

But there was much more to them, much more than just rearing a good Christian family, noble as that is.

Seamus Durkan had been trained into the life of business in Louisburgh, Ballina and Westport before founding his own business on Bridge Street in the 1950's.

Ita Kilcoyne had left Shranacloye for the USA as a young girl and on her return to Louisburgh, joined Seamus in the sanctity of marriage. The year was 1955 and they conducted their business on Bridge Street until their more senior years demanded a lesser involvement in a business now thriving and continuing in the next generation.

Seamus was outgoing and helpful in the community. He was a natural leader and a volunteer in a world where voluntary work was becoming old-fashioned. He was a keen businessman and an advertisement in *An Choinneal* 1959 shows him as an agent for Pierce Machinery, Connacht Laundry and Foyles' Library. Incidentally, the same issue has a description by Bridge Street neighbour, P. S. Mac Conmara, of the county semi-final at Balla between Louisburgh and Swinford and played on 7th January 1951:

"Highlight of the hour was Seamus Durkan's (Louisburgh cul baire's) penalty save from the boot of Padraig Carney . . ."

Many are the parish clubs and associations, which gained through the quiet – never loud – wisdom and guidance of Seamus Durkan. Here at *An Choinneal* he was our Treasurer. He was a founder member of the Louisburgh Park Committee, a member of Muintir na Tíre, the Traders' Association and many others. His political party was Fianna Fáil and his political roots grew from the nourishing republicanism of those who saw all as equals and whose generosity of spirit was reflected in a son's nature as a kind and gentle person. But he wasn't afraid of Carney's penalty shot!

A good marriage is a compliment to both partners where one complements the other. Seamus was blessed in the love of Ita Kilcoyne who, in the great traditions of our people, had dedicated her life, initially to her brother's family, but ever to God, her husband and family and her neighbours. She, like her husband, never sought fame but achieved it quietly and respectfully. The Durkans always had a great name and are good neighbours, thanks in no small measure to Ita and Evelyn.

Ita's latter years were marred by failing health, but the quiet dignity, the ladylike gait, the pleasant word, the smile, never left her. She did mourn for Seamus. May they be with God forever.

*Seán Ó Laighin*

## Remembering Nora Lyons

**N**ora . . . I believe that name suited Nora Lyons, it being derived from the word "honourable". She certainly lived her life in an honourable and admirable fashion.

Lately, Nora flashed into my mind's eye when I read the following, "There is only one way I can get ready for immortality, and that is to love this life and live it bravely and cheerfully and as faithfully as I can." While Henry Van Dyke wrote this, it echoes Nora's apparent philosophy of life.



*Nora Lyons*

She was seventh in a family of nine children born to Dick and Bridget Lyons. She attended Killadoon N.S. in the days of "through school through the fields." I was older than Nora so my earliest memories are of a happy, confident girl, skipping down the bóthairín past my home in Killadoon to collect the daily paper in Maguire's post Office.

After finishing secondary school, she trained as a primary teacher and her first job was in Carrowniskey N.S. where she was assistant to Mrs. Rose Maguire, later forming the solid "Lyons" team with Mrs. Clementine Lyons. Apart from her well-deserved reputation as a wonderful teacher of "the three R's", she inspired her students through her love of sport, music, song and art, long before these subjects became part of the new curriculum. She was an educationalist in the full sense of the word. She later moved to Carrowholly N.S. where she continued to use her gifts for the enrichment of that community.

Nora placed great value on family life. She often talked about the family spirit enjoyed by them in their youth as they played and worked



on the farm together, often exchanging visits with her cousins in far-flung places like Accony and Leenane!! Nora continued this tradition and her home always had a welcome for visitors. She cared for her beloved mother and supported her brother, Josie, in the running of the farm up to his untimely death in 1992. Her nephew, Richard Austin, then took over the running of the farm and Nora's support and guidance enabled him to make a success of this. As well as her barely concealed pride in Richard, she held all of her nephews and nieces close to her heart and their varied achievements were a regular topic of conversation. So too were the arrivals (or pending arrivals!) of grandnephews and grandnieces.

It is also fitting that Nora lived in a scenic and historical setting like The Colony. The word "colony" suggests community and in this respect Nora has earned her place in our parish history. She didn't believe in looking outside the community to meet our challenges, but believed that we had all the resources we needed within and around us. She would laugh modestly at this description of herself as a community activist as she just called it "doing her bit". For me, she gave meaning to the saying "leading from behind." Nora looked for no attention or plaudits; she quietly and solidly went about her work. During the renovations of Killeen church in 1971, Nora's work on the Finance committee was crucial to the success of the project as the bulk of the money had to be raised locally. Through weekly card games in the Killadoon Beach Hotel and through "supper dances," "running buffets" and raffles, Nora ensured the target was reached. Being a great organizer and a car owner to boot (no pun intended), she set off to buy chickens and other requirements, distributing them to her various helpers who prepared the food for the "big night." Such hard work and thrift paid dividends.

Fast-forward twenty six years . . . the centenary of the foundation of the church must be celebrated. The proposal of the organizing committee was to produce a centenary book . . . and again, Nora was working away quietly. She left no stone unturned in her quest for information and photos and she visited people to "cajole" them into putting pen to paper, believing that ourselves best wrote our history. The frequent gentle reminders of "Have you much written yet?" didn't allow one to give up and the twinkle in her eye belied her quiet determination. The resulting

publication, "Killeen, Church and People" is something we are all very proud of and we acknowledge Nora's contribution.

These are just two examples from the Half-parish, but her interests extended further afield too. She was an active member of Muintir na Tíre and was also on the committee of *An Choinneal*, acting as assistant secretary for a time. She also supported Western Care and other voluntary organizations. She was a loyal supporter of the GAA, attended local matches and travelled further afield to the big games, offering her opinion on the highs and lows of the matches. She traveled through Europe and to Africa where Sr. Hillary worked in the mission fields.

I have tried to convey that Nora was an honourable person who made a great contribution to her family, to her community and to her teaching career. As she never "blew her own trumpet," I am relying on our conversations and what I read between the lines. So please forgive me for any omissions on my part. If she were to read this, she would, no doubt, praise my effort in putting pen to paper and then enquire whom the paragon of virtue was!!

On a personal level, I sorely miss Nora for her kindness, friendship and sense of humour and courage. A night playing cards in her company or a while spent chatting to her was a tonic that I much appreciated. When she was laid to rest on a bleak Christmas Eve, 2001, the sense of loss among her family and friends and among the wider community was palpable, but the feeling of a life well lived surmounted this.

*"When I have found the way of peace,  
No king surpasses me,  
My rule extends beyond the land,  
Beyond the distant sea."*

Rest in peace, Nora.

**Chris Mc Nally  
Roonith Hill**



## The Life of Joe Burke, 1916-1999

*Submitted by members of the Morahan family, Moneen.*

**T**wins Joseph and Eddie Burke were born on January 22nd, 1916 in Sooley, Co. Sligo, the youngest in a family of six. But when difficulties beset the family, family members were dispersed to orphanages, the twins spending the first four years of their lives in Drogheda. Eddie died at age four and he was the twin of whom Joe had no memory until told of him by a nun in the more recent past.

The original house where Joe's family lived is still standing. His brother Jim lived there until his death in 1986. With Jim's death the Burke name disappeared from the locality and as far as we know, none of Joe's siblings ever married.

When Joe was about five or six years of age, he was transferred from the Drogheda orphanage to an Industrial School in Killybegs, Co. Donegal.

Years later, in 1987, Leo Morahan accompanied Joe back to Killybegs. Joe recalled looking out the window of his bedroom at fishing boats coming and going. He recalled being brought on numerous walks with the other boys and fondly remembered the remains of an old castle, no longer standing.

It is difficult to say how Joe felt about the Industrial School – it seems to have been heavily regulated and he described it as being somewhat like an army camp or a prison. On his arrival at the



*Joe Burke*

school, Joe was given a number and this was written or stitched onto all of his belongings.

For any indiscretion or boldness, the children were caned. This could be in the classroom or throughout the school. Joe was not bitter about this and accepted the system. Schooling was the basic "Three R's"; Joe liked "sums" and ever retained a little of the Irish he learned there.

At age sixteen it was time to leave Killybegs and employment was found for Joe at Mantua House in Roscommon, home of the Fehilly family who were beef and dairy farmers. In general, employment was arranged for the boys before they left Killybegs. In Joe's case, he and another boy travelled by C.I.E. bus to Grange in Co. Sligo. Joe continued alone to Roscommon in a Mantua House vehicle; the other boy tragically died soon afterwards, Joe believed.

The work at Mantua, where Joe remained into his late thirties, was hard. His life was one of a drover, sometimes doing a round trip to area fairs when walking cattle was the order of the day and no sale meant forty miles on foot. Felling and chopping timber was another of Joe's chores.

Joe often recalled the great snow of '47 and when the Mantua House estate was subdivided Joe moved on to Belclare, Westport, where for a short period he was companion to an elderly couple. At age forty, he came to Moneen to live with the Morahan family with whom he shared a full and happy life. His flair for music was discovered and he often accompanied Basil in the Tavern or in Murrisk Abbey Hotel.

Unfortunately, although he found he had a sister, Molly, in the USA, they never met. He did discover his brother Jim who happily had returned to the old family house in Sligo and John, living with the Garveys in Castlereagh.

In 1996, when Joe was almost totally blind and old age was upon him, the Sacred Heart Hospital was felt to be more appropriate for his needs.

Joe Burke passed to his eternal reward on 12th May 1999.



## Louisburgh Support Group Mayo/Roscommon Hospice



**P**ictured above at their AGM of last year with guest speaker Michael Downes (Chairman, Mayo/Roscommon Hospice) are officers and committee members of the Louisburgh Support Group:

Front (l. to r.): Gerardine O'Malley, Treasurer; Carmel McLoughlin, Chairperson; Michael Downes; Sheila Tiernan, Secretary.  
2nd Row (l. to r.): Mary Philbin; Breta O'Malley; Ann Grealis; Mary O'Toole; Mary Teresa Gibbons; Mary Healy;  
Back Row (l. to r.): John McLoughlin; Margaret Gibbons; John Joe Gibbons, P.R.O.

Hospice cares for persons whose illness no longer responds to curative treatment. It enables patients to live the remainder of their lives in comfort and dignity, surrounded by family and friends. We continue to raise much-needed funds towards this essential service as the number of families helped by this service increases annually.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone for their generosity, loyalty and continued support.

## Killeen Community Playgroup

**K**illeen Community Playgroup has provided a consistent, quality, affordable preschool service that is accessible to all children for over ten years. A group of parents started the playgroup as an outlet for themselves and their children. They met in Killeen Community Centre with toys brought in from home and a newly bought trampoline for the children to enjoy. The parents would volunteer with the play leader and they would bring out all the toys and put them away every night. One of the parents, Rita O'Malley initiated building a purpose built playgroup. A committee was formed and they got a grant to have it built. Brick by brick it took a lot of time and effort for the committee, but it was completed. Actually, it was one of the first purpose built playgroups in the Mayo region, and it has been used as a model for other playgroups.

The main focus of this play group is "PLAY". The children attend four days per week and are encouraged to play in a multi-sensory, child



Back row (l. to r.): Luke Morahan, Philip Stewart, Monica Bourke, Kieran O'Reilly, Esther Gavin.

Front row (l. to r.): Cora Staunton, Brendan Staunton, Seán Keane, Nicola O'Malley, Ciara Morahan, Laura Morahan.





### Happy Days

Back row (l. to r.): ???? ?????, Philip Stewart, Esther Gavin, Brendan Staunton, Nicola O'Malley, Anthony Gibbons, Laura Morahan, Ciara Navin, Cora Staunton, Luke Morahan.

centred play environment. The playgroup is full of equipment, things like a climbing frame, sand table, painting, tractors, and a play kitchen. Up to twenty children can attend from ages three to five.

The co-playleaders of this group are Pauline Dunleavy and Ann Morrison. Mieka Hoekstra has been a faithful volunteer to the playgroup. All of these women have spent over ten years working with the playgroup and have played with the majority of the children in the area. They each have their own special way with the children and it is very clear that they enjoy their work.

The playgroup is recognised as a preschool service from the Western Health Board. There are regulations that need to be followed and there is specific criteria that needs to be met. A committee of volunteers run the playgroup consisting of five parents and three members of the Community Council.

Three members of the committee this year felt that there was a need of something for the younger children and their parents in the area. So Noreen Staunton, Geraldine Keane, and Laura McNally started a Parent and Toddler group in the playgroup centre. This group meets on Fridays and many parents and children from the Killeen and Louisburgh area

have enjoyed getting together. The toddlers love having a place to play: wearing the construction hats, going down the slide, and jumping on the same trampoline that so many others have jumped on and enjoyed.

The playgroup is full of life and has become a central point to the community. Each year parents of the playgroup children take over the running of the committee. It provides the young children with a safe and fun place to play that is so crucial in their development, and it gives the parents a chance to take up work or complete day to day tasks. As the young children who attend the playgroup grow older they remember the fun they had –

sliding on the slide  
being in the Louisburgh St. Patrick's Day Parade  
ringing the bell for lunchtime  
Pauline and Ann sitting on Santa's knee with Mieka keeping  
a watchful eye  
parties and  
jumping on that trampoline.

The establishment of the playgroup and the continual progress that it has made truly shows the dedication and commitment that is evident in our community.

**Laura McNally**

## All talk

*Some say life is good  
But what do they say  
When bad things happen  
In the world each day*

*They just turn their backs  
Or act like they don't care  
Because when bad things  
happen  
They are never there*

*At home by the fire  
Or down the pub with a friend  
They talk about how  
The world they would mend*

*But when the time comes for  
actions  
To follow through their talk  
They leave it to others  
And away they walk.*

**Ross Sinclair** – Sancta Maria College.  
From Writer-In-Residence Project, 2002.



## Senior Citizens

**L**ouisburgh Senior Citizens Group came together in 1985 to bring services, togetherness and friendship to the senior members of our parish. Twenty-seven years later, the Group is representative of the wider parish, from Thallabawn and Killeen to Mullagh, Kilgeever and Kilsallagh.

