

SUAIRE



# guaire

First Issue  
October 1978

Guaire is a magazine about Gort. Hopefully it will be a seasonal publication. It does not claim to be the definitive gospel of Gort. Rather is it a miscellany of news about Gort, past and present.

It will try and be an independent publication, answerable to no creed or party, but respecting the virtues of honesty and truth.

The past will be recalled. This should help everyone to appreciate their roots and the rich cultural heritage of the region.

The present will be reported on and critically analysed. In this examination the views of young

people will be particularly welcome.

It is hoped that Guaire will lead Gort into a brighter future.

**Editorial Board:** Fr. Enda Glynn, Peadar Ó Conaire, Josephine Ward, Brendan Long.

**Advertising:** Audrey O'Connor, Mary Moloney, Maria Long and Anne McInerney.

**Production Assistant:** Martina Gillane.

**Photographs:** Jimmy Walshe.

\*\*\*In this first issue it was not possible to report on the excellent work of every organisation in the town. In time this will be done.

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Advertising agents Audrey O'Connor and Mary Moloney.

A view from Convent of Mercy grounds, Gort.

## Is this GORT?

Bridget Noone

Have you ever wondered what makes Gort click? Personally I don't ever expect to arrive at the answer. Gort is a town with advantages and disadvantages. Some love it, some don't. Is it Peyton Place or Utopia?

Yes, in a way, one has to hand it to Gort. It has history - almost to the point of saturation. King Guaire, St. Colman and William Butler Yeats.

Yeats' retreat at Thoor Ballylee is now an international landmark for the thousands of literary enthusiasts who visit there every year. It also played a large part in the formation of Gort's culture. Lady Gregory presently being portrayed by the celebrated actress, Siobhán McKenna, in a new documentary by R.T.É. on the life and times of this great Lady, needs hardly any introduction.

Few towns in Ireland can boast of such a local treasure that recaptures all the nostalgia of Ireland's literary revival - a revival which focussed such limelight on Yeats as to enable him to pour forth his verse on a rather unsuspecting Europe.

### PEYTON PLACE

There are some things about Gort, though, that compare painfully with Peyton Place. It has its quota of gossips and character assassins. It is conservative. It is a typical small Irish

town, everybody knowing everybody else AND his business.

Gort is also a stately town that oozes history. It lacks sufficient industrial ventures which would improve town prospects significantly.

It is often said that gossip and 'idle chat' are the life and soul of a small Irish town. This being so, anything unconventional or out of the way so to speak, gives rise to plenty of 'buzz'.

But it has its redeeming points. It takes all types to make the world go round and there is nothing like a bit of variety. There are, would you believe, some saints in Gort, figuratively speaking. But these of course are few and far between.

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Gort is a town with character. Passers through, especially Americans, regard it as being rather quaint. It derives the Irish version of its name from the noble King, Guaire. As

sceálaíocht has it, through his never-ending hospitality and kindness, he developed an uneven pair of arms, the price he paid for his sub-human quality of giving and giving with arms outstretched. To-day with inflation, however, I doubt if there are many in Gort who would fit that description.

Finally, dear reader, before I rouse too much consternation within you, I wish to state that our town, in spite of all its faults and irritants, is quite unique.

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# Introducing

The inhabitation of Gort reaches back into the mists of time. The them districts of Co. Galway were known as Hy Fiachrach Aidhne in the century.

There were two royal residences in this territory, one on the present site of Guaire Castle and the other was on the island formed by the Gort river. Guaire was the king of Connacht at the time and the town is supposed to have got its name from him. Gort Inse Guaire means "the field on the island of Guaire" and of course the island is the one on which his castle was built. At the end of Barrack St. you can see the military barracks on the island. These barracks are now used as stores by Coens in Gort. Guaire was famous for his generosity and we all learned at school that one of his arms was longer than the other from giving.

## BURKE'S AND O'SHAUGHNESSY'S

By the middle of the 14th century the De Burgo's (or De Burgo's) had acquired extensive territories in Galway which were known as "Clanricarde". Clanricarde included the baronies of Glenties, Dunkellin and Loughrea. They were all in the diocese of Down. The De Burgo's controlled the eastern portion of the diocese and the remainder was controlled by the O'Shaughnessy's. The O'Shaughnessy's were the local chieftains of this area and their chief residence was on the island on the site of Guaire's Castle.

A few years prior to King Henry II becoming Supreme Head of the Church in England, the O'Shaughnessy chieftain was made a Knight and received his hereditary estates by royal

In 1599 Sir Dermot O'Shaughnessy retained the Lord Deputy when he died near Gort and from this we know that he paid lip service to the nation and thereby to the Crown. However lip-service to the Crown in England was all it was as in 1651 Cromwell's troops laid siege to

Galway, the then Sir Dermot O'Shaughnessy went to Clanricarde's aid, accompanied by his most experienced men.

The siege lasted forty days and during it a dastardly blow was struck to the Castle in Gort. A Cromwellian, Ludlow, attacked and burned the castle, though he left the mansion nearby standing. The women and children were saved from the burning at the last minute.

Jennifer Foley

But Sir Dermot had to flee the area after the siege of Galway ended. Happily his property was restored to him before he died in 1673. The Castle wasn't re-built.

## COLONEL SMITH

At the beginning of the 19th century a man called John Prendergast Smith inherited the O'Shaughnessy estates. He became Baron of Kiltartan on May 1st 1810 and was created Viscount Gort on 2 January 1816.

He lived in the Bridge House in Gort which is now the Convent of Mercy. Under his patronage factories

were established and flourished – a brewery was the most famous of these.

Colonel Smith commissioned Mr. Payne, an architect, to build a mansion for him on the southern shore of Lough Cutra. It was completed after his death by Colonel Veneker, his nephew, who succeeded to his titles and estates. Colonel Veneker also had the grounds landscaped by a Mr. Sutherland.

The castle is in the Tudor style and the walls are of finally chiselled limestone. The building cost £50,000. In 1847 the 3rd Viscount Gort inherited, but the estates were saddled with debts amounting to £60,000. Because of the famine he was unable to pay the interest on the mortgage and so the castle and property were sold for £17,000 to Mrs. Bell, superioress of the Religious Order of Loreto, Dublin.

It now became a convent and school but some years later was sold to Lord Gough for £24,000. Some years ago it was bought back by the present Lord Gort.

## THE MILL

The Mill was built in 1805–06 and the miller was a man named Mannion from Dublin. It was built on the mainland to the East of the now famous island. The miller eventually became bankrupt and the mill was taken over by the Hynes family towards the end of the last century.

The mill was joined to the island by bridge, probably for the convenience of the troops garrisoned in the military barracks. The mill stopped functioning about fifteen years ago, but the mill can still be seen – though rotting –

# GORT

and so also can the cobblestones and original buildings.

## THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

The minutes of the Church of Ireland state that the original Church on the site was wooden and that it was built in the middle of the 18th century. Some headstones in the graveyard support this theory – for example one erected to the memory of Robert Miller who died in 1762 aged 69 years.

Local people substantiate this wooden Church theory as they say they heard it from their parents and grandparents. The present stone structure was designed by Mr. Payne and built in 1814 at the estimated cost of £2,000.

The style is late Gothic with a Tower and Spire. In 1877 it was renovated and the Church built by the subscriptions of parishioners and friends. It is interesting to note the original cost in comparison to the cost of the present innovations – estimated locally to be in excess of £40,000.

## OTHER GORT BUILDINGS

In 1815 the present courthouse was built which was a very spacious structure for the time. The Gaol, dating from about the same time was built above the bridge, beside Marlboroughs and on the site where Coens now have their shops.

If you go up the railway road and stop just at the back of these shops, you can still see a portion of the original wall of the Gaol, extending to  $\frac{3}{4}$  the height of the present building and forming part of the back wall.

The R.I.C. barracks was situated where Tony O'Connor now lives. A



A view of Protestant Church from Convent grounds.

large building, it had a facade of the usual chiselled limestone. An important addition to the military barracks was made in 1814–15 containing quarters for commissioned officers. Unfortunately virtually every trace of the old castle was done away with by this new building.

Good business houses were built in Bridge St. and the Square about this time. They were built with strict regard to symmetrical appearance of the streets. The topographical dictionary listed 565 houses in the town at the time. The population was over 3,000 before the famine but dropped to 1,500 after it.

Local people say that the houses on the Church side of the Square were originally built with the idea of the front overlooking the river and the back looking out on the Square. One can imagine the view from those houses at the time as being one of

green fields with two Churches on the extreme right and the ground sloping away gently to the river bank. Locals say the southerly facade of these houses is the most ornate side, though this is difficult to see after all the building additions.

## HOUSE DESIGNS

These houses have two interesting features. Some of them are four stories high and have several steps leading upwards to the front door, while others have only three stories. The houses appear to the naked eye, however, to be of uniform height. One believes that it was for this reason that some have steps leading up to the front door; others where the slope downhill is greatest have steps and a basement – the remainder have no steps or basement.

