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The Corran Herald

Annual Publication of Ballymote Heritage Group

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Issue No 46 2013/2014

The Corran Herald wishes to sincerely thank all those who have written articles or contributed photographs or other material for this issue

24th Annual

Ballymote

Heritage

Weekend

Thursday 1st
to Monday 5th
August 2013

Venue: The Teagasc Centre,
Ballymote, Co. Sligo

(on the right over the bridge at the railway station out the 'Palmercentury' Road)

Thursday 1st

To coincide with the Bram Stoker lecture,
the **Art Deco Theatre & Cinema** will
show the classic 1958 movie
Dracula
at 8pm Admission €6

Friday 2nd

8.30 pm. Official Opening by
Malcolm Billings
Journalist, Radio Producer
and Author

Lecture: Varian of Nazareth:
Missionary and Medical
Pioneer in the
Nineteenth Century
Middle East
Malcolm Billings

Saturday 3rd

9 am. Outing: Carlinn Country (Tyrone);

*(Highlights inc. Clagher & Georgian
Cathedral, Carlinn's Cottage, Rathmole,
Brackishale & Falls and church by
wood architect Liam McCormick)*

Guide: *Jack Johnston*, Ulster
Local Historian

8.30 pm. Lecture: The Railways of
Co. Sligo

Peter Bowen - Walsh,
Railway Historian

Sunday 4th

Outing: Temple House: Guided Tour
of House @ 12 & Lunch
@ 1 pm.

*(Tickets at €30 must be purchased
before Friday evening from Alden
Tyle's Shop, Ballymote remaining 75 seats
available on the Opening night only
over transport - lifts on request
where bookings)*

8.30 pm. Lecture: Bram Stoker, Dracula
and the Sligo Connection

Paul Murray, Retired Diplomat & Author
of *From the Shores of Dracula: A Life
of Bram Stoker*

Monday 5th

9 am. Outing: Tollynally Castle (Co.
Westmeath) and Fore Abbey
Guide: *Frank Tymon*, MA, Historian

8.30 pm. Lecture: *Dr. Padraig Deignan*,
Author & Historian
The Sligo Port Strike of 1913

Lectures €10 Cash for Outings from Catholic Church,
Further Information: 087 4149137

Organised by Ballymote Heritage Group

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Tillie Casey - An Appreciation (<i>David Casey</i>)	4
Brigid O'Hara (<i>Malcolm Billings</i>)	5
Remembering Clare Walsh	7
John Doddy, A 'Rebel' Cleric (<i>John Mc Ternan</i>)	8
Members of Ballymote Tennis Club (<i>Provided by Pearse Brady</i>)	9
A strange thing happened on the way to the dance (<i>Michael Farry</i>)	10
The place where I was born (<i>Bernie Gilbride</i>)	14
An Irish Emigrant of the Fifties (<i>Joan Gleeson</i>)	14
Faster, Higher, Stronger: My experience of the Olympics (<i>Conor McDonagh</i>)	15
Synge's Chair on Irishmaan (<i>Bernie Doyle</i>)	17
Inishmaan (<i>Bernie Doyle</i>)	17
Three stones and a well-dressed man: The story behind the story (<i>Martin A Timoney</i>)	18
Two giants of Irish life (<i>PJ Duffy</i>)	23
Further light on the linen Industry in 18th Century Ballymote (<i>John Coleman</i>)	24
History and Tranquillity at Tobernalt (<i>Bernie Gilbride</i>)	30
Classiebawn and the Assassination of Lord Mountbatten at Mullaghmore: A Retrospective (<i>Joe Mc Gowan</i>)	32
A season in the Carrowmore Meadow (<i>Lynda Hart</i>)	36
The Ballad of Corran Park (<i>Neal Farry</i>)	37
Chapel Hill (<i>Mary Kelly-White</i>)	38
Wedding Bells in 1914 (<i>Submitted by Padraig Doddy</i>)	39
The Ballymote ICA choir in the 1970s	40
Sligo in Ulysses (<i>Neal Farry</i>)	41
Ballymote 1915-1921 (<i>Mary Gaffney</i>)	46
A Mother's Death (<i>Submitted by Alfie Banks</i>)	48
Underground Streams and Canals without water (<i>Bernie Doyle</i>)	49
The Sligo Port Strike of 1913 (<i>Padraig Deignan</i>)	50
Cillin Monastic Site (<i>John Higgins</i>)	57
Down on the Farm in the 20th Century (<i>Kathleen Fairbanks</i>)	58
A manly Sport (<i>Padraig Feehily</i>)	60
Opening night of the Art Deco (<i>Adapted from remarks by John Perry TD</i>)	61
The Village Station (<i>Kathleen Fitzmaurice</i>)	62
World War 1 Casualties from the Barony of Coran (<i>Neal Farry</i>)	63
Inquisition in Ballymote 1593 and 1617 (<i>Jim Higgins</i>)	64
Count Charles O'Gara 1699 - 1777 (<i>Maura O'Gara-O'Riordan</i>)	66
Photograph of the pupils of Emlaughton National School in the 1940's	69
'Vanished Shop Fronts' (<i>Photographs collected for the Gathering photography exhibition</i>)	70
Mining in the Connaught Mineral Field (<i>Pat Hughes</i>)	71
The Irish Revolution 1912-23 (<i>Neal Farry</i>)	75
James Daly and the Land League - The Sligo Connection (<i>Neil Mongey</i>)	76
Heritage Weekend 2012 (<i>Paddy Conboy</i>)	77
Mayo Churches, Stained Glass and More (<i>Micheál Murphy</i>)	78
Headed paper of Hannan's of Market Street from a receipt of July 1903	81
Dedicated to Sligo : Thirty - Four Essays on Sligo's Past (<i>Martin A. Timoney</i>)	82
Photography of the Corran Park Committee in 1949	84
The Origins of Strandhill as a seaside resort (<i>John Mc Ternan</i>)	85
Views on the Past (<i>John Coleman</i>)	86
The Ballymote Gathering Photographic exhibition (<i>Submitted by Mary Cawley</i>)	87
Ballymote Boys National School Class group 1959	90
Photo of Achonry Co-op staff taken in 1968	90
Knockminna First Holy Communion 2013	91
First Holy Communion class 2013, Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal, Ballymote	91
Ballymote Heritage Group	92
Sponsors	92

Tillie Casey – An Appreciation

David Casey

The death occurred on 25 May 2013 of Matilda (Tillie) Casey nee Walshe at her residence. She will be sadly missed.

Tillie was a devoted patron of Ballymote Heritage Group and along with her late husband Stan was a long-serving and loyal committee member of the group.

Tillie and Stan were enthusiastic and loyal promoters of all the heritage group activities. Tillie enjoyed attending all these activities and was a wonderful ambassador for the annual Heritage weekend held in August in Ballymote each year for the past 25 years.

She had a deep knowledge and appreciation of Irish heritage and culture in all its manifestations.

She was born in Swinford, Co Mayo in 1917 at a momentous time in Irish history. Her parents Dominic and Mattie Walshe, from the south of Ireland, had moved to Swinford where her father was a pharmacist and opened one of the first Medical Halls in the west of Ireland in 1912. Tillie was always very proud of her south of Ireland heritage.

Tillie's father died when she was just sixteen years old. The family business was run by a manager and later on Tillie trained and qualified as a pharmacist in Dublin before returning to manage the pharmacy in Swinford.

In 1952 Tillie married Stan Casey who practiced as a dental surgeon in Ballymote and Tobercurry. Stan then concentrated on his dental practice in Ballymote. Tragically Stan developed eye problems which prevented him practicing as a dentist. Tillie then opened her own pharmacy in Ballymote in 1961, and



embraced the culture and heritage of Ballymote and its environs.

As well as her friendly and affable nature, Tillie was active in her support of many community activities and events. Her enthusiasm and love of life and her gentle way with people has been remarked upon by many. She went out of her way to help others without any fuss and nothing was any trouble to her. Her encouraging words have often been mentioned and people have spoken about leaving her company feeling much better.

Tillie's love of and interest in pharmacy has also been spoken of by many. During her 71 years working as a pharmacist, she always welcomed new developments and technology as they were introduced into pharmacy over the years. Tillie attended IPU meetings both in Sligo and Donegal and liked to meet with her colleagues. She was very encouraging of and loved all her staff. She also loved to see students coming to do work experience in her

pharmacy and helped them as they performed their duties, and she was always ready with an encouraging word. Tillie worked in the pharmacy up to three weeks before her death and her presence in the pharmacy will be sadly missed especially by her daughter Mattie and all her wonderful staff and customers.

Tillie was a woman of strong faith and devoted to her church. She was predeceased by her elder son, Martin, in 1996, and by her husband Stan in 2004.

Her lovely welcoming smile and her very positive approach to life will be greatly missed by her family, staff, many friends, and all who knew her.

She is survived by her daughters, Mary and Mattie; by her son, David; and her brother, Matt; her sister in law Rose; her sons-in-law,

and by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews and extended family.

Ar dheis de go raibh a h-anam dilis.

Brigid O'Hara

Malcolm Billings

“What do you want to be called when we are married?” I asked. “Brigid O’Hara of course, what else!”

Brigid had no intention of subsuming her Irish heritage in an ordinary English name such as Billings. I would just have to get used to confusion at the school gate, and being known by the milkman as Mr O’Hara. Brigid’s Irishness never waned. It was a strong feature of her personality throughout her life, and, along with her calm integrity, her Irish persona won many hearts.

Brigid and I met on her first day at Bush House – the headquarters of the World Service of the BBC – and neither of us forgot that first encounter. She had followed her older sister Jillian who had worked for a few years in the Education Department at Broadcasting House. Both these O’Hara daughters were interested in the arts and music when they were growing up at Munnar in the tea-growing hills of south India. Frank O’Hara managed a tea estate and had married the daughter of another tea planter. The family, however, returned to Sligo in the early 1950s after Frank had inherited Coopershill at Riverstown.

In Sligo, Brigid’s flair for dancing and acting was encouraged by the gifted Sligo teacher Sybil Higgins. Sybil believed Brigid had the makings of a ballerina and arranged for an audition with the formidable Dame Ninette de Valois, head of the Royal Ballet School in London. Brigid passed the audition and was offered a place. She was nine years old. But in the early 1950s the Royal Ballet had no boarding house for young ballerinas and it was not practicable for her to live in London. The decision was taken to send her as boarder to Elmhurst Ballet School in Surrey where she studied theatre and dance, until returning to Dublin to continue her more formal education.

Before joining the BBC Brigid spent two years in the United States as au pair



Brigid at the bow of the USS Constitution in Boston Harbour

with a family she knew well. In her early 20s she sailed with them on the Queen Elizabeth to New York, and on to Norfolk Virginia where the family was posted. Whenever the opportunity arose Brigid took off by herself to discover the United States on Greyhound buses that criss-crossed North America. It was invaluable experience for a young woman who would later choose the BBC World Service for a career. As with everything else in life Brigid threw herself wholeheartedly into the BBC. She joined the Drama Society and took advantage of the stables in Hyde Park when members of the BBC riding club could canter along Rotten Row in riding kit, complete with a reinforced riding bowler hat. Quite useless if one fell off, but very stylish.

Brigid greatly enjoyed her production role during the BBC Proms every summer at the Royal Albert Hall. She used her knowledge of music to edit the Radio 3 live broadcasts to fit a smaller slot in the World Service transmission schedule. The broadcast box in the Albert Hall went with the job and as the

Henrietta and Sebastian were growing up they would be ushered into the broadcast box, along with Brigid’s stepchildren Alexia and Warwick, to hear some of the world’s great orchestras and soloists.

Brigid was generous with her time, very proud of the World Service, and welcomed many visitors from Sligo. She recalled through a gale of giggles how Anthony Kitchin, one of many members of Brigid’s family and friends, was shown around the offices and studios at Bush House. Brigid took Anthony into the ‘live’ continuity studio where Anthony confided that he always listened to the World Service in the middle of the night when he was calving. That caught the announcer’s attention as he was a potter in his spare time. “What do you carve?” he asked. “Calves,” responded Anthony, wondering if they were speaking the same language. Just as puzzled, the announcer turned to his script to announce the next programme.

Sligo was important to Brigid throughout her life. Twice a year, at Christmas and for the summer holidays,

we piled the children into the car, drove on to the B+I ferry at Liverpool and crawled up the N4 to Riverstown to the cranky little cottage we bought near Coopershill. Brigid loved seeing Irishness seeping into her London-born children and would happily have lived in Sligo all the year. For several years she organized an evening's entertainment in the sheep shed by the river at Coopershill. 'The Sheep Shed Players' staged musical evenings among bales of straw, and on two occasions featured excerpts from A Midsummer's Night's Dream and Oscar Wilde's Importance of Being Ernest.

Rounding up the reluctant famers to attend rehearsals was a challenge. Young famers like Mark O'Hara had to be persuaded to play the part of Thisby in an old dress and a straw wig, in the 'play within the play'. Brian O'Hara as Pyramus seemed to ad lib his way through the plot and it was noted that Joan O'Hara, in her early 80s, was the only member of the cast to have learnt her lines word perfect. Brigid was intensely interested in the history of Sligo and the role played by her family that spanned many centuries. She had a reader's ticket for the British Library in London to do research whenever possible. In London, dancing was relegated to a hobby with weekly dance lessons in a studio in Covent Garden, but her love of music continued and grew to be an important and life-long interest. Brigid joined the Medici Choir in London and sang in two or three concerts a year in London along with performances in European capitals including Berlin and Rome.

In the early 90s Brigid resigned from the BBC staff and together we set up an independent production company. Brigid became the producer of 'Heritage', a long running series on archaeology and conservation which took us all over the world to record archaeologists on location. Always drawn to Irish archaeology, we made programmes on the excavation of Carrowmore, the Valley of the Boyne,

and the Viking settlement in Dublin. The greatest challenge Brigid and I had to face was the aftermath of 9/11. Brigid and I were asked to record a documentary on location as firemen and a team of workmen continued to explore the crater left by the collapse of the World Trade Centre.

The epicentre of the clean-up was the 18th century Church of St Paul, on the edge of the disaster area. We were hardly prepared for what we saw from that church on Wall Street: the railings of the churchyard were hung with tributes, flowers and pleas for news of those who had disappeared. Brigid had shown how strong she was in the face of uncertainty and danger in many parts of the world, but this became her greatest test as we both looked up at the blackened trees in the churchyard. Branches of the trees had snared objects from the collapsed trade centre when a tsunami of pulverised rubble hit lower Manhattan.

Caught in the trees were waiter's aprons blown out of the top floor restaurant as the building collapsed. Brigid, as usual remained calm and with her emotions under control. It was a testing time for both of us as we followed workmen into buildings on the edge of the site, scuffing through inches of debris and dust across a carpet of grit made up of crushed concrete mixed with some pulverised human remains. Brigid remained focused on the purpose of the programme – to work with museum officials who were trying to collect material evidence of the tragedy for future generations.

Until 9/11 most producers and presenters working for the BBC or independent production companies enjoyed a remarkable degree of editorial freedom and permission to travel as required. Health and Safety was then invented along with form-filling and more careful vetting of projects. Armchair safety experts defined areas of danger and demanded special training for 'hostile environments.' Brigid and I had devised a programme that followed

the route of the 1908 Hejaz railway from Damascus to Medina – the railway that Lawrence of Arabia sabotaged during the First World War – and that was deemed as a hostile place to go.

A light dusting of snow did not augur well for a week's 'desert' training in the grounds of a big country house in Surrey where we and other members of BBC staff would learn how to survive capture and interrogation by an unknown, unspecified regime. Brigid learned how to crawl out of a land rover in the middle of a minefield and test a safe path ahead using biro pens (which journalists were supposed to have at the ready) and metal coat hangers (which were not usually part of a producer's kit). Brigid knew about mines from programmes we had made in Cambodia and Sri Lanka, but the main exercise, surviving capture and interrogation ending with a firing squad, was new to us. Tough guys in uniform stopped our land rover, accused us of spying, and escorted us to a rusting and abandoned WWII army base. Brigid was hooded and shouted at. I had to keep reminding myself that it was only an exercise while Brigid dismissed the interrogator's accusations: "Of course I'm not a spy. I'm from the BBC."

After much bullying and shouting the main accuser plunged his hand into Brigid's Barber pocket and triumphantly brought out a handful of rifle bullets. "Explain that?" he said. "I don't have to," Brigid answered, "You must have put them there yourself." Brigid was offered clemency if she confessed; it was all real enough for some members of the captured staff to agree. Not Brigid. "I'm from the BBC and what you say is ridiculous!" She was led out to a face a firing squad where once again she was asked to confess. "Do what you like I'm not a spy". Suddenly the spell was broken with: "It's all over. Relax everyone." The hoods were removed. One of our colleagues needed counselling. Brigid called for a cup of tea. Intimidation? She did not know the meaning of the word.

We both needed a break in Sligo

before the next recording and flew to Dublin and on to the airport in the sand dunes at Strandhill in Sligo. Refreshed, we returned on the same flight to Dublin. Going through security to board the London flight Brigid was called over and asked to empty her Barbour pockets. Bits of binder twine, a dirty handkerchief, a bandaid, a Fisherman's Friend cough lozenge, and a few favourite sea shells collected on walks along the beach. Then out came the two bullets that had showed up clearly on the luggage scanner. "How do you explain these?" The member of the Gardaí was not smiling. "Where have you been?

What have you been doing?" Again Brigid stayed calm but this was not a game, and 'I'm from the BBC' was not enough. Brigid suddenly remembered the interrogation in the snow in Surrey.

The unlikely story tumbled out. The bullets had travelled undetected through four airports, but without our BBC identity passes (we are on holiday Brigid explained) the story about training for a hostile environment sounded a bit thin at Terminal 1 in Dublin. The Guard was thinking of taking us off the flight and phoning M15 when I found a stray letter in my brief case addressed to the Head of Archaeology, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Brigid handed over the bullets and promised not to do anything like that again, and, very relieved and chastened, we caught the flight.

Brigid died from ovarian cancer in June 2012. During her interment ceremony at Coopershill on 23 March 2013 the young harpist, Aine Martin, a distant cousin of the O'Haras, played one of the pieces of music that Brigid had always wanted to hear: 'A tribute to Kean O'Hara.' (Kean the musician.) It was by O'Carolan, the 17th century blind harpist whose life and influence on Irish music Brigid had planned to record for the BBC.

Remembering Clare Walsh

Heritage Group members were saddened to learn early in 2013 of the death of Clare Walsh, a long-time supporter of the annual Heritage Weekend lectures and regular contributor to The Corran Herald. Clare wrote no less than 15 articles over the years: one in issue number 22, one each year from number 29 to 38 and three in number 44. The subject matter was wide – from Bianconi to the history of knitting. She took great note of local lore and of course wrote of her beloved Castlebaldwin.

Although she had reached her mid 90s, Clare continue to attend lectures up to last year. Clare represented all that is best about the Ballymote Heritage weekends. She was full of enthusiasm and curiosity and took great pride in her native place. We will miss her contributions to discussions after lectures. Above all, we will miss her bright eyes and smiling face.

Ar dheis De go raibh a h-anam dilis.



John Doddy, a ‘Rebel’ Cleric

John C McTernan

John Doddy, a 19th century Achonry priest, was something of a ‘rebel’ who openly challenged the authority of his bishop and as a result was the subject of much comment and not a little criticism both locally and in the wider media of that era. However, according to the late Martin Kelleher of Doocastle, a noted local historian, ‘Doddy was much maligned and numerous untruths were told about him.’

John Doddy was born at Roadstown, Bunninadden, in 1789. He was educated at Maynooth, matriculated in September 1809, and was ordained in June 1813. He was subsequently appointed a curate in Collooney where he ministered for a number of years. Tradition has it that during that period it was brought to his attention that a young child who lived at Somerton, then part of the Perceval estate, suffered from a malady that defied all medical efforts to cure. Fr Doddy was asked if he could stay the hand of nature and was later credited with saving the child’s life. Tradition has it that in return the Percevals gave a site in Bunninadden on which the present church was built in 1831-32.

In 1819 Doddy was appointed parish priest of Bunninadden in which capacity he quickly got into difficulties, initially with the civil authorities by stoutly refusing to take an oath of supremacy, a necessary requirement for Parish Priests in the pre-Emancipation era, and also for officiating at a prohibited wedding. Both these events brought him into headlong collision with Patrick McNicholas, the then bishop of Achonry, with whom Doddy was non co-operative if not openly hostile. ‘This resistance to his superiors occasioned deplorable tumults in the parish,’ wrote county historian Terence

O’Rorke, ‘and involved his abettors and followers, who were numerous, in the guilt of disobedience and schism.’ Eventually in 1824 Bishop McNicholas found it necessary to remove Doddy from the administration of the parish and appointed Bernard O’Kane in his place. However the incumbent, strongly supported by a majority of his parishioners, refused to give way. Eventually, one Sunday morning, Patrick Durcan, the diocesan administrator, acting on the Bishop’s instructions, and accompanied by the leading Catholic laymen of the parish – namely Joseph ‘Mor’ Mc Donnell of Doo Castle, Daniel O’Connor of Roadstown and Tim MacDermot of Kilturra – forcibly removed Fr Doddy off the altar and onto the church grounds. It is said that most of the congregation followed, leaving only a handful to hear mass celebrated by the newly appointed Bernard O’Kane, PP.

Doddy subsequently departed from the area and life returned to normal in Bunninadden and surrounding areas. However, following his return in 1829, after an absence of four years, old hostilities surfaced again. Despite the prohibition of Bishop McNicholas he claimed the parish, and with the help of friends and relations took forcible possession of the old chapel at Killavil. In June 1829 the *Sligo Observer* reported that Doddy’s supporters ‘frequently parade from one chapel to another marching in regular array, armed with sticks and threatening the other parishioners who solely through the mild persuasions of their legitimate pastor are withheld from giving battle.’ The *Observer* report also stated that a number of neighbouring magistrates, including Revd John Garret of Ballymote, Joe ‘Mor’ McDonnell and Daniel Jones of Benada, interfered with a view to

preventing the parading and threats of Doddy’s supporters. They had a number of the paraders summoned and others arrested but their efforts to restore order were counteracted by the underhand agency of a Brunswick family in Ballymote, who had taken Doddy under their special protection and seemed to tacitly sanction the violence of his followers.

In July 1830 the *Observer* reported that those who organised themselves in favour of Rev Mr Doddy still persevered in ‘their lawless practices.’ It reported that during the previous week notices were posted on numerous houses intimating that unless they abandoned their support of Rev Mr O’Kane, their legitimate pastor, and frequented the chapel forcibly taken possession of by Doddy, their houses would be burned over their heads. On learning of these threatened outrages Joseph ‘Mor’ McDonnell, a resident of the parish, attended Mass in Bunninadden and in his capacity as a resident magistrate addressed the congregation seeking information from those on whom the notices had been served as to the identity of the miscreants who threatened them. No information was provided on that occasion, but promises were made that any illegal threats in the future would be reported to the said magistrate. In a parting comment the *Observer* expressed the hope that Doddy would cease to be instrumental in continuing a system that had led to such infamous conduct.

The ‘rebel’ cleric, then residing at Roadstown, where it is said he opened a small church for the benefit of his followers, gained further notoriety in 1829 by attempting to prosecute to capital conviction his brother, Thomas, for the theft of a mare. In the course of his evidence at the

Sligo Assizes he stated that he had been a parish priest from 1817 to 1824 before being suspended by his bishop, and afterwards spent some time in England but on his return had not been reinstated to his parish. He claimed ownership of a farm which his brother, Thomas, had attended to in his absence and collected the rents. They both lived together at Roadstown and on the night of January 5th, 1829, Thomas stole the mare which Fr Doddy claimed was his, having been purchased out of his 'oats money'. The mare was subsequently sold to one Andrew Doddy (relationship, if any, not stated) for £13, and this gave rise to the court proceedings which

were reported in some detail in the *Sligo Observer*. They included some witty exchanges between Fr Doddy and Judge Blakeney:

Judge: Have you been reinstated in your parish?

Doddy: No, Sir.

Judge: Why, your Reverence ?

Doddy: The oppression of my Bishop

Judge: Unfortunately, Doctor, you are out of your dues since you were suspended?

Doddy: Yes, I am.

Judge: That's a great misfortune for you are, no doubt, very fond of money.

Doddy: Yes, and so are you, I believe.

Judge: You ought to be a Bishop.

Doddy: I may yet, perhaps. I have as good a right to be a Bishop as you have to be a Judge.

On the conclusion of the evidence the case was dismissed.

Bishop McNicholas later reinstated Fr Doddy after he had shown signs of reform. In his latter years he lived in the vicinity of Bunninadden where he died in March 1869, aged 80 years. According to local tradition he lies at rest in an unmarked grave in Kilturra cemetery. His brother, Thomas, who had a leasehold of thirty acres in East Ballinvalley, or Roadstown, had predeceased him in 1859 and was survived by his wife, Anne.



Members of Ballymote Tennis Club, probably in the late 1920's . The photograph was taken in the castle where the court was located. If any reader can put names to faces please let the editor or any member of the Heritage Group know and the information can be published next year. Photograph provided by Pearse Brady, Cloonlurg

A strange thing happened on the way to the dance: An encounter in Sligo between two military men

Michael Farry

One of the fascinating discoveries I made while researching the history of the War of Independence period in Sligo for the recently-published *Sligo: The Irish Revolution 1912-1923* (Four Courts Press, 2012) was that of a typewritten account, including some photographs, by an officer of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment covering the activities of the 1st Battalion of that regiment while stationed in Ireland. The account, now in the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives, Bedford, covers the battalion's activities in Belfast, Fermanagh, Donegal, Sligo, Roscommon and Leitrim from 1920 to their departure after the Treaty in early 1922.

This 'summary of events' written by Captain A.L. Dunnill provides a valuable insight into the activities, tactics and attitudes of the British forces during this period. It is a day-by-day diary recording the incidents which came to the army's attention, and any action taken. It is an official history rather than a personal diary, and Dunnill's accounts of the Crown forces' response to police killings at north Sligo, Tubbercurry

and Ballymote make no mention of the reprisals which they were undoubtedly involved in. His and the troops' respect – and sometimes even admiration – for the activities of the IRA breaks through at times.

In response to increased activity by the IRA in the second half of 1920, the 1st Battalion had been moved from Belfast to Finner Camp near Ballyshannon on August 20. C Company, comprising just over 100 men, took over Sligo military barracks. The 1st Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment, based at Boyle, operated in south Sligo until the end of February 1921, when the Bedfordshire Battalion moved headquarters from Finner Camp to Boyle and took responsibility for Sligo, Leitrim and north Roscommon, C Company remaining at Sligo.

Jim Hunt was O/C of the Gurteen Battalion IRA and Michael Marren of the Ballymote Battalion at this time. In early 1921 each had a small, well armed, active service unit and they were able to engage in small scale activities which kept the enemy on their toes. These columns were flexible and were able to combine when necessary and call on Volunteers



Picture of Michael J Marren from the Sligo Champion, 30 July, 1921

who were not on the run for specific operations. Road-trenching, tree felling and destruction of bridges restricted the mobility of the Crown forces, and foiled the many large scale round-ups they conducted. The IRA's local knowledge and the availability of replacements when officers were arrested also helped the IRA columns to survive.

The railway line between Ballymote and Kilfree Junction and the branch line from Kilfree to Ballaghaderreen proved easy targets for the IRA. Trains were regularly stopped, RIC and soldiers on board were disarmed and Belfast goods taken. In January 1921 an IRA party under Hunt overpowered and disarmed an RIC District Inspector and two constables at Kilfree station, and later the same day opened fire on train carriages occupied by a group of the Bedfordshire Regiment as a train left the same station. On May 6, Marren led a party of between thirty and forty IRA, armed with ten to fifteen rifles and various other firearms, which held up the Dublin to Sligo train. Two soldiers and five Auxiliaries were disarmed and dispatches taken. On 23 May two constables were wounded near Keash when an IRA party under Tom Brehony, O/C Keash, fired on three Crossley tenders and a Ford car carrying thirteen Auxiliaries and thirteen RIC. A company of



A group of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment with a Lewis gun at Sligo military barracks c. 1920 (Foley/Kilgannon collection, Sligo County Library)

Auxiliaries was stationed at Boyle at this time.

In mid-May Jim Hunt was captured when he and two other IRA men opened fire on Ballaghaderreen RIC Barracks from a hi-jacked train. Hunt was held in Boyle military barracks. Joe Finnegan replaced him as O/C Gurteen Battalion and the raiding of trains continued, with hold-ups recorded on 19 and 26 May.

The 26 May hold-up is particularly fascinating as it brought together two officers, Commandant Michael J Marren O/C Ballymote Battalion and Major ESC Grune, O/C Sligo Troops, 1st Battalion, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.

We are fortunate that in Dunnill's document we have Grune's first-hand account of the meeting at the side of the railway track at Rathmullen, between Culfadda and Ballymote, of two military leaders from vastly different backgrounds

This is as it is recorded in Dunnill's account:



A trenched road near Ballymote (Dunnill, Summary)

Major ESC Grune is a passenger on this train and the details of the hold up can best be described in his own words:

'All off! Everybody off the train! Everybody off the train, and hurry up!'

Sitting quietly reading in one of the carriages of a corridor coach, I realised that the train was slowing down, but it was not until I heard these shouts that I became aware of the cause of the stop. I then heard footsteps scrambling along the permanent way, and more shouts, so I got up and went to the corridor and looked out of the window.

I found myself looking at the bank of a high cutting, over the top of which projected a varied assortment of rifle barrels. I crossed quickly to the other side of the carriage and, looking out of the window, saw a number of men standing with their various weapons at the 'ready' position along the full length of the train. The guard of the train next came bolting along the corridor, and asked, 'Are you armed?' but he was too agitated to wait for a reply.

I decided to sit on in the carriage and see what happened, as there were not enough passengers on the train for one to mingle with the crowd and escape detection by that means.

A few minutes later a youth with a Mauser rifle and two revolvers in a belt came along and ordered me off the train. As I was unarmed it seemed as if I must obey him. He had one finger hooked around the trigger guard of his Mauser, and uncertainty as to what that finger might do in the

excitement of the moment helped me to make up my mind.

I therefore climbed down and noticed that the owners of the herein before-mentioned rifles were standing up in a trench – probably a drainage trench – on the top of the cutting. At the end of this trench there was a 'sportsman' with two signalling flags, and another with a pair of glasses.

On reaching the permanent way I hesitated as to the direction I should take, and was promptly told to put my hands up, to keep them up, and to walk to the rear of the train.

There I was handed over to the man who appeared to me to be the leader of the raiding party. I was then searched, but as I had emptied my pockets before leaving Sligo nothing of any importance was found. The only article of military equipment which I possessed at the time was a swordfrog [a leather holder for a ceremonial sword].

A small notebook which had been taken away from me unluckily contained an old visiting card of mine. I was asked if the name on the card was mine, and as my name was on the back of my collar I thought it best to agree. I was then asked what I was doing, and I replied that I was just going into Boyle for the afternoon. I was asked if I was travelling on duty, and replied in the negative, and that I was going in for a dance that evening.

The possession of an ordinary first-class railway ticket instead of a duty warrant seemed to decide the point that I was not on duty.

I was then moved round to the other side of the train where the rest of the



Major ESC Grune (Army Museum, England)

Thursday, May 26th.

The Sligo to Dublin mailtrain is held up five miles northwest of Ballymote by about fifty armed and masked men who order all male passengers to get out of the train on to the permanent way.

passengers had been collected. There I found Sergeant Willett and my RASC [Royal Army Service Corps] driver, both in uniform. They were asked whether I was an officer of theirs, who I was, what I did, and so on. From neither of them was a single word of any sort forthcoming.

The leader of the raid now produced a notebook, looked at my visiting card, and then started to turn over the pages of his notebook to see if he had any record of my name therein. As I was at this time OC Troops at Sligo, I began to get a recurrence of that peculiar feeling in the pit of the stomach that all of us, heroes excepted, felt during the Great War when there was rather more 'stuff' than usual fizzing about.

By this time too, one or two unpleasant-looking individuals had grouped themselves behind the leader of the raiding party, and I did not feel at all sure that one of them would not take a 'pot shot' at me just to test the sights of his gun or out of sheer light-heartedness.

During this time I was able to take stock of the situation, and also of my chances of making a bolt for it in the event of their decision being unfavourable to me.

As far as the latter was concerned, my chances were nil, for there were about fifty or sixty men employed on the raid. Both sides of the train had been picqueted, some were removing the mailbags, sentries were posted on the engine and on the brakevan. A number of others were visible on the horizon, with flags, watching the roads, etc, I imagined.

Their arms seemed to consist largely of Winchester and Service rifles. Hardly any shotguns were visible. All kinds of revolvers were carried.

In a few minutes my captor finished scanning the pages of his notebook, and wrote my name in it. He had now apparently made up his mind on some course of action; what this was I was unable to surmise. He said nothing, however, but went off and stirred up the activities of the 'mail-carriers', knocking over en-passant a man who was busily engaged in turning over the contents of a commercial traveller's handbag, ordering him 'to

leave that alone and get on with your proper job'.

In less than five minutes he returned and started to chat with me. My anxiety was considerably relieved when he said: 'You know, I ought to take you away.' I admitted gently that as he had made a fair capture I was not in a position to argue what he should do. I then spotted that he too was becoming a little 'windy'. I noticed this because as he came up to me he pulled a cigar from his pocket and lit it before speaking to me. While he was talking to me the cigar went out, and when he went to light it again a moment or two later, he put the opposite end in his mouth, and was unconscious of the fact that he had done so.

He then said, 'Well, get up in your carriage,' at the same time ordering the other passengers on to the train as well as the raiders; remarking that they had been there too long. He took a look round to see if they were all aboard, and then climbed up himself and came to my carriage, where there were, besides myself, Sergt Willett, the driver, and our bodyguard.

He then opened the conversation again by asking me if I knew who he was. Naturally, I replied in the negative, whereupon he volunteered the information that he was Charles Marron.

I thought that a few soft words would do no harm, so I complimented him on the technical skill of the hold-up. This seemed to please him very much and on the strength of it he offered me a cigar. The train was now on the move again.

Marron now asked me why so many English officers wanted to resign in 1914 when it was a question of coercing Ulster, but nobody had offered to resign now that the South was being coerced. I found the question rather a poser to answer on the spur of the moment, but suggested that resignations had been offered but not accepted. He then remarked: 'Well, we are fighting for freedom, political freedom, that's all, and you English officers ought to help us instead of hindering us.'

By this time we were in Kilfree Junction Railway Station, where the

raiders proceeded to detain. Before leaving, Marron said 'good-bye' and asked me to take a message to one of his pals who was a prisoner in Boyle barracks. He then left the train, and I noticed a number of young women on the platform whom I suspected of receiving the arms of the raiders for safe custody.

After this the train left Kilfree, and nothing more of any interest happened before reaching Boyle, our destination, where we arrived about an hour after the scheduled time.

The incident itself, as well as Grune's account, are very interesting. It is surprising that neither officer was aware of the other's existence. This may be an indication of the poor state of intelligence services on both sides. It also seems strange, careless even, that the O/C Sligo would travel unarmed without a guard on a railway line subject to constant IRA interference. Grune was honest enough to admit fear while Marren checked his name against those in his notebook. Grune would have been aware of killings elsewhere in the country, and that on 19 April the IRA had taken two policemen from a train at Ballisodare and shot them dead. He does indulge in a little fun at the expense of the IRA, his fear that a finger might suddenly slip or an IRA member might take a pot-shot at him. In fact his account shows a very organised, efficient military action with the train being held up, all on board searched, weapons taken, military identified, without any exchange of fire. Grune may not have been as calm as he claimed. He got Marren's first name wrong. And despite the cigar mistake, Marren showed no signs of fear; rather he had the confidence to engage the British officer in conversation on the way to Kilfree.

Jim Hunt told Ernie O'Malley that immediately afterwards Grune visited him in his cell in Boyle, told him about the incident and said that Marren had asked for him. Grune asked if he had any requests, and Hunt requested that a pane of glass be taken out of his cell window for ventilation purposes. He also asked to be provided with a

bucket of whitewash so he could paint the cell. Both requests were granted.

The incident received little publicity and doesn't seem to have been reported in the local newspapers. The Sligo RIC County Inspector's report for May reported 39 outrages, including 26 robberies of arms, mails etc, and two attacks on police and Auxiliaries. It mentioned in particular the 6 May train hold-up and the Keash ambush on 23 May, but not the 26 May incident. It was reported in the Daily Railway Situation reports as follows: '27/5/21: On 26th inst between Ballymote and Kilfree the 13.40 hrs mail train Sligo to Dublin was held up and boarded by armed men at 14.05. These men travelled on the train to a point between Kilfree and Boyle where they stopped the train and detained.'

The report to IRA headquarters of the Sligo O/C IRA, William Pilkington, for May, dated 5 June, did not include any mention of the Rathmullen hold-up. It did mention the 6 May raid on train between Kilfree and Ballymote and the 23 May Keash ambush.

In their joint witness statement to the Bureau of Military History Thady McGowan and Tom Brehony included a short paragraph on the hold-up but gave the date as 29 June, 1921. Jim Hunt also gave that as the date in his conversation with Ernie O'Malley.

As 1921 progressed there was no reduction in IRA activity in south Sligo and train hold-ups were recorded on 10, 14, 23 and 29 June, and 6 July. In response to the continued IRA activity in the area, a company of the Bedfordshire Regiment moved from Carrick-on-Shannon and were stationed in Ballymote towards the end of June 1921. The truce came into effect on 11 July 1921. At that stage the Bedfordshire Regiment had three officers and 97 other ranks stationed at Sligo, two officers and 53 other ranks at Ballymote and seventeen officers and 237 other ranks at the headquarters at Boyle.

Edmund Sidney Chawner Grune had a long military career and served with other units of the British Army as well as the Bedfordshires. He was born in Surrey in 1887 and so was 34 years of

age when he met Marren. He served with the West African Regiment in Sierra Leone from 1909 to 1911. During the Great War he served in France, Belgium, Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey. He was wounded on two occasions and was mentioned in despatches. After his service in Ireland he was employed by the Palestine Gendarmerie 1922-23. In 1937 he reached retirement age with the rank of Lt-Col in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. During the Second World War he served as a squadron leader in the administrative and special duties branch and the Balloon Branch of the RAF Volunteer Reserve. He was promoted to the rank of Wing Commander. He died on 6 July 1960. His obituary especially mentioned his leadership qualities, his sense of humour and cheerful disposition.

According to the 1901 census, Michael James Marren was then living with his parents Timothy and Catherine in the townland of Knocknaskeagh, Gurteen and was fifteen years of age. This would suggest he was born in 1886 and was 35 at the time of the train hold-up meeting, a year or two older than the British officer. He was educated at the local primary school and became an apprentice at a local carpentry and joinery works. As the independence movement developed he became captain of the Killavil IRA company and later Commandant of the Ballymote Battalion. He was elected to Sligo County Council in June 1920. His men regarded him as a fearless and fair leader who was not interested in inflicting what he considered as unnecessary violence. Neither of the two killings of RIC in Ballymote, that of Sergeant Patrick Fallon in November 1920 or Constable O'Brien in March 1921, were ordered or sanctioned by him. He was however a member of the court martial which sentenced the British soldier known as John Watt to death in Glean Hall in 1920.

Marren's accidental death on the day following the truce in July 1921 was greatly mourned, and over two thousand IRA people were said to have marched behind the hearse on the way to Knockmore cemetery,

Mount Irwin. The local newspapers reported that as the funeral cortege left Sligo it was met by a lorry of British military. The officer in charge had his men dismount and stand to attention with arms reversed along the road. We have no idea who that officer was. It is very unlikely to have been Grune, but the soldiers were members of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.

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Sligo Champion

Sligo Independent

Sligo Nationalist

Thanks also to Nigel Lutt of the Bedfordshire Archives, to Steven Fuller, historian of the Bedfordshire Regiment in the Great War and to Chris Cooper of the National Army Museum, Chelsea.

The place where I was born

Bernie Gilbride

On the west coast of Ireland, lies
Sligo town,
Surrounded by mountains and sea,
Ancient history here abounds
Where God placed me

Its beauty renowned, in Yeats
verses found,
Ben Bulbin, Knockrea, Inishfree,
Sluthwood, Slish Wood,
Hazelwood
Dooney Rock, Magherabuidgh

Strandhill, Rosses Point,
Lisadell, Mullaghmore,

Beaches to swim, surf, sail, and
ski
Horse riding, tennis, golf, for you
or me.

Garavogue River to explore,
Lough Gill's islands, woodlands,
shores,
Fish, its waters, its streams,
Visit Tobernalt, pray, rest, dream.

Under Knockrea the 'Cromlech
graves,'
Ancient cemetery, prehistoric
ways,

Rock formations, geometrically
designed,
With mountain peaks aligned.

Ogham writings on rocks
intrigues,
History fascinates, millennia old,
Learning lasts to eternity,
Where God placed me.

--
'Sonas', Circular Road, Sligo
February 2013

An Irish Emigrant of the Fifties

Joan Gleeson

Employment then was for the few
So this is what we chose to do:
Take the boat across the sea
To earn a crust in a new country.
Right through the foaming main
The old boat ploughed
The evening bright, the sky without
a cloud.
Farewell to homeland, a new life
dawned
A long adventure spawned.

At last dry land was reached
Long train pulled up, puffed, braked
and screeched
Dark night was falling as
Landscapes new were calling.
Helmeted policemen in dark uniform
Suspiciously eyed us on train
platform
Tired and weary we took our seats
Promptly settled and dozed asleep.

Some hours later the time it flew
Train guard called out strange station
names, *Rugby, Crewe*
All change, except the London bound
Who'll travel on with rumbling
sound.

Railway lines like tangled thread
In ordered form before us spread
The train at great high speed
Ate up those tracks with rampant
greed.

For miles and miles the suburbs
grew,
And mile for mile this was my view:
Tall chimney stacks, industrial
estates,
The backs of houses, blue Bangor
slates.
Here and there an old church steeple
The Christian symbol for many
people.

By 6am we reached Euston station
The train spilled out like Sunday
congregation.
Paperboys ran up and down
Sensational news from London town
Read All about it! Read All about it!
Their never-ending mantra shouted.
I thought I heard a Western storm
Turned out t'was roar of traffic in the
morn.

On walking out I see a church
With two heavy suitcases there I
lurch.
But as I enter, plain to see
This church is clearly not RC
Back out! I must not go within
To do so then was Mortal Sin.

Red double-decker buses snaked
along
And large black taxis followed on
I joined the throngs of Lombard
Street
Invisible speck amongst those I meet.
A challenge beyond my comfort zone
In this new world I'll make my own.
Those new beginnings were so
exciting
A host of opportunities inviting
One cannot tell what the future holds
Just live each day as life unfolds.

Faster, Higher, Stronger: My experience of the Olympics

Conor McDonagh

There is no show greater or more captivating than the Olympic Games. It boasts an almost complete cross-section of the world's population. Its ideal of 'a healthy mind in a healthy body' is the cornerstone that has inspired generation after generation.

History of the Olympics

Baron Pierre de Coubertin of France realised his dream of reinventing the ancient Olympics in 1896, when the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece. The first Olympic champion of the modern Olympics was an Irish-American, James Connolly. He won the gold medal with a jump of 13.71 metres in the men's triple jump. He followed this achievement with a bronze medal in the long jump, and four years later a silver medal in the triple jump in Paris in 1900.

The Olympics is held every four years in a different city. The reason for this is to increase awareness of the Olympics, and only five nations have participated at every Summer Olympic Games of the modern era. They are Greece, France, Great Britain, Switzerland and Australia, though not always as part of official teams. On the other hand, Vatican City is one sovereign state never to have competed in an Olympics.

Olympic Dreams

'Congratulations! We are delighted to confirm that you have been allocated the London 2012 Olympic Games tickets you applied for.' So read the email I received on 17 June 2011. Ever since I was old enough to understand what the Olympic Games were about I had wanted to attend, and now I knew my dream was going to come true.

Over one million fans applied for tickets to witness Bolt perform at the Olympics on 5 August 2012. When I heard that all those people had applied for tickets for London and I got one, I thought, 'Wow, amazing, someone is looking down favourably on me.'

My earliest Olympic memory was that of the Opening Ceremony of Seoul 1988, and they were always a major part of my life. I fell short of actual qualification as an athlete by tenths of a second for the Sydney Olympics in 2000. However I made up for it by running at the World Athletics League Series in Melbourne a few years later, in a race which featured Asafa Powell. It hadn't worked out for me as an athlete on the Olympic stage, but I was determined to pursue my passion for the Olympics. Getting tickets was the next best thing, especially considering the Olympics were on my door-step in London. I felt this was the opportunity of a lifetime, one that not many people get. Boarding the plane in Dublin was nothing short of destiny, fulfilling a life long dream. I was privileged to be finally going to the Olympics.

Olympic Stadium and Park

I got what are called 'final night tickets' to see the men's 100 metre final and also the men's 400 metre final. I will never forget the feeling as I walked into the Olympic stadium those nights. I felt like a kid on Christmas morning as I approached Olympic Park. I could see the lights of the stadium from the train as it approached Olympic park train station. The park and stadium were constructed with astonishing attention to detail. There is an Energy Centre in the park which details all the different stages in the construction of the

place. It described the environmental impact of the site and how the power was provided. They used low carbon concrete and reduced steel in the construction. The Olympic Park was chosen for an area in east London which underwent a transformational renaissance. It is an amazing and inspirational field of study in itself, and one that fascinated me.

There were two rounds of security checks, like airport security, run by the British army. All the attendants were more than friendly and welcoming, clearly a decision that had been taken by the London 2012 organising committee. On one occasion I had a bottle of orange juice in my backpack and the army officer said "You've got two choices mate, drink it here or give it to me!" Inside the stadium was the Olympic Flame. I can only describe it as bright white flames in a huge golden bowl. It is the symbol for the Olympics and conjures all sorts of emotions and images to everyone. It's the reference point for the whole spectacle. The torch had one day outside the United Kingdom when it visited Dublin on 6 June 2012.

The evening began with a welcoming message from Lord Sebastian Coe, the head of London 2012. There were huge screens at every corner of the stadium which showed spine-tingling moments from previous Olympic Games. Events started at 5.45pm exactly, with the women's pole vault at one end of the stadium and the women's shot put at the other. From then on it was full steam ahead until the main event of the night. The stadium was packed to the rafters, with people's heads everywhere. I was sitting beside a lovely elderly couple from England on my left and



The author at London 2012

an African couple to my right. The pressure on people these days with finance and work is difficult and a situation like this for them to escape was amazing.

Usain Bolt

Ever since Bolt won three gold medals at Beijing 2008, the Jamaican sprinter has become as famous for his electrifying personality as for his superhuman speed. The energy in the stadium from the audience was gigantic. When Bolt appeared the place went hysterical. Everyone was captivated by him and his antics. I might add they were incredibly entertaining. It was hard not to be emotional after watching what had just happened. This is clearly what everyone wanted to see and everyone was on their feet screaming. The silence before the race was deafening and then the noise reached a crescendo as he crossed the finish line in a new Olympic record of 9.63 seconds. My initial thoughts were, 'How did he do that?' The world had stood still to see this one race and I was there in the thick of it actually watching him. He delivered what was expected in extraordinary fashion under enormous pressure.

The 100 metre final was breath taking. Bolt teased the crowd, and held up the final by 5 minutes gesturing

to the audience. It felt as though we were all looking at an Olympic athlete sent to us from the Olympic Greek gods. The look of wonder and joy on everyone's face to be actually there watching this amazing man was astonishing and unforgettable.

Bolt had left his mark indelibly upon the minds of all there, and London had succeeded in its goal of achieving the most memorable and successful Olympics to date, impacting the social, political and educational fabrics of society.

Life at the Olympics

The buzz and excitement were evident everywhere. I walked around the Olympic Park and Olympic Village on Monday evening August 6 and also Tuesday August 7. This privilege was extended to me on the grounds that I had Olympic Tickets. I met the 400 metre champion Kirani James at a restaurant in the Village and he kindly signed my Olympic programme and stood for photos. I also met the Jamaican women's relay team, who wondered why I was wearing a Jamaican tracksuit. I informed them that I had bought it earlier that day in the gift shop. They were very proud of the fact that a non-Jamaican was supporting them and gifted me their Olympic flag in gratitude. I've always felt there has been a

connection between Ireland and Jamaica. Everyone was so friendly and happy. Colour, creed or belief did not matter there, as everyone was part of the Olympic family and exchanged flags and tracksuits in gestures of friendship.

The food was excellent in the Olympic park. There were restaurants with mile-long tables of buffets that catered for every taste and need in the world. The colour and array of food were astonishing. It matched all of the different flags and national tracksuits that were to be seen everywhere.

The Orbit was a natural draw. This was a steel construction of modern art towering over the Olympic stadium. The idea behind it was an expression of masses of hands intertwined. It was a landmark point. Every one had their photo taken beneath it.

At any one minute you would see or meet an Olympic champion past or present. Famous people were to be seen everywhere, and they all seemed approachable and welcoming.

London 2012

London became the first city to have hosted the modern Olympic Games on three occasions. The costs of my tickets were £350 for Sunday 5th August and £250 for Monday 6th August. It was calculated that an audience of four billion people watched the Olympic Games of London 2012. The broadcast deal with NBC, the American network television station, was worth more than one billion dollars for the rights to show the London Games in the USA.

I had travelled over to London the previous December to a friend's wedding and went to see how the preparations were going while I was there. I happened to meet Jonathan Edwards, the former triple jump Olympic champion, and he was extremely welcoming and hospitable. I had my photo taken at the Olympic Countdown Clock in Trafalgar Square. One thing I noticed from my visit in December to the week of the

Olympic Games in August 2012 was the stark difference in the mood and expression on the faces of the people in the Tube, London's underground train network. People did not make eye contact with each other in December and I'm told with the pace of life in London this is quite normal. However during the Olympics it was the direct opposite with everyone friendly and welcoming.

For the duration of the Olympic Games I stayed with friends from Northern Ireland, Michael and Haley Mc Phillips and their two-year-old daughter Orla, in their apartment in Shepherd's Bush. On Sunday morning I attended the women's marathon final. I watched it from Westminster Bridge along the Thames river. There I met with Imelda Smith and Ciaran Fitzpatrick, a former 400 metre

sprinter from Dublin who is now a physiotherapist. Later we met up with Ciaran and Croinne McDonagh. Ciaran was the physical therapist for the Jamaican sprint team at London 2012. He was a world finalist at the long jump in Seville 1999. Once people realised we were Irish the only question on their lips was, did we know Katie Taylor?

Katie Taylor was amazing and will live long in our memory. Everyone will remember where they were when Katie won gold. The English openly supported the Irish on that occasion. One could argue that Katie Taylor was a major factor in introducing women's boxing to the Olympics. She was the darling of the games. She delivered by winning gold in the women's lightweight division. Ireland rejoiced and the world celebrated. I

will never forget the deafening roar when it was announced that Katie was the Olympic gold medal winner. Ireland had been waiting for twenty years since our last gold medal. She was the undisputed star of the Games in many people's eyes, and not just in Ireland. Little wonder that she was awarded an additional prize as one of the outstanding female athletes of the Olympic Games at the closing ceremony.

The memories I take away from London 2012 will last a lifetime. It was one of the best weeks of my life and a wonderful opportunity. Well done to London for an amazing Olympics, and I deeply thankful that I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to attend.

Synge's Chair on Inishmaan

Bernie Doyle

Trailing upwards on stony paths
Craggy lanes whose shoulder-high walls
Hide the rocks declining to the cliffs.
A wide expanse of Burren crags
Leads onward to the poet's chair –
A circular wall enclosure,
Open to the seaward side,
Two flat bare stone seats.
Sea-birds dive from crevassed cliffs
Into the spuming green waters,
While all around sun and wind
Iridescence and shadow create.
Pillars of stone, wrought by long-dead hands
Stand sentinel on the rugged coast.
Frail jewel-coloured flowers
Bloom in nook and cranny,
Visited by hoards of fragile butterflies
Blue and orange and brown and gold.
Ancient peace and monastic quiet
Distil the essence of the poet.

Inishmaan

Bernie Doyle

Took a giant step
Into the tiny aircraft,
All weighed and set
Both baggage and self.

Over the broad Atlantic
Slabs of flat rock beckon,
Guarded by Dun Conor
And 6000 miles of stone
Walls built by islander's hands
To protect their tiny fields,
Wrested from rock, reclaimed by seaweed
Torn from the sea on their backs.
Now cattle, sheep and donkeys graze.

Light, gas and phone ease
The lot of hardy island people,
In outboard-engined currachs they fish.
By plane and boat the guests arrive
A summer bumper crop,
Till winter seals in and
Returns the island to its people.

Three Stones and a Well-Dressed Man: The Story Behind the Story

By Martin A Timoney

Good information does not get recorded on time and much of what does get archived deserved to have been binned. However, it is often not until long after that you realise what questions you should have asked and what answers you should have archived. Research into what has been archived, be it manuscript or printed, can be a never-ending pursuit! You get out a book in a research library, perhaps NLI or SLLSA, and soon you need yet another publication that the first draws you to, but there you may have to wait! Some days can be exhausting, boring, others enthralling, satisfying, much more so than watching the crime detectives 'pull' a modern 'story' together. This piece is about what you can discover by keeping asking questions. Having spent months editing the just-published *Dedicated to Sligo, Thirty-four Essays on Sligo's Past*, we treat here of background stories about three stones that are dealt with in greater detail in the book, and also a suit of 17th century clothes that got a mention by way of an unrelated question from one of the authors. Copious references and illustrations may be found in *Dedicated to Sligo*.

Eleanor's Triangle

The book has a trilogy of articles relating to Eleanor Butler, Countess of Desmond, circa 1545-?1638. It was she who had the O'Connor Sligo-Butler monument erected above the high altar in Sligo Abbey.

The triangular head of a memorial was found in a well at the east end of the Denny's Bacon Factory site

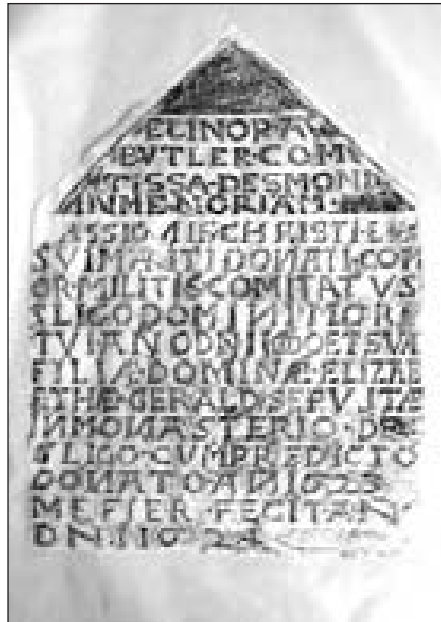


Fig 1 The Eleanor Butler memorial of 1624 'reconstructed' from rubbings made in Sligo and at Braganstown

in Quay St in 1989 by Noel Dunne; Sligo City Hotel stands on the site. For a time some people considered this to be part of the magnificent O'Connor Sligo-Butler monument, even though that monument is intact and entire. Mention of the discovery circulated in Sligo town for a while and we included a photo of it in *A Celebration of Sligo* in 2002 (140, d) but that drew not a whisper.

Sometime later the Timoney household had a phonecall from JM Conlon who gave us great detail about the bottom part of the memorial, and soon afterwards he sent us a twelve-page small copybook manuscript version of the story as he knew it. There was no address on the signed manuscript and he had not given us a phone number! If only we had got his contact details we would not have

spent over twenty years trying to track down JM Conlon. Without Conlon's information the story of this memorial would have remained lost in early 20th century printed pages in *The Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead, Ireland* (JAPMDI) and in a Co Louth local history for more generations.

We knew from Conlon's manuscript that he had a married daughter living in Dromiskin, Co Louth, but we did not have any part of her name. We went to Louth to see the bottom part of the memorial in February 2011. However, if we had gone to Braganstown more than six years ago they would not have known what we were talking about as it had not come to light by then; it was only discovered by workers in recent years. The correctly reassembled stone – it had been in three when found recently – is securely built into an inside wall of a building at Braganstown. From our record of the two stones made in Sligo and at Braganstown we have 'reconstructed' the memorial, at least in photographs in *Dedicated to Sligo* and here (Fig 1) from rubbings. The three framing stones that were found with the triangular top part have not been located.

After recording the stone at Braganstown and after food and advice from the Thatched Cottage, Castlebellingham, Co Louth, several people, shops and the post office were sought out in Dromiskin, a village centred on an Early Monastic foundation, but we drew a complete blank on finding Conlon's daughter on the day. Some weeks



Fig 2 The 'Sligo 2 Dublin' milestone, Two Mile Hill, Ballyglass, Calry, Co Sligo. Photo: Martin A. Timoney

later Peter Mulligan of the post office in Dromiskin mentioned to Roisín Langan, daughter of Anthony and Lena Langan who have Sligo connections, that there was a Sligo archaeologist looking in the village for a Sligo-born lady whose maiden name was Conlon. Roisín mentioned it to her friend, Orna Owens, whose mother Elizabeth is the daughter of the JM Conlon we were looking for. She told her father and he rang us with great delight. James M Conlon turns out to be living in Ballydoogan on the west side of Sligo. He confirmed the whole story to us and explained that in 1998 his son-in-law, David Owens, loaned him James B Leslie's *History of Kilsaran Union of Parishes in the County of Louth*, 1908, having seen reference in that book to stones from Sligo being at Braganstown in Kilsarn Parish.

The inscription in Latin reads in translation: Eleanor Butler Countess of Desmond in memory of the Passion of Christ, and of her [2nd] husband

[Sir] Donagh Connor, Knight [-Miles], Lord of the County of Sligo [= "O'Conor Sligo?"], who died the year of our Lord 1609, and of her daughter Lady Elizabeth [? Fitz] Gerald, who was buried in the Monastery of Sligo with the aforesaid Donagh in the year 1623, caused me to be erected in the year of our Lord 1624.

Greater detail of the memorial is to be found at pages 111 to 115 of *Dedicated to Sligo*, but the major credit goes to James M Conlon for telling us that the lower portion was at Braganstown.

A Mile Stone

Jim Foran offered to review Fiona Gallagher's 864-page tome *Streets of Sligo, Urban Development over Seven Centuries*, which she herself published in 2008 and then he added Horner's *Mapping Sligo in the Early Nineteenth Century: with an Atlas of William Larkin's Map of County Sligo, 1819*, published by Wordwell in 2011, and Gallagher and Marie-Louise Legg's *Irish Historic Towns Atlas. No. 24, Sligo*, published by the Royal Irish Academy in 2012.

The concept of Jim's article was to three works on mapping Sligo up to the 21st century, informing us of the mapping of Sligo that we have. With liberal editorial prompting, the article was just going over four pages and we met to cut some words and sentences, but not thoughts. I had noticed that Two Mile Hill, Calry, was the address of a subscriber to an earlier volume. Jim, who had spent much of his early life in the Calry area, explained that Two Mile Hill was in Ballyglass and that there was a milestone (Fig 2) on the roadside, though it has been moved a little to where it is now set into a wall on the north side of the road.

Milestones are an endangered species. Road widening means they get moved and road improvements means

some get buried. Bridget Timoney in 2007 (*The Corran Herald*, 40, 25-26) published some more modern ones along the road from the Sligo side into Ballymote and she had difficulty finding some of those, though not a milestone of another early type in Hazelwood.

The inscription 'Sligo 2 Dublin' is intriguing; surely Dublin is in a different direction! Its position matches the '2 mile' mark on Thomson's 1800 map, a map dedicated to Charles O'Hara (Horner 2011, Fig 23a). The stone is two miles from Sligo on what we now would consider to be Manorhamilton, Enniskillen and Belfast road, certainly not that towards Dublin. However, examining another Larkin map, that of Post Roads of 1805 (Horner 2011, Fig 24), it is clear that this was indeed a road from Sligo to Dublin, going through Manorhamilton, Florence(court), Belturbet and Cavan. I have failed to find '1 mile' and '3 mile' milestones on the Calry road. Arnold Horner

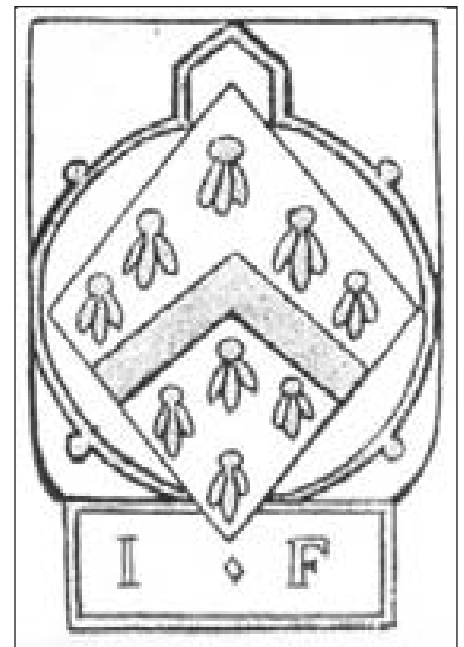


Fig 3 Lord Walter FitzGerald's drawing of the French coat-of-arms that was at Tobernalt in 1912. The spacing confirms E F, for Ellen French, would be the correct reading

(pers. comm.) thinks the milestone may date to the period 1630 to 1750 and having to do with Grand Jury.

This local name, Two Mile Hill, has indirectly revealed a point I had missed out on completely when reading of travel writers record coming and going by this route, particularly the route taken by Beranger and Bigarri in 1779 coming to Sligo from Dublin, so eloquently detailed by Peter Harbison in *Treasure of Antiquities* and in *Celebration of Sligo*, both published in 2002.

Marriage Stones

One evening the two Timoneys were in Sligo Abbey checking some final details for the book. Mary B took to looking at some recumbent gravestones, as she is wont to do. I floated my eyes along the O’Crian armorial monuments under the tower. Days later Mary B queried me about a drawing published (Fig 3) in *The Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead: Ireland* in 1912 of an armorial stone that was then at Tobernalt holy well; Tobernalt is at the west end of Lough Gill, about two miles out of Sligo town. Instantly, the similarity with a piece (Fig 4) under the Abbey tower struck me. Cochrane (1936, 13-14) records that this stone was taken to Tobernalt from Sligo Abbey before it had been vested in the Commissioners of Public Works in 1893. Wood-Martin in 1902 in his *Traces of the Elder Faiths* included a photo of the altar which then had the stone incorporated in its front. The altar has been rebuilt since then.

We had recollection from some 20th century sources that there was a piece of sculpture from the Abbey at Tobernalt but I had never seen it, but we should have asked those who frequented it down the century. The altar at Tobernalt was rebuilt decades

ago. Where is the armorial stone now? A search of the site, local inquiry and a piece in *The Sligo Champion* added nothing. The stone is lost to research!

What we do know of the stone comes from the early 20th century. Lord Walter FitzGerald described and illustrated it and he took the initials to be ‘IF’, for I French, but examination of the spacing confirms that the horizontals of the first letter are missing. Henry Crawford (1921, 30) suggested it should be ‘EF’. Mary B Timoney has included detail on these stones in her article. Dr Jim Higgins of Galway confirmed that this was a coat-of-arms for a female and that her surname was French. He and Fiona Gallagher have traced an Ellen French of the Galway Merchant Family at the appropriate time, about 1600. Ellen was married to Andrew (FitzJohn) O’Crian (Gallagher 2008, 129) and the stone under the Abbey tower is for him. In a lecture to Sligo Field Club in the early 1950s (extract in John McTernan, *Olde Sligo*, 1995, 34) the Ballymote-born historian J.C. McDonagh noted that Andrew Fitz John O’Crian, pardoned 19th April,

1603, then “of Galway”, married Ellen French of that city.

The O’Crians or O’Creans, possibly now Cryan, were major merchants, wine, etc, in Sligo and Diarmuid Ó Catháin tells me that there are O’Crian papers in Spain. These two stones, then, are from a single monument and they are very important in that they reflect the marriage of a Sligo trading family to a Galway one where, unlike in Sligo, armorial and marriage stones are frequent.

On their own these two stones do not fit with any of the visible sculptured stone in the Abbey though some would argue that they belong with one of the O’Crian armorial stones under the said Abbey tower. They would more comfortably be from a house rather than from the Abbey itself.

A Well-Dressed Man

Albert Siggins, formerly of National Museum of Ireland, long-time stalwart of Co Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society, offered an article on Patrick Cleary from Ownykeevaun. Cleary was not known to me but the rhythmic Ownykeevaun lurked somewhere



Fig 4 The A C, for Andrew (FitzJohn) O’Crian, coat-of-arms at Sligo Abbey. Photo: Mary B Timoney



Fig 5 Mícheal Sheridan, Edward Cleary and the author in May 2013 at the findplace in 1969 of the Tawnmore bog burial; Photo: Martin Wilson

in my mind as being in the northern foothills of the Ox Mountains, west of Dromore West. When Albert mentioned connections with Patrick Tohall, a founder member of Sligo Antiquarian Society and Sligo Field Club, and Dr AT Lucas, Director of NMI, I knew this had to be genuine and good.

Albert wrote the article but this Editor, as any Editor should do, asked if we could find descendants of Cleary. Mary B Timoney, who taught in Easky Vocational School, for once in that Barony of Tireragh, had nothing to offer. Next was Martin Wilson, active on many fronts across Tireragh! Wilson soon tracked down Edward Cleary to Tullylinn, Culleens. He is a son of John Cleary and grandson of Patrick Cleary c 1876-1961, and he provided photos which added a personal element to Siggins' article.

Totally unrelated to this, Paul Walsh, Director of Archaeological Survey of Ireland and minder of the Record of Monuments and Places at the Department of Arts, Heritage and

the Gaeltacht, asked me about the *precise* location of the Tawnmore bog body found in May 1969. The record on the National Monuments



Fig 6 Front view of the late 17th century clothes worn by Tawnmore man. © National Museum of Ireland

Service file noted that the location had been supplied by Mary B Timoney in 1989. We could not personally give detail despite having included some paragraphs on it in *A Celebration of Sligo* (Timoney and Heraughty 2002, 290-291). If the National Monuments Service did not have detailed record, then the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) might be able to help. Mary Cahill came back on the phone with the NMI file in hand. The record from 1969, though fulsome on the clothes and the body, does not contain *details* of a find spot. All the RMP file had was mention of it being thirty yards from a prehistoric megalithic tomb. There was one 'final' source; track down Edward Cleary again.

His instant response: "It was I who found that! Never heard anything of it since! Was it important?" He was delighted to hear that the clothes had been conserved and are on display in NMI. He was then an 18-year



Fig 7 Back view of the late 17th century clothes worn by Tawnmore man. © National Museum of Ireland

old cutting turf for Patrick Joseph Sheridan of nearby Glen. In May 2013 Edward Cleary, born 1950, and Mícheal Sheridan, son of Patrick J Sheridan, born the year of the find, showed us the exact location of where Edward made the discovery in May 1969 (Fig 5). The heather has covered the bog cuttings but the two men were precise as to the location in this featureless area; bog is to be seen in every direction. We made an accurate record of the location, 38 m east of a modern bog road as recent as the 1960s. The prehistoric wedge tomb, 50m north of the burial position, is barely exposed above the bog surface.

The clothes (NMI IA 1969:70a-k) were published as part of the normal NMI acquisitions listing for 1969 in *JRSAI*, 102 (1972), 215-222, where Rosaline Murphy describes them in great detail. More recently, Mairead Dunleavy weaved them into her classic book *Dress in Ireland* in 1989.

When the bog body was found in May 1969 the Gardaí were alerted, Sgt PJ Duffy of Dromore West Station was involved, and then the Coroner, Dr Patrick Heraughty; Michael Cahalane of Sligo Field Club is mentioned on the NMI file as well.

The bog body, christened 'Walter', was found supine with his head to SSW and at an angle to the face of the turf bank. Cleary remembers the fingernails being very long and that the hair was long; the Museum record gives the hair as being 30 cm long. Walter, a middle-aged man, 5 ft 7 in tall, was wearing a hat, coat, jacket, breeches, stockings, gaiters and shoes (Figs. 6-7); the shoes are not shown in these photos but are to be seen in *J Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 102 (1972), 216, fig 17. The Museum record says the bog body was on twigs but Edward Cleary can not confirm this as he left when work stopped when the find was made. These twigs were either of hazel, or,

less likely, of birch. The Museum record indicates that there was two feet of bog over him and two feet of bog under the twigs. Cleary and Sheridan say these figures are too large, more like about 18 inches over and 12 inches under.

Heraughty took all into care and kept them from deteriorating until John C O'Sullivan of NMI collected them. Prof Erskine of TCD examined the bones and a considerable mass of soft tissue that was recovered.

'Walter' has always been ascribed to the 17th century. More precise dating comes from research by Mairead Dunleavy on the basis that the coat is of a style introduced to Court by Charles II in 1666 and Dunleavy leaned towards the 1680s for it. The other clothes had been much repaired and the hat is of an earlier style. The man found in Tawnamore was of the period that Henry McCarrick, whom Nollaig Ó Muraíle writes about in *Dedicated to Sligo*, was living in Sligo town. The early 17th century clothed bog-body [?] found at Killery in Kilross Parish in 1824 is also NMI.

Walter was found in Tawnamore but we do not know where he was from. There are many questions, having been to this remote location, we now must ask. Was the raft of twigs part of a togher as Prof Emeritus Michael O'Connell suggested to me? Edward Cleary does not know of any bog roads in this area. What was he doing up in this isolated area, a little over 400 ft above sea level? Where was he going? The location is so far south from the present main Sligo-Ballina road that it is almost within touching distance of both the Lough Easky and Lough Talt gaps through the Ox Mountains. Was this a burial? If so why were the clothes not kept! There is no indication of foul-play nor of ritual sacrifice. Did he lie down in the bog and simply die? Hardly so if there was an arrangement of twigs under

him! Was he found dead and some respectful people buried him? If only someone had made proper record of what was under Walter we would be much wiser. However, now forty-four years later, thanks to Edward Cleary and Mícheal Sheridan, we have a pinpoint on where he lay for almost three centuries.

Despite the efforts of many in Sligo, including Dr Patrick Heraughty's family, Donal, Sheila, Patricia and Marie, Dr Des Moran, the current coroner, and several in Sligo County Council, the Courts Service and Brian Donnelly and Aideen Ireland at the National Archives of Ireland, the coroner's file from 1969 has not been located.

Comment

These are just a few of the stories that dropped out of editing *Dedicated To Sligo*. They came about by continually asking questions, casual, careless, curious questions, while still pushing an author, determined by endless digressions to be the winner of the slow bicycle race over the repeatedly extended deadline. The stories of our past are fragmented and linking the bits can be so rewarding. These loose ends would have been resolved much more easily if more questions had been asked in the past and the information had been archived, improving the record that gets lost with the passing of time, but then we would have missed out on the thrill of the chase! Many of the thirty-six authors in *Dedicated to Sligo* are mentioned throughout this article and many are well known to Ballymote Heritage Group from having lectured to it or written for *The Corran Herald*. All know the good feeling of success on the never-ending pursuit!

Two Giants of Irish Life

By PJ Duffy

Back in the closing decades of the eighteenth century there dwelled in our country two gentlemen whose talents and achievements gained for them a secure place among the business folk of the populace, and among every householder in the land and indeed further afield. To this day everybody is as familiar with the names of Theophilus Moore and Arthur Guinness as they were when they first came forward with their fine creations over 200 years ago.

Theophilus Moore was a teacher of English, Greek and Latin who ran a classical academy at Milltown, then a small village on the outskirts of Dublin which has since that time been incorporated into the city. He was also a clever mathematician who was totally dissatisfied with the calendars and almanac registers of the day. He vowed that whenever he gave up his work as a teacher he would devote a good deal of his time towards compiling an almanac that was detailed and simple to understand. True to his word he got to work and in 1764 he published his old Moore's Almanac which from the beginning was a huge success and remains so to this very day.

Down through the years if you happened to miss out on buying your yearly edition of Old Moore's Almanac, the following year would not be the same without it and you would be completely lost for general information relating to everyday life. Those of us who are still around and can remember well back into the last century will recall the lovely poems and compositions submitted by people like Patrick Tunney, Joe Fogerty, Andrew McGill and many more too numerous to mention. Theophilus Moore was a man of ability whose genius and foresight has ensured that his name lives on in Irish history.



Alexis Soyer in 1849

Down through the years Patrick Tunny from Mayo was a well-known contributor of poems and verse to old Moore's Almanac. He was also well known as a songwriter. He passed away during the middle years of the last century. After his passing one of his admirers wrote the following lines for the Lady Di section of the almanac, which was set aside for bards and composers:

*Now Lady Di your pen now don
And mourn with me a while
For Patrick Tunney he is gone
Bright star of Erin's Isle
No more he'll write on famed Mayo
Or sing the songs of yore
I'm afraid it will be hard to fill
His place on Di's role
For he was always to the fore
Brave Tunney who's no more.*

When Theophilus Moore first compiled his Almanac it was known as *The Irish Merlin*. He was born in County Offaly in 1730. He is believed to have started working on his Almanac during his spare time in the 1760s. He was reputed to be related to the poet Thomas Moore. He passed away in the first decade of the nineteenth century aged 80 years. Ever since his passing his Almanac became known as Old Moore's Almanac. Theophilus Moore is buried in Drumcondra Churchyard.

Arthur Guinness

It was during that period of the eighteenth century when Theophilus Moore came to the fore that also brought about the arrival of Arthur Guinness, another Irishman whose name is enshrined deeply in our history. He was born in 1724 in Cellbridge, Co. Kildare. According to legend it was while working as a bartender as a young man that he discovered what people who were drinking beer at the time really wanted. There would be strong criticism coming from the direction of the customer if the liquor being consumed wasn't quite up to standard, and he heard comments like 'it's flat' or 'the fizz is gone out of that stuff' or 'it tastes like slop' or 'there is no substance in it'. His experience led him to believe that the regular drinker was more discerning than was previously thought.

After inheriting a sum of money in 1756 he set up and operated his own brewery in Leixlip town, and it was here that he perfected his own special brand of Guinness Extra stout. His efforts brought him instant success and Guinness Extra stout was much in demand. In 1759 he moved to Dublin where he signed a 9,000-year lease on a disused brewery in James Street from Mark Rainsford, and it was there that the Guinness success story took off. Soon every tavern and guesthouse in the country was busy putting up signs advertising Guinness Extra stout. Among the slogans: 'Guinness is good for you'. 'Have a rest, have a Guinness' and 'Guinness stout is good no doubt.' Arthur Guinness had founded something that had made his name famous and it would remain so for centuries to come. In Dublin city his business gave considerable employment to a large number of workers, and grew to be one of the main hubs of life in the city. He died in January 1803 aged 78.

Further Light on the Linen Industry in 18th Century Ballymote

By John Coleman

In an article in the 2009/10 issue of *The Corran Herald* I described the significant linen industry developed in Ballymote during the eighteenth century. This ambitious commercial enterprise was initiated by John Fitzmaurice, 1st earl of Shelburne (1706 -1761) in the 1750s, expanded by his son Hon Thomas Fitzmaurice, a pupil of the moral philosopher and influential economist Adam Smith (1723-90), and drew the particular attention of the writer and agricultural economist Arthur Young (1741-1820) who visited Ballymote in 1776.

I have since become aware of additional information on two different aspects of the story: the period between the death of the John Fitzmaurice and his son Thomas's arrival in Ballymote and, secondly on Thomas himself and his involvement with Ballymote.

A tale of two Wakefields!

In my earlier article I noted that when Young visited Ballymote in 1776 he

was told by Thomas Fitzmaurice that, following his father's death in 1761, his widowed mother had engaged 'Wakefield' 'the great Irish factor [merchant] in London' and that he succeeded in increasing the industry to sixty looms. Young went on to note that unfortunately after Wakefield's death the business was neglected for a year and Lady Shelburne was less well served by his replacement in managing the enterprise. Letters which I have discovered in the Public Record Office for Northern Ireland in Belfast (PRONI) are a particularly important addition to our knowledge since they are contemporary documents written by participants in the action, rather than second- or third-hand accounts given in later sources. Even Young's account was written more than a decade after events described and does not always tally with the documentary evidence set out below.

Included are letters written by Edward Wakefield, and the earliest

such letter is worth quotation in full as it tells us a great deal not just about Wakefield's plans, but what was already in place when he was writing in December 1764. It is clear that Wakefield was only commencing his involvement with Ballymote in 1764, four years after the death of the 1st earl of Shelburne in 1761 – a long interval that was not hinted at by Young. The letter dated 29 December 1764 from Edward Wakefield, London to Thomas Christy is transcribed below [unconventional spellings are retained and marked [sic] – capitalization and shorthands are likewise retained]:

I have agreed with Lady Shelburne for 1,000 acres of land for four lives & 31 years on one side of a Street in Ballymote, with 8 or 10 good Houses with 4 Looms [sic] in each House which I have for Ever, besides there are 3 or 4 more Houses one of 'em I am inform'd is a good large house that will hold 10 or 15 looms [sic] all these with more I propose building I am to put Weavers into. In the first Place I want a sober careful man to have the Direction of 8 or 10 Diaper Weavers who shall have an eight Quarter Loom for himself and employ the rest in ¾ and 6/4. I think an honest sober Man with 8 or 10 boys will get a comfortable good living. Next I want another sober Man that understands manufacturing 7/8 cloth 9 & 10 Hundreds to have the direction in that Article. I shall also make coarse ¾ Cloth to sell both Brown and White which Boys from 14 years upwards can make. There is a Bleach House & Green upon the Estate, I must have a sober careful foreman for a Bleacher that can Lap Cloth well. All these shall have a good House to Live in and every



Thatched cottages in Mill Street photographed by Maisie McGovern before demolition in 1979/80 for construction of new house by Tom Currid for the Coleman family.

proper encouragement provided they are sober & Industrious. The Town is pleasantly situated & everything very cheap 12 miles from Sligoe [sic]. I shall be obliged to thee to consult Tho.s Greer & give me thy answer. I would have the Weavers go there as soon as possible & the Bleacher before the 1st of March there are now about 20 Looms employ'd who will begin for me about ye 1st of February.

Thy Sincere Friend

Edward Wakefield.

(a copy)

The document is a contemporary copy enclosed with a letter from Thomas Christy at Moyallon, County Armagh to 'Cousin Tho.' [Thomas Greer] dated 1/11 1765 [11 January]. [1]

At this point I will divert for a moment from discussing Edward Wakefield's letter to considering Thomas Christy's letter to Thomas Greer as it is also of interest to us in several respects. Christy explores suggestions of suitable people who might be employed in the Ballymote enterprise. The name of Thos. [Thomas] Sinton is mentioned but it is noted that he would only go 'if it be nigh a meeting'. There is also a reference to another connection, one William Mills Akinson. A further letter of 1767 refers to the Grange meeting. I knew that the Grange in County Tyrone is one of the oldest Quaker Meeting houses in Ireland and this together with the reference to "nigh [near] a meeting" seemed to add up. The history of the Grange set out on its website www.grangefriendsmeeting.sharepoint.com notes that a Thomas Greer was one of the people with whom Lord Charlemont agreed a lease of a site for a meeting house in 1751. A bit more web surfing on the theme of Quakers in Ireland brought me to the Quakers' official site www.quakers-in-ireland.ie where I learned that a member of the Akinson family had been responsible for founding one

of the earliest meetings in the country at Moyallon, from where Thomas Christy had written.

I have since discovered that the Greers were among the most important linen drapers in Ulster. [2] A further internet search confirmed the Wakefields as one of the leading Quaker families in London during this period. Reverting to the contents of Thomas Christy's letter, it is very doubtful if the Thomas Sinton mentioned in the correspondence established himself in Ballymote as there was no meeting closer than the Grange; this was probably the Thomas Sinton (1732-1812) who married Margaret Christy (1737-1810) of Moyallon. [3]

Returning to Edward Wakefield's letter we find that it tells us a great deal; but it also poses many questions. While Wakefield had already agreed terms of his lease he makes it clear that he had not yet visited Ballymote. Nevertheless, from the success of his business ventures it would be reasonable to assume he would only have acted on information from a trusted source. We are presented with an image of a street in Ballymote with 8 or 10 "good houses" – but which street was it? And what were 'good' houses? I am not entirely convinced that the modest thatched cottages that used to line Mill Street [now Grattan Street] would qualify. We are told of a further three or four houses (On the other side of the same street? Or on another street?). One house was large enough to contain ten or fifteen looms [sic]; this must have been remarkably large indeed. We are told that there was a bleach house and a bleach green. He proposes building 'good houses' for crucial men to attract them to settle in Ballymote. We are told of his need for a bleacher, for diaper weavers and plans for 'lapping cloth'. (1) 'Diaper' as in 'diaper weaver' refers to a repeat woven pattern in linen or other fabrics. 'Lapping' is part of the

final stage of the linen manufacturing process before it was taken to the Linen Hall for sale. The linen was hung to dry in a large airy room with windows and was then measured and folded into lengths.

We learn more from the extract below from a further letter written by Wakefield from London to Thomas Greer of Dungannon on 16th February 1765:

I have rec'd several letters from Neddy expressing thy great kindness and tender advice to him. He informed me thou has heard of my concern in Ballymote. I have no doubt but I have a very good Bargain of the Land, but that should not have had any great weight with me , if I did not promise myself much from ye manufactory.....I propose building fifty [houses], each house to contain four loombs [sic]. [4]

However, Wakefield did not have long to realize his plans; a letter dated 5th December 1765 from Mr R Redmond of Wakefield, Willet & Pratt in London to Thomas Greer notes that "Mr Wakefield died this morning." The will of one Edward Wakefield, Mercer of Lad Lane in the city of London, was probated on 19th December 1765. [5] This confirms Wakefield's profession. A 'Mercer' was a term used since medieval times for traders, firstly in fine fabrics, but later as general traders in fabrics. The Mercers' Company remains today the first in order of precedence of the great and wealthy guilds of the city of London. They have long since ceased to be trade bodies but are now heavily populated with wealthy city gents who dine in the great guildhalls of the city and dispense charity. Interestingly in the plantations of King James 1st in 1609 the company was granted 21,000 acres west of the Bann (www.mercers.co.uk). As well as his wife Isabella, the beneficiaries of his considerable fortune included



Perspective View of a Lapping Room (Irish Linen Engraving Series), Stipple Etching by William Hincks, 1791, British Museum (No 1877,0113.380)

his sons Joseph, Edward, Thomas and John and daughters Catherine and Elizabeth, wife of one Samuel Robinson. His son Edward must be the 'Neddy' referred to his letter to Thomas Greer.

It also clears up a bit of a mystery as there is a further letter of 15 September 1770 in the PRONI signed by Edward Wakefield at Moyallon and written again to Thomas Greer and with mention of the Ballymote business. [6] R Redmond's 1765 letter at the time of Wakefield senior's death had said that "the business will be carried on much as it was before." Thus Edward Wakefield Jnr probably continued the firm's involvement with Ballymote for some years and would account for the developments credited to the Wakefield that could hardly have been realized in the short year of his father's association with the enterprise. This makes sense of Young's assertion of a long period of Wakefield involvement. The firm of Wakefield, Pratt & Miers was still trading with Thomas Greer in 1776. [7] A letter to Thomas Greer from his brother John on 11 May 1780 notes

bequests from Thomas Christy of the very significant sums of 'upwards of' £5,000 to John and £6,000 to Edward Wakefield. [8]

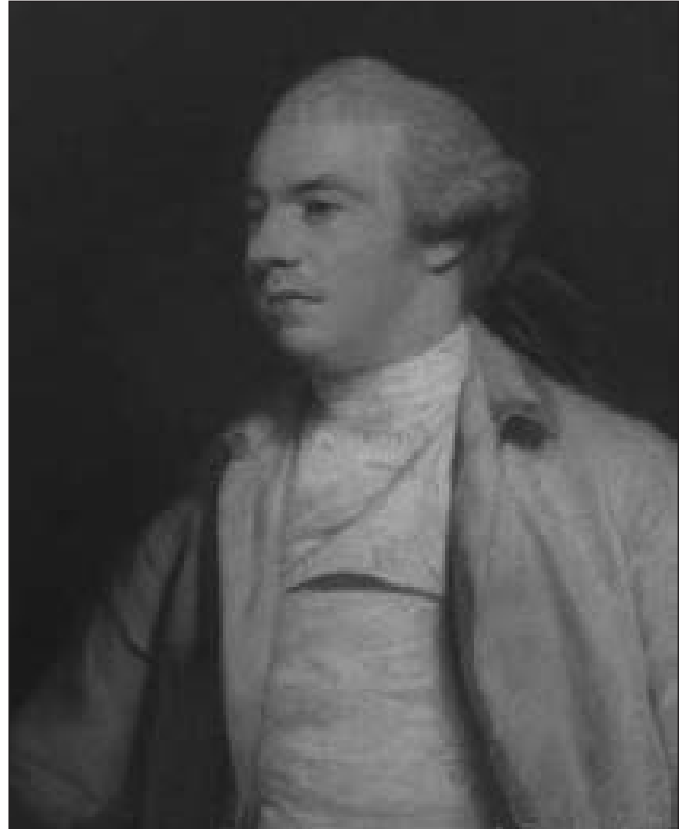
Hon Thomas Fitzmaurice (1742-93)

As I had detailed in my earlier article, it appears that Thomas Fitzmaurice (1742-93) first became involved with Ballymote probably before 1774 when he was in his very early thirties. Before Young's visit in 1776 he had already heard that the finest bleach mill in the country had been constructed by Thomas in 1774. *The Wealth of Nations*, arguably the most influential ever text on economics, was published by Thomas's mentor Adam Smith in the same year as Young's visit; in his text Smith specifically discussed the linen industry as an ideal model where employment and wealth could be generated at many levels, from the growing of flax, through its manufacture into linen to its marketing.

During the course of my earlier research I had been in contact with the current marquess of Lansdowne, direct descendant of Thomas

Fitzmaurice's elder brother the 1st marquess (1737-1805), who continues to live on the Petty estate at Bowood in the west of England. As a result of this connection I was contacted by Nigel Aston of the School of History at the University of Leicester who was researching the 1st marquess and particularly the relationship between Thomas Fitzmaurice and his elder brother. Mr Aston shared with me the results of his research in a draft text which has since been published as a chapter of a book he jointly edited on the 1st marquess. [9] From Mr Aston's research, and additional information I have gathered from other sources, we come to a greater understanding of Thomas Fitzmaurice and his involvement with Ballymote. More information will undoubtedly emerge in time due to increased availability of research material.

According to Aston, Thomas was his mother's favourite son and was more amenable to his father's direction than his elder brother. Thomas was heir to several Fitzmaurice properties in Ireland, including some that came to his father through connection with the 1st earl of Kerry and some from his mother who was also a Fitzmaurice, daughter of the 1st earl of Kerry's brother Colonel the Hon William Fitzmaurice of Gallane, Co Kerry. [10] This included property in Tipperary and Kerry and indeed I have noted elsewhere that some of his descendants lived in Tipperary well into the nineteenth century. His elder brother apparently resented the extent of Thomas's inheritance. Thomas was at Eton from 1755 to 1758 and went from there to the University of Glasgow from which he graduated in 1759 (the period living at the house of Adam Smith). His father had taken up the suggestion of Sir Gilbert Elliot (1722-77), MP, scholar and friend of the Scottish political philosopher David Hume, of sending Thomas to study Adam Smith. Elliot in a letter to



Lady Mary O'Brien, later 3rd countess of Orkney (1790) by descent from her mother, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1772, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Daughter of the 5th earl of Inchiquin (from 1801, 1st marquess of Thomond), she married Thomas Fitzmaurice on 21st December 1777. Her father's second wife was Mary Palmer, niece and heir of Reynolds. She is depicted in classical dress and with an equally fashionable melancholy air.

Thomas Fitzmaurice, looking wistful. Portrait completed in 1774 by Sir Joshua Reynolds (Bowood). Both were members of famous conversational gatherings presided over by Dr Samuel Johnson and known as 'Dr Johnson's Club'.

Smith described Thomas as:

... a very good Scholar, very lively, and tolerably ungovernable, but probably will not give you much trouble, as you will have total charge and direction without any controul [sic].

He took classes in philosophy, modern and ancient languages, mathematics and moral philosophy and stayed in residence during vacations to further his studies. Smith was impressed by his application to his studies:

There is not a poor boy in the college who is supported by charity and studies for bread that is more punctual in his attendance upon every part of College discipline.

In 1761 he went on to Oxford where

the distinguished professor of law Sir William Blackstone (1723-80) noted his remarkable intelligence and an affable character which was to make him an ideal candidate for membership of Dr Samuel Johnson's famous London conversation club. He was awarded an honorary doctorate in 1773.

Due to his father's death in 1761, and his brother's consequent move to the English House of Lords as 2nd earl of Shelburne, Thomas replaced him as MP for Calne on his brother's Bowood estate in 1762. He was also MP for Kerry in the Dublin Parliament 1763-8. [11] His father had been MP for Kerry also from 1743 until he inherited the Petty family fortune in 1751 and moved his attentions to

England. He made only two speeches in the London parliament of 1761-8, one supporting the activities of his brother in the cabinet. He was called to the bar in 1768. Having failed to be elected as MP for Oxford, in a strategy designed to gain two family seats, he again sat as MP for Calne in 1768-1774 though he was an irregular attender at parliament. However, as he sometimes took an independent line in voting, he could not be entirely relied on by his brother to support his political ambitions.

Despite these differences he was returned for a seat on another of his brother's estates at Wycombe in 1774 but from then on was more engaged in his personal affairs than politics. This would fit in with the

beginning of his involvement with developing a serious business venture in Ballymote. Thomas was still a bachelor in 1774 and apparently was spending much time in London. He had leased a substantial manorial property, Knighton Gorges in the parish of Newchurch on the Isle of Wight, but I am not clear what role this played in his life.

In the same year that Young visited Ballymote, Thomas was expanding his other interests by taking a lease of Lwenny Hall Denbighshire which he was to develop into part of a linen business which he had instigated in Ballymote. [12] Aston notes that Thomas set himself up as a linen merchant and established a bleaching factory at Lwenny for fabrics from the family estates in Ireland [Ballymote]. The following year he married Lady Mary O'Brien (1755 -1831), daughter and heiress of the 5th earl of Inchiquin, and wrote with delight to his mother of how agreeable and lovely his wife was and how happy she made him. His only child, a son John, was born in 1778.

Aston suggests that Thomas quickly overstretched himself financially with maintaining a house in London's fashionable Pall Mall – it must have been a very significant mansion as it was later sold to the Prince of Wales for £7,000 in 1787 (*The Times* 30 November 1787), as well as taking on Lwenny Hall in Wales. Relations with his father-in-law, the Earl of Inchiquin, soured over the issue of accessing his wife's inheritance. Aston notes that arrears of rental from the Irish estates of Thomas and his mother amounted to £27,000 but that, due to the linen business there, his mother's Sligo estate yielded its full rental [Ballymote]. From 1779 he stopped attending the House of Commons at Westminster and the following year did not run for parliament admitting his 'great distress for money' but also showing that he was not really

much interested in national politics. It is interesting to note how he was expected to support the family's English political activities founded on the basis of the Petty family fortune inherited by his father and brother. While he retained the name of Fitzmaurice, they had changed theirs to Petty – a frequent requirement made of those inheriting estates where the male line had died out. Nevertheless, Thomas chose to take a close personal interest in Ballymote which ensured its success and indeed he had assured Young of his intention of continuing and expanding the commitment he had already made.

His mother died on 9 December 1780 leaving a fortune which helped ease his finances but caused a family rift as his brother (unsuccessfully) challenged the will. Briefly he became involved in local politics in Wales and in July 1782 became High Sherriff for Flintshire, the same year in which his brother became Prime Minister.

From 1784 Thomas concentrated on his business interests – including improvements to his Lwenny estate and bleach works, business in Liverpool with warehouses in Chester, and occasional business trips to France. In a letter to his brother of 20 November 1788 Thomas showed himself very optimistic about the future of his business interests which he saw as coming to fruition:

I think I can now venture to assure you, that, my linen schemes are within a mere trifle of being perfectly accomplished & put upon a solid footing, for myself, and others after meConsidering all the circumstances, the undertaking will, one day or other, be certainly consider'd as singularly wonderful [13]

However, in the winter of 1792/3, a mere four years after his optimistic letter to his brother, at the age of 50, Thomas sadly suffered a stroke. Aston suggests that leading up to this he had taken to drink, suffered from dropsy

and was depressed. Financially things should have been looking up as his wife's mother had died and she became countess of Orkney in 1791 and succeeded to her father's estate at Clivedon near London. But their marriage had failed and they were living separately. In April of 1793 his nephew found him 'dejected' and Thomas told him that 'he rather wished for death'. He died on October 28 in the same year. His will proved on 26 March 1794 mentioned his properties in Ireland in Sligo and Tipperary but does not provide more interesting information about Ballymote. However in my earlier article I quoted some documentary evidence that he did highly value the enterprise he had established in the town. In an age when travel and communications were difficult, and when one considers his hands-on approach to developing his extensive business interests in Ireland, England and Wales, it is easy to imagine that he overstretched himself physically as well as financially.

Aston suggests that he helped to lessen the prejudice whereby the gentry frowned on getting involved in business – Edmund Burke had referred to him as 'the Honorable linen merchant'. [14] At the same time he was philanthropic in the way he ran his Ballymote and Welsh business by not squeezing the last out of his workers or tenants for a profit. An obituary in 1793 noted '... his love for the poor, for his country, for real improvements of every kind, his benevolence in general, and his uncommon skills in the management of the great concerns wherein he was engaged, were such as met not often in one person. . .' [15]

Some additional information and corrections to earlier article

I would like to note an apparent anomaly in my earlier article, pointed out by Martin Timoney, in that I

suggested that Ballinascarrow lake had been created by a dam on the river built as part of the enterprise. Martin pointed out that when the lake dried out in a drought ‘crannogs’ or lake dwellings were revealed, meaning that the lake is of much earlier origin. Des Black has since resolved the question by pointing out to me that the dam did not create a new lake but would have resulted in significantly raising the level of an existing one.

I must concede that there is no evidence to support Lewis’s assertion that Lady Arabella Denny had constructed an obelisk and that the only comparable monument ‘on a hill near the town’ was that in Carrownanty on which Jim KIELTY tells me a flag was suspended on rent days.

Eileen Tighe has drawn to my attention to a short but no less interesting article by the late Clare Walsh published in *The Corran Herald* which is very informative on the production process, local aspects and uses of the products.

On the subject of the linen industry elsewhere in County Sligo there was discussion at the 2013 Sligo Field Club Conference on the subject of a linen mill on the river in Collooney about which there is information in the O’Hara of Annaghmore papers

(National Library of Ireland or in the PRONI, Belfast).

For further details on the Reynolds portraits of Thomas Fitzmaurice and his wife lady Mary O’Brien, see David Mannings, *Sir Joshua Reynolds, A Complete Catalogue of his Paintings*, two vols, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2000.

Footnotes

[1] PRONI D1044/52. This letter is wrongly noted by the PRONI as November (1st of November, rather than 11th of January) 1765 – but that would make no sense in the sequence of correspondence or events

[2] Mention is made of Thomas Greer (1724-1803) in ‘The Greer and Greeves Family’ in Kathleen Rankin, *The Linen Houses of the Bann valley: The Story of their Families*

[3] www.sinton-family-tree.com

[4] PRONI D1044/62: Edward Wakefield, London to Thomas Greer, Dungannon 16 February 1765

[5] PROB 11/914/450

[6] Curiously some years ago my mother was listening to the Australian writer Germaine Greer talking on the radio about her search for her Irish roots and my mother wrote to her with information on Greers in County Sligo. She received a postcard from the writer thanking her for the information (I am sure I have it

somewhere)

[7] PRONI D1044/461- Letter of 27 February 1776 to Thomas Greer

[8] PRONI D1044/608

[9] Nigel Aston, ‘Lord Shelburne and his Brother’ p29-50, *An Enlightenment Statesman in Whig Britain*, ed Nigel Aston and Clarissa Campbell Orr, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England, 2011

[10] Thomas’s first cousin, the daughter of his mother’s sister Elizabeth, was the Lady Caldwell with whom his paternal aunt Lady Arabella Denny engaged in correspondence as referred to in my earlier article. I noted recently that Lady Arabella’s house, now known as Lios an Uisce, at Blackrock, County Dublin appeared for sale in *The Irish Times*, Residential Property Supplement 2 May 2013

[11] E M Johnson Liik, *MPs in Dublin: Companion to History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, p88

[12] The spelling of Lwenny I use here and throughout is as in Thomas’s will

[13] Bowood Papers, S 6 Family correspondence, f 74 – quoted by Aston

[14] Edmund and Jane Burke to William Burke, 13 September 1792, *Burke Correspondence* VII, p191

[15] *The Gentleman’s Magazine* 63 (1793), 1053, 1147

Ballymote (Emlaghfad and Kilmorgan) flax growers in 1796

The ‘Spinning Wheel’ list or the Flax Growers Bounty, published by the The Irish Linen Board in 1796, included nearly 60,000 individuals. Spinning wheels were awarded based on the number of acres planted. People who planted one acre were awarded four spinning wheels and those growing five acres were awarded a loom. A full list for the country is available on web site: <http://www.failteromhat.com/flax1796.php>.

Emlaghfad: Brennan, Laughlin; Bridgeham, James; Carrol, Daniel; Conlan, Bartholomew; Conlan, Thady; Conlen, Thady; Davey, Peter; Derrig, Daniel; Doyle, Michael; Dunleavy, Michael; Fahy, Patrick; Finan, Laurence; Flyn, Bryan; Flyn, Michael; Garret, Rev William; Healy, William; Keiver, Thomas; Kerin, John; Kerrene, Andrew; Kilbride, Charles; Kilbride, Patrick; Kilhawly, Patrick; M’Getrick, John; M’Getrick,

Roger; M’Gin, James; Preston, Denis; Preston, Francis; Preston, Michael; Rogers, Daniel; Shaw, John; Supple, Morris

Kilmorgan: Barber, James; Bereen, Laurence; Bereen, Thady; Carter, Widow; Casey, Michael; Clifford, James; Denneady, James; Dowd, James; Dowd, Matthew; Dowd, Stephen; Duke, John; Duke, Rev William; Flyn, Michael; Golrick,

Hugh; Golrick, James; Golrick, John; Healy, Roger; Higgins, Francis; Irwin, John; Kilfoyle, James; Lang, Michael; Lindsay, John; Manion, John; Milmo, Bryan; Morrison, Thomas; Mulleeny, Widow; Orr, Robert; Porter, Richard; Quin, Christopher; Quin, John; Quinin, Patrick; Quinin, Philip; Reynolds, Owen; Savage, Owen; Scanlon, Patrick; Tige, Patrick; Tige, Terrence; Trumble, Harloe

History and Tranquillity at Tobernalt

Bernie Gilbride



Tobernalt 2010

Most Saturday evenings my friend Teresa and I go to the 7.30pm Vigil Mass. We find it convenient and enjoy a quiet Sunday morning with the papers.

Tomorrow being Garland Sunday I suggested we wait and go to the open-air mass at Tobernalt instead. 'Tobernalt!' she exclaims, telling me she had never been to this traditional mass though she had lived in Sligo for many years, and she would very much to attend. We agree to go to noon mass the following day.

The fact that it will be her first time sets me thinking back to my own past, and I realise I cannot actually remember the very first occasion I was there. Mass at Tobernalt on Garland Sunday has been the custom in our family as

far back as I can remember. We had no car; very few people did in the 1930s. Living in town, we had no pony or trap either. So from when we were able to walk we got up at the crack of dawn – exciting in itself for us – and fasting we walked the three miles with our father for first mass at 6am.

It was always a very happy journey. Meeting friends and neighbours at the corner of our street, we proceeded via Cleveragh Road, where we passed the last of the town houses. From then on it was a country road with rough stones and grass verges. To us small children it was a great adventure. We stayed close to my father, walking with our friends directly ahead of him. Everyone knew everybody else so there was

much chatting and laughter which shortened the journey. The road would be crowded with whole families on foot like ourselves. Some older people recited the Rosary. Those who had boats came by river and lake, much to our envy, while many came by pony and trap, well wrapped up with colourful rugs over their knees, especially older folk.

Sometimes the morning was shrouded in early morning mist, a sign of a good day to come, but to us small folk rather frightening as people loomed up suddenly in front of us. Leaving the town the road winds uphill. On reaching the top of the hill the mist would usually have begun to lift and the surrounding mountaintops appeared bathed in the golden light of the early morning sun. Gradually Lough Gill spread out before us with its islands and wooded shores. In those long-ago days, I little knew I was following an ancient pre-Christian pagan tradition in celebration of the old god 'Lugh' who gave the Irish name 'Lughnasa' to the month of August. St Patrick in his wisdom decided to use the same place as a Christian place of worship.

Tradition tells us that St Patrick visited Tobernalt on his way back from pilgrimage to Lough Derg, and as one approaches the copse of trees at the entrance there is a large rock where he left the imprint of his hand. To this day one can stretch one's fingers and thumb to fit the indentations on its smooth worn surface. On looking towards the altar one is taken by its rugged beauty. History tells us that the

Sisters of Mercy had this particular altar built, in thanksgiving for the saving of the inhabitants of Sligo – and of their own community – from a virulent fever, long before my time. Perhaps it replaced an older altar, as we are assured Tobernalt had been used for sacrificial rites and celebrations in pre-Christian times.

Tobernalt is situated at the base of a rocky cliff, with a well at its feet that feeds a gurgling stream as it makes its way over rocks with miniature waterfalls to the nearby lake, Lough Gill. The well is surrounded by a sturdy stone wall, approximately three feet high, with an entrance down three or four cut stone steps, much worn by many feet down the centuries. In this wall is a niche, specially incorporated to hold a ‘porringer’ (tin mug) with which to drink the water. The water is icy cold and refreshing, coming as it does from the solid rock. It is known to Sligo people as the ‘Holy Well’ and is reported to have medicinal qualities. Generations have drunk its water, hoping to be cured of many ailments. It is especially recommended for eye ailments of all sorts. Some people leave bits of clothing and even walking sticks hanging on the trees as proof of their belief and devotion.

Garland Sunday – the last Sunday in July – is the main celebration at Tobernalt and it is then that people gather from miles around to hear mass in the open air. It is there Teresa and I make our way, not for early morning mass but for the last mass of the celebration at noon. We go by car and on the way I fill her in on what I know of the history of the place.

The singing and readings of the mass are really impressive and

it is with a lovely feeling of the tranquillity and peace we head for the car and home. Afterwards Teresa is loud in her praise and was delighted at having been present. She loved the gentle murmur of the stream in the background and the sun-dappled shade of the trees. Later she confided she was amazed at the effect the whole place and ceremony had on her. I tell her of long ago when I was young, before radio or television. Then the singing would echo all along the shores of the lake, especially if the hymns were being sung by people on the boats on their way to mass or on their way home, water being a great carrier of sound. Often the groups on the roads would join in

Then the green adjoining Tobernalt was covered with all sorts of stalls, some selling religious objects – missals, colourful First Communion prayer books, Rosary beads, scapulars, holy pictures. Others stalls catered for hungry people with, tea, bread, scones, cake and everything in that line, much availed of by people coming long distances and fasting from midnight. Others sold fruit and sweets and so on. It was a lively spot with children running, shouting and playing, and friends greeting each other, not having met perhaps from the year before. My father did not believe in having breakfast there or even breaking his fast, so we set out for home where we enjoyed a big fry with all the trimmings, being very hungry by then. This too was part of the magic of Garland Sunday for us. The festivities at Tobernalt went on all day and into the evening, culminating with a ceile in the ball alley nearby that night. Perhaps a throwback to our pagan past.

As we drive home, our talk is of

the hardship pilgrims must have suffered during the ‘Penal Days’, from 1691 after the defeat of King James at the Battle of the Boyne to Catholic Emancipation in 1829, enacted under the persuasion and guidance of Daniel O’Connell. All during those years the celebration of mass was prohibited, and every priest had a price on his head. Tobernalt was an ideal place for flouting that law, and with lookouts at the top of the hills and along the lakeshores priests were relatively safe. So it was there the people came from miles around to hear Mass, go to confession, have children christened and even get married, all in great secrecy and in fear and dread that the military might chance upon them when the priest would surely be arrested and possibly hung. So it was that down the years it continued to be a place of pilgrimage and celebration.

Thinking about those terrible times, we realise how lucky we are to be living today in such freedom and travelling in such comfort.

Garland Sunday is indeed a special day for Sligo people, and Tobernalt itself with its Holy Well is a special place. Having retained its aura of mystique and sacredness since time immemorial, it has become a restful corner in our hectic world. It is a place to stand still, to listen to birdsong and to the gentle gurgle of the stream on its way to the lake. It is to realise that thousands of men and women – now long gone and forgotten – have done this before us. We too will go, and like them be forgotten, while Tobernalt with its ageless beauty, tranquillity and peace, will offer these qualities to anyone who seeks them, in this shady, restful place, by the shores of Lough Gill.

Classiebawn and the Assassination of Lord Mountbatten at Mullaghmore, County Sligo: A Retrospective

Joe McGowan

Like ants we were, or worker bees, and just as susceptible to the whims of wind and weather as we shook out the hay on warm summer days, or feverishly made ‘lappings’ if rain was on the way. Most of the time it was. Above us, Classiebawn, that great impressive hulk of Mountcharles sandstone built in the 1860s by twice Prime Minister of England, Lord Palmerston, looked impassively down. Vying for attention with those imposing natural landmarks, Benbulbin and Maeve’s Knocknarea, it failed – but only just.

Too busy with concerns of crops, cattle and survival in the hungry ‘50s, we knew nothing of the castle’s history, and cared less.

Village Life

Classiebawn’s owners Lord Palmerston and later Ashley, were absentee. The Bracken family were gamekeeper/managers on the estate in Ashley’s time – bachelor Watty, Jules and his wife, and their daughter, Yvonne. Wearing tweed plus fours, jackets and hats, their manner of dress alone pointed them out as different to everyone else in the area. Their relationship with the villagers in Mullaghmore was a Jekyll and Hyde one. On pitch-black winter nights they patrolled the Classiebawn estates with shotguns and flashlights, protecting Lord Ashley’s rabbit warrens. The local poachers with carbide lamps and hounds played cat and mouse with them. Sometimes the poachers won and carried off a haul of rabbits; sometimes the Brackens succeeded and the miscreants were forced to plead their case before a hard-faced district justice in Grange District Court.

When morning came it was business



Classiebawn

as usual. Men who skirmished with the gamekeepers and stole the landlord’s rabbits the night before now had no choice but to go to the Brackens for permission to cut a load of firewood in the Classiebawn woods. A cartload of timber cost five shillings. It was all very civilized, a game almost, and no one thought it odd. It was as if nothing at all had happened the night before. The Brackens kept a dairy too. When our cows ran dry we bought milk, and sometimes delicious salty home-made butter, from those people who were so different from us, but in a sort of detached way, were yet a part of our community.

Republicans were billeted in Classiebawn during the War of Independence. Hostages were once taken and held there to secure the release of condemned IRA prisoners, Johnson, O’Shea and MacBride. The castle was mined with dynamite: any attempt at rescue and it would be blown sky high! If the Brackens noticed anything unusual in their patrols, and they must have, they said nothing. ‘Less said is easiest mended’ was an old country saying. Although they were in the pay of Classiebawn, the people who lived in the small

community at Mullaghmore were their friends and neighbours.

During the Civil War, soldiers of the new Freestate were stationed there. Many years later, the war a fading memory, Jules Bracken often stopped at our house. Leaning across the stone ditch my father and he talked for hours. About the concerns of small farmers I suppose: cattle prices, weather, will the turf be saved at all this year? Don’t mention the poachers — or the war!

Origins of ownership

Following the dispossession of the O’Connor clan in the late 17th century, about 10,000 acres of Sligo land was granted to Edwina [Ashley] Mountbatten’s forbear, Sir John Temple, during the Cromwellian confiscations of the 17th century. His father, also Sir John, was Master of the Rolls in Ireland, and a man of letters too. Following the rebellion of 1641 he wrote a book called *History of the General Rebellion of Ireland*. Considered by some a gross exaggeration of the events of the Rising of 1641 it was thenceforth considered as a true historical record by loyalists — and justification by

Cromwell for his excesses in his Irish campaigns. According to publisher DeBurca it was “An outstanding success as a piece of propaganda, it had the greatest impact of any book on Irish history. Because of its blatant sectarian nature and having as its objective the incitement of hatred in England against the Irish, it had the unique distinction of being condemned by the Irish Parliament and publicly destroyed by the common hangman in Dublin.”

Under William of Orange, Temple was made Attorney General and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons.

The property eventually came into the possession of Edwina Ashley who had inherited these estates from her forbears, and who in 1922 married Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Mountbatten's Visits

But that was long ago and Sir John never set foot in Mullaghmore. It was to Mullaghmore the ascendancy classes came in their droves on summer holidays to Henry John Temple's (Lord Palmerston) Lodges, purpose-built for them beside the harbour. Arriving with great pomp and ceremony all the landed gentry of Sligo and surrounding counties came there: the Le Stranges, the Maudes, the O'Hara's, Wynnes, Gores, Richardsons, Percevals, Hosies and Cookes. Guarding them was an RIC presence in Cliffoney and a Coastguard Station near Mullaghmore village. O'Rourke, in his history of Sligo, written in 1898, criticised Palmerston for having developed Mullaghmore as a 'watering hole of too exclusive a kind' which catered only to the rich 'who have already too many of the good things of Ireland.' While these wealthy landowners were in residence local people found some small employment as cooks, housemaids, jarveys, waiters and waitresses.

Following the Easter Rising of 1916



Classiebawn gatehouse showing mountbatten crest

and the subsequent events leading to Irish independence in 1922, the star of those people of privilege and power waned. No more did they come to Mullaghmore. At the changeover and departure of the ascendancy families some locals were rewarded for their service, acquiring local businesses and buildings once owned by the inheritors of Classiebawn.

At Classiebawn Castle itself however, now the property of Lord Mount Temple (an Ashley and father of Mountbatten's wife), nothing changed. Lord Ashley's visits to Mullaghmore were sporadic. Later on when Lord Louis and Lady Edwina Mountbatten came into possession they commenced annual visits. Well used to visiting tourists, their occasional sojourns created no great stir in the village. Very few knew much about their comings and goings except for a few locals who provided kitchen and dining room staff. For most of us the only indication that they were in residence was the house flag flying from the roof. Or we might see the ill-fated boat, Shadow V, leaving the harbour, or returning. Sometimes the old man himself could be seen pottering about with a shrimp net in the harbour. For the most part they minded their business and we minded ours. We had nothing in common with them, nor they with us. Most had no idea of his close relationship to the British Royal Family, or that he was

the great grandson of Queen Victoria, nor did we care.

Remembering Lord Palmerston's excesses in famine times, or perhaps Queen Victoria's apathy during the Black Hunger, others were not so ready to give dispensation to their heirs. But for the vigilance of a local fisherman Mountbatten's boat, the Shadow V, would have been sunk many years before the assassination. Someone had drilled holes in her bottom when she was grounded at low water expecting the filling tide to finish her off. This should have served as a warning, but it was dismissed as an insignificant act of vandalism.

The threat assessed

Given the scale of the conflict a few miles down the road in Northern Ireland, it was almost inevitable that this grandson of Queen Victoria, uncle to Prince Philip, retired Admiral of the Fleet, one time Commander of Allied Forces in Southeast Asia, last Viceroy of India, First Sea Lord and Earl of Burma would be a prime target for some kind of political demonstration.

In 1960, Mountbatten's estate manager, Patrick O'Grady, raised questions with the Gardai about the Earl's safety. "While everything points to the fact that no attack of any kind on the Earl, by subversive elements was at any time contemplated," the reply went, "it would in my opinion be asking too much to say in effect

that we can guarantee his safety while in this country.” Mountbatten himself scorned a major security presence.

Who were the subversive elements in the report? He was not favoured by such bodies as ‘The League of Empire Loyalists’; they felt his views on partition were too liberal and he was, ‘very friendly disposed towards the Catholic clergy, particularly the Jesuits.’ The Jesuit angle may have arisen because the castle was rented to Jesuits, or anyone else with hard cash, in the 1950s. Among the black-clad throng who spent time there was the famous photographer, Fr Browne.

Life went on normally in the small seaside village of Mullaghmore in that fateful August of 1979. Tourists came and went. It rained almost every day and summer drew to a soggy close. Paul Maxwell and I crewed on Freddy Conaghan’s fishing boat the *Kilkilogue*, drift netting for salmon. We spent long nights shooting and hauling nets, chatting as we worked. He was a pleasant young man who loved the sea, and Mullaghmore.

Darker forces

While village life continued as normal, all was not as it seemed. For some passions simmered and the English visitor’s movements were surely monitored by watchful, secret eyes. Meetings were held and plans hatched; death weaved a deadly snare while the village slept.

The fateful Monday morning of 27 August 1979 came in bright and clear. Hope springs forever, and it looked like there might at last be some good weather ahead. Mountbatten and his family were among the many holidaymakers who took advantage of the good day. They prepared the boat, left Mullaghmore harbour, and eagerly put to sea. Everyone on board was in a good humour as Paul Maxwell steered the *Shadow V* around Mullaghmore Head to the fishing ground.

Local man Martin Dowdican, taking advantage of the sunshine, worked his

hay in the field up above. It might be saved after all if this weather would only hold for a day or two. Watching while he worked on the heights overlooking the bay he noticed the green boat move smoothly towards the lobster pot markers outside of Oilean Ruadh. Green was Edwina’s favourite colour.

The explosion heard around the world

Suddenly there was a massive bang. A column of water, fragments of boat and shattered bodies blasted into the air. People looked up in surprise as windows shook and rattled when the shock waves hit miles away in Cliffoney and Bunduff. They wondered what could have made such a great noise. Like many others I thought the sound came from Finner Army Camp across the bay. We often heard shooting and explosions from that direction.

Martin Dowdican was frozen on the spot. It was too much to take in.



ShadowV leaving Mullaghmore Harbour (Mountbatten 4th from left)

Those in the vicinity looked towards the sound in time to see the splintered remains of *Shadow V* fall back into the sea in a tumultuous fury of froth and water. Paul Maxwell’s father, John, hearing what he recognised as an explosion went immediately to the pier. Boats rushed from the harbour to the site of the explosion to see how they could help.

Four died on that day: Mountbatten, his grandson Nicholas, Lady Brabourne and Paul Maxwell. Lady Patricia, her husband and Timothy were badly injured, but survived. Fortunately, the day was good and boats in the vicinity sped immediately to the rescue. If the incident had happened at any time in the bad weather of the preceding days there would have been no other boats at sea, no survivors.

Fragmented, shattered wood, pieces no bigger than matchsticks and barely recognisable as part of a boat, were picked up by fishermen for days after the explosion. Gardai collected them and pieced them together in an effort to discover exactly what had happened: where exactly in the boat was the bomb hidden, how was it detonated, what kind of explosives. On lobster fishing trips I found many such pieces and handed them over. Tides had carried them all over the bay. A helicopter hovered over the site for weeks. Day after day divers went down to scour the seabed for clues.

On the same day as the explosion at Mullaghmore the British army suffered the biggest number of casualties in a single incident in the North of Ireland. Eighteen British soldiers were killed in an explosion in Warrenpoint, Co Down. The IRA claimed responsibility for both incidents.

If the ‘shot heard around the world’ was fired at Concord, USA in 1775, then the explosion heard around the world was triggered at Mullaghmore in 1979. Reporters from the international print and TV media poured into the



Oilean Roudh: looking out across Donegal Bay near the location of the assassination

village. They filled its hotels and guesthouses. On anniversaries, they still do. Things would never be the same here. Mullaghmore had entered the history books; forever linked with a chain of mayhem and carnage in an age-old struggle.

On the day of the killing, 29 August 1979, Hugh Tunney, the present owner of Classiebawn, claims that young Knatchbull asked his mother, Lady Pamela Mountbatten: ‘Why did they do this to Grandpapa?’ Her enigmatic reply was: ‘Oh, they have their reasons son, they have their reasons.’

‘I have a place in Eire, Classiebawn Castle in County Sligo,’ Mountbatten had told a gathering of the Empire Club of Canada in 1967, ‘and I and my family could not be treated with greater friendship by the Irish. My son-in-law’s grandmother was the Marchioness of Sligo who died not long ago at the age of 98. Shortly before the second election for which Mr De Valera stood, Lady Sligo asked her head gardener: ‘Do you think Mr De Valera will be re-elected?’ He replied: ‘Of course he will, your

Ladyship, after all it was the poor who got him elected last time, and there are many more poor now.’

It seemed wrong the earth did not cry out.

The bomb is believed to have been triggered by a remote control device from the cliffs overlooking the bay. Thomas McMahon of Monaghan and Francie McGirl of Leitrim were tried for the murder and convicted in a non-jury court. Mc Mahon has since been released. McGirl died in a farming accident. Mullaghmore today is a prosperous holiday village comprised mostly of holiday homes for the wealthy. Their yachts throng the harbour, built by Lord Palmerston in 1820, and spill out into the sea beyond. Holidaymakers crowd the village in the summer months; building sites have sold for astronomical figures.

Standing once on Omaha Beach in Normandy, where the D-day landings took place, I wondered that things could be so normal in a place where death rained from sea and sky, where thousands died horribly; mutilated bodies on blood-soaked strand.

Wavelets gently lapped the sandy shore at my feet. A placid sea reflected blue skies and stretched away endlessly to the horizon. Somehow it seemed wrong the earth did not cry out, did not scream in anguish and mourn forever in such a place.

Similarly, in Mullaghmore today the waters ripple peacefully around Oilean Ruadh. The mists of time have closed in and left no trace of the bloody event of over three decades ago. Perhaps somewhere in our subconscious a dark shadow clings. But Sliabh League and the Donegal shore still delight our eyes as we gaze out over the assassination site from Mullaghmore’s ‘Circular Road’. Classiebawn has a new owner now. It still stands proudly atop the Fairy Rock and yet vies for magnificence with majestic Benbulbin and Maeve’s Knocknarea.

And still it fails — but only just.

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Joe McGowan’s latest book is *A Bitter Wind*. He is currently working on a book of short stories

A season in the Carrowmore Meadow

Lynda Hart



Yellow-Rattle

Nestled within seventy acres of meadow at Carrowmore, Co Sligo, are 29 Neolithic monuments that make up the Carrowmore Megalithic Complex.

For five and a half thousand years they have barely changed. The landscape however, is an ever-changing part of nature.

For most of the 20,000 or more annual visitors to the complex the monuments themselves are the main attraction, but some people see beyond them and take in the landscape as a whole. The surrounding mountains, from the imposing Knocknarea with the magical cairn of Queen Maeve to the Bricklieve mountains with the stunning Carrowkeel Complex, back to the Ballygawley mountains and the Caillech Bhearra's House. A passage tomb where the Caillech was said to live and from where she flew across the peninsula dropping stones as she went, which fell and became the Carrowmore monuments.

The seasons and the weather change the colours and the flora of the area. At Carrowmore the season starts at Easter. At this time the large meadows are still dormant – cut short in the previous autumn for a second cut of grass, they have yet to start growing. A few days

of warm sun starts the process and by mid-April the first of the meadow grasses begin to push their way towards the sky.

I have identified eleven different types of grasses growing at Carrowmore, and there are still one or two which I am not sure of. The first is the year-round Meadow Grass. This is followed by Lesser Catstail, Cocksfoot, Red Fescue, Yorkshire Fog and False Oat Grass.

By June my favourite has appeared. In just one small part of the lower meadow, Quaking Grass.

The first plants and flowers to show themselves in early April are the bane of the gardener. The Daisy, Sorrell, Dandelion, Ribwort Plantain and the Buttercup. In the meadow however, they provide the first and much-needed palette of colour. In mid to late April we have Bluebells, Primroses and wild garlic, the leaves of which provide a tasty addition to a guide's lunch! Also we have the gorse, and on a warm day the coconut scent from the bright yellow flowers can be overpowering. By late April/early June they are joined by both Red and White Clover, Herb Robert, Lady's Smock, also known as the Cuckoo flower, Black Medick which has a small yellow flower and by the prolific (at Carrowmore) Yellow Rattle, an upright spike of a plant with yellow flowers from top to bottom, about six inches in height.

Now the hedgerows are covered in a variety of vetches and the Elderberry and Hawthorn tree are in full leaf and flower. Many birds use both the meadow and the hedgerows to nest and forage for food.

Pipits and skylarks fly out from under your feet as you walk the paths. A pair of buzzards nested nearby last year and could often be seen riding the thermals and mewing to each other. Kestrels and sparrowhawks can also be seen.

Wheaters are a summer visitor to be seen in the lower meadow, while small flocks of linnets visit the area. June sees the meadow in all its glory, Herb Robert grows upon the reconstructed Cairn of Listowel. Around the edges of the meadows Eyebright, Common Centaury with its delicate pink flowers, and the bold violet flowers of Selfheal reach for the sun. And hidden amongst the grasses are the elegant pink Pyramidal Orchids. These delicate flowers are very fickle. Some years you may only find two or three, other years dozens can be found.

From now on in the season each day brings a kind of dread for me, as I know that on one of the finer days the local farmer who has the contract for the hay will come through the doors of the centre and inform us that he is going to clean-up the meadow. Within a few hours all of the beautiful flowers and grasses lay cut upon the land. The smell is amazing. The fragrance of the flowers mingling with the heady scent of the cut grass can make you dizzy.

The hedgerows and the margins survive. The Dog Rose and the Blackberries are in full bloom, and the occasional Ragwort. So attractive to bees, bugs, flies and children and so poisonous to all! It spreads so quickly that we are lucky we don't get more.

A few years ago when the meadow had been cut there was a warm damp spell and we were blessed with the most delicious field mushrooms. Another perk for the guide's lunchtime. Alas it was only the one season!

If the weather stays fine there will be another cut of grass in the early autumn, but the main growth is grass. Around the peripherals of the meadow Willowherb begins to appear along with Common Knapweed. Soon the sloes appear and the blackberries turn from red to black and another small feast awaits the nimble of finger.

After the second cut of grass the site starts to wind down. The trees start to turn and lose their leaves. The crows are ever present on the ground searching for a tasty morsel on the cut

meadow. Charms of Goldfinches flit among the thistles and the now skeletal Willowherb. Robins, the Tits and the Blackbirds have raised their families.

So now it is October, the site will

close for the winter months. The monuments, a solid reminder of a long forgotten past, still stand proudly in the ever-changing landscape.

The Ballad of Corran Park

Submitted by Neal Farry



Very Rev Canon PJ Roughneen PP VF introducing His Lordship Most Rev Dr Fergus, Bishop of Achonry, at the official opening of Corran Park on 1 May 1949. Also in the picture is Right Rev Mons Blaine PAVG.

Come all you loyal football fans in the county of Sligo,
In Leitrim and Roscommon and likewise, too, Mayo.
The news that I have here to tell is glorious and grand:
We've now a park in Ballymote, a credit to our land.

Now in the Gaelic sporting world we boldly take our place,
Maintaining by our efforts the tradition of our race,
And by our great achievements we stand out upon our own
And to the Gaels of Connacht an example we have shown.

The site it is adjacent to the old historic town
And stately in the background Keash Hill looks smiling down.
The scene is fair and picturesque and lovely to behold
With the abbey and the castle, far-famed in days of old.

When travelling down the Sligo Road, oh, what a lovely view!

The playing pitch and Earlsfield, and the Mercy Convent too.
Both one and all, these scenes recall, the days long, long ago
When McDonagh held the castle against the Saxon foe.

The people of this grand old town are known both far and wide
For their kindly words of welcome, are heard on every side.
Hospitality is the watchword which guides them on their way,
Sure they'll make their patrons happy upon the opening day.

It's at the opening ceremony our Pastor will be there,
Our beloved Canon Roughneen, to bless the spot so fair.
When he'll raise his hand to heaven I trust the Almighty God
Will pour down his choicest blessings upon this dear old sod.

God bless our noble soggoth, Father Denis is his name,
He is our gallant leader who loves the good old game.

He has been an inspiration to Gaels both young and old
To rally round the banner of the emerald, white and gold.

We'll have the Leinster champions, Louth, they are by name,
To meet the Connacht stalwarts, Mayo, of noted fame.
Now Louth have conquered Cavan, who hold All-Ireland's crown
But the wearers of the red and green won't let their names go down.

Thrills we'll have in plenty and football at its best
'Twixt the boys from o'er the Shannon and the champions of the west.
The Louthmen may be favourites but this you all may know
That their mettle will be tested by the heroes of Mayo.

With a dance we'll finish up in the well-known Loftus Hall,
And we'll extend a hearty welcome to our patrons one and all.
'Twill be a fitting closing to a most successful day,
So rally in your thousands upon the first of May.

--
This ballad was composed by Michael Francis Regan, Secretary of Keash GAA Club and a lifelong member of the Corran Park Committee in Ballymote. It has been reproduced here from the programme of the official opening of the park that was enacted on 1 May 1949. Mr Regan was a candidate in the 1980 fun election for the titles of 13th Baron of Ballymote & Viscount of Corran that succeeded in taking Corran Park out of debt for the first time in its history. Michael F featured in the March 1980 BBC Nationwide programme 'The Baron of Ballymote'. This programme can be accessed on YouTube.

Chapel Hill

Mary Kelly-White

I was born and raised and went to school in Sligo in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, from age 5 to 18. I spent much of that time on Chapel Hill, attending school from Infants right through to Leaving Certificate in 1956.

It was towards the end of the cholera epidemic. The Mercy Nuns were well established on Chapel Hill, having laboured through the cholera years. St Laurence's Orphanage and St Anne's Laundry were grim reminders of the awful decades of sickness and poverty which had only just passed. I was never inside the orphanage. It was behind a high wall with a small entrance, as was the Laundry. I remember the trundling noise from the Laundry, the soapy steamy smell, and the sight of the big king-size sheets sticking to the massive wringers; the precision of the women retrieving the sheets one by one, holding four corners, hands meeting, sheets folded perfectly and stacked properly. If St Anne's Laundry was similar to the infamous Magdalene Laundries, we did not know. As far as we were aware it was an industry which gave employment. St Anne's Laundry put a horse-drawn van on the road to collect and return laundry, and the story circulated that the driver went to the Ursuline Convent which was (and still is) on Finisklin Road in Sligo, and asked the Reverend Mother 'If she had any dirty habits?' I have no idea when either the Orphanage or the Laundry ceased to operate.

All the buildings and the land on both sides of Chapel Hill belonged to the Mercy Order of Nuns. Where Chapel Hill met Chapel Street, which runs between the Hill and the Garda Barracks, there was a big green iron gate which was closed at night, and a smaller gate left open. All the children used that entrance. I remember orphans looking cold and hungry and weepy, wearing cotton dresses in winter time. Everyone was sorry for them, but most of the children at the school then were the same; there were no chain stores, the only difference was that the orphans always seemed to be crying. Orphans, and that is what they were called, attended the regular classes

in the school, but sometimes parents objected to their children sitting beside orphans.

My family got parcels from our cousins in America who were older than we were and my parents took the clothes apart, made short pants and jenkins for my four brothers, as well as cutting down the coats for my two sisters and me. My father repaired / soled our shoes and they lasted forever. He was so good at making 'ponnies' (tin mugs) and milk cans from tin cans, that his brother said that 'there was a good tinker lost in him'. Plastic hadn't yet arrived on the scene, and delph was scarce and expensive.

Built in 1849, St Patrick's Mercy Convent was – and still is – an impressive building, standing on 4.13 acres of land. On the ground floor were two parlours, a reception room, dining room, kitchen, laundry, two pantries, two stores, a self-contained flat, and more.

On the first floor: 12 bedrooms, two bathrooms and a kitchenette.

On the second floor: TV room, 19 bedrooms and three bathrooms.

In 1877 the lovely Romanesque chapel, standing on 5,000 sq ft was built and still stands in perfect repair, but is no longer used as a chapel. In 1895 the Noviciate Wing was built comprising:

Ground floor: conference room, two reception rooms, shower and toilets.

First floor: 12 bedrooms, bathroom, toilets.

First floor, second floor: 13 bedrooms, bathroom, shower and toilets.

Still on the 'Hill but opening on to Pearce Road, Scoil Fatima opened for little boys in 1883. A large field divided Scoil Fatima from the girls-only Primary Infants school. Babies for children four and a half to five years old, High Infants, Senior First and First classes were held in this one-storey building. Not every child passed through all four classes but it was a great grading system. Little girls received the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist (First Confession and First Holy Communion), from First Class before moving on to

Second Class in the big school which was built in 1888, and called Scoil Naomh Phadraig. It was a girls-only school also.

The same pertained for the little boys from Scoil Fatima, after First Confession and First Holy Communion they moved on to the Christian Brother's National School on Quay Street, now situated in Temple Street, Sligo.

The Nuns were powerful women. They had 35 to 50 students in each class, sometimes two classes in one big room, and only one Nun in charge of each class. They taught discipline, reading, writing, maths, proper pronunciation, religion, Irish, how to listen and repeat what was delivered including the sermon in the cathedral at the 10.30am children's mass every Sunday, which we had to write on Mondays. We were taught respect for ourselves and others.

'If it was taught at the school it had to be learned,' was the motto of most of the parents then. Neither religion nor Irish was rammed down our necks. The Nuns just taught and we just learned. Gone are the days! And we learned courage and how to have confidence in ourselves. One day during class in the early 50s when our classroom overlooked the green field between the two schools, Sr Damien RIP, excused herself from the room and showed up two minutes later confronting ESB workmen who were setting about sinking a pole in the middle of the field. On gut instinct, and against the general rules, she protested against the ESB cutting diagonally through the field, stressing that the Convent might be in position some day to build on that field. We watched in awe as Sr Damien rent her garments demonstrating how the poles should be sunk behind the Pearce Road boundary wall to prevent the cost of re-locating them at a later date.

I don't remember how long it took but she succeeded. When she returned to the classroom she was flushed and excited. She told us never to be afraid to speak up. We might be wrong and we might be overruled but have the

courage of our convictions.

There was a Cookery and Sewing School with Sr Virgilia. In 1946 the Nuns were considering secondary education, and a commercial school was introduced for girls who did not want to continue education but wanted to get jobs in the Civil Service and in offices with short-hand and typing skills. There were only nine girls in the First Year of Secondary Top in 1949/50, which is what it had to be called because of the small number. They decided on a uniform, navy gymslip, white long-sleeved blouse, navy blazer with blue trim, navy hats and barrettes with OLM (Our Lady of Mercy) crest, which Summerhill and the Ursuline Colleges translated as Old Lousy Maids.

In 1956 with eleven other girls we sat the Leaving Certificate Examination and my time on Chapel Hill was over. Although I never left Sligo for any length of time I had no business back on the Hill.

The Mercy was expanding; in 1964 Scoil Caitriona was established for the Girls Primary. Lay teachers were arriving year on year. In 1993 Scoil Fatima, Scoil Niamh Phadraig and Scoil Caitriona were amalgamated and became a mixed / co-educational called Our Lady of Mercy Primary, with a majority of lay teachers. In 1976 a massive new secondary school was built on the land that was formerly convent lawns and gardens. This college was extended in 1989, 1992 and 2001 to include basketball and other pitches.

In 1991 the Mercy Convent went under the hammer, with auctioneer Dermot Mc Dermott. Many of the powerful women were gone to their reward in God, or were no longer needed: Sisters Dorothy, Agnes, Veronica, Philippa, Magdalene, Brendan, Leo, Eucaria, Aquinas, Virgilia, Emmanuel, Dominic, Berkman, Damien, Loyola, Misericordia, Incarnata, Gabriel, Augustine, Eymard, and Annuncia,

all of whom were my teachers. By 1993 only 6 to 10 Nuns remained in Sligo and they moved to an old stone building called Bethany Hill, which was originally an old National School, on St Patrick's Avenue, only yards away from Chapel Hill.

By September 2005 there were 516 pupils, 39 teachers and 16 special needs teachers in Mercy College.

By 2010 there were 380 pupils, 35 teachers and 11 special needs teachers.

In 2004 the Convent became Globe House accommodating 220 - 250 Asylum seekers from many nationalities across the world.

Sandwiched between Globe House and Mercy College Sligo at the top of the Hill, and St Anne's Youth Club at the bottom, all the buildings on the 'Hill are in private commercial use and in impeccable repair. Chapel Hill road feeds off a busy Roundabout – Chapel Street, Abbey Street, and Cranmore.

Wedding Bells in 1914

Submitted by Padraig Doddy

This report originally appeared in the Sligo Champion of 13 June 1914.

On 2 June [1914] at St Michael's Church, Kingstown, a very pretty wedding was solemnised, the contracting parties being Dr MJ Ahern, son of the late doctor and Mrs Ahern, Brosna, Co Kerry, and Nora, daughter of Mr John O'Dowd, MP and Mrs O'Dowd, Dathi House, Bunninadden, Co Sligo.

There was a large attendance of the friends of both parties. The bride, who was given away by her father, was charmingly attired in a gown of saxe blue Irish poplin, and wore a beautiful cream leghorn hat to match, and was attended, as bridesmaid, by her sister, Miss Nan O'Dowd, who looked pretty in a dress of white silk, with hat to match.

The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev J O'Dowd, CC, brother of the bride, assisted by the Rev DJ O'Grady, PP, Bunninadden; Rev M Canon O'Connor, Gurteen; and Rev M O'Flaherty, CC, Brosna.

The party were afterwards entertained to 'déjeuner' in the Royal Mail Hotel, Kingstown, after which the happy couple left by the 1:40pm boat from Kingstown en route for London and Paris, where the honeymoon will be spent.

Presents

The following is a list of the presents:
 Bridegroom to bride, gold watch, bracelet and silver-mounted dressing case
 Bridegroom to bridesmaid, diamond pendant
 Bride to bridegroom, gold cuff links and diamond scarf pin:
 Mr O'Dowd, cheque Mrs O'Dowd, house linen
 Rev J O'Dowd, CC, Irish lace blouse and scarf
 Rev DJ O'Grady, PP, dinner service
 Very Rev Canon O'Connor, PI, morning and evening tea service
 Rev R O'Donnell, CC, set of carvers in case
 Mrs MJ Davey Fairmount,

Waithamstowe, London, pearl and amethyst pendant and brooch
 Rev Mother and community, Banada Convent, silver cake basket
 Sister Imelda, Banada Convent, embroidered tea cloth
 Sister MJ Angela, Doo, Belleek afternoon tea set
 Rev Mother Mercy Convent Swinford, embroidered tea cloth
 Sister Mary Rose, mother of pearl beads and prayer book
 Mother Edan, Mercy Convent, Ballymote, cushion
 Sister Margret Mary, Mercy Convent, Collooney, prayer book
 Mr and Mrs Mc Nulty, Ballina, silver tea and coffee service and tray
 Ms L Mc Elroy, Knockalass, brass kettle and stand
 Mother Raphael, Loretto Convent, Dublin, Tennyson's works
 Miss L Shaw, Ballyfahey, cut-glass cruet
 Miss Freyne, Dublin, cut glass pin tray and scent bottle
 Mr John Shaw, Ballyfahey, silver cake

basket

Mr P Wynne, Wexford, case of dinner knives and forks

Mrs Morrison, Woodhill House, embroidered pillow shams

Miss Dorry Morrison, Doo, crumb brush and tray

Miss C Hunt, Tobercurry, silver cake basket

Miss M Burke, Doo, Embroidered sideboard cloth

Miss Sarah and Mr JP O'Dowd, Goldfield, silver mounted pickle ernet

Miss Katie O'Dowd, Belix, Omagh, silver mounted butter dish

Mr and Mrs Killoran, Bunninadden, cosey and cushion

Mr R Hall, Templehouse, travelling rug

Mrs Lipsett, Ballymote, Irish crochet collar and cuffs

Mrs Heally, Lecarrow, Damask tablecloth

Mr and Mrs R Morrison, Abbeyville,

silver spoons in case

Mr Jim Lavag, Knockalass, silver mounted dish

Mr MJ McManus, Tobercurry, cheque

Mr F Morrison, Goldfield, travelling rug

Mr John Scanlon, Bunninadden, cut-glass cruet

Mrs Breslin, Doocastle, pendant

Mrs Gallagher, Doo, gold brooch

Mrs Gilmartin, Sligo, case of fish knives and forks

Mr JH Mc Dermott, Bunninadden, Beleek tea service and tray

Mr John Graham, Quarryfield House, set of candles in case

Miss K Mc Gettrick, Lecarrow, box of embroidered handkerchiefs and Irish lace collar

Mrs and miss D Crowley, Kinlough, set of carvers in case

Mr John Morisson, Wood Hill, hall set

Mrs K Gallagher, Cloonameehan,

Damask tablecloth,

Miss S Corrigan, case of silver tea spoons

Miss M Duffy, Bunninadden, silver kettle and stand

Miss B Hunt, Sligo, counterpane

Miss M Keirns, Bunninadden, fruit dish

Miss M Wynne, Everlawn, Damask tablecloth

Miss J Hunt, Bunninadden, jam dish

Miss KA Morrison, Cloonaghan, Damask tablecloth

Miss K Mc Cann, Cloonameehan, jelly dishes

Miss A Pilkington, Ballyfahey, silver spoons

Miss O Connell, Bunninadden, China tea Set

Lizzie Mc Gettrick, Tobercurry, cushion

Ms O'Dowd and Mr MH O'Dowd, drawing room suite

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The Ballymote ICA choir in the 1970s.

Back row: Ann Harrison, Paddy Rogers, Concie Rogers, Eileen Cawley, Mollie Cawley, Una Connelly, Keenan Johnson

Middle row: Bernadette Martin, Kay Tansey, Rosaleen McElvaney, Patricia Tansey, Mary Banks

Centre front: Clare Martin, Mary Banks

Sligo in Ulysses

Neal Farry

When Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus traversed the city of Dublin on the 16th June 1904 with separate but eventually converging fictional peregrinations, it seemed that every possible observation, memory, perception, intuition, association of ideas and conversation were expressed, experienced and conveyed through multiple literary techniques. Bloom's perambulations from his home at No 7 Eccles Street through much of Dublin and back to his north city home in one day was a simulation of the wanderings of the Greek hero Odysseus (known as Ulysses in Latin) from Troy to his home in Ithaca, an island off the Greek coast after the Trojan Siege, a journey that continued for ten years.

During the voyage, Ulysses' ship landed on the island of Cyclops which was inhabited by one-eyed giants. In the Cyclops episode in the 1904 Dublin story the advertising agent Bloom and some drinking companions are conversing in Barney Kiernan's pub in Little Britain Street. Bloom is not drinking and Michael Cusack is clearly portrayed in an unflattering manner as 'The Citizen'. Joyce clearly implies that these hostile, tunnel-vision, nationalistic Dubliners are a mirror image of the one-eyed giants of Cyclops. Here is a portion of the dialogue:

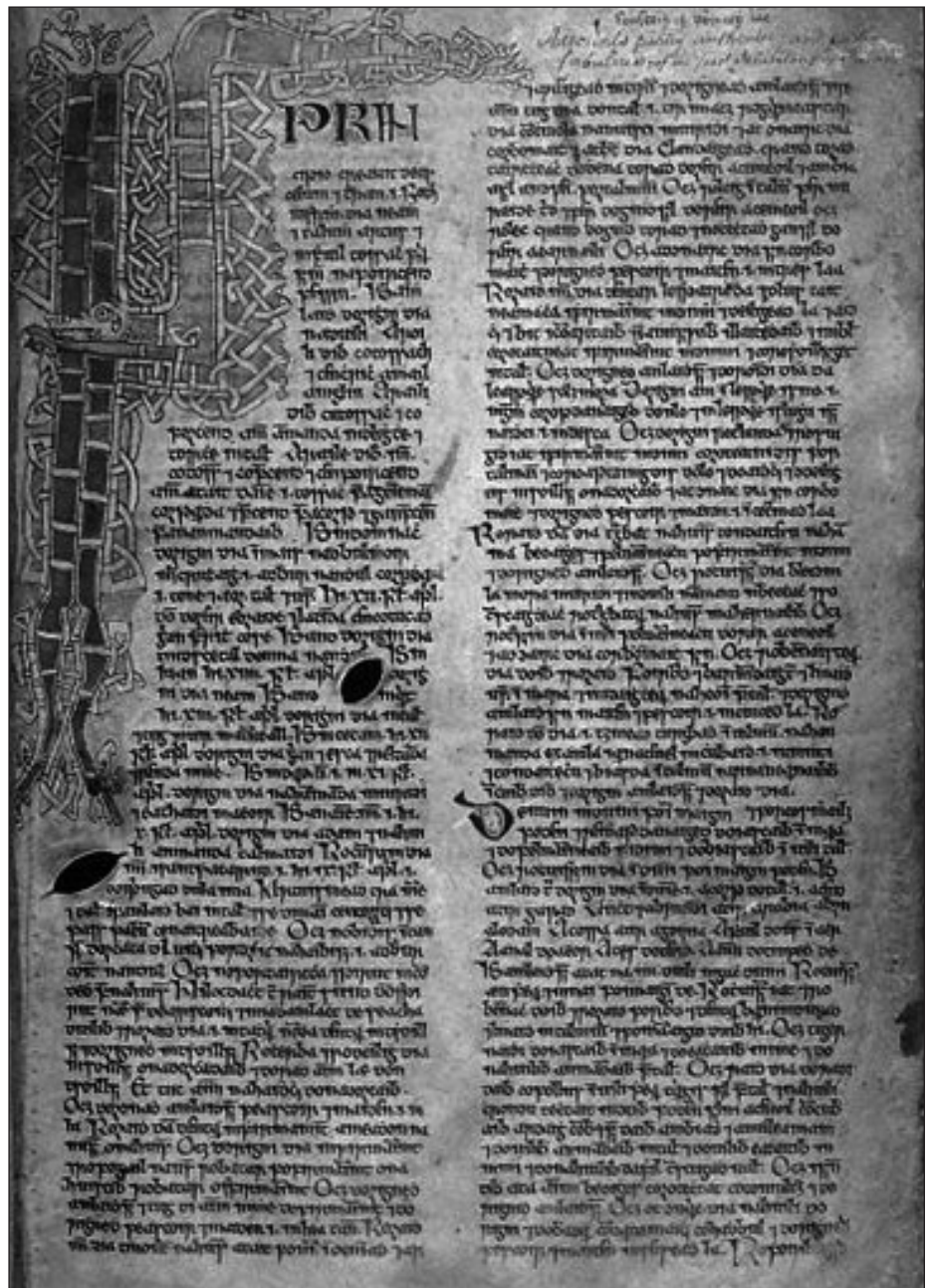
"But do you know what a nation means?" says John Wyse.

"Yes", says Bloom.

"What is it?" says John Wyse.

"A nation?" says Bloom. "A nation is the same people living in the same place."

"By God, then," says Ned, laughing, "if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years."



The Book of Ballymote

So everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it: "or also living in different places."

"That covers my case," says Joe.

"What is your nation, may I ask?" says the citizen. "Ireland", says Bloom. "I was born here. Ireland."

The citizen said nothing only cleared the spit out of his gullet and gob, he spat a Red Bank oyster out of him right in the corner. "After you with the push, Joe", says he, taking

out his handkerchief to swab himself dry. "Here you are, citizen," says Joe. "Take that in your right hand and repeat after me the following words:

"The much-treasured and intricately embroidered ancient Irish facecloth attributed to Solomon of Droma and Manus Tomoltagh og MacDonogh, authors of the *Book of Ballymote* was then carefully produced and called forth prolonged admiration. No need to dwell on the legendary beauty of

the corner-pieces, the acme of art, wherein one can distinctly discern each of the four evangelists in turn presenting to each of the four masters his evangelical symbol a bog-oak sceptre, a North American puma (a far nobler beast than the British article, be it said in passing), a Kerry calf and a golden eagle from Carrantuohill. The scenes depicted on the emunctory field, showing our ancient duns and raths and cromlechs and grianauis and seats of learning and maledictive stones, are as wonderfully beautiful and the pigments as delicate as when the Sligo illuminators gave full rein to their artistic fantasy long, long ago in the time of the Barmecides, Glendalough, the lovely lakes of Killarney, the ruins of Clonmacnoise, Cong Abbey, Glen Inagh and the Twelve Pins, Ireland's Eye, the Green Hills of Tallaght, Croagh Patrick, the brewery of Messrs Arthur Guinness, Son and Company (Limited), Lough Neagh's banks, the vale of Avoca, Isolde's tower, the Mapas obelisk, Sir Patrick Dun's hospital, Cape Clear, the glen of Aherlow, Lynch's castle, the Scotch house, Rathdown Union Workhouse at Loughlinstown, Tullamore jail, Castleconnell rapids, Kilballymacshonakill, the cross at Monasterboice, Jury's Hotel, S. Patrick's Purgatory, the Salmon Leap, Maynooth college refectory, Curley's hole, the three birthplaces of the first duke of Wellington, the rock of Cashel, the bog of Allen, the Henry Street Warehouse, Fingal's Cave – all these moving scenes are still there for us today rendered more beautiful still by the waters of sorrow which have passed over them and by the rich incrustations of time.”

In response to the above lengthy, deranged and outlandish description of a fanciful illustration from the *Book of Ballymote* (circa 1391AD), Leopold Bloom informs his fellow drinkers that he, as well as being an Irishman, also belongs to a race, ie the

Jews, that is hated and persecuted at that very moment and instant. (Page 430 to 432, Penguin 20th-Century classics, 1992 edition).

Professor Declan Kiberd of UCD, in his introduction to the Penguin edition of *Ulysses*, outlines a rationale for the catalogue of mocking and burlesque contempt of Irish places and of the *Book of Ballymote* as displayed by Joyce in the Kiernan Pub episode. Dr Kiberd explains that while Joyce was writing *Ulysses* he was reacting against the cult of Cuchulainn which was purveyed in the ‘Celtic Twilight’ literature of Pearse, Yeats and Lady Gregory. Yeats believed in ancient heroism and wished to make it live again in Ireland. Joyce was more modern. He contended that the ordinary was the proper domain of the artist, arguing that sensationalism and heroics could safely be left to journalists. In Mr Kiberd's view Joyce objected to the Cuchulainn cult because it helped to perpetuate the libel of the pugnacious Irish overseas, while



An illustration of Prince Cormac Mac Airt being suckled by a she-wolf by Stephen Reid (1910)

gratifying the vanity of a minority of self-heroicising nationalists at home. To Joyce, Cuchulainn's aggression and pain seemed to be an ill-disguised version of the ‘muscular Christianity’ preached in British public schools. Joyce heaped ridicule on the ‘Irish Cultural Revival’ because its

nationalism was an imitation of the original English model, rather than a radical renovation of the consciousness of the Irish race.

One of Joyce's biographers, Peter Costello, has noted that when John Joyce, the author's father, completed the official 1901 Census form in his own hand, he recorded that his sons James and Stanislaus both spoke and wrote Irish. They had not learned the native language at school but in the Gaelic League. In May 1901 James Joyce attended a meeting of committed Gaelic language enthusiasts on the topic ‘School and the Nation’, which dealt largely with the role of the Irish language in modern education. The audience list was recorded in ‘An Claidheamh Soluis’, the Gaelic League paper edited by Patrick Pearse, with whom Joyce was acquainted. Kiberd also noted that Joyce had learned Irish at Pearse's Gaelic League classes but had abandoned these on discovering that Pearse could not praise Irish without denigrating the English language. Pearse later corrected the fault.

This bone of contention with the Gaelic Revival on the part of Joyce goes a long way to account for the portrayal of Michael Cusack (The Citizen), the founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association, as a boorish, xenophobic, racist, anti-Semitic, nationalist bigot. Professor Kiberd emphasises that the nationalism that is asserted in Kiernan's Pub can be interpreted as a neurotic reaction to Englishness. By the device of national parallelism, Gaelic football, hurling and Irish-administered athletics can be presented as an antidote to soccer, rugby, hockey and athletics administered on the English model.

This view of Cusack as illustrated by Joyce in the Cyclops episode fails to take into account the fact that the games codified in Great Britain and imported into Ireland during the last decades of the 19th century

were exclusively the preserve of the Irish middle classes. These games were not played on Sundays, and the manual workers and farmers who laboured until sunset six days a week could not participate. It must also be acknowledged that Joyce himself was a member of a middle-class family that had declined into poverty. Nevertheless Joyce had the benefit of a privileged education in Clongowes Wood Jesuit College at primary school level and he enjoyed a secondary school scholarship to the Jesuit Belvedere College. He graduated with a BA degree from University College Dublin.

Joyce's private middle-class primary and second level colleges have never been distinguished for their enthusiasm to promote Gaelic games. One wonders did his educational and social background create an irrational hostility to the GAA, a body that had provided sporting outlets for the vast majority of Irish people, the manual-working male and female population, when that Association spread like a prairie fire in the 1880s. One feels that his portrayal of Cusack is unfair, biased and a product of his own class experience.

Professor Joseph Kelly (Charleston College, South Carolina) contributes a further insight to Joyce's view of Ireland before he compiled *Ulysses*. Mr Kelly has recorded some relevant facts as follows:

'In an article written in 1907 on the death of the Fenian John O'Leary, Joyce identified the Irish character as dominated by a tendency toward betrayal. In the 'Home Rule Comet' written in 1910, Joyce also personified Ireland as a betrayer with these sentiments: 'She abandoned her own language. She betrayed her heroes, always in the hour of need and always without gaining recompense. She has hounded her spiritual creators into exile only to boast about them.'

The Irish Joycean scholar, John

Garvin, a native of Keash, has alluded to the fact that Joyce wrote to a friend, Carlo Linati, in September 1920, sending him a schema of *Ulysses*. In his letter Joyce asserted that his book was a sort of encyclopaedia. At the same time he told Robert McAlmon: "I have now written in a great lot of balderdash all over the damn book." Garvin believes that some of this balderdash is included in the embroidered corner-pieces on the citizen's handkerchief and the scenes depicted on the emunctory field.

The illustrations depicted on Solomon of Droma's and Tomaltagh og MacDonogh's imaginary facecloth contain the four evangelists who in reality adorn the 9th century *Book of Kells* and are making presentations to each of the Four Masters, the chroniclers of the 17th century *Annals*. According to Garvin this type of absurd, anarchic composition is simply set piece, parody and juvenile mockery.

After all of Ulysses' sailors, with the exception of those in his own ship, had died violently in the land of the Laestrygonian cannibals, the remaining ship reached the island of Aea that was ruled by the goddess Circe. After an invitation to a feast in her palace Circe changed some of the sailors into pigs. Ulysses, with the aid of a magic herb, freed them from their enchantment.

The Circe experience is an appropriate metaphor for the next episode in 1904 Dublin. Stephen Dedalus and his friends are carousing in Bella Cohen's brothel in Nighttown, Montgomery St (Monto). Stephen is mimicking his absent father, Simon Dedalus. Stephen dresses up as a mock cardinal. He refers to his friends and himself as 'monks of the screw' i.e. the corkscrew. After singing a verse of 'Nell Flaherty's Drake' Stephen feels a multitude of midges swarming over his robe. He scratches himself with crossed arms, grimacing and

exclaims: "I'm suffering the agony of the damned. By the hoky fiddle, I'm thankful those funny little chaps are not unanimous. If they were they'd walk me off the face of the bloody globe." (P639 Penguin, 1992)

John Garvin illustrates the background to the aforesaid agonising complaint by Stephen Dedalus, and as usually happens with any reviewer reflecting on any detail of *Ulysses*, he proceeds to make what seems like a short story, long. Mr Garvin explains that 'the Monks of the Screw' was a social club founded by John Philpot Curran (1750 to 1817) whose family home outside Rathfarnham, Co Dublin, was known as 'The Priory'. Here Curran frequently entertained his convivial companions, naming them in a song 'The Monks of the Screw'.

John Garvin also notes that Curran was a member of the Irish Parliament, a popular barrister and a prominent defence counsel in the trials of the United Irishmen. He defended Wolfe Tone. His daughter, Sarah Curran, was the sweetheart of Robert Emmet. Curran often visited Sligo and he was always entertained there by Bob Lyons, a rich attorney who lived in Mullaghmore.

When addressing a jury, the Rathfarnham barrister made it his practice to concentrate on whatever juror seemed to him to look most hostile to his case. Once he had brought the recalcitrant one to show signs of sympathy with his pleading, Curran felt convinced that he had the whole jury behind him. This procedure he called 'making the jury unanimous'.

One winter Curran's carriage got stuck in a snowdrift near Riverstown, Co Sligo, and the Dubliner was obliged to lodge overnight in the local shebeen. Next morning the landlady expressed the hope that Curran had had a good night's sleep.

"How could I rest," demanded

Curran, “with all the fleas in this damned village eating me alive, one regiment pulling me from another.”

“I never knew there to be a flea in this house. Pulling you round, you say,” protested the landlady.

“Yes pulling! By heavens, woman! And if they were unanimous and all pulled the one way, they’d have pulled me out of the bed entirely.”

John Garvin says it is clear that Joyce had a truncated version of this tale and that he transformed the fleas from Curran’s story into the midges that tormented Stephen Dedalus in the Circe section of *Ulysses*. Mr Garvin also recalled a few lines of an old ballad commemorating Curran’s curse in Co Sligo, which ends: ‘Bad luck to the night I met Riverstown fleas.’

We have only Curran’s word for the alleged infestation. And if the offending fleas ever existed, modern husbandry and chemical warfare have well and truly eliminated their descendants in that currently reputable, industrious, neat, and house-proud village.

In the modern *Ulysses* story Bloom rescues Stephen Dedalus after the younger man goes berserk with drink and breaks a chandelier in the brothel. The two men stay together until the end of the novel.

John Garvin, a proud Keashman, is anxious that two references to another native son of his own ancient community, ie King Cormac Mac Airt, who features in the modern *Ulysses*, are not overlooked in any commentary on the celebrated novel. As I have already intimated, most of the classical Ulysses’ sailors perished in the land of the Laestrygonian cannibals. Our more mundane modern hero Leopold Bloom decided to have lunch in the Burton restaurant in Duke Street. Here he was disgusted by the repulsive eating habits of the diners who resembled the Greek cannibals.

“Am I like this?” he asks himself. “See ourselves as others see us. Hungry

man is an angry man. Working tooth and jaw. Don’t! O! A bone! That last pagan king of Ireland Cormac in the school poem choked himself at Sletty southward of the Boyne. Wonder what was he eating. Something galoptious. Couldn’t swallow it however.” (P.215 - Penguin 20th Century Classics, 1992.)

To add vigour to his claim that Cormac was a native of Keash, Mr Garvin quotes from *Ogygia*, a book written in Latin by Roderick O’Flaherty (1630-1718), translated into English by Rev James Healy and published in Dublin in 1793. He cites O’Flaherty in the following terms: ‘Cormac, the son of Artur the Melancholy, after the Battle of Crinna ascends the throne in 254 AD. He was called Cormac O Cuinn, as being grandson of Conn of the Hundred Battles, and Cormac Chorainn, as being born in Corann, at Athcormaic, near the mountain Ceis (in Co Sligo).’ The second reference to Cormac Mac Airt can be found near the end of the novel in the Ithaca episode.

Virtually all literary critics have observed the encyclopaedic mind of Joyce as demonstrated in *Ulysses*. Ballymote historian JC McDonagh quotes Dr Athkinson’s description of the *Book of Ballymote*: ‘It forms a miscellaneous collection, a bibliotheca, in which the scribe endeavours to preserve, as faithfully as he could, the valuable documents that antiquity had handed down without concerning himself with observance of any particular order in their arrangement’. In other words the *Book of Ballymote* is an encyclopaedia without alphabetical order. The last chapter in the *Book of Ballymote* is a translation in Irish from the Greek of the destruction of Troy and the wanderings of Odysseus, who is known in Latin literature as Ulysses. Joyce was well acquainted with Charles Lamb’s English version of Ulysses from his youth. While

a student at UCD, which was then located in Newman House in St Stephen’s Green, Joyce was a frequent visitor to the National Library and presumably to the Royal Irish Academy in Dawson Street. Perhaps his familiarity with the *Book of Ballymote* and its contents resulted in it receiving two references in *Ulysses*.

SL Goldberg, while evaluating and analysing the structure of *Ulysses*, emphasises that its flaws are both deep and serious: ‘The busy ant-like industry with which he piles in detail, his inability always to select the necessary from the available, the itch to get everything in, produce some maddening exhibitions of misdirected elaboration. He seems to worry his material almost obsessively at times’.

Joyce’s penchant for encyclopaedic showboating is also evident in his second reference to the *Book of Ballymote* in *Ulysses*. In the Ithaca episode Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus are sitting in Bloom’s kitchen in No 7 Eccles Street in the early hours of June 17.

In the Greek epic Ithaca is the home of the hero Ulysses and in Joyce’s 1904 story the hero Bloom, the Irish-born Jew, has likewise reached his home. Stephen Dedalus is the modern embodiment of Telemachus, the son of the Greek Ulysses.

Bloom and Dedalus discussed many topics, one of them being the similarities between the Irish and the Jewish cultural and political experiences. Fragments of verse from the ancient Hebrew and Irish languages were cited. The pair compared the phonic symbols of both languages.

In the manner of a catechism the following question is posed: “What points of contact existed between these languages and the peoples who spoke them?” Joyce’s character Bloom responds mentally with a stream of consciousness and here I paraphrase his meditation:

‘The presence of guttural sounds, diacritic aspirations, epenthetic and servile letters in both languages: their antiquity, both having been taught on the plain of Shinar, 242 years after the deluge in the seminary instituted by Fenius Farsaigh, descendant of Noah, progenitor of Israel, and ascendant of Heber and Heremon, progenitors of Ireland: their archaeological, genealogical, hagiographical, exegetical, homilectic, toponomastic, historical and religious literatures comprising the works of rabbis and culdees, Torah, Talmud (Mischna and Ghemara) Massor, Pentateuch, Book of the Dun Cow, Book of Ballymote, Garland of Howth, Book of Kells: their dispersal, persecution, survival and revival: the isolation of their synagogical and ecclesiastical rites in ghetto (S. Mary’s Abbey) and masshouse (Adam’s and Eve’s tavern): the proscription of their national costumes in penal laws and Jewish dress acts : the restoration of Chanan David of Zion and the possibility of Irish political autonomy or devolution.’ (P806 – 807, Penguin, 1992)

In this extract the tone of lampooning derision is considerably lessened. The Irish-Jewish hero of the novel, Leopold Bloom, is presented with empathy by the author and the combined cultural formative experiences of Bloom himself and of his protégé, Stephen Dedalus, are embraced, acknowledged and celebrated by the characters with a degree of scholarly detachment. Declan Kiberd elucidates for us that Joyce’s portrayal of his protagonist, Bloom, depicted the Irish as quiescent, long-suffering but astute people, very similar in mentality to the Jews. It should be noted that the *Book of Ballymote* contains a history of the Jewish peoples. It seems likely that Joyce was well aware of the contents of that 14th century tome from Co Sligo.

In the Ithaca section we read in a



A view over Riverstown village

narrative: “Bloom assented covertly to Stephen’s rectification of the anachronism involved in assigning the date of the conversion of the Irish nation to Christianity from druidism by Patrick, son of Poitius, sent by Pope Celestine in the year 432 in the reign of Leary, to the year 260 or thereabouts in the reign of Cormac Mac Airt, suffocated by imperfect deglutition of aliment at Sletty and interred at Rosnaree.”

John Garvin points out that both characters are in error about the date of Patrick’s mission to Ireland. There is ample documentary evidence to affirm the 432AD date for the saint’s landfall in Co Down. (P777, Penguin, 1992).

There are two significant vignettes of Cormac Mac Airt in the *Book of Ballymote*. The first is a glowing description of Cormac on the Festival of Samhain. The second entry pertaining to King Cormac in our 14th century manuscript is a legal essay on statecraft in which the King addresses his son. Both these extracts may be accessed in English translations in JC McDonagh’s history *Ballymote and the Parish of Emlaghfad* on pages 15, 17 and 18.

TS Eliot said that *Ulysses* is a book to which we are all indebted and from

which none of us can escape. Professor Kiberd contends that what seemed like random incidents are revealed in the end to be part of some fore-ordained plan: “There is a providence in the fall of a sparrow, the hairs on our heads are numbered, and the man of genius makes no mistakes. His errors are the portals of discovery.”

A Walton Litz, a New York academic, says that Joyce laboured to a pattern already laid out and fixed in his mind. Each fragment of material he gathered was marked for a specific place in the novel’s general design. The entire novel, with all its complex internal allusions, seems to have been constantly present for him as an ‘image’.

Emboldened by these generous commendations of *Ulysses* by the three aforementioned eminent professors, we may rest assured that the references and allusions to our native county in *Ulysses* were specifically inserted by Joyce to bring totality to his grand creative scheme.

Similarly, the *Book of Ballymote* was the outcome of a fore-ordained plan by its patron, Tomaltagh Mac Donagh, Taoiseach Chorainn. This far-sighted design was to preserve the literature, genealogy, history, geography and laws of his nation.

The historian Dr Petrie and the poet Matthew Arnold were of one voice in stating that tomes like the *Book of Ballymote* could not have been written by fools or for any foolish purpose. Consequently, it is with a modicum of justified self-esteem we can regard the fact that Joyce's *Ulysses* has made manifest Ballymote's most illustrious publication to a worldwide readership for almost a century.

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Dr John Garvin, a native of Carrowcrory, Keash, combined a

distinguished career in the Irish Civil Service with a life-long study of Joyce. He has written and lectured widely in Ireland, the UK and the US on Anglo-Irish literature. He delivered the memorial James Joyce memorial lecture in the University of Zurich in 1966 when the body of Joyce's wife, Nora, was interred beside his remains. Garvin has won an international reputation and has written under the pseudonym 'Andrew Cass'. In 1969 Dublin Corporation was dissolved by ministerial order for refusing to strike a rate. Dr Garvin, who had retired from the civil service, was appointed Dublin City Commissioner or head of the city administration. He held this post until 1973.

Ballymote 1915-1921

Mary Gaffney

As far back as 1915 the youth of Ballymote were in revolt. They saw Home Rule as a new form of restriction, recruiting was going on all over the country and suddenly the entire situation seemed intolerable.

So it was in 1915, just after the start of World War I, that the young men of Ballymote made their own protests. They were Alex McCabe, Bernie Brady, Matt Leonard, Tom Cawley, Tom McManus, Albert and Papie Farry and Batt Keaney, whose protests took the form of throwing stones and eggs at recruiting meetings.

At the end of 1915, Tom Cawley and Tom McManus were arrested for tearing down recruiting posters. The authorities sent them to Athlone and then to the Curragh, but, not knowing what to do with them, returned them to Ballymote where they were charged, tried and let out on bail.

Batt Keaney was one of 13 men

involved in the raid in February 1918 on Rockingham, the home of Sir Thomas Stafford, the first raid for arms after the 1916 Rising, where it was known there were guns for the use of guests for the shooting. Alex McCabe, later a Sinn Fein TD for Sligo, was in charge of the operation. Others taking part were Patrick Delahunty, James P Dodd, James Turbitt, James Haran, Stephen Brennan, John Shreerin, Martin Killalea, Patrick Shreerin, Patrick Spelman James E Feely, Michael McGuire, who drove the car, and Batt Keaney, who was chosen to knock on the door. Mr Keaney, who did not carry a gun, had orders to grasp whoever answered the door and hold on to him until assistance came. He was 18 years of age.

As Mr Keaney stood behind the colonnades which fronted the house, the door was opened by the butler, Farrelly. Although he was a large

man, Mr Keaney caught him by the collar of his coat but in the struggle the top of one of Mr Keaney's fingers was bitten off at the joint, which still bears the scar.

Alex McCabe tied the joint tightly with a handkerchief but despite this blood gushed from the wound. Inside they found the gun case locked so Mr Keaney pushed his bandaged hand through it, and retrieved three Mauser (sniper) rifles, two Lee Enfield rifles, five ladies' shotguns, 20 other guns, 2,000 rounds of shotgun ammunition, some revolvers and a camera. One of the rifles had a note pushed up the breech of the barrel in front of the bolt and it was learned this was the rifle carried by Stafford King Harmon when he died on the battlefield of Flanders.

On leaving Rockingham the men went to Townagh Graveyard, near Riverstown, where they handed the

arms to Jimmy Walsh who stored them on the Ballymote-Castlebaldwin road. When the hue and cry died down they were distributed.

A week later, on February 16 John McDermott, Michael Roddy, James Pallas, Alex McCabe, Batt Keaney, B Brady, E Killeen, T Cawley, P Farry, P Rogers, and T Langan were arrested and sent to Sligo for trial, charged with unlawfully and by force carrying away a gun and 80 rounds of ammunition that was the property of Graham Shaw, Riversdale, near Riverstown.

They were the first group who refused to recognise the English Court, wearing caps and smoking. Half way through the proceedings Alex McCabe said, 'We will have a song now, boys.' They were given a week in Cranmore Jail for contempt of court and it took the police a half an hour to get them into the military van. Traffic through the street was blocked by British soldiers keeping sightseers away, and on the way to the jail the men made things as difficult as possible. Although eight of them were handcuffed together, Batt Kearney managed to kick one policeman to the ground and in the scrimmage the bandage fell off his finger which began bleeding again.

On their release from Cranmore they were recharged and sentenced to six months imprisonment in Belfast Jail where a riot broke out a few days later. Bedding was smashed and the prisoners went out on the jail roof for ten days. Among the prisoners were Tom Ashe and P Biasley. When they came down from the roof they were sentenced to solitary confinement in underground cells. They went on hunger strike and after eight days Batt Keaney was moved to the Mater Hospital.

He was released after five days and on his way to Ballymote was arrested by the RIC and sent to Mountjoy Prison under the 'Cat and Mouse' act. There he discovered a hunger strike

was in progress and he immediately joined. After a fortnight he was released and returned to Ballymote. He later joined the Free State Army and before his retirement reached the rank of Lieut Colonel. He was one of the youngest volunteers in the west of Ireland. Later he joined the Army and served for 25.5 years.

Comdt Keaney was born in May 1899, the eldest son in a family of ten, in Treanmacmertagh, Keash. At the age of three he was sent to Drumcormack NS to boost the numbers. His parents were strong nationalists and his grandfather, an old Fenian and Land Leaguer, lived until he was almost 100 years old.

Even before he could read, Comdt Keaney listened to his grandfather talk about the Irish Party and politics in general. After the formation of the Volunteer Army in 1913 he joined the Ballyrush section where training and manoeuvres were carried out with wooden guns.

At the age of 15, Comdt Keaney was apprenticed to woodwork with an uncle in Ballymote who was president of the local AOH. During his two years in Ballymote he attended night classes given by Co Sligo's most famous teacher, Michael Doyle. In 1917 Comdt Keaney opened a bicycle and accessories shop in Teeling Street, renting it from Jimmeen Andy, a friend of the RIC and a member of the AOH. All the younger generation in Ballymote were members of the Volunteers and soon the bicycle shop in Teeling Street became their meeting place.

In the early months of 1917 Comdt Keaney was sworn into the IRB, appointed a Lieutenant of Ballymote Volunteer Company and nominated to attend lectures and demonstrations in guerrilla warfare and tactics given by the late Colonel Ginger O Connell in Sligo.

The next three years were eventful. There was the snow election in North Roscommon resulting in a Sinn Fein

victory followed by more victories in Longford, Clare, South Armagh, and Kilkenny. Immediately after the snow election, IRB instructions were received to secure possession of any known arms, ammunition and explosives in the area. Apart from the raid on Rockingham, County Council magazines and quarries were raided for explosives while attacks and interference with British recruiting were a regular occurrence. On the evening of a Quarter Session in Ballymote Judge Wakeley and his resident RIC guard were held under fire in Hannons Hotel, within 50 yards of the RIC barracks, for half an hour.

Ceilings were knocked down and every window smashed. Next morning when ball bearings and bicycle chain links were found embedded in the walls, a Constable Scott told Comdt Keaney that one day he would dangle on the end of a rope.

After the birth of the first Dail on 21 January 1919, the Volunteers ordered 'Land for the people, bullocks for the road' and grazing ranches were seized at Keenaghan, Ardsallagh, Cloonlurg, Ardcumber, Rusheen, Ballygawley and Lugacaha. In all the seizures the Volunteers stood guard while large tracts were ploughed up by local men. Afterwards the ploughed land was let on a con-acre to neighbouring men for cropping. Arrests and imprisonments followed and during the trials the prisoners shouted slogans, sang national songs, smoked and threw things at the bench. The result was imprisonment in Sligo, Belfast and Mountjoy prisons. During this time there were four important events for County Sligo Volunteers: on 23 August 1917, Freedom of the Borough of Sligo was conferred on Countess Markievicz; Ballmote's St Patrick's Day Parade in 1918 in which 21 bands took part; June 1918 when the Freedom of the Borough of Sligo was conferred on Father Michael O Flanagan; and finally when the Irish Party, Sinn Fein and Volunteer

representatives spoke from a common platform in Ballaghaderreen pledging to fight at home rather than yield to conscription.

In October 1919 Comdt Keaney's landlord obtained a court order for eviction and in the autumn he left Ballymote to work in the Belfast Shipyards of Harland and Wolff while continuing his association with the Volunteers. A few months later the pogroms broke out. Comdt Kearney saw men thrown from ships into the docks. When they managed to reach shore they were beaten unconscious with iron bars and thrown back into the docks to drown. He saw men disembowelled and left to die in agony.

On being given five minutes to get out of Belfast, Comdt Kearney moved to Wallsend where he found employment on a new government ship launched at Swan and Hunter Shipyards on the Tyne. His hatred of everything English intensified, and he and some associates set fire to the ship which was reduced to a metal shell and sunk beneath the waters of the Tyne.

Shortly afterwards he moved to Liverpool where he joined the Liverpool Company of the IRA and took part in the burning of warehouses, farmhouses, the homes of Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, and the destructions of telegraph and telephone communications. Comdt

Kearney was captured in July 1921 with three others and tried as Irish terrorists. They were sentenced to six years penal servitude in Dartmoor of which it is said 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here.'

Mary Gaffney died on 2 January 2008. She was a distinguished regional correspondent for all the Dublin-based national daily newspapers for many years and also worked for The Sunday World. Mary also wrote a number of plays and sketches for both radio and theatre. She particularly wished to have this article published in The Corran Herald.

A Mother's Death

Submitted By Alfie Banks

Lines in memory of Mrs Maria Regan, Carnacreeva, Keash, who died 2 May 1939, by Michael Francis Regan.

The summer sun was shining,
'Twas in the month of May
The birds were singing merrily
When mother passed away
She left her friends and neighbours
And the paths she often trod
And went for evermore
Unto almighty God

'Twas on a Tuesday evening
I'll never forget that day
When I last gazed on her sweet face
That's now in cold, cold clay
I watched beside her dying bed
Not knowing death was near
I left and took a last farewell
Of one I held so dear

Next morning came the telegram
Which brought the sad news to me
That mother had departed
And gone to eternity
When I received that awful news
I read it over and over
'Twas hard for me to realise
That mother was no more

'Twas sad but true, what could I do
But bear a heavy loss
'Twas on a feast day, the third of May
The finding of the cross
It was the greatest trial
On earth I could endure
But death can never be escaped
To meet it we are sure

She lived a good and holy life
She was resigned to die
To meet our blessed Lord
Upon his throne so high
I hope He will have mercy
On her immortal soul
And bring her eternal bliss
That truly-wished goal

She loved Our Blessed Lady
In life and death she came
And with her dying lips
Did often repeat that name
May Mary always plead for her
As in her month she died
And ask her loving son
The gates of Heaven to open wide

In Kilmorgan's lonely churchyard
I know her body lies
I hope her soul is happy
In the land before the skies
Beside my father's grave
She sleeps in sacred clay
Waiting for the trumpet call
Upon judgement day

Underground Streams and Canals Without Water

Bernie Doyle

The waters of Loughs Cara, Mask and Corrib in County Mayo are joined together by a maze of underground channels running through a plateau of carboniferous limestone. In fact, Lough Mask is so named (Loch Measc) because it mixes the waters of Corrib and Cara. A few of these channels can be seen through some caves or holes around Cong. The best-known of these is called the Pigeon Hole, which is not far from Ashford Castle in Cong.

A signpost from Ashford Castle leads us along a tree-lined path, with the Cong river on the right. Across the river we can see the ancient little house of stone jutting out onto the water. This was the Monk's Fishing House, associated with Cong Abbey founded by Turlough O'Connor in the twelfth century, and is one of the most peaceful places in the world. Turlough O'Connor, last High King of Ireland, spent twelve of his declining years in the Abbey.

The path turns abruptly to the left beside a tall limestone wall, and leads us to a tunnel under the Cornamona road. Here the signpost points to the largest of the caves, the Pigeon Hole. We descend sixty-one steps to a cavern through which runs a river fourteen feet wide and ranging from three to twenty feet in depth. We need to take a powerful torch (and an alert ear) to follow the windings of the stream around huge boulders as far as safety permits.

There are two caves on what is now the golf course at Ashford. The larger one is called the Horse Discovery. As the name suggests, it was discovered when a man, his plough and his horse fell through the middle of a seemingly solid field into the stream below. The second cave is known as the Lady's Buttery. I haven't found a reason for this name, unless some ladies in a previous age used it for a quick snifter

while they were out on their regular walks.

West of the main Ballinrobe to Cong road is the Poll Mór, the Big Hole. This is really a vertical hole in the rock giving access to an underground river. It was in constant use as a well until the 1940s, the river seldom being low enough for anyone to do anything more than to put their head inside.

There are two stories told about Poll Mór. First is the unfortunate tale of a goose belonging to the Foy family, which strayed into the hole and was lost for three weeks until it emerged from a crevice some yards away. It was then ravenous, but it was so badly affected by the light that it could eat only the first mouthful and then ran into the darkest corner of the shed and refused to come out. There it remained for three days until it died.

The second story was about the late Canon Neary, who was parish priest of the parish of Cong, Cross and the Neale. He once found a trout in the Big Hole that must have lost its way in the underground streams. From lack of food the poor trout had such a shrunken body that its head appeared out of all proportion to it, so that it resembled a giant tadpole. The kindly priest rooted around and found some worms to ease its hunger. And every day for some months Canon Neary would go down there, at about the same hour, with worms and other tasty morsels. In a short time the trout became so tame that it would swim across to the side of the well to take the food from Canon Neary's hand without any fear.

This work of mercy went on until the trout regained its graceful curves and normal poise. Then it seems it swam away through those lost underground streams to join its fellows in the normal rivers. But as every country person knows, the country grapevine is the most efficient form of communication

ever devised by man, and perhaps some clever fellow had been keeping an eye on things and fancied the trout for his supper at the most propitious moment.

In the early nineteenth century no engineer worth his salt could resist joining two large expanses of water by canal. Sir Robert Kane had a vision of a direct navigation from Ballinrobe via the river Robe, Lough Mask, through a canal and through Lough Corrib to Galway city – some fifty miles of waterway. What a glorious prospect! Construction on the canal started as Famine Relief work sometime in the 1840s, and for five years Mr Nimmo of the Board of Works and his colleagues supervised an army of labourers and stonemasons. They bored thousands of holes, sixteen foot deep, using only hand-operated rock drills to blast a twenty-square-foot-wide passages through carboniferous limestone. Mr Nimmo built many jetties and quays around the country but he never seems to have lived at the Cong river, which has a fine flood of water at Ashford bridge but disappears underground just beyond the bridge in Cong village. No wonder that the arches of this bridge sheltered a thriving hedge school for many years.

The locks and sides of the canal are beautifully constructed of cut limestone – the first lock about fifty yards north of the bridge at Ashford. A path leads us under the Cong village bridge to the second lock, which was never finished. At different seasons there is a little residual water in many parts of the canal, but water has never flowed between this lock and the third lock at Cornabanny, where you can see the line of dry canal from Drumshiel Bridge.

The stretch of canal from here to Lough Mask is dry or wet according to the season, or to whether some of

the underground streams are running high or low. At Inishard on Lough Mask stands the fourth lock, known as the Sluices. Here in summer is a deep, well-cut canal without a drop of water in it. Rising above it is a massive contraption of metal and wood, rack and pinion, fit to control the seven seas but with not a cupful of water to operate on. In winter a few feet of water will be flowing up the canal past the useless sluice-gates only to disappear through

a hidden cranny a few hundred yards away.

It would be interesting to know what the canal cost but it is a well-kept secret. A brief report of 1848 states: 'The Cong canal was one of the follies of the Board of Works, abandoned because of carboniferous rock, and sold to Lord Ardilaun.'

The first lock became an improvised boathouse. The bed of the canal near the third lock was turned into a

handball alley. And in Ballinrobe is a well-constructed cut-stone quay, complete with warehouses that never held any goods, and stone bollards to which the picturesque pookawns sailing from Galway city were never tied. The Mask and Corrib canal, this strange museum piece, is surely a monument to the folly of man and to the lack of foresight and planning in high places.

The Sligo Port Strike of 1913

Padraig Deignan

The strike of 1913 was the longest and most vicious labour dispute in Sligo's history. It started on 8 March 1913 and stretched on until resolved on May 6. A man was killed and there were violent confrontations in the streets and at the quays during the two-month strike. The principal organising force behind the strike was the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU). At the beginning of January 1909 James Larkin (1874-1947) had founded the ITGWU in Dublin to campaign for better pay and working conditions for dockers, carters and labourers. In September 1911 a branch of the Union was founded in Sligo. Sligo became one of the first branches established outside Dublin, along with branches in Belfast, Cork, Wexford and Waterford.¹



Harp Tavern Docks.

Hall Sligo, 27, 28, 29 May 1901. Back row: P McGowan, P Harte, John Dykes, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, J O'Connor, W Neary, J Clancy. Builders Labourers Benevolent Union.

Front row: James Kivlehan, F Gallagher, (Hon Sec) Patrick J Farrell, (President Sligo Trades and Labour Council.) Operative Bakers Society. H Reilly, (Hon Treasurer) Amalgamated Society of House and Ship Painters.

William Costello, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.

A Labour Tradition

Sligo had a long tradition of industrial action, and in March 1890 Sligo dockers formed a Mutual Protection

Association demanding an increase of 6d an hour, 'the docker's tanner'. Conflict with Arthur Jackson and Major Campbell of Harper Campbell

& Co over unloading the SS Sligo quickly ensued. Arthur Jackson (1853-1938), the key opponent of organised labour on the employer side in Sligo, was a prominent businessman who had come to Sligo from Belfast. He had married Alice Polloxfen and became managing director of the Sligo Steam Navigation Company, Director of Sligo Gas Company, and head of Arthur Jackson and Son manufacturing fertilizers.

The Sligo Independent backed the employers while the Sligo Champion supported the workers. The Sligo dockers soon afterwards merged their organisation with the National Union of Dock Labourers (NUDL). The employers tried to recruit men from Rosses Point to unload the ships while the NUDL tried to get them to join the union. The carters and employers of the merchants at the docks joined the union and brought membership to over 400. In April 1890 the union had its first victory and the Sligo Steam Navigation Company awarded the dockers an increase of half a penny an hour, concessions to those working at night and the abolishment of the role of stevedore at Sligo docks. The position of the strikers was undermined by the availability of blackleg labour from Rosses Point, and in the end all the workers accepted the Bishop of Elphin, Dr Gillooly's plea from them to return to work.²



The Eight Annual Irish Trades Union Congress

The Eight Annual Irish Trades Union Congress held in the Town

On 28 January 1891, at the height of the crises over Parnell's affair with Kitty O'Shea becoming public, local concerns took precedence over national ones when the dock labourers and artisans of Sligo met in the council chambers of the town hall. They were there 'for the purpose of taking into consideration the treatment which certain employers of labour had meted out to their men for taking part in the labour demonstration on St. Stephen's Day.' Patrick Farrell, of the Baker's Union and President of the Trades Council, condemned the employers for bringing in men from country areas to do work. The demonstrators in December 1890 had demanded better pay and working conditions for the labouring classes in Sligo.

In February 1891 union labourers in Sligo went on strike and the Sligo Champion editorial of 14 February 1891 supported them, arguing that 'the men are determined, [but] the employers unbending and confident'.³ The store men and mill men all turned out to support the Sligo dockers. The Sligo Champion were sympathetic to the strikers, maintaining on 14 February 1891 that 'trade unionism is a force in our social system which has got to be reasoned with' and 'yesterday week the union labourers of Sligo struck work causing considerable excitement throughout the town and neighbourhood. The employers of Sligo are not inferior in qualities of head and heart to employers in any part of the world, but they seem to be behind their time in their appreciation of the rights of labour.'

The strike revolved around the employment of non-union dock labourers. After two weeks the workers were broken and began to drift back to work. The union was, according to the Sligo Independent, 'shattered, forsaken.' The Sligo Champion made no comment. Union funds had run out and gains from the previous strike, where at least the union had achieved a negotiated settlement for the dockers, were negated. The NUDL was destroyed and the Trade's Council also disappeared. The employers had

achieved a complete victory.

The ITGWU in Sligo

The Sligo ITGWU branch was founded in September 1911 after the Sligo Trades Council, an organisation which protected skilled, unskilled and craftsmen and had been in existence since 1890,⁴ invited Walter Carpenter, a national ITGWU organiser, to speak and launch a branch.⁵ The Sligo Trades Council or the Sligo Council of Trade Unions (SCTU) was a successor of an earlier 'union' started in 1883 from among the 'Artisans Society', and records of the Sligo branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners date back to 1871.

The immediate circumstances surrounding the launching of the ITGWU in Sligo related to a number of minor labour disputes in the town in the summer of 1911, which included a strike by workers at the Sligo Gas Company, labourers at Pollexfen's mills, and the participation of Sligo rail workers in a national strike.

There was some vocal opposition to the establishment of the ITGWU in Sligo, and the Bishop of Elphin, Dr Clancy, who was anti-socialist, was strongly opposed to the organisation and was reported to have said that he would drive the ITGWU out of the town 'at the sacrifice of my life if necessary'.⁶ Clancy found an ally in his opposition to the ITGWU in the form of the unionist and conservative newspaper, the Sligo Times, which was owned and run by Robert Smylie, who was also opposed to what seemed a revolutionary organisation supporting worker rights. Smylie's editorial in the Sligo Times scorned Carpenter, and ridiculed him as a 'paid English agitator with his cockney accent'.⁷

Robert Smylie was a Presbyterian who was born in Scotland and had been on the staff of the Sligo Independent for almost twenty years before he founded the Sligo Times in December 1908. Smylie lived on Mail Coach Road in Sligo town and was elected as a representative of the East Ward to Sligo Corporation in January 1912. He later moved to Belfast and

died there in 1936. His eldest son, Robert M ('Bertie') Smylie, moved to Dublin and became editor of the Irish Times.

The ITGWU in Sligo quickly became closely allied to the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) and the United Irish League (UIL) through Henry Reilly, who was the president of the Trades Council, a prominent Hibernian member and Vice-President of the North Sligo Executive of the UIL. As Michael Wheatley has noted in Nationalism and the Irish Party, until his death in 1909, PA McHugh had been 'a noted campaigner of workers' rights' and in 1910 the Sligo Trade Council led the fundraising for a proposed memorial to PA McHugh.

Another important UIL and Hibernian ally of the ITGWU in Sligo was Daniel O'Donnell (1853-1914). O'Donnell was the proprietor of the Imperial Hotel, Alderman and Mayor of Sligo in 1913, and he was Connaught Provincial Director and National Trustee of the AOH. O'Donnell was an active supporter of the Trades Council and promoted better housing for workers. When O'Donnell died in February 1914 alderman John Lynch, the leader of Sligo ITGWU and vice-president of



John Lynch

the Trades Council, saluted O'Donnell by calling him 'the greatest friend the workers of Sligo ever had'.⁸

John Lynch was born to a fishing family in Magherow, Co Sligo, and worked as a deck hand on the harbour tug boat and on lighters between Rosses Point and Sligo. He then went to sea and was later employed by Sligo Harbour Board. He may have joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood in 1903 in Glasgow and was good friends with both Sean MacDiarmada and James Connolly.⁹

John Jinks (1873-1934), who was unanimously voted in as mayor in O'Donnell's place, supported O'Donnell's encouragement for the ITGWU. John Jinks was originally from Drumcliff in North Sligo and had moved to Sligo town and entered the grocery trade. He set up his own business in Stephen St as a publican, auctioneer and undertaker. He was first elected to Sligo Corporation in 1898 and was a strong supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party and its leader John Redmond. He was also a member of the Hibernians.¹⁰ Fellow Hibernian member and corporation councillor Patrick N White, who was a chemist, bottler of 'Holy Cross' mineral water and a mill owner, was also a supporter of the ITGWU. All three men had been strong supporters of PA McHugh.

Michael Wheatley argues that the alliance between nationalism and labour was 'unsurprising, given that for many years the common enemy of Labour and nationalists had not been Catholic merchants and employers ... but the Protestant, unionist, commercial establishment which dominated Sligo's docks (the Harbour Commissioners), shipping (the Sligo Steam Navigation Company), and mills (Pollexfen's).'¹¹ He contends that 'Protestants in Sligo were self-confident, socially active, and politically assertive' and therefore 'in Sligo town as a result, Protestant/Catholic antagonism was always politically, close to the surface'.¹² Undoubtedly Protestants had strong

business interests in Sligo but they were not dominating the business life of Sligo. The Catholic business community was very significant and politically well-established, and Catholic businessmen had much in common with Protestant businessmen and were not completely united with their fellow nationalist workers or fellow nationalist politicians. When in late May and early June 1912 a dispute over pay occurred between the dockworkers of the ITGWU and the Sligo Steam Navigation Company, the Catholic businessmen, Thomas Flanagan, provision and coal merchant, James P. Higgins, owner of several bakeries, groceries, general stores and pubs, and Edward Foley owner of the Riverside Brewery, Sligo town's only brewery at the time, all joined the Employers' Federation set up by Protestant businessmen Middleton, Pollexfen, Harper-Campbell and others.¹³ Higgins later became vice-president of the Employers' Federation.

Michael Wheatley has maintained that in Sligo 'it was the residual economic and political strength of the town's Protestant commercial elite which gave common cause to the Irish party and Labour'¹⁴ and the 'key leitmotif particular to Sligo town, of conflict between the town's Protestant minority and Catholic majority, confirming the unity of the latter, was played throughout'.¹⁵ However, it appears that Catholic businessmen were eager to exploit the Protestant/Catholic animosity in 1912 and 1913 to their advantage and convince their workers that it was Protestant businesses that were keeping the workers down and not Catholic businessmen such as them. They were also using this animosity to further their own political careers.

The mayor, Daniel O'Donnell, as well as John Jinks and Patrick N White, appeared determined in their support of the workers. The Sligo Champion also supported the strikers, praising their conduct and supporting their demands for more wages. In

July 1912 Larkin visited Sligo and attended a meeting supporting the strikers, which was held in the town hall, with Trades Council and ITGWU members present including John Lynch and William Gibbons. Patrick N White also attended the meeting. This was Larkin's second visit to Sligo and on 24 March 1912 he had spoken at a meeting outside the town hall. Dr Clancy, although a supporter of



James Larkin

workers rights, but in keeping with his anti-socialism, had opposed the visit, calling him 'an imported mischief maker'. However, there was a large turnout for the meeting. The Trades Council leaders and O'Donnell had not attended that time and although the Sligo Champion criticised Larkin's 'wild' character and questioned his concern for the 'men of Sligo', the paper was keen to state that it opposed Larkin personally and not the labour movement.¹⁶

The 1912 Strike

The strike which broke out on 7 June 1912 was caused by the demand for an increase of half a penny in wages for unloading coal boats. Patrick Thomas Daly (1870-1946), a printer from Dublin and Larkin's lieutenant, was sent to Sligo to organise the strike. He was a member of the IRB, and in 1906 had been elected for Sinn Féin to Dublin Corporation. He criticised the merchants but mainly for allowing the stevedore leaders Garvey and Roycroft-Verdon-Scanlon to monopolise work at the quays. They were supported in this by Arthur Jackson.



Larkin with ship and crowd

Daly organised a meeting at Rosses Point where some blackleg labour had been hired by the merchants. Michael McKeown took over from Daly when he was called away and he managed to recruit the Sligo Corporation workers and the carters to the strike. A settlement was agreed two weeks into the strike.¹⁷ The system gave the ITGWU the right to appoint all stevedores at the port. Larkin boasted later that one of the union's achievements was the fact that 'we undertake the transport work of Sligo Port'. The increase in membership meant they were able to rent new premises and they called the building Liberty Hall.



Arthur Jackson

In September 1912 at a meeting of Sligo Trades Club, Henry Reilly,

Bernard McTernan and Edward Harte, who had replaced Reilly as president of the club, William Gibbons and John Lynch made a presentation to O'Donnell rewarding him for his support for the workers. O'Donnell thanked them saying that he supported the workers' 'right to a decent life and a fair wage'.¹⁸ Thomas Scanlon, MP, who was present, tried to ingratiate himself with the working class, claiming that as a member of the legal profession he was also a trade unionist.

In December 1912 O'Donnell spoke at a meeting of the ITGWU in Sligo. The annual corporation elections were coming up in January 1913 and so O'Donnell called for a 'one solid phalanx' at the forthcoming corporation elections. In January 1913 O'Donnell and John Lynch spoke together at a meeting to support Labour/ ITGWU-AOH candidates. O'Donnell and Lynch were clearly using each other's influence to secure election. Lynch was associating himself with O'Donnell and the UIL while O'Donnell allied himself with Lynch to secure worker support.

The Labour/ ITGWU and the AOH candidates won all six seats. John Lynch was elected, as were two close associates of O'Donnell and both members of the AOH, Henry Monson, a furniture retailer, and vice-president of the Sligo town AOH, and Henry Dewep, a carpenter and director of the

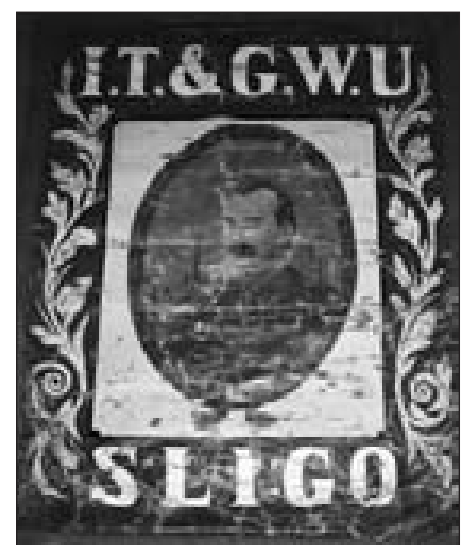


Thomas Scanlon

Sligo town AOH brass and reed band. Peter Heraghty, a trader, Thomas Hughes, a monumental contractor and William Gibbons, a plasterer, were the three other successful candidates. The three men were all ITGWU members. O'Donnell was unanimously elected mayor for a third term.

The 1913 Strike – 'a long pull and a straight pull'

In the first half of 1913 the increasing strength of the labour movement in Sligo, and the UIL and AOH support for this, allowed labour concerns to become more important in Sligo than national issues. From March to May 1913 the second round of the dispute occurred at Sligo docks. The first round had been



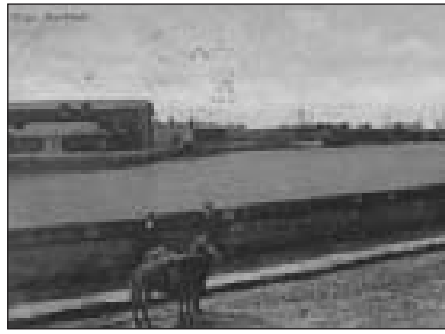
Sligo branch ITGWU banner courtesy of Sligo County Library

unresolved and this time the ITGWU increased their demands, insisting on a unionised workforce and better pay and conditions for the workers. The strikers consisted of dockers, carters, seamen and mill workers. Nationalist support for strikers came especially from Jinks and White. Jinks called on 'fellow workers' to stand up and win their fight, urging 'a long pull and a straight pull'. Jinks maintained that as a UIL man he would pressurise the employers to give in. John Lynch and Marty Mulligan, secretary of the ITGWU in Sligo, led the strike and they were supported by union organiser Patrick T Daly.¹⁹ The strikers were also assisted by the grocer/publican Thomas Connolly of Holborn St/Victoria Line who gave the dockers food on credit, and by Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth, a prominent Protestant landowner and owner of the Connacht Manufacturing Company, a clothing company, who supplied bags of potatoes for the strikers.

What precipitated the dispute which began on 8 March occurred when Sligo Steam Navigation workers, unloading the SS Sligo, lodged unsuccessful claims for extra help and more wages in connection with looking after livestock on cattle boats. Five men who stopped work without giving the required twenty-four hours notice were prosecuted under the labour laws; four were sentenced to seven days imprisonment with hard labour.



Josslyn Gore Booth



Sligo harbour

Meanwhile, a non-union local crew completed the unloading, and the ship sailed for Liverpool carrying livestock, but the main cargo remained behind. The vessel later returned to Sligo and the company tried to have non-union men unload the ship but this was resisted by the union members aboard who went on strike, and were supported by carters. Jackson and Pollexfen, emboldened by their victory in 1891, decided to take on the workers and deployed all their clerical staff as motorists in order to circumvent the carters' sympathy strike.

The Sligo Times criticised James Larkin's visit to Sligo during the strike, but the Sligo Champion reported that the principal leaders of the strike were John Lynch of Lower Quay Street and Marty Mulligan from Riverside, who was the secretary.

When the strike entered its second week, a large force of police were on duty at the quays to protect non-union men unloading various ships. Arthur Jackson had put together a group composed of the Garveys and Verdons from the unemployed stevedores. On Saturday 29 March, the dispute had considerably worsened and sixty extra police were drafted into Sligo. A number of dock labourers, sent by the Shipping Federation, arrived by train from Liverpool, and under heavy police escort, boarded the SS Liverpool and began unloading the ship. An angry crowd, which included women and children, armed with sticks and other weapons, barged their way on board and attacked the non-union men, resulting in several serious injuries.

Workers drafted in from Ulster and Liverpool were escorted by the police from the Railway Station to the docks. Strikers returned to the union offices at Lynn's Place, and from there an angry mob marched through Sligo attacking businesses that supported blackleg labour, and demonstrated outside the homes of non-union workers, one of which was the Garvey house. Many incidents of vandalism were put down to reckless youths, who were not directly involved with the strike. The police and ordinary citizens were targeted and the well-known local historian Colonel Wood-Martin was assaulted on Knox Street. While the Sligo Times denounced all the strikers for these acts, the Sligo Champion reported that many incidents of vandalism were put down to 'irresponsible rowdies who are using the opportunity for the gratification of their own low instincts'.²⁰



Police on Horseback

Striking dockers also forced their way into the 'Liverpool' shed where a number of non-union men, including members of the Garvey family, had gone for safety. Following this incident, Patrick Dunbar, Riverside, a married labourer and member of the Transport Union, was found lying unconscious. He was brought to hospital, but unfortunately died the following morning. He had been employed casually in Pollexfen's Mills and had joined the strike.

An inquest on Patrick Dunbar was held later, and a witness gave evidence that he and Dunbar had been standing at a shed gate when the police baton-charged. Both men went into the



Col. Wood-Martin

shed for shelter. The witness reported that 'I saw a number of men hiding behind bags in the shed and I said to Dunbar: "We're in a trap"'. The witness mentioned that 'there was a rush made by a number of these men.' During cross-examination, he said Dunbar got 'a clout' on the head with the stave of a paraffin oil barrel, and two revolver shots were fired inside the shed, striking the gate over his head. John Garvey, son of a stevedore, was later charged with the murder but he was acquitted on the grounds that he acted in self-defence.²¹

After being thwarted in their attempt to board the SS Liverpool, the crowd had made an effort to stop non-union men from unloading the SS Amelands. A strong force of police headed them off and formed a cordon at the deepwater. The strikers used sticks, stones and other weapons to break through the cordon but didn't attack the men on board who were armed 'with all sorts of weapons'.

The strikers returned to the union offices at Lynn's Place and marched through the town. They tried unsuccessfully to get into the Steam Navigation Company's office in Wine Street. They smashed windows at Pollexfen's office before the crowd marched to High Street and demonstrated outside the house of a non-union worker. They later returned to the quays and were addressed by

the Union organiser, PT Daly, who appealed for calm during the next twelve hours, as negotiations were under way. Daly declared that 'if the strike is not settled, I won't stand between you and what you consider to be your rights.'

Later, eighty extra police arrived by train from Dublin, which brought the total force in Sligo to 160, and barriers were posted to prevent strikers gaining access to the quays. A large crowd armed with sticks paraded through the streets heading towards the docks where police blocked their way. When they came under attack, the police retaliated with a baton charge during which 'a fearful melee' took place, and many dockers were 'severely handled'. A crowd was baton-charged at Knox Street and cheering strikers occupied the Harmony Hill-Knox Street junction late into the night, but there were no incidents.

In late March, a conference was held in the Steam Navigation Company's offices between representatives of the strikers and of the firms involved in the dispute, but negotiations broke down. The Mayor, Ald O'Donnell, invited the merchants and traders to a conference in the town hall. The Sligo Times reported that the authorities were very confident of a settlement. However, the talks came to a last-minute halt; Daly refused to sign an agreement containing a free-labour clause giving employers the right to hire anybody without asking if he was a union member. Negotiations broke down, with both sides stating that they were determined to 'fight to the finish!'

By the 5th April over 350 policemen had been drafted into Sligo to control the strikers and protect non-union



Mounted police

workers brought in to unload cargo at the docks.²² The RIC Co Sligo inspector reported at the start of April that 'the local press of all shades of politics is against the strike'.²³ This was not entirely true. While the Sligo Times criticised the strikers claiming that 'women with hatchets' roamed the streets, and Smylie deplored their language as the 'filthy of the filthy'²⁴ and the Sligo Independent condemned the violence,²⁵ the Sligo Champion supported the strikers' demand that employers not employ non-union men²⁶, though it also denounced the violence.

The Catholic Church did not become directly involved in the strike, although Dr Coyne, the Bishop of Elphin who had replaced Dr Clancy in early 1913, stood at the pulpit during mass and warned of the serious repercussions for Sligo if the Trade Unions took control of the workers, saying: 'The grass will grown green on the Docks, if the union is in control in Sligo.' Younger priests may have sympathised more closely with the strikers, and Fr Michael O'Flanagan, the North Sligo rebel priest, supported the dockers and encouraged them to fight for their rights. Later the Sligo Administrator, Rev Doorly, was involved in trying to bring both sides together for settlement talks.

On the 9th April, the SS Liverpool arrived with a cargo and 150 labourers supplied by the Shipping Federation. Three crews began unloading the cargo of the SS Ameland and two started work aboard the SS Sligo. There were no incidents, but a large police force was present. The employers banded together and set up as the 'Importers Association' and created a banner with the words 'free labour' on it. Around Sligo the strikers placed pickets on shops providing supplies to the non-union workforce, and the supplies were brought under heavy police protection to the quays. A large crowd of women and children paraded through the town in support of the strikers. Also, in a sympathy strike the Connacht Manufacturing Company in the Market Yard, owned by Josslyn

Gore-Booth and employing eighty women, closed in protest at being dragged into the dispute in which it was not involved.

The strike dragged on until early May when talks chaired by TA Cooper, Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth's



Image of Sligo Harbour from the Victoria Line

agent, who along with John Jinks had been seeking a solution to the strike after the close of the Connacht Manufacturing Company, were successful in bringing the strike to a conclusion.²⁷ Another important reason for bringing the employers to the negotiating table was the mounting cost on the ratepayers of maintaining a large police force on the streets of the town. The terms of the settlement stated that the non-union men were to be allowed to work without interruption for three months after which an arbitration conference would be held consisting of three shipping employers and three Transport Union men, with an independent chairman, to further consider the case of the union workers.

The union representatives conceded the right of free labour in the mills and stores, and the various shops and warehouses of the town. The workers received a pay increase and blacklegs were forced to join the union and were forced to pay a fine. The ITGWU position had been strengthened. On 6 May, 56 days into the strike, at the town hall the dock workers heard of their victory and celebrated into the night. Normal work resumed the next day but many were to face prosecutions, hefty fines, and jail sentences for their efforts on behalf of labour rights.

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Table 1: Members of Sligo Corporation January 1913

Title	Name	Occupation	Political affiliation
Mayor and Alderman	Daniel O'Donnell	Hotel owner	UIL/AOH
Alderman	John Connolly	Merchant	UIL
Alderman	Thomas Flanagan	Merchant	UIL
Alderman	Edward Foley	Merchant	UIL/AOH
Alderman	J.P. Higgins	Merchant	UIL
Alderman	John Jinks	Auctioneer	UIL/AOH
Councillor	John Lynch	Stevedore	Labour/ ITGWU
Councillor	Thomas Scanlon	Tailor cutter	UIL
Councillor	Dudley M. Hanley	Merchant	UIL
Councillor	Edward Kelly	Merchant	UIL
Councillor	John P. Foley	Merchant	UIL
Councillor	Patrick N. White	Chemist	UIL/AOH
Councillor	Robert Smylie	Journalist	Unionist/Conservative
Councillor	William Gibbons	Plasterer	Labour/I.T.G.W.U
Councillor	Michael McDonagh	Shopkeeper	Labour/ ITGWU
Councillor	John Hughes	Merchant	UIL
Councillor	Thomas Hughes	Monumental contractor	Labour/ ITGWU
Councillor	Edward Harte	Carpenter	Labour/ ITGWU
Councillor	Peter Keely	Clerk	Labour/I.T.G.W.U
Councillor	Peter Heraghty	Trader	Labour/ ITGWU
Councillor	James Gray	Dealer	UIL
Councillor	Henry Monson	Furniture retailer	Labour/ ITGWU/AOH
Councillor	Henry Depew	Carpenter	Labour/ ITGWU/AOH
Councillor	Thomas Kivlehin	Journalist	UIL

Source: *Sligo Champion*, 25 Jan. 1913.

Cillin Monastic Site

John Higgins

This is a very historical parish, being the birthplace of Ireland's first *Árd Rí*, Cormac Mác Art, and the setting for the epic tales of the *Fianna* related in legend and story. As we know from archaeological research people have lived here for thousands of years, in the forts and raths that are so numerous all over the area. They worshipped old gods and built dolmens and cairns to mark the burial places of their dead. Carrowkeel is only over the hill from Cillin, where cremations and inhumations took place. The advent of Christianity with the coming of St Patrick had a profound influence on society. He did not change the old pagan ways of worship but gave them a new Christian meaning. Soon monasteries spread all over the country; these were centres of religion and education and catered for the spiritual needs of the people. There were two main monastic sites in this parish at the time: Drumrath and Toomour. Greenan was a later offshoot of some type, perhaps associated with Toomour.

Templevanny and Cillin are of a much later date, being granges or outlying farms belonging to the Cistercian monks in Boyle Abbey, which was founded in 1161. Cillin is situated in the old parish of Toomour, and a bullan stone and some metal slag found here helps to find a date for its foundation. The name Cillin suggests that there was a graveyard here where children who died without baptism were buried. On the 1838 Ordnance Survey map a mill with a kiln and fishery is marked to the west of the church. The church and cells for the monks were established here to enable the monks who worked the lands - then known as Abbey Lands - to celebrate the divine service.

The Cistercians were granted 50,000 acres of land west of the Shannon and there is a reference to 'Cluain Cath' [Battlefield] as being part of this grant of land. These lands were granted to the Cistercians to repay them for ministering to the spiritual needs of the people. This site was probably circular in shape. It would have been surrounded by a large

fence for protection, and the church itself was built of stone. The monks who lived there had their own cells around the church. They were largely self-sufficient, living by the labour of their own hands. Sheep pigs and cattle provided foodstuffs, clothing, footwear, tallow for candles, and vellum for writing. Wheat, flax, oats, barley, vegetables and herbs were grown. Bee-keeping provided honey and oxen and horses were used on the farm.

These monks looked after the spiritual needs of the local people. The Abbot was the head of the monastery, and the almoner dispensed alms to the poor. The daily life of the monks centred around the 'Book of Hours' which was the main prayer book. It was divided into eight sections, or 'hours', that were meant to be read at specific times of the day. Each section contained hymns, psalms and other readings to help the monks secure salvation. Each day was divided into eight sections or sacred offices during which time the recitation of the Divine Office took place. The monks fasted daily until evening, and their day was spent almost in complete silence with a great deal of solitude. They saw their life as a journey to God and they fixed their eyes on the destination rather than the passing pleasures of this world. However, many of the monks failed to live up to this austere discipline and opted out. The rule of life for the Cistercians was very strict and the main reason they had been invited here was to reform the Church, which both morally and organizationally had fallen out of line with the rest of Europe. There was spiritual and moral laxity, the sacraments were neglected and corruption was rife, so it was obvious that reform was necessary as the era of Ireland's Golden Age had long ended. At the synod of Kells in 1152 the present Diocesan boundaries were agreed on. The lay lords of the time made most of the clerical appointments. They administered the Abbey Lands mainly for their own benefit and often without regard to the interests of religion. If an unpopular Abbot was chosen by the Pope, the

Abbey Lands would be seized by the supporters of the disappointed candidate. Therefore the wealthy monasteries had left the country without even the bones of a clerical organisation based on a secular priesthood.

Tadgh McDonagh was steward of these Abbey Lands here and he and his son built a residence, a church and guardhouse that became known as *Tampall a Mhanaigh Templevanny* (Church of the Monks). They were not welcome here and the local people resented the heavier dues and task work which Tadgh and Boyle Abbey demanded. Because of his flowing red hair the locals called him *Manach Rua*, and he became supreme arbiter in all matters lay and spiritual. His word was law, and for the slightest offence one could be imprisoned in his prison house at *Templevanny* or hanged at *Cnocan na Cruaiche* (Hill of the Gallows) *Knocknacroy* in *Keash*. He is buried in *Templevanny Churchyard* under the long stone.

In 1586 these lands were granted to Patrick Cusack and lay abbots ceased to be appointed. The worldly minded were weeded out of the ranks of the priesthood, the monasteries and their lands were confiscated during the reign of the Tudors, and Cillin like other monastic sites passed into oblivion. These venerable ruins are relics and memorials of our past and out of this hallowed place of prayer, hymns and the celebration of the Eucharist was heard and celebrated hundreds of years ago.

This article is from a talk given by John Higgins, retired Principal of Culfadda National School, at Cillin in June 2012 as Mass was celebrated in preparation for the Eucharist Congress.

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Down on the Farm in the 20th Century

Kathleen Fairbanks



Milking time, Kathleen Harte



All is safely gathered in. The Higgins children, Carraroe



In the hayfield, the Fairbanks Children.



Feeding time, Ms O'Higgins, Skreen



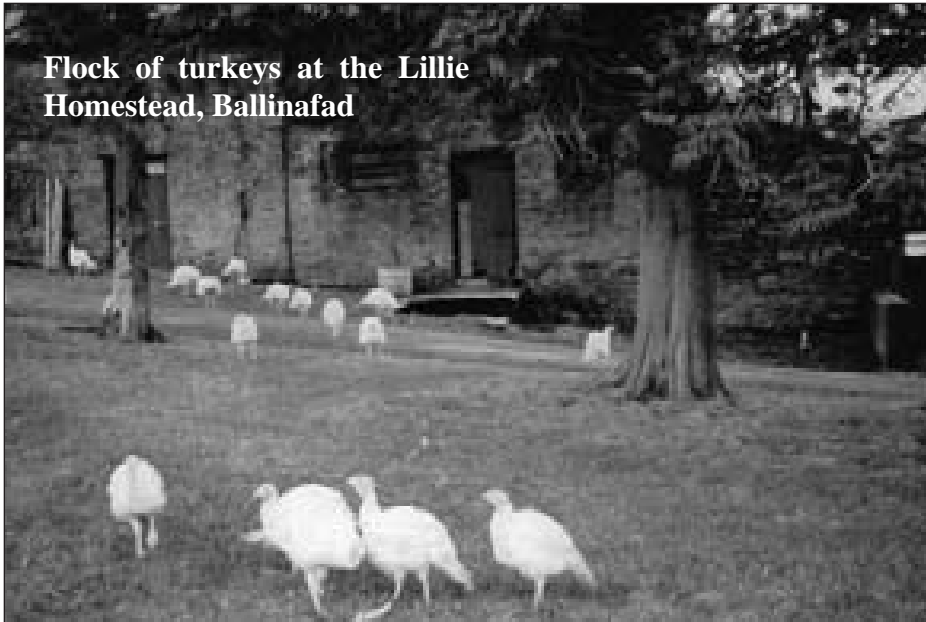
Cornfield, the Lillie Farm Corrick, Ballinacfad

In the cornfield, the Beckett family and George Ingram, a visitor



Feeding the Skim milk to calves. Kathleen Fairbanks.

Flock of turkeys at the Lillie Homestead, Ballinafad



Cornfield, the Lillie Farm Corrick, Ballinafad



Quack quack! The little ducklings

A Manly Sport!

Padraic Feehily

In the latter days of the nineteenth century, any young man about the town of Sligo could find amusement in the sporting events taking place weekly at the various venues. Athletics, rowing and handball were very popular, with soccer and Gaelic football the emerging games. The games were regulated to ensure fair-play and to channel the energies of the young athletes in a regulated way.

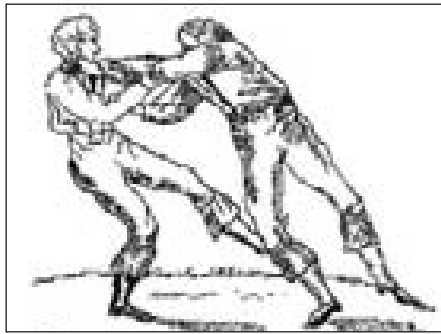
In earlier days young people would gather at places like Tonaphubble (Field of the Congregation) near Cairns Hill which may have got its name from the previous custom of people gathering in the area after attending mass on Sundays to amuse themselves in 'manly' pursuits like throwing the stone and wrestling.

Irish Styles

The origins of Irish collar-and-elbow wrestling are not known. According to historian Dr Edward MacLysaght, it was an organised sport as early as the 1600s in which the more prominent of the wrestlers were able to earn a living. Dr Douglas Hyde tells of a wrestling bout that took place in Connacht in his *Amhrain Cuige Connacht* (Gaelic History of the province of Connacht). A young wrestler, Thomas Costello, known as Laidir (The Strong), took up the challenge issued by the champion of the town of Sligo. This man had been living at the expense of the town, as was the custom of the day, and had killed several men in earlier bouts. He was greatly feared and not overly loved by the people of Sligo. Odds were ten to one that the challenger would fail.

The two men met on the public green in front of the mass of townspeople. Laidir latched onto his opponent and hurled him to the ground, breaking his neck. The astonished crowd, silent with awe for a moment, cheered their new champion. Of course, the new champion had nothing to fear from the law as this was a legal contest with an unfortunate ending.

It was the smaller man who usually excelled in this style, where speed and technique were valued over strength and size. It was often practiced shirtless, so the term 'collar' only refers to the areas grabbed in the contest. Sometimes tight jackets with double sewn seams were worn



as well. Footwear was banned from being worn in competition early on, due to the kicking and tripping techniques employed. The wrestlers who practiced this style referred to themselves as 'scufflers'. An impromptu scuffling match was known as a 'scuffling bee'.

The beginning stance is the foundation of the style as well as the origin of the name. The wrestlers face each other, grabbing the elbow with the right hand and the collar area with the left hand. This very stance forced the scufflers to use technique rather than a bull rush on their opponent. The beginning of the match was often a test of strategy and balance. The scufflers would try to circle each other clockwise while a series of unbalanced manoeuvres, including kicking and tripping, would be played out by both combatants. This stage of the match could last a very long time; indeed, there are accounts where the standing position of the match had lasted over an hour. Inevitably a take-down would occur. A 'flying mace' or a 'snap mace' was a common takedown. A 'mare' was a throw in which the feet of the thrown opponent actually were higher than his head. Ground wrestling began after one or both of the scufflers hit the ground. 'Half-nelsons' and various 'grapevines' and other ground control techniques were then employed. A match was considered won when all four points of the body were pinned to the ground for the count of five: both shoulders and both points of the hips; apparently not easily accomplished against a well-versed opponent. In the later nineteenth century the requirement to win was lessened to a three-point touch.

Although collar-and-elbow was seen as a common man's sport in Ireland, it was considered a gentlemen's pastime

in several areas of the colonies. It was part of the curriculum at the Reverend James Maury's Academy in Fredericksburg, Virginia. This was the academy that helped prepare the first constitutional President of the United States for his life in the public eye. George Washington at the age of eighteen years held a collar-and-elbow championship that was at least county wide if not possible colony wide.

To mark the opening of the Hogan Stand on Sunday 7 June 1959, the GAA published an interesting little booklet. It gives a short account of the history and rules and early regulations, of the Association. Teams originally consisted of twenty-one players and individual wrestling was permitted during games. This is a throwback to an era when a test of strength was what marked a man out from his fellows.

Padraic Feehily's book *Around the Borough*, stories and photographs of Old Sligo is available at book stores now or direct from the author at Rathlee, County Sligo.



John McMahon is acknowledged as one of the greatest exponents of collar-and-elbow style wrestling this world has ever seen. This archaic form of wrestling was brought to North America by Irish immigrants and for a time was the popular style used by the early professional wrestlers.

Collar-and-elbow is a standing style of wrestling that involves grasping the other person's collar-and-elbow and through various hip locks, cross buttocks, grapevines and trips, attempting to toss one another to the ground. A fall was called when one man touched the ground with either two hips and one shoulder or both shoulders and one hip.

Opening night of the Art Deco

Adapted from remarks by John Perry TD

Tonight's opening is very much a case of back to the future – from February 26, 1948, to tonight, 64 years later; from a glorious past to a very bright future. This magnificent facility will once again echo the sounds of the biggest and brightest talents, from cinema, theatre and music.

The magnificence of this building which has taken shape over the last year and a half or so, is indeed evident for all to see here tonight, and has been completed fully in keeping with its original and unique Art Deco styling – a feature to which the re-naming pays tribute. We have had the original seating refurbished and have kept the unique charm of this beautiful building fully intact.

Art deco is an artistic and design style that began in Paris in the 1920s and flourished internationally throughout the 1930s and into the World War II era. Art Deco was an ornamental style, and its lavishness is attributed to reaction to the forced austerity imposed by World War I.

It is therefore a fitting backdrop that tonight in Ballymote we have our own 'reaction' in times of austerity, by bringing back the Art Deco style! This is a very positive message of confidence, that things can be achieved with determination even in challenging times.

At its best, art deco represented



The opening night of the Art Deco

elegance, glamour, functionality and modernity. Architectural examples survive in many different locations worldwide, and in New York City, the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, and Rockefeller Center are among the largest and best-known examples of the style.

The old Abbey theatre on this site was originally opened in 1948, to much excitement and fanfare, as documented by the feature in the Sligo Champion of the time. It said: 'Work is rapidly nearing completion on the Abbey, Ballymote's new bijou cinema. Constructed on ambitious lines, the cinema can boast many features found in the bigger and better-known city picture houses. The Cinema will have seating accommodation for between

500 and 550 people.'

Indeed, if in 1948, the Abbey was the most state of the art facility of its kind, then the same can certainly be said today of the Art Deco. Our cinema facility here will feature the latest 3D Digital Projection Technology, as well as the most up to date digital sound equipment. It will have the capability to stream in live shows from Broadway New York and the West End, London.

The official opening of the Abbey Cinema took place on Thursday the 26th of February 1948, and was performed by the Ballymote Parish Priest of the day, the Very Reverend Canon Roughneen.

A look at the advertisement placed in the Sligo Champion dated the 21st February 1948 shows that the opening film screened in the cinema was *The Homestretch*, starring the renowned Irish actress Maureen O'Hara. On the nights to follow the cinema screened *The Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland, *The Stranger* starring Orson Welles and *Moss Rose* starring Ethel Barrymore. The admission prices were advertised at One and Nine pence, One and Four pence, and Ten Pence.

As well as screening some of the biggest stars of the movies of the day, the Abbey also played host to some of the best-known luminaries to have treaded the boards. Greats who played at the Abbey included the Irish Players



A vintage car at the opening night

in 1951, who presented the repertoire of Abbey Theatre and West End Plays, like *The Rising of the Moon* and *Peg O' My Heart* by playwright T Hartley Manon, *Shadow and Substance* by Paul Vincent Carroll, and *Night Must Fall* by Emyln Williams.

Some other stars of from the world of entertainment who performed at The Abbey were the great comedians Maureen Potter, Hal Roach, the wonderful Jimmy O'Dea and renowned Hypnotist, Paul Golden.

Enormous credit must go to the original founders and directors of the Abbey, and those who in the mid 1940s had the vision, determination, and the ambition to embark on a project like this and establish the Ballymote Cinema Company Ltd. People like Linda Quinn Begley and Patrick F Begley who were among the original founders and directors of the Abbey Cinema. Also, people like Bartley Cryan his wife Kathleen and their family, as well as Denis and Jack Conroy.

These outstanding individuals deserve to have their legacy preserved



The cinema before reconstruction began

in the most fitting way possible, and tonight, with the official opening of the Art Deco, I believe we have indeed paid homage to these visionaries. We are very fortunate that the original projector of the Abbey Cinema, which was donated to Riverstown Folk Park by Bartley Cryan, is being returned to the Art Deco here by John Taylor, Riverstown, where it will go on permanent exhibition. It will feature a plaque which will dedicate the display to the memory of Bartley Cryan.

Tonight is the culmination of years of hard work, vision, and foresight. It is a prime illustration of the potential and benefits of Social Enterprise within the community and of what can be achieved by communities working for themselves. The Art Deco is a cinema, theatre and music venue of national and international standard. It is a venue and facility of which Ballymote and the surrounding region can justifiably be proud.

The Village Station

Kathleen Fitzmaurice

For those who have never experienced attending a 'village station', let me explain. It refers to having mass celebrated in a family home in the local townland or village, attended by the people who live in that particular area. It was a widespread event up to recent times, but sadly the custom is dying out in many places.

Perhaps this custom may trace its origin back to penal times when mass was celebrated in remote sheltered locations far away from prying eyes of the 'authorities' or their henchmen, when there was a reward for anyone who betrayed a priest. In more liberal times mass was offered in the homes of ordinary people, especially in the country.

Every Parish is divided into townlands, and in these townlands a home is selected as host for the station.

Where the population is sparse two townlands are combined to make it a more viable event.

Stations are held twice a year, in spring and autumn. In former years the spring stations began on the day after Ash Wednesday and followed the same yearly routine until every townland had its station. The same pattern was followed in autumn. People felt privileged to host the mass and great preparations were made, starting long beforehand. It was an incentive to get any renovations done to the house. Perhaps the roof needed new thatch, so the thatcher arrived. The place was whitewashed inside and out, windows cleaned and painted. The flagged floor in the kitchen was scrubbed till it shone. The most important job was arranging an altar on the kitchen table, complete with starched cloth, crucifix and blessed

candles in brass candleholders.

There was one job for a young gasún in the family. He tackled the ass and cart and off he went to collect the 'Priest's box.' This box contained vestments and sacred vessels which were reserved for use at stations and were stored in a sturdy wooden box. When the first family hosted the station they collected the box from the presbytery and then it did the rounds from one house to another. It was safely stored and eventually found its way back.

In the days when there were two priests in a parish both attended the station. One took his place in the parlour and heard confessions and the other was the celebrant of the mass.

At the station, holy water is blessed and sprinkled on the congregation and around the house. A contribution from each household is collected at the end

of the mass. This money was known as 'Oats Money', reminiscent of the time when the priest did his rounds on horseback or in a horse-drawn vehicle. Mass was early in the morning and a meal followed. The priests and the older people ate in the parlour and the meal wasn't over-elaborate – boiled eggs and toast often featured on the menu.

Having the station was a landmark for the family. I am happy to say we still have stations in my own parish and it is

wonderful to have such a worthwhile event take place twice a year. Not every family is happy to be the host and it is largely up to oneself to be part of the custom. The response is quite good, thank God, and is deeply appreciated by those who attend and by your parish priest.

The pattern does not follow a strict routine – the P.P. is happy to facilitate families by having evening or weekend stations at a time that suits the family.

There is still great preparation – a house looks its best at station time and there is always a hearty meal. There is a wonderful sense of awe at a station mass, a miracle happening in your own home! It is a time when family and neighbours meet in a homely, relaxed atmosphere, when worries and tensions are forgotten and our minds are focused on the mass and blessings it brings with it. Long may this lovely custom continue!

World War I casualties from the Barony of Corran

Extracted from Sligo Men in the Great War – 1914-1918 with the kind permission of the author, James McGuinn, by Neal Farry

James McGuinn's excellent book *Sligo Men in the Great War 1914-1918* deals in great detail with the heroic contribution of hundreds of Sligo soldiers to the war effort and the eventual victory of the Allies. The author has listed the names of 34 soldiers with Ballymote addresses who lost their lives in the conflict. He also lists four casualties with Keash addresses and four casualties with Bunninadden addresses. Their regiments and the theatres of war where they were killed are also recorded.

The names of the fallen Ballymote soldiers are as follows: Pte John Chambers, Pte Michael McGuinn, Pte Terence McGuire, Sgt John Muldoon, L Cpl Thomas Mulligan, Pte Michael Quigley, Pte Michael Regan, Pte James Reynolds and Pte Michael Reynolds, all members of the Connaught Rangers who died in France/Flanders, except Michael Reynolds, who fell in battle in Mesopotamia; Pte John Duffy (RIF) died in France/Flanders; Rifleman John Ferguson, Pte Patrick Mulligan, Pte Thomas Flanagan, Cpl Michael Gilmartin and Pte Arthur V Gorman, all members of the Royal Irish Regiment and they died in the French/Flanders battles; Pte Michael Clarke of the Royal Irish Regiment died at Gallipoli in Turkey; Pte Timothy Forbes, Pte Thomas Gallagher, Pte Michael Healy, Pte Michael J Healy, Pte James McLoughlin and Pte Edward Sharkey, all members of the Irish Guards who died in the French/Flanders battles;



James McGuinn images (courtesy of him)

Pte John Welsh, Pte John Downey and Pte Martin Meehan, all of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who died in France/Flanders; Pte Mark Cawley of the Argyll Highlanders, Pte Michael Joseph Cawley of the Machine Gun Corps, Pte Peter Flanagan of the RASC: Pte Michael Keene of the Inniskilling Fusiliers and Cpl John McNicholas of the Royal Engineers, who all died in France/Flanders; Pte Patrick Connolly of the Royal Fusiliers, who died of wounds in Sligo Infirmery; Pte Charles Kilpatrick of the Seaforth Highlanders, who died in the Persian Gulf; Pte Michael J Judge of the Norfolk Regiment, who died in Egypt and Pte J Feeney who died in Flanders.

Pte James Brehony, Keash, Royal Scottish Fusiliers who died in France/Flanders; Peter Casey, Keash, who died in France/Flanders; William Phibbs Griffith, Knockbrack; Pte John Kelly, Keash, Royal Irish Regiment who died in Mesopotamia; Pte John Boland, Bunninadden, First Leinster Regiment

who died in Egypt; Pte Richard Cawley, Bunninadden, Connaught Rangers who died in Mesopotamia; Pte James Coleman, Bunninadden, Royal Lancs. Regiment, who died in Mesopotamia and Pte Joseph O'Dowd, Bunninadden, Connaught Rangers, who died in France/Flanders are also recorded as casualties.

The author provides a list of 420 dead from every part of Co Sligo and suggests that this is not a complete list. He believes that approximately 500 Sligo soldiers lost their lives in the conflict.

A brief biography is also given of Fr Michael (Doc) Henry, a brother of Batt Henry NT Emlaghnaughton, who served as a chaplain in the war, and of Captain William Knox, Ballymote and the Connaught Rangers. Cpt Knox was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry in action. Both men survived the war. The letters from soldiers in the trenches that Mr McGuinn presents in this book are poignant accounts of courage, endurance and humanity.

James McGuinn is a native of Cashel, Tubbercurry, and was principal of St Mogue's College, Bawnboy, Co Cavan until his retirement. Some copies of Mr McGuinn's fascinating book, which was published in 1994 by the Naughan Press, Belturbet, Co Cavan, are available in libraries throughout the county.

Inquisition in Ballymote 1593 and 1617

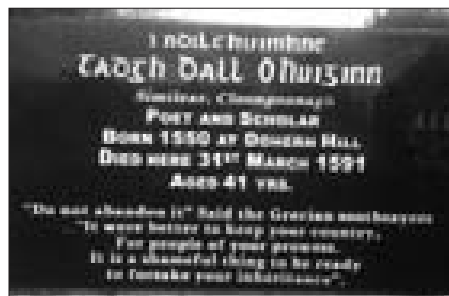
Jim Higgins

The mere mention of the word 'inquisition' is likely to summon bloodcurdling thoughts of endless interrogation, extreme humiliation and physical punishment, perhaps leading ultimately to burning at the stake for the poor unfortunate concerned. Although the reason for convening the Ballymote inquisitions is equally horrific, the actual process is completely unrelated to the generally accepted connotations of that word.

Chancery Inquisitions were established in medieval times to record the death of wealthy landowners and to determine the amounts of taxes and levies payable to the king. The inquisition was composed of a jury appointed from amongst other land or property owners in the area. The jury might decide to administer the estate of the deceased on behalf of surviving heirs who had not reached the age of 21, and to reconvene to decide ownership at a later date.

Tadhg Dall Ó h-Uiginn was a 'file' (or poet) who owned substantial tracts of land near Banada Abbey, Kilmactigue, in South Sligo. In the year 1591 at the age of 41, he was murdered in his home, by having his tongue cut out. Two years later in 1593 at Ballymote Inquisition his death was recorded, and again in 1617, five members of the O'Hara clan were 'attainted' with the murder of Tadhg Dall together with his wife and one of his children. The murder was carried out in revenge for an *aoir* (or satire) which Tadhg had penned, and which was less than flattering to the O'Hara clan who had previously been one of his many patrons. Tadhg Óg, who was 9 years old when his father was murdered, inherited his estate.

Whether the description of the manner of his killing is allegorical or not, whether he was completely



Tadhg Dall Ó h-Uiginn

blind or had lost the sight of one eye, the mere suggestion is nevertheless chilling. Even at a distance of over 400 years this brutal and gruesome event must send a shiver down the spine of the reader. We recoil in abhorrence at the unspeakable, premeditated cruelty perpetrated on a defenceless blind *file* together with his wife and one of his children. To come to any rational interpretation as to what caused such an atrocity, one must attempt to understand the role of the 'filí' in ancient Irish culture.

Before the arrival of Christianity in the 5th century the *filí* were our primary source for recording stories of significant happenings and 'battles long ago', if not indeed the only source. They did this not by the written word but by an oral tradition of composing *dánta* (poems), songs and storytelling. They were the accepted authority on all matters cultural, historical, economic and judicial, among many others. They were an elite and privileged group, whose position in the society of the day ranked second only to that of the *rí*, or king. The position of *file* was passed from father to son and it required 14 years concentrated study to qualify for the title. Strict rules of composition applied, requiring the counting of syllables, alliteration and rhyming. The reason for this discipline was of course to ensure ease of memorisation as well as making for easy listening.

There were no texts or 'aide memoires' in those days! They shut themselves up in a darkened space for hours on end to avoid distractions while they struggled to attain the perfection they sought. When reasonably satisfied with their efforts an assembly of their peers would gather to hear the latest masterpiece and amendments or corrections would be made.

The *rí* or chieftain was obliged to reward the *file* by providing him with all his earthly needs, including land, horses, cattle and servants. Consequently they became very wealthy and so influential that by the 6th century, the chieftains wanted to curb their powers. At the Convention of Drum Ceat (near Limavady in Derry) in 575AD Colmcille was recalled from exile in Iona, to decide their fate. The Saint ruled in favour of the *filí*, and they flourished for another thousand years.

Handwritten books and manuscripts were introduced following the coming of Christianity, and gradually the oral tradition of the *filí* was recorded for posterity. Sadly however many of these handwritten accounts were lost or destroyed, but we are fortunate that many of Tadhg Dall's compositions survive. It is generally accepted by scholars of the period that his work may have been equalled by some of his contemporaries such as Ó Dálaigh and Mac Grádhá, but he has never been surpassed.

Tadhg Dall's poetic ancestry may be traced back to the 13th century, although some scholars have suggested that his lineage may have begun with Neil Naoi nGiallach or 'Niall of The Nine Hostages' who is credited with bringing Saint Patrick to Ireland as a sixteen year old slave. There are other suggestions that the surname 'Uiginn' comes from the Viking invasions of

795 onwards. Whatever his origins, there is no denying his outstanding achievements as a *file* par excellence, and he remained a topical reference for over one hundred years after his death.

The 16th Century was a very turbulent period in our history, and the traditional culture of the day was under severe threat. For over 200 years all efforts to prevent the integration of the Norman invaders and the native Irish had failed. Henry VIII was determined to succeed where others had not. 'Divide and conquer' was his first priority. The Geraldines who were the most powerful Norman Irish chieftains of the day were ruthlessly crushed. He declared himself head of the church in 1534 and King of Ireland in 1541. He closed the monasteries and confiscated their land. Many Irish chieftains were frightened into 'surrendering' their lands held under the ancient Brehon law, while the King returned it to them or 're-granted' their land under English law. From now on property no longer belonged to the clan but to the monarch. Queen Mary continued her father's policy, but where 'surrender and re-grant' failed, she decided on Plantation. In 1556 lands of Irish chieftains in Laois and Offaly were confiscated and English farmers were invited to settle there. Mary's sister, Queen Elizabeth 1, concentrated on spreading the Reformation and stamping out Popery. She also attempted the Plantation of Munster in 1585.

Opposition to these drastic changes were strongest in Ulster and particularly from the Earls of Donegal and Tyrone. Tadhg Dall Ó h-Uiginn had spent some of his earliest years living in Donegal in fosterage with the O'Donnell clan, who continued as one of his most generous patrons throughout his life. He was also *file* to Maguire of Fermanagh among others. Living between Tubbercurry and Coolaney, his lands were held under

the patronage of O'Connor of Sligo and O'Hara of the Barony of Leyney. Whenever a dispute arose between these powerful families Tadhg Dall had to walk a very fine line in order to avoid causing offence either expressed or implied. O'Donnell claimed overlordship of Sligo, and on one occasion when Tadhg Dall extolled his virtues, O'Connor felt grievously rebuffed. The *file* was forced to leave his home and lie low for a year or so, until tempers cooled and egos healed. Some of his patrons were tempted to accept 'surrender and re-grant', while others violently opposed it. Uncertainty and suspicion abounded. Meanwhile the authorities of the crown looked upon all *filí* as troublemakers and rabble-rousers. A precarious situation indeed for someone whose duty it was to interpret the spirit of the age!

Such was the prevailing attitudes when five members of the O'Hara family visited Tadhg Dall, sometime prior to 1591. It seems that the brothers overstayed their welcome and the *file* wrote the fatal *aoir* which was to lead to his awful slaughter. It consists of twelve verses with four lines in each verse making a total of 48 lines. In the poem itself the author says that he had six uninvited and un-named guests and he satirised each one in turn. Why only five were accused of his subsequent murder is not clear. A full appreciation of the artistry of the author is only available to those who are fluent in the Gaeilge of that era, but a flavour of his intentions may be gleaned from the following attempts at translation. The opening lines go something like this:

'A troop of six that came to my house, I shall give a description of them; scarce of milk was I next morning, from the thirst of the six vagabonds.' We get an image of 16th century 'austerity' when he reminds us of his predicament: 'I in want, and they in necessity – I am in a strait between the two.'

The second visitor is described as 'a

miserable fellow, whose marrow had gone from him.' The 'fifth rogue had a short smock not worth a groat' [a four penny coin in use in the 16th Century] and 'his mantle was no better.' While we must readily agree that these lines are most uncomplimentary, it remains stubbornly difficult to understand how murder would be seen as an appropriate punishment. Perhaps there is more to this story than has yet been revealed.

The fall from grace of a once most prosperous Clann Uí Eaghra must have been a bitter pill to swallow and perhaps the publicising of their difficulties damaged their chances either to avail of the option of surrender and re-grant or to convince the rebellious Earls of Ulster to accept them as allies. Further scrutiny is called for and one may only hope that some future Sligo scholar may take up the challenge.

Tadhg Dall Ó h-Uiginn was the last of the great Gaelic *Filí* and with the defeat of Ó Neill and Ó Donnell at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, and the Flight of the Earls in 1607, the 1,500-year-old Bardic tradition finally came to an end. The great poet's work will ensure he is never forgotten and it is fitting and appropriate that in recent years a beautifully inscribed plaque has been unveiled in his memory in the cemetery at Banada Abbey.

Throughout history, sages tell us that birth and death are essential components in the renewal of the earth and the recreation of this wonderful planet which we are privileged to inhabit, however briefly. Perhaps a new golden age of Gaelic literature is about to dawn.

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Corpus of Electronic Texts funded by University College Cork, Department of History. Translations of Tadhg Dall's work by Eleanor Knott in 1922.

Count Charles O’Gara 1699-1777

Maura O’Gara-O’Riordan

Charles O’Gara was among the first children to be born in St Germain, Paris, in the decade after the defeated King James II went into exile. During the Jacobite wars, Colonel Oliver O’Gara, his father, had been colonel of a regiment of infantry at the battle of Aughrim in 1691. With his wife, Mary Fleming, the daughter of Lord Slane, his was one of the regiments that went to France. Charles was born in 1699. The sponsor at his baptism in l’Eglise Royale was ‘the very noble and powerful Prince, James II, King’, who signed himself, ‘Jacques Roi’.¹ Several other members of the Stuart royal family were to act as sponsors at the numerous O’Gara baptisms.

In contrast to the military careers followed by his father and three brothers, Charles was employed in the household of the dukes of Lorraine for all of his working life. While still a small child, Count Francis Taaffe is said to have recommended him for future service to Leopold Joseph, duke of Lorraine. Taaffe was a cousin of the O’Garas and had himself served in the regiment of the duke and of his father.²

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), followed by the Peace of Utrecht, saw the cessation of hostilities between France, Great Britain and other European countries. However, peace brought hardship for the Irish Jacobite soldiers and their families at Saint-Germain. Given the difficult financial circumstances, it is possible that Colonel Oliver O’Gara made arrangements at this time for his son Charles to travel the 200 miles to the palace of the Duke at Lunéville to take up employment in the Lorraine household.³

The small duchy of Lorraine in north-east France shares its border with present-day Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. James III, son of James

II, spent some time there, in the Bar-le-Duc district of Lorraine when forced to leave St Germain under the terms of the Peace of Utrecht. When he arrived in the duchy in 1713, he was greeted by Leopold, duke of Lorraine and by Owen O’Rourke of Connacht, who was later appointed Jacobite diplomatic representative in Vienna.⁴

The first record connecting Charles O’Gara with the duchy of Lorraine is dated 1731. In that year, he accompanied Francis Stephen, duke of Lorraine, to London. Charles was at that time engaged in the roles of ‘Gentleman of the Chamber and Senior Groom to the duke’.⁵ No information on the day-to-day life of Charles in the household of the duke of Lorraine has come to light, in contrast to the historical facts available for his three military brothers, John, Oliver and Joseph, who enrolled as officers in the Irish brigades in France. The regiments of Irlanda and Hibernia in which they served were later transferred to Spain, and all three remained with the regiments in Spain, where records exist for the O’Gara officers from 1715 to 1768.

However, some information on Charles can be gleaned from other O’Gara family sources. By 1720, living conditions for military personnel had greatly deteriorated in Saint-Germain. Although over thirty years had passed since the death of her first husband, Richard Fleming, Mary O’Gara decided to petition for arrears of rental income that had been due to her as his widow. Richard Fleming had died at the siege of Derry in 1689. Following the Jacobite war, both Mary and her second husband, Oliver O’Gara, had been outlawed. After several appeals in the 1720s, including a petition from the office of the duke of Liria, son of the duke of

Berwick and grandson of King James II,⁶ an act of parliament was passed in England in 1726 which gave her the right to return to Ireland and sue for her entitlement to rental income from her jointure lands.

Mary O’Gara, by now a widow, returned to Ireland after an absence of thirty-five years to start legal proceedings against her brother-in-law from her first marriage, Michael Fleming of Stahalmock, Co Meath. With the expectation of winning her case, and recovering the rents due to her, she signed a deed in 1728 in Dublin, which stipulated that her son, Charles, who had supported her financially during the legal process, was to get the principal share of the arrears:

... pay unto her beloved son Charles O’Gara out of ye sd Arrears ye sum of one thousand six hundred pounds in Discharge & Satisfaction for the money by him Advanced for sd Mary in obtaining sd Act of Parliamt.⁷ The deed was between the Honble Mary O’Gara of ye City of Dublin widw. of the one part & Sr. George Barnewall of the City of Dublin Bart. & John Brown of ye sd City Esqr.

Charles continued to support his mother’s attempts to claim what was due to her, but a final agreement was not reached until 1736 when Michael Fleming was ordered to sell or rent land within five years between 1 May 1736 and 1 May 1741 to pay the debts he owed to Mary or her assignees. In December 1728 it had been calculated that Charles was owed the sum of one thousand six hundred pounds but by 1736 his expenses had risen substantially:

Charles O’Gara, Esquire, her Son, who hath been at the Expence of maintaining the said Mary procuring the said recited Act, and prosecuting the said several Suites, in the Sum of

*Four thousand Pounds.*⁸

Mary O’Gara spent her final years in Ireland and died in Dublin in the winter of 1741/2.

Charles remained in mainland Europe and continued his association with the dukes of Lorraine. He had first served under Duke Leopold Joseph, who died in 1729. The duke’s son, Francis Stephen, inherited the title and in 1736 married Maria Theresa, heiress to Charles VI, the Holy Roman Emperor. Shortly after his marriage, Francis Stephen exchanged the duchy of Lorraine for the grand duchy of Tuscany, Italy. Charles O’Gara continued in the service of the duke, who was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1745. Francis Stephen and Marie Theresa had sixteen children, the youngest daughter of whom was the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, queen of France, who was executed in 1793.

Later in his career, Charles held the position of senior major-domo in the household of Princess Charlotte of Lorraine, a sister of the duke, Francis Stephen, who had settled in Mons, then part of the Austrian Netherlands. It is difficult to ascertain where Charles’s principal place of residence was, or in which year he changed his employment. While in the service of Princess Charlotte, he remained a member of the council of the Emperor in Vienna. Although his will was signed in Mons, no properties were listed as part of his estate so it is probable that he had quarters in the residence of Princess Charlotte.

By 1761 Charles had been awarded the Austrian Order of the Golden Fleece by the Holy Roman Emperor, Francis Stephen. His status at this time is confirmed from a Spanish source. Charles’s youngest and only surviving brother, Joseph, lieutenant colonel in the regiment of Irlanda in Spain, was awarded the habit of knight of the Order of Alcantara by the king of Spain in 1761. Several of those who recommended Joseph O’Gara for knighthood referred to the

status of his brother, Charles:

*Don Carlos O Gara who is currently Count of the Holy Empire, a member of the Council of His Imperial Majesty and senior major-domo of the house of the Most Serene Lady Princess Carlota of Lorena, sister of the Emperor.*⁹

Although he was born in France and spent all his life in Europe, Count Charles O’Gara maintained connections with his Irish relatives, and in time they would benefit from his substantial will. One of these was the antiquarian, Charles O’Conor of Belanagare, his second cousin – Charles O’Gara’s paternal grandmother was an O’Conor.¹⁰ That he was well regarded for his generosity to his relatives and friends is suggested in correspondence dated 1772. Charles O’Conor refers to a request for information he had received from a Father O’Kelly, a friend of the count. The priest had asked that a response be sent to him through ‘the young Mons. de Plunkett of Dunsany, who will ... send it to his Excellency, Count O’Gara, his illustrious uncle your relative and my protector’. The ‘young Mons. de Plunkett of Dunsany’ was Randal, a grandson of Bridget Fleming, and a grandnephew of the count. Fr O’Kelly was described as a companion to Count O’Gara in the count’s will.

Charles O’Gara’s employers both predeceased him. The emperor, Francis Stephen, died in 1765, and his sister, Princess Charlotte, in 1773. Throughout his life, Charles had accumulated wealth, status and connections. He had his own staff, with personal valets and footmen. His will of 1773 and a codicil added in 1776 revealed that he had substantial bank accounts in Vienna and Paris.¹¹

After his death on 15 May 1777, royal associates, household staff, friends and family in Europe and in Ireland were provided for in his will. His chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece was returned to the

empress, Marie Theresa. As a token of esteem, Count d’Argenteau, one of his executors, was left a diamond embedded in gold ‘given to me by the Empress on my last trip to Vienna’, while the Countess d’Argenteau received ‘the most beautiful’ of his rings. Another beneficiary received a lacquer chest containing boxes of tea. The Count of Nery was given his green and gold telescope.¹²

Servants were rewarded depending on their length of service. His two valets were to share his used clothes.¹³

Although Charles had a number of sisters – one of whom, Marie Magdelaine O’Gara, had Queen Mary of Modena as her baptismal sponsor in 1701¹⁴ – none are mentioned in his will, which suggests that they predeceased him. However, he did have a half-sister, Bridget, whose grandchildren, Randal and Rose, were the main beneficiaries. Bridget had married Randal Plunkett, baron of Dunsany, in 1711. The current Lord Dunsany is their direct descendant.

Randal Plunkett and his sister, Rose were named as the main beneficiaries of Count O’Gara, but there were conditions attached. In his will of 1773, both were to receive 80,000 French pounds [livres] from his funds in Vienna, and both were to share equally in his assets deposited in Paris. The section of the will relating to Randal reads:

*I bequeath half of my Royal assets that I own from the Town Hall in Paris to my grandnephew [Randal Plunkett], only son of the present Lord Dunsany, on condition that this young man embrace the Apostolic and Roman Catholic religion.*¹⁵

However, if he failed to convert to Catholicism, his share would go to Rose, but on condition that she marry ‘a man of good birth and of the Roman Catholic religion’. In a codicil to the will dated 1776, he further stipulated that if Randal and Rose wished to benefit, they would have to live in the ‘States of her Royal and Imperial

Majesty' in the Austrian Netherlands.

In the event of neither complying with the conditions, his executors were to apply the count's assets for the establishment of:

*... a boarding school at the Military Academy in Venice in favour of the poor children of Irish officers, who by their services have been well deserving of the noble House of Austria and, failing this, in favour of young men and children of Irish origins.*¹⁶

Randal and Rose did comply with the conditions of the will. Both 'provided certification of their Catholicity' and Rose married the Baron of Carondelet, a Catholic. Within a year of the count's death, both had settled abroad and had become entitled to their legacies.¹⁷

Receiving a legacy of 10,000 French pounds was a priest named MacDermot, who lived in Antwerp.¹⁸ Fr McDermot had been a friend of the late Count O'Gara, but they were also related. In an attempt to establish any entitlement to the O'Gara estate that his elderly father might have, Fr McDermot wrote to his cousin, Myles MacDermot, in Shruffe, Coolavin, chief of the name, in early July 1777.

Fr MacDermot was seeking written proof in order to 'get more for his poor father provided he can get his relation to O'Gara properly attested'.¹⁹ Myles contacted Charles O'Connor of Balanagare, an authority on genealogy, with a request for information on the MacDermot pedigree. Charles O'Connor confirmed that the genealogical detail that linked the MacDermots, the O'Garas and the O'Conors was authentic.²⁰

Also receiving a legacy of 10,000 French pounds was Charles O'Connor of Belanagare.²¹ When he received notice of the O'Gara bequest, he exchanged letters with the executor of the will in Brussels, Jean-Francois Deuzan, and with Randal Plunket of Dunsany, grandnephew of the count and one of the two principal beneficiaries of the will. The firm of La Touche in Dublin dealt with the

conversion of Charles's legacy of 10,000 French pounds into £5405. 13s. 2d. and notified the authorities in Brussels.²² The legacy arrived at a very opportune time for Charles O'Connor. Around this time his younger brother, Hugh, had conformed to the established church in order to claim the O'Connor property at Belanagare. In a letter written in the summer of 1777, Charles explained his difficult position:

*My unhappy brother Hugh has run out his whole fortune through [corrupt] ness and want of industry. He conformed to the religion established here and filed a Bill of discovery (as a Protestant) against me to wrest from me the poor plank that brought my father to shore after the great wreck of the family fortune in 1688. This affair is not yet come to trial before our Lord Chancellor and I must abide by the event. I have no crime to answer for but professing the religion of my ancestors...*²³

Writing to his son, Denis, in June 1778 he spoke of his relief at receiving the O'Gara legacy:

*... As the affair is now so near its crisis, I shall not rest a minute from giving it all the attention in my power, and be assured that money shall not be spared to give my cause the strongest sinews it can bear. I thank God that I am enabled to bear this experience through the succor I lately received from the Netherlands...*²⁴

In a letter to another relative in 1781, Charles O'Connor described how intolerable the financial strain of the legal proceedings would have been but for 'the legacy of my cousin Count O'Gara [that] came opportunely to my relief and eased me of a great part of my burden'.²⁵

The property and lands at Belanagare are still in the ownership of a member of the O'Connor Don family today.

Charles's parents, Col Oliver and Mary O'Gara, had left Ireland for exile in France in the winter of 1691-2. The count's great-grandfather was

Feargal O'Gara, who was described by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh in the Annals of the Four Masters as lord of Moygara and Coolavin. Coolavin was possessed by the O'Garas until the Cromwellian confiscations of the 1650s.²⁶

In his 1773 will made in Mons, Austrian Netherlands, Charles remembered those who were living in poverty through the penal times on the faraway O'Gara ancestral lands by requesting that any new items of clothing in his wardrobe be sold for their benefit:

*... whatever is new be sold and the money be given to the poor in the Bishopric [district] of Coolavin in Ireland, where this donation will be placed in the hands of the Bishop of the Diocese [Achonry] to be distributed amongst the poor.*²⁷

1. C. E. Lart, *Jacobite Extracts, Registers of Saint Germain-en-laye*, 2 vols (London, 1910-12); vol. i, p. 74.
2. J.C. O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France*, (Dublin, 1869), p. 88; *Memoire de M. Mac Donagh (1792)*, Halliday Pamphlets, number 619, Royal Irish Academy Library, Dublin, fn 1, p. 35.
3. A document of 1718 relating to pensions for Col. Oliver and Mary O'Gara indicates that Charles was no longer living with his parents in Saint-Germain by that date; The National Archives, Kew, S.P. 63/379, scan 0066.tif.
4. Edward Corp, *The Stuarts in Italy* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 285; Betty Mac Dermot, *O Ruairc of Breifne*, (Manorhamilton, 1990), p. 170.
5. Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, exp. 1085, Alcántara, folio 50v.
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7. O'Gara to Barnewall et al., Registry of Deeds, Dublin, no. 39572, book 57, p. 527.
8. Act, Fleming/O'Gara widow, NLI,

LO 2391, (Dublin 1736), pp 12–13.

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10. Count Charles O’Gara’s paternal grandmother was Mary O’Conor of Belanagare, grandaunt to Charles O’Conor, who explains his relationship with Colonel Oliver O’Gara’s family in a letter to an O’Conor cousin c.1769. See Ward & Ward, *The Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare*, typescript 1980, vol. I, letter 202, pp 271–2.

11. Notary of Brabant, Will of Count Charles O’Gara (1773, 1776, 1778). (Copies in possession of Maura O’Gara-O’Riordan.)

12. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, articles 7 and 30; Will of Count Charles O’Gara, codicil 1776, article 5; Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, article 10; Will of Count Charles O’Gara, codicil 1776, article 6.

13. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, article 13.

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15. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, article 17.

16. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, codicil 1776, article 18.

17. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, execution of will, 27 May 1778.

18. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, article 25.

19. I am grateful to the late Madame Felicity MacDermot at Coolavin House, Monasteraden, Co. Sligo, for this information; Dermot Mac Dermot, *MacDermot of Moylurg*, (Nure, Manorhamilton, 1996), pp 337–8.

20. Ward & Ward, *The Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare*, 1980, vol. ii, letter 294, pp 108–9.

21. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, article 24.

22. Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare, Brussels, 19 May 1778, Ms B i 2.

23. Ward & Ward, *The Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare*, 1980, vol ii, letter 288, p. 103.

24. Ward & Ward, *The Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare*, 1980, vol ii, letter 307, p. 125.

25. R.E. Ward, J.F. Wrynn S.J. & Catherine Coogan Ward, *The Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare*, 1988 (Washington, 1988), vol. ii, letter 353, pp 413–14.

26. Books of Survey and Distribution: Sligo, pp 130–2.

27. Will of Count Charles O’Gara, 1773, article 4.

I am grateful to Dr Máire Ní Chearbhaill for her assistance with the writing and editing of this article.

Emlanaughton National School in the 1940’s



Back row: 1 Michael Carr 2 James Flanagan 3 Jimmy Cawley 4 Andrew Kerins 5 Tommy Cawley 6 JP Muldoon 7 Charlie Kerins 8 P J.McGuinn

Middle row: 1 Pauline Cawley 2 Kathleen Carr 3 Geraldine Breheny 4 Aggie McGuinn 5 Maureen McGuinn 6 Eileen Muldoon 7 Josephine McGuinn 8 Rita Davey 9 Michael McGuinn

Front row: 1 Seamus Hogge 2 Seamus Fahey 3 Liam Fahey 4 Tommy Mc Carrick 5 Seamus Doddy 6 Alfie Davey 7 Paddy Gormley

Vanished Shop Fronts

Photographs collected for the Gathering photography exhibition



Mining in the Connaught Mineral Field

Pat Hughes

The main mining activity was centered in the Arigna valley, and there were five distinct phases in the mining history of Arigna.

From earlier times to 1600AD there was small-scale iron mining, the 'sort of iron mines dug out of the mountains.' (Boates, Ireland's Natural History). From 1600-1770 wrought iron or steel was produced on a continuous commercial basis. Timber was then in abundant supply and was used to produce charcoal to smelt the iron at very high temperatures.

From 1770 to the 1860s the timber stocks were exhausted, and iron mining continued with coal mined mainly to replace charcoal for smelting. From the 1870s to the 1950s, there was coal mining only, for domestic and industrial use. Finally, between the 1950s and 1990, operations continued with government support through the ESB generating station.

Period: Earlier Times - 1600

Intermittent mining on a small scale. Used to produce tools, weapons and utensils. Probably smelted using timber as fuel. It would have been very low-grade iron, which would bend and break easily.

Period: 1600 – 1770

The first commercial, continuous-process iron smelting was set up by Sir Charles Coote in the early 1600s. Coote, a commander in Mountjoy's army, acquired estates in Roscommon, Cavan and Laois – hence the placenames Cootehill, Castlecoote and Cootehall – after the battle of Kinsale. Cootehall would have encompassed a large proportion of the Arigna mineral field. He obviously had first-hand knowledge of

steel manufacture and marketing. He quickly surveyed the area and set up iron-works at Arigna, Drumshanbo, Ballinamore and Creevela.

In his Natural History of Ireland, Boate, a contemporary of Coote describes this process:

'At the end of a great barn standeth a huge furnace being at the height of a pike and a half or more [presumably the pike was then in every day use] and four-square in figure but after the manner of a malt kiln – narrow below and by degrees growing wider towards the top so that the compass of the mouth or top is of many fathoms. The mouth is not covered but open all over so that the flame when the furnace is kindled rising through the same without any hindrance, may be seen a great way off during the night.

'The ovens are not kindled with wood but with charcoal whereof they consume a huge quantity, for the furnace when kindled is allowed never to go out but kept continually burning from one end of the year to the other, and the proportion of the coals to the ore is very great, and that the fire may be more quick or violent. It is continually blown by two vast pair of bellows, which are kept perpetually in action by means of a great wheel which is driven by a little brook, maketh them rise and fall by turns so that while the one pair doth swell and fill itself with wind, the other doth blow the same into the furnace.'

Regarding the costs involved in the erection and maintenance of an iron works he continues: 'Essentials are, enough wood on one's land together with the conveniences of water courses not far from the mine. Nevertheless the costs are great

by reason of the great number of workmen and labourers of several sorts, a list of whose names and offices here followeth:

- Woodcutters who fell the timber.
 - Sawyers to saw the timber.
 - Carpenters smiths masons and bellows makers to erect the iron works with all the appurtenances thereof.
 - Watercourse keepers to steer the watercourses and to look to them constantly.
 - Basket makers to make baskets to carry the ore and other materials.
 - Boatmen and boat-wrights to make the boats and to go into them.
 - Diggers, who work in the mine and dig the same.
 - Carriers who carry the ore from the mine.
 - Colliers to make the charcoal.
 - Corders who bring the charcoal to the works.
 - Fillers whose work it is from time to time to put ore and charcoal into the furnace.
 - Keepers of the furnace, who look to the main works, rake out the ashes and cinders and let out the molten metal at convenient times.
 - Finers who look to the works where the iron is hammered.
 - Hammerers whose work is to see the iron is hammered out.
- Besides several other labourers who help to put their hand to everything.
- 'All of such sorts of men Sir Charles Coote the elder did continually keep at work, some 2,500-2,600 at his iron works, and for all this the owner thereof did greatly gain thereby no less than 40 in the 100 per annum [40% net].
- 'Two ores are used, rock mine and white mine, and mixed in the

proportion of one part of rock mine to two parts of white mine. The furnace is not filled to the top but some space is left empty, and to put new stuff into it they do not wait until the former is quite consumed but only until it is somewhat descended, and then they cast into it some baskets of coals, and at the top of them the same quantity of ore, and thus they do from time to time so as the furnace is in a manner always in one and the same state. Where it is to be observed that in most furnaces they add into the ore and coals some quantity of iron cinders and in others of limestone whereby the melting of the iron is greatly furthered.

‘Within the barn at the bottom of the furnace stand constantly two men, one on each side. They with long iron hooks through holes left for the purpose do every quarter of an hour draw out the unburnt coals ash and cinders. The iron itself descendeth to the lowest part of the furnace called the ‘hearth’, which being filled to below the level of the aforesaid holes, they unstop the hearth and open the mouth thereof.

‘The floor of the barn hath a mould of sand upon it wherein before they open the door a furrow is made of sufficient breadth and depth through the whole length of the barn from the bottom of the furnace to the barns door, into which furrow when the furnace door is opened the molten iron runneth very suddenly and forcibly. It doth presently lose its liquidness and redness turning into a hard stiff mass, which masses are called ‘sows’ by the workmen.

‘The sows are with teams of oxen drawn to the hammer works where being put into the fire again they melt them into finery. Then they carrieth them under the hammer where it is hammered out into such narrow flat and thin bars as are to be seen everywhere.

‘The hammers being huge big ones

and never ceasing from knocking day or night are being kept at work by means of wheels turned by the water courses in the same manner as the wheels of the bellows.’

While it is said the Arigna iron was of better quality and less expensive to mine, its remoteness was a problem. The Mountrath (Co Laois) product, on the other hand, was sent by boat down the Nore to Waterford and from there trans-shipped to London.

During the 1641/49 rebellion, Coote’s works were attacked; they were manned exclusively by English and Dutch workers recruited from his former army. Coote himself was slain in the first year of the rebellion.

Boate refers to ‘That zealous and famous warrior in this present war against the Irish rebels wherein having done many memorable exploits he lost his life in the first year thereof.’

Soon afterwards Coote’s son, Sir Charles Coote the younger, got a commission to raise an army to uphold parliament. It probably included most of the workers in the iron-works and as a result the entire complex closed down. Shortly after the battle of the Boyne in 1690 iron works were re-established at Drumshanbo, Ballinamore and Creevelea.

The works of Patrick Reynolds at Drumshanbo at this time are said to have produced the iron used in the first ship built in Limerick by the East India Company. Presumably the steel was used to produce spars, trusses, rivets and so on.

The site of the Drumshanbo works was near the canal crossing of Cavan and Leitrim railway. The place is still known as Furnace Hill.

Fuel used for smelting was charcoal, then easily obtained. However after continuous use the supply of timber ran out and Drumshanbo works closed in 1765 followed by Creevelea in 1768.

Period: 1770 - 1860

Shortly after this, three brothers named O’Reilly recommenced working at Furnace Hill, using coal from Seltenaskeagh for smelting, and iron ore from Slieve-an-Ieren. This was the first time coal was used in Ireland for smelting. The O’Reilly’s were said to have ceased operations when a boat loaded with iron ore foundered off Cormorgan townland.

Coal was first discovered on Altagowlan in 1765 at a place called Mounterkenny, two miles west of Lough Allen. The landowner, Mr Jones, worked the coal for some time. Quoting from Chas O’Connor on The Parish of Kilronan: ‘There are also about 250 horses fed here which are employed in the carriage of coals and culm from Mr Jones’ colliery, all over the adjacent country. Their method of conveyance is by back loads, in small baskets, half a barrel in each; their price about 12s per ton, for every ten miles.’

Presumably the lack of roads made the use of carts impossible. The colliery was considered so important that a parliamentary grant was voted to aid the making of roads to it but no funds materialized and the mine was abandoned.

On the far side of the valley at Aughabehy there was plenty of coal, and before 1800 it was worked by Col Thomas Tenison, the royalty owner.

Further down the same valley the Rover colliery on the lands of the archbishop of Tuam started production.

Up until 1930 these were the oldest regularly-worked mines in the whole valley.

After abandoning Furnace Hill, the three O’Reilly brothers erected the Arigna Iron Works, held under demise from the Tenison family, in 1788. These were on a large scale compared with previous works. Quoting Dalton in Barony of Boyle: ‘Bar and pig-iron of the best quality

and castings of every description is produced.’ A report in the Dublin Chronicle on 30 November 1790 stated: ‘We hear that the Arigna works on the border of Lough Allen are at this hour in a most prosperous state, and that within three years the entire provinces of Connaught and Munster will be hence fully supplied with iron of every denomination and that when the Royal Canal shall have reached the Shannon the rest of the kingdom will in all probability be supplied with that useful metal.’

However the brothers soon found themselves short of capital and approached the Irish parliament for a grant of £10,000. Despite two favourable reports from an investigating committee, no grant was given.

The O’Reilly’s next approached the famous Dublin banking firm of Latouche. An advance was received, but too little. A second advance was received but was too late to be effective, and the brothers became bankrupt in 1792.

Peter Latouche (who now had an interest through his loans) and Col Tenison petitioned parliament for assistance to keep the works from being abandoned. They asked for a bounty on home-produced iron, but while parliament seemed favourable nothing was done.

The main problem at the plant was a heavy stationary steam engine used for blowing the furnace when the river was low. Despite a further injection of funds by Latouche, the works had to close down in 1798, less than ten years after starting, and afterwards were sold by the Court of Chancery.

The works were in two parts – Upper and Lower – with smelting carried out in the former and rolling in the latter.

In developing the Aughabehy mine, the O’Reilly’s drove a shaft 5ft high by 4ft 9ins wide into the mountain below the level of the coal for the

purpose of draining the mine and in the process using the waterway thus created as a canal on which to take out the coal by boat. When abandoned by the brothers it reached 300 yards into the mountain. It is said that the system worked.

Latouche continued to be interested and at the Chancery sale he bought the works for £25,000. But despite investing further capital and making several changes of management he eventually had to call it a day in 1808.

Years later, while showing a friend around his garden in Dublin, he pointed to a little gate and said, ‘That gate cost me £80,000 for it is all I ever got out of my investment in the Arigna Iron Works.’

Part of the development of the iron-works was the provision of the first iron railway line in Ireland on an inclined plane, 250 to 300 yards long and probably connecting the upper and lower works. A reservoir or ‘Furnace Pool’ was also provided where the ‘Bay Field’ is today.

After being abandoned by Latouche a considerable part of the works was ‘removed’, and after some time a caretaker was appointed.

In 1824 a Mr Flattery, an architect or builder, came on the scene. He obviously saw opportunities in the area and he leased the property. He returned to London and met Sir William Congreve, an inventor and explosives expert. Together with Congreve and the Clark brothers, Mr. Flattery set up a joint stock company, ‘The Arigna Iron and Coal Co’, to develop the Arigna valley. It appears that the formation of the company did not fully conform with company law as it then was, and there were also some doubts concerning the motives of the promoters. A committee of the House of Commons was set up to investigate the matter. However work in the old iron works did start in Arigna in 1824. As with Coote, English or foreign workers were

employed in both the iron works and Aughabehy colliery.

Meanwhile in London legal proceedings were started against ‘Those involved in the fraudulent formation of the company.’

At this time two new companies began mining in the valley at Tullynahaw, the Hibernian Mining Company and The Irish Mining Company. The former hit a faulty seam and gave up early. The Irish Mining Co continued for a long time, erecting a steam engine to haul the coal from the shaft and a small dock and quay at Lough Allen. The Lough Allen canal was completed and opened in 1817 and it was now possible to ship coal throughout the country.

In 1825 the iron works commenced production and up to May 1826, 230.5 tons of product was exported to England. Unfortunately a serious accident resulted in the plant closing down shortly afterwards when molten metal was allowed to solidify in the smelter, leaving it damaged beyond repair. No more iron was smelted during the next ten years.

Following this setback a new board was appointed. The members were concerned about the feasibility of the whole project and employed a consultant, Mr JA Twigg of Chesterfield, to study and report on the business.

The Twigg report was published in London in 1827 and had three main recommendations. First, to complete the shaft at the Aughabehy mine begun by the O’Reilly’s and to enlarge it to allow horse transport through it. Second, to build coke yards at the mouth of the shaft, and third to construct a railway from the coke yards to the works, and thus replace the packhorse and manual labour then being used to transport the fuel.

The directors began immediately to implement the recommendations

but as with the previous regime they regularly changed managers so there was little continuity. The last manager, Mr Thomas Cox, an Englishman, was murdered when his home was raided by thieves.

However by 1831 the railway line, measuring 5,500 yards, was completed at a cost of approximately £4,000. The line, which was designed for horse operation, was completed to a very high standard. The shaft at Aughabehy was deepened and widened to measure 6ft by 7ft so that horse transport would be possible through it.

Legal proceedings against the company continued, but in January 1836 Flattery gained control. He then operated the works for a further two years, employing 600 men, but in 1838 due to competition from cheap imported iron and a further threat of legal action, the Arigna iron-works was finally closed down.

The industrial revolution was then in full swing, demanding more and more low-cost iron which could only be met by the very large and efficient mills then being developed in England and Wales. The small Arigna plants with poor infrastructure were no longer viable. The railway line was taken up and removed some time later.

Meanwhile near Drumkeerin at the site of the old Coote works at Creevelea a few unsuccessful attempts were made to develop an iron-works.

In 1852 a Scottish company moved in and erected buildings and equipment on a large scale. The enterprise failed two years later in 1854. One reason for the failure was that while the iron ore was available locally, the coal had to be brought from Altagowlan almost ten miles away, using horse transport. Nevertheless, so well constructed was the blast furnace that it still remains as a monument to bygone days.

It is said that some of the sheets

of the original Tay Bridge bore the words, 'Manufactured at Creevelea.' Also the Metal Bridge in Dublin was cast here, and it is claimed that at least one of the cannon used in the Crimean war came from here.

Period: 1870 - 1950

Back at Arigna. the opening of the Ballinamore-Ballyconnel (Shannon-Erne) canal (which had a life-span of eight years), enabled one cargo of coal to be sent to Enniskillen.

In the late 1880s one or two extra pits were opened. In 1888, the modern age of coal mining in the valley began. From that year, mining has gone on almost without interruption until 1990, and in this period most of the rail and tramway developments took place.

In 1888 the Arigna Mining Company was formed by some of the directors of the newly opened Cavan, Leitrim and Roscommon Light Railway, for the purpose of supplying the railway with cheap coal. The chairman of both companies was the Earl of Kingston who owned the coal royalties on both sides of the river.

At about the same time the Layden family began mining in the valley and while they did well from the start, the Arigna Mining Co encountered some difficulties.

Attempts were made by the Mining Co to get the railway extended up the valley. On the outbreak of World War1, the Board of Works drew up plans for this extension. Work began in 1918 and was completed in 1920 at a cost of £60,000. The main beneficiary was the Arigna Mining Co. through its mine at Aughabehy.

Two factors hastened the end of the Mining Co. First, the GSR (Great Southern Railway) was formed in 1925, which absorbed most Irish railways including the Cavan-Leitrim line, and it ended the agreement for the supply of coal by The Arigna Mining Co. The GSR from then on

used cheaper imported Welsh coal for all its lines. The second reason was a long-drawn-out legal action between the Arigna Mining Co and the Layden family over 'territorial rights' started in 1924 and finished in the Supreme Court in 1929. Judgment was given against the Arigna Mining Co, which then went into voluntary liquidation and turned over all its mining royalties to Laydens in lieu of costs. The Layden Co moved into Aughabehy and in a short time removed all its coal. Thus in 1931 after 150 years in use, work ceased at Aughabehy.

Apart from water power, the steam engine was the main motive force in industry during this period. Coal was required by the GSR cement works, ESB, creameries, sugar companies, food and preserves processors, hospitals and institutions.

During the 'Emergency', because of lack of imports, coal was sold under permit and the Arigna mines were working at full capacity.

Period: 1950-1990

Diesel and electricity replaced steam in industry while Polish coal, which was exported solely to acquire foreign currency, undersold the Arigna product in the domestic market. Unable to compete, the smaller mines closed down. However State intervention in the form of a coal-fired ESB generator, established at Lough Allen, kept the bigger mines operating for some time. Eventually economics forced the ESB to close down this facility in 1990 and mining in Arigna was no more.

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The Irish Revolution 1912-23

Neal Farry

To write an appreciation of Dr Michael Farry's absorbing history of the revolutionary experience of Co Sligo from 1912 to 1923 is indeed a presumptuous and superfluous activity, because in the forewords to his book, Mary Ann Lyons, Dept of History, NUI Maynooth, Daithi O Corrain, Dept of History, St. Patrick's, Drumcondra, and David Fitzpatrick, Trinity College, Dublin, express more than adequately their admiration and academic evaluations of Dr Farry's most recent work, which was published in 2012 by the Four Courts Press.

However, it seems appropriate that some words of appreciation of Dr Farry's achievement should be recorded in the current issue of the *Corran Herald* in view of the fact that the celebrated Coolaney and Trim historian is a regular votary of the activities of Ballymote Heritage Group. Since his book appeared on the bookshelves last year I have become aware of a lot of interest in its content at local level, especially among families who had past relatives who were protagonists in the events that shaped our nation as we know it today.

Dr Farry's 1912-23 history is Sligo's contribution to a series of county histories that have been researched and published in recent decades. The editors Mary Ann Lyons and Daithi O Corrain are at pains to inform us that 'the series brings together for the first time the various strands of the exciting and fresh scholarship within a single coherent, overarching interpretative framework, making available concise, accessible, scholarly studies of the Irish Revolution experience at a local level to a wide audience.' David Fitzpatrick says that by investigating historical events at parish, town or county level we attempt to write



Michael Farry

history from below and such 'local studies have helped to restore the force of rationality and adaptability in Irish revolutionary history, and thus to call into question the primacy of the romantic idealism often attributed to the 1916 rebellion or republican resistance in the civil war.'

Indeed Dr Farry interprets his sources, data and the people he encounters from the period with meticulous objectivity, and he presents a countywide multitude displaying every conceivable shade of political, social, commercial, educational and religious opinion with admirable empathy and sensibility. He tells us that 'this book is the culmination of thirty years' interest and study of the revolutionary period in County Sligo.' The present work is contained in 115 pages of text but the same material can be accessed in much greater detail in Dr Farry's earlier histories: *Sligo, 1914-21: A Chronicle of Conflict* (1994) and *The Aftermath of Revolution: Sligo 1921-23* (2000). Throughout the text every incident is annotated and 848 detailed source

material locations are provided on a chapter by chapter basis. The primary and secondary sources and their locations are listed in an orderly manner so any reader who wishes to further investigate any incident will have no difficulty following the author's signposting.

As is obvious from the number of annotated incidents it would be quite impossible for me to draw attention to everything of importance in the text. Nevertheless a number of themes had a particular attraction for me, perhaps because I was acquainted with many of the participants in the struggle and with the manner that they reacted to their experiences under the stress of agitation, politics in a state of mercurial flux, social confrontation and guerrilla warfare. I found the following topics to be essential strands that coloured society, altering events within the period:

- The reduction of the number of RIC barracks during the war of independence, the destruction of many barracks and the abandonment of extensive areas of the county to IRA control
- The campaign to have ranches and large estate farms divided among small farmers, a central policy of all Irish Nationalist parties that reached a violent climax in the Ballymote/Bunninadden area with the Hannan purchase of the Oldrock ranch and the double shotgun attack on Hannan's Hotel in Ballymote with a view to intimidate Judge Wakely who was to judge relevant agrarian outrages
- Ambushes by the IRA at Ratra, twice at Chaffpool, Ballyrush and Culleens where casualties occurred
- The assassination of Sergeant Fallon RIC in Ballymote and the resultant reprisals by British forces
- Reprisals in Tubbercurry after the death of DI Brady in the second

Chaffpool ambush

- The superbly organised escape of Frank Carty from Sligo Jail
- The demise of the Nationalist Irish Parliamentary Party after the 1918 General Election
- The introduction of Proportional Representation for the first time in a UK election for Sligo Borough Council
- The effective guerrilla activity of South Sligo IRA and their almost total control of railway traffic between Ballymote and Boyle
- The number of times that the South Sligo IRA under Michael Marren disarmed British and RIC personnel and freed them when such opportunities in other counties led to heavy casualties on the British side, a degree of humane behaviour that does not seem to have been appreciated at national IRA level
- The attack on Templehouse in search of arms
- Cumann na mBan activity which featured the Bohan sisters and Susan Hannon, Ballymote
- The shootout in Ballymote where Constable O'Brien lost his life

- The arrest of Jim Molloy
- The drowning of Michael Marren one day after the truce
- The dominant and domineering demeanour of IRA men in the period between the Truce and the civil war
- The bizarre confrontation between the IRA and the Ladies' Sodality concerning the occupation of the front seats at Sunday Mass in Gurteen Church
- The dispute between the IRA and the parish priest of Collooney regarding the organisation of mixed Irish language classes for national teachers
- The domination of Sligo County Council by the IRA gunmen after the truce-
- The 1922 General Election
- The predominance of republican anti-treaty IRA in North Sligo and the ascendancy of the pro-treaty National Army in South Sligo during the civil war
- The respective careers of Billy Pilkington and Alex McCabe
- The struggles for the Ballinalee armoured car
- The attacks by the National Army

for the occupation of Sligo Town and Collooney

- The casualties suffered by the National Army at Rockwood and by the anti-treaty forces 'Noble Six' at Ben Bulbin
- The execution of two suspected spies by republicans after the arrest of some of their men near Tubbercurry
- A number of sectarian attacks particularly the burning of Doobeg House, Bunninadden, home of Charles Phillips
- The arrest of Patrick Coleman in Ballymote
- The dumping of arms by anti-treaty forces in May 1923 on the orders of Frank Aiken without surrendering or negotiating a settlement to end the civil war.

The 28 excellent contemporary photographs speak for themselves. A number of Dr Michael Farry's praiseworthy, accurate and informative books can be still found on bookshelves throughout the county. At €16.99 a copy it is indeed a bargain.

James Daly and the Land League

- The Sligo Connection

by Neil Mongey

James Daly, Michael Davitt and John Boyce Killeen attended the second meeting of the Land League held on the 2nd November 1879 in Gurteen. They announced that it was time to rid Ireland of landlordism and track-renting. Daly had cycled to Gurteen from Castlebar. Subsequently all three were arrested and imprisoned in Sligo's Cranmore Jail.

All were charged with making seditious speeches at a court on November 24. Daly was reported to have said, 'Don't pay the landlord until you have a guarantee from him that your children will not starve.'

Most of the speeches were delivered in Irish to thwart British Government agents.

Killeen was defended by John Rea, a brilliant but eccentric Belfast Presbyterian solicitor. Through his tactics he drew world attention to the trials and gained publicity for the Land League.

Charles Stewart Parnell held a meeting at the gates of the Assize Court and scoffed at the arrests. Parnell denounced the jury packing which resulted in the prosecution being withdrawn in contempt and ridicule.

When the three prisoners were being brought from the jail to the court they were preceded by the Ancient Order of Hibernians Band and followed by large numbers of supporters.

In 2006 on the Centenary of Davitt's death, his grandson Fr Thomas Davitt and Neil Mongey, great-grandson of James Daly, stood in the dock in Sligo Courthouse where their forefathers appeared.

Heritage Weekend 2012

All photos by Paddy Conboy.



Dr Edward McParland who performed the official opening and delivered the Friday evening lecture on the theme of ‘what is classical architecture’



Betty Conlon, secretary, with Fr Hannon, enjoying some serious discussion



Des Black, chairman (left) with Stephen Cameron, who gave the Sunday evening lecture on the Titanic



An eager audience awaiting the commencement of a lecture



Eileen Tighe, president, and Pam Benson, joint treasurer



Kevin Myers delivering his Monday evening lecture on the Ballymote, Sligo and the Great War

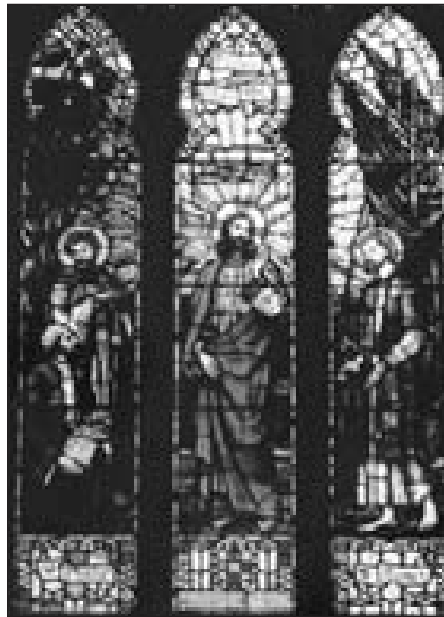
Mayo Churches, Stained Glass and more

Micheál Murphy

When Betty Conlon asked me to plan a trip for the Ballymote Heritage Society in August last year, I don't think she had stained glass in mind, but somehow it came to play a big part in our tour. Prior to my involvement in the church windows' restoration project in my own parish of Killasser for the millennium year 2000, I had scarcely given a second glance to the art or the symbolism of stained glass. But researching the history and meaning of the windows awakened an interest in these under-appreciated treasures of our churches.

Castlebar

Before embarking on our stained glass trail we took our first stop in Castlebar where Noel O'Neill, who has few equals as a local historian, pointed out some of its landmarks. The Mall, the centrepiece of the town, was originally the cricket green of the local landlord family, the Bingham, who held the title of 'Lord Lucan'. (Richard Bingham, the infamous seventh Earl of Lucan, mysteriously disappeared in England in 1974 following the death of his children's nanny). Overlooking the Mall is Daly's Hotel where James Daly and Michael Davitt founded the Land League in 1879. Nearby stood the 'Hanging Tree' where Fr Andrew Conroy of Bofeenaun was hanged by the British for his part in assisting the French Forces in 1798. Noel showed us a cross which had been carved from the wood of the tree after it fell in the 1930s. George Fitzgerald, alias Fighting Fitzgerald of Turlough House, was hanged in the Bridewell Jail nearby for his part in the murder of a neighbouring landlord, George McDonnell, in 1786. The Methodist Church, now the Castlebar Christian Fellowship, has links with John Wesley who laid the foundation stone here in 1785.



Christ with Philip and St James by Sarah Purser in Christ Church, Castlebar

On the opposite side of the Mall stands Holy Trinity Church where Noel took us to meet the sacristan, Trevor Ardill, who had kindly opened the building for us to view the beautiful three-light window by Sarah Purser, the only one of hers in Mayo. The window shows Christ with Philip and St James and is one of the earliest windows produced in *An Túr Gloine*, a co-operative studio which Sarah Purser founded in Dublin in 1903. Before that time there were some individual stained glass artists working throughout Ireland but most of the windows inserted in our churches came from England or Germany, notably from the Mayer Studios in Munich. The Gaelic Revival movement was gaining strength at the turn of the 20th century and one of its greatest supporters was Edward Martyn, the Galway based landowner. He not only encouraged Sarah Purser to establish *An Túr Gloine* but through his influence and benevolence he assured its survival by sponsoring many commissions for the newly constructed St Brendan's Cathedral in

Loughrea. The cooperative flourished under the management of AE Child who also taught the technique and design of stained glass in the Metropolitan School of Art and in An Túr Gloine until his death in 1939.

Newport

After our visit to Holy Trinity Church and a pit-stop at the TF Royal Hotel, our bus took us past the Mayo Peace Park and Garden of Remembrance where the names of Mayo-born soldiers who died in service all over the world are recorded. Then it was westward to the town of Newport on the shores of Clew Bay, with its landmark Midland Great Western Railway Viaduct. Constructed of local red sandstone, it accommodated a train-link between Westport and Achill from 1894 until 1937. The same red sandstone and craftsmanship is evident in the imposing Romanesque Catholic Church built in 1914 and dedicated to St Patrick. It was here that we spent an hour or so, in appreciation and wonder at the magnificence of its stained glass windows. Its pièce de resistance is *The Last Judgement*, a three-light window over the main altar. Designed by the renowned Harry Clarke (1889-1931), it was his last and possibly his finest work. Harry Clarke was born in Dublin, the son of Joshua Clarke who had set up his own stained glass studios in Dublin in 1886. Harry worked in his father's studios but also trained under the aforementioned AE Child in the School of Art. His work is noted for its vivid imagination, its vibrant colours, notably blues and purples, and its intricate detail. On the death of his father in 1921, Harry took over the running of the stained glass studios, but he was plagued by ill-health and died of tuberculosis at the age of 42.

Commissioned in 1926 by Canon McDonald PP, this sanctuary window



Railway Viaduct, Newport

was not completed until 1931 because the artist became seriously ill. Before his death in January 1931 he had completed the drawings for the window and they were installed posthumously that year. Canon McDonald had sold his life insurance policy for £800 to pay for the window.

The centre opening is dominated by the figure of Christ, with outstretched hands, acting as Judge on the Last day. Surrounding Christ's head are six saintly figures and four adoring cherubs about his feet. Under them another angel, blowing a trumpet, calls the dead to judgement while an angel sitting with a scroll and a quill on either side of the trumpet records the verdict. Beneath the trumpet, an illuminated cross guides the throng of shrouded figures from earth to hear their fate.

The left opening shows Our Lady seated in Paradise with six apostles around her head. Happy angels with the joyful figures of the Just are represented underneath. Six other apostles are grouped around St Patrick's head in the right opening. At St Patrick's feet are five cherubs and the awful spectacle of the damned in hell where Harry Clarke has included his own self-portrait.

Sacred Heart Chapel: *The Agony in the Garden*

This is a two-light window. In the right

opening, Christ is shown kneeling in prayer. Soldiers with lighted torches stand in the background. In the left panel, an angel with outstretched arms comforts Christ in his agony while the three apostles are sleeping.

Our Lady's Chapel: *The Adoration of the Magi*

In the left opening, Our lady is seated holding the child Jesus on her knees. The 'Irish Magi' (Colmcille, Brigid, Patrick and Brendan) pay Him homage in the adjoining panel. St Colmcille is standing with the Abbot's cross in one hand and the book of psalms and a quill in the other. Standing beside him with arms crossed is St Brigid. In front and to her left is the kneeling figure of St Patrick holding a miniature Irish Church. St Brendan is distinguishable by the oar under his left arm. At the base is a glimpse of Clew Bay with Croagh Patrick to the west.

(The windows in the side chapels described above were commissioned from the Clarke Studios in 1971 by the members of the fourth Western Division of the Old IRA in memory of General Michael Kilroy.)

The Resurrection Window in the Sacred Heart Chapel

This window was commissioned from Richard King by Archbishop Walsh in memory of his family (see note on

Richard King under Swinford Church below). This Resurrection window portrays the risen Lord with uplifted arms displaying his sacred wounds. The opening to the right is dominated by the angel seated above the empty tomb, in conversation with the Holy Women.

The O'Donel Window in the south wall of the church

This window was commissioned from the Mayer Studios in Munich by Sir George and Lady O'Donel for the convent in Newport in 1887. The O'Donels were a branch of the Earls of Tyrconnell who had lived in Newport House for 200 years. When Captain George O'Donel was killed at Ypres in 1915 his widow sold the property. The O'Donel window was relocated to the church after the Convent of Mercy closed in the town in 1977. The right panel shows St Joseph with the Child Jesus in his arms and the left panel portrays the Virgin Mary.

Burrishoole Dominican Friary

Continuing on our religious theme, our bus took us west again to Burrishoole Friary which was founded by Richard Burke of Turlough, the Mac William Oughter, for the Dominicans in 1470. It flourished for about 200 years until the suppression of the Penal Laws resulted in the deterioration of the building. The roof collapsed in 1793. However the friars continued to live in the vicinity of the abbey until about 1800. The ruins, Gothic in style, are quite substantial with the church and portion of the cloister still standing. Among those buried within its walls is Peregrine O'Clery (Cúchoigríche Ó'Cléirigh 1624-1664), one of the Four Masters who helped compile the Annals of Ireland and who also supplied Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh with family history for his great book of genealogy, *Leabhar na nGinéalach*.

We must express our sincere thanks to fellow traveller, Frank Tivnan, expert on monastic buildings, who

pointed out features of the abbey to us and placed them in context with other Dominican abbeys of that period.

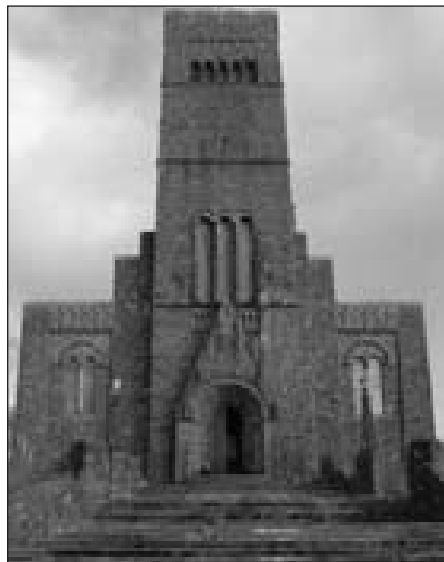
We must also pay tribute to our driver who got us out of many tight corners that day and turned the 52-seater bus on the proverbial sixpence with bus and passengers emerging unscathed.

Our Lady Help of Christians Church, Swinford

A very welcome and relaxed lunch in Nevins of Tiernaur refreshed us for the journey home but it also whetted the appetite for more stained glass. In referring to the work of Harry Clarke in Newport, I mentioned that Richard King was one of his students and that his work was well represented in Swinford Church. This brought requests for a visit there on our return journey. Ballymote native, Fr Dermot Meehan, now parish priest of Swinford kindly came to welcome us at very short notice and to explain the work of Richard King in the church.

Richard King was born in Castlebar in 1907 where his father was an RIC constable. The family moved to Carracastle for a time and then to Westport before finally settling in Dublin. Richard studied at the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art and later under Harry Clarke at his studios. When Harry Clarke died in 1931, Richard became the chief artistic designer at the Clarke Studios and was appointed manager in 1935. He opened his own studios in Dalkey in 1940.

The magnificent sanctuary window in Swinford Church is a splendid example of King's work. It depicts Mary's Assumption into Heaven, 'a woman clothed in the sun, standing on the moon' (Rev. 12:1-2). She is lifted up by a host of cherubs and is flanked by St John the Evangelist and St Patrick who holds a replica of the church in his hand. Above this is a rose window showing the Holy Trinity waiting to welcome Mary as she arrives in heaven. This window was erected in 1952.



St Patrick's Church, Newport

The Old and New Testament window in the left hand nave towards the rear of the church is a later example of King's work. The figures here are more simplified, showing greater clarity than his earlier work but with less variety in his use of colour. The Old Testament light shows the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, Abraham about to sacrifice his son Isaac, Moses with the Ten Commandments and King David playing his harp before the Ark of the Covenant. The New Testament light shows the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, his Resurrection from the dead and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The lower right panel shows Pope Paul VI in a boat, representing the barque of Peter, with a number of Bishops, portraying the idea of shared ministry between Pope and Bishops, one of the central themes of Vatican Council II which was continuing in Rome at the time of the installation of the window in 1964.

The clerestory windows high up on the nave of the church are also from the Richard King studios.

The Stations of the Cross in Swinford Church are a further example of Richard King's talent. They were erected in 1953 and display an innovative approach to the depiction of Christ's passion by showing only head and shoulder images, allowing us to focus on the anguish in Christ's face.

They are executed using the technique of oils on masonite and are similar to the stations which King did in 1951 for St Joseph's Church, Carrickmacross.

Swinford Church holds two windows by Hubert McGoldrick who was also a member of *An Túr Gloine*. They are single light windows, installed in 1940, portraying Our Lady of Lourdes and Christ the King.

Another feature of the church is the pulpit, now lowered and relocated for use as the ambo in the sanctuary. It is the work of James Pearse, father of the patriot, Padraig Pearse.

Reflecting on our Journey

Our tour took in just three churches in Mayo where there are fine examples of the art of stained glass. As early as the 12th century, plain glass had been included in our monasteries and abbeys. Gradually, dyes were incorporated into the glass-making process and floral or geometric designs were built up, held together by lead interlace. In time, images were incorporated, showing biblical scenes or pictures of the saints. When first introduced to churches, stained glass probably served as a teaching tool to impart the scripture stories to an illiterate people. It helped to eliminate external distractions and to create a subdued atmosphere for prayer and meditation. The images portrayed in stained glass were sometimes intended to act as sacramentals, to inspire devotion to God and the saints. It was also a way of embellishing God's house, to pay homage to His glory. As techniques developed, artists became not only more adept in the process but also in the symbolism expressed, thereby displaying a depth of spirituality and a knowledge of Christian theology appropriate to a church setting. This is especially true of the work of Harry Clarke in Newport and Richard King in Swinford.

My hope is that all my companions that day enjoyed their sojourn in Mayo whether from an historical, a spiritual

or an aesthetic viewpoint, and that sometime in the future Noel and I will be able to share more of Mayo's lesser-known treasures with them.

Sources

Ruth Sheehy, The Art of Richard King (1907-1974) in Swinford and

Newport, Co Mayo in Cathair na Mart, 2009, No. 27, p30-45

Stained Glass Windows of Mayo by Harry Clarke and the Clarke Studios, 2009, Mayo County Council

Sister M. Consilio, The Stained Glass

Windows of St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, in Back the Road, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Recollections of Burrishoole and Newport), Newport Historical Society, 1998



Headed paper of Hannan's of Market Street from a receipt of July 1903. Note the range of its merchandise and services provided. The sign on the upper floor announces its operation as the Commercial Hotel! This facade has not altered; the premises operated for many years as Hayden's pub and that name has been retained though it is now operated by Michael Perry. The receipt is made out to Captain Gethin, agent for the Gore Booth estate who lived at Earlsfield.

Dedicated to Sligo: Thirty-four Essays on Sligo's Past

by Martin A Timoney

Extracts from the editor's speech at the launch

My book *Dedicated to Sligo, Thirty-four Essays on Sligo's Past* was launched on 14th of June by Dr Patrick F Wallace, former director of the National Museum of Ireland, in the presence of over 100 enthusiastic devotees of Sligo's past.

The book has 34 articles, 36 authors, 300 illustrations and 500 numbered footnotes, all packed into 304 pages. A wide range of authors describe, analyse, interpret and re-interpret parts of the complex, understudied, and at times misunderstood, archive of eight thousand years of Co Sligo's past. Drawing new and exciting knowledge about what Sligo looked like at times in the remote past, the events which changed lifestyles and the products of humble and status craftsmen, they give us a greater understanding of our county and its place in Ireland's past and present and they inform us of some inspired intellectual and artistic giants of more recent centuries. The illustrations draw us out into the Sligo landscape, so richly endowed with the natural beauty, archaeology and history that surround us all the days of our lives. Some of the stories behind these stories are published elsewhere in this issue of *The Corran Herald*.

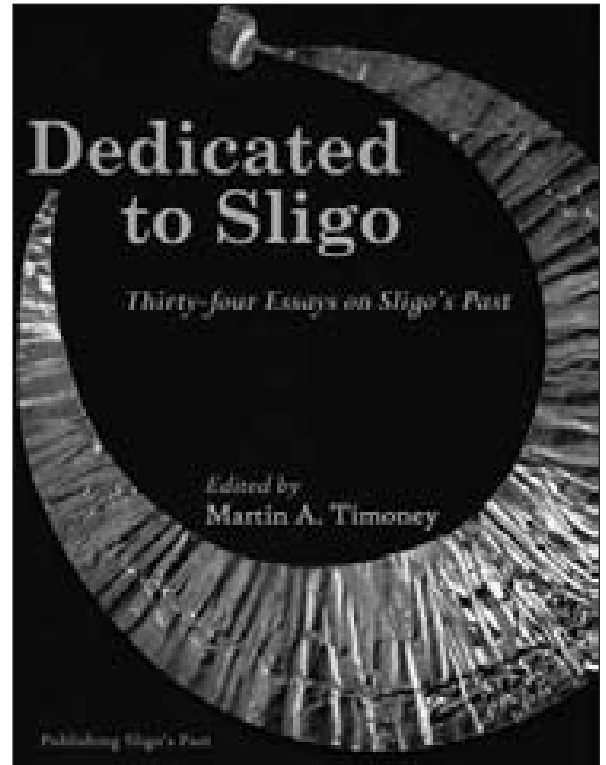
There is a great variety of themes: Numbers of monuments in Co Sligo. Paleobotany. C14 dates. Glimpses of Bronze Age Life at Ballincarr and Dromahaire. The Caves of Keash, Coastal Shell Middens, Cormack McArt's Well, Sligo Castle, Sligo Abbey and Hazelwood House. Crafted Objects, antler pins, Bronze Age and Iron Age gold ornaments, a Bronze Age necklace and Drumcliff High Cross and its date. Eleanor Butler, Henry McCarrick, Rev

William Henry, Rev Martin Sherlock, William Higgins, the Meldrum Family, the Yeats Family. The Battle of the Book at Cúl Dreimne. Sligo Town on Luttrell's 1689 map. Sligo in 1739. God-in-the-Bottle. Shopfronts. Fishing Boats. Folklife in practice in the 1950s. Placenames of the Taaffe Landholdings, Toomour and Sligeach. Recording Sligo in the past. Mapping Sligo reviewed.

The cover design is by Bridget and Catherine Timoney, using copyright image courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland of 'The O'Hara Lunula', and a drawing by Albert Siggins of a rushlight holder from Owenykeevan, Dromore West, Co. Sligo. Many places and landscapes get included by way of images.

The culture of Sligo is not hanging on the walls of an art gallery, it is all around us, we live in its midst all the time. Sligo is like an extraordinary antique shop where you can enjoy monuments of all the events that happened in the county over the last eight millennia. Frank Tivnan once commented 'The damdest things are to be found here.' A museum of Sligo would be worthwhile, and is necessary, for us now and for the future, and we need it now! It is not a case of wanting, it is a case of needing!

There are many revelations to be found in the book. Rev William Henry was not from Fermanagh, nor Donegal, nor Gloucestershire, but from Sligo, most likely John St. The Sligo weather of 1739 and 1740 gave



Dedicated to Sligo

a famine in which a quarter to a third of the population died, a much greater proportion than in the so-called Great Famine. Perhaps that famine was why William Henry went chasing souls and never completed his Topographical Description of Sligo.

Carrowmore is not more than 6,000 years old; just about 5,500 years. It makes quite a difference in that the Mesolithic line of argument by Burenhult is untenable as Dr Robert Hensey, with agreement from Stefan Bergh, explains.

Eleanor Butler's life in Sligo has still to be written up. Compare the photos of the O'Connor Sligo monument in Sligo Abbey, which has been outdoor for some centuries, with those of Donadea, Co. Kildare, which has never been outdoors and you see what weathering does to stonework. Surely the so-called transept of the Abbey is the family chapel that

Eleanor Butler endowed. Jim Conlon told me of where the second part of the O'Connor Sligo memorial is in Co Louth. The O'Crian monument in Sligo Abbey of 1506 was rebuilt at some stage.

Rev Martin Sherlock appears to have had input into the Diamond Skreen School of Monumental Sculpture which may have been greater than recognised until now.

Sligo Stone Fort, on the site of the castle in Quay St, is not all gone; there is a reflection of it in upstairs of Lyons, Garry's Stafford's restaurant; look at the angles of the part nearest to the Town Hall. We do not have a museum, so why do we call it a city?

God-in-the-Bottle is not a solution to self-inflicted agony from the night before, and there may be hundreds of them; since release we have recently seen a God-out-of-the Bottle here in Sligo.

We thought we had the products of the Costello timber workshop all wrapped up; again, since release, we have been told of the existence of the actual Costello drawings for these shopfronts and perhaps they will come in the next publishing of *Sligo's Past*.

Slim and all as the evidence was, we do not doubt Eoin Halpin's proof of the defences of the town as seen on Luttrell's 1689 map, but oh, where is that original map! And where is the French marriage stone that was at the Holy Well in the 1910s!

Most likely it was Collooney man William Higgins, not John Dalton, that devised what we know as the Periodic Table in Chemistry. I like John O'Dea's quote from John Dalberg-Acton: 'There is no error so monstrous that it fails to find defenders among the ablest men.' Joyce Raftery Enright also has a memorable quote from Yeats' *Autobiographies*: "When I was eight or nine an aunt said to me, 'You are going to London. Here you are somebody. There you are nobody.'" But that article should set many Yeatsian students on the right road. The Yeats Axis runs from the Ulster Bank statue to the Middleton-



Martin's book launch night. Back row, Left to right: Michael Rodgers, Peter Diamond, Martin Timoney, John Coleman, Front row: Carmel Rogers, Nuala Rogers, Eileen Tighe.

Pollexfen Quarter at the Western Wholesale building.

The past landscape is recorded in the lake muds, studied by a collaboration between NUIG and Kiel in Germany, a collaboration that came from a chance meeting of paleobotanists over twenty years ago at a conference. O'Connell's mini-dictionary of paleobotanical terms should make reading all paleobotanical articles much easier. Traditionally archaeologists have looked to pollen analysis to fill in a few background details for the arrival of monument type, but should we not be doing the research in a different sequence and compose the full picture from the continuous record and see where the changes are and then match the arrival of monument types?

People ate their oysters in restaurants along Ballisodare, Sligo and Drumcliff Bays in prehistoric times, only to change to a take-away style from the early medieval period. Nollaig Ó Muraíle proves that our Sligo, town and county, got its name from those shells, the shelly place was not from the fossils in the Garvoige, it was from the dumps of shells that we find under the footpaths in the town and along the coast that the name derives.

The milestone on Two Mile Hill in Ballyglass says 'Sligo 2 Dublin' as Jim Foran points out, but see this issue for more on why. Wendy Lyons details the architecture of Hazelwood which is crying out for a lover, perhaps one with some money, but time is not on its side.

The editor, Martin A Timoney, is a graduate in Archaeology and Geography of UCG in the late 1960s, and has been involved in the archaeology of Co Sligo since then, having lived in Knocknarea, Cliffoney and Keash, and has made major voluntary contribution through Sligo Field Club of which he has been a member since 1969.

Publishing *Sligo's Past*, Patrick Hurley, Margaret McBrien, Maura O'Gara-O'Riordan, Patrick Tuffy, Derry O'Connell, Dr Nollaig Ó Muraíle, Mary B Timoney and Martin A Timoney, acknowledges the assistance of the Sligo Leader Partnership towards the cost of printing the book. At Sligo Leader Partnership Ltd Deirdre Kennedy was of great help.

Kiel University and Ballymote Heritage Group and some individuals were sponsors and there were over one hundred subscribers. The book printed by Brendan Salmon's KPS,

Knock, Co Mayo, where Mick Gallagher was the most efficient person, comes in hardback at €40 and softback at €25. It is available from local shops, Tighe's, Ward's, Liber, Record Room and Yeats Society, and from the Editor.

Long may the dedication of authors continue! Now we have a stack of

sixty-eight essays on which to build further research on this county of ours. I thank all these for all their help, dedication, knowledge and patience. Hopefully those who have gone before would have approved of our endeavors!

I do hope that Sligo Leader Partnership and all Sligo people will

use this book to promote Sligo as is done by Sligo Field Club, under whose aegis this book was begun, and Ballymote Heritage Group. The book is a permanent monument to parts of the legacy of Sligo and this is what Publishing Sligo's Past has done and will hopefully do again. Your dedication will boost our dedication!

Corran Park Committee in 1949



The committee members are listed as follows, but this list is not in the same order as the people appear in the photo. Some members of the committee are not in the picture. The committee was:

Very Rev Canon Roughneen PP (President), Rev Denis O'Hara CC, (Vice President), Jack Hoey (Chairman), Bertie Farry (Vice Chairman), Eddie McGettrick and John Barnes (Joint Hon Secretaries), Paddy Cawley (Ld Edward St), Mary K Begley, Pake Begley, Mick Brehony, Owen Brehony, Batty Cawley, Delia Coleman, James Duffy, Paddy Dwyer, Roddy Egan, Tom McGettrick, John Gardiner, Alex Gillmor, Hannon & Co, Michael J Henry, Des Johnson, Thomas Keenan, Michael J Mattimoe, Dick Molloy, Mary E McDonagh, J McGettrick (Ld Edward St), JMcManus, Tom Quigley, Gerry Regan, Martin McGettrick, Paddy Rogers, Tom Scully, Denis Tighe, P J Rogers (Emlaghfad), P J Rogers TD, P Wims, George Woodland, Michael F Regan.

The exhortations of the balladeer, MF Regan bore fruit on 1 May 1949 when over 6,000 people attended the official opening of Corran Park to see Louth defeat Mayo. On June 5 of the same year over 16,000 spectators were in Corran Park for the Connacht Senior Football Championship match between Roscommon and Mayo, surely the highest attendance at any sporting event in the history of Ballymote.

Photograph courtesy Mary Cawley and Neal Farry.

The Origins of Strandhill as a Seaside Resort

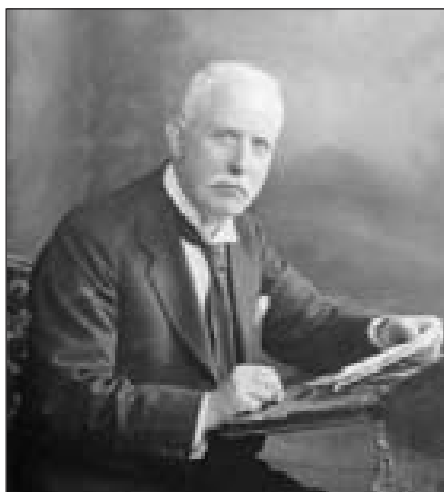
John C McTernan

The recent demise in Sligo of Robin Murrow recalls his family's major role in the development of Strandhill as a popular seaside resort. Over a century ago the area between the upper road and the seashore was partially covered by blowing sand, and uninhabited. In 1895 Benjamin Murrow, Robin's grandfather, a native of Belfast and a lawyer's clerk in the firm of Messrs Fenton & Lyons, purchased what was then the Allen estate for £1,760.

After coming into possession Murrow proceeded to develop his newly-acquired property by constructing a thoroughfare joining the upper road to the seashore. The new road, which is reputed to have cost £1,000 to make, he named Buenos Ayres Drive. In 1920 he built himself an imposing two-storey marine residence close to the upper entrance to the road and named it *Buenos Ayres*.

With the roadway in place Murrow offered plots for sale to potential developers on either side of the thoroughfare, subject to an annual rent. In an effort to encourage developments on or close to the shore he offered sites at a cheaper rate. In all cases he retained a three-foot strip of land between the individual plots and the roadway.

In 1912, in an effort to attract more visitors to Strandhill, he built a bathhouse on the seafront on a site forty paces to the left of the 'Big Gun' which he had previously purchased and placed *in situ*. This new facility provided patrons with hot and cold seawater baths in addition to seaweed baths at one shilling per head. Over the succeeding decades, until it was closed in 1966 and subsequently demolished, this amenity attracted numerous family groups to the resort annually. Gradually, the new Strandhill took shape as homes and guesthouses were built on both sides of Buenos Ayres Drive. A significant



Benjamin Murrow

factor in that development occurred in 1920 with the siting there of St Patrick's church on a plot donated by Murrow.

At that stage it became obvious that it would only be a matter of time before the new road would pass from private into public ownership. Benjamin Murrow favoured such a move provided that he was adequately compensated. The local residents, especially those who had purchased plots along the road, were also in favour and availed of every opportunity in pushing their case. At a meeting of Sligo Co Council in May 1922 the following memorial from the Strandhill ratepayers was read:

'We, the undersigned, being Ratepayers in the District of Knocknarea, respectfully request Sligo Co Council to take over the new road leading to the sea at Carrowbunnaun. The road is now being used by the public for attending the new Chapel and also for the accommodation of people getting to the shore. It is also a great convenience for carting wrack.'

A month later the county engineer, RJ Kirwan, reported that the road in question had become a thoroughfare of considerable importance and was suitable for taking over by the Council for maintenance. A year later the Council instructed their legal adviser,

John Tarrant, to open negotiations on its acquisition and whatever land was necessary.

Over the following three years there were little or no developments apart from the fact that Murrow made it known that he was willing to assign his interest in the road on being reasonably compensated. In 1927 the local ratepayers submitted a memorial to Sligo Co Council stating that the public use of Buenos Ayres Drive was essential for the welfare of the people of Strandhill as a whole, and for those residing on the sea road in particular, and the compulsory acquisition of the road was strongly advocated. Eventually, a year later in 1928, a deputation from the Council met with Benjamin Murrow and made an offer of £150 on the condition that the public were entitled to unrestricted right-of-way over Buenos Ayres Drive and also the adjoining foreshore. Further negotiations followed and eventually Murrow agreed to accept the offer of £150. In May 1928 Tarrant was in a position to inform the Council that the conveyance of Buenos Ayres Drive had been completed.

On Benjamin Murrow's death in 1936 there still remained an unresolved matter relating to a plot of land between the end of the road and the seashore. He was succeeded by his son, John Stuart Murrow, who approved of the transfer of the strip concerned to the Co Council, thus bringing to a successful conclusion the long-drawn-out saga of Buenos Ayres Drive.

The subsequent development of Strandhill as a popular seaside resort can be attributed in no small way to the foresight and progressive outlook of Benjamin Murrow, who deserves to be remembered as the modern founder of the 'pretty watering-place' at the foot of Knocknarea.

Views on the past

Submitted by John Coleman



Market Street with RIC Officers outside the RIC barracks, which was later burned down during the 'Troubles'.



An outing at the gun in Strandhill, early 1930s - the laughing girls with the long coats are Kathleen Benson (later Coleman) on the right and Sheelagh Johnson, who died this year. This picture was taken by Maisie McGovern (nee Benson), who had been given a gift of a box Brownie camera by her parents when she was a boarder in the Ursuline in the early 1930s.

The Ballymote Gathering photographic exhibition

Submitted by Mary Cawley

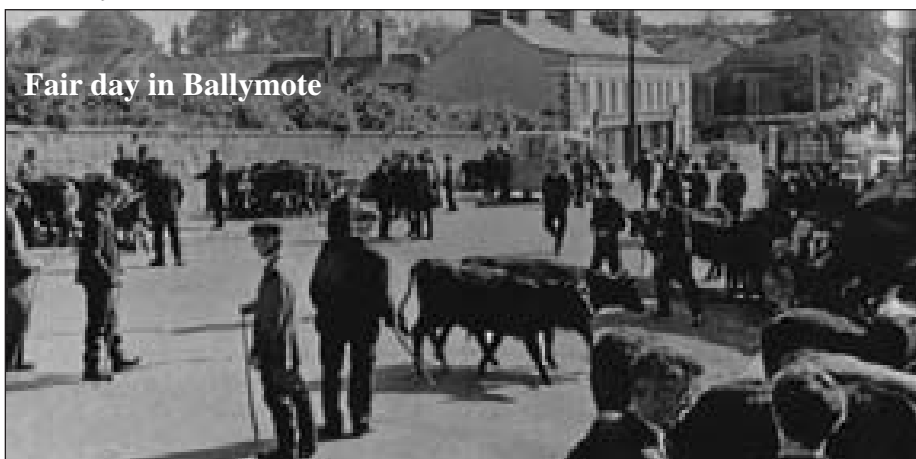
In March 2013 an exhibition was presented as part of the Ballymote Gathering Festival in the Art Deco Theatre, Ballymote. The exhibition focused on the last century. It featured old photographs of the town covering shop fronts, streetscapes, buildings, people and events. It highlighted the way buildings and the landscape have evolved over the century. Many buildings have changed radically, some have a completely different function, and some have disappeared.

The photographs of people and events recorded and preserved moments in time. Many of these photographs were not available to the public before, and they evoked many shared memories of different people from the town and its surrounds.

The exhibition brought together a rich store of historic Ballymote photographs. We are indebted to many people who provided photographs. Batty Cawley was an important prolific photographer of people and places in the Ballymote area. We record our thanks to his family for allowing us access to his archives. We are indebted also to the following people: Alfie Banks, Mattie Casey, Gerry and Esther Cassidy, Molly Cawley, Paul Coen, John Coleman, Corran College, Derek Davey, Evelyn Davey Paraic Doddy, Catherine English, Neil Farry, Joan Finn, Joseph Flanagan, Francis Flannery, Mary Gilhawley, Gladys Hannon, Shirley Hannon, Neil Henry, John Hannon, Keenan Johnson, Doreen Lavin, Tommy Lavin, Martin McGettrick, Monica McGrath, Richard Molloy, Colm Mullarkey, Carmel Mullen, Scoil Mhuire gan Smal, St Mary's Secondary School, Eileen Tighe.



Back row: Attracta Shiels, Teresa Keaney, Mary Keaney, Helen Duffy
Second from back: Nell Chambers, Imelda Hannon Vera Golden Rosie Cassidy, May McGettrick, Teasie Shannon, Teresa Cunnane Joan Hannon, ? Leydon
Third from back: ? Healy, James Duffy, Billy Brown, John James Brehony, Stepho Benton, Michael Scully, Sean Healy, Fintan Molloy, Michael Keany
Front row: Paddy Cunningham, Willie Reynolds, Des Rogers, ?, Phil Rogers, ?, Jimmy Finn



Fair day in Ballymote



Achonry Co Op, 1968



Boys' National School, 1960

Back row: Derek Davy, Paddy Hannon, Michael Rafferty, Jim Hannon, Michael Hever, Michael Healy, Raymond McAndrew

Middle row: Paddy McNulty, Donald Berry, Joseph McGettrick, Pat O'Harte, Austin Prior, Tom McNulty, James Flanagan, George Brennan, Damien Tansey Raymond Galvin, John McArdle

Front row: Michael McGettrick, Joseph Donegan, Vincent Finn, Tommy Duffy Kieran McNulty, Michael Duffy, Billy Brady, Jimmy Coen



Teresa Kielty and Mick Gildea



Kitty Cawley, winner of the County ICA Federation Fish Cookery Competition organised by Bord Iascaigh Mhara, 1970



Keany, Brendan Benton, Padraig Brehony, Michael Finan, Michael Hannon

Second row from back: Ann McGettrick, ? Jim Sreenan, Thomas Healy, John McAndrew, Bernard Tansey, Michael Murtagh, Bernie Murtagh, Martin McDonagh, Mary Connell.

Third row from back: Cyril Hogge, Leonard Scully, Mary Scully, Ann McDermot, ? Leydon, Sadie Cunnane, Richard Molloy.

Front row: Paul Galvin, Mattie Brady, Michael Rogers, John Rogers.



Confirmation 1949

Back row: Margaret Dwyer, Rosie Healy, Mary Hoey, Mary McFadden Nuala Shannon, Kitty Healy, Maura Browne.

Middle row: Betty Tighe, Dymrna Mc Govern, Eileen Shreenan, Cait Nolan, Florrie Cassidy Teresa Gormley, Rosie Hoey, Mary Duffy Rosie Rogers, Patricia Begley Margaret Molloy, Gertrude Scully, Mary Finan, Eileen Healy, Peggy Hannon

Front row: ? Brady, Kitty Brady, Helen Tighe, Rita Brehony, Rosaleen Leyden, Dora Tighe, Nancy Cassidy, Florrie Hannon, Mary Shiels, Patsy Browne



Healy School Of Dancing, 1968



Round Tower at Carrownanty, Ballymote, which crumbled in 1947



Ballymote Primary School at Liturgical Festival Ballaghaderreen 1950s



Richard McBrien, Tony Henry, Eamon Scanlon, Dennis McBrien, Tom Henry



Dance in Loftus Hall New Year's Day 1958



Ballymote Boys National School class group 1959 . Submitted by Derek Davy

Back row: Ivan Pettipiece, Sean Donegan, Tommie Duffy, Joseph Donegan, Michael Duffy, Brian Meehan, Vincent Finn.

Second row from back: L-R Chris Reid, N.T., Sean Hunt, Vincent Brehony, John Mc Donagh, Sean Duffy, Patrick Chambers, Damian Tansey, Raymond McAndrew, Jim Hannon.

Third row from back: Derek Davey, Austin Prior, David Corr (Hidden), Jim Donaghue, Paddy Hannon, Peter Golden.

Front row: Francis Donaghue, Michael Healy, Derek Droughton



Photo of Achonry Co-Op staff taken in 1968 on the occasion of the Charlie Finan having worked there for 50 years. Charlie was assistant manager.

Seated, front row: Mr and Mrs Charlie Finan, Tim O'Mahony (manager)

Second row: Carmel Davey, Margaret Brennan, John Gannon, Paddy Boland, Harry McGovern, Jim Brett, Peter Brennan, Hughlie Brennan.

Third row: Jim O'Mahony, Doreen Brett, Walter Kivlehan, Dominic Roddy, Peter Murtagh, Charlie Wimms, Ted Ross, Peter Brennan, Johnny Brennan, Jimmy Durkin, Paddy Coleman(hidden), Paddy Redican, Ollie Brett, John Dunleavy(behind), Johnny Brennan.

Fourth row: Annie-May Brennan, Paud O'Donnell, Kathleen Kivlehan, Sean Hunt, Dennis McDonagh, Seamus Henry, Nathy Wimms and Roger Wynne sitting on window.

Photo submitted by Carmel Rogers.

First Holy Communion Classes 2013



Knockminna First Holy Communion, 2013.

Back row: Mr Henry (class teacher), Fr James Mc Donagh, Mrs King (Principal) Front row: Brendan Hailstones (altar server), Darragh Brehony, Sarah Cassidy, John Kerins, Evan Cunnane, Malachi Drew, Katelyn Beirne, Oisin Brennan, Aaron Brennan (altar server).



First Holy Communion Class 2013, Scoil Mhuire gan Smaí, Ballymote

Back row: Michael Lavin, Laura McGee, Mark Scanlon, Chloe Fahey, Felim Finn, Julia Rychta, Shane Rafferty
3rd row: Emmet Finan, Jakub Kasperek, Aine O'Connor, Darragh Phillips, Rebecca Healy, Dylan Anderson, Maxine Ward.
2nd row: Klaudia Klamán, Scott Lumsden, Kacey Glavin, Mark Tighe, Ashlee McLoughlin, Michael Ward, Danielle Martin, Diarmuid Keenan.
Front row: Emily Loughlin, Owen Egan, Caoimhe Moffatt, Cian Cunnane Cantwell, Chloe Hever.
Also included in photograph: Fr James McDonagh, Fr Gregory Hannan, Ms Dolores Taheny and Mrs McGetrick

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Special thanks to John Coleman and Anne Henry for their
assistance with this issue of the Corran Herald.

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