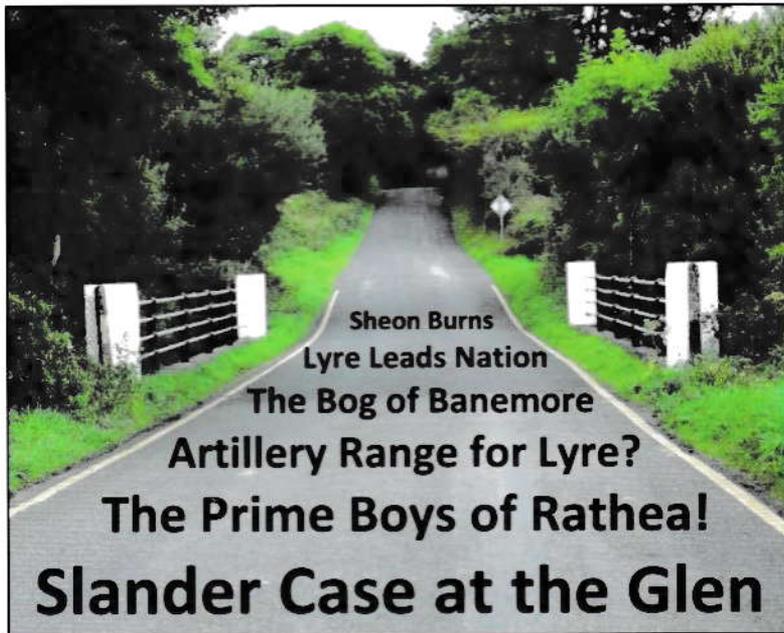
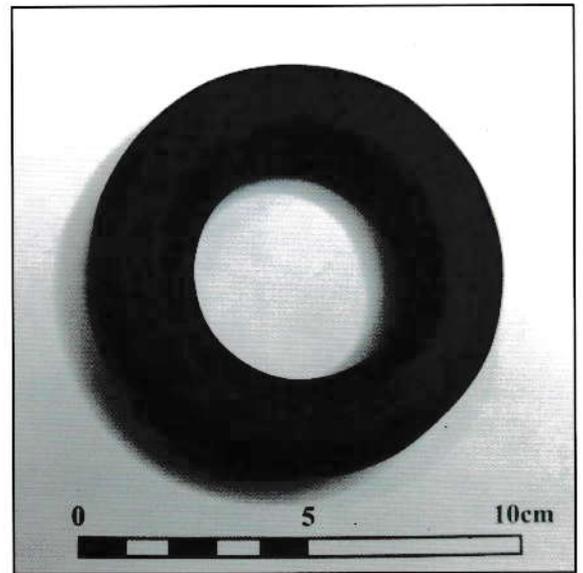


# The Lyreacrompane and District Journal

Number 12 December 2017 €10



## The Lyreacrompane Find

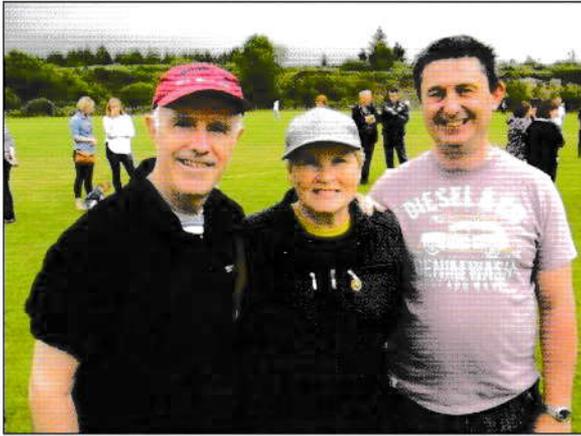




Meeting up at the Ireland/Italy World Cup game in London - Eirn Lyons, Sean Dillon, Michael, Caitriona and Tony Lyons.



Breda (Nolan) Flynn and brother Tom Nolan



Enjoying Lyre Sports Day 2017



Mary Murphy Kelly holding Jeremiah with her father Bill Murphy and in front Helen (now Noonan) and Kathlyn Kelly (early '80s). Centre photo - Tommy Quille and John Whelan at Dan Paddy. On the right Amalie and Finn Harrington from Tipperary (with Lyre connections) celebrating St Patrick's Day.



Mary and the late Billy Keane casting their vote and on the right Pat Quinn and the late John Neville.

# The Lyreacrompane and District Journal

Number 12 December 2017

You are welcome to the Lyreacrompane and District Journal, number twelve. In these days of Donald Trump, the climate change he denies and the ballistic missiles of Kim Jong-un, it's nice to take a break from the madness and look at our own community, past and present. By its nature our Journal generally looks to the past but also records the way we live here now because those articles and photos will, all too quickly, become a record of our past too.

Once more the Journal's Bank Account is in the black thanks to your support for the last issue which had strong sales. This has, once again, enabled us to produce this issue without seeking advertising or sponsorship. Thanks to Kay O'Leary who has, once again, used her research capabilities to bring invaluable input to this Journal. Special thanks to Jack Joyce and his brother Dan for unearthing 'The Lyreacrompane Find' at the National Museum. We are also indebted to Billy O'Connell, Sean and Mary Whyte, John Stack, Buddy and Mary Kelliher and to so many people whom we have approach for little nuggets of information or clarification and to all who have contributed articles or photos. There would be no Journal without you. I'd also like to thank the History Section of Tralee Library and The National Archives and National Museum.

The rich history and heritage of the Lyreacrompane district and community certainly continues to provide material worth recording. We hope you enjoy what you find within the covers of this Journal and that the material may prompt and encourage you to write for Journal number 13.

**Joe Harrington**

*Editor*

Tel: 087 285 3570

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## Tribute to the late Fr Pat Moore

who died on May 1, 2017

*Sonny Egan*

The sad news has spread, Fr. Moore is dead,  
it was on the 1st of May.  
Thousands mourned his passing,  
on that lovely summer's day.  
Fr. Pat was loved by one and all,  
the old, the sick, the young  
And in many sad, heartbroken homes,  
his praises will be sung.

Your gentle ways won many friends;  
you were so kind to all.  
Children and teachers, in the schools,  
looked forward to your call.  
With wisdom in your stories,  
you always liked to say  
Truth, Honesty and Forgiveness  
will always win the day.

O'er the airwaves with your guidance,  
you helped us on our way.  
On programmes like "Horizons" or  
"A Thought for the Day".  
Your plays "The Pimple" and "The Wart"  
were full of wit and charm  
And that illness blog, your masterpiece,  
called "Weathering a Storm."

McMahon, Kennelly and J. B. Keane,  
to their writings you would relate.  
At the Rambling House you did recite  
Sean McCarthy's 'Darling Kate.'  
At weddings you would tell a joke  
and end up with a song.  
As Fear an Tí when doing MC,  
you would move the show along.

Your ministry took you to Listowel,  
Irremore, Rathea, Lixnaw.  
Also, Gneeveguilla, Lyreacrompane  
and Duagh.  
As a priest you did your duties  
and for happiness you would pray.  
As you spread God's word throughout the land  
in your own special way.

No more you'll see your homestead,  
in Littor Road, Asdee  
For you're laid to rest with your kith and kin,  
in Aghavallen cemetery.  
The people who have cared for you,  
God, his blessings on them will bestow.  
May The Lord above pour down His love  
on your noble, gentle soul.

## Knocknagoshel on the Hill

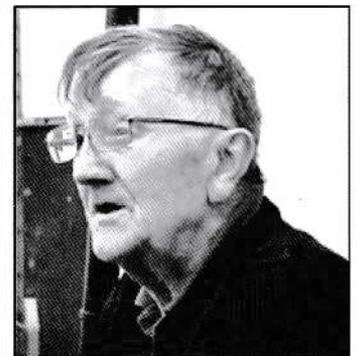
*Joe Harrington 2009*

*I can tell by that spire yonder  
That I need no longer wander  
And the bell that's ringing seems to let me  
know*

*I'll be seeing familiar faces  
in those old familiar places  
For I'm walking where the Abhbeg waters flow  
In the little square I'm greeting  
The old friends I am meeting  
Where Charles Steward Parnell  
is honoured still  
In the fight for liberation  
Arose the people of the nation  
And so did Knocknagoshel on the hill.*

*In the little bars old neighbours  
Are resting from their labours  
And the talk is of the Gaelic games they play  
And the heroes are debated  
and the battles are related  
And Eddie Walsh was mighty in his day  
There's the sound of fiddles playing  
And I'm thinking about staying  
To watch the music makers ply their skill  
Or to hear someone reciting  
About the Kerry rebels fighting  
Around old Knocknagoshel on the hill*

*I may decide I'm staying  
And never more be straying  
From this village that I love so well  
But the wanderlust is on me  
There are places that I must see  
So the roads I'll travel for another spell  
But sometime around the next bend  
My days of wandering will end  
And I will see a sight to make me trill  
For my final destination  
Is my favourite in creation  
It's my own Knocknagoshel on the Hill.*



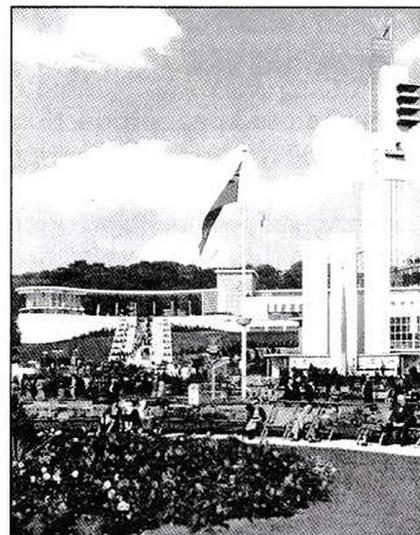
*Fr. Moore RIP checking out an earlier Journal and on the right the legendary Tom Greaney RIP from Knocknagoshel.*

## Sod of turf from Lyreacrompane plays a starring role

It has long been forgotten by many but a humble sod of turf from Lyreacrompane once featured on display at one of the world's biggest exhibitions. On May 5, 1938 the Empire Exhibition was opened to the public in Glasgow. This was one of the last great Exhibitions of the Commonwealth. Hitler was on the move in Europe and in a Glasgow that was in an economic depression the organisation of this massive event was intended to show power and unity of the Commonwealth and hope for the future at more local level.

The Ireland of the times was still part of the Commonwealth and the Government was not going to leave the side down. Three hundred Irish companies were mustered to show their wares at the Irish Pavilion at the exhibition. One of those firms was the Turf Development Board, the forerunner of Bord Na Mona, and the week before the exhibition opened the Irish Press of April 26 1938 carried the news that... *"One of the exhibits will be that of the first sod of turf cut by the machines on the Lyreacrompane Bog, Co. Kerry - the first large mechanical production scheme initiated by the Turf Development Board on which production commenced last month"*.

There is no record of what people thought of the performance of our sod but the exhibition had its one millionth visitor within nine days and 13 million showed up in the six months it was open. There were 80 Pavilions on the 175 acre site of Bellahouston Park. One thing for sure about the sod of turf from Lyreacrompane - it would have felt right at home weather-wise. During the six months of the exhibition only three Saturdays were without rain. 50% more rain fell throughout the duration of the Exhibition than over the 35 previous years!



*Part of the massive Glasgow Exhibition with the Empire Tower to the right and, below, the Irish Pavilion at the Exhibition where the first sod of Turf cut from Lyreacrompane Bog was on display.*



### **The Casement Connection**

On May 3rd, 1920, three RJC men were cycling from Listowel to Ballylongford when they were ambushed at Galebridge by the Ballydonoghue company of the IRA. In a bloody struggle, Sgt. Francis McKeena of the RIC was killed. It was Sgt. McKeena who had arrested Sir Roger Casement in 1916.

### **How Grand**

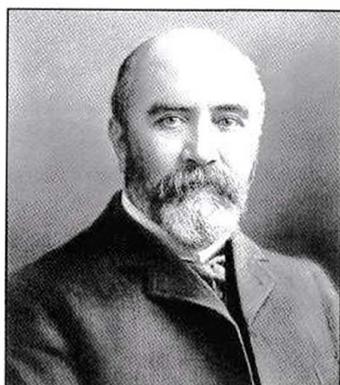
How grand, mid all this  
world's strife  
If we could pile a golden  
treasure  
Of memories on the road  
of life  
To which we could look  
back with pleasure

*Ned Buckley (Bard of  
Knocknagree)*

**When Lyreacrompane was  
Leading the Nation  
in mechanised peat production**

Sir John Griffith (1848 - 1938) was born in Holyhead, Wales but spent most of his professional life in Ireland and while politically conservative he was considered by many to be the top engineer of his time. Turtle Bunbury has written about him and his intervention into peat production.

*"In 1917-18 Sir John was appointed chairman of the Irish Peat Enquiry Committee. The Commission reported on the practical possibilities of turf production. Both the British Government and the Free State Government failed to act on his recommendations. In 1924, Sir John took the bull by the horns, purchased two bogs at Ticknevin and Turraun in the Bog of Allen and set up the Leinster Carbonising Company.*



*John Griffith*

*The venture cost over £70,000 of his own money and was to prove a massive inspiration to Irish peat industry. He drained the*

*bog/and and built a peat fuelled power station which drove a Wielandt excavator. His aim was to develop on a large-scale, the production of power from peat with recovery of products of tar, and of fertilisers. He carried out, at his own expense for many years, industrial research into the economics of the Peat Resources of Ireland, and on his former property at Ferbane is to be seen one of the most modern continental type of automatic peat-winning and sod-spreading plants. The excess peat was then taken by the Grand Canal for sale in Dublin".*

In 1933 C.S."Todd" Andrews became an official of the Department of Industry and Commerce and established co-operative turf societies on a county basis to promote the production and harvesting of hand-cut turf and facilitate its direct sale by the producers. In that year 33 societies registered, followed by another 124 in 1934. Some were more successful than others and the Turf Development Board (TDB) was set up to take charge of those that survived the first couple of years.

One of those Societies was the Ivy Bridge Society in Lyreacrompane and the Kerry News of March 5, 1937 reports well on their work. *"Great credit is due to the Ivy Bridge Turf Society Ltd because it may be said that this district had never been heard of until the Society*

*availed of the Government's offer of co-operation for peat fuel development about three years ago. Since its foundation they have made great strides and, no doubt, put up a great case to the Turf Development Board whose engineers have, for the past few months, thoroughly investigated the bog's possibility."*

The report went on: *"£23,242 has been allocated for the development of the Lyreacrompane bog... The Society has also been demanding that the main roads leading to the district be repaired... especially in regard to the main road to Listowel..."* Bill Nolan was secretary of the Ivy Bridge Society.

At national level what was happening was that in 1936 the Turraun peat works in West Offaly, which had been established in 1924 to produce machine turf, had been handed over to the TDB by its founder, Sir John Purser Griffith, for the estimated value of its fuel stocks (£6,500). {The area is now the Lough Boora Parklands nature reserve).



At the same time a delegation was sent to the continent to study German and Russian methods and its report recommended that the German system of machine

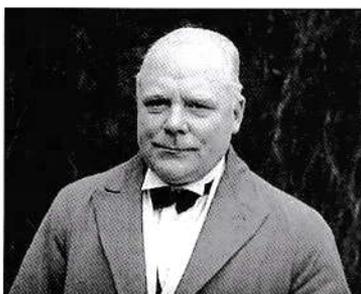
turf production (similar to that employed at Turraun by Purser Griffith) be adopted.

Arising out of that report the TDB, in 1936, acquired a raised bog of some 4,000 acres at Clonsast in Co Offaly and a mountain blanket bog at Lyreacrompane, in Co Kerry. These bogs were cleared and drained and provided with railways, machines, workshops and offices. The output from these and future developments were to remove Ireland's dependence on imported fuel. The war soon made this policy an urgent necessity.

Newspapers of the time referred to the Lyreacrompane works as a "*local Klondyke*" that was placing the area on "*Ireland's industrial map*". The preparation for turf cutting involved putting in nine miles of drains (described by some as mini-canals) and twelve miles of sub-drains. The Lyreacrompane works was geared to producing 15,000 tons a year providing employment for 150 people in the busy period and up to 60 in the slack times. The technical staff included Manager, Mr Coote, the secretary was Mr Gafney, Mr O'Gormon was the bog foreman and Harry Starcken was the Machine foreman.

The shortage of petrol and diesel during the war years forced the TDB to refocus on producing large quantities of hand-won turf for distribution in Dublin and elsewhere. The

most concentrated attempt to exploit the resources of the bogs took place during this period. Thousands of acres of bog were purchased by the TDB and by 1941 around 1,000 bogs were being worked in every county in the Republic.



Hugo Flinn TD Cork

In 1941 coal imports for domestic use fell drastically. Hugo Flinn T.D. was appointed Turf Controller and under his direction four major projects promoted the saving and distribution of turf.

A County Council scheme was established whereby each Council took responsibility for the production of turf. This scheme produced over three million tonnes of turf in the period to its termination in 1947. A major Government campaign was organised to encourage private turf production; the Turf Development Board handled the publicity and marketing. A crash expansion programme on the large bogs of Kildare and adjacent counties, the 'Kildare Scheme', was entrusted to the Turf Development Board. This scheme involved the drainage of 24,000 acres of bog and the building of fourteen residential camps to house the workers. The

scheme produced some 600,000 tonnes of turf in the period to its ending in 1947.

The Turf Development Board produced high-grade machine turf at its three bogs, Lyreacrompane, Turraun and Clonsast and this was allocated to cheap fuel schemes for the urban poor. The TDB also re-started Lullymore briquette factory and the briquettes were allocated to priority industries and the railway system. Todd Andrews remarked that as a result of these schemes during the war "no-one died of cold... or had to eat un-cooked food".

The big advantage machine turf had over hand won turf was the quality of the sod. Turf cut by sleán produced paper light top sods of little heating value while the black sods from further down were prized for their heating properties but tended to break and crumble easily when handled and transported. On the other hand the machine pulped up the peat so that each sod extruded was composed of peat from all depths. In order to highlight this breakthrough in consistency the Board marketed the machine turf as 'Turfuel' and was not shy in its claims on quality and effectiveness. There was no shortage of distributors.

**JOHN GLENNY,**  
Well Lane, RATHKEALE,  
Sole Distributor of "TURFUEL"  
in this district.

Hitler was dodging a bomb blast in a Munich beerhall and while the song 'McAlpine's Fuselers' had the Germans heading for Poland and the Paddys for Holyhead' there were not too many heading that way out of Lyreacrompane. Instead people were traveling from far and wide for the work offered and anyone with a lorry was confident enough to put an advertisement in the papers as distributors of Turfuel.

These are some of the advertisements carried in the Kerryman of November 4, 1939.

THE FUEL OF THE FUTURE—TURFUEL.  
GET YOUR SUPPLIES FROM  
Michael Collins, Knockariddera, Knocknagoshel.  
Any Quantity Supplied. — Lorry Deliveries.

"TURFUEL" at its best  
MAY BE HAD FROM  
M. McCARTHY,  
Coal Merchant, FOYNES.

The AGENT for  
TURFUEL in ABBEYFEALE  
Is DANIEL TOBIN, GARAGE PROPRIETOR.

PLACE YOUR ORDERS FOR  
**TURFUEL**  
WITH THE FIRM which has the record of Selling the first SOD of Lyreacrompane Machine-Won Turf. We distribute the Largest Quantity list year, and we lead Heading the List of Sales this year.  
SPECIAL TERMS FOR QUANTITIES. NO ORDER TOO BIG OR TOO SMALL. ALL RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION. Inquiries Solicited.  
M. J. Moloney & Co., Wholesale and Retail Turfuel Distributors, Lyreacrompane, Listowel.  
Phone Listowel 32.  
CONTRACTORS TO THE BOARD OF WORKS (Government) BUILDINGS, EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS, HOSPITALS, INDUSTRIAL CONCERNS, ETC.

Time has faded the print on this advertisement but the firm does claim to have the record of having sold the first sod of Lyreacrompane machine-won turf. Another article in this Journal would dispute that claim ☺



**THE FUEL OF THE FUTURE**

TURFUEL— which is the name of the Turf (macerated and spread by the most efficient Turf machinery in the world) that comes to you from the mountain bog at Lyreacrompane is a fuel of supreme efficiency. It is hard and of uniform density - slow burning - hot - clean and economical - with a very low ash content. It is not only ideal for domestic use :-

Tests Have Established Its Amazing Efficiency for Commercial and Industrial Use. Information concerning these tests will be made available by the Turf Board on request

ARE YOU BURNING TURFUEL? — IF NOT GET A SUPPLY FROM YOUR LOCAL DEALER

**BURN TURFUEL**

IN YOUR RANGES AND GRATES — AND IN YOUR POWER PLANTS

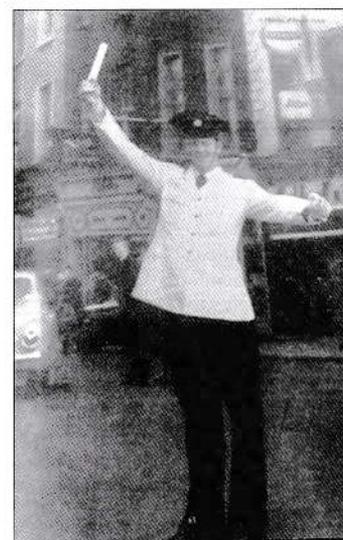
## British Soldiers killed in Ireland 1919-21

The exact number of British soldiers, including Black and Tans, killed in the war of Independence will probably never be known. Apart from those recorded as killed in action there were those who went missing (some of whom were deserters) or who were killed by the IRA and buried in unmarked graves.

- Killed in action - 180 approx.
- Killed accidentally by firearms - 56
- Suicide - 26
- Murdered by another soldier - 4
- Accidental deaths from non-firearm related accidents - 48
- Illness - About 100 (mainly from Spanish Flu).

So, while about 180 died in action over 230 died of other causes.

## On Point Duty



Gay Starcken not directing truck-loads of Turfuel in Lyreacrompane - although he would have seen plenty of them as a young man. His father was Harry, the machine foreman. Gay, retired from the Gardai, lives in Westmeath, and he and his daughter Helga regularly visit Lyre.

## It could have been a case of Keep Your Head Down

Joe Harrington

Lyreacrompane was once seriously discussed by the British War Office. One can only imagine the difficulty the top military brass had in trying to pronounce the name!!! What we do know is that they quickly passed on the issue in hand to their man in Tralee, Colonel Turner, who believed that, in the south of Ireland, the County of Kerry was the most suitable and accommodating place for an artillery range.

The year was 1888 and there was no artillery range on the island at the time. British soldiers stationed here had to travel to England for training in the use of the big guns. A Battery had been established off Tarbert since the time Napoleon was half expected to sail around Kerry Head on the next tide. It was suitable for navel practice.



Tarbert Battery Fort built in the 1790s and demolished in 1963. Alongside this building sixteen 24-pounders and six 6-pounders were mounted on gun platforms formed of stone slabs from Shanagolden.

A land range would have to be four miles in length and at least two miles wide, with,

understandably, no houses or other inconveniences in the way.

One of the two areas favoured for the range was a mountain slope at Inch near Annascaul. The other was Lyreacrompane in the Stacks and Glanaruddery mountains. There were some dwellings in the vicinity of the Inch site but in the case of Lyreacrompane the locality was described as "*an extensive tract abounding in waste and derelict farms, the property of the Hurly minors which had been under the management of Miss Lucy Anne Thompson*".

Miss Thompson had indeed enforced an extremely high level of evictions of those unable or unwilling to pay the excessive rent hikes she introduced. The fact that the area was considered as empty enough of human habitation shows that the Hurly's and their manager, Lucy Anne, had little success in re-letting the farms – land grabbers were, it seemed, in short enough supply in Lyre.

The proposal of an artillery range in Lyreacrompane must have been mouth-watering for the landlord. The British state renting the area from him would ensure a guaranteed income and no pesky peasants. On the other hand the hope of the former tenants regaining their holdings would be, so to speak, blasted forever. The contrast was stark according to the *Kerry Sentinel* of March 9, 1888 – "*the roar of the artillery or the rattling of wheels of the farm cart laden with the fruits of the industrious peasant*".

The cannons never echoed along the Smearlagh valley. More research is needed into why the plan was dropped. What happened instead was that, nationally and locally, evicted tenants refused to lie down. With the National Land League and the Plan of Campaign behind them they eventually brought down the Landlord system. Lucy Anne lies in a Blennerhassett tomb in Droumavally Graveyard just outside Killorglin.



Royal Field Artillery gunners in the Boar War 1899 with a 15 pounder field gun – the sort of weapon that would be used in an artillery range in Lyreacrompane

## The Rathea man and the Newtown Wonder

Back over the decades the job of a court reporter had the potential to be soul destroying. Variety was rarely the spice of life in the courtroom – drunken brawls, fights over rights of way, or lightless bikes. But every now and then a little gem would come along – a quaint event to give latitude to a writer with imagination and humour that rarely had a chance to shine forth. This opportunity presented itself to one such reporter at a North Kerry Sinn Fein Court in Listowel during the war of Independence.

The reporter began by telling us that the story was about “the extraordinary eccentricities of a Newtownsands Jennet. A man from Rathea was before the court claiming £10 for a “breach of engagement” in the sale of the jennet to him, at the fair in Listowel, by a man from Newtown. The seller had represented the jennet as of “quiet and peaceful habit and of such exemplary character that a woman could guide it without any danger whatever to her corporal existence”. Not alone that but he claimed that it could also be easily shod and harnessed.

However, when the man from Rathea went to turn the jennet for home he discovered its true character. We will let the reporter take up the story...

The plaintive said that it took twelve men to drive her homewards through the Small Square... In fact, he said, the

animal seemed to have no less celestial intention than to kick the stars which, no doubt would have stood great danger had they being out at the time, but evidently having heard that the Newtown jennet was out for trouble, they postponed their appearance on the firmament until the infuriated beast was safely installed and fettered in Rathea.

The plaintive went on to describe a special winkers he had to make for the jennet and he described the animal as having an incurable disease – Thispoc. The defendant claimed that the jennet, prior to selling, was of a quiet and mannerly disposition. In the face of such conflicting evidence the Court, in its wisdom, ordered that the jennet be produced at the Square so that the harnessing of the animal could take place in their view. The man from Rathea rather wisely insisted that the harnessing be done by the defendant.

A large crowd had gathered and when the defendant approached the animal and was about to adjust the winkers it fixed its eye on its late owner, lowered its head and let its hind legs fly in the air and made a sudden rush at the defendant, who, had he not been possessed of the necessary agility to clear to the right in the fractional part of a second, would, most unquestionably, have been badly butted by the infuriated animal in the nether regions of his frontal autonomy. It was only after the beast made four rounds of the Protestant church (after a very laudable attempt at jumping over the

railings) that their worships (the court) gave any facial expressions to suggest that they had their mind made up. In the meantime the Newtown Wonder as it was coming to be known continued its wild career down towards Custom Gap dragging the six men attached to its halter after it with apparent ease. It then took a semi-circular course towards the National Bank and back to the centre of the square.

To the terror and consternation of the newly assembled... it precipitated itself at a flying pace in the direction of the apothecary’s shop... After swerving a few yards from the aforementioned establishment it veered towards the electric pole close by and whether it was influenced by that perversity of nature which appears ever to be associated with jennets, mules and donkeys it turned the part of it opposite to its head towards the pole and with a backward spring caught it with its hind legs and to the natural astonishment of those assembled began to ascend, hand-over-hand style with her legs until serious apprehension was being felt for the men attached to the halter.

To put an end to this... the most fearless of the crowd, who appeared to be stalwart Volunteers, rushed to the rescue, captured the animal and reduced it to subjection unconditionally. The court held in favour of the plaintive from Rathea and ordered the £10 to be returned with costs and the animal be returned to Newtown where she will probably immortalised by future generations.

## Twenty years of Dan Paddy

Kay O'Leary

While gazing around a full festival marquee during the final event of the 2017 Dan Paddy Andy Festival I began to reflect on the success it has become for Lyreacrompane and North Kerry since its inception in 1998. I have come to know many people through it and even though I may not know their names we always acknowledge each other whether we meet in Kerry, Cork, Limerick, Clare or across the Irish Sea. The greetings our committee often hear at the marquee door is "aren't you great to keep it going", "we'd miss it if it weren't on" or "keep up the great work you'd doing in Lyre". Many people tell us that they mark the festival dates in their diaries or calendars so that nothing else will get in the way. One man who joins us each year tells us it's better than a holiday in Spain to him. Its comments like these that have kept us going even though by the time the festival starts we, the festival committee, are often exhausted.



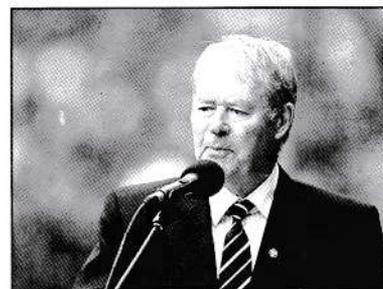
But as we come to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> festival and before we head back out on the road, once again, to collect

and store the signs for our 21st I've decided to jog my memory and write the happenings of the past twenty years as I recall them!!! The festival committee are Joe Harrington, Mary Mangan, Chris Quinn, Michael Mangan, Albert Roche and myself.

It all began back in the 1990's when I undertook a Rural Development course at UCC, which was funded by the Leader programme. In the final year of the course we were given a project to do with the condition that it had to relate and have the potential to benefit the area in which we lived. Looking around I quickly formed the opinion that the one thing which might assist my locality would be something connected with the widely known Dan Paddy Andy O'Sullivan. I researched Dan's lifespan, separated the myth from the man, and published my findings in a booklet. I then proceeded with the idea of developing a festival in his honour. Dan Paddy Andy was the last of the Great Irish Matchmakers. He was born in 1899 and died in 1966. He made his first match in 1932 and he claimed to have arranged over 300 successful marriages.

The first public meeting called was held at Roche's Bar on Saturday 16 May 1998. Eight people including myself attended that inaugural gathering, Michael Lynch, Mick Naughton, Bridget Naughton RIP, Tony Lyons, Jimmy Roche, Pat Dillon and Joe Harrington. Jimmy Roche transferred a site for a Dan

Paddy Andy Memorial. Having come up with a design for the site we applied for Planning Permission. We applied to North and East Kerry for leader funding but to secure this funding we'd have to match £1 for £1. Arising from the meeting we did a door-to-door collection and a sponsored walk from Lyre to Castleisland to raise funds. The local Lyreacrompane Comhaltas Ceolteoiri Group held a fundraising Irish night with the proceeds going toward the project. We received £500 from the American/Irish fund. Shannon Development also supported us in the early years. Artist and local man JJ Sheehy was engaged to sculpt the bust of Dan Paddy Andy but before having it cast in bronze he had Charlie Collins RIP and John Moloney RIP give it the once over as both men knew Dan well. Local builder, Tom O'Connor, commenced the building work. We also erected a Dan Paddy Andy Memorial finger sign at Renagowan Cross - where Dan had ran a dancehall from 1928 - 1960's.

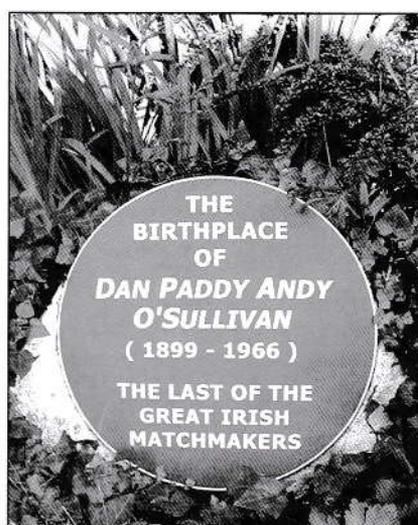


The unveiling of the bust took place on Sunday 20 1998 at 3pm by the icon of Gaelic Games, broadcaster, Micheál O'Muircheartaigh. After all we felt no one knew more about matches than Micheál!!! Prior to the unveiling the committee and

invited guests dined at "A Day in the Bog" - this establishment has since closed. Dan Paddy's son, Jimmy and daughter, Mary, along with members of their families travelled from the States to celebrate the great occasion with us. Jim Murphy RIP, Knocknagoshel, loaned us bunting for the occasion. Peggy Sweeney and Micheál O'Muircheartaigh sang/recited the "Peatlands around Lyre" a song specially composed for the occasion by Joe Harrington. Fr. O'Connell loaned us chairs from the Duagh hall and he also came along to bless the monument site. A large, circular open-air dance platform made by Tom O'Connor was placed on the site. RLO, a pirate radio station in Limerick, recorded the event and Joe Harrington also organised a bus to travel from Limerick. Members of the committee gathered early that morning at the home of Mary and Michael Mangan at Glashnacree to make sandwiches for the gathering. We held a raffle on the day which generated £255. I had also secured Leader funding toward the publication of my booklet on the lifespan of Dan Paddy Andy and this brought in £700 from sales. We did a video recording of the day and, subsequently, we sold copies for £12.

In 1999, twelve months after the official opening, we held a three day festival for which I secured funding from JP Brick, Guinness. The Company supported our festival until 2004. Micheál O'Muircheartaigh returned to Lyre to unveil a Dan Paddy Andy Plaque at his birth

home in Renagowan. At the site of Dan's old dancehall in Renagowan we gathered along with local musicians, Eamon Sheehy, Mick Naughton and Luke Keane to 'round the house'. Micheál arrived on site as the music was playing and I had a dance with him on the spot. (Micheál also returned to open our tenth festival.) Later that evening Labhrás O'Mhurchú, Comhaltas Ceolteoiri Eireann, opened the festival.



Having got a little lost on the way Labhrás described Lyreacrompane as been 'the hidden Ireland' referred to by Daniel Corkery, Irish politician and writer. We had Dan Paddy Andy Tee-shirts printed which we sold at this festival. Members of our community who helped with preparations were Pat Quinn, Mike Dillon RIP, Mai Keane, Maureen Harris, Mossie Long and Fr. O'Connell.

To celebrate the Millennium and Dan Paddy Andy's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday we entombed a capsule, containing items from members of the community, at the Dan Paddy Andy site. In 2000 we hired a 60' x 30' marquee from

Tipperary which was erected outside the 'Four Elms' bar and we got a loan of a stage from the Irish Rambling House. In the following years we have borrow the stage from the community centre.

In 2003 on the suggestion of Joe Harrington we moved our festival forward from September to the August Bank Holiday weekend and we made it a four day event. We also introduced a dog show with the help of Mary B Leane and Margaret O'Sullivan. Trophies and rosettes are sponsored by Patricia and Tom Lenihan. At the suggestion of Jimmy Roche, we had the electricity disconnected at the memorial site and we now operate on power from Jimmy's establishment.

In 2004 Michael Mangan returned home from NY and became an active member of our committee. Jimmy O'Sullivan, Dan Paddy's son, came from NY to open our festival. Our storytelling evening was recorded by Seán Hurley, Radio Kerry. Storytellers who have performed down the years include, Frances Kennedy, Sonny Egan, Brian Caball, Murt Collins, Paddy Commane, Ray O'Sullivan, Fr. Pat RIP and The Bogadeers, Noel Joyce and Seán O'Sé.

Many drama groups have performed at the festival including Listowel Lartigue Theatre Group, Call Back Theatre Group Kilmallock, Abbeydorney Drama Group, Bawdy and Soul Group and a young group from Lixnaw, organised by Annette Galvin, who performed 'The

Matchmaker'. Writers Week takes place during the month of May in Listowel and a group from it have visited and performed at the memorial site on a couple of occasions. In 2009 they performed sketches from 'Sieve' to celebrate its 50th anniversary of the play. Sieve was written by John B Keane. John B also wrote a book on Dan Paddy Andy called "Man of the Triple name".

Flags began to fly over the memorial site in 2005. In 2009 the English Flag was taken overnight and the flag pole bearing it was broken but we replaced it for the following year.



2006 saw part of the stone wall at the site damaged by a drunk driver so we had stone mason, John Carroll, back to repair his original work. That year Irish Marquees began providing the festival marquee and they still do.

In 2007 we held an art competition for two categories under nines and over nines. JJ Sheehy adjudicated. We've also held a Sean Nós and Set Dancing workshops at the festival which were run by Aidan Vaughan, Clare and Mike Murphy, Tralee. Children's entertainers over the years include Sylvano the Magician, Punch & Judy Show, Fumbling Buffonery, Ger's Animal Farm, Shaggy Dog Puppet

Show, Magician Terry Andrews, Tom Thumb Puppet Magic Show, Tony Baloney Magic Show and Eddie Lenihan

Early in 2008 an email came to us from the USA through [www.lyreacrompane.com](http://www.lyreacrompane.com) looking for help in tracing ancestors for a Bob Ahern RIP. Bob sent me the info that he had and I was successful in finding his roots in Knocknaglough and Cloughboola. When I contacted Bob to give him the good news he was so excited that he immediately proposed that he would be travelling from San Francisco to Kerry in the near future. I then proposed to the committee that we should ask Judge Bob Ahern to open our festival and they readily agreed. So Bob accompanied by his daughter Katie arrived in Lyreacrompane. Bob brought along a California flag which still flies annually over the memorial site during the festival. Katie celebrated her birthday while in Lyreacrompane and we presented her with a volume of The Great Book of Kerry written by Seán Quinlivan along with a birthday cake.

In the early days the afternoon dances were free but we held raffles to help toward the cost. For the past few years we have discontinued the raffles and introduced a cover charge instead. In 2009 we called Tom O'Connor in to replace the black mat seating at the monument with wood. Up until 2009 we used wooden doors for road signs to advertised 11 estival. We have now progressed to corri-

board. Over the years we have only lost two of our big road signs. Both were taken from the same stretch of road, between Castleisland and Faranfore!!!

After the 2009 festival we held Sunday afternoon dances during the month of August at the platform. Over the years we ran some fundraising dances, some successful and some not.

In 2011 our festival was opened by Rose of Tralee, Clare Kambamettu. We met Clare at The Kerry Association Dinner Dance at The Crown Moran Hotel, Cricklewood. Robert Kelly, a member of the Irish Rambling House group, came to the festival to serenade her with 'The Rose of Tralee'. Jimmy O'Sullivan, Dan Paddy Andy's son, came from NY with fourteen members of his family for our fifteenth festival. Over the years exiles have returned periodically for the festival but one couple, Norah and John Casey, have flown from London every year to be with us.



*John and Norah Casey*

In 2012 we moved the marquee from outside the pub into the field, behind the monument site, known locally as the 'Racecourse'. This was done during very wet weather. Part of the dance-

floor had to be re-lifted to open a drain underneath. Billy Keane RIP came to give us a hand, digging the drains, as he was a fan of Declan Nerney's and he was worried Declan might drown!!!! We also got the dyke between Leans and Doran's filled in. Moving the marquee and filling the dyke provided badly needed extra parking places. Local man, Seán Enright, did the work and we got the filling from Peter Galwey's quarry, Fahaduff. It cost €4,031 to complete but Kerry Co. Co. paid €3,000. This was the last year we placed the open-air dance platform at the memorial site. We got balloons specially printed with a Dan Paddy Andy Festival logo to mark our 15th. The festival committee got hi-vis jackets. We also engaged portable toilets for the first time.

We held a waltzing competition during the Ceilí with dancing trophies sponsored by the Mangan Family. In 2013 Michael Lyons sponsored them. For the past three years Larry O'Connor, Farm Supplies, Duagh have sponsored the trophies. Also in 2012 Joe Harrington put pen to paper and wrote, what has become the anthem of our festival, 'The Dan Paddy Andy Festival is here'. We use lines from this song when we make our own recording of the advert for the festival which goes out on Radio Kerry. 2014 saw us purchase sandwiches, for the first time, for our bog walk. Up to then we were up early on a Monday morning to make them. Each year Chris and Pat Quinn prepare the

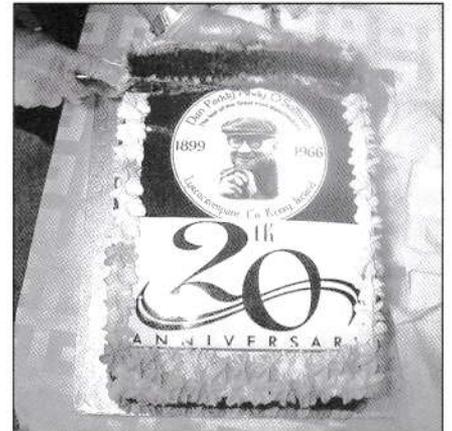
bog for the turf cutting experience along with having the sleán and pike ready. Mossy Long is always on hand on the day of the walk to help out. We use part of Bord na Móna bog in Carrigcannon for our bog walk. Bord na Móna sold the bog in 2014 but they informed the new owner of our link with it. Since 2014 all our meetings are held at 'The Glen'. During one of our early festivals Valentine Trodd, Editor of the Bord na Mona publication, *Scéal na Mona*, brought down the silver sleán that was used by De Valeria to cut the inaugural sod in the very first national turf-cutting competitions in 1934 from Bord na Móna's Peatland World Museum in Co. Kildare.

Jer Keane, Kilmorna, has been providing the outdoor sound since 2014.

2015 saw Dan Paddy Andy go on social media for the first time. Irish TV came to Lyreacrompane in 2016 to record our bog walk. This was the first year that local falconer, Eric Witkowski, was with us. Eric put on a fantastic display with his birds of prey and walkers were delighted to have the birds flying alongside them during the walk.

For our 20th festival we extended it to a five day event. John O'Sullivan of Lee Strand, Tralee, was our main sponsor. On approaching John for support he didn't hesitate on affirming Lee Strand involvement. The festival opened with a mighty Irish Rambling House Show. Even though organised by lyre locals, it was the group's

first time performing in Lyreacrompane. The group have been travelling to England since 2000 to entertain Irish exiles. At break-time the punters were treated to a cupán Tea and a slice of the special 20<sup>th</sup> Dan Paddy Andy cake which was sponsored by Eirn Lyons.



Padraig Doran had made a field available for us to hold our maiden sheep dog trials but unfortunately we had to cancel it owing to bad weather. This year we organised a 5k and 10k run/walk fundraiser for charity. It was the first 10k to be held in Lyreacrompane on what turned out to be a very bad morning, weather wise, but the event was a great success. Refreshments for the event were sponsored by Martin James Leane 'Lidl', John O'Sullivan Lee Strand Tralee, Donal O'Connor 'Total Produce' Tralee and Peter Clifford 'Cliffords Cash & Carry Tralee. The assistance we had from Listowel Gardaí before and on the morning of the walk was very supportive. Members of our community who came on board to help with the organising were, Bridget Long, Marie Murray, Christy Donoghue, Billy Connell, Michael Carmody, Noel Murray, Eirn Lyons,

Patricia Lenihan, Mick Naughton, Chris Kelly, Mossie Long, Michael Lyons, Seán Enright, Tim Nash and Eamon Monaghan. Along with local donations we presented a cheque for €1,500 to the Kerry/Cork health link bus.

2013 was designated the year of the gathering by the Irish government. We decided to be part of it so we organised an extra festival 'The Hooley in the Hills' to commemorate the gathering. It was held during the May Bank-holiday weekend. We had a weekend of dancing with many well-known bands. We received a cert signed by President Michael D Higgins for having held the event.

For the past couple of years we have been lucky to qualify for Kerry County Council community funding as we don't have access to any other funding or lotto's. I would also like to thank the people who have supported us by contributing, especially local small business, or attending the various events down the years. Without you there would not be a festival in Lyreacrompane. We are also very proud of the fact that we have achieved the running of a very successful festival in a settlement that doesn't have a village. Looking ahead it would be great to welcome others into our group because as the saying goes 'new blood brings new ideas to an organisation' and yes, reflecting back on 20 years it's my opinion that Dan Paddy Andy and the festival held in his honour have put Lyreacrompane firmly on the map.

### **Bands that have performed at the twenty Dan Paddy Andy Festivals**

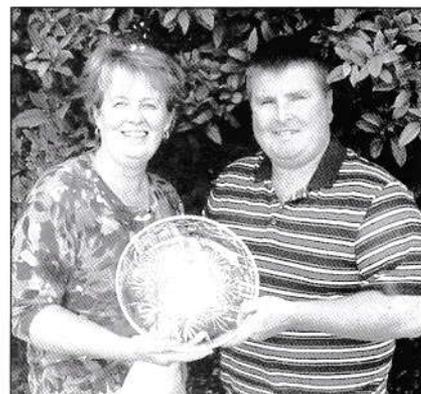
Declan Nerney, Brendan Shine, Mike Flavin, TR Dallas, Peter Burke, Crystal Swing, Tommy (Flanagan) Country Roadshow RIP, Stevie Donegan, PJ Murrhiy, Mike Condon, Johnny Reidy, Billy Donegan & Jambylia, Denis Allen & Denis Carey, Mike Fitzgerald & Southern Pride, Caitriona, Jim Connery, Dermot Lyons, Tim Joe & Ann O'Riordan, Donie Nolan & Taylors Cross Ceilí Band, Eddie Lee & James Kelliher, Maids of Erin, Charlie & Michael, Eddie Keogh, Singing Jarvey, Dan Noonan, Mossies' Country Roadshow, Martin Williams & Neily O'Connor, Larry McEvoy, Thrashing Mill Boys, Patrick O'Sullivan, Ann Marie & The Ferrymen, Tim Sommers, Sunrise, John McAuliffe & Aenus O'Connell. Some of those bands have been with us from the start. Others are no longer doing the dance circuit. Some have been with us on just a couple of occasions as they are expensive and others once heard was enough.

### **Our Twenty Festivals were opened by:**

**1998** - Micheál O'Muircheartaigh, GAA Commentator  
**1999** - Labhrás O'Murchú, President of CCE.  
**2000** - Brendan Dunne, Guinness Representative  
**2001** - Kate Kennelly, Kerry Arts Officer  
**2002** - Ógie Moran, Kerry Footballer and Regional Officer, Shannon Dev.  
**2003** - Billy Keane, Writer and John B Keane's son

**2004** - Jimmy O'Sullivan, Dan Paddy Andy's son  
**2005** - Fr. Pat Moore RIP, PP of Lyreacrompane & Duagh  
**2006** - Martina Barton Cork/Kerry Tourism Officer  
**2007** - Micheál O'Muircheartaigh - Back for our tenth  
**2008** - Judge Bob Ahern RIP, California, Found his roots in Lyreacrompane  
**2009** - Weeshie Fogarty, Radio Kerry Presenter  
**2010** - Eoin Liston, Kerry Footballer  
**2011** - Clare Kambamettu, Rose of Tralee  
**2012** - Donncha O'Dulaing, RTE Radio Presenter  
**2013** - Sonny Egan, Storyteller, Singer, Musician  
**2014** - Eoin Hand, Former Ireland Manager and Player  
**2015** - JJ Sheehy, Designer of Dan Paddy Andy Bust  
**2016** - Seán O'Sé, Singer  
**2017** - Danny O'Sullivan - Kerry Person of The Year in London and Dublin.

Since 2004 The Dan Paddy Andy Plate has been presented to the people who open our festival.



*Patsy Tim O'Sullivan accepts the Dan Paddy Andy Plate from Kay O'Leary on behalf of his Dad, Danny Tim, former Kerry Person of the Year in both Dublin and London who was unable to perform the 2017 opening due to illness.*

## “And paraded it around the streets of London”

The Wolfe Tones had a big hit with a song about Admiral William Browne (1777 –1857) who was born in Foxford, Co. Mayo. He was founder of the Argentine navy and played a big part in that country’s fight for independence. The ballad describes his exploits and also the role of the British Empire. One of the lines from the song goes... “*In the Empire Days of Old, when they murdered for the gold and paraded it around the streets of London...*”

An account of such parading appeared in a publication of the early 1800s. It describes how on September 20, 1806, the treasures taken from the Spanish settlement, Buenos Aires, were brought through London in eight wagons on each of which was a Jack Tar holding a flag on which was inscribed ‘Treasure’ and on the wagons the initials RM (Royal Money). Jack Tar was a common term used to refer to seamen of the Merchant or Royal Navy, particularly during the period of the British Empire. The wagons were escorted by the Royal Britons, commanded by Col. Alexander Davison. The rear was brought up by the Clapham volunteers who were commanded by Col. Bestead.

The Cavalcade proceeded along Whitehall, passing the Admiralty and along Pall Mall into St James Square where it halted in front of Col.

Davidson’s house and the men received some refreshments. At 3pm it arrived at the Bank where over one million Spanish Dollars (Pieces of Eight) and a box filled with precious stones and jewels were deposited. The field pieces and colours taken at Buenos Aires were carried to the Tower.



Pieces of Eight

## Filling the potholes 1832

*Tralee Mercury February 25,*

£30 was approved by the Grand Jury in Kerry to James and Thomas O’Connor for the repair of the 30 perches of the road from Listowel to Castleisland between the south bounds of Muingaminnane and Carrigcannon Bridge.

John and James Wharton received £23. 11s. 4d. for repairing the “ruts and sloughs” in 707 perches of the road from Tralee to Castleisland.

## League of Youth meet in Rathea

A very enthusiastic meeting was held in Rathea on June 14 1934 when officers of the League of Youth attended to form a branch. Thirty members were enrolled according to *Kerry News* and the following officers were elected: Captain Jack Larkin, Vice-Captain James Galvin, Secretary P Lyons, Treasurer Stephen Galvin and Reporting Secretary was John Galvin. The League of Youth, had, in its short history been previously known as the Army Comrades Association, the National Guard and Young Ireland but are popularly remembered as the Blueshirts. It was a far-right organisation and one of its founding objectives was to “*oppose Communism and alien control and influence in national affairs and to uphold Christian principles in every sphere of public activity*”. Its leader was Eoin O’Duffy who was an admirer of Mussolini.

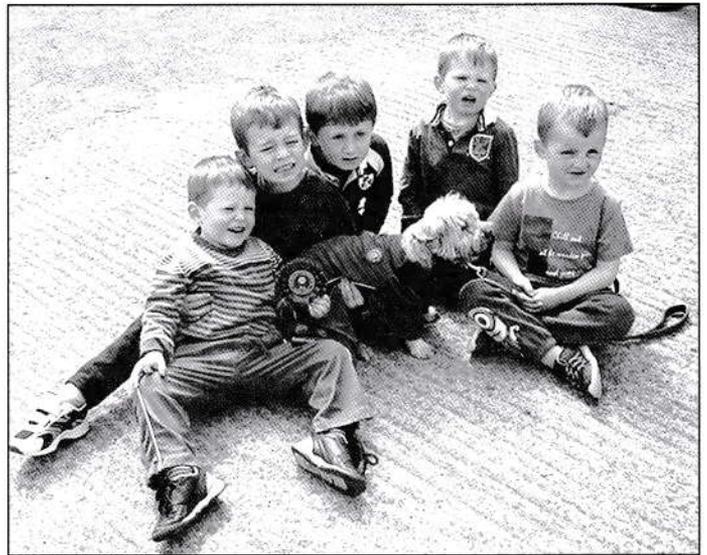
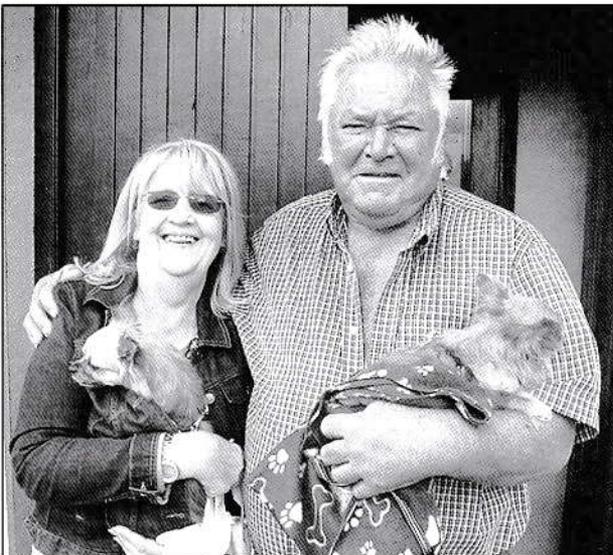
At the time of this local meeting the organisation had, in fact, been banned by DeVelera’s government and, while in 1932 it had over 30,000 members, at the time of the Rathea meeting the organisation was disintegrating. Duffy then recruited the ‘Irish Brigade’ and went to Spain to support Franco.



*Blueshirt flag-red cross on blue*



Out on the town... Mary McElligott, Eileen Ryan, Bridget O'Brien, May Shea, Margaret Condon, Mary Lynch, Betty O'Brien, Mary O'Brien, Sheila O'Donnell and Eileen McKenna.



Enjoying the Dog Show at the Dan Paddy Andy Festival in Lyreacrompane



Beagle groups from Scartaglin, Abbeyfeale and Glenoe gather at the Four Elms, Lyreacrompane 2006

## Stories from North Kerry

by John B. Keane

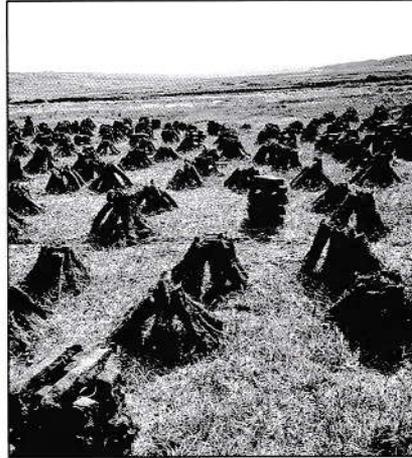
### The Stack's Mountains

I returned every year to the Stacks' Mountains for those long summer holidays until I reached the age of fifteen. I still frequently return to the warm secure home where I was reared when Hitler was shrieking his head off in Berlin and innocent Irishmen were dying in distant places like Tobruck and Alamain, men from The Stacks at that, long before their time, in useless carnage, carefree boys whose only weapon until that time were the hayfork and the turf sleán, who wanted only the right to work and play and find a place at the table.

I had already written a short book about the matchmaker Dan Paddy Andy O'Sullivan but if his name crops up now and again, don't hold it against me. Dan was to The Stacks' Mountain what bark is to a tree. Any cur síos about the Stack's Mountain would be incomplete without Dan Paddy Andy. Dan would, no doubt, have been the most famous name in the area. The wealthiest is a man in England who doesn't like having his name mentioned.

The Second World War was the best time to be in The Stacks Mountain. There was no man nor boy who didn't have a shilling in his pocket. There was an insatiable demand for turf and Lyreacrompane was the

home of it. Man, woman and child took to the bogs across the summers and, for the first time in the history of that much abused, much deprived community every person who wasn't disabled or sick had a pound or two to spare.



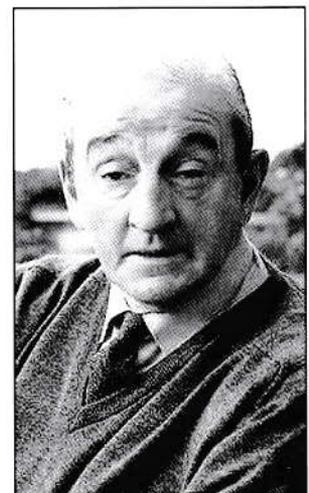
Buyers would come from Tralee, Castleisland, Abbeyfeale and Listowel on the lookout for likely roadside ricks to fill the wagons waiting at the railway depots in the afore-mentioned towns. Those who journeyed to the towns with horse, ass, mule and pony rails were often met a mile outside by buyers with orders to fill. In addition, Kerry County Council initiated a turf cutting campaign in order to supply cheap fuel to the many institutions under its care. This even ensured jobs for townies if they wanted them.

In The Stacks there were no villages but there were several shops such as Lyre Post Office, Doran's, Nolan's and McElligott's and, of course, there was Dan Paddy Andy's famous dance hall at the crossroads of Renagown. There were three or four

visiting butchers and fish mongers and occasional travelling salesmen. Mostly Pakistani with huge trunks of wispy undergarments, scarves and frocks perched precariously on the carriers of ancient bicycles. I remember two of these quite well.

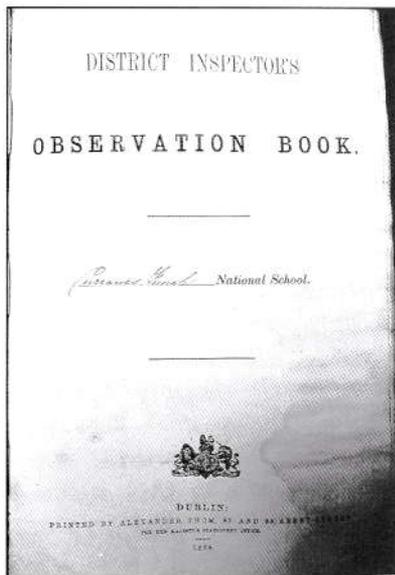
There was Likey Nicey Tie and Likey Nicey Knickeys. The latter often indicated that he was prepared to exchange his wares for the favours of the country ladies. As far as I know he never did any business in this fashion. In our youthful ignorance we would stalk them as far as the cross of Renagown shouting "Likey Nicey Tie", Likey Nicey Knickeys and, most heinous of all, "Likey Pig's Bum."

We had been informed by hobside know-alls that these dark coloured salesmen would be damned if they ate any kind of pig's meat but doubly damned if it was the rear of the pig. We didn't know any better. We were young and backward and wouldn't know prejudice from the prod of a thorn.



John B Keane

## Curranes Female National School Observation Book from 1869.



Curranes Female National School on the Maum heading north out of Castleisland was visited from time to time by an inspector as were other such schools. The inspector left his account of each of his visits in an Observation Book. The first entry in the Curranes Observation Book was made on the 25th of June, 1869. The Principal is listed as Kate O'Grady and 25 pupils were present. The inspector wasn't a bit impressed with the pupils writing skills. He described the penmanship as *"indifferent"* and the dictation exercise was no better. When it came to Arithmetic he described the slate exercise as *"bad"* and he wasn't happy with the pupil's knowledge of Grammar and Geography either. He signed his name to the report as Henry A Donovan.

He didn't return again until the 6th April 1871. He obviously noticed an improvement as the word most used in his report this time was *"middling"* and described progress as *"pretty*

*fair"*. However, he didn't think much of the way the Accounts Books were being used. In his next visit of December 1, 1871 he had upped his opinion of how the school was doing to *"satisfactory"*.

John Barrett was the next inspector to wander up Pound Road and in June 1872 he too had concerns about the paperwork of the Principle – in relation to the Account books and the Register. On his visit in 1873 the Principal was Margaret Walsh – and there was no improvement in the keeping of the accounts.

The inspector that arrived on May 28, 1870 left a signature to his report that cannot be read. He recorded that there were six pupils in Infants, seven in First Class, and both classes *"answered very fairly"*. He had some good words for the ten pupils in Second Class but in the case of the four pupils in Third Class *"The answering in Arithmetic was deficient"*. He declared the Fourth Class which had four pupils to be *"a very good class"*. There were five pupils present in the Fifth Class and he felt that parsing and geography *"required attention"*.

January 28, 1875 brought another inspector, J Barrett, who described the copy books as *"neat"* but advised that the children should move in an *"orderly manner"* and be trained to *"answer one at a time"*. He concluded his entry in the Observation Book by stating that *"their discipline today was not at all satisfactory"*. The use of erasures on Roll Books was frowned on and according to the report of October 12, 1875 some changes seemed

to have been made retrospectively in relation to Hanna McAuliffe, Minnie Daly, N Hickie, Maggie Horan, Mary Sullivan, Bridget Lenihan, Minnie Sullivan and Maggie Lenihan. However, the inspector stated *"Teacher young and rather innocent looking so I do not think dishonesty was intended"*.

Mr E Dowling called to the school on January 27, 1875 and examined the pupils from 10.20am to 4.30pm. He was back again the next day and stayed from 9.30 to 11.15 to complete that task. In his report in the Observation Book he described the standard of Grammar and Geography as deficient and that Needlework did not *"seem to be sufficiently attended to"*. He pointed out that copies should be signed and dated by the pupils *"and each copy examined carefully by the teacher"*.

Mr. Dowling went on; *"The discipline is very faulty. The pupils answer out of order greatly impeding the Examination. They also have a very bad habit, extremely prevalent, of putting their fingers in their mouths when asked a question rendering the answer, at best, nearly inaudible"*.

He recorded that the Accounts were very unsatisfactory. *"According to a circular lately received 17 of the pupils presented for examination are ineligible on account of erasures. There are no less than 54 erasures absence marks during the year... The percentage of attendance to the number on Rolls is exceptionally low at this school"*. Mr. Dowling's remarks must have been

taken on board because when he returned the following year he was pleased the report that the school was progressing "very nicely" and if continued satisfactory results could be anticipated.

The Inspectors report of 1877 mentions the condition of the School for the first time and described walls and ceilings covered with cobwebs and window pane "dim with dust... and the maps not as tastefully arranged as might be expected".

The problem with the Accounts continued to persist and in 1878 Mr. Dowling noted; "Accounts still very unsatisfactory. They are most carelessly kept. It is useless to specify as my former remarks in this regard have been unheeded. I have therefore marked the defects with blue pencil in register. The recent grants have not been noted. The record of school fees received during the past year is altogether untrustworthy as according to the Report Book they were £9.15.6, Teachers Report £10.15.6 and the Summery Book £13.5.6. The Fees have not been regularly entered in the Report book weekly and monthly as required".

A Mr. Browne was the inspector for the next couple of years with little fuss and in 1880 a William Connolly came along. This guy had no grounds for complaining about pupils writing - because his own was pretty illegible. Reading between the lines he seemed generally pleased with the progress of the pupils.

The Principal in 1882 was Ellen Horan and on a visit on

January 9, 1883 Mr. Connolly decided that the following children should be marked absent; Lizzie Nolan, Minnie Dennihy, Kitty Curtin and Margaret Brosnan. He also mentioned Mary Horan and Minnie Hickey but it is not clear why. On a visit on March 31, 1886 he observed that some pupils read badly - "inaccurate and unintelligible... Some were better but did not seem to understand what they read". He suggested that a large map would be useful and a Leave-of-absence book was needed (to record when pupils left the school early). He also mentioned that "the drainage of the Out-Offices is insufficient".

By 1888 the Principal, Ellen Horan, had married and was now Mrs. Ellen Roche and the new inspector was Mr. Steede who mentioned that "the instruction in the use of the Sewing Machine was effective" (The machine had been patented in America 40 or so years earlier, just before the Great Famine).



Antique Sewing machine 1927

In May 19, 1892 Inspector Coyne arrived at 2.35pm and found 36 pupils present while the Roll Book recorded 40 as being at school. The four missing pupils were Bridget Connor, Nonie Sullivan, Nano (?) Broderick and Ellie Connor. The teacher said they were at school up until

noon but left to go to Castleisland for Catechism. However the Inspector noted that their names were not listed in the Leave-of-absence Book.

The following year Mr Coyne spent a couple of days at the school and noted that the eight pupils selected from fifth class for examination on the sewing machine and Advanced Dressmaking "did not exhibit sufficient dexterity in the adjustment of the machine or display sufficient knowledge of Advanced Dressmaking to entitle any of them to pass in this subject". He also noted that Han Keane from Second Class was present but marked absent! Mr. Coyne continued to visit the school up to 1895 and generally he described his examination of the pupils as showing deficiencies in most subjects while grammar was "almost unknown".

A Mr. Bannan, who substituted for Mr. Coyne in 1896, made the following observation; "Judging by the conduct of some of the senior girls the teacher has failed to impress upon the pupils the necessity of maintaining an honest deportment when under examination".

Heading into the early 1900s the number for exam was 40 on average and the inspector reported improved results. The "Alternative Programme" for Sixth Class girls "was being taught with success... and their proficiency in the Industrial Subjects was highly satisfactory".

W H Welply was the next into the breach and he had good things to say. "I am glad to see shrubs planted in margins of plot. More keys needed in

hall for keeping shawls. I notice the attempts of the teacher to fall in with the spirit of the new Programme. She has provided a washstand in the hall and has made a small collection of objects as a museum".

A Mr. Fitzpatrick came along in 1903 and suggested cookery should be a subject and expressed concern about the dilapidated appearance of the boundary wall.

In 1907 a PJ Fitzgerald described the school as in good condition and well conducted. "The teacher discharges her duties faithfully and with a considerable amount of skill".

The following year he said she was "endowed with considerable taste which is reflected in the condition of the schoolroom which she has beautified at her own expense". He also felt that the younger pupils had "faulty English" and should be got to talk more and only advanced pupils should be allowed to teach infants. "A general knowledge of the World might be included in the course of Geography"

A Mr. Doody (Junior) inspected the school in 1908 and like all the other inspectors over the recent years referred to the neatness of the needlework.

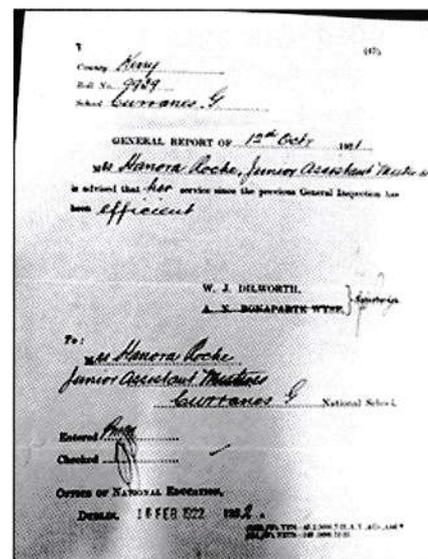
On a visit in 1911 Louis Daly recommended that the wall between the boys and girls "offices" be raised and pointed to the need for a Junior Assistant teacher. He went on; "The use of slates should be abandoned and infants should write with pencil on paper".

Robert J Little's report, also in 1911, stated that darning was good "to judge from the finished specimens. Button holes are moderate and many of the girls are awkward with their knitting needles". In 1913 Ellen Roche was still Principal and there was an assistant; Hanna Brosnan. When he called in May of that year he observed the cooking class and declared that the fireplace was not very suitable for the lesson. "I wish a stove or suitable grate could be provided by manager with the help of the Board's grant". In his report of February 1915 Mr. Little recorded that "Both teachers are satisfactory at their work. Written English, Arithmetic, Drawing and Needlework are now soundly taught, and much better than they were two or three years ago".

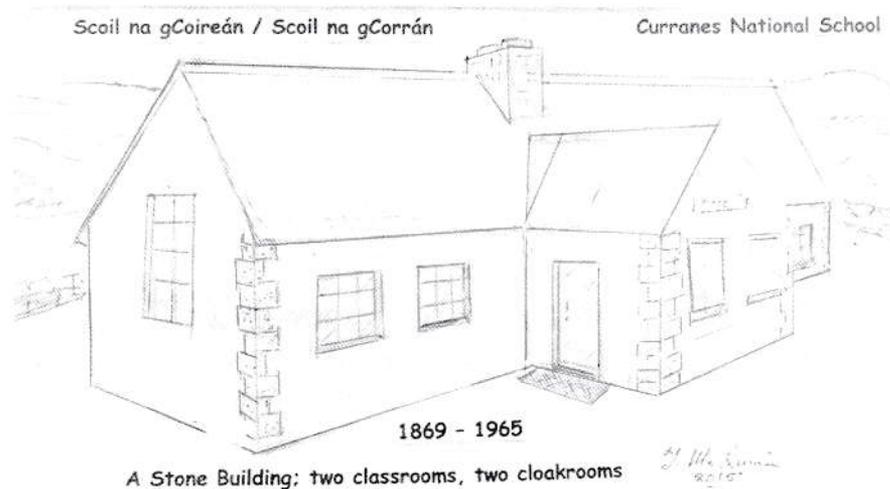
In the early 1920s the Inspector was W M Perry. In February 1921 the Principal, Ellen Roche was informed that "having reached the maximum salary of Grade 2 ... her service since the previous inspection has not been of such a character as to qualify her for promotion to the next highest grade". The note

was signed by WJ Dilworth and a Mr. Bonaparte Wyse of the Office of National Education. Perry noted that "the gutters need repairs, a door should be provided for the Out Offices and the desks are not suitable for infants".

The entries in the observation book began to appear in the Irish language in the early 1920 (after the Civil War) and the entries finished in 1926.



Report of October 12, 1921 stating that teacher Mrs. Honora Roche "is advised that her service since the pervious general inspection has been efficient"



This is a drawing by Terrance McQuinn of the old Curranes National School which was just across the road from the present Schoolhouse. Terrance was principal at Curranes National School.

## 'Crime Returns'

1844 – 1888

Evictions numbers  
in the same period

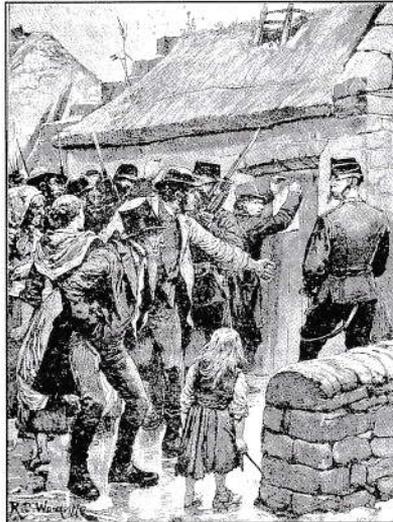
An old document entitled '*Outrages, and Acts of a Coercive or Repressive Character during the period 1844 to 1888*' gives very interesting 'Crime Returns'. In the years leading up to the Great Famine the number of so called 'Outrages' increased dramatically from 6,327 in 1844 to 8,099 in 1845. The number jumped to 12,380 in 1846 and Black '47 saw the number go up to 20,986. 10,044 were cases of cattle and sheep stealing. For the following years the numbers were...

1848 – 14,080 (6,738 for cattle and sheep stealing),  
1849 – 14,908 (8,157 for cattle and sheep stealing),  
1850 – 10,639 (6,738 for cattle and sheep stealing),  
1851 – 9,144, 1852 – 7824.  
The number of incidents continued to drop during the 1860s and 1870s.

The early 1880s saw a rise to between six and eight thousand annually. This spike in "lawlessness" was driven by agrarian agitation. In the three years 1880-'83 there were a total of 5,000 recorded incidents relating to the land issue and over 5,000 threatening notices were put up by Moonlighter-type groups. Of these ten thousand incidents only 428 cases were successfully prosecuted – about 4%.

The same document records evictions for the following years

1849 - 16,686  
1850 - 19,949  
1851 - 13,197  
1852 - 8,591  
1853 - 4,822  
1854 - 2,156  
1855 - 1,849



The numbers continued to fall over the next twenty years to 463 in 1877. The figures for the following years were

1878 - 980  
1879 - 1,238  
1880 - 2,110  
1881 - 3,415  
1882 - 5,201  
1883 - 3,643  
1884 - 4,188  
1885 - 3,127  
1886 - 3,781  
1887 - 3,869  
1888 - 1,609

The total number of evictions recorded between 1844 and 1888 was 119,043.

The late Fr Philip McNamara, Killoscully, Co. Tipperary, pictured on the right, who spent many years in Texas and Argentina, wrote the next verse.

## The Souvenir Sod of Turf

By Philip McNamara

I'm sitting here in Jersey  
A long way from Knockfune  
With a 'sod' of turf before me  
And the bog all around the room

The sofa there is a turf bank  
The carpet has heather high  
The ceiling is all clouded  
Shutting out the sky

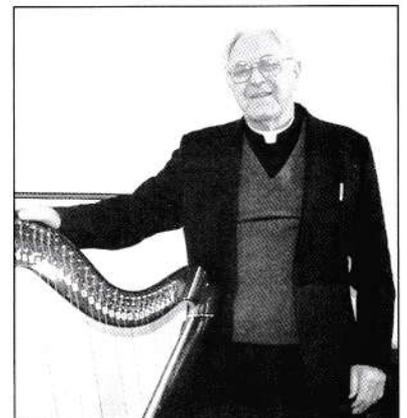
Each year we went to cut our turf  
And spread it out to dry  
It looked so nice and shiny  
Beneath the sunny sky

But the rain, the rain, one night it came  
And washed away the shine  
And left our sods as hairy  
As the beard of father time  
But father time he did help out  
With a pleasant week or two  
And so we got our turf to foot  
And started off a new

Four sods are propped up together  
With one across the top  
All of them supported  
So none of them will flop

And now we need more sunny days  
To dry that old time fuel  
Most of which will be burned at home  
And some will be brought to school

But you my dear don't have to fear,  
For you will always be my souvenir!



## The Rathea man who was shot in Youghal

Joe Harrington and Kay O'Leary

At about noon on 3 December 1920, a patrol of six RIC men from Youghal crossed to the Waterford side of the Blackwater Bridge to deliver a pension payment to a bedridden ex-policeman named Coughlan who was residing with the man in charge of operating the swing bridge. Suddenly and without warning, shots rang out and as the constables dived for cover three were hit in the hail of bullets. The firing was coming from the hill overlooking the bridge. Eight men of the Ardmore battalion of the IRA, armed with rifles, had taken up position on the high ground and had a clear line of sight on the bridge. As the RIC men scrambled for cover British army soldiers from the Hampshire regiment based in Youghal were quickly on the scene but the attackers had already melted away.



*The metal bridge over the Blackwater where Constable Prendeville lost his life. The bridge has since been replaced by a more modern structure.*

The most seriously injured on the bridge was Constable Maurice Prendiville, (police

number 57219) a forty-five-year-old married man with five children who had been born in Rathea on September 17, 1874. He had twenty-five years police service and was from a farming background before joining the RIC. His parents were John and Mary (nee Stack) Prendiville. Kate Sheehy was present at birth.

A woman known as Lady Brown was passing in her trap. She helped Maurice into it and brought him to the nearby Chemist shop, run by John (Jack) Morrison Torrens, where he was treated by a local doctor. He died from his wounds later that night, a bullet having penetrated his abdomen.

### Business stops in Youghal

A *Cork Examiner* account of the incident says that reprisals were expected in Youghal, but the night of 3-4 December 1920 passed off quietly. Citizens complied with the police order to suspend all business from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. as a mark of respect for the dead constable. The removal of Maurice Prendiville's remains from Torrens's pharmacy to the Catholic Mortuary Chapel was a striking event in several respects: The coffin, which was draped with the Union Jack and covered with beautiful flowers, was borne on the shoulders of his companions up the Main St. The cortege, it was reported, was joined by a very large and thoroughly representative body, including Roman Catholic and Protestant

clergymen, professional, public, and business men of all creeds and classes. On arrival at the church grounds, the Rosary was said, all kneeling and joining in the responses.



The police order about shop closings for the funeral read as follows: *'All business premises must close on Monday, 6th inst., until 6 p.m. as a mark of respect to our murdered comrade, who died a martyr. By order—R.I.C. Signed: Black and Tans.'*

Monsignor Daniel Keller of Youghal protested in church that Youghal citizens had already signified their respect for Prendiville, and he expressed doubt as to the official status of this closure order, but after consultation with priests of the parish, he recommended the people to still further show their respect by shutting their shops while the funeral was passing and by attending it.

On 6 December the funeral of Maurice Prendiville left Youghal for Listowel, Co Kerry. Two of his brothers were serving RIC men;

Sergeant Edmund Prendiville in Clonmel and Constable James Prendiville in Cork City. They, along with his brother Thomas Prendiville from Rathea and his two oldest children, John M (born 1906) and Edmond Joseph (1907), accompanied the body from Youghal.

The couple's other children were Maurice Francis (1909), Thomas P (1915), Hanora M (1917) and two months old Garrett F.

### **Back in Kerry**

Maurice Prendiville's body lay in the Mortuary Chapel of St Mary's Church in Listowel overnight and next morning High Mass was celebrated by Rev. O'Connor PP, assisted by Rev. C O'Sullivan and Rev. J O'Connor. According to the Kerryman newspaper report of January 1, 1921 "*At 12.30 the funeral left for the ancient burial ground of Kilsinon and was both large and representative of all classes... as well as members of his own family who are among the most respected in the district*".

A long list of the mourners was given in the report and showed attendance from all the local townlands such as Gortaclohane, Behins, Toornageeha Rathea and Ballyduhig. Messages and wires were received from J Prendiville MA Madeira, Sister Mary Redeemer, Sheila (sisters), and from Garrett (brother). Wreaths were sent from, among others, Lady Browne and Lady Blake, from

Captain and Miss Davis and from the Youghal and Midleton RIC. At the request of his relatives there was no military display at his funeral.

Maurice Prendiville's other siblings were Honora, Thomas Margaret, Bridget, Mary, John, Julia, Ellen and Gerard (perhaps known as Garrett).

Maurice Prendiville's wife Margaret hailed from Newcastle West. Her maiden name was Mathews. In the 1911 Census she is down as Margaret Mary, living with her children in Carrigtohill, outside Cork city. Her mother, Honora Mathews, was also in the house with her on Census night and marked as being able to speak both Irish and English.

Immediately following her husband's death Margaret, then aged about 38, qualified for an Annual Pension of £39 and an Annual Allowance of £2. 10s for each child under 18 - of which there were four. On the Pension records her address is given as Church Street, Listowel in November 1921.

### **Warned by IRA**

A month before his death, on November 1, 1920, Constable Prendiville was captured but released by the IRA, having promised them that he would resign from the RIC.

This incident happened near Piltown. Maurice Prendiville and a colleague called O'Neill were captured by the IRA and released on the promise of

leaving the Royal Irish Constabulary. When O'Neill returned to Youghal, he took off his uniform, said he was finished with the R.I.C. and walked out but Prendiville did not. It is not clear why he risked staying on but the fact that he had a family of five to care for may have been a consideration. He had been stationed for two years in Youghal at this stage.

The ambush near Piltown is recalled in the witness statement given by a James Prendergast, Vice O/C, West Waterford Flying Column of 2, Myrtle Hill Terrace, Tivoli, Cork to the Bureau of Military History (Doc. No. WS 1655).

*On the night of 1st November 1920, we took up ambush positions at Piltown Cross. In all, we had about 18 men under the command of George Lennon. All were armed with either shotguns or revolvers...*

*At about 11.30, our scouts reported that a military lorry was on its way from Youghal and was approaching our position.... We 'opened up' on it with a burst of shotgun fire... Our first burst of fire killed the driver and the lorry stopped. The order was then given to us to "cease fire"...*

*Pat Keating of Comeragh next came out to the road and the two of us ordered any soldiers who were wounded to "fall out". About a dozen did so. I began to look for the military officer in charge and after some time he came out on to the road. It appears that he*

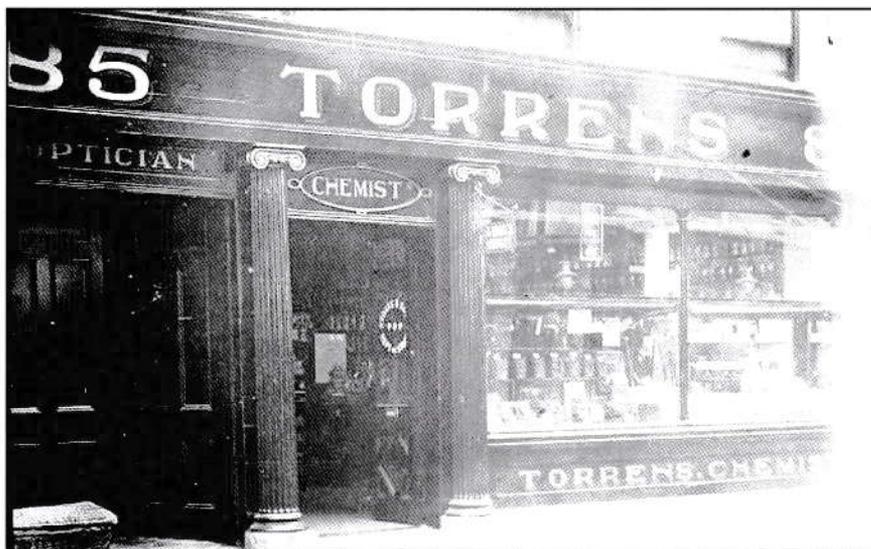
was in the cab with the driver and, when the latter was killed, the officer jumped from the cab and in over the ditch amongst some of our lads who did not recognise him in the darkness and the excitement. He lay there until his men surrendered. I took from him a revolver and his Sam Browne Belt.

The military party were from the 2nd Hampshire Regiment. It comprised a captain, a lieutenant and about 25 other ranks. In addition, there were two R.I.C. men named O'Neill and Prendiville with the military, presumably acting as guides. These two men, after being disarmed, were taken a short distance up the Clashmore road and told they would be shot unless they gave their word to resign from the R.I.C. This they promised to do and were thereupon released.... We suffered no casualties.

Records show that in the ambush one soldier was killed, six wounded and thirty captured (and released).

### **Some RIC rules**

For those wishing to join the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) the minimum age was 19. However, for the son of an RIC man the minimum age was 18. The maximum age was 27. Applicants had to be a minimum of 5ft 9inches but for sons of RIC men it was lowered to 5ft 8inches. A member of the RIC had to serve for 7 years before being given permission to marry.



*This is the chemist shop in Youghal where Maurice Prendiville died from his wounds. The owner of the premises, John Morrison Torrens was also a photographer and took this photo in 1910.*

### **To Resign... or not?.**

Six months before Maurice Prendiville was killed the famous mutiny took place in Listowel Barracks when the RIC constables there refused to go along with new rules of engagement with republicans that would require them to shoot IRA suspects on sight; people who were their neighbours, friends and relations. Following Constable Mee's confrontation with Colonel Smyth in Listowel Barracks the RIC constables held a meeting in what was to become John B. Keane's bar in William St and of the twenty-five who had been involved in the incident, fourteen, who were single,

decided to resign. Within three months of this high profile incident over 1,100 men resigned from the force.

The officers and men of the RIC were in a dangerous occupation - a fact reflected in their rates of pay. With men leaving the service in their droves the starting salary for a constable with less than six months service had risen from £39 a year in 1889 to £80 in January 1920. For married men with families resignation would have nearly always meant a descent into poverty or exile. Might have been the sort of a situation the expression 'Caught between a rock and a hard place' was devised to describe

### **A lot of RIC.**

The number of RIC constables in Kerry on August 1, 1892 was 587 which included five reserves. Three years later, in 1895, the force had fallen slightly to 562. The total RIC force in the 32 counties during this time was over 11,000.

## Just a little memory

Mary (Nash) Orr,  
Melbourne

I grew up in Spur in the 1950's/60's. Lyreacrompane was my playground. I was free to go anywhere. It was a safe place.

There were five thatched cottages beside our house in Spur.

I used to go visit them all but my favourite one was Johnny Mac and Katie Lynch. To me Katie never walked. She floated just above the ground. She never wore shoes. When I drew the water from the well she would 'float out' and take a cup of water from the bucket. It was good luck she said. I believed she had magic because of her two black cats.

It was Johnny that taught me to swear. He used to say there was nothing after we die. He said he would come back and tell me. I am still waiting!

I went to Australia in my twenties. I've been home lots of times but this time (2017) we came back for the Dan Paddy Andy Festival. It was a great weekend. The bog walk was great and it brought back memories of our days in the bog. However, the best event was the Sunday night dance listening to Declan Nerney playing life and getting to meet him.



Margaret and Timmy Archer, Carmel Kelliher, Ellie Mary Archer and in front, Jack Costello photographed in Spur.



James, Tim, Geraldine and Mary (Nash) Orr taken about 1966.

**The Folklore Commission** of 1938 recorded the memories of older people alive at the time. Now and then a humorous story was collected by the pupils. This one was collected from his father, Michael Kiely by William Kiely from Aughrim outside Listowel... Once there was a man digging potatoes in his garden near Listowel. Another man came out from the town and stood looking at him. He said to the man in the garden; "There is not much between you and a fool". "Nothing but the ditch of the road" said the man in the garden.

## John O'Connell

**Doran's Cross, Lyreacrompane.**

John Connell was born to Patrick Connell and Julia Dillane in January 1839 at Doran's Cross, Lyreacrompane. John had four sisters and two brothers. The youngest, Jerry, was also born in 1839. All John's sisters immigrated to America, to Washington and New York. John followed in 1860. In Washington John married a neighbour from home, Margaret Nolan from Glountane. They had four daughters, Julia, Anna, Mary and Margaret and three sons, Patrick, Jeremiah and Dennis. His brother, Jerry, married Kate Sheehy from Dromadda in Duagh in 1863.

They (the brothers and their wives) lived together for some years before moving to Connecticut where I understand they were employed on the railway lines. First they lived in Norfolk before moving to Winsted where they became very involved with the community. John's sister, Kate, married John Shelly and they followed the 'gold rush' to California. John Shelly died, I'm not sure if it was a natural death, and soon afterwards Kate died. Their three children were placed in an orphanage. When the eldest girl, Margaret, became of age she wrote to her uncle, Jerry, asking for information on her family and looking for a photograph of her mother.

Jerry replied in 1879 and I have a very faded copy of that reply which was written in pencil. Jerry's wife, Kate, died in 1878, aged thirty-eight years and Jerry died in 1889 aged fifty four.

I understand Patrick O'Connell followed his children to America. He died there in 1867 at seventy five years and is buried beside his son, Jeremiah.

One brother, Patrick, stayed at home and married Mary Connor. They lived in the Lyreacrompane/Rathea area having children born in both places. It's possible that descendants of Patrick and Mary still in the locality.

*Billy Connell* (unrelated).

### Obituary:

**John P. O'Connell**

**Winsted Evening Citizen Saturday, October 31, 1925,**

John P. O'Connell, one of Winsted's oldest residents, passed away at the family home on Oak Street Friday afternoon at 3:20. Death followed a lingering illness of several months' duration. Mr. O'Connell was born in Ireland 86 years ago, the son of Patrick and Julia Dillon O'Connell. He emigrated to this country when 18 years of age, taking up his residence in Washington. While residing in the national capital, Mr. O'Connell was united in marriage to Margaret E. Nolan. From Washington Mr. O'Connell went to Norfolk where he stayed for a short time. Forty-two years ago he moved to Winsted, where he has since resided. Mr. O'Connell was very well known in the community and had a host of friends. He was a member of St. Joseph's-church,-the Holy Name Society and the Order of St. Francis. Surviving him are four daughters, Julia, Anna, Mary and Margaret O'Connell of Winsted, and three sons, P.F. O'Connell of Norfolk, and Jeremiah and Dennis V. O'Connell of Winsted. The funeral will be held from his late home Monday morning at 8:30 and at St. Joseph's church at 9. Friends are kindly requested to omit flowers.

### Funeral Notice

**Winsted Evening Citizen**

**Monday, November 2, 1925.**

The funeral of John P. O'Connell was very largely attended at the family home on Oak street this morning at 8:30 and at St. Joseph's Church a half hour later, where a solemn high mass of requiem was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Reidy of South Manchester, assisted by Rev. Fr. Andrew Slatterly, pastor, and Rev. Fr. Ambrose Greelis, assistant pastor. The soloists were Miss Laura Grady of this city and John Kinary of New Britain. There was a profusion of beautiful floral remembrances. The bearers were Thomas Hannafin, Joseph L. Carroll and William Favley of Winsted, John Burke of Bristol, John Condon of Derby and William O'Connor of Norfolk. Interment was in St. Joseph's cemetery.

Jeremiah P O'Connell  
Norfolk Post Office  
Field County Connecticut

December 8 1879

Dear Margaret Shelly

I now sit down to answer your letter which I was taken with surprise when I see who it came from. I never expected to hear from any of that family of children.

Dear niece with regard to your Father saying I could send you one of your mothers picture I never saw any of them to my knowledge. I think he is only putting off in that way saying I would send you one. I have been speaking to one of my sisters the day previous to this letter and she says she never saw any picture of your mother in anyplace. Now when your mother went from the city of Washington to California she went with a lady. Her husband was an editor of a newspaper and sometime after this move the editor died or got killed I can't call her name but I will write to my sister to Washington she may have any or perhaps may know the lady's name so that you may find someone this lady may know.

Now Maggie you wish to know how many aunts and uncles you have in mother's family there is three aunts their names are Elizabeth, Mary and Julia. Elizabeth is in the city of Pittsburgh PA. Mary is living here in Norfolk and Julia is living in Washington City DC. I will be able to send you their directions when I hear from you in answer to this letter. As for your uncle there is but one and his name is John and is living here in this town. So there is now but three aunts and two uncles from mothers side in the family of O'Connell's. Maggie I have an uncle's daughter here in California. Her husband's name is Thomas Brooke. I will get his directions and send it to you so you can write to her. Before she married her maiden name was Cate O'Connell.

Dear Margaret I hope you will send me pictures of the three of you but I would like to have you make enquiries of brother Charley. I think it strange that your father don't take any pain of looking after your welfare or those of sister or brother I would like to know the ages of your two brothers and your sister Julia. Don't forget those pictures.

Dear Maggie I have had some hard times for the last two years since I buried my wife the mother of eight children from ages of fifteen years down to two years when she died. Pray god be merciful to those who is gone before us and grant them eternal rest in heaven. I have been in this country since June 1863. My brother John came in 1861. My sisters are here in this country long before us. I am trying to console you by giving you all the information I can. I will now wish you and brother and sister good luck and good bye for the present. Send those pictures.

The original letter written by Jeremiah P O'Connell is in the possession of Theresa Stafford, Oklahoma and Billy Connell has a copy. However it is too faint now to print here so we have reconstructed the letter much as it would have looked originally. The letter was sent to Margaret's husband, William Armstrong, Old City Hall, Central Police Station. It was Margaret's great grandson, John Dailey who ensured that the letter was passed down and finally reached Theresa Stafford who contacted Billy Connell in Lyreacrompane about the link back to here.



*Gerry and John O'Connell (second and third males from the left) born in Lyreacrompane at 'Doran's Cross'. Going on the dates in the previous article this photo must be about 150 years old and taken shortly after the*

### Fiddle makes news in the '60s

A Violin that helped earn hundreds of pounds for Duagh parish funds has a "Stradivarius" label on it. It is owned by Jeremiah Long of Lyreacrompane whose Glin-born great grandfather purchased it in America before the end of the last century.

"At the time of the Land League my great grandfather, James Long, was evicted from his home at Turree, Glin, and he brought his family to America," Jeremiah said. "During the short period he was there he purchased the violin from a Brooklyn bandmaster so that one of his sons could play it. The family returned to Ireland and the violin passed into the hands of my father fifty years ago."

Mr. Jeremiah Long, senior, who lives with his son and Ballymac-born daughter-in-law at Lyre, said he was offered £300 for it some years ago by Jimmy Nash, a next door neighbour who had emigrated to Australia and was home on holidays.

"But I thought it was worth more than that and did not part" he said. "I'm a concertina

player myself but many people have remarked about the quality of tone of the violin, including my sister-in-law, Mrs. J. Long, who taught my son, Jerry, how to play it. There was no professional could touch her at the violin."

The younger Mr. Long wrote to Mr. Celsus Sheehy of Dingle when he read in The Kerryman two weeks ago about the "Stradivarius" violin he had.

The inscription inside Mr. Long's amber rosewood coloured violin reads: "Antonius Stradivarius, Cremona, Faciebat Anno 1690." It had the letter A.S. inscribed in a circle mounted by a cross.

Mr. Sheehy's violin has two sounding posts but the Lyre violin has only one. The younger Mr. Long has frequently played his "Strad" at concerts in aid of the local parish church fund. "I'm sure it has helped to earn hundreds for the fund," he said.

In the intervening years the violin has been checked by experts and although they have described it as a first class instrument they have not classified it as a Stradivarius and it has since passed on to cousins in County Limerick.

### The Mad Kerryman

*Mike Doyle, Manchester.  
(With connections to Spur)*

On Oct 26, 2017 The Irish Rambling House show was back again in Manchester at the new Irish World Heritage Centre (IWHC). It set me reminiscing back to the year 2000. I'd just been elected chairman of St. Wilfrid's CCE based at the old I.W.H.C. along with a new committee.

I was sitting at home one night early that year when I got a phone call from what I can only describe as a Mad Kerryman. He oozed enthusiasm about a new show he wanted to bring to England. He waxed lyrical for the best part of an hour. When I eventually managed to get a word in it was to say yes we'd be delighted to help out in any way we could here in Manchester.

The show arrived at the I.W.H.C in April 2000 and was a resounding success. When it returned the following October it sold out through word of mouth and continued to astound with the quality of the show.

So it was wonderful to see the show back again. There were faces from the very first show, faces from the intervening years and new faces on stage. The show was still brilliant. It was wonderful to meet up once again with Kay and of course the Mad Kerryman, none other than the one and only Joe Harrington.



## 'The Fifth Kerryman' The Story of Robert Dillon

Bridget McAuliffe

During the centenary commemoration of 1916 one of the most exciting things has been the uncovering of the hidden or little-known stories of the Easter Rising. 2016 will be regarded as the year the history of the women got its rightful place. In Kerry, the integral part of the events there was emphasised through publications such as *Kerry 1916; Histories and Legacies of the Easter Rising - A Centenary Record*. The stories of the children killed during the Rising were vividly recalled. So, too, were the stories of civilians caught up in the events of Easter week. This civilian story is a tragic one with a Kerry connection.

Robert Dillon was originally from Braumaddra, Lyreacrompane. He was the son of farmer, John Dillon, and his wife Catherine O'Donnell. He had at least four brothers - Maurice, Mathew, John and Jeremiah. In 1901, Robert's brother Mathew and his wife Ellen were still at the home farm in Braumaddra. A Michael Lyons aged 18 was there as a Farmer Servant according to the Census of 1901. Mathew and Ellen did not have any children. The farm went to his niece, Katie Dillon, daughter of his brother Maurice and his wife, Mary Scanlon of Glouira. After his marriage, Maurice Dillon had moved to Glouria, Lisselton and had six children including Katie.

Katie married Edmond Galvin son of James Galvin of Braumaddara and Hanora Stack in 1910 and they were

settled in the farm there by 1911. (These are the Grandparents of Edmond Peter Galvin of Braumaddra). Another brother, John, married Anastasia Brophy and they set up in business in Listowel. Their children included Mary Josephine Dillon, born in 1880, who married, John Scully, an Instructor in Agriculture and Technical Instruction in 1909. Mary and John set up home in Listowel, where they lived with John Dillon, at Scully's Corner. John J Dillon and Anastasia Brophy also had a son, John Sebastian, who became a priest...

Unlike his brother, Robert Dillon left Kerry and went to Dublin in the 1880s where. On September 5, 1887, he married Ellen Cogan of Summer Street, just off the North Circular Road. Ellen's mother was Eliza Cogan.

Robert had already set up in business at 8 Moore St, which had proved to be very successful. He and Ellen then ran businesses at No 6 and No 8 Moore St. He is recorded in the Dublin Directories as a poulterer (dealing in chickens and eggs) but he also ran a pub, 'The Flag', out of No 8. In 1901, when the census was taken in April of that year, Robert's Kerry cousins, John J Dillon, his brother, who had business in Listowel, was visiting with his son, Father John S (Sebastian). Interestingly, John J is also recorded in 1901 Census in Listowel; he must have filled the form before he left for Dublin.

Moore Street was then, as it is now, a shopping street. In 1916, the buildings from No 1 (J Humphreys, Tea and Wine

merchant) to No 57 (Christopher Flanagan poulterer), housed businesses as diverse as fishmongers, pork butchers, grocers, dairies, clothes dealers, china and glass warehouse and many others. In 1916, the street was home to an eclectic mixture of people and families; a much more mixed collection of people in terms of class and ethnicity than would be generally found in other areas of Dublin.

These ranged from Organa Savione and his family, from Italy, who ran a fried food shop at No 2, to Thomas Clifton, a labourer, and his family, all from England, who lived at No 12, to Alfred Dursley, a chair repairer from Liverpool, who lived at No 4. The street was home to business owners, to fruit and vegetable dealers, to a number of chimney cleaners, to hairdressers, and to general labourers, quite a wide mix of social classes compared to most, more homogenous, areas in Dublin.

Although most of the residents in Moore St. were native Dubliners, a number came from other counties in Ireland. Bridget Morris, who ran the Dairy and Provision Shop at No 4, came from Longford, while T F Cogan at No 10 was from Wicklow. At No 13 lived Cork-born John Horgan and his American-born wife Rosanna. While they were obviously concerned with their businesses, the men and women who lived and worked on Moore St were not insulated from the political events of the day. For example, Jim Humphreys who ran a pub at No 1-2 Moore St. took part in the

rebellion as a member of the Irish Volunteers.

Coincidentally, Humphreys, whose family were originally from Boher, Co Limerick, was related by marriage to The O'Rahilly, who died on Moore St. during the Rising. Dr. David Humphreys of Glenstal, Co Limerick, uncle of Jim Humphreys of Moore St, was married to Nell Rahilly, sister of The O'Rahilly. Joe Humphreys fought in the GPO and was arrested and interred in Frongoch for his activities.

In 1916, Robert and Ellen Dillon, with their daughter Mary (May), had a poultry business and a pub, 'The Flag', in Moore St where they also had their residence on the upper floors. Robert doesn't seem to have been involved directly in politics but, running 'The Flag', the family can hardly have been unaware of the political undercurrents in the city.

If he was not political, Robert was very involved in charity, working especially with St Vincent de Paul. In the early 20th century, Dublin had the worst housing conditions of any city in Britain and Ireland. By 1911, tenements in inner-city Dublin were filthy, overcrowded, and disease ridden, teeming with malnourished children and very much at odds with the elite world of colonial and middle-class Dublin. For those living in poverty, some succour came from the Liberal government of David Lloyd George and Henry Asquith, with the introduction of old age pensions in 1908, labour exchanges in 1909, and a national insurance scheme to afford workers protection against sickness,

invalidity and unemployment in 1911. The introduction of the old-age pension for the over 70s was of enormous importance, alleviating some of the distress that attended the last years of those no longer able to work, even if work could be found.



*Children of the tenements*

However, the extreme poverty of the people was also alleviated by charities such as the St Vincent de Paul, which had been operating in Dublin and Ireland since 1844. The charity was particularly active during the 1913 Lockout and in founding homeless shelters for men and boys.



*Front page from the 1913 Lockout*

Robert Dillon was a well-known fundraiser and activist with St. Vincent de Paul during his years in Dublin. When the rising broke out on Easter Monday 1916, like

many of the residents of the street, the Dillons decided to remain in their home, probably to protect their business and belongings. Throughout the week, Robert, Ellen and May hunkered down in No 8, no doubt, terrified of the gunfire, the looters and the British forces who had set up barricades at the end of Moore St where it intersects with Parnell Street.

Almost immediately the policemen of the Dublin Metropolitan Police were recalled to barracks (after a number of them were shot and killed) which meant the homes and businesses in inner city Dublin were unprotected. Compensation claims after 1916 show how quickly the Moore Street businesses were raided and emptied by looters. For example at No 15 (Gormans), two thousand Woodbine, 500 hundred Players, 300 Goldflake and 700 Park Drive cigarettes were taken from the shop.

By Friday, the GPO was on fire and the insurgents had to plan an escape route, a route that would take them directly into Moore St. The plan was to retreat and set up a new GHQ at Williams & Woods, a jam factory on Parnell St. The O'Rahilly offer to lead an advance party to clear the way and secure Williams & Woods, going by the direct route from the GPO to Parnell St, down Moore St. However, as The O'Rahilly and his men turned into Moore St they were lethally strafed from the barricades at Parnell St.

Here, several of the men following him, including Patrick Shortis, Ballybunion, Patrick O'Connor, Rathmore and Michael Mulvihill from Causeway, died. The

O'Rahilly was badly wounded. He crawled into nearby Sackville Lane, where he died a number of hours later. In No 8 the Dillon family would have heard all the noise of shouts and gunfire. Now Moore St was a battleground.

Back in the GPO, despite no word from The O'Rahilly, circumstances forced the insurgents to leave and follow his route up Moore St. Moving about Moore St. was now becoming very dangerous, especially as the machine guns on the Rotunda had the street covered. Volunteers began forcing their way into homes, as terrified families hid in basements. The British were, by now, as Irish Volunteer James Kavanagh said, 'firing at everything that moved on the street, and at such short range their shooting was deadly. I saw three people attempting to cross the street killed by three shots, 1, 2, 3, like that'.

The army had continued the build-up of firepower and

artillery in the area with an 18 pounder gun now targeting the houses on Moore St. Elizabeth O'Farrell later wrote that the insurgents, now in No 15/16 Moore St, spent Friday night 'amid the roar of burning buildings, machine guns playing on the houses, and, at intervals, what seemed like hand grenades'

In No 8, the Dillon family also experienced a night of gunfire, bombardment and terror. As Saturday morning dawned without any decrease in fire, the insurgents were planning their passage to safety from Moore St. Citizen Army member Sean McLoughlin proposed using 20-30 men - a 'Death or Glory' squad - to rush the barricade at the end of Moore St, distracting the British and allowing the remaining garrison to escape down Little Denmark Street. Pearse, however, witnessing the continued killing and wounding of civilians, was disturbed by this plan which

would cause more death and destruction in heavily populated areas.

As it was, the remaining residents of Moore St, many of their homes now on fire, were trying to escape. Early in the morning, a group of women and children, attempting to leave the street had been fired on. An elderly man (Mr Fee of No 57) who fled his home, holding a white flag, had been shot dead. The Doyle and McDonagh families (tenants at Number 16) attempted to leave their homes. Mr Doyle pinned his wife's apron to an umbrella and led a party of seven out onto the street. They were fired on, Mr Doyle fell wounded. He and his party were pulled to safety by the O'Carroll's at No 49, who were tripe dealers.

On that Saturday morning, the Dillon family at No 8 also had a decision to make. British shells were landing with greater frequency; eventually No 8 was hit and



*The Barricade at the end of Moore Street from behind which the British army fired on the rebels and residents that came in their sights*

set on fire. As the flames grew, Robert, his wife Ellen and daughter May had come to a decision to flee. They had seen their friends and neighbours shot down in previous escape attempts but as fire caught hold their house no longer provided any safety. At about 12 noon on Easter Saturday, with Robert holding a white sheet, the family crept out of No. 8 and attempted to make their way to safety.

It is believed that Pearse, watching what was happening out on the street from No. 16 and saw the family as they tried to flee. Moving towards the barricades at Parnell St, under the white flag, the Dillon family had hoped for safety. Instead, the troops there opened fire. Robert was gunned down immediately and as his wife and daughter crouched behind his body they watched as he died. Many later reports and descriptions of this in the history books mention that the family were shot dead, and Pearse thought the whole family were killed. However, Ellen and May survived, traumatised and shaken, but alive.



Pearse, watching the fate of the family, is said to have decided then to surrender in

order to 'prevent further slaughter of the civilian population and to save the lives of as many as possible of our followers'. Soon after, Elizabeth O'Farrell began her walk to the barricades to deliver his note and within hours the insurgents were all arrested and removed from Moore St.

In the stillness of the ceasefire the residents took stock of their street. Many of the homes and businesses were on fire, destroyed or badly damaged. Several residents, including Robert Dillon, lay dead. The dead of the Rising were gathered and buried, Robert, was taken to Glasnevin Cemetery and interred there.

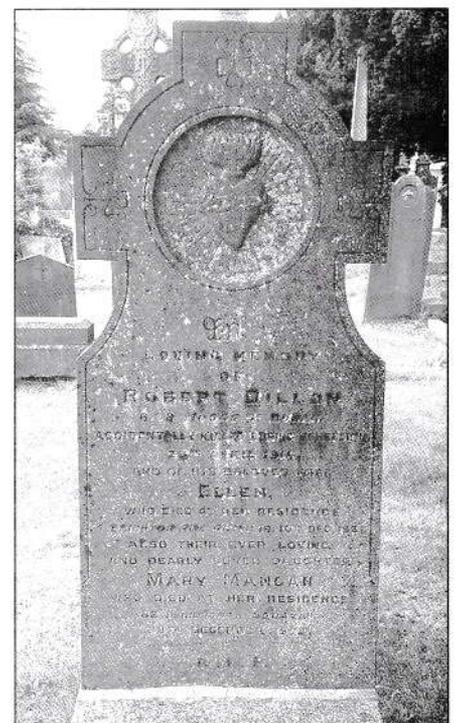


*Pearse surrenders*

In his obituary Robert Dillon was referred to as a "man of high principle and sterling honesty and his charitable work amongst the poor of the city in connection with the St. Vincent de Paul Society had brought solace and relief to many a desolate home". His wife Ellen, and daughter May, survived but lost their home. Ellen Dillon applied for compensation for her material losses to the

Property Losses (Ireland) Committee (PLIC). A detailed description of the contents of No 6 and No 8 Moore St. was submitted. Ellen claimed for £3,788 in losses of the homes, the businesses and the contents and she was awarded £2,125. Ellen and May never returned to live in Moore St. Ellen lived in Terenure for the rest of her life. May married James Mangan, the son of Timothy Mangan, a butter merchant from Tralee. They lived in Dublin and did not have children. May died in 1972 and was buried with her parents in Glasnevin.

The story of Robert Dillon, the fifth Kerryman killed on Moore St., is part of the experience of the civilian population during the Easter Rising. Rediscovering his story adds to our knowledge of the time and allows the experience of all, combatant and civilian, been properly commemorated and remembered.



*The headstone of Robert Dillon in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin*

## Church of the Sacred Heart Carrigcannon.

Kay O'Leary

*In the Millennium Journal (Number 6) we carried a list of people who contributed towards the church building fund in Carrigcannon. (The Church was eventually built in Glountane). Below we print a letter sent by the Parish Priest to the papers of the time which include some more names of people who had contributed up to March 1913.*

Dear Sir,

Kindly oblige by publishing the subjoined list of subscribers towards the erection of a new church for the people of Carrigcannon and the enclosed letter from Mr. Pierce MCC.

On behalf of my parishioners, I tender Mr. Pierce, benefactors, one and all, our grateful acknowledgement of

their benefactions and good wishes in connection with the onerous work we have in hand, which we could never hope to accomplish without the sympathy and material support of a generous public.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to our benefactors which personally we could never re-pay, but we are very confident that the fruits of the monthly Mass, and the special prayers of the congregation offered up every Sunday for their various intentions will more than compensate them for their charity and generosity.

Much merit is due to esteemed friends who returned their collecting cards with generous donations. Others equally benevolent, but reluctant to make a collection returned their collecting cards with their own contributions. We trust that our other good and faithful friends from whom we have not heard will do their

best to fill up their collecting cards and return them at their earliest convenience. The response made to our appeal for aid has been so far almost everything we could expect. However much remains to be done. A little from all, rich and poor, according to their means will be enough to bring the work to a speedy and successful finish. We are confident that little will be forthcoming. No person will miss a mite. May I bring a blessing on the donors. I have to thank 'A Friend' outside the parish whose name I am not free to give for a valuable picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, for the new Church. No gift could be more acceptable. Further contributions will be gratefully received and acknowledged by

Yours very faithfully,  
J. Beazley, P.P.  
Duagh, Kilmorna  
15<sup>th</sup> March 1913.

### List of subscribers:

Rev P.D. O'Connor, Coburg, Melbourne £4.0s.0d  
Door Collection Lyreacrompne: £1.16s.2d  
Per Miss Nora Fitzgerald, Killarney £1. 10s.0d  
Dr. Gerard Pierce, Bishops court, Lixnaw £1.1s.0d

Lieut. Colonel Rice, Bushmount, Firies £1.0s.0d  
Per Miss Bridget Kennedy, Ballymalis £0.15s.0d  
Edmond Moriarty, Clahane £0.14s.0d  
Per Mrs. Jerh. Lyons, Duagh £0.10s.6d

10s each: Thomas Doran and Mce. Doran London, Garrett Stack Tournageeha, Mrs. Mat Doran Lyre,  
5s each: Mrs. Relihan Knockreagh, William Loughnane Ballyduhig, Daniel Walsh Cappa, A Friend,  
Mrs. Murphy London, Michael Power London, Florence O'Sullivan MCC, John O'Donnell,

2s.6d each: Mrs. Twomey Irremore, Mrs. Sedwick Cappa, Ml. Moloney Cappa, A Friend, Mrs. Johnson Ballyduhig, Anna Spillane Listowel.

2s each: Mrs. Murphy Kilshinnane, Jn. Kelliher Irremore, Mrs. Buckley Mountcoal, J. Fitzell.

1s each: Ml. Browne, P. Mangan, K Donoghue Rathea, Mary Walsh Cappa, D.J. Nolan, James Costello, J. Molyneaux, Lyre, Masters Patrick, Mat, Daniel and Thomas Doran Misses Cissie and Mary Doran.

6d each: Mrs. Lynch and Ellie Lynch, Mrs. Harty, Mrs. Naughton.

Trippol,  
Ballybunion 25 February 1913

Dear Father Beazley,  
Enclosed find cheque value 7s.6d, my mite towards the building of the Carrigcannon Church. Trusting your appeal for funds for such a noble and meritorious work will meet a ready and generous response.  
Yours faithfully,  
Garret Pierce.

## Church on the Move

And so the second church in Lyreacrompane was built at a cost of £16,000 with accommodation for 400 people. It was blessed and opened by Dr. Denis Moynihan, Bishop of Kerry in 1956. The first church was built in Lyreacrompane in 1914 practically on the same site as the present one. That church only lasted for 40 years. It seems unlikely that any church built in the last two hundred years had such a short lifespan.

Addressing the congregation in 1956 Bishop Moynihan recounted that on September 26 1870 Dr. Moriarty, the then Bishop of Kerry, wrote in his diary: *"The Archdeacon and I drove by the old Listowel road to choose a site for a chapel between Carrigcannon and Duagh where the people are remote from any place of worship. We considered that Carrigcannon would be the most central. Fr. Roche PP Lixnaw offered to give up townlands of his parish to facilitate this arrangement"*. The entry in the diary for September 30 1870 reads *"I went to Tralee. Saw John Hurly at Fenit who most kindly desired me to choose any spot on his property to build a chapel at Carrigcannon, or the neighbourhood"*. The entry in the Bishop's diary for 11 October 1870 read *"Went to Listowel. Ordered Mass to be said on Sundays and Holidays at Pat Stack's farmhouse by PP and CC Duagh. Fr. Roche PP Lixnaw gives up four townlands Lyreacrompane, Carrigcannon, Clashmullagh, Clohaneleskirt, (The townland of Clashmullagh seems to have been an error as*

there is none of that name known today or recorded in the Ordinance Survey maps of the time)

There is no record of Dr. Moriarty's wishes having been carrying out until March 24 1912. On that date Dr. Mangan, late Bishop of Kerry, in company with Fr. Brosnan, and Fr. Denis O'Connor CC Killarney, formerly CC Duagh, visited the area. The Bishop wrote in his diary: *"Visited Carrigcannon to select site for new church. Met Fr Beasley, PP Duagh and selected present site"*.

At the opening of the present church Bishop Moynihan went on to say that it would serve no useful purpose to inquire why the life of the first church was so short lived commenting that *"the people of Lyreacrompane have their ideas and he had his. Whatever was the reason the people of Lyreacrompane were the sufferers for they had been compelled to build a second church in a short space of fifty years. (Actually 42 years). Later in his homily the Bishop said the old church had stood for 40 years and that it was built in 1916. (The dedication stone says 1914).*



There is no explanation offered by Bishop Moynihan as to how the church ended up been built in Glountane and not in Carrigcannon!!!

The Bishop said that the priests and people had

worked together and in a short time had collected over £7,000. He recalled that this was the ninth church which had been built in recent years to the design of Mr J.R. Boyd-Barrett, architect. He also thanked the builders, Fitzgeralds, Tralee.

The 40 feet high tower of the present church is constructed of stone from the old church and it also has a glass window from the old church. The Fr. Brosnan who accompanied Dr. Mangan, Bishop of Kerry, to meet Fr. Beasley in 1912 was born in Islanddanny - a townland that no longer exists. Fr. Denis Brosnan, was born in 1855, was one of nine children born to Daniel Brosnan and Mary Moloney.

### Some Adverts of the time

**FITZGERALD  
BROS.**

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for

**LYREACROMPANE  
CHURCH**

The Rink, Basin View,  
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PHONE 78

**LYREACROMPANE CHURCH**

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## That picture!

In his letter to the papers all those years ago and reprinted above Fr Beazley paid a special tribute to "A Friend outside the parish whose name I am not free to give for a valuable picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, for the new Church". That was in 1913.

Today there is a picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in the porch of Lyreacrompane Church. It looks to be very old and it has been damaged to some extent over time. It would be easy to assume that it is the same picture donated to Fr Beazley a hundred and fifteen years ago.



However what we know about this picture in the church porch today is that it was brought back from Greece a few years ago by local man, Christopher Nash. He had been staying in the house of a Greek man who was in the process of clearing out his home and he offered the picture (which is on canvas) to Christopher. Christopher brought the picture home and Sean Dillon made a frame for it and it now hangs in the church porch. Is it possible that the original picture found its way to Greece and back to Lyre again? Wouldn't that be stranger than fiction???



Lyre Scouts messing about on the river Smearlagh.



Tony Healy and Mike Quinn with the silverware. Liz Quille, Knocknaglough married John O'Brien Kilflynn (Grandmother of Mary Kelliher, Banemore).



At the Dan Paddy Andy Festival.



Irish Coast Guard called in to help in local incident in Lyreacrompane.

Memories of  
**My Schooldays**

*Helen (Harrington) Schisas  
Brisbane*

I have just returned to Australia after a three week holiday in Lyreacrompane my birth place and it brought back memories of my younger days when I went to school there. My brothers Joe , Brendan and I walked the two and a half miles to school. In those days there was no such thing as been driven as there were few cars around the area back then.

There were only two houses on the first stretch of road. The first was Pa Dillane's and his wife Baby (Naughton) - a lovely couple I remember well. My father and myself visited their place once a week, to watch a show on television called Mr Ed (it was a show about a talking horse). Like most others we didn't have a TV in those days and those that had the new-fangled invention didn't mind us going there for the show. I used to look forward to the walk over there and to watching the show.

Next house along was Molly and Paddy Dillane's. Theirs was a new cottage. They had moved there from the 'Barracks' further over. A little further along was where we turned right and passed the Barracks, Dillanes place, and that brought us to Connors house on the main road. We always called in there as PJ walked to school with us. I will always

remember PJ's mother Mai, saying to Pat every morning; "Wash behind your ears PJ. Look at the Harringtons how clean and tidy they are".

We would head along over the bridge then and I would meet up around the Grotto area with my cousin, Mary Nash, who lived in Spur. We walked the rest of the way to school together. The teachers then were Master Hanifin, Miss Nolan and Mrs Behan. The creamery was a busy place then and the horses and carts were always lined up there. It is long gone now and in its place is a Community Centre and a playing field. We used to know that place as Doran's Inch and it was there that the boys from Lyre School played matches against other schools in the parish. We girls got no chance to take part. That was long before Ladies Football existed. Neilus Nolan's shop was just past the bridge over the Smearlagh river and we used to call in there sometimes on the way home if we had a few pennies on us to get a couple of sweets or a two penny wafer. Neilus's son Johnny now runs the business but I'm glad to say that the shop has changed little.

Every now and then on our way home we would get a lift from Timmy Horgan in his cart and that was really special. Theresa Kelliher and I used to walk home together as well. I have so many lovely memories of those days. After all the years I still

meet up with Mary Nash when I visit her and Seamus in Melbourne and when I visit Lyre Theresa Kelliher always makes the long trip from Meath to make sure we get together.



*Helen and Theresa 2017*

Another thing I remember is Sunday mornings going to mass and getting a lift from Mike Horgan from Banemore in his horse and trap. It was a beautiful trap and we felt so privileged to be in it. After the mass there was a small shop across the road owned by Neilus Nolan and we always went there for an ice-cream or some sweets. We used to look forward to that.

I remember also a lady called Mary Quilter who used to go to the creamery in Lyre and always call in to my Mom on the way home to have a cup of tea. She used to bring me a block of Galtee cheese sometimes. I still love the Galtee.

These are just some memories that came to me on the long flight from Shannon to Brisbane - memories of long ago never to be forgotten. Maybe they will remind you of your school days and you will write your memories down for the next Lyre Journal as I have done.

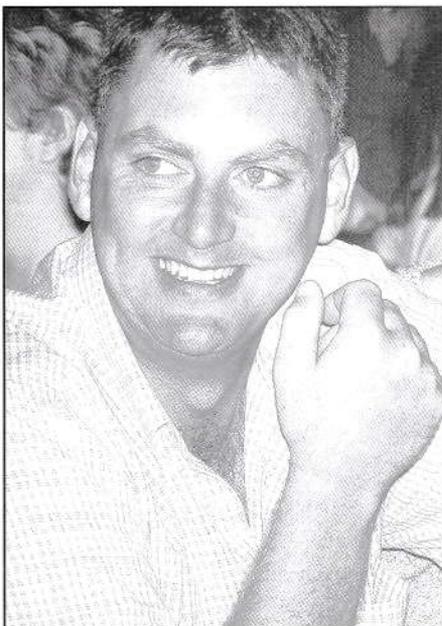
## Calling to the Shop



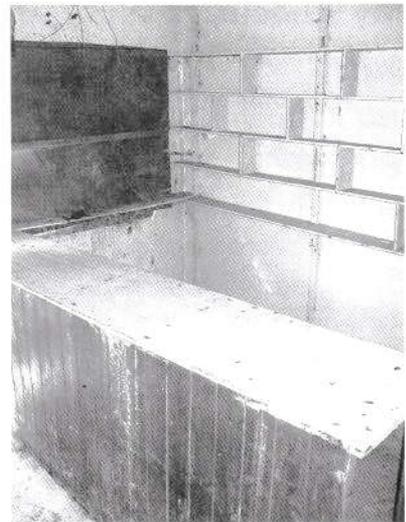
*Nelius Nolan having an early morning chat with some of the regulars at Lyreacrompane Post Office in the 1970s.*



*Providing a service for Mass goers – Nelius Nolan's little shop opposite Lyre Church. Opened on Sunday mornings only. Closed for years now the photo on the right gives us a glimpse inside today (2017). The front of the counter is still a bright green.*



*Lovely photo of Eamonn Curtin RIP who left us at such a young age.*



*The Indo or the Press?*

### Prices of raw hides in 1611.

The Carew Papers relating to the reign of King James 1 carry information about an important item of the time – cowhide. These were sold by the Dicker or the Last. "Ten lawful and merchantable hides (of cows above three years old) make a Dicker and 20 Dickers a Last". The price of raw hides usually is (in Cork.) 6 or 7 shillings - sometimes more but seldom less.

The price of a tanned hide is usually 10 or 12 shillings. The biggest outlet they had for these hides is at St. Malice's, in France, where they sell raw hides at ten shillings and tanned hides at 15 shillings each. Hides were sometimes exported to Lisbon, Seville and the Canaries for much the same price as they got in France.

"In the time of the wars Cork has all the traffic and transport of hides from Kinsale, Ross, Kerry and Desmond and then they transported near a hundred Lasts a year, but now they transport not past 80 Lasts yearly. A stone of tallow is commonly sold for two shillings and they seldom buy any unless it be refined. The stone is 14 lbs, and 8 stone make a great hundred". (Calendar of the State Papers - Ireland 1611-1614)



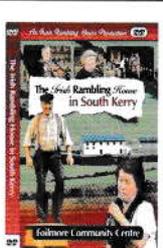
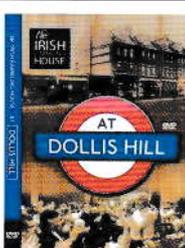
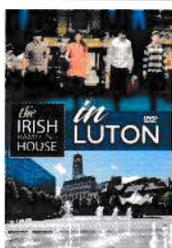
The 32 County Association in Birmingham, including Maurice Long (Knockalougha) presenting a cheque of support to the Irish Rambling House. On right Maurice and Sarah O'Keeffe, musicians and dancers with the Show.



The 2016 Irish Rambling House Group pictured after one of their shows in London. On the right Mike Mangan, Josephine and Conor Walsh and Billy Donegan meet up in London at an Irish Rambling House Show.



The 2017 Irish Rambling House group pictured in Birmingham. These tours are organised by Lyre natives Kay O'Leary and Joe Harrington. On the left: Mary Landers (nee McCarthy Kilmorna) and her daughter Pat Sokall.



**Irish Rambling House DVDs**  
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 A full list of DVDs can be found on  
**WWW.IRISHRAMBLINGHOUSE.COM**

**First 5k and 10K Walk/Run held in Lyre for the Kerry Cancer Link Bus 2017**



From the top... Daniel Breen Lyre, Grace Cahill Knocknagoshel, Garrett Scollard Tralee, Daniel O'Donoghue Lyre, Geraldine O'Sullivan Bantry, Ann Kelliher, Aidan McCarthy Tralee, John Neville Ballylongford, Denise Quilter Duagh, Caitriona Lyons Lyre, Jason Galvin Lixnaw, Rachel Stokes, Listowel



2017 Katie Brosnan, Hugh O Connor, Chloe Lyons and Ayla Yaxley. Listowel Writers Week comes to Lyre.



Lyreacrompane music maker, Lorraine Nash.

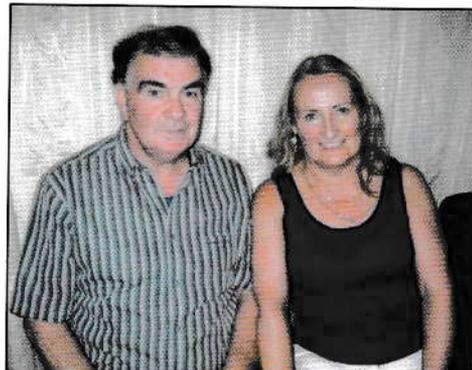


Harringtons - Joe, Brendan with Linda, Zara and Aleena.

## Photos from the Dan Paddy Andy Festival



Mick and Brigid Naughton with Michael Murphy in happier times. The dash for the finish line.



More  
Dan  
Paddy  
Andy  
Fest  
Photos



Joe Harrington talking to members of the Kerry Archaeological Society about the Glen Schoolhouse. On the right, school friends, Ann Carmody and Maureen Dillon. Ann grew up in the former schoolhouse.



Brendan Shine and some of his Band taking a break in Lyre and on the right 'Thumbs up' at another Lyre wedding

## The Second School in Lyreacrompane

The Glen Schoolhouse was the first school in Lyreacrompane (outside of Hedge Schools). The second schoolhouse was built in 1911/12 but the planning for it started much earlier. The *Kerry Sentinel* of August 20 1898 carried the following notice...

### TO BUILDERS

I am prepared to consider tenders for  
**BUILDING A SCHOOLHOUSE**  
NEAR THE  
Smerla Bridge at Lyreacrompane  
In this parish  
The School to be built according  
to No. VI plan to accommodate  
200 children. Plans and  
Specifications can be seen at my  
house.  
M. A. Dillon, P.P.  
Duagh,  
Listowel

Twelve years after Fr Dillon's notice appeared the following was displayed in the *Kerry People* of May 7, 1910

### BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

Tenders for the erection and furnishing of National School Buildings at Lyreacrompane, Co. Kerry, will be received up to, but not later than, 10am on the first day of June 1910. The plans and specifications can be seen at the District Office of Public Works, Tralee.

The tender for the whole of the works may be in a lump sum but each tender must be accompanied by a detailed and fully priced Bill of Quantities showing how the total has been arrived at. Everything required for the full and proper completion of the whole of the works must be carried out for the contract sum even though the contractor may have omitted or neglected to include certain items in his Bill of Quantities.

The Board will not be bound to accept the lowest of any Tender.

By Order H Williams, Secretary  
Office of Public Works, Dublin May 3, 1910



*During preparations for the School reunion of 2013 people contributed scores of old photos of interest but not one of the old schoolhouse could be found. However, one did exist and it lay for 50 years among many mementos from home in a box belonging to Sr. Eileen Enright in America. It had been sent to her all those years ago by her sister, Joan Roche. Joan thinks the photo may have been taken by Mick Naughton's mother, Kit Joy, Glashnacree – one of the few people in Lyre to have a camera back then.*

### The long wait.

On Nov 3, 1886 an school inspector had described the Glen Schoolhouse as unsuitable and hoped that a new house would shortly be erected. The new school did eventually open in Glashnacree Twenty five years later - July 3, 1912.

Along the way the landlord John CD Hurly had donated a patch of ground on the farm of one of his tenants, Timothy Quill, but by the time the school was built the era of Mr Hurly and landlords was over.

## The Lyreacrompane Find

Jack Joyce

On a recent visit to Dublin to meet my brother Dan our business on the day to visit the 1916 experience at the GPO. An amazing display it was. The graphics and sound effects had transported us back to the GPO during Easter week 1916. It felt as though we were reliving those historic days. Highly recommended.

With time on our hands we decided to visit the National Museum. We had often heard our father talk about a ring they found while cutting turf in O' Donoghues bog back in the forties. The Meitheal on the day was Con and Jim O Donoghue and our father Danny Joyce.

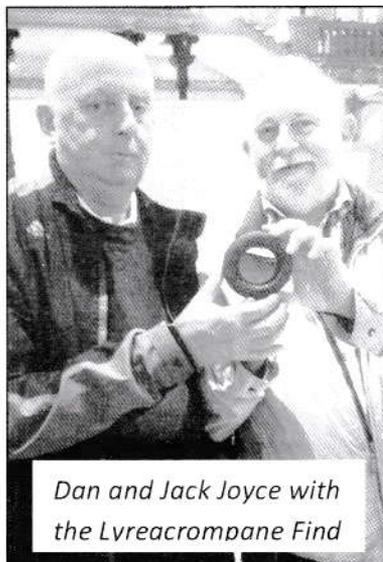
All have departed this earth to their eternal reward, but still alive in the memory of all who knew them. Jim O Donoghue had also mentioned the find to his niece, Nora. Now Nora Healy. They never knew for sure that the ring had made its way to the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.



We approached the reception desk in the Museum and were met by a kindly Dublin man. We told him that we were

there to claim our heritage – 'The Lyreacrompane Find'. He told us to wait over there in his best Dublin accent.

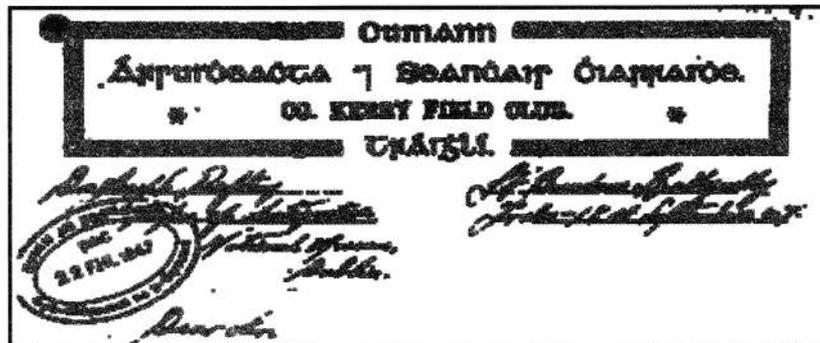
Within a matter of minutes a member of the museum staff came to us with the Ring in her hand. We were amazed to discover that the story was actually true that the item was indeed in the National Museum. Seeing was believing. She took us into the inner sanctum and we had an opportunity to handle the ring and take photos. They were most helpful to us and shared some of the documentation that had been associated with the find.



Dan and Jack Joyce with the Lyreacrompane Find

The find was a Black Stone Ring. It was three and a half inches diameter outside. It was one and three quarter inches diameter in the centre and one inch in depth. Described as a Jet Bracelet they were unable to say what it was used for. It was listed as found under four sods of bog in Lyreacrompane. The helpful staff member explained to us that bog grows at the rate of one foot per thousand years. The ring could possibly be four thousand years old!!!

We have a copy of the letter of the 18th Sept 1947 from the Field Club in Tralee in which mention is made of the find. It was duly received by the Museum on the 22 of Sept 1947. The Museum had recorded the find as a loan from the Kerry Field Club, Tralee and the Loan Register number is L.1948:1 It is stored in compartment B5:9 and the material it is composed of is described as "a consolidated ash from Ballyferriter area". There was no reward attached to the find we were told.



This letter to the National Museum stated; "I would like to mention our latest find. It's a black stone ring found under four feet of bog in Lyreacrompane – very well made and in excellent preservation. (Like a Jet bracelet)".

Your sincerely  
James McDonnell Hon. Admin. Secretary

## Michael J McElligott

Rathea

### Remembered in Fermoy

Dramatic and tragic events unfolded in the River Blackwater in the town of Fermoy on September 6 1942 which cost the lives of two members of the armed forces. One was Lieutenant Thomas A Ryan from Cashel in County Tipperary and the other, Sergeant Michael J McElligott from Rathea. Michael had been a member of the part-time Volunteer Force and had been called up on permanent service when the war started.



*The uniform of the Volunteers - grey in colour with wine trims.*

While Ireland was officially neutral in the conflict the government strengthened the Army (which included subsuming the Volunteer Force into the regular forces). Training and army maneuvers were intensive and the focus was on slowing down any German advance if Hitler decided to invade. Presumably, neutrality would

have required trying to prevent any incursion by Britain in pursuit of its war with Germany – but in reality Irish neutrality was one sided. In fact, Bill Power, a well published historian from Mitchelstown points out that there are British documents from that time showing that there were British observers present and reported back to HQ that they were very impressed by the quality and intensity of the manoeuvres.

Bill has written that the Blackwater was set as the line to defend if Hitler invaded from the south or south west. All the bridges on the river were drilled and prepared for the placing of explosives at a moment's notice should the German army move in. This would only slow the German advance but it would give a good pretext under which the government could invite a British division from the North to come to its aid.

The bridge over the Blackwater in the center of Fermoy was, like the others, prepared for and could have been blown up at short notice. On that fateful September day a training exercise, as part of the biggest military maneuvers ever to take place in Ireland, was undertaken by the Army which included assuming that the bridge was out of use and the river had to be crossed by the soldiers. The crossing had to be made from Ashes Quay to Kings Inch on the north side. To achieve this, a

rope was stretched across the river and secured at both sides. It seems that a combination of too many soldiers on the rope at the one time and a high river put too much pressure on the rope and it snapped leaving soldiers struggling in the water in full combats, rifles, helmets, uniforms and in some cases with their boots tied around their necks. Ryan and McElligott were drowned.

Michael J McElligott, better known as Joe, was a member of the 12<sup>th</sup> Desmond Infantry Battalion, Castleconnell Camp, Limerick. He was born in Rathea in 1914 to Michael and Ann (nee Lyons). One of his three brothers, Jim, was also in the Army with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and in command of Michael's Company. His sister was in the Presentation Order – Sr. Philomena. Michael married Irene Leane in 1936 and they had three children, Mary, Michael and Ann. Michael is buried in Kilfeighny graveyard. His comrade, Thomas Ryan is buried in the Rock of Cashel graveyard along with his two brothers who also died in service. One of the brothers was killed in a light aircraft crash.

In 1992 a memorial plaque was erected near the rowing club on Waterloo Lane, Ashe Quay, in Fermoy to the memory of Michael McElligott and Thomas Ryan. The ceremony was attended by Sergeant McElligott's 83 year old widow, Irene.

Some years before this incident a letter appeared in the Kerryman dated May 3, 1937 and signed by a Joseph McElligott from Rathea. This would seem to have been the same Michael Joseph who lost his life in Fermoy five years later. The letter read...

Dear Mr. Editor,  
 Permit me space in your widely read journal to voice the grievances of the Irish Volunteers. As the public are aware the Minister of Defence invited the young men who were physically fit to don the uniform of Casement's Brigade in defense of their country. Everyone must admit that the response to his appeal was magnanimous. We are about 20,000 strong and I have no doubt if the occasion should arise that our services should be required in action we can be relied upon to emulate the traditions of chivalry of our ancient nation.

Notwithstanding all that, we are not mechanical soldiers as some may think. Stripped of our equipment we are ordinary human beings who cannot exist without the means to purchase food, clothing and a legitimate share of amusement and sport - with the luxury of a smoke thrown in. For eleven months of the year we are supposed to exist and keep kit on thin air as far as our employment is concerned by the Government and local government.

It ought to be their duty to give us first preference as stewards in all public works, consistent with our ability for such positions. Considering that we have volunteered to stand between our people and the armed invader, the least that a grateful nation may do to appreciate our services in that manner. Hoping this reminder will have the desired effect.  
 Yours truly,  
 Volunteer Joseph McElligott.

### Who were the Volunteers?

The Fianna Fáil government created the Volunteer Force on 6 April 1934. It was a part-time militia and was intended to offer an alternative to membership of the IRA. The uniform adopted was based on Roger Casement's Irish Brigade, recruited among Irish POWs in Germany during the First World War. A substantial sum of £250,000 was set aside in the first year for the project and it was aimed to recruit 24,000 volunteers.

At a local level the Force was run with the assistance of a civilian committee known as a 'Sluagh' but the Volunteer Force was not as successful as first hoped. Between March 1934 and March 1939, 16,146 men joined the Force, but when it was reorganised in March 1939 only 3,731 re-enlisted. When World War Two started a few months later the Volunteers were integrated into the regular army and its main roll was in the Coast Watching Service. When the war was over it was replaced by An Forsa Cosanta Áituil (FCA) in 1946.

**FIANNA FAIL**  
 (Republican Party)  
**EAMON DE VALERA**  
 Will address the following Meetings :  
 FRIDAY 24th — CAUSEWAY, 8 p.m.  
 SATURDAY 25th—KNOCKNAGOSHEL 8 p.m.  
 SUNDAY 26th — BALLYHEIGUE, after 11 o'clock Mass.  
 SUNDAY 26th — BALLYBUNION 3 p.m.  
 MONDAY 27th — TRALEE, 8.30 p.m.  
 TUESDAY 28th — LISTOWEL, 8 p.m.  
 (Final Rally)  
**Vote No. 1**  
**MOLONEY, Daniel J.**  
 AR AGAIDH LE FIANNA FAIL.  
 Published by Murtogh E. Burke, Solicitor, Dingle, Agent for the Candidate and printed by The Kerryman Ltd., Tralee.

A 1950s poster for Dan Jim - the candidate from Lyreacrompane.

### Trees.

The Lyreacrompane district is more than familiar with the tree called Sitka Spruce. The natural home of Sitka spruce is a narrow belt of the Pacific north-west coast of North America. It grows along this coast from Alaska in the north down through British Columbia, Washington and Oregon to California. It grows at low elevations, hugging the coast line and islands and only venturing inland along river valleys. Sitka Spruce was first introduced to Europe in 1831 and was first planted in Wicklow soon afterwards.



Modern Irish forestry began in 1904 at Avondale in Co. Wicklow, the home of Charles Stewart Parnell. Many different tree species from all over the world were planted within the estate to see which would grow best in Irish conditions.

The tallest tree in Ireland is a non-native Douglas Fir, at the Powerscourt Estate in Co. Wicklow. This tree measures 56 metres in height. The tree with the largest girth is another exotic, a Monterey Cypress, commonly known as Macrocarpa. This tree is growing at Killyleigh, Co. Down, and is over 12 metres in diameter. The tallest native tree in Ireland is a 40m tall Ash that is growing near Clonmel.

## Clergy call (off) the Tune

Back in the 1930s the clergy were determined to mind the morals of people – whether people liked it or not. District Justices such as Mr R. D. F. Johnson, DJ, went along with their views of how life should be lived and at Listowel District Court in September 1936, made it clear that he believed that “The ideal dance hall was run by a parish committee under the supervision of the clergy”.

The occasion was the annual licencing Session and the PP from Lixnaw was in full flight. “There is only one way to deal with all-night dances, and this is as Soupers were dealt with in olden times — by excommunication.” He said that these dances were going to be the “curse and ruin of the country”. The stopping of the crossroads dances was responsible for the raise of the

dance halls according to the District Justice when all the evidence was that the opposite was the situation! Fr. Browne “strongly denounced” people who attended dances in motor cars from Tralee and elsewhere and argued for the imposition of the three-mile or parish limit to exclude these “packs of scoundrels of the lowest type; devils incarnate.”

Michael Regan, from Billeragh, certainly ran into a clerical storm when his application for a renewal of his dance licence for his hall known as ‘The Six Crosses’ came up. He felt he was on solid ground with a note from Inspector Flood in Tralee saying there was no objection by the Guards but Fr. Browne was on his feet to object to the hours applied for and also to object to all-night dances.

Getting fully into his stride he

reiterated that there was only one way to deal with the dance-hall craze and that was by excommunication.

Fr. Browne was still in fighting form when John Horgan applied for a renewal of a dance licence for his hall at Killoccrim. The PP objected to the hours, and said that 10.30 and 11.30 was too late in winter time. 6 to 9 pm would be more appropriate in his view. The application was granted, but the hours being fixed from 6.30 to 10 pm and no one was to be admitted who came from outside the three-mile radius.

It was in this noxious atmosphere that Dan Paddy Andy O’Sullivan set up his dance hall at Renagown and bucked the moralising of a clergy who tried to ensure that no one else could have fun if they didn’t.

### A list of North Kerry Greyhound owners from the mid-1920s

John Barrett Kilflynn. John L Barry Listowel. Dan Boland Lisselton. John Brassil Tralee. Wm. D Broderick Listowel Con Brosnan Listowel. Tim Brosnan Kilmorna. Jerimah Buckley Lixnaw. J Bunyan Lisselton. Jim Carmody Kilflynn. Frank Casey Ballyheigue. Dick Colbert Abbeyfeale. Dan Collins Templeglantine. William R Collins Abbeyfeale. Tom Corridan Abbeyfeale. William Corridan Ballylongford. Dan Costelloe Lixnaw. Jack Cremins Lisselton. Mick and Tim Cronin Lixnaw. Jim Crowley Listowel. Wm. Diggins Causeway. Jas Dillon Lisselton. Wm. Dillon Finuge. Martin Dinneen Causeway. Willie Dowling Woodford. William Dunne Abbeyfeale. Henry and Wm. J Fitzell Ardfert. Ted Fitzgibbons Listowel. Pat Flynn Kilmorna. **SW Fuller Glenoe**. Wm. Fuller O’Dorney. Kit Galvin Finuge. **MI Galvin Duagh**. Mort Galvin Lixnaw. Jas Griffin Causeway. Jack Griffin Castleisland. John Halloran Ardfert. JC Harnett Abbeyfeale. MI W Harnett Abbeyfeale. Jim Harty Causeway. Jim Healy Ardfert. E Horan Castleisland. G Hurley Rathkeale. Denis Hussey Castleisland. Moss & William Keane Causeway. Bill Keane Ballygrennan. Jack Kearney Ballyheigue. **Paddy Kelliher Rathea**. Pat Kelly Tanavalla. JR Kissane Ballylongford. Pat Lawlor Lixnaw. Con and Pat Leahy Abbeyfeale. Jim Lynch Lixnaw. Denis Pat Lyons Abbeyfeale. Tom Mahony Abbeydorney. Austin Martin Tralee. MI M Moloney Church St Abbeyfeale. JP Moriarty Ballyheigue. John Murphy Listowel. W McAuliffe Templeglantine. B McAuliffe Abbeyfeale. John McCarthy Ardfert. J McDonnell Ballyduff. Henry and Maurice McElligott Lixnaw. Jack McEllistrum Edenburn. Jer McEllistrum Tralee. Eugene **McNamara Ballyduhig**. J McNamara Abbeyfeale. **Wm. Nolan Lyreacrompane**. Tom O’Brien Tanavalla. MI O’Carroll Ballyheigue. **Tom Carroll Pallas**. John Connell Lixnaw. Tom J Connell Listowel. Tom JP Connell Abbeyfeale. Chris O’Connor Ennismore. Denis O’Connor Listowel. **John Connor Duagh**. PE Driscoll Ardfert. Mick Flaherty Ardfert. Wm. Flaherty Tanavalla. Jer Keeffe Abbeyfeale. **J L Keeffe Meenscovane**. Owen Leary Finuge. Wm. Leary Listowel. John Sullivan Tarbert. Jack Sullivan Lixnaw. J Sullivan Abbeyfeale. TD Sullivan Listowel. T Sullivan Ballyduff. **Jim Dower Duagh**. Dick Power Ballylongford. Pat Quill Causeway. Abbeyfeale. TD Warren Abbeyfeale. Peter Williams Ardfert. M Woulfe Finuge. MI Woulfe Listowel. J McCarthy and M Collins Ardfert. **Pat Sheehy Duagh**. Ed Sheehy Tralee. Dick Woulfe Kiltien. Fitzmaurice Duagh. Jim Regan Kilmoyley. John Regan Lixnaw. DJ Reidy Castleisland. JJ Rice Abbeydorney. Mick Roche Lixnaw. John Ryan Abbeyfeale. Jer Ryle Ardfert. Dick Savage Finuge. Wm. Savage Ardfert. John Scannell O’dorney. Denis Shanahan Ardfert. MI Shanahan Kilflynn. Dan Sheehan Finuge. TF Sheehan Kilflynn. **JP Sheehy Duagh**. JB Silles Lixnaw. Jack Stack Coolkeragh. Denis Sullivan Kilflynn. PJ Trant Listowel. JR Walsh Listowel.

## A Memory of the Bog

*Thomas Dillon, Glanderry*

In the month of March my father would be talking about stripping. By stripping I don't mean he would be planning to take off his clothes. He'd be talking about going to the bog. "Stripping" was the term used to describe the removal of the top four to six inches of "straw" from the bog to prepare for the cutting of the turf.

This was a very important time of the year. If you did not get the turf cut you might have a very cold time in the winter months. My father would set off with a spade, a hayknife and a line. He would mark out about three feet of the turf bank that was going to be cut that year. The line was used to keep the hayknife cut straight along the length of the bank. He would use to spade to cut off the scraw.

We spent three days cutting turf then – my father and two uncles, Paddy and Timmy, all gone to God now. May they rest in peace. I was the "gorsoon" – or the fourth man to spread the first two sods far out from the bank. When we got down to the third so the three men could manage without me.

These men had a strict starting and finishing time. The start time was 8am and the finish time was 6pm. My uncle Paddy was always first to arrive and when we came along he would pull out his pocket watch and say; "It's hardly worth yer while. It's nearly time to be going home. The cutting would start. Timmy would be on the sleán, Paddy branching, my father on the bank

throwing the sods out to me to spread them in a "nice" line. I was often told off if I didn't keep the sods in a proper line. You would swear it was a monument we were building.

At 10 o'clock I would be sent to boil the kettle on the fire that was made when we arrived. It was a big kettle and the eggs would be put in the kettle too to boil them. If there was a breeze or a light wind I would be told to turn the spout of the kettle away from the wind or it would never boil. All those instructions would have to be adhered to or I would get more lectures or worse. While the kettle was boiling I would butter the bread and then call and say "Tae is ready". My mother, RIP, would have all the items packed in a big message bag. Everything was in that bag – bread, butter, spoons, knives, eggs, salt and a half a cake of currant or sweet bread for the 3 o'clock tea.



Not much time would be spent over the breakfast and it would be back to the cutting again. There was always good banter with the men. They would know all the other men who were cutting turf nearby and occasionally a shout or a wave would be made to someone who was very well known. People came from miles around to cut turf that time of the year.

Not everyone had the same time for starting or stopping as us. Some people would show up at 9 or 10 o'clock and they would work on into the evening – seven or eight o'clock or later, daylight permitting.

My memory of the bog in March or April is of cold hard weather with the odd shower from which we would have to shelter. We would cut on until 12.30, then more tea and a couple of cuts of bread and back at it again. The men would talk about cows calving or maybe the birth of a child to a couple. Most things going on in the locality got an airing as the day went on. You would not feel the day passing and the word bored did not exist in those days. My uncle might try to catch me out by asking if I had a round square or a glass hammer. There was a bit of roguery in them.

Sometimes a couple of hares appeared and would seem to fight with each other and then the term 'Mad as a March Hare' would be mentioned. The men would keep an eye on those hares as they might net them later for a coursing meeting. I think you would get a guinea (£1. 1s) for them – a good price.

Cutting continued at a steady rate with an odd short stop to light a fag or a butt if they had them. At about 3pm there would be another tea break and the currant bread would be eaten. This seemed to give them extra energy and they had a spring in their step afterwards. At around this time my father would pace out how much was cut. He might say we had more cut this time last year. He

seldom suggested that we had less cut the previous year. I wonder why?

The lark is another thing that sticks in my mind. At about 12.45 he would start a little song and slowly start to soar up towards the sky. This would take about 15 minutes to complete but he would come down in seconds as if he was rejected from wherever he was hoping to go. You could set your watch by him.



If the day was showery he would stay at home or so it seemed. I often wonder if it still happens. After the 3 o'clock break I would get some spring water from a well that was close by and wash everything as best I could to make it a little easy when we got home.

Work would continue until 6 o'clock. Just like the lark, stopping time was very precise. The sleán would be

cleaned and hidden in the boghole ready for the next day. Every man brought his own pike and looked after it like it was gold. On the way down the bank the men would comment, generally favourably, on the amount other men had cut that day. Home then to rest for the next day.

As I said, we used to cut for 3 days. Then it would be Timmy's turn and then Paddy's turn until all had enough cut for the next twelve months. The cutting was probably the easiest part for me. Next came the turning of the turf when the crust came on the sods. This was done if the weather was poor. If the weather was good the turf would be stood up, or "footed" as the saying goes. This work was a backbreaker and it seemed to go on forever every evening after school.

How long the turf remained in the bog depended on the weather. Then, as now, the weather was a law unto itself. Eventually the turf would be dry enough to bring out of

the bank to the side of the road using a donkey and cart. I liked this work, maybe not so the donkey. It was hard work for him. I would make a heap of the turf by the roadside ready to be brought home by some kind neighbour with a tractor and trailer.



Once the turf was home my father would make a reek of it by clamping. It would be thatched to keep the rain out. That turf would make a good fire for the winter. It was used to boil water, cook meals, dry clothes and, most of all, keep everyone warm. It was the central heating of the time. This is just a distant memory of the bog. I would like to think that it will bring back a few memories to other people. Long may the bog continue for those people who rely on it.

### Moonlighters and Political Prisoners.

*The Evening News (Sydney) April 25, 1882.*

**The Listowel Affray.** Two hundred men belonging to the "Moonlight" gang attacked a House in Listowel, Co. Kerry. The police arrived on the scene and a severe fight ensued during which the police succeeded in wounding and capturing 15 of the gang. **Canada and Irish Affairs.** The House of Commons of the dominion of Canada has voted to address to the Queen that her Majesty may be pleased to grant to Ireland autonomy similar to that enjoyed by Canada and, further, that political prisoners now confined in jails be pardoned and released.

### Some Cork Butter Market Suppliers 1884

Thomas J Behan, Lixnaw No 207  
Alexander Cruickshank,  
Gortnaskehy, Listowel No 16  
William Dowling, Ballydwyer,  
Ballymacelligott No.208  
George Fitzmaurice  
Bedford House Listowel No 374  
William B Daly  
Farranfore Post Office No 27

Any time is a good time to plan to be at the next Dan Paddy Andy Festival in Lyreacrompane. It is always on over the August Bank Holiday Weekend. The 2018 Festival, the 21<sup>st</sup>, is on August 3, 4, 5 and 6.

For info 087 285 3570 or [www.lyreacrompane.com](http://www.lyreacrompane.com) You can also find the Dan Paddy Andy Festival on Facebook.

## An Accident at Norbury

Between the late 1700s and 1857 Lyreacrompane was part of the Lock Estate which extended over parts of the Duagh/Lyre parish and around Fenit House also. The Locks (who sometimes spelt their name as Locke) operated as absentee landlords and their agent was Adam Murry, the family solicitor. William Lock had built a mansion at Norbury in London and engaged with the nobility of England. The rent paid by poor tenants in this district all totalled up to a sum that, along with other sources of income, helped the Locks to wine and dine and host dukes and earls and royalty. The *Annual Register of 1806* recounts a tragic incident associated with the life style of the Locks...

It is with great concern we have to state the following melancholy accident. Her royal highness the Princess of Wales was this afternoon on her way to the seat of Mr. Locke at Norbury Park, near Leatherhead, Surrey in a barouche, attended by Lady Sheffield and Miss Harriet Mary Cholmondeley, and was driven by her royal highness's own servants. On their arrival at Sutton they took post horses, and were driven by the post-boys belonging to the Cock Inn. Her royal highness's horses and servants were left to refresh in order to take her home that evening.

Her Royal Highness proceeded to Leatherhead, when, on turning a sharp corner to get into the road which leads to Norbury Park, the carriage was overturned opposite to a big tree against which Miss Cholmondeley was thrown with such violence as to be killed on the spot. She was sitting on

the front seat of the barouche alone. Her royal highness and Lady Sheffield occupied the back seat, and were thrown out together.

They went into the Swan Inn at Leatherhead. Sir Lucas Pepys, who lives in that neighbourhood, and had not left Leatherhead (where he had been to visit a patient) more than a quarter of an hour was immediately followed, and brought back; and a servant was sent to Mr. Locke's, with an account of the accident. Mrs. Locke arrived in her carriage with all expedition, and conducted the princess to Norbury Park, where Sir Lucas Pepys attended her royal highness and, as no surgeon was at hand, bled her himself. On the following day the princess returned to Blackheath. Her royal highness received no other injury than a slight cut on her nose and a bruise on one of her arms. Lady Sheffield (wife of Lord Sheffield, who was with her, did not receive the slightest injury.

An inquest was held on the 4th, before C. Jemmet, Esq. coroner for Surrey on the body of Miss Cholmondeley, at the Swan Inn, Leatherhead. It appeared, by the evidence of a Mr. Jarrat at Leatherhead, and of a hostler belonging to the inn, that the princess's carriage, drawn by four horses... while turning round a very acute angle of the road, was overturned. The drivers, through extreme caution, had taken too great a sweep in turning the corner, which brought the carriage on the rising ground and occasioned it being upset. The carriage swung around a great tree before it fell. When the Surgeon saw the Princess of Wales she most benevolently desired him to go upstairs, as there was a lady who stood more in need of his assistance.

The Surgeon (Mr. Lawdell, of Great Bookham) then went to Miss Cholmondeley, and found her totally deprived of life.

There was a violent contusion on her left temple; and her death appeared to have been occasioned by the rupture of a blood vessel. The jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death. Miss Cholmondeley was born in 1753, and was the daughter of the late Rev. Robert Cholmondeley, rector of Hartingford-Bury, and St. Andrews, Hertford, who was son of the third Earl of Cholmondeley, and uncle to the present earl. Her mother is living, and resides in Jermyn Street. On the 8th at 12 o'clock, the remains of this unfortunate lady were interred in Leatherhead Church, close to the spot where Lady Thompson, wife of Sir John Thompson, some years since Lord Mayor of London, is buried. The body was, on the evening of the sixth, removed from the Swan Inn to an undertaker near the church yard and was followed to grave by her brother, George Cholmondeley Esq, one of the Commissioners of Excise; the Hon. Augustus Phipps; William Lock Esq; S. Grey Esquire and several other gentlemen. The fatal spot where this amiable lady met her death is still visited by crowds.



*The residence of the Locke's of Norbury between London and Brighton*

**Links to Lyreacrompane**  
**[www.lyreacrompane.com](http://www.lyreacrompane.com)**

and on Facebook you will find a page for the Dan Paddy Andy Festival

## **Sean Whyte, Behins, recalls his neighbours in Rathea of long ago.**

As a schoolboy attending Rathea school, Sean lived in the first house on the left on the old road near the grotto – the same road that Rathea School was on – just a couple of hundred yards away. His Grandparents were Jack Whyte and Bridget Carey. Bridget's people were originally from Carriggannon.

Jack and Bridget were married in 1893 and used to live in Glanderhig but moved to Rahea sometime in the 1910s. Jack used to take care of the pony and trap used by one of the teachers at Rathea School. Both Jack and Bridget were born in the late 1860s. Their children included Mary, Kate, Patrick, Ellen, Edmund (Sean's father), Bridget and Hannah. Sean's great grandfather was Thomas Whyte and his great grandfather on his Grandmother's side (Bridget Carey) was Thomas Carey who was born around 1829.

Sean's father was Ned (Edmund) and his mother was Margaret Sheehy from Muingwee. Their children included Eileen, Mary, Ann, Liz, Peggy, Paddy RIP, Monsignor Eamon RIP, Bridie RIP, Kathleen RIP and Sean. During his time at Rathea School his teachers were Mrs Greaney and Mossie (Master) Lynch.

On the Rathea Church side of Whites there were two

houses, both thatched, but now long gone. In the nearest one lived Paddy McCarthy, an uncle of Sean McCarthy, the writer.

The second house was Mick Sheehy's from Muingwee and Hanna Whyte, Sean's aunt. They later moved to a cottage near Lyreacrompane School. Mick was a postman.

Lynches also lived in this house at another time. Ger was a native of Lyreacrompane and his mother was Mary (Dillon) who was born in Gortacloghane. She was known as 'Marie the Glen'. Ger's wife was Liz Kirby from Mountcoal. Ger was a tailor and the junction, according to some people was known as Tailors Cross. Sean does not remember it being named so.

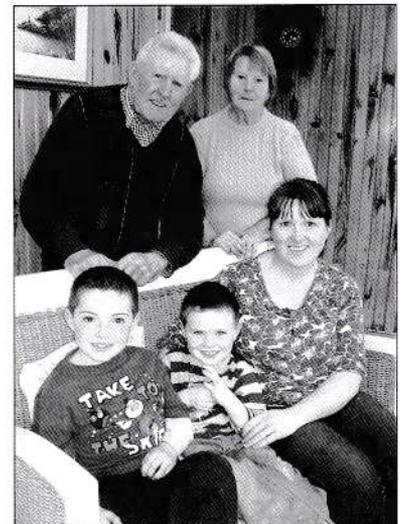
This was a great rambling house and neighbours called in to hear the newspaper being read by Paddy (Con) Galvin. The neighbours would bring the papers in turn. Jack Nolan who passed on his bicycle to St Michael's College from his home in Lyreacrompane would also bring newspapers. Jack Nolan later became a priest and spent many years in Australia.

The first house on the left of Whytes was McElligotts. There were a lot of McElligiott families in the general area – especially in the Stacks Mountains to the west with nicknames such as 'The Bawns' and 'The Dinny Burkes'.

## **Tragedy.**

Sean remembers a tragedy that befell the family in September 6, 1942. Sgt Michael J McElligott, an uncle of Lal (McElligott) Doran was on army manoeuvres at Ashe Quay, Fermoy. The Fermoy Bridge over the Blackwater was mined during World War II to prevent the crossing of the Blackwater by the German Army in the case of an invasion.

The soldiers, on manoeuvres, were swimming across the river holding a rope which was secured at each bank.



*Sean and Mary Whyte with  
their daughter Kathleen and  
Grandchildren Jack and Dara*

The rope snapped and Sgt. McElligott and another soldier, Thomas Ryan, were drowned. Today there is a plaque on the wall near the spot to commemorate the tragic deaths.

## **The 'Major'**

Next to McElligotts lived 'Major' Lyons in a house long gone. The title was probably a nick name although there

was a story circulating that 'Aero' Lyons, the IRA volunteer who was later killed at Clashmelcon Caves near Causeway had spent some time in a ditch waiting for a chance to get a shot at the 'Major'. 'Aero' was eventually approached by some locals and told to "have sense" and go home.

The 'Major' was married to Nonie Carmody from Glashnacree, an aunt to Mickeen Carmody. Their children included Mick who married Kate Loughnane (whose brother Simon married one of the Dorans from Lyreacrompane), Danny who was in the Special Branch of the Gardai, Joe, 'The Yank' Lyons, Maggie who married Jed Kennelly, Dysart, Lixnaw, Fr. Paddy who died young, Bridie who went to England, Fr. Adrien (Dublin), Noelann (Kenny) who was a teacher in Duagh and Rathea (she travelled to Duagh in a pony and trap) and Patricia who was a nun in Listowel.

The next house in the direction of Listowel was James and Margaret Keane. Margaret was one of the 'Mikeen Michael' Galvins. She had been to America and was a great step dancer. Among her children were Mike (born in August 1915) who took over the farm and married a Kirby woman from Derrindaff, Jimmy who married a Quinlivan woman from Coolnaleen, Maggie who married John Carey from Toornageeha, Joe was a creamery

manager in Buttevant, Co. Cork, Fr. Paddy and Fr. Jerry who went to America and Sister Gabriel (Lixnaw Convent).

Sean remembers the family nicknames of the general area... Patcheen Poulterers, the Mickeen Michaels, the Jeramiah Jers, the Mickey Joe Fads, the Majors, the Tom Thades, the Mickey Ogs, the Jackeen Garretts, the Roads, the Bunteens, the Big Jacks, the Mick Willeens and the Mohooneens.

Sean also remembers an uncle of Danny Joy, Knockaclare, who worked for Jack Stack of Rathea. Every Christmas Day, and only then, he dressed up to the nines and called to Danny - and staggered home later.

### **Ratheas Dance Hall goes up in flames.**

On the right (when facing the Grotto) once stood the Rathea Dance Hall on Micky Óg Galvins land. The Black and Tans from Listowel, visited it one night. They were in a very drunken state. In the commotion, according to Sean, they shot and killed one of their own party; a member of the RIC, McCarthy from Kilmoyley. (We can't find supporting evidence of this death - Ed)

They also raided Whites nearby on the night. At that time each house had to have a list of everyone staying in the house hanging on the back of the door. The list included a Carey man home

from America, a relation of Sean's grand-mother. He was asleep in the loft and he was brought down and questioned.

Eventually the Tans withdrew without doing him any harm. Sean thinks he may have owed his escape to his American acquire accent and the English authorities wanted to steer clear of any diplomatic incidents in that regard.

### **Whelan's Bog.**

Sean worked in Whelan's bog in the west of the townland of Lyreacrompane for the Council in the 1950s. He would cycle to Martin Costello's near the Glen, parked his bike there and walked to the bog.

Some of the names working in the bog at the time were McElligotts from Kilfeheny and Glanoe, Brosnan from Glanoe, the Breens from Cappa, Jet Stack, Mick Sheehy from beyond Lyre school. The steward may have been Jimmy O'Flaherty from Lixnaw side and the regime was strict. The working day was 8 to 6.

There was a hut for shelter and stores - made of opened out tar barrels. The common spade was used to strip the bank and this was generally done by the same workers all the time. They never used a Bord na Mona type bog spade which was harder to drive as it was more than twice as wide.

## The Bog of Banemore

*Written by the late Dan Fitzmaurice, Banemore and Cardiff  
and passed on by Buddy Kelliher, Banemore.*

It was early one morning the Council did say,  
Give word to all dolers and make no delay.  
If they're anxious for work there is plenty in store  
Cutting turf in Moss Whelan's above in Banemore

The transport it takes them from Banemore Cross,  
And coming behind them is Brien and his ass.  
With hay knives and pikes and sléans they do bore,  
For fine sods of turf in the bog in Banemore

The ganger he hails from where Foran was shot,  
He is one of the foxes that's hard to be caught.  
He'd blast on his whistle, or give a great roar,  
Which would be heard all over the bog of Banemore.

Jackeen Brien is our tay-man; a gay man was he,  
Always shouting and singing and laughing with glee.  
If short of some milk he'd be hard to ignore,  
Shouting "Where will I find it up here in Banemore?"

He tried all the housewives; in his hand was the cash,  
And a jug of goat's milk he got from Jule Nash.  
He took off his cap saying "God bless you astóir,  
Your heart is as big as the bog in Banemore.

What a glorious sight are those men in the bog,  
Through snow, and through rain,  
through frost and through fog.  
They have good concessions and their looking for more,  
An extra addition to the hut in Banemore.

Paddy Power, Muckenagh and Mick Kelliher, Banemore,  
The shelter they're building will go down in lore,  
Although its appearance suggests it would fall.  
Their assurances sound like they'd build County Hall.

When the bog is all over our stamps we will draw.  
How nice on a Wednesday to make out Lixnaw,  
To meet the old folk that we worked with before,  
Cutting turf in Moss Whelan's bog in Banemore.

(Technically Whelan's Bog was over the Parish bounds in  
Lyreacrompane but that doesn't take from a great verse)

## Shenanigans at a Hooley

*(From the Listowel Connection)*

A letter to the Kerry Evening Post, Nov 13, 1839, described a series of political dinners that had taken place around that time in Listowel and neighbourhood. The letter referred to "that exotic and eccentric Maurice Mac O'Connor" and also mentioned Morgan O'Connell, M.P.; Pierce Mahony, ex-M.P.; John Cronin of Park; Rev Mr Harrington, C.C.; Rev Mr Simple, C.C. and Mr Marshall, Auctioneer.

The letter explains the expensive and lavish preparations, items from Limerick and ornaments, wreaths and greens from Ballinruddery, used in decorations. Their motto was "Céad Míle Fáilte". Being market day many came to admire the show.

Pierce Mahony spoke in very dull and prosy language. Morgan O'C admitted that Tories had political interests to support and rights to contend for, as well as the Radicals. Third Toast was The National Board of Education and Fr. Mahony who had recently erected a school, but later on in the letter, it noted that the school was not finished yet and badly needed to educate the children who had bad habits wandering around the Market place. Mr Marshall speaking under the influence of spirits, it was alleged, mentioned Mr M O'Connor being good at feeding pigs and jack asses. The mind boggles at what it was all about!

**Guard What We Have For Future Generations:** It is worth considering the important things we have in our community. These include our School, Post Office, Community Centre, Festival and the various small businesses. In the present economic situation it is vital that we continue to support the things that makes and keeps us a vibrant community. Let us appreciate the things we have and work individually and collectively to maintain, extend and improve them. There are a lot of things working against small rural communities like ours and we all need to think of the bigger picture so as to protect what we have. No one else is going to do that for us.

## As I Grow Old I Will March Not Shuffle

Brian Bilston

As I grow old  
I will not shuffle to the beat of self-interest  
and make that slow retreat to the right.

I will be a septuagenarian insurrectionist  
marching with the kids. I shall sing  
'La Marseillaise', whilst brandishing  
homemade placards that proclaim  
'DOWN WITH THIS SORT OF THING'.

I will be an octogenarian obstructionist,  
and build unscalable barricades  
from bottles of flat lemonade,  
tartan blankets and chicken wire.  
I will hurl prejudice upon the brazier's fire.

### One Great Athlete



This is Pat Leane whose parents emigrated from Finuge in the 1920s. He is the uncle of Helen Lyons at the visitor's desk in The Lartigue Museum and connected to Tim and Oliver Nash and Joe Harrington in Lyreacrompane whose grandmother was Anne Leane (Lane). Anne's grandnephew, Pat Leane, represented Australia in the Olympics at Helsinki in 1952 and Melbourne in 1956. He competed in the decathlon (100 metres, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 metres, 110 metres hurdles, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw and 1500 metres). He achieved the following during his career – really impressive figures back then.

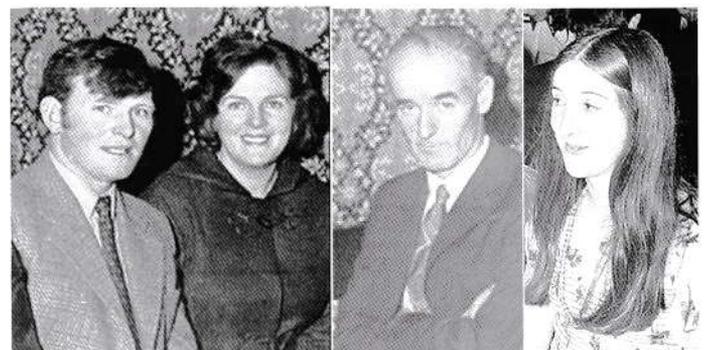
High Jump: 6ft. 5in.  
Broad Jump: 24ft. 2in.  
Hop, Step, and Jump: 44ft. 6in.  
Pole Vault: 10ft. 9in.  
100 Yards: 10.1sec.  
220 Yards: 23.3sec.  
440 Yards: 51.7sec.  
Javelin Throw: 165ft.  
Shot Put: 38ft.  
Discus Throw: 128ft. 6in.  
120 Yards Hurdles: 16.9sec.  
1,500 Metres: 5.20

He was Australia's best long jumper and high jumper for many years. He is still alive and well in Australia.

I will be a nonagenarian nonconformist,  
armed with a ballpoint pen  
and a hand that shakes with rage not age  
at politicians' latest crimes,  
in strongly-worded letters to The Times.

I will stage longstanding sit-ins.  
My mobility scooter and I will move for no-one.  
And when I die I will be the scattered ashes  
that attach themselves to the lashes  
and blind the eyes  
of racists and fascists.

### Recognise the faces from a Social in the mid-1970s?



## Slander case in Lyreacrompane

While Fr Mathew A. Dillon, P.P. of Duagh was making plans for a new school to replace the Glen Schoolhouse in Lyreacrompane (see elsewhere in this Journal) he was also involved in the political conflict of the time. Back then, in 1889, the Glen Schoolhouse was also used for mass and weddings. The church in Glountane would not be built for another twenty five years, After mass was a great time to catch and bend the ears of Lyreacrompane people and that is exactly what Thomas Galvin MD, Listowel, did on St Patricks Day 1889. Standing on "a mound of mortar" outside the Glen School he addressed an audience estimated to be about 200.



*The Glen Schoolhouse*

The subject of Thomas Galvin's speech was the forthcoming election for the position of Poor Law Guardian for Trieneragh and Kilshinane. Charles Stuart Parnell had advised people to "wrest every representative position from the enemy" and elect those in sympathy with the people. Apparently one of the candidates, Pat Dillane, a cousin of Fr. Dillon, was not

thought of as a Parnellite and Thomas Galvin's brother, Patrick Galvin, was put forward by the Nationalist side. There was already bad blood because Fr. Dillon was seen to be involved in ousting "the worthy and patriotic representative", Alan Fitzell, the previous year.

Among the upturned faces in the crowd at Lyreacrompane was that of Acting Sergeant, McCreery from the RIC Barracks just down the road - and he was listening more intently than most - as it turned out. The utterings made on the mound of mortar were to land their utterer in court with a claim by the parish priest for damages of £1000 for slander. Four months later the case was held in Cork before Justice Harrison and a special jury. The first witness called was Acting Sergeant McCreery and he told the court what he heard Thomas Galvin say that day.

McCreery outlined that the meeting had been in relation to the election of a Poor Law Guardian. The candidates had been a Patrick Galvin and a Patrick Dillon. He said Thomas Galvin addressed the gathering and alluded to Fr. Dillon as "prostituting the altar by delivering political harangues of a sectarian and bigoted nature". Galvin had, according to the Constable, called Fr. Dillon a Pigottist and "worse than Balfour" and that he paid frequent visits to George Sands office in Listowel supposedly on

behalf of the tenants but he was a friend of the landlords and was well acquainted with Lucy Anne Thompson. Galvin, the Constable also pointed out, that Fr. Dillon had offered a free place in the Seminary in Killarney for a person's son "if his father would vote for a friend of his".

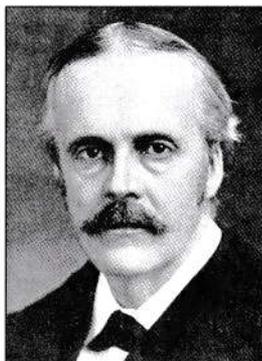
The witness, McCreery, further swore that Thomas Galvin MD had claimed that Fr. Dillon had gathered materials such as sand for building of a spire at Duagh church and instead used the materials to build cow houses for his cows. Pointing to the building behind him - the Glen Schoolhouse - he referred to it as "the poor chapel at Lyreacrompane, used for chapel, school and dwelling house" and warned the crowd to mind that Fr. Dillon "didn't do the same thing with that" as he did in relation to the Duagh spire. He also claimed that other clergy refused to associate with or shake hands with Fr Dillon.

The Constable completed his evidence by stating that Galvin had told the crowd that Fr. Dillon had denounced Adan Fitzell from the altar as "an infidel" and followed that by praying for Parson Fitzmaurice for giving him a few loads of sand. Pressed by Mr. O'Sullivan for the defence the Acting Sergeant said the speech was delivered at noon but admitted that he did not take notes on it until eight hours later.

Constable Patrick Young also gave evidence of having heard Galvin say the same things as outlined by Acting Sergeant McCreery and when asked if he had compared notes with the first witness he denied doing so stating that he lived three miles from the acting Sergeant. He was followed on to the witness stand by Thomas Molyneux, National School teacher, at the Glen School who corroborated the evidence given by the two previous witnesses. It was put to him that the Dillons think the Galvins "*great intruders*". Mr. Molyneux responded that he knew nothing about that and recalled that Fr. Dillon had told him that he would have preferred that his cousin had not taken part in the election.

John Dillon, a tenant on Miss Thompson's property, was the next witness. He backed up the previous witnesses and further stated that the defendant, Thomas Galvin, had told the crowd gathered outside the Glen Schoolhouse that Fr. Dillon, had, in effect, suppressed the Duagh branch of the National League and if he was President of the entire League Balfour would not have trouble suppressing it. Galvin, he said, claimed the priest was damned and at the end of his speech outside the school had called for "*Three cheers for the Galvins and down with the Pigottists*".

William Joy, described as a farmer, was then called to give evidence. He said he heard Thomas Galvin tell the



*Arthur Balfour (1848 -1930)  
Chief Secretary of Ireland and  
later Prime Minister*

crowd that the real fight was between his brother, the candidate, Patrick Galvin and Fr. Dillon and also that Fr. Dillon did nothing but tell lies since he came to the parish. He was "*nearly making a pagan of a man called Denis Hayes*" by keeping him from mass for twelve months. Under cross examination witness admitted he had heard Fr. Dillon several times denounce Moonlighters and those who committed outrages and that there was a rumour that Hayes was partially boycotted for taking a meadow on a grabbed farm.

Fr. Dillon was next to be examined. In reply to Mr Wright he stated that he was PP of Duagh for three years. He took no part in the election of the Poor Law Guardian in March except to advise his cousin to have nothing to do with it. He dismissed the claims that he had misappropriated money and materials meant for the spire in Duagh. He said he never denounced Fitzell and actually spoke of him in a kindly manner from the altar for lending him horses to

draw materials to build a schoolhouse. He denied the alleged allegations that he sided with landlords against tenants. He said that he had publicly thanked Rev. George Fitzmaurice, a Protestant clergyman, for his kindness in giving him permission to take as much sand out of his property as he wished to build a schoolhouse and presbytery.

Fr. Dillon was cross-examined by Mr Bushe;

Do you consider yourself on the best of terms with your people? - *I Do.*

Did you recently go before Judge Curran in Listowel to complain that a set had been made upon you? - *Yes, on the Schools. I complained that there were certain people trying to boycott the schools in my parish.*

Did you habitually make statements against others? - *No, only against the enemies of morality, order and religion.*

Did you occupy the position of President of the Duagh National League? *Yes, until it was suppressed and I held a meeting after it was suppressed.*

Do you remember a certain speech of yours from the altar after which the people were saying to themselves that you meant Hayes? - *On that Sunday... I had occasion to speak of persons who were giving scandal by staying away from Mass... and I said I would have to speak very strongly of their conduct.*

Were any names mentioned? - *No.*

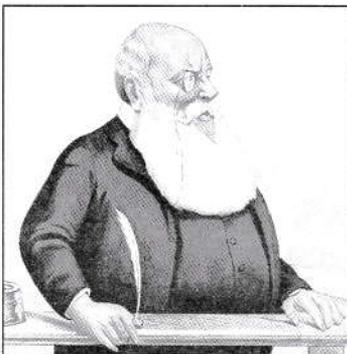
Did Hayes abstain from mass about the time that sentence was passed on him (for grass grabbing) by the League? - *He and other did abstain.*

Did you ever say with regard to the defendant (Thomas Galvin) that you would drive him from the country? – *I never did.*

Or that you would make it hot for him? – *Never.*

Did you take an interest in the election (campaign) of your cousin...? – *I did not ask any man in the parish how he was going to vote... I said it was demoralising to poor farmers to become Guardians and they ought to... mind their business.*

Thomas Galvin MD, the defendant, was then sworn in. His brother was a candidate against Fr. Dillon's cousin in the recent elections. He did say Fr. Dillon was a Pigottist and he would repeat it now.



*Richard Pigott who forged the so-called Parnell letters*

Justice Harrison asked him what he meant by that. Is it that he is a member of the Tory Party? – *Yes, that is the sense in which the word is used down here.* In reply to Mr Bushe Thomas Galvin agreed that he did say that since Fr. Dillon had become President of the (Duagh) League all public life and spirit left it – that, in fact, he has turned it into a Landlord's League.

Thomas Galvin was cross-examined by Mr Wright. Do I understand you to mean by Pigottist someone who differs

from you in politics? – *I mean a member of the Tory Party.*

That he was a Tory in disguise? – *No, a Tory pure and simple.*

Did you mean that in politics he (Fr. Dillon) was a traitor? – *Yes, he became a Tory after being President of the League for two years. He certainly deserted the League and the National cause.*

Did you allude to Sandes office? – *Yes, and it is true.*

Do you mean that he was trying to impose hard terms for the benefit of the landlord? *Yes, while he was pretending to be the tenant's friend.*

Mr. Wright continued the questioning... Did you say anything about the materials for the church at Duagh? – *I did and he has done it.*

What has he done? – *He has built a cow house with it.*

For himself? – *No but for his cattle (laughter).*

You aren't a bit sorry for making those charges – *No* You won't withdraw any of them? – *No, the whole parish is aware of it.*

Did you accuse him of prostituting the altar? – *Yes, by demonising political opponents.*

Did you say anything about Moonlighting? – *No. I denounced Moonlighters myself on more than one occasion.*

Did you say a single word for Fr. Dillon that day? – *I don't think I could.*

Could you now say a good word for him? – *Not a single word since he came to the parish.*

Have you ever tried your hand at writing ballads? – The witness hesitated but finally admitted he had. A ballad entitled "*The Rev. Biddy Moriarty – or the Monarch of the Mall*" was put in his hands. He was asked if he

had composed it and he refused to say on the grounds that it might incriminate him. The Judge said he should answer the question and he admitted that he had written it and the judge ruled it out as evidence.

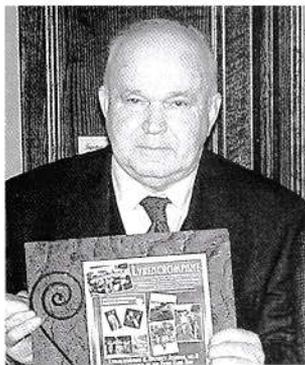
His Lordship, Judge Harrison then reviewed the evidence and said it was the duty of the Jury to vindicate the priest's character by marking their disapproval of the language that had been used – language which should never have been spoken even if there was any truth in it and he (his Lordship) did not believe there was a particle of truth in it. The plaintive, he said, did not want to punish the defendant with heavy damages but only to vindicate himself before the world, before his own parishioners and before his brother clergymen and to show that he was not the scoundrel the defendant represented him to be.

The jury, after a quarter of an hour's deliberation, found for the plaintiff, (Fr. Dillon) with £5 damages. Judgement was given accordingly.

So ended the Lyreacrompane Scandal Case. Fr. Dillon won the case and £5 damages (having claimed £1,000). Thomas Galvin lost but the court case gave him a much wider audience for his views than was available to him from the top of the mound of mortar outside the Glen School.

The Galvin side won the election – P Galvin 58 to P Dillon 53. But perhaps the real winners were the dozen legal eagles – QCs and solicitors – all of whom had their fingers in the till.

## Joe Quille RIP



*A regular contributor to Journal*

Joe Quille passed away on April 26, 2017 in the care of Roseville House Nursing Home in Limerick. Joe was born in Cloghaneliskert, Lyreacrompane in 1934, the third son of Margaret and Thomas Quille and brother of Christy, Tim and John. He travelled the old river road to Lyre school where he first made friends with the late Bridie Long whom he was to marry in 1965. In later years Joe wrote many articles for the Lyreacrompane and District Journal in which he recorded "those innocent and honest" times - in particular the advent of the radio in the area and the gathering of people in neighbour's houses to hear Micheál O'Hehir's match commentaries.

GAA was strong in Lyreacrompane in the 1950's and it played a big part in Joe's early life. He refereed matches and played in goals for local teams on occasions. He was involved with others in founding a football team in Maugha called the 'Young Irelanders' but with Carrig Sarsfields, St Mary's Clahane, Smearlagh Rangers and Boola Tones flourishing in the

area it was short lived. These local teams were under the umbrella of the Lyre GAA Club and Joe acted as Secretary. Some of the Club's meetings were held in Dan Paddy Andy's Dance Hall. Interestingly, Joe recorded that the Lyre GAA Club didn't affiliate to the Kerry County Board so as to avoid fallen foul of the GAA's dislike of "foreign dances".

In 1952 Joe spotted a cup in the window of Micko Doyle's shop in Tralee. He bought it for £10 and ran two dances to pay for it. This cup was for the winners of the Lyreacrompane District League and Joe called it after Con Healy of Rathass, a member of the Kerry team that won the first All-Ireland for the county in 1903. Joe had come to know and admire him while working in Tralee.

Joe wrote afterwards in the Lyre Journal about the famous final of 1952 held in the 'Racecourse' beside the Four Elms Bar in Lyreacrompane in front of a crowd of one thousand who had paid sixpence each at the gate. The John Mitchels Club provided linesmen and umpires and the Kerry legend-to-be, Niall Sheehy was present. Also in attendance were Maurice McCarthy and Dinny Breen from the 1903 winning Kerry Team. The ball was thrown in by Fr. Moriarty PP and in the game Carrig Sarsfields beat Smearlagh Rangers to take home the Con Healy Memorial Cup.

Joe Quille subsequently moved to Wicklow and eventually settled in Southill, Limerick city but continued to be very connected to his own place. He presented the Al Roche Cup for under 18 football but emigration was draining the youth from the area and the cup eventually went to the North Kerry Board for Senior competitions. Joe acted as local correspondent for the Kerryman newspaper for a number of years and his contributions now provide a rich source of the local history of the time in the Lyreacrompane area.

In Limerick Joe worked in the bar trade until his retirement and he became a household name in his adopted city. He was affectionately known as Joe 'The Kerryman' Quille on local radio. In the '70s and '80s John Frawley, widely acknowledged as the initiator of local or pirate radio, operated a very successful station called 'Radio Luimini' and in 1982 Joe made his debut with a programme, called 'Midweek Music' which ran until 1988. Subsequently, Joe featured on other local stations including Galty Radio and on Radio Limerick One. Joe loved to tell stories of those "Pirate days".

Joe, a true community person, will be sadly missed by his son, Tommy, and by all his relatives and friends in Lyreacrompane, Limerick and further afield.

*Joe Harrington (First published in the Kerryman)*

**Lyre gets dragged into it!**

The Anglo-Irish Trade War (also called the Economic War) was a retaliatory trade war between the Irish Free State and the United Kingdom from 1932 to 1938. The politicians of the time were given a hard time in the papers.

In the Kerry newspaper, *The Liberator*, of August 16 1934 there was one such harangue as follows...

*We are paying heavy bounties to get our livestock... into England. We are borrowing money to pay those bounties. And we are told by £400 a year TDs, whose knowledges of history and economics is derived from the study of Old Moore's Almanac and we are supposed to accept that the British market is gone at the same time we are heavily taxed to get into it.*

*Tell me Mike Darby TD, can a*

*door be open and shut at the same time? Mike, some of us are satisfied to remain in the trenches fighting for the land while we have a crust to eat but we protest against these Veiled Prophet tactics.*

*You had better be careful about your statements when there are a few queer fellows around whose reading is not confined to Old Moore and his prognostications as to when Halley's Comet will pay the next visit to Lyreacrompane.*



*Children from Lyreacrompane National School, their parents and members of the community celebrating 1916. The pupils had marched from the School to Lyreacrompane Post Office where they read the Proclamation.*

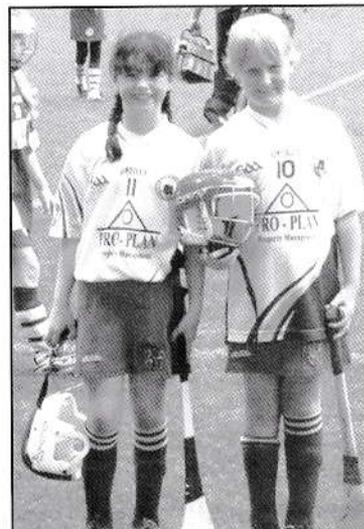
**1916 - 2016**

*Caoimhe Lyons, Lyreacrompane*

There was fighting in the GPO  
It happened a hundred years ago  
The Easter Rising is an important date  
That now we're going to celebrate.

The Aud brought German Rifles to Banna Strand  
That's where Roger Casement did land.  
The leaders signed the Proclamation  
Declaring Ireland an independent nation

They fought so bravely but they did fail  
The leaders were shot in Kilmainham Jail  
We honour them in 2016  
Their likes again will not be seen.



*Holly Smith and Caoimhe Lyons in Croke Park representing Tralee Parnells GAA Club.*

## Wireless goes Digital

Joe Harrington

My first introduction to radio was the day my father brought home a second hand Bush that he had bought from Neilus Nolan. The excitement was palpable. Setting up was complicated with two leads each to the wet and dry batteries – and an ariel on the chimney in the shape of a wire taken up the gable. Later, when I started going to the Technical School in Listowel it was my job to take the wet battery to town to have it charged. Electricity had not yet arrived at our house.

Fifty to sixty years later how things have changed. The internet has made it possible for individuals and groups to set up stations to broadcast through that medium. One such station is Irish Country Music Radio (ICMR) broadcasting on [www.irishcountrymusicradio.com](http://www.irishcountrymusicradio.com) This station was started in Limerick by Pat 'Garrett' Butler ten years ago. It is a community orientated station and all the presenters are volunteers. About six years ago I bumped into Pat at a dance in Tralee and he remembered me from the years I used to broadcast on Pirate Stations in Limerick. He asked me to present a programme on his station and that's how my programme, Joe's Country Kingdom, began.

For the first couple of years I did the programme from a

studio Pat had set up in Limerick but with the advance of digital technology it became possible to broadcast from home. Now my programme goes out from Lyreacrompane. My computer is an ordinary Mac and the app is called Nicecast – linked to iTunes. The only other things needed are a microphone and a small mixer – and my friend, Billy Donegan, to set it up.

Internet radio reaches all parts of the world and Facebook is one of the ways of letting people know the station exists. I am on the air from 9 to 11pm every Tuesday and Saturday night. About an hour before the programme starts I post a message on my own and the station's Facebook page (and a few others) that usually reads something like this... *Saturday night and what's there to do? Well you could listen to Joe's Country Kingdom. It's on [www.irishcountrymusicradio.com](http://www.irishcountrymusicradio.com) 9 to 11pm Irish time. Send in your requests and chat on Joe Harrington's Facebook page. And just to mention... I am also on Tuesdays 9pm to 11pm*

Listeners can go on to the Station's website and use the Red Button (e-mail) to send in requests or they can put requests and messages on my Facebook page – and usually a conversation takes place on the page among people who are listening to the programme. A little community has developed

around the page and people have got to know each other and many have come to visit Ireland as a result of their contact with the Station.

Most of those tuned in are 'silent listeners' but those who send in requests or chat on Facebook are now like neighbours down the road though they are scattered all over the world. Robin and Rosemary Daley live in Stevenage in England and they have been to the Dan Paddy Andy Festival on two occasions arising out of getting to know us through the programme. Luke O'Toole in Wicklow also found our Festival in a similar fashion. Sheila from Manchester has also made it to the Festival. Pat Dunworth in Caines, Queens-land, is a regular listener and when he was on a cruise a couple of years ago the liner he was on visited Dublin and we went on board to meet him and had a lovely meal and a tour of the cruise ship. Others that we have got to know very well are Mike and Kay Kavanagh originally from Galway but now in Kent, Patsy and Rita McCartney living in Ontario but exiles from the north of Ireland and Lev and Gloria Jackman from New Brunswick. Janet Quillan in Nova Scotia never misses a programme and Chris Adams in Canton Ohio is another that was introduced to Ireland by the station and now regularly visits the country. Other listeners who regularly join the chat are Fedelina Impagnatiello from Sicily,

Gerri Aherne in Henley, Henry O'Hora in Stockton-On-Tees, Sandra in Chester and William Mason in Dumfries, in Scotland. We have listeners on the Isle of Lewis (They refer to it as the Rock). A song from Elvis is always in demand when John Cooley joins the conversation from Labasheeda in Clare.

Valarie Wild tunes our way in South Africa, Doris Daly in London, Monica Evans in New York and Tommy Quille joins the Facebook chat from Limerick when the programme is on. Mick and Marie live in Manchester and, through the programme, got to know about the Irish Rambling House shows that we take to England. They now come to see us when we stage a show in Manchester. Another New Brunswick listener that we have come to know is Audrey Belyea. Tom Sweeney, who lived in Lyre, now listens in Waterford. From the USA we hear from Joei who is a big fan of Tralee's Noel Hartnett. Patrick, originally from the Ballyheigue listens in Brazil and John Whelan picks us up in the Ozark Mountains of the US. George Langan and Vera in Dublin are always tuned in. George was part of the pirate days and had recorded many songs which we still play. One of his most popular is 'The Lights of Carrigkerry' which was written by the late Patrick Brosnan from Lyre.

These are just some of the listeners we have come to know but like all radio

stations the vast bulk of listeners do not interact and just enjoy their favourite Country and Irish music as served up.

I try to make the programme as interactive as possible and encourage listeners to use their iphones to record themselves singing and we have played some lovely recordings from Margaret O'Rourke from Doneraile and from Fedelina in Sicily. I use a number of jingles/promos during the programme featuring the voices of Declan Nerney, Seamus Moore, Tom McGinty and others.

So Joe's Country Kingdom, and indeed ICMR, is a sort of a global village where people scattered all over the planet make friends. It is sometime said that Facebook friends are not real friends but I think that when people have a common interest, such as country music, real friendships are formed and quite often people visit and meet up.

Digital technology allows presenters to be based in any part of the world. Michael Fox broadcasts from Mayo, Anne O'Halloran from Abbeyfeale and Alice O'Keefe from Newfoundland. Brian O'Brien is based in Doon, Co. Limerick, Seamus Long in Wexford, David Marks in Glasgow and Eamonn Murphy from Co. Clare. Helen Schisas, my sister, living in Queensland, broadcasts from Down Under, Howard Myers

## Some ICMR Presenters



*Pat Butler and Anne O'Halloran*



*Alice O'Keefe and Michael Fox*

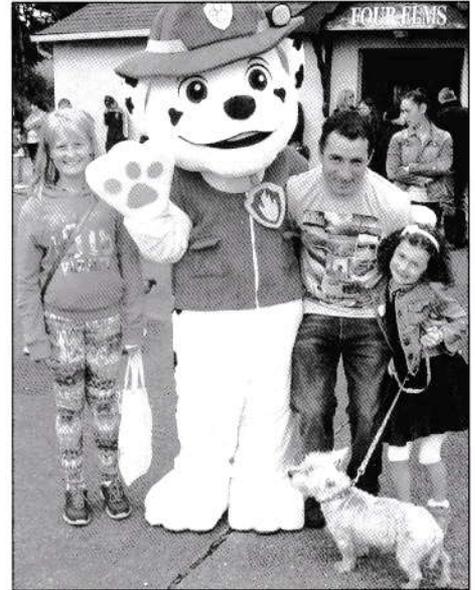


*Lucia Butler and Helen Schisas*

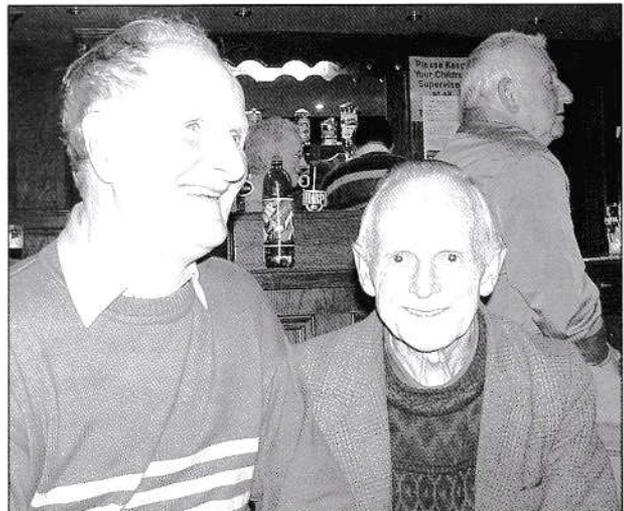
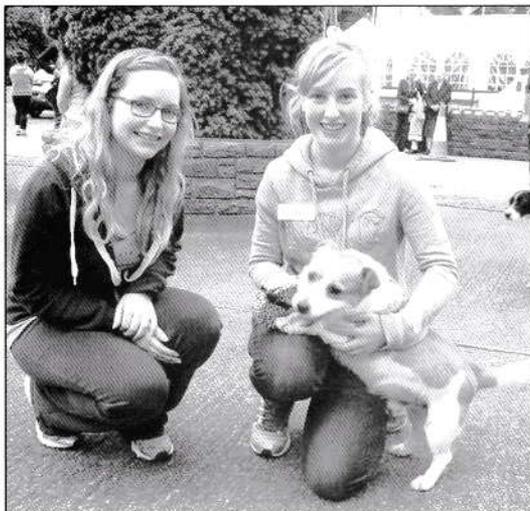
from Dublin, John Grimes from Killaloe and James Cafferkey from Erris in Mayo. JP McNelis operates from Leitrim and is always on hand with Mark Butler to chase down technical problems.

Newer presenters are Julian Cassells from Sligo and Julie Healy from Glenamaddy. Lucia Butler, a winner of two All-Ireland medals with Wexford Ladies, broadcasts from London where we often meet her on duty taking photos for the Irish World at our Irish Rambling House Shows. Margaret Cadogan along with the Station Master himself Pat Garrett take to the airwaves from Limerick.

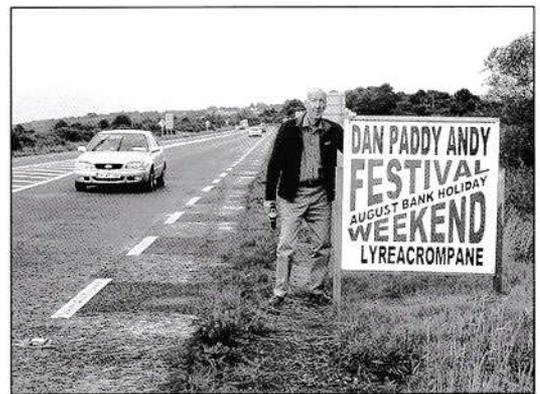
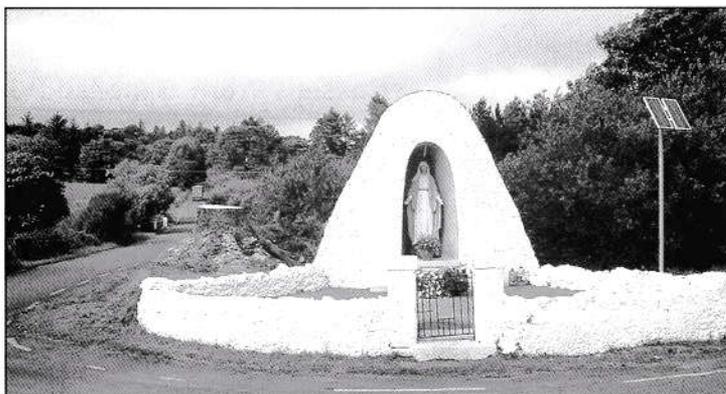
Now that you know where we are do say 'Hello' some night.



Ploughing fans, Paul and Eric McKenna. Eileen Long on the Ring of Kerry Cycle. On right all smiles with Marshall!



Buckley sisters at the Dan Paddy Andy Dog Show. On the right Liam Lynch RIP, Knocknagoshel and Christy Quille.



Trees down and signs up!

### Watch that rock!

In 1714, the British Parliament offered a cash reward to anyone who could invent a clock accurate enough for use in navigation at sea. Thousands of sailors died because they were unable to find their exact position. The exact time was needed to find longitude and pendulum clocks would not work at sea. For every minute lost by a clock, it meant that there would be a navigational error of 15 miles, and sailors died lost or smashed against rocks because they were unable to figure out their exact position. Then, in 1761, after 4 attempts, John Harrison succeeded at inventing a small clock accurate enough to use for navigation at sea. It lost only 5 seconds in 6 and ½ weeks.

## The Masked Marauders of Rathea

Back in the 1930s District Justices' heard some strange cases and the one against Thomas J Galvin, Glanderry and others fell into this category. Throw in guns and a marriage proposal and you had a recipe for a good day in court. The charges, heard before District Justice Charles Kenny at the Courthouse in Listowel, were for armed assault, unlawful assembly and conspiracy. The others suspected of being involved were Jack Molyneux, Christopher and Garret Fitzgerald and James Galvin all of Mountcoal, Tim and Patrick Quilter of Ahabeg and Daniel Broderick of Glanderry.

The story goes that Patrick Minogue who lived in Rathea and worked as a labourer for the County Council had been approached by a Thomas (Thade) Galvin with a suggestion that he might marry his cousin Kate Galvin. Patrick "sort of" agreed but it turned out that Kate was 56 and he was only 24 so, after some consideration, he decided against marrying her. Not alone that but the bold Patrick Minogue proceeded to get friendly with a girl named Julia Mahony (22) to the extent that marriage was arranged.

With three weeks to go to the big event Pat was standing outside his door thinking of good times when Thomas Thade appeared in a

business-like gauche and without as much as a 'good day' asked him if it was true that he was about to marry 'your wan' - meaning Miss Mahony. When Pat admitted to the prospect Tom Thade caught him by the throat and told him he would 'brain' him.

Pat was a bit shaken by the incident but it soon faded from his mind with the dint of the preparations for the wedding. A lot had to be done but what better than a dance to get in the mood.

And so it came to be that on the night of March 20, 1934 in the townland of Rathea the ditch near Pats house was the resting place of a few bicycles and the dance inside was in full swing to tunes from a mouth organ. In-laws-to-be and neighbours battered the floor as Pat and his bride-to-be snuggled in the cosy corner beside the turf fire.

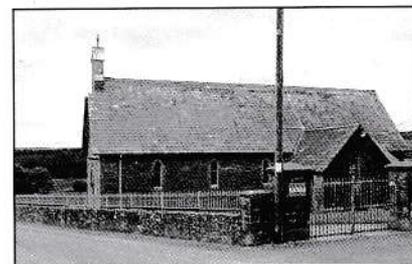
### The man in the mask!

Then it happened. In the middle of a polka set (some say it was when they were doing the slide) the door burst open and there stood a man in a mask. In a period when reading cowboy books was a popular pastime Pat's first thought was of the Lone Ranger but it wasn't Tonto



who followed the guy at the door when he made his move. Followed by two other masked raiders the masked leader made a dive across the floor at the Tilly lamp but before he could extinguish it Pat saw enough to recognise Tom Thade and one of the others as his brother James. Tom Thade sent the Tilly flying and the crowd ran for the door and a few nimble souls made it through a window that had been open.

Pat got out with all the rest - hotly pursued by the masked marauders. He was collared from behind and kicked around the yard. To add insult to injury the banditos kicked his innocent pony. Pat broke loose and made a run for it in the direction of Rathea church with a gunshot



ringing in his ears. He met a man named John Galvin and while he was breathlessly relating his story to him he looked back to see Michael and Mrs Spring and Julia Mahony tearing up the road with the masked posse on shanks mare in hot pursuit.

The skirmish that took place outside Rathea Church under the light of the silvery moon was sharp and short. Pat Minogue got a belt of a gun on the head from James Galvin and the man Pat was

talking to, John Galvin, was nimble enough to avoid injury. Having drawn blood the masked raiders withdrew in good order and as no one from the dance was eager to go back to Minogue's house that night they all stayed at John Galvin's abode.

### **The man in the wig**

And so the case came before District Justice Kenny in Listowel – and not a masked man to be seen. Mr MacAuley interrogated Pat Minogue on the stand...

Mr MacAuley - *Did you hear that the people of the district objected to your association with Julie Mahony? – No*

Mr MacAuley - *As a result of your relationship with this girl did the priest visit your house? – Yes, because he was sent by the Galvins.*

Mr MacAuley - *Did he ask you to send her away? – No, he told me to get married as soon as we could.*

Before District Justice Kenny sent the matter forward to a jury of Pat's peers – if such could be found, Pat, to be fair to him exonerated the Fitzgeralds and said they wouldn't touch him in a thousand years.

### **The alibis**

The jury sat in early July, 1934 to hear the case. The defendants were ready with their alibis. John Molyneaux, one of the defendants, had Thomas Relihan as witness that he was at Relihan's

house at the time of the incident and that when he went home at 11pm Joe Lyons, the Parish Clerk was there and they slept in the same bed!

Another defendant, Patrick Quilter had James Quilter, described as an old man, in court to confirm that he had spent the night ten miles away in Ahabeg and didn't even know about the incident until over a week later.

John Joy of Dromclough was on hand to confirm that Timothy Quilter had been with him at Jerome Stacks on the night of the raid cutting hurleys. Another defendant, James Galvin, had the same alibi.

The chief defendant, Thomas Thade Galvin and another defendant, David Broderick, vouched for each other and Thomas claimed that when he returned from Brodericks his gun had been stolen from his house. The fact that he didn't subsequently report this crime did not help his case.

Tom Thade's father, Timothy, with whom he lived, got on the stand and said that seven or eight masked men had raided his house that night and carried away the gun.

### **A bunch of blackguards**

John McElligott, Rathea, said he was at the dance that night when three masked men came in. He said that Minogue had shouted "*I know ye, lads*" and was struck by one of the raiders. His

Lordship on the bench (whose name is not reported) said; "*I know that district very well and I believe you could get as fine a bunch of blackguards in Rathea and Mountcoal as you would get anywhere in Ireland*".

When called to the stand Patrick Minogue seemed to withdraw, or at least modify, his evidence given at the earlier hearing. Now he claimed he didn't see Tom Thade carrying a gun when he entered the house. Pressed by Mr Liston BL he admitted that he had gone to the priest in Lixnaw in connection with his "*sort of*" agreement to marry Kate Galvin. He said he was afraid of Thade Galvin.



### **A shot was fired**

Michael Spring was more definite in his evidence. He was at the dance with his sister-in-law, Julia, his wife and child. He said Thomas Thade had a gun and pointed it at him and said; "*The less talk the better*". When he and the women and child were getting in to the trap to get out of the situation a shot was fired over their heads by Tom Thade Galvin.

Another witness, Patrick Trant, Rathea, admitted that,

when the guards had come looking for the stock of the gun (which had broken off when Pat Minogue was hit over the head with the gun outside Rathea Church) he had destroyed it.

*"To aid the administration of justice", His Lordship sarcastically remarked and added "There are some prime boys around Rathea".*

Thomas Thade Galvin was found guilty on one count that he *"Riotously assembled with others unknown and assaulted Patrick Minogue"*. The others were found not guilty. His Lordship said the verdict was very discriminating and *"does credit to you as Kerry men"*. Then turning to Tom Thade's defence he said: *"What will I do with this man Mr Liston. Could he pay a good substantial fine? £20 say? I hate this crime of perjury which he added to it"*.

Mr Liston, having consulted the accused replied; *"He says he has no money, my lord, that he is only a labourer."* His Lordship - *"Very well. He can go to jail for three months. It's a shocking disgraceful crime"*.

#### Putting the boot in...

John Ryan, Ballincollig, was charged with larceny of a pair of boots from John Leen on September 17 1885. Constable Dullaghu (?) Lyreacrompane Barracks also charged him with assault on the same date. Ryan got one month for stealing the boots and two months for assaulting the policeman. Mr Wynne RM said it was a bad case.



*John Costelloe RIP, who lived in Bromley, Kent, passed away in March 2017. John, a native of Lyreacrompane, pictured at a Dan Paddy Andy Festival a few years ago. He was predeceased by his wife Ann and is survived by his partner, Dorothy and two sons, John and Martin.*

#### The Big Snows of 1947

1947 was the year of the Big Snow, the coldest and harshest winter in living memory. Long may it stay that way. Because the temperatures rarely rose above freezing point, the snows that had fallen across Ireland in January remained until the middle of March. And there was no shortage of snow that bitter winter. Of the fifty days between January 24th and March 17th, it snowed on thirty of them.

'The Blizzard' of February 25th was the greatest single snowfall on record and lasted for close on fifty consecutive hours. It smothered the entire island in a blanket of snow. Driven by persistent easterly gales, the snow drifted until every hollow, depression, arch and alley-

way was filled and the countryside became a vast ashen wasteland. Nothing was familiar anymore. Everything on the frozen landscape was a sea of white. The freezing temperatures solidified the surface and it was to be an astonishing three weeks before the snows began to melt.

#### Nohoval School

Teachers from 1873

Boys.

Michael Dillane	1873 - 78
Michael Scanlon	1878 - 80
Mathew	1880 - 82
Richard McElligott	1882 - 90

Girls.

Mrs Cronin	1873 - 85
Mrs McKenna	1885 - 96
Mrs Nelligan	1896 - 02
Mrs Culloty	1902 - 14

Amalgamated 1899

Mrs Aalice O'Connor	1914 -
Maurice Lynch	1914 - 15
Thomas O'Connell	1915 - 17
Mrs Reidy	1917
Mrs McEllistrum (Assistant)	

The wry sign outside the Keane family pub in Listowel, which announced that **Mary is off tonight.**

*Billy Keane*

The Fifteenth is the feast day of Our Lady and the biggest day of the year in Knocknagoshel, north Kerry, my mother's home village. Dad and herself had great days at the Pattern Festival, or 'The Pattern', as it's called. He was full of fun and poems. Dad won the 100 yards and the long jump. Mary is our mother's first name and she died last Friday, on the fifteenth of August, the feast day of Our Lady's assumption in to heaven.



Mam said you could always rely on Holy Mary. When we were small she would ask Holy Mary to mind us. There was always a candle lighting before exams in front of her statue. My mother's own mother died when she was four, and the little girl prayed to Holy Mary. There was a day in the kitchen when I found Mam crying behind the closed curtains. "What's wrong?" I asked. It took a while but Mam, who was never ever sorry for herself, said, "I'm older today than my mother." Poor Mam, but then within a few minutes she was stocking the shelves

in the little pub we ran together and getting on with life in that practical way of hers.

It wasn't easy going in to the pub on Friday. I went in on my own. I should have brought the family. The pub was empty and I never felt so alone. I was taken in to the pub by my parents, when I wasn't fit to work for anyone who wasn't family, after a succession of self-inflicted disasters. Mam helped me get my confidence back with a mix of tough love and mother's love. I'm fine and strong now. She knew that before she died. Thanks Mam.

For those of you who are dying or afraid of dying, I sort of feel that death is only the beginning of a journey and not the end. It's not that I'm not heartbroken, because I am. I saw more of Mam than anyone else. But I'm fairly sure there's something going on after we die. The smile on Mam's face would convince you, and there was the night we were in the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin for the opening of *The Field*, just before she was diagnosed with the cancer when Dad was with her. Dead isn't gone away. As we walked in to the theatre, she said, "Look John, a full house." She was talking to Dad. And later she told me she felt his presence beside her, there in his beloved Gaiety.

Mam lived on her own above the pub with Dad's spirit. She tried to retire to "a private house" but came back to the pub after just two days. She missed the street. "On the first day I saw a dog and on the second day I saw a cat and that was it," she said.

But the real reason was, she knew Dad's spirit was happiest in the home they made over the pub. It was tiny and I often wonder how we all fitted in, but home is where the heart is.

Those last days were tough for sure, but full of love. My brothers, Conor and John, and our sister, Joanna, were never so united. They were so good to Mam. It was like back when we were kids, all sleeping under blankets together on the floor. We always kept in touch but this was us as a family all together with Mam at the end.

I will never forget these days with my brothers and sister. And thanks to the Bons in Tralee. Mam was never in pain. We said poems for Mam and sang for her as she lay dying. I just got up to hold Mam's hand, right at her last breath. Joanna told Mam what a great mother she was. John made jokes and kept her laughing. Conor, as ever, was the soundest.

Maybe because her own mother died so young, Mam tried so hard to be the best mother ever. It wasn't easy trying to run a pub, never mind four cracked kids and looking after Dad, who needed massive back-up when he was writing all those masterpieces. Mam was tough, fearless and fiercely independent. So there I was at her bedside, saying, "Mam, you minded us and now we're minding you," feeling so wonderful about myself when Mam said, "I always minded myself. There's no one minding me."

Mam was all for divorce, contraception and gay rights.

She was no old-fashioned Irish Mammy who did as she was told. Mam was well able for Dad, but in a good way. She always spoke her mind and was full of wisdom. Our mother's last advice to her grand-kids on relationships was, "If there's an argument going on, one of you has to shut up." She defined post-feminism even before feminism.

I'll miss our favourite summer feed of ham, cabbage, cream and the first of the new potatoes. I'll miss her being around the bar. She even threw a lad out just a few months ago. And I'm dreading this evening when we'll be closing the coffin. That's the toughest part.

When I started off writing this, I was all brave and philosophical. The pain of her loss is bad now. But I hear our Mam. "Toughen up," she says. The maternal-induced composure came back again just now. I'm certain Mam picked her day to meet up with Dad. The day didn't pick her. Heaven, I think, is here all around us. Mam smiles, and Dad is making up poems for her.



*Marion Walsh, a stalwart of the Dublin Kerry Association for many years.*

## The School at Glashnacree

Anon

I have pictures in my mind of the place I left behind  
 Since I left there long ago some dreams to snare  
 Thought some dreams were not fulfilled there are memories  
 instilled  
 Of the valley where we didn't own a care.

In my minds-eye I can see the old school at Glashnacree  
 And her stony yard where first I made a friend  
 With the turf house at the rear where sometimes we'd  
 compare  
 Our homework which I often did amend.

In the classroom stark and bare sounds of children filled the  
 air  
 And a lazy clock high on the window ledge  
 As a master strict but fair rested one leg on his chair  
 And the stick he once plucked out of the hedge.

When three o'clock came round 'twas down the steps we'd  
 bound  
 And at the half shut iron gate we left our woes  
 Free the country wide to roam as we slowly headed home  
 With the feel of soft warm grass between our toes.

There beside the glade our football games we played  
 'Twas often that we left there stiff and sore  
 With no ref to interfere the rules were few and clear  
 But those shouts of joy and banter are no more.

The carefree ways of our childhood days  
 Have lived in my memory  
 Through this world of care – and we got our share  
 Like some dreams that just were not to be.

There's so much I would trade to go back to that glade  
 With those friends and a football to play.  
 Then laze in the sun when the kicking was all done  
 As the trees overhead gently sway.



Crane off the Road at Dromadda 2017

Outings to the district by the

## Kerry Field Club

70 years ago

### Minutes of Kerry Field Club

31/5/1946

The next outing of the club was to the Banemore area... portion of the road ran under groves of laburnum thickly planted. Here in the shelter primroses and wild flowers grew in profusion. The party proceeded on the Kirby's house for it was at the invitation of Mr Kirby we visited the district. They first viewed a small square fort without moat on the lands of Mr Galvin, Rathea. In this fort some of the party were for the first time introduced to the... earth nut that grows in profusion there. ...Eastwards still a deep glen with a small stream within and overgrown with hazel bushes. In this glen is Gleann an Affrin but only fragments of the mass stone now remain.

The party next visited Gortacloghane where once a teampall stood thought not a stone remains today. This site was viewed before by members of the Club on the memorable day they had traversed Lyreacrompane and all the district round. The people here claim that this Teampaill is the second oldest church in Ireland. It was a church of early type roughly 30 by 15 as its foundations show. There is a fine bullan or font broken in two but nothing else as even the stones were drawn away



to build outhouses and can still be traced in those walls by the ancient p..... cutting.

### Minutes of Kerry Field Club

31/4/1947

The Secretary gave an account of the outings for the month. The first of these was to the Mountcoal district... The party called on Mr Con Hunt of Mountcoal. He proved to be a sort of local antiquarian himself. He gave the party a small fossil stone he had found in a fort. He also showed... a sort of pliers for putting rings on pigs noses by driving in a horseshoe nail and turning it with the instrument...

The party next called upon Mr O'Sullivan next door. He mentioned that he had found two quern stones about 16 inches diameter... He was able to give good information about the coalmines nearby.

He mentioned that years ago engineers had visited the site and took samples but no results followed. Some few years ago Dr O'Connor and others from the Listowel area

interested themselves but still without results. There is no tradition as to how long ago the mines were worked. Older people long since dead who remembered back to the Whiteboys had no tradition of the mines. Mr Con Hunt, however, mentioned that in one of the gravel dumps near the pit head he found an old coin dating back to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century which might be an indication of the date.

The party visited the old mine but could not see much by reason of the fact that all the openings had been filled up by farmers fearing danger to cattle. They were, however, able to proceed along the cummer or drainage canal at the north side. Through this cummer a considerable stream of water was flowing and it made a deep echo at the cliff face where it issues from the mine. Mr Con Hunt mentioned that on one occasion he picked up a couple of bags of coal washed out of the cummer by the flood and that in flood time it was quite common to see several lumps of coal among the gravel of the stream.

The party noticed a small seam of coal slanting across the face of the cliff from the mouth of the cummer and out of this they were able to take some samples of the coal. The lumps however were small and not very good samples either.....

**Minutes of Kerry Field Club  
2/8/1947**

Mr Ernie Vine presided. The report of the administrative secretary was first taken... There was quite a collection of objects on display.... (including a) pointed spar with hole in centre found in Banemore bog... by Mr John Finucane. Beside this also was found a lump of fossil tree fern and a smaller piece of stick possible used to trust through the hole in the larger one. The fossil was possibly used as a plane. It was decided that the whole collection be sent to the National Museum on loan...

The next outing of the Club was to the Banemore bog at the invitation of John Finucane... mentioned above. Mr Finucane accompanied the party to the scene of the find. He then proceeded due north along a path locally called the Deadman's path to a little hillock on top of which was a ring forth of small size and without any outstanding characteristics.

Banemore is a bog that has yielded many finds in the course of turf cutting and the district is worth observing.

## That word 'Approbation'

*Marie Neligan Shaw*



In the Listowel of my youth, there was a word that was widely used which one rarely hears today. Everyone knows what it means but few remember what it was used for. The word is "Approbation" and every reputable shop in town had an approbation book. Back then, you couldn't get a man and especially a farmer, to shop for his needs. The wife would shop for the shoes or the shirt or jacket and bring two or three of the items home on approbation. This way the male of the family could try them on in the privacy of his home and make his choice. The remaining items were returned to the store and the selections paid for.

Having lived in the United States for many years I was home on vacation one time and went to Michael Hennigan's shop to buy a bedspread for my mother. The wallpaper in her bedroom was a pretty busy pattern so it was difficult making a decision as to what would blend. Michael, in his eternal

wisdom suggested that I take three bedspreads home, try each one on the bed and then decide. I did exactly that with the word approbation ringing in my ears and reliving the memories it brought back.

The Carnegie library at the top of Church St. was an important part of our lives. Once we were old enough to read we got library cards. After that the world held no limits. We inhaled the written word and couldn't get enough of "The Adventures of Maeve" or "The Hardy Boys Mysteries" Every Saturday afternoon was spent searching through the many available titles on display. I learned to read at the feet of my uncle Dick Fitzgerald. It seemed to me that he always had a book in his hand and even before I could read he would bring home the library books and read them to me.

Once I could read by myself, he would have me read to him. If there was a word that I stumbled over he would pretend not to understand the storyline so, we would have to get the dictionary and solve the meaning before the story could continue. It took me a few more years to understand that I was actually learning a lesson and to this day I consult a dictionary quite often. We never get too old to learn something new but in spite of modern social media and Kindle there is nothing quite so satisfying as holding the written word in one's hand.

## Pre- Famine Houses of Lyreacrompane

*Joe Harrington*

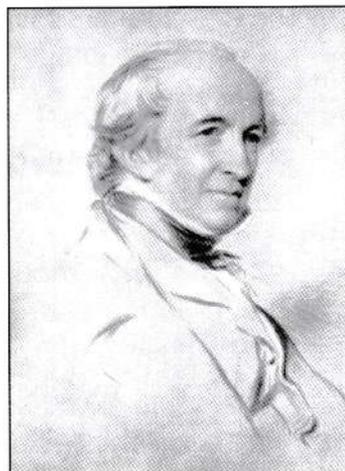
How did Lyreacrompane fare during the 'Night of the Big Wind', 6-7 January 1839? Folklore gives it a mention but little specific information is known. Kerry was not one of the worst hit areas but within the county it might be safely assumed that exposed upland areas like the Stacks Mountains suffered much the average destruction as the rest of the country. (The area had no forestry back then to drag and slow down storms.) The estimates on the loss of life and the level of destruction at national level vary a lot in the different accounts. The numbers killed were somewhere between one hundred and three hundred.

It was calculated that 4,846 chimneys were knocked. How the fallen chimneys could be counted so accurately and the dead so vaguely is strange. William Thomas Le Poer Trench, 3rd Earl of Clancarty, reported the loss of nearly 20,000 trees on his estate at Ballinasloe. Trees were a valuable commodity and some Landlords had grown fine stands. These were valuable on January 6 and near worthless after the storm, with the fallen timber causing a glut of firewood on the market. Many people lost the small savings they had secreted in thatch and rafters when roofs were carried off. There was no weather

forecasting at the time and the hurricane arrived unexpected and unannounced. Winds reached 120 miles per hour in what was a category three hurricane. Twenty-five percent of the houses in Dublin were destroyed and 42 ships were sunk.

While we know little of the specific destruction wrought by the storm in Lyreacrompane we do have a very accurate record of the houses that existed in the area then due to the fact that the Ordnance Survey of Ireland was being carried out at the time.

Thomas Colby, Director-General of the Ordnance Survey in Great Britain, was the first to suggest that the Ordnance Survey be used to map Ireland and would be of use to the British government for levying local taxes based on land valuations and for military planning. In 1824, a committee was established under the direction of Thomas Spring Rice, MP for Limerick, to oversee the foundation of an Irish Ordnance Survey.



*Thomas Spring Rice*

While Spring Rice wanted Irish involvement in the mapping process the Duke of Wellington believed Irish surveyors were not qualified for the task so the Irish Ordnance Survey was initially staffed entirely by members of the British Army.

From 1825 teams traversed Ireland and when the survey of the whole country was completed in 1846, it was a world first. Both the maps and surveying were executed to a high degree of engineering excellence using triangulation and with the help of tools developed for the project. The concrete triangulation posts built on the summits of many Irish mountains can still be seen to this day.

The scheme provided numerous opportunities for employment to Irish people, who worked as skilled or semi-skilled fieldwork labourers, and as clerks in the subsidiary Memoir project that was designed to illustrate and complement the maps by providing data on the social and productive worth of the country. John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry (who has a plaque to his memory on the wall of St Joseph's Hospital in Limerick where he worked for a while) were employed in scholarly research into place names. The total cost of the Irish Survey was £860,000 – nearly 100 million Sterling allowing for historical inflation.

The Ordnance Survey map for Kerry was produced in 1842 – just five years before the famine. The roads in the Lyreacrompane district are shown as are the houses here at the time. The map shows the following houses in the area....

**Knockaclare.** Coming from Listowel, on what the map refers to as "The Light House Road", the first house in Knockaclare was on the left just beyond Maurice Curtin's. The next house was the Light House now owned by Fr Tim Grant but associated with Roches for many years. A little further on and also on the right, just passed Kim Murphy's house, there was a dwelling which does not appear on the revised 25 inch Ordnance Survey Map of the late 1890s (nearly 60 years later).



*Ordnance Survey Map of 1842 showing the Light House on the Listowel/Castleisland Road*

A little further on and about twice as far to the east as the present day house of Jackie and Josephine Walsh was a cluster of dwellings close to the Knockaclare/ Braumadra border. Access to them seems to have been along the existing road to Walshes

and then onwards to the east. These dwellings had also totally disappeared by the time the 1897s OSI map appeared.

Back on the main road and travelling on towards the Glen there was a house on the left across from Eddie and Helen Linnane's and a few yards further south. This was close to where the Edgeward family lived in a house up to the 1950s.

**Lyreacrompane.** Continuing South in the Castleisland direction there were a cluster of dwellings on the right – one of which was subsequently extended to house an RIC Barracks. Fifty six years later only the building we knew as Dillanes and the Barracks remained.

The bridge over the Lyreacrompane (Spur) river did not exist in 1842 and the map shows a ford. On the south side of the ford and about two hundred yards to the west stood what appears to be a large house with some smaller buildings nearby. These also do not appear in subsequent maps.

Further west along the northern bank of the Lyreacrompane (Spur) River the map shows a house at the joinings with the Clahane river and another close to the house of Teresa Long and family.

Further west again and still in the townland of Lyreacrompane there are two houses shown along the banks of the same river (the river that comes down to Spur from the foot of Pallas Hill.)

Back on the main road to



*The two buildings on the bottom right are near today's Grotto*

Castleisland and just opposite the Grotto there stood two houses. The present road to the post office and National School was not there at that time. There is a long stretch without a house until, on the left, just beyond the turn to Clahane and just before the stream known as Slip the map shows a small structure enclosed in an extremely small space.

**Carrigcannon.** After the present day Four Elms Bar, there is a dwelling shown where Joe Doran's house now stands. Immediately across the road, to the left passed present day O'Connells and Keanes and just before Costello's there was a small cabin and beyond where Costello's is now a path lead to a dwelling on the site of Shanahan's old house. Going down Collins Hill (as we know it today) there was a house off to the left in the same place as "Jereen" Nolan.

The number of houses in the three townlands listed above, through which the main Listowel/Castleisland road ran, was small at a time when the population of Ireland was at its highest – just prior to the Famine. Outside of the cluster near

## The Scanlon Family

*Nora Scanlon, The Lighthouse, Knockaclare.*

the Bromadra/Knockaclare boundary and the cluster around the Barracks (to be) there were about fifteen houses in total in the three townlands. In the late 1890s OSI map (nearly 60 years later and after the mass emigration of the famine) the number of houses shown in those three townlands had tripled.

The approximate number of houses in other townlands shown in the 1842 OSI map was...

- Glashanacree - 10
- Glashananoon - 15
- Knocknaglogh - 4
- Glantaunayalkeen - 9
- Dromaddabeg - 7
- Dromaddamore - 7
- Braumaddra - 6
- Knockaunanoon - 5
- Knockaunbrack - 15
- Muingwee - 7



The above is a picture of my father, Tim, my grandmother, Johanna Keane and my grandfather Tim Scanlon, who was born in Lyreacrompane, (see map below) and my aunts, Kitty and Peggy. I have always loved Kerry. When working for the Inland Revenue in Dublin and Waterford the highlight was always coming home for the holidays.

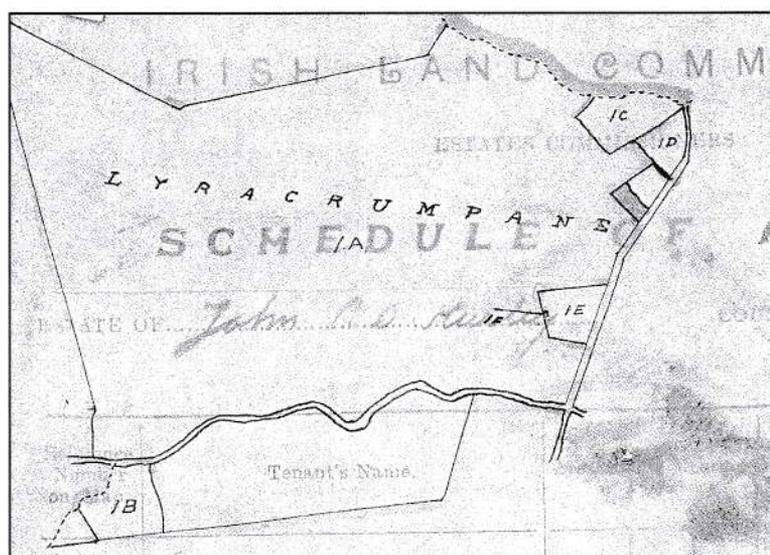
My son, Paddy, daughter, Eileen and son, Tim, now Fr. Tim Grant PP had always spent their holidays in Kerry - Lybes, Duagh - and regarded it as their home and they still do. It's lovely to live now so near to where my Grandfather, Tim Scanlon, was born. The air is pure magic. As we always say we enjoy "The Kingdom" so much.



Carrying out the Ordnance Survey of Ireland nearly 200 years ago

### Legend of Map on right

- 1B = Spur Kate Lynchs/Johnny McElligott (Johnny Mac's)
- 1D = Johanna Scanlan. Grandmother of Norah Scanlon and Great Grand-mother of Fr. Tim Grant.
- 1C = Costello. Now Murphy's.
- 1F = RIC Barracks - now demolished
- 1F = Barracks lawn
- 1A = Jones. Joseph Jones married Tom Hurley's daughter.



This old Land Map shows where Tim Scanlon lived. The plot 1D was just across the road from the Glen School but no trace of the house remains. 1B is on the banks of the Lyreacrompane (Spur River). (See legend on left)

## Folk Memory of Sheon Burns

*John Stack (Moynsha and Kildare)*

The National Folklore Collection – Schools was compiled in 1937-38. Pupils were asked to talk to their parents and grand-parents about what they remembered of olden times. Many of those recorded in this fashion were in the 60 to 80 age bracket. Their memories would have been from the 1870s onwards but they would have remembered stories from their own parents and grand-parents which stretched the folk memory back to the early 1800s or even the rising of 1798.

The stories collected by the pupils of Dromlegach school and other schools in north Kerry includes many mentions of a strongman, Sheon Burns. These stories related the feats of strength that impressed earlier generations. According to the accounts Sheon's strength had no limits. They told of how he rung a sow singlehanded after seven men failed to hold it.

Another account listed in the Folklore Commission referred to how he used a horse cart axel as a walking stick to ford the Feale when it suddenly flooded during mass preventing mass goers from the other side from getting home. Hanging on to Sheon's coat tails and to each other's coat tails they crossed safely in four journeys of six at a time. Sheon was a powerfully built man and, according to one description, stood about five feet eleven inches high with shoulders like a giant and weighing about 17 stone. He was a jovial character and called

every man and boy a "Gorsoon"

Sean Kirby, an old man from Knocknacrohy, was the source of another story. "I remember Sheon Burns very well. When I was young, Sheon used to call here very often for eel oil for his ears, he being very deaf. How we used to get the eel oil then was as follows. This place was very wet and marshy. We used be opening drains and scouring dykes and in those we used get the eels. We had two very clever terriers here and when they would see the eels waddling in the dyke they would dive in and pull them out and then stuff them into a bottle for about a month or six weeks until they would melt away. We put a pinch of salt into it especially for Sheon. He would dip a piece of cotton wool into it and cork his ears with it. This would improve him in the hearing for some time".

Sheon was a terrible strong man. He had two other brothers Tom and Mick and three sisters. Tom died very young. I think he was about 22 years. He died in a field in the townland of Behins coming home from the river Smearla, he being a water bailiff there. I heard Sheon to say that if Tom Burns lived there would be no talk of Sheon Burns. Sheon was also a "Cooleen" and used to faction fight with the "Black Mulvihills"

I remember a time in Listowel and other towns on fair days and market days when twelve o'clock would come the town was cleared knowing the fight was on. The men on both sides would gather with blackthorn sticks and so the fight would begin.

I remember to see Sheon walking the square in Listowel and he shouting; "A Burns and a Cooleen against any three of any other name".

It was from their mother that the Burns brought the terrible strength. She was a Kenny from Castleisland, known here as old mammy Kenny. Her people were known to be terrible strong. (Sheon's mother was Mary Kenny. The Burns had a farm in Freemount, Lixnaw in the 1820s (later evicted) before coming to Coolaneelig, Duagh).

Sheon was a bog ranger in the Knockmaol bog. He was also in the holding up and robbing of a coach between Castleisland and Abbeyfeale with five more Duagh men and a pig buyer from Limerick and their leader Daneen Dan Harnett a notorious highwayman. He was also one of the whiteboys. They were there in their keeping (hide) for several weeks. Some of them were rounded up but were left off as the Coachman swore they were a deal bigger men. However Burns was not caught, he being in his hide along the Derk glen. (The holding up of the mail coach at Abbeyfeale made headlines in 1848. Daneen Dan Harnett was a very famous rebel from Abbeyfeale of those times. He avoided capture and escaped to the USA after the failed rising of 1848).

Another story told of "a stone in Denis Florrie's field and it was Sheon Burns who put it there. It is nine feet long and he put his hands around it and drove it four feet into the ground. There is five feet of it standing". Another told how

when Sheon was outnumbered in Listowel one day. He tore a shaft off a donkey's cart and cleared all before him. On another occasion Sheon was on the run from the police as there was a big fine hanging over him. This day he was in a forge talking to the smith. A man in a cart came along and asked the smith for a match to light his pipe. The smith said "I have no match". "Wait a moment" said Sheon "and I will give you a light" He placed a coal on the anvil and carried it out with one hand and handed it up to the man in the car and said "here is a light for you". "Well" said the man in the car "there is no man able to do that only Sheon Burns" "I am just the very man" said Sheon. "Well" said the other man "I am a police officer and I have a warrant for your arrest for a fine, so come with me and I will pay your fine as it is a pity to see such a remarkable strong man like you to be in any trouble". So Sheon went into the car and the officer kept to his word. The source for this story in the Folklore Commission was a Timothy Lynch.

The following was collected from Loughfouder School in Knocknagoshel. "Once there was a circus in Tralee. Sheon and his friend, a landlord from Abbeyfeale named Harnett (most likely John Creagh Harnett of Moynsha) were in Tralee. Mr Harnett went to see the circus but Sheon stayed about the town. A great wrestler was a performer. The circus manager bet £5 that nobody amongst the audience would bring the wrestler to the floor. Mr Harnett accepted the challenge for Sheon, and asked the manager if he

could wait a short time until he would get him in the town and bring him along. The opponents faced each other in the ring. Sheon gripped the wrestler and then the people saw the foreigner's feet in the air to the astonishment of all but the few who knew Sheon well.

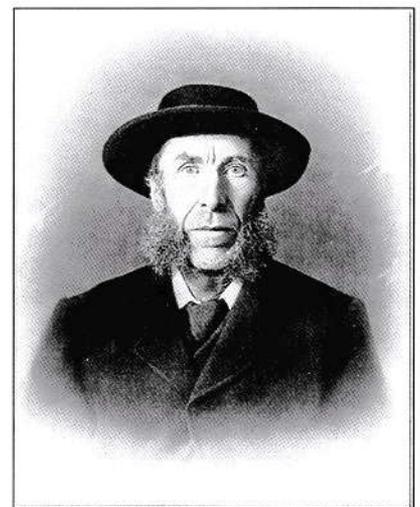
The manager explained that his champion slipped that time. But he had no better luck the second time and Sheon won easily. The crowd applauded Sheon and so did the manager. The manager invited Sheon to join his circus agreeing to pay him any salary he demanded, but Sheon unhesitatingly refused.

Finally, a story from Islandanny School, Kilmorna. At one time there were English visitors at Fitzmaurices in Kilcara, Duagh, a Protestant family who owned a big tract of land around Duagh. Among the visitors, was one brave strong fellow, who did great feats in England and had a great opinion of himself. One day as the visitors were walking in the lawn where there was a great big stone, which Sheon Burns used to lift. This famous Englishman had great looking at the stone, and Mr Fitzmaurice said; "You seem to think you could lift that". "I don't presume any such thing" replied the Englishman "or there isn't a man in Ireland to lift it". "I'll bet you £10 I will get a man sixty years of age to lift it." Fitzmaurice replied "It is done" said the Englishman. Mr Fitzmaurice sent for Sheon and gave him a few pints of whiskey, then he told Sheon what he wanted him for. "Oh" said Sheon "I am too old to do these things now" So the Englishman said "There was never a day you could lift it"

This rose Sheon, he made one drive at it and raised it to his knees. The Englishman put his hand in his pocket to give Sheon some money, when Sheon said, "Tis lifted now, and I would defy any English seonín to do it" At the remark, the Englishman drew his hand from his pocket and gave Sheon nothing, but Fitzmaurice was very proud of the act.

Sheon Burns was, however, not just some shadowy figure of folklore and we are indebted to John Stack again for pointing us to the following account of Sheon. In 1932, over 50 years after Sheon had passed away, the Abbeyfeale journalist, James D Harnett, wrote of Sheon in the Kerryman and Limerick Leader. In the next page we carry an edited version of that article.

John Stack's Great-Grandfather, Edmond Stack, of Craughatouke, mentioned in the article, was Sheon's nephew. John passed us on this one existing photo of Edmund.



*Edmond Stack (1836 – 1922) of Craughatouke, a nephew of Sheon Burns*

## **SHEON BURNS.**

### *The Strongest Man in the Kingdom.*

In 1932, over 50 years after Sheon Burns had passed away the Abbeyfeale journalist James D Harnett, (known as J.D.H.) published a long article on Sheon in both the Kerryman and Limerick Leader newspapers. There are multiple versions of Sheon's name "Sean", "John", "Shown" and "Shawn" the name Sheon is used in this article – as it was in the material collected by the Folklore Commission. The following is an edited version of the article.

Half a century ago, a writer, referring to the famous Sheon Burns described him as "The Strongest Man in the World". Presumably he was all he claimed to be. His family name was Byrnes, but the name in common use then sounded, and was often written, as if it were Scotch. No one could ever make anything, however, out of Sheon Burns but an Irishman, and one of whom his countrymen were proud. He was born about a year before the '98 rebellion (1798) and resided the greater part of his life at Coolaneelig in the parish of Duagh.

He died on the 30th of September 1876. His name and deeds are still rife throughout Kerry and West Limerick, and wherever feats of strength are recalled, Sheon Burns' record remains unrivalled. From early manhood, he retained abnormal physical powers, even up to the date of his death. On that very day, a remarkable instance of his strength has been recorded.

Sheon, in temperament, was as docile as a child, and was seldom known to lose his temper. He was however, obstinate, as may have been natural to one endowed with such physical capabilities, and towards the end of his span, he became ill, and the priest and doctor were sent for. The doctor having examined him asked Sheon, what age he was. Sheon replied that "eighty and myself are fighting it out". "I am afraid", said the doctor, "eighty will do for you this time". Sheon smilingly reached out his left hand from the bed, and before the doctor could anticipate his intention, he had lifted him off the floor and placing the doctor beside him on the bed, said; "What do you think of that for a dying man?" Despite his strength, however, he did not live many hours afterwards.

Stripped of the mythological accounts of his strength, and apart from these tales that would have attributed to him something of the prowess of Fionn MacCumhaill, there was much of an astonishing nature in his acts that set him apart as an outstanding man in his generation. No one has since succeeded in approaching any of the deeds on which his fame still rests.

His home in Coolaneelig is only about a mile over the sunny slopes and glens that separate it from Graigue, where his sister lived convenient to Craugh Ban, a continuation of the hill of Croyle. The latter pleasantly overlooks the Feale and the town of Abbeyfeale across the river. One morning, Sheon, as a young man, was passing by Craugh Ban, when a neighbouring farmer named

Florry McCarthy, a man physically endowed above the ordinary himself, called him in to "give him a hand" in getting a large rolling stone into a horse cart. The horse had been unyoked and the cart tilted back, awaiting a plank which two other men had been getting from Mr John Creagh Harnett's farmyard. Sheon directed that the horse be replaced between the shafts, and lifting one side of the huge stone, about 5 of 6 hundredweight, placed his other arm underneath and quietly lifted it over the side and into the cart.

Before the general introduction of hay floats, it was customary in the olden harvests, to lift cocks or wynds of hay into carts by means of spikes or poles, while transferring it from the meadows to the barns. One day a "meitheal" of men were engaged on the farm of a man name Dillane in the parish of Duagh, when a spike became fastened beneath a wynd of hay on one of the carts. Three men tugged at the spike, but in vain. Sheon was called, and though usually shy of displays of the kind, he placed his right hand on the back of the cart, and with his left, easily withdrew the missing spike.

Deeds of somewhat similar kind performed when a young man soon established his fame as a man of extraordinary strength. Dr Fitzmaurice, who was connected with the district, one day while in Killarney, heard the Earl of Kenmare repeating some tales of the marvellous performances of one of his employees. The Doctor said it would not be

necessary for him to travel many miles from his own home to find a better man than him. Argument led to challenge, and a meeting of both men at Springmount. Dr Fitzmaurice sent for Sheon, who was not, however, over pleased, at exploiting his strength in a challenge of the kind. He did not, however spoil the fun, but casting his eye around, he divined the Doctor's intention in selecting a venue where some huge boulders invited a test.

Although somewhat allied in sentiment to the feats of Myles the Slasher in Knocknagow, the physical features of this Kerry meeting resembled the performance of the Douglas before James, when, "The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone, from its deep bed, then heaved it high and sent the fragment through the sky"

It was not however, so easy to send through the sky the fragment which Sheon removed from its centuries old bed. It was such a wonderful thing to transfer it over the high fence behind him that it has remained there ever since. His opponent certainly did not trouble to pass it back again. Major Galway (also spelt Gallwey) was stipendiary magistrate for the Abbeyfeale District, and in those times was more or less a man of the people. In dispensing justice he always lent a sympathetic ear to extenuating explanations, and he was never above regulating disputes in the local ball alley at unofficial intervals.

He lived in the centre of the Main Street of Abbeyfeale then, in a building originally intended for a hotel in the

coaching days of Bianconi, but eventually served as a magisterial residence and barracks,

Amongst the few police billeted, in Sheon's time, in the eastern end of the building was a certain Constable Molloy. He was a strong man, and by all accounts appeared to know it, for he was constantly, impressing the fact on those who cared to be interested in the recital of his achievements, whenever occasion arose for expanding his chest.

Molloy was a man who set some value on his own capabilities, and had only been a short time in the district, but long enough to learn that the Major didn't care for that brand of strong man that wanted everyone to bear in mind that distinction. He didn't get time to know that there were other strong men in the world too, before getting a local illustration. In fact he had not so far heard of Sheon Burns at all.

It was St. Patricks Day, and about midday, Sheon was endeavouring to drown the shamrock in the Major's sitting room in a jorum of his best Irish. In a few words the Major explained the situation to Sheon, whom he directed to simulate drunkenness with the object of getting Molloy, who was on town duty, to try his strength on Sheon.

Sheon toppled to the joke, and soon afterwards was describing anything but straight lines in front of the hotel. It was an affront to the great Molloy, who made a beeline for Sheon. A crowd had gathered to see Sheon for the first time humiliated

by a public arrest. Sheon walked along quietly until nearing the barrack door. Here in the old days, and until quite recently, when the streets were concreted, a little stream used to run beside the kerb. Just beside it, Sheon pulled up, and setting his relaxed but powerful muscles, into working order, said to his captor, in a voice that seemed to come from a sober man; "Gorsoon, I'd advise you to go home for yourself" Gorsoon and Gosoon, was a term of friendly familiarity habitually used by Sheon towards men and boys alike.

It was a kind of natural condescension from a man of such conscious strength, and may be tinged with a little unintentional pride. It was popularly accepted however as an expression of good nature coming from a man whom almost everyone liked. Not so Molloy, who regarded it as an insult, and resented it by an angry pull at his prisoner, Sheon released with an iron grip Molloy's hold, and forcing both his hands into his own, raised him quietly off the ground with his disengaged hand and laid him gently to rest in the bed of the little stream. The fine was never paid by Sheon, and the Major saw to it that Molloy did not suffer for his humiliation.

These things would not be possible nowadays (in 1932). To digress a little in explanation for the foregoing incident, it may be mentioned that it was customary on the occasion of some of the big fairs at Abbeyfeale in those days to allow the people do much as they pleased. It sometimes happened that an

odd faction fight may take place, but the Major did not always see any reason for drafting extra police in, whose heads might also need bandaging as a reward for their peaceful efforts.

On one such day, so I was informed years ago by an old man long since dead, a tailor named Jack Riordan, got a stroke of an ash plant at the big 29th of June fair. Jack complained of the outrage to the Major, only to hear the latter say: "Don't you know there is no law today, Jack" This was a revelation to Jack, who retreated sorely down the street, and seeing a man against whom some former grudge rankled, simply knocked him down, and told him the Major gave him a free day that day.



Although living in the days when faction fighting was sometimes a popular form of amusement amongst some of the hot-blooded youths of the period, Sheon never showed any inclination to abuse the gift of strength he possessed by participating in them. He often received provocation from bullies, but invariably ignored them. He knew they sought some reflected honour which even an unaccepted challenge to himself might bring about, but he could afford to allow such affronts to pass idly by, and did so on more than one occasion, when he declined to mix himself in the quarrels of his friends or neighbours.

One evening, however while returning with his sister from the fair of Listowel, he was set upon by a number of bravos who pursued him from the town, and attacked him in a savage manner. Receiving a stinging blow on the face from a leader of the gang, Sheon struck back with his clenched fist, and unfortunately the one and only punch of his life proved fatal. Although perfectly justified in defending his sister and himself against such an unprovoked attack, Sheon disappeared on the run for a time, but was subsequently acquitted of a charge which was met by an honourable defence.

Many tales are told of the marvellous feats of strength performed by this famous Kerryman while on the run near the borders of Tipperary. At a certain smithy not far from the foot of the Galtees, Sheon would often while away an hour or two and occasionally gave the smith a hand at the sledging. He was not very fond of making himself remarkable, but one day he played a trick on the smith. The latter had been engaged hammering a horseshoe into shape, while amongst those in the forge at the time was a man named Coll, who had been driving past from a horse fair and drew up at the forge to have a horse shod.

The smith had returned the shoe to the fire for a re-heating, and was intent on heaping the coals into position over it. After a few turns at the bellows he wheeled around with the sparking shoe, and could not check the force of habit until he had the hammer raised in the air, to strike the shoe on

the block instead of the anvil. Sheon with one hand had taken the anvil by its horn and held it concealed behind his back, while the smith had been thinking of the fairies. The stranger who entered the forge was a powerful looking man himself. He walked up to where the smith and Sheon were laughing at the joke and said: "There is only one man in Ireland could do that. You are Burns from Kerry". For a reply, Sheon once more handled the anvil by the horn in one hand, and motioning the onlookers outside, flung the anvil outside the forge door. Next morning he was gone.

There were many other outstanding feats performed by Sheon. It had been said that Sheon in his youth played a trick on a younger brother of his which affected the latter's health adversely. Having unyoked a horse from a load one day, both brothers set about draughting the load themselves against a hill. Sheon is said to have playfully held the cart against the brother to test his strength, and in this way caused him to overcharge his powers. The brother gave promise of rivalling Sheon in physical ability but it may be taken for granted that he died from appendicitis.

A nephew of Sheon's, the late Mr Ned Stack of Graigue, was the only member of the family that approached Sheon in muscular powers. So far as the records of the last century are concerned, no man in any of the southern counties was known to possess the abnormal physical strength of this Herculean Kerryman.

## Sheon Burns final resting place

Official records for Sheon do exist. On his death certificate he is recorded as passing away on the 30th of September 1876 at Coolaneelig. Cause of death is included as "Phthisis - Pulmonary - 2 years certified". Phthisis is the old name for T.B. His age is listed as 80. The informant is shown as "Michael Byrne - present at death" Michael was his brother who inherited the family farm in Coolaneelig. While the details on his headstone vary slightly from these details, they are very much in line with each other.



His sister Ann, who had immigrated to the USA, and later married a man called Barrett, has this headstone erected to her parents and Sheon.

These details also fit with the James D Harnett article. His death was certified, he was approx 80 years of age and he died at home in Coolaneelig.

Sheon is buried in the old graveyard in Dysert, Lixnaw Co Kerry.

The Headstone inscription reads as follows; Erected by Mrs Ann Barrett in memory of her beloved father and mother John and Mary Byrne and brother John Byrne who died September 28, 1877 R.I.P.

## Faction fighting

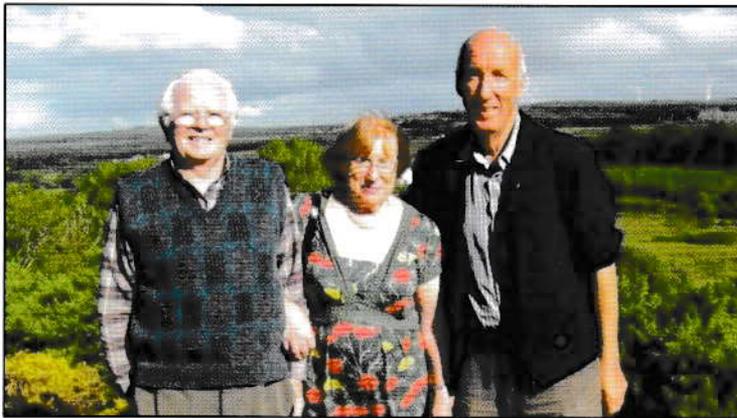
The claim by James D Harnett in his article that Sheon Burns was not involved in faction fighting seems at odds with the folklore and songs written about him. John Stack, who collected these various articles and pieces of information on Sheon believes that "JDH is definitely being respectful! A man of Sheon's strength would have needed to have been a saint not to be involved - the Folklore Commission sounds very authentic especially the Dromlegach stories - Sheon was a neighbour and a living reality to them. Even my father told us some such stories when we were small".

Below is Tithe Applotment record for the Burns at Freemount, near Lixnaw, from 1824. Burns landlord at the time was "Goodman Gentleman" - this Gentleman family later intermarried with the Owens of Ballyhorgan.

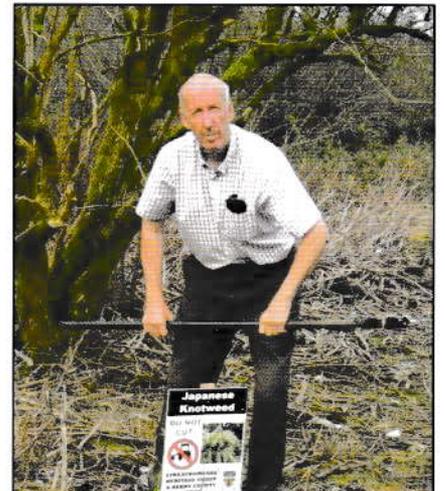
Persons and Description	1824			1825			1826			1827		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
<u>Freemount</u>												
John Burns	9	2	19	12	0	0	19	15	0			
• Coarse grass	5	0	55	10	0	0	7	16	6			
• Marshy Meadows	9	2	57	14	17	6						
	24	2	11				32	9				
												1.12.7



Local weddings and winning celebrations.



John and Gwen O'Halloran on a visit to Lyreacrompane. James and Sean Murphy on the Ring of Kerry Cycle.



Graduate, Seamus Nolan, another winning display by Tony Lyons, Lyre and Eaton Bray and on the right the Lyre Heritage Group tackle the invasive Japanese Knotweed in the area.

# Enjoying Dan Paddy Andy Festival

