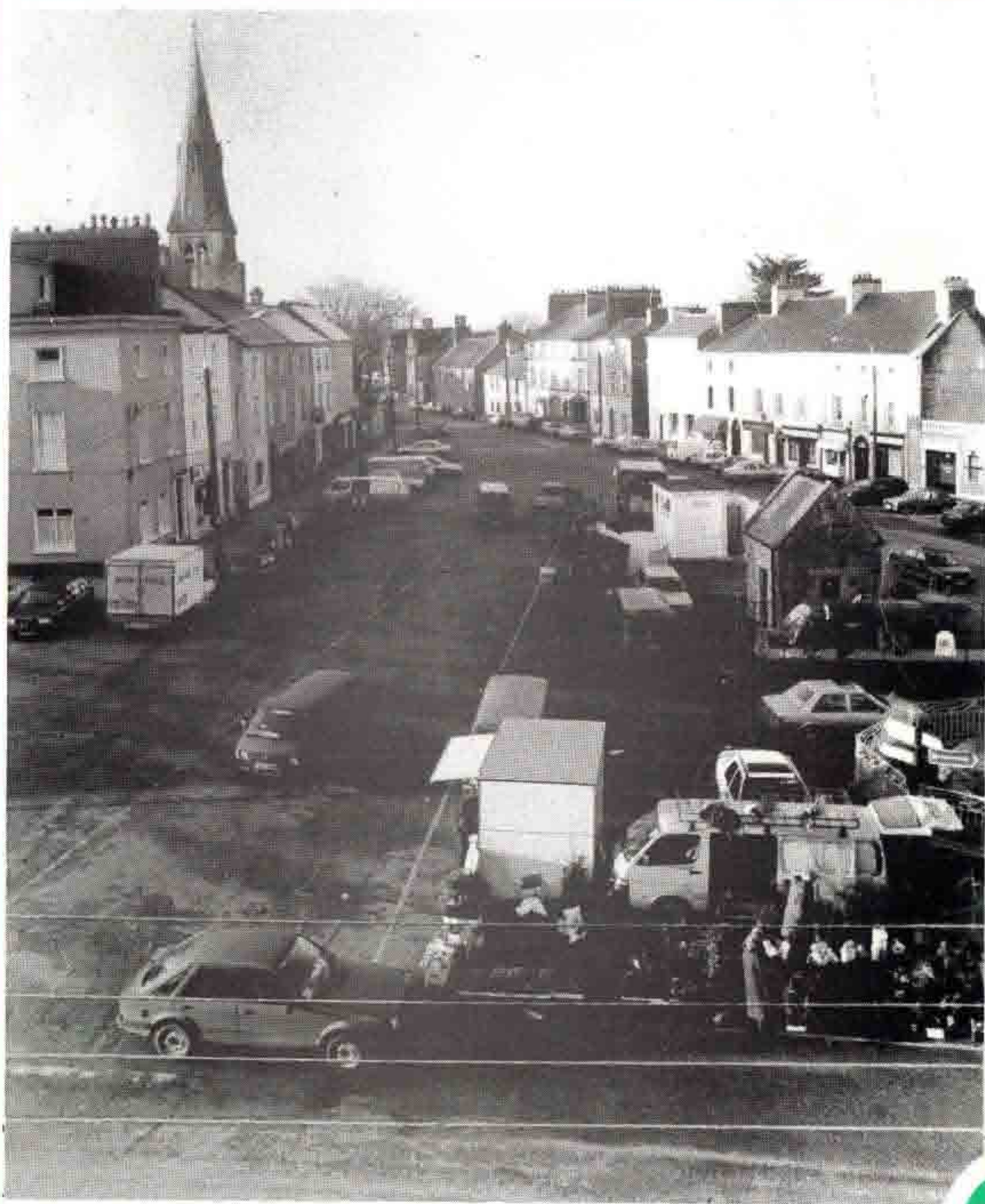


# QUAIRE

*Spring  
1991*



*Price  
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# GUAIRE

Spring 1991

GUAIRE IS A COMMUNITY-BASED MAGAZINE AND DEPENDS ON COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT.

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**Editorial:** The last issue of Guaire came to you over three years ago. Last November a small group of old faithfuls and a few new enthusiasts met to discuss the possibility of having the magazine in the shops for Christmas. As this proved impossible it was decided to opt for a Spring issue instead.

In this issue we are fortunate to have back again old stalwarts like Seán Leahy, Willie Quinn, Sr. de Lourdes Fahy and our two exiles Fr. Jimmy Walsh and Geraldine Killeen. We also have a substantial crop of very talented new writers.

Our sincerest thanks to all those who helped with the magazine. We are deeply indebted to our advertisers, without their support Guaire would not survive. I hope you all enjoy this issue of our magazine. Gach rath oraibh.

Peadar O Conaire

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH: THE SQUARE, GORT, FROM THE A.I.B.

# I Was Saddam Hussein's Guest

By Carol Casserly

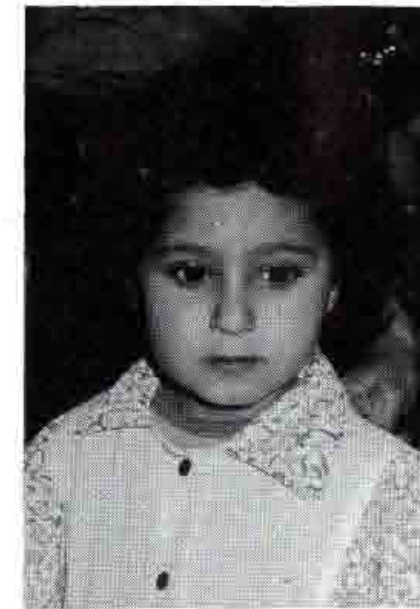
**In October of 1988 when I decided to go to Iraq on a year's contract with Parc Hospital Management I admit to having little or no knowledge of the location of the city of Baghdad. I did, however, locate it on a map before I left. It was a spur of the moment decision to go. Why not?**

The adventure alone and the prospect of a full year's work and good work experience was enough of an incentive. I attended for interview in Dublin on 6th October, and was successful. Travel arrangements were made for Monday 10th October. I had little time to get the essential requirements, never mind having second thoughts about the whole escapade.

I departed from Dublin Airport and had a stopover in Paris to connect with an Air France direct flight to Baghdad. I was one of 11 members of the Parc contingent. On touchdown in Baghdad the heat and humidity were overwhelming. Passport Control proved to be a gruelling experience with massive queues awaiting to be let through. Two and a half hours later, following individual scrutiny, passports were finally stamped and entry allowed.

Next day we visited the hospital. "The Ibn-Ac-Bitar Hospital" is a 200 bed Hospital owned by the Iraqi Ministry of Health, providing, within the country, the type of specialist facility to which the Iraqi patients had previously been referred to U.S.A. and Europe. The Hospital itself was ordinary, as far as hospitals go, but the patients and relatives were to prove much more of a challenge in all respects.

The language barrier created its own frustrations, despite having 24 hr. interpreters on hand to assist us in our professional tasks. However, we gradually picked up certain key



*A Kurdish girl from the village of Dhokan in Northern Iraq.*

words of the Arabic language but our pronunciation only seemed to lead to further confusion all round.

The majority of the plastic surgery and orthopaedic cases at the Hospital were from injuries received in the Iran-Iraq war. It took at least 2-3 months to adapt to our new environment, culture and climate, though the brilliant atmosphere and presence of great team spirit at work helped to settle us in.

The climate was one of the easiest things to adapt to, with endless sunshine for most of the year. We had membership of the nearby Mella Hotel sports club with a gym, tennis and squash courts and three swimming pools. Most of our time-off was spent lazing by the pool, working on the 'ould tan'.

There are no limitations in Iraq, as regards the consumption of alcohol, unlike their neighbour Saudi Arabia. The beer brewed locally or "Jungle Juice" as we called it, left a lot to be desired. "The Baghdad Blues" a band comprising of local talent within Parc gave endless entertainment; and staged in the Villa one night was the "Baghdad Rose" an

imitation of Tralee, in which I represented Parc.

Fancy Dress parties were very common and Pyjama, Punk, Hawaiian, Toga, just to name a few, were often held in our block. Many nights were spent going to the numerous beautiful restaurants in Baghdad - Italian, French, Chinese etc. We lived and survived on the black market - 1 Dinar being the equivalent of 3.3 Dollars. An ordinary jar of Hellman's Mayonnaise cost 8 Dinars which is 24 Dollars. We were always bringing back with us vast amounts of Dollars to change on the market and spend locally.

Despite the fact that Iraq is an immensely rich country the majority of the people were unbelievably poor, with only shacks for accommodation. Women and children were constantly ravaging in the bins outside our block. It's disgraceful really, when one considers the fantastically built hotels adorned with marble and gold and all the monuments that are erected in honour of Saddam Hussein.

There were always constant reminders of Saddam Hussein - every room in the Hospital had a framed picture of him. Outside the apartment building and along the main streets of Baghdad and throughout the whole country were massive portraits of him, even watches and note paper displayed him.

Two Egyptian planes were shot down, as they entered Iraqi Airspace without clearance, during an Air-fair in Baghdad in 1989. We were on duty at the Hospital when gunfire broke out, spreading panic and absolute chaos among staff and patients.

In September 1989 a nursing officer from the Hospital and a British journalist were found guilty of espionage. The journalist was hanged for the offence and the nursing officer got a 15 year sentence; luckily she only served





*A typical Market scene in Iraq.*

over a year, but in retaliation the British Club where a lot of Europeans sunbathed was bombed and a series of terrorist attacks against Europeans followed.

The 2nd August, 1990, is a day I won't forget for a long, long, time. I was woken at 7.30 a.m. by friends coming off night duty, trying to locate the bottle of whiskey for a stiff one. I knew that something serious was up. I was totally surprised when they told me that Iraq had invaded Kuwait, and I did not realise the consequences of that invasion, and what was to turn out to be 4 months of captivity. The whole apartment block was uptight wondering what was going to happen next.

The International Airport was closed at 8.30 a.m. and the borders were also sealed. Now we were well and truly hostages even though we were called "Guests of Saddam Hussein".

When a bus-load of end-of-contract Parc locums went to Jordan, we all had our hopes raised only to have them dashed when they returned a day later. It was very emotional and upsetting. We informed Parc of our decision and desire to leave the country immediately because of its instability.

Quite a number of staff were

not able to work because of their psychological state. The morale of all staff and fellow Europeans went to rock bottom. I remained cool, calm and collected throughout most of it due to the invaluable back-up of friends Orla and Frank, who helped me on the bad days, the days that we really did believe that we would never get home, that we might be harmed or worse still sent to an installation as a human shield against attack. We strongly felt that the Irish Government had more interest in the Goodman beef deal with Iraq, than the safety of its citizens. True enough it was our decision to go there, but we had no control over the series of events since August 2nd.

There were daily meetings with Parc Management in the Hospital, hoping for good news. The first group got out in mid September, when 35 members of Hospital staff left.

Several husbands and wives were separated, which was a very emotional and tough experience for them and also the people who were left to comfort them. The only sanity saver that we had was the international operator who rang our loved ones and friends.

One could spend hours on end trying to get the operator and sometimes we were cut off

because the conversation was in English.

The visit of the three Irish politicians was very much appreciated and everyone went to meet them. At least we knew somebody really cared after all. I don't think people could have taken much more stress or strain. We were at breaking point literally. The T.D.'s brought letters and messages from our people at home. At least they boosted the morale, even though it may have only been short lived.

On 17th October I stopped working as I had completed my Contract and should not have been in Baghdad. It was hard to occupy the day, watching videos and just lazing around. In the end it was "The Importance of being Ernest" that occupied my afternoons. The six weeks that we were practising it occupied our minds. It went off very well, and we had a good many laughs afterwards.

Finally on November 21st at 11 a.m., totally out of the blue I received a telephone call from the Hospital stating that 27 of us were issued with Exit Visas. The moment of sheer elation had arrived - champagne was uncorked, that was reserved specially for this moment. Ringing home that morning with the news

informing my mother and family was a moment I will always remember and cherish.

The following two days before our departure proved to be more stressful than the previous four months put together. The emotional mood swings from sheer elation to guilt feelings and spending hours crying in the company of the people we were leaving behind.

The final farewell outside our accommodation block was unforgettable, with big crowds of people sending us on our way, tears rolling down everyone's faces, hugging and kissing, trying to draw out the last few minutes with them before going to the airport.

We flew to Jordan and caught a Royal Jordanian plane direct to London. The realisation that we were finally free only seemed to hit when we boarded an Aer Lingus plane bound for Shannon. We were booked into 1st class on the flight,



*A local waiter and myself enjoying local cuisine at a Baghdad restaurant.*

with a special greeting from the Captain and Baileys on Ice for a toast.

The re-union at Shannon was very emotional with immediate family, relatives and friends. Weary and emotionally burnt out, we retired to the bar. On the final lap of the journey home, I was greeted by a large bonfire at Lough Cutra School with neighbours and friends braving the cold Winter elements waiting my arrival. Many thanks to them, it was a real surprise and much appreciated. Afterwards we all went back to the house and spent hours talking while I savoured the joy and happiness of "Home Sweet Home".

Finally a word of thanks to Fr. Michael Flaherty and the second level students in Gort who wore the "green ribbon" in support of us while we were in Iraq. Also thanks to the Gulf Relative Support Group for the time and energy they spent trying to organise our release.

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# JOURNEY INTO THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION

**KEVIN STREET COLLEGE  
OF TECHNOLOGY**



*Stephen Burke*

Kevin Street College of Technology was opened in 1968 with a further large extension within the last two years, and therefore it is well equipped with modern facilities for both academic and leisure pursuits. The College deals primarily with technological courses but also includes business courses, both with emphasis on the application of these courses to the new European Community by involving a European Language namely French, German or Spanish.

In the College as much emphasis is placed on the practical aspect of the course as on the academic. Many hours are spent in the laboratories and workshops with "hands on experience" of what is being dealt with in lectures, and we often have the lecturer working with us in the laboratories as well, which means that we get a chance to talk to the lecturer and get to know him. This enables him, of course, to get to know us on a personal basis, which may be a

good or a bad idea. At least it makes it a little less impersonal than Universities and the jump from second level less traumatic.

A wide variety of activities are available during your leisure time. The College has its own indoor swimming pool, which is used not only for swimming but surfing, diving and canoeing. Other activities include hurling, football, soccer and rugby. The College teams often compete both at home and away with other third level Colleges. The Students Union Organisation regularly organises Concerts, Discos and entertainment throughout the year.

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
GALWAY**



*Caroline Loughnane*

I am a first year Arts Student at University College, Galway. I would like to share with you my first impressions of U.C.G. Believe it or not, the first thing that struck me as I entered the Concourse (the main building at U.C.G.) was how difficult it was to open the doors. Honestly, you'd want to be Superwoman to open

those big doors. However, there is much more to U.C.G. than stubborn doors, so let me take you on a guided tour of what is affectionately known as "The College".

As an Arts student I am really only qualified to tell you about the Arts faculty. The Arts Faculty is the largest and most certainly the best faculty at U.C.G. (okay, so I am a little biased). Undoubtedly, the Arts Faculty offers the largest range of subjects to its students - it offers everything from Archaeology to Classical Civilisation, from Welsh to Latin. At the moment, I'm studying English, History, Psychology and Sociology/Political Studies, all of which are for the most part, fascinating. Someone once told me that you have to be slightly crazy to do Arts - I don't know if that is true, but the Arts Faculty is certainly alive, buzzing and whacky. Not surprisingly, Arts Week, more commonly known as "Rag Week" (which takes place during February) is generally regarded as the best week at U.C.G., when anything can happen and usually does. To anyone who says "Arts" as a University course is dead, I say, if you haven't experienced Rag Week at U.C.G., you simply haven't lived. Apart from the anti-Arts jokes like -

"What's the difference between an Arts student and a computer?"

You can punch information into a Computer".

The Arts course is a fascinating, exciting and energetic one. Best of all, the only necessary requirements for any aspiring Arts student are a broad mind and a sense of humour.

The social life in Galway is absolutely hectic. The "local" for all College students is "The Hole in the Wall" where the crack is



mighty. Needless to say, the College Bar on campus is also quite a popular place. Then of course there's Thursday night – Galway is notorious for its Thursday nights when, after a "tough week" everyone heads for Salthill to do some serious partying. Oddly enough, everyone seems to have a lecture at nine o'clock on Friday mornings. I have been told by those wiser and better than me (these are the people who manage to smile on Friday mornings) that the secret is to get the right balance between socializing and studying ... difficult, but not impossible.

The greatest thing about U.C.G., the thing that makes it the best College in Ireland is the atmosphere, the buzz of excitement that surrounds the College. U.C.G., is a hive of activity and this energy and excitement diffuses through the entire city. Everything that happens in Galway City revolves around the College – U.C.G. touches every aspect of Galway City life.

"Has she discovered a Utopia in the West of Ireland? I hear you ask? Well not exactly. True to form, there are one or two flaws in this great institution. The main problem facing U.C.G., at the moment, is one of overcrowding. This year U.C.G., has taken about three hundred extra students into an already overcrowded College. The main problem areas are the canteen and the library – in the canteen, students are forced to sit on the floor, through lack of space, while seats in the library are like gold dust – virtually impossible to find. The Students Union is continually trying to get the College authorities to do something about the inadequate canteen and library facilities, and while the authorities are willing to build a new canteen and increase library space, the government has not, as yet, promised to provide the necessary funds.

**ATHLONE R.T.C.**  
*Colin Burke*

Although Athlone is a garrison town, this fact does not in any



*Colin Burke*

perceptible way influence its Regional College. However, some students might say it could account for the dogged determination and dedication of the College staff to impart a comprehensive knowledge to each student, however reticent he may be to embrace it.

Athlone R.T.C., situated on the Dublin Road is a hive of activity with over 2100 students attending full-time courses and approximately 400 on the night course roster.

The College itself built in 1969 was one of the first R.T.C.'s in the country and to-day it is rapidly developing as the need to supply more places for students increases.

Among the more popular sporting activities is Gaelic Football and presently the senior team is touring the Canaries.

My perception of College life was lectures and tutorials, words that I now hate to hear. The idea that a student's life is all play with sessions, discos, all-night parties and no work is a misconception. The reality is much different indeed. True College life offers greater freedom and opportunity. For once in a student's life these things come to the fore.

My experience of the first few months of third level, as opposed to secondary school was one of change. You are no longer treated as a "kid". You are now an adult, well supposedly!

Away from home to go into a place you have never been before and meet new people, it's amazing how quickly you begin to

make friends, it is an experience in itself. You are with people from every corner of Ireland and some even from abroad with different attitudes, education and outlook to yours.

Third level is part of life, part of growing up, maturing as a person. It involves many challenges and many pitfalls, so be prepared but most of all enjoy it.

**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**



*Maeve Conroy*

Belfast – the very name conjures up for many people the horrors of the Northern conflict. I must admit to some such feelings myself before I got the opportunity to study for a Master's Degree in Occupational Psychology at the Queen's University in the city. Coming from three years in the happy hunting-ground of U.C.G., I was apprehensive as to what Belfast could offer in comparison, I was'n't disappointed.

Just fifteen minutes from the city centre, the University Campus is sprawled along several main roads in the south-east of Belfast. The area is quiet and completely dominated by the 7,000 or so inhabitants of the College. Facilities are excellent, no shortage of library space, computers, eateries or the inevitable photocopiers. There is a large foreign representation among the students – from Malaysians and Chinese to Turks, Iraqis and Sudanese among

others. Their unique living patterns are fascinating to say the least, when everyone is thrown together in University accommodation.

Social life is very much based around the campus with very few students venturing further afield. The Students Union runs two bars and a disco in the S.U. building itself. Drink is well subsidised and there is usually a table quiz, live band or charity concert to be found in some corner of the building (unless previously occupied by some incoherent first years). Post first-years tend to prefer several of the local bars – Lavery's, the Empire or the plusher but curiously named "Egg". For film-buffs Queen's Film Theatre (QFT) carries the latest releases as well as many lesser known films. Bands that have visited Belfast recently include Status Quo, The Waterboys, Something Happens and the Stunning. Discos are surprisingly a rare occurrence and if you're not into "House" music then forget it altogether. The Crescent is the most popular of the few although you'd be advised to keep any opinions to yourself that you may have, especially on locals night out which is Friday. The less said on such occasions the better.

Tucked away in the Botanic Gardens that surround the University, is the Queens P.E. Centre. Reserved for students and staff the facilities here would entice even the laziest individual to indulge in some sporting activity. Everything is catered for: from karate to diving to weightlifting and even indoor rock-climbing. The charge is minimal and the possibilities endless. If exercise conjures up images of shopping, then Belfast city-centre offers a wide range of English and Irish shops to compare with the best. For security reasons the main streets are pedestrianised and are never as busy as Dublin. Security checks on bags in most shops can become tedious, so it pays to travel light.

In general, living is cheaper than in the South and is reflected in the amount of people who indulge in eating-out. Queues of

twenty or thirty people are common-place outside restaurants at the week-end. Believe it or not, there is actually a shortage of bars, so they too are crammed full at the week-end. There is a bewildering variety of money in circulation, each main bank has its own notes with no standard size or design, which can lead to a lot of confusion. The Bank of Ireland £5 note, for instance, features Queen's University and is so colourful that it has been compared to "Monopoly" money on many an occasion.

Up to this, I have shown perhaps only the finer points. Belfast is deceiving in many ways. To look at, the southern suburbs are a strong reminder of peaceful Boston – red-brick buildings and tree-lined avenues. But the armoured trucks and continuously hovering helicopters indicate that there is bombing and destruction taking place. Fortunately, I have never experienced any of this directly. I, like everyone else who goes North for the first time, was told discretely where not to go and what not to do. There is a general belief that one only finds trouble if one goes looking for it.

On my own course, the M.Sc., in Occupational Psychology, five out of the eleven students are from the Republic. Subjects include Interviewing, Training and Personnel Selection among others, which allow for a lot of integration within the class. Thus despite the troubled environment life does go on as normal in Queen's as anywhere else. The hopes, fears, aspirations and dreams are those of students everywhere.

**WATERFORD REGIONAL  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE**  
*Vivienne Kelly*

Deciding to take the Degree in Business Studies in Waterford Regional Technical College was, for me, the nearest thing I could get to emigration without actually leaving the country. It seemed miles away at the time. It was a toss up between the certificate in Business Studies in Galway or the Degree in Water-



*Vivienne Kelly*

ford. Galway was only down the road compared to Waterford and I was sure I'd regret my decision but I can safely say now I have no regrets.

The move from home (a 144 mile move to be precise) was a very daunting task to say the least at first. Gone is the security you had for the past 17 years, gone is mother's cooking, gone is the open fire. It was time for me to face the proverbial "big bad world". On registration day going down in the car, I had visions of myself shaking with the cold and feeling extremely miserable travelling up and down each week-end in what could only be described as a bone shaker of a bus.

But it had to happen sooner or later. I was sharing my digs with two other girls and seeing as I was the first to arrive I had time to concoct awful visions of what they might be like. Every ounce of optimism I had, deserted me and I was left fearing the worst, but fortunately, for me, they couldn't have been any nicer.

Monday morning could only have been described as traumatic. At least starting primary school, your mother was there to hold your hand and catch you when you fainted at the sight of so many people. Everyone seemed to know exactly where they were going and I was just standing there in the middle of it all searching desperately for my compass and map. All budding entrepreneurs had to gather in one place and we were shown around by a group of second and



third years who gave us the lowdown on who and what to avoid while down there. One vital piece of advice I was given before I came down was, make the effort to talk to people, they are as lost as you are. There are 95 people on my course, divided into two groups, this ensures that everyone gets to know everyone else eventually.

My course involves seven subjects in all, maths and statistics, economics, accounts, law (for the purpose of keeping us out of the courts as our lecturer informed us), behavioural science, business administration and communications. It involves a lot of practical work such as projects and presentations in front of the Video camera, all in a bid to transform us into Smurfits and O'Reilly's. At the end of the four years we are sent out on job experience for 6 months, some graduates are kept on permanently after the six months.

The R.T.C., itself has roughly 2700 full time students and also has night classes in a wide range of courses. We were soon to find out just how badly under-facilitated the Colleges actually are, its not a pretty sight to see 2700 students beating each other up over the 200 seats available in the Library!

For Waterford Regional Technical College the future looks good. During the current year building will start on a multi-purpose sports hall and a campus social centre, while a new library and a computer centre are in the College development plans. So for anyone deciding on third level education, don't rule out Waterford because of the distance, the world is a much smaller place when you're surrounded with friends.

#### UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

*John Devlin and  
Richard Lundon*

Each year after Christmas the C.A.O., the Leaving Cert and the points system are on the minds of most of those in their final year at Second Level. For those at College it is a time of getting back to meet friends after the holiday



*John Devlin and  
Richard Lundon*

period and having the "bit of crack" once again. This is so true in the University of Limerick. Because of the College's exam structure (exams every eleven weeks), one can take it easy after the Christmas break and ease into things.

Exams in Limerick are quite different to those in other Colleges, students have to prepare themselves for three lots of exams, each at the end of an eleven week term. The lowest pass grade is "C". Subjects in our area of study (Business) range from Law to Management, Sociology to Psychology, with Accounting and Economics especially important. A very important point is, however, that one does not have to have studied these subjects beforehand.

Life in Limerick is not all exams, however. Let us say that one can quite easily have a good social life as well. The College itself is the newest and most modern College in the Country and does not suffer to any great extent from overcrowding like so many other Colleges. There is good food available in the College canteen and Pub Grub is reasonably priced in the city.

Plassey Village or "Legs Land" as many call it is a village built by the College providing luxury accommodation for many students; prices are high but comforts are great. Up to a few years ago many would look down on the Limerick College and would prefer the older establishments,

but now with top companies snapping up graduates the University of Limerick enjoys a high ranking.

Recreational facilities at the College are second to none. There is a newly built Athletics track of International standard, a swimming pool (the only College in the 26 counties to have its own), the only indoor diving pit in the country, 10 acres of playing fields, squash courts, a gym, a sauna and a large hall well equipped for many sports. The College with 48 sporting clubs provides everything from wind-surfing to karate, horse-riding and archery.

Buses ferry students free of charge most nights especially Thursday nights when the students descend on the night spots in town. The "Stables" pub is one of the places where students spend a lot of their social life with drink being consumed at an alarming rate.

All in all student life is good and graduates qualify with top degrees and also valuable experience gained through each student having to work with a top Irish or International Company as part of the degree course. With expansion on the cards the University of Limerick will not only be the top Irish University of the future but also the biggest and best equipped.

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**Kiltartan means many things to many people. Among my most cherished memories are the days I spent in the old brick schoolhouse at the Cross of Kiltartan. In fact, it was only later, when I attended the Convent Secondary School in Gort, that I came across Yeat's poem, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death". I felt a few inches taller while reciting**

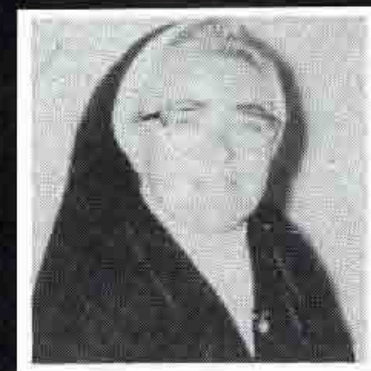
*"My country is Kiltartan Cross  
My countrymen Kiltartan's  
poor".*

What was it like to be a "scholar", as schoolchildren were then called in the 1940's? I began my schooling on the 10th of May, 1942. There is no need to remind people of mature years that this was one of the main fair days in Gort. I didn't know anybody or at least I don't remember knowing them and I am reliably informed that I never spoke a word for the first week. I have tried to make amends ever since! I owe a priceless debt of gratitude to the Connors family, Ballyaneen for guiding my first steps to Kiltartan School. Paddy Connors was one of nature's greatest wits, God rest him.

As the years went by the McAllens and my own Paddy and Rena wended our way through Forde's and Lally's fields. I remember a few terrifying encounters with Forde's ram. No matter what stile I crossed he was always there! Hayes' orchard was very tempting but I left that devilment to the boys. And talking about orchards, does anyone remember, or can anyone forget, the bag of apples we used get from Mulker's for one penny (old money)? The empty milk bottle, the penny catechism and other treasures of learning were emptied out each evening to make way for Granny Smiths.

Living at a distance from school, as we were, was not an unmixed disaster. I negotiated at least six different routes to Kiltartan. At least I can go one better than Alice Taylor and claim to have gone to school through the fields and the bog. My parents weren't wildly interested in the latter route, to

## TO SCHOOL THROUGH KILTARTAN



*by Sr. de Lourdes Fahy*

put it mildly. Will I ever forget the day that Paddy, Rena and Ruth O'Shaughnessy arrived late for school dripping wet? Yes, you've guessed it, they had fallen into a bog hole. The "drying out" process was carried out in front of the turf fire, the hob of which also played host to an array of bottles of milk.

The heating of the milk points to a humane side of our teachers. Yes, I believe we had great teachers. I am deeply indebted to Miss Minnie O'Shaughnessy, whose house in Kiltartan is now in the possession of my sister, Rena. She was succeeded by Miss Maggie O'Shaughnessy, who cycled all the way from Kinvara and back each day. She was a great lady. I imbibed my love of history first from Mr. Tuohy. I was fascinated by the seemingly endless knowledge of the "big" boys - Eric O'Shaughnessy, Martin Coen and John Nolan, to name but a few. It was with some trepidation that we went to school the first morning that Mr. Long took over as principal. He was looking into the big press, with his back to us, as we entered the room. His first pronouncement was: "I will confiscate all the rubbers". To this day I never meet the word "confiscation" in the context of the Irish Plantations, without thinking of Mr. Long. I loved the Irish "comhra" classes. Mr. Long opened up a

whole new world for us. Kiltartan is the richer because of his influence.

Time or space does not allow me to register every incident or "character" as I would wish to. The tree stump is still there where Annie McInerney regaled us everyday with fairy stories and ghost stories involving her grandfather. What that good man didn't see, wasn't worth seeing. There were flaming rows too, between those who believed in Santa Claus and the skeptics who didn't. There was the homely advice which the master gave us about persevering at the job. As the steam-engine train leaves Gort station it says, slowly, "I can, I will, I can, I will". By the time it's at Kiltartan Bridge it's saying, fast, "I knew, I could, I knew I could". Many's the time I have repeated that piece of wisdom to my own students, with varying results!

They were simple times, weren't they? The big heap of turf in the porch and along the back wall of the big room, the odd drop of rain through the old ceiling which led a neighbouring clergyman to declare, "I wouldn't put my cows into that place"; the long desks, the white-washed walls.

Towards the end of my schooling in Kiltartan I had acquired a bicycle. I have golden memories of Teresa Connors (McGrath), myself and others cycling to choir practices and being enthralled by the glorious tenor voice of Mike Mulcaire singing "Panis Angelicus", or the hymn to St. Colman, Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís.

Ours was a closely-knit parish. Our main task now is to restore the old school. Having researched the history of it and shown the Gregory connection, I have no hesitation in saying that it would be an unforgivable crime to allow it to fall into ruin. Next year will be its centenary year. It is also the centenary of the death of the much-respected Sir William Gregory. On top of that it marks the 150th anniversary of the building of Kiltartan Church. The people of Kiltartan will rise to the occasion as they have always done.



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## THE TEN GLORIOUS MUSICAL MYSTERIES

*By Kevin Glynn*



It was a cold November evening back in 1981. I was enjoying a quiet game of darts in my local, the juke box was playing some old country and western number and the bar was empty except for two farmers at the counter giving out about the price of cattle. Suddenly the door burst open and about 25 or 30 people began to fill the empty seats. They were in high spirits, laughing and chatting away themselves. I recognised most of them as they were all members of the community, shopkeepers, housewives, teachers, solicitors, farmers, etc. I wondered to myself what was going on. By now the sound from the jukebox was merely a background noise. Then somebody shouted 'turn that thing off' and lets have a sing song. The farmers bade us a good night but I had no intention of leaving. I was amazed by the unusual congregation who were now all singing and clapping and really enjoying themselves. I asked the leader of the group what was going on. He told me that this gathering of people was known as the 'Gort and District Musical Society' They hoped to stage a pantomime in Gort in the new year. If successful it would be the first panto in Gort in 30 years. He then asked me if I would be interested in joining them as there were a few places left in the cast. How could I refuse? So from that night until this, I have been involved with Gort and District Musical Society.

That first year we staged 'Sinbad the Sailor'. The chairman that year was Colm Sherry. It was his idea to revive the performing of pantomimes in Gort so he put every minute of his spare time into the production of Sinbad. By the time the curtain went up on Sinbad, Colm was worn out but the Gort, District Musical Society was off to a good start.

Many years of enjoyable pantomime followed - 'Red Riding Hood', 'Cinderella', 'Aladdin', 'Old King Cole', 'Robinson Caruso', 'Jack 'n the Beanstalk'. One show which delighted many of the children of the town was 'Babes in the Wood' as one of the babes was played by a local N.S. teacher who appeared on stage in her nappy. The following year Dick Whittington and his cat was brought to life and we were asked by the newly formed Clare F.M. to go on the air with some of our specially composed music for the show. This year's show 'Humpty Dumpty' has proved to be a tremendous success and it is the first year that the seats have been completely booked out.

The people behind the scenes, orchestra, costumes, backstage, scenery, make-up etc. are the backbone of any good show and our backstage crew of ten years are no exception. Many of the gags which you, the audience see, often originate from these stage-frightened artists. When we started, some members of the orchestra were wearing nappies and were driven to rehearsals by Brother Niall every night religiously! Now Bro. Niall takes a back seat while the lads do all the driving.

New faces are introduced every year and blend this with the experience of the old faces and you never get tired of our shows. Someone said to me in the early days that the society would not last more than three or four years. Looking back over the years and seeing how more and more advanced the shows are becoming, I can only say how wrong you were. Long may the Gort and District Musical Society make you the public laugh and smile.

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# THE 'JOYS' OF BIG STORE SHOPPING

*by Geraldine Killeen*

I hate to shop here. We don't have stores, we have emporia. To go to the Tesco up the road, you'd need battle dress and a bazooka, such is the "enthusiasm" of your fellow shopper. A mile in the other direction brings you to our other option locally, Sainsbury, which, by its 'plane hanger size, dictates that you bring a packed lunch to sustain you as you pledge your day to the long march around aisle after aisle in search of the loaf and pound of butter the household is in need of! I am not able to cope with all of this.

Take Tesco (please!). This dwarfs Dunnes on the Headford Rd. It isn't a shop, it's an instrument of torture. An excursion here demands taking a very deep breath when you take your trolley, because the pain is unendurable. You'll find the place full of 'women with a purpose', all of whom resemble swarming bees, seeking out the best value, and perish the thought of survival if you get in their way. Further, there is so much of everything that you can't find anything. Morning, noon, or night, it is always (dangerously) busy, with queues at the checkout that are designed to ensure the thawing of your frozen stores well before you get to the humanoid extension of the cash register to pay for them! Twice I went there, and do I need to say that I will never be going there again? NOT for the nervous, is Tesco. No indeed.

Having concluded that Tesco was bad for my mental health, I tried the Sainsbury branch. Bad move. Here is a place devoted to the release of the frustration of sadistic parents. Anyone with a

shred of human sensitivity would be most upset, for the place attracts what the Brits like to term 'the family party'. There's Maw, with a list as long as an Andrex toilet roll, wanting to include Paw, out of some sense of female liberation, in the rigours of the weekly shop. If Maw and Paw both are there, the offspring, one or two, as is the norm here, must needs come too. Now, Supermarkets are upsetting enough for this adult, so I am not in the least bit surprised that the under tens find them disconcerting. Their parents are totally shocked by their infantile protestations, however, and while little Lee (favoured name at the minute) or William begins to whinge and carp that he wants to go home he gets neglected. Like all other voices in the wilderness, the penny eventually drops that they don't hear him, so a whine turns into a fully fledged, lungs at maximum output wail! This, as I read it, is what the pervoid folks have been waiting for, and they summarily wallop the living daylights out of him. So here you are, buying the weeks provisions, treated to the spectacle of public administrations of corporal punishment, and the ensuing cries of torment, which chorus agonisingly with the calls from the staff on the shelves, and you wonder what stratum of Dante's Inferno you've landed on now.

But if the screams and beatings didn't bother you, the twenty minute wait for a trolley certainly would. I kid you not, that is how long I stood, pound in hand (£1 deposit on 'em here) waiting for something I could throw me bits in. Awful.

And the queues at the end point are no better at Sainsbury

either. They do a lovely line in ice creams, but a kiss to the person who ever got it home solid! So you satisfy yourself as best you can standing, and standing, and standing while life passes you by until you finally get your turn. However, just as you are about to thank God for your deliverance, you spot the acne ridden post adolescent slime ball in the terylene suit looking you over with deepseated distrust. He holds position as you take out the cheque book to pay, and in spite of the fact that it is your cheque book, with plenty in the account to cover the outlay, you find your hands are shaking under his menacing eye, and you want to drop all and run for your life. When you finally pass this oily little snots scrutiny, you leave with gratitude oozing from every pore, a great deal less concerned now about the trail of ice cream dripping after you than how well a carefully aimed kick might have softened the cough on the little bleeder with the 'Trainee Manager' badge!

So I gave up. Unless I absolutely have to, I do not go to these places any more. These days, I get the necessities from Mr. Patel around the corner. Here is a man I can do business with. He is always pleasant. He reminds me of things I might otherwise have forgotten, and he took the trouble to get in Kerrygold butter and Kimberly biscuits for me without my ever asking. He is one in a million, like the local traders at home, and like them, worth the few pence extra, because he values his customers' business, and gives value in human terms in return. And I've always been able to get my ice cream home intact!







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# IN THE COMPANY OF BIRDS!

**(The Editor spends an evening with Terry Carty and his Budgies)**

## BACK TO GORT

In 1975 Terry, with a fast growing family, returned to Gort. He didn't get back into budgie rearing again however until 1983. It took him three years to build up a good stock of birds. He constructed a substantial aviary in his backgarden, where he now keeps up to a hundred 'chirpers'. He prefers to breed his own birds and will only buy in if he has to. In the last year he bought in six birds and bred sixty nine.

Breeding budgies is not anyone's cup of tea! It requires infinite patience and knowledge and Terry is practically incommunicado during breeding time. On one occasion, during a particularly long stint in the aviary, he was found fast asleep there by his wife!

It is every breeders dream to breed a rare specimen. It is literally a one in a million chance and it happened to Terry. In a nest containing five chicks he noticed one with peculiar colourings - blue on one side and green on the other. A frantic phone call to an expert in Dublin confirmed that Terry had bred a Half-sider. Terry is giving this beautiful bird to a rare bird collector in England.

## SHOWS

Before his heart attack eighteen months ago Terry was a very

Terry Carty has been interested in birds since he was a child. He attributes this interest in our feathered friends to his mother, who kept goldfinches and encouraged her children to be kind and caring to them. He left Gort as a young man in 1948 to work in Manchester. After his day's work in Kipling's Bakery Terry would pass away the evenings looking after pet budgies which he kept in an attic. Weekends invariably found him with a cage under his arm making his way to a bird show. After he got married and the children came along, Terry kept up his bird show visits at weekends, sometimes with a youngster or two in tow. At this stage the budgerigars had graduated from the attic to an aviary, which Terry and his wife Enid had built at the rear of their house. Terry was fortunate at the time to have as a neighbour a keen and knowledgeable budgie-breeder called Bill Gibson. Bill, a police detective, was particularly helpful to Terry in the 'schooling' of budgies for shows.

Another friend at that time was Terry Pilkington who later made a lucrative business out of rearing budgies and swept the boards at two World Championships. Terry takes great pride in the fact that he beat Pilkington into second place for the Golden Bird of England twice.

active member of Gort G.A.A. Club. Since then however he has had to curtail his activities in the club and this has enabled him to devote more time to his beloved budgies. As president of the Galway Budgerigar Club Terry travels to shows all over Ireland. He is particularly interested in the juvenile section of the club and is often found at shows in Limerick, Athlone, Cork, Dublin and at the local show in Gort tutoring the younger members. 1990 was a very successful year for him on the show front, taking fourth place in Ireland at the Dublin Show (300 birds entered) and best budgie in the show at Athlone and Limerick. Terry and his wife Enid have made many good friends throughout the country from their appearances at shows, including a Protestant clergyman from Craigavon who has invited them to his home, and a Scottish couple who call regularly.

To the uninitiated rearing budgies seems like child's play. Such is not the case, however. Budgies are very delicate and extremely demanding. The aviary must be kept spotlessly clean because a virus could undo several years work in one week, and also to satisfy the high standards demanded by the Department's advisers. Terry buys his stock birds in England and they have to spend 35 days in quarantine on arrival in Ireland. The average price he pays for a bird is £25, (a top-class bird can cost £2,000). He keeps a register



of all his birds. In this he records every possible detail of the bird from the time it comes out of the egg. A bird's pedigree as far back as great - great - grandparents can be traced in the register!

I asked Terry how his neighbours reacted to his backgarden aviary. He assured me they were delighted with it, especially the younger folk who are regular visitors, helping him to feed the budgies, and often bringing injured birds to him. On one occasion a local boy, Michael O'Connor, brought Terry a chaffinch with a broken wing. He nursed it back to health and let it off, only to find that the bird did not want to leave and returned to the kitchen window every evening. Was there ever a disaster in the aviary? I enquired. Only on one occasion, was Terry's answer. During a hard frost some years ago, the roof of a shed containing 30 budgies collapsed. Quick-thinking Terry brought the birds into the house and installed them in his son's bedroom, where they



Terry and his Budgies.

were perfectly happy until their own home was repaired. On my first visit to Terry's aviary the birds were obviously ill at ease due to my presence, flying noisily around in a nervous manner. The

minute Terry arrived and they heard his voice they settled and there was silence. No wonder his neighbours call this unassuming, affable man 'the Birdman of Crowe Street'.

# O'Shaughnessy Society Rally

By Kevin O'Shaughnessy

A rally of the O'Shaughnessy family was held in Gort on the last weekend in June. It could be said that it was the first such gathering in over 230 years, when circa 1675 in an ill-fated attempt to regain his ancestral possessions which had been confiscated in 1697 following the defeat of the Jacobite cause, but only temporarily, the then head of the family engaged in an extraordinary enterprise. He was Joseph O'Shaughnessy, who "assisted by his relatives and the gentry of the county of Galway, took forcible possession of the mansion house of Gort, on which occasion they caused the bells of Athenry and Galway to be rung for joy". His impetuosity

was ill advised and prejudicial to his case, which was eventually lost. The mansion in question and an older castle stood on the island in the river at Gort, from which the town takes its name and which in ancient times was the site of Guaire's residence. Part of a wall and a window is all that remains of the old O'Shaughnessy castle on the island.

The recent rally took place under much more amicable circumstances and was attended by about 100 family members from as far away as Australia, Canada, U.S.A., England and Austria and, of course, included a strong Irish representation. It commenced on Friday evening with a getting to know you

session at Sullivan's Hotel. This included two illustrated talks on the family, one dealt in a general way with the origins and history of the family up to the Treaty of Limerick (1691). Around that time a form of diaspora took place. Subsequently, major concentrations of O'Shaughnessys' were to be found in Limerick, Clare and to a lesser extent in Mayo. The second talk took up the story of the Limerick branch of the family. Brother John Feheny of Cork has done remarkable research and it was a great pleasure to hear the story of the Limerick O'Shaughnessy's right down to the present day. The Friday evening session enabled people to mingle, get to know each other and search out family linkages.

## DEATHS

During 1990 we were sadly bereaved. To the families, relations, friends and neighbours of the following we extend our sincerest sympathy. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.

Sr. Jarlath Burke, Convent of Mercy.  
Patrick Cusack, Crowe Street.  
Thomas Spelman, Ballyaneen.  
Richard Treston, Garrabeg.  
Anthony Diskin, Lisatunna.  
Ann Killeen, Corker.  
Mary Ann Walsh, Tarmon.  
Sharon O'Donnell, Bridge Street.  
Kathleen Gillane, Glenbrack.  
Molly Fahy, Barrack Street.  
Mary Nolan, Ballinastague.  
Brigid Glynn, Cloughnaceva.  
Nora O'Shaughnessy, Rinerush.  
Joe Moloney, Garrabeg.  
Patrick Connolly, Crowe Street.  
Jack Spelman, Crowe Street.  
Michael John McNevin, Glenbrack.  
Martin O'Connor, Gortnakella.  
Vera Connolly, Crowe Street.  
Brigid Duffy, Roo.  
Thomas Linnane, Gortnakella.  
Michael Curley, Lavally.  
Celia Lally, Castletown.  
Patrick Butler, Ennis Road.  
Mary Lynskey, Shragh.

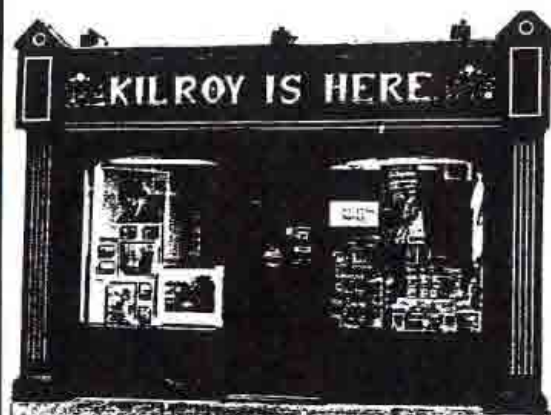
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The O'Shaughnessy Group at Kilmacduagh.



On Saturday morning a family mass was celebrated by Fr. Sean O'Shaughnessy, C.S.Sp. St. Mary's College, Dublin at St. Colman's Church in Gort. It was well attended and the provision of both choir and organ was greatly appreciated. It was, indeed, a fitting way to start the day. The group then went by coach to the monastic ruins of Kilmacduagh where there was special interest in the O'Shaughnessy chapel and tombs. Mr. Tom Hannon provided a commentary on the history of Kilmacduagh its role in local history and in particular the links with the O'Shaughnessy family.

After a snack at Kilmacduagh it was on to Fiddaun, a nearby O'Shaughnessy castle, Mrs. Rose O'Shaughnessy of Ennis gave a short talk on its history, unfortunately it was not possible to visit this national monument on the day, but since it is nearly a mile on foot from the road this may have not been a great

hardship. Next stop was a visit to Whelan's hostelry in the village of Shanaglish where we enjoyed refreshments and the pleasant afternoon sun as we waited for transport to our next O'Shaughnessy castle - Ardimmullivan. The local I.R.D. group (Mr. Tony Diviney, Ms. Martina Neilan, Mr. Paddy Rosengrave, Mr. Michael Slattery and Mr. Michael Whelan, Mr. Patrick Walsh) is trying to have the road into this castle, which is also a national monument, opened up. Access is currently over rough ground and they provided us with a tractor and trailer to make several journeys to the castle. It was novel and very enjoyable. Mrs. Marie O'Shaughnessy gave a short talk on Ardimmullivan and its role in the saga of the O'Shaughnessys.

Our next and final rendezvous was Thoor Ballylee to the north of Gort where Peter O'Shaughnessy, the Australian author and actor, read from the works of W.B. Yeats

in the auditorium of Ballylee Castle. It was then time to make for Gort once again.

That evening a celebratory dinner was held in Glynn's Hotel. Amongst those present were the President of the O'Shaughnessy Society, Mr. Colman O'Shaughnessy; Chairman, Mr. Thomas C. O'Shaughnessy and the Honorary Secretary, Mrs. Christina O'Shaughnessy. Special guests were Mr. Tom Hannon, Mr. Gerard Keane and the Hon. Elizabeth Vereker. Mr. Tom O'Shaughnessy provided music and a most convivial evening was had by all.

Next day a cavalcade of motor cars, sixteen or more moved off from the Square in Gort (à la M. Hulot's Holiday!) to visit Lough Cutra Castle. This visit, which was specially arranged by Mr. Gerard Keane, was a great success. Later the window in the old castle on the island in Gort was visited and this brought a memorable occasion to a close.

## POET'S CORNER

### Burren A Tourist Paradise

In Burren, many wonders tether,  
Quaint rock formation caves are there,  
Flowers of beauty amid the heather,  
Artistic adornment is everywhere.

Pasture land supplement the rockies,  
Mystical sunsets, the artist's joy,  
The scenic view once held by Guaire,  
Enhanced by distance pleases the eye.

Sky above with rare cloud formation,  
Boggles the artist, to hold his sway,  
Hills arise in mounds, and stretching,  
From Kilmacduagh to Galway Bay.

Sunrise beams in the morning glory,  
Landscape reflects with cosmic rays,  
Stimulating life, renewing spirit,  
Anxious fears, twin our atomic age.

Corcomroe ruin of art perfection,  
Cistercion monks with psalms and quill,  
Spent many hours in deep reflection,  
Passed on to generations strength of will.

Achievement of the perfect union,  
With selfcontrol and bend of will,  
Truth of message in close communion,  
St. Colman made change standstill.

Past poetic versions ever blooming,  
A gold and treasure in Daly's lines,  
Seagulls gliding, harmonious tuning,  
Stamps Eileen's story for modern times.

The birds awake to greet the morning,  
Blend in chorus united in praise,  
Pertaining to the now, new dawning,  
Divine love dewing the ring of Clare.

*All rights reserved,  
By Colman Moylan.*

### That Blasted Breathalyser

*By W.M. Quinn*  
Once long ago the preachers cursed  
The sinful proselytiser  
Yet in the age of ninety  
Our drivers all berate

That blasted breathalyser.

Democracy is dead'n gone -  
No more the straight chalked line  
Or mumbling of hard spoken words  
Or picking up a coin.

The squad car now just flags you down  
If you but wobbles show -  
And take away your licence  
With just one green tint blow.

Democracy is dead and gone  
When a driver drunk gets free -  
If only he can feign fatigue  
Or knows a good T.D.

### To Cross O'er The Sea

As I'm leaving my hometown,  
In tears now I wonder,  
Why should I leave you  
and go far away?  
When all that I cherish,  
is right here beside me,  
But God how my heart breaks  
to cross o'er the sea.

Goodbye to my comrades,  
and the grand town of Guaire.  
Your river runs by me,  
as soft as can be.  
The trees they are waving,  
the Burren is weeping,  
For tomorrow I'm leaving,  
to cross o'er the sea.

It's well I remember,  
the time of our courtship,  
And that day at the altar,  
that you said yes to me.  
But I also remember,  
the grave where you're lying,  
I can't take you with me,  
to cross o'er the sea.

No more will go swinging,  
the hurley of glory.  
Gone are the fond walks,  
to old Ballylee.  
Forget about tracking,

the pheasant and widgeon  
As tomorrow I'm sailing,  
across o'er the sea.

So give me your blessing,  
dear father fond mother,  
As I leave dear old Guaire,  
it's lonesome I'll me.  
But I'll never forget you  
dear town of my childhood.  
When I'm sailing tomorrow,  
across o'er the sea.

*Sean Leahy*

### Farewell To The Smell

*by Pat Fitzgibbon*  
(SUNG TO THE AIR OF SLATTERY'S  
MOUNTED FOOT)

There was a brave Reporter  
and Joe Duffy was his name,  
In the cold month of November  
to our little town he came,  
To find from whence there came the  
stench  
That drove us all insane,  
And made us close our windows  
In the sunshine and the rain.

He interviewed some people  
Ah sure, you know them well,  
They tried to give him reasons  
for the intermittent smell.  
But Joe would not believe them,  
So he sallied forth to find  
Where his nose would lead him,  
And his crew fell in behind.

### Chorus

Down from the City came the bearded  
Duffy man,  
With strong and sturdy Wellie boots  
And microphone in hand,  
He was sent by Gay and he talked all  
day  
To people great and small  
"Where did they think the dreadful stink  
Was coming from atall"?

The outcome of this story now  
I think you all know well,  
And to Joe Duffy's glory  
We no longer have the smell.  
We're free to walk and stop and talk  
And breathe the sweet fresh air,  
And to the Gay Byrne Show and Joe,  
Our heartfelt Thanks we tell.

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# Historic Win in Burren Foursomes

*By "Beautiful Chip"*

In 1975 the competition known as the "Burren Foursomes" was started. Members from Ennis, Loughrea, Athenry, Portumna and Gort met in Gort and as well as naming the society a set of rules was drawn up.

Some years later, Ballinasloe and Oughterard applied for membership and were accepted. Tuam participated for two years. The format of the competition is Foursomes Matchplay with ten players on each team. Gort participated each year, often with great difficulty fielding a team.

While the competitiveness took priority at all times the Inter Club rivalry created a very good atmosphere. Many enjoyable social evenings have taken place.

After waiting 15 years Gort eventually won the Burren Foursomes in 1990. On Monday, May 28th there was great joy and jubilation in Ballinasloe Golf Club when Burren Captain, Trish Lenehan, presented the Burren Trophy to victorious Gort Captain, Geraldine Connors.

In the preliminary rounds Gort gave some very impressive displays and emerged as finalists from Group A. Round 1, played in Oughterard on April 23rd, saw Gort defeat Loughrea 4-1. Round 2, in Ennis, on May 7th brought our only defeat, 3-2 to Galway. In Round 3, played in Portumna on May 21st, we met Ballinasloe. There we secured a place in the final with a most convincing 5-0 victory.

Ballinasloe was the venue for the final on Monday, May 28th. We were cautiously optimistic as we faced our opponents, Oughterard. In the final Gort showed the same determination as they had shown throughout the competition. With greater ease than expected we defeated Oughterard 4-1. The prestigious Burren Trophy was eventually on its way home to Gort.

Back in Gort a very enjoyable function was held to celebrate our historic win. Mr. Noel Geoghegan, Club President, formally welcomed the victorious team and Mr. Paddy Fahy, Club Captain in his address congratulated the ladies and said that they had done the club proud. In reply, Lady Captain, Geraldine Connors, recalled some memorable events of the competition and she thanked the men's committee for their welcome and the team members, selectors and supporters for their commitment throughout the competition.

**Team:** Geraldine Connors, Marie Fennessy, Mary Noone, Ethne Bermingham, Sadie McInerney, Margaret Kelleher, Dairin Coen, Rita Lundon, Nuala



*Gort Ladies, Burren Trophy winners 1990.*

Spelman, Mary Coen, Agnes Fahy, Margaret Murphy, Siobhan O'Connor and Ellen Dolan.

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Galway Hurling Star Pete Finnerty pictured at the Customer draw for Hurling Final Tickets at the Bank of Ireland, with Manager Tom Naughton and Assistant Manager Pádraic Giblin.



The 10th anniversary Gort show was held at the Community Centre on 25th August 1990. The Donkey Derby was one of the major attractions. Pictured above is the winner, Martin Burke, Georges St., with his champion donkey "The Miller" and some supporters.



Remember last year's floods? This was the scene at Tiernevan.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
MEMORIES

ARE MADE

OF THIS

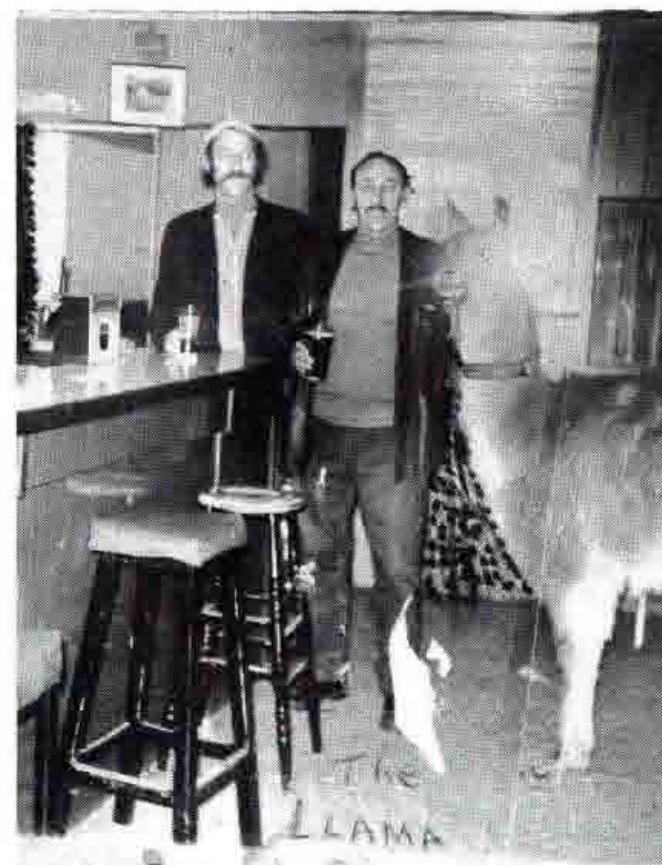
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Gort Panto of yesteryear - Ann Fitzgerald-Kenny and Miko Mulcaire.



Kilmacduagh tower prior to its restoration in 1879. This is a copy of an original photograph discovered by Pat Quinn Kilmacduagh.



No, your eyes are not playing tricks on you! The Llama at the counter in Bourke's Bar, Church Street belonged to Duffy's Circus.



A rare sight in Gort! A thatcher at work on the Galway Road last Autumn.



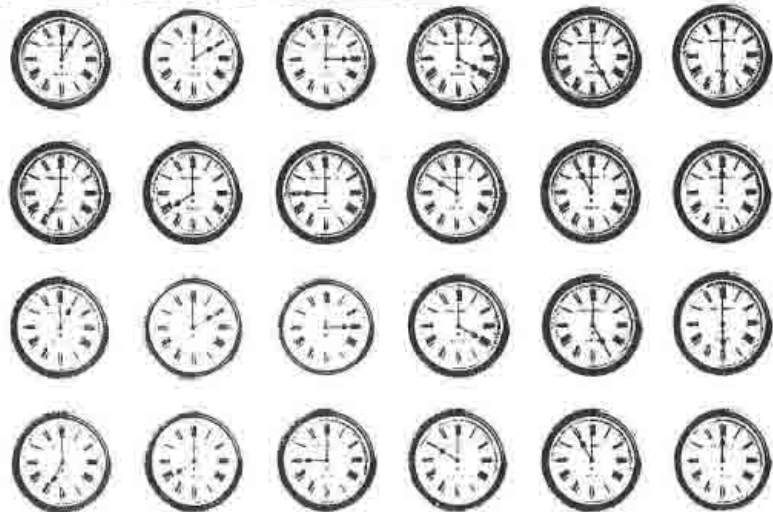
Taken at the old Clubhouse, Rockfield. Back Row Left to Right: Jack Murphy, Pauline Murphy, Brod Slattery, Pakie Broderick (RIP), Nickey Brady (RIP), Pat Brady (RIP), Joe Griffin, -, Ned Gilmartin (RIP), Fr. Spelman and Georgie Daly (RIP). Middle Row: Mrs. Healy, Birdie McGovern (RIP), Renagh Spelman, Bridie Keane, Mrs. Brazzil and Teresa Fitzgerald. Front Row: Rita Lally (RIP), Miss Lahiffe, Eddie Treston (RIP), Babs Gilmartin, Evelyn Gilmartin, Jack Spelman (RIP).



Rynal Coen presenting the Coen Billiard Cup to Denis Madigan 1959.



# NO ONE IS OPEN LONGER

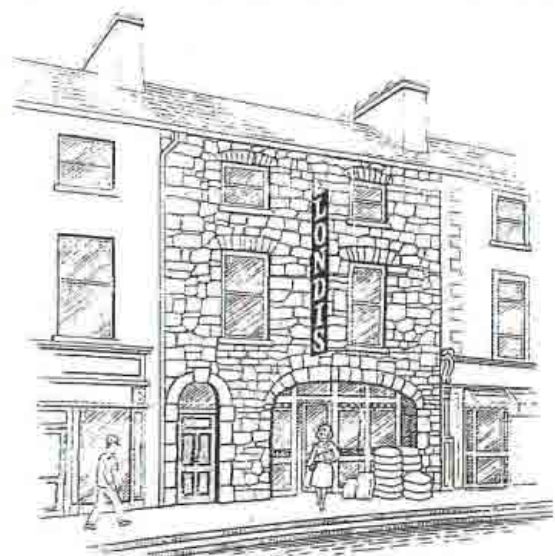


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# Gort Golfers Clinch Connacht Title

by "Deadly Putter"

The picturesque and challenging Westport Golf Club at the foot of Croagh Patrick this year provided Gort Golf Club with one of the greatest chapters in its sixty eight year history. On Sunday 25th August in a David and Goliath scenario, Gort's golfers – the absolute outsiders, defeated one of the country's biggest clubs, County Sligo, in the final of the Irish Junior Cup, Connacht Section and qualified for the All-Ireland semi-finals, which were held at Westport during the weekend of September 18th-19th.

This is only the second time Gort have won the Connacht section Irish Junior Cup. In 1973 the team comprised Paddy Jordan, Gerry Cahill, Vincent O'Shaughnessy, Father Ned Crosby, Frank Shaw and Noel Mullins. This year's team comprised the two "old" staggers Paddy and Gerry again and were joined by Niall Finnegan and two outstanding young golfers Alan Devlin and Donagh Forde. It proved to be the perfect combination of valuable experience and uninhibited youth.

Gort's underdog tag came from a combination of the smallness of the club, some 110 male members with only 10 eligible for selection on the Junior Cup Team. The team first of all had to come through a very tough qualifying competition with all the other clubs in Connacht to make the last eight for the matchplay stage. In fact they were the last of the eight qualifiers. They only secured eighth position when Alan Devlin, Niall Finnegan and Donagh Forde all birdied the 18th hole. In the quarter final they encountered the leading qualifier, Castlebar, most of whom are familiar with Westport Golf Course. Gort won 3 and 2. Alan Devlin and Niall Finnegan won on the 17th and Donagh Forde, having played outstanding golf won the 18th, to set up a semi-final meeting with Ballinasloe. This proved a traumatic affair, Donagh Forde won on the 15th - Paddy Jordan finished strongly to win on the 17th and on the 18th green of the fifth and last game. Niall Finnegan birdied to win his match and for Gort a 3 and 2 victory.

The stage was set for a final meeting with Co. Sligo, and it proved to be one of the most comprehensive victories in a final in recent years. Gerry Cahill playing at Number 1 provided one of the most outstanding rounds of golf in his illustrious career and won his match on the 14th hole, and Alan Devlin having had two birdies and an eagle in the first five holes won his match on the 13th. Paddy



Gort, Connacht Junior Cup Champions 1990, pictured with Club Captain Paddy Fahy and President Noel Geoghegan.

Jordan and Niall Finnegan were called in and there were joyous scenes among the team and the many supporters who travelled from Gort when Mr. Ger Golden, President of the Golfing Union of Ireland presented the Connacht Title Pennant to the team's Captain, Paddy Jordan, who in turn presented it to the Gort Club Captain, Mr. Paddy Fahy.

On the following Monday night a reception was held at Gort Golf Club for the victorious team. Club Captain, Paddy Fahy, paid glowing tributes to the team on their great achievement.

He told them they had done the Club proud and hoped they would acquit themselves with distinction in the All Ireland semi-final against Killarney, the Munster Champions, on the weekend of September 18/19. Club President Mr. Noel Geoghegan, congratulated the team.

Unfortunately the fairytale story came to a disappointing end when Gort were beaten 3 to 2 by Killarney. In some people's minds, for a small 9 hole club to take on the might of Killarney, who have up to 1,000 members, this would seem a mis-match. However, when Gerry Cahill and Donagh Forde won the first two matches, both easily, a major shock seemed on the cards. However the strength in depth that Killarney had gave them the edge that mattered and they won the last three games, to win the match 3-2.

Disappointing? Yes, but seldom has a team been so worthy of praise in defeat. Indeed the messages of goodwill from all over Connacht and beyond showed the team had indeed done Gort Golf Club proud.





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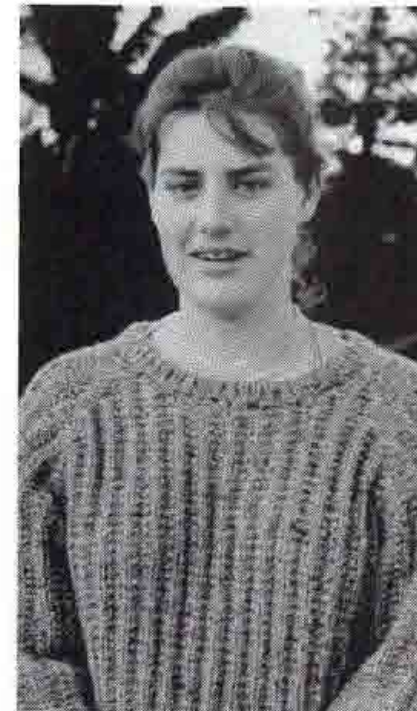
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# YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NEWS IN 1990



## CARMEL BURKE

The Otway Freeman Gold Medal for the top student in the final year of the B.Sc. Degree Course at Trinity College, Dublin, was awarded to Carmel Burke, daughter of Peadar & Teresa Burke, Kiltartan, Gort. Carmel was conferred with the B.Sc. Degree in Clinical Speech and Language Studies at the end of the four year course. She is a past pupil of Kiltartan N.S. and St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy Secondary School, Gort. She now works in Kilkenny.

## GARY LEAHY

Gary couldn't believe his good luck when he was informed that he would be spinning the wheel in the National Lottery. He went to Dublin with family, friends and well wishers, and came home £10,000 richer. Well done Gary! He is studying for a certificate in Horticulture at present, having got his diploma in gardening from Kilroy's College, Dublin last year.



Gary Leahy being congratulated by Ray Bates of the National Lottery after winning £10,000 on 'Spin The Wheel'. Also in the picture is Mrs. Maureen Hawkins, seller of the ticket and Ronan Collins of R.T.E.

## ELVA CONROY

It was a sunny day in May. We played games during the lunch-break and on re-entering the classroom we settled down to the serious business of discussing poetry. Towards the end of that class, Sister Maura, our teacher, hurriedly left the classroom to answer an urgent phone call that concerned me. My essay "Ireland as a destination for the European Tourist" had already won me a racing bike. Now Sister Maura was being informed that I had won the premier award with my essay and that I would be representing Ireland at the Council of Europe's 41st birthday in Strasbourg!

**The day had come ...** On the plane from Shannon to Heathrow I was chewing the cud of recollections, in which the sweet predominated over the bitter. Strange thoughts, one 13 year old, Elva, chosen out of the best 3

in Ireland ... my essay ... Not wishing to in any way disturb my most perfect hour, I left the puzzle of wits and enjoyed the shopping in Heathrow and the flight that took me to Strasbourg.

It was late when we arrived and I remember distinctly picturing the glorious French coast we had passed over just an hour before. The speed of the taxi was phenomenal and as the darkened countryside fled by in blurred images, my mother and I sat, tired and happy, in the back. On arrival at our lodgings we thankfully fell into our beds and slept those glorious hours away, until at precisely eight o'clock we were wakened by the bell and breakfasted with the other countries' representatives. It was now time to spend some of the francs so generously given to me by family, relatives, friends and neighbours.

Shopping in Strasbourg was a





**Madame Lalumière, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, meets children from many European countries outside the Council's headquarters in Strasbourg. Elva is standing beside Madame Lalumière (1st right).**

real experience with my mother and I trying out our French! Later we had a fascinating trip around the city, visiting the enormous Cathedral, it's cardinalist air, and meek God-loving atmosphere. We also saw it's aristocratic Merry-Go-Round, with which came the joys of the Place Kleber, and afterwards a buffet at the Hôtel de Ville. I simply cannot describe the beauty of the massive, gargantuan tapestries and the feel of the deep carpets and lace curtains. We were also privileged to a boat trip of the city, passing the town hall which was attacked by the mob during the Revolution of 1789. Idling along that sweet river, from lock to lock, we came to know so much more of the French culture.

**The Council of Europe:** It was of course the Council of Europe together with the publishers of the new European newspaper **The European** that made my trip possible. (It was a nice thrill to open the first issue of that paper in Londis Supermarket, Gort, after coming home and to see my photo there). We spent a great deal of time in the Council's headquarters - we fed on the 41st anniversary cake, we chatted with Madame Lalumière - Secretary-General of the

Council, we toured the whole building, and by the time it came to Havel's history - making speech, we felt quite at home in these distinguished surroundings. For that famous speech, we - the Children of Europe - were escorted to the gallery of the Hemicycle, where we listened to the heart-rending speech by Vaclar Havel - President of Czechoslovakia. He spoke with great feeling and passion about Czechoslovakia's past and present. The Minister Gerry Collins, on seeing the Irish flag came over to have a few words with me. Later I witnessed the signing of the European Cultural Convention by Havel. This was the last Council of Europe event I was present at. We had our last delicious meal in the 'Jardin de l'Europe' and on our way in passed the house built by Napoleon for Josephine on the one occasion she stayed in Strasbourg.

The trip to Strasbourg was a turning point in my life, I experienced a European gathering which brought to life the necessity for unity, a wholeness and for peace. It was an enriching experience and the many friendships I made there will last me a lifetime in memories and letters.

#### TRACEY FERGUSON



1990 was a terrific year for Tracey Ferguson from Ballyhugh, Gort. Tracey always had a keen interest in drama, and she spent six years in the Gort and District Musical Society. On entering College she became an active member of Dramsoc, U.C.G., and starred in 'Under Malk Wood' by Dylan Thomas and 'Swans' by Peter Golden. She went to Dublin in March for the I.S.D.A. awards as a member of the cast of 'Swans'.

Tracey became a member of Punchbag Theatre Company, Galway's newest professional theatre company in June and acted with the new Company for three months as Maeve in Tom Murphy's 'Famine' and as Katie Doogan in Brian Friel's 'Philadelphia here I Come' which ran until mid-August. Since then Tracey has set up 'Dram-Ed' Theatre Company with Tina O'Rourke. The basic idea in Dram-Ed is to give students an introductory course in Drama through education. The programme consists of a play, lasting a half an hour and a workshop lasting 1-2 hours. To put this idea into practice the two girls brought the Geraldine Arron play 'Bar & Ger' to Westport for three days and worked with local students there. It proved to be a successful venture and it encouraged Tracey and Tina to travel to other centres with Dram-Ed, which they have been

doing since November.

Tracey directed 'From a Woman's Point of View' by Jean Norman for U.C.G.'s Dramsoc in October and it was a huge success. It was in fact the World Premiere of the play.

Tracey has since signed a contract with Backstage Productions and will play Amanda in 'The Glass Menagerie' by Tennessee Williams in the Taibhdhearc Theatre Galway in March, to be followed by a tour of other cities and towns from April.

To anyone interested in drama Tracey's advice is to audition for as many productions as possible so as to gain valuable experience and the confidence which is so necessary to 'land' yourself the part you want. Above all other things Tracey says you have to keep trying and be willing to accept refusals as part and parcel of the scene' in Drama.

And what about her own future on stage? Next year is going to be even more successful than 1990, she maintains! Positive girl, Tracey!!

#### DAVID CASEY

David Casey a member of South Galway Athletic Club was selected on the Irish Senior/Junior which competed in an International Decathlon competition which was held in Waterford last September. Other countries which competed in the competition were England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. David gave great performances in the ten events which took place over two days and enabled the Irish team finish in third position overall.

David was selected because of his performances in the National B.L.E. U-21 Decathlon which was held in Tullamore last July when he took gold on that occasion. The Decathlon is a very difficult event and consists of ten disciplines the 100m, long jump, shot, high jump, 400m, hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1500m.

David also won bronze at the National B.L.E. U-21 Indoor Octathlon which was held in Nenagh last January and went on to compete in the British A.A.A. junior indoors at Cosford, Eng-



**David Casey**

land where he finished in a creditable 9th place out of twenty one competitors.

#### COLIN CASEY

Athletics in Gort was kept very much to the fore this year with high class performances by Colin Casey of South Galway Athletic Club at National and International level. Colin who has had a very successful career in athletics to date has gone from strength to strength since he won his first All-Ireland medal at National Community Games at the tender age of seven years.

Colin representing Our Lady's College had his first outing this year at the All-Ireland Schools which were held in Belfield. There he took gold in the Senior Triple Jump and silver in the Long Jump. He then went on to compete in the National Junior B.L.E. championships at Tullamore where he won gold in both the long jump and triple jump

events. His next outing was at the National U-21 Championships which were held in Cork and there he took silver in the triple jump and bronze in the long jump.

He was chosen Connacht Tribune Sports Star of the Week twice during the month of June and also received the First National Building Society/Connacht Tribune Award for Sports Personality of the Month (June).

The high point of the season was being selected on the Irish Junior team which competed in Sittard, Holland. Over fifty athletes made the trip to this International event also involving teams from Belgium and Holland. In what turned out to be a very close contest Colin gained valuable points in the long jump and triple jump events helping his team to win this competition for the first time ever by the narrow margin of one point.



**Colin Casey**



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# Gort Credit Union 25 Years On

*By Bernie Commins & Thomas O'Quigley*

Gort Credit Union celebrated its 25th anniversary in July last. To mark the anniversary Mr. Gerry Foley President Irish League of Credit Unions attended a function in the Credit Union Hall on 20th July '90, it was a very enjoyable evening. The Credit Union was the brainchild of the late J.J. Coen. While on a business trip Mr. Coen heard of the movement and being impressed put the idea of a Credit Union for Gort to some of his acquaintances. A meeting was held and Mr. John Sullivan of Bullring Wexford was contacted for information. Mr. Sullivan very kindly came to Gort at his own expense and explained what the Credit Union Movement was and how it worked. Approximately a week later another public meeting was held and it was decided to form a Credit Union in Gort.

Gort Credit Union became a reality on the 26th July 1965 in the premises of Mr. Joseph



*Opening of Gort Credit Union Office 2nd January 1971. Micheál Breathnach, Martin Lawlor and Seamus Conway.*

McInerney at Church St., Gort. Its hours of opening were Sunday from 12 noon to 1 p.m. Some time later to meet members needs collections were also taken at Tomás O'Quigley's Barber Shop.

As the movement grew the Board of Directors decided that the Credit Union should have its own premises. Plans were drawn up and sites inspected and

eventually the site at Station Rd. was purchased on the 2nd May 1969. On the 19th May 1969 the hard task of preparing and clearing the site began, all labour was voluntary. Actual building started on 24th April 1970, official opening of office was on 21st January 1971. Surely a magnificent achievement by all those involved in such a short time and at the expense of their leisure time. The building itself has offices meeting rooms on the ground floor while upstairs there is a fine self-contained flat. Many groups have been well served over the years by the use of these fine facilities. Credit Union Motto is "Save regularly and borrow wisely". Since its foundation the Credit Union has grown in leaps and bounds. At the end of our financial year 30th September 1990 Shares balance £371203.00. Loan balance £355,504.00. Office hours Friday 1.30 p.m. to 3.00 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. Members of the Board of Directors are always there to offer advice. New members always welcome. Special tribute has to be paid to everyone who helped set up the Credit Union Movement in Gort and to all the voluntary workers down through the years, Gort Credit Union is for and about people - why not join now.



*1990 Board Left to Right: Bernie Costello, Geraldine Flanagan, Michael Gormally, Bernie Commins, Tomás O'Quigley, Gerry Foley (League President), Paul Collins and P.J. Downey.*



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# THOOR BALLYLEE

By Mary Callanan (Curator)

Thoor Ballylee was adapted by the Poet, Dramatist and Critic William Butler Yeats as his summer home from 1919-1928. Purchased from the Congested Districts Board for £35.00 the Tower inspired two of his greatest books of Poetry "The Tower" and "The Winding Stair".

*I the poet William Yeats  
With old mill boards and sea green  
slates  
And smithy work from the Gort forge  
Restored this tower for my wife  
George  
And may these characters remain  
When all is ruin once again.*



This inscription did not appear on the Tower in his lifetime but in 1948 it was erected - appropriately - by the Abbey Theatre of which he was a founder.

Yeats won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923.

Today the Tower has been restored and refurbished by Ireland West Tourism which has led to a 53% increase in visitor numbers.

The development of an Interpretative Centre on the poet's life and works with an audio-visual presentation (17 minutes) and push button audio narrations in each of the rooms has proved extremely popular. In order to accommodate the various nationalities who visit Thoor Ballylee the tour is available in English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish and Irish.

Each room in the Tower has been furnished to appear exactly as when Yeats lived there. Also, on display are first edition books by Yeats and Lady Gregory, Broadsheets, Japanese translations of Yeats poetry etc.

Because the tower is a Sixteenth Century Norman tower house built by the deBurgos or Burkes an information centre on this aspect of its history will be in place for next season.

The cottage area has been extended and now houses a larger tea room, bookshop and craftshop. The tea room seats 50 people and a variety of home cooking is available - soup, smoked salmon salad, quiche and salad, cheese and biscuits, carrot cake, chocolate biscuit cake etc. The bookshop offers a variety of Yeats literature together with a wide range of Anglo-Irish Literature. The Craftshop has a large selection of traditional crafts.

Other facilities include a Tourist Information Office, Official Bureau de Change, gardens, riverside walks, picnic areas, toilet facilities, and wheelchair facilities. To further enhance the visitor attraction



Thoor Ballylee by Robert Kerans, George's Street, Gort.

the old mill house is being restored.

A more unusual visitor attraction is being investigated at present - that of a friendly spirit or ghost still lingering in the Tower. An English visitor requested permission to take a photograph in the ground floor room of the Tower. On being developed it showed a shadowy figure in the foreground which resembles a child. The photographer maintains it is not his shadow and nobody else was present at the time. Mr. & Mrs. Yeats were known to be involved in spiritualism and the occult and it is presumed that seances were held in the Tower. Sheila St. Claire who is qualified and experienced in the field of psychic research has agreed to investigate the event and welcomes further information or photographs which would help with the research.

The season is being extended and now Thoor Ballylee will be open to visitors to walk in the footsteps of the world famous poet W.B. Yeats, see the audio-visual presentation, visit the Tower, browse in the bookshop, relax in the tea room, stroll through the gardens and riverside walks. Thoor Ballylee is now one of the major all weather attractions in the area where individuals or families can enjoy a day long visit.



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# MY FIRST PINT

*By W.M. Quinn*

**Do you remember drinking your first pint. No doubt you do if it was to-day or yesterday or but a few years back. Usually it is a luminous landmark in a man's life.**

You will associate it perhaps with the night you went to the marquee in the Yellow Glen, or when Mick Mack brought his bride home to Ballylara and they tapped a half barrel in the little scullery off the kitchen. The drinking of my first pint is etched indelibly in the joyous cavity-part of my mind, for it was a ... shall I say, all a mistake ... an event unsolicited, and in such circumstances as to make it somewhat unique and hence, worth telling.

## I was at the Puppy Stage

In my twenties, I had been a somewhat of a "regular" at Kilroys, a homely well disciplined pub alongside the Church, but I was at the "puppy" stage ... half ones of this and that, sherry, whiskey, gin etc.

Be it remembered, most novices begin with 'shorties' ... easy to 'palm', or swallow in one fast frightened gulp should the occasion arise with the entrance of some long-tongued neighbour or (heaven forbid), the 'old man' himself. In such emergencies, the shortie also lent itself to being 'palmed' easily with the minimum of incriminating evidence, should swallowing be impracticable, then present a face of sweet innocence ... just in for cigarettes or a bar of chocolate.

## Quietly in the Snug

It was a harsh March afternoon in 19—. Due to wartime rationing demand by far exceeded supplies of Guinness, so that, metaph-

orically as well as actually, draught was 'under the counter'.

That harsh but eventful afternoon in March, being a licenced Auctioneer I was endeavouring to outwit a wily potential client, so what more fitting location to clench the deal than 'longside the friendly counter in Kilroy's Pub.

The place was crowded. Only the hum of animated snippets of conversation mingled with the steamy smoke filled the bar room. Usually the son of the house was in command, but on this afternoon it was the 'old' woman herself, assisted by the kitchen girl that was dispensing the good cheer. Now the old woman, in common with many of her generation, had a wary eye for the 'regulars'. My friend and I squeezed apologetically toward the counter, but with a sly wink and a beck of her hand the old woman bid me aside, "Willie I want you a minnit" ... soon we were both esconced in the tiny snug at the back of the bar. Without the opportunity of voicing our desires the old woman trotted off purposefully, but then, at the time, patience was a necessary requisite so we went into discussion while awaiting her pleasure.

I was contemplating a gin. My potential client had settled for a half one.

## Oh what a surprise!

Act II in this happy comedy of errors ... reappeared old woman in a rustle of voluminous black skirts and apron, then as the door of the snug shut cautiously behind her (aided by a push of her 'behind' out popped from the secrecy of her apron ... a creamy topped pint of Guinness. But ... but ... I made to cut in, she shushed me to silence. Exit once

more to again soon reappear with a second creamy topped pint from under her black apron. But ... but ... Her clenched fist good naturedly beckoned me to silence. Pay me again 'tis alright keep the door shut, and the old woman once more disappeared to her medium drinking and less appreciated customers.

I was an honoured guest and flushed quietly at my distinction, my potential client across the snug from me took the affair for granted ... the whites of his eyes showed outstandingly as he dipped his lips into the creamy top and sipped with an expression of happy detachment.

I was spell bound and totally undecided. PINT??? In a heavy 'church window' glass it looked big as Carrauntoohil and as unfinishable as a gargantuan feast before an overfed man ... A PINT ... FOR ME?

I decided to attack it. It felt weighty, and forbidding to my unaccustomed grasp. I was wondering and debating within myself. My first sip ever from so momentous a measure slid easily down my throat.

Gradually the weight in my hand grew lighter as sip followed sip and conversation mellowed glidingly to a successful conclusion of my business deal, and my first pint.

Thinking back, I wonder did the old woman in her anxiety over a favoured 'regular' in a crowded and rationed bar (and my excitement at my first joyful incursion to the land of 'long'-drinks) ever collect for it?

I forget, but I'll never forget the air of mystery and the taste and thrill of my first UNCALLED for pint.

Many since have slipped satisfyingly down my throttle, but none etch so magical an aroma as that first surreptitious pint that popped as if magically from under the old lady's apron.



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# INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

*By Seán Ryan*

The Concept of Integrated Rural Development programmes is not exactly new. Such programmes have been the subject of discussion and have been in place in various parts of the developed world over the past twenty five years or so. Indeed they have existed since the end of the second world war in a few countries.

Experience has indicated that no two programmes are the same. This is understandable in many ways because the characteristics of individual rural areas and regions vary so much. In particular, they differ in the characteristics of their main features, namely, the people and the physical resources. The people will be different, in their level of skills, traditional occupations, age structures, identified leadership and so on, and clearly the physical resources will always be different from one region to another.

I make this observation only to make the point that there is really no single blueprint or formula for the ideal or "guaranteed to work Integrated Rural Development programme". Equally fashionable and all as the topic of IRD. is nowadays, I suspect that there are hundreds of different notions as to what IRD ought to represent. However it is better to start with some broad definition or terminology of what Integrated Rural Development is.

Integrated Rural Development deliberately sets out to stimulate initiative and development among rural communities in their own areas and to encourage a fresh spirit of enterprise among those local communities that will lead to greater economic activity, greater creation of wealth, greater creation of gainful employment, and improved quality of life. It should not be imposed from the top but rather be encouraged to grow from the bottom up. It should embrace all areas of activity and nothing should be ruled out. Everything should be tried and no negative thinking should be allowed to develop. It must actively involve the people themselves and the results should reflect their needs and aspirations and should be measured accordingly. It must entail co-ordinated effort by all public agencies and voluntary bodies at local level, and considerable flexibility of approach by all of them. Rural in the context of Integrated Rural Development means "Non-Urban".

The objective of the IRD programme is to improve the employment opportunities, earning potential and social position of Rural areas by focusing on the community and mobilizing it to take a new look at its

resources, its potential and its needs. The active involvement of the people themselves is essential to the success of IRD, because it encourages decision making and development from the ground up.

The Integrated Rural Development Pilot programme was therefore established in Oct. 1988 for a two year term. The purpose of the programme was to implement a particular structure for generating Rural development. The structure was designed to encourage a bottom-up approach to development by giving to local communities an opportunity to determine their own set of priorities, to decide on the action to be taken to bring those priorities to reality, and to accept responsibility for the result of such action.

There were twelve Pilot areas selected for the Pilot phase and these areas were geographically distributed throughout Ireland. A Co-ordinator, employed by the Department of Agriculture and Food was appointed to each of the pilot areas. The first task of each co-ordinator was to establish a Core Group composed of members of local voluntary bodies and individuals committed to promoting the interests of the local community. The design for the pilot programme incorporated the concept of shared-learning through which the areas emerging as a result of the programme apart from a small technical assistance fund. These projects were expected to avail of the existing funds and services provided by the State Agencies.

## **Gort - A Pilot Area**

Gort was therefore selected as one of the twelve pilot areas, with the town of Gort as the centre. The territory stretched from the sea at Kilcolgan Point to the County Bounds at Aughinish down through Kinvara, Ardahan, Kilbeacanty, Gort, Beagh and over the border into East Clare passing such areas as Lough Graney, Caher, Feakle, Scariff, Bodyke and Tulla, and joining Lough Derg at several points. The total area is approx 200,000 acres with a population of approx 12,000 people. There is a large diversification of interests and natural resources throughout the pilot area. In the inner Galway Bay area for instance the concentration is on Aquaculture, coming down by Ardahan the main priority is farming. Gort town seeks to develop its tourist potential and to become a magnet or centre of attraction in its own



right. East Clare seeks to improve its infrastructure, and to develop its fishing potential amongst other things.

The concept of shared learning was crucial to the success of the pilot phase. Gort was twinned with South Kerry and we shared our knowledge, experiences and disappointments. Four workshops were held at six month intervals during which all twelve pilot areas came together to make their presentations and extend their knowledge. The concept of networking was also introduced. Under this aspect of shared learning interested groups who had projects up and running were facilitated and encouraged to travel to other areas to examine, explore, and gain as much information as possible about their current project(s).

Eleven Core Group members were selected in the first few months. The Core Group members were geographically distributed throughout the pilot area, and all came from varied backgrounds, experiences and skills. Sadly we had only one woman on the Core Group, and I would have liked to have more. A good balance however is always difficult to achieve. Each Core Group member could have as his/her backing group/support group any organisation of his/her choosing. Groups were always encouraged to work together and to pool their resources.

All in all we came up with forty one different projects. Each Core Group member wouldn't be required to take on more than one or two projects at the time, and we would collectively look after as many projects as we could. Not all our projects were successful, and we had to drop some after initial investigation. Others are long term and would need four/five years work to bring to fruition. The most exciting project for Gort of course is its application for acceptance as a Theme Heritage Town. When this project is put in place Gort will become a focal point or magnet in its own right in much the same way as Clifden, Cashel, Killarney, Rosslare, or Dingle. I would love to see an 18 Hole Golf Course in Gort as well as lots more accommodation.

### Teleworking!

Our projects were always revolving and we were always willing to take on board extra projects large or small. Our latest project is known as Teleworking. Telecommunications are changing the way in which work is carried out. The traditional pattern of workers going to where the work is (either commuting or emigrating) is being replaced by new arrangements where work opportunities are brought to where the people are. This may be on a small scale, where an individual uses Information Technology and Telecommunications to enable him/her to work some or all of their time from the home, or on a large scale where telework provides a significant number of jobs. Its already happening in America & Europe, so we may as well be the first into the arena here. In five years time Teleworking will be common place. People won't have to leave their rural base to work for major corporations. We hope that the larger Irish firms will also become attracted to Teleworking.

The pilot phase concluded in October last, and since then all the various reports, accounts, evaluations have taken place and have been submitted. An independent evaluation was also carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute. In addition each pilot area was video'd during the summer months, and a comprehensive video was forwarded to Brussels. I am glad to say that Gort is well featured in this video, and when I get my hands on it, I will make it available locally. On a personal basis I am delighted to see Gort making such great improvements, and to see so many of the plastic signs coming down, the stone walls being rebuilt and the lovely new trees planted. This is the type of heritage we all can leave after us. Every encouragement therefore with Gorts Development plan, and do not be disappointed with the little setbacks that arise from time to time.

The pilot phase was a preliminary prior to launching a National programme for IRD sometime in 1991. It is envisaged that many of the essential elements of the pilot phase will be incorporated in the new national programme but its not known at this time what the ultimate package will be.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my short time in Gort, and I have made many new friends, and renewed old friendships. I will be looking forward to seeing Gort and its hinterland develop in a programmed way in coming years, which will stabilize the rural populations, create new jobs and job opportunities, and ultimately give people pride in their own place.

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To Be"*

# Sojourn In Another Land

*By Fr. Jimmy Walsh*

*'And the Lord said to Abraham! 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land I will show you'. (Gen.)*

When I was appointed to Gort in October 1981, and came to teach at Saint Colman's Vocational School, the present wave of emigration was just about to descend upon us like some great 'fallout'. By the time I left in the summer of 1989, the majority of those who sat in front of me in desks had departed for another land. I was to follow them. My concern for them eventually brought me to the point of applying to Bishop Casey to work in the immigrant situation in London. And so I came to work with the Irish immigrant Chaplaincy in Britain, and to live in exile myself. The thoughts of the young who left would touch my heart also in my first year:

*When the ould fella left me at Shannon  
Was the last time I travelled that road  
As we turned left in Claregalway  
I could feel the lump in my throat  
As I pictured the thousands of times  
That I travelled the railroad track,  
And I know things will be different  
If ever I decide to come back.  
(N17, The Sawdoctors)*

### Emigration: The Left and the Bereft

During the 1970s Irish people thought that the days of involuntary emigration were a past event. Few left, and those who did generally did so out of choice. There was great activity around the countryside, with so many young people present. No problems then getting the numbers for hurling, football, camogie and other activities. In early 1980 it became evident that emigration was beginning again. Many would ask why this was happening again.

Emigration is not an act of God. It is caused by external, international economic trends and internal economic policies. Multinationals began to repatriate profits and invest elsewhere. Industry moved closer to the densely populated areas like the southeast of England and northern Europe so as to be nearer the market. Once capital and industry moves, people follow - emigration.

The people that leave are the energetic, between the ages of eighteen and twenty five. For the local community and country this is a loss of a most precious asset - youth. The country they move to gains from their energy, skills and expertise.

For those left behind - parents, friends, brothers and sisters, there is a sense of grief for those who have had to leave. They are anxious about how their



*Fr. Jimmy Walsh preaching in the Burren in 1984.*

young will manage in a strange place and look forward to a phone call or letter. As someone said: "The house is quiet since they left". If the house is quiet, so too is the countryside because the energy has been sapped.

Since 1982, some 300,000 have left Ireland, and of these some 200,000 have settled in the southeast of England where economic activity began to situate in preparation for the single Economic Market. Once again they took to the 'emigrant ship'. The huddled masses at the end of the 20th century arrived in jets and coaches with little preparation, often little information. The culture shock was often probably greater for them than their ancestors because the rapidity of travel wrenched them from home and deposited them in an unfamiliar environment. The fact that they had seen glimpses of it on TV in the security of their own homes didn't make it any easier to encounter.

### The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain:

Since 1952, the Irish Chaplaincy, some 40 Irish priests, sisters, brothers have been travelling with and living in the midst of the Irish immigrants in Britain. For Gort people, the memory of Fr. Jack Casey's work - after the pain of China - will not be forgotten. Since 1986 they are doing similar work with the Irish in New York, Boston and in Munich, Germany. Their task now is the same as it was then - to enable Irish people adjust and settle in a new environment; to invent a new identity and express it; to learn from and contribute to the experience of being a stranger in a new land.

Over the years, the Irish Chaplaincy has tried to meet the rising and changing needs of new immigrants. Accommodation is still a problem; trying to cope with loneliness and isolation; employment; realising that return is not as immediate as they first perceived; planning to get married back at home



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where their families are. The stress and tensions are as common today as ever they were. Frequently, the local church here is not as conscious as it should be of the plight and nature of emigrants and migrants. Expressing the faith in a new secular environment is more difficult and different than it would be in Kerry, Clare or Galway. There is often much inner anger and disillusionment regarding their experience of church at home. The faith is often rapidly weakened. There is the growing tragedy of the AIDS virus among some of the young Irish here in London. These are issues which must be faced by the church if its voice is to be strong and relevant into the next century. They are often issues which are swept under the carpet in Ireland – consequently, the anger. It was disappointing (not to say downright annoying) to read in London based Irish papers reports about the reaction of one member of Galway County Council concerning a pamphlet relating to the prevention of the AIDS virus – it is easy to 'moralize' from a secure middle-class position in Ireland when one is not faced with the harsh reality of despair and even death in this area. It is for these reasons that the Irish Chaplains are with the immigrants.

There is also the added difficulty of the Irish who come to Britain arising out of the conflict in Ireland which overflows into life here in Britain. Legislation such as the Prevention of Terrorism (PTA) not only views Irish immigrants in their vulnerability, but this legislation perceives Irish people as suspect. This often adds to the stress already there, increasing anxiety and fear of expressing cultural identity.

There is anger too that political circles in Ireland have reneged on much of their responsibility towards the massive exodus. The odd 'token' statement does not work with an educated youth. One great ray of hope and change has been the election of Mary Robinson to the Presidency. A welcome development would be the vote being given to immigrants. But that might cause many a sleepless night for the members of Dáil Eireann!

### A Personal Note:

Have I regretted coming here? The first year was one of personal struggle in finding my own feet – perhaps a necessity if one is to reach out in a sensitive and understanding way to others. It was often a chastening time when one was forced back to essentials, to a questioning of one's attitudes, and sometimes an acceptance of one's own prejudices. But there is no discovery without change, no growth without a pruning.

Presently, I am based here at St. Mellitus Church where the new central offices for the Chaplaincy were opened before Christmas. I help out in the parish. My main work, however, takes me all over London, working in the area of pre-marriage preparation for young Irish couples. It brings me into contact with young people from all over Ireland and as always one cannot fail to be challenged and enthused by the young.

Of course I have kept in contact with many of the young immigrants from the Gort area – many keeping in regular contact. Their support and

friendship is a joy and a privilege.

In a teeming city of millions – with countless expressions of the human condition – it is immensely exciting to work in a church which is constantly being challenged – and yet we experience our congregation grow, especially among the young. In the midst of all the problems and pressures which are inherent in such a great city, the heroism and commitment of people still shines through. God, the mystery behind all things, is found also on the city streets:

*'But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
Cry – and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder  
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.*

*Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,  
Cry – clinging heaven by the hems;  
And lo, Christ walking on the water,  
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!"  
(Francis Thompson: 'In No Strange Land')*

**A 'Thank You':** For the years in Gort which meant so much, lasting memories like the ancient Tower of Kilmacduagh itself. To the youth of that place; to all who have called while visiting London. Pray for us in our work, as I do for you. For us all, may the roads of life move on in their searching ways 'till we reach at evening that place where God's peace is housed, and our work is done.

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# PEG RYAN'S FORTUNE

(FIRST PUBLISHED IN IRELAND'S OWN)

*By Sean Leahy*

Peg Ryan was never a woman for spending money. In fact it could be said that she was a miser. She was rarely seen in the village, appearing only to go to mass on a Sunday, where she slipped in the side door of the Church, side-stepping the collection plate on the way in. She never bought from any of the Vendors in the village, all her buying was from Ted Kelly who had a travelling shop that passed by the door of her little house once a week. Peg was from a district called "Hinch" it was located between the village of Kiltara and the Black Mountains, there she lived alone in her one bedroomed house with her sole companions, her hens and a big cat she called "Pussy". Most of her eggs she sold to Ted Kelly and always gave him a cup of tea and a slice of griddle cake on the day of his calling. Peg had a sister in London who died leaving (as the people called it) a fortune to Peg. Peg's one and only outing from the village was a trip to Dublin to see the Solicitor. Everyone waited to see what she would do with the money - they never found out - Peg never darkened the door of the Bank or Post Office, so they all came to the conclusion it was stashed in the house. Once when she was at Mass her house was broken into, whoever tried to rob her was only interested in her money, nothing was taken. "They never got it" she would say, "I had it too well hidden".

And so it went on and on, until Peg became old and was confined to bed and when she died it was no surprise to the village to hear that poor old Peg had at last gone to her eternal rest, bringing the secret of her fortune to the grave with her. A collection was taken up for her funeral. The crowd was

small when she was taken from her house to the Church, a few more came to the burial which took place at Kiltara Cemetery. On the following Monday evening a strange young man made his way from the railway station to the undertaker, then to the solicitor and lastly to the local Guesthouse, where he booked himself into a room, signing in under the name of Sean Kelly. His sudden appearance in Kiltara, it being a small village, started tongues wagging. Paddy Mack said he was from the Government, Silo Kane was heard to say he was the son of Matt Keane (long since dead) who had come back to claim the old man's farm. The auctioneer had the right story, he was a nephew of Peg Ryan, back from England to look after the funeral (a bit late) and sell the house and contents in Hinch. He turned out to be a likeable sort of person, but with a very strange accent, and when he spoke he had to speak slowly to make himself understood. The auction was set for May 14th, posters were put up everywhere. The tongues started wagging again, some said "whoever buys that house gets old Peg's fortune, it's sure to be in some part of the house", others said "it could be buried in the little cabbage patch to the rear". Bidding would be high, there was a lot at stake.

On the day of the auction Paul Finn, the auctioneer, was up early marking all the contents in lots and making up a good story to tell about the house. 2 o'clock was the hour and Hinch the venue and all the surrounding districts were represented. The auctioneer stood on an old wooden chair, "What will ye bid for this? What will ye put on this lot of lovely antique chairs? - Sold to Mrs. Ryan down there, a bargain. Who'll give me two pounds for this wardrobe? Come

on now, this is a real antique, it would fetch a rare price at a Dublin auction!" Everything went, from the sheets on the bed to the last cup and saucer on the dresser. Finally it was time to sell the house and the plot. Mr. Finn got down from the chair, filled and lit his pipe, and strutted up and down between the people crowded into the kitchen, stopping now and then to let off a billow of smoke. At last he started, "Ladies and Gentlemen, ye are all here today for one purpose, to buy this lovely little house and plot, but before I start the bidding, I want to tell you what a sound dry house we have here, new roof - only twenty years old - walls that were not built by your modern day methods, no indeed, these walls are mass concrete and stone, letting not a shadow of dampness pass through. Look at the floor, pure Moher Flag, carted all the way here from the Cliffs of Moher nearly fifty years ago. Look at the windows, made from the finest bog oak and will never rot, doors of oak, lovely open fireplace and as all of you know, a great story surrounds this lovely little house, I don't have to remind you what that story is. The person who buys this house is buying a lot more than a house as you all know. Now, there is an opening bid of two hundred pounds on the place, so I will start the bidding at two hundred and fifty pounds. "Two hundred and fifty" shouted Tim Ahern from Brenta, who was standing just inside the door. Everyone turned. "Two hundred and fifty I'm bid by Mr. Ahern", shouted the Auctioneer "now there's a man of vision". "Three hundred I bid" said John Clune, although everyone in the kitchen knew he could not buy ten Woodbines, of course, he was bidding for somebody else. "Three hundred I'm bid" said old Finn "any higher offer for this lovely



# Cartoons by 2nd Level Students in Gort



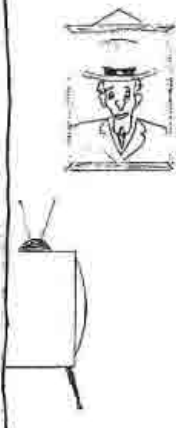
Jane, it's the one that rolls up in a ball when he is attacked.



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old (mysterious) place, come now, there must be someone amongst you who will go a bit further, who'll bid me three hundred and fifty? anyone there for three hundred and fifty? Three hundred and twenty-five, it's a steal at three hundred and twenty-five. Okay, I'm bid three hundred from Mr. Clune down there, going once at three hundred, going twice at three hundred ... "Three hundred and twenty-five" shouted Pat Barry "and that's as much as it's worth!" "I'm bid three hundred and twenty-five by a man who knows his business, come on now, who'll bid me three hundred and fifty? remember the fortune". "Three hundred and fifty" stuttered old Twoomey, the only man there with enough money to buy it. "At three fifty I say it's not worth it" said old Mrs. Quinn. "Why is he trying to buy it and his farm twenty-five miles away?" said another old woman. "He's after old Peg's fortune, and it's a small price to pay for it" said another. Old Finn cleared his throat, stuck out his chest two inches further "Three fifty I'm bid, before I close this auction and sell to Mr. Twoomey I will ask again, I'm bid three fifty, are there any higher bids? Going once, going twice, sold! to Mr. Twoomey down there for three hundred and fifty pounds. I'll ask Mr. Twoomey to see me at the door before he goes home, as for the rest of you, thank you for coming her today. God bless. You can all collect your lots from my assistant over there".

Early on the following Friday morning, Mr. Twoomey was seen driving through the village in his pony and trap, he was loaded down with an assortment of tools, a spade, shovel, even a crowbar. Everyone knew where he was headed, and a lot begrudged him his bit of luck, they said he had enough money and should not be bothered with old Peg's fortune. He booked into Mrs. Brennan's Boarding House from where he arose early every morning to go to the house in Hinch, and darkness had fallen on his return each night. For the next few weeks the little house in Hinch was turned into a hive of activity. First

Twoomey dug trenches to the depth of three feet on one side of the little garden at the back, then he filled them all up again and started all over again until he had the whole garden dug from corner to corner. He found no treasure. Then the front garden got the same treatment, then all the floors in the house, he uprooted all the Moher Flags and dug all over to a depth of ten inches. No luck there either. At last he tackled the fireplace and climbed up almost half way searching for loose stones. Failure again. His last attempt to find the fortune was to bare the walls of all the lime that had been plastered on year after year, pulling out any rocks that looked like a likely hiding place. When he was finished the house resembled something that had been struck by lightning. For weeks he stayed on, searching every possible place, at last he'd had enough, he tackled his pony and cart and started back for his farm in a black mood. Old Finn had the house for auction once again.

It stood idle for ten years until a Gentleman from Australia purchased it for what Twoomey paid for it. He plastered the walls, laid a new floor and fixed the roof which by now was letting in a few drops of rain. It was a lovely little house again. The man from Australia spent his time collecting specimens of rocks from different parts of the mountain, digging small holes here and there and sending his special stones off to Dublin by train. His name was Hans Brile, he had several visitors but they kept to themselves. One day the daily paper announced that an Australian had bought the Black Mountain and they were to start digging for silver in the near future. The Mining Company was called 'Strand and Ferrer'. After a while the digging started, it was an open cast mine. Lorry load after lorry load of stone, earth and grit passed down from the Mountain to the Railway Station to be borne away to its destination. The little road that ran past Peg's cottage had to be widened to take the lorries that passed that way day and night.

The town gained from this venture and houses sprang up all over the place, locals were employed at the Mine and money poured into the households in the vicinity.

Peg's house was sold again, this time to a family named Reddy who were back from England, Paddy, his wife Mary, and a little baby. Paddy added an extra room to the back and the old house looked lovely. More than forty years had passed since old Peg died, few spoke of the fortune and those that did classed it all as a joke, "She never got any money from England when her sister died", they said. "Where would her sister get it anyway?" It was quietly forgotten and whenever Paddy Reddy heard it he would shake his head and say "Well, whoever got it, it wasn't me". Paddy got on well at his work, so well that he bought the field at the rear of the house so he could grow vegetables for his family. He decided to clear the hawthorn bushes at the front of the house that formed a wall between the house and the road. The job was tackled, a hard slow job, it took him two weeks to clear it, and lay the foundation for a wall as he went along. When he came to the pillars of the gate, he felt sorry as he laid the weight of his sledge to the base. After several heavy blows it started to crumble, then with a last desperate blow the while pillar fell over and broke into hundreds of pieces. Paddy looked at the bits scattered everywhere, they'd be useful for the foundation. It was then he saw it. An old coco tin tilted over on its side. He picked it up, it was as heavy as lead, he tried to prise the top off but it was stuck tight, a knock against a big stone got it open, and out spilled dozens of half-crowns, no, hundreds of them, but after counting there were ninety-six. He had hit on old Peg's fortune hidden under the cap of the pillar. No more coins were ever found, Paddy searched everywhere but to no avail. "Ninety-six half crowns" Paddy said, "some fortune!"

Twelve pounds might not be much for the year 1958 but it was a fortune fifty years before in 1908. It was Peg Ryan's fortune.