

# GUAIRE

# GUAIRE

MAGAZINE



GORT'S LONGEST RUNNING COMMUNITY MAGAZINE - ESTABLISHED 1978

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# Dream WEDDINGS

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## WHAT WAS MR. YEATS LIKE?

So much has been written during the past year about the poet W.B. Yeats that it may seem superfluous to add anything more. Perhaps not. It's possible to distinguish Yeats the poet from Yeats the man. How is he remembered in South Galway, where he spent upwards of thirty summers, between the years 1897 and 1927?

Nobody living in this area today remembers ever seeing the great man, but they have heard stories about him. The late Julia Tymon (nee Nilan) who died last year at the age of 100 often saw Yeats walking down Crow St. on his way

to Coole Park. He was usually dressed in dark clothes and walked past the children playing in the street as if they didn't exist. He didn't mean to be unfriendly; it was just that he was so absorbed in his poetry that he didn't hear or see the children.

When Delia McAllen (nee Hynes) of Killanena was growing up in Ballyleshe and her sisters and brothers would hear Yeats walking along the road, humming and intoning the words of his poems. The children used to hide behind a wall until the poet had passed by. Delia's mother brought her youngest baby over to Thoor Ballylee to show him to Mrs. Yeats. W.B.Y.



W.B. YEATS

took the child in his hands and said "nice baby"!

Sr. Thomas Killeen O.P. while attending Kiltartan N.S. often saw Yeats leaning against the road wall at Kiltartan Cross, and staying there for a long time.

Farmers like Johno McAllen of Ballyaneen saw Yeats walking along the road as they went about their everyday tasks, but there was little or no communication between them. Some thought him strange, others considered him aloof.

The Fahy family of Ballyaneen supplied milk to the Yeats family. The two oldest sons, Thomas and John often drove Yeats down to Coole in their pony trap. He seems to have little in common with country lads.

The relationship between Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats was mutually beneficial. Their contribution to the Celtic Revival was enormous. One could say that it helped to put South Galway on the map. In letters, he always addressed her as "Lady Gregory", and she called him "Willy". The Gregory grand-daughters, Anne and Catherine, aka "Me 'n Nu", as small children had no time for W.B.Y. He didn't give them any notice, as George Bernard Shaw was wont to do. They remarked that he didn't say "thanks" when handed a cup of tea! To young well-brought-up ladies this was unforgivable!

Mr. and Mrs. Yeats did their shopping in Gort shops such as Ralph Keane's, Bridge St., John Spelman's, and Lally's Hotel which sold groceries. Mrs. Lally, Senior (nee Spelman) remarked that Yeats was always looking down at his toes! Gerard Keane reminisced that Mrs. Yeats used to come into the shop while W.B. stayed outside in the horse-drawn vehicle, lost in his own thoughts. Desmond Coen was told that George (Mrs. Yeats) bought flannel material in his parents' shop. She used it to make curtains for Thoor Ballylee.

The jury is out when it comes to summarise Yeats's personality. Some would call him a snob while others would give him the benefit of the doubt and regard him as somewhat of an absent-minded professor. What do you think?

# FOREWORD

**I'm often asked the question: why are you living here instead of back in sunny Miami? The answer goes back to my first visit to Gort, in 1974. Many things have changed in the last 42 years, but the welcome and generosity first made famous by King Guaire has never altered. Between volunteering and simply greeting people on the street, I have found a sense of community that eludes me in the urban metropolis of Miami. When asked to edit the Guaire, I was delighted. Who wouldn't love a job that offers a "blow-in" the unlimited opportunity to ask questions?**

Gort is home to a wellspring of talent, full of writers, artists, athletes, historians and community activists. We asked for your ideas, and were swamped with them! We'll be looking for your submissions to the next edition soon. Don't hesitate because you are worried about your writing skills. One benefit of being editor is my opportunity to work with writers who are impassioned by a story. What's yours?

This edition is packed with new features. Let us know what you think of the changes. But don't wait too long to get one, we've only printed one thousand copies. In another first, we offer online ordering for a short time, at [www.guaire.org](http://www.guaire.org) using PayPal.