Secondly, all these houses, like all the other buildings built in the town at



## SCHOOLS

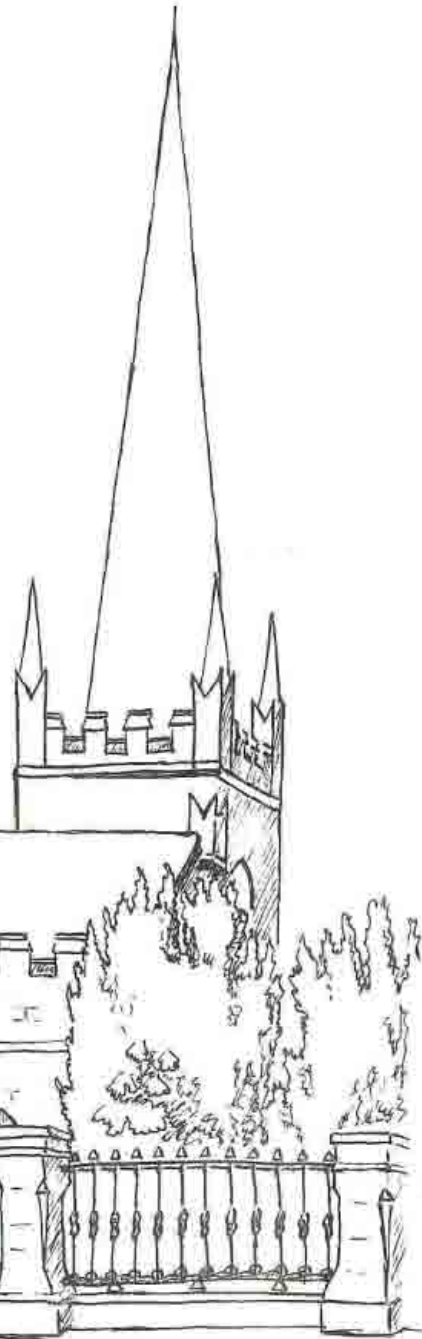
One question left unanswered is where all the limestone used in all the older buildings was quarried. Does anybody know?

Perhaps the lives of the people who lived in Gort since the beginning of time could best be summarized by this epitaph which I found on a tomb in the graveyard of the Church of Ireland. (Note: The blanks are words I was unable to decipher.)

The parish National School was built in 1847 on the site on which the 'poor thatched Church' originally stood. The building consisted of two stories and two schools, one for boys and one for girls. The front is of cut stone showing windows with Tudor mouldings and gables with pinnacles.

In 1856 Fr. Shannon obtained the bridge House to start a convent. Mother Aloysius M. Doyle from the Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy in Carlow founded the Convent. The nuns devoted themselves to the education of the local children. In 1887 the present National School section of the convent was built.

Underneath  
this tomb lie the remains of one  
whose tender and \_\_\_\_\_ spirit  
combined all those \_\_\_\_\_ endearing  
qualities which make the devoted  
wife the faithful parent and the  
sincere friend  
Harassed by temporal trial  
given up to the well being of her  
Family, her anxious mind was  
wrapt in the stillness of death  
by the awful pestilence with which  
it pleased Almighty God to visit  
these counties during the \_\_\_\_\_.



The Protestant Church, Gort (J.W.)

## GORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



John Finnegan, Chairman Gort Chamber of Commerce.

Guaire would like to thank Mr. John Finnegan, Chairman of Gort Chamber of Commerce for the following interview.

**Question:** When, John, was Gort Chamber of Commerce founded?

**Answer:** July 1977 we started. Our chief reason for starting was to try and improve the commercial and social life of Gort and its hinterland.

**Question:** How would you review progress to date?

**Answer:** We are satisfied with what has been achieved in the first two years. I suppose the two Festivals are what have made most impact on the town, but we also worked well in other areas.

**Question:** Would you mention some of these?

**Answer:** We promoted two big car rallies, the Galway International and Circuit of Ireland rallies, securing an all day stop-over for the two of them. This helped business in the town. We also succeeded in improving Gort's overall position in the Tidy Towns Competition. In this year's competition we jumped from the 'Very Good' to the

**Question:** What about industry? Any progress in this area?

**Answer:** At the moment three Chamber members have been co-opted to the Local Development Committee. We hope that these two bodies will merge and try and improve employment prospects in the town.

**Question:** Finance - how do you manage this?

**Answer:** Our main source of revenue is street collections. We held collections for the Festival, for the Christmas Lights (we hope to extend these to the entire town this Christmas) and for the Car Rallies. We also hold an occasional dance.

**Question:** Anything else, John, you would like to mention...

**Answer:** The Chamber, too, assisted the Telephones Action Committee in providing a new Departmental Telephone Exchange for the town. We hope that this new Exchange will service a wider hinterland shortly.

The founding Committee of the 'Exceptionally Good' Chamber was:

category. We painted some derelict buildings and built up some walls.

- Honorary President:** Ned Roche
- Chairman:** John Finnegan
- Secretary:** Eileen Brennan
- Treasurer:** Ray Spellman
- Assistant Treasurer:** Mary Rochford
- Committee:** Mrs Theresa Moloney, Mrs. Rose Mullins, Mrs. Enda Daly, Mrs. Anne Shinnors, Tom Mullins, Paddy Kerins, John Sullivan and Colman Keane.
- Honorary Legal Adviser:** J. C. Murphy.

The new Chamber Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting on 2nd October is:

- Chairman:** John Finnegan
- Vice-Chairman:** Micheál Breathnach
- Secretary:** Mrs. Teresa Moloney
- Assistant Secretaries:** Eileen Brennan and Mrs. Anne Shinnors
- Treasurer:** Mrs Mary Rochford
- Assistant Treasurer:** Mrs. Mim Moloney
- P.R.O.:** Colman Keane
- Assistant P.R.O.:** Humphrey Counihan
- Executive Members:** Mrs. Rose Mullins, Eddie Fennessy, Paddy Kerins, Mrs. Enda Daly and Mrs. Vera Moran.

**Honorary Members:** Ned Roche and J.C. Murphy.

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# Festival Week

John Finnegan

The Gort Autumn Festival owes its beginning to a well attended Public Meeting held at Sullivan's Hotel on 9th July 1977. Following that Meeting, the Chamber of Commerce was formed, as the majority of the townspeople felt there was a great need for such an association in Gort. Previously, there had been Chamber Groups in the town, but these had been disbanded.

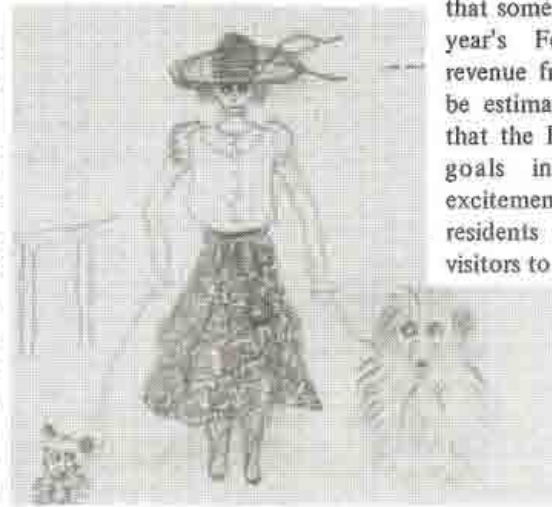
Each member of the Executive Committee of the newly formed Chamber of Commerce, knew the volume of work facing them, as recognised representatives of the town, bringing Gort back into parallel with other similar towns throughout the country. It was agreed that the first project should be the holding of a festival in the town. It was decided that Gort's Festival should be held before the end of September, the last weekend of September being agreed upon as a date and so preparations for the First Autumn Festival were quickly under way.

## FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

With bunting, banners and street music providing the Festival mood, the occasion was officially opened on Thursday September 29th, by Mr. Tom Hussey T.D., then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and now Minister of State in that Department. In spite of appalling weather conditions, the weekend activities commenced and thousands of people flocked into the town to participate in a most varied programme. Highlights of the programme included Boxing, for the first time ever in Gort, Cabaret and

Dancing, a Donkey Derby, a Bonnie Baby Show, Sporting activities of all kinds, Ballad Group Competitions and an Open Air Feis. The selection of Gort's Wild Rose proved to be a most popular event and that first year the honours went to Miss Lavene Mooney, a University student from Kilcolgan.

The Industrial and Fancy Dress Parade, was, without doubt the most exciting and colourful event of the entire Festival. The Parade took place on Sunday, October 2nd the final day of the Festival and some 5,000 people crowded into Gort to see the various floats and fancy dress entries.



The continuation of the Chamber of Commerce saw the holding of the Autumn Festival again this year. It took place a month earlier and was extended to six days with an even more varied programme than the first year. The Festival was officially opened by the town's Parish Priest, Rev. George Canon Quinn P.P., on Tuesday, August 15th. Extra items on the programme this year included Car Trials, a Dog Show, a Fashion Show, the Housewife of Gort Competition, a Tractor/Trailer Reversing competition. Plenty of music was heard and especially traditional music which always adds so much to the atmosphere of a Festival. Local girl Mary Madigan who is teaching in Dublin was a very popular winner of the Wild Rose Competition and Declan Brogan from Kinvara won the Gay Batchelor Title amid much hilarity.

