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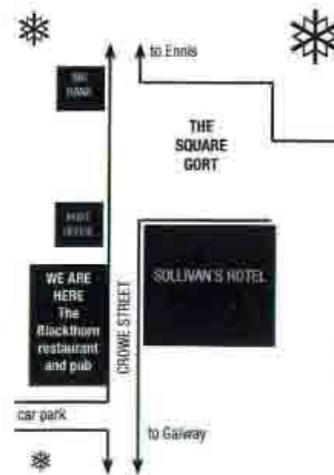
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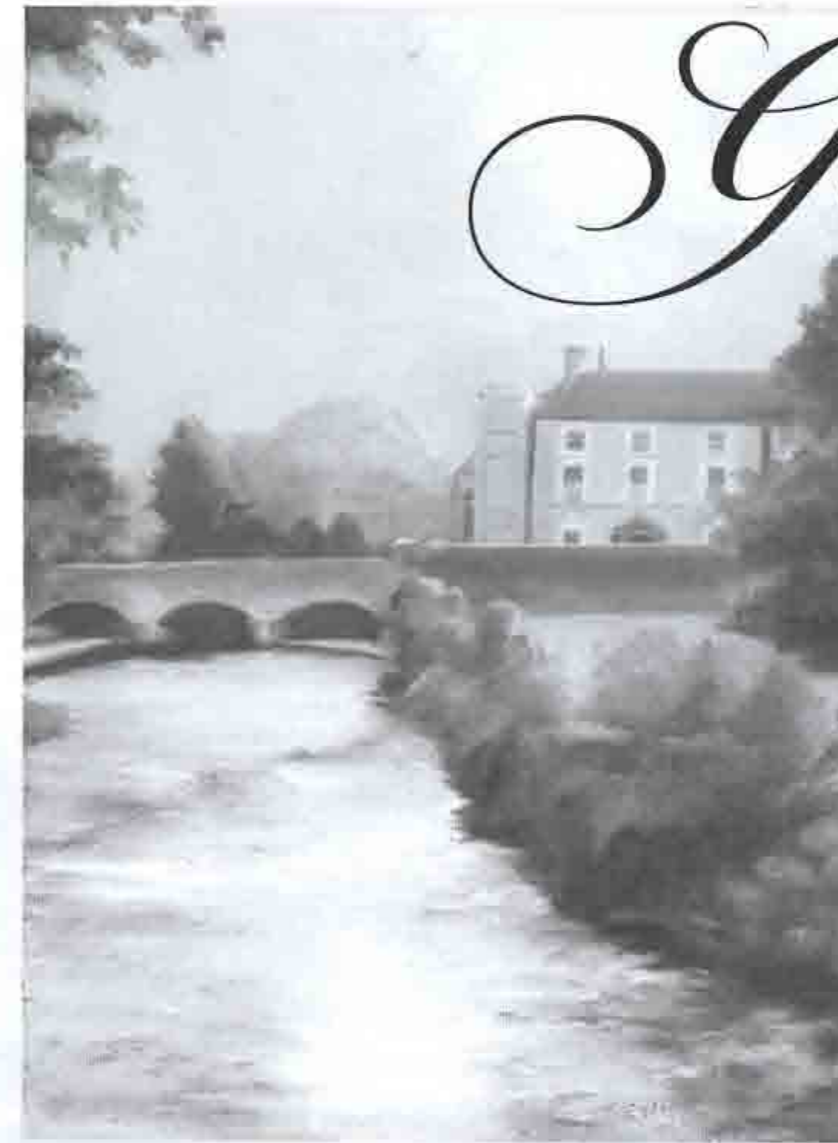
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# Gwaire 2006

## Editorial

It gives me great pleasure to put another issue of *Gwaire* before you; the magazine is community based and depends on community support and involvement. *Gwaire* is aimed at the people of Gort and surrounding areas but I know from correspondence over the years that the magazine is read 'wherever green is worn.'

Some of the old stalwarts who regularly contributed articles, poems and so on to the magazine are no longer with us and they are a sore loss but a good number of new writers are putting pen to paper and this augurs well for the future.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who submitted material for publication and those who gave photographs. The continued support of the business community is deeply appreciated.

The committee is hard-working and dedicated. To each and every one of them I would like to say go raibh míle maith agat.

Happy Christmas to all our readers *agus go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís.*

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# New beginning for Orchard Centre

BY MARY KINSELLA

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2003 at four in the morning, the Orchard Centre was destroyed by fire. The fire was caused deliberately. Everyone was very distraught and upset as we woke up to hear what happened the night before.

Everyone was in shock. As the day went on, service users went to see the centre and cried as they saw what had happened to it. During the day, there were many people calling to our residential houses offering support and help. Family members telephoned us to see if everything was alright. Everyone was wondering what was going to happen now that the centre was gone.

When I went down and saw the state of the centre I too began to cry. There were loads of people there. The garda forensics team were also there, investigating the crime. Nobody knew why anyone would want to burn our centre. The fire was covered by tv, radio and also by the newspapers.

### Working towards a new centre

In the days that followed, there were meetings on a regular basis carried out by Bernard O'Regan, former sector manager of the Brothers of Charity Galway and Derek Smith, our area manager. There were committees set up in which service users and staff worked together. At these meetings, discussion took place about how the new centre should be built. All service users had their opinions taken into account on what the new centre should be like. All service users had meetings with Sean Conneally, former head of evaluation and training and present sector manager of the Brothers of Charity Galway and a local volunteer at our centre who gave a great deal of time to this process.

While the meetings were taking place all the service users were separated into different groups in houses. We preferred to be in small groups instead of the larger groups that existed in the old centre. Everyone wanted the new centre to be organised into smaller groups. It was also decided with us that



The new Orchard Centre, Queen Street

security cameras would be installed in the new centre to protect it.

### Decision time

After many months of discussing options with us—service users, management, staff—it was decided to locate the new centre on the original site where the old centre once stood. The rehabilitative training group opted to stay in the present location opposite Gort church in Apple Tree Training. The retirement group moved to a new house near the Galway road which is especially for their needs. Three groups, drama, crafts and contract work, opted to move into their own units in the centre when it was built. Each unit would have kitchen, specially adapted toilets to suit our needs, work rooms and a sitting room in two of the units. Two apartments for service users were also included in the plans as well as administrative offices and IT training, social worker, physiotherapist, psychologist and nurses' offices. A multi-purpose room for large group gatherings such as discos, parties and so on and a conference room was also planned for our new centre. Everybody was happy and looking forward to it.

### Fundraising and building our new centre

A group of people, local builders, members of the local community, 'friends of the Orchard Centre' group, Brothers of Charity management and some service users got together and set up the Phoenix project. This project

involved raising money to help rebuild our centre.

Construction workers and suppliers of building materials gave generous discounts on their time and products. The local community was very supportive. The Sisters of Mercy generously gave us some land at the back of the centre for parking. Thanks also to J P McManus for his generous donation. Many thanks to everybody involved in fundraising and rebuilding our centre.

### Welcome to the new Orchard Services

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2006 Mary McAleese, president of Ireland, opened our new centre, now known as Orchard Services. The president went to each unit and spoke to the service users and their family members. It was a very exciting day for both the service users and staff. I had the honour of presenting her with my book of poems after her speech. Patrick McGinley, our director of services, also made a speech. A lot of people and politicians from the local community came to celebrate with us and meet the president. We had the brilliant band De-Derga in the afternoon in our specially erected marquee. It was a good day and we are really proud of our centre. Thank you to all staff, management and everyone who helped us while the new centre was being built and was involved in the fund raising and building.





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## My learning experience in Crete

BY CELENE GOODALL

This summer the wandering bug bit me. I decided that I would combine my desire to escape to the sun with something worthwhile that would be useful to me in my current job and for future travels.

My choice was to take a month-long course on how to teach English to speakers of other languages—TESOL. There are many acronyms for this type of course, you may have heard of TEFL or CELTA, all mean more or less the same thing.

After the decision was made to make my escape to the sun the next step was to find a place on a course. So many to choose from in so many places. Confusion and panic started to set in, especially when I looked at the application forms and tests you are required to submit to the schools.

There are days when the intricacies of English grammar remain a mystery to me. I was never taught formal grammar at school. During the 1970s, going to school in London, grammar just wasn't the 'done thing'. The theory was that we absorbed grammar along the way, which, in truth we all do; the problem comes when you have to explain to someone what the difference is between the tenses 'past' and 'present perfect simple'.

I must have absorbed more than I realised at school because after a tense week or so I was offered several places. Now the next difficulty was where to go. Budapest and Prague were tempting, the history and culture were appealing but did I really want a month in August in a city that I would want to explore when I should be studying? Durban in South Africa was very tempting, somewhere I would never think of going for a two week holiday, maybe I could stay a few days longer and see a little of the country I started to reason with myself. Then I looked at the air-fare and faced reality. Durban wasn't a possibility.

After giving it a lot of reasoned thought I opted for Crete. It would be sunny, I had been there before so wouldn't be too disappointed if I couldn't fit in any sight-seeing. The

school was in a quiet small resort about twenty minutes from Chania, a harbour town in the west of the island. I remembered Chania having a very attractive and bustling harbour with lots of Venetian buildings, some interesting museums and great fish restaurants. The Cretan people are proud people, they consider themselves Cretan first and Greek second. The islanders suffered greatly during World War Two and this has resulted in an island of independent, feisty but very amiable people. I was looking forward to going back to Crete.

Arriving on the Saturday before my course started on the Monday was a good idea, a few days earlier would have been even better, but that wasn't to be. I arrived at Chania airport at 11:00 pm after a long day travelling from Shannon via Heathrow and Athens. It was still very hot at that time of night, thirty-two degrees. What on earth had I let myself in for?

On the way over on the flight I had started to feel very nervous about meeting the other trainees on the course. Was I going to be the only one over forty on the course? How would I fit in if the other seven trainees were all recent graduates in their early twenties? Did I pack enough anti-wrinkle cream to keep the ageing process at bay? Would my considerable amount of grey hair stay hidden by the hairdresser's talents for the next five weeks? Sunday morning would reveal all. We were having breakfast together to get to know one another and our tutors. Well, we were a pretty varied bunch. Half of the trainees were in their early twenties and the rest of us mid-thirties upwards. Yes, I was the oldest but it didn't make any difference, I didn't feel the oldest of the group and I wasn't made to feel as if I was prehistoric by the others.

Monday morning, we start work. The timetables looked full to say the least. Every morning we start at 9:00 am, break for a couple of hours at 1:00 pm, back to class at 3:00 pm for lesson preparation and teaching practice or for research for one of the numerous

assignments we have to complete over the next four weeks. Most days we finish between eight and nine pm.

We have three adult groups of usually eight students to 'practice' on, beginner group and two intermediate groups of different abilities. The students are eager to learn. At the beginning of each week we are told our teaching times and what level and types of lessons we are to teach. The rest is up to us but helpful and constructive advice is always at hand from the tutors. The materials and content of each lesson must be devised by us and is thoroughly checked by our tutors before they are used in the actual lessons. Our lesson plans must be detailed and clearly show the objective of each task designed for our students.

By the end of the second week I was wondering if I would get through the course. I knew it was going to be intense, but there was so much to learn and being 'out of practice' at writing essays made it just a little tougher. I stared at a blank page hoping that inspiration was going to come when faced with having to write my views on "error correction and the tendency for teachers to be over preoccupied with accuracy". At this stage I feel so bombarded with learning that I have absolutely no idea what I need to write.

In the first two weeks the other trainees and myself hardly ventured outside of either our accommodation or the school, except to have dinner at one of the local tavernas if we couldn't face cooking. I looked out of my bedroom window each morning and between the buildings across the road I saw a glimpse of Kato Stallos beach and could hear the waves of the sea from my balcony, but until then that was as close as I had got to the beach. So for reasons of saving my frazzled brain and my sanity I planned to make my escape into Chania on the Saturday. I wanted to wander the narrow streets with their beautiful old buildings, sit and watch life go by in the harbour area and just switch off worrying about verb tenses, parts of speech, sentence structure and

*continued overleaf*



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lesson planning. The morning in Chania and the late afternoon on the beach in Kato Stallos worked their magic. I was rested, relaxed and refreshed, so much so that the blank piece of paper didn't look quite so daunting any more. Unfortunately two of the trainees decided that they couldn't carry on with the course, one in her early twenties and the other in her mid-thirties. They found the course too intense and the amount of work required too difficult to deal with. It was sad to see both of them leave as all eight of us had gelled well together. So now there were six trainees.

The third week was another frenetic week but by the Friday evening I had more or less completed my assignments, my teaching practice had been going very well and I was starting to feel a sense of achievement as opposed to one of confusion. By the Wednesday of the final week you could almost see the finishing post and there was a palpable sense of relief between us all. By that evening all our assignments were in, Thursday evening was my final teaching practice and Friday evening was Grades and Graduation. The final few days flew by and on the Friday we were all a little anxious about what our grades would be. We would have one grade for our teaching practice and another for the entire course. All of the group had worked extremely hard for the length of the course, some of them were more competitive than others and wanted the top A1 grade. I wanted to pass with a good grade but what was more important for me was the fact I had achieved something, I had learnt a new skill and felt confident using it, even grammar wasn't the mystery it had been for so many years.

The graduation arrived and our tutors were taking us to dinner after the presentations so nerves were really kicking in. We all did very well, everyone passed both elements of the course. As Miheala, the head tutor, handed me my certificates and offered her congratulations I was delighted to discover that I was the only one on the course to get A1 grades in both elements.

It just goes to show that age and maturity don't hinder learning.

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## The President's visit

BY OLGA LINNANE



On the wet morning of May 2<sup>nd</sup> at approximately 11:30 am, President Mary McAleese and Dr Martin MacAleese arrived at the doors of Gort Community School. Mr Corry, principal, Mrs Talbot, deputy principal, the chairperson and members of Board of Management, teachers, student council, parents and some 700 students greeted our president with a great sense of honour and pride.

President McAleese and Dr McAleese were given a short tour of our ground floor. They also greeted and shook hands with each students' council member. President McAleese unveiled a plaque in memory of her visit to our school. A short presentation of our school's curricular and extra-curricular activities was given and was followed by some refreshments.

Next, in great spirit, President MacAleese visited our very special school memorial, which is dedicated to the memory of anyone who has worked or studied in our school but who has sadly passed away. Then the entourage enjoyed a concert which showcased the excellent talent in the school.

To finish, the president greeted almost 800 people, mostly students, where she laughed and joked about how all the talent must be over this side of the country. She complimented us on our beautiful school and encouraged us to do our best. A great day was had by all.

## Prestigious scholarship for GCS student

Brian Egan, Derrybrien, one of the Leaving Certificate class at Gort community school of June 2005 won the prestigious Easter week commemoration scholarship for 2005.

Only seven scholarships are awarded annually, one for each of the seven signatories of the 1916 proclamation of independence. The seven successful students, out of over 50,000 students nationwide who sat the leaving certificate in 2005, performed the best in the country in higher level papers in a nominated group of subjects.

The scholarships go to the highest achievers in each of the seven categories. All the seven winners are funded in respect of fees and maintenance costs associated with one full-time under-graduate course and one full-time post-graduate course approved under the terms of the scheme.

Brian won the Sean Mac Diarmada scholarship as his combined results in the subjects Irish, English and Engineering were the highest in Ireland.



left to right: Denis Corry, Principal; Martin Killeen, Engineering; Judy Conroy, Irish; Brian Egan and John Conneely, English

## Gaelscoil for Gort

BY JAMES FAHY

A very successful meeting was held in the Lady Gregory hotel to discuss the establishment of a Gaelscoil for Gort and the surrounding areas. As a result, a founding committee was formed and it was decided that a formal application will be made to the Department of

Education and Science to seek recognition for the school. It is envisaged that enrolment will commence in September 2007. The search for a suitable location for the new school is under way.

Further information nights will be held in the near future, to which all interested in the project are invited to attend. Aside from presenting information about the new venture, the information nights will provide an opportunity for parents to pre-register their children in the Gaelscoil

as well as giving an opportunity for those parents to socialise and meet others. The next meeting will be advertised locally and in parish newsletters. Anyone seeking further information and or wishing to register their offspring can ring the secretary of the Coiste Bunaithe on 087 288 7782 where all queries will be answered.

The Coiste Bunaithe members are James Fahy, chairperson; Fiona Folan, secretary; PROS Geraldine Linnane and James Fahy and treasurer Mathew Waters.



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## My musical journey

Facing the music:  
Ian the conductor



BY IAN LAHIFFE

**M**y musical journey began at a very young age, with a one-sixteenth-size violin and an equally small bow, trudging to lessons in New Inn. In those early years, music was something that distracted me from playing sport and practice was an arduous task. However in my time at New Inn I gained much knowledge and understanding of music, particularly through the schooling of the Suzuki method. This method really develops the musical ear and I firmly believe that I still rely on this training to this day.

By the age of twelve, I was beginning to make great strides on the violin and, at this stage, a major turning point in my musical career occurred. I was awarded a music scholarship to the Schola Cantorum, St Finians college, Mullingar, county Westmeath. This scholarship provided a wonderful opportunity and a very different environment, as I boarded in the school. The emphasis in the Schola Cantorum is on liturgical music and it was in St Finians that I began to play the organ. It was in this milieu that I met many like-minded people and began to develop a real love for music. I took piano lessons with Pádraic Ó Cuinneagáin and my interests began to shift towards the piano and organ and the violin received the cold shoulder. The richness of musical life here provided many highlights. In my first year, our choir participated in a live RTÉ Christmas radio broadcast. Second year saw us joining forces with the choir of the Loreto college in Mullingar in a memorable performance of Faure's requiem in the town cathedral. In my fourth year, we undertook an unforgettable trip to London while for Leaving Certificate, I had the distinct honour of being chosen as head schola.

The nature of the experiences provided an added impetus to continue to study music and I gained a place in Trinity college, Dublin, studying two of my great passions in life, music and Irish. Despite being in boarding school for five years, moving to Dublin was still something of a culture

shock. Dublin has a very lively musical scene in which it was exciting to get involved. In my first week in college, I joined Trinity singers and this was a formative decision. My first concert with the choir was epic. We performed some of the most challenging and rewarding choral pieces, namely the songs of farewell by Parry and five negro spirituals by Tippett. This was an amazing beginning to my musical experiences in Trinity and I've gone on to be librarian and treasurer of the society and I'm conductor and chairperson of the society for the coming academic year.

In my second year as treasurer of the music society, I became very active in the promotion of music throughout the college. We focused on promoting certain contemporary composers and arranging performances of their music. One of the most exciting projects that I was involved with was Terry Riley's *In C*, which I directed. This was my first experience of directing an ensemble and what an eclectic place to start, as the performance was held in the Douglas Hyde gallery in Trinity. In March of last year, the culmination of my dedication to new music occurred when I directed a full concert of newly-composed music by Trinity students. The concert was held in the Project in Temple Bar and it was very well attended.

While Trinity is the epicentre of my musical life, I also continued by studies on the piano with Pádraic Ó Cuinneagáin in the College of Music and I began to study organ with David Lee in the Royal Irish Academy. I have gained ATCL and ALCM piano diplomas. Last year, I sang with the very prestigious choir of Christ Church cathedral. This is a semi-professional choir and I learnt so much from the director of music in the cathedral, Judy Martin. The standard of singing was absolutely stunning and I improved out of all proportion in singing and attitude towards performance.



There were many highlights during the year. We recorded a professional disc of the music of Frances Pott, a living composer, who was present at the recording session. It was a very draining experience as we had to record in the cathedral during the night and, while it was very complex music, it was more difficult as we had to compete with the tones of Dublin city traffic. The other major highlight of the year with the choir was a two week trip to New York and Washington. While I could easily write a full article on this wonderful trip alone, my personal highlight was the evensong which we did in Washington cathedral, the national cathedral of America. We sang the canticles *as Gaeilge* and it was wonderful to fill this huge cathedral with the Irish language.

My greatest experience since beginning in Trinity was last year when I conducted the Trinity orchestra in a series of two concerts. I chose the programme myself. It consisted of Gorecki's third symphony, which is a slow, haunting piece with a solo soprano part, a piece of incidental music by Britten and a suite for strings by Lutoslawski. The orchestra travelled to Galway and we performed the concert in the church of St Nicholas. This was a tremendous honour for me, to perform such a concert in Galway.

My plans for the following term are very ambitious. I am the new organ scholar of Trinity, which involves providing music for two services a week and lots of weddings and I am conducting both singers and orchestra for a joint concert with a programme including Beethoven's triple concerto and Elgar's *The Music Makers*. This concert will be held in St. Patrick's cathedral on November 29<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, I'm applying for various master programmes and finishing my degree. I'm really excited about the future, it's going to be a continuous musical adventure.



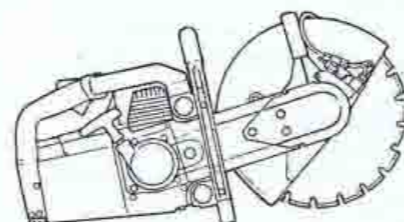
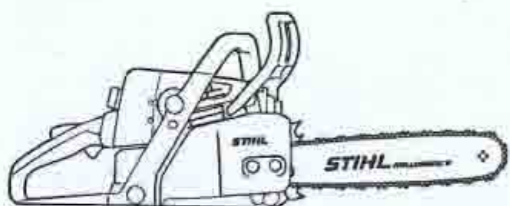
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# A visit to the Eagle's Nest

BY DICK BURKE

The Eagle's Nest was the name given to the house built for Adolf Hitler on the top of Kehlstein mountain. The Kehlstein was a favourite place for nature lovers even before the Third Reich. The house, also known as the Kehlsteinhaus, sits on the narrow summit of the peak.

When Hitler first visited the area in 1923 he was so impressed with the scenery that he decided to settle on the Obersalzberg at the foot of the Kehlstein. This area is located among the Alps in southern Bavaria, close to the Austrian border.

In 1933, after taking over power in Germany, Hitler began to rebuild his private residence at Obersalzberg and later as his government headquarters. Seventeen thousand acres were cleared of local farmers and other inhabitants to make way for the new development. Private residences for the Nazi VIPs and government buildings were constructed together with a massive bunker and tunnel network interconnecting the residences and the various offices.

As Hitler's fiftieth birthday was approaching, Martin Bormann decided that he would give a very special surprise birthday present to his boss in the form of a mountain retreat on top of the Kehlstein. General Fritz Todt, inspector of roads, was asked to undertake the project. At first he described it as an impossibility to build a road to the summit but, with pressure from Bormann, he undertook the task.

A road six-and-a-half kilometres long and four metres wide was carved out of the side of the mountain. Eight hundred metres of altitude had to be gained and still the upper end of the road was four hundred feet below the summit. This final ascent was achieved by cutting a tunnel three hundred feet long into the mountain and installing a vertical lift to travel the final four hundred feet upwards.

Foreign workers, including Italian stone masons, were brought in to construct the road. Five tunnels were dug out and lined with cut stone work. Cyclop walls were built on the lower side to retain the road upper side to



left: the Eagle's Nest perched on top of Kehlstein mountain  
below: the marble fireplace, Mussolini's gift to Hitler



prevent landslides. Men hauled tools and equipment up the mountain on their backs and worked for sixteen hours per day in winter snow and often poor light. Some workmen had to be held in position by their mates while they worked, such was the incline of the terrain.

When the road was completed, work began on the Eagle's Nest. It is an impressive granite stone building. The rooms were as follows: a huge reception hall with many windows and a marble fireplace, dining room, kitchen, guard rooms and a pine-panelled room where Eva Braun sunbathed and enjoyed the view of the Alpine landscape. The cost of this technical masterpiece was thirty million reichmarks. The structure was given to Hitler on his fiftieth birthday.

Visitors enter the building by the four hundred foot climb in the elevator. This is the original elevator which is about twelve feet square with polished brass panelling to all sides. This gives the impression that the elevator is three times as large—it is said that Hitler suffered from claustrophobia. We walked down the long corridor at the end of which there were about twenty-four heavy brass coat hooks. At this stage your imagination and goose pimples begin to run riot as you think on the men who used them.

Then into the large reception room which is semi-octagonal in shape with a massive carrera marble fireplace which was given as a gift to Hitler by Mussolini. This shows some rough edges where the soldiers of the 101<sup>st</sup> airborne division took away little pieces as souvenirs. There was a four-inch thick carpet presented by Hiro Hito of Japan. This was taken away by looters at the end of the war. One gets the feeling that decisions were made in

this room that sealed the fate of many of the six million who died in the concentration camps or the three million starved to death or murdered. Today this room is used as a sitting room for visitors while a dining room and kitchen provide for those who wish to dine at this historic location.

A u-boat diesel engine provided power before cables were laid up to the site. This engine is maintained in working order in case of a power failure.

The view from the Eagle's Nest is spectacular as you look almost vertically down on the villages some two thousand feet below or scan the peaks of the surrounding mountains. The total height of the Kehlstein is 6,017 feet above sea level. The final two thousand feet is travelled using buses which are equipped with special engines and braking systems. As we travelled to the summit, I think I felt safest while in the tunnels as you could not be pitched over the edge at the many hairpin bends along the way.

Hitler's headquarters was bombed by the RAF on April 25<sup>th</sup> 1945 and almost totally destroyed. Only one person was killed in the raid due to the underground bunkers. There was enough food provisions stored there to last for up to three years. The SS troops burned the remainder of the buildings on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1945 to destroy any remaining documents. The US authorities cleared the whole area of the Obersalzberg in 1952 to prevent Nazi sympathisers from turning the remaining ruins into shrines of their leaders. The area, including the Eagle's Nest, which was not bombed, as it was not considered a threat, was handed over to Bavaria by the US in 1948 and, since then, it has grown to be a major tourist attraction, catering for up to 3,000 visitors per day.



# Peadar Ó Fathaigh 1931-2005 —a tribute

BY JAMES FAHEY

I was born in a thatch cottage in the townland of Knockoura in the village of Peterswell on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1931. It was a three mile walk to the school in the central part of the parish, which included a post office, pub and the old school, itself now known as the Joe Cooley memorial hall, the local community centre. Times were different then."

"The old pound note was worth 240 pence and a lot more groceries could be got for it. People cut turf for fuel and it was by a slane or spade-shaped implement by hand. Now it is by machine. People used to say the rosary every night and neighbours who visited always joined in the prayers. No television, no phone but, in emergencies, telegrams could be sent from the post office."

Above are the opening lines of the foreword to the fourth book by Peadar Ó Fathaigh, late of Crowe Street, Gort.

He was well known in the town for his love of conversation, debate on hurling, football or, indeed, any sport and his love of Irish traditional music and song. There was not a pub in Gort he wasn't seen in at some stage or other, whether it be to recite a poem he'd just written or to sample the Guinness. He loved local history and heritage became a way of life for him. He travelled all over Ireland investigating the old ways of life in each different area and, as he said himself, everyone had to "put their own twist on it." But essentially Ireland culturally was the same.

He got no secondary education because his family didn't have any money

but he craved information and read incessantly. There was a time when he read every single book in the Gort library. He left school at the age of fourteen and began work for the county council. He got rheumatic fever at the age of seventeen and he had to quit the council. He left home at that stage and travelled around Ireland seeking work on different farms. The homestead already had two more brothers vying for the place so he had to venture further as there was not enough work for three.

He worked for a farmer in Moyvane, county Limerick, who had cows and pigs. He told many a good story of his experiences there and of how well they treated him. I remember meeting some of the family when I was younger. They called to visit when we lived in Crowe Street.

He made his way across the country and joined the army in the Curragh of Kildare in the year 1952. It was in the army he excelled at sports, having been very athletic and he introduced me to the sport of boxing, which he recalled from his time in Plunkett barracks.

After his sporting and drilling in the army, he went to England to work in building jobs and factories until 1974. Again his health let him down and he had to return to Ireland where he underwent a huge operation. It was around that time that he was granted a council house in Crowe Street. As the operation was not successful, it was a case of having a bigger one in March

1979. That was the same year that the pope came to Galway and that was his other passion, religion. He was brought up by his mother, his father having

died when he was ten years old, to be very Catholic and for the longest time he never accepted the fact that he was divorced by his wife in England. They had married in England under English law. One could get divorced but in the catholic religion, 'what God has joined together, man cannot separate' was his answer.

He loved the Irish language and it was his other regret that he rarely got the chance to speak it. He was always encouraging us at home to speak it and, when he began writing seriously, he changed his name to the Irish version and always signed himself as Gaeilge after that. It was his dream to start an Irish school in Gort. He loved Gort and its people. He was short tempered but it didn't last long. He forgot who he had insulted the next day and would attempt to make good as soon as possible.

One of his first poems that I recall which was first written on the wall in the hallway in his house in Crowe Street now adorns his headstone in the new cemetery behind the library.

"Let no jealous heart inspire a tongue to speak" His idea was simple, don't say when you are annoyed, something you will surely regret when you calm down. He was strict, not always fair but he did the best that he knew how. He was loyal and friendly when your friend; as an enemy he was fierce. He made his way unaided by any other. He was honest and hard working when able. He cycled to Tubber to O'Connors engineering works for many years when Complan was his only food.

He was my father. May he rest in peace.

Peter Fahy, aged seventy-four, died of a stroke on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005 in Peterswell. He had lived in Crowe Street, Gort for thirty years. Below opposite is a sample of his work, written while resident there, in 1988.

# Josie Curly of Ballyaneen, a tribute

SR DE LOURDES FAHY

We buried Josie Curley on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2006. The wake in his kitchen, surrounded by friends young and old, the large crowds at his funeral, a guard of honour on horseback awaiting the hearse at the graveyard and a gathering at McCarthys, where stories of Josie's life were told and retold, was a fitting farewell to one of the best known and loved people in the parish.

A kind and decent man who was an especially good neighbour, who, to borrow an expression of his, would give you the shirt off his back. A highly intelligent man, with a photographic memory of people and events, a sociable man who enjoyed a 'good school' as he would say himself. His work in the mart was a combination of work and pleasure. He could never be accused of running home from Gort in a hurry.

Christmas night parties were an annual event in his house, even when he was mostly confined to bed. His kindness to his mother throughout her life was exceptional, so it was fitting that



Men at work: Larry Nolan, Ignatius Cahill, Kevin Nolan and Josie Curley, RIP

in his later years his neighbours and friends, particularly the Nolan family, treated him with the kindness that he deserved.