Each Friday, Group members attend the 11.30am Mass in the Church. Immediately afterwards, they congregate in the Pastoral Centre for refreshments, bingo and lotto. Useful information is made available and includes details on social services and health/safety in the home. The admirable "Community Alert" system has been put in place and many homes are now fitted with security lighting and alarms.

Planning and organization of events are the business of a voluntary committee with input from the senior citizens themselves who are encouraged to become more involved.

We look forward to one of our own senior citizens being elected to the Senior Citizens Parliament. A founder member of the Louisburgh Group, Mrs. Breda O'Malley who now lives in Westport, represents Mayo in the Parliament.

Since 1998, Senior Citizens who live in rural areas, avail of the local school bus service each Friday during school-term and thanks to Bus Éireann, they can do their shopping and avail of banking services in all "winds and weather." A special word of praise is also due to their two drivers.

Highlights of the year include Christmas Mass and Function and the annual outing.

The Christmas Mass and festivities rotate between Louisburgh and Killeen. Refreshments and singsong with the musical talents of the children of all areas, together with the noted musicians of the parish, make for a superb evening.



*From left: Katie Keane, Mary Moran, Johnnie O'Toole, Mary O'Toole, Fr. Mannion, P.P., Imelda O'Grady.*

The annual outing is generally held at the end of May and the coach tour takes in venues such as Achill, Ballina/Enniscrone, Cong/Connemara/Ashford Castle and Knock Shrine, winding up in Westport or at the Tavern.

On the 27th June, founder member Eileen Kerr, (nee Dunne) R.I.P., was laid to rest. Eileen was a dedicated and tireless volunteer whose tremendous contribution is deeply appreciated by all who knew her. Sincere sympathy is extended to her husband John, to her children and to her mother, brother and sisters.

### **Breta O'Malley**

—::—

*'There's a story told of a Parish Priest who on a Sunday morning climbed into the pulpit wearing a large white plaster on the side of his face. He thought: "I'd better explain to the people what happened." "This morning," he said, "while in the bathroom shaving, I was thinking about my sermon and I cut my face with the razor." After Mass – in the Sacristy – he found a little note in the collection basket, which read: Next time, Father, when you're shaving – mind what you're doing and cut the sermon instead.'*

### **Fr. Pat McNally**



## Louisburgh to Kitale

As members of the Louisburgh/Killeen/Kitale partnership, P.J. Keane and myself were afforded the opportunity (courtesy of Africa Ireland Partnership) to travel to our twinned town, Kitale in Kenya. Kenya is a Third World country and has seen huge economic decline since gaining independence from Britain in 1962. We are partnered with Kitale since 1998.

It was a fantastic experience for us both. In spite of all their suffering and poverty, these people welcomed us with happy smiles. We stayed with the Medical Missionaries of Mary, who fed us so well we didn't lose an ounce. The two Sisters with whom we stayed were Sr. Mary from Donegal and Sr. Treasa from Kildare.

The partnership is involved in fundraising to assist their Aids programme which has three strands, an Aids Clinic, a Home Care Aids Health Programme and an Aids Education Programme.

This year alone our donations were in excess of a staggering €12,000, which sum helps to ensure that this very worthwhile project will continue. People with aids virus can come to the clinic for medication and so live to see their children grow into young adults. The Medical Missionaries also cater for those too ill to travel and who need home treatment.

The aids orphans are also benefiting from the financial assistance we give in that they can be medicated, fed, clothed and educated that they might enjoy a better quality of life than might otherwise be available to them.

Parallel to this families are assisted in self-reliance; this enables them to rent a plot, sow seed and harvest maize. If maize is left over the following year, more seed can be bought and ploughing can start again. The climate often militates against a harvest if there has been heavy rain or drought.

The Sisters are marvellous, working in the depths of poverty and sadness every day. They are happy and full of hope. They gave us a clear view of the whole programme, no curtains concealing anything. It was

so sad to see fathers and mothers denied a life with their children. It was upsetting to see children inherit this disease, thus having very little hope of a long life. One could ask questions again and again, but religion and culture don't often see eye to eye.

The Government and the country are run inefficiently and corruption is evident everywhere. The rich, a small minority of the population, are getting richer, and the poor, the vast majority, are getting poorer.

Personally, the trip benefited us both and we now know exactly where the money from Louisburgh/Killeen is going. Therefore, we can only continue to do what is in our power to do and this is to ensure that the link with Kitale is maintained.

**Breda McGinn**

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## Horizon

*The light filters through the clumsy cumulus  
Concave in her form eloping effortlessly onwards  
Broken gold sheen she is as smooth as silk to thread  
Foresore shining clear backshore troubled trodden tired*

*Forward the runnels lie deep darkened parallel ridges rise  
tall triumphant  
Optimistic they flood till pessimistic they drain dry  
As the winter waters collect and claim their prize*

*And there she holds herself water lapped  
Lifting her tar torn head to a rhythmic bob  
Outwards she holds her stance  
A quarter of powerful oak lengths*

*Lonesome, thoughtful, she flounders forward  
Conversation caught crippled by its larynx  
Four figures sit stained locked oared  
As the journeyman presents his case over the silent ocean.*

**Ben Ruddy** – Sancta Maria College.  
From Writer-In-Residence Project, 2002.



## Sonas, Louisburgh's Children's Arts Festival

**T**he week long festival, organised each October since 1999 by Louisburgh Community Project, transforms an isolated rural area into a truly global village through music, dance, theatre and storytelling from Ireland and the world. Workshops range from carpentry to creative writing and from African boardgames and drumming to jewellery and costume making. Participation and accessibility are central to the festival which opens children's imaginations to the wonders of cultural difference while simultaneously nurturing pride in their own environment.

At Sonas 2001 there were fifteen performances by three outstanding theatre companies attended by 1300 children from 12 different primary schools in the region. There were 46 different workshops for children



aged three to sixteen years old. Projects within the three local primary schools included a dance show, drama workshops and visits by two Irish children's authors.

The climax of the festival each year is Family Day on Sunday when there are activities for all ages, clowns in the streets and historical re-enactments with Clann na Ulaídh. Then the festival ends with a street pageant prepared over the preceding weeks by Killeen, Louisburgh and Lecanvey schools. Sonas is an Irish word for happiness, and that's what the children of the Louisburgh area feel as the week-long festival comes to an end for another year.

## Remembering Sion

**I** remember how having an autograph book was "cool", not that we had that word then. Signing one's name in one of those little books was not enough and one had to write a little verse. Two such "poems" have remained in my mind, written by two friends of my youth:

*"As the chimes of mem'ries bells,  
Pealing through the mist of years  
Brings the memory of the past  
Softly, sweetly to your ears,  
Won't you listen to them dearest?  
Till perhaps you catch a strain,  
Which will bring you back an echo  
Of a once-familiar name".* Kitty.

*"Build for yourself a strongbox,  
Fashion each part with care,  
When it's as strong as it can be,  
Put all your troubles there.  
Hide in it each thought of failure  
And each bitter cup that you quaff,  
Lock all your heartaches within it,  
Then sit on the lid and laugh".* Breta.

Sadly, both Kitty and Breta have both passed away, but I am sure they are now enjoying the reward of lives well spent.



## Louisburgh Community Project

**L**ouisburgh Community Project originated when a group of women who had attended a 'Women in Community Development' course in 1992-3 decided to set up a drop-in centre for women in the town. The aim of the drop-in centre was to create a space where women suffering from rural isolation, and often caring for elderly relatives at home without support, could meet.

The group's ambitions grew and in 1994 they successfully applied to the Department of Social Welfare for funding to create a Community Development Project.

Louisburgh CDP was formally established in 1996 and a full-time administrator was taken on. In May 1997 the first full-time project co-ordinator started work. In August 1997 the Project was registered as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

There are now over two hundred such initiatives all over Ireland, all part of a National Community Development Programme, and there will soon be thirteen in Co. Mayo alone. These Community Development Projects are funded out of National Lottery money which covers staffing and overheads costs. Funding for any actions or activities undertaken by a Project must be raised separately.

There are two permanent staff at Louisburgh Project: Breda Ruane, Co-ordinator, and Peg McGrail, Administrator. Stephanie Troy, the Developmental Arts Worker who also works with similar Projects in Ballina and Kiltimagh, and Geraldine Mitchell, Outreach Development Worker, are on limited contracts. The Project is managed by a voluntary committee made up of six women and three men who bring a wide range of interests and support to the Project's work.

Projects differ quite a lot depending on the area they are working in, but they all share certain core characteristics. They all:

- Have an anti-poverty, anti-exclusion focus
- Work from community development principles

- Provide support and act as a catalyst for community development activity
- Act as a resource to the communities of which they are a part
- Provide co-ordination and co-operation between community, voluntary and statutory groups in their areas.

They are not funding agencies or service providers.

In the five years Louisburgh CDP has been in existence its role and its place in the community have evolved significantly. At first it was mainly a resource centre for the town, offering typing and photocopying as well as information on welfare entitlements. Fax and the internet were later added to the services on offer to the public. Then its area of activity was recognised to extend beyond the town to Killeen to the west and Lecanvey to the east. With the addition of an outreach development worker to the staff in 2001, the scope of the Project was at last able actively to include these outlying areas.

Louisburgh Community Project is behind a number of specific activities, the best known being Sonas, the annual children's arts festival held each October. We are also involved, for example, in a local network around the issue of domestic violence, a twice-yearly newsletter, the Friday Bus, the Creative Activities Art Club and the Commemorative Famine Walk. We organised an eight-week writing course this Spring, bringing young and old together under the guidance of a professional author. An anti-racism video we produced with the co-operation of the three local national schools won a national multicultural award, MAMA 2002.

In May 2002, Louisburgh Project invited the public to join in a bit of collective planning when they held their open evenings – entitled "Choosing the Future" – in Killeen, Louisburgh and Lecanvey on successive nights. It was also a chance to learn all about the work of the Project and to enjoy an exhibition of photographs taken locally by renowned photojournalist Derek Speirs. The results of a questionnaire distributed at the end of the meetings will help to inform the Project's work over the next three years.

**Geraldine Mitchell**



## Carrowniskey National School Re-union

**T**he Carrowniskey National School Re-union began on August 8th last at the Church of the Holy Family Killeen with a con-celebrated Mass of thanksgiving for the 113 years of the school's existence, 1862 -1975.

The principal celebrant was Carrowniskey born and past pupil of the school, Fr Pat MacNally, now Parish Priest and Dean of Wigan, England. The other con-celebrants were Fr Michael Darcy, C.C. Louisburgh and Fr Richard Gibbons, C. C. Headford.

The Church was full to capacity for the Mass. The local choir sang,



*Back row (l. to r.): Cllr. Peter Sweeney, Fr. Pat McNally, Pat Joe O'Malley, John Tiernan, Mary Jo O'Toole, Fr. Michael Darcy.  
Front row (l. to r.): Noreen O'Malley, Francis O'Malley, Sr. Bernadette McNally, Breege Needham.*



*Making a presentation to Fr. Pat McNally (left to right) are: Breege Needham, Mary Jo O'Toole, Francis O'Malley, Paddy J. O'Malley, John Tiernan, Fr. Pat McNally, Noreen O'Malley.*

conducted by Pauline O'Grady, Cregganbawn.

The lessons were read by Nora O'Malley (Carrowniskey), and Breege Needham (Aillmore).

The Prayers of the Faithful were prayed by Sr Bernadette MacNally, Jim O'Malley, Cementine Lyons, former headteacher, Anthony O'Toole, Padraig McNamara.

The Offertory gifts were presented by Lizzie Sammin, John O'Toole, Michael Duffy, and Greta Tiernan. They carried up the bread and wine, the roll-book, a copy book, pen, ruler and pencil, reflecting the 3 R's, a bible reflecting the strong Christian and Catholic ethos which permeated the school.

Eucharistic Ministers: Mary O'Malley, Francis O'Malley.

Altar Servers: Anne-Marie Sammin and Tracey Gibbons.



After the Post-Communion prayer, John Tiernan, Doughmakeone, read out a poem about the school. Later, in the Derrylahan, Louisburgh, all past pupils, their families and friends partook of a sumptuous meal followed by a social – singing and dancing – well into the early hours. The organising committee – John Tiernan, Francis O'Malley, Mary Jo O'Toole, Doughmakeon, Nora O'Malley, Carrowniskey, Breege Needham, Aillmore, and Paddy Joe O'Malley, Roanith, are to be congratulated for organising this most enjoyable and worthwhile togetherness. They left no stone unturned, crossing every "t" and dotting every "i" to ensure a most enjoyable and happy time was had by all.

The re-union brought together past pupils and their families and friends from all over Ireland, the US and the UK. It provided an excellent opportunity to renew acquaintances, to reminisce and to repair friendships.

During the social, the committee presented Fr Pat MacNally with a masterpiece of photography by Liam Lyons, showing "the Reek" peering through a break in the clouds over Clew Bay. A replica hangs in the



Back row (l. to r.): Pat Kelly, Michael Tiernan, Serena Trench, Andrew Minnock, Annette Tiernan, Jim and Marie Tiernan, J. J. Trench, Edel and John Tiernan.

Front row (l. to r.): Mary Trench, Anne Kelly, Gretta Tiernan, Margaret Minnock, Sheila Tiernan,



Tommie McHale, Enda McHale, Clementine Lyons and Evelyn Leamy.



Teachers Anne O'Grady, Mary O'Toole, Patrick O'Grady, Mary O'Malley, Patricia Rose.