Guaire 2014 included a classic locked-room mystery. Can you guess the winning answer to Niall Finnegan's Conundrum? This issue's puzzle is a hidden anagram. Be the first to discover it and leave a comment on our Facebook page to win a 40 euro bouquet from the Gort Florist and Garden Centre.

The flooding issue in South Galway continues. Our cover of Thoor Ballylee is a reminder of this threat to the cultural and historic legacies that helped make Gort a Heritage Town. We asked David Murray and Ciaran Cannon for an explanation of the problem, which you'll find inside. Until the probability of flooding recedes, farms, homes, businesses, schools and roads are hostages of the winter rain.

A word about the fantastic staff of the Guaire is necessary. Each member has done a heroic job these past two years. Between researching, writing, collecting photos, editing, proofreading, and delivering the magazines, their tireless effort is what brought Guaire 2016 into your hands. They deserve a round of applause!

*Tonii Kelly*  
Editor

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Running for over 35 years, Guaire features the news stories, reflections and history of the local community at home and abroad. Proceeds from the sale of the Guaire Magazine are donated to local charities. We would be delighted to receive your comments and ideas for future editions - contact [guairemagazine@gmail.com](mailto:guairemagazine@gmail.com) or go to our website, [www.guaire.org](http://www.guaire.org).

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Cover painting and illustrations by Josephine Ward  
Photography: Colm Grealish  
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# ST. PATRICK'S DAY PATRIOTIC PARADE

## *Celebrates 1916 Centenary*

Fine weather and top class entertainment drew large crowds to Gort for the St Patrick's Day Parade. The day out helped to shake off the effects of what has been a miserable winter in South Galway and North Clare. Groups both on floats and on foot took to the theme of "Gort and South Galway as it was in 1916" from various angles. The parade was led by David Curley, Grand Marshall on a horse drawn carriage and Gaillimh Theas Comhaltas. Four members of Galway Blazers Hunt on their steeds added colour and variety to the event. Colm Farrell provided a lively commentary on the parade.

There was music on The Square well into the late afternoon provided by Celtic Star and Gaillimh Theas Comhaltas, a display of Set Dancing by the Gort Group under the direction of Maggie

Hutton, Ennis and step dancing by the Gavin Dance Academy, some of whom are took part in the World Championships in Killarney. A display of threshing and old farm machinery reminded the crowds of times past and Francis Linnane provided a special display of 2 rifles, a helmet and other items from 1916.

The Overall winners were Kilbeacanty Rural Development with their float "Celebrating and Commemorating 1916" event, to be held on the May Bank Holiday week-end.

Category winners: Best Effort: Gort Active Retirement  
Local Support: P & J Gillane Transport Ltd.

Most Humorous: Keehan Cleaners "Laundering as in 1916"



NIALL FINNEGAN AND MAX LEE CARRY THE BANNER FOR THE ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE THEME OF 1916.



CELEBRATING AND COMMEMORATING 1916. BACK ROW, (L-R) MARGARET QUINN, MARY COEN, NIALL O'HALLORAN, EILEEN GLYNN, SEAN GLYNN, EDDIE LYNCH (HOLDING THE JOHN 'TRACTOR' LALLY MEMORIAL TROPHY), BENNY FAHEY, EAMON BROADERICK, ANNE MCCARTHY. FRONT ROW, (L-R) TOMMIE QUINN, CELENE DIVINEY, ANDREW COEN, MARION FAHEY.



ANDREW AND ANGELINA MURRAY PARTICIPATED WITH GAILLIMH THEAS COMHALTAS.



# MARY COEN, AUTHOR

## INSPIRED BY FAMILY *History*

By Fidelma Larkin

Mary Coen, nee Kearns, recently published *The History of Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan*. She decided to write a book that included the feminine contribution to 1916 for personal reasons.

"It was really because of the year that we're in and because of hearing all the stories and debates my mother and grandmother talked of. Maybe I'm being parochial, but to me it was important to document all the significant happenings prior to the rising and also from 1916 to 1922 in the parish I grew up in."

Through her family research, Mary learned her father was involved in the Irish Volunteers. His cousin, Patrick Houlihan, and Mary's granduncle on her mother's side, Peter Roughan, were also involved. Her grandmother, Mary Roughan, had her house raided by the RIC on a regular basis.