Josie had a beautiful expression: 'the bed of heaven' when referring to

somebody deceased. So, on behalf of relatives, friends, neighbours and everybody who had the pleasure of knowing him, the bed of heaven to you, Josie Curley.

## Abnormal Crowe Street

Rat-tat-tat goes the big machine  
Penetrating Crowe Street's  
subterranean mysteries  
While awakening from my dream and  
not dreaming  
Of forgotten histories  
But late, when the autumn's sun  
shines  
Casually down on a little western  
town  
Then I consider back to many  
yesterdays  
Where weary horses hauled their  
rambling carts  
And weary travellers from many tree-  
lined parts  
Came to markets and refreshed their  
aching hearts  
In Gort's capacious square  
Haggling many a bargain there  
'til the angelus bell called all to silent  
prayer

JCBs were not imagined then  
No steam engine awoke the  
slumbering glen  
Nor a thought on international  
Murphy's men  
No CIE or Shannon freight  
Connecting airports small and great  
Where Irish immigrants meet hope  
or fate

Did cannon balls or arrows fly  
Across Kinincha in days gone by  
When 'The West's Awake' was the  
battle cry?  
Did the Celtic kingdom have stalwart  
men  
Building Guaire's fortress on the  
island then  
With limestone crags from every glen?

Uí Fiachrach Aidhne with Kiltartan's  
plains  
Where dark-eyed colleens made daisy  
chains  
And father fought for worldly gains  
Your fields are steeped in history  
Your lofty towers now serve the free  
And that's the way it should always be

Now rat-tat-tat goes the big machine  
With chaotic traffic as ever was seen  
But soon an orderly change of scene  
When winter's first white flakes of  
snow  
Descend from heaven to here below  
And Murphy's mixers away must go  
It will again be normal in a street  
called Crowe

BY JAMES FAHEY

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# Coole voices and Coole music

BY KATHARINA BAKER

After six wonderful years in the heart of Stockholm, Sweden, our little family decided to move back to Ireland in the summer of 2002. Cork or Kilkenny were possible destinations discussed but first we wanted to present the new grandchild to its grandparents in Gort. We thought to give ourselves a while to recover from the move and culture shock before moving on. Within our first week, Mossey Clabby had his head in the door and was asking me to start a new choir in the community. Within days, he had organised a committee for the project. As I was keen to start working and we had no other definite plans, I agreed to give it a go and Coole Voices was born. I then also accepted a violin teacher position in Galway for a year, so we decided to try out life at this end of the country for a while.

Coole Voices took off well with around forty members from the local community. Soon we had our first performances which were much appreciated. After a year a second group, Coole Strings, which was made up of young talented violinists, joined the concerts. In 2003 we went on a week-end concert tour to Wexford. In spring 2004 we sang in Ennis cathedral, in December we presented a Christmas concert with Coole chamber strings in St Colman's church in Gort; in the spring of 2005, we went on a week-end together to the Aran islands and later hired Cloghan castle for a Musical Soirée in a medieval fair.

2006 brought two concert productions in the Lady Gregory hotel: *Songs for Life* in conjunction with a number of vocalists and instrumentalists and *A Musical Feast* in association with the Stockholm academic orchestra. It has been a busy and exciting time with ambitious productions and not always easy. A lot of work, but all worth it in the end.

As a violin teacher, my timetable had filled up quickly, a waiting list grew and people kept phoning up asking for all kinds of music lessons: voice training, piano, guitar and so on. I wanted to specialize in classical violin and viola

and orchestra conducting as that is what I know best and studied for six years at the royal academy of music in Stockholm.

I understood that the demand for music education is huge around the area. That was when the idea came up to start a music school in Gort.

At first it seemed to be an impossible mission. I was faced with the very difficult conditions in Ireland for music education as there is no governmental system in place for it. Coming from a country like Sweden where it is seen as one of the basic rights for everybody to learn a musical instrument, where every tiny village has a music school subsidised by the state, the Irish situation was a real shock. Apart from Dublin and Cork, there is no outside support for music schools. Some private music schemes are struggling along in different parts of the country but, as they have to be self-sufficient, the student fees are often either so high that music classes are only affordable for the better-off families or the teachers' wages are so low that no qualified staff will stay for long. I have played with many classical musicians in Ireland who have given up teaching music because the conditions were so bad. Some went into primary school teaching and just last week I heard that one of my colleagues in Ennis, a very talented and highly qualified piano teacher, has left all her teaching to sit at a car hire desk at Shannon airport. Less stress, more pay and much better conditions.

It makes me sad and angry that it has to be like this. In my experience, music is such an important part of life, a source of enjoyment and creativity that nurtures the spirit. Music also builds community through choirs and orchestras, concerts and workshops. The benefits of music activities are so obvious and even scientifically proven. What does it take to make the govern-



Coole music—fiddle fun

ment realise that here is a power to invest in. For the communities around the country, for the future of the country that struggles with drug problems and rising suicide rates among young people. Why not invest in music education for all? I believe it would make a real difference in society. But so far, unfortunately, music education in this country has to pay for itself.

Nevertheless, in September 2005, we started a school of music in Gort, Coole Music. I had found enough enthusiasts for the idea among my friends around Gort to make me believe it would be possible to establish a vibrant music school against all difficulties. I approached Caroline Baker to be my partner in the adventure as I knew she shared similar community visions, is a fantastic organiser and just a great person to work with. We started looking at possibilities of venues and were extremely lucky to be warmly welcomed by Gort community school as our main teaching venue. Our aims were high: we wanted to create a music school that is dedicated to joyful, creative and supportive music-making where all students get the chance to play in concerts at least twice a year; where the teachers work together as a team; where the student fees are affordable and a number of instruments are provided for rent; where the teachers have decent working conditions including a worthwhile fee for their work. We decided to make Coole Music a non-profit organisation, a trust owned by the community and had our grand opening and celebration concert in October 2005.

This autumn we started our second year. Reflecting on the development over the first year, it has been pretty

amazing. We have reached a lot of our goals. By now around one hundred and seventy students are learning the violin, viola, cello, piano, guitar, bass, voice training, recorder, melodeon, singing in the Coole Kidz choir or playing in the starter string orchestra. We have twelve teachers involved and Coole Music has undoubtedly become an important part of Gort community life.

Our constant struggle however is to make ends meet and so far they don't. Although we are investing an enormous amount of voluntary work, overwhelming at times, we still can't cover our running costs out of the current students' fees. Putting those fees up even higher clashes with our

aim of social inclusiveness. We have to find compromises and creative solutions like every other music school in the country and strongly hope that our community will continue to sup-

port us and help to keep our vision of Coole Music alive.

And as for myself, with Coole Music I have now made my commitment to Gort, a decision I am very happy with.



Coole voices and Coole chamber strings 2005

## Éire Brasil Éire—a bilingual community newsletter for the Gort area

At last we have a name for the bilingual community newsletter. The name *Éire Brasil Éire* combines the names of the two countries, Ireland and Brazil, in their native languages and implies the integration of the Brazilian community within the local Irish community in the Gort area. Mary McAleese, during her visit to Gort in May to open the new Orchard Centre, mentioned the newsletter and she "got a bit of a land when I heard it was English and Brazilian or, should I say, Portuguese to be more correct."

Originally the idea for this project came from Nilton Vieira de Souza, a Brazilian participant on the diploma course for community development in practice, which took place in Gort for the first time last year in 2005. The course was run by NUI Galway outreach programme and funded by Galway Rural Development (GRD).

The aim of the newsletter is to publicise community events and news of local interest. The publication is bilingual, in English and Portuguese, to promote the integration of the local and Brazilian communities through sharing information and learning more about each other.

GRD provided initial funding for the computer equipment needed for the design of the newsletter. The first issue was published last February and the response was very positive. A fund-raising dance party was held at Sullivan's night club at the beginning of March with DJs Will and Áine from Ruaille Buaille, Brazilian DJ Primo and the local Brazilian samba band. The night was a great success. The business community have continued to make this publication possible through advertising. Please support your local businesses who are supporting community projects.

The *Éire Brasil Éire* team are Áine O'Loughlin, co-ordinator; Sarah O'Loughlin, graphic designer; Nilton Vieira de Souza, Monica Enerehy and formerly Denisson Gomes Battista, translators and associacao Brasileira. Carmel Crowley joined the newsletter in April and has been an enthusiastic and productive addition to the team ever since.

The newsletter has served to document local events over the past year in words and pictures. The front cover, in full colour, has featured the visits to Gort by Mary McAleese, Bertie

Ahern and the Brazilian ambassador as well as the Brazilian festival and the celebration of Brazil's successes in the world cup, Aoife Finnegan becoming the Galway rose, the debs' night, the Gort show, Máiréad McCormack, Excel student of the year, the no name club, the new superintendent for Gort Con Cadogan and, of course, the recent RTE community challenge.

A big thank you to all our contributors and advertisers for their continuing support. A special thank you to David O'Reilly for the generous use of his photographs. We also would like to thank all those who have helped us make this idea a reality. A special thanks to Frank Murray, course tutor; Louise Butler, GRD; Mike Riordan, Family Resource Centre; the Chamber of Commerce and Niamh Clune of Grace and all of you who stock *Éire Brasil Éire* in your shops and especially everyone who buys the newsletter. Please continue to support this project with your articles, photographs and advertising.

Happy Christmas from the *Éire Brasil Éire* team. E-mail [bilingual.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:bilingual.newsletter@gmail.com) or post care of the Family Resource Centre, Church Street, Gort.



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## Tobar Pheadair boxing club

It has come to the end of the second season at Tobar Pheadair boxing club in Peterswell and the club still continues to grow in numbers and in success. James Fahy, who was a very successful boxer under the watchful eye of Mr James Regan, Georges Street, Gort, has opened this club in his local community centre where he is aided by Francie O'Donnell, who himself boxed under Jimmy also. Kieran Connors keeps the ship afloat as the able secretary.

With seventeen of its forty-five members competing at county, provincial and national level it has been a record year and a huge leap for an embryonic club. Six members won county titles, three with national honours.

Most recently, the club was represented in the national boy three-quarter finals in the national stadium in Dublin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April where Oisin Fahy flew the club colours with pride. The club recently also ran a very successful fund-raising event at Tesco shopping centre in Galway city with a bag packing event over the Easter weekend. The committee would like to take this opportunity to extend its gratitude to all those who presented themselves—both club members and non—to support the club, without whose help the event could not have been such a success.

The final event of the season was the Connaught ladies' championships held in the St Annes club in Westport on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> of April. We have our first-ever Connaught ladies' champion in the club now at 63kg girl year one.

Once again the committee thanks all for their support over the last year and a special thanks to the parents who brought their children to training each night and presented them at each event. The club was well represented at the first ladies' national boxing championships held in the national stadium in Dublin on Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005. The girls brought home three medals: Fiona Kelleher and Una O'Donnell silver and Jessica Dooley a gold. Jessica went on to fight for her county against Cork in December and again in Ballinasloe this Easter. In January 2006 the club hosted the inter-county between Galway and Clare, which was very successful, having eighteen bouts of boxing. The club travelled to Wales in October to box a Welsh selection.

The ladies' camp held in Dublin on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2006 was a historical success, the plan being to start a ladies' national team. Over thirty participants country-wide were there and it was proposed to hold a weekend camp in Coolrairie in August and another squad training day for girls in

Dublin in July. Ladies' boxing is on the up-and-up. All girls with an interest are welcome; some are coming from Oranmore.

James Fahy recently was team manager with the national ladies' at the fifth ladies' European championships in Warsaw, where they won the gold and the best boxer of the tournament. He says ladies' boxing is getting a lot of funding and he will be doing his best to ensure the west is well represented.

Training has resumed on Monday, Tuesday and Friday nights at 7:30 pm. All interested in joining should contact 091 634 050 or 087 414 9160 of turn up on one of the appointed nights at the Joe Cooley hall, Peterswell, to register. All are welcome, adults included.

## Local transport turns on bio-fuel in south Galway

Clare Accessible Transport has been operating two services into Gort with a low floor bus since October 2005. We are delighted to say they have proved to be a great success. On this first anniversary, we would like to thank all those in the locality who helped to set up these services, the passengers for supporting them and Galway Rural Development for funding their start up. It is hoped to see these services continue under the main-streaming process of the rural transport initiative in 2007.

Clare Accessible Transport has recently begun a pilot project on the use of bio-fuels. One of the buses selected for conversion regularly operates on the south Galway routes. Passengers

will have the chance to travel on one of the first buses converted to pure plant oils in the country.

Don't forget, these services are open to everyone, particularly those who do not have transport of their own. Why not try it out? "I consider us very lucky to have a service in an area where there was no other transport facility such as Aughinish. We hope it will continue. It's one of the best things to come to the area and a great social event," so says a regular passenger. Why not register to use the service and let us know your views?

Friday bus services into Gort Derrybrien to Gort, arrive Gort 10:30



Ruth Ganly helps Paddy Madden on board the bus as Denis Daly, Rose Glynn and Mrs Madden look on

am, depart Gort 13:30; Aughinish-Kinvara-Gort, arrive Gort 12:30 pm, depart Gort 16:00. Fares €2 each way, under-16s half fare, under-55 and free travel pass holders free.

Call 061 924 375 or 1890 687 287 (our bus) to register and book your seat. Clare Accessible Transport is funded by Pobal under the Rural Transport Initiative and Community Service Programme.



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Townland	area (a, r, p)	former parish	electoral district
Ballyaneen North	138-1-17	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Ballyaneen South	130-0-26	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Ballybaun	247-2-24	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Ballyhugh	311-0-10	Kilmacduagh	Gort
Ballylee	219-2-39	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Ballylennon	56-2-03	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Ballyloughaun	98-2-14	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Ballymulfaig	164-0-10	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Ballymurphy	26-2-23	Kiltartan	Gort
Ballynamanton	100-3-02	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Ballynastaig	214-2-02	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Ballyvoher	159-2-20	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Baunrach	26-2-01	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Cappavarna	51-3-29	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Carrownavohanaun	131-3-19	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Castletown	233-1-22	Kiltartan	kiltartan
Carrowbaun East	84-2-20	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Carrowbaun West	99-3-21	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Castlequarter	343-3-11	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Cappanapisha North	121-0-38	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Cappanapisha South	165-1-02	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Cloonanearla	137-3-27	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Cloonahaha	339-3-39	Beagh	Gort
Cloonafunshin	225-1-34	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Cloonteen	54-1-09	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Coole Demense	1355-0-23	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Corker	460-0-21	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Crannagh	546-0-21	Kilmacduagh	Kiltartan
Deerpark	50-1-29	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Doonowen	279-1-20	Kilmacduagh	Kiltartan
Drumminacloghaun	218-0-09	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Faunin	99-1-39	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Garryland	350-3-14	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Glenbrack	631-3-12	Kiltartan	Gort
Gort	170-3-08	Kiltartan	Gort
Gortnaculla	268-3-38	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Gortnasteal	142-2-12	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Kilmacduagh	237-0-25	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Killomorran	266-3-07	Kilmacduagh	Cahermore
Kiltartan	104-3-03	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Kininch	103-1-06	Kiltartan	Gort
Knockauncoura	123-0-23	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Knockaunatouk	238-2-30	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Lavally	208-1-11	Kiltartan	Gort
Lisheen	414-2-21	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Lisheenacrannagh	182-2-20	Kilmacduagh	Kiltartan
Lisngyreeny	141-1-30	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Lisrabirra	43-0-32	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Lissatunny	151-3-02	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Newhall	168-1-15	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Newtown	226-2-06	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Newtown	192-1-02	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Newtown(Glynn)	102-3-10	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Rockpark	65-0-19	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Roo	847-3-21	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Rindifin	236-1-35	Beagh	Gort
Rinneen	102-1-21	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Rinrush	134-2-18	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Sheehaun	356-3-35	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Srah	106-1-29	Kiltartan	Kiltartan
Tawnagh East	158-3-29	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Termon	645-1-27	Kilmacduagh	Beagh
Timeevin	118-0-29	Kilmacduagh	Killinny
Turavaghla	74-0-36	Kilmacduagh	Killinny

## Gort parish townlands

BY PADDY COOKE

The present Roman Catholic parish of Gort came into being in the late 1890s when the church authorities decided to add part of Beagh (Shanaglish) parish to the combined parishes of Kilmacduagh and Kiltartan, (which had been united in 1854) to form a larger Gort parish. All of the townlands in the new parish were in the barony of Kiltartan and within the Gort poor law union area and were in various electoral districts.

The townlands are shown opposite with their areas listed in acres, roods and perches now comprise the present parish of Gort.

Townland areas as detailed have been abstracted from the Townlands Index carried out for the 1871 census.

The barony of Kiltartan had an area of 66,654 acres 3 roods and 11 perches and was one of approximately 330 baronies in Ireland, of

which seventeen were located in county Galway. Baronies came into existence following the division of Ireland into counties from the fourteenth century onwards by the Anglo-Norman establishment. As in the English shire system, counties were subdivided into baronies, which in turn were subdivided into townlands, of which there are approximately 60,000 in Ireland.

Baronies are no longer used in local government administration.

The poor law unions came into existence in Ireland in the 1830s. Initially there were 130 unions and a further 33 were added during the great Famine period of 1845-50. Gort Poor Law Union covered an area of 106,648 acres 1 rood and 27 perches and was



one of 10 in county Galway. In each union area, a workhouse was erected with the purpose of providing relief for the poor and destitute within its area. Conditions were generally very harsh in the workhouses especially so during the famine period. Following the establishment of the Irish Free State government in the 1920s, the poor law unions was abolished.

Some of the workhouses were converted to local and fever hospitals. Most of the functions of the Poor Law Unions were taken over by the state through the Health Boards and County Councils.



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# Gort and Galway Rose—a Rose's Diary

BY AOIFE FINNEGAN

My year began when I was fortunate enough to be selected from twelve other lovely girls as the Gort Rose and show queen for 2005. Little did I know what a hectic and exciting year lay ahead of me. I had a wonderful day at the Gort show, presenting prizes and rosettes to all the winners.

I represented my sponsors Saddlers Well at the Galway Oyster Pearl. This was a magical few days for me and I had a great time with the other contestants and master of ceremonies Marty Whelan at the Ardilaun hotel on selection night. This was also the week I started my first teaching position at St Attractas primary school in Balinteer, Dublin.

One of my first duties as the Gort show queen was at the St Patrick's Day parade. A little bit chilly but I was delighted to be invited to take part.

The 5<sup>th</sup> of May was the most momentous night of my year so far when, representing Gort, I was selected from twenty-one other girls as the Galway Rose for 2006. The selection night was in Haydens hotel in Ballinsaloe and a great home-coming and party followed that lasted long into the evening. This was a dream come true and now I was to represent Galway at the Rose of Tralee national finals.

What a weekend...I joined the other thirty Irish roses on Thursday and we were treated like royalty for the next four days. We were greeted



with champagne everywhere; we were taken on a bus tour of all the local sites including the rose garden and other special shows laid on for us. It was strange signing autographs for wide-eyed little girls everywhere we went.

and although I was not successful, it was a week I will never forget.

As the Galway rose I was invited back to the international festival where I met all the Irish girls again and the rest of the Roses from all over the world. We all had a wonderful time and I made good friends with the new Rose of Tralee, Kathryn Feeney from Queensland, Australia.

I still had some other duties to perform, including officiating at the Cooley-Collins weekend in October. It was a special year and there are so many people I have to thank. However I must give a special mention to Mr David O'Reilly and his wife Ann for their support during my year. A big thank you to my own family and my many caring friends and supporters who travelled in large numbers to Tralee.

It has been an honour to represent Gort as the Galway rose for 2006 and I hope the next Gort Rose Show Queen will have as much success and as many special memories as I have from my most memorable year.

above right: Gort rose and show queen 2005  
above left: Tina Donnelly, Tyrone rose 2006, Rose of Tralee 2006 Kathryn Feeney and Aoife Finnegan, Galway rose 2006  
left: Galway rose 2006





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## Gort twinning

BY TOM NAUGHTON

On the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2006, fifteen members of the Gort/Rouillon twinning association arrived in Rouillon, were collected by their host families at the square and taken to their homes for lunch. After that, some people went shopping while others had a tour of the 24-hours Le Mans car race track and museum. Later everyone met at a French pub where only wine is served.

At 6:30 pm everyone met at the town hall to meet many locals and the mayor to celebrate our friendship. The mayor welcomed the visitors and the chairperson Christophe Bigot also spoke. Eamon Broderick responded eloquently on

behalf of the visitors. That night the visitors were guests at a dinner at Le Domaine de la Blanchardiére. A disco followed this and our hosts had a display of how the Irish celebrate and enjoy a good night out.

On Sunday morning we had a tour of the Jacobin open air food market which is held every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 7:00 am until 12:30 pm and located at the foot of St Julian cathedral in Le Mans. This was an experience in itself with hundreds of stall selling all and every type of produce from the farm and the sea.

We visited the cathedral for mass and a tour; built between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries, the five centuries have given it a diversity of styles, combining local roussard stone, limestone and glass. It is one of the largest cathedrals in France, steeped in history and association with nobility. After lunch some went to the south Sarthe district and visited villages such as Parce, Asnieres, Asnieres sur Vegre, Malcorne, culminating in a visit to Solesmes and St Peters Abbey, whose foundation dates back to 1010. The

monks of Solesmes are Benedictine. For over a century they have been involved in research on Gregorian chant. The monastery has produced publications and recordings in order to promote its world-wide diffusion. Some of the touring group, members of Coole Voices, may introduce a chant to Gort. Others visited Mulligans Irish pub for the rugby international between Ireland and Wales from Landsdowne Road. Every person there was treated to a display of an Irish celebration in true fashion. Songs such as *Fields of Athenry* and Irish dancing including the broom dance were performed to perfection. A wedding anniversary was celebrated with champagne on the house. A return to our hosts for dinner was later than intended.

The following morning we were taken on a tour of the Loire valley. We visited Domaine Saint Just, the vineyard of Yves Lambert and tasted all his award-winning wines, underground in limestone caves. From there we went to Les Caves de Marson, a restaurant in a cave, for a seven-course lunch with no shortage of Saumur red wine.

In the evening we were taken on a tour of the castle of Usse. The first known owner of Usse was a fierce Viking, Gelduini, around 1004. In the seventeenth century, Usse became the stately home it is today with a tremendous view onto the Indre and Loire valley. Le Notre, the famous architect of the gardens of Versailles, designed its terraces and gardens. Legend tells that in the seventeenth century, while staying at Usse, the writer Charles Perrault was inspired by the castle to write the fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty*.

Pancake night was celebrated with salads and crêpes at the Crêperie des Ducs in the old town of Le Mans. Everyone had a gorgeous time, thanks to Christophe Bigot, his committee and particularly the host families.

The visiting party consisted of Eamon and Marion Broderick, Nora Connolly, Tina Earley, Mike Finn, Paul and Siobhan Glynn, Mairtin Grealish, Peadar Grealish, Stephen and Frances Killeen, Tom Naughton, Catherine Neilan and Alan and Olivia O'Grady.

### The return visit

On Saturday morning 9<sup>th</sup> September 2006, thirty adults and four children, led by their president Christophe Bigot and secretary Natalie Cerutti arrived in Gort. They were met at Shannon by some of the Gort hosts and taken to the Lady Gregory where they met

their host families. After lunch, some were taken on tour to such places as the Cliffs of Moher, the Burren, the Flaggy Shore, Coole Park and Thoor Ballylee. Some attended the official opening of the Frank Lally memorial dressing rooms at the local pitch. That evening, the visitors dined with their host families.

On Sunday the visitors were taken to Bunratty Castle and folk park. They had a guided tour of the castle. The afternoon was spent visiting the houses and farm house, the village street, replicas of the 1800s and 1900s way of life for the Irish farmer, farm worker, tradesman, fishermen and so on.

That evening, guests and hosts attended a magnificent dinner at the Lady Gregory hotel. Entertainment was provided by the Marie Gavin school of dancing, who gave a great exhibition of dancing *a la RIVERDANCE*. The visitors, conducted by choirmaster Josiane Dore, sang a number of French songs. Host chairperson Luoise Duffy welcomed the visitors and Christophe Bigot responded on behalf of the guests. All retired to the bar where the talented brothers Martin James and David Howley provided entertainment and were joined by their dad David. The visitors associated with many of the Irish ballads. The Howleys provided a great finish to an enjoyable day.

On Monday morning, the officers of both committees had a meeting to discuss and agree the best way forward to cement our twinning. After that, all set out for Galway, starting with a full guided tour of the city. Everyone had lunch in the panoramic restaurant at Galway golf club overlooking the Atlantic and the hills of Clare.

That evening, everyone went to the horse racing at Ballybrit. Some people had beginners' luck betting while others enjoyed the Irish hospitality in the bars. The next morning, the visitors departed for home. Everyone had a wonderful time and special thanks must go to organisers Lousie Duffy, Ollie Connolly, Paul Glynn and Olivia and Alan O'Grady for arranging such a warm *céad míle fáilte*.

The committee would like to enlarge the group, young and not-so-young. Anyone interested in more information and becoming involved with the twinning project, please contact any of the following: Louise Duffy, 091 631 933; Olivia O'Grady, 086 809 6121; Ollie Connolly, 091 631 894 or Paul Glynn, 087 988 4288.



# A Gort man's memories of the Great War

BY THE EDITOR

John Murray was born in Rindifin in 1896. A clever boy, he was awarded a county council scholarship, which he didn't take up, opting instead to join the civil service in Dublin. He subsequently moved to Edinburgh on promotion. Reading in newspapers that Irish nationalist leader John Redmond was offering the Irish volunteers for home service to defend the shores of Ireland against England's enemies and that Irish men in their thousands were joining the British army as Home Rule was promised as soon as the war was over, John decided to enlist in the autumn of 1915. His call to arms came in April 1916 and he joined the fifteenth London regiment, otherwise known

as the Prince of Wales Own Civil Service Rifles. In August, along with several hundred fellow soldiers, he sailed on a troop-carrying vessel from Southampton to Le Havre, where he celebrated his twentieth birthday before heading to the Front. The following extract, taken from John's lengthy and very detailed account, is an indication of what awaited himself and his young comrades and the extraordinary bravery they displayed.

"As we neared the Front we met a small straggle of mud-stained, weary soldiers coming out. They told us they were all that were left of a Welsh battalion that had gone in a few days before. As dusk fell we came to a sunken

shell-battered road alongside of which lay dead horses, broken limbless and dead soldiers who lay as they had fallen. We were now on the verge of Bourlon Wood in which we were to entrench ourselves preparatory to attacking the enemy next morning. There was heavy shelling as we moved up and our platoon was lucky enough to escape unscathed. A following platoon of D Company was less fortunate; a shell made a direct hit in their midst wiping out most of them as dead or wounded.

We took up a position within the shattered wood and started to dig for our lives. Being a practised hand at digging in view of my rural origins, I dug

a narrow trench about seven feet deep, in I should think, record time. At that depth, the clay was very sticky and despite its so-called protective covering the action of my rifle got clogged up with mud. I did the best I could to clear it but my fingers were so encased in the stuff that I did not succeed too well. During the night there was heavy shelling and from time to time cries for stretcher-bearers arose as men became wounded. We remained in our positions until some time next morning when the order to advance was given.

Having cut a couple of steps into the side of my deep trench, I did not find it too difficult to scramble over the top. As we went cautiously through what was left of the wood in front of us, there was a lot of rifle and machine gun fire. Emerging into the open ground ahead, the firing increased in volume and intensity, our own contribution having added to it. About twenty yards

ahead, our Lewis gun crew were in action, and firing it like a demon was a young sixteen year old lad, who had told me when I remarked on his juvenile appearance coming out on the draft that he had given a false age to the recruiting officer. Obviously he had been extremely eager to join up, and his enthusiasm was certainly in evidence in his present performance.

By short crouching spurts we reached what appeared to be our first objective. This was not a trench but merely an irregular series of shell-holes—some fairly deep, others so shallow as to be of little protective value. Our platoon officer, a brave young subaltern, took up his position standing out in the open just in front of this tenuous line, gazing ahead through his field glasses. He was looking at a German field gun a couple of hundred yards away ready to open up on us. Calling for two volunteers, he scribbled a message on a piece of paper from his notebook to take to company headquarters in the wood we had just left and deliver it to the company commander. A corporal with whom I had always got on very well volunteered at once and I did not hesitate to join him. Taking the message, he scrambled out of our hole with



John with his wife Clare and children, left to right, Neil Dermot and Ann

me close behind him. Scarcely had he gone five yards when he fell and I dived down by his side. His steel helmet had been sent flying and he had received a gaping shrapnel wound in the head from which he died instantaneously; all I could do for him was to breathe a silent prayer.

Taking the message from one of his pockets, I set out again. Shells were bursting all around but I kept dodging forward, throwing myself down, darting forward again, marvelling that so far I had not been hit. So severe did the shelling become at one point that I had to take cover in an old German 'pill-box'. It held an occupant, a young private who told me that he was from D company; he had been shot through both thighs and also one of his eyes was badly wounded. He was in a bad way and while the barrage continued outside I was able, using his first field dressing and my own, to dress and bind up his thigh wounds. He was sufficiently alert to warn me not to put any of the iodine near his wounded eye, there was nothing I could do for that. Promising that I would tell his company where to find him; I took advantage of a lull in the firing to resume my journey.

I do not know how long it took me but at last I found myself looking down into a trench full of khaki figures: they said they were D company men, so I told them about their wounded comrade. They directed me to C company headquarters; this was situated in a deep dug-out in the wood and there I delivered the message. I must have been in bad shape for when I ventured to leave the dug-out so as to report back to the officer who sent the message, I was put sitting down and told to rest. An hour or so later I was told that the officer had been killed some minutes after writing the message. By this time one side of my face and neck had a sort of burning sensation and I appeared to have lost the sight of my left eye. I was told that I had received a bad dose of mustard gas and would be evacuated with other casualties when darkness fell. That evening it was a case of the half blind helping the blind, as the man

whose arm I was taking on our straggling way down to the first casualty clearing station had lost the sight of both eyes, also through mustard gas.

I cannot now remember from what part we were evacuated across the channel: I have a vague recollection of being on a hospital ship and being carried ashore on a stretcher. I do know that I woke up to find myself in the Norwich general hospital. This must have been some little time before Christmas, by which time I was able to sit up and take a lively interest in the proceedings."

John was wounded twice but survived the atrocities of war to settle in Dublin and continue his work in the civil service.

He served as chairman of the Buy Irish Committee set up by Jack Lynch in the 1960s, when he was Minister for Industry and Commerce.

Ill health forced John to curtail his activities but he retained his interest in people, places and literature (especially poetry) until the end of his life. He died in 1984.

I am indebted to John Murray, Rindifin for giving me access to a valuable and most interesting document concerning his family's history.

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# The old Glynnns of Gort and the

**AIB** BY JOHN McMAHON GLYNN

Whether you are a customer of the AIB or not once you put your foot inside the door of the bank's premises at the Square in Gort you will feel a sense of history. Several very important people were born there and the business carried on constituted a vital element in the thriving community of Gort throughout the 1800s. The family involved were affectionately known as the 'Old Glynnns' of Gort. In the 1600s this family were involved in shipping between Cardiff, the Isle of Wight and Galway.

In or around the year 1660 a member of the family settled permanently near Gort. This was Robert John Glynn. His grandson, John Glynn, established a very successful tobacco factory near Gort and imported tobacco leaf direct from America through the Port

of Galway. He married one Mary Madden of Peterswell and on his death she decided to set up a business for her sons and in the early 1800s

she built what is now the AIB in Gort. Her eldest son, also John Glynn, continued to carry on his father's tobacco business and he married one Elizabeth McMahon from Dublin.

The McMahons had a machinery and wool card manufacturing business at 101 Thomas Street, Dublin. John died young leaving the business in a very poor state and his young wife, Elizabeth, pregnant. She undertook



This old photograph shows Glynn's shop, Bridge Street

the task of trying to restore the business as best she could but as a Dublin girl and a complete outsider she found it very difficult. In 1824 her son, John, was born and now she had a son to rear and a business to manage. She was a very strong willed woman and she succeeded in rearing the son and restoring the business to prosperity. She gave her son the full title John McMahon Glynn and he established,

in what is now the bank building, a business dealing in agricultural implements, hardware and fertilisers. The fertilisers he imported directly from South America. The business grew to be one of the largest and most successful concerns of its kind in the west of Ireland. John McMahon Glynn also owned a considerable amount of land and property in the vicinity of Gort.

At the age of twenty-seven he married the sixteen-year-old daughter of Thomas Walsh, Solicitor, in Loughrea. There were eleven children by the marriage, two of whom died young. The business at Gort then passed to the eldest son, John Walsh Glynn and Thomas Glynn and they continued to run the hardware business right up to the early 1900s. John Walsh Glynn died in 1897 and Thomas died in 1917. In addition to the hardware business they also established a good name for making excellent whiskey which, again, they sold from the bank premises. When next making a lodgement therefore it might be no harm to establish whether or not the custom still exists of giving the customer a dram or two while doing business. I am sure if the bank re-established the custom business would go upon one hundredfold.

It is also reputed that John Walsh Glynn who was a very powerful man had a disagreement with one of his customers and picked him up and flung him over the counter and out into the street. Banks may bounce cheques now and again but I have no doubt wisdom will prevail here and the wise manager will refrain from bouncing customers over the counter and into the street. Things were far more exciting however, in those distant times.

The third son of John McMahon Glynn was Patrick McMahon Glynn born in 1855. Without taking from other members of the family he certainly was one of the more important sons of the premises and of Gort. He was a law student at Kings Inns and graduated at Trinity College to become a solicitor and then a barrister. He was called to the Bar in 1879. He was awarded a certificate for oratory by the Historical Society of Dublin University and a medal for oratory by the Law Students Debating Society of Ireland. In 1880 he emigrated to Victoria in Australia and was admitted to the Victorian bar. He remained in the state only two years and in July 1882 he went to south Australia and took up his residence at the town of

Kapunda where one of his younger brothers, namely Eugene, had established a large medical practice.

He entered a law firm with a Mr Parsons of Adelaide and was later head of the firm of Glynn & Heuzenroder in Adelaide. He was one of the pillars of the South Australian Land Nationalisation Society which he helped to found at Kapunda in May 1884. He was also editor of *The Kapunda Herald*. He entered parliament at the state elections in 1887 as a member for the district of Light. He was president of the Irish National League in south Australia and in 1895 he was elected MP for north Adelaide. He was Attorney General in the Solomon ministry in 1899 and was one of the leading figures in the movement for the establishment of the federation and was a member of the convention which framed the commonwealth constitution which stands to this day. He was regarded as one of the ablest authorities in Australian constitutional law. He was actively interested in negotiations which took place between the states concerning the Murray Waters question and was chairman of the inter-state commission which drafted the Murray Waters bill in 1907. He was appointed a KC in 1913 and was Minister for External Affairs in the Cook government. He was also a member of the select committee on decimal coinage in 1901 and attorney general from June 1909 to April 1910. Again he was Minister for External Affairs from June 1913 to September 1914. He visited England at the invitation of the Imperial Parliamentary Union in 1916 and was Minister For Home and Territories from February 1917 until 1919.

In addition to being a prominent politician he was also an avid writer and a leading authority on Shakespeare. He died in October 1931 and flags all over Australia were placed at half mast. A motion of sympathy was passed in the senate in the state of Victoria. He left numerous descendants in Australia who keep in regular communication with the Irish branch of the family and often revisit Gort. If, therefore, you hear some Aussie accents in the bank the likelihood is they are one of his descendants or a descendant of another of those other brothers who emigrated to Australia.

Another famous son of Gort to come out of this house (bank) was Sir Joseph Glynn. He was the youngest son of the family and was born in the

bank premises in 1869. He was best known for his work for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, having held the presidency of the society from 1917 until about 1940 when he resigned for health reasons.

From 1911 to 1933 he was chairman of the national health insurance commission. Later he was identified with the hospitals committee of the hospitals trust as joint vice chairman. He was educated at Blackrock college and the old royal university. He became a solicitor and for a short while practised in Gort and then for many years at Tuam.

In 1902 he was elected chairman of Galway County Council and he was continually re-elected until 1912. For a long period he was a member of the Board of Technical Instruction of Ireland, and he was on the governing body of University College Galway. He was knighted by the crown in 1915. *The Life of Matt Talbot* is one of his widely read works. In 1944 his Holiness the Pope appointed him a knight commendatore of St Gregory in recognition of his distinguished service to the church. He did have several sons, one of whom John was a hero in the First World War and received the Victoria Cross. None of his sons had descendants.

Many other members of the Glynnns also had distinguished careers but time and space does not permit me to elaborate in detail. The Glynnns of Gort continued to operate a business at the bank premises until the early 1900s when the last member of the family sold the property in or about 1911 and the title eventually passed to AIB.

When you do cross the threshold of the bank again, therefore, do remember its ancient past. It does seem to be, however, that much of the good tradition remains. There is a sort of good 'karma' about the place. You may or may not be offered a dram of whiskey but certainly Mona O'Donnell and her crew will make you very welcome and do everything they can to assist you with your business. The writer always feels this when he visits the bank and indeed visits Gort itself.

Having been born and lived in Dublin all my life I still feel drawn to Gort every so often. I suppose it is in the blood. After all I too am a descendant of the fourth son of John McMahon Glynn of Gort who was a manager of the national bank. Long live Gort and the good people who reside there.

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# The Western Rail Corridor

BY FRANK DAWSON  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY, ENTERPRISE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

The Western Rail Corridor is a term which has become very widely known in the past three or four years but the concept of a modern passenger and freight railway between Limerick and Sligo has actually been promoted for the past thirty years.

Those who invented the term and promote the Western Rail Corridor were inspired to act in 1975 when Coras Iompair Éireann announced its intention to close the ninety-mile-long railway between Limerick and Claremorris to scheduled passenger trains and to close entirely the fifty-mile-long railway between Claremorris and Sligo, where scheduled passenger trains had ceased in 1963.

Even at a time when Ireland, and the west of Ireland in particular, was suffering from economic decline and social disadvantage, this was still a dramatic and devastating decision. It's very hard today, in a climate when almost €2,000 million is earmarked for investment in transport infrastructure in county Galway over the next ten years, to understand how the Limerick to Claremorris passenger train service was terminated because of an alleged annual deficit of £125,000.

A deficit was understandable when you consider there was only one train in each direction and that both met in mid-afternoon at Athenry.

Despite the protestations of local authorities and communities the last trains ran between Sligo and Claremorris on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1975 and between Claremorris and Limerick on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1976.

Occasional special passenger trains to Knock and football matches as well as a skeleton freight service continued to operate between Claremorris and Limerick until 1999 when all services ceased and the line from Claremorris to Ennis fell silent for the first time in over a hundred years. It is worth noting that up until the late nineties about 40,000 tons of coal and oil were transported annually from Foynes along this route, supplying the giant Asahi Synthetic Fibre plant near Ballina, county Mayo. Other regular movements included

bulk cement from Limerick to Athenry as well as bagged cement and fertiliser traffic.

Another interesting point is that the two locomotives, B166 and B170 which hauled the last trains, are still operating throughout the country.

After the closure the Western Inter-county Railway Committee comprising elected representatives, regional development organisations and county development team officials, formed in 1975, campaigned vigorously to reverse the backward decision. Two reports were commissioned, a social analysis produced by Dr Micheál MacGréil and the sociology department of Maynooth college in 1981 and an economic analysis by Professor Michael Cuddy of University College Galway in 1992.

Deputations to successive ministers for transport were greeted with tea and biscuits but little else.

In 1986, ten years after closure, CIE proposed, as was their entitlement, to formally abandon the Claremorris to Sligo Section, lift the track and dispose of the track bed. The Western Inter-county Railway Committee appealed to the then Minister for Transport, Séamus Brennan, to stop the abandonment process and he did just that. That trackbed, saved for the people by that bold initiative, is worth about €500 million if it were to be acquired today. Because of that decision the prospect of re-opening between Claremorris and Sligo is a realistic prospect which the government has agreed to reconsider in 2008.

In 2002 the government-commissioned Strategic Rail Review dismissed the prospect of re-opening any part of the Limerick to Sligo railway other than that section between Limerick and Ennis which Iarnród Éireann had already decided to rebuild. Fortunately, the Minister of Transport was Seamus Brennan, then enjoying a second term. In so far as it referred to the Western Rail Corridor, the Minister rejected the report and decided to commission a further assessment of the project. He established an expert working group

under the chairmanship of Pat McCann the chief executive of the Jurys Doyle group. Other members comprised representatives of county and city managers, Iarnród Éireann, the Railway Procurement Agency, department of transport, regional authorities and assemblies, the western inter-county railway committee, western development commission, city and county development boards (which I had the privilege of representing) and a new but catalytic group representing community interests, West on Track.

West on Track was formed following publication of the Strategic Rail Review, in support of the Minister's declared intention of carrying out further assessment of the proposal. They became a feature of every town and settlement along the route, Sligo, Collooney, Coolaney, Tubbercurry, Swinford, Charlestown, Kiltimagh, Claremorris, Ballindine, Milltown, Tuam, Ballyglunin, Athenry, Craughwell, Ardahan, Gort, Crusheen and Ennis.

A further report was produced by West on Track focusing on the demand and sustainability of a revived passenger and freight service, as a contribution to the research of the McCann expert working group. McCann commissioned international railway consultants Faber Maunsell to carry out a detailed costing of the complete reinstatement of the Ennis to Collooney 115 mile long section to modern inter-city passenger standards. The resultant estimate of €366 million together with detailed cost benefit analysis, land use and settlement, and demand projections were submitted in what became known as the McCann report to the current Minister for Transport, Mr Martin Cullen, in March 2005. The report recommended a phased re-opening of the line from Ennis to Claremorris, and reconsideration of the remaining Claremorris to Sligo section in 2008.

In Transport 21, published in November 2005, the commitment was made by government to re-open Ennis to Athenry in 2008, Athenry



to Tuam in 2011 and Tuam to Claremorris in 2014.

In September last Minister Cullen accompanied by the Chairman of CIÉ, Dr John Lynch formally announced the commencement of engineering works on the thirty-six-mile-long Ennis to Athenry section with the promise of seven trains in each direction daily between Galway and Limerick/Cork from autumn 2008.

**Success at last**

As promoters of the project all of us here in the west who have worked to re-open this railway are now committed to working with district manager Gerry Glynn and his team in Iarnród Éireann to make this first phase and subsequent phases,



The last passenger train enters Gort station, March 1976

tions and new fast, frequent and efficient commuter and long distance train services, in the very near future. For county Galway this historic investment in transport infrastructure represents the first construction of an inter-regional railway since the nineteenth century in Ireland. It is a vote of great confidence by the State in the social and economic potential of this County and it represents a victory for common sense and strategic planning on the part of Galway County Council and our many energetic

partners mentioned above.

Ar scáth a cheile agus Nollaig shona do gach duine i nGort Inse Guaire.

all the way through to Sligo, a resounding commercial success.

Gort, Ardahan and Craughwell can now look forward to new railway sta-



The O'Shaughnessy

# Gort O'Shaughnessy window

BY TOM HANNON

high with a trench outside stood on the east side and the river was a defence. There are buildings on site today.

There were about eighty people in the castle, some civilians. The attack came as scaling ladders appeared and heavy firing of guns erupted. Eventually an entrance through a window was made.

Galway town surrendered to Cromwell's armies circa 1652. He was helped by traitors amongst the citizens and the usual divisions amongst the Irish. No Catholic could live in Galway or within three miles of the town. In 1658 Richard Cromwell was made Lord Deputy of Galway. Henry Cromwell took Portumna castle and 6,000 acres of the best land in Galway, leaving old RC leaders like Clanrickard and old descendants of Irish clans to fly to France, Spain and so on. O'Shaughnessys held on for a while but eventually they too became the wild geese and said goodbye to the land of their birth.

Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy, having led a band of men from south Galway, fifty in all, left Gort castle in charge of some of his tenants and a few soldiers under an English lieutenant called Folliot. This Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy was a well-known and highly respected gentleman of his time, noted for his hospitality and integrity. On the entrance to his castle in Gort was an inscription which read, 'let this door be ever open and never closed to an honest man'.

As Sir Dermot was involved in Galway, Ludlow, one of Cromwell's generals, appeared with an army and demanded Folliot to surrender. He refused and waited for the attack. At this stage it should be noted the castle was a strong one with a barracks attached for officers and men. A wall twelve feet

Folliot died and the castle surrendered. Forty men had died in defence and some more were executed. The last stand against Cromwell in Gort was a sad defeat.

The castle was wrecked but, some years after, it became an army barracks for British soldiers. 1921 saw the British garrison move out. Many of the Irish had left for France in the First World War, reminders of the other wild geese.

The Cromwellians also destroyed Ballinamantane castle. This castle was a de Burgo one. Sir Rober O'Shaughnessy's son Charles became family head but, having turned Protestant hoping to hold on to some property, the attempt failed. He disappeared from history. O'Shaughnessy property saw one of the biggest court cases of the eighteenth century, when the Vereker family won the case. Verekers were Lord Gort's family. They had Lough Cutra castle built. Sir Joseph O'Shaughnessy was the last of the family to own lands in Galway. He died in 1785 and left no direct issue.

The taking of Gort castle by Cromwell's army saw forty members of the garrison killed and forty more executed. Also at this time many native Irish and hundreds of priests and clergy were shipped as slaves to the West Indies. It is possible that some of their descendants managed to survive through the centuries and even yet we

may have distant cousins whose ancestors were shipped as slaves there. It's known that Irish was spoken in St Kitts and other islands in the Bahamas over a hundred and fifty years ago.

About 1760 the O'Shaughnessys lost their case against the British and Pendergast-Smyths for their ancient property. It had cost thousands of pounds and beggared both parties. It would take a long time to take in the whole sad tale. Lies and deceit helped deprive the O'Shaughnessys of all their lands. The last O'Shaughnessy chief died without issue in 1785. When all finished up, the castle and two houses in Gort belonging to O'Shaughnessy were knocked down and eventually became a soldiers' barrack until 1922 when the garrison left. It is interesting that a local man Henry O'Shaughnessy bought part of the site and I believe his family still own part. It had a cinema for many years. Today it is a very busy place.

The O'Shaughnessys once owned 12,000 acres, four castles, two of these Fiddane and a town house and the castle in Gort. Two of these castles ranked among some of Ireland's best. Out of all this and maybe more, structures which include Kilmacduagh's magnificent round tower shows how important the area was. The O'Shaughnessy window was probably put in Gort castle or town house in the seventeenth century. If one could work some magic and look through the window and see again all the drastic events that led to the downfall of old Gaelic customs, culture and so on it would be a sad and in parts shameful picture. Traitors there were and those who changed their ancient faith for a few pieces of silver.

It is a pity some reminder of the events which the O'Shaughnessy window would have seen can't be put in place somewhere near the old site of Guaire's palace. Even a small plaque or something. The place in parts is almost covered in trees. We can spend millions building, why not something to show one of Ireland's most extraordinary events of the past?



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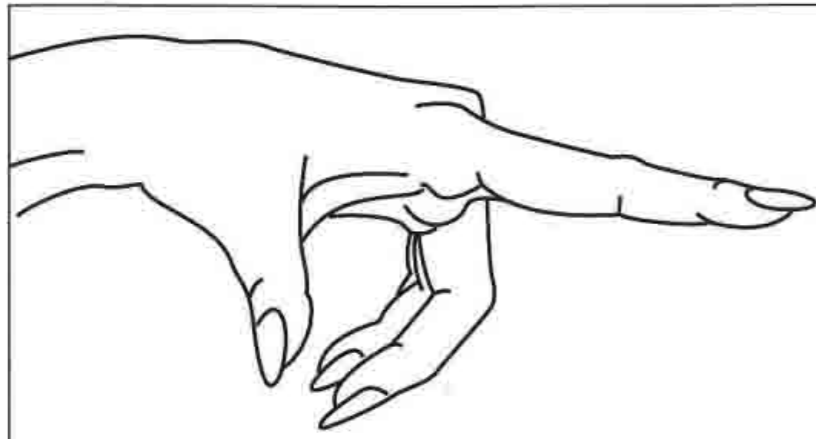
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## The history of Tannian's forge

BY DICK BURKE

Mattie Tannian continues to run a business which was established by the Tannian family many generations ago. He is believed to be the seventh generation of blacksmiths in the family line to have operated forges in the Granagh-Lisatunna area of South Galway. Mattie recites the generations as himself, his father Martin, his grandfather James Bob, his great grandfather James and three earlier generations unnamed.

Research in the US has shown that immigrants to America of that name were members of this South Galway family. The name Tannian comes from the Irish word *teanaithe* meaning thin or slender. In the *Master Book of Irish Surnames* by O'Loughlin, Tannian is listed as a rare name found in county Galway.

Mattie has records that show that many of his ancestors emigrated to Vermont in the USA in the early 1830s and 1850s. One Patrick Tannian managed to buy a forge there and a younger cousin Thomas Tannian served his apprenticeship with him, eventually setting up his own forge with the experience gained.

Research into the history of the blacksmithing family of Tannians in county Galway revealed a flagstone in the old priory in Athenry with the name Thomas Tannian who died in 1664. Chiselled into that slab is the image of a pincers, a bellows and a horseshoe, reminders of his blacksmith's trade. One James Tannian is supposed to have operated six forges at the same time. They were located at Castletaylor, Cregclane, Roxboro, Ardahan, Grannagh and Castleboy. It is believed that he staffed them with Tannian family who had not emigrated to America during the Famine, such was the demand for horse shoeing at the time. On the other side of the Atlantic it is believed that in Rutland County there were at least three forges, one in Brandon and two in Rutland and one also in Forest Dale operated by Tannians from county Galway.

Here in South Galway in 1923 one of James Tannian's sons settled at

Lisatunna and set up a forge there. Horses were a big part of farming life then and shoeing of horses kept the blacksmiths busy.

Shoeing of colts and young fillies for the first time was something for which Martin Tannian was noted far and wide. Prior to one November fair at Loughrea, he shod forty young horses.

In the mid-1960s the last horse to be shod at Lisatunna forge heralded the end of that shoeing era. The end had also come for the 'shoeing' of wooden cart wheels, that is, the fixing of the iron rim to the outer edge of the wheel. The large circular stone used for this process is still retained at Mattie's home at Grannagh.

The arrival on the farming scene in the early 1950s of the Ferguson 20 tractor with its twin hydraulic lift ploughs replaced the Clydesdale and Irish draught horses on Irish farms within a few years.

When rural electrification came in 1948, hand-operated machines were put aside and electric drills and electric welders came into use, Mattie acquir-

ing these in 1952 and 1954 respectively. Now the skills of the blacksmith had to be brought into line with the new demands of adapting horse-drawn machinery to attach to tractors. Repairs were soon needed to keep the ever-growing variety of new machinery arriving on the farms in working order.

Mattie kept abreast of all these new advances and was appointed a Ford agent in 1980. This meant having to stock all required spare parts for Ford machinery. Today Tommy Kelleher looks after the spare parts section while Tony Howley carries out repairs. Mattie himself arranges the business overall and is also at hand when more expert advice and experience is needed.

Mattie's assistance in preparing this article is much appreciated.



Mattie as a young man outside the forge in September 1955



The arrival of modern machinery  
left to right: unknown, Bobby Hynes, Paddy Fogarty, Jimmy Nolan and Packie Byrne



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## Gort before the Celtic Tiger

BY MICKEY MCQUAIDE

Nowadays, when we talk about immigrants, we are generally referring to the many thousands of foreign nationals who continue to arrive here in search of employment and a better standard of living. With the Celtic Tiger apparently still thriving, this influx of immigrants will continue for the foreseeable future or, at least, while there is a demand for labour.

The vast majority of our new neighbours are filling this labour shortage as the young generation of men and women here in Ireland nowadays enjoy a better standard of education. They have, by and large, abandoned the pick and shovel, so to speak and can now pick and choose. For many people in Ireland and especially the older generation, this sudden influx of visitors can be upsetting and we feel a bit threatened. Our little patch is being invaded and we no longer feel so secure. The shop assistant is no longer our neighbour's daughter down the street but, perhaps, a *cailin* from Peking. In time, of course, we will come to accept those changes and especially our younger people who will have grown up with our changing society.

For our generation however, life growing up in the forties and fifties was very different. There was certainly no Celtic Tiger, far from it. Immigration in those years referred to the thousands of our young men and women who were forced to leave home and family year after year and seek employment abroad, the vast majority going to Britain and, to a lesser extent, to America. Those were lean times indeed with work and money in short supply. We were far removed from the social welfare services that exist today. Families managed as best they could and what they couldn't afford they went without. For most people, paying for the necessities of life over the counter was out of the question. Instead, people had a longstanding account with the local grocery shop. You lived on credit and the weekly purchases were entered in what was famously known as The Book. The weekly gro-

ceries went on the book and you paid what you could when you could.

We learnt at an early age what The Book meant. My mother bought all her groceries in Spelman's in Crowe Street, maybe ten shillings' worth—about seventy cents in today's money. I remember old Mrs Spelman would sometimes press her to buy such luxuries as biscuits and, when my mother protested, saying her account was already too high, the old lady would say, "sure, you'll pay it off sometime". As children we were always very self-conscious whenever we were sent to the shop with The Book. Indeed, shortage of money was the predominant memory which I carried from my childhood, because it was the source of so much friction and upheaval in the home. While the man brought home what he could it was left to the woman of the house to provide for the needs of the family, to put a meal on the table and manage the few shillings as best she could but which was never unfortunately enough. Sadly, many a pound was left in the local, which put an extra strain on the family budget.

For many a family then, their sole income depended upon maybe husband, son or daughter who had gone to England, sending home what they could from their hard-earned few pounds.

We as children of course didn't think too much about the future or that we too might sooner or later be obliged to leave home and family and seek a better life abroad. We dreamed only of the day when we would leave school forever. My father would often remind us of the importance of education. "If you don't pay attention to your lessons, Mickey", he would say, "you'll finish up with the pick and shovel". For me however anything seemed far more desirable than facing the trauma of the classroom day in day out with no end in sight. We learned to our regret in later life how right he was.

In those days, there was no secondary school for boys in Gort, except for the privileged few whose parents could afford to send their children to a

boarding school. For most, education finished with National School. The girls fared better as the Mercy nuns always had a Secondary School as well as a Primary School. There was the Technical School of course but it was really regarded as the poor relation compared with the Secondary School. It was largely attended by children of working class parents in the town or farmers' sons or daughters who spent a couple of years there after National School.

I attended the 'tech' as it was known during 1952-1953. The tech was, in fact, quite a good school and had some excellent teachers. Miss Bohan was the principal and Colm Walsh was our woodwork teacher. Miss Bohan certainly had the pupils' interests at heart but regrettably, we didn't all share her concerns for us.

For pupils attending the school there was, of course, no school transport as there is nowadays. It was not exceptional for girls attending the Secondary School to cycle from as far away as Ardahan with their cases of books on the carrier and this they did daily and in all kinds of weather, winter and summer. So they certainly earned their education the hard way. Even the children attending national school had to do likewise. There was no other choice. Those who lived within a mile or two of the town walked to school. Not many parents could afford bicycles for their children.

In the Tech we learned Woodwork, Mechanical drawing and Horticulture as well as the usual subjects we had learnt in national school, while the girls studied Domestic Science and Needlework. Colm Walsh was a perfectionist and would often say to us that a good carpenter should never have a need to use a nail. He would heat the gluepot over the stove and all our joints had to be glued.

The girls who left school with second level education were in a better position to take up a profession when they emigrated and were greatly sought after by the medical profession in England, especially in the nursing



sector. The vast majority of the male population, however, had no qualifications and could not be choosy but had to settle for what was on offer. Notwithstanding the lack of education, many an Irish man availed of the opportunities abroad, continued their education and became very successful. Many more, regrettably, fell by the wayside for various reasons and were left in old age without family or friends and in accommodation that was often pathetic.

The emigrants returned on holiday usually during the summer months or at Christmas. News of the return of the prodigal quickly spread and it aroused a certain curiosity and not a little excitement. We were all anxious to get a glimpse of the new arrival. There was the collar and tie, the new suit and new shoes and, of course, plenty of money. My childish vision of England was a country of big cities, with no green fields, where everyone went to work in their Sunday best and there was no end to the money you could earn.

I remember discussing this in later years with Coleman Burke of Georges Street, an old school pal and friend and he recalled how when he first went to England he didn't see any need to bring his working clothes. When he got a job as a plasterer's labourer, he arrived at his new job on the first day all dressed up in his lovely sports outfit. Not the kind of attire one would wear when one was serving a plasterer all day and running up and down a ladder with a hod on your shoulder. In order not to embarrass Coleman, the boss suggested that his clothes might get soiled during the course of the day, so he loaned him some overalls until he could get some working clothes more suited to the job.

Of course, neighbours would gossip, as neighbours always did. What matter if the gossip was sometimes tinged with a little bit of scandal? It was really only a diversion from the monotony and drudgery of everyday life. For the most part, the comments were harmless and I suppose you could say complimentary. "I believe so-and-so is home." "Yes, so I believe and I heard you would hardly know him. All dressed up to kill and a bit of an accent too. In the pub every night I believe and buying drinks for everyone. He must be doing very well beyond. My God, at that rate he won't have a shilling left going back and I think that that poor devil

had hardly a seat in his trousers before he left". Or, "so-and-so is home and he never changed a bit and getting on very well in London I hear. Isn't it great for the poor lad? And they say he could hardly spell his own name when he was here at home". There were, no doubt, the less complimentary comments, the little bits of scandal that were circulated.

There was the poor girl who had to suddenly pack her bags for England. "Wouldn't you think she would have more sense and minded herself? God help her poor mother, the shame of it all". Sad to say that this poor girl was treated far more charitably in 'that Protestant country' as it was known then than she was in our own Christian country of the day.

Then there was the girl who found romance when she went to London. "I believe she married an Englishman and a Protestant at that. They say that that's the reason she never comes home any more".

Nowadays, there isn't the close-knit community there once was and there is less communication between neighbours. We are less likely to meet a neighbour in the street and stop for a chat. We get into the car, go to the supermarket and return home to close our doors. Everyone is in a hurry. Evenings are spent in front of the television instead of entertaining a neighbour. We have to see the Soaps.

We are all so self-sufficient that we tend to lose contact. We don't drop in next door any more for a drop of milk or a bit of sugar as we used to do when we ran short. We don't call into the elderly couple down the road who might enjoy a bit of company and exchange a bit of local news or talk about old times and we are all the poorer for it.

And so, we as children listened to all those bits of scandal and comments from our adult neighbours. Meanwhile we got on with our own lives. We became thrifty and managed to make a few bob in any way we could. We collected scrap metal and sold it to Mr Woolson, the Jew man in Church Street. We caddied for the golfers during the summer whenever there was a golf match. We picked hazelnuts and sold them to Piggots for four shillings a stone. We plucked turkeys at Christmas which earned us a welcome few pounds.

In summer we swam in the river in Kininicha and we fished there for eels.

We played hurling in Lally's field and sometimes on the road on a Sunday morning with two stones on either side for goal posts. We had our spinning tops and our hoops. The hoops were bicycle wheels with the spokes removed. We propelled those hoops up and down the street with a piece of stick and parked them outside Annie Gillane's shop when we were sent for a message, with all the pomp of a Rolls Royce.

On winter nights we listened to stories by the neighbour's fireside about ghosts and haunted houses and about the headless coachman who drove his coach and four down the Avenue in Coole Park. We heard about the people who swore hearing the *bean sí* around the time some local person died. Others swore they even saw the *bean sí* sitting on a wall. Afterwards we were petrified to venture out into the night.

Pat Fennessy was a well-known figure in Gort. A colourful character, he was the church clerk for many years and you might say rather vocal when expressing his views about a subject or the local population. Pat emigrated to England rather late in life and spent a couple of years there. I worked with him for a short period some years after he returned and he took great pleasure in relating his experiences before and after his return. Before he left for England, he told me, he was known in the town as Pat Fennessy but, when he returned two years later and with five hundred pounds in his pocket, he was known as Mr Fennessy and he placed great emphasis on the Mr. This was a fairly substantial sum in those days and Pat was making the point that one's standing or status in society was based on or measured by how much wealth one possessed regardless of what kind of person you were. If you had a few pounds in your pocket, people took off their hat to you.

Life was moving one however and soon many of us would be leaving school, our childhood days behind us and an uncertain future ahead. In our home, immigration was never a consideration but that was all to change in 1947 when a long, lost cousin of my father's came home from Glasgow to visit us. This visit would change our lives forever.

Mickey McQuaide, a native of Crowe Street, has been living in Dublin for many years. He visits his old home place very regularly.

## No Name Club, Gort

The No Name Club in Gort is now in its seventeenth year. Thanks to the dedication of many individuals but, in particular, to Mona Glynn and Marian Diviney, who have given many years of hard work, the club is still running successfully.

The No Name Club is a voluntary youth organisation which was founded in 1978 in Kilkenny and which has clubs throughout the country. The club offers an alternative to pub culture for young people. It seeks to demonstrate a lifestyle in which the use of alcohol or drugs is seen to be unnecessary to the enjoyment of a good social life.

The No Name Club consists of a group of adults who form a committee, a core group of boys and first who act as hosts and hostesses and other young people who avail of the services of the club. Hosts and hostesses are recruited locally. They have a major role to play in the services which the Club provides in the local community. They are helped to develop excellent leadership skills and qualities. Current committee members are Adrian Feeney, chairperson; Deirdre Collins, secretary; Mona Glynn, treasurer; Caroline Quinn, assistant treasurer and Rachel Cunniffe, PRO.

The club is an outlet for young adults to organise events in their own community. This may consist of discos,



outings to the cinema, bowling, visits to other clubs and overnight stays in other clubs throughout Ireland. Most of the activities are organised by the young people themselves and are supervised by the adult committee. Other activities of the club in 2006 included the production of a cabaret. The members competed at the national competition and were awarded individual prizes for their contribution. One of our members, Megan Scully, got to the finals of the National Youth Awards Programme. Club members with the committee organise their own discos locally and also attend others throughout the county. At the end of each year, a hugely successful Annual Ball is held.

In 2005, members organised a fundraiser for the tsunami disaster and we purchased a boat, aptly named *Guairé*, after Gort's own King Guairé, for a family in Sri Lanka. The no name club

back row, left to right: unknown (Gort), Jacqueline Daniels, Shelly Schella, Sandra Downes, Rynagh Stanford, Sinead Ryan, Adrian Feeney, Teresa Murphy, Olga Linnane, Niamh Cunningham, Lisa Mooney and Grace Doran  
centre, left to right: Niamh Mannion, Nicola Keane, Cleo Goodall, Roisin McDaid, Caitriona Howley, Sinead Burke, Roisin Kelly and Caroline Quinn  
front row, left to right: Raymond Quinn, Kris Finnegan and Cian Mulligan

encourages civic pride and has helped in National Spring Clean and Tidy Towns competitions. Last year our group made their own video highlighting the need for a youth centre in Gort. The film was screened at the Galway Film Fleadh.

A new group of hosts and hostesses are now in place for the coming year and we look forward to another successful year working together.

Committee members, left to right: Caroline Quinn, Deirdre Connelly, Marian Diviney, Rachel Cunniffe and Mona Glynn



Gort No Name Club raised €2,000 for the tsunami disaster fund left to right: Rachel Cunniffe, Marian Diviney, Adrian Feeney and Mona Glynn





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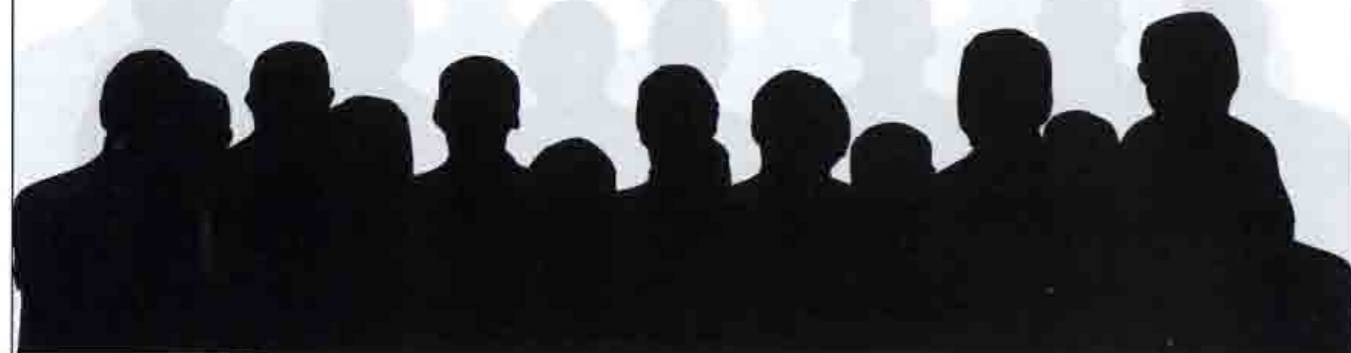
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# Bees and their ways

BY MICHEÁL BREATHNACH



The bee keeper at work

Bees are a fascinating study. I have two hives in my back garden. I visit them a number of times each day and on each visit, I learn something new about bees. The bees occupying the hive are referred to as the colony. The colony is divided into three groups: workers, drones and the queen.

There is only one queen in the colony. She is a very special bee and can be identified as she is one-and-a-half times as long as the ordinary bee. She controls every bee in the colony. In the middle of summer there can be up to 60,000 in a colony. The queen is the only laying bee in the colony and, in the height of the season, can lay between 1,500 and 3,000 eggs per day.

There are three types of cell in the hive: the worker cell, the drone cell and the queen cell. As the queen is laying her eggs, she deposits them into their cells. She fertilises the eggs that she puts into the worker cells and the queen cells but she does not fertilise the eggs she places in the drone cells. Those eggs, when hatched out, produce the drones.

The drones are about twice the size of the worker bees and are easy to identify in the hive. They have a very special duty to perform, they mate with the queen when she is on her mating flight. After mating with the queen they die. The drones get very special treatment in the hive. The nurse bees give them food and groom them and they don't have to do any work in the hive. However a day of reckoning comes when the mating season is over. The nurse bees will no longer feed them and the worker bees drag them out of the hive and they are left to die from starvation and cold. There are no drone bees to be found in the hive when the mating season is over. Food is preserved for those essential in the colony.

The worker bee is subdivided into a number of categories. The nurse bees are bees that are just born, just out of their cell. They go to work immediately cleaning out their cells, preparing them for the queen to lay her eggs in

them and the older ones prepare food for the brood and drone section. The scouts discover where the pollen and the nectar is and bring this information back to the foragers in the hive. Here is the interesting bit. How do they tell the foragers where to go? They do a dance on the face of the frame in the hive. They dance around in a circle. If they do just one circle the bees know that the pollen and nectar is within one hundred metres. If they do two circles it means that the pollen and nectar is within two hundred metres and so on. The most interesting bit is the direction the bees must go in when they leave the hive. This is given by the bee dancing across the diameter of the circle in the direction where the pollen and nectar is to be found. The scouts have a second duty to perform. It is to find a suitable place for a new swarm to go. When a swarm comes out of a hive they usually lodge on a tree nearby. They resemble a large rugby ball on the tree. The scouts go immediately to locate a suitable new home for them. When the scouts arrive back they decide on the most suitable site. They communicate this to the swarm and the swarm will leave immediately for their new home.

The guard bees protect the bee entrance to the hive and protect the hive from robbers who might try to come in and steal some of their honey. Wasps are a regular scourge in all apiaries. If you were to examine a hive, you may find that there are no guards on duty. Give it a few taps to the side of the hive and the guards will appear immediately. Tap again and more will appear if nothing can be seen from the landing board. One or two will fly out to see what is going on. All bees entering then will be checked until the scare is over. The system of checking is very effective.

The foragers are the most important group as far as the beekeeper is concerned. They fly out up to three miles to collect the pollen and nectar and bring it back to the hive. This only happens about fifteen times in the year. The temperature must be right and

the flora in full bloom. It is wonderful to watch the performance of the bees when there a 'honey flow' on.

The queen is the mother of all the bees in the colony and maintains complete control over them by releasing pheromones from a special gland in her body which spreads throughout the hive and every bee gets a portion of it. This keeps the bees in constant contact with the queen. However, as the queen gets older she is unable to produce sufficient pheromones for all the bees. The bees sense this loss of power by the queen and start to build queen cells. These are special cells which are built on the side of the frame and are about one-and-a-quarter inches long. The queen lays an egg in it, the nurse bees feed it with royal jelly until, after eight days, it is sealed. The new queen will emerge after sixteen days. The day before she is due to emerge the old queen will emerge from the hive, bringing with her a large proportion of all bees, fully laden with honey and will lodge on a tree close by. The scouts, as described earlier, will find a location for their new home. The bees left in the hive will be mostly young bees. Their new queen will emerge from her cell the following day will take control of the colony. She will go around to all the other queen cells and kill the young queens that are in them so that she will be in complete control of the colony.

After three or four days she will leave the hive on her mating flight. She will return to the hive and start laying and so start the cycle over again.



Micheál beside the hives in his back garden





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“Haiti. Where on earth is that?”  
 “What’s bringing you to that  
 place—it’s so dangerous.  
 Isn’t it the poorest country in the west-  
 ern hemisphere?”

Those were some of the comments I received when I told people that a trip to Haiti was the prize which a team from Gort Community School received for winning the national final of the Concern debates on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006. Shane Duane (captain), Aine Lynskey, Teresa Murphy and Susan Kennedy and myself were accompanied by Róisín Kelly and Lucy Deering from Concern and the teacher and finalists from Presentation, Thurles.

Our stay in Haiti was preceded by a one-day whirlwind tour of New York which took in visits to the Rockefeller Centre, the Nasdaq HQ in Times Square, the UN building on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, the NY Concern office and the site of Ground Zero. Concern made sure we were well catered for in the Red Roof Inn on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, one block away from the majestic Empire State Building. We left the hotel at 3:00 am to go to Kennedy airport and get a plane to Port au Prince, Haiti via Miami.

What a contrast to Haiti where we spent the next eight days. And yet I preferred Haiti, which could be a tourist paradise but has been in economic decline and a volatile political state especially for the past thirty years. Under Papa Doc Duvalier and later his son Baby Doc the country was brought to its knees. Most Haitians blame the USA for removing the reformer Bertrand Aristide when he resisted their attempts at privatisation. A democratic election held two years ago offered hope but corruption is still rife.

What Haiti lacks in material wealth is made up for by its friendly people. We received a warm welcome in every sense of the word when we stepped on to the sizzling tarmac of Port au Prince airport. There to meet us were our guides/interpreters and our marasas, or ‘twins’. They were ten Haitian teenagers with whom we bonded very quickly. My twin was a very bright girl called Cassandre who would like to study law.

Many donors wonder about what becomes of the money collected by the Concern fast and other ventures. We saw at first hand the extraordinary work being done by seven ex-pats and about one hundred and ten local members of Concern. They have built schools. Only one child in ten

has a chance of even basic schooling. It takes Frankie, one of our ‘twins’, two hours to walk to school. They have established a health centre; it may be comparatively primitive with one doctor and three nurses for 41,000 people but it is a start. HIV/AIDS infection rates have fallen due in large measure to the efforts of Concern. We were also brought to water springs in the hills. Previously, people and animals shared the same water supply, leading to many types of disease but Concern have separated them. The level of poverty was beyond anything I could have imagined. Many Haitians live on less than one dollar a day.

Some of the highlights of our visit were:

- Our stay in St Joseph’s hostel for homeless boys, run by Michael, a former brother from Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity. He has given those boys dignity and a reason to live by training them to be dancers, singers, musicians and artists. They have performed for Pope John Paul II and in the USA and Canada.
- Sleeping on the roof top and being awakened by a chorus of cocks.
- Travelling for hours on ‘roads’ which have been washed away by floods. Haiti lies in the path of horrific hurricanes.
- All the little stalls along the streets and roads and women trudging to the market with a load on their heads.
- Simple buffet-style meals in Concern’s pagodas. These structures served as sleeping quarters, dining areas and discussion venues.
- Downtown Saut D’Eau: crowds, pilgrims coming for the festival, skinny donkeys and mules standing patiently all day, mud, music, hospitable people willing to take in relatives when their own tiny, shanty houses were already bursting at the seams. They have a saying in Creole: *manje kwit pa gen mèt* which means ‘Cooked food has no owner’.
- The local church: exhausted pilgrims sleeping on pews; people praying for a suitable spouse; people praying for a visa to the USA; others lighting candles, so unsophisticated about their religion. Not affected by political correctness—yet.
- The torrential rain on three evening. Just wring out your clothes and hang them on the fence: they’ll be bone dry in a few hours.
- Sitting in the shade of exotic vegetation, listening to soul-stirring, haunt-

ing music and the chirping of the cica-  
 das.

• A visit to Moulin sur Mer, fifty-acre estate paradise on the coast. Not always a paradise, as we saw when we visited the colonial sugar cane museum. About ninety-five per cent of the Haitians are descended from African slaves who were treated with inhuman cruelty by the European masters, especially the French. Italy had just won the World Cup when we reached Haiti. A cause for celebration by the few Haitians who were aware that the World Cup games had taken place.


• Sharing our story with our hosts: they were consoled to hear that we were oppressed for centuries. Unfortunately, many of them dwell too much on the past injustices. They need to move on from there. They loved the Irish.

• Learning *cúpla focal* of Creole. It resembles French but the syntax is of African origin. On Sunday we recited a decade of the rosary in Irish, Creole, French, German and English.

We parted from our ‘twins’ with a real feeling of sadness. We were going back to relative luxury while they had to face a hand-to-mouth existence. However, the few young people that we met were fortunate to get an education. They are ambitious and articulate and the future of Haiti lies in good hands. The trip to Haiti was an unforgettable and humbling experience for which I thank God. I sincerely hope that the students and teachers of Gort Community School will enjoy many such opportunities.

Happy in Haiti  
 BY SR DE LOURDES FAHY





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## 21 and 22 Boland's Lane—Gort ICA Guild

BY ANNE BURKE

Boland's Lane takes its name from the Boland family. This family acquired the leases for all the houses on the lane in 1834 and are recorded as the first bankers in Gort. (*Gort Inse Guire - A Journey Through Time*, published 2000). They lived in the house at the top of the lane. Perhaps this accounts for the name Bank Place on the street in front of this house which appears on the 1844 map of Gort. In *Slater's Commercial Directory of Ireland - 1881*, four Boland premises are listed: Thomas Boland, Market Square, apothecary; John Boland, Bank Place; ironmongers and hardware men; Denis Boland, Market Square, leather sellers, grocers and dealers in sundries, spirit dealers and John Boland is also listed for Market Square as a grocer and spirit dealer.

Fifty-eight years ago, a small group of local women started the first ICA Guild in the town. After six years, the number increased to fifteen, enough to have their own meeting rooms. In the early 1950s, a house became available for purchase in Boland's Lane. They bought it for £36-10-0. A couple of years later, when the house next door was put up for sale, they bought

that for £47-0-0. Thus 21 and 22 Boland's Lane became the property of the ICA Guild. They then knocked the two houses together to form the Gort ICA Hall.

Those founding members of Gort ICA guild went about paying for these acquisitions in the dedicated manner of the times, raising funds through Sunday jumble sales. Through voluntary efforts, they set about the provision of facilities at their hall. The hall has served the guild well for more than a half century, accommodating meetings, exhibitions, classes and social functions.

Gort is expanding and old parts of the town are coming to life again. To cater for the growing needs of the community the ICA is about to demolish the old building which is in a very bad state of repair and lacking basic facilities. It will be replaced with a new hall on two levels. It is hoped to incorporate the stone and slates from the old building into the new one so that the character of Boland's Lane would be preserved.

The new building will be equipped to the highest standards serving the modern requirements of the members, and

will also be available for other organisations. The ICA Guild has now in order all the legal documents pertaining to the hall and it is hoped very shortly to begin the construction of the two-storey development, which will consist of two large meeting rooms, kitchens and toilets.

In keeping with the spirit of the Guild's founders, current members are setting out on some serious fundraising to finance the proposed construction. A lot of energy has to be expended on these ongoing fundraising events and the guild is ever grateful for the enormous generosity of the people of Gort. Meanwhile the activities of the guild continue. This, the fifty-ninth season the Guild has started with craft workshops, beginner's bridge classes, a knitting circle and social events. Anyone interested in joining the guild should contact: Nell Giblin, president at 631306.

Last May the fifty-eighth birthday festivities of the guild were held at the ICA Hall. It was hoped that this would be the 'last supper' in the old hall. Members sat down to a dinner which was provided by a group of chefs from the guild. The hope is that when the time comes to celebrate the 60th birthday of the guild, the celebrations will take place in a wonderful new hall of which the guild and the town of Gort can be justly proud.



Boland's Lane, home to Gort ICA Guild for the past fifty-nine years





left: Gymkhana in Gort in the mid 1950s

left to right: 'Coolebeg', Kevin Gillane, Johnny Gillane, Harry Hawkins (Belfast), Colie Molloy and Patrick Pak McNevin



above, left to right: Paddy Flaherty, Joe Leary, Sonny Mullins, Mark Scully, John Cahill and Mrs O'Leary

In August 1965, an exhibition game was organised at Gort golf club (Glenbrack) between Frank Glynn, captain of Gort golf club, partnered by Gerry Cahill and Christy O'Connor senior partnered by Eddie Treston. The scores recorded were Christy O'Connor senior 66, Frank Glynn 68, Gerry Cahill 69 and Eddie Treston 74 The exhibition was sponsored by Rynal Coen and Frank Glynn

The photograph on the right, taken in Glynn's hotel, shows, left to right, Gerry Cahill, Christy O'Connor senior, Frank Glynn, Eddie Treston and Rynal Coen



left: Frank Lally being presented with the Gallagher trophy by Mick Sylver, president of the Galway hurling board



right: winning all-Ireland managers Mattie Murphy (minor) and Vincent Mullins (under-21) with cups in Johnny Kelly's bar, Georges Street

down memory lane

Launch of Guire magazine, Christmas 1984

left to right: Peadar Ó Conaire, Sean Leahy RIP, Evelyn Roche, Josephine Ward, Nicholas Cafferkey, Michael Bermingham RIP, Frank Lally RIP, Chris O'Shaughnessy RIP and Paddy Cooke



Limepark, Peterswell: it was here the main body of Galway brigade of Irish volunteers under commandant Liam Mellows was disbanded on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1916

The photograph shows the executive committee of the Gort battalion old IRA who organised a memorial mass at Limepark, Peterswell on Easter Sunday 1961 to commemorate the 1916 rising  
front row, left to right: John Melville, Ardahan; Patrick Neylon, Gort; Sean Courtney, Gort; John Joyce, Ardahan; Matto Nestor, Kilmacduagh; Ned Roche, Gort and Gilbert Morrissey, Craughwell  
standing, left to right: Patrick Howley, Peterswell; Michael Howley, Peterswell; Jim Cooney, Kiltartan; Matt Nolan, Kiltartan; Martin Murphy, Ardahan; Martin McGrath, Kilmacduagh; Michael Reilly, Kilbeacanty; John Nilan, Ardahan; Martin Coen, Kilbeacanty; Timmy Considine, Gort and Vice-commandant Peter Howley, Peterswell  
back, left to right: John Colman Quinn, Gort and Dan Ryan, Kilcreest



down memory lane



Kilmacduagh school 1939

front row: Annie Geaghan, Anna Baker, Mary Moylan, Martin Geaghan, Carmel Regan and Coleman Kerins  
second row: Michael Flaherty, Cathleen Grealish, Peter Grealish, Michael John Kelly, Gerdie Glynn, Bridget Geaghan, Rose Carr, Pauline Carr and Patricia Helebert  
third row: Miko Carr, Mikey Geaghan, Tommie Kelly, Andrew McGann, Joe Geaghan, Albert McGann, Pat Geaghan and Michael McGann  
back row: Lena McGrath, Mary Ann Geaghan, Mary Kate McGrath, Tomo Flaherty, Joe Glynn, Lily Regan, Phil McGann, John Joe Baker and Paddy Kerins



The Craic-Ái-Í Céili Band

left to right: Kieran Collins, Kit O'Connor, Paddy Burke, Frank Finnegan, Bob Forde and Joe Leary



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## The Tech — a re-birth

BY SEAN McLOUGHLIN  
ADULT EDUCATION OFFICER, VEC

To those living in Gort or the surrounding area, the vocational school is that old, ugly, badly maintained building at the top of the town as you turn south for Ennis; or it was until recently—things are changing. A transformation is slowly and quietly taking place. Windows and doors have been replaced in both buildings. The old woodwork and metalwork rooms have been totally refurbished and will soon house the VEC's Adult Education Support Services for South Galway as well as a drop-in centre for the adults of the area.

The large two-storey buildings, the original school, are about to get a huge revamp and, by early 2007, will be a further education centre for South Galway.

Does this mean that the adult education programme being provided by the community school will then cease? No, not at all. On the contrary, both establishments will work hand-in-hand to provide a larger, more varied and more comprehensive adult and further education service for Gort and south Galway.

In Ireland—and South Galway is no exception to this—over 1,200,000 adults never reached upper second level education (leaving certificate); 6,000 and more never got to junior

certificate; one in four cannot read or write and one in three experience some form of abuse. So, despite the economic boom or Celtic Tiger, there is a huge need which must be met and the rebuilding of the old Tech will in some way help us to service that need.

The first phase of rebuilding is now nearing completion. The area formerly used for metalwork has been converted to a canteen and meeting room. It is hoped that this room will be used by the Gort community as a drop-in centre, a place to meet, to read the papers, have a chat or game of cards and, perhaps, avail of some of the other services provided.

The old woodworking room and store will house the offices of the literacy organiser, the tracking officer, the advocacy officer, the adult education information officer and the adult guidance coordinator. The literacy officer's role is to provide a comfortable place for learning for adults who are functionally illiterate, those who experience difficulty with everyday reading and writing and perhaps numeracy. It is not widely known that over 500,000 adults, one-in-four of the working population, have literacy problems.

Those involved with the literacy programme are caring and understanding professionals and deal with each indi-

vidual with the utmost discretion. The advocacy and tracking officers work as a team and have a close working relationship with the gardaí, the health services, the justice system, FÁS and others. Their aim is to ensure that all young people are either in school, in training or in a safe learning environment, such as youth projects.

A job for life is now a thing of the past. Workers now keep moving onwards and upwards. This in turn means that people must continue to up-skill and re-educate. To do this effectively one must have recourse to the most up-to-date information on education and training as well as professional counselling and guidance and this will now be available in the centre from the adult education officer the guidance coordinator.

The refurbishment of the old two-storey building will enable the VEC to offer, for the first time in south Galway, the BTEI or Back to Education initiative programme. This initiative will provide a part-time two-year education programme, free of charge to those wishing to return to education, who are in receipt of any form of social welfare or disability allowance. This programme will also be available at 70% discount to non-working spouses and the working public will also be welcome but will be required to pay an economic fee.

The area to the rear of the school shall be divided into three parts; the first part to be developed as a play area for the youth of the town; the second will have developed upon it a new modern crèche and, lastly, part three is to be developed as an organic horticulture training area. All of this would not have been possible without the help and support of the many volunteers who gave so generously of their time for the last two years, the FÁS management and workers who have done trojan work and the many individuals who have helped along the way.

So now, people of Gort and south Galway, it's up to you to continue and support and use this facility so that over the coming years it may yield a rich harvest for everyone in the area.



Stan Mac Eoin, Deputy Principal, makes a presentation to Micheál Breathnach on the occasion of his retirement as Principal of Gort Vocational School





photographs courtesy of David O'Reilly

picture parade

top left: President McAleese meets Vincent Maloney who represented the community and voluntary sector

top right: President McAleese addresses people of Gort in the community centre

above left: the President officially opens Gort's new Orchard Centre

opposite top: unveiling the commemorative stone at St Colman's park

opposite centre left: Superintendent Paul Mockler receiving a presentation at the occasion of his retirement from Adrian Feeney on behalf of Gort Chamber of Commerce at the Lady Gregory hotel

opposite centre right: Brazilian ambassador (centre) Mr Ostello Amarante attending the Brazilian Festival Day

opposite bottom left: St Patricks Day Parade, Gort 2006

opposite bottom right: Autumn gathering 2006; at the unveiling of a new portrait of the granddaughters of Lady Gregory, Anne and Catherine, commissioned by her great grandson Ted Kennedy and painted by Brian O'Rourke and Jay Murphy were Julia Kennedy, great, great granddaughter of Lady Gregory, Susan Sutherland, great granddaughter of Lady Gregory and Graham Kennedy, great, great grandson of Lady Gregory; photograph by Tony Hannon



picture parade





Out-going president Regina Monaghan congratulating Julia Qualter, in-coming president

## Gort and District Lions Club

BY PADDY O'GRADY, PRO

largest number of activities to date organised by the club and the members have a strong feeling of achievement and morale

Gort and District Lions Club is proud to be part of the world's largest and most active club organisation. Since the club was formed in 1992, its members have been and continue to be committed to the motto of Lions Club International, 'we serve'. This motto was adopted back in 1954 and it inspires each member to take pride in their membership and motivates the club to perform works of charity and compassion for the betterment of society.

Lions Club International was founded in Chicago in 1917 by Melvin Jones and now has 1.4 million members in 68,000 clubs throughout the world, with 125 clubs in Ireland. Clubs are the vital essence of the association and it is the aim of the Gort and District Club to be the best service club it can be. Along with Gort town and its hinterland, the club has members in Kinvara, Ardrahan, Kilbeacanty and Clarenbridge.

Another successful Lions year has passed into history and another new year of activities lies ahead. The club has gradually built its strategy in being a force for community betterment since the learning experience of the early years. The year 2005-6 saw the

is high.

The highlight of the year was the Emerald Ball in the Lady Gregory Hotel on St Patrick's Night which raised €27,500 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Graham and Joan Surman (Ardrahan) and Louise Duffy were the main organisers of the Ball which was enjoyed by all 250 in attendance.

There were many other noteworthy events and activities organised and the following is a brief summary of some of them: a Golf Tournament at the local golf course raised €12,000 for the benefit of Cancer Care West; a walk was organised in Coole park in support of Bóthar, the third world development agency and they were presented with the cost of sending six in-calf cows and three goats to Africa; €2,000 was donated to the Pakistani earthquake fund and €1,300 was presented to Alan Kerins for his Zambia charity fund.

Donations were also made to Bushypark House addiction centre, Ennis; Crumlin Children's Hospital, Temple Street children's hospital and UCHG children's unit; a children's charity in Cape Town, South Africa; the Chernobyl Sunflower Project and a SightFirst camp in India.

Eighty years ago, Helen Keller challenged Lions to be 'knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness'. Along with its support for campaign SightFirst, the club has been quite active in collecting used spectacles for sending to the third world. Sadie McInerney has been responsible for collecting some hundreds of pairs and she would always welcome some more.

The Club has also given much support to the Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind. Boxes inviting support for this worthy cause have been placed in local business premises and yield in the region of €3,000 annually.

Other activities which were successfully undertaken were the Lions Club Youth Award programme; a hurling tournament which involved ninety students in Gort Community School and a seven-a-side primary schools football tournament run in conjunction with Gort garda; a suicide awareness seminar; a peace poster competition; table quiz for primary schools; participation in the St Patrick's day parade; the youth exchange scheme; the Christmas Carols Service and the visits of the blood transfusion service; visits to hospitals and nursing homes and raising funds from teddy bear sales and a breakfast morning.

The 2006-07 club president is Julia Qualter and Tony Hannon is secretary. Joan Surman is treasurer and Graham Surman is vice-president.

## Snippets from stage and social scenes of the sixties

BY ANGELA DONOHUE

My very earliest memory and first introduction to the stage in Gort goes back to the very early sixties when annual variety shows were very popular events. The big buzz in Gort at the time was to clear the church building deficit. For years, every voluntary effort of the community was spent achieving this mission. The town was very fortunate in having people who gave so unselfishly of their time and energy to organise various events.

One of these people was Mrs Gaffogue, who took it upon herself to stage an annual variety show in the Town Hall and have a bunch of six- and seven-year-olds as an opening and closing act. Rehearsals were held in her home after school for a few weeks prior to the main event. After school, a gang of us would tear up Garrabeg to her house, stand around the piano while she played to her heart's content and taught us the words of the opening and closing songs. Needless to say, there was great excitement before opening night. Costumes were needed. This was a daunting task. We all had to have skirts made out of crepe paper. Every shop in the town had to ensure adequate supplies of raw materials in every colour. It wasn't the putting together of the skirt that was a problem but preventing it from falling apart. We had a reserve of safety pins that were meant for damage limitation. A stapler would have been nice but had we even heard of one. The thought of the skirt tearing on stage while kicking our legs from side to side to the strains of *Here we are again, Happy as can be* was nothing short of terrifying.

But it was all worthwhile because there was a promise of a party when it was all over. This is where Birdie Silver from the square excelled in her hospitality. After the last performance, we all congregated in her dining room at the back of the shop and savoured such delights as minerals, biscuits and sweets, while Birdie and Mama Silver told us all how wonderful we were and wasn't poor Mrs Gaffogue great for putting up with us all. So say all of us.

With the arrival of Fr Kelly in Gort in 1962, we progressed to a more sophisticated level of stage production: the pantomime. The excitement when he came to the school to announce his plans. Of course we all had to be able to sing and we all could, so we were all in it. The first pantomime was called *The Continental Journey*. He didn't have to worry about royalty payments or performance rights because I think he devised the whole production himself. My memory of it is that it consisted of several scenes, each one set in a different European country. As we travelled the continent, we were introduced to a little taste of culture from each. We explored France to the strains of *Under the Bridges of Paris, Jolie Jacqueline, Alouette* and *Sur le Pont d'Avignon*. We greeted our lady with a hymn as she appeared in Lourdes. Miko Mulcair, the matador, sang *Toreador* as we all attended a bullfight in Spain. There were lots of rehearsals in the town hall to get this from page to stage. Some of the songs were sung in French, not that we knew what we were singing of course but sure we sang them anyway. Unlike our previous productions, costumes were not going to be a problem as they were being hired out from Dublin. We awaited their arrival with

bated breath. What a disappointment, most of them were awful and poor Mrs Turner ended up making them instead. I do remember specifically the hired costumes for the bull and the matador in the Spanish scene worked well. As far as I can remember, we played to full houses every night, further reducing the deficit of the church's building fund.

The following year, Fr Kelly went on to produce and direct *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This was obviously based on the traditional story with the usual colloquialisms thrown in. Christina Shaughnessy played Snow White and, to the best of my memory, Ralph Keane was her prince charming. Not being blessed with a very good singing voice, I never progressed further than being part of the chorus but what did it matter, I wasn't the only one and didn't we get to grace the stage with our presence? It is invariably the memories of the first experience that remain the most vivid. Sadly, Fr Kelly was moved onto another parish, having served as a curate in Gort for two years. His departure was greatly mourned by the whole community. He left behind a group of youngsters that he helped develop a love of the stage and was richer in character as a



Christine O'Shaughnessy and Niall Finnegan in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, 1962



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result. However, there was a void left that would be very difficult to fill. This was sadly the end of community youth theatre in Gort during the sixties as we knew it.

There was a strong Macra na Feirme senior group in those days that produced a play annually. Their productions were more of the serious drama genre but we went to see them anyway because they were on. We were too young to fully appreciate them but there was always a raffle to be won, usually a box of chocolates or a ten shilling note. Some of the plays I remember were Lennox Robinson's *The White Headed Boy*, John Murphy's *The Country Boy* and *Dial M for Murder* by Frederick Knott. I remember the latter particularly because someone was murdered with a scissors and Moira Gilmartin and David Curley were in it. They were probably in the other plays as well, together with Patrick Nestor and Ollie Kearns and others. Otherwise I don't remember very much about these plays except that I never won the raffle.

Another great annual event was the production presented by the boys from Our Lady's college. We used to love these plays because it was great fun watching the boys in female roles. Billy Kilroy as Gwendolen in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a particular memory. It was obviously very difficult for them to sit with their knees together in typical female fashion.

Travelling theatre companies were not uncommon in Ireland in those days. Usually they comprised of a family that travelled the length and breadth of the country, bringing their production to every town and village. When they arrived in Gort, they would pitch their tent in the circus field, set up, perform and the next morning they would have moved on to their next venue. Their contribution was invaluable really as they gave the people of rural Ireland an opportunity to see productions that were otherwise reserved for the bigger towns and cities. The one production I remember was Noreen Bán. It was obviously a piece that they devised themselves, based on the words of the famous song. It was all too serious and sad for me as the curse of emigration brought tears to everyone's eyes and I of the understanding that it must be wonderful to travel and see the world.

The circus field was a great place. It accommodated the circus of course

when it arrived, usually once a year. It would stay in the town for three or four days. During its stay we would be treated to a little parade around the town. This big elephant would be led by its keeper, followed by clowns, trapeze artists and other members of the cast in full costume. Then there was a whole gang of us in tow. One year we were up near the railway bridge when the poor elephant decided to break a bit of wind and we all scattered like geese at a crossroads.

The carnival was another very popular occupant of the circus field. Again it was an annual event and lasted a week and sometimes a fortnight. There were chair-o-planes, bumpers, swinging boats, roulette, tombola, throw-a-ring-and-win-a-prize and lots more. Of course it was great fun but unfortunately it demanded a lot of money which was never too *fluirseach* at the time. One of our main sources of income at the time was doing messages for people. A bottle of milk for Angela Coen ("and don't shake the bottle as I need the cream for mama's tea") from Piggotts earned me a threepenny bit. A skein of embroidery thread for Granny Lally from Coens would earn me sixpence. Mrs Williams, Crowe Street, always wrote down what she wanted. He note would invariably read 'please give bearer'. Then I would have to go to my mother's shop for a pound of ham, still wondering why I was called a bearer. For this, I was sure of another sixpence. So, needless to say, we were more than available during carnival days to meet everyone's demands.

The annual sale of work, held in the convent grounds, was another highlight of our year. For weeks beforehand anybody that could sew, embroider, knit, crochet and so on converged in the cookery room at the convent. They made beautiful frocks, aprons, tablecloths, socks, gloves, tea cosies, dolls and puppets. This ensured that there would be adequate stocks for all the stall that were set up in the grounds on the day. There were fresh cakes, buns



left to right: Sally Carty, Breda Burke, Denise Daly and Angela Donohue

and confectionery of all descriptions, together with fresh farm produce and home-made jams. Of course, we youngsters were not too interested in all of that because there were far more interesting things to do, like egg-and-spoon races, puppet shows and several other games where we could win prizes. I remember winning a porcelain hen for not having a shaky hand at Mr Conway's 'lie game'. The greasy pole was, no doubt, the main attraction of the day. A long pole, like an electricity pole, extended out over the river. It was covered in grease and anybody that could walk to the end of it got a prize or another free turn. This was great fun as most people did not succeed and ended up in the river, much to the amusement of all present. All the proceeds from these sales of work made the parish priest very happy.

In the latter years of the sixties, being a bit more grown up, we were in need of something more sophisticated than a circus or a carnival as a social outlet. We were too young to attend the Classic ballroom, 'den of iniquity' according to St Bernadette. Obviously none of us understood what she meant as everybody in Gort crossed its threshold at some time or other. We had hops during the summer months. On a Saturday evening, we would gather up a bit of courage and knock on Mrs Shaughnessy's door and ask for the key of the ICA hall. We would leave with the key and a list the length of my arm of the dos and don'ts and "make sure you leave it as you found it" and 'don't disturb the neighbours', Biddy Sweeney and 'my lovely' John. A record player would be sourced from some house, a few records and we were organised. We danced to Englebert Humperdinck,

Simon and Garfunkel and Long John Baldry to name but a few. At 10:55 pm we were out the door and up Bolands Lane like bats out of hell to ensure the key was returned by 11:00 pm. We had to keep the rules, make sure there were no complaints, so we could always go back and ask for the key again.

Our spiritual needs were well and truly looked after. We were mem-

ber imagination as I never saw a reply. But I kept writing the letters anyway. Years later, having long left Gort and the Legion of Mary, I popped in for a visit while home on holiday and who was there with Muddy only Fitzroy. He thanked me for all the letters. I was delighted to know that my efforts were not in vain. So, for all our good works of mercy we were rewarded with a par-

Peck or Steve McQueen. All the Elvis and Cliff Richards films were big at the time. There were the ninepenny seats up front (garden benches) and the one-and-threepenny seats further back. It was not unusual at the time for the film reel to break during screening and, whilst it was being fixed, everything and everything would be thrown at the screen from the front seats.



*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, 1962

front, left to right: Raymond Piggott, Pat Griffin, Barry Fitzgerald, G P Fahy, Colman Keane, Paul Cox, Ronnie Counihan and Niall Finnegan

second row, left to right: Carmel Counihan, Claire Treston, Elaine Piggott, Mary Killeen, Catherine Piggott, Kay Gillane, Lorraine Scully, Christina O'Shaughnessy, Barbara Scully rip, Eileen Brennan, Ethele Griffin, Jacqueline Murphy, Mary O'Shaughnessy and Patricia Piggott

third row, left to right: Bridget Kelly, Phil Glynn, May Madigan, Tita Madigan, Ann Hayes, Marie Daly, Patrick Counihan, Joseph Cos, Ralph Keane, John Finnegan, Vincent Cox, Marion Staunton, Maura Carty, Michelle Fitzgerald and Christopher Griffin

bers of the Legion of Mary from the age of ten, before going on to become Children of Mary. Members of the Legion of Mary met weekly on Wednesdays, chaired by our president, Mrs Lawlor. We said prayers, received sermon from our chaplain Fr Healy, before the good works of mercy were dished out for the week. These consisted of anything from collecting used stamps and holy books and visiting the sick and the elderly. I was blessed by having to visit Muddy and Pat Shaughnessy every week to help them in any way possible. My chief task was to write a letter to Fitzroy in Boston, Illinois. He was her care when she worked in America as a nanny. I often wondered if he was a figment of

ty in the legion room at the town hall at Christmas time. It commenced with the Magnificat and after we had put the statue of Our Lady and the stand away we had tea and buns and a few records were played, all under the very watchful eye of our president.

We were more than privileged to have a cinema. We couldn't wait until Christy Fennessy put up the poster every Saturday night on the billboard at Henry Shaughnessy's corner to see what pictures were on for the coming week. There were matinées on a Sunday to which we only went if it was raining. There were films showing every night of the week but we were only allowed to go during school holidays. I used to love any film with Gregory

Johnny Porter, the usher, had his work cut out maintaining law and order. "Be quiet or I'll put you out" as he flashed his torch at the culprits.

And so, such were some of the events that kept us happy as youngsters in the sixties. There were lots more: the races at Coole, jumble sales, fair days, pioneer outings to Butlins, Youghal and Bundoran, annual school tours to Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Knock and school plays under the directions of Sr de Lourdes. One of the last social events in my calendar before leaving Gort in 1971 was helping to organise what I believe was the first ever leaving certificate party. It was quite simple really, we just asked Noel Mullins for the use of the Classic ballroom for Saturday night, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1971 and a few crates of minerals. We had a record player, brought our own records and we had a marvellous night. The next day we tidied the hall and paid for whatever minerals were used. Everything was so simple and innocent but we had the best of fun.



Excerpt from Slater's Directory of Ireland, 1856

**Connaught.**

**GORT.**

**Slater's**

this town is very beautiful, comprising on the west the Burren mountains, county of Clare; and on the east the eminences of Derrybrien, Castle-Daly, and Roxborough. The market is held on Saturday; and the fairs, March 17<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup>, August 11<sup>th</sup>, and November 7<sup>th</sup>. The population of the town, as returned in 1851, was 2,005.

**POST OFFICE,** Church-street, Cornelius Francis O'Loughlin, *Post Master*.—Letters from DUBLIN, GALWAY and all parts arrive (by mail car from ORANMORE) every morning at twenty minutes past three, and are despatched every night at fifteen minutes past nine.

**NOBILITY, GENTRY AND CLERGY**

Alexander Arthur, Esq. Mary Ville Anteseil Thomas, Esq. Ashfield Blaquier Edward, Esq. Castle Lodge Bermingham the Very Rev. Joseph Aldridge, dean of Kilmacduagh, Denery House  
Burke John, Esq. Lisbrien  
Burke Redmond, Esq. Annagh  
Butler William, Esq. Bouchow  
Carrick Patrick, Esq. Lisheen  
Clonmorris Lord —, Creggclare  
Crowe George, Esq. Rose Park  
Daly James, Esq. Castle Daly  
Davys Francis, Esq. J.P. Hunt's Cott  
Drouit Rev. Edward, Ardahan  
Eagan Miss —, Market square  
Galway Edward, Esq. Doon  
Gibbith James, Esq. Cappard  
Glynn Mr. Patrick, Market square  
Gough the Right. Honble. Viscount, Loughcooter Castle  
Gregory Wm. Henry, Esq. Cool Park  
Harrett Alfred W., Esq. Cregg  
Heather Rev. George A. Bridge st  
Hewson Mr. John F. Bank place  
Hynes Mrs. Anne, Church st  
Killeen Timothy, Esq. Ballygagan  
Killickely the Misses —, the Square  
Lahiff Henry, Esq. Cloon  
Lahiff James, Esq. Bridge st  
Lopdell John, Esq. Derrydown  
Mahon James, Esq. Northampton  
Nolan John, Esq. New Park  
O'Hara Major Charles, Raheen  
Rosengrave Mr. Matthew, Crow la  
Rosengrave Mr. Tobias, Church st  
Shannon Rev. Timothy, P.P. & v.g. Bridge street  
Smith Lawrence, Esq. Mary Ville  
Trotman Captain Philip, Bridge st  
Tully Rev. Patrick, Market square  
Ward Thomas, Esq. Bridge st

**PROFESSIONAL PERSONS, &c**

Boland Thomas, apothecary & agent to the Catholic and General Life Assurance Co. Bank place  
Gill Terence, apothecary, Bridge st  
Mulville William, A.M. physician and surgeon, Bridge House  
Noian Martin Daly, physician and surgeon, Bridge st  
O'Shaughnessy Edward, registrar of marriages, Market square  
Slater James, clerk of petty sessions, Bridge street

**ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS.**

Broughan John & Michael M'Namara (classical), Barrack st  
**IRISH CHURCH MISSION SCHOOLS,** Queen st—Robert Roche, master  
**NATIONAL SCHOOL,** Church street—Patrick Hewson, master

**HOTELS.**

Forrest Mary, *Mail Coach Hotel* (and posting-house), Market square  
Glynn Patrick (and posting house), Market square

**INNS AND PUBLIC HOUSES**

Byrne Michael, Georges st  
Cahill Thomas, Georges st  
Carty Stephen, Georges st  
Dobbin Mary, Bridge st  
Gilligan Denis, Market square  
Gorman Michael, Bridge st

**PLACES OF WORSHIP AND THEIR MINISTERS.**

**PARISH CHURCH,** Kilmacduagh—The Very Rev. Joseph Aldridge Bermingham, w.a. dean, Denery House  
**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL**—Reverend Timothy Shannon, parish priest and vicar general; Reverend Mortimer Brennan, curate

**POPE LAW UNION.**

**WORKHOUSE,** Georges street.  
Governor—Michael M'Keon  
Matron—Mary Keller  
Schoolmaster—Michael O'Neal  
Schoolmistress—Margaret Hart  
**Protestant Chaplains**—The Very Rev. Dean Bermingham  
**Roman Catholic Chaplain**—Rev. Patrick Tully

Hare Margaret, Crow lane  
Helbert Michael, Crow lane  
Hoarty John, Georges st  
Hynes Anthony, Market square  
Hynes Edmund, Church st  
Hynes Michael, Bridge st  
Kean Martin, Market square  
Keane Denis, Georges st  
Kelly Michael, Bridge st  
Lee Redmond, Market square  
M'Namara John, Market square  
Murray Lawrence, Georges st  
O'Dea Thomas, Crow lane  
Pollard Anne, Market square  
Plunkett Thomas, Market square  
Quinn John, Market square  
Stephens Patrick, Crow lane

**SHOPKEEPERS, TRADERS, &c**

Ahern Patrick, painter and glazier, Crow lane  
Boland Denis, grocer & spirit dealer,  
Boland John, iron & timber dealer,  
grocer & spirit dealer, Bank place  
Brennan Martin, shoe maker, Church street  
Bridrick James, carpenter, Georges  
Bull Catharine, draper, Market sq  
Burke Francis, shopkeeper, Market square  
Burke Patrick, butcher, Georges st  
Chamberlain, Martin butcher, Church street  
Connel James, grocer & spirit dealer,  
Connor Michl. shoe mkr, Church st  
Conroy John, shoe mkr, Church st  
Conroy Ann, linen draper, Bridge st  
Conway John, shoe mkr, Church st  
Coysne Martin, shoe mkr, Crow lane  
Coyne Martin, shopkeeper, Barrack st  
Dermody Margaret, confectioner, Bridge st  
Devany David, nail maker, Church st  
Devany Patrick, tailor, Church st  
Dobbin Mary, grocer, Bridge st  
Dolphin Martin, baker, Martin sq  
Donohue Michael, shoe maker, Barrack street  
Duggan Patrick, confectioner, Market  
Fahy Martin, shopkeeper, Market sq  
Fahy Roger, shoe maker, Crow lane  
Fahy Wm. blacksmith, Crow lane  
Farley James, shoe maker, Crow la  
Farrell John, shoe mkr, Georges st  
Flannagan Patrick, tailor, Crow la  
Foran James, shoe mkr, Crow lane  
French George, carpenter, Crow la  
Gibb James, nail mkr, Georges st  
Gill John, stone mason and shopkeeper, Market square  
Glynn John M. hardware dealer, leather seller, &c. Market square  
Glynn Michael, carpenter, Crow la  
Glynn Morty, hardware dealer, Bridge street  
Glynn Patrick, grocer, Market sq  
Glynn Patrick, shoe maker, Crow la  
Gorman Michl. shopkeeper, Bridge st  
Hardiman Thomas, collector of income tax & poor's rates, Bridge st  
Hardman Anne, shopkeeper, Bridge st  
Hart Patrick, carpenter, Georges st  
Hazel Edward, slater and plasterer, Market square  
Henderson Patrick, butcher, Crow la  
Holland John, carpenter, Crow la  
Husty John, shopkeeper, Georges st  
Hynes Anthony, shopkeeper, Market square

**SHOEMAKERS, &c**

Hynes Michael, iron & leather dir, Market square  
Jordan Andrew, butcher, Crow la  
Jordan James, boot, &c. mkr, Crow la  
Keane Denis, grocer, Bridge st  
Keane Michael, linen draper, Bridge st  
Keane Denis, provision dir, Georges st  
Keatinge Morty, shoemaker, Georges st  
Kelly Festas, pawnbroker, Queen st  
Kelly Mary, shopkeeper, Georges st  
Kelly Michael, grocer, Bridge st  
Kelly Patrick, shopkeeper, Crow la  
Kenny Martin, earthenware dealer, Market square  
Kennedy Edward, gun mkr, Crow la  
Kennedy James, shoe mkr, Crow la  
Kennedy Michl. shoe mkr, Church st  
Kennedy Patrick, shoe mkr, Crow la  
Lee Redmond, shopkeeper, Market sq  
Leech Patrick, carpenter, Crow la  
Lennard Patrick, nail mkr, Crow la  
M'Dermot John, coach mkr, Crow la  
M'Dermot Timothy, hardware dir, Market square  
M'Keon Patrick, shoe mkr, Bridge st  
M'Mahon Owen, nail mkr, Crow la  
M'Namara John, grocer, Market sq  
M'Namara Michael, shopkeeper, Georges street  
Mangan John, miller and baker, GORT MILLS, and Bridge st  
Martin Michl. shopkeeper, Georges st  
Mealey Patck, blacksmith, Georges st  
Meelian Michl. shoe mkr, Georges st  
Moloney Mary, wine & spirit dealer and grocer, Market square  
Molony Andrew, tallow chandler, Market square  
Molouy Patck, blacksmith, Church st  
Morris Thomas, grocer, Bridge st  
Mullin Patrick, cooper, Crow lane  
Murphy Patk. carpenter, Georges st  
Murray Lawrence, shopkeeper, Georges street  
Nelly John, haberdasher, draper & toy dealer, Market square  
Nelly Peter, earthenware dealer, Market square  
Nielon Michael, shopkeeper, Crow la  
Nilon Michl. blacksmith, Church st  
Nolan Thomas, carpenter, Bridge st  
O'Dea Thomas, grocer, Crow lane  
O'Donohue John, feather and skin dealer, Bridge st  
O'Loughlin Francis, tailor, Crow la  
O'Shaughnessy Anne, grocer, Barrack street  
O'Shaughnessy John, shoe maker, Pigott Jas. nail maker, Georges st  
Pollard Anne, grocer, Market sq  
Quinn James, tobacconist, Bridge st  
Quinn John, grocer, Market sq  
Reilly John, flour dealer, Market sq  
Reilly Patrick, butcher, Bridge st  
Ruberry John, cooper, Crow lane  
Russell John Norris & Sons, corn merchants, Market sq  
Shearman James, saddler, Market sq  
Snack Thomas, butcher, Boland's la  
Steuison Peter, saddler, Crow lane  
Tierney John, baker, Georges st  
Toohy John, tailor & clothes dealer, Georges street  
Wallace Andrew, linen and woollen draper, Bridge st  
Walsh Laurence, palster, Georges st  
Walsh Thomas, butcher, George st  
Ward Bryant, tailor, Market sq

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To ENNIS, the *Mail Car*, every morning at twenty minutes past three  
To GALWAY, a Coach (from Limerick), calls at Michael Keane, every afternoon at three  
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To ORANMORE, the *Mail Car*, every night at a quarter past nine

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**BARRACK (Military),** Barrack st—Capt'n Philip Trotman, barrack master  
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**COURT HOUSE,** Market square—Mrs. Galvin, keeper  
**DISPENSARY,** Market square—Martin D. Nolan, M.D. surgeon  
**STAMP OFFICE,** Market square—John Boland, distributor

**Just like you by Shane Counihan**

I don't remember you  
We have not spoken  
I am told I am like you  
But I don't know  
I have your wit and funny ways  
I have your stature and your face  
I never met you  
Because you died.  
I have seen your picture but never cried  
I talk just like you so I am told  
I have seen your headstone  
Engraved with gold  
I have felt a heart ache  
But it doesn't stay  
If I could only meet you  
Just for a day  
And we could talk and reminisce  
About olden times and things you miss  
But that's a dream that can't come true  
So someday I will see you  
At heavens great door  
So rest in peace forever more

**Scattery Island by the late John F. Counihan**

The western coast has many isles,  
Near rugged, smooth and cliff-bound shores,  
But Clare holds one untainted jewel,  
On which the sun its radiance pours.  
'Tis a verdant isle in an azure sea,  
Surmounted by churches and grey round tower,  
Where saintly monks in days of yore,  
'Gainst Satan waged their godly power.  
In olden days, the light of faith,  
Shone brightly out from this fair isle;  
Today the lighthouse's winking beam,  
Protects all men from Neptune's bile.  
At morn just like a sparkling jewel;  
At noon a bourne of peaceful rest;  
At eventide when sun meets sea,  
It conjures up a golden crest.  
And now, when Mars in triumph sits,  
And hears cruel Vulcan's smithy roar,  
No sound of strife encroaches here,  
While nations these two gods adore.  
Its king is Peace, its array Prayer  
Its subjects hunters of the deep.  
Fate smiles on it, for never yet,  
Has Guilt disturbed its child-like sleep.  
If e'er you pass this Shrine of Peace,  
Stop, for there must trouble surely cease.

**Poet's corner**

**Gaelic Games**

Hurling and football are games for young folk  
Camogie for coleens I am telling no joke  
It keeps them so fit may they live a long life  
Keeps them athletic much better than strife  
The ways of the world are often so sad  
Our planet is full of the good and the bad  
Cork and Kilkenny for this year to score  
At Croke Park in Dublin we will see them once more  
In the west we have Mayo good luck to their job  
Against the kingdom of Kerry they are worth a few bob  
After mass on a Sunday old folks can sit down  
To watch it on telly to see who gets the crown  
Three cheers for Mayo for the west one more cheer  
I would bet for the rebels in hurling this year  
Hard luck on poor Galway but what can be done?  
But next year please God we will have some more fun  
The minors from Galway sure this year did win  
And the lady footballers crossed the Shannon again  
By beating Dublin in Croke Park they are braver than men.  
Peadar O Fathaigh (September 2004)

**The waters of oblivion by Anthony Coppinger**

Sticks and stones  
See and speak  
And call collect  
To run and fall  
Into low concern  
And sad content  
Bowed  
Down  
Not out  
In abandoned  
Symphony  
(Coole Park River)

**Slow boat to China by A Coppinger**

In a perfect Sunday  
We would all be trees  
And we would all learn  
The breeze,  
Growing in the rainfall  
And the sunshine  
Year after year.  
From our roots  
We could hesitate a smile  
Gold, wishing we could be  
Tall and strong,  
We could be homes  
For our feathered friends  
And we would never be  
Alone:  
Wish I was a tree  
Wish I was a flower  
Wish I could be a Sunday best.

**Old House by Seán Leahy**

Old house of stone, how tired you look,  
From standing all alone;  
Those window panes have long been smashed,  
Your trembling timbers moan.  
Stone chimneys great are blocked for years,  
The crows have built their nests,  
No fire shines out from your open hob,  
And mice are now your guests.  
Your doors are chipped of coloured paint,  
No place for lock or key,  
Those walls are bare and floors are damp,  
And the slates are broke you see.  
A wall once ran around you,  
With a garden of small flowers;  
The walls are gone, the flowers are too,  
As nettles above them tower.  
What kind of people lived with you,  
In the days of long ago?  
What made them leave you all alone,  
Is what I'd love to know.  
Emigration could have been the cause,  
To make them go away,  
And leave behind a house of love,  
To fall into decay.  
Old house of stone I now must leave,  
And journey on my way,  
I'm sad, but yet I'm happy,  
That I stopped and looked today.  
Maybe as the years go by,  
Someone will look, and then,  
They will hear the words I heard today,  
"I want to live again".  
Seán Leahy (RIP) was a committee member of Guaire magazine for many years. The poem 'Old House' is taken from his book 'Heart of Ireland'.

**To find a spot by Michael O'Dwyer**

Oh, to find some wee small cot,  
In some lovely beauty spot,  
Go there with some friends of old,  
Body, mind, to let unfold.  
Find oneself like some lost child,  
Be easy on oneself, be mild.  
Forget the job of making money,  
Feel earth's warmth, taste of honey,  
Relax, letting one's mind wander,  
Over landscape's beauty, to ponder.  
The sea, the mountains, lakes and streams,  
Beauty that we see in dreams,  
Feel renewed, a good deal stronger,  
In this way, we hope, live longer.



ALWAYS ON TO A WINNER WITH

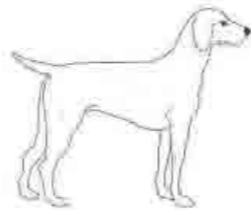
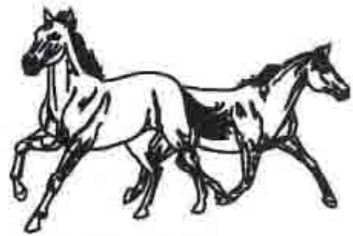
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and  
ladies'  
fashions*

## Gort memories BY PETER BRENNAN



left: my friend Ted and I in Brennan's vegetable garden  
right: snapped in Georges Street, I didn't have to worry too much about traffic



My father Joe left Gort in 1936. His elder brother Tom had sent him the fare for America but immigration had been stopped due to the world economic depression with millions of people out of work. He then decided on England as a first step and then on to Spain to fight in the Spanish Civil War. Happily, this plan was shelved after he met and eventually married my mother in May 1939 and then World War Two intervened.

We came to Gort for the first time as a family in September 1947. The journey in those days and subsequent years was a nightmare. We would catch the night boat train from Euston station in London to Holyhead, then came the walk through the customs shed in the middle of the night. I would be half asleep as we crossed the cold, wet and windy dock side to reach the big black and white steamer, only to be faced with the ordeal of the night crossing. I can't remember a time when the Irish Sea was really calm and my mother and I suffered the inevitable consequences along with many other women and children. The men folk could usually be found having a drink or two in the ship's bars and would be deep in conversation and apparently totally oblivious to the conditions.

At Dun Laoghaire, after another customs shed, where every suitcase was opened and its contents inspected thoroughly, we were allowed to board a little narrow gauge steam railway train for the short journey up the coast to the main line station, Westland Row in Dublin, now known as Pearse station and would quickly cross the platform for the train to Galway. That is, if the staff had unlocked the main barrier gates in time. At this stage everyone was very weary. If the boat had been delayed by bad weather, we would miss that all-important morning con-

nection for the Galway train but it did give time for a wash and brush up and a cup of strong Irish tea, the brew that 'invigorates but does not inebriate' followed by an excellent Irish breakfast in the station restaurant before resuming the journey on the afternoon train.

The steam train journey in those early days could be erratic, with frequent stops for one reason or another. At one time it was to allow a guy to walk casually along the train tapping the carriage wheels with a hammer while the driver and fireman ate their sandwiches on a grass bank, causing a number of male passengers to grumble and occasionally take the names of the Holy Family in vain. Eventually we would get to Athenry and change for the branch line train to Gort.

Arriving thankfully at the house in Georges Street, we would be greeted by my grandmother, who would always be standing at her domain next to the fireplace with its turf fire burning brightly. Nana was not a very demonstrative lady but she would be rubbing her hands excitedly up and down her apron, her eyes bright with a wonderful look of welcome. After a brief hug she would quickly usher us to the table where my father's favourite meal of cabbage and bacon was produced in short order. I can still picture the sight of a large dish of Irish potatoes steaming on the table with their skins splitting to show the flowery soft flesh, which, after the ritual of burning your fingers and thumbs when peeling off the skins was completed, were eaten eagerly topped off by a large knob of home-churned butter. The meal was usually accompanied by a glass of porter for dad, tea for mum but, for me, it was always a glass of fresh milk placed lovingly at my right hand by my grandmother who would always say 'so' when she had completed a particular task. In those early days, coming from a country where food was still rationed and of poor quality, to have home-produced fresh milk, soda bread, eggs and butter was pure luxury.

Our nana, like all her generation, was a truly remarkable woman. To

my child's eye she was a small, slightly built and rather shy lady, dressed in long brown and grey old-fashioned clothes, complete with high-buttoned cotton blouse and woollen cardigan. She sometimes went barefoot around the house and yard when feeding the chickens or a young calf from an enamel milk bucket. She would also only use the electric light until she lit the table oil lamp each night.

From the lofty position of our comfortable modern way of life, it is very difficult to appreciate how hard life would have been for women of her generation. She cooked, as many did in those days, at ground level, with no kitchen range. The fireplace was a large inglenook type with two brick seats built at either end, just right for small children to sit and warm their toes. In the central part, directly over the fire, there was a large wrought iron crane with hooks to carry cooking pots but, more usually, it held the source of a constant hot water supply in the shape of a very large black iron kettle. To get the fire burning brightly to boil the kettle, she would expose the glowing coals with a pair of tongs, put fresh sods of dry turf around the back and sides and, after a short time, it would blaze, creating a wonderful sweet smell which permeated throughout the house day and night.

My grandfather John I remember as a tall, lean man with a ginger moustache. It has been of some regret to me that this first visit as a six-year-old was to be my only opportunity to know him, because he died three years later. As a shoe maker and repairer by trade, I saw him for the first time sitting on a low stool in the workroom cutting sheets of leather over his knees, which he quickly put aside and, while remaining seated, he held me in a bear hug for the first time. I was the first of his grandchildren in that part of the world old enough for to talk to, so he made the most of it by taking me to see the livestock on market days, also around



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the town to meet his friends and long walks in the countryside, ending up by picking blackberries along by the railway line. I sometimes wonder what he thought of that little stranger from over the water.

### Gort—a quiet town

On other visits as I grew through adolescence to a young man, my memories of Gort were always of a quiet town, with the cattle market in the street, few private cars, just hoses and donkey carts, later some tractors but lots of big black heavy bicycles. In 1955 the only cars I can remember at our end of town were owned by Christie Carty who had a great big black American V8 sedan and would, in addition to himself, pack in five adults and two of us youngsters for a day trip to Salthill on a Sunday after Mass. Christie had a great singing voice which improved markedly after he had a glass of punch and I can assure you he kept us entertained all the way home to Gort.

The other car was owned by Josie Gallagher who had a Hillman Minx in 1951 and, in later years, a Morris Oxford. Josie would drive us to all the usual beauty spots which, unlike today, had free car parking. I should also mention that on these trips my mother and I were given a running commentary from Josie and my father at every crossroads and blind bend where an ambush had occurred during the War of Independence or the Civil War, which did much to bring some balance to my mixed heritage.

The children of the town in those days made their own amusement and, apart from the odd impromptu hurling match for the boys, even a walk in the country could be made into an adventure. I would play football in the road at the top end of Georges Street with my cousin Sean and his friends who always played in bare feet. I had the feeling they did this to put me at a disadvantage, because I couldn't get in for a close tackle without causing injury. During my recent visit in 2006 Sean recounted how on frosty days in winter, children would throw buckets of cold water over the road outside their house in Georges Street to make a huge ice slide down the hill towards the Loughrea Road.

Cousin Brian also reminded me how Paddy Burke would always, after working in the heat of the forge, take a stroll across the quiet road to Kelly's pub to receive payment for his labours. Can you imagine what would happen if he

tried to cross Georges Street with the volume of traffic going through the town these days? The poor man would expire with thirst.

I also remember that to order a pint of porter in those days was almost ritualistic in its complexity and the publican had to be master of the black art. The Guinness was drawn from a barrel on a stand behind the bar at room temperature, into a tall white enamel jug, from there into the glasses, which were filled slowly while being held over an enamel bowl and where the inevitable overflow from each glass would cascade. When all the glasses were full, this residue brew from the bowl would be carefully poured back into the jug for the next customer. Quite different from today's semi-frozen concoction which, if they get any colder, will have to served on a stick.

### Fond memories

I had my first glass of porter in Kelly's pub in 1959 when I was eighteen years of age. It was bought for me by a family friend Mick Ruane. He was a great character who wore military-style World War One puttees wound round his lower legs.

During that holiday, my pal Ted and I, out of curiosity, counted thirty-two pubs in the town. Most were just little bars with a shop at the front but each of them was obviously a favourite haunt for local folk in the town and visiting farmers on market day.

Friday was always fish day and, at one time, I accompanied by mother to the market square where a delivery of fresh fish was made. I also had in mind to mail a few postcards back to England and had asked my uncle Mattie, who was a postman, for directions to the nearest post box, which was apparently down the street on the right by the bridge. I walked up and down the street and could not find that post box and eventually went back to my uncle who immediately knew why I had failed. "Our post boxes are green, not red, you eejit," he said. Oh dear, the shame of it, my ancestors must have turned in their graves.

The town cinema in 1959 was, I believe, part of an old barracks with a corrugated iron roof which did nothing at all for the acoustics, especially if you were watching a musical and, if it rained, you couldn't hear the dialogue at all. There were also times when they mixed up the film reels and we would have to sit and watch a repeat performance.

Ted and I loved to go coarse fishing, where you caught your fish, weighed it and then returned it to the river. "Have you ever heard such nonsense?" said my uncle Mattie. We would cycle to Lough Cutra castle where we spent many happy hours. The house and grounds at that time were deserted, the gates open and the lake had more eels than any type of fish we were used to catching.

Gort in 1959 was a typical Irish market town without litter problems associated with today's throw-away society; there were few motor vehicles and no heavy trucks speeding through town, creating noise and exhaust pollution. People in the town could safely cross the road and engage each other in conversation but today that same road effectively divides each side of the town. If ever a bypass road was needed, then the politicians and planners should look no further than Gort.

Perhaps I can be accused of letting nostalgia cloud my memories about a lost age when life was simpler and perhaps seemed happier. Memories of my uncle Colie cutting hay with a scythe and collecting it on a horse-drawn wagon or being driven around a field by him on a horse-drawn harvester like charioteers at the Circus Maximus in Rome. Sadly, I also remember that in those days, there were few jobs or opportunities for people. Most of the children I knew and played with in the street throughout the years had to leave the country to find work by necessity, not choice. Progress can sometimes be very difficult to control and it is natural for those among us of a more mature age to resent too much change. I did, however, find it significant during my last visit that, with the growth of supermarket shopping, an establishment which I believe was once an excellent butcher in Georges Street has now been converted to an estate agent and valuer, which reflects the general growth in the housing market. It was also a nice surprise for me to find some of the town's characters of a more venerable age frequenting the bar of the very modern and comfortable Lady Gregory hotel.

Gort has certainly lost none of its charm and its people are still welcoming and friendly. Throughout its history, it has been through many traumatic and turbulent periods and has survived. I think at the moment it is just holding its breath for that long-promised bypass.



**Fashion in Galway**

BY NIAMH O'DONOVAN

**A** top Irish designer once placed the words Irish, mutton and lamb into the same sentence. This was at the end of the 1990s. However, since the turn of the millennium, great changes have occurred in the Irish fashion industry. Irish women have now become as stylish as their French and Italian counterparts and how, we ask? Because Ireland has it all. With new, exclusive boutiques opening throughout the country, Irish women are spoilt for choice.

Galway city and county have indeed such boutiques offering a lot to the fashion-conscious lady. One such boutique is Madison. Located at 2 Upper Abbeygate Street, Galway, Madison is now moving into its fourth year of fashion. Opened by Kiltartan resident Niamh O'Donovan in 2003, this chic

boutique has continued to grow from strength to strength.

Madison has so many achievements under its designer belt and are pleased to have dressed former Misses Ireland Pamela Flood, Vivienne Doyle and Lynda Duffy as well as tv personalities Maura Deranne and Louise Loughman, to name just some. Indeed proprietrix Niamh herself won the prestigious award of best dressed lady at the Galway races in 2003.

Madison have also had the opportunity to showcase their exclusive range of RTE's *Off the Rails*, TG4's *Passion Fashion* as well as numerous visits to TV3's *Ireland AM* fashion slot.

With their award-winning style and unique new collections added every season, Madison will give you the ultimate shopping experience. This chic boutique carries an extensive range of casual day wear, smart business wear and a magnificent range of occasion and evening wear. Stocking designer collections from Paris, Madrid, Milan, New York and even Australia as well as unique Irish labels, there is something for everyone. Madison also carry an array of wraps, bags and accessories in all colours of the season, making it a one-stop shop for creating a stunning look any time.

To complete your look there is a large selection of hats and head pieces available for purchase or hire and they are delighted to carry an exquisite range by well-known milliner Jamie McEleney, available to order.

Moving to South Galway, Gort has plenty to offer the fashion conscious lady. The town is home to a wide variety of stylish shops to suit all tastes and ages. Each boutique carries a wide range of exclusive labels and staff can advise you on how to build your seasonal wardrobe.

Indeed spotting the trends on the catwalks this winter with weekly fashion shows co-ordinated by Galway style icon Mandy Maher of Catwalk can add even more fun to completing this season's wardrobe. It's the perfect way to shop for busy mums and workaholics. It gives an overall picture of how to dress from head to toe and how to add the finishing touches to your perfect look. Accessorising well can sometimes be the key.

If time is on your side, browse through glossy fashion magazines for the top trends of the season. Here are a few top fashion tips:

- dress to suit your shape; just because it is a key trend this season it may not suit you
- spend on key pieces that will carry you through next season
- accessorise; the ability to accessorise well is a modern accomplishment
- mix and match; get the maximum out of your wardrobe
- grooming; ensure your hair, nails and make-up is tip top; good grooming equals good style

**Catwalk model agency**

BY MANDY MAHER

**T**he agency was established in July 1999. Modelling was something I always had an interest in so, when I was sixteen years old, I travelled to Limerick to Celia Holman Lee agency where I was trained and modelled for some years.

I moved to Galway and couldn't believe that there were hardly any fashion shows on during the various seasons and, if they were on, it was always a Dublin agency that did them. I felt Galway had fabulous girls to do this work and the potential was there to set myself up.

The first September I was open, Catwalk celebrated the first of three wins in the Miss Ireland competition with Vivienne Doyle. Then we repeated our success the following year with Emer Holohan Doyle and, in 2002, Lynda Duffy. We are the only agency in Ireland to actually win the Miss Ireland title three times.

We also have models competing in the World Hairdressing Championships in Paris where another model, Blaithnaid Bohan, won under the guidance of the fantastic and talented hair stylist Mary Kennedy from Bellissimo.

We travel all over the country doing fashion shows, photoshoots and promotional work. We also train people in

grooming and deportment to boost confidence and give tips on how to look well. These classes are held throughout the year. What is fantastic is the local support we get from home, both in Galway city and county. Without it we would not be in business. The first show we did in Gort was three years ago with Patricia Kilkelly of Streams Beauty and John from the Market Hall. It was such a huge success that they extended the show to the beautiful Lady Gregory hotel which has now become an annual event. All proceeds go to the Irish Cancer Society under the guidance of Breege Shaughnessy.

Gort has the most amazing boutiques and it is wonderful to see we have fabulous fashion right on our own doorsteps.



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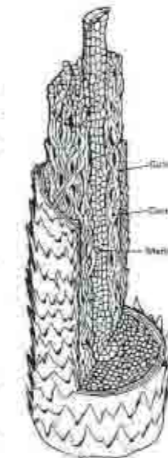
**Hair**  
BY MAI COUNIHAN

**H**air undoubtedly is one of the most important aspects of one's appearance. Take a good look at the condition of your hair. Has it a bouncy, shining, glossy, healthy look, most important before one contemplates style? Hair, like our skin, reflects our general health. Should one feel a degree under, one's hair tends to become lifeless.

Hair is built from the food we eat and is fed through the blood

supply, by the sebaceous glands. A balanced diet containing certain vitamins and minerals is essential if you want glossy, healthy, shining hair.

In the case of greasy hair, the sebaceous glands are over-productive and it is advisable to avoid animal fats, starch, all kinds of oils and salad creams. Take an adequate mineral supply of fresh fruit and vegetables, lean meat and fish, which contains protein and sufficient supplies of carbo-



hydrates, such as potatoes and brown bread.

Premature greyness is caused by a lack of vitamin B. The best sources of this vitamin are kidney beans, yeast, broccoli, cabbage and water cress. A consistent diet of these foods has been known to restore premature greyness to its natural colour. Grey hair is hair that has lost its colour pigment. In most cases, it is hereditary.

Illustrated and magnified in the diagram is a rib of hair. The inner layer is the medulla or secretion; the centre layer is the cortex or colour pigment one loses when one gets grey and is 3/5 of each rib; the outer layer is the cuticle, transparent scales. To make the hair healthy and strong, fill each rib with its natural colour or a desired colour.



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## GRACE (Gort Regional Alliance for Community and Environment)

BY DR NIAMH CLUNE

**G**RACE is a Socially Inclusive Community Development Company. The aim of the company is to promote and develop cohesion, cooperation and communication by acting as an umbrella association for twenty-six established and newly formed groups in the Gort region.

These are: Integrated Rural Development, Beagh; Gort Community Council; Gort Active Retirement Association; We the People of Gort; Gort Family Resource Centre; Gort Chamber of Commerce; St Patrick's Day Committee; No Name Club; Gort Irish County Women's Association (ICA); All Ireland Dancing Festival; Kiltartan Gregory Cultural Society; Little Feet Community Childcare Centre; Gort & District Show; Coole Music School; Wealth from Waste; Gort & District Community Medical Emergency First Responders Group; Kilcreest/Castledaly Heritage Group; Gort and District Community Development Group (FAS); The Lion's Club; The Community Interpreting Service (CIS); Bi-lingual Newsletter; Gort Community Childcare Centre; Coole Voices; Kilcreest/Castledaly Senior Citizens; Brazilian Association of Gort and Gort Embracing Migrants (GEM).

GRACE's activities in the past year involve making submissions to the Gort town plan, to the traffic management plan and to the waste management

draft plan. These submissions involve major consultations with all the GRACE groups as to what might best enhance Gort making it a town to be proud of. GRACE applied for, and was awarded the urban and village renewal scheme grant of €240,000 to refurbish the town square. Work on the town square is due to begin before the end of the year and plans will soon be available for viewing in the public library.

In conjunction with the up-grade of the town square, GRACE has been canvassing the county council and local politicians for a new public toilet.

GRACE won its NRA campaign to have a second entrance/exit off the new N18 dual carriageway and is working closely with Galway county council to make sure that funding for the up-grade of the local road network is in place in order to facilitate the second junction when it is built.

GRACE is also part of the water and sewage campaign team working in partnership with the chamber of commerce.

GRACE projects currently being developed include the Community Interpreting Service (CIS); Gort Embracing Migrants (GEM); PLACE (Participatory Learning and Action for Community and Environment) training programme including PLA, conflict resolution, communication skills, listening skills, strategic planning and proposal writing; Wealth from Waste

(resource recovery park) and support for groups in networking, social inclusion and integrated programme development including funding.

The idea behind GRACE is to give the Gort community a united voice by working within the framework of local agenda 21. LA21 is a process which facilitates sustainable development at community level and builds on local knowledge and expertise. The principle behind local agenda 21 is to respect the social, cultural, economic and environmental needs of not only present but future citizens. It also respects a community in all its diversity and relates that community and its future to the regional, national and international community of which it is a part.

GRACE works with dynamic new partnerships between different groups in order to effect social positive change and development in the town and region of Gort. Working together gives the people of Gort a stronger voice when negotiating with local and national government.

With support and sponsorship from the business community GRACE has just opened its office in Bridge Street, Gort; phone 091 632 525. For further information, please contact 086 847 9494, Dr Niamh Clune, chair GRACE, Kilcrimple, Gort, Co. Galway, mobile: 086 847 9494, email [niamhclune@eir-com.net](mailto:niamhclune@eir-com.net)

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## Adrian Feeney outlines his community work in Gort

I came to live in Gort with my wife Geraldine Nolan, from Crowe Street and my daughter Siabhra in December 1999. Geraldine's father was Eddie Nolan (RIP). Eddie owned a pub and shop, and her mother Birdie ran a hairdressing salon, where the Blackthorn is now located. Geraldine, a primary school teacher was keen to move back home and was fortunate enough to secure a post in Peterswell National School. Prior to this we were living in Turloughmore for one year, following our return from London, where I had spent twenty years. In 2001 my second daughter, Caolainn was born.

I hail from Ardara in county Donegal. My mother ran a bed and breakfast and restaurant and my father worked for the ESB. Our family was very self-sufficient and although we lived in the town we were the proud owners of a small farm, our own orchard and vegetable garden. And like everybody else in Donegal, we had our own bog. My father Tommy Feeney passed away in August of this year and I sadly miss him. My father had green fingers and had a real love of nature. He was able to bring many unusual vegetables (unusual for the time, that is) to the dinner table as he was continually experimenting with his poly-tunnel. My father was originally from Carney in Sligo, but moved to Ardara when he married my mother, a local woman. Tommy was a real community man. He was responsible for installing and erecting the first Christmas street lights in Ardara and for bringing piped television to the town. I suppose you can see history repeating itself as I have made my life in Gort and initiated Christmas lights for Gort once again and organised broadband for the town. We now have broadband in Gort. This gives a considerable competitive advantage to local businesses and is a great resource for our schools. Recently, Eircom announced it was making huge efforts to complete broadband roll-out country-wide. When the chamber secured €2,000,000 and successfully competed with other towns to bring broad-

band to Gort, it really put us ahead of the game.

I have spent the last eight years employed as a mediator/community development worker in Galway Rural Development. Based in Tuam, with outreach offices in Glenamaddy, Dunmore, Williamstown and Oughterard. I have also worked in Loughrea and Ballinasloe. I understand how applying the principles of community development can bring about critical improvements to an area and I have a good understanding of rural needs working in this area for eight years.

In June 2004 I ran for the local elections as an independent community candidate. Although not successful in securing a seat, it was a wonderful experience and whetted my appetite to continue my voluntary work in the town. I was aware of deficits in the community and wanted those needs to be addressed. I believed the Chamber of Commerce was the best vehicle to begin work on addressing some of those needs. Put simply, what benefits community is ultimately good for business, and what is good for business benefits the community. I became chairperson of Gort Chamber of Commerce in September 2004 and worked hard to secure real and tangible benefits for the people of Gort and its environs during my term in office. I am proud to stand over the records of achievements of the Chamber of Commerce during my tenure as chairperson.

One of the issues addressed by the chamber was the second access junction from the N18 dual carriageway to Gort. This second entrance is simply vital for Gort. It will provide much needed access to the larger centres of population, business and employment, as well as making Gort more accessible. We need to do something about the nightmare of traffic congestion. The N18 cannot be viewed as complete until this link is in place.

Committed members of Gort Chamber of Commerce were part of the delegation, which met with the national roads authority to put the case

for such an entrance. Based on statistics provided by the delegation and the strong case made for the necessity of the junction, the NRA has confirmed funding for the second access to Gort.

Liaising with Galway county council about traffic management is a new departure for the chamber. The council now consults with the chamber to ensure that all traffic management plans, including the provision of parking, location of pedestrian crossings and traffic lights, maintenance and improvements to footpaths, and disabled access is carried out in a way that meets the needs of Gort as identified by the chamber and other local groups. The council has embraced the input.

Another issue was the provision of adequate sewage and water supply for Gort. An active sub-committee has been established which liaises with Galway county council. Monies have been earmarked for this project for some time and the Chamber is making every effort to bring it to fruition.

I am particularly happy when I see the great improvements that have taken place over recent months at the VEC building at Georges Street. I have worked closely with VEC CEO, through the auspices of the chamber, having initially looked at the possibility of achieving our goal through a public-private partnership. Now, following many months work by a dedicated team, we have in Gort, a wonderful community facility. The building will house a community playground, a drop in centre for the elderly, a family resource centre and a communal garden, and in time a centre for further education, a one-stop-shop.

I am firmly committed to the principal of Life Long Learning. Having returned to full time education as a mature student to complete my MA in Media and Communications Studies at London university and a BSc in social science, I am acutely aware that educational opportunities are not limited by age. Later, as a lecturer I saw the deep commitment mature students gave to their studies. Working with GRD, the value of education to the individual is



The Feeney family Geraldine and Adrian with their children Caolainn (left) and Siabhra (right)

something I see on a daily basis. People want to learn, they want to have up-to-date and relevant skills that will stand to them in the work place. Everything I have seen in my own academic and professional life bears this out. The enormously successful Community Development Diploma course which I brought to Gort and which is run by GRD and NUI, Galway adequately illustrates my point. Many tangible and practical benefits have accrued to Gort as a result of this course. The spin off groups and organisations, that had their origin in the diploma course, are now beginning to blossom.

At the instigation of the chamber, this year for the first time, monies previously available but not accessed under the urban renewal grant plan have been secured for Gort. A new street lighting scheme, in sympathy with the Georgian architecture of the Market Square will be in place by the end of the year. Deidre Collins of GRD played an invaluable role in doing the preparatory work on the initial grant application. I personally visited other communities that had accessed this funding, took photographs and discussed with other groups the best way to put this proposal forward. This paved the way for other community groups to access the €250,000 grant from Galway County Council. The lights will be installed before Christmas this year. This is the first phase and hopefully next year more funding can be accessed.

Another exciting and innovative project to receive the support of the

chamber is the Coole Park project. Now in its second year this project utilises the wonderful amenity that has been enjoyed for many years. The cultural education centre plan has been prepared for the Friends of Coole.

When implemented, the plan will see the development of a national centre at Coole for nature studies and cultural education, an exciting community cultural facility and ultimately, a year round tourist attraction for the area. There will be something of benefit for all members of the community, not least local schools and drama groups, artists and retirement organisations. The unique thing about the project at Coole is that its development is being fostered by a cooperation of groups, all working towards the same goal; it is an impressive concentration of effort. It's wonderful to see what can be achieved when we all sing from the same sheet.

The need for this type of flagship facility to promote the West of Ireland has been recognised and recommended by various reports including The Galway county heritage plan 2004-2008, the Galway County Strategy for economic, Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012, and developing sustainable tourism in Galway 2003-2012.

Despite a fairly full schedule and the many demands on my time, I have a special regard for the No Name Club. It was through the club that I first became involved in community work in Gort and I have served as chairman for the last three years. It is a country-wide

organisation with over 10,000 members. The club supports young people in such a way that they can lead their own peer group, taking on organisational and practical tasks, experiencing a real sense of responsibility and ensuring a friendly reception for all patrons of the club. All activities are carried out in an alcohol-free atmosphere, which is the main ethos of the club. I enjoy working with young people and can see the benefits of encouraging them to think, plan and organise for themselves and to take an active part in their community.

I'm PRO for Gort Show day and chairperson of the St Patrick's day committee for the last two years. It is a role I thoroughly enjoy. We run a

'blind date' fundraiser for the parade. Like all committees we welcome new volunteers and I would encourage anyone interested in community or voluntary work to go ahead and get involved. It really brings a sense of achievement and personal satisfaction, as well as improving things in a practical way. It also is a great way to get to know your neighbours, your community and to make a real difference.

Flagship educational and social resources, cultural and community facilities, new housing and increased business opportunities are all in the immediate future for Gort.

Our dream is to add to those successes. We want to see a larger comprehensive community health service, the re-opening of the western rail corridor and the continued expansion of business opportunities for the area. The Gort chamber of commerce will continue to work for and on behalf of the people of Gort to make these goals a reality.

The highlight of the year for me was the visit of president McAleese. Her interest in the work of our many voluntary organisations was recognition of our achievements. It was a proud day for Gort and I was particularly proud to be part of it as the Chamber representative.

Finally, I want to say how much I enjoy living in Gort and being part of its community life. I want to thank the people of the town and surrounding area for making me feel welcome: it is here I want to stay.



# Raftery, the people's poet

BY PEADAR Ó CONAIRE

Anthony Raftery was born in Cill Aodáin, a small village near Kiltimagh, county Mayo circa 1779. He was blinded at a young age (by smallpox) and learned to play the violin possibly with the help of Mrs Taafe, mother of the local landlord, who charitably cared for him after he became blind. Folklore sources quoted by Douglas Hyde assert that Anthony was the only member of his family who survived the small-pox outbreak. Hyde's sources (also quoted by Lady Gregory) maintain that Raftery had to leave his native place towards the end of the eighteenth century because of taking a horse belonging to the landlord, Frank Taafe and riding it recklessly leading to its death.

Some scholars in the modern era suggest that this explanation regarding his departure from home is too simplistic and that it had more to do with the young poet's commentary on social events such as the Year of the French and the Rising of 1798. There is no solid proof to back either scenario but we can be quite certain that the blind poet Raftery arrived in Galway towards the end of the 1700s and most probably never returned home. He spent the rest of his life wandering from town to town, mostly in south Galway, playing the fiddle and composing poetry. His son, who could also play the fiddle, joined a circus.

To understand the success of Raftery as a folk poet we must look at the social milieu that existed in the West of Ireland at that time. He lived at a time of social and political unrest, of landed gentry and a deprived, subdued, dispossessed peasantry. Diseases were rampant among the lower classes (the majority of the population) and poverty was endemic in both countryside and towns. The majority of people got little formal education excepting those who could avail of the local Hedge School. The quality of housing, especially in country areas was extremely poor, many houses being little more than hovels. Fear of death from starvation or disease was a constant reality for people whose precarious state

of existence fostered a strong belief in 'piseoga', the evil eye, 'síoga' etc. Irish, although not the language of commerce or politics was the common language of the working classes and the peasantry and would have been understood, if sometimes despised by many among the landed gentry. The printed word was the prerogative of the rich, but a treasury of heroic tales, legends and other stories from the past was maintained through unbroken oral tradition. Fireside entertainment was provided by eloquent local seanchaithe (storytellers) who could regale a gathering with fantastic accounts of battles, love stories and adventures of heroic Ireland, often interspersed with verses of Fenian lays. Bearing all this in mind it is not hard to understand that Raftery, with his blend of music and verse, was a very welcome guest in the houses he visited. Also Raftery's itinerant way of life enabled him to gather news and gossip much prized by the people.

When one considers the severe restrictions his blindness placed on his learning opportunities the quality and scope of his poetry is truly amazing. Some scholars argue that he lacks the technical finesse, and vision of earlier Irish poets, but such lacking is more than compensated for in his handling of light and serious subjects, maintaining his chosen metre and rhyme even in very long poems. Subjects dealt with in his poetry include religion, moral issues, politics, history and love in its many shades and forms.

Lady Gregory, who collected accounts of Raftery from local people and published them in *Poets and Dreamers*, gives us an interesting insight into how the poet overcame his disability and gained knowledge which he put to good use in his poetic references. A woman told her, "He used to stop sometimes with my uncle that was a hedge schoolmaster in those times in Ballylee, and that was very fond of drink and, when he was drunk, he'd take off his clothes and run naked through the country. But at evening he'd open the school and

neighbours would gather into him and he'd teach them through the night and there Raftery would be in the middle of them".

Yeats, who came to Ballylee for the first time in 1896, took a keen interest in Raftery's poetry. He recalls in *The Celtic Twilight (Dust Hath Closed Helen's Eye)* hearing an old woman sing Raftery's poem about Mary Hynes. This woman knew both the poet and the beautiful Mary. This is what the old woman had to say about Raftery: "He was nearly blind and had no way of living but to go round and to mark some house to go to, and then all the neighbours would gather to hear. If you treated him well he'd praise you but if you did not he'd fault you in Irish. He was the greatest poet in Ireland and he'd make a song about that bush if he happened to stand under it". A weaver told Yeats, "His poetry was the gift of the Almighty, for there are three things that are the gift of the Almighty—poetry and dancing and principles".

There is no doubt that Raftery possessed considerable innate ability but it is equally true to say that he must have actively fostered his natural gift by availing of whatever 'casual' education he could get from hedge schoolmasters, seanchaithe, preachers, *reacairí* and other poets/singers of his time. He classified himself as a professional poet and did not take kindly to people who composed poetry as a pastime (his dispute with the Callinan brothers sprang from this deeply held view).

## Poems/songs

Douglas Hyde collected fifty-three of Raftery's poems for his book *'Amhráin agus Dánta Raifteirí'*, (Dublin 1933) but it is thought many more were lost including a poem composed by the poet on his deathbed. Raftery made one of his most famous poems about the beautiful Mary Hynes of Ballylee. An old woman told W B Yeats: "I often saw Mary Hynes, she was handsome indeed. She had two bunches of curls beside her cheeks and they were the colour of silver. I was at her wake too - she had seen too much of the world."



Raftery's depiction of himself—a verse from *Mise Raifteirí*, Killeen cemetery

She died of the fever some time before the Great Famine. The song has acquired a variety of airs over the years but it was traditionally sung to the same air as *Anach Cuain*, Raftery's well-known lament. Hereunder is a translation of the fifth verse of the song.

"Oh, Mary Hynes is my choice of ladies,  
For matchless face and bewitching eyes;  
The host of learned scholars of Erin,  
One half her fairness could hardly write.  
Don't talk of Venus or Deirdre's true love,  
Or Helen whose beauty filled Troy with spears,  
The blossom of Erin outshines their glory,  
The bright hued posy of Ballylee."

*Anach Cuain* is a lament for those who drowned in a boating tragedy on Lough Corrib in 1828. Thirty-one people as well as some sheep set off from Annaghdown for the fair in Galway, in an old boat. When they were within two miles of their destination a sheep put its hoof through the bottom of the boat. Seeing the water coming in a man took off his coat and stuffed it into the hole. This only made matters worse as a board came loose and the boat very quickly sank. Nineteen young peo-

ple drowned. Some scholars think that the song as it has come down to us is not in its entirety the work of Raftery but a compilation of two songs, one by a local poet named Cosgrove and the other by Raftery. It is argued that Raftery would be unlikely to have the details of local people expressed in the song.

The following is a translation of the first verse of the song by Mrs Costello of Tuam in her book *Amhráin Mhuighe Seola* 1923.

"If my health is spared  
I'll be long relating of  
the boat that sailed out  
of Anach Cuain,  
And the keening after of  
mother and father,  
And child by the  
harbour the mournful  
cruon.

O King of Graces, who  
died to save us,  
'Twere a small affair but

for one or two,

But a boat load bravely in calm day  
sailing,

Without storm or rain to be swept to  
doom."

As previously stated Raftery never returned to his native Killeadan in Mayo but he never forgot it. In the song *Cill Aodáin* he tells us that it is his firm intention to make the trip as he lavishly praises the village of his childhood.

"Now with the coming of spring the days  
will be stretching,  
And after the Feast of St. Bridget 'tis  
home I will go,  
And I never will stop but shall ever be  
going,  
Till I find myself roving through the  
County Mayo.

The first night in Claremorris I hope to  
put over,  
And in Balla below it the cruiskeens will  
flow;  
In Kiltimagh then I'll be living in clover,  
Near the place where my love is and the  
house that I know."

The most amazing poem composed by Raftery is *Caismirt na Sceiche*, a poem made up of a prologue and ninety four-line stanzas, in which the poet narrates the history of Ireland

from earliest times to the war of the kings (1689-91). In the prologue he describes how he sought shelter from heavy rain under a thorn bush, somewhere near Headford. The bush offered poor protection and so the poet retired to a house in the locality where he was well looked after. Next day passing by the bush he pointed out his displeasure to it. The bush challenged him to a poetic duel, boasting of its great age and proceeded to recount the great events of Irish history.

That a poor, blind poet possessed such vast knowledge of the history of Ireland is truly astonishing. One wonders where or how exactly he acquired such knowledge or how he managed to compose and recite a poem of such length (400 lines) and scope so that it stuck in the minds of his listeners. The first recording of the poem was made by Douglas Hyde some fifty years after the poet's death.

"One August day I chanced to be,  
Near Headford in the pouring rain,  
I moved aside, quite sensibly,  
Shelter near hedge or bush to gain."  
(from the prologue)

The bush challenged the poet...

"If you come poet a duel demanding,  
I stand before you here on guard,  
An ancient I, long ages standing  
Approach no nearer with your sword."

The bush tells its great age and proceeds  
to relate the history of Ireland:

"One thousand and one hundred years,  
Before the Ark was built I grew,  
Since then I have been standing here,  
And many's the tale I have for you..."  
(translation by Criostoír O'Flynn)

An interesting aspect of Raftery's life as a poet was his rivalry with the Callinan brothers, Marcus and Patsy, poets who lived near Craughwell. Some scholars think that this rivalry was no more than petty jealousy between men of talent living in close proximity. Others feel it is a relic of an older tradition when the great ruling families such as the O'Briens and the O'Donnells had their own hereditary bards. Indeed a collection of poems, consisting of some seven thousand lines, called 'The Contention of the Poets' is the result of a squabble between several poets of great Gaelic houses. Raftery in a sense lived the life of a Gaelic bard and was the inheritor of an ancient Gaelic tradition; always ready to praise generous patrons and hospitable people, always adept at 'putting down' people who did not look after him properly.



Here are some lines of *An Sciolladh* a poem which indicates the deep antipathy that existed between the Callinans and Raftery. It may have been a joint effort by the brothers but the late Seán O Ceallaigh, who wrote a book about the Callinans' poetry attributed it to Marcus (*Filíocht na gCallánán*, Dublin 1967).

"*Siúd mar a tharla ins an aimsir chéanna, File de dhal gan radharc gan léargas, A rádh de ghlór gan chiall gan réasún, Go gcuirfeadh sé gobán i mo bhéalsa.*"

A rough translation would be:

"It's how it happened at that time, That a poet without a trace of sight, Said in a voice without sense or reason, That he would gag me and leave me silent."

*Bhíos ag sciolladh na tíre ag scóladh na ndaoine,*

*Is ag tógáil a chíosa sna bailteachaí, Is mura bhfaighe seisean dídean is a ghibhis a líonadh,*

*Beidh a dheimheas i bhfaobhar ag bearradh aige."*

Which translates something like:

"He who shouts his satires and belittles people, And collects his rent in the villages, If he's not given shelter and the best of feeding, He sharpens his shears for the shearing."

It is said that Raftery cried on hearing this hard-hitting poem for the first time. His response was an equally scathing poem denouncing Callinan—*Fiach Mharcus Uí Challandáin*, in which he portrays his victim as a wild animal being hunted by the pack all over Connaught and into Munster until he is eventually killed. There are bonfires lit to celebrate his death.

The poets were reconciled later and Raftery spent some time in the Callinan household near Craughwell as a guest

of his old adversaries. In fact he asked for Patsy Callinan to be called to write down a poem he composed on his deathbed. The man of the house said he could write it himself but forgot most of the lines and the poem was lost to posterity.

Raftery's poetry covered a wide range of subjects including social/political issues such as Catholic emancipation, the Galway election and the Ribbonmen. Moral issues were examined, such as *Bean an Fhir Rua*. A substantial number of his poems are about people, for example Antóin O Dálaigh, an t-Athair William, Brídín Bhéasaigh, Máire Stanton, Peigí Mistéal etc. There are many references to drink and the poet's love/hate relationship with it. For example *Caismirt an Phótaire Leis an Uisce Beatha* and inevitably the poet's confession *Áithrí Raifteirí*, in which he traces his life of sinfulness and asks God for forgiveness.

Raftery died on Christmas eve, 1835 and was buried in Kileeneen cemetery. His coffin was made and his grave dug by the local people who knew him for many years. He was buried by the light of a candle which remained alight despite the strong wind that was blowing. His grave remained unmarked until



Raftery's headstone in Kileeneen cemetery

Lady Gregory, with the help of local people, discovered it. She, with the help of her learned friends Edwards Martyn and Douglas Hyde and some others raised the necessary funds for a headstone.

On 26<sup>th</sup> August 1900 the headstone was unveiled and blessed. There were many tributes paid to the dead poet and orations made in his memory. The stone bears his surname only, Rachtúraigh, for that's how the blind poet from Mayo was known by the people of north and south Galway.

## Drugs: abuse, addiction and habit

BY BRENDAN QUINN

**D**rugs, illegal because they're dangerous, not dangerous because they're illegal. Drugs: what are they? All medicines are drugs but not all drugs are medicines.

Many drugs abused nowadays were once medicines, and some of them remain freely available, though more refined. Other drugs (like cannabis and morphine) have produced useful medicines in the treatment of chronic illness. The main point is that ALL drugs can do harm, but most can do good. It is the way that they are used that matters most.

### Abuse, addiction and habits

Abuse: when someone takes a substance or persists with a habit though knowing it to be harmful to the person or the person's family, friends or environment. Most drugs, medicines and even many foods give us a benefit of some kind: antibiotics treat infections, caffeine is a stimulant, fish-oils help our skin, hair and brain-cells grow; these are all examples of USE of substances.

MIS-use or abuse occurs when the taker ignores the safety advice and either takes something too often, or in too big a dose, or tries combining it with other substances in a deliberate attempt to get a kick, feed a craving or even just because they think it's doing them good.

### Habits and addiction are thieves in the night

What habits have you? None? I doubt it. Some of the most addictive substances in the world are in every-day use, but not really harmful; take caffeine for example. Try to stop taking tea or coffee for say five days and you will go through withdrawal symptoms like headaches, craving and hunger. After five days though, many people report their taste is sharper and ability to smell food. The next cup of tea/coffee is usually a real treat.

Nicotine, probably the most addictive substance in the world, is a powerful drug and the most abused on earth, not unlike caffeine it is very addictive, a stimulant and a drug that makes the taker feel good by being a stimulant. It

is psychologically very addictive, with many users finding they need a cigarette after a journey/meal/with a drink or first thing with a cuppa. Physically it is less harmful, so sudden stopping of it will do no harm to the body.

What many people don't know is nicotine does **not** cause cancer; it is a colourless, odourless stimulant and the taking of it in, for example, chewing-gum or any other form is just as addictive as cigarettes but a LOT less harmful, because with the cigarettes you get a dose of tar and 500 or so other chemicals into your lungs directly.

Alcohol is a very addictive drug, causing a 'feel-good' that makes users want more. It is psychologically very addictive but, unlike nicotine, is also physically very addictive, causing terrible suffering during withdrawal (cold turkey).

Regular use of these substances can easily become a habit and often to feed a habit you need more...and more...and more...and then you are into addiction.

"I'm not addicted...I just do it once a week, maybe twice". So then stop it. Go on...give it a break for say a month, then we all can agree it's not an addiction, probably just a habit. BUT, if you spend all of that time off wondering when you can start again, missing your craving and promising you'll make up for the off period by doing it twice as much, then it's definitely a strong habit and maybe worse. A sure sign of addiction is when the habit begins to interfere with work/life balance, so the addict craves their habit more than say, time with their family, friends, or even their work. How many of us have seen the Christmas turkey stuffed along with the other groceries under a 'safe spot' in the pub, while the messenger gets more and more hammered and the family get more and more anxious? Hardly a healthy pursuit, but a good example of tipping the balance towards addiction: when a habit becomes a compulsion.

The most frightening part of many addictions is the more you get the more you need. Many articles recently have

warned about the potential to abuse medicines, particularly those with codeine in them. Codeine is a good example of how a medicinal drug can become an addictive drug slowly, surely but most of all, sneakily. Many of you will have noticed a relative, friend or colleague needing two solphadeine, or Nurofen Plus or a cough bottle every single morning before they even have a cup of tea...hardly a healthy habit and probably not a medical need. The body naturally adjusts to many drugs, so the more you take, the more you might need, and eventually the dose gets so high that it starts to do more harm than good. Even vitamins can do harm if abused. The commonest side-effects of overdose of vitamins A and D are almost identical to the side-effects of a lack of these vitamins. Many prescription medicines are taken day in day out, causing a need for more frequent and higher doses and yet their recommended use is for short periods of three to five days or less. The valium-type drugs are a good example of this.

Illegal drugs are no different. Take heroin for example. It is a narcotic (sleep inducing) drug related to morphine and even to codeine. All narcotics cause drowsiness, dulling of the brain, loss of co-ordination and reduced breathing. They are strongly habit-forming and very addictive, both physically and psychologically. In combination with alcohol, as they often are, the risk is doubled...at least.

Cannabis has been in the headlines recently because it is known to help reduce nausea and vertigo as well as pain in certain chronic illnesses like motor Neurone Disease or advanced MS. This is true, though the legal forms used in most cases are an extract of only one of the many drugs found (THC) in cannabis herbs. It is only mildly habit-forming, much less so than tobacco or even caffeine, but cannabis has been associated and even proven to be damaging in pregnancy, to reduce growth and mental development, but worst of all is known after regular use to induce an irreversible form of schizophrenia-like mental illness, from which we

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have come to associate cannabis with the word 'dope'.

Of all the 'illegal' drugs, cocaine is the grand master when it comes to self harm. It is so powerfully addictive and especially in its newer crystal forms that users will do anything for their next score. Despite all this, it is actually physically less harmful than heroin and other narcotics. It has become very, very available and is one of the most psychologically addictive drugs. Cocaine users tend to be very impatient, aggressive, focused and they race around with heightened senses, heart-rate and blood-pressure. Needless to say this drug probably kills more than almost all the other illegal drugs put together, by murder, assault, suicide, overdose and drug-induced accidents or infections.

The drug cocaine was considered such a tonic it was once added to many foods and remedies and was originally used as an anaesthetic. The term 'cola' was used in many old medicinal tonics and when a company produced one containing cocaine, they gave it the name Coca Cola.

Other great stimulants include amphetamines, the 'speed' class of drugs abused by many, but most of all in sport. Sport has become rife with drugs, to the point that modern athletics, cycling, swimming and endurance sports are almost all a farce. The athletes are

causing their bodies to change sex, to pump too hard, grow too big too fast, until they fall apart and all in the hope of winning a medal. They still remain ahead of the drugs testers to the point where many papers like the *New York Times* refuse to report on athletics. Interestingly enough they still report on basketball and baseball and tennis, all of whom have refused to fully honour the world anti-doping rules.

**"Sure we're from the country, there's no drugs here."**

There's heroin in Gort; and cannabis and ecstasy and cocaine. There are dealers, up the mountains, down by the sea, in town twice a week. The drugs are everywhere and dealers not far behind. We can hardly avoid them, but should not...we should ask people what they're doing meeting up with school kids, watch out for the same-time-same-place traders, watch our children's development and even their spending and remember one thing, the world's most damaging two drugs are available in almost every shop in Ireland, even to our kids: cigarettes and alcohol. We should look out for changes in appearance, permanent 'cold' symptoms, loss of 'form', sleeping very late the next day. Many drugs leave tell-tale signs; powder residue, resin burns/smells, rolled up notes, tin-foil gone missing. The sight of a bastard dealer (no apology for the language)

sitting on a pub toilet seat dispensing heroin into rolled-up foil 'deals' is sickening, even more so if it turns out to be your brother, son, friend or whatever, being sold their rubbish later that night. The fact you can see this go on outside the Dublin corporation offices in daylight in Harolds Cross any day any time, and in hundreds of sites all over Ireland is offensive but it happens and will continue to do so if we allow it. How would you feel if the first thing you did to stop someone's habit was to ID them in the morgue?

Abuse kills and harms and we can all help...but do we? If you need help or know someone who needs it...be brave...pass them a number, before their number comes up.

**Addiction services (Outreach)** Western Health Board. 755 883 Merlin Park 0905 44103 (Ballinasloe); **Samaritans** 1850 609 090/091 561 222; **AA** 091 567 807; **Our Lady's Ennis** 065 682 1414/Bushy Park 065 684 0450/Clarecare 065 682 8178; **Overcount** (a website dedicated to 'over the counter' medicines addiction) [www.overcount.org.uk](http://www.overcount.org.uk); **Drug Awareness Programme** [www.dap.ie](http://www.dap.ie) a brilliant information resource for Ireland; **Europe against drugs** [www.eurad.net](http://www.eurad.net) a lobby countering vote-catching slackening of controls in Europe.

## The Frank Lally Project

BY AUSTIN MCINERNEY

It's no lie to state that we've all been 'caught' for 'this fund raiser' and 'that club' and 'this charity' and it never seems to end, there's always an angle around the corner designed solely to remove your money from your pocket and lets be fair its usually for something that you cant see the benefit of.

But then you see such schemes as a children's playground for Gort, the rebuilding of the Orchard Centre and parting with the precious euro isn't so hard after all. And then along came the Frank Lally project. Of course it had no name at the start but boy did it get a good one, more of this later.

The start began when Frank Murray from Scotland, who is liaison officer for GAI to the Brazilians in Gort, was chatting to RTE one day. RTE asked was there any thing in Gort worth doing up that could be covered in an up-coming series called Community Challenge, where a task would be given within a time frame and the local people come together and try and succeed. While all this was happening the cameras would be rolling.

Immediately Frank recognised the potential to get the long-dilapidated

and vandalised dressing rooms at St Colman's park done up to the benefit of the Gort soccer club, Samba soccer, Gort camogie club, St Colmans football club and Gort RFC not to mention any other club or group that would need them. And so the ball started rolling. All that was needed now was an or-

ganising committee and then Frank turned to the five locals who are slightly known for organising a thing or two, namely the hugely successful *Reach For The Stars* competitions which helped raise money for various local charities and also Cancer Care West after a similar show in Galway. The group known, as *Five Star Events* comprised Austin McInerney, David Murray, Martin Ahern, Kevin Glynn and P J Downey.

This, of course, was a challenge too hard to turn down and from the very start it was obvious that local plumber Kevin Glynn was to be the project manager.

Sideline Productions were the company producing the show for RTE and they put the pressure on from the off. Presenters Gary Miley and Katriona McFadden and the sideline crew became regular visitors to Gort for the duration of the project.

The task was laid out in front of us, finish it in ten weeks. For those not in the know the property at this time had no doors, windows, no proper roofing, no plumbing and would have been a laughing stock in down town Kabul.

It was then we knew we needed a name and we hit pure gold with the Frank Lally Project. A name that was fitting for the man and would strike a chord with so many of the locals who had nothing but fond memories.

Frank Lally, RIP, is fondly remembered by many in Gort for his life-long selfless dedication to sport in Gort over many years. Frank always expressed his disappointment with the state of the dressing rooms and this project is named after him in the clear knowledge that he would give it his full backing. For over twenty years he served as a dedicated officer of the Gort club. During much of that time, Frank managed under-age teams in hurling and football to county honours, and greatly enjoyed the success. He became one of South Galway's most prominent referees during the 1960s and refereed numerous hurling games when Galway hurling Board was set up in the 1970s. One of Frank's great passions was singing and he was a member of Coole Voices Choir and the Gort



Canon Michael Kelly with Fr Peter Joyce and the Lally family at the official opening of the new changing rooms in St Colmans park

male choir. Five Star hit the ground running and a launch was organised in Ambiance where many local tradesmen and business people were invited for their hopeful participation or sponsorship. From the off the enthusiasm was overwhelming. The room packed and the promises of help and monies came pouring in.

It would require four or five pages for this writer to describe the following ten weeks, the toil and labour put in by so many from qualified electricians, plumbers down to the half useless but totally priceless labourers. The contributions both physically and financially were astounding. Some had kids that would benefit, others were from the clubs who would utilise the building and were sick of changing out of the boot of their car and plenty others had no ties to the property and would not reap any reward from their improvement only to know that they helped in some way.

Everything was overseen by Kevin Glynn who sacrificed much of his personal and professional time throughout the entire project.

Money was obviously a major factor but with the considerably low cost help of local and national suppliers, the free labour by the pros and a couple of fund raisers, the books always stayed close to the black at all times.

A fun day was organised in St Colmans Park on a searing hot day with games, events, barbecues and the now famous dunking machine. There was a fun table quiz in O'Donnells Bar which was well supported.

Of course everything did not run super smooth with plenty of hiccups

along the way, last minute redesigns, no shows, lack of materials and of course the weather. Remember the pressure would have been hard enough but most of the time there was an RTE camera in your face hoping to get a bit of controversy or aggravation, great TV but not good for the nerves.

To the bitter end the work kept going with a truly frantic last forty-eight hours but, with Kevin Glynn losing weight by the stone a minute, the lights were eventually blown out.

Two spacious dressing rooms with fully tiled open showers, toilets, plant room, store room and referees' room together with viewing veranda, driveway and car parking area. All painted and superbly presented. Ten weeks over and done with.

But making a long story short the ten weeks culminated in a launch party at the pitch where the attendance was over two hundred. The unveiling of a Irish Stone Products plaque commemorating the project, the presence of the extended Lally family and the amount of participants and workers was great to see.

The building was blessed by Canon Kelly, balloons released by the camogie underage girls and the all-important thank you's from a tearful and clearly delighted Kevin Glynn.

RTE as always were present and called it a wrap and set off to edit their footage for a one-hour programme on this project and five more around the country. At the time of writing we were informed that the Gort programme would be going out first in the series as it was the strongest.

The list of the helpers in the project is simply too long and too dangerous to publish here for fear we forget someone.

From those who gave €1,000 to those who made some sandwiches, you should all be proud of yourselves as now our excellent playing pitches have changing rooms that will be the envy of visiting teams.

This is a very concise description of a very hectic ten weeks. For a full detailed description read Kevin Glynn's up-coming auto-biography entitled *Sorry Martha*.



Five Star team with the RTE community challenge presenter Katriona McFadden. Kevin Glynn, front left, was the project co-ordinator.

photograph by D O'Reilly



# Helping people to Cope in our community

BY JUSTIN McDERMOTT

Our community, county and country continues to develop and grow at unprecedented levels. Wealth and prosperity are now as much a daily experience as poverty and emigration were thirty years ago. In the midst of this phenomenal development and growth we all need to recognise that large sections of our community are struggling. In addressing the needs of these people there are a number of charitable organisations which work at supporting them in dealing with the trauma they face in their daily lives. One such Galway charity is Cope.

Cope, formerly Galway Voluntary Social Services, was set up in the mid 1970s to address the growing social services needs of the community at that time. The organisation has expanded in many ways mirroring the growth of the city and county. From our origins in the mid-70s we now provide a wide range of services and supports in Galway city and county, in three main sectors of social services.

Cope is the largest provider of emergency accommodation and support services for people who are homeless in the west of Ireland. These services include Fairgreen Shelter for homeless men, Osterley Lodge for single homeless women, the Cope Family Service and the Homeless Referral Service. To give a better idea of the numbers of people in our community experiencing homelessness, according to our annual report 2005 Cope provided emergency accommodation and support services to 676 men, 194 women and 93 families (parent(s) with a child/children). These figures show that although homelessness in Galway may not be as visual as in Dublin, the issue is as real and challenging in our community. It is the support that organisations like Cope provide which is so essential to assist people out of the vicious cycle of homelessness.

Cope provides domestic violence services in Galway city and county. Waterside House in Galway city is a refuge for women and children who

experience domestic violence. The Waterside House outreach service provides a community outreach service for women who need support and advice. Children too are affected by domestic violence and Waterside House childcare professionals are available to support children who have experienced violence in the home. In 2005 the refuge had 174 admissions for women and 284 admissions for children. Not all women who are experiencing abuse need to access the refuge. For those women, Cope provides an outreach worker who can offer support, information and advice, throughout Galway city and county, helping them to explore all their options.

A third range of services, which Cope provides, is our service for older vulnerable people. This includes Meals on Wheels in Galway, which provides over 36,000 meals to older people throughout Galway City each year. Meals on Wheels have over 100 volunteers who assist in the preparation and delivery of the meals. Cope also provides two day centres for older people, at Francis Street in Galway city and Sonas day centre in the Walter Macken Flats in Mervue.

My role in Cope is as fundraising and public awareness coordinator; this gives me the unique opportunity to highlight the profile of the charity at a local and national level. This is not however how I began my career in Cope. I started as a care worker in our Fairgreen Shelter for homeless men; I hate to use a cliché but this was truly a 'life changing experience'. As a Gort and Galway native I, like most people, had no idea of the levels or realities of homelessness in Galway. It was this experience more than any that has given me a unique insight into the positive effect that our services can have on the lives of people who need them. This in turn is my motivation to work at rais-

Justin McDermott



ing funds for, and the profile of, Cope as I have seen the immensely positive effect that this can have on service users, staff and the organisation as a whole.

The past twelve months have been a watershed for Cope fundraising, starting with Sile Seoige and her fantastic success on You're A Star Charity Special in August 2005. The levels of goodwill that still exists continually move me. I am honoured on so many occasions to have the opportunity to meet such wonderful people who give of their time and energy in donating and raising funds for Cope. The level of generosity which the Irish public have shown towards Cope is most gratifying.

It is with the support of the community that Cope can continue to provide the quality services, which we provide and have been providing, in Galway city and county for nearly thirty years now. We continue to grow to meet the challenges that the people who need our assistance face. An essential part in this growth is that Cope continues to inform and educate the public on the issues facing both our service users and our services. It is with a greater awareness and the continuing generosity of the people of Gort, and all of Galway city and county, that we can all work together in 'helping us, help them Cope'.

For more information on the issues raised in this article, or on the services that Cope provide please visit [www.cope.ie](http://www.cope.ie)

Justin is fundraising and public awareness coordinator for Cope.

# Neighbourhood Watch

BY DAMIEN McGRATH

This scheme originated in 1996 and has been active on and off since. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> last they held their AGM and elected seven new officers. Since then coordinators were selected to take charge of every street and zone. These people make themselves available to all townspeople in need of help, advice, safety directions and security. It is aimed mostly at our elderly. Where necessary they liaise with the local gardaí. Garda John Keating is the liaison officer and we have the full support of our superintendent Con Cadogan, who with four sergeants attended our AGM.

Neighbourhood Watch is often misunderstood as people are under the impression that members are informants. This is far removed from reality. Our aim is to protect our neighbourhood, especially our elderly, from anything or anybody causing them concern, grief, frustration or harm. We visit these people and compile their complaints which we forward to the liaison officer, John Keating.

We offer no apology to those who interpret this as informing. We are simply helping the old people in our area to live in peace and harmony in the knowledge that their security interests are being catered for.

We receive assistance from Gort Regional Alliance for Community and

Environment (GRACE) This organisation assist the elderly without charge, giving advice and fitting smoke alarms and so on.

We would like you to take this opportunity to find out who your area coordinator is by contacting GRACE at their office in Bridge Street (over Teagasc offices) at 091 632 525, myself or any committee member.

Our local gardaí will also assist by providing householders with crime prevention advice such as how to make your home less inviting to criminals, how to make your personal property less desirable to thieves and how to be alert to suspicious activity in your area.

This is where the community in partnership with the gardaí report suspicious/criminal activity observed in the area and Neighbourhood Watch assist you all. The role of the gardaí in Neighbourhood Watch is to assist in the formation of area groups and to instruct the members in crime prevention techniques and other safety measures. So get to know your leaders, coordinators and of course your neighbours and let's all work together towards a better quality of life, without fear or crime.

The Neighbourhood Watch committee are: chairman, Damien McGrath; secretary, Brian Lynch; treasurer, Greg

Lundon; PRO, Padraic Cummins; assistant secretary, Veronica Stone; vice-chairman, Seamus Killeen; liaison person to Brazilian community, Isias de Sousa Silva and garda liaison officer, John Keating.

Neighbourhood Watch committee members/zone leaders/coordinators do not patrol streets and do not work for the gardaí.

We encourage the community to get involved in the fight against crime. We watch out for anything that is 'out of place', or is happening at an unusual time of the day or night. And please don't hesitate because you feel your suspicions might be unfounded.

Neighbourhood watch is grant aided by Eamon Ó Cuiv's Office for Voluntary and Community Support based in Tubercurry, Co Sligo.

Two companies, Fold Telecare in Clones and Emergency Response Social Monitoring Centre in Enniscorthy supplied all our security alarms to date.

We hope this insertion in *Guaire* will help to enlighten the majority of our community as to why your neighbourhood watch exists, what its aims are, why we need your help as you need ours.

If anybody wishes to be actively involved feel free to attend meetings which are advertised in the parish newsletter.

## Kiltartan golf society remembers the late John Cahill

Mr Frank Fahey, TD, Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Law Reform, presented to Kiltartan Golf Society a claret jug trophy in memory of the late John Cahill, RIP, of Coole. The late Mr Cahill, who was tragically killed in a road accident, was a personal friend of the Minister for many years. The perpetual trophy was accepted by the captain and the president of the society, Michael

Cunningham and Sean Mullins. The trophy was played for by the members of the society in a singles stableford competition at Gort Golf Club. There was a huge turn-out of members for this inaugural competition. The winner was Barry Cahill with a score of forty-three points, who won from Josie Cummins at thirty-six points and Colman Counihan, thirty-five points. The trophy was presented to Barry by Ian Cahill, son of the late John Cahill, at a function in O'Grady's.

Kiltartan Golf Society was founded in 2004 and is open for membership to all golfers who either reside or are natives of Gort parish. The officers are Michael Cunningham, captain; Sean Mullins, president; Canon Michael Kelly, PP, patron; Jimmy Hannigan, secretary; Gerry Lally, assistant secretary and treasurer and John Forde, Don Coen and Kevin Fahey, committee.





Grand marshalls Stephanie Oriorison and Shane Casey with Mickey Carey and Yvonne Mulvey

## 'Blind Date' in aid of St Patrick's Day Parade

BY TRISH BEAKY

McCarthy sponsored by J McInerney auctioneers and Aaron McDaid who was sponsored by Gort Tarmac. The final vote then took place

among the sponsoring groups and the winners of group two Stephanie Oriorison and Shane Casey emerged as the overall winning Blind Date couple and grand marshalls of the St Patrick's Day Parade. They were presented with the Ken Carr perpetual cup and their St Patrick's Day sashes.

The organising committee would like to thank all of the couples named above who took part. We would also like to thank all the other willing (and not so willing) participants and organisations who sponsored them including Sean Birmingham for O'Donnell Keane & Company accountants, Brian

Ruane for Dicey's pub, Carmel Coen for Colm Farrell auctioneers, Danny for O'Sullivan's hotel, who did a great job serving all and sundry in the bar before and after his round, Lucimeire who represented Gort ICA, Afne O'Loughlin for Linnane's Bar, Elishia for GRACE, Nilton Vieira de Souza for the Brazilian Association of Gort, Conor for O'Grady's Bar and restaurant and Jamie for Kilroy's bar. Finally we would like to sincerely thank John Sullivan for the use of his facilities in Sullivan's hotel.

The theme for the 2006 parade was 'Gort has something to offer—parade it' and Gort-Credit Union sponsored the inaugural St Patrick's Day children's fancy dress competition with each child who participated receiving a medal for their effort. The St Patrick's Day parade was led by the FCA followed by the Grand Marshalls Shane Casey and Stephanie Oriorison, (Shane in full morning dress and Stephanie in a beautiful gown).

It all began on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2006 when St Patrick's Day Grand Marshalls were selected in Sullivan's hotel at a 'Blind Date', modelled on the popular TV show of the same name. The prospective couples were put through their paces by Yvonne Mulvey and Mickey Carey, who did a great job putting all the nominees at ease. Mike Finn and Geraldine Nolan did a humorous synopsis of what each candidate had to offer at the end of each round.

A total of five competitors selected their blind date and those couples went into the grand final when the winning blind date couple was selected. The first group winners were Bryan Burke, sponsored by Gort GAA and Niamh Coen sponsored by Hennelly's Carry Out. The second group winners were Stephanie Oriorison sponsored by Streams Beauty Rooms and Shane Casey sponsored by Walsh's Bar. Michelle Moran sponsored by the Gort show and Niall Hoarty sponsored by Gant's Bar won the third group followed by Brian Coen representing O'Donnell's Bar and Eimer Regan from the No Name Club winning the fourth group. Finally the last couple of the evening to win was Elizabeth



Parade committee

back, left to right: Shane Counihan, Tom Moran, Padraig Giblin, Brid Quinn, Seamus Killeen and Mary Maloney

front, left to right: Tish Beaky, PRO, Cathy Curlette, treasurer, Celene Goodall, secretary, Stephanie Oriorison, Shane Casey and Adrian Feeney, chairman

## Living aboard a yacht—a short introduction

BY ALAN R FAIRWEATHER

Why would you give up a comfortable lifestyle to live aboard a small yacht. For most people this would mean a yacht of between thirty-eight to fifty feet in length, which is the size of your average cruising yacht and crewed by a husband and wife or partner or family and taking a few years out or perhaps an extended cruise of several months. We are not concerned with multi-millionaires who can afford to buy a very large yacht, with lots of staff, more or less a floating hotel.

So why would we do it? It certainly is a healthier lifestyle, not only are you out in the fresh sea air, but a sailor has no choice but to be active, whether you are steering the boat, adjusting the sails, anchoring, tying up to a mooring or pontoon and keeping the boat shipshape. Since the sea covers a good part of the planet, there is plenty of space and a sense of freedom, even escapism. No deadlines to meet. You have the opportunity to see many different places and reaching your destination safely, gives you a sense of confidence in your own abilities.

Nevertheless, before you embark on such a venture, there are practical considerations. A boat of this size would likely be a lot smaller than your home, so unless you are sailing single-handed you really do have to be sure you are going to get on well with everybody else on board. You will be in their company, in a relatively small space, for extended periods, days, weeks, even months. It is also very important to be able to work as a team, with everyone knowing their role and only one captain on board issuing orders. If you encounter a stressful or difficult situation at sea, will you pull together and help each other out and heed the captain's instructions without hesitation.

You can encounter many kinds of weather at sea, it could be a flat calm, but most likely small to moderate sized waves, which means the boat will be subject to rolling and or pitching motions. For this reason it is helpful if you have good 'sea legs' and do not suffer from seasickness. There are medica-

tions which you can take, that alleviate the symptoms and as you gain experience and confidence the symptoms will most likely disappear.

As a first experience, if you have never tried sailing before, you could go on a sailing flotilla holiday; the Greek islands are good and so is Turkey. The weather is normally really good and an experienced sailor would be on board so that you can relax and enjoy the sailing. You will be in the company of other boats and the whole trip should be an enjoyable good time and you might also be able to gain a sailing qualification.

If you are still keen, you can learn more about meteorology, the study of the weather, sail handling, navigation where you learn to plot a course and keep track of where you are at any given time, and understanding marine charts, which are just maps of the sea showing depths and coasts, where harbours and marinas are situated.

A brief look at the accommodation on board which will be quite different to what you are accustomed. There will be a main saloon where there will be seats to sit and relax, your dining table, the galley (your kitchen), the chart table and lots of cupboards and stowage space. The seats can also double as your bunk bed where you will sleep, there should be one cabin with a double bed and perhaps one or two smaller cabins with two-tier single bunks. A sea toilet with wash-hand basin, possibly with the luxury of hot and cold running water, and there might be a shower. You cook on a marine stove which is gimballed so that it moves with the motion of the boat and the top stays level in most conditions.

To keep your supplies topped up, some cruising sailors keep a small folding bicycle on board, very handy if the shop is some distance away from where you are 'parked'. If at anchor then you might have to go ashore in the dingy. If your electric system will support it, then you would have a fridge and some form of on-board heating. Televisions are possible but most cruising sailors do not have them probably because



Alan on board the yacht

you are more likely to be sitting looking at the environment around you. A marine radio will be there for ship to ship communication and emergency broadcasts. A standard radio for listening to weather forecasts, news or music and a barometer would be other pieces of essential equipment.

This will give you some idea of what life afloat is about. If you wish to give this more serious consideration and cruise in a small yacht, then there are some further questions you can ask yourselves. Do you like sailing? A very simple question, but very important. If you are faced with a rough sea and a rising wind on a long beat into harbour, can you cheerfully cope? When you go on holiday, do you organise your own flights, accommodation and itineraries? If the answer to those questions is a positive yes, then you are more than halfway there, and now you can start to think, "How can we afford to sail away?" Which is another whole subject. In the meantime, good sailing and good luck.

The author has been sailing for forty years, my wife Janet for about twenty years. In the last two decades we have cruised extensively in Northern Brittany, Channel Islands and around the Bay of Biscay. This has been our favoured cruising area. We have considered longer voyages to many places but have been very happy with passages of one and occasionally two days. A cross channel passage, for example Poole to Cherbourg would be around sixteen to eighteen hours. The favoured route from Ireland is from Cork Harbour or Kinsale via the Scillies and then on to Northern Brittany, although this would be a longer passage, perhaps two days. We have lived aboard our yacht for periods ranging from six months to over one year at various times and enjoyed nearly every minute of it, so we do speak from experience.





Above: children lining up to have their photographs taken with Barney  
left: Michelle Moran, Gort Show Queen, being driven to this year's show



Gort and district show company officers and committee 2006

back row: Mary Martin-Linnane, Kitty McGrath, Seamus Killeen, Anne Walsh, Tom Moran, Mary Leonard, David Curley (chairman horse section), Mary Moloney, Amanda Norton, Mary O'Reilly, Pat O'Donnell (dog show secretary), Aisling Rochford (organising secretary), Michael Roughan, Fiona Curley (secretary, horse section) and Vincent Moloney  
seated: Josephine Helly (treasurer), Margaret Rochford (organising secretary), Padraic Giblin (chairman), Kathleen Curley (assistant secretary), Adrian Feeney (PRO) and Ian Stone (vice-chairman)  
missing from photograph: Peggy Barry, Nancy Casey, Deirdre Collins, Christy Dalton, P J Downey, Jacintha Leech, Mim Moloney, Anne O'Reilly, David O'Reilly, Marie Ott and Tracey and Derek Pullein

## Gort and District Show

On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2006 the annual Gort show was held once again. It was a particularly memorable occasion as this year marked the silver jubilee of this annual agricultural show. We would like to extend our thanks to Padraic Giblin, this year's chairperson, particularly as Padraic also held this role for Gort's first show twenty-five years ago.

A very special thank you to all those who have been involved in the Gort show over the last twenty-five years. The show has grown from strength to strength and this year the committee produced a special Silver Jubilee brochure.

We are proud to welcome a new aspect to the show, our new web site. The web site was designed

to mark this year's twenty-fifth anniversary show. Indeed we are delighted to be one of the first shows in the country to have its own web site. Many thanks to Ian Stone of Dynamic Computer Solutions, Gort and this year's vice-chairman, for all his work in setting up the web site.

We hope that the site will be a further means of spreading the news about our annual show. Apart from getting general information about the show you can view a complete list of showing classes and indeed download an entry form.

The pictures give a flavour of the various show day events. More information will be added as the web site is developed further and in this regard, we would welcome your suggestions about interesting items that could be included.

The show was officially opened this year by our show queen Michelle Moran. This year's attractions included a

bonny baby competition, free children's cabaret (Barney, Shrek, foot and hand juggling and unicyclist stuntman), vintage cars, tractors, farm and static machinery, displays of local art and craft and trade stands. The Vintage Car club took part in a sponsored run to raise funds for the Gort Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA), who are in the process of building a new meeting venue.

The dog show competition was sponsored by Bernard Gillane and Co. Cloone, Corrib Oil, Liam Burke, Ballyhugh Veterinary Service and Supervalu. The judge was Tara Hunt from Manorhamilton and there was a large number of entries in all twenty-one classes.

Our dog show organiser, Pat O'Donnell was delighted with the turn out.

We gratefully acknowledge the Beagh riding cross county club, also known as the Turkey Trotters, for their generous sponsorship of the horse and pony sections. This year we had eight qualifiers for All-Ireland competitions. Gort and district show committee are very keen to host an all Ireland final at the show and plans are afoot to organize this for the near future.

The members of Gort ICA Guild once again provided refreshments for exhibitors, judges, stewards and the general public. Food and fare were enjoyed by all. Overall, another successful year and a good day was had by all.

The officers and committee of Gort and District Show Company are: Canon M Kelly, PP, president; Peggy Barry, Michael Roughan, Dennis Corry, Christy Dalton, Nancy Casey and David O'Reilly, vice-presidents; Padraic Giblin, chairman; Ian Stone, vice-chairman; Mary Martin-Linnane and Deirdre Collins, indoor chairpersons; David Curly, horse chairperson; Margaret and Aisling Rochford, organising secretaries; Kathleen Curley, assistant secretary; Fiona Curley, horse secretary; Pat O'Donnell, dog show organiser; Josephine Helly, treasurer and Adrian Feeney PRO. Committee members were Paddy O'Grady, Mim Moloney, Kitty McGrath, Ann Walsh, Ann O'Reilly, P J Downey, Peggy Spain, Seamus Killeen, Mary O'Reilly, Mary Moloney, Tom Moran, Amanda Norton, Mary Leonard, Marie Ott and Jacintha Leech.

Gort & District Show Company Ltd.  
www.gortshow.com  
Presents

### The 25th Anniversary Gort Show

Sunday 6th August 2006

At the Community Centre and within the Community School Grounds, Ennis Road, Gort.  
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**Vintage news**

BY S COUNIHAN

I am sure there are many readers who can remember well the sound of a threshing mill on a frosty morning many years ago. A sound that a lot of people say is sadly heard no more. The days when the horse and tractor did all the work and cars were a rare sight. The simple but effective binder was the main combine back then and farming was the main source of income.

Well there are a few locals around Gort and the surrounding areas that try to preserve and recreate these old ways. For example the cutting of the corn with an old Fordson tractor and binder. And the rare sight of the corn being threshed with an old Ransomes thresher, also the corn being ground with the Bamford grinding mill and the wee Lister engine providing the power required. Francis Linnane and crew every year without fail provide these rare sightings.

On St Patrick's Day of every year the thresher is to be seen in the Square and always gets young and old watching. It's amazing how many people stop and watch whilst some of the older people reminisce about how they had one once upon a time. The parade would not be the same without it and I am sure it will be there on the seveneenth of March again next year.

In Gort alone we have well over twenty-five vintage enthusiasts. Some collect old tools, seats, engines, motor-bikes, cars, tractors, agricultural machinery and implements, whilst oth-



The thresher, now a regular at the Gort St Patricks Day parade

ers collect old delph, bottles etc. It's a great pastime and interest. And you would not believe what some people collect.

At the 2006 Gort show a vintage section was held as usual. It generated great interest from young and old. We had over seventy-eight exhibits of vintage cars, tractors, engines etc. Each exhibitor received a delicious cold meat salad provided by the ICA and before they went received a memento of the day. Categories for the best turned out car, tractor and vintage machine were held. The best turned out car award was won by Jim Barrows of Ennis for his immaculate Austin. Best turned out vintage machine went to James Ruane of Corofin, Clare for his mini-

ature threshing set. The best turned out tractor went to Francis Linnane for his gleaming Fordson major E27N. A great day was had by all and we look forward to next year's show. 'Thank you' must go to all the stewards who helped out on the day.

Maybe in the future we might form a proper vintage club and run an all vintage show. Shows are run all over the country and a large contingent from Gort display at them. So I am sure they will repay the compliment if we get our own show going. People are always complimenting the great work the vintage enthusiasts do in preserving these old items. And how they bring back fond memories of many moons ago.

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A view of Gort square circa 1910-1914



Results of Gort GAA Club's golf am-am on the 31<sup>st</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize, Heritage golf outing: Alister Lynch, Dowlin Whelan, Stephen Carrol and Brian McNamara; 107 points
- 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, Killarney golf outing: Michael O'Grady, John Skehill, Maura O'Grady and Annemarie Craddock; 104 points
- 3<sup>rd</sup> prize, Doonbeg golf outing: Ollie Flanagan, Gerard Kennedy, Martin Whelan and Vince Egan; 102 points
- 4<sup>th</sup> prize, Pat Smith vouchers: Celine Fahy, Bernard Gillane, Pat Fahy and Pat Craddock; 101 points
- 5<sup>th</sup> prize, Castlebar golf outing: John Lyons, John Forde, Don Coen and Mary Coen; 100 points
- 6<sup>th</sup> prize, Renvyle House hotel: Pat Gill, Mandy Cosgrave, Ellen Gill and Noel Lane; 100 points
- 7<sup>th</sup> prize, Pier Head restaurant: Colman Cooney, Kieran Cullinane, Ronald Ryan and Steve Mahon; 99 points
- 8<sup>th</sup> prize, four cases of wine: Tommy O'Donnell, P J Moylan, Pat Lambert and G Fahey; 99 points
- 9<sup>th</sup> prize, Portumna golf outing: John Fordham, John Haverty, Mike Kerins and Noel Geoghegan; 99 points
- 10<sup>th</sup> prize, Woodstock golf outing: Kieran Galvin, Kevin Roche, Agnes Fahy and Ollie Fahy; 98 points
- Fourball not a member of Gort golf club: D Lyons, F Kyne, T Fahy and H McHugo
- Longest drive: Declan Flaherty
- Nearest the pin: Ollie Fahy

## Gort GAA Club's golf am-am

### Gort hurling club duck race

Winners of the Gort Hurling Club duck race, held 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2005 at Gort River were

- 1 Colie Roche, Church Street
- 2 Paddy Hynes, 14 Bolands Court
- 3 Conor O'Donovan, Castletown
- 4 Martin Kearns, Killomorran
- 5 Kevin Fawle, Ballindereen
- 6 Celine Fahy, Cloone
- 7 Johnny Cummins, Ennis Road
- 8 Pauline Helebert, Kilmacduagh
- 9 Caroline Ford, Lisbrien
- 10 Tom O'Loughlin, 46 Burren View

## Gort hurling club 2005-2006

BY BRIAN BRENNAN



**G**ort Hurling Club has been active both on and off the field. The club has designed a club logo which depicts the tower in Kilmacduagh, Ballylee Castle and the twin church spires of the town of Gort. The three buildings represent the three old parishes of Gort, Kilmacduagh and Kiltartan.

The club has also set up a web site at [www.gortgaa.com](http://www.gortgaa.com) and, on the site, the club gives information of times past, present and future. We would welcome GAA items, photographs and any information concerning the Gort hurling club. The web site was designed by Bryan Brennan junior and Mrs Josephine Ward.

Since the last *Guaire*, our president Joe Pete Hehir and Frank Lally RIP, past secretary, have gone to their eternal rest. Both men were active members of the Gort hurling club. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh siad.*

I would also like to welcome our new president Mick Cahill, Deerpark.

The Gort Lotto is the main fundraiser and the club wishes to thank all

the people who contribute each week. I also would like to acknowledge our sponsors and the people who have supported our fund-raisers each year.

Movement on the development front has been slow. However, we have managed to finish the steps on the stand and plans are made to develop dressing rooms at the rear of the stand.

The club wishes to congratulate all its members who got married or retired in the last year and all its players who represented the county at different levels.

On the playing fields, the Club and its mentors have been working hard at both under-age and senior level. Our under-14s reached the County Final this year and our minors have reached the semi-final at the time of writing. At senior level, we won the Kilbeacanty 7s in 2005 and the Kinvara tournament three years in a row in 2004, 2005 and 2006. Unfortunately we were defeated at the semi-final stage in 2005 and the quarter-final stage in 2006 in the County Senior Championship.

On the junior A front, we won the Junior A League final in 2005 and the Kilbeacanty junior 7s in 2006 but we have not performed in the league or championship in 2006. The under-21s are still in the knockout stages of the championship.

We invited Sixmilebridge, Clarecastle, Castlegar and the home club Gort to participate in the Guaire Cup. Sixmilebridge were the eventual winners on a score of 2-18 to Castlegar's 3-10. The referee was Pat Greene of Craughwell and our sponsor was Cathal Connolly, Kilroys bar.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2006, the club holds a function at the Lady Gregory hotel in honour of 1981 Galway and Connacht senior club champions, 1980 and 1981 Galway under-21 champions and the 1956 south board senior champions. Tickets are available from Club officers.

Finally the club would like to wish all its members and supporters a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.



Brian Brennan, chairman, Gort hurling club, making a wedding presentation to Declan and Marie Spelman





# Gort Hurling Club

"Home of the Hurler"  
 Created by Deo Treiston of Gort  
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Club House & Grounds - Loughtyshaughnessy, Gort, Co. Galway  
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## Jubilee Dinner & Dance to honour

1981 Galway & Connacht Senior Champions  
 1980 & 1981 under-21 Galway Champions  
 1956 South Board Senior Champions

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2006 in the Lady Gregory Hotel Gort  
 Music by Shillelagh

Gort Hurling Club wishes to thank the following for their sponsorship and support of our recent Fund Raising Golf Am-Am Classic (all Gort based unless otherwise indicated)

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Congratulations to Sixmilebridge on a fine win against Castlegar in the 2006 Guaire Cup Final.  
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# The Guaire cup 1951-2006

On Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1951 an article in the *Connacht Tribune* reported "A strong body of voluntary helpers assembled for the purpose of making blocks with the association's new concrete block making machine. The blocks will be used in the erection of sideline seats to seat 1,000 spectators at the up-coming tournament for the Guaire cup. The committee is determined that nothing will be left undone to make the park ready for the tournament". On the 28<sup>th</sup> April 1951, the *Tribune* again reported "block making continues to occupy the evenings of the energetic committee of the local park, the blocks being made in the yard of Mr J J Coen. Gort will be the Mecca of hurling enthusiasts from Clare and Galway on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1952 next when the finalists and semi-finalists of Clare and Galway will meet to contest for possession of the Guaire cup".

On the 29<sup>th</sup> March 1952 St Colmans park committee attended a meeting and made arrangements for the holding of the Guaire cup tournament on Easter Sunday and the following stewards were appointed: T Considine, F Murry, E Roche and P O'Connor, gate and J J Coen, P O'Shaughnessy, F Kelly and M Brennan, field.

It was decided to pay county board rate of travelling expenses to visiting teams. As reported in the *Connacht Tribune*, "Castlegar, Galway county champions will play Ruan, Clare, runners up in Clare championship in the opening game at 3:30 pm and a rousing struggle is expected with the odds on Castlegar. Ruan, however are dangerous adversaries and will give a dour fight to any team. They have two county stars in J Meaney and Jimmy Smyth. Castlegar call on Mickey Burke and Johnny Molloy while in Padraic Nolan and F Burke they have men who also have county experience.

The Connors brothers, both goalie and full back, are fine hurlers while Cullinane, Connell and Connor are players of merit in any company".

The *Connacht Tribune* also reported, "The Gort v Whitegate game at 4:30

pm is one that arouses considerable speculation. Gort hurl with considerable elan on their native heath and can call on the brilliance of Gallagher, Kelly and Fahy. In the Piggotts, Lambert, Forde and V Maloney they also have dashing players. Whitegate boast such stalwarts as Ned Doyle, Paddy Jordan, Percy Dolan and Dermott Dolan.

### Match reports

Clare Champion, Guaire cup semi final 29<sup>th</sup> April 1951

Gort 2-6 Whitegate 2-6

Gort proved a surprise packet in this game as Whitegate were hot favourites

After some keen exchanges in which the ball travelled up and down the field at a terrific pace, Ned Doyle landed his third point and McDermott added to the Whitegate score with a point to close the scoring in the first half. Whitegate 1-4, Gort 1-0

On resumption Grace (Whitegate) had a point and for the next ten minutes an unceasing attack on the Gort goal but Tadhg Kelly was in his usual good form and weathered the attack. After this Gort broke away and had points from Spelman, Hartigan and Gallagher added two more points and



and expected to win easily. But such was not the case in a game that provided plenty hard and thrilling hurling and in which no quarter was asked or given but all the time played in a sporting spirit.

Whitegate went into the attack from the start and had not long to wait before being rewarded with a goal per Haran. Gort fought back and Josie Gallagher netted with a shot that gave the Whitegate goalie no chance. Whitegate forced two seventies in quick succession from which Doyle scored two points.

Dick Connors had a brilliant goal to put Gort in the lead for the 1st time. Jerome O'Shaughnessy increased this lead with a point but a bullet-like shot from Grace (Whitegate) brought the teams to level pegging.

Hurling was now at its best and Cleary had a point for Whitegate and just on full time Josie Gallagher shot a point to make a grand game a draw. Full time score was Whitegate 2-6 to Gort 2-6

The replay was fixed for Corpus Christi. Scorers, Whitegate: Grace 1-1, Haran 1-0, N Doyle 0-3, McDermott



0-1 and Cleary 0-1. Gort: Gallagher 1-3, Hartigan 0-1, Spelman 0-1, Shaughnessy 0-1 and Connors 1-0. The referee was M Quane.

Best for Gort were Kelly and Gallagher. Jack Spelman in the half forward line gave good support.

Joe Keane at mid-field had a good day and Kelly's partners in the half back line Cyril Piggot and Tom Lambert were in devastating form.

**Clare Champion replay report**

Whitegate defeated Gort in the replay of the Guaire cup at Gort on Corpus Christi and so qualify to meet Castlegar in the final of the competition.

While it never reached the heights of the drawn game, it provided some thrills and it was not until the last ten minutes that Whitegate asserted their authority and pulled away to win by 4-4 to 2-3.

A feature of the game was the display of Dermot Solan (Whitegate) at full back. He was easily the most outstanding player and time after time broke up the Gort attack and long clearances kept his forward line well supplied. Gort favoured with a strong wind opened the scoring after five minutes with a goal per Gallagher to

which Dick Connors added a point almost immediately.

Whitegate had a free in front of the Gort goal but M Cleary sent wide. Gort had two further points by Gallagher and Connors before Whitegate opened their account with a goal per John Kinneally. McNeill the Gort goalie brought off two magnificent saves in quick succession and play returned to the other end where Hehir (Gort) doubled on a ground ball and sent to the back of the net.

Gort were now having the better of the play and forced two seventies which were sent wide. Ned Doyle (Whitegate) who was having a great game in defence was injured but resumed and against the run of play Kinneally (Whitegate) trapped a loose ball and goaled to leave a half time score Gort 2-3, Whitegate 2-6

On resuming Gort strengthened their defence by bringing back Josie Gallagher to the full back position and in doing so blunted the edge of their attack and even though the forwards had plenty of chances they failed to register a score in this half.

Whitegate settled down to their work better in the second half playing

a grand combination and after sending wide twice were rewarded with a point. Shortly afterwards they forced a 70 which Doyle sent wide. From this puck out Gort sent a wide.

From a far out free Solan had a point. M Cleary (Whitegate) went off injured and was replaced by M Fouhy and on resumption of play John Kinneally levelled the scoring with a point. From this to the finish of the game it was all Whitegate and after a grand passing movement P Jordan had a great goal. In the closing stages of the game Kinneally added a further goal to put the game beyond doubt. Best for the winners were Solan, Jordan, Kinneally and Doyle. Gort were best served by Josie Gallagher, Spelman, Connors, Piggot and Keane.

**Semi final: Newmarket-on-Fergus v Castlegar 29<sup>th</sup> April 1951**

Castlegar 9-6, Newmarket 6-1 In the absence of Ruan who were unable to field a team, Newmarket-on-Fergus very sportingly filled the gap at short notice and played Castlegar in the first round of the Guaire cup on Sunday. The game opened on a high note with Castlegar favoured with a strong wind going into attack immediately but the

Newmarket defence stood up to the onslaught in surprisingly good fashion and it was not until the twelfth minute that Castlegar opened the scoring with a goal per Molloy. Glynn (Castlegar) followed with a point.

From the puck out Keogh (Newmarket) placed Greene for a goal. That finished the Newmarket scoring in the first half. Castlegar were now settling down and playing with grand combination had further scores per Glynn, Burke, Cannon and Nolan to leave the half time score Castlegar 5-4, Newmarket 1-0.

After the interval Newmarket had a quick goal by Greene, but Coyne replied almost immediately with a goal for Castlegar. J Burke added a point. This took most of the sting out of Newmarket and play became dull and listless until the closing quarter when both sides went on a scoring spree and the match finished with Castlegar winners by 9-6 to 6-1

Outstanding for the winners were Molloy, Burke and Nolan. Newmarket were best served by Keogh, McNamara and Greene.

**Replay May 1951 Corpus Christi**

Tribune account 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1951 Whitegate 4-4 to Gort 2-3 Gort fielded without Tadgh Kelly injured in the game with Tipperary in London and his defection was keenly felt all through especially in the second half.

The decision to play safe and defend the slender lead was wrong in the outcome as Josie Gallagher was put in the rear line and Gort's many chances on increasing the lead went a begging for want of his skill. Had Tadgh Kelly been fit or had Josie remained in the forward line there seemed little doubt that Gort would have won. Jack McNeill did fine work in goal. C Piggot at centre half back was a glutton for work. His flanker T Lambert was also in tip top form. At centrefield J. Spelman was Gort's outstanding player and was rarely beaten for the ball. Dick Connors and J. Keane were good on the forty yard line where young Hartigan should prove a find for the team.

Whitegate had an infinitely better side than in the drawn game and the inclusion of D Solan infused magnificent life into the team. Ned Doyle in the half back line and M Cleary at the centre field were mighty men who kept the Gort men on their toes from start to finish. The centre back Percy Solan was a tremendous worker. P Jordan

was very effective on the forty yard line and John Kinneally on the full line notched 3-1 of his side's total.

Whitegate team: C Burke, J Burke, Dermot Solan, T Thornbury, Ned Doyle, Percy Solan, J Burke, M Cleary, S Cleary, J Counery, P Jordan, P Haran, John Kinneally, N McDermott and K Jordan. Substitute: M Fouhy for M Cleary.

Gort team: Jack McNeill, Vincent Moloney, Val Forde, N. O'Connor, Tom Lambert, Cyril Piggot, Jimmy Madden, (Johnny) Jack Spelman, Paddy Piggot, Joe Hartigan, Dick Connors, Joe Keane, Joe Pete Hehir, Josie Gallagher and Jerome O'Shaughnessy.

**Clare Champion Guaire cup final played 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1952**

Castlegar 3-11 to Whitegate 4-3 Castlegar were worthy winners of the Guaire cup when they beat Whitegate in the final in Gort on Sunday in a game that reached great heights at times. Play opened up at a fast pace with Castlegar going into the attack immediately but they met stiff resistance and it was ten minutes before they registered their first score, a goal from Abberton. This seemed to give the desired incentive as they rattled up a succession of scores by Nolan, 1-1; M Burke, 1-2; J Burke 0-2 and Molloy 0-1.

While Whitegate tried hard, their best efforts went for naught owing to faulty shooting by their forward division. The half time was reached with Castlegar on 3-6 and Whitegate 0-0.

On the resumption the game took on a new lease of life as Whitegate put all they knew into it and, after a grand solo effort, Heffernan had their first score, a point to which Kinneally added a goal almost immediately.

Whitegate were now playing with great confidence and, when they had a further goal by Grace, they had Castlegar somewhat on the run. Two points by Heffernan and Jordan reduced the Castlegar lead to six points and, at this stage, it was anybody's game, with Whitegate looking the more dangerous side. But, after some brilliant exchanges, Castlegar came again and had two points by Nolan and one by Abberton in quick succession. Jordan of Whitegate nullified these efforts with a grand goal. In a thrilling finish, Castlegar seemed to stick the gruelling pace better than their opponents and, when their centre forward J Burke notched two neat points, the game looked as good as

over. But Whitegate got going again and had the last score of the game, a goal by Kinneally. They were again attacking when the long whistle went.

Mickey Burke at centre-field was outstanding for Castlegar as was Johnny Molloy in the back line where Connell and Walsh gave excellent support. Of the forwards Abberton, J Burke and P Nolan were best. C Burke, the Whitegate custodian, played a grand game and the three full-backs Thornberry, Leonard and John Burke played a dour and resolute game. Ned Doyle played a magnificent game in the half back line and Jim Burke shone on his plank. M Cleary and J Cleary were sound at mid-field but found Mickey Burke a handful. Heffernan, an elusive player, was a constant menace to Castlegar and Grace was a dashing and resourceful attacker. Haran and Kenneally were trustful forwards and the latter shot fast and accurately at any opening.

Scorers, Castlegar: Nolan 1-3, M Burke 1-2, Abberton 1-1, J Burke 0-3, Walsh 0-1 and J Molloy 0-1; Whitegate: Kinneally 2-0, Jordan 1-1, Grace 1-0 and Heffernan 0-2.

Castlegar: Paddy Connor, J Cannon, Stephen Connor, John Molloy, M Connell, J B Molloy, M Walsh, M Burke, J Cullinane, P Nolan, J Burke, E Abberton, M J Cannon, P Shaughnessy and M Glynn; Whitegate: C Burke, Thornberry, Leonard, John Burke, A N Other, Ned Doyle, Jim Doyle, M Cleary, J Cleary, Heffernan, P Jordan, Grace, J Kinneally, Haran and K Jordan.

The Guaire cup is still played for. Recent winners include Feakle 1987; Castlegar 2004; Gort 2005 and Sixmilebridge 2006.

The Guaire cup was made in Dublin by Awright and Marshall. The cup itself is a valuable piece, made of sterling silver with exceptional Celtic design and inscribed in the front of the cup, in Irish, is: pobul an Guirí do braon an corn seo i lei iománuicta i teo an Cháir i teo na Gaillime. Ta sé le leit i oir camana ar Páirc Colmain Naomha, Gort Inse Guaire gach bliain i oir an oa fuirinn as Co na Chláir an oa fuirinn as Co na Gaillime a bfearr a crutuis i gco-mortaisi an conntae. It translates as: the people of Gort presented this cup for hurling in Co Clare and Co Galway. It is to be competed for in St Colmans Park, Gort each year between the two teams in Co Clare and the two teams in Co Galway who proved best in county competitions.

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## Gort senior team county hurling champions 1981



back row, left to right: Gerry Lally, Pierce Piggott, Tony Monaghan, Gerry Linnane, Michael Brennan, John Nolan, Josie Harte, Kevin Fahy and Christy Monaghan

front row, left to right: Johnny Crehan, Joe Regan, Colie Rock, Sylvie Linnane (captain), Micheal Cahill and Mattie Murphy

## Gort under-21 county hurling champions 1980



back row, left to right: G Linnane, J Sullivan, M Kerins, G Piggott, Frank Shaw, D Duffy, G Cloonan, P Neilan and coach Terry Carthy  
front row, left to right: C Roche, M Crehan, C Rock, J Crehan, P Piggott, D Fahey, T Monaghan and D Kerins insert: J Lally, G Lally

## St Colmans junior B west champions 2006



back row, left to right: Kieran Earls, John Curley, Liam Nolan, Paul Glynn, Robert Piggott, Kieran Kelly, Gerry Stanford, Brian Bourke, John O'Donnell, captain, Gerry Quinn, Colin Whelan, and Kevin Roche and Gerard McMahan, selectors  
front row, left to right: Paul Brown, Enda Tannian, Rory Gantley, Garret Nestor, Gary O'Donnell, Eoin Glynn, John O'Donnell, Evan Kilroy, Keith Glynn, Michael McNamara, Noel Quinn and Martin Moran

## Junior A league champions 2005



back row, left to right: Brian Brennan and Terry McCarthy, selectors, Greg Lally, Colman Cooney, Brian Regan, Gary Linnane, Aiden O'Grady, Keith Killelia, Ronan Loughrey, Brian Coppinger, Garret Nestor, Kieran Graney, Kieran Helebert, Tony Finnegan, Gary O'Donnell and David Hehir.  
front row, left to right: Declan Spelman, selector, Patrick Loughnane, Brendan Cummins, John Carr, Sylvie Óg Linnane, Liam Ford, Coimhe Linnane, mascot, Martin Moran, Keith Glynn, Darragh Linnane and Bryan Brennan



## Gort deceased since last issue 2005 to 2006

Nuala Diviney, The Maples  
Patrick Nestor, Church Street  
Moira Killeen, Church Street  
John Cahill, Coole  
Michael Moloney, River Walk  
Mary Leech, Knockauncoura  
Brendan Long, Church Street  
Freda Loughrey, Glenbrack Road  
Mary Gardiner, Orchard Centre  
Aggie Jennings, Crowe Street  
Clare Moran, Crowe Street  
Susan Curley, Crowe Street  
Frank Lally, Market Square  
Martin Walsh, Glenbrack  
Annie McMahon, Ballybaun  
Mary Kate O'Flaherty, Hawkhill  
Brendan Murphy, Galway Road  
Joe Pete Hehir, Rindifin  
Thomas O'Shaughnessy, Crowe Street  
Seamus Connors, Rinneen  
Bernadette Mullins, Galway Road  
Edith Cusack, Galway Road  
Denis Hynes, Ballyhugh  
Maureen McMahon, Garryland

Larry Loughrey, Glenbrack Road  
Eileen Reilly, Church Street  
William Costello, The Maples  
John Davey, Ballyhugh  
Paddy Kilkeny, Ballylennon  
Mollie Fallon, Georges Street  
Winnifred Hansberry, Sragh  
Julia Ruane, Georges Street  
Kathleen Mitchell, Roo  
Josie Curley, Ballyaneen  
Colie Moylan, Roo  
Frank Keely, Lavally  
Michael Hynes, Garrabeg  
Peter Smullen, Sycamore Grove  
Mary Killilea, Corker  
Jim McCotter, Tubber Road  
Maureen Wallace, Crowe Street  
Dympna Coen, Market Square  
Kevin Burke, Georges Street  
Maxie Scully, Gort na Rí  
Olga Scully, Gort na Rí  
Pat McGrath, Seehan  
Mary Jo Nolan, Rineen  
Linda Minogue, Loughrea Road

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