**Kelly, Golden and Gibbons Family**

*Back row (l. to r.): Liam Kelly, Mickie Joe Gibbons, Mary Teresa, Chris, Padraic Murray, Mary Majella and Claire Murray, John, Evelyn, Damien, Gabriel Gibbons.*

*Front row (l. to r.): Kitty, Helena, Laoise Kelly, Marian Walshe, Michael Gibbons, Margaret Kelly, Sheila Golden.*

*Kneeling: Róisín Kelly, Aoife and Lisa Gibbons.*

White House, Washington, and Áras an Uachtaráin in the Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Fr MacNally expressing thanks said: "this re-union and your company brings me and so many here this evening to the very core of our "dúchas" – to our roots, which we thank God for and are truly and rightly proud of I'm deeply grateful and appreciative of your gift – this masterpiece. I'll treasure it always – Gura míle maith agaibh go léir."

This re-union was such a huge success that we invite other schools in similar situations to arrange such get-together events.

Faith and a sense of community, a sense of belonging and awareness of one's roots, a more meaningful personal communication will most certainly result.

Well done Carrowniskey, you did us proud. Ar aghaidh libh go léir.

## Credit Union Quiz 2001

**A**nd the winners are Louisburgh by two points! – Our jaws dropped. For the first time ever (in our history books) a team from Louisburgh Credit Union had won at chapter (regions into which Credit Unions are divided) level. We (Tracy Gibbons, Aisling O'Malley, Kayleigh O'Malley and Patricia Morrison) looked at each other in amazement. We were going to Dublin.

In the weeks leading up to the 17th of June we were ticking the days off on our calendars. We received many good wishes. We were nervous yet excited setting out for Dublin.

Finally the big day arrived and we set out for the R.D.S. or the Royal Dublin Society. We all met up in front of Shelbourne Hall and took pictures and talked while waiting to be registered. After being registered we put on our badges and went to be seated. Then Jim McMahon





(President of the ILCU) and Ray Darcy (Quizmaster) came round to each table, having photographs taken with each team. 2FM were also there, playing requests. After some time the quiz got under way. During the break, they called out the scores and we thought we were doing quite well, especially since we were competing against nearly a hundred other teams. After another six rounds the results were called out. The winners were from Co. Carlow. Our score was 62 out of 72 and even though we had not won we were proud of ourselves for doing so well. Each member of every team received a ten pound voucher for Lifestyle Sports, a peak cap and a certificate. All of us really enjoyed our day.

We would like to thank our teachers Mrs O'Toole, for starting us out on quizzes, and Mr. O'Grady, for helping us prepare for different quizzes. We would also like to thank Mairéad Staunton and Carmel McLoughlin for coming to all our quizzes and supporting us, and Louisburgh Credit Union for paying all our travelling expenses. Last but not least we would like to thank our parents for putting up with us and bringing us to all our quizzes.

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## Remembering Sion

### *The Story of Little Nell*

I remember the story of Little Nell told by Charles Dickens in a schoolbook many years ago. It was the story of a little girl whose grandfather was a gambler. He had borrowed money to gamble but had to flee from home to escape from a ruthless moneylender.


Their plight did not rid the foolish grandfather and his trusting little grandchild of the attentions of the moneylender.

He followed and sought tidings of them everywhere. And there were bouts of gambling too as the old man's dream was, "She'll be rich one day and be a fine lady', (through his winnings!)

So they journeyed on, through thick and thin. In the end, they reached a friend's house where, sadly, Nell, the little girl, died. It was inevitable, after all the hardships.

It was a story that brought a tear to many an eye.

## WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE FOR LOUISBURGH: AN INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

 always-based poet and novelist, Fred Johnston, became a frequent visitor to Louisburgh when he became 'Writer in Residence' for eight weeks in the Spring of 2002.

Working with fifteen Fifth Year students from Sancta Maria College and eight men and women from the wider community, mostly retired, Fred explored the idea of belonging, place and identity with the group, as well as giving a free rein to their creative talents.

The results of this innovative project, which was a three-way venture involving Louisburgh Community Project, Sancta Maria College and Poetry Ireland, are here for you to enjoy. For the photographs, our thanks go to Margaret Chapman of the newly-formed Louisburgh Photographic Club.

### *Geraldine Mitchell*

Outreach Development Worker

Louisburgh Community Project

Tel.: 098 66218

Fax: 098 66412


E-mail: louisburghproject@eircom.net

Website: www.louisburgh.ie

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## PREFACE

### Poetry as the Voice of Place – 1

 he West of Ireland has been celebrated beyond measure by poets, painters and musicians. For poetry, one might at once consider Richard Murphy.

It was not merely to do the same thing that brought me to Louisburgh, to a project of bringing together two distinct generations in the one room; but the fundamental notion that the place common to the experience of these generations had made its mark upon them and in unique ways. This, I thought, was worth recording.

I had come from a very similar project in Galway city. In that project,



I had encouraged the young and senior participants to write about the places in which they'd grown up – or, indeed, were still growing up – and a sort of comparison of ideas was then possible. The writing thus produced was clear, rough-edged and true and free, thankfully, of the contamination of hushed drawing-rooms.

Quite soon, it became clear to me in Louisburgh that those who wrote of their lives and the effect – or lack of effect, which is an effect too – of the places in which they spent their lives were also inhabited by those places; I hope I managed to enable this to be articulated. For some, these were places of the past; for others, they were taking form in the imagination. I wanted each group to learn from the other and I think they did. The contributions, at the end of the day, were various and always interesting; from the lightly academic to the boldly adventurous and imaginative. Each contributor should justly be proud of his and her achievement.

I tried to get across the idea that place was a personal territory, with a unique story to which we all contributed something; the humblest poem went out and into the place in which we lived and breathed, as the heartiest song did too, or the fireside tale. There was a time when tales and poems recited by the fire or at a party were as powerful in their impact as a TV soap or serious documentary; I tried to bring back the idea of the power of words and the names of things; of rivers, fields, hills, bothrins. Of the fairy-tale, of the personal history; what makes a place live.

We live in an age of overpowering technology, of the sound-bite, of too little time. We are apt to neglect, or be encouraged to neglect, the powerful word in the mouth of the natural world, the everyday world of living people. We might even think that our past has no value because we can't replay it on DVD. We may forget that we carry within ourselves our past, present and future; that these components are inseparable. I would like to think that I have intruded however lightly upon this sort of thinking, while at the same time encouraging some participants to continue to write and research their found places for themselves. I am indebted to Geraldine Mitchell for her help and direction and to Jane O'Hanlon at Poetry Ireland. Similarly am I indebted to the headmaster of the school, Vincent O'Loughlin, and most of all, perhaps, to the participants, whatever their age.

**Fred Johnston**

## Poetry as the Voice of Place – 2

**E**arlier this year, a proposal was suggested to us, senior citizens, that any of us interested in writing prose or poetry, or increasing our ability to do so, would get an opportunity to meet the famous journalist and writer, Mr Fred Johnston, from Galway. He would come to Louisburgh on the invitation of the Community Project, “which” as Eamonn Kelly used say “he did”. The idea was also extended to the students of Sancta Maria College nearby.

So, on a certain date in March, a group of would-be writers – senior, middle-aged and youthful aspirants – assembled in the Project Centre, to meet Mr Johnston. This is a man who puts everybody at his or her ease, and he did most of the talking, which encouraged the rest of us to join in, and from there on everyone contributed to the conversation.

What he would like us to write about for a start was “place”: the place of our birth, of memories of our youth, childhood, experiences, old traditions and folklore. And it all came, in prose and poetry and even one detective story! Ghost and fairy tales were told bringing light hearted humour and craic.

He impressed on us the benefit of having confidence in our own ability to write and not to look at our “efforts” in a negative way. So the course went apace and young and old and middle-aged, wrote and read aloud their “piece” and all applauded.

Mr Johnston had all in happy and confident mood. Bless him.

We, the older members of the group, were edified by the interest, good manners and commitment of the students and enjoyed hearing them read out the “pieces” they had written. They on their part enjoyed hearing of our knowledge of the past and of things that happened long, long before their time!

Long may they keep these fine traits of character and grace!

**Úna O'Malley**



## Kilgeever

A parish I have a very close affinity with, being a native parishioner, is that of Kilgeever in Co. Mayo. It has some beautiful beaches with golden sands and crystal clear waters, surrounded by picturesque mountains, not forgetting its lakes and rivers which provide some excellent salmon and trout fishing.



The town of Louisburgh itself is going through a bad patch at the moment, with a declining population and the closure of the small, friendly family shops.

The older residents are passing on and family members are moving to bigger centres for better social and financial rewards. Personally, I am confident that with community co-operation and self-effort the tide will turn in its favour. Recollection of growing up was mentioned at the original meeting, as a theme to write about.

One of the most vivid memories I have was going to the bog, whether it was to help neighbours or work on your own family's bog. I'm going back some time, now, when the norm was the donkey and cleaves. One particular occasion this town of ours had engaged a few of us to give him a day or two changing out or putting out the turf. I had this donkey that was quite big and strong looking but that really was deceptive as nearly every second or third trip, down he went and stayed down until the cleaves were taken off. The owner was obsessed with corns, which did not help with relations between the donkey and himself or me.

This had happened for the umpteenth time when he made the memorable comment, "I declare to Christ he would go down on the bloody kitchen table". On another occasion in our own rented piece of bog we had our greyhound with us and when the lunchtime break came we discovered to our horror that he had eaten the lot, so a drink of tea and head for home was the only option left.

A common problem in some areas in those years – fifty years ago – was wandering cattle. They would simply eat any article of clothing left around. The local name I think was "cruppan" caused by lack of certain minerals in the soil – though I stand open to correction on this. It meant that you could not relax completely until they moved on.

**Charley Gaffney**

## Carraig na Sionnach . . . an early life memory

From my earliest childhood days, my grandfather was a man I admired and revered. He was a giant of a man, white bearded and energetic. Like all small land farmers of his time, he was a tireless worker, an extraordinary provider. He could handle a plough, or shoot a wild duck, with equal ability, and amazing accuracy. But above all else, he was a fisherman.



One of his favourite fishing spots was tidal, situated close to a flat and sandy beach, near Thallabawn, where my grandparents lived. On a suitable day, astride Maud, his favourite mare and companion, he would carry his fishing gear, and cross at low tide to Carraig na Sionnach. There, cut off from the world, in the silence and stillness of a place of breathtaking beauty, he fished to his hearts content, sure in the knowledge that his strong and faithful friend Maud would brave the evening tide to swim him and his shimmering catch safely home.

Later, the sight of a lobster or two, crawling lazily on the spacious kitchen floor in Thallabawn, filled us youngsters with fear and excitement.

"Why is it called Carraig na Sionnach?" my older brother inquired.

"Sionnach is a fox . . . and surely foxes don't live on rocks in the sea?"

"There's a very good explanation," said one of the older men. "I'll tell ye the story." And he began.

"Once upon a time a hungry fox made his way at low tide to the carraig. Being ravenous, he immediately thrust his sharp teeth around a juicy bairneach (limpet). The bairneach, though glued to the rock-face, adjusted its grip, and in doing so, jammed the foxes tongue between the rock and the shell.

The poor fox struggled, but try as he might, he failed to escape. He disappeared into the sea as the tidewater rose. And from that day forth,



the rock was known as "Carraig na Sionnach".

"What a sad story!" we whimpered; but my older sister, wiser than us, and ever ready to console, came to the rescue.

"Perhaps many ducks and geese and hens were spared the wrath of the fox?" she said. Content with that explanation, and in the hope that justice had been done, we scampered off to get one last glimpse of the remainder of the "catch", now salted down in a deep barrel in the store.

Many years later, I was very interested, and somewhat amused, to hear a totally different explanation for the same place name. Seemingly, shoals of storm battered fish would be stranded, from time to time, in the holes and crevices of the rock. There, under the light of the moon, the fish took on an illuminated or phosphorescent appearance. In the darkness, from a distance, this gave the rock a mysterious or "will-o-the-wisp" effect. The name for this luminous glow, in the Irish of our area long ago was "teine shionnaigh" (fire glow), so the rock may originally have been named: *Carraig a' theine t-Shionnaigh* – or simply: "Carraig a' Shionnaigh".

In time the rock became known as "Carraig Na Sionnach", thus giving birth to a new story that suited.

Whatever the truth of the matter, the Carraig never fails to recall for me memories filled with wonderment and happiness, and a knowledge of an extraordinary people, and a unique way of life that is, sadly, no more.

### Etta McGreal

#### Footnotes:

Dineen-page 1169:

*Tanaidh* (e) adj., thin, slender, spare, lean, **shallow**, etc. . .

*An t-uisce tanaidh* – the shallows

*Tanaidheacha* – a shallow; common in place-names, e.g.

*Tanaidh Mhor*, *Tanaidh Ur*, *Tanaidh Bheinn Bhuidhe* (all near Mullranny, Co Mayo)

Dineen-page 1200

*Teine tanaidhe* = phosphorescent light seen in the marshy places or on the skins and *teata* of animals

*Teine shionnach* (or *shionnaigh*) = poor fire.

John Gallagher, formerly of Corran (and son of Mikey Mor Gallagher, beannacht De leis, of Buaile an Ghleanna) assures me:

(a) That 'dul isteach ar a'tanai' was something his father constantly bid him beware of, since 'an tanai' and 'an domhain' are shoal water and deep, respectively.

(b) John also rattled off five or six place names embodying the word 'tanai' as an element of their defining shallow nature, all within the ambit of his boats fishing endeavours in Clew Bay.

John also affirmed that the fox, like the more aquatic otter, is an enthusiastic frequenter of beaches, on hygienic as well as scavenging occasions, nor would he shun the appeal of rocks likely to yield accessible fish, living (stranded in shallow pools) or dead.

## Adopted Home

Although born and bred in Louisburgh, my childhood and subsequent adult years were spent in Coventry City, England. In the early 50's, Coventry was a city, which lay in ruins, almost entirely obliterated by the ravages of war. Like London, Coventry was blitzed beyond recognition; hardly any building was left standing in the city – even the cathedral lay in ruins.