Other sources of information included Desmond Greaves book, Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution, extracts taken from the Bureau of Military History and statements recorded by the Bureau from local Volunteers. Local history books written about The Rising and newspaper accounts added to her store of knowledge. Interviews taken by Martin Dolan for the 1966 50th Commemoration and Volunteers' family members completed her search for facts.

"I was writing and researching on and off for about four months. The biggest problem I had was deciding what to put in and what to leave out," Mary confided. "The families of Volunteers were delighted to see the high quality of the photos! There was so much information in the Bureau of Military History and there is so much more. I hope to do more in the autumn and produce a different type of book, a profile of as many Volunteers as I can." Mary continued, "My interest in history stems from primary school, influenced by my teacher Mr. Patrick Fahey and also by the encouragement of my friendship with Sr. Mary de Lourdes Fahy, MA."

The launch of *The History of Irish Volunteers and Cumann na mBan* took place during the Kilbeacanty Commemorations weekend. Mary's daughter Lourda has it up on Facebook and they have had enquiries from England and Australia.

Mary felt the response has been very good. "The local shops in Gort have been very supportive displaying it," she said, "and I also put it into the parish newsletter. All the schools have acknowledged 1916 in some form or other so this of course

helps me immensely because the book is more out in the public now."

Mary Coen hails originally from Dunally, Peterswell, but has lived in Gort since 1973. Born in 1947 she had four brothers and went to Peterswell Primary School. She finished her education in 1966 and left Gort Convent of Mercy to train as a Psychiatric Nurse in Our Lady's Hospital, Ennis.



MARY COEN



# THE CHARACTERS OF OLD

By Tommy Fahy

Where have all the great characters gone? In times gone by, every parish in the country had people who were described as great characters, because of their actions, personalities, and sayings, that were told and retold.

On the Late Late show many years ago, John Hume was describing to Gay Byrne some of the great characters in his native Derry when he was younger, and the fact that they didn't seem to be around anymore. His opinion was that the great characters of old had two things in common. They were highly intelligent and had little formal education. He added that had they been born in a later era, they would have reached the top of whatever profession they would choose. I think he was right. I was lucky enough to grow up as a neighbour of Josie Curley and Colie Quinn. I always looked forward to meeting them. Here, we remember a few of the wonderful characters locally, with contributions from Dermot Keran, Sean Devlin, Mattie Farrell and Paddy Fahy.

Nobody from the parish didn't know Joe Pete Hehir. Joe Pete lived his life for hurling. Everyone has a story about what Joe Pete said, or was reputed to have said. My own favourite story was when Joe Pete brought home a pig's head for his mother to boil. Where and how he got the pig's head depends on who told you the story. He either won it in a game of twenty five in Moloney's, or bought it in Gallagher's. In any case, the pig's head was boiled and Joe Pete put it in a press to have when he came back after a few pints in Gort. However, when he was gone to town, his brothers John and Colie made the tea and must have found Joe Pete's pig's head. Next day, Joe Pete was telling Dermot Keran that "it was only last night I found out how many teeth a pig had". According to Joe Pete, all that his brothers had left in the press was the bones and the teeth.

Mattie Markham was another well-known and well-liked man around the town. A story has been told and retold of an occasion in the early mid-nineteen sixties when Galway played Kerry in football. During the game the great Mattie McDonagh was hauled down in the square as he was about to shoot and Galway were awarded a penalty. The following evening Mattie Markham was crossing the square in Gort on his way to

Kilroys, and was already well lubricated. What happened next is unclear. Either Mattie got a slight knock from a car or Mattie walked into the car that had already stopped. In any case Mattie fell, got up and dusted himself down, and proceeded to Kilroys. His description of the sequence of events is still quoted today, "Mattie McDonagh brought down in the square going for a goal, Mattie Markham brought down in the square going for a pint". When Mattie the footballer was told about this, he enjoyed it greatly.

Although not from the parish Andrew Quinn came to Gort at every opportunity, always for a visit to the bookies. His salute was either "any tips?" or "come on the blues". Andrew was a bachelor and a thorough gentleman. Domestic duties weren't his strong point and having been in his house I can say with certainty that his farmhouse was never in the running for the title of 'Ireland's tidiest farmhouse'. Andrew was healthy all his life until his seventies when he had occasion to be hospitalised. After his discharge, describing his stay there, "The nurses gave me a bath. I felt like a new man, and why wouldn't I? It was the first bath I had in 73 years."