Viewing both years of the Gort Autumn Festival, it can be seen that it is growing steadily and creating an injection of additional revenue for the traders of the town. It is estimated that some 15,000 people attended this year's Festival and although the revenue from this Festival has yet to be estimated, there is no doubt but that the Festival has far surpassed its goals in both providing colour, excitement and entertainment for the residents of the town and attracting visitors to Gort.

## Poet's Corner



NATURE

Niall Shaw

I walked along the banks of the Boyne with thoughts going through my mind

I saw birds and trees and animals and flowers of every kind,  
I thought of all the secrets that nature just won't tell  
As I walked along the Banks of the Boyne, with the air of rosy smell.

I came to my place of worship, the well surrounded by trees  
With the leaves and branches dancing in the cool and gentle breeze,  
And I entered the well and before me I saw what I really love  
And I thought of the man that gave me this, Our Lord,  
who's up above.

I went out of the well and entered the fields where the sheep and lambs always play  
And I looked above me and saw the sun and said what a beautiful day,  
And I looked around and saw the field where I played with my sister and dad  
And I thought to myself what a thrill it would be if I were again just a lad.

On I walked and then I saw the site of my old Georgian house  
Where I keep as my pets a goat and a dog and a harmless little white mouse,  
And I thought to myself how lucky I was to live near the fields and the well  
On the beautiful banks of the beautiful Boyne with the air of rosy smell.

## YESTERDAY

I remember as if it were yesterday  
When barefooted we went,  
To the meadow with sweet smelling hay  
Filling the air with its scent.

I remember as if it were yesterday  
When at the crossroads we would meet,  
And there the fiddler with his fiddle would play  
To wild young dancing feet.

I remember as if it were yesterday  
When with horses and plough I would go,  
Across to the field and there to stay  
Until the sun sank low.

Alas! For I am now old and grey  
And nothing remains but memories of yesterday,  
Soon in the damp dark earth I will lie  
Beneath a blue and hazy sky.

Bernadette Halvey

## DISCARD

A mortuary; cold and bare,  
So cheap the timber coffin there;  
Just bare, bare walls, and God.  
No surpliced Chapter of the Cloth,  
No friend or foe to cast a thought;  
This poor, poor work, of God.  
No solemn music in the air,  
The candles; just a meanly pair,  
In tall, wood stands of black.  
Unknown to all, yet someone's son,  
Befell what may, this nameless one;  
He lies stark dead, alone.  
Did he once know a mother's kiss,  
Did she foresee he'd end like this;  
A found, cold corpse, one morn.  
Did he once know a father's pride,  
To watch him grow with every stride;  
This lone, lone castaway.  
Was he some athlete of renown,  
Who sported once a victor's crown;  
A proud, proud princely man?  
Did he, perhaps, once taste of fame,  
Or sentenced he to die of shame,  
By human, self anointed gods?  
It matters not, his lively goal,  
This lonely, nameless, lifeless, soul;  
His cold black hour is here,  
But may his God show him the care,  
His fellow humans could not spare.

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'Fada ann is fada arís'



# Guaire's Generosity



*Peadar Ó Conaire*

most noble and generous Guaire", he said, "you are a man of God who is King of all kings". You should not have to submit to me". And with that the High King embraced Guaire and there was peace between them from that day on.

## AONACH TAILTEANN

Some time afterwards Guaire went to Aonach Tailteann. He brought a large bag of gold with him to distribute to the poor. The High King, however, had ordered the people not to ask Guaire for any gifts during the Aonach. For two days Guaire sat with the High King and watched the festivities and competitions. He was amazed that nobody asked him for a gift.

On the third day he spoke to the High King. "Order a priest to be brought to me", he said, "my days in this world are nearly over". "Why do you say that?" asked the High King.

"The poor people of Ireland know that my death is near when they see me here and yet not one of them will ask me for a gift" replied Guaire.

"That is not so" said the High King. "I ordered that no man should ask you for a gift during the Aonach".

Guaire was not pleased to hear this. He ordered his bag of gold to be brought to him. He asked the poor people to gather around him and he gave to each one as much gold as he could carry in his hands.

Déansa mar a dhéanadh Guaire  
an tréan fhear ab uaisle croí  
os buaine duit clú ná saol  
Caith le déirc gach a bhfaighir.

your life", he said. "Have you one last request?" "I have", replied Guaire, "do not take my life until I take off my shirt to give to this poor man".

Diarmuid was deeply moved. "Rise

Guaire was famous throughout the land for his generosity. Guaire an t-ádh (the generous one) he was called. There is a tradition that his right arm grew longer than his left arm because of all he gave to the poor.

Guaire was once attacked and defeated in battle by the High King of the land, Diarmuid. Guaire had to submit to Diarmuid. He was forced to kneel on his knees before the High King and take the tip of his own sword between his teeth.

While Guaire was in this position the High King spoke to his followers: "You will soon know", he said, "whether Guaire is generous because of his true love of God or for his own glory". He ordered a poor man to ask Guaire for a gift. Guaire gave the poor man his spear.

A second man asked Guaire for a gift. Guaire gave him his shield. To the third person he gave a gold brooch. The poor man was attacked, however, and the brooch taken from him. He returned to Guaire and told him what happened. Guaire gave him his gold tunic.

He was attacked a second time and his tunic taken. When Guaire saw him returning empty-handed he started to cry, because he had no more to give him.

The High King, who had watched with interest, pretended to be annoyed. "Your tears will not save

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# GORT G.A.A.



*The Gort Hurling team who won the South Galway Senior championship in 1942:*

*Back left: Johnny Gillane, Algie O'Connor, Joe Keane R.I.P., Miko Shaughnessy R.I.P., Josie Gallagher.*

*Second row from back: Jack O'Connor, Paddy Icklam, Joe Cooney, Bobbie Dooley R.I.P., Kevin Burke, Joe Glynn, Paddy Fahy R.I.P..*

*Second row from front: Fr. W. Moran, Thomas Howard, Wally O'Connor, Mattie Brennan R.I.P. (Captain), Tom Staunton and Brendan Moloney.*

*Seated in front: Stephen Gallagher and Jack McNeill.*

Gort has a long G.A.A. tradition. This can be traced back to the earliest days of the Association. The first hurling ball used under G.A.A. rules was made by Eddie Treston's father, Ned, of Crowe St. It was used for a game between Galway and Tipperary at Jones' Road.

A link with Galway's only All Ireland Senior Hurling success also exists. For Gort supplied three players and a trainer to this team. They were Bernie Gibbs, Jim Morris and Ned Gilmartin — the late Jack Berry of Georges' St. was the trainer.

To-day the club continues to cater for the young people of Gort. Hurling is still a popular topic of conversation in the parish. The young people of the town would like to improve on the past.

## THE PAST

This past is laden with some honours: A senior championship was won back in 1934; Intermediate 1958; Junior 1964 and Minor in 1957, 58, 59 and 74. Gort also won the County Junior football championship in 1938.

Gort has supplied many distinguished players to Galway teams over the years. The Gallagher brothers, Josie and Stephen, and Tadhg Kelly were members of the great Galway hurling teams that won the Railway Cup in 1947 and National League in 1951. Paddy Donnelly of Dublin, who

twice held Christy Ring scoreless, told me during the summer that he regarded Josie Gallagher as one of the all time greats of hurling.

## THE FUTURE

To-day the club is close again to winning a County Senior Championship. Narrow defeats in the 1977 and 1978 campaigns have not dampened spirits. The team is young and will come again.

Good young players are also on the

way up. Pierce Pigott and Gerard Lally were very prominent on this year's Galway minor team. Our Lady's College continue to produce good teams. And St. Colman's Vocational School won All Ireland honours last year.

Ireland's greatest field game is well to the fore in one of its traditional settings.

Information for this article was supplied by Frank Lally and Sean Devlin.

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# ST. COLMAN'S WELL

Brendan Long

Saint Colman's Well is situated in Corker some three miles from Gort. It is here according to tradition that St. Colman was born in the 6th century. His mother, Roineach, was fleeing from her enemies kinsmen of Colman, fearing that the child she was bearing might be a rival for the kingship of Connaught, tried to drown her in the Kiltartan river. She was miraculously saved.

The story goes that they tied a heavy stone around her neck and threw her into the deepest part of the river. The stone, of granite, is still to be seen in the old Church in Kiltartan cemetery. It bears the mark of the well to this day. It is on a little altar at the Gospel side.

Another story says that Roineach was thrown into the Poll Tuathail in Kiltartan. This is a swally hole and it is called Poll Tuathail because the water there swirls anti-clockwise before going underground. Roineach was kept safe through the subterranean passage and appeared safe where the well surfaced again below the old Kiltartan new school.

## THE WELL

Roineach made her way across the country to Corker where she rested. There her baby was born. There was no water to baptise the child. Roineach prayed and two monks happened to be passing by. One of them, understanding Roineach's predicament, pulled a scraw from the ground and immediately water sprang

The child was baptised and received the name Colman which means 'little stone'!

As for the two monks, one of them was lame and the other blind. Both were cured after they bathed in the well. The monk who had been blind

looked towards the North east and observed: "Tá sé ina lá bán" and that is how Labane got its name.

A Celtic Cross marks the exact spot where St. Colman was born. The base of the Cross bears the inscription in Gaelic script:

"Chuir an tAthair Hieron Ó Fatha O.D. agus muintir an Pharáisde an Chrois seo suas in onóir do Naomh Mac Duach a rugadh ins an áit seo. Aois Chríost 1901".

## THE ORATORY

In 1912, Mons. Fahy, P.P. Gort had a little oratory erected over the well, under the shadow of the great ash tree — seed of the spreading tree that sheltered Roineach and her child. The oratory resembles the form of the beehive huts which are still to be found in remote places along the West coast.

It is octagonal in shape. It has a glassless window in each of six sides — a Roman arched window between two Gothic-arched ones. The Roman arched doorway occupies another side and the remaining side has a plaque with the inscription:

"St. Colman pray for us, erected by Rev. Mons. Fahey D.D. P.P. V.G. 1912."

The oratory is about fourteen feet in height at the apex and about ten feet wide. It is all concrete. The sides of the domed roof are perfectly symmetrical and beautifully converging



A view of St. Colman's Well with pupils from Kiltartan National School.

to the central point on which a concrete cross is erected.

A very fine coloured statue of St. Colman as a Bishop complete with mitre and crozier is also in the oratory. It stands four feet in height in front of the plaque.

There are seven steps leading down into the Well and the water there has sometimes a depth of six feet. An iron gate surmounted by a cross guides the entrance to the Oratory.

## ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

On the 29th October, the feast of

Ceremonies begin at the Well with Mass and Holy Communion at 3 o'clock. This is followed by the traditional Station — the 'rounds' are made while reciting seven Our Father's and seven Glory be to the Father's. A talk on St. Colman is now given and the ceremonies finish with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in Kiltartan Church.

The ceremonies attract people from many other parishes in South Galway and from as far away as Tullamore, whose people claim Roineach as their very own. Private visits during the month of October are also very frequent. Others do a vigil at the well on the night before the feast of St. Colman. It is claimed that many petitions have been granted and cures effected at the Well.

Tradition says that St. Roineach is buried under the Cross at the spot where she gave birth to St. Colman.

The people of Kiltartan take a pride in their ancient heritage. Year after year they come led by their parish priest to prepare the Well and its surrounds for the pilgrimage. Fathers and sons work feverishly for evenings beforehand tending with loving care to the paths leading to the Well — trimming the grass, clipping branches of the famous ash tree near the Well.

St. Colman, there is an annual pilgrimage to the Well. It is the 'Pattern Day' of Kiltartan and is kept as a holiday.

Here is a community spirit in action.

## GORT RUGBY



Junie Finnegan

The Gort Rugby Club, after a lapse of some years, was revived on 8 December 1974. It now has fifty six members and fields two teams.

Officers are — *President:* Junie Finnegan; *Secretary:* Donal Connolly; *Treasurer:* Don Coen; *Fixtures Secretary:* Greg London.

The Club competes in the Connacht Junior League and in the Connacht Junior Cup. The second string competes in a Seconds Competition.

Last year the Club reached the Semi-Final of the Connacht Junior Cup before being beaten by Creggs, Roscommon 9 — 6, the eventual winners.

Members train on Wednesday and Friday nights at Sullivan's Hotel. Young members are especially welcome. Perhaps the Club's most famous members are Clare hurling stars, Pat and Enda O'Connor.

At the moment the Club is planning a trip to Murray Field, Scotland for the Ireland Scotland game in February. Any one interested is asked to contact Don Coen or any officer of the Club.

Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month and the Club Coach is Garda Tim O'Driscoll.

## SALUTE TO YEATS

Welcome to this land oft graced  
By him whose noble pen lends  
Such uplifting and sustaining food  
To mind and spirit.

Without the mind what is the body  
But a poor receptacle for earthy things,  
like meat or bread or fish or passing fancies  
Transient as a fleeting cloud.

But Yeats, we do salute  
and granting justice, thank him  
for a wondrous heritage.

Written by W. Quinn on reopening of  
Toor Ballylee June 1965.



# Golf



*in Gort*

In 1924 a small group of people in town decided to lease about 50 acres of land at Glenbrack, Gort from the Rock family and start using it as a golf course. Due to flooding the lands could only be used during summer and autumn. Fairways were cleared of trees and greens fenced from stock. The owner had a right to graze sheep on the lands.

During the late 1960's various committee meetings discussed the possibility of acquiring other lands. Various farms were inspected each committee meeting with failure for one or another.

In October 2nd 1975 word came that the Tubber Road might be purchased. Two days later these lands were purchased, the contract signed and the purchase price of £16,400 paid. The original idea in buying this land was to exchange it for the existing golf course. In fact some negotiations took place at the time of this object in view.

## THE CHANGE

In an extraordinary General Meeting

*Niall Finnegan, the youngest member of Gort's winning Connacht Shield and Jimmy Bruen teams.*

of Gort Golf Club was called and the big step was taken. Gort Golf Club was to move to lands at Laughty-shaughnessy.

Problems were but reasonable to expect, financial and otherwise. Every

### *Joe McEnerney*

hurdle was cleared by an outstanding team of men who came to clear away walls and bushes, design and develop what we now enjoy. Voluntary subscriptions from some, a £100 levy from all, wonderful fund raising efforts by a magnificent Ladies Section all made progress possible.

By March of 1976 we had our first competition - later that year the clubhouse was completed.

The men and women who made all this possible have every reason to be proud and certainly people of this calibre will no doubt continue to develop this course still further.

It is worthy of mention that no

state aid or grant of any kind was received.

## SUCCESS

Gort Golf Club won two Connacht titles in 1978 - the Connacht Shield and the Jimmy Bruen trophy. This was a fine achievement by a small club. The team panels were:

**Connacht Shield:** Gerry Cahill, Frank Cooney, Noel Mullins, Gerry Cooney, Paddy Jordan, Val Hoarty, Joe McEnerney and Fr. Liam Power, Niall Finnegan, Frank Glynn, Frank Shaw, Johnny Cummins, Chris Nestor, and Micheál Breathnach.

**Jimmy Bruen:** Gerry Cahill, Noel Mullins, Val Hoarty, Joe McEnerney, Niall Finnegan, Johnny Cummins, Chris Nestor, Frank Shaw, Thomas Quigley, John Moylan, Pat Burke.

In the All Ireland Semi-Final of the Jimmy Bruen trophy Gort were beaten by Stokestown G.C. Stokestown went on to win the final. Turkey competitions are now in full swing. The course is in fine order still. Careful practice now could bring further successes to Gort Golf Club in 1979.



## GOLF

Golf is earth's ambassador that comes to haunts of men to lure them from the banking floor the counter and the pen; to lead them gently by the hand through toil and stress and strife to guide them to the pleasureland along the path of life.

It is a game of honour, too, that tries the souls of men it's easy to the public view to be all honest men But he deserves an angel's wings who paths of truth has trod when left alone with just two things his score-card and his God.

If golf shall teach you patiently adversity to meet, If it shall teach philosophy to keep your temper sweet If it shall teach you still to grin with mirth no matter what You are a victor if you win a loving cup or not.

*author unknown*



*Marie Devlin, Treasurer of Mentally Handicapped Association.*



*Princess Grace of Monaco with her daughter Caroline outside Glynn's Hotel, Gort in May 1961.*



# Gort's Protestant Church



Mairéad Walsh

The handing over ceremony took place on 5th April. It was another practical link in the unity of all Christians. Present at this great event were Edwin Owen, Church of Ireland Bishop of Killaloe and Clonfert, Very Rev. Cyril Bruce, Very Rev. L.R. Kirkpatrick, Ennis, Most Rev. Dr. Browne, Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh at the time, Canon O'Donohue R.I.P. Ardrahan, Canon Quinn of Gort and Canon C. Burke President of Our Lady's College Gort, R.I.P.

All this happened over six years ago. Yet it is only in the past year that we have seen some progress in the development of the Church and grounds.

The County Council are doing the work which is at an advanced stage. The building has been re-roofed and a lot of interior decoration has been done as well.

A new library and museum are long awaited by the people of Gort. To all who made it possible, thanks.

the people of Gort. The ideal solution for its preservation and use would be a library and local museum for the town.

The central position of the Church and its ready access to the community would fit in with local plans for improvements and would also be of benefit to the students of the Vocational School and the two Secondary Schools in the town.

The two slender church towers rising into the skyline can be seen in any road approaching Gort. They belong to the Protestant and Catholic communities of Gort. Now they belong to the people of Gort.

The Protestant Church was built in 1844 at the then enormous cost of £1000. Its architect was John Nash of London who also designed Lough Rostara Castle. His two assistants John George Paine of Gort built the present bridge over the Gort river in 1841 going on to build Lough Cutra and the Protestant Church in the early years of the last century.

The Church of Ireland served a representative of the Gort community, which numbered about 100 at the time. Families included the landlords of the area, the Goughs of Lough Cutra, the Baggots of Ashfield, the Gregories of Coole.

## CHURCH GIVEN TO PEOPLE

The decision to close the Church was made when George Daly, who was Mayor of Gort 51 years ago, died. The Church Body decided that such churches should be demolished. But around the Church is a cemetery which contains a Catholic burial plot. The landlords had taken Catholic workers as servants for themselves.

For this reason Canon Kirkpatrick and the late Dean Hynes P.P. discussed the idea of handing over this church to

## QUIZ

A prize of £5 will be given to the first correct entry drawn from a hat in both sections.

### UNDER 14

1. If you asked for sirloin what kind of meat would you expect to get?
2. If you sailed down the Volga river what lake would you sail into?
3. Who conferred the title 'Defender of the Faith' on Henry VIII?
4. What is a scuba?
5. In Irish legend who was the old woman whose shrieks told of a coming death?
6. What was the Dodo?
7. How many sides has a snow crystal?
8. What are the colours of the French flag?
9. What do the letters N.A.T.O. stand for?
10. Who is Minister for Health in the present Irish Government?
11. A young goose is called a gosling. What is a young swan called?
12. Where is W. B. Yeats buried?
13. What was Lady Gregory's Christian name?
14. What height is Kilmacduagh Tower?
15. What is the fastest animal in the world?
16. Who compered the R.T.E. programme QuickSilver?
17. Who is President of the I.F.A.?
18. How many times has Muhammed Ali won back the World heavyweight boxing title?
19. Name the actor who plays the leading role in 'Grease'?
20. How many loaves in a baker's dozen?

Answers to Fr. Enda Glynn or Peadar Ó Conaire before 31st October.

## PADDY NOLAN - THE LAST OF THE SHOEMAKERS

By a friend

On Good Friday 1977 Paddy Nolan, the last of the Gort shoemakers, was laid to rest.

Paddy was a man of many parts, truly a man for all seasons. He was known to everyone, young and old. He was an expert at everything he turned his hands to.

Apart from being a wonderful

shoemaker, he was an expert violinist, piper, fisherman, fly-maker, trumpeter, and a marvel on the flute, piccolo and tin whistle.

His musical tastes were truly Catholic and he was as much at home pouring out some piece from the classics as the 'Sally Gardens'. His ear was razor keen and he would detect the merest fraction of a departure from the true note.

Paddy got some of his greatest delight when the flies he tied became

## OVER 14

1. Who wrote the best selling book 'Jaws'?
2. In what century did the BLACK DEATH afflict Europe?
3. Why is the Russian Revolution which began on November 7th, known as the October Revolution?
4. Members of certain councils etc. have the power of Veto. What is the meaning of this Latin word?
5. In Genesis it is said that God first created Heaven and Earth. What was the next thing he created?
6. Why does yellow phosphorus have to be kept under water?
7. What quality is symbolized by a blindfolded woman holding a pair of scales?
8. What family ruled France for more than 200 years?
9. Who wrote 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea in 1870?
10. What is the national symbol of Canada?
11. What French heroine died as a witch in 1431, but was declared a saint in 1920?
12. Americans often referred to President Johnson as L.B.J. Whom did they call F.D.R.?
13. The fourth letter of the Greek alphabet is a geographical term; what is it?
14. What name is given to gypsies in Hungary?
15. A ladybird is a beetle; what is a ladysmock?
16. A man's heart has 4 chambers: how many chambers are there in a frog's heart?
17. What is the Sargasso Sea noted for?
18. What is the popular name of Mozart's last symphony?
19. What is the heaviest known metal on earth?
20. What is the legendary creature that is supposed to haunt the Himalayas?

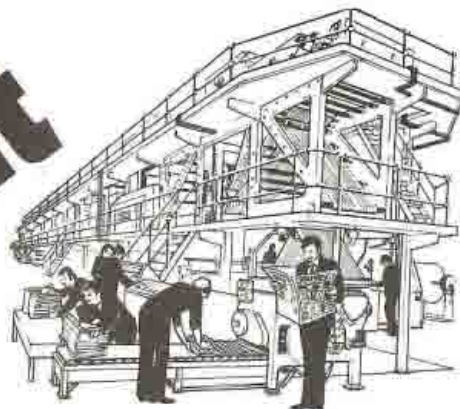
perfect enough to delude the wary trout. Perfect the flies had to be - as Paddy spent a lot of time examining material specimens under his magnifying glass, and faithfully coping them in his reproduction.

Paddy was a simple and kindly man who never offended anyone. He loved the young and liked to help them. Shoemaking in Gort will never be the same after him.

He loved Gort and Gort loved him. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.



# Out and about



ie Charismatic Movement has come Gort. It was started by Larry Hogan (took R.T.E.) at the end of just. Prayer meetings are held in Convent Secondary School on ndays at 8 o'clock. An ever easing number enjoy the get others.

ck Scanlon whose death occurred eptember was the last of the old eration of postmen in Gort. For thirty years he was a well-known respected figure in the area. ore joining the post office he ed in the Medical Corps in France ng the First World War. May he in peace.

to thirty years ago the Annual gh Patrick pilgrimage used to act hundreds from the Gort area. y used their bicycles in the long ney to the Reek. Pierce Piggott embers leaving Gort for the Reek a bicycle in the morning, serving s for Fr. Quinn (then curate in t) on Croagh Patrick and returning ie with P. J. Finnegan (deceased) 941.

ny groups of Boy Scouts came to een House during the summer. y used Coole Woods for different ities.

lyaneen Water Group Scheme is ing completion. It will serve ty houses and farms.

recent visitor to Gort was the op of Gambia, West Africa, Most Dr. Moloney. He stayed with Mr. Mrs. Rynal Coen, Glenbrack d, Gort. A native of East Clare, op Moloney was once a Professor rish at Blackrock College, Dublin.

He was a keen Rugby enthusiast and was granted an honorary O.B.E. some years back. However he returned this honour in 1972 after the events of Bloody Sunday.

## MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

\*The Gort Branch of the Mentally Handicapped Association is working hard since 1965 in the Gort region. It is a branch of the County Galway Association for Mentally Handicapped Children Ltd. For two years volunteers brought children from areas like Derrybrien, Peterswell, Tierneval to a pick-up point in Gort and from there to St. Joseph's Special School at Snipe Avenue, Newcastle, Galway. Pressure was put on the Government during these years to provide a regular transport service. This was eventually organised. And to-day two cars leave Gort each morning bringing children to the Special School in Newcastle and to the adjoining workshop.

The branch meets in the Convent on the last Monday of each month. All members are voluntary workers. Contributions are received from the parishes of Gort, Kilbecanty and Beagh. Last year a very successful social was held in Gort.

Voluntary workers act as escorts on the transport service to Galway every day. The branch appeals to anyone who is willing to act in this capacity to contact the branch secretary or any member at their convenience. Officers for 1978-79 are:

*Chairman:* Fr. Power; *Vice-Chairman:* Tom Staunton; *Secretary:* Mrs. Judy

Conroy; *Treasurer:* Mrs. Marie Devlin; *P.R.O.:* Mr. J. Porter.

\*The death took place of Sr. M. Agnes Fahy, a native of the Square, Gort on Sunday 27 August. She was a Cistercian nun attached to Glencairn Abbey. Sr. M. Agnes was one of those chosen in 1949 to make the foundation in Wrentham, U.S.A. Two sisters live in Gort, Mrs. Glynn and Mrs. Murphy, the Square. May she rest in peace.

\*William Kilroy, brother of Jack, and his son Kevin have returned to Montreal after a two week holiday in Gort. It was William's second trip home in forty seven years.

\*Another visitor to Gort recently was Anthony Meade, brother of the late James Meade, Ballyhugh. It was Anthony's first visit home in forty eight years.

\*Susan Daly daughter of the former rector of the Protestant Church, Archdeacon Daly, and step-sister of George Daly celebrated her 103rd birthday on 20th September in Surrey England. She is the last of the Daly family. She corresponded in her own handwriting to one of the Convent sisters up to her 102nd year.

## YEATS

\*The Yeats Gregory Summer School is held every July. Under the direction of Dr. Louis Muinzer, Queens University, Belfast, a series of lectures is presented on a selection of Yeats' poetry at the

Tower in Ballylee or, weather permitting, in Coole Park.

Plays by the poet and Lady Gregory are a feature of the school. The School attracts many overseas visitors, especially from the U.S.A. What a pity so few from Gort patronise the occasion! Ventures like these need constant care and attention. Up to now the school depended upon outside influences for survival but its days are numbered if new sources of inspiration are not found. Only the people of Gort can supply this new inspiration.

## YOUTH

\*Kathleen O'Regan, the Square, Gort writes:

Gort has not got what the youth of

to-day need. There is nothing but a Pool Hall and for some reason or other parents don't seem to like it.

Gort is really in need of something for youth. A good youth Club with experience leaders who know how to organise and run a *proper* youth Club - this is badly needed. The co-operation of youth themselves is also required - not leave everything to the leaders.

Some suggestions have been made in having the river cleared and made into a proper swimming facility with a diving board etc.

What young people in Gort would love to see is a cinema or even a hall where advertised films could be shown.

If Gort doesn't cater for its young people, it has no future.

# "GREASE"

Rosemary Shaw

The long awaited follow up to the overpowering film 'Saturday Night Fever' reached the shores of Ireland on the 15th of September. John Travolta was, of course, the star of the show. Olivia Newton-John who played the part of Sandy excelled herself in this role although compared to John Travolta her dance sequences were a bit stiff.

The story is based in Rydell high school and centres mainly around Sandy and Danny played respectively by Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta. They have their up's and downs during the course of their romance but happily and inevitably everything ends the way it's supposed to. Rizzo, played by Stockard Channing, was very entertaining as was Frenchie played by Didi Conn.

The high point of the show was of course The High School Dance which showed John Travolta as the next best thing to Gene Kelly. The music for the dance was supplied by Sha-na-na who are a very well known American Rock

and Roll group. They made their fame in the film "American Graffiti".

Their version of the song 'Hound Dog' could only be bettered by the King of Rock and Roll himself Elvis Presley. The dance competition was won, of course, by Danny and his dance partner ONLY Cha Cha played by Annette Charles. Those of you who saw 'Saturday Night Fever' will remember her.

## Songs

Grease was originally a hollywood movie in which Elizabeth Taylor starred as Sandy. The film was of course cut in parts and those of you who have the double L.P. will have noticed the absence of Cindy Bullins who sings perhaps the two nicest songs in the whole show - 'Freddie my Love' and 'It's raining on prom night'.

It's hard to categorize the songs but my favorites are 'Summer Nights' sung by John Travolta, and Olivia Newton-John, 'There are worse things I could do' by Stockard Channing, and

\*It is not often that three gold medals come to Gort. But Marie Scully did just this bringing home three gold medals and one silver from the Kidney Olympics held at Portsmouth England in August. Marie won the 100 m, 200 m and 500 m. She also won a second silver medal in the Relay race and captained the overall winning team - the prize a Rose Bowl.

It was a wonderful performance and the winning team was honoured at a recent function in the Classic Ballroom. £1000 was presented to the Irish Kidney Association on behalf of the people of Gort and surrounding areas.

'Sandy' by John Travolta.

My advice to anyone who hasn't seen it is SEE IT. It's the best Rock and Roll film ever.

Rosemary Shaw.





# The River Beagh



Mel Conway.

The River Beagh is the largest river in the Gort area. It is known to locals by many different names including the Black Water, the Black Water, the Black Water, the Black Water and the Gort River.

The course of the river closely follows the digit '2', and it is a fine example of a water-way in a one region since it is partly man-made.

The Beagh has its source in Lough Beagh, 2 miles S.S.E. of Gort town, leaving the lake the river flows in a westerly direction, following a winding course until it reaches a depression called the 'bowl' where the swirling water enters into the pervious limestone. After travelling underground for a hundred yards, the river emerges again in a tree-lined hollow called the Black Water, the water flows down a slope of three hundred yards before sinking in a slow pool beside the Gort-Ennis road. The river appears briefly in an open, steep-walled pot-hole called the Ladle about 200 yards west

of the Blackwater swallow-hole.

The next emergence of the river is probably the most spectacular — the rising is known either as Pollduagh or Cannahowna and it consists of a rock cavern about 50 feet wide and 7 feet high. The water flows out from the back of the cavern filling it from wall to wall. At the mouth of the cave there is a small island connected to the bank by a low, concrete, bridge-like structure.

## WATER SUPPLY

Shortly after Pollduagh rise the river turns North and flows towards Gort town  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away. It is from this stretch of the river that the town water supply is obtained. The water is pumped to an artificial reservoir situated above the town where it is filtered and stored before public use.

Down-stream of the pump-house is an area of the river frequented by swimmers, the area is about 30 yards in length and is known locally as "small hopes" because until a few years ago pot-holes in the river bed

caused treacherous currents there.

The Beagh flow through the centre of Gort — it is crossed by a stone bridge constructed in 1771. Until recently the river was harnessed to power two grain mills, one in the town and another  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the North, but both are now in a dilapidated condition.

The town uses the river for sewage disposal and although there are some untreated sewers which flow directly into the river, the majority of the sewage goes through a treatment plant just downstream of the town.

About  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles North of Gort the river disappears again at a place called Pooltoop Hill sink. It consists of an open rock face with the water running into a large crevasse. Driftwood has accumulated about the sink and the ledges around the swallow-hole are littered with debris.

Having travelled underground for 1 mile in a westerly direction the river surfaces at Poldeelin rising in the vicinity of Kiltartan Church. From here it enters Coole Demense, once the home of Augusta Gregory, it goes underground twice within the grounds and finally flows into Coole Lake, a turlough  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles North East of Gort.

## GORT CATHOLIC BOY SCOUTS

Peadar Ó Conaire



Pictured at Eucharistic Congress 1932:  
Back left to right: Tom Finnegan, Joe Hanrahan, Gerard Keane, Joe Griffin and Stephen McDonagh.

Front left to right: Donal Ross, Wallie O'Connor, Fintan P. Nelly, Tom O'Shaughnessy, John Gallagher and Michael Brady.

A troop of boy scouts has been formed in Gort after a lapse of many years. There are twenty boys from the town and the rest of the parish in the troop.

Meetings are every Friday at 8 p.m. in the I.C.A. hall. Scout Master is Sergeant Jerry Sheehan; Assistant Scout Masters are Dan Casey, Eamon Fennessy and Paddy Kenny. Fr. Liam Power C.C. is Chaplain to the troop. The Committee is

Chairman: Michael Cunningham  
Secretary: Peadar Ó Conaire  
Treasurer: Colman Keane.

The first Scout Unit was formed in Gort in 1931. John Joe Coen was

Chairman of the Committee. Scout Master was Gerard Keane, assisted by Joe Hanrahan.

The troop, led by its officers, marched from the Phoenix Park to O'Connell St. in the procession at the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. They also had regular weekend camps at Cloughballymore.

Rev. James Larkin (R.I.P.) Chaplain to the troop arranged a Summer Camp for the troop in Maam valley. Most of the troop including Pierce Piggott cycled the fifty miles to Camp. Pierce remembers being told by his leader to swim to an island in a lake to get 'cigars' for the camp fire.



Pierce Piggott the scout pictured at Cloughballymore.

Welcome Guaire from  
FALLON BROTHERS  
Groceries, meat and hardware

Drink in comfort  
THE PUNCH BOWL BAR  
(Prop.: Bill and Eileen Kelly)

Teas, coffees, soups, snacks, bed and breakfast.

The Square Gort



# THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF THE "GALWAY STAR"

By W.M. Quinn



Mrs. Jack Kilroy, the Square looking over past issues of 'The Star'.

The seed that blossomed into the colourful, controversial adulated and led flower "The Galway Star" was planted at a political meeting in Loughrea, circa 1947.

My records and copies have been consigned to the garbage bin, occasioned by a damp cellar and the waning interest that accompanies the re – crumbling into understandable confetti.

That Loughrea meeting was presided over by the aloof, dictatorial, enthusiastic and over-honest Sean O'Riada – a meeting of the Clann na nGael party locally, of which I was an ardent advocate. We heralded a new political party, that would break the link with sterling and bring needed reforms to this country. We were bewildered but hopeful and conscious of the vested interests were stacked against us.

After an after session drink it was my deeply keen Committee member, who suggested that a political party's success depended on a paper of its own.

## THE STAR ARRIVES

Fianna Fail's first rise was due to its significant four page tabloid 'Anocht' later the Irish Press. By its own writings in favour of Fianna Fail it helped put them in a prominent position.

Until then I was an outsider to journalism. But with four years at Garbally College, Ballinasloe and a two year Commercial Course in shorthand and typing in the old Technical School at Dominick St. Galway, I felt reasonably equipped to launch a paper of my own.

And so the first issue of the 'Star' was within a short time in the hands of a critical and excited public. Like Fianna Fail's first effort it was a four page tabloid, but unlike the nationwide machine of Fianna Fail it was a one man effort.

I was publisher, editor, Sub-editor, advertising agent, letter writer and columnist. Into that unhappy bargain I was a rotten bad accountant which later proved my undoing.

Then I was riding high – a semi-detached house on the Ennis Road, two doors from the Classic Ballroom and now occupied by the Cox family. I pinpoint location lest

some half-wit should decide to disgrace me with a plaque there when I was no longer present to protest. No laurels should be unfurled till the Printers Ink is a hundred years dry.

## WHAT THE STAR WAS LIKE

It was a four page tabloid that embraced a miscellany of matter – Court reports from Gort, Kinvara, Ardahan, Loughrea and Galway. As now it was an age of suppression. Once a defendant offered crisp notes to ensure omission. Dare I be contradicted but I never accepted a bribe or published anything I deemed hurtful or unjust.

I received no journalistic help or financial assistance from any source, despite my appeals to men who could have made it a viable proposition.

In an effort to keep my tottering financial Empire afloat, I organised an annual dance – the first was for the Miss Galway title won by Miss Kitty Duffy of Crowe St. Later came the Bachelor's Ball led by Joe Connolly and Jimmy Burke and then the Tramps Ball with the real Julia McDonagh attending.

I was a lone starved wolf – cursed

with the appellation 'dedicated'. Apart from news items I was 'Uncle Pat and Auntie Maggie' – the children's column. "Bill Hawkins" (my mother was a Hawkins) and I wrote a column 'Chatter and Patter' touching everything from Spiritualism to laudatory pen pictures of famous personalities.

I forestalled Angela McNamara by years with my 'Advice Column – send your problems to me'. They came by post, often in the middle of the night by a personal rattle on the hall door

knocker – mostly romantic intrigues or a man 'in trouble'.

I always exercised caution in what I published. Too much 'tell it all' sensations besmirch our modern world, causing heartaches and untold conflict.

## EXIT "THE STAR"

The Galway Star dragged on to its inevitable conclusion – exit about 1953, wallowing deeper into debt. I had not the accountancy brain to foresee it in time. I lost my house on the Ennis Road – the Sheriff moved in. I found happy shelter in a caravan

for twelve years – a heavenly heaven, the happiest years of my life.

In hindsight it was an overpowering one man effort. It gave some enjoyment, I hope; occasionally caused embarrassment as most papers do at some time. However I have no regrets. I swapped wealth for justice.

I survived. Financially I was in ruins from which I failed to emerge to this day. But there is a web of nostalgia, achievement and a feeling of self-righteousness that I wouldn't swap for a job 'permanent and pensionable'.



# Sport for all day

Brendan Long

Sunday October 1st saw the start of a new nation wide campaign to get the country on its feet – and to partake in some physical activities.

Directed by the National Sports Council, headed by Ronnie Delaney, numerous exercises were planned for the whole country. The weather duly obliged and produced probably the finest day this year.

All activities in Gort centred on the Square. The circle of Gallagher's Lane was the circuit. All very simple, people thought. To many it showed just how far around it really was and how hard the road can be. You would never think there was such a hill from the powerhouse up to Ballyhugh.

That done you could roll all the way down to the Square. The field had no trouble in reaching Ballanger's corner but as they headed out the country the going got tough. The sun poured down and the sweat rolled off. (It was even tougher if you missed the turn and continued down to Coole).

The stoney road off Gallagher's

Lane posed numerous feet problems. The road seemed to bob up and down before you. A sense of achievement was very high once the course was completed. All were presented with a certificate by Cuspóir on finishing.

## ENJOYMENT

Many spectators were out at their doors to view proceedings. But participants would have been better appreciated. In all it seemed that more could have taken part. Congratulations are due to all who took part not because they broke any athletic record – but because they took part when asked and helped make it a successful sport for all day.

Many children participated but the number of adults was not as high as expected. Maxie Scully, star of the recent kidney olympics, took part.

The day proved a very enjoyable one. It is hoped that everyone will take up some form of physical activity. It would be nice if people shook themselves and livened up the



weekends. Cars might not be used as much now when we have to get across the road or down the street. Everything is to be gained.

It will ensure good health for those who take it up regularly.







View of the 'Mill'.

### HYNES' OLD WATER MILL GORT

W.M. Quinn

Few Irish districts can boast a heritage so rich in literary and historic associations as Gort. To this day it is a hospitable and architecturally pleasing town served by the Blackwater river that plays hide and seek in delightful under from its source in Ballinakil lake – on to Lough Cutra lake, Dunire Castle to its exit near ould Kinvara Quay. Three miles West of Gort stands the Round Tower of Kilmacduagh and St. nan's seven Churches. The seven woods of Coole, home of playwright Lady Gregory are just one mile north and three miles further north is Tulira Castle, a Gothic gem. Here Edward Martyn, patron of the Arts and founder of the Gort choral choir, lived – a benevolent bachelor.

Tourists are aware through Bord Fáilte of the many interesting sights and medieval ruins. But most residents of the town itself are unaware of a direct link with our simple past – the water Mill just off George's Street to the Railway Station.

#### HOW THE MILL WORKED

Before the intrusion of the oil engines and the E.S.B. it was a vital link in the lives of the farming community for miles around. The great Big Wheel went round and was driven only by the free rushing waters of the Blackwater river – no oil, fuel, no dependence on Saudi Arabia or impersonal electric power. This was the age of simple living, of horse and cart. Old women often walked miles with a small Coscain of flour on their backs, arriving at dawn at the mill was a place of animation and necessity.

Long queues waited their turn to grind the wheat ground into flour or the corn turned to Pin Head Oatmeal to

rear the chickens that grew to hens or fat cocks – or was eaten with relish as porridge for breakfast. This before a long day's toil in the harvest fields or at the demesne of the local gentleman.

It is a changing retrogressive world to-day when corn flakes and cream, grilled bacon and sausage is devoured by an over-pampered youth at breakfast time.

In my youth fifty years ago it was a lucky school boy who had a bottle of milk or Cold Tey with a chunk of rough brown bread for his school luncheon – the luckier ones had a spatter of home-made Blackberry jam on the bread. Most ate it 'natural' and licked the crumbs in hungry delight. They were none the worse for it.

To-day it's fast cars, tinned vegetables, butchers meat and costly crisps. Fur lined boots and the 'Bus Scoile' from home door to school door. . . . Bacardi and coke or special brew lager with ice cubes. Old dad and grandad had the occasional medium of porter at a wake or wedding or on the big Fair Day when he walked a £3

bullock miles along the dusty road to the local town.

Now the £400 beast is hastened to the mart in a trailer behind a sleek cushioned automobile and consigned impersonally to the white coated salesman in a tiered sales ring.

But is age fogging my nostalgia? Is that why I yearn for the "old (un)happy days of long ago"?

When men won muscle and appetite  
Sometimes I wonder is progress right  
Down on our knees we'd weed the drill;

For a task well done we'd feel a thrill  
Then back to a feed of cabbage and bacon

That was the nucleus of a healthy nation.

#### PRESERVE THE OLD MILLS

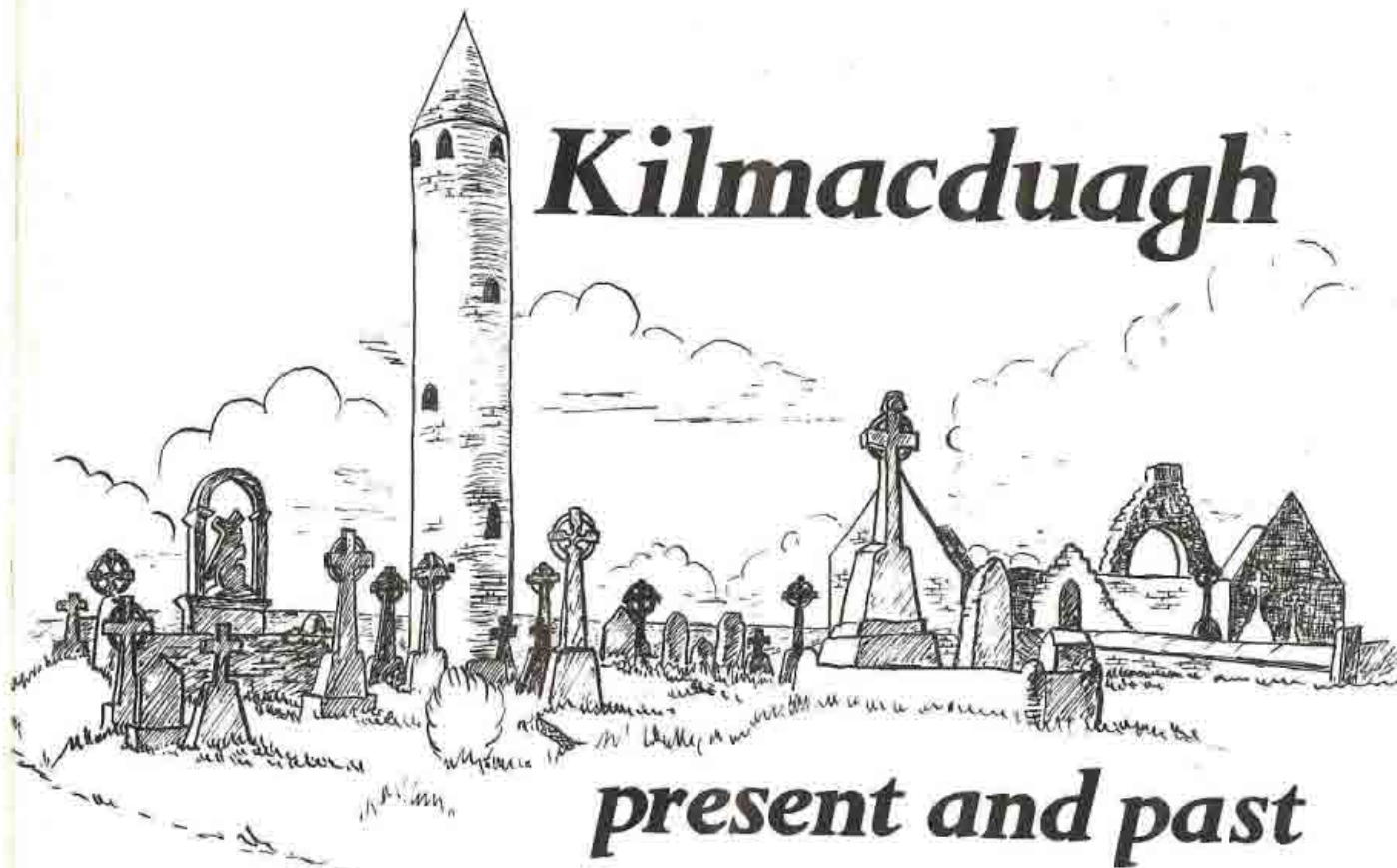
But to revert to the old water mill now "silent and still as the waters churn idly by". What a pity they are allowed decay. A visit to Hynes' mill today would be a sight of wonderment and disbelief, not only to youth but to grown up men who have never seen one in motion.

We spent millions in restoring old town and Abbeys and Fairy Liosanna but future generations will bewail the obliteration of that link with an old style of farming.

Since the accompanying picture of the Mill was taken 20 years ago many slates have fallen down – the big paddles of the Mill wheel have rotted away. Soon only the heavy iron work of the inner mill will remain.

The present custodians Mr. and Mrs. John Hynes would like to see it preserved – perhaps hear the rhythmic churl of the big wheel turn the mighty cogs that sent the stone quairans pouring out brown flour from the brittle corn. Done in its slow unhurried way that made its meal a product far superior to the fast engines driven mechanisms of to-day.

Who will buy the old water mill? It could be a worthwhile proposition and bring back the flavour of the dark rough bread that needed no Bis a Dol or capsules to ensure a healthy inner man.



# Kilmacduagh

## present and past

Sr. M. de Lourdes Fahy

#### Buildings

A rather detailed account of the monastic ruins of Kilmacduagh is given by John O'Donovan in the Ordnance Survey Letters of 1838. He mentions the following buildings:- 1. The Round Tower. 2. The Cathedral. 3. Teampall na Naomh. 4. Seanloch. 5. Teampall Mhuire. 6. The O'Heyne's Monastery. 7. Teampall Mac Duagh. 8. Teampall Beg Mac Duagh.

#### The Round Tower

This building is unique in some respects. It is Ireland's only leaning Tower; it is inclined about two feet from the vertical. It is also the country's highest tower, being 111½ feet high. No satisfactory explanation has been given as to why it leans. The sill of the doorway is 26 feet from the ground being at the highest elevation of any of our Round Towers. The conical top was restored in 1978/9 and at the time birds' bones and oyster

shells were found in the base; under these and partly under the foundation of the Tower, were skeletons.

#### The Cathedral

The west part of the nave of the cathedral is a small structure, originating from the tenth or eleventh century which was lengthened eastwards in the twelfth century. A northern and southern transept, a new chancel and sacristy, were added later. The west doorway which is now blocked up, has inclining jambs and is flat-headed or lintelled. The northern transept was known as the O'Shaughnessy chapel and is believed to have been the mortuary chapel of that family. Opposite the entrance and against the gable stands a striking monument resembling an altar tomb. Above it can be seen a triple-towered castle and supporting lions, the arms of the O'Shaughnessy. Also here is a Crucifixion scheme. The oldest date

which the diarist Austin Cooper found in 1771 was "Hic iacet Johannes Fahie 1622". The southern transept was known as Lady Chapel.

#### Teampall na Naomh

It is sometimes referred to as the Church of St. John the Baptist, a small twelfth century church to the north of the cathedral.

#### Seanloch

House of the Clergy, a large square building north of the cathedral. It is a strong castellated residence, generally regarded as the ancient residence of the bishop. On the upper floor is the oratory looking N.E. from which, it is said, the bishop blessed the pilgrims who came there. It is being re-roofed at present.

#### Teampall Mhuire

This ruin is on the opposite side of the road, a road which was built by



Grand Jury over the graves of the people, at the end of the eighteenth century. It was one of the main routes between Connacht and Munster.

**O'Heyne's Monastery**  
Art historians consider this to be the most interesting building in macduagh. It stands at a distance from the other buildings. There is a monastery chapel in the north side and considerable portion of the domestic part of the monastery connected with the chancel of the chapel, at right

angles and extending southwards. The main interest of the work centers in its chancel, which shows features of Irish Romanesque. The beautiful chancel arch is supported by pillars with animal and floral decoration, and there are two excellently carved east windows. The Annals of the Four Masters record that the building belongs to the thirteenth century.

**Teampall Mac Duagh**  
Now destroyed. Old men living in 1838 remember to have seen parts of

it standing. It was situated between the Cathedral and the Tower.

**Teampall Beg Mac Duagh**  
This was outside the wall, about one hundred yards S.W. of the Cathedral.

**Leaba Mic Duagh**  
This is where St. Colman is supposed to be buried. Dr. Edmund Ffrench, Catholic bishop of Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora was buried there in 1852.

**Kilmacduagh Monastery**  
*John Lally*

Kilmacduagh Monastery, four miles South West of Gort is one of the glories of County Galway. Founded by St. Colman in 620, its cathedral was ravaged in the 13th century by William de Burgo but was restored shortly afterwards by the Canons Regular.

It is now almost 100 feet long and the west wall is part of the original structure. The chancel and south transept have finely moulded windows with stone tracery. There is a stone altar in the chancel and an altar tomb in the north transept.

The Abbey Church close by is a large well-preserved building with a richly decorated window and pillars with stone tracing. Beside the Cathedral stands the Church of John the Baptist (Teampall Owen) the oldest part of the foundation.

West of these Churches on the opposite side of the road stands our Lady's Church, Seanclogh, an ancient two-storied building sixty yards north of the Cathedral. To the South East lies the ruined monastery.

**The Round Tower**

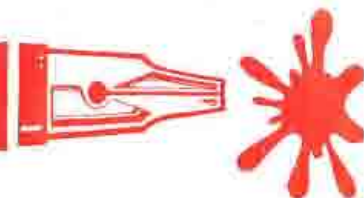
This stands 110 feet high and leaning almost three feet from perpendicular. It is one of the most perfect towers in Ireland. Its narrow doorway stands 26 feet from the ground.

The traditional site of St. Colman's grave is now occupied by the tomb of Most Rev. Dr. Ffrench, a former Bishop of Kilmacduagh. The tombs of the O'Shaughnessy chieftains, lords of this district are to be found in the Cathedral.

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*Letters to the Editor*



*Craughwell*  
7 October 1978.

Dear Enda,

I am truly pleased to hear that Gort of my ancestors is to have a magazine of its own.

Not alone will Gort enjoy the magazine but Gort away and Gort abroad will read and re-read every line. Plenty of readable reading matter is what they want.

Give them names, places and news. The news of yesterday, the news of to-day, history. Gossip has a bad reputation; but healthy gossip, the good and bad news that bind a community, the little things, must find a place in your magazine. Local activities - games, the Chamber of Commerce, Church activities, educational matters, Kilmacduagh

developments, Coole Park improvements will interest Gortonians the world over.

Don't forget all those great men and women who down the years helped make Gort what it is: Saint Colman, King Guaire, Paddy Nolan, Monsignor Fahy, Josie Gallagher and Tadhg Kelly, Georgie Daly and his splendid father, the Archdeacon, Sir Joseph Glynn, Sir Roger O'Shaughnessy, Lady Gregory and Pat Mulkere, Bagan Forrest, Bessie Dalton, Molly Glynn O'Brien, Dr. Gerry Coyne and Mr. Carter, the dentist, Fr. Christy Burke and the ever faithful Mary, Miss Bohan, Mossy Nolan, George Ross, Ned Treston, Fr. George Quinn and St. Colman's Park, Micky Jordan, Boysie Fogarty, Tomsie Fahy, Jack Scanlon, Thomaseen Diviney, Ma Shaughmessy, Mattie Collins and your lineal editorial

ancestor W.M. Quinn.  
Remember too that the best writing talent is often found in ordinary working people - once given the opportunity.

The magazine will require hours of hard work - much of it, as you know tedious. But it will be appreciated.

Might I suggest here that people who want the publication to continue above and beyond the selling cost. This will secure financial security at a time when printing costs are soaring. As a gesture in this direction I am happy to send you a small cheque.

Every good wish, Enda,

Yours sincerely,  
Martin Coen.



Eight girls from St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy Gort have been called to train as National Teachers. Pictured here are Geraldine Nolan, Annette Lally, Marie Long and Bernadette Halvey. The other four are Martina Donoghue Ballyturn, Angela Donnellan Ballyturn, Geraldine Hynes Tubber and Bridget Keenan Lough Cutra.



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