It was against this chaotic background that my parents and many other thousands of Irish men and women decided to make the city their home.

As you can imagine, Coventry's priority at this time was to rebuild and rebuild quickly. Jobs were plentiful and the wages were good, very good indeed particularly to people such as my mother and father, coming as they did from rural Ireland where unemployment was endemic and even those lucky enough to find work "at home" often did so for meagre pay.

Elderly Coventrians today are in the main quite happy, and even eager to relay their experiences of this difficult time – they will invariably tell you that the hardship they endured, fostered in them a strong community spirit. A general sense of neighbourliness existed through the city, and a great determination was felt by all to "pull together" and I am proud to say that at this juncture, many Irish men and women decided to "pull" with them.

If you or I were to walk through the city centre today, we would undoubtedly be impressed by the "state of the art" shopping facilities and the new Cathedral that now stands as a symbol of renewal and reconciliation next to the old ruins. Indeed it would be easy to forget that all of this came at a great price to the people itself. The Irish Community (Louisburgh people included,) have much to be proud of as they now walk around their adopted home knowing it was much of their hard-work and commitment that made so much of it possible.



I have often wondered how my parents managed to leave such a beautiful part of the world (Louisburgh) to work in a gloomy, post-war, industrial city. How did they reconcile the loss of their spectacular home landscape with the drabness of city life? They could indeed be forgiven for thinking that they had landed on another planet, given the differences that were in their culture and general way of life. On this question, I can only assume it was their strong work ethic and desire for some level of financial security that induced them to leave.

I think it is also true to say that most young Irish people of this era, (late forties and early fifties), were expected to leave. There was no viable alternative to emigration then, no "Celtic Tiger" to rely on. Indeed many young people left having received only a National school education.

Despite all these obvious disadvantages, the Irish in Coventry flourished. They encouraged their children to take an active interest in all things Irish, particularly Irish dance and music. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in Coventry with the same pride and fervour as in any Mayo town today.

Ireland today can boast a booming economy and excellent educational and health programmes. Today if young people choose to travel abroad for work experience, at least they do so from a position of strength and confidence. They know they have the skills necessary to succeed.

I feel the one thing that ties both generations together is the Irish quality of love of family and homeland, sense of adventure and not forgetting, the indomitable Irish courage.

**Mary O'Dea**

*'Everyone is gifted. Some don't recognize their individual gifts, talents straight away but all have received gifts of nature and grace; the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all God's children.'*

**Fr. Pat McNally**

## A Ghiorraí Fiosrach

*Tá tú suas or do ghorúin  
Ag breathnú thart  
do dhá chluais in áirde  
amhail ionaid ghréine ar chóisde spáis.  
Cén fáth nach n-ealaíonn tú leat  
mar a dhéanann an coinín  
an broc nó an gadhairún bocht rua.*



*Tráth dá raibh, d'éalaigh tú go sgiopthaí  
agus an mada i do dhiaidh.  
Níl aon failíos anois ort.  
Ní chuireann an mada féin ruaig ort  
nach mór an t-athrú!*

*Bhfuil tú ag súil go bhfeicfidh tú  
rud eicint nó duine eicint –  
sean-chara, b'fhéidir  
ceárd é do sgéal?*

*An b'fhuil aon chineál  
idir tusa agus sean-ghiorraí mór Muing na Maoile  
nó giorraí aonraic Sgiath Imlig?  
An raibh tú anseo I saol eile, b'fhéidir,  
nuair a bhí claidheannaí a geur  
ar pháirceanna anseo?  
Nó níos faide siar fós  
nuair a bhí tóigeadh na croimligh nó na stacaí móra.*

*Bhfuil tú ar ais arís  
mar a bhí Oisín as Tír na nÓg  
ag fanacht is ag féachaint.*

*Níl mórán le feiceáil anois –  
na h-innill ghluaiste ag dul thart  
agus eitealeáin ag triall sa spéir.*

*Nach mór an t-athrú!*

**Austin V. O'Malley**



## My Formative Years in Louisburgh

**M**y first recollection of birthdays was my sixth; my uncle came to visit the family. Without any shyness I announced, "I'm six today". I have no idea if I realized at that age, that birthdays were synonymous with money and presents.

At six, I was attending the girls national school, this very same building we use for our Parish meetings and a number of other activities. It was the 'Fifties, school meant learning off by heart, Irish poetry, reading, sums and spelling. Singing and dancing were introduced early; some children were lucky to learn to play the piano. The teacher was an elderly nun, a member of the Sisters of Mercy who owned and ran the school.

The town, as we called it at that time, had approximately forty shops, comprising of grocery and drapery, butchers, a family run bakery, a chemist shop, pubs, grocery and drapery often traded in the same premises, with high counters and stools. Seats were provided in the "snug", the women folk met there for a "hot toddy" and a gossip.

At the lower end of the town, on the West side as it were, was a trading post for pigs. It was known as the "factory". A very fine trade was carried out there between local farmers and the Castlebar Bacon Company.

Fair days were held monthly, on the streets. Sheep and cattle covered the pavement, rams were tied to telegraph or any other poles available. The business people and the private house owners were very tolerant. Their evenings were spent scrubbing the walls, doors and pavements.

The "pig fair" days were free days from school; a number occurred during the school year. We loved the idea.

Fondest memories remain of the shopkeepers and other business people of that time. On the Square was my favourite sweet shop called Maggie Durkan's. The shop window held a fantastic display of colours and selection. I often think this good lady had a keen knowledge of homeopathetia. There was liquorice, aniseed, ginger nut, arrowroot, orange and lemon, marshmallow and many more. The boxes were never empty and each purchase was wrapped in a little paper cone or bag. The making of the cone was an art in itself, the tip was always turned back to keep the contents intact.

The old penny was the unit of currency. To own a 2/6 piece was very

rich; this coin was generally presented on First Communion day.

One ritual I clearly remember, was visiting the "Corpse house". We knew most people in the town. When a death occurred, the nuns prayed with us, at school, on the way home small groups called to the house, paid our respects as we knew it, by visiting the room where the corpse was laid out, saying a little prayer again. We left with sweets or biscuits and I can't remember any hint of fear of the dead person.

On the Square was the Courthouse, used on a monthly basis for court cases. We were not too interested in the goings on; it was as if it didn't apply to us, and was a little above our heads. This two-storey building also housed the equipment for weighing stock and grain. The remains of the iron base are still visible and are in excellent condition. When these practices ceased, the building became our chemist and veterinary shop, I'm glad to say it is still in the same family and providing an excellent service.

The forge was another of my haunts. The large hearth and bellows fascinated me. Tom Glynn would sit there heating, moulding and cooling the iron shoes. He shod the horses of the parish, right up to old age. He enjoyed pumping the bellows and sending showers of sparks through the forge, scattering the inquisitive children. The heat was intense and Tom always seemed happy there, chatting as he plied his trade.

Louisburgh was a very safe place to grow up. People were friendly and rich in the things that mattered, education was very important and parents spared nothing to send their children to second and third level colleges.

I always enjoyed visiting my relations with my sister and parents. My home was close to the town, in Shraugh na Seasci. I cycled as soon as my feet reached the pedals, despite the rough roads.

The local Parish Hall was the meeting place, where plays and concerts were regularly held, where dancing to romance flourished.

We were very privileged to have a weekly film in a small basic hall called McDermott's which was attached to the hotel of the same name. Many wonderful films were shown there; one I will never forget was *May Time*.

At thirteen I started secondary school. Life became more serious. Small numbers of our friends went to boarding school in Tuam, Claremorris or Tourmakeady and the remainder just crossed the road to continue with the Sisters of Mercy. The school was one of the first co-education schools in the country at the time. It was daunting at first to have boys in our classroom. However, like all other worldwide changes we grew to accept them and they accepted us.

**Breta O'Malley**



## The Seasons

*Winter is worst, so I'll dwell on it first,  
with its short days so dark, cold and dreary.  
Christmas it comes with its colour and fun,  
Brings friends and neighbours to party.  
The elements sweep in, frost, sleet and snow,  
it's picturesque show is some bonus.*

*For me spring is the best, buds on flower  
and shrub,*

*Delight the hearts that were weary.  
Little lambs sprint to play, birds like blackbirds and thrush,  
Gather twigs to build nests for their layings.*

*Summer, oh summer, we wait and we pray,  
That your days will be warm bright and sunny,  
We've dreamed of the beach, the sea and the sand,  
We've shopped for new clothes and bikini.*

*Autumn creeps in, school opens again,  
New beginnings for parents and students.  
Colours they change on grasses, mountains and plains,  
Evenings grow a little bit shorter.  
The fruits and the leaves, now drop from the trees,  
To be gathered, to rot, and be scattered.*

**Breta O'Malley**

*'Let us – each one of us – give whole-hearted thanks and praise to  
God this evening for the rock from which we were individually hewn. In  
other words, we give thanks and praise for our parents and our family  
homes and the values and the jewel of faith, passed on to us and  
complemented and built upon in our days at Carrowniskey National  
School.'*

**Fr. Pat McNally**



## Words used in English dialogue, handed down from the Irish language

**Maistin:** Bold female, one who would hold forth with calling and abuse, yet could be thought to have quite another side to her character, i.e.: actually appealing, in her good moments.

**Badach:** a male with similar characteristics.

**Ag clamhsan:** To give out, or even more than that. It is a habitual thing, never satisfied.

**Ciotog:** A left-handed person. Also applied to an awkward person.

**Gaisc:** Note working deeds, boasting, doing great Gaisc – attempting more than he or she is able to do.

**Neantog:** A nettle. Can also mean a touchy person who stings back whenever they are touched.

**Ruiteactt:** Uproar, for example an uproar in the classroom when the teacher leaves. Also, an uproar at a committee meeting.

**Nudai – nadai:** A listless person. A person who is unable to take his or her place in conversation, in activity or in giving an opinion.

**Bail-odhar:** A sorry plight, a state of helplessness. For example, if one invited a person in for a cup of tea only to find you had no tea in the house.

**Ceolan:** (a music maker) A term applied disparagingly to a child who makes a nuisance of him/herself by offering precocious opinions.

**Storc:** An unyielding person who holds onto possessions of a needed object.

**Somachan:** Term of endearment – a likeable young person of a genial disposition. Can be described as a plump youngster.

**Seafoid:** Nonsense, sometimes applied to the conversation of elderly people.

**Cab:** Human mouth – used as a derisory term for beal.

**Cab milis:** Sweet tooth.

**Aura:** Worry, for example: What aura is on you now? Worry – caused by trouble, an accident, public disgrace . . .

**Glacai:** A trickster – practical joke, term used in a playful way, not in a condemning sense.

**Breta O'Malley**



## Doughmakeon

**D**oughmakeon, or *Dubh Ach MicCoin*, is one of the villages that make up the Louisburgh community. It is situated four miles west of the town and looks out to the Atlantic. It stretches from Cloc Maol on its western shoreline to Cregan An Aifreann near its eastern boundary.

To the south lies the village of Carrowniskey and on the north the village of Emlagh with a view of Clare Island, Achill and Clew Bay. Its area is approaching 3000 acres of what can be described as reclaimed cut-away bog.

It is often asked how the village got its name. Dough is referred to locally as the flat sandy soil grazing land adjacent to the waterfront. That name holds through in other villages with similar soil and location. The Irish spelling *dubhach* is described as a dark, gloomy or sorrowful place and perhaps it was.

The name may also have come from the Irish word *dúchas* meaning birthright or heritage, the heritage of McKeon. Another possibility is as follows: the name Owen is associated with the earliest settlers we know of in the village. Could it be the inheritance of the sons of Owen – *Duchas Mic Eoin*?

At any rate it was into this village I was born in the early 1930s and where I spent the first nineteen years of my life. Growing up in those years was an experience that left one well equipped to handle life's difficulties and disappointments. Poverty and hardship were commonplace.

The small family farm on which we survived required continuous effort by all members of the family. Ours, like the rest of the village holdings, was engaged in what was known as mixed farming. In those days tillage was the mainstay, and the holdings were very close to being self-sufficient.

There was no mechanical implements to get the job done, so it was the spade-work by the man of the house, or 'Himself' as he was known, that sowed the root-crops, prepared the seed beds, cut the turf, mowed

the hay, harvested the grain crop and generally kept things moving. In order to do this however, he required the continuous help of his wife and *gasúrs* (children). They took care of the one hundred and one chores that had to be done around the house. Jobs such as milking, feeding calves, cutting slits, bringing cattle to and from the pasture, feeding pigs and poultry were all done by the wife and small children. A house where the old couple lived had an added bonus. The old woman might mind the child, so the wife could play a more active role outside. It was not uncommon to see the eighty-year old grandfather and six year old grandson working as a team, building the reek of turf, letting and twisting *sugons* for the thatching, or moving with the donkey and cleaves to the ridges. Again the effort of all was necessary for the well being of the household.

That was the setting when I first attended the National School at Accony in 1935. It was a two mile walk, half of which was through fields, across ditches, drains and rushes. In wet weather it took a bit of skill to get to school with your feet dry.

The one-room school accommodated ninety to a hundred pupils and three teachers. We did get a new three-room school about three years later. The '3-R's' were comprehensively covered. There was also a great emphasis on poetry, both in Irish and English. An *Craoibhín* agus *Aoibín* was taught with passion. Since there was no radio or TV about and very few papers the teachers took up the challenge of bringing us up to date on current events. We liked those sessions.

We learned about *Ard Na Crusha* and what electrification might mean to rural Ireland. We learned about the sugar factories being built and were rightly proud when Tuam was selected. We were told of the seaplane *Yankee Clipper* flying from Foynes to the US and very soon after TWA flights from Rineanna (Shannon) to Gander.

School holidays were always looked forward to and the summer holidays were a particular favourite. With long days and good weather it was great to enjoy the outdoors.