One could go on forever with similar stories. One thing for sure, when many of the rich and famous are gone and long forgotten these great characters will be remembered. Society is all the poorer for their absence.



JOE PETE HEHIR



JOSIE CURLEY



# DESPITE GRIEF,

## STUDENTS *Share Fond Memories Of*

### The Legacy of Sister John Lee

**It is with tremendous sadness that I find myself writing a preface to this article. A couple of months ago, I was asked to put together a short contribution for Guaire magazine, to mark the retirement of Sr. John. I could hardly have believed that a few short weeks later, I would receive a phone call from my sister, telling me the sad news of Sr. John's untimely passing, on 2nd October 2016.**

**To say that she is a loss to her community, her family and the**

**town is a huge understatement. Nowhere, perhaps, was this more evident than in the presence of so many people who came to pay their respects at her funeral. The words written below are a compilation of the memories of some of Sr. John's many past pupils. She has left a tremendous legacy and will remain, in the memories of all of us, as a strong, kind-hearted and inspirational woman, who will be greatly missed.**

I heard Sr. John had retired during a recent trip to Gort. My father told me that Mass was held in St. Colman's Church to mark the occasion. I wasn't surprised to hear that the Church was packed and was even less so when I heard that, on strict instructions from the woman herself, there were to be no speeches and absolutely no fuss. Nevertheless, I gathered it was an emotional evening, as a community gathered to recognise the incredible impact that Sr. John had on Gort and the connection that the people of the town had with her. In a way, the description of the evening epitomised my memory of Sr. John, who taught my brother, sister and I many, years ago: a no-nonsense, practical and pragmatic woman, who also had something of a soft spot!

In compiling this contribution, I contacted some other past pupils to share and gather their memories of Sr. John. The words that kept cropping up were fair, compassionate, enthusiastic, an amazing person, a lady. She was a teacher who

made a significant impression on her pupils and, in looking back, it was clear to all of us how much joy she took in imparting knowledge to her, sometimes, reluctant pupils. I have no doubt that many the parent came home from the parent-teacher meeting with the phrase "that one has more brains, if she would only use them" ringing in their ears! For some, it was a love of Poetry or English that Sr. John fostered, for others Geography or Maths. One past pupil recalled the projects on different countries or topics that Sr. John got us to undertake, all compiled in big A4 notebooks- that pupil has kept them to this day. I still remember hand-drawn maps of Ireland, with each mountain range painstakingly marked, in her distinctive handwriting. Speaking of painstaking, many remembered hand-written scripts that Sr. John produced for school plays and musicals, ranging from Cinderella, to the Mikado, the Sound of Music, and the fun there was in taking part.

Indoor P.E. classes also featured in

people's memories. Many remember sessions in the 'big room' moving energetically, if inelegantly, to the sound of "Peter and the Wolf"- gazelles we were not — while following the 'beat' of Sr. John on the tambourine. I use the word 'beat' loosely, as it was clear from her rhythm that Sr. John was no percussionist.

Almost everyone I asked remembered the preparations for first confession and first holy communion; the walks to and from the Church, two by two; practicing receiving the host with ice-cream wafers and trying to obey the strictest of instructions not to "chew" Jesus- a tricky task for some 7-year olds, whose curiosity of what might happen if they did, often got the better of them.

But perhaps the word most frequently used to describe Sr. John by the past pupils that I contacted was kindness. There was a strong sense that, despite how exasperated you might make her, and there were those of us who did that very well, she believed in you, your ability



to do your best and to do well. Nowhere was this more evident than in Sr. John's dedicated work with Gort Social Services. One past pupil remembers coming home with orange hands, having helped peel carrots for the senior citizen's Christmas dinner, while another remembers being chosen to help with the end of term school tidy up and being rewarded with

chocolates and sweets. Above it all, there was always that encouragement to get involved, to be involved in doing something for someone other than yourself.

Sr. John played an influential role, whether consciously or unconsciously, in helping to shape the people we, her past

pupils, are today. She was an important, formative influence on our development and was an integral and cherished part of our community.

Ar dheisDé go raibh a hanamuasal.

Editor's Note: The writer felt by remaining anonymous, she could speak for all Sr. Lee's past students.



BACK ROW, (L-R) PASCHAL LEE, TOMMIE LEE, MARY LEE, MARY SPELMAN. FRONT ROW, (L-R) SHARON LEE, SR. JOHN, MAX LEE

Despite how exasperated you might make her, and there were those of us who did that very well, she believed in you, your ability to do your best and to do well.

# My Path to Gort – 50 years ago By Peadar Ó Conaire

The bus stopped at Coole Avenue. Our English teacher, Fr. Vincent Jennings, read 'The Wild Swans at Coole' and gave us a brief history of the famous place. He also informed us that we couldn't go as far as the site of the house as the whole place had fallen into disrepair, and was overgrown with briars and nettles. Major disappointment! We would stop in Gort town where we were told we could do some "shopping". Ecstasy! The bus stopped in the Square and despite the Padre's request to have manners we stormed into Birdie Sylver's shop, those with the strongest elbows winning pole position at the counter!

We were freed from the shackles of boarding school regulations for the day and we were going to eat, drink, and be merry. It was May, 1962. Four years later, in November 1966, I made my second trip to Gort when I arrived to take up a teaching post in Kilmacduagh N.S.

1966 – My final year in St. Patrick's Training College, Drumcondra was an eventful year. Recreational facilities in campus were excellent and the proximity of the College to Croke Park, Parnell Park, Tolka Park and Dalymount enabled students to watch Gaelic and soccer matches at weekends. Indeed the legendary 'Dalymount roar' could be clearly heard at the back of the College on calm evenings.

On the night of March 8th, a big bang was heard in the student accommodation buildings at the College in Drumcondra. It transpired that the IRA had blown up Nelson's Pillar in O'Connell Street.

I headed off on my bike the following morning to photograph the remains of the famous landmark. At least the blast didn't damage Clery's clock, the other meeting place for country people on the main thoroughfare at that time! The explosion left Nelson's head lying at the foot of the pillar.

It being the 50th anniversary of the Rising, the Pageant in Croke Park drew a lot of attention. Seán Ó Síocháin (General Secretary of the GAA) with his friend, balladeer Martin Dempsey, came to the College to recruit students for the pageant. The reward on offer was free passes to all matches in the Croke until the end of the academic year. A number of final year students, myself included, joined the pageant rehearsal and did our bit on the hallowed ground of Croke!

Seachtar Fear, Seacht Lá----- Seven Men, Seven days

The Pageant, commissioned by the GAA and written by teacher/dramatist Brian McMahon, was held in Croke Park from the 17th to the 19th of March, with a further performance in Casement Park, Belfast. The cast of four hundred included the Artane Boys' band, two pipe bands, boys and girls from the Dublin County Board, and third level students from St. Pat's Training College. The narrator wore white and was accompanied by four attendants with shirts the colour of the four provinces. He read a short history of Ireland from Cúchulainn to 1916, ending with the lines:

"I was a bystander in O'Connell Street when, fifty years ago today

Seven men in seven days -----"

Each signatory appeared in turn: P.H. Pearse with young men and women; Tom Clarke with the Fenians; Éamonn Ceannt with pipers; Sean MacDiarmada with transport groups; Thomas McDonagh with singers; James Connolly with workers, and Joseph Plunkett with monks—including myself.

Gaelic football was very strong in the College at that time and we returned to the Croke in autumn to watch our team 'Erin's Hope', which had already won the county u-21 championship, lose the Dublin County Senior Semifinal to St. Vincent's. The main thorn in our side that day was the unstoppable Kevin Heffernan. The students were well served by County players Mick Gleeson (Kerry), Liam Mulvihill (Longford), John Gibbons (Mayo) and ex-Kerry minor captain Brian McCarthy. We all headed to the Hotel St. George (Con's) in Parnell Square to lick our wounds. You paid a half crown to get in and all you needed was luck on the dance floor after that!

Student life was a good mixture of high idealism, sport and socializing (and a little study). Che Guevara was our political hero and Bob Dylan our musical idol. But the times they were a changing'—to paraphrase Dