

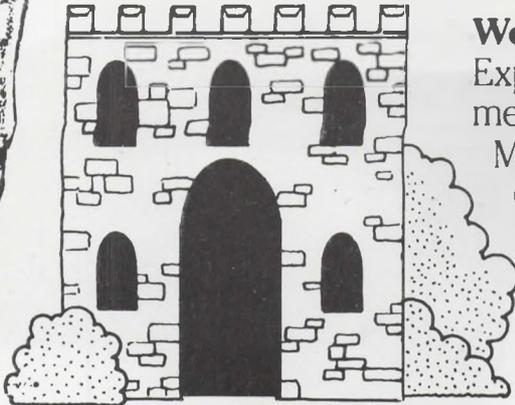
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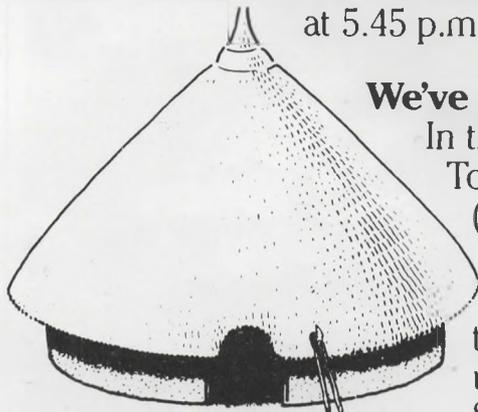
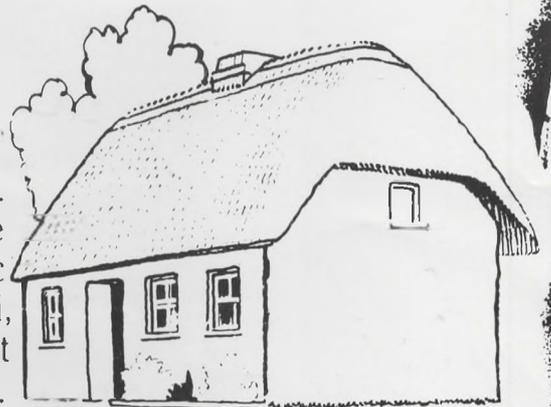


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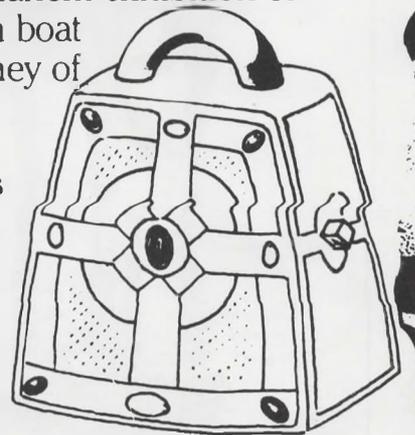


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TRÁCT



In and About Kinvara
1988 Price £1.50

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Editorial

This has been a busy and exciting year for Kinvara. As we go to press preparations are well advanced for two major events in our community — the twinning celebrations with Local-Mendon and the tenth year of what is by now one of the major festivals in the country, Cruinniú na mBád. On behalf of Kinvara Community Council I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Breton neighbours and express the hope that in the years ahead the ties that unite us will grow ever stronger. The hard-working twinning committee deserves our special thanks for carrying the initial idea into a reality. The social and cultural benefits of the twinning have already made themselves felt in many ways. Next year, perhaps, we will see a Breton contribution in the pages of 'Trácht'. As for Cruinniú, the committee this year has done excellent work in organizing, financing, and publicizing the festival. Television, radio, and press coverage has highlighted the Cruinniú as never before. We would like to mention particularly Charlie Piggott's excellent article in 'Ireland of the Welcomes', a magazine read literally around the world.

One of the outstanding achievements earlier this year was the Kinvara Drama Group production — 'Manu — The Ballads of Kilmarrach'. Superbly directed by Paul Brennan, this was a community endeavour of heroic proportions, involving over 60 people from the area. Visually, musically, and theatrically, it was a memorable experience for all concerned. Let's hope it is the start — or we should more accurately say 'revival' — of a tradition of high-quality drama in Kinvara.

The Community Centre was the venue for another initiative this year — Adult Education Courses. Painting, language teaching and practical car maintenance were offered, and such was the response that we will again be offering courses beginning in the Autumn.

This year has also seen the publication of two books — 'St. Colman's Church' and 'Kinvara History — A Family Affair', both essential reading for anyone with any connection with Kinvara.

'Trácht '88' contains what has by now become the standard assortment of excellent articles and photographs. In particular we would like to single out for special praise John Conneely's carefully researched article on 'The Troubles' in South Galway; Jimmy O'Connor's splendid presentation of the life and works of Matt Mahon, Kinvara's Raftery; Caoilte Breathnach's fine account of the notebooks belonging to Tomás Ó hEidhin; and Leen Vandommele's beautiful tribute to the late Jack Burke.

Finally, may we extend thanks to all our advertisers and supporters.

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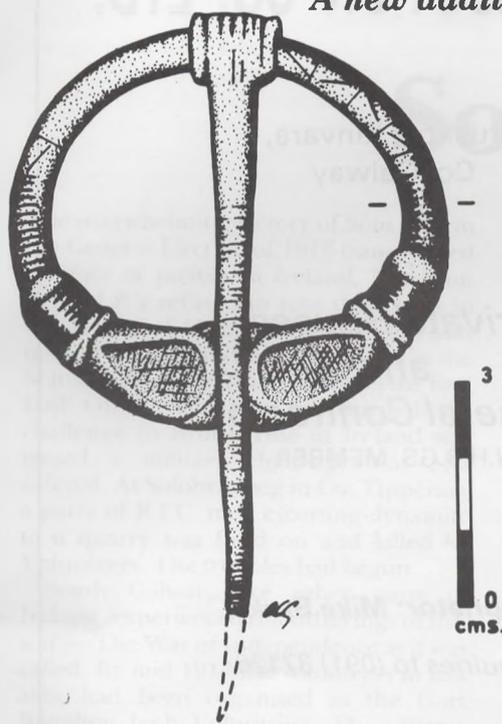
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The Gortaboy Brooch

A new addition to Kinvara's archaeological heritage



The Gortaboy Brooch. Lifesize drawing by Angela Gallagher, Dept. of Archaeology, U.C.G.

"Would you be interested in that?" asked John Connolly, handing me a small colour photograph. It showed a dark-green, metallic-looking, circular object contrasted against the background of a white lace curtain. At first glance it looked like part of a horse-bit but ..." I certainly would" says I. "I think it might be a bronze penannular brooch. It's probably over one thousand years old" I continued, concealing my ignorance of the Group A₂ zoomorphic penannular brooches? Jeff O'Connell, who had been hovering nearby, suddenly sensed an important scoop and leapt into the conversation in true journalistic style. "Could we put a photograph of that into the next issue of 'Trácht'?" And so it came to pass...

The discovery or identification of a 'new' archaeological find is always an exciting and fulfilling moment for an archaeologist. And to have been surprised by Mr. Connolly and his photograph after delivering a lecture on the archaeology of south Galway in Kinvara Community Centre on a cold winter's night in 1987, was a most unexpected reward. Upon examination, the brooch proved to be a 1,600 year old bronze cloak fastener of a type known to archaeologists as zoomorphic penannular brooches.

These brooches take their name from

their gapped circular shape (hence penannular = not fully circular) and the animal head designs on their terminals (hence zoomorphic = animal like). Far from being obvious to the eye, these animal heads are generally highly stylized affairs and the terminals appear, at first glance, to bear completely abstract patterns. This impression is often underlined by the presence of inlaid panels of red enamel on the terminals. On Mr. Connolly's brooch which measures almost 6cm (2½ inches) in diameter, the enamel has unfortunately fallen away but the panels in which it sat are visible as pear shaped areas on either side of the pin. However, traces of red enamel are still visible in the grooves of the cross-hatched lines at the bottom of the panels. These were out in order to key the enamel into the bronze. Beyond these panels can be seen the slit-like eyes of the animal and beyond that again the fluted snout which is biting into the ring. As one expert on these brooches has put it, these animal-heads "appear to be engaged in a hoop-swallowing act." The other element of these brooches is the pin which can be passed through the gap in the ring. Unfortunately the pin on this brooch is broken but would have been about 9cms (3½ inches) long originally.

Howard Kilbride-Jones is the acknowledged expert on these brooches and his major study of them, published in 1980, catalogues 163 examples from Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Northern England. He divides the brooches into a number of groups on the basis of variations in form and decoration, and dates Group A₂, to which Mr. Connolly's example belongs, to the period A.D. 350-450. Zoomorphic penannular brooches appear to have been developed originally in south-eastern Scotland towards the close of the 2nd century A.D. from whence the design spread to Ireland. Irish craftsmen quickly adopted the design as Kilbride-Jones suggests that these brooches were one of the standard dress ornaments worn by the last generations of the old pagan aristocracy in Ireland. Given the thickness of their pins, these brooches would have been best suited to homespun garments and were probably used to

fasten short-fringed cloaks on the breast or shoulder.

Unfortunately, over 60 of the 137 Irish brooches listed by Kilbride-Jones have no recorded find-spots and many of the remainder can be localized only to within a county or the vicinity of a town. Though it had for long lain in a family junk-box, Mr. Connolly related that the brooch originally came from a field immediately behind his old family home in Gortaboy about 2 miles (3m) north-east of Kinvarra. He had been told this by his father, who recalled that it had been found in a potato or cabbage patch. Without properly recorded details of their find-spots and circumstances of discovery, objects like the Gortaboy Brooch lose a lot of their archaeological value. However, thanks to Mr. Connolly's interest and concern, this brooch is now being properly recorded and examined in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin and Kinvara has added a new facet to its already rich and varied heritage.

Paul Gosling



A penannular brooch in use. Drawing by Brendan McMahon based on the panel showing the arrest of Christ, on Muiredach's High Cross at Monasterboice, Co. Louth.



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'The Troubles' in South Galway

The overwhelming victory of Sinn Féin in the General Election of 1918 transformed the face of politics in Ireland. The Sinn Féin M.P.'s refused to take their seats in the House of Commons in London and instead assembled (those not in jail) in the Mansion House in Dublin to form the first Dáil. On the same day that this political challenge to British rule in Ireland was issued a military challenge was also offered. At Soloheadbeg in Co. Tipperary a party of R.I.C. men escorting dynamite to a quarry was fired on and killed by Volunteers. The troubles had begun.

South Galway, like other parts of Ireland, experienced the sufferings of this war — The War of Independence as it was called. By mid 1917 the volunteers in this area had been organised as the Gort Battalion Irish Volunteers. The officers were:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Tom McInerney | Battalion Commandant |
| Peter Howley | Battalion Vice Commandant |
| Patrick Ruane | Battalion Quartermaster |
| P.J. Piggot | Battalion Adjutant |
| The battalion consisted of ten companies each with an officer in charge. | |
| Ardrahan | Captain Thomas Helly |
| Kinvara | Captain John Burke |
| Peterswell | Captain John Fahy |
| Kilbeacanty | Captain John Coen |
| Gort | Captain John Hayes |
| Derrybrien | Captain Paddy Flynn |
| Kilmacduagh | Captain John Quinn |
| Ballinderreen | Captain Thomas Gibbons |
| Beagh | Captain John Flaherty |
| Kiltartan | Lieutenant Cahill |

The average strength of each company was twenty to twenty five men. Thus Gort Battalion had approx. 200 to 250 men. Company officers were elected by the company. Voting was by ballot.

Actions by the battalion were carried out by Active Service Units (A.S.U.'s) composed of officers and men from the ten companies in the battalion. During 1919 the first priority of the battalion was getting weapons. Weapons procured by G.H.Q. Director of Purchasing, Liam Mellows, did not find their way to Gort. So houses of ex-soldiers were raided in Peterswell and Ballmanagh for this purpose. Commandant McInerney sent £40 to England to procure arms but these were seized by G.H.Q. in Dublin as he had interfered with their method of purchase.

The battalion A.S.U.'s attacked and burned police-barracks in Derrybrien and Peterswell as well as a police hut in Kilbeacanty. The purpose of these attacks — as well as getting arms — was to drive the R.I.C. out of the small rural stations so that the volunteers could operate freely in the countryside. Warnings were issued to individual R.I.C. men to resign from the force or become targets for attack.

On July 2nd 1920 R.I.C. Sgt. Elliot was shot and wounded at Castletaylor, Ardrahan by the local company. On the same day two R.I.C. men Sgt. O'Connor and Const. Mac Dermot who were escorting a patient from Kinvara to Ballinasloe were captured at Roxborough, Kilchreest and their weapons taken. They were then allowed to go on their way. On the next day, July 3rd, Willie Hynes of Dunguaire who had recently been released from prison in England was again arrested and lodged in Galway jail.

On the night of July 20th/21st John Burke led the Kinvara Company into the town at midnight. He posted sentries at all the entrance roads and proceeded to demolish the R.I.C. station. Reports in the papers that 300 men took part in this exercise were greatly exaggerated! The roof and second floor of the building were completely demolished. It was decided to

knock the building down rather than burn it so that the houses on either side would not be damaged. The R.I.C. had vacated the barracks two days previously and had gone to Kilcolgan and Ardrahan.

On August 9th the St. George residence — Tyrone House — was burned by the Ballinderreen company. Rumours had spread that the house which was then empty was to be used by the auxiliaries as a base. On the following night August 10th Kinvara Courthouse was demolished by the Kinvara Company. Again it was knocked down rather than burned to avoid destroying the houses beside it. On August 25th events in the area took a more deadly turn when R.I.C. Const. Duffy was shot dead in Boston as he accompanied a group of Black and Tans in a lorry. This incident began a sequence of attack and reprisal which characterised the rest of the troubles. On August 30th the Kinvara Company held up the mail car in Currenree and took all letters addressed to members of the R.I.C. This was one method of getting information to the R.I.C.

In early September Tom McInerney selected an A.S.U. from the battalion to assist the Kinvara company in setting up an ambush on the Crushoa road about one mile from Kinvara. Although the



Barracks in ruins.

(Photo with permission of Mrs. Flaherty, Killina)



Mr. Malachy Quinn with his children. (Photo with permission of Mrs. Oaherty, Killina)

volunteers waited for hours the patrol did not arrive. It came as far as Kinvara and returned from there. McNerney believed that the R.I.C. suspected an ambush. Shortly afterwards Kilkelly's house in Crushoa was burned down by the Black and Tans.

On September 23rd — the day of the Kinvara races at Gortshavogh Race Course — a group of volunteers ambushed a party of R.I.C. men who were on their way to protect Lord Ashdown's workers at Drumharsna. Both sides exchanged shots but there were no casualties. However, on Sunday 26th a terrible price was paid for the attack. The houses of Patrick Joyce and John Higgins (both from Ardrahan) were burned down. At 7 p.m. the Black and Tans arrived at the house of Michael Burke from Ballymacvive and took his son outside. Eight of them covered him with their revolvers and but for their captain would have killed him. Instead they burned his house and wheat and oats. At midnight they arrived at the house and forge of Michael McNerney at Cahermore looking for Tom McNerney. They fired shots through the windows, dragged everyone out and set fire to the house. Nothing was saved. St. Theresa's Hall in Labane — donated to the parish by Edward Martyn — was also burned to the ground. The Black and Tans had laid it on the line. This was to be the punishment for attacks on the police or military.

In October the battalion considered a plan for an ambush at Castledaly. A patrol

of R.I.C. men left Kilchreest, cycled to Peterswell and returned along the same route a number of times each week. The active service unit was selected and consisted of approx. 30 men under Tom McNerney. On the night of October 30th they gathered in the mountains near Castledaly. A lookout was posted in the morning who noted that the patrol passed on its way to Peterswell. The ambush party got into position near Castledaly Church. The R.I.C. patrol approached. There were four constables and a sergeant strung out over a couple of hundred yards. The order to fire was given before the full patrol was caught in the trap and so casualties were lighter than they might have been. R.I.C. Const. Horan died, Const. Keane was seriously wounded. Sgt. O'Driscoll with Consts. Dunne and Kilmartin carried Keane with them and escaped along the back road to Persse's at Roxborough. The ambushed party dispersed into the mountains.

The by now familiar reprisals took place. That night Fallon's house in Scailp was burned. Howley's at Limepark was destroyed. Coys and Fahy's in Kilchreest were burned. Two local men, Moylan and Callanan from Glanagh, were arrested and charged with the murder of Horan. They appeared before a Field General Courtmartial in Dublin on March 23rd 1921 and were defended by Tim Healy. They were acquitted on March 31st due to lack of evidence against them.

On March 5th 1921 a number of men were arrested around Gort and brought to

Peterswell where Sgt. O'Driscoll was brought to look them over to see if he recognised any of them. He did not and they were all released.

On November 1st 1920 — the day after the Castledaly ambush — Mrs. Eileen Quinn of Corker, Kiltartan was shot in front of her house as she held her child in her arms. She was carried into the house where she died some hours later. An inquest found that a shot from the first of two military cars passing at the time killed her. No one was charged with her death. The inquest excluded all except witnesses to the shooting. Thus there was no reference to the fact that other houses had been shot at as the cars passed by. At Donoghues some fowl had been shot while shots were fired at Callanans which broke the windows of the house. Mrs. Quinn was still alive when the Head Constable arrived at the house but he made no attempt to take a statement from her although it was police procedure that he should have. Fr. Considine from Gort was not allowed to give evidence at the inquest but he put together a full account of the circumstances of the atrocity which he gave to the papers and to any one who would listen. Because of this whenever the Black and Tans came to Gort (they had moved to Renmore on the 1st October) eight men of the old R.I.C. went to guard his house. Sometime in January 1921 District Inspector Blake told Margaret Gregory privately that the killing of Mrs. Quinn was not done by the Black and Tans as believed by everyone but by a member of the R.I.C. whose name was known to him.

On Friday, November 26th the most shocking episode of the Troubles in South Galway began. Shortly after 3 p.m. a lorry load of Auxiliaries and R.I.C. arrived at the Loughnane house in Shanaghlis and arrested the brothers Pat and Harry Loughnane. This began ten days of distress and trauma for the family. The suffering of the brothers and the manner of their deaths has been described by Jeff O'Connell in his article 'The Murder of the Loughnane Brothers' in the 1987 edition of 'Tracht'. But why were they arrested? Why were they subjected to the most terrible abuse and beating before being killed? The answer to these questions may lie in the fact that Pat was suspected of being involved in the killing of R.I.C. Const. Duffy in Boston in August. He was suspected — rightly — of taking part in the Castledaly ambush on August 31st.

The remains of the two brothers were brought back to Hynes's house at Dungalair where they were laid out in the barn. The bodies were guarded by the Kinvara Company until they were removed to St. Colman's Church. After mass by Canon Fahey the cortege moved on to Shanaghlis cemetery where the Loughnanes were laid to rest. South Galway was in a state of shock after this outrage. More was to follow. On the night of December 23rd the following houses

were burned by the Black and Tans — Austen Staunton's at Clonasee, James Davenport's at the Quay and Patrick Hynes's at Dungaigue. It was a wretched Christmas in the area. On St. Stephen's Day the Tans raided Flatley's in Kinvara and stole £200. No house was now safe.

On February 11th 1921 a wake was in progress in the house of Mrs. Bridget Quinn, Caheravoneen. Many volunteers were present at the wake including John Burke, Captain, Kinvara Company and his brother Pete. Approximately 14 Auxiliaries suddenly appeared looking for "the killers of policemen". They locked the Burke's in the barn with the horses and set it on fire. The both escaped as the horses bolted through the door. Others at the wake were beaten and Mrs. Quinn was



Capt. Pádraig Kilkelly, Crushoa.
(Photo with permission of Martin Greene)

robbed. Her house, barn, sheds, hay etc. were all burned. On the same night Glynn's house in Caheravoneen was raided.

On Sunday February 28th parishioners leaving Doorus Church after Mass were surprised to be met by a strong force of Auxiliaries and R.I.C. All were lined up, searched and questioned as to the whereabouts of Volunteers who were on the run.

On Sunday, April 2nd people on their way to Mass in St. Colman's Church were shocked to find the body of a man on the road about 150 yards west of the Church. He was Thomas Morris an ex-member of the Royal Irish Fusileers who lived with his sister in Crushoa. He had been shot three times at close range with a shot gun. He had returned to Kinvara the previous night after a spell in Galway hospital. His sister stated at the inquest on his death that threats had been made against his life previously.

Sometime during 1920 (no record of exact date) the Gort Battalion Volunteers became the South Galway Brigade with Tom McInerney as Brigade Commandant. This gave the Brigade officers direct communication with G.H.Q. in Dublin. It would appear that early in 1921 the South Galway Brigade was divided into two battalions — the first and the second.

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| First Battalion | Officers |
| Commandant | Joe Stanford |
| Vice Commandant | John Fahy |
| Adjutant | P. Glynn |
| Quartermaster | D. Ryan |

There were five companies in the 1st Battalion: Peterswell, Gort, Kilbeacanty, Derrybrien, Beagh.

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Second Battalion | Officers |
| Commandant | Tom McInerney |
| Vice Commandant | Peter Howley |
| Adjutant | John Joyce |
| Quartermaster | W. Thompson |

There were six companies in the second Battalion: Ardahan, Ballinderreen, Kilmacduagh, Kinvara, Kiltartan and New Quay.

Tom McInerney dates this reorganisation of the Brigade to July 1921 but for reasons which will appear later I believe it took place before May 1921.

Up to the end of April 1921 Gort had escaped the worst excesses of the Troubles. The town had a company of the 17th Lancers — approx. 140 strong — stationed there. As well as this there was a strong force of R.I.C. men, many having abandoned rural stations throughout the area. The Black and Tans had been stationed in front of the present Garda Barracks but seem to have moved to Galway in October 1920. The Auxiliaries — about 14 in number — were stationed in Drumharsna. In charge of the R.I.C. in Gort was District Inspector Blake.

Since the killing of the Loughnanes in Nov. 1920 there was a growing desire for some reprisal against the police and military. By early May 1921 an active

service unit of volunteers was centred in Kilbeacanty and consisted of seven men. The arms at their disposal were: one Lee Enfield Service Rifle; one Carbine, one Martin Rifle, one Winchester Rifle, and some double barrel shot guns with eight to ten rounds per man. It was to this group that the chance for reprisal fell.

On May 14th a dispatch was received stating that District Inspector and Mrs. Blake with some friends were going to Baggots in Ballyturin on Sunday, May 15th to play a game of tennis. On Sunday morning after 9 a.m. Mass in Kilbeacanty the men of the A.S.U. met in O'Donoghues field to set up the ambush. They sent a man to scout the avenue leading to Baggot's house to ascertain the number of occupants in the car. He reported that there were five — three men and two women. The men then took up their positions for the ambush.

They first took over the Gate Lodge at the entrance to the avenue. This was the home of Frank Connolly and his family. Three men took up position inside the kitchen window while a fourth was posted outside to the west of the lodge behind a cut stone wall. The other four took up positions on the other side of the avenue. One half of the gate leading to Baggots was closed so that the car would have to stop. The ambushers then waited.

At 7 p.m. they heard the sound of the car being started. In a few minutes it arrived at the gate. Blake was driving with Captain Cornwallis of the 17th Lancers beside him. The captain got out to open the gate. As he did the cry "Hands Up!" rang out. He crouched by the gate, drew his gun and fired three shots. With this the Volunteers opened fire. Cornwallis was shot dead. Mrs. Blake stepped from the car on the left hand side and was caught in a hail of bullets. She died with her husband and 19 year old Lt. Maccreary of the 17th Lancers. The fifth occupant of the car, Margaret Gregory — Lady Gregory's daughter-in-law — got out of the car on the right hand side, crouched down and waited until the firing stopped. She was unhurt. Such was the suddenness of the attack that neither Blake nor Maccreary had time to draw their weapons.

The R.I.C., Black and Tans and Auxiliaries came in their Crossley Tenders, firing in every direction. One of the Black and Tans shot R.I.C. Const. Kearney at the scene of the ambush. He was believed to be a spy as he had decided to resign from the R.I.C. the following week. He died a week later in hospital in Galway.

Retribution was swift. Four houses in Ballycahalan were burned. The mill belonging to Martin Hynes in Gort was set on fire. The drapery shop of J.J. Coen was broken into and wrecked. Mac Namara's in Crowe St. was bombed. Barley Fahey's shop was broken into. Ruane's shop in George's St. was damaged. All shops in Gort were closed for a week by order of the military. This was the worst reverse

suffered by the police and military in South Galway during the War of Independence.

One of the participants in the Ballyturin ambush in a description many years later named all the volunteers who took part in the ambush with the ranks held by them at the time. The leader of the group was described as Brigade O.C. I think what he meant was Battalion O.C. If he held that rank then the division of the South Galway Brigade had taken place before May 15th 1921. Also Tom McNerney makes no mention of this ambush in his description of his activities during the Troubles. An action of the importance of Ballyturin would have to be cleared by him. The fact that he makes no reference to it suggests that it was the responsibility of another battalion rather than his.

The Troubles were, however, gradually drawing to an end. The British Government realised that it could not pacify Ireland without an unacceptable level of terror. The I.R.A. realised that it lacked the firepower to defeat the British army and the R.I.C. Tentative discussions were taking place to bring the hostilities to an end. At last on July 11th 1921 a truce was agreed.

The War of Independence was over. A feeling of hope existed that peace would come at last. But, alas! within a year the angry clouds of Civil War rolled across the

country and the thunder of guns was heard once more. But that is a story for another day.

John Conneely.



Kinvara Courthouse after its destruction in 1920.

(Photo with permission of Martin Greene)

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The Last O'Shaughnessy

Few O'Shaughnessys can have had a more daring or successful life than William O'Shaughnessy who died in 1744 at the age of 70, loaded with honours at Gravelines on the north coast of France between Calais and Dunkirk where he was military commander.

His story is well enough known, having been chronicled in all the main works on the family. In 1689 at the age of fifteen he was in command of 100 men in the cause of James II, a year later he was an officer of the Regiment, later to be known as the Regiment of Clare in the service of Louis XIV. He rose to the rank of Major-General in French service having fought at many famous battles including Blenheim and Ramillies.

Some years ago I went with my youngest son Luke and a friend on a pilgrimage to Gravelines — the day excursion fare from London was ridiculously cheap — and the visit led to the unearthing for the first time for many year, I believe, of the death certificate of a man who became known as Le Chevalier O'Shaughnessy.

At Gravelines, which now lies in the shadow of one of France's biggest nuclear power stations, I made the acquaintance of Monsieur Maurice Torris, a distinguished old man with a passion for the history of his town. A few weeks after my visit he sent me a photocopy of Le Chevalier's death certificate which a friend of his had found in the Mairie, the town hall. It reads as follows:

"Le deux de janvier de l'an mil Sept Cent quarante quatre est Decede en la communion de notre Mere la Ste. Eglise administre de tous les Saints Sacrements d'elle Messire Guillaume O'Shaghnessy j Chevalier de l'ordre militaire de St Louis, Lieutenant Colonel du Regiment de Clare irlandais, Marechal des Camps et armees Du Roi, employe a Gravelines pour le Service de Sa Majeste, natif de Gortin-chegory, Comte de Galway province de Connought en Irlande age de Soixante dix ans, marie a Dame Marie Jacqueline Gauville, lequel fut inhume par moi j Cure Doyen Soussigne le quatre du present mois dans le chœur de cette paroisse en presence de Messire Jean Baptiste Delalande Brigadier des armees Du Roi j et Lieutenant du Roi j — audit Gravelines, Monsieur Thomas Maguire Capitaine au Regiment de Clare irlandais et du Sieur Jacques

O'Shaghnessy j Cadet de la Compagnie du Deffunt et Son parent, lesquels ont signez avec Moi jll

Le Chvr. de Lalande

Copy of Death Certificate.

(illegible) Doyen et Cure de Gravelines"

The English translation is:

The 2nd January of the year 1744 there died in communion with Holy Mother Church, having received all her holy sacraments Messire William o'Shaghnessy j, knight of the military order of St. Louis, Lieutenant Colonel of the Irish Regiment of St. Louis, Lieutenant Colonel of the Irish Regiment of Clare, major-general, employed at Gravelines for the service of His Majesty, native of Gortinchegory, County of Galway province of Connacht in Ireland, aged 70 years, married to Dame Marie Jacqueline Gauville, which person was buried by me Dean and Parish Priest undersigned the 4th instant in the choir of this parish church in the presence of Messire Jean Baptiste Delalande, brigadier and King's Lieutenant at the said Gravelines Monsieur Thomas Maguire, Captain in the Irish Regiment of Clare and Sieur James O'Shaghnessy j, cadet of the company of the deceased and his relation, have signed with me.

It would be interesting to know who the young Jacques (James) O'Shaughnessy and what happened to William's wife. At the time of his death William was the oldest serving Irish officer in French service.

(Hugh O'Shaughnessy is Latin American Correspondent of the *Observer* (London) and author of several books dealing with central and South America. A frequent visitor to South Galway, he has a deep interest in his O'Shaughnessy forebearers.)



Fiddaun Castle — home of Sir William O'Shaughnessy.

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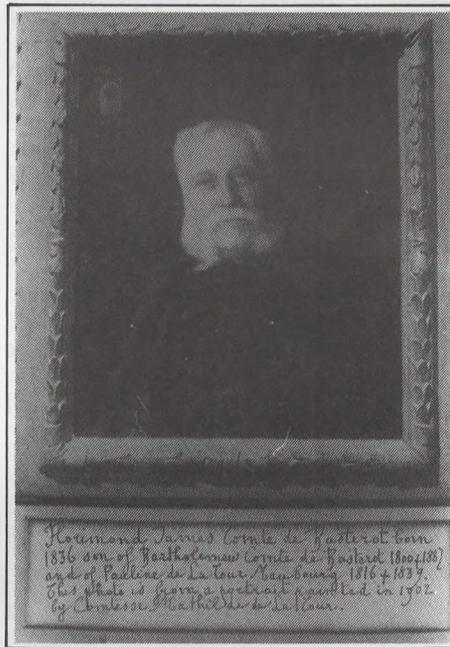
The Parish Chapel of Killoveragh

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The Letters of Count de Basterot

A few years ago, Mrs. Maureen Smyth, daughter of Thomas Wilson-Lynch of Newtownlynch in Doorus, presented a valuable collection of family papers to the Hardiman Library, University College Galway. Among the papers, which have now been catalogued by the archivist, Fionula Burke, are seven letters and two telegrams sent by Florimund, Count de Basterot to John Wilson-Lynch (1831-1912). The earliest is dated 9th November 1892 and last, one of the telegrams, 5th September 1904 — only ten days before the Count's death at the age of 68 on 15th September. Together, they shed an interesting light on a man who, through his friendship with Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and W.B. Yeats, presided indirectly over the birth of the Irish National Theatre. They also provide an interesting insight into the life and times of a French aristocrat who counted among his friends the poet and novelist, Paul Bourget, and one of the masters of the short story, Guy de Maupassant.

Florimond Alfred Jacques, Count de Basterot, was born in Paris on 15th September 1836, the son of Bartholomew de Basterot, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, and Pauline Florimond, eldest daughter of the Marquis de Latour Maubourg. Florimond's great-grandfather, another Bartholomew, had married Frances, daughter of James French of Duras, in 1770. His wife died in 1775, having given birth to a son, Jacques or James, shortly before her death. The de Basterots were an old and respectable Bourdeaux family, and Bartholomew was a member of the Parlement of Bourdeaux until sometime in 1791. The inscription on his tomb in Parkmore cemetery states that he was "obliged by faction" to leave France. Memorial inscriptions are not always as precise as they might be and the facts are rather more complicated. Although Bartholomew certainly served in the Parlement, even becoming its president in 1770, he appears to have been a poor manager of his finances. Bourdeaux in the 18th century was a very wealthy region of France and noblemen like de Basterot who were also members of the powerful and influential Parlement were expected to maintain themselves in style. By 1789 — the eve of the French Revolution — he had run up debts of over half a million pounds. By 1790 he was



Count Florimond de Basterot.

bankrupt, and a council of his creditors had been set up to run his estates until he was discharged. With their permission he went to Dublin in 1791 to institute legal proceedings to establish his claim to his deceased wife's dowry.

Meanwhile in Ireland, Patrick French, Bartholomew's brother-in-law, had died unmarried in 1785, leaving his Duras estate to his first cousin, Anna Donelan, wife of Denis Daly of Raford. Bartholomew and his son, James, disputed the will and only after a lengthy and costly legal battle did they manage to establish their legal right to the Duras estate in 1796. The victory in the courts was so expensive that considerable portions of the estate had to be sold to Robert Gregory of Coole and Mark Lynch of Renmore. Bartholomew and James, exiles now because of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, settled down to build themselves a new life in Ireland. Bartholomew died in 1822 and was buried in Parkmore, having built 'Neptune Vale' (where Patrick and John O'Connor now live) earlier in the 19th century. James married Mary O'Brien of Rahen, King's County; their son, Bartholomew, appears to have restored the family connection with Bourdeaux. His wife, Pauline, died at the young age of 23, having given birth to

Florimond only three years before her death. Of all the de Basterots, Bartholomew appears to have spent least time in Ireland, dying at Turin, Italy, in 1887.

Florimond appears to have been sent back to Doorus sometime after his mother's death, to be raised by his grandfather. His early memories cannot have been happy ones. In 1849 his grandfather died in debt. Years later he told Lady Gregory and Yeats that "at that time a creditor could seize a body and prevent its burial until paid. The creditor arrived, but at the sight of armed men fled". At the age of thirteen, young Florimond had watched his grandfather's servants throw up a barricade to prevent the body being carried away. The de Basterots were 'good' landlords and are fondly remembered to this day in Doorus.

After James de Basterot's death, Bartholomew was forced to sell more of his estate, this time to the unpopular Isaac Comerford of Galway. We do not know where Florimond was educated, but Michael Quinn of Doorus, who died many years ago, recalled an incident from Florimond's youth. His father, Bartholomew, called all his tenants together one Sunday after Mass:

"He gave orders to the tenants that anyone who had a young lad that was the same age as his own to bring him down after Mass, till they'd pick one out of the crowd that they'd bring to France to send him to College with his son. So it was my uncle, John Quinn, that they picked that was the one age with him. He was educated in France, and when he was a certain age, he was appointed agent, and he'd live in the Big House when they'd be gone."

The Count became a great traveller, and published two books recounting the considerable journeys he undertook. The first, published in 1860, was 'From Quebec to Lima: Journal of a Voyage Through the Two Americas in 1858 and 1859', and the second, in 1869, was entitled 'Lebanon, Galilee, and Rome: Journal of a Voyage from the Orient to Italy, September 1867-May 1868'. Denis Hynes of Parkmore, who died in 1970, recalled in an interview some years ago, that his father told him that as a young man, the Count "went away foreign with two of the Blakes from

Cloughballymore . . . He went to America, and he went everywhere." He divided his time in latter years between Paris, Rome, and Doorus, avoiding both Dublin and London, neither of which he could abide. The late Pádraig Ó hEidhin, recalled hearing that the Count would arrive on June 24th and remain at Doorus until September 15th. "On his arrival", Yeats tells us, "a great flock of ducks and hens and chickens ran about in front of his door, and he would scatter coins for the local children to catch."

The novelist Kate O'Brien knew him but does not seem to have liked him; he was "a committed pagan and a worldling, with finiky, fastidious ideas with regard to race and place." Indeed, the Count was a close friend of Count Alfred de Gobineau, whose social and political thought provided one of the pillars upon which the Nazi racist ideology was later erected. In 1884, he contributed a brief biographical sketch of Gobineau for a collected edition of his works. Lady Gregory recounts an argument the Count had with a French Countess who expressed horror in an exaggerated way at "the dirt of the Irish people." "Well," replied the Count, "they are pious. You can't have piety and cleanliness together. Would you have them heretics like the Dutch? Cleanliness and infidelity are always on the one side." She was speechless, Lady Gregory tells us, and de Basterot delighted. It is hard to connect the humorous, affectionate figure recalled by Lady Gregory with the sinister figures of the Third Reich.

By the time the letters begin in 1892, the Count was 58 years old. Youthful excesses, possibly, so Yeats suggests, of a sexual nature, had rendered him virtually paralysed from the waist. The late John



Denis Hynes (R.I.P.), Parkmore.

Glynn of Traught, recalled:

"The first time I got to know him he was able to walk with a stick."

But Denis Hynes's father remembered him as "very lame, disfigured, his bones were all bent . . . and he'd have to have a small cart to carry him out in the garden, and a carriage and two horses for bringing him to Mass, and they'd have to carry him into the chapel because he wasn't able to walk." As he grew older, he turned increasingly to the consolations of religion and became very pious. On the western base of the cross erected in the precincts of the family tomb in Parkmore he placed this passage from Mathew 9:10 — "I will have mercy for I have not come to call the just but sinners." It is clear that it was in such terms that he saw himself. Let us turn now to the letters.

1. Rome/115 Via della Terofa/19th of february 92

My dear John,

I received 2 days ago a postcard from Tilly with rather better news of poor dear Mark. What I would want now is news of yourself. Will I confess that I fear in you the excess of a very great quality, pluck. But with this dreadful mysterious disease one must give in. Of course there was the occasion of the death of your poor dear sister R.I.P. but now I would be so anxious to hear you were either quite well (this would be the best news) or taking care of yourself either at home, where I write on chance, or at Kilcornan, such a good healthy house, for one thing is certain, exposure to air till quite well is the thing to avoid in influenza.

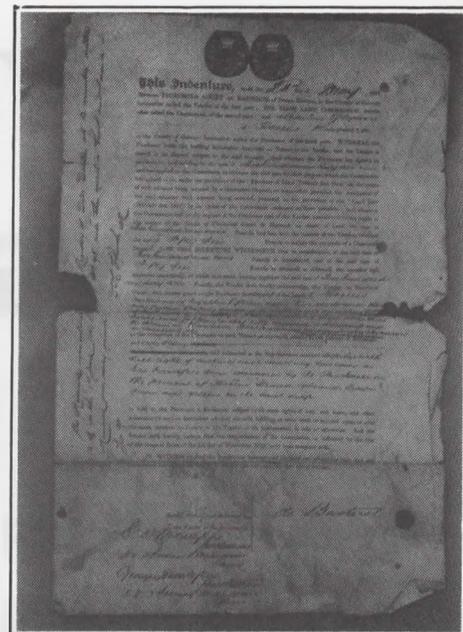
I was indoors a fortnight and even now only go out a short time in a close carriage. I was never very ill, but all was affected, chest, stomach, kidneys, even heart. It is evidently a general poisoning.

My poor aunt Nancy lost in 10 days her 2 brothers, the Marquis de Treuise first, then the Duke who got a chill at his brother's funeral. He was a charming fellow, full of anecdote, of fun. We were quite of the same age and friends of 43 years, when my uncle married in 1849.

I received on Wednesday such a nice affectionate letter from Gregory, but so sad! It is like a farewell. He was to have left London yesterday by Club train, arriving this afternoon at Marsailles from where he goes to Algar. He says he is as low as he can be, in an awful state of weakness, but wishes to try this as a last card, as it would be so important he could have a little longer for Robert's sake.

Excuse me if this is a gloomy letter, but this fearful winter all the news seems bad. It is as if one was writing in 1348, the year of the Black Death.

The weather which I have been watching closely yesterday and today on account of Gregory's journey is not good, after these snowy days I hope mild weather and I intend remaining here, please God, at least till the end of March, so I hope to see the Stapletons. I received a letter from Eddie written on sea, but posted at Naples. They had a most prosperous journey, but Eddie said his father though fairly



Land Indenture of John Glynn, Traught.

well was low and taking very little interest in things — they quite intend passing here on their way home.

The Bourgets continue here, a great pleasure to me. She got influenza but went to bed at once, did not move, and got over it in about 7 days.

I am rather pleased this morning with the news of the Fall of Treyuinet — we may have worse, but I hardly believe it — he is such a mean fellow.

Kind remembrance to all. Ever dear John/ Affect'y yrs. lde Basterot.

You have much to write so a postcard will be most welcome.

Bourget and his wife had an audience of the Pope yesterday. He was well — they were greatly pleased. W. will not get the red stockings, probably Logue of Armagh.

The Lynchés of Renmore and Duras, the Redingtons of Kilcornan, and the de Basterots of Duras were all related through marriage. Sir William Gregory, husband of Augusta Perse of Roxborough, was an old friend; he died on 6 March 1892 at his London home, and was buried in a tomb not far from Kiltartan Church. Paul Bourget was a well-known novelist and essayist who became a fervant Catholic around the turn of the century. A close friend of the Count's, he and his wife stayed with him several times at Duras House. Logue was created Cardinal and Primate of Ireland in 1892.

2. Ardrum Lodge/Bournemouth/ Friday 9th October (?) 1892

My dear John,

I have so many letters to write that I cannot go beyond a few lines, but I want to thank you first of all for your very kind letter and then to tell you why and how I am here, lastly not less, I would be so glad to know dear Mark back to Kilcornan or Renmore.

I could not stop in Dublin being very tender — with Mrs. Ball in London, with the Colthursts in Folkstone — when I got there I was all wrong, bowels, kidneys also, the hotel was dear an bad, the Colthursts after 2 days were leaving, he for Valentia, she for Scotland till the 10th or 15th of October. They strongly advised me not to run into Paris already ill, and offered me in the most friendly manner their nice villa — I have accepted — Bridger had to go home, his wife going to be confined, so my servants have come over — In fact, I am "installe". The place I always liked and the weather is good. I hope it has mended in Ireland. Some days were very sad ones for the country. I hope I will get better in the quiet here, but my mind cannot be very quiet with so many friends in France and the cholera gaining ground.

Love to all and ever, dear John, affectionately yours.

de Basterot

Mark Lynch, eldest son of John Wilson Lynch, died in December 1892 at the age of 26 years.

3. 10, Place de Caborde/4th of April 1894.

My dear John,

Many thanks for your letter, but the news you give me is sad, for after your great misfortune anything connected with colds, influenza must make you very anxious — However a great matter is to take the thing in time as you have done, and to come home — the long sea journey makes me shudder — the climate of our West of Ireland may be dark and damp but it is mild and Kilcornan is such a good house.

I will not breathe a word, it is besides useless, about the chaos, it amounts to a sad craze, and will complete his ruin, but now Tilly is paid, Mary is nearly so, he is free, and can break down in — walls and drains without a stain. Others do so in racing, drink and bad conduct, but it is depressing to see such a good fellow, with such an intellect on some matters give way to such nonsense.

Lady Gregory had told me of the bad state of dear good Miss Arbuthnot.

I was in correspondence with George Morris before he started but I missed him with much regret — I had to return here for business connected with my dear aunt's affairs —

I hope all is going on well, but I hear the long spell of fine weather seems ended in Rome. Here everyone is praying for rain: The last few days have been as oppressive as June and such drought.' Last year was the same. One would imagine a change in the seasons. Paris has been very unhealthy — a great deal of influenza and of typhoid — if the Morris' tell me they are coming here on my return I think I must warn George, however the hotels are healthy, filled with swells. The great thing is to avoid drinking water — Paris is very badly off in that respect. I had on arriving a sharp attack of influenza and was very poorly for a few days.

This letter I finish the morning of the 5th. The new dynamite outrage at the Restaurant near the Lunabourg is disquieting. Something is very rotten in Denmark.

I am not astonished at Tommy's disgust of Calcutta, the only odious place I have seen in

India — had suggested Jeypore or Ullwat (?), or Lucknow and Benares, but did not warn him of Calcutta — thought he would have known what a dirty pandemonium it is —

You say nothing of Ellen and — I trust they are all right.

Clare seems still unsettled but would quiet down I suppose like the rest of Ireland if the English parties let alone our unfortunate island.

Kindest souvenir to Fanny, she knows I feel for her and I have often thought during the beautiful services of the Holy Week of the dear departed, of her mother, of Mark, of poor William (and of many others).

Ever my dear John (affectionately yours/de Basterot.

A letter always welcome. I do not move, please God, till about the 5th or 10th of June when I come to Ireland — no London, friends gone and have no more time — for noise and crowds.

Sir George Morris, a good friend of the Count's, belonged to a prominent Galway family; he owned property in Moy townland. The political situation in France, especially Paris, was very tense; anarchists planted bombs in several public places during the mid-1890's. Fanny was John Wilson Lynch's wife; she was the second daughter of Sir Thomas Redington of Kilcornan. Ellen was her daughter; she later became a nun. William Lynch was John Wilson Lynch's brother; he died in 1874.

4. Duras. July 31st '96

My dear John,

I am very sorry indeed to hear you have given up the trip with the Morris! It is quite like you, so kind to others, but was it necessary? Could you not join them later. However you know best.

The Bourgets left on Tuesday after a most successful visit. I fear they will not have the same fine weather at Killarney and on the Kenmare



Edward Martyn.

river. Still who knows. The barometer is going up today. Monday was very fine here, we had a regular reception, Annie & Mary, Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn and 2 poets, one clever and amusing but showing such unmistakable yellow blood.

Tommy proposes himself for the 7th. It suits one to a pin, so I write to him. On the 10th Mrs. — comes for a couple of days and later on I hope Fanny will pay me a visit and that I may see you also when returned from England.

You ask for an account of the crops. I am happy to tell you (and you know optimism is not my failing) that up to this potatoes, barley, turnips are first rate — Even T. Quinn owns it. A very few fields suffered from the drought. There is now plenty of grass. The barley is not ripe, the harvest will not begin before 10 or 15 days — but prospects are excellent.

Love to all and ever affectionately,

de Basterot

This, the most interesting of the letters from the standpoint of literary history, contains a hitherto unrecorded reference to W.B. Yeats. In the second paragraph the count refers to guests at Duras. It is not clear who Annie and Mary are, but the "2 poets, one clever and amusing but showing such unmistakable yellow blood" undoubtedly refers to the young W.B. Yeats and Arthur Symons, one of the most prominent of the '90's poets and author of 'The Symbolist Movement in Literature', an important study that influenced not only Yeats but T.S. Eliot. The "yellow blood" is probably an allusion to 'The Yellow Book', a literary journal associated with Oscar Wilde, the artist Aubrey Beardsley and a number of other poets sometimes described as the 'Decadents'. The Count, although a pious Catholic, was also a man of the world, and he would have been familiar with the French counterparts of the English movement, chief among which was the poet Paul Verlaine.

5. Paris/18th of May 1899

My dear John,

This is what we call in French "du rechauffe" or "de la moutar de apres diner". Still a line to tell you about dear George Morris. I intended to write at once; one thing, then another prevented.

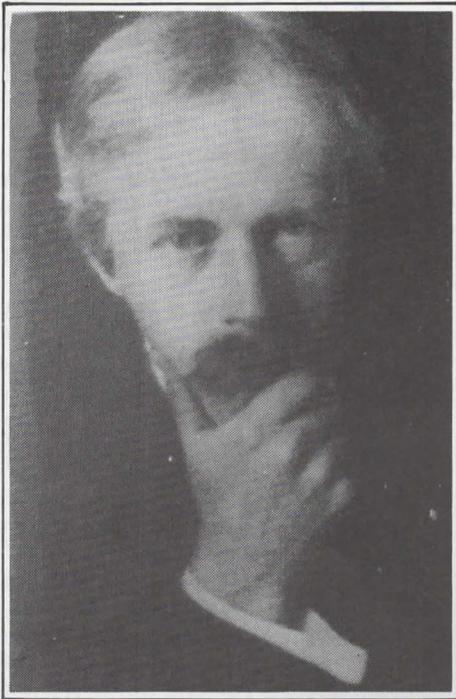
I saw G.M. on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday I was shocked, he was so pale, so weak. The journey from Marsailles Friday, from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. had been too much. On Sunday he was more himself but thank God he has got home and is recovering, for it was very serious! Not kidney, as before, but bowels! Something like poor Christopher.

Up to that the journey had been a great success. Mrs. Morris was also pulled down. Julia was sunburned but looked well.

They went on to London on Monday, and intend being early next week in Dublin.

I have also seen Bob Burke. He dined with me and told me much about the holy admirable end of Ch.

Paris is upside down. The exhibition is already a nuisance.



Arthur Symons.

I do not give in, but can hardly hold myself on my legs. The journey will not be easy, however I hope to manage to get to Duras, as usual, about the 20th of June.

I am greatly pleased at Edward Martyn's evident success. The Irish Times critic showed little intelligence. Tastes may differ, people may be bored by a clever thing, but The Heather Field is a good piece of literary work.

Love to the family and ever affectionately yours.

de Bt.

Edward Martyn of Tullira was one of the original group associated with the theatre set up by Yeats and Lady Gregory. Yeats's 'The Countess Cathleen' and Martyn's 'The Heather Field' were the first plays produced.

6. 10, Place De Laborde/5th of October 1901

My dear John,

In your kind letter received a few days ago you asked for some details about my journey so will not excuse myself of being personal.

I must confess I was awfully nervous leaving, but for the Kingstown Holyhead crossing Dick Nugent and a very civil secretary of the City of Dublin boats had given orders, and for Ffolkstone and Boulogne the Cooks settled the affairs (?)

It is certainly against one's grain to be obliged to give in and to be carried, but in one respect this journey was a comfort as it showed me, that if I live on, I can get back to Duras in spite of my helpless state.

Bridger was also a great comfort — he is so careful and never flurried —

Better I never can be, but I am not worse since my return, and my sleep has been less uncertain.

Paris is very empty, but the Bourget's are here, also my cousin Mme de Coursey, and many

friends pass through — This morning nice, clever Alberto Ball comes to lunch with me.

The weather, very bad when I arrived, is now fairly good.

What is deplorable, what puts a cloud on all one's thoughts and little pleasures is the religious persecution that has now begun with a vengeance. Nearly all houses, all chapels belonging to religious orders are closed, the Jesuits first of all and this is only a beginning.

You can conceive what I feel, and to find myself unable to act!

This on the top of many other things has quite disgusted me of Paris, and still it is on the cards I may have to spend the winter here, for the bubonic plague is in Naples and if it spreads there, Rome is nearly sure to get it.

You will give me further new of the Morris! It has been such a blow.

I am glad Tommy is always in harness, but he must hate going to the North. Willie's letter was satisfactory, but the South African news seems once more very bad. It is a terrible business.

Love to the Tanny's and ever dear John Affectionately yours

de Bt.

By the date of this letter the Count's health was visibly failing. The account of the journey gives an insight into the very uncomfortable travelling conditions endured by those crossing the Channel. John Bridger was the Count's valet. At this time the Boer War was being fought in South Africa.

7. Sunday 22 Sept. (No year given but probably post-1901. It was probably written from Paris after his return from Duras. Written in French, it was probably

sent to John Wilson-Lynch after his arrival)

I will write later. Just a word to tell you I have arrived, T.G., yesterday evening, well tired, but happy to have finished the terrible voyage. The weather was very bad.

Regards to you and affections to yours.

de B.

8. Two telegrams, handed in at Kinvara and sent to Kilkishen. The first was sent at 1.10 p.m. and received at 2.04 p.m. The second at 6.35 p.m. and received at 7.23 p.m. The date of both is September 5, 1904.

a) *To Major Wilson Lynch/Kilkishen You Oliver Tommy Kathleen all propose themselves for Wednesday/pray wire immediately what you decide/cannot put off Oliver for long/would end of week suit you and Tommy as well/master coming Tuesday/can send carriage Ardrahan/Bus weak for heavy luggage/excuses/am puzzled*

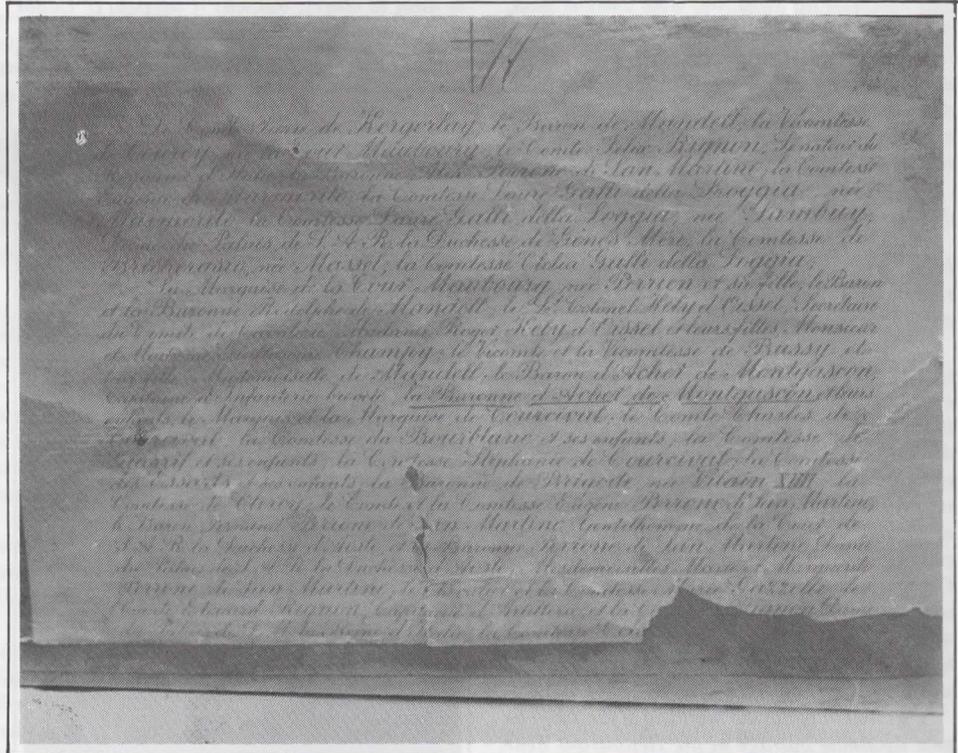
Basterot

b) *To Major Wilson Lynch/Kilkishen With great pleasure will expect you Wednesday Tommy Friday/cannot send conveyance Ardrahan*

Basterot

Ten days later, on September 15th — his 68th birthday, the old Count died.

J.W. O'Connell



De Basterot Memorial Card.

Matt Mahon: The Bard of Doorus



The late Pádraic Ó hEidhin had commenced articles on Matt Mahon in Volumes 1 and 2 of 'Trácht'. Regrettably Pádraic is no longer with us and I have been asked to continue these. Pádraic was undoubtedly the great authority on Matt. Having known him he maintained a clear recollection of many of his compositions for which he had a great feeling and affection. Eventually he bought the ruin of Matt's old house and had it restored and went to live there.

My contribution must be limited because he lived before my time. I was fortunate to have conversations about Matt with Pádraic in his later years and it is on these mainly together with the many bits and pieces I have got from so many others that I will be relying for my inadequate article.

The picture that emerges of Matt is of a remarkable person. He was severely disabled, with a deformed leg and arm but was highly intelligent, quick witted with a sharp retort and away ahead of his time. He accepted and overcame his disability and even referred to it jocosely in some of his lines. He had an extraordinary turnout of verse, long and short, mostly in English with some in Irish, on all the happenings, events, people and places not only in the Kinvara area but elsewhere.

Judging from what is available of his songs and sayings he commented on almost everything that was said to him; done for or against him. His works are a social chronicle of his time.

Unlike his contemporary Francis Fahy, whose songs were nostalgic, of exile and home, Matt's were more earthy, some being critical and some probably a bit touchy for those who were the butt of his criticisms. Indeed some would say that he was too much of a critic.

He travelled extensively with his ass and cart throughout the county, into Clare, Roscommon, Mayo and probably even further afield and could be away for a few months at a time. Something which more able bodied men would reluctantly undertake. He had many of his songs printed as ballad sheets which he sold during his travels at sixpence each (old pence). On one occasion it is said that he had £50 when he returned — a hefty sum at that time — which he used to finance repairs on his house.

In addition to the songs and verses that he composed about the local area it is almost certain that he wrote and sold others about places he visited. These would not be known or remembered locally.

It is now almost 64 years since his death — he died in 1924 — so regrettably most of his songs are lost and forgotten. Any written record he may have had is not now available and most of the people who knew him and his songs are no longer with us.

He was born about 1858. His father was Denis Mahon who was a member of the R.I.C. It is not known where he was stationed so Matt's place of birth is not known. His mother, who died leaving three young children, is said to have been of German descent. The family consisted of Matt and a brother and sister. Because the father was in poor health, Matt and his sister were reared with his uncle, Tom Mahon and an Aunt. Tom was a weaver. It is not certain if the other brother, who became a sea captain, was reared with them also. There are two stories concerning the sister — one says that when she grew up she married in Galway and the other is that she emigrated to the U.S.A.

Tom Mahon was known as Tom Cluman. This is probably Colmán the

Irish version of Coleman and his father's name may have been Coleman. He was a very pious person and gave catechism lessons to the congregation in the church before and sometimes after mass on Sundays.

Matt attended Doorus National School and always had a great interest in reading. His left arm and leg were deformed from birth and his entire left side and face was affected. He had a stoop and was unable to stand upright and walked with a shuffle aided by a stick. An ass and cart was his mode of travel. On the death of his uncle he inherited his house and the small holding of land — about 2 to 3 acres. He was a hard worker and grew corn and cabbage plants which earned him the nicknames Matt na bPlandaí and Matt an Chabáiste. He also kept some goats. Jim Conole of Parkmore, who was a carpenter, made a special small plough and harrow so that he could use his donkeys to work them when tilling the gardens. He was also able to yoke the two donkeys under the cart if required. It was said that he did much of his composing while working on the land. He travelled around the local area and outside annually or more often gathering alms as he himself described it in one of his verses. People gave him money and sometimes bread, potatoes or vegetables. He was given ten shillings (50 new pence) whenever he composed a verse or song for the house and he was paid £110^s0^d for a song specially composed at the request of the Fallon family when Patsy Fallon N.T. died. He rarely recited this song in public and so it has not survived and is not known.

The recollections of his visits vary. Some thought that he was good company and they liked to see him coming. Others feared him and were careful about what they said lest he composed something critical about them and so they felt that they had to give him alms or whatever he requested.

He remained unmarried although his verses show that he admired many of the local beauties. It was said that he had a brief affair with a lady in Ballymacward and that it resulted in money and a ring which he had bought for her being stolen. He wrote of the incident "My purse of money they stole from me and the ring I had for the Grádh mo Chroí".

He had stopped composing in the later years as his health was deteriorating and he suffered from an untreated hernia. He did not work the land either and my father

had it leased from him. At this stage he had to lie on the hearth when visiting houses as he found it difficult to sit on a chair. "Get up legs" was his comment when rising from such a position.

He died suddenly on the 23rd October 1924, at the age of 66 and was buried in Parkmore on the 29th October. He had not been seen for some days previously and anxious neighbours had to force entry to the house where his body was found.

Thus ended the life of a rare and unusual man, who, living in an age when state aid was unheard of, soared above his congenital deformity and carved a memorable niche for himself in Kinvara's history.

The following ballad is undoubtedly his finest and it is fortunate that it has been preserved in its entirety. I got a copy of the ballad sheet from a friend of mine — Michael Griffin — who lives in the Claddagh, Galway. It is the story of a boating tragedy in 1902 when eight men from the Claddagh were drowned after their boat capsized off Tawin, Oranmore. The boat was owned by Coleman Greene, father of Peter Greene who later became a Mayor of Galway. The story told is that Michael Burke, one of the victims, swam ashore but died on the beach from his exertions. A man from the Ardfry area, who had seen the tragedy happen, rode into Galway on horseback with the news.

The ballad sheet is well produced. It contains 40 verses on two sheets with printing on all four sides and a black border around the edges on each page. The name Matthew Mahon is shown at the end with the words "With deep sorrow" and "All rights reserved".

Matt deserves to be remembered for this one even if he had written no others.

a Sorrowful Lamentation

After the Eight Men drowned, near
Tawin, from Galway.

*From Claddagh Quay, on the 4th of May,
When the sea appeared serene,
Eight men most gay had sailed away,
In a boat owned by Colman Greene.*

*With a breeze most fine, that did incline,
North-westward there to blow,
Christ Divine had marked the line,
Where this boat it ought to go.*

*They rose the sail, and did not fail
To hail some melody,
Quick as the mail, with a gentle gale,
They sailed for the open sea.*

*With sore dismay, I now must say,
They left from Galway town,
For a fatal spray rose on the way,
Just nigh the land of Tawin.*

*They lost their joy, no wonder why,
For at once there came a squall,
Like mountains high the waves rolled by,
Which caused their sad downfall.*

*They could not rest, they done their best,
But in the twinkling of an eye,
The wind went west it struck her breast,
Till on her side she had to lie.*

*In that instant just there came the gust,
Which made the boat capsize,
Their poor hearts must with fears burst,
When they saw she could not rise.*

*Their lives to save upon the wave,
All exertions they would try,
They did behave like men most brave,
As seen by many a naked eye.*

*They out did fall between clothes and all,
it is sad it to relate;
Those around did bawl — no use to call —
For no boat was in the whole estate.*

*They in the tide clung to the side
Of this fatal dismal boat;
Each one had tried until he died
To keep himself afloat.*

*The swelling wave had been their grave,
After two long hours in agony:
For these men so brave of Christ we crave
Celestial bliss for eternity.*

*And how can we who are near the sea
Banish it from off our mind;
You must agree Oh Gra-ma-cree,
Now come to where its hard to find.*

*Will we relate who were these eight
Who have met with such a destiny;
Their names we'll state who have met with such
a fate,
And who are gone to eternity.*

*Michael Dwyer whom would require
To help his wife and family,
His fate did transpire if you inquire
Throughout this country.*

*And Pat Folan's fate, it is sad to state,
Left a wife and child its true;
Each evening late would they on him wait,
But now adieu! adieu!*

*To Joe Barrett too, we must bid adieu,
And also to Stephen Hynes;
They to manhood grew, I'll tell to you,
Those men, too, showed blooming signs.*

*For poor Pat Byrnes all here mourns,
And for Pat Walsh we do lament;
Also Pat McDonagh as we learn,
Who to the ocean's bottom went.*

*And Michael Burke who did gallant work,
To keep himself alive,
When the boat did jerk, just like a cork,
To swimming he did strive.*

*He caught the mast that had been cast
Upon the foamy brine,
But he could not last for his days were past,
May his soul be with the most Divine.*

*So for those men, eight that met with such a fate,
I beseech ye all to pray,
their hardships were so great, that half I can't
relate,
Whilst drowning there out in the Bay.*

*If you were in Ardfry you'd have to cry,
When poor Burke was washed to shore,
Tears in each eye, no wonder why,
His loss we do deplore.*

*If there had been a quay I hear people say,
Just near the land of Tawin,
Those men so gay, that died that day,
In the deep would not go down.*

*For near the scene the men had been,
And they running here and there,
When the wrecked boat (Greene) the women
seen,
They wrung and tore their hair.*



Matt Mahon's former home.

*They did not join to show some sign,
And waved a flag on high,
Till those on the brine had to decline,
For doomed they were to die.*

*So good people kind, now bear in mind,
The year, the month, the week and day,
When those men pined by this cruel wind
In that part of Galway Bay.*

*The 4th of May had been the day,
In the year 1902,
When those men I say, had pined away,
Alas! alas! it's true.*

*O God divine, please now incline,
And listen to my prayer;
My hands I'll join at the last line,
Have mercy Christ beware.*

*You suffered and died; you let the sword in your
side,
And it all on account of sin;
On you we have relied as they have died,
That you would save those men.*

*So now my song it is too long
That I will say no more
And if I prolong to compose this song,
It's because I do deplore.*

*So I'll make an end, God them befriend,
I humbly beg and pray,
And Christ as you for them did send,
Please aid now lend
That is all I can now say.*

It is almost certain that the following ballad is his also. It is titled 'Kinvara Ballad' and is printed as a ballad sheet. His name is not shown with it but that is understandable because of its content. It was made about Fardy Curtin, a rent agent, who lived at Muckinish, Ballyvaughan. The ballad sheet was found by Pat Naughton, Knocknacarra, Galway, when he was demolishing or repairing an old house in Galway city. He gave it to Pat Keane, Aughinish.

KINVARA BALLAD

*The night was falling dreary in old Kinvara town,
When in his office weary old Fardy he sat down.
The tenants came not near him his face was deadly pale,
And in his mind was raging a fearful "hanging gale".*

*He seized the bell-pull wildly, and rang with all his might;
And in a twinkling, mildly, a waiter hove in sight,
Who bowed unto "his honor" with keen expectant eye.
Said he, "his weary waiting," what is it, Sir,
you'll try.*

*Then Fardy spoke unto him, I not in mood for sport;
I've come here by appointment — by order from the Court.*

*I ne'er was so ill-treated — I ne'er was so annoyed,
To find that I'm unheeded with — "Rulings" form
"Judge Boyd".*

I fear the rascals know me — I fear the bubble's burst.

*The tenantry of Ireland collectively are curst.
I've sat here in the office full six days of the week.
Endurance has its limits — its vengeance now I'll reek.*

*The waiter felt no pity for Fardy's doleful tale,
Though brought up in a city, he looked the Clanugail,
And asked him to remember the maxim good and true —
Do unto all other men as you would wish men do.*

*Away with musty maxims then Fardy he replied;
By old Judge Boyd's decisions the tenants must abide.*

*I've tried some bogus projects — their houses all I'd slate.
But they have guessed my objects — I'll mount a larger bait.*

*In summer, when the fountains and all the wells are dry,
I'll swear to move the mountains — bring water from the sky.
Then the rents I'll sue them — a full year's rent or more.
They then may shift for water as e'er they did before.*

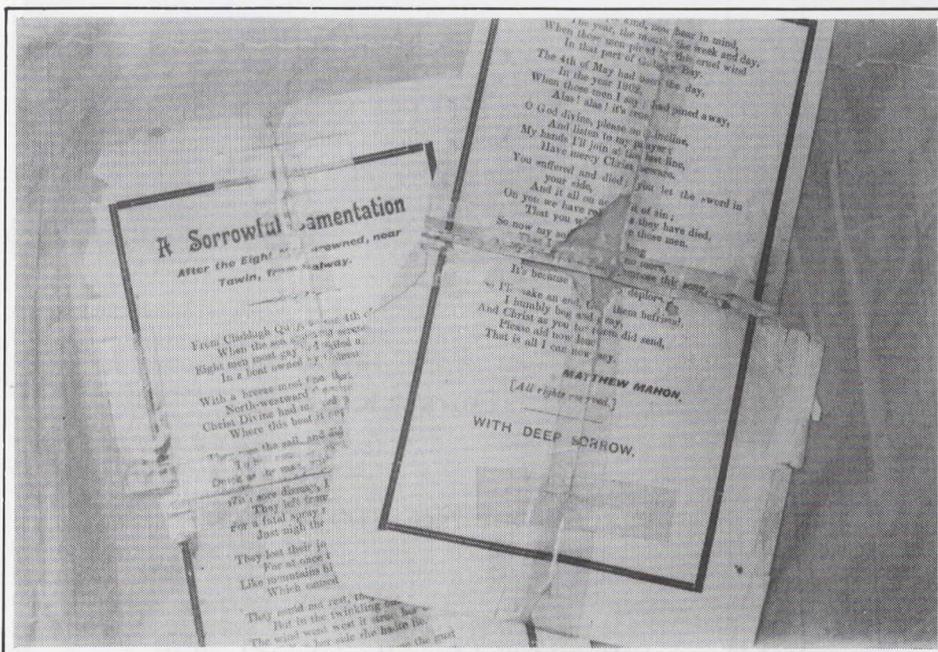
*A Hall for Town Commissioners and Harbour Board likewise,
With many other prizes to set before their eyes.
I'll start a pier from Curranrue to Ballyclery shore.
The rent will then come tumbling to Muckinish, Oranmore.*

One of his best ballads, which is remembered by several people, is that on the wedding of John Kilkelly and Nora Kierce (parents of Mrs. Ellen McCook). They were married in 1914. The Kierces lived where Anne Korff now lives in Newtownlynch. It was said to be a very good description of the event. Ellen Kilkelly, the daughter of John and Nora, is now the wife of Pat McCook, son of Bill, who was a guest at this wedding.

A WEDDING BLESSED

*A wedding Blessed in Doorus West
This year was celebrated,
And Bill McCook, a witty guest,
On it now has related.
He said he left from Fahy's shop
On his wedding invitation,
And along with others he did hop
To Kierce's habitation.*

*There the wedding was going on
With an immense congregation.
Up stood the host whose name was John,
And gave a salutation.
He welcomed gents as they went in
And shook hands to the ladies.
What he began he did again
As if he'd not seen them for ages.*



'A Sorrowful Lamentation'.

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KINVARA BALLAD.

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The night was falling dreary in old Kinvara town,
When in his office weary old Fardy he sat down.
The tenants came not near him, his face was deadly
pale,
And in his mind was raging a fearful "hanging gale."

He seized the bell-pull wildly, and rang with all his
might;
And in a twinkling, mildly, a water hove in sight,
Who bowed unto "his honor" with keen expectant
eye.
Said he, "'tis weary waiting," what is it, Sir, you'll
try.

Then Fardy spoke into him, "I'm not in mood for
sport;
I've come here by appointment—by order from the
Court.

I ne'er was so ill-treated—I ne'er was so annoyed,
To find that I'm unheeded with—"Balings" from
"Judge Boyd."

I fear the rascals know me—I fear the bubble's
burst.

The tenantry of Ireland collectively are curst.
I've toiled in the fields till the days of the week,
Endurance has its limits—let me get home to
reck.

The waiter felt no pity for Fardy's doleful tale,
Though brought up in a city, he took the Clangail,
And asked him to remember the maxim good and
true—
Do unto all other men as you would wish men do.

Away with misty maxims then Fardy he replied;
By old Judge Boyd's decision the tenants must
abide.

I've tried some Logus projects—their houses all I'd
slate,
But they have guessed my objects—I'll mount a
larger bait.

In summer, when the fountains and all the wells are
dry,
I'll swear to move the mountains—bring water from
the sky.
Then for the rents I'll sue them—a full year's rent
or more.
They then may shift for water as e'er they did
before.

A Hall for Town Council and Harbour Board
likewise,
With many other projects that I'll set before their eyes.
I'll start a pier from the Ballyoley shore.
The rent will then come rolling to Muckinish, Egan
Oranmore.

'Kinvara Ballad'.

He brought them to the dining room
Where glasses thronged the table,
Saying, "Be in glee and show no gloom,
But drink whilst you are able."
Some drank porter, wine and beer,
Whilst more had taken brandy.
Of getting drunk some maids did fear,
They only took a 'dandy'.

There the men were in a row
And nigh each sat a maiden
Who hand in hand with them did go
To dance on the occasion.
They danced a set, a jig and reel,
Flings and participation,
When a girl loudly out did squeal
The tickling was temptation.

Then alas, hands were off
As on a proclamation,
Up comes a man who took a quaff
And gave a recitation;
His head was bare for want of hair,
Some said he wants a raiment,
While others cried, "He wants a bride
And a wife should be his payment".

The men from town at once sat down,
A seat by each was taken,
Up comes a waiter dressed in brown,
With mutton, beef, and bacon.
With forks and knives with prongs so wide,
The same as they had in the cradle,
These forks and knives seemed to be alive
When all sat round the table.

Just then the time was break of day,
And steeds outside were prancing,
They longed to run and get away
When they spied the group advancing.
With whips and reins and no complaints
Such was the jarvey's tackle,
They mounted up in grand array,
And drove them to the Chapel.

There groom and bride stood side by side,
Their hearts and hands were binding
The priest in robes these words he then recited
"I'm satisfied you both are tied,
But your duties I'm reminding.
No law of man, no creed or clan,
Can part you both asunder,
But death itself that has the plan
And to it you must surrender.
By the power of Rome,
I say — Go home.
As now my task is done
All you that hear this comic poem,
Enquire for Creg na gCon.
'Tis there you'll find the happy pair,
Who now enjoy both mirth and glee.
Let my last words be as a prayer:
May they have a family".

In the following ballad he describes a boat
race held at a regatta in New Quay. Two
boats from Aughinish and one from New
Quay took part. Patch Glynn was father of
the late Pakie Glynn and Martin Keane
was father of the late Mattie Keane. No
one from either family remains in
Aughinish now.

On November's Day back from New Quay
Upon the briny foam
A regatta it was held there
Around the Aughinish shore.
There were two boats from Aughinish
And one from New Quay
And if you'll be quiet, we'll have delight
In rowing all in the bay.
John Gaynor spoke "It is no joke,
Here challenged you will be
There is a cot in yonder spot
That will try it out with ye".
Then Martin Keane spoke out quite plain
Saying "My boat is but a galley,
And if ye'll be quiet we'll have delight
In rowing all in the ferry".

"St. Patrick" was this boat's name
And the "Wild Duck" Martin Keane's
And the other one from near New Quay
She was the "Royal Marine".
St. Patrick, her owners name was Patcheen
Glynn,
A man of worthy note,
Esteemed around by decent men
And on him they do dote.
The Wild Duck swam with furious speed
Right willing for to go
But soon was shown she was in need
Her men could hardly row.
She was in need, they were fatigued
And then they were in trouble.
No use, no use, says Martin Keane
We can no longer struggle
St. Patrick she being firm and strong

*Well fit to plough the deep
So gently they did pull along
And pass them she did.
Her owners life it many be long
And also too her crew
So now I'll end my simple song
With best respects to you.*

The next is a lovely lament on the death of Mrs. O'Dea of Doorus Mill — John O'Dea's second wife who obviously had been kind to him.

*Grief oppressed lies on my breast
And sorrow wilts my quill
Since a friend I had was laid to rest
She is late of Doorus Mill.
From her generous heart she gave to me
And to others poor around
A frown on her face I ne'er did see
But genius most profound.
And what she saw from juvenile
The same she followed on
A kind good word and a friendly smile
but alas now she's gone.
I'll sigh ochone that home looks lone
The place I'll shun for aye
No use such grief to be made known
As she lies cold in clay
But to beseech the heavenly Lord
For its He who rules on High
To grant her now a due reward
In that home beyond the sky.
For as the Saints gone on before
and knowing her here on Earth
May guide her to that Heavenly shore
Where there is joy and mirth.
Most holy Queen those deeds have seen
And know my lines are true
Be to her now as she had been
The best of being true blue.
True blue of mind or word or deed
An example every way
For I shall end on my good friend
Have mercy Christ I pray.*

Another ballad of praise is that on Anna Maria Purcell of Gortnaglough (Aunt of Jim Purcell) who also had shown kindness and gave him lodgings. This is part of it.

*Walking through Connacht on the borders of
Clare
South west of Kinvara where houses are rare
It was there I found welcome from a charming
young belle
Her meek and her mildness the truth I will tell.
There's an A with an N and an N with an A
The truth I've been told from her old dear Mama
There's an M with an A and an R with an I
A is the last word in Anna Maria.*

The following is part of what he wrote about a visit he made to the house of Annie and Ellen Picker, Traught. Annie later married John Connors in 1901. They were the parents of Patrick. No doubt it was much longer but these lines only are remembered now:

*It being in the month of August
As I was straying from Kieran's Strand*

*To a female's cottage for the sake
Of talking to a lovely maiden
As you may understand
At this habitation I got salutation
With food to eat and drink likewise
And good conversation from this fair young
maiden
In her sweet harmonious voice.*

The following is part of what he wrote about another local girl:

*She carries the water upon her poor head
Another man's daughter would rather be dead
She can whitewash and polish and paper the
wall
And answer her mammy whenever she calls
She has a fine fat turkey to roast in the pan
And I'm told by her sister 'tis for a young man.*

When a neighbour got the old age pension he said:

*Patsy said "Get up out of that"
But Spot (the horse) paid no attention.
She scarcely does a bit at all
Since Peggy got the pension.*

Unfortunately only parts of many of his ballads are remembered now. He composed one about Kinvara. It mentioned everybody who lived there on both sides of the street but the following lines are all that now survive:

*First it is Grady, the baker of bread
With spuds and roast bacon Kate Anne is well
fed
Next is Jim Davenport he is maker of coffins
In comes his daughter with a jug full of tea
Ill all the day with a pain in his knee
Next it is Treanor, he is a mender of soles.
He strikes with his hammer and he stabs with his
awl
And he places McMahon to give him a call
Maureen Noone, she is Muareen Noone
morning, noon and night
she has spikers in her window and they'd stab
you in the backside
She has fish in a dish for sale outside her door
You can hear the smack she gives her whip as she
turns down Crann Mór.*

The following is part of one he wrote on a tug of war and Bazaar held in Kinvara listing the prizes presented and those who gave them:

*I read it in the Champion about the Tug of war
They'll have it in Kinvara on the day of the
Bazaar
A pound from John Finnucane and a pound
from John O'Dea
A beautiful parlour lamp from a lady who lately
left Loughrea.
A pound from Patsy Fallon, Mike Farrell will
not fail
A note from Thomas Gardiner and Fahy's
Adams Ale.
In comes Martin Treanor with a pound of
starch and blue
A guinea from a lady Miss Bridgie Donoghue*

*The gift of Michael Dominick was a carving
fork and knife
But a five pound note he'd freely give if they
could get for him a wife.*

He wrote another in praise of Miss Agnes Flatley, Kinvara who later became Mrs. Johnston and the following is part of it:

*I walked into the merchant's shop
The daughter did me attend,
A glass of her father's whiskey,
She gave so my head could mend.
For a greater surgeon you couldn't send
If you travelled all France and Spain.*

*Oh, if she were there in the time of Davis
Or famous Thomas Moore,
From them both she would win praises
Of that I'm very sure.*

*She has rich friends in Connacht
She has rich friends in Clare
Respected is Miss Flatley,
Residing at the Square.*

The following is but part of a ballad which he wrote about his uncle Tom when he died:

*As Tom was kneeling down to pray
He drew a heavy sigh
Saying now I'm feeble, old and grey,
I'm ready for to die.*

*My days on Earth are numbered,
My tongue will soon be dumb
And in the clay for evermore
I'll slumber until the judgement come.*

*He left goodbye to all the people
And the seat was next the pew
And left the charge to Fallon
The master of the school*

On one occasion he went to Doorus Mill to borrow an ass for ploughing from John Finnucane and was refused. This is part of what he composed on the episode:

*I went to the Mill for Heenans (the name of the
ass)
To yoke her to the plough,
I got her freely from the ladies,
But Master John would not allow.
She being a noble donkey,
A good spirited ass you know,
Bred born in Caheravoneen,
About three or four miles from home.*

A Kinvara man Dindy (Denis) Keane was drowned when on his way in a boat with two others to Island Eddy. His body was later found on the Knockaculleen shore by John Melody. The following is part of the ballad that Matt wrote about it. The remainder is not remembered now:

*The wind is fair and the boatman rowed
And Dindy Keane fell overboard
The tide had washed him into Doorus shore
And may the Lord have mercy on his soul.*

There are two versions of a ballad made about his visit to the home of Peter McGann, Turlough, Bellharbour (grandfather of Mrs. Maureen Flaherty formerly of Parkmore). Ellen McCook sings the first of these to the air of the Croppy Boy. The following are part of these:

*It was in winter before the spring
I went to Turlough there for to sing
For to take down notes of each place I pass
I arrived in Turlough just after mass
I came to the house of a decent man
His name I'll mention it is Peter McGann
The likes of Peter and his family
You could not find in this country
He's kind, he's mild, oh he is good and grand
The likes of Peter is not in the land.*

The other version, where he is not ashamed to disclose the treatment given to him in that area is:

*In the winter before the spring
I went to Turlough there to sing
My heart it was black it was in despair
I was out of Connaught and into Clare
When they see you coming they close their doors
Except one man who was known as Peter McGann
He opened his door to my piteous cry
And he bade me welcome with exult and joy!*

When Baron De Basterot left small sums of money to neighbours in his will the following is part of a ballad he composed about it:

*A fiver to Connors, a fiver to Glynn
A tenner to Manie because she was a Quinn
Oh mercy upon us, oh mercy and all
Poor Manie Duane she bought a new shawl.*

In another of his ballads he describes a dialogue between two young men contemplating marriage. This is part of it:

*Good morrow Tom says Michael
Then politely Tom answered in reply
To marry we are both likely
For each do want a bride
For years I lay in safety
For the maiden I have sought
Tis well known she can cook a dinner
Composed of carrot broth
Some say she is mellow
So best with few to feed
For I pity a poor fellow
With children in need
But you have sought a juvenile,
The best I must avow
The steam of such in Erins Isle
Would need a milking cow
The best for King and the best for Queen,
The best for house and home
The best for priest I really ween
And the poor if they chance to roam.*

On one occasion when he failed to pay his rates the rate collector obtained a seizure order and his donkey and cart were taken

from him. The following is part of what he wrote on the incident. It is certain that there was much more. He felt that a great injustice had been done.

*Coen came in for the ass's winkers
When he couldn't find it he went out
And brought in the tinkers
The tinkers they ransacked the house
At which they were quite handy
They even brought the chamber pot
That was nearly half with brandy.*

He was not inhibited in any way about his infirmity and referred to it openly in many of his verses and indeed he was often critical of himself. The following pieces are remembered:

*My name is Matt Mahon, I live near the well
My leg it is crooked, I'm sorry to tell
Its about my bold neighbours, amongst them I dwell
There's Hutton and Sutton and Daniel O'Leary
And Matt in the middle in the vales of Tipperary.*

In another he said:

*Two houses in the hollow
Jerusalem in the street
The cause of all Matt's sorrow
He got the crooked feet.*

In another one:

*Keane on the hill, Rooney in the hollow
Matt in the middle the house of the Swallow.*

Sean Hynes now lives in Keanes and Rooneys is now a ruin. The house of the Swallow is his own and must refer to himself and his wanderings away from home.

On another occasion he met a lame man in Gurrane, Oranmore, who challenged him to compose something about himself:

*In Gurrane, in Gurrane, two brothers did meet
Related, related they were in the feet.*

On a visit to Bellharbour on New Year's Day he composed this:

*On New Year's Day there came this way
A tinker and an ass,
Outside Kerins gate they stayed
Until they came from mass.
He Ha the donkey cried,
What brought us this way,
Or is there anybody inside
To give us a sop of hay.*

He composed a number of short pieces on various happenings. On one occasion when in Aughinish he was unable to find any lodgings so he composed the following lines:

*Through Aughinish village I yearly tramp
In search of alms of which I wanted*

*They gave me tea I sweetly drank it
But none could spare a sheet or a blanket.*

About Ballymaquive, Ardrahan he said:

*Burke and Hoarty and Muchil A Choin (Coen)
And as for the rest we will leave them alone!*

About Ardrahan he said:

*Ardrahan town without renown
Their church without a steeple
The peeler standing at the Barrack door
Gazing on the people*

On an occasion when visiting Mahons in Newtownlynch he was asked by two of the children, Babe (now Mrs. Curtin) and Mary Kate, to compose some lines for them. They were going to Creg Garbh to pick wild strawberries. He composed the following on the spot:

*There are two little girls and they're very crabbed
They go to the wood every day as a habit
And all they bring home is a little jaggot
They try to put poor Matt to the grave
A bite for the maggots.*

Somebody in Rockforest had hit him because he had frightened his young son so he composed the following:

*The lord of Rock forest I am sure he did cry
For beating Matt Mahon on the 12th of July.*

The following was the notice he attached to his door whenever absent from the house:

*If you by chance come here and find me not within
Please adapt your sober steps and don't come here again.*

When a Mr. Hazel in Athenry put the dogs after him he wrote:

*You are a thin long scollop
Thin and dry
May the devil sweep you
From the face of Athenry.*

When he was refused alms at a house in County Mayo he wrote:

*White washed houses and painted sashes
Empty bellies and naked a-ses.*

On the flooding which occurred after heavy rain on the road near Nogra he wrote:

*Mrs. Gardiner's duck and Mrs. Farrell's drake,
Swimming together on the Nogra Lake.*

When he was refused lodging in Peterswell he said:

*I am making a manger to put cattle in
I've no room for a stranger said Mr. James Glynn.*

About Miss O'Donoghoe, Kinvara, with whom the local Curate lodged he said:

*This Miss O'Donoghue she is very civil
She has a priest in the house to rout out the devil.*

When in New Quay on one occasion he was selling ducks from his cart and some locals let them go. He had this to say:

*The ducks looked out at break of day
And looked around to see New Quay.*

On one occasion when in Letterfrack he was talking to a girl. Along came a Policeman named Tom Moore who had been stationed in Kinvara previously. He recognised Matt and went to poke fun at him criticising Kinvara. Matt's reply was as follows:

In Kinvara, Kinvara there's neither water nor fuel

*In Kinvara, Kinvara there's rich men and poor
But they never had to beg from a man like Tom Moore*

*Kinvara has fuel that they get oe'r the brine
Kinvara has fuel that they purchase by coin
They had Reilly and Walker and Hanley at their back*

While he was amongst them he bothered their lives

*Screaming and crying and looking for a wife.
Now that he has found a partner he'll never come back*

They shifted poor Moore out to Letterfrack.

Because of his handicap he had to rely entirely on his donkeys to convey him from place to place. That he had a great affection for them is shown in the number of times they are mentioned in his ballads. The following are parts of these:

*I saw once in Trellick the place of my birth
My father and mother were known to have mirth*

*Johnny my master and tailor leg one
Was bought by Matt the poetic man
He brought me to Doorus in 1908
And often kept me working both early and late
When I was idle he gave me no fill
So I went to my cousin who lives at the Mill
The Miller begrudges me eating the grass
And reports to Matthew for making trespass
I partook from kind Denis (Denis Linnane)
along with his own
I met with Sir Patsy (Patsy Burns)
Coming home from the strand
I roared and bawled and told him to stand
He shouted and this is what he said
Be jepers leave me Mary and her basket of shells
So now loving brothers and sisters likewise
Keep away from Kinturla and beware of those boys.*

In another he writes of when he loaned the donkey to the Griffins who lived in Traught:

I was sitting near the fireside and thinking of the past

And mourning for my donkey when she popped in at last

*Oh Linsey, Linsey, where have you been all day
Oh she said "I was working at Griffins by the sea
There was Jack and Pat, Stephen and Matt
And likewise Tom you know*

They put a basket on my back, they drove me down the shore

They put me gathering fortune for Breege and Máire Rua

*There was Jack and Pat and Stephen and Matt,
likewise Tom you know*

Each had a stick to make me stick to where I refused to go".

He was also well known for his wit and quick retort and the following are some examples of this:

In an exchange with Patrick Duane, Traught during a spell of fine weather when they met at Tobair Phádraig well

Patrick: Great weather Matt

Matt: Not bad, whatever length it will go.

Patrick: We will get bags of fine weather.

A short time afterwards when they met again at the well after the weather had broken:

Patrick: Bad weather Matt

Matt: If it is why don't you let out one of your bags of fine weather.

When in Kinvara one day selling two goats Pappy Greene said to him "You are selling the goats now when they have all the cabbage in Doorus eaten". Matt in reply said "So they would and eat all the Greens in Kinvara too so you had better be going".

He bought two lambs on one occasion and John Melody of Knockaculleen asked him why he did not buy four small ones instead. His reply was: "One that would live is better than two that would die".

In an exchange with a tailor in Carron he came second best when the tailor said to him: "There is not a man or ere a tramp from Cork to Oranmore but knows lame Matt the peelers brat going by the Doorus poet".

I am deeply grateful to all those who so willingly gave of their time and their memories to assist me when researching this article.

It is possible that others have more of his ballads and sayings. If so, I would be glad to hear from them so that they can be recorded and included in some future article.

J. O'Connor

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CRUINNIÚ NA mBÁD

—Go Maire tú an Céad

Is iomaí aistear atá déanta ag na báid móna ag teacht aniar is ag dul siar ó Chinn Mhara. Ach is radharc é nach bhfeicfeadh mórán atá beo inniu murach samhlaíocht agus diongbháiltacht Tony Moylan.

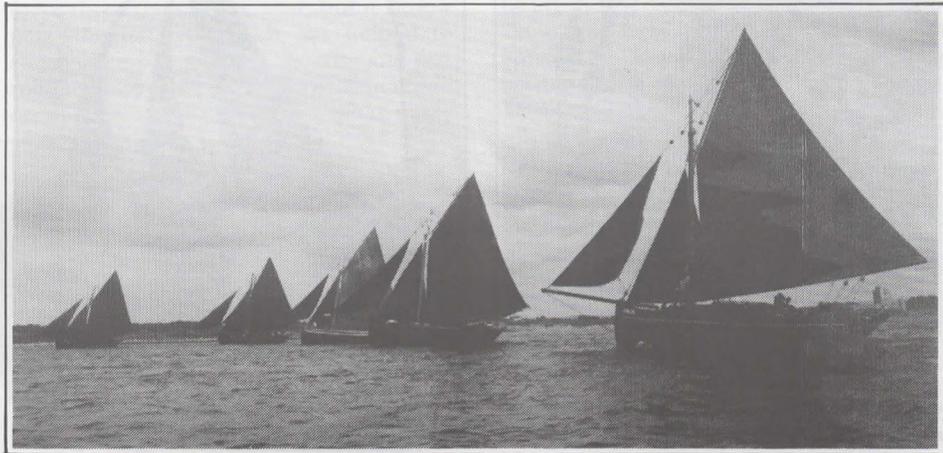
The preparations for the first Cruinniú na mBád in 1979 were short and intensive. Tony and Bill Crampton, the master boatbuilder, succeeded in getting together sufficient help to get the show on the road, not without considerable coaxing in some cases. Those of us connected with the first Cruinniú will never forget the intensity with which the actor Joe Pilkington, promoted the project.

The name 'Cruinniú na mBád' was decided upon at a gathering in Greenes (I think). Many suggestions came up for consideration. In his inimitable quiet way Bill Crampton inquired what was the Irish for a 'meeting' or 'gathering'. On being given the word 'cruinniú' he proposed 'Cruinniú na mBád'. This was commended and then forgotten as other titles came up. I was struck by the appropriateness of Bill's proposal and three or four times I drew attention back to his suggestion. Gradually it dawned on people that it was a very good name and it was eventually unanimously adopted. Besides Tony, Bill and myself, others who can claim credit for the name 'Cruinniú na mBád' include Micheál and James Linnane, Martin O'Grady R.I.P., Tom Quinn, Ann Meagher, Alison Bowyer, all of whom were at that discussion, along with others whom I can't now recall.

That first Cruinniú was a great success in spite of drizzly rain. Martin O'Grady, Tony Moylan and Bridie Quinn-Conroy gave a warm welcome back to Kinvara to the boatmen as soon as they tied up at the quay. The pipe band of the Western Command played for the six hookers and the Gleoiteog that sailed from An Cheathrú Rua.

Before reaching Kinvara the boatmen experienced the unique hospitality of the people of Parkmore and Nogra, and they were then entertained in Kinvara.

The Castle singers, Kieran and Róisín Moylan provided music and song for the crowds who flocked from far and near. A unique exhibition of farm implements was displayed in Flatley's yard. Geraldine Quinn and Gerry Byrne dressed in period clothes and showed how domestic and farm utensils were used. Thomas Quinn mounted an impressive photographic exhibition of local scenes and faces and there was a puppet show and a



demonstration of their work by some craftspersons.

Most Rev. Dr. Eamon Casey presided over the auctioning of the turf by Paschal Spelman, and John Joe Conneely presented the purses and trophy to the prizewinners of the races.

All in all, it was a memorable occasion which caught the imagination of the people. That so much was achieved in such a short space of time is remarkable. There was determination that the event would have to be celebrated annually. And so it has been.

The Continuation

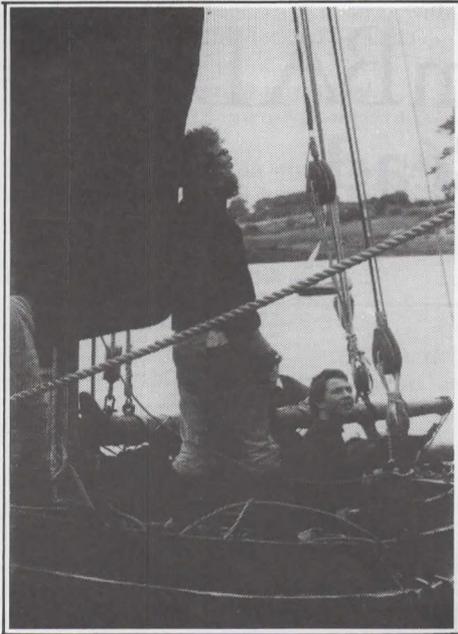
The existence of Cruinniú na mBád has been, since then, fraught with uncertainty

from year to year, though its future at this time now seems assured with a steady hardworking committee.

Ambitious, though expensive, improvements were made to the quay in preparation for the 1988 Cruinniú. Their financing was a big problem. It was very difficult at the time to raise the required money. The committee mistakenly put their faith in sponsors rushing to help when they saw the work in progress. One member said that an (un-named) M.E.P. would get funds for the project. This didn't materialise either.

However, the major works went ahead not without its moments of drama. The most spectacular emergency occurred





Bill Crampton.

when a bulldozer got bogged down in the mud with the tide turning to come in. The quay wall had to be breached to allow rescue vehicles go to the aid of the stranded bulldozer. It was disengaged from the mud with little time to spare.

The 1980 Cruinniú na mBád had a very full programme including the now well-established hooker race across Galway Bay to Kinvara, currach racing, a Kinvara Bay Hooker race (and also raced for the half-hookers, gleetóga and púcáin), swimming, etc.

The Cork Garda Choir under the direction of Mrs. O'Callahan added greatly to the festivities, and their singing at the open-air Aifreann an Domhnaigh made it a memorable occasion.

Michael Sullivan and Gerry O'Bryne, once again mounted an agricultural exhibition and Gerardine Quinn organised various arts and crafts exhibits and demonstrations.

The first play ever to be held in Kinvara Community Centre took place on Friday 8th August when the Pinchpenny Players from the United States presented 'The Dreaming of the Bones' by W.B. Yeats. De Danann (with Charlie Pigott) staged the first ever concert in the Centre when they played to a packed audience there on Sunday 10th August.

Though the 1980 cruinniú was a spectacular success for visitors and participants alike it produced an element which has been a constant potential feature of the festival ever since — a large deficit.

The charismatic Fr. Martin O'Grady who as Chairperson had put great energy and drive into organising the 1980 Cruinniú had to resign some time afterwards when he moved from Kinvara. The intensity of the preparations and the actual organisation on the weekend took a toll on many others, and it was left to a



Catching the breeze.

small group to try and reduce the debt through selling the turf at £2 a bag and trying to raise funds through other means.

The Future

The subsequent history of Cruinniú has been one of the hard toil. Enda Brogan became the third Chairperson and under him a realisation of our limitations, due to financial restrictions, was imposed on the members. The Community Council was requested to run the céilí's in the Community Centre for the 1981 and 1982 cruinnithe. This worked admirably as it released Cruinniú committee members for other activities. The céilithe were probably the best ever held in Kinvara and they engendered a very substantial income for the Cruinniú.

Though tight budgetting and an increase in generous sponsorship the

huge debt incurred in 1980 was virtually cleared.

Over the years the most significant constant feature of Cruinniú na mBád has been Tony Moylan. Many other people, also have contributed much time and effort to make the Cruinniú the success it is today. These people would include Gerry O'Halloran, Joseph Bugg, Ger Conneely, Michael Burke and many others. Under their influence differences in the development of the Cruinniú have been noticeable from year to year.

John Joe Conneely, the man whom all associate most clearly with the sea, in Kinvara, became its first Honorary President. He was succeeded by Dan Goodrich, another sailor of note who has added much to the character of Kinvara since he came to live here with his charming wife, Rosaline. Dan resigned his position at the last A.G.M. and it is now held by Tom Leech, whose family have seen many boats come and go at the Quay over a number of generations.

In 1985 the Cruinniú committee in its wisdom, thought it a good thing to start a custom of inviting party politicians to open the festival. The first to come to Kinvara this purpose was Charles J. Haughey, and he was followed in 1986 by Fine Gael's Peter Barry and the Progressive Democrats had their turn in 1987 when Desmond O'Malley sailed into Kinvara with Galway's P.D. Lord Mayor, Martin Connolly, to declare the festival open.

Tenth Anniversary

And so to 1988. Cruinniú na mBád has been held every year since 1979. There have been emergencies and 'scares' that it might not be possible to hold the event in certain years because of financial restrictions and lack of manpower. However, over the last year or two we have entered a new era. The present committee are a disciplined, hard-working group of



people under the direction of their efficient Chairperson, Marie O'Shaughnessy. The 1988 Cruinniú promises to be one of the most colourful ever. There will be up to 100 guests from Locoal-Mendon who will make an impact with their Breton music; thousands will once again flock from far and near; cloisfear Gaeilge na Gaeltachta, Gaeilge na Galltachta, Francís, Briotáinis agus mórán teangacha eile ar shráideanna Chinn Mhara.

This account of Cruinniú does not claim to be a definitive history. It is a personal impression, and I am aware that the names of many people who sweated and toiled to

make Cruinniú the success it is may have been omitted. A proper account couldn't be attempted in a short article such as this. The full history of the Cruinniú is well worth researching and writing, especially when we are still quite close to its origins and subsequent development. Certainly, in 100 years time people will be anxious to know how it started and developed. Why not make it easy for them?

Cruinniú na mBád may be a focus for a mere three days in the year, but it is now part of what we are. It has helped to consolidate our sense of identity and our solidarity with the boatmen of Conamara on the other side of Galway. It has made

the name of Kinvara known throughout the length and breadth of Ireland through the word of mouth of visitors and participants through publicity such as Cruinniú's participation in St. Patrick's Day parades and through the extensive media coverage.

Cruinniú has also awakened a realisation of the great amenity we possess in the sea. The increase in the number of people sailing, rowing and canoeing can be attributed to it.

Go mba fada buan Cruinniú na mBád agus go bhfága Dia a ndíogras i gcroí na ndaoine a eagraíonn é.

Stan MacEoin

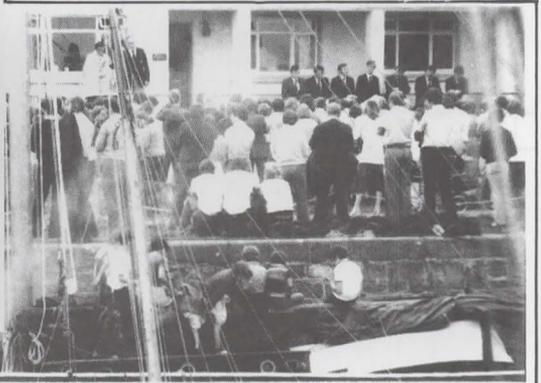


Sarah and Sinéad O'Connell.



A big wave from Toddie.

Fr. Martin O'Grady celebrates Mass on the Quay.



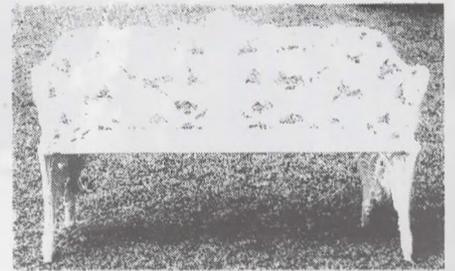
The Cruinniú Committee 1988. L-R: John Madden, Gemma Kavanagh, Pat Collins, Pete Greene, Tom Leech, Michael Burke, Jim Barr, Pat McMahon, Eileen Connolly, Don Devaney, Enda O'Connor, Declan Connolly. Front: Maria O'Shaughnessy & Sue Madden.

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Musicians of Kinvara

John Colfer was born in Slade, on the Hook peninsula, Co. Wexford. His father William played the mandolin and his mother was an accomplished accordion player. Obviously then, his parents were the earliest influences in John's love for our traditional music. John started playing the mandolin when he was a child and remembers Saturday evenings sitting with his parents listening to the Céilí music hour on the radio.

Living in London for eight years, John's fondest memories, were playing in sessions with musicians such as Roger Sherlock, Bobby Casey and Brendan Mulhaire to name but a few.

In 1980, playing with Mike Howard (who's guitar playing we are familiar with when we listen to John Sheehans 'Marino Waltz') and his brother Eddie, they released an album under the Silvermore records label, simply titled after the name of their band 'Tristram

Shandy'. On this record John plays one of the most moving renditions of the air, An Coulin.

With his wife, Jo, John moved to Kinvara, after stumbling upon the village by accident, which occurred one day, by taking a wrong turn off the road, from Gort on the way to Galway. One of his first thoughts about Kinvara was wondering whether or not the people of Kinvara realised that they lived in obviously one of the most beautiful villages in the country. They now live in Castlevew with their four children Eoin, Jenny, Helen and Joseph.

John can now be heard most Thursday evenings in the Pucán (Forster St., Galway) and at various Céilí's with Mary Larkin, Mike and Sue Fahy and Finton the drummer when they get together as the Ballinderrin Céilí Band.

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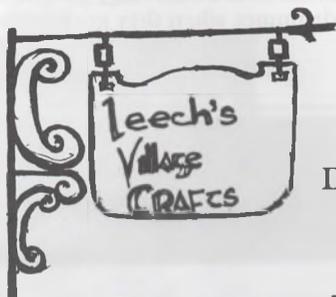
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The Ó hEidhin Notebooks

On loan from Mr. and Mrs. Joe Forde, Kinvara.

How many people are aware that Tomás Ó hEidhin, Irish teacher, photographer, folklorist, was also a water diviner? This is but one of the facts revealed in one of three interesting notebooks.

These copy books are not unlike the exercise books used by schoolchildren today. Written in the old Irish script, they provide us with an invaluable account of life at the turn of the century in Kinvara and the Gort area. The 'diaries' were handed to me some time ago by a crafty Jeff O'Connell who said I might be interested in having a look at them. It would only be a matter of time, he knew, before I would suggest that the work ought to be translated for the benefit of the community. This is of course what Jeff had in mind and I was asked to undertake the translation, a big task to say the least. But first I was asked to deliver a synopsis of the contents for this year's issue of 'Trácht'.

Tomás Ó hEidhin, we were told in the 1986 'Trácht', was great Gaeilgeoir as was his father before him. He loved his native country along with its language and customs and firmly believed that the loss of our native tongue, which was frowned upon at the time, would also herald the demise of a tradition which was strong in Christian faith and communal brother and sisterhood. These were times of great poverty and hardship for a community which was still suffering after effects of An Gorta Mór, the Great Famine of 1847 and 1848.

In one of the articles, Tomás describes the Connacht area before 1948. "There were towns and villages side by side where now no house is to be seen. The people were very poor. They were only given the worst land." Heavy rents made it difficult for people to get by, not to mention obtaining proper seed, he recounts. Despite all the hardship they did not lose their noble tradition: "The language of the saints and the scholars was spoken up and down the province. There were poets and storytellers amongst them to give them heart and courage. There was much sport at fairs and markets and there were many more races in that time than there are now. The people used to gather at the crossroads every Sunday afternoon. There they would have dancing and music... When they were tired they would joke and tell each other stories. Before that bad, dreadful, unfortunate year for Ireland there was no talk of going to England or to any other country. Even though they were as poor as could be they were able to live out their lives."

Tomás Ó hEidhin has been praised for the composition and style of his

photographs. Those remaining are in the care of his niece, Mrs. Flaherty of Killina, I believe it is hoped to have them properly bound and preserved as best as possible. His photos provide a historical image of the times, ranging from a happy W.B. Yeats and children to the said account of the Loughnane funerals, the two young volunteers who were brutally tortured and murdered by the Black and Tans. It is a tragic irony that this man, who spent most of his life in the service of his country's best traditions, should derive his living for a time by providing passport photos for the many who were to fill the emigrant ships, never to return to their native shore.

Tomás was always on the lookout for suitable employment:

"June 30th 1899, Dear sir, It occurred to me to ask you to grant me a small favour. If you know of any establishment which would need a clerk, I hope you would recommend me to them. I am seeking such work for a long time now, but since I have no friends in the big towns I can't leave this isolated spot. I have no learning except what I received in the stranger's (English) school. I am 26 or 27 years of age. I would accept a long term contract. In the hope that you won't deny a poor Gaeilgeoir if it is within your capability, I am your humble servant..."

"Seventh month 1903, Dear Sir, I see according to an Chlaidheamh Solais, (Conradh na Gaeilge's paper at the time) that you need an Irish teacher. Maybe you would think that I could do the job. I am teaching Irish here for over two years. . . I have excellent Irish but I can't teach music or dancing, I won many prizes for essays in

Irish. If you accept me I would hope for £2 a week or near to it. Hoping I will hear from you soon. . ." These and other letters tell us a lot about the young Ó hEidhin, hard pressed to make a living and eager to spread his wings away from his 'isolated spot'. The innocent and modest style of writing is a far cry from the aggressive competitive approach of today. One of the above letters also establishes his year of birth to be 1872 or 1873, in contrast to 1868 as stated in the 1986 edition of 'Trácht'. Was Tomás 'spoofing' in his job application or did the contributors err in their article?

The eye witness report of St. Colman Mac Duagh's feast day, translated elsewhere in this magazine, is a very interesting account given in a fine old style of storytelling. A further account of a fair in Gort is given also. This article, signed 'fear siubhail' (walking man) mentions a feis which constituted part of a fair day on the 22nd of May, no year was given. Dancing, acting, art, music as well as speech all took place. He laments "no one had the courage to get up and give a speech on the 'Irish Question' and there was no musician present to play the 'Coolin' or 'Cailín deas crúite na mbó' — the pretty maid milking her cow) on the pipes or the fiddle. . .!"

"Gort kept some of the prizes. The rest went to Peterswell, to the mountain, to Co. Clare, to Kinvara, and the little boy from Galway took one away too. Two young boys from the vocational school in Galway won some prizes also but the Brother who was in charge of them left them with the feis committee and said he would pay



Tomás Ó hEidhin with Irish pupils.
(Photo with permission of Mrs. Flaherty, Killina)



Irish College, Ring, Co. Kerry. (Photo with permission of Mrs. Flaherty, Killina)

them from his own pocket. . ."

Tomás Ó hEidhin was a deeply religious man as is evident from the prayers which fill some of his pages and much space is devoted to Irish proverbs he collected in the Kinvara area: His rent is paid and his house is roofed (said of a man who is well off); What's good enough for a person is good enough for a horse; That which is in the blood is difficult to extract from the meat; Love is blind; A soldier's welcome, a bad welcome; It's sweet to get it but sour to pay for it; You were born at the end of the year (said to a person coming in at the end of the meal); Youth sheds many a skin; He is stronger than God who extends his house to the west (it is said to be unlucky to extend westwards); If it doesn't make a day for digging potatoes it'll make a day for playing cards; It's not the same to go to the city as to leave it; God didn't ever close a door than he opened another; A change of business is as good as a rest; Three steps of mercy; It is said when a person meets a funeral he should turn and walk three steps in its wake, these are called the three mercy steps; A turf and wood fire or a wood and turf fire, which of these is the best? And finally from this selection: The salmon's health to you — a healthy heart and a wet gob. . .

No mention is made in these notebooks of his photographic work. Some essays are included, speeches in favour of the Irish language, and the minutes of a Fianna Fáil Comhairle Ceantar meeting, I believe in the thirties.

In these years Tomás was, it would seem, waging a one man campaign for payment he felt was due to him from the Co. Roscommon and Galway Health Boards. In April/May 1933 when he must have been in his early sixties, he wrote to the Health Board in Galway, to James P. Colley T.D. and to the enquiries section in the Customs house in Dublin outlining his case. Water divining for these Boards is what he was up to in 1927/28, presumably for the erection of public pumps: "They found water in each place they brought me". He had been divining for five years for them until a Board official, a Ms. Kennedy complained: "I have no belief whatever in the supernatural powers of the water diviner. It has been proven beyond doubt by numerous experiments and notably by Prof. Burke that the movements of the hazel twig . . . are caused by muscular action of the diviner" Tomás called her letter rubbish and went on to defend the gift stating we all have it but the twig only moves for some of us. He

was requesting to be re-instated and could not understand why he was attacked in the first place. The Pope himself believes in the work, said Tomás, as he had given special permission to an abbot called Lambert to study the matter, and hadn't the French sent diviners to Algeria to find them water? The diviner is respected in every country, he concludes.

£3 was all he was offered per well even though private diviners charge five guineas, he complained. The Roscommon Board had left him £80 short for fifty wells he had divined for them, including Boyle: "I spent two days walking the hills etc. in Boyle and I was half killed but up to now I have received no compensation for that work. . ." Five locations had been unsuccessful due to bad conditions from Oct. to Jan., he explains, and he was not working on such terms as no water, no pay: "If that were the case I would double my charges". The Board stated it had to drill deeper than Tomás had guessed the water to be, but he states that he had been requested to divine in winter when the water level was highest! Some snide comments had been passed because of his desire to do his business through Irish, but Tomás was well able to stand up for himself, although he must have suffered at times for sticking to his principles. I wonder if he ever got paid!

This concludes a random selection from the Ó hEidhin notebooks, written in fine handwriting in the old Irish script. Going through a person's notebooks, even after death, feels like an intrusion on his private life. In Tomás' case this is being done with the utmost of respect for a man who loved his people and recorded their ways.

Caoille Breatnach



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St. Colman Mac Duagh's Feast Day

This feast day falls on the twenty ninth day of the eighth month. The day fell on a Wednesday this year. It was a beautiful big day in the parish of Kiltartan. For a long time people had been coming to Carcar² on a pilgrimage to Mac Duagh's well. But in recent years they had been neglecting this lovely saintly and holy Irish custom. Just like every other custom this custom was dying with the language. The fault did not lie with the people of Saint Colman Mac Duagh, for the same can be seen all over Ireland.

The credit goes to Prof. of Theology, O'Fahy, parish priest of Gort for being the first priest in Ireland who raised his voice and called back his people. It was he who gathered the people together and directed them along with Colman's faithful successor, the reverend Bishop of Galway, and good few other priests, to Carcar. There was upwards of two thousand people present, and there would have been many more were it not that a great part of the day came wet. There was a mass first in Kiltartan. After mass the people all went to Carcar, the place where Saint Colman Mac Duagh the patron saint of the diocese, was born. No sooner in Ireland did the Bishop, the priests and the people stand on the holy site where the saint was born, did the day clear up wonderfully. The Bishop said he was certain that it was the power of the saint which swept aside the rain and the clouds. And if it was what wonder. His people were now coming back to him to honour him and to place themselves under his care. The people who had turned their backs on him and his holy life were now coming back to him again. What wonder that he would be happy. What wonder that he should sweep aside the rainy showers and give the people a nice day on the holy spot where he was born and baptised.

The Bishop and the people said the rosary in Irish. It was very noticeable the amount of people who could answer it in Irish. I suppose there won't be anyone who won't be able to answer it in Irish next year. He promised if he was alive and able

that he would be with the people again on the same holy spot next year. After the rosary Father O'Casey, P.P. delivered a fine fluent sermon in Irish describing the saint's life. He said they were gathered together to honour the name of Colman Mac Duagh, the patron saint of the diocese. This saint, he explained to us, came from royal ancestry. Colman, the king of Connacht became jealous of his mother³ because of a prophesy which stated that she would bear a child who would become more famous than any of his ancestors in the same line. Because of this Righneach took herself to Kiltartan but this did not save her. The king and his servants followed her. They caught her. They put a heavy stone around her neck and threw her into the deepest part of Kiltartan river. But she was miraculously saved. The stone which was tied around her neck is still to be seen in Kiltartan today. After this she came to Carcar, a delightful small lonely valley in Kiltartan. It is there the saint was born. She placed the holy infant under the shelter of the branches of an ash tree and she waited impatiently for someone who would baptise him. It was not long before two monks happened to come that way. One of them was blind and the other was lame. Now, there was a person to be baptised but there was no water. The monks asked God for help when they saw the child. Soon after a small well of spring water appeared at the bottom of the ash tree. The child was baptised. The monks washed themselves in the water. The blind man was granted his sight. The lame man could walk. Thanking God they asked the mother to give them the child to instruct and to rear. This was a request that was easily granted because the mother was not well off. There is no more known of him from then on until he accepted the holy order and went to Arainn.⁴ In those days there was no place on earth more famous than 'Aran of the Saints'. This holy lonely place had great effect on Saint Colman Mac Duagh. He was able to cut himself off from life and become closer to God. He was a long time

in Arainn. He built two churches there, Colman's Church and Colman's Chapel. But however holy Aran of the Sains was, it was not in Arainn where Colman's heart and desire lay. He wanted a place where he could give himself fully to God. In time he left Arainn and hid himself among the loneliness of the trees at Cionn Aille⁵, a lonely valley in the Burren mountains in county Clare. He spent seven years in this valley unknown to the world, praying always day and night but for the short time he'd be sleeping. He had nothing to eat and drink but roots and water. It was in the last decade of the sixth century that he went to Cionn Aille. There was no one with him during those seven years except a young lad. After having spent seven years in solitude cut off from the world he was asked by 'Guairé of the Feasts', King of Connacht, to serve as Bishop in the area which is now known as Kilmacduagh. He offered him a place where he could establish a church and a monastery. He died in Ocht Mára in the year 632. He is buried in Kilmacduagh.

After the sermon the Bishop spoke to the people. He did not say much but what little he had to say he pleaded with the people to keep the Irish and to cherish it. He said that it and the faith were closely linked together, and the preservation of the language had much to do with the people's loyalty and pledge to their faith. He gave his blessing and forty days absolution to the people.

Prof. of Theology, Dermot Fahy, P.P. offered his thanks and that of the people to the Bishop.

The Bishop spoke and said that if God kept him alive and well that he would be with them again next year. After this all the people went back to Kiltartan. The blessing of the holy sacrament was given there. Thus ended the big Irish day of devotion in Kiltartan.

*Translated true to Ó hEidhin's mode of writing
by Caoille Breatnach*

¹ Lá Fhéile Naomh Colmáin Mhíe Duáich (from Tomás Ó hEidhin's manuscript)

² Corker

³ Colman's mother presumably

⁴ Inis Mór, Aran Islands

⁵ 'head of the cliff, near Eagles rock, Burren.

⁶ Also known as Oughtmama, near Corcomroe Abbey

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Manu — The Ballads of Kilmarrach

"Time Back Way Back..."

Last August, not long after I had been appointed Community Development Officer, Paul Brennan came to see me one evening. Paul comes from a distinguished acting family; his father, Denis Brennan was one of the best-known names on RTE during the '50's, as well as being a fine actor, while his mother — Daphne Carroll — delights, irritates, and entertains the nation daily as 'Mrs. Doyle' on 'Harbour Hotel'. Paul's sisters are also much-sought after actresses, frequently appearing in productions at The Abbey and The Gate. The night he came to see me Paul had a proposal. Galway County Council had agreed to fund a Drama Workshop — would Kinvara be interested? I told him that we certainly would be. The Community Council warmly welcomed the proposal and agreed to make the meeting room available for weekly sessions.

On paper, the idea of a Drama Group was great. But without people willing to take part, it would never get off the ground. So, posters went up between Ballinderreen and New Quay, notices were sent home through the schools, items appeared in local newspapers, and by word-of-mouth other people were contacted who might otherwise have been overlooked. I remember the auditions well. Paul and I sat in the Meeting Room, the unspoken fear in our hearts that no one would turn up. But we were wrong.

Almost at once people started coming in. Paul gave those interested in acting a piece to read, while those willing to give a hand backstage were asked their areas of special competence. By 10 o'clock we had a list of nearly twenty-five.

Once the group was established, Wednesday evenings saw a curious collection of people gather at 8 o'clock in the Meeting Room with devotion and regularity one normally only associated with Mass. No one really knew what to expect. Paul had told us that we were going to write our own play, based on the work we did on Wednesdays. But I must admit that after about a month I started to wonder. It was hard to see what walking in a circle, tossing imaginary balls back and forth, and crawling around the floor on all fours pretending to be a cow had to do with playwriting. Surely Shakespeare didn't do it this way?

But Paul knew perfectly well what he was doing, and gradually we began to see it as well. Through activity and improvisation, our inhibitions were breaking down, and, instead of the miscellaneous 'lump' of people we were to begin with, we were becoming a group welded together by a common purpose.

We began to improvise scenes, suggested by characters we were pretending to be. Sometimes whole sessions would be devoted to elaborate and frequently hilarious playlets. Some of us



Joe Quilty, Vicki Griffin, Jane O'Brien

would be villagers, others hunters — battles were fought, make-believe houses built. It was like being a child again, playing cowboys and indians. Sometimes we laughed so much and so loudly that anyone passing the Community Centre would be forgiven for thinking that a convention of lunatics was being held!

Then, sometime in November, we were each asked to write down ideas for our yet-to-be written play. Paul had very skillfully been allowing certain themes to emerge in our 'play' sessions, so that it was probably more of a surprise to us than to him when three themes in particular came to the fore. The first was the idea of a secret of some kind, the second was the contrast and connection between past and present, and the third was the importance of village life and tradition.

A small group of us met for a number of Saturdays in November and December with the aim of turning these three themes into a play. Under Paul's general direction, necessary to restrain our wilder flights of fancy, we tossed characters and dialogue and plot back and forth. I was given the job of transforming the material from our sessions into a script. Never having even attempted writing a play before, I wrote lengthy passages of dialogue that not even Sir Laurence Olivier could say without sending entire sections of the audience to a deep and dreamless sleep. Paul kept encouraging me, however, and taught me



Paul Brennan in rehearsal.



Michael Curtin, Ross Brennan, Mark Conneely, Ultan Monahan.

a valuable lesson — dialogue in a play (unless you happen to be Shakespeare!) must be brief and to the point, while action is the true dramatic method of catching and holding an audience (I remember being both amused and slightly taken aback when, on the first night, someone had 'jumped' about eight lines in one of the scenes. Paul, who hadn't noticed the missing lines, declared that he thought the scene had moved much quicker than previously, and was all the better for it. 'Immortal vers', my eye!).

From January and February to March 11th — the first night — we all lived, breathed, ate, and slept with the play. It was all-consuming. It got to the point where you had nothing in common with anyone who was not connected in some way with the play. Rehearsals were sometimes a nightmare, with lines being forgotten, movements clumsy on stage, people not turning up for various good or bad reasons. Paul's dedication was awe-inspiring and also more than a little terrifying. Excuses for missed rehearsals cut no ice. I remember one evening Aine and I couldn't make it because a burst pipe had flooded our house. This excuse was just about accepted.

As March approached, rehearsals increased and nerves began to fray. Paul, normally a very easy-going fellow, became a different person, seeing you as your 'character' and hardly at all as yourself. Like a juggler keeping ten balls in the air at once, he directed the actors, arranged the lighting, supervised props, costumes, design, sound, music, posters, etc., etc. He was most impressively assisted by Petra Breathnach, whose costumes were as good as anything you would see on the professional stage, Anna Korff, whose sets were wonderfully evocative, and Helen McGinley, whose pursuit of props of all

kinds added immeasurably to the fullness and 'believability' of the action. If I have singled out those three, it is not in any way meant to play down the contribution of dozens of others who tirelessly give of their time and energy. Space simply does not allow a full list to be given. Suffice it to say that everyone — from the ticket sellers to those who built the sets — helped to bring 'Manu' to life.

The final purgatory we all had to pass through was the lighting rehearsal. Lasting nearly five hours, this technical run-through was the final proof — if any proof was needed — of Paul's professionalism. With 8 scenes to act and the curtain available for only 3, it was

essential that things move swiftly or the whole play would drag terribly. Again, and again, and yet again, we went through scene changes until we were like zombies, stumbling around the stage.

Finally the night of March 11th arrived. Costumes were put on, make-up applied, and all we could do was wait. The tension was overwhelming. Would people come? Would they like it? Would they 'get' it? It was too late for re-writes. All we could do was do our best. "On with the show!"

The 'warm-up' concert ended, Marion Connelly, Diane Reid, and I trooped on stage and took our places. The house-lights dimmed. Showtime, folks!

"Will you have another, Mary?"

Something marvellous happened as the house-lights came up as the play ended. It's called 'applause'! Wild applause — the audience was clapping, whistling, cheering. We'd done it! The second night — the official 'Opening Night' — was even better. We even had the enormous satisfaction of putting on a third, unscheduled, performance. Word had spread, and people came from Galway and Clare to see 'Manu'. History was made, not only in filling our Hall three nights, but in the magical way in which all sections of our community were represented. Toddie Byrne and Paddy Geraghty, old Kinvara thespians, took their places next to newcomers like Diane Reid and Rosaleen Goodrich and Paul White. When old John Joe (Toddie Byrne), in scene 8, said to Janet (Diane Reid) "You're one of us now, Miss. No more strangers now", the words seemed to give symbolic expression to what the whole experience of writing and performing the play was all about. Out of 'Manu' came friendships, mutual respect,



*L-R (seated): Riona Mac Eoin, Cara McGinley.
1st row (l-r): Aine O'Connell, Jennie McGinley, Patricia Mac Eoin.
2nd row (l-r): Yerron Vandammele, Emer O'Donnell, Muriel Francis.*

and a wholly justifiable pride in what Kinvara, at its best, is capable of achieving.

'Manu' is history now, but let us hope that it signifies the beginning of a new and creative era in the life of our community.

J.W. O'Connell

**A Traveller and His Lady:
A Ballad**

*The stalk is withered dry, my love,
And so our hearts remain,
Until what's lost is found, my love,
And the voices speak again.*

*Kilmarrach's hills are steep and green,
Her fields are tumbled down.
But where the stream divides is seen
A queen who's lost her crown.*

*It fell about that time of year
When nights are dark and long,
And days grow short and give no cheer
And the Eastern winds blow strong.*

*A traveller and his lady
Wandered to the town:
"O we have journeyed," they did say,
"Both up the world and down."*

*"But now we would our burden rest
Upon this pleasant shore
And lay within our mother's breast
Our jewel forevermore."*

*"O dig our grave both long and deep
And pile the earth up high
For now my love and I must sleep
And our jewel with us lie."*

*So seven shovel-fulls of clay
Made up their lovers' bed,
And seven pairs of eyes that day
Bore witness to the dead.*

*The stalk is withered dry, my love,
So will our hearts remain,
Until what's lost is found, my love,
And the voices speak again.*



L-R: Caoilte Breathnach, Rose Symes, Diane Reid, Toddie Byrne, Rosaleen Goodrich, Paddy Geraghty.



Warriors clash as Philip Sweeney looks on.

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Michael McMahon.

Extract "Galway Express" dated 3rd October 1874

Proposed Convent Schools in Kinvara

The most Rev. Dr. McEvelly, Lord Bishop of Galway, accompanied by Capt. Blake Foster J.P. arrived here on Tuesday 22nd inst. for the purpose of selecting a site for a Chapel and Convent schools which are about being built in the town, the expenses of which were bequethed by the late Mr. W.G. Murray, Northampton House. Having secured an eligible site in a healthful and prominent locality Capt. Blake Foster with his characteristic liberality purchased the interest in one of the fields and handed it over to the Lord Bishop for the purpose.

Galway Vindicator

28/7/1875

We regret to record the death of D.J. Hynes Esq. M.D. which occurred on the 16th inst. At his residence Seamount House, Kinvara. Connected for over a quarter of a century with the district

professionally and a resident landed proprietor Dr. Hynes was eminent in and held a deservedly high place in his profession and was at one time President of the Irish Medical Association of which institution he was a founder and subsequently one of the foremost and most indefatigable patrons. His remains were on Monday the 19th conveyed to the family cemetery at Kilcolgan and were followed by the largest funeral cortege seen in the neighbourhood for very many years.

Departure of the Rev.

P.J. Newell, C.C. Castlegar from Kinvarra

25th February, 1888

The Temperance Society Present an Address

Escorted by a Procession of His late Parishioners

At an unusually early hour on the morning of Saturday the 25th inst. the town of Kinvara was thronged with people who gathered together from all parts of the parish to join in the fares well demonstration that was organised in honour of the much respected and highly esteemed late C.C. of the parish Revd. P.J. Newell who was about severing his connection with the people by whom he was loved owing to his appointment to the important curacy of Castlegar. The people of Kinvarra with whom he spent nigh four years of his sacred ministry attending to the wants of the flock entrusted to his care, ever ready to succour the poor in distress — ever ready to console all in afflictions have reason to mourn his departure. The members of the Temperance Society founded and fostered by him nigh three years since, and in whose welfare he took such a very deep interest have sustained in his departure a loss that time can never sufficiently repair. The good work that he enunciated when he first unfurled the banner of temperance in the parish will yet bear fruit a hundredfold and the change that he has wrought in such a short space of time both socially and politically in the minds of the young men of Kinvarra will in years to come speak trumpet tongued of the happiness he has brought to many a once unhappy home. Long before the hour of departure the streets in the

immediate vicinity of the Temperance Hall were crowded with people mounted men on cars and horseback waiting for the moment the marshals in charge of the procession would give like the city policeman's order to bystanders) the word to 'move on'. At a given signal the members of the Temperance Society wearing medals commemorative of Ireland's national apostle St. Patrick suspended from a badge of the national colour marched forth from the Temperance Hall and headed by the William O'Brien fife and drum band playing "God Save Ireland" proceeded slowly on foot followed by a procession of mounted men wearing medals and badges on outside cars and horseback to Dungora Cottage the residence of the Rev gentleman. At the residence of the Rev gentleman the processionists ranged up in double file and halted, and cheer after cheer rent the air until the Rev gentleman made his appearance when suddenly all heads were uncovered and Mr. Thomas Corless V.P. stepped forward immediately in front of the members of the Temperance Society and on their behalf after a few introductory remarks read the following address —

Address of the Kinvarra Temperance Society to The Rev. P.J. Newell, C.C., Castlegar



Inscription reads: 'Bridget Leel/Died/18th March 1925/Aged 107 years/R.I.P.' John Ryan on left. (Photo with Permission of Martin Greene)



Town Scene — Note original entrance to Seamount.

Rev. and Dear Father — Permit us the members of the Temperance Society founded and fostered by you in the parish of Kinvarra to tender to you our heartfelt and grateful acknowledgments for the inestimable blessings which your ministry as curate during nigh four years in this parish has under Gods Providence bestowed upon us to perform a duty which we feel is incumbent on us would be a pleasure, a happiness were it not that it brings us face to face with the sad reality that we are parting with one whose noble qualities of head and heart have endeared him to us beyond all powers of expression. It is literally true, dear father to say that at the moment our hearts are too full for utterance. We must, however, attempt to give some expression to our gratitude.

Every one knows with what zeal and earnestness the spiritual work of this parish has been always carried on, that we are and have been always blessed with the best of Pastors. We confess that still remained that one blot, the source of those evils which, as the poet sing

*And yet they grow and multiply apace,
To rob, to ruin, and destroy our race;
Though good men strive and zealous
clergy preach
To check the evil seems beyond our
reach.*

Yes, dear father, you found those evils before you. You manfully grappled with them. You trusted in the faith and in the virtue of the people and thank God you were not disappointed. Your efforts have been crowned with success.

Under your presidency we have not missed the miserable pleasure of the 'social glass'. Following under your guidance the paths of temperance our lives have been rendered happy. We have learnt

*'Tis not in drink
Or drunken joys we find
The eternal sunshine of the spotless mind.*

The cause of temperance as inculcated by you included the frequentation of the Sacraments and was united with the dear old cause of love of fatherland. Nor did you forget that joyous social meetings have always helped the good cause. But here, dear father, we must come to an abrupt

conclusion. To think of those happy meetings which you enlivened by your genial presence is too much for our feelings now, that we have to say farewell.

With sorrow and with deep gratitude we say farewell, and beg that you in hour holy prayers remember your affectionate and devoted friends.

Signed on behalf of members,

Thomas P. Corless, V.P.

James Kilkelly, Hon. Sec.

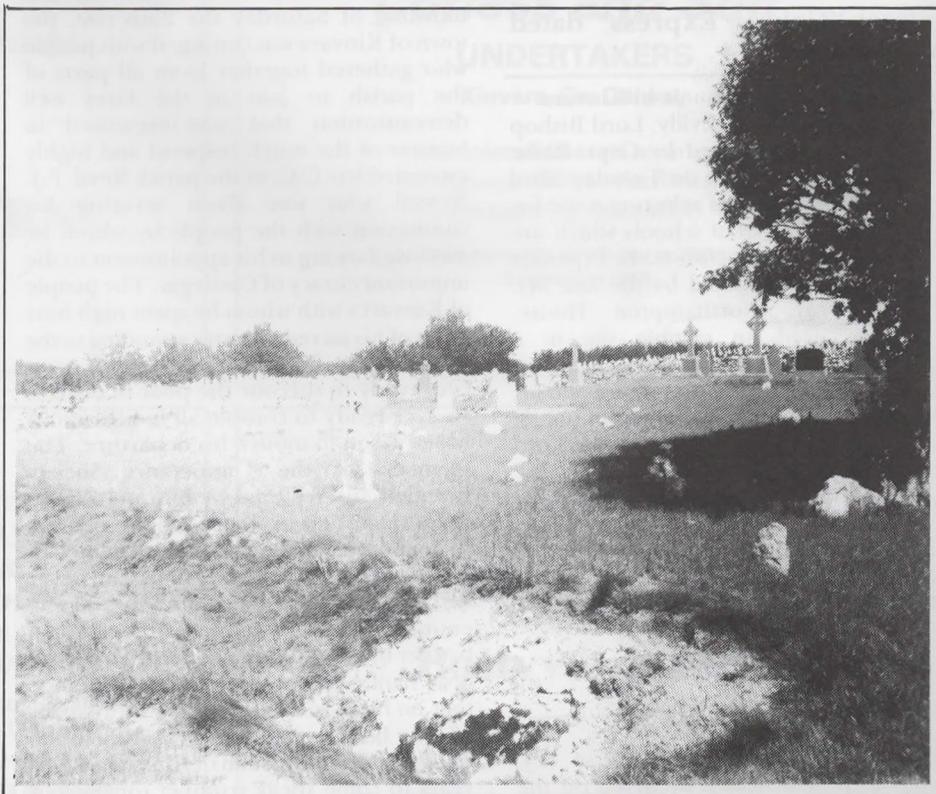
Edward Holland, Treasurer.

First Muintir na Tíre meeting held in 1949

President Canon Garraghy, P.P.

Chairman: Rev. T. Martin C.C.; Vice Chairman: John Peter O'Grady Kinvara, Thomas Reidy Townagh, Kinvara; Secretary: Kieran Moylan N.T., Kinvara; Treasurers; Joe Lynch, Kinvara; Joe Leech, Loughcura; J.J. O'Shaughnessy, Kinvara.

Members: Tom Donnellan, N.T., Kinvara; E.J. Fallon, Bc; Paddy Gardiner, Kinvara; J.P. Muldoon, N.T., Kinvara; P.J. O'Loughlin, Kinvara; Jack Conole, Crushea; Patrick O'Loughlin, Poulmageann, Kinvara; Michael McInerney, Leeha, Kinvara; Mattie Corless, Kinvara; Ritchie Johnson, Kinvara; John Sullivan, Cartron, Kinvara; Michael Leech, Kinvara; Mattie Callinan, Dungory, Kinvara; Bartley Linnane, Caherawooneen, Kinvara; Patrick Fahy, Rineen, Dooras; Michael Curtin, Aughnish; Pa Curtin, Dooras; Paddy Quinn, Kinvara West.



Foy's Cemetary — Famine grave in foreground.

SIMILARITY AND VARIETY IN TWINNING

Twinning week in Locoal-Mendon during Easter, 1987, was a two-sided mirror to represent, misrepresent or even shatter the abstractions of both sides. Look out for the last week in August, 1988, in Kinvara, the second half of the twinning formality. The image reflection must be uncanny.

To the fore in this reflection come things like Celtic character, Celtic temperament, the shared features that suggest the common Celtic origin — the gift of the gab, the ear for poetry, the hand of generosity, the heart of initiative. Two different sides converging to occupy the rediscovered same destination.

Locoal-Mendon people prefer to travel on their own steam, while a bus, the favoured Kinvara conveyance, leaves the hassle to the driver. Kinvara is about the same distance by road from Ringaskiddy Ferry Port as Locoal-Mendon is by road from Roscoff. Go off the recommended route only if you have hours on hand — as we apparently had in Easter, 1987 — and enjoy the scenery. Being greeted by a waving green/white/gold flag in that other land of dolmens and monoliths dissolved our ferry-lag with the sensation of reality. It was home from home.

One fine morning we were taken on a tour of an old-style Breton village, conserved and on display, complete with artefacts from past generations. That deserted village became a window — not a mirror — to view the very same items familiar to us at home. Here was a precious moment. Regret for our own, for items discarded or abandoned to the tinkers, was tinged by the memory of individuals of our own lineage.

In our rush and hurry viewing the modern lifestyle of Brittany, the stone monuments seemed to recede in their immediacy. Yet in an ironic way they had what might be called the last laugh.

For me the monument that resounded loudest was the *Obelisk*, at Halfway Oak between Ploërmel and Josellin. It commemorated mighty men politically diminished by the subsequent tide of events but immortalised in the hallowed passageway of time. Thirty Breton men successfully fought thirty English soldiers for the supremacy of Ploërmel on a day in March, 1351. Events later were to distort their achievement but not their Celtic character and pride of place. Sitting down in groups and partaking of a picnic, we gazed in wonder at this magnificent pyramid bringing the line of vision up into the clear blue sky. No clouds there. None of those dappled colours worn by the men

of Kinvara region who, as O'Brien Boru's wife's contingent, had helped turn the tide of the Norsemen of Clontarf.

If we could only have spoken in anything like presentable French (or even in the Breton language) we'd have had willing listeners to our yarns. But they listened to our songs, enjoying the rhythms and melodies. We danced their seemingly endless dances. We smiled, they smiled. Winks were exchanged.

The interesting thing was that when they set off in full-flight to explain something in French we could make out the gist of it. One day we sat enraptured on the side of a wild and hostile Armorican hill taking in its timeless beauty and listening to a tale centred on the small dark lake below. An ordinary natural feature under whose waters in days gone by there was a going concern, a castle. To make a long story short; here was the location of the fabulous Arthurian legend. The sword in the water. Heroes conquering the perimeters of the living.

But hold fast! we thought. Don't we have our own romance, our own fabulous Finn, Diarmuid and Gráinne, immortalised by bards, story-tellers and place-names. Whether or not these characters ever existed, were misrepresented or not, they now have a basis in fact. Celts all, these Bretons would have joined Guaire's retainers as he'd sped up Bóthar na Mias in hot pursuit of his Easter banquet flying ahead to Cinn Aille. They'd have testified to the horses' hooves gripping the limestone flags, frozen time.

The heat of day during Easter '87 corresponded to the heat of day of August, Easter in Locoal-Mendon and August in Kinvara, and understandably enough there was no great urging required from the sun, sea and sand at Morbihan to call many of the Kinvara group out for a swim. The wisdom of the calendar went overboard. Were it August '87, at the gigantic beach south of Belz they'd have seen a sight not often encountered at home. Nudist bathing. No problem there. Lots of people.

Historically, Kinvara people had their own solution to a problem encountered also by the people of Locoal-Mendon. Locoal-Mendon seemed like Kinvara to have been left on the sidelines or even further away from the industrial revolutions of the last century catching on in other centres. Both regions were hit by economic problems. Yet, while migration from Locoal-Mendon was directed to other regions of France, emigrants from

Kinvara headed off for Britain, North America and Australia.

It is in the area of culture they seemed to have so much in common with us. Our ancestors had faced the problem of cultural identity about a hundred years ago in much the same way, reviving the interest in traditional music, language and customs. Apart entirely from the cultural correspondence between the two places, there is at present a fairly even level of interest in tradition in both communities.

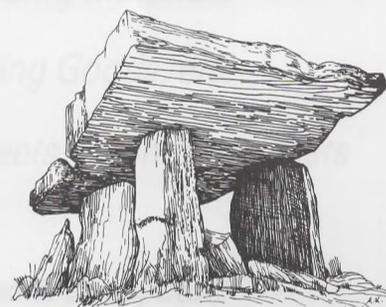
But no more of that sniping. The abiding impression of Locoal-Mendon at Easter '87 was hospitality, the people's friendliness, generosity, openness, joviality and concern. We supped and dined like kings. We were utterly spoiled. We'd encountered distant cousins who'd seen in us what we saw in them. We were pleased with what we saw. We'd sown the seeds of mutual respect. One place had become the outpost of the other. Formal exchanges of goodwill were made.

Little wonder then there were tears at our parting. Tears that continued to stream down faces until Tommy Farrell's muted bus had almost reached Roscoff.

Everyone had something in the boot of that bus. I had squeezed in a timber 35 litre wine barrel. Not loqn after arrival who should appear but Kinvara's veteran carpenter, Richie Burke. Without hesitation he hauled me back to earth recalling an incident, complete with names and times, when he and two colleagues repaired a whiskey barrel for my paternal grandfather. The twinning week had begun to recede in my memory, jostled out of place by the reality of my own heritage.

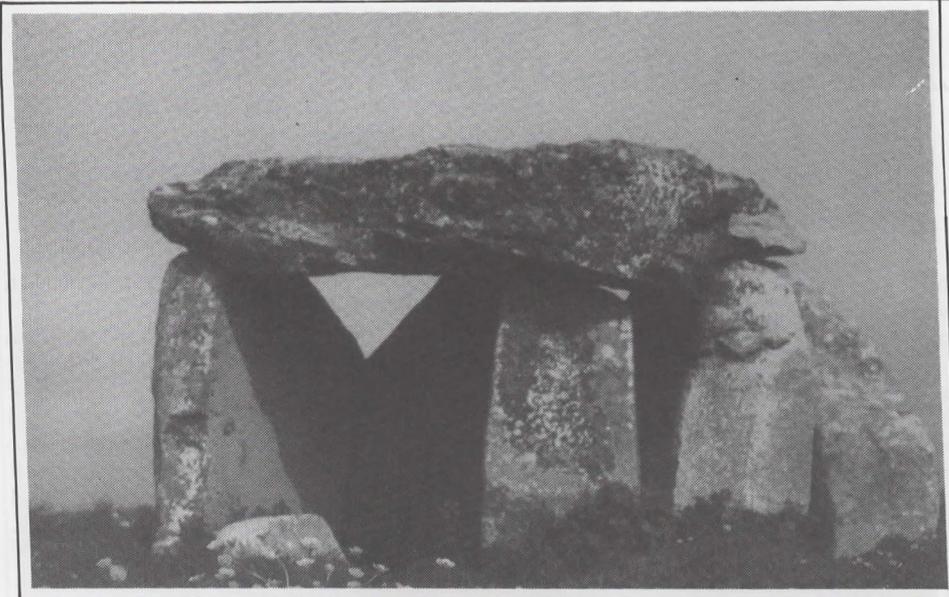
Before long now the twinning week in Kinvara will be in motion the roles of

Two similar megalithic monuments described by the Breton word dol-men meaning stone table.



Poulnabrone Portal Dolmen

From *The Burren, Ballyvaughan*. Anne Korff, Jeff O'Connell, Kinvara 1986.



Burial Chamber in Locmariaquer. From *Menhirs and Dolmens*. P.R. Giot, Bretagne, 1983.

Easter '87 being delightedly exchanged for the roles of August '88. The hosts then will be the guests now and the guests then showing how they do things their way. The party of 80 from Locoal Mendon can relax with the similarities and enjoy the variety.

What exactly are these Bretons looking out for? What, in any case, does twinning spell out? On the grapevine one hears it's

simply co-ordination of all concerned with some innovations here and there.

If that seems too much of an effort, just think of the value of twinning to the generations coming after us. Anyone wishing to lend a hand to furthering the twinning process, to promoting the programme devised by the Committee, will be more than welcome. The twinning

ceremonies and functions will be much more than about welcoming visitors. These ones are special.

John Flatley

A Kinvara, la semaine avant la rentrée va être la plus chargée de toute l'été. D'abord nous souhaitons la bienvenue à nos amis bretons qui viennent pour les fêtes irlandaises de jumelage entre Kinvara et Locoal-Mendon. Ça représente le fin de presque cinq années de travail par les deux comités. Depuis '84 il y a eu des échanges réguliers entre les deux communautés. Malgré les difficultés évidentes de langue, on a trouvé pas mal de choses en commun: Notre patrimoine celtique, nos racines dans la terre, notre caractère et tempérament.

Pour les cinquante irlandais qui ont voyagé en Bretagne à Pâques '87 pour les cérémonies bretonnes de jumelage, c'était une expérience mémorable. On a reçu un accueil si chaleureux que quelques uns d'entre nous ont exprimé la crainte de qu'on nous ne pourrions jamais l'égaliser. On verra!

Au cours des trois dernières années on noué des liens d'amitié et de bonne volonté. On a renforcé nos liaisons économiques et culturelles. Nous remercions nos amis bretons avec "Céad Mile Fáilte"

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Sub-Office — Kinvara — Each Wednesday

What's in a Name

What's in a name? Much, a little, a lot. Let's take the latter. That will put us on the right track. Doorus is a good place to start. Quinn is a good name to take.

Shortly after the effects of the famine had diminished c. 1850 George Quinn from Parkmore emigrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. His brother John, a linguist, and an aide to Florimond Count De Basterot, bought Doorus House and lands on the death of the Count. His daughter Cecelia married Michael Corless and took up residence at the square in Kinvara where his son carries on the family business. Now we have two names, Quinn and Corless.

Enter the name Fleming. During that period in Kinvara history, the business now run by the Corless family was previously owned by a family named Fleming, two of whom emigrated to Australia and settled in Melbourne. The

business later came into the ownership of their niece, Honoria Burke from Maree. At that time also Martin Corless lived next door where they ran a grocery and variety shop and bakery from where they delivered bread from Maree to Ballyvaughan. When Martin Corless married Honoria Burke the two properties became one.

A common bond united all three families, namely their love of horses. The Quinns were widely known for their horsemanship. Stories of their cross-country excursions on horseback are legion. Likewise, in Kinvara, the Corless's carried on the horse breeding tradition established by the Flemings. Their show jumpers and hunters graced the fields of Meath, Tipperary, Limerick, Clare and chased with the Blazers all over Galway. Florimond Quinn and Mattie Corless were members of the Galway Hunt.

Likewise the Flemings brought their expertise to Australia where they pooled their resources with George Quinn who had already established his own race track there. Then known as a flapper on the demise of George Quinn the Flemings expanded the operation and gave Melbourne one of its most famous assets, its racetrack. On this track is run the Melbourne Cup, a race which stirs national interest equal to that of a derby or a grand national. The state of Victoria comes to a standstill on that day, the first Thursday in November.

So what's in a name? Much, a little, a lot. Yes a lot. The lot on which Melbourne's famous track is built is called the Flemington. A name does mean a lot.

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Community Affairs

All organisations and clubs in the parish, except the Community Council, are single issue groups. This makes the realisation of their aims relatively simple and straightforward. The Swimming Club isn't expected to produce a play; the G.A.A. won't organise outings for the Senior Citizens; the Rowing Club won't campaign for the improvement of the areas water supply; Crunniú na mBád doesn't see itself as having a role in Adult Education. They all have specific and clear-cut aims.

This is where the Community Council presents a greater challenge to its members. Its brief covers all areas of life. It exists to preserve what is good in our environment and community life, to correct defects and weaknesses, and to continually improve the quality of life in our area for young and old, for long-established and new residents, for the town dweller and the rural sector. It is an all-the-year round movement with programmes and actions in all seasons.

Its range of activities is therefore diverse and demands dedication, initiative and perseverance from its members. Meetings are held monthly. Their function is to review the action taken since the previous meeting and to plan the implementation of action over the following month.

People who cannot afford the time to attend the monthly meeting should not become members of the Council, for they are expected to give more time to community activities than the mere two hours spent at a meeting. Talk is easy; action demands dedication, organisation and co-operation.

Kinvara Community Council has been fortunate in having sufficient members with the commitment to 'get things done'. In its most visible forms this is evident through the continual improvement in our marks in the Tidy Towns Competition; our ambitious Twinning Project with Locol-Mendon in Brittany; our having the most wide-ranging Community Games participation in County Galway, and possibly in all Ireland; our extensive adult education programme; our initiation of the Drama Group; our publication of Trácht and our help in having other works published; our attempt to establish a Summer School; our representations for the improvement of the Water Supply; organisation of entertainment for Summer visitors etc.

Community Centre

Our Community Centre is a valuable asset but one which demands time. The organisation of bookings, collection of rent and general day-to-day upkeep merit hours of attention every week. It has had its shortcomings but we are striving to correct them. Many have commented on how warm and comfortable it is now. For this we can thank the expert advice of Gerardine Quinn and Anne Korff who devised the colour scheme. Also the



A Symbol of Friendship.

dedication of Marian Connolly, Martha Kelly, Bernie Leech, Pádraig Walshe and P.J. Walshe, who gave generously of their time to making the Centre an inviting pleasant place. None of them are members of the Council at present, but they saw the work that had to be done and did it. Some members of the Council also gave generously of their time and talent, two of whom didn't miss even one day during the weeks of renovation.

But more extensive work has yet to be done. The help and co-operation of the many users of the centre is requested so as to ensure that everything in our Centre reaches the highest standard.

From June 1987 to June 1988 Jeff O'Connell was employed by the Community Council under a Social Employment Scheme. He has been very inadequately remunerated for the many hours of research and writing he has done. Our whole community must feel a greater 'sense of belonging', a deeper realisation of our local history, a finer appreciation of the monuments that are in the area, as the result of the publication of some of Jeff's findings. His location of 'new' source material promises even more interesting information to any historian, young or old, who feels inspired to do research.

Our community owes a great debt of gratitude, also, to quite a number of people in the area who very willingly, have shared their specialised skills with us. Among these I include Thomas Quinn, Gordon D'Arcy, Anne Korff, Brian Allen and Paul Brennan. We are indeed fortunate to have such brilliant people among us, especially when they are so generous with their talents. On behalf of the community, I would like them to know that they are very much appreciated.

Ar Aghaidh le Chéile

By now you will have seen our new crest. We hope it meets the approval of everyone

in the community and that it is adopted by all the clubs, organisations, and even private individuals. You will read about it in more detail elsewhere, but I think that the motto is a particularly appropriate one. It was suggested by my father, Freddie, and subsequently endorsed by the Twinning Committee who initiated the project to find a suitable crest for Kinvara. The Community Council then adopted it.

We should continually keep the motto before our eyes. Together there is no limit to what we can achieve. Disunity and bickering will isolate each of us in our own tiny shell. Puny minds look inwards; they destroy imagination and creativity; they show intolerance and bigotry. Let this never be the case in Kinvara. Let us reach out to one another in the true spirit of the



Tom Tannian hard at work.

'meitheal'; let us look beyond our own horizons to explore the thinking and culture of others; let us listen to one another in a spirit of comradeship and solidarity.

CREST FOR KINVARA

Our competition to design a 'Crest for Kinvara' announced in last year's TRÁCHT, didn't generate the interest of as many artists as we had expected, though we extended the closing date a few times.

However, the quality was good, and the submission of Mary Keane of Tramore, County Waterford was the one that immediately caught our eye. The slogan submitted with his design by F.L. Mac Eoin (Fred Johnston), formerly of Kinvara and now living in Dublin, was considered particularly appropriate. The two were amalgamated by Chris Hanly Johnston, and you can see the finished product in the back page.

The castle is a reminder of our heritage, extending back to the 7th century, and earlier, as is epitomised also by the name of the boat in the crest, Mac Duagh.

Our national flag is a symbol of peace between people of different background and culture, and it is therefore appropriate that it be seen flying from the castle. The Breton symbols are a reminder of the latter-day twinning of our communities, which are, paradoxically, so similar and so different in many ways.

The Galway Hooker is a reminder of the independence which existed between us and our fellow-Galwegians on the other side of Galway Bay. It also symbolises the finest features of our living tradition — our language, music and pastimes.



*Presentation of trophy and plaques to Kinvara Junior Pioneer Quiz Team.
Back (l-r): Tom Ruane, Craughwell; Paddy Geraghty, Rev. M. Keane, Richard Burke, Kiltartan.
Front (l-r): Paul O'Shaughnessy, Derek O'Connor, Noel Griffin. Not shown: Michael O'Sullivan.*

'Ar aghaidh le chéile' — forward together is a motto which we embrace because it upholds the fraternity and unity which we adopt through living in caring harmony in the one small area, while it also states our ideal to make our community one which will continually grow in spirit, prosperity and fulfillment.

We present the crest to all groups and individuals in the parish and invite them to incorporate it into their costumes and letterheads.

We have decided to divide the prize fund as follows:— £25 each to Mary Keane and Chris Hanly-Johnston, and £15 to

F.L. MacEoin. Congratulations to each of them, and many thanks to all who contributed designs.

Kinvara Tidy Towns



'A little more to the right!' Paddy Geraghty, Stan Mac Eoin, Marion Connolly.

1987 was a good year for Kinvara in the competitions, having gained first prize in category B of the County Council competitions and a substantial increase in marks in the national competitions. The effort in Kinvara is beginning to pay dividends and certainly the presentation of some private and business premises, indicates an awareness of the importance of good presentation and a growing pride in their own place. However, it must be said that plastic advertising signs eventually must go. Many shopkeepers throughout the larger towns and cities are now tearing down the old plastic shop signs and replacing them with "old world" signs such as appeared in the early part of the century. Lets hope Kinvara will give a lead and take the necessary steps to dispose of the plastic! And while Kinvara continues to improve its position in the competition it is at this stage that the competition is more intense and assessment more critical. It is important that not only are the major buildings, streets and open spaces presented well,

but also the *side roads, approach roads, minor buildings*, the appearance of which can make or mar the overall presentation of a town.

These are some of the problems we should note for 1989. Adjudication this year '1988' will take place during June, July and August and there will be no notification to centres which have been shortlisted. The results will be announced by mid September.

Paddy Geraghty, Chairman

Note: Sneem, the National Award Winners for 1987 are 23 points ahead of Kinvara. The markings were: Sneem 180, Kinvara 157. In 1977 Kinvara's markings were 122.



Kinvara Mayor and Mayoress installed at Social Services Annual Christmas Party: James Nolan, Curanroo and Mrs. Bridget Connolly, Kinvara.

News From Our Schools

Kinvara Pre-School Playgroup

Kinvara Pre-School Playgroup has once again had a very successful year. We had full groups for morning and afternoon. As we are a community playgroup, fund raising is an important part of our activities. This year we hosted Santa Claus' visit to the Community Centre. This has become a very popular event and contributes a substantial sum to the playgroup funds. We also held a Father's Day cake sale which was very successful.

It was a busy year for the children. They had a celebration on the first Sunday of Advent. For Christmas two groups formed in a charming Nativity play. During the final term they had their annual visit to Coole Park. This took place in the beautiful June weather and was much enjoyed by everyone.

The committee has undertaken the enormous task of decorating the Courthouse. This work is now well underway and we hope to have it completed before the start of the new year.

We would like to thank all the people who have assisted in this work and all those who have supported our activities during the year.

We have still got some vacancies for the coming year. You can contact Aine O'Connell or Ann Vesey.

The Committee is:

Joseph Kavanagh, Chairperson;

Sue Madden, Secretary;

Jean Greene, Treasurer;

Aine and Ann, Playgroup Leaders.

DOORUS N.S. — LOOKING BACK

On the last day of the Easter to Summer term I said goodbye to Doorus N.S. after eight years. I am going to miss all the friends I had.

Doorus N.S. was built in the year 1954, across from the old school. The land on which it is built was bought from Patrick Fahy, Rineen. Its name is St. Kieran's National School. It is a two-teacher school. The names of the teachers are Mrs. Peg Corless and Mr. Toddie Byrne. There is a basketball court at one side of the school and a pitch at the back.

I started school in 1980. On my first day at school when my mother came to pick me up at 2 o'clock I didn't want to go home. I made many friends when I started school in Doorus. (I was innocent then!)

Doorus school boys' hurling and football teams won the County cup for hurling and football twice in a row, in 1983 and in 1984. This year Doorus girls' camogie team got into the semi-finals but lost the match.

In 1981 Doorus N.S. went on their first school tour to Westport. Since then the school has gone to Dublin twice, Killarney, Fota Island, Cork, Boyle, Co. Roscommon and Westport again this year.

In 1986 the board of management decided to make some improvements in the school. Instead of the old gas system in the school they put in central heating. They put two radiators in each of the classrooms and one in each cloakroom and toilet. Instead of the old wood windows in which we had to stuff papers to stop the

draught coming in, they put in new weatherglaze windows.

The school sports, organised by the parents committee, were on the 15th of May this year. There were many events at the sports. The prizes for the winners were Taytos and bars. Medals were given to all the children who took part. Kathleen Connole from the Bank of Ireland gave out the medals to all who took part.

During the year, 5th, 6th and 7th classes



Anna Hynes, Parkmore.

did a project on the sea. It was an environmental project. It was on display in a secondary school in Athenry. A few weeks after the display we were invited to Gordon D'arcy's house and walked around Ballindereen shore and Cloghballymore wood.

There are forty seven pupils in Doorus school now. It is the biggest ever. There are twenty eight in Mr. Byrne's room and nineteen in Mrs. Corless's room.

Dick Flake taught gardening this year to the girls of 2nd and 3rd class. They grew

many kinds of vegetables in the garden, such as potatoes, peas, onions, radishes, lettuce and spinach.

I will never forget our trip from school into the past with Jeff O'Connell in 1987. Our first stop was at the impressive ring fort at Doon, near Ardrahan. There we went underground and were amazed at the intricate stonework of the souterrain. From there we went to Drumharsna Castle where the Black and Tans were billeted during the War of Independence. The we visited Nastaig Fort and the nearby

Crannagh Portal Dolmen. Our last call was to Kilmacduagh, where St. Colman founded his monastery. The Round Tower was fascinating.

This past year also, Margo McGeeney taught tin whistle to a group of boys and girls in the school. They are progressing well. They might be playing in the Christmas concert in Kinvara at Christmas!

I will always remember my school days in Doorus N.S.

*Anne Marie Hynes,
Parkmore.*

Clubs & Activities

Imshaol Beo



Imshaol Beo - For a Living Environment

Two years ago an environmental group was set up in Kinvara/Corofin area. Called 'Imshaol Beo' (For a Living Environment) it comprised people who felt concerned that the effects of the Chernobyl disaster were not been taken seriously enough by officialdom here. Also, the fact that the E.E.C. intended raising the permissible levels of radioactivity in foodstuffs prompted the group into collecting and making available information on the health effects of these increases.

Earlier on this year a well attended meeting in Kinvara Community Hall was addressed by Michael O'Sullivan and Dick Flake who spoke about the effects that radioactivity could have on farming and on the well-being of the community. In May, as steps were afoot to establish another environmental group in the Corofin/Ennis area, the Corofin members decided to direct their energies there. Meanwhile 'Imshaol Beo' felt the need to widen its scope of activities and became more active in local issues.

In conjunction with Tidy Towns 'Imshaol Beo' organised a 'Clean the Beaches Day' and Children's Art Competition which were held last June. The turnout was very good and the response excellent. The group also gave a talk on the dangers of nuclear waste dumping and its implications on Ireland at a weekend seminar for secondary school

students held in Doorus youth hostel at the end of June last.

The group meets on a regular basis and is anxious to hear from anyone who would like to become involved, phone 37357. Donations to a/c 14727087 Allied Irish Banks, Gort would be gratefully accepted by 'Imshaol Beo', and put to good use.

KINVARA SWIMMING CLUB

The demand for swimming lessons is enormous. With the limited resources at our disposal we are doing our best to meet the demand. If we had more instructors we could offer more classes every week to both children and adults.

We succeeded in having the Jimmy Cranny Swim School based in Kilcornan. We had hoped that many local adult competent swimmers would avail of the opportunity in having a training course nearby to become qualified instructors. Alas, while some have passed the Preliminary Teaching Award exam. there has been no candidate from Kinvara on the course leading to the Swimming Teachers Certificate award, though Rosemary Fahy from Kilbeacanty is now a fully qualified instructor and is going on to get the Advanced Swimming Teacher's Certificate.

Our life-saving classes, under the direction of John Curley, were very well attended. However, most of the participants were from Gort, Clarenbridge, Kilbeacanty and Oranmore, though credit is due to Brenda and Aideen Morgan who achieved the Intermediate Award of the Irish Water Safety Association. This is the basic qualification needed by lifeguards. Quite a few other Kinvara swimmers were awarded the Preliminary life-saving award.

The club participated in the Connacht Novices Gala and came home with a very creditable haul of nine medals. In the County Galway Community Games finals

the medals eluded our representatives though there were many fine performances by our swimmers, most of whom came in fourth position. The Green Island swim was won by Mark Conneely (Men's) and Linda Giles (Women's).

Our 'Family Hour' was enjoyed by a small number of families, but not sufficient to make it financially viable. Unless there is demand for it this will be repeated.

Our children's Saturday classes will recommence on 11th September. The bus will leave Nogra at 9.25 a.m. and Kinvara at 9.30. A course for adults will start on 13th September. The fee for the ten-week course will be £16, and classes will start at 8 p.m. each Tuesday. Arrangements for life saving classes will be finalised later and advertised through the Newsletter and notices.

In the past year the numbers attending both children's and adult's classes exceeded all previous records. We expect this upward trend to continue in the coming years, and we therefore call, once again, on competent adult swimmers to assist us in making the enjoyment of aquatic activities more widespread and safer by qualifying themselves as instructors and passing on their skills to others.

Any enquiries regarding Swimming Club Activities can be addressed to any of the following: Mrs. Maureen Connolly, Paddy Geraghty, Stan Mac Eoin.

PUBLIC HONOUR FOR KINVARA GIRLS

The outstanding bravery of three teenage Kinvara girls was publicly recognised at Kinvara District Court when Justice Albert O'Dea presented them with Comhairle na Mire Gile Certificate for saving human life at Traught Strand on 30th August, 1981.

Sisters Elizabeth and Michelle McCormack and Eithne Barry were preparing to go for a swim when they noticed a general commotion on the strand. The focus of the agitation was

three people who were in difficulties a considerable distance from the shore. The three girls immediately ran to the water and swam to the distressed bathers. By the time they reached them one had disappeared below the water. The other two, a boy and a girl, were carried to the shore by Eithne and Michelle. Elizabeth, meanwhile, dived ten feet below the surface and succeeded in locating the third swimmer.

On their way to the shore the three rescuers were aided and encouraged by an un-identified male swimmer, and when they reached shallow water medical help was at hand, and the three rescued swimmers were rushed to the Regional Hospital, Galway. Sadly, the teenage girl who was skillfully located and carried to land by Elizabeth, died after being in a coma for some days.

The bathers got into difficulties when they were stranded on a sandbank by the incoming tide. When they tried to walk back to the shore they found themselves out of their depth.

Eithne and Elizabeth were then aged 16 years and Michelle 15 years. Elizabeth is now married to Michael O'Brien of Craughwell and Eithne is preparing to sit her H.Dip.Ed. examinations in U.C.G. having graduated last year in Science. Michelle is at present working in Galway.

The three girls received their training in swimming and life-saving with Kinvara Swimming Club.



Seisiún in Kinvara Community Centre.

IRISH MUSIC CLASSES FOR CHILDREN

Irish music classes are held every Saturday in Kinvara under the tuition of Mr. David Hanrahan. Instruction is provided in a wide variety of instruments.

Classes will resume in September. For further information phone David Hanrahan (065) 25470.

Kinvara Pioneers

Kinvara Pioneers send best wishes to John Leech, Funchionbeg, Kinvara who received his Golden Jubilarian Pin and Diploma for having remained faithful to the Pioneer Pledge for over fifty years. The presentation was made during the Annual Pioneer Temperance Mass on 8th January.



At the launch of 'St. Colman's Church, Kinvara'. L-R: Canon O'Connor, Thomas Quinn, Bishop Casey, Fr. M. Keane, Gerardine Quinn, Bishop Casey, Fr. M. Keane, Gerardine Quinn, Jeff O'Connell.

Congratulations also to Mrs. Bridget Quinn, Ballybucke and Miss Maureen Farrell, Cahercarna. Both received Silver Jubilarian Pins and Diplomas.

Best wishes to the 32 young people who have joined the Pioneers and Probationers during the last year. Congratulations also to the Kinvara Boys National School Junior Pioneer Quiz Team on their great

win in the south Galway quiz competition. The team were presented with a Perpetual Trophy and a Plaque for each member of the team at a Social and Disco in the Community Centre, Kinvara. The team members were Derek O'Connor, Michael O'Sullivan, Noel Griffin and Paul O'Shaughnessy.

Making the presentations were:

Thomas Ruane, Craughwell, Chairman of the South Galway region; Rev. Martin Keane, C.C., President; Richard Burke, Kiltartan and Paddy Geraghty, Vice-President; Derek Quinn, Hon. Secretary, Kilbeacanty and Geraldine Kilkelly, P.R.O., Kinvara.

FILÍOCHT

Emigration

*The greatest bane of this our nation
Is the curse of emigration;
Our boys and girls are taught at home,
And then exported o'er the foam
To toil and sweat in foreign lands,
To earn their bread with calloused hands.*

*Our lifeblood flows fast away,
While employment is the tourniquet
By which our nation we can save
From sinking to an early grave
Youth and old age must always be,
But youth are the seedling of the tree,
And they, in turn, must fructify,
Otherwise, all must die.*

R.J. Johnston R.I.P.

The above poem was written by the late Richie Johnston in a period when emigration was one of our major social problems. Now that it is, once again, taking many of our best young men and women from us here in Kinvara and elsewhere throughout the country, we thought it appropriate to reproduce Richie's poem which succinctly sums up the terrible effects of emigration.

A Mother of Kinvara

*'Twas tenderly she spoke of it
That little Galway place
Kinvara of her childhood days
A smile upon her face
"A little Irish town", said she
Of quiet folk and true
"That's where I come from" and her words
Would touch the heart of you.*

*Why I could see the blessed town
Beneath a soft blue sky,
Thy kindly neighbours at their toil
Until the day passed by
And when I heard the Angelus
Ring out from Sacred God
Ring out its sweet Kinvara call
"Come lift our hearts to God".*

*And young and old on bended knees
Knelt where they were to pray
For pious were Kinvara folk
And still they are to-day
"For in our little Church" she said
"Where worships was a joy,
Kinvara souls found faith and peace
The world cannot destroy".*

*An Irish mother told me this
As only she can tell
While looking back in memory
On scenes she loved so well
And though the years have
wrought a change
And she is far away
I watched Kinvara's magic work
As 'twere yesterday.*

*How far her eyes lit up and lips
Gave voice to sweetest song
And how Kinvara music keeps
A soul from going wrong.*

*I know it, for I heard her sing
A soft and sad refrain
As she was dreaming all the while
Of being home again.*

*And as she sang like as she spoke
Of old and happy ties —
I'm not the least ashamed to say
The tears were in my eyes
For that dear Irish mother from
Kinvara of her birth —
Gave me a glimpse of heaven far
Upon this weary earth.*

Percy W. Reynolds in the Boston Pilot.

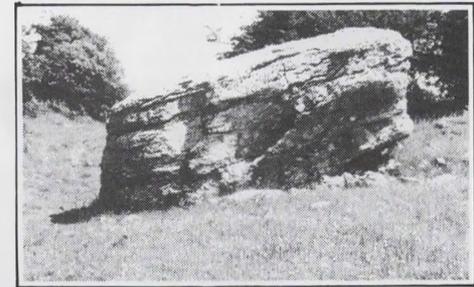
Moby Dick in the Burren

*We came upon you
Today's central image
Whale-shaped monolith
Basking in a pond of leafy sunlight
Trawling a harpoon of shadow;
All your sailors, your Jonah's
Secure
in your rocky innards.*

*The slow swell of the wind
Billowing up the limestone furls
Surrounds us in a sea of soft sound.
Centuries pour in waves around us
As we puzzle out your probabilities.*

*Tensile bones
You sleep so securely
Under your cap of rock
Where we lounge in the bee-strewn grass
Beside you
Posing in mock studies against your
Immensity,
Like tourists in those faded photos
Beside the Pyramids.*

*Here history aspires
To the symmetry of myth
And Melville's mighty symbol
Acquires accidental form
Beached in the burren
Above the limestone swea,
Intact, until flayed open
For secrets that Ahab never found.*



Sonnet

*Whose is the hand that plucked the mistletoe,
And brought it humbly to the ancient grove?
And those I dreamt I saw there, did they know
The meaning of the circle that they wove?
Within the darkened splendour of the wood
The still and quiet earth embraced the night;
While at the centre, undisturbed, there stood
A weathered stone, bathed in spectral
moonlight.
Some sacred presence dwells within this space
That modern arrogance will never sense;
Only a vision enflamed the surface
Sees as Nature's substantial eloquence.
The ancient grove, the mistletoe, the stone
All fragments of a text to us unknown.*

M. O'D.



County Intermediate Champions

Left to right (back): John Connolly, Leo Finn, Micheál Mahon, Mattie Whelan, Tommy Quinn, Tony Connors, Colum Corless, John Conneely, Donagh Forde.

Front: Joe Connors, Colum Muldoon, R.I.P., Jimmy Connors, Joe Mitchell, Willie Connors, Tom Curtin, Paul O'Shaughnessy, Kevin Sexton.

Paul Shaughnessy of Kinvara. Galway's right half-back, with the Munster Intermediate Hurling Trophy, which his team won for the first time under the Captaincy of Paddy Egan of Castlegar.

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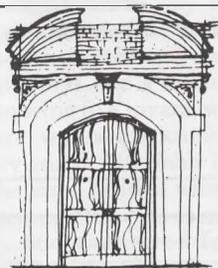
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Siobhan Ford, Cruinniú na mBád Princess 1988.



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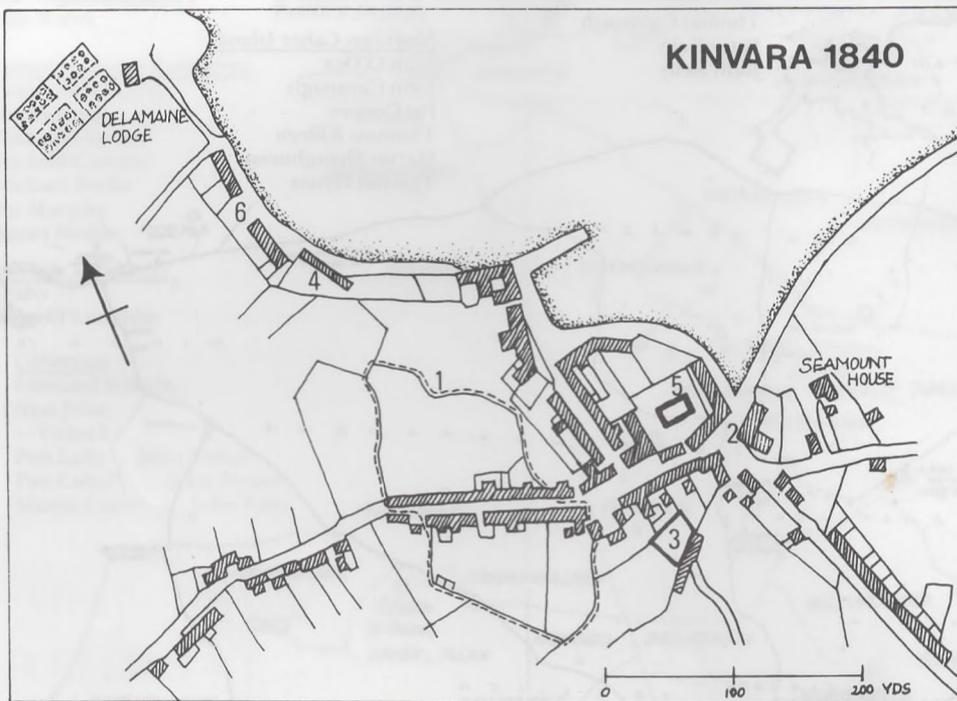


Mac Duash

KINVARA IN 1834

Last year we presented the first part of the Parish list compiled by the Rev. Thomas Kelly, Administrator of the Parish of Kinvara and Durus. This year we present the section dealing with the town of Kinvara and the surrounding townlands.

A list of the inhabitants of the United Parishes of Kinvarra, Durus and Killina by Reverend Thos. Kelly/A.D. 1834.



- 1 CHURCH OF IRELAND GLEBE
- 2 POLICE (R.I.C)
- 3 ANIMAL POUND
- 4 SCHOOL
- 5 ST. COMAN'S CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD
- 6 CLADDAGH

Kinvara

Tobias Butler Esq.
 John Burke
 Bart Bermingham
 James Fahy
 William Kelly
 Bernard Hynes
 Dominick Holland
 Bryan McGuinness
 Patt Minogue
 John Kempsey
 Patt Cunniffe
 Michael Donelan
 Martin Linnane
 William Mannion
 Fergus Kilkelly
 Patt Leonard, Publican
 Antony Kilkelly
 Bartly Flemming
 Patt Sheil
 Peter McDonough
 Patt Galvin
 John Moran
 Francis Kilkelly
 Francis Tolman
 Michael McInerney-Smith
 Patt Ward
 Patt McGirr
 Michael Fahy

Patt Crowe
 Thomas Tressy
 Patt Mannion
 Michael Kilkelly
 Martin Durrane
 John Kilkelly (Fergus)
 Michael Diviney, Shoemaker
 James O'Brien
 John Meehan
 Martin Washington
 John Curley
 Bernard Brogan
 James Tressy
 Dominick Burke
 Patt Connors
 William Burke
 Michael Tolman
 Joseph Heambury
 John Torpey
 John Daly
 Martin Scully
 James Jordan
 Patt Fahy
 Patt Fowley
 Michael Curley
 Patt Curley
 Rick Kilkelly
 Patt Pembrick

Patt Durrane
 Michael Diviny
 Bart Heynes
 Patt Leonard Tutor
 Michael Galvin
 John Burke Servt
 Matthew Winkle, carpenter
 Thomas Whelan, publican
 John Heynes
 John Heynes, Boat Builder
 Peter Murphy
 Bart Carrick
 James Diviny
 Mick Tully
 Robt. Price
 Pat McNamara
 Michael Healy
 Thomas Nilan
 James Pigott
 Laurence Williams
 Malachy Fahy
 Martin Burke
 Thomas Burke
 Michael Conole
 Thomas Hall
 Martin Nestor
 John Kean
 Joseph Hamberry

Martin Scully
 Martin King
 Thomas Whelan, Tailor
 Patrick Regan
 John Callinan
 Matthew Winkle, Boat Man
 Michael Burnell
 Patrick Whealan
 Mark Hynes
 Michael Glynn
 John Flemming
 Michael Dillon
 Darby Fahy
 Patt Malbroe
 Michael Rorke
 Owen Grady
 John Walsh
 Martin Daly
 Thomas Nolan
 Patt Curly, Butcher
 Patt Curly, Caveman
 Pat Curly, Carpenter
 Richard Long
 Martin Ward
 Edmond Hynes
 Patt Holleran
 Malachy Scanlin
 James Kilkenny

Ballybranigan

Mark Moran
Patt McCugo
Denis Madden
James Heynes
James Diviny
Michael Kyle
John O'Mara

Gortskeigh

Rodger Corcoran
Michael Gorman
Bryan Kean
Patt Quinn
Dan Lidan

Norman Grove

John Burke Esq.
John Walsh
James Loyons
Michael Burns
Michael Ballinger
George Hynes
Martin Caley
James Brogan
Patt Ford
John Linnane
William Quinn
Thomas Quinn
John Ward

Dungura

Cathal Roughan
James Winkle
Michael Conway
Patt McInerney
Edmond Conway
Nicholus Conway
Edmond Farrell
Antony Farrell
Thomas Conway
Edmond Hamberry
Tim Dunn
Michael Farrell
Peter Healy
John Holloran
Thomas Burke
James Burnell

Boherbee & Gurrawn

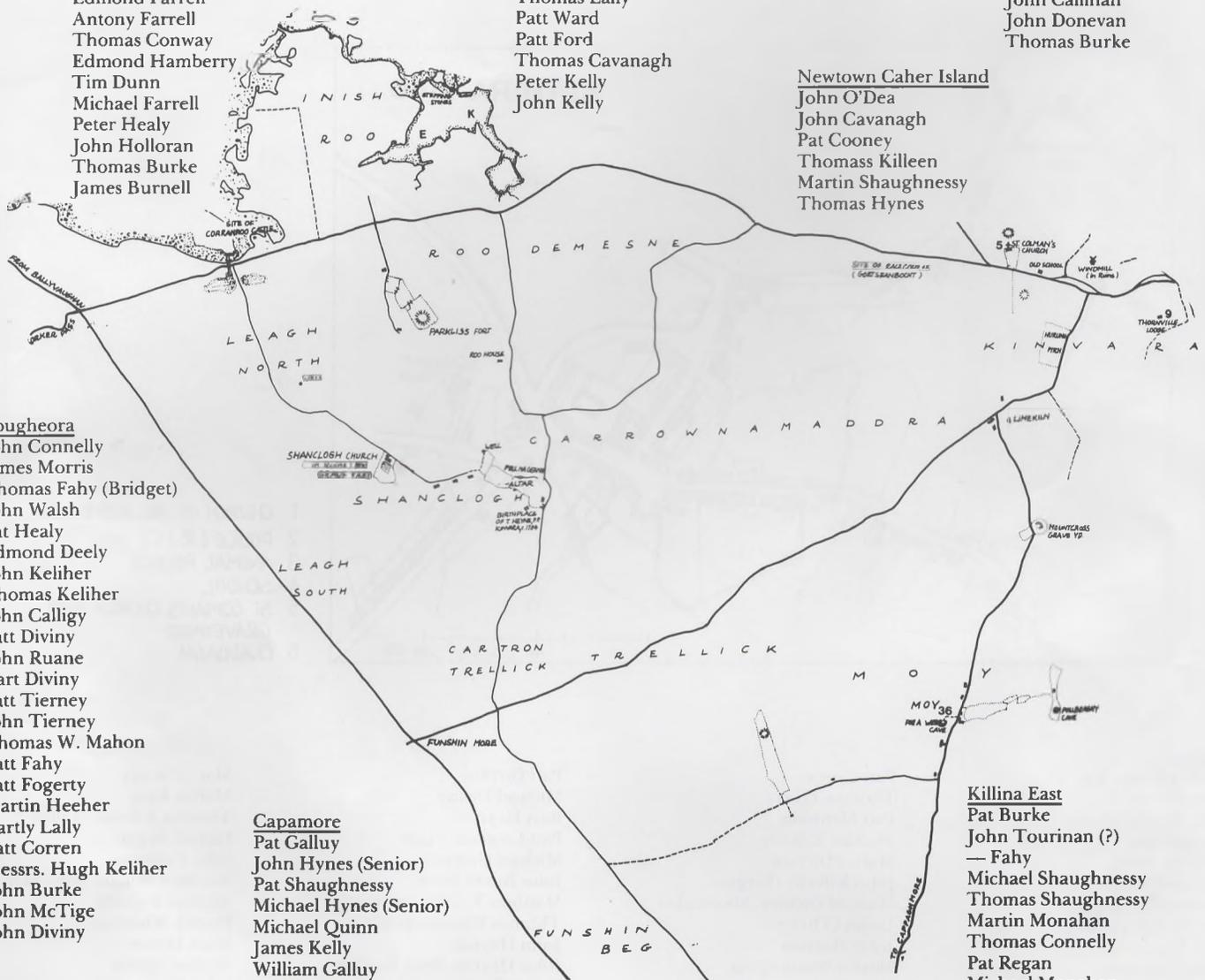
Michael Nilan
Pat Heely
Thomas Heely
— Kelly
Michael Kelly
James Kelly
Thomas Lally
Patt Ward
Patt Ford
Thomas Cavanagh
Peter Kelly
John Kelly

Caprecassin

Pat O'Dea
John Callinan
John Donevan
Thomas Burke

Newtown Caher Island

John O'Dea
John Cavanagh
Pat Cooney
Thomass Killeen
Martin Shaughnessy
Thomas Hynes



Lougheora

John Connelly
James Morris
Thomas Fahy (Bridget)
John Walsh
Pat Healy
Edmond Deely
John Keliher
Thomas Keliher
John Calligy
Patt Diviny
John Ruane
Bart Diviny
Patt Tierney
John Tierney
Thomas W. Mahon
Patt Fahy
Patt Fogerty
Martin Heeher
Bartly Lally
Patt Corren
Messrs. Hugh Keliher
John Burke
John McTige
John Diviny

Capamore

Pat Galluy
John Hynes (Senior)
Pat Shaughnessy
Michael Hynes (Senior)
Michael Quinn
James Kelly
William Galluy
Briam Galluy
Pat Hynes
Martin Donohoe
Michael Gorman
Mark Hynes
John Hynes (Jun.)
William Ballinger
Thomas Harrahill

Moy

John Farrell
Thomas Quinn
Michael Quinn
John Hynes
Thomas Keaghry
Dennis Keaghry
Pat Shaughnessy
John Cavanagh
Pat Cavanagh
Michael Keane
William Flanagan
Thomas Flanagan
Widow Flanagan
Patt Kean

Gortnaglough & Caher Irrela

John K--ff
Owen Kerns
Owen Larkin
Patt Hynes
Edmond Conneely
Peter Kennedy
Pat Kennedy
Pat Linnane

Killina West

James Grady
John Grady
Owen Donohoe
Michael Carney
John Hynes
Peter Larkin
Thomas Kenny (?)
Thomas Trassy
Thomas Cloonan (Sen.)
Thomas Cloonan (Jun.)
Bart Hynes
Michael Grady
Martin Cloonan
Edmond Grady

Killina East

Pat Burke
John Tourinan (?)
— Fahy
Michael Shaughnessy
Thomas Shaughnessy
Martin Monahan
Thomas Connelly
Pat Regan
Michael Monahan
Martin King
John Burke

Ardnagnough

Pat Diviny
Michael Diviny
Thomas Connors
Edmond Diviny

Ballybuck
 Thomas Hynes
 Martin Halvy
 Bart Walsh
 John Diviny
 Edmond Fahy
 John Fahy
 John Neilan
 John Fahy (Junior)
 Pat Higgins
 Matt Hynes
 Martin Hynes
 Thomas Lynch
 Thomas Heshin
 Darby Tressy
 Pat Fahy
 Pat Diviny
 John Dividane
 Thomas Hynes (Junior)
 Thomas Walsh

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 Pat Kempsey
 Michael Clayton
 Michael Cannon
 Michael Burke
 Pat Murphy
 James Neilan

Cartron bue & Pake (?)
 John Fahy
 Cornelius O'Loughlin

Cahereun
 Edmund Kilkelly
 Ned Joint
 — Cusack
 Patt Lally John Fallon
 Patt Cahel John Hynes
 Martin Coen John Fahy

Cloonasee
 Pat Burke
 Thomas Staunton
 Bart Holland
 Pat Skerrit (Senior)
 Pat Skerrit (Junior)
 Pat Moran
 Thomas Moran
 Thomas Welsh Senior
 John Fahy
 Thomas Skerrit
 Matthius Welsh
 Thomas Welsh Junior
 Michael Duggan
 James Ford

Cartron Kinvarra
 Bartly Heynes
 John Hynes
 James Burke
 Michael Walsh
 John Heynes
 John Kerrins
 John Connelly
 Patt Moran

Carunamadra
 Michael Parker
 Martin Casey
 James Linnane
 Michael Driscoll
 Fergus Kilkelly
 Thomas Cady
 John Haverty
 Michael Kean
 Pat Picker
 Pat Connole
 Pat Ward
 John Kean
 Peter Kean
 Edmond Nilan

Whinshinmore
 Laurence Donohue
 John Merrick
 Thomas Mogan
 Ferdinand Kerrins
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 John Keirce (Junior)
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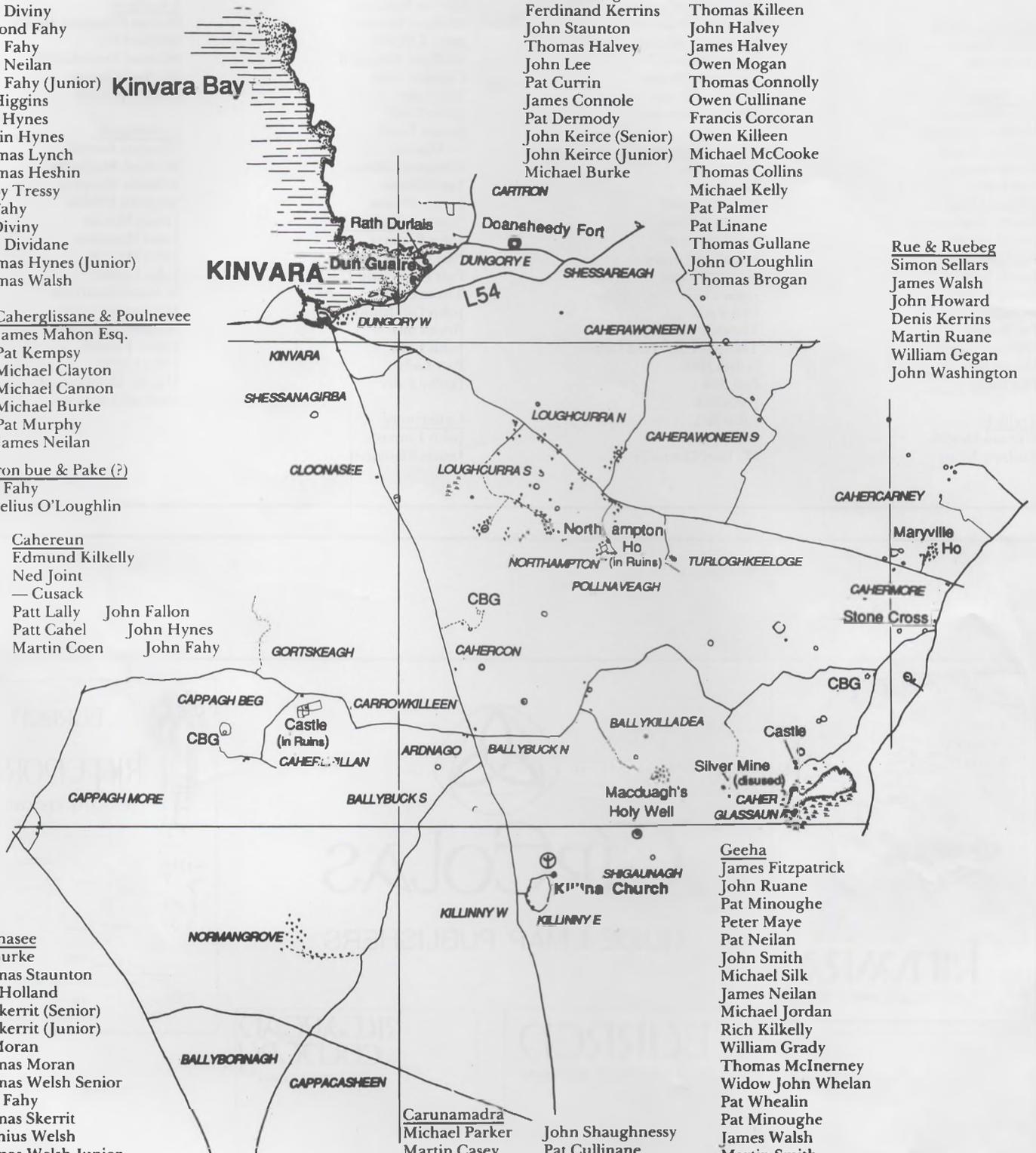
John Shaughnessy
 Pat Cullinane
 Thomas Kilkelly
 Michael Farrell
 Pat Fahy (Black)
 Peter Fahy
 Pat Fahy
 Malachy Conlan
 Laurence O'Loughlin
 John Gegane
 John Picker
 Bart Moran
 John Kean Linnane
 Mick Kean

Patt Collins
 Patt Liddane
 Patt Noon
 Tim Killeen
 Thomas Killeen
 John Halvey
 James Halvey
 Owen Mogan
 Thomas Connolly
 Owen Cullinane
 Francis Corcoran
 Owen Killeen
 Michael McCooke
 Thomas Collins
 Michael Kelly
 Pat Palmer
 Pat Linane
 Thomas Gullane
 John O'Loughlin
 Thomas Brogan

Rue & Ruebeg
 Simon Sellars
 James Walsh
 John Howard
 Denis Kerrins
 Martin Ruane
 William Gegan
 John Washington

Geeha
 James Fitzpatrick
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 Peter Maye
 Pat Neilan
 John Smith
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 Rich Kilkelly
 William Grady
 Thomas McNerney
 Widow John Whelan
 Pat Whealin
 Pat Minoughe
 James Walsh
 Martin Smith
 Michael Roche
 Joseph Walsh

Poulnagan and Shanclough
 Terrence Hynes
 John McNerney
 Pat Kilkelly
 James Linnane
 Michael Noon
 Thos. Roche
 Bryan Kean
 John Dermody
 John Hinely
 Francis Fearcloth



Cartron Trilock
Richard Cullinane
Laurence McHugh

Sleevena Lehee
John Mogan
Pat Kerins

Enisherue
John Sheehan
Michael Callinan
Michael Kean
Bartly Kean
Patt Ford
Thomas Douglas
Murty Washington
James Douglas
Pat Mannion
Bartly Jordan
Bartly Maye
— Fahy
Pat Ready
Michael Glynn
Murty Nee
Patt Fahy

Trellick
William Moran
Andrew Kean

Mark Moran
Patt Farrell
Martin Moran
Michael Callanan
Michael Holleran
Martain Callanan
James Moran
Laurence Moran
Thomas Moran
Thomas Mantan

Caheravoneen
John Kean
Patt Kean
Martin Quinn
Thomas Fahy
John Heaher
John Gill Junior
Michael Kean
John Fahy
Patt Fahy
Thomas Fahy
Thomas Fahy (old Caher)
James Hall
Patt Silk
John Silk
John Silk
John Hall
Michael Connelly

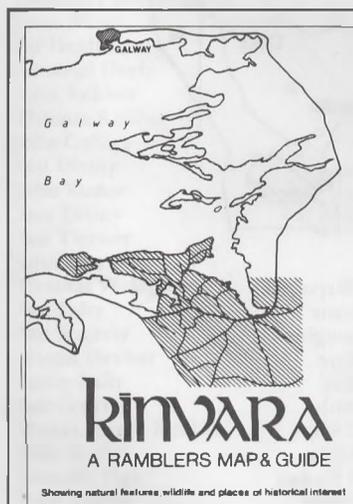
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Martin McGrath
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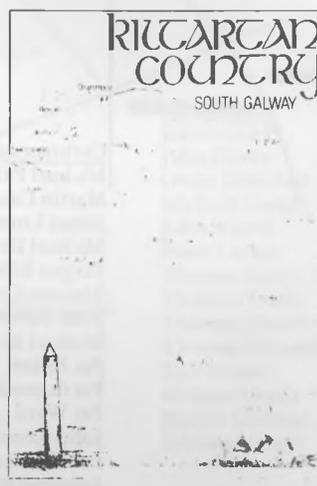
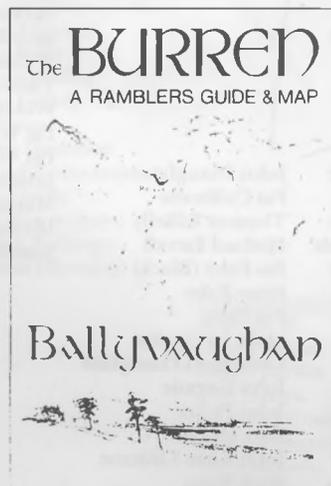
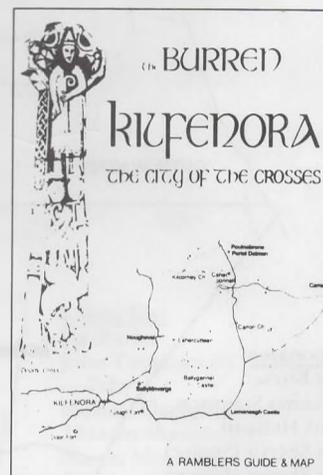
Cahercarney
Thomas Fahy

Knockroe
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Michael Foundation
Michael Calegy
John McGrath

Coursepark
Thomas Farrell
Michael Mullaville
William Murphy
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THE LAST OF THE BLACKSMITHS

(In Memoriam Jack Burke)



Many's the story I heard about the magic place that was the forge, for one of my grannies was a blacksmith's daughter, and proud of it too. But all I ever saw in my childhood was a garage on the way to school, when an old man did some smithing on the side-line, at the dead-end of the workshop. So it was like a dream come true when, on moving to Kinvara, we discovered that there was a blacksmith living down our very road! The man in question even had the same head of white hair, bony face and strong blue eyes as my Flemish forebearer ... and it appeared that his name was not un-Flemish either: Jack Burke. All those proud Burke, de Bürca, de Burgh and de Burgo people so well represented here in the West of Ireland, had their origins in Flanders, centuries ago.

It did not take too long to get to know all the neighbours and townspeople, as we walked and cycled a lot, and always made time for plenty of stops and chats along the road. For Jack Burke, trying to get his tongue around our outlandish names meant only a waste of time. He was a direct and practical man, and this exercise would only have meant a delay in ... winning our hearts. For that he managed well and from the very beginning. In order to make things simple for himself he

would refer to the three kids as "Mag", "Girleen" and "Manneen". I was to be "Mam" from then on, "Mam", short and sweet. "Himself" was initially also referred to as "The Boss", till he discovered that I was very much my own boss. So, for some reason only known to Jack, he was to become "Shteaven". Jack did have this positive leveling effect on people.

"D'ya know something about buildin', Shteaven?" Jack asked him one evening as he made his way up the hill.

"Mmm . . . Well . . . Errr, yes Jack. As a matter of fact I'm an architect, why?"

"Could ya drop in so to-morra and give us a hand with d'oul roof?"

All of that sweltering Summer's day they were at it, dismanteling the old galvanised that held the shed together, and letting many a pint of sweat in the process. Later on that evening, and after wringing out their shirts, they met up in Flatley's where the sweat was put back in by means of a couple of pints of "porter" (as Jack would call the Guinness.) True to old blacksmith's tradition, Jack appreciated a good pint as well as everyone who shared his views on the life-saving qualities of the stuff. And so he had an ex-lecturer from Bolton Street Tech having a look at d'oul roof, and agreeing with him, for years to come, on "d'atin' and drinkin' that is in the porter".

After our first meeting however, it would take a good few months before we ever saw Jack at work as a blacksmith, for his was a dwindling trade, now banished to the Folkparks of this land. One rainy afternoon, when taking a stroll into Kinvara — a habit we seemed to never grow tired of — we noticed good-humoured smoke-signals coming from the direction of the forge and our heart skipped a beat, and we duly hastened our step. Jack was inside the forge, rushing around like be-devilled to get all in readiness for the job, and he seemed not one bit surprised to see four heads appearing in the low half-door.

"Ow aaroo, Mam, Mac, a Girleen and little Manneen! Come in, come in, and welcome!"

The children were completely in awe of this cave-like stone-built place, which they only knew from its friendly outside: the stooped gable, the lively carpentry of the door embossed and painted on with strange marks and beautiful lettering . . . the hoops and the odd wooden cart-wheel, and interesting bits and piece of iron strewn along the roadside, a long-acre store of tempting toys for them, and it all covered by the gentle greens of the trees and the grasses. Here inside, everything was blackened by smoke and fire, and it all stood there shining in its own shade of . . . black. There was the gaping hole of the work-pit, the dark hatch, the obscure gleaming altar of the anvil, and the silent multitude of iron shapes and forms crowded around it. Biting thick smoke sought its way through to the doors and

the windows, and the (electric!) bellows purred like a contented black panther after his dinner, and now and then, when it was in the mood, it spat sparks out of the fire at the very heart of the forge. The iron, held in tongues, was busy working up a glow, and then Jack sprang into action with the hammer "ring-kingking, ring-kingking". An apotheosis of fumes, stench and hissing followed as the iron was tempered in a pot of dirty water. Magic it was! The kind of ancient ritual that still may dwell in our collective memory, a ritual as old as civilisation itself, but that had vanished with the advent of whipped ice-cream, supe-glue and electric blue baling-twine. Jack grinned a broad toothless grin at the amazed children and, dropping his work, he chased them playfully out of the forge with his huge blackened hands.

He took pride in his craft. With the tongues he went to pick up the fallen workpiece, and scrutinised it, and showed it to me, talking quietly. He was the last surviving blacksmith in Kinvara, where, up to twenty years ago, there were still three forges operating. His craft had grown on him through years of hard and persistent work. He was a well liked figure, and known from Ballinasloe to Spancill Hill. Up till shortly before his death he would go to (or, if it couldn't be otherwise, he'd be driven to) every fair in the area. He was known to every farmer, traveller and horse-man, for many's the horse he shod, and many's the hoof he pared, and many's the mile he cycled when on call of duty. His shoulder were moulded to the animals soft flank, and his hands by holding their leg in their firm grip. Jack worked very hard, every day of his life and in spite of his bad back. His labours never made him a wealth man, but he was a king at heart, as generous as old Guaire himself, and he loved to see everyone around him happy and content. If he knew someone somewhere could do with some spuds for their tea or the kindling for a Winter's fire, Jack would see to that in his own discreet way, his left hand not knowing about his right hand. And, same as he could hammer the sparks out of the anvil and the iron, same would be spark the crack and the fire in a crowd, when he would burst out in his characteristic high-pitched laughter.

In the Summer, or whenever there was a Summersday in it, Jack and his friend Martin would sit at the road-side on a block of stone, and observe all the comings and the goings, from way down to Sexton's Bar at their left, to Cloonnasee on their far right. People pushing themselves, or their shopping, their cattle or a loaded bike up hill would be welcomed at the summit by a friendly "Ow aaroo?", followed by a free assessment of the weather, past and present, and after a pause and a look at the clouds, a promise of what was to be. Jackeen Burke was very fond of the chat. But not only had the motorcars done him out of a job as a blacksmith, in a way, the

also deprived him of a great amount of socialising and news-gathering, and they only buzzing past, and there barely being the time for a quick wave of a hand or a wiggle of an indexfinger in recognition of the old institution gathered on the hilltop.

Very near the end of his life, when nothing, not even a sup of milk would hold body and soul together, a dropeen of porter, reluctantly and within measure administered to him, would make him last a little while longer. It was a gift that Jack was allowed to die at home, in his own bed, and surrounded by his own people. Not that it was the easiest task for his gentle

wife Mary, and Annie, and the nurse and the neighbouring women . . . Now and then Jack seemed to have it in his mind to go off to some horsefair, but he never got further than the edge of the bed, and it was an immense job to get him back in it. But all of these women set about their task with so much love and dedication that Jack, even after a long illness as his was to be, did not show the slightest trace of a bed sore. That hot Monday morning when he died, loving hands laid him out in his room, on his own bed, on snow-white linen and in his best suit, as was the custom in years gone by. A simple crucifix and two

burning candles stood by his bedside, and friends and neighbours came in an hourlong quiet procession to bid him farewell and say a little prayer for him.

After closing time, we often walked the last biteen of the road with Jack and we'd see him off at his gate. The morning of his passing away he looked so beautifully at peace, and a glimpse of a smile on his face told us of how, at the other side of this Gate all was love and brightness. And God knows, there might even be some heavenly forge set aside for him, down some hawthorn-scented little boreen, West of Paradise.

Leen Vandommele

Transition 1987-1988

Births:

Colette Catherine to Thomas and Mary Gill.
Paul Francis to Patrick and Eileen Keane.
Conor Martin to Thomas and Teresa Leech.
Catherine to Gerry and Bernie McCormick.
Christine Francis to Paul and Marian Coady.
Róisín Mary to Gerard and Mary Callanan.
Elaine Carol to Michael and Ann Burke.
Diarmuid Pádraic to Thomas and Mary Mahon.
Stephen to Michael and Breda Moloney.
Michael Frederick to Derek and Anne Smyth.
Lisa Ann to John and Nora Glynn.
Claire Antonette to Martin and Francis Shaughnessy.
Stephen Albert to Thomas and Annette McCormick.
Eoin Joseph to Patrick and Fiona Quinn.
James Francis to James and Muirean Simons.

Aidan Gerard Colman to Stephen and Breda Moylan.
Marian Francis to Eamonn and Ann Hynes
Laurence Majella Patrick to Martin and Catherine Greene.
Ciara Marie to Martin and Kathleen Huban.
Niamh Joschica to Basil and Geraldine Tuke.
Laura Maria to Michael and Carmel O'Connor.

Marriages:

Gerard Monagle and Maura Keane.
Christopher Sweeney and Heidi Krause.
Patrick Fogarty and Joan Kavanagh.
Thomas Flanagan and Anne O'Connor.
Michael O'Connor to Carmel Broder.
Thomas Costello and Eva Quinn.
Kieran Whelan and Sally Woods.
Eamonn Bermingham and Carmel Tuohy.

Deaths:

Patrick Joseph Keane
Mary Kavanagh
Lena Shaughnessy
Peter Bohanan
Mary Kate Finnegan
Martin Conole
Mary Shaughnessy
Stephen Moylan
Bernard Canon Mulkerrin
John Whelan
Patrick Curtin
Margaret Keane
Mai Connolly
John Quinn
Thomas Nolan
Sean Connolly
Jack Burke
Aidan Muldoon
Colm Muldoon
Peter Kavanagh
Pakie Moran

MIKE FOLEY

Turf Accountant

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