The jobs were there always, now it was the bog, footing and putting out turf with ass and creels; long days but easy work. With each spring tide in summer, there was the off-farm enterprise, picking *Corrigeen* moss. About three hours work each day near low-water time; an adult and two or three kids would pick a big bag of *Corrigeen*. It was taken home, spread out on a sheet, sprinkled with water and in three days it



changed from a dark brown to white. It was called bleaching. It was left a bit longer to dry in the sunlight then bagged, and was now ready for sale. It fetched a good price and it was used as a gel in the cosmetics industry.

It was not all work however; sometime in July or August the Parish Races were held on the local strand. The event would be talked about for weeks beforehand and when the day came you only did that which was necessary at home. It was the most enjoyable day one could imagine. There would be a sports programme consisting of six or seven horse races and a donkey race. There was something for young and old. You might even get to buy a banana or an orange or maybe even an orange crush. Truly a long day and one came home tired, but thinking of a wonderful day. There were aspects of the day you enjoyed for days to come.

Summer drifted into autumn, and now again as in early spring there was a sense of urgency to get important tasks done. The hay now cocked in the meadow had to be reeked, the grain crops cut, tied, stooked and stacked, the house, barn and stacks needed to be thatched and tied down before the weather broke. Once more all hands did their bit and usually with great success.

School re-opened on the first of September, and it was jobs in the morning before school and again in the evening time. By month's end the harvest work was complete except for the potatoes. The stalks were now falling off, their work complete. The tubers were bulging the earth upwards as the crop waited to be harvested. Again it was the time of year for celebration. The Harvest Stations were held. Family members might be on holiday from abroad. Those were occasions for fun and dance in the village houses. We were lucky to have our own musicians, both melodians and fiddle players, talented men who gave freely of their time at house dances. A night's entertainment would mean tea and white bread followed by step dancing, set dancing and songs. "The Ould Bog Road", "The Stone Outside Dan Murphy's Door", and "Down By The Green Bushes" were village favourites.

I can still see our two musicians setting side by side playing, their heads tilted slightly to the left and upward, the eyes closed, a smile on the faces. The tempo was fast and measured, the dancers hob-nailed

boots hitting the beat on the concrete floor, created a synchronised rhythm that really set the pulse racing. May God rest you, Mikey; thankfully Johnny is still with us. For over sixty years they entertained the village.

Walking home at two or three in the morning was another great experience. A full harvest moon shone down, the aftergrass on the meadow was now a paler shade of green. The stubble-fields were a lighter shade of yellow, the potato stalks now a whitish grey, and the white washed old house proudly showing off its new coat of thatch, stood silently, cradling its family and keeping watch over its fields. The moon itself seemed to linger a bit as if it was reluctant to head west over the Atlantic.

Sadly throughout the twentieth century, most of the dancers had to emigrate. They carried little baggage. They carried in the mind a host of happy memories. Nestled amongst those memories was a grand old poem of Katherine Tynan:

*There's music in my head all day  
I hear it late and early  
It comes from fields far, far away  
The wind that shakes the barley.*

*Above the uplands drenched with dew  
The sky hangs soft and pearly  
An Emerald land is listening to  
The wind that shakes the barley.*

*Above the bluest mountain crest  
The lark is singing rarely  
It rocks the singer into rest  
The wind that shakes the barley.*

*And still through summer and through spring  
I hear it late and early  
Come home, come home, come home, it sings  
The wind that shakes the barley.*

**Michael P. O'Malley**



## Trial at Poetry

*They met at the local céili,  
A young man of high degree,  
And a maiden of gracious charm  
With a face that was fair to see.*

*They danced all the old céili dances  
Their hearts were as free as air  
They found they had much in common  
Folks said "What a handsome pair".*

*'Twas the time of enforced emigration,  
For work was both scarce and ill-paid;  
So the home that they were planning would have to wait  
'Till the boy had his fortune made.*

*Then one day as the dawn was breaking,  
They stood by the train hand-in-hand  
And she saw him off with tear-filled eyes,  
To find work in a foreign land.*

*There was nothing left but to hope and pray,  
That success would attend his mission,  
And the day would come, when he'd return,  
And fulfil their mutual ambition.*

*He was put to work on a JCB,  
Having learned to drive a tractor  
The pay was good and he was a TT,  
Which, for saving, was a vital factor.*

*When he'd made his pile, to his native isle  
He returned, to start a new chapter  
These two were wed in the church nearby  
And lived happily ever after.*

**Una O'Malley**



## Thallabawn

**S**itting here, looking at a blank page, my gaze is attracted to, and by, the vista that spreads out before me. The incoming, flowing tide, white with foam, is eating up the Golden Strand.

Some of it is filling up the channel that takes the many rivers and streams that meet and merge, and keep the channel running to the sea, in all weathers: summer's heat and drought and winter's rain or snow.

Here's where the Atlantic enters the Bay called "Killary Harbour", which runs up at the back of the Muilrea Mountain to Leenane. Across the Bay can be seen Connemara; Tullycross with its Church of Christ the King; Renvyle with its Castle Gogarty and Cleggan with its shops from which the island people get their provisions. Ferry trips are also embarked upon from there to Boffin, but like the song "Carrickfergus", 'the sea is wide and we cannot swim over'. The bay is too wide for unpractised swimmers from this side. In the days when currachs were plentiful, because local men were able to make them, trips to Connemara to attend races and dances were not unusual.

Part of the intervening vista is a green plain of several acres towards the south and south-west, and sand-dunes towards the west and towards the Atlantic. Just as I was writing this, my nephew, John Joseph, reminded me that Micael Viney's film, "A Year's Turning", was on T.V. and I dropped everything to see, with delight, some of our own area, and the good use he is making of "just one acre of ground". This man certainly treats God's creation with respect, knowing that the land – the ground – is the basic environment, to be protected. But, sadly, land is being deliberately destroyed by thoughtless people who divert streams and rivers off their natural course to the sea.

This is one of the crimes against nature and, for that matter, against the Creator, who created land and water. The saying "with desolation is the land laid desolate because no-one thinks in his heart", can be applied to this mal-practice.

**Una O'Malley**



## The Paschal Fire Of Patrick

*On Irva's hill, the daylight dies,  
On Tara's plain 'tis dead  
"Till Baal's unkindled fires shall rise  
No fire must flame instead"  
'Tis thus the king, commanding speaks  
Commands and speaks in vain  
For a fire, defiant, breaks  
From out the woods of Slane.  
"What means this flame that through  
Illumines all the vale?  
What rebel hand a fine dare light  
Before the fires of Baal  
O King! When Baal's dark reign is o'er,  
When thou, thyself art gone,  
This fire will light the Irish shore  
And lead its people on;  
Will lead them on full many a night  
Through which they're doomed to go,  
Like that which led the Israelite  
From bondage and from woe.  
This fire, this sacred fire of God,  
Young hearts shall bear afar,  
To lands no human foot hath trod  
Beneath the Western Star,  
To lands where Faiths bright flag unfurled  
By those who here have knelt  
Shall give unto a heavenly world  
The sceptre of the Celt."*

**Denis Florence McCarthy**

(This poem appeared in a senior schoolbook in the late 1920's or early 1930's, to the great delight of adults who read it. Grown men learned it off, as well as pupils who had to do so. The air of "The Boys of Wexford" may suit it.) – Una O'Malley

## Lore of Croagh Patrick

**M**y native place, which is generally called Lecanvey, provides its share of wonder and mystery. What has happened there in the past? A number of naturally occurring or man-made shapes appear on the landscape which are taken for granted, but which are likely to have a story to tell if we could only hear it.

I grew up close to a stream, which flows down from Croagh Patrick creating a ravine in the mountainside on its journey to the sea. It can be quite severe on the earth cover as it washes the surface with its collected rainwater. On the west side a number of unusual shapes appear on the terrain that are so regular that, whether man-made or occurring naturally, they should be examined geologically. Conical or rounded it seems as if in donating a trophy, the maker had a replica to present representing the Reek mountain range.

I have visited the area frequently and felt overcome by the sensation of eerie silence about the place. I am not surprised that fairy stories were told and retold about the place.

It was here at Sherroe that Pat Farrell began to harvest his field of oats, happy with his crop. At late evening he became aware of many helpers with the work. In the moonlight all seemed well until the crop was in stooks. To his surprise in the morning nothing had changed, as his oats remained uncut. He swore it had to be the fairies that deceived him.

Michael Mickey Mortimer worried because the milk supply of his household was no longer adequate so he decided to keep watch on his milking cow in case she was being suckled. When he finally found her in Pairc Ard she was being milked by a little woman in a red cloak.

"I have you at last", Mickey shouted.

"Sora wan aye have you me", she shrieked, running off into the bushes where the old man could not follow. Trace or tidings of her was never seen again.

These and other stories of "Bob of the Reek" and "Fear a Cnuich" were the hushed yarns of my childhood.

**Joseph Staunton**





## Preface

When first told that a writers' workshop was to be held our minds and imaginations sprung to life, wondering, waiting and anticipating what was to come.

Through the wind and rain of early March we made our way to the first day of the course with warm open minds to fight the cold outside.

A mixture of youth and age awaited us inside; half of the participants were students and the other half were older members of the community. Through the wind, sunshine and rain the group began to come together. What had started as a spark was now a warm glowing fire, that would shine brightly in the eyes and hearts of youth and age alike on those Wednesday forenoons that seemed all too short.

Through the encouragement of our professional writer, facilitator and mentor Fred Johnston, we began to write pieces and once he convinced one of us in the group to read a piece of our own composition, a chain reaction of stories would begin. Through the stories of our ten or twelve newly adopted parents or grandparents we learned of a time that was foreign to us, set in a place we believed we knew but, as stories were told and as tea flowed, we were to learn that beneath today's towns and parishes lay the communities of the past, communities of the nineteen thirties, 'Forties and 'Fifties.

Beneath the present lay the past of myths and legends, which were passed from generation to generation in the warm ambiance of the fireside. And we were taken there to that empty seat by the fire, taken to their hearts and hearths of long ago. As we tried to bring them on the paths and thoughts of the future, voicing our fears, our dreams, our hopes and beliefs. We shared with them how we viewed life, how we viewed one another, how we planned to live abroad and maybe one day we hoped to return and retire in this place we called home, and then it may be our turn to share these youthful dreams that would then be aged with the new generations. We took them to our friendships, to our dreamy youthful naivety, to how we try to feel invincible but inside hold apprehension towards life. I guess we too took them to our hearts.

Through those brave souls who dared speak of their lives first, I believe that others found the encouragement and self-belief to bare their minds and souls with the group, and even though there were times of awkward silences when you could hear a pin drop, there were also times when discussions would rise among us, encouraging, criticizing but ultimately helping the writer inside all of us.

So it was with great sorrow that we shook hands and went our separate ways on the last day, but it was now embedded into our hearts how every Wednesday our minds were given the opportunity to delve into the past of the parish and maybe the students were able to show the older participants a glimpse of the future. The project was made possible through the support and sponsorship of *Poetry Ireland*, *Sancta Maria College* and *Louisburgh Community Development Project*. Our sincerest gratitude goes to them and to Geraldine Mitchell. For it is because of them that I now feel that all those involved can head into the future with an understanding and respect for the past.

*Bjorn Mac Giolla*, Sancta Maria College

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## Kilgeever by the hill

*I'll tell you of my birthplace,  
It is lovely, quiet and still,  
It's name it is Kilgeever,  
Kilgeever by the hill.*

*Sheep grazing on the hillside,  
Cattle down below,  
That is my Kilgeever,  
In the county of Mayo.*

*If ever I had to leave there,  
With tears my eyes would fill,  
For I love my Kilgeever,  
Kilgeever by the hill.*

*The neighbours, they are so  
friendly,  
You would never hear them yell,*

*There's always joy and laughter  
In Kilgeever by the hill.*

*There's a graveyard in the town-  
land,  
Kilgeever by the hill,  
My grandparents are buried  
there,  
Resting at God's Will.*

*The old church ruin still  
standing,  
Close by the Blessed Well,  
That's the place where I come  
from,  
Kilgeever by the hill.*

*Martina Maxwell*  
Sancta Maria College



## Island of Dreams

With each encounter in life many memories are offered to you on the pallet of the mind. And as I sit here writing, many of those offer themselves openly to the writer, the storyteller, and me. Some remain vivid in the mind's eye and some drift away uncontrollably.

Clare Island, a place of dreams, hopes and aspirations, coupled with the usual pinch of idle gossip and open sarcasm, was our America, our opportunity.

We moved there in the warm summer of 1992. A crowd of "jackeens," they called us. With our thick Dublin accents and big orange life jackets we crossed those Atlantic breakers. I remember our sheer excitement, our eagerness as to what lay ahead, our curiosity as to the sort of life we could make there for ourselves.

When we first arrived we were almost looked upon as the new travelling circus in town, with everyone wanting to catch a glimpse of a foreign culture. In this small almost isolated island off the west coast of Ireland it was unheard of that a young family would move there but even more unheard of that they would move there for good.

We moved into a small cottage in the village of Lecarrow, whose previous proprietor was the deceased Mr. Austin O'Grady or "Big Austie" as he was known. In that year of 1992, Clare Island national school gained its second schoolteacher, due to pupil numbers rising to thirty. And in some small way we felt as though our own small part in this was greatly appreciated.

In that childhood invaluable friendships were formed, one with a place and many with its people. On my first day in St Patrick's National School, Clare Island, I wore some sort of pink tartan leggings and more noticeably held the appearance of a hippy, with my two long thin plaits dangling at the front with glass beads! But to top it all off I wore my prize possessions, the black so called "cowboy boots"!

That day was the beginning of a new life for me, a life far different to

the one I had been living. On that day, I made friendships to last me the rest of my life.

From appearing as an "angel" in the Christmas concert to resorting to stone throwing in the playground, school informed an adolescent of the age.

As I have said before, one of the most important aspects of my childhood was indeed friendship, first of all, with the place, namely Clare Island! In the warmth of the summer months the place glowed with vitality, and took on a life of its own. Visitors would stare in awe at the beauty of a small landscape surrounded by a fence of cool Atlantic breakers. In the winter Clare Island would hibernate away from the cold, shrill north winds that shadowed its zest for life and beauty.

This place was to become and is, as John McGahern said in his novel *Amongst Women*, "the summer light and winter shadow", over my whole life. In the true fashion of childhood memories, friends are close by, partaking possibly in the antics you're getting up to. The months of planning for the Halloween egg fight or the too cruel meaning of Lent's sacrificing vow of abstinence!!

I, the storyteller, can so easily be prompted to write about the influences of a childhood. In ways I wish I could step back to it, to that time of an uncontrollable, inconceivable future. My future.

*Angela Biggs, Sancta Maria College*

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## Katie

*Yesterday I said goodbye  
To someone so much part of me  
I waved my last, closed the gate  
And travelled on my way.*

*I never knew I could hurt so much,  
I never thought I'd cry.  
My eyes are heavy, I feel a sort of pain.  
I close them now in times of need and  
Think of the little bay pony in the field.*

*Jemma Lyons, Sancta Maria College*



## A Childhood Memory

**A**s I've been given this task to write about my childhood memories, it asks a question, which I honestly don't find myself asking quite regularly.

What are my childhood memories? Childhood memories should be an un-forgettable recollection of personal thoughts on your past, which you can share with your kids and even grandchildren. I believe that young adults of our ages don't muse over these memories, but instead, wonder what is on Friday night or who will next week's gossip surround!

When I ponder carefully I think of my brother. My brother, the older, wiser and more powerful figure in my life, ordering me around yet defending me when in trouble. We had a mutual connection, an older brother, baby sister bond. He being a superior symbol in my childhood, everything he did was prominent. He went to meetings in the Parochial Hall in Louisburgh every Wednesday night conscientiously. To other folk this memory wouldn't linger in their minds, but in mine it was a mystery at the time. These meetings he would attend were known as F.C.A. What did these three letters mean? Absolutely nothing – I hadn't even an indication as to what the letters represented, but I did know that this engagement, which my brother applied himself to, was essential in the life of the interested explorer. The older I got, the more informed I got about the association. On a Wednesday night he would leave his conventional life behind and with the aid of a khaki green uniform he would transform into a brave soldier.

He would spend endless hours shining boots with polish and old tights. I wondered why, but still found it fascinating. I understood that once they entered the assembly they were part of an organization, an organisation that defended and represented our national identity. Without fail, this arrangement of green men marched and shouted orders in a language unfamiliar to me.

Occasionally, I recall travelling in the back seat of the family car to the Westport Battalion Headquarters, with a green rucksack at my side, instructed by the front seat passenger not to touch. My brother was off

to weekend camp, and on Sunday night he would return home, not keen on sharing his adventurous experiences. I would sit in the living room, examining his every movement and expression to try and gather more information about this mystery, and to me that's exactly what it was. Of course, I could have simply asked questions about the discipline, but then my sense of enigma would be ended.

My childhood memory influenced me to find out for myself exactly what goes on at this puzzling place – and that's indeed what I've done.

*Maria Coyne, Sancta Maria College*

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## Freedom

*The bird once caged by city walls, now free  
The wings once tied have now been released,  
Like seeing the world for the very first time  
You were bright, you were free, alone but alive.  
Above your wings the stars shone so bright,  
Hundreds of thousands that the sun had set alight  
Feel the wind falling from angel's lips  
Caress your face; see the power of towering cliffs.  
The rolling hills, like the rolling seas  
The tumble of the shore was my symphony,  
For hours you could gaze, gaze in awe  
At the beauty, at the silence or at nothing at all.  
Within her shores you knew you could see,  
Because of her freedom you could always be  
All that your imagination would allow,  
From a misplaced seed comes a budding flower.  
Growing in solitude, in freedom, in peace,  
Growing to believe, believe in a dream.  
Like a wayward seagull sailing the stormy seas,  
I was young, I dreamt; was alone but I was free.*

*Björn Mac Giolla, Sancta Maria College*



## Off The Beaten Track

**G**azing out my front window, I am presented with a breathtaking view. The sun is beginning to set in the west creating long dark shadows from the young pines. The pale sedge grass lying dead on the bogland has surrendered to the strong winds of winter. In the distance Croagh Patrick stands aloof, impressive compared to the smaller hills in the shadows, yet somewhat out of place with its perfectly conical slope surrounded by such a rugged landscape. A blue haze over Clew Bay masks the beauty of the Nephin range.

As I appreciate this spectacular sight, a warm feeling of contentment comes over me and I would be happy to sit a while longer, just to watch and listen.

In the sky the scavenging crows congregate after a day pillaging the countryside. The grey heron returns to his nest, hidden in the tallest branches of the scots pine, after a day stalking the river either poised, motionless or wading cautiously in the shallow water. In the bushes robins and colourful finches sing sweet and pleasant music until sunset. In the meadow, the ewes seek shelter for their young lambs from the cold and gusty East wind.

All of this magnificent natural scenery and nature is visible through a small window in my room and there is so much more present all around me.

Life in this small rural village off the beaten track is peaceful, pleasurable and close to nature. Sometimes, on a calm, quiet night, the only sounds to break the silence are of the river below the house snaking through the small boulders or the sea's relentless attack on the shore as its distant waves can be heard crashing against the rocks.

On a clear summer evening, a climb to the top of the hill which shrouds my house in a dark shadow, can be rewarded with a spectacular view of Thallabawn's coastline, interspersed with glinting gold beaches and a commanding view of proceedings on Loch Nahaltora where ducks and swans forage the shallow water, and the fins of small trout break the mirror like surface, slightly distorting the reflection of the surrounding landscape.

In the middle of winter on a dark cold morning, when the sound of a stormy gale laden with heavy rain and hailstones almost quells the sound of my alarm clock, there is little to entice me from my warm comfortable bed to go to school. Yet venturing out into these inclement conditions can be a satisfying experience, especially if you're lucky enough to catch a glimpse of two salmon aggressively contesting for a mate in a mountain stream, or a small cluster of Whooper swans from the Arctic seeking protection in shallow sheltered bays, or a large flock of visiting geese, favouring our temperate climate over an extremely cold winter in Greenland. They are a terrific spectacle, flying in an orderly "V" formation, silhouetted against the winter sky.

This wild and rugged place constantly changing with the seasons never ceases to amaze me.

*Fintan Egan, Sancta Maria College*

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## Freedom From Fear

*White horses, dark horses dancing  
Towards me.  
Trying to bring all their misery,  
When all I have is want to be free.  
Free of my body, my mind, my desire,  
I want my wings to feel wind,  
My lips embrace fire.  
But if my wings unfold, and my blinded  
Eyes could view.  
Would I see a dark horse on an  
Ocean of blood in you?  
If freedom came would I laugh,  
Would I cry?  
Would I live my life,  
Or fall down and die?  
Die then, the horses may never return.  
And my wings would feel wind,  
And my lips would be burned.*

*Björn Mac Giolla, Sancta Maria College*



## The Best Mistake I Ever Made

 On 8th April 1957, Ian John Hicks was born in Lambeth, London, second of three children to Sid and Jean Hicks. He was to spend his childhood at different locations in London, Malta and Portsmouth, his father's job in the Navy ensuring that the family never settled for long.

When asked why he first came to Ireland, he laughed "There's a story behind that."

He first came to Ireland as a student, at the age of 18. When he was filling out his university application form, he wrote the wrong code, and instead of being accepted at Swansea as he had hoped, he got quite a shock when a letter accepting him to the University of Ulster in Coleraine, Co. Derry, came in the post. "It was a total mistake! But it turned out to be the best mistake I ever made."

On and off, Ian has lived in Ireland for 25 years. During that time, he has travelled to Holland, England and Wales, but he has always returned to the country he now considers his own. He estimates that he has spent 18 full years of his life here.

I asked him about his early impressions of Ireland, when he first arrived 25 years ago, in the North.

"My first impression was seeing armed soldiers at the Airport as the plane was coming in to land. That was scary and definitely not something I was used to or prepared for. As for the landscape, it was a complete shock! I felt as if I'd stepped back into Victorian Times! Everything seemed so old, and not anywhere as busy as the UK. Even the architecture seemed Victorian. There were hardly any trains or buses running, and there was coal smoke everywhere. I thought it looked backward. When I arrived at the University area, there were soldiers and armed police everywhere. Being stopped by army patrols and having machine guns pointed at me took a long time to get used to." I asked him if his impressions changed at all during his time there. "Well, for a start I realised it wasn't half as backward or old-fashioned as I'd thought, and I even got used to living through the Troubles after a while."

When I asked Ian about the Northern Irish people, a broad smile immediately appeared on his face. He found their humour, attitudes and general outlook very refreshing, and felt immediately at home with them. "I couldn't explain it, but I had a sense of home-coming, as if I really belonged with them."

After dropping out of university, Ian travelled for a while, living in England and Holland before moving to Mayo. He came to Mayo after having lived in an attic in Rotterdam for the summer, while working at the Europort on the River Maas.

"Coming to Mayo after Rotterdam was a very liberating experience: the space, the landscape and the natural beauty of the area were an incredible change from an international port. It was like going from one extreme to another. And Mayo was even more like stepping into another era: everything looked like it had come straight out of the last century. There was quite a difference between the Punk Club I used to go to in Holland and Hoban's bar in Castlebar! But the difference wasn't necessarily a negative one. Within a few weeks I felt totally at home, and I'd completely fallen in love with the place, the people and the beauty of the landscape." And what did he think of the locals? "They were very hard to understand verbally, at first, and they were very different! But so friendly and very, very accepting. And they have a wonderful sense of humour."

I asked Ian whether or not he's very conscious of the fact that he is a 'blow-in' and an English one at that! Although he feels very conscious of it, he feels that nearly everyone has accepted him for who he is, and that his nationality doesn't usually affect their opinions of him.

"I think 'blow-in' is a very offensive term: it implies that you'll never be accepted. But most people have accepted me, and I have a real sense of belonging. I've only ever had one or two unpleasant incidents in which people have made reference to my being English. Whenever I travel up to my wife's family in Donegal, I get a friendly slagging about being English, and I play up to it of course, but I know it's only a bit of fun, and nothing to be taken seriously."

Ian has taken to the Irish culture in a big way, especially the social life and the sport. Ever since he first arrived in Mayo in 1980, he's followed Mayo football as passionately as any other good Mayo man; and shared in the triumphs and losses as much as the team. He told me it was about time Mayo got an All-Ireland, because even one more



disappointment will kill him! He talked about the different attitude the Irish had towards their sport, compared to the English. "At that time there was quite a lot of violence in English soccer, with hooligans and riots as much a feature in matches as the actual football. I love the fact that at GAA matches the fans can mix and have the craic without having to worry about anything unpleasant happening. Going to a football match here is as much a social event as a sporting one. And there's a great family feel to it: you'll see all groups of all ages there." Despite this love of GAA, he's still a loyal soccer fan, and listens anxiously to the radio every Saturday to see how Portsmouth FC have fared. "I may be an Irishman, but I'll always be Portsmouth 'till I die!" he says, quoting a favourite soccer chant. He even coached a local under-15 (soccer) football team, the Carrowholly Hotspurs, and remembers it as one of the most enjoyable things he ever did.

During his time in Mayo, Ian has worked as a barman, on a building site, as a fisherman, on Westport golf course and on a fishfarm. "I was also a housewife for five years – unpaid!" he laughs. "At the moment I'm an Adult Education tutor, in the VEC in Castlebar, and I love it. I think I've definitely found my calling!"

Ian told me what he thought were the main traits of the Irish people. "For a start, they're very welcoming and accepting, and of course they have that famous Irish humour. They're also very generous. They're so easy to talk to and great friends. When I first came to Mayo, someone gave me some advice that I've never forgotten. He said that the Irish were incestuous and insidious in the best possible way! In other words, if you had mouth someone, then at least one person listening will be a sibling, parent, husband, wife, cousin, in-law, third-cousin twice-removed or the neighbour's brother-in-law's best friend! I've never slagged anyone publicly since! Although, on the negative side, I think Irish people have a tendency to turn a blind eye to dishonesty, which can encourage corruption and malpractice in certain situations."

I asked Ian whether he preferred England or Ireland, or was that too hard to answer? "Oh that one's simple! Ireland, without a doubt." And would he ever consider leaving? "Only in a wooden overcoat! You can never say never, I suppose, but at the moment and in the foreseeable future I wouldn't even think of moving. Ireland is my home and the Irish are my family."

*Rachel Hicks, Sancta Maria College*

## Folly At Sea

I have many memories of my childhood, but one in particular stands out for me. It was a glorious sunny day; the sky from early morning was crystal clear, the blueness dazzling. We made our sandwiches or should I say my mother made them and took our cold drinks from the fridge and we were ready to go.

It was a Saturday, and both my mother and father decided to take the day off work and come with my sister and I. We excitedly skipped our way towards the beach.

We strolled along through the clear blue water and made our way towards the pier at Old Head.

There were quite a few people there already and everybody was doing their own thing, some cooling off with a swim, others doing some mackerel fishing from the pier. Having had our swim and also our picnic we decided to go to the pier, as we had seen a boat heading there.

We waited excitedly for its arrival, because we always watched to see the different species of fish on board.

As the boat approached, it was coming in the wrong place, as he was an inexperienced newcomer. The breaker just outside the pier stood fast as the boat crashed headlong onto its sharp edges, and soon the boat was submerged in the water. My father and some other men made use of a boat at the pier and rescued the five men, two of whom could not swim at all. Having brought them onto the pier they were given some advice about the dangers of the sea. We looked again and the boat had disappeared beneath the blue water.

I can still see this image as vividly as yesterday and it really brought home to me both the power and beauty of the sea; a lesson that has stayed with me all my life.

*Helena Moran, Sancta Maria College*



## Hurricane: Murder

As the sun peeped through the narrow windows of the enormous mansion in front of me, I surveyed my surroundings. The modern style mansion, recently built, was surrounded by luscious vegetation and well-kept beds of colourful flowers. To one side was a tennis court and to the other a swimming pool.

As I turned around the estate spread out in all directions, from the tops of the green mountains, to the vast wilderness of the island, much of which would remain undisturbed forever and finally stretching down to the white docks where our yacht was harboured.

As I moved my gaze back up to the front of the house, I noticed the tree-lined driveway, and the ancient Bentley, Philip's pride and joy, parked outside.

"What's the matter Jody, can't you take it all in?" quipped Philip

Travis, the owner of the island. He was a wealthy Wall Street banker with whom I had gone to school and had recently met at a school reunion. He was English, and from a wealthy background, someone who had always had it easy and could well afford to be the "life and soul of the party".

Several months previously he had invited me to spend a week with him and his closest friends on his Hawaiian Island. Just as I was about to smile my reply, a shrill voice sounded over the bustle, "Philip darling, could you help me with my bags?" called a tall blonde. Obliging, Philip hurried over and took a pencil-case sized bag from her, as she turned around, her blonde hair swinging, she shot me a look. She was Heather Chilton-Travis, Philip's adoring but possessive wife.

With long, blonde hair, Barbie-like configurations, and designer clothes she proceeded haughtily into the house. Instant dislike on her part hadn't made us the best of friends.

Dr. Harvey Moore and his wife Erin followed her. This was Philip's best friend, an old Harvard schoolmate who had made it big with his private medical practice. His wife Erin was another thing. She struck

me as a person who hadn't worked a day in her life, coming from a wealthy background, she was strong-willed and ambitious, and she filled her days doing charity work.

As I stepped inside out of the sticky heat, I nearly bumped into a dark figure, Nick Whitby, Travis's CEO. Although I hadn't met him before he seemed to be quiet, calculating wit. After a mumbled apology and a quick readjustment of his back spectacles he hurried off.

The whole house seemed to be decorated in Philip's usual extravagant taste and indeed my room was more than adequate with a four-poster bed, an en-suite bathroom and matching soft furnishings.

"Your luggage ma'am", growled a voice behind me. It was Samuel, Philip's Butler, who did all the menial tasks in the house, including the cooking. I had spied him on the way in and as I looked him in the face again now, he struck me as a cold figure. Tall, thin and rather stooped, with a gaunt face, he was certainly an odd fellow who made no attempt to be friendly or welcoming.

"Samuel, Samuel", called a voice from the hall.

At the sound of his name, Samuel's frown deepened and he trudged outside, closely followed by me.

Standing angrily on the landing, with her hands on her hips, her lips pouted, and her expertly styled auburn coif swept back over her shoulders was Calvina Prescott. The final member of our party.

Perfectly proportioned and glamorous, she was a former model and one of Philip's ex-lovers. Even though Philip had invited her, what she was actually doing here was anyone's guess. I decided to leave her and Samuel to the dispute over a bag, and as I closed the door I contemplated the week ahead.

The next few days were spent soaking up the Hawaiian sun and at gentle leisure pursuits like swimming and tennis. This was followed each evening by dinner for which everyone got dressed up, something I was getting accustomed to. It was at one of these dinners that an odd incident happened.

One evening, having just been served the main course, we were drawn outside by the screeching of tyres. On the front lawn, stood a bedraggled angry man, who began shouting and screaming abuse at us,



but mainly at Philip. He had driven the Bentley round and round the lawn, digging up the ground and destroying all the flowers. He gave a final angry shout and ran off into the darkness.

Stunned, we turned to each other in confusion. Philip urged us all back inside, shut the front door, and told Samuel to "batten down the hatches".

"But what about the car, sir?" he questioned.

"Leave it, I'll tend to it myself tomorrow morning," said Philip. "Who was that dreadful creature?" asked Heather, batting her big blue eyes and flicking her blonde hair. Philip's hard, angry face softened when he saw her.

"Come inside and I shall tell all of you", he said.

Dinner abandoned, we sat around the large, log fire sipping cognac as he explained. "When I bought the island and built the house, there were a few murmurs of discontent among the conservationists. However, they never made any formal complaint and I put it down to local gossip. Just when I was finishing the house, I was approached by that man outside. His name is Tierney Mac Doughall; he's a Scottish conservationist. Of course I didn't know that at the time, but I was impressed by his knowledge of the area and wilfully agreed to let him take care of the estate while I am away."

This drew a shriek from Calvina. "You permitted that awful man to stay here in your absence!?" she said.

"Calm down Calvina", said Philip, "he's really let himself go since I have seen him. Anyway, I received a few anonymous letters, threatening letters, accusing me of destroying the delicate ecosystem of the island."

"Outrageous", said Harvey.

"That is what I said", continued Philip, "but his newest action is unbelievable, I will be taking some serious action myself when I go home."

"On that note I think I will go to bed", announced Erin. One by one the rest trooped off, sleepily but warily, now that paradise had been disrupted.

Eventually only Philip and I remained. During the in-depth conversation that followed, he revealed that this house was part of an

investment plan, and that he had just finished drawing up his will. In which was left a generous sum of \$5million for Heather, and the property of her choice. Oddly he had also left a sum of \$1million for Calvina. When I questioned him on this, he just smiled and said, "well, I have to keep the mistress happy."

Unsure as to whether this was a joke or a revelation, I encouraged him to continue. Dr. Moore would be left \$0.5million but, oddly again, his wife would receive more.

Samuel would inherit the house and the grounds, but it was Nick who seemed to gain the most. In the event of Philip's death, Nick would inherit Philip's company, and if he retained his CEO position, this would see him earn a net \$15 million a year.

I decided not to press Philip on any more of his decisions, after all he didn't have to tell me any of this, but it explained a lot. It would explain the tense atmosphere when everyone was together, the constant bickering between Harvey and Erin, and the fraud of a friendship between Heather and Calvina. Thinking I had cried enough for one night, I went to bed.

Early the next morning, I was woken by a tremendous bang. Rushing to the window, I saw the Bentley in flames. Throwing on a dressing gown, I raced downstairs to find some of the party already there. Samuel and Harvey were battling the flames with fire extinguishers, as a panicking Calvina looked on.

"What happened?" I asked.

"Oh it is Philip, it is Philip!" she cried, "he is in the car!"

We watched in horror as the flames engulfed the car, the fire extinguishers were no match for them and Samuel and Harvey were driven back. By that time everyone had arrived and pandemonium was breaking loose. Calvina was running around shrieking and shouting abuse and accusations.

Heather was sobbing hysterically and Erin was trying to comfort her. Nick was pacing back and forth, his hands deep in his pockets, his brow furrowed in confusion. Harvey and Samuel stood rooted to the spot, staring at each other in disbelief.

At that moment there was a clap of thunder and the sky lit up with



lightening. The hurricane threatened for days had finally struck, and we were stranded until it passed.

After we got over the initial shock, we all took breakfast (which consisted only of strong mugs of coffee) by the fire. Silence predominated. The fire in the car had been no accident. Someone had planted a bomb in it. But who?

As I looked around the group my mind began to swirl. Firstly Heather, 'the damsel in distress', her and Philip's marriage seemed perfect, but both had had numerous affairs and I doubted if all was calm under the surface. She had a lot to benefit from Philip's death, but surely murdering her own husband was a bit extreme?

What about Nick? He had the most to benefit and he had been slow to appear when the explosion took place, and of course he had known, as we all had, that Philip would be the next one to go near the car.

Maybe it was Harvey. Not only did he have a financial gain if Philip died, but the fact that his wife was left more money than him, suggested that something was not right there.

Perhaps Erin did it. But would that make any sense when Philip had left her so well provided for? She seemed to have no motive to kill him.

Calvina seemed an obvious choice. She had been jealous when Philip married Heather, and tensions were high between them. Also, why had she been first on the scene, especially when her room was so far away?

Samuel was another strong possibility, but he was the only one who did not know what he had been left in Philip's will. Could he be angry at the thought he would be left nothing? But would he really murder his boss who looked after him so well?

Tierney Mac Doughall had an obvious motive, but how would he know who would be the next one to use the car?

Suddenly, as my mind churned all of these thoughts, I hit on something and everything fell into place. It was so obvious now that I wondered how I had missed it. I realised who the murderer was, it was someone with obvious motive, someone with obvious gain, it was . . .

*Alanna O'Malley, Sancta Maria College*

## Madam, your Goose is cooked!

**W**hen my grandparents – and even my parents – were young, they lived in a “waste not, want not” society that is completely different from today's wasteful world.

Things have changed dramatically due to a wealthier economy, a rise in the standard of living, and people generally having more money in their pockets. Unfortunately in the process we have lost many of our original traditional recipes and cooking methods. Indeed eating patterns have changed completely. We now live in a society where quick convenience food is the name of the game. I disagree with the opinion that this is due to women returning to the workforce. I think it is more to do with the demands of our busy, urban society. People just do not have the time to spend slaving over a hot stove any more, but this is no reason to let go of our unique recipes.

There are plenty of recipes around which we do not use at all now. Most of them are simple, nutritious meals involving little effort, and I think it is time to revive them. Ironically, many of them are perfect for our current eating habits.

### Calley

This is a simple dish eaten about the time of the first harvest of potatoes. Once you have selected your new potatoes, peel them, boil them, and mash them up to a fluffy consistency. Mix into the mash a fair dash of butter, salt, and a very finely chopped onion. Serve in a lump with a hole in the middle, into which goes another lump of butter. (The aforementioned butter is of course the real, full-fat original, not any kind of processed imitation.)

### Colcannon

This is another dish along the lines of Calley.

With any kind of ordinary potatoes, boil and mash up, again to a soft, fluffy consistency. Into the mash mix chopped up green and white cabbage. This was thought to be traditionally eaten by the lower class in Northern Ireland.



### Bread and Butter Pudding

This is a very old recipe which has seen a revival recently by many celebrity chefs, most notably Nigella Lawson.

Using a stale loaf, butter 5-6 slices of bread. As you do, heat a pie-dish in the oven and in a saucepan, heat up half a cup of milk and a good toss of sugar. Grease the bottom of the dish (now heated), and cut the bread into fingers. Line the bottom of the dish with these, throwing a fistful of currants over the top. Continue building up in layers and once you reach the top, pour the heated milk and sugar and two beaten eggs over the top and allow to soak down through it. Cook in the oven for half an hour until brown and crispy.

### Christmas Goose

One of the most original recipes and one, which we do not eat much today, is also one of the most versatile and resourceful of meals. It has to be the goose. Traditionally eaten at Christmas, followed by plum pudding, the goose is a three-day dinner. During the old days most people had goose for Christmas dinner, and only the wealthy or upper classes had turkey. Ironically, this situation is now reversed, with most people eating turkey. The geese would have spent the whole of autumn, (or at the very least six weeks before Christmas), foraging in the stubble-fields in search of fallen corn and barley. By December they were very fat, almost not able to waddle.

#### *Preparation & Cooking:*

Having caught the goose, hold the body between your knees, leaving a large basin on the ground nearby. Slit the back of the goose's head with a sharp knife, holding the head over the basin to collect the blood. When the goose stops moving, hang it by the legs over the bowl, to collect all the blood. Next day, dry-pluck the goose, retaining rough feathers for your tick or mattress. Keep the soft feathers for your pillows and cushions. Cut off the wings at the elbows. These will later on become quills for dusting.

Cut off the neck from the body. Retain the head and the feet; skin them by putting them in boiling water, and peeling off the skin. Singe the hairs left on the skin. Do not forget to collect any goose grease. It is excellent for sprains and is still used by apothecaries today as the basis for all sorts of healing ointments. It is also great for any kind of foot swellings, and rheumatism. Remove the intestines and keep the large

and small intestine, the liver and the gizzard. Remove the bile sac from the liver and the grit bag from the gizzard. The liver can now be used as a single meal, floured and fried in butter.

Now you can remove the sweetbreads. This is the soft, pink flesh, the gut-meat if you like, on the inside of the skin. These are an excellent addition to the stuffing.

Remove skin from neck without breaking, and fill it and the intestines with a mix of oatmeal, onion spices, salt and pepper, and the blood of the goose.

Sew the ends of this together. Cook it with the head, feet, and the remainder of the wings, the gizzard and some goose bones. Cook in a large pot of water, and voila, goose soup. This is called "Ge Beag" and it is eaten on the first day of celebration.

Do not forget to crack the head, the brain is very tasty. Give the windpipe of the goose to the children as a toy, it makes a great bugle. The wing bones, when meat and marrow are removed, make great popguns, using raw potato pieces. A fat goose is difficult to stuff, so it is advised to let it sit for some days with two bitter apples cut up inside it. These will help to counteract the greasiness of the flesh.

Next day, stuff the goose (2lbs boiled potatoes, 2onions, 1oz butter, half teaspoon of chopped thyme, pinch of sage, salt and pepper). Put the stuffing into the belly of the bird, stuffing from front to back, and sew up the vent. The goose was traditionally cooked on a three-legged iron on a hearth, with the fire on top. These are but a few of the many fascinating old recipes remaining from times gone past. There seemed to be almost no waste produced at all, and many of the directions are "a toss of this" and "a pinch of that".

I think they are a great reflection of not only the past, but also it's people and society, which strikes me as being predominantly, rural. I would hope this piece also provides an insight and a taste of the past, and perhaps of the future.

I would also finally like to say a special thanks to Etta Mc Greal and Angela Sylver for their invaluable guidance.

*Alanna O'Malley, Sancta Maria College*



## The West's Awake

**L**ouisburgh is one of the most western points of Europe. Flanked on one side by the majestic Mweelrea Mountains and the wild Atlantic Ocean on the other, it is a place of awe-inspiring beauty. It is also a place however, which does not remain uninfluenced by the British Crown. The great example of this influence is the loss of many of our original Gaelic place names. Few have remained unchanged and through our investigation, we found that many are now crude combinations of English and Gaelic. In a quest to rediscover our roots and our native countryside, we decided to explore this abundance of sometimes unpronounceable and often illegible place-names by which we are surrounded.

Some place-names proved more fascinating than others – most memorable, “Loch Awanareena” – which after considerable confusion, we translated to mean “Loch na Banriana” or “Lake of the Queens.” We can only speculate on the origin of this name and how it was associated with queens. Was it a place where witches gathered? Were there possibly fresh-water mermaids? Or was there a time when we, the women of Ireland, held our rightful place at the head of society? And the Bertie’s and the Ruairi’s, and the Michael’s have trembled at our every command?

However, upon closer examination, we realized we had let our minds jump to conclusions because the spelling did not bear out our initial surmise. But, and maybe this is just wishful thinking, we believe our ideas to be correct! This area was the seat of our great queen of the 16th century – Granuaile. We lean this to be sufficient historical evidence to back up our original theory.

Place names around the seashore e.g. Bunlough, Port Leargach, Duanín, and Suaimara in the West to Cuainín, Béal Trá, Carraig Coisceim and Port na Langein in Emlagh, each name, among others, a piece of coast hardly more than half a mile.

But with our essentials – cups of tea and a magnifying glass, little was left unsolved!

Suicín, the name of another river, drains out to the sea at Accony. Outside the mouth of this river, lies Carraigaun – probably, the “Sloping Rock”. East of this, another rock, for which we haven’t yet discovered a name, lies.

Farmers, overlooking these rocks and a seal, have observed a natural phenomenon here. At the approach of fine weather, the seal basks on one rock and on the other at the approach of rain. Will we ever solve the mystery of this natural weather-dial? Or the greater mystery – why he has not yet been sought out by Met Éireann!

Further east, the Bunowen River empties into the sea at Carramore. It flows for miles throughout the Louisburgh area and has been the origin of many place-names. In harvest time mostly, natural flooding occurs and spreads out causing names like shraghs, curraghs, culamars and calleys.

And yet another natural phenomenon occurs unseen each year.

The young salmon, known as parr, undergo a great transformation into smolt as they prepare for survival in saltwater.

These wild salmon now follow lengthy migration routes of thousands of miles to waters off Scotland, Norway and even Greenland! The miracle however, is that the odour of its native river is imprinted on the memory of each fish and that, after a year, the salmon returns exactly to where it was spawned! Needless to say, many well-travelled, multi-cultural fish inhabit our own Bunowen River!

And so from the Holy Mountain to Killary Harbour, lies a place, which witnesses many natural phenomena and in which remain many unsolved mysteries. The answers to which the wisest of us can only speculate upon.

People say that you are formed in part by your environment. Through this research, we have discovered myths and legends, fact and fiction, truth and lies, but most of all, a world and a life we knew little of.

Currently we both desire to leave this place and explore the world but whether or not we will return like the salmon is much more than a speculation. For now we have discovered, that the West is well and truly awake!

*Alanna O'Malley and Deirdre Philbin, Sancta Maria College*  
(With help of Austin V. O'Malley)



## The Swan

*The dark winter of raging winds  
Blankets the land in a shadow of cloud,  
And on the lake where she sits proud,  
She captures an ear with the song she sings.*

*A whisper in a passing glance,  
The white reflecting innocence;  
But baffled as to her intent,  
I hesitate to take a chance.*

*The silent water's a barbed-wire fence  
Allowing only me to see  
The enchanting beauty daring me  
To dance, disturb the sweet content.*

*How dare I be of such a mind,  
The grace of nature can but be free  
To spread her wings away from me  
And with a swan abide her time.*

*But winter's just a passing grey  
And if I don't embrace the sight  
I fear a silent starlit night  
Will guide the swan to fly away.*

**Oliver Smith**, Sancta Maria College

## Comhgháirdeas . . .



Aoife O'Leary, Bunowen, who graduated from NUI, Galway with a First Class Honours B.Sc. Degree in Microbiology. She is daughter of Teresa and the late Donal O'Leary, Bunowen.



Éamonn O'Malley, Carrowniskey, on his recent graduation as a member of the Garda Síochána. Éamonn is son of Jim and Noreen O'Malley, Carrowniskey and is a past pupil of Holy Family N.S., Killen and Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh.



Pictured with his mother Vera is Peter Scanlon, Bunowen, Louisburgh, who was conferred with a B.Sc. Degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Paisley, Scotland in 2000. He is currently completing a Masters in IT at the same University.



Olivia Lyons, Bunowen, who received a B.Sc. Hons Degree in Applied Human Nutrition (Dietetics) from the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff on July 12, 2001.



## Comhgháirdeas . . .



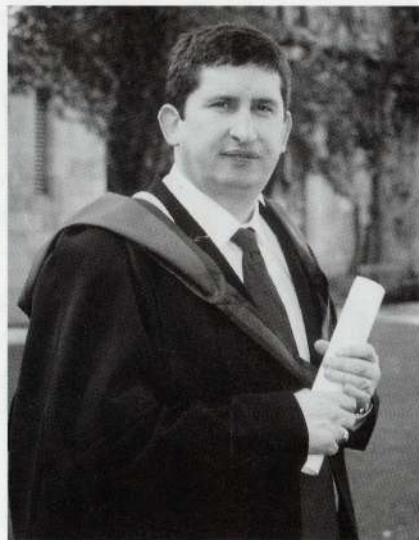
Miss Linda Sammon, Carramore, Louisburgh, who graduated with a Corporate Law Degree and LLB Degree from NUI, Galway.



Caroline Keane, who graduated from University College Dublin, in November 2000, with a Degree in B.Comm International (French).



Austin Keane, who graduated from NUI, Galway, in July 2001, with a Degree in Mechanical Engineering.



Congrats to John McConnell, Shraugh, who was awarded an M.B.A. in NUI, Galway.

## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 . . .



6th August 2000 – Sandra Mayberry and Steven McCluskey who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Louisburgh.



Ann Kilcoyne, Cregganbawn /Luton and Stephen Dolan, Luton, who were married in the Holy Family Church, Killeen. The reception was held in the Castlecourt Hotel, Westport.



## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 ...



*Jane McGuire, Aughagower and John O'Grady, Aillemore, who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Aughagower on 2nd October 1999.*



*Frances Hannon, Ballivor, Co. Meath and John Kilcoyne, Cregganbawn who were married in St. Columban's Church, Ballivor. The reception was held in the Old Darnley Hotel, Athboy, Co. Meath.*

## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 ...



*Joseph McDonnell, Bridge Street, Louisburgh and Norah Lyons, Furmoyle, who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Louisburgh on 27th July, 2001.*



*Marie McCormack and Aiden D'Arcy who were married on the 3rd July 1999 in St. Patrick's Church, Louisburgh.*



## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 . . .



*Christine O'Grady, Aillemore and Kieran Collins, Brize, Claremorris, who were married at Killeen Church on 4th June 2000.*



*Seán McLoughlin, Falduff, Louisburgh and Mary Needham, Culleen, Kilsallagh, who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Lecanvey on 12th November, 2000.*

## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 . . .



*Bernie O'Malley, Thallabawn and Pat Kitterick, Cregganbawn who were married in Killeen Church on 1st September, 2001.*



*Clair Grealis, Fallduff, Louisburgh and Philip McKiernan, Mohill, Co. Leitrim who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Louisburgh on 21st April 2001.*



## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 ...



*Anne-Marie Scanlon, Bunowen, Louisburgh and Patrick Carroll, Cork, after their wedding in Cork in 2001.*



*Nicola Lyons, Louisburgh and Takao Takizawa, Tokyo who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Louisburgh on 16th August 2001.*

## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 ...



*Peter Scanlon, Kinnock and Anne Connors, Manchester who were married in Manchester.*



*Kevin Anthony Kerr, Bunowen and Nicola Lee Cox who were married in the Main Post Chapel, Presidio of San Francisco on 9th June 2000.*



## Parish Weddings 1999-2002 . . .



*Larah O'Malley and Stephen Hutchinson who were married in St. Patrick's Church, Louisburgh on 20th July 2001.*



*James S. Morrison, Killadoon and Aine Moore, Churchtown, Dublin, who were married in St. Mary's Church, Sandyford, Dublin on 28th December 2000.*

## Comhgháirdeas . . .



*Christina Collins, Aillemore and Castlebar, who recently graduated with I.T.E.C. Diploma in Beauty Therapy from Tuam, Co. Galway. She is pictured with her husband Kieran Collins and her parents Frank and Sally O'Grady.*

*Peter Scanlon who graduated in October 1999 with an M.Sc. in Manufacturing: Management Technology. Based in London he is currently North European Regional Manager working for Colorcon Ltd., a pharmaceutical excipient supplier. He was educated in Boys N.S. Louisburgh and Sancta Maria College.*





## Comhgháirdeas ...



*Jim and Ellie O'Malley of West Roxbury marked their 50th Wedding Anniversary on November 2 at a concelebrated Mass and reception given by their family. Rev. Msgr. William Helmick, Pastor of St. Theresa Church and Rev. John J. Burns, who witnessed the O'Malley's wedding on November 3, 1951. Jim is a native of Louisburgh and Ellie a native of Ballymoe, Co. Galway. They are pictured above with their nine daughters and families.*



*June 2001 – the official opening by Mr. Martin Joe O'Toole of Louisburgh's New Voluntary Housing. From (l. to r.): John McConnell, Imelda O'Grady, Fr. Paddy Mooney, Sally Davitt, Archbishop Neary, John Davitt, Fr. Darcy, Martin J. O'Toole, Fr. Mannion P.P., Rev. Canon Gary Hastings, Councillor Peter Sweeney, Des Mahon (Co. Manager), Eileen Kerr RIP, Vincent O'Reilly, Mary Fergus, Teresa Sammon, Liam McNamara (Contractor).*

## Comhgháirdeas ...



***New Voluntary Housing Committee with Archbishop Neary***  
Back row (l. to r.): Eileen Kerr RIP, Mary Fergus, Sally Davitt, John McConnell, Imelda O'Grady, Marian McNamara, Teresa Sammon.  
Front row (l. to r.): Fr. Darcy, Fr. Mannion P.P., Archbishop Neary, Fr. Paddy Mooney, P.P. Leenane, John Davitt.



***Young Pioneers from Killeen National School***  
Front row (l. to r.): Jeffrey Gallagher, Peter Kitterick, John Gibbons, Regina Needham, Seamus Keane, Christina Burke, Aisling O'Malley.  
Middle row (l. to r.): Patricia Morrison, Kayleigh O'Malley, Niamh O'Grady, Martina Giblin, John O'Malley, Austin Joyce, Anna O'Toole, Brendan Tiernan.  
Back row (l. to r.): Margaret Gallagher, Fr. Darcy, Assumpta Fergus, Walter Davitt.



## Comhgháirdeas . . .

**Young Pioneers with their Mentors**

Back row (l. to r.): Margaret Gallagher, Fr. Darcy, Assumpta Fergus, Walter Davitt.

Front row (l. to r.): Majella Morrison, Pauline McNamara, Marie Jordan, Danielle Gallagher, Tracy Gibbons.

**Young Pioneers with their Mentors**

Front row (l. to r.): Siobhán Corrigan, Carmel Keane, Orfhlaith Prendergast, Sharon McNally, Anita Walsh.

Middle row (l. to r.): Sandra Kilcoyne, Clare Eugster, Mary O'Malley, Maura Geraghty, Noel McGreal.

Back row (l. to r.): John Tiernan, Fr. Darcy, Walter Davitt, Assumpta Fergus.

## Comhgháirdeas . . .



James and Nora Rita Gibbons on their 65th Wedding Anniversary  
– February 6th 2002.

Nora and James Gibbons, Feenone, have been married 65 years; they were married in February 1937. Nora (nee Gallagher) was born in Aillemore; James was born in Feenone. Both attended Killadoon N. S. and were taught by amongst others Mr and Mrs Maguire of whom they often speak with fond regard.

Nora and James had 11 children: Mary, Sally, Padraig, James and Therese (Philadelphia, U.S.A); Austin (Melbourne, Australia); John (Liverpool, England); Rita, Myles (London, England) and Gabriel, (Feenone). Anthony, James' twin brother died when he was four months old. RIP.

Nora (born 1915) and James (born 1910) have during their long and eventful lives lived through many changes in society. One of the great communal qualities that has endured is the friendship and constant support of neighbours, friends and relatives who have been a continuing source of help, companionship and love throughout the years.

Nora and James have been fervent believers in the power and goodness of prayer. Regularly they have recited the rosary together for more than half a century.



## Sr. Bernadette McNally

When the new Hygiene Regulations came into operation in October 1998 Sr. Bernadette McNally, Director of Nursing put forward plans to have their Quality System at the home audited. Sr. Bernadette had all the staff trained in the Hygiene Regulations. They had an audit carried out initially so that any necessary fine tuning could be completed – then they proceeded to the full audit/inspection by Excellence Ireland.

- Area audited included
- Documentation in detail.
- Personnel and training.
- Management responsibilities.
- Purchasing.
- Process control.
- Equipment maintenance and calibration.
- Inspections and testing.
- Records in detail.
- Customer service.
- Temperature control.
- Corrective action.
- Housekeeping in detail.



*Sr. Bernadette McNally, Director of Nursing and Mrs. Mary Duffy, Head Cook, with the National Hygiene Award Certificate.*

The audit carried out was practical, it took into account the overall business objectives and found that the optimum quality programme was in place to meet the requirements not just of Quality System Standards but also of product and Service Quality.

MacBride C.N.U. received the Excellence Ireland Certificate on 13th September 2000 and are proud to announce having received it again – second time in a row on 27th September 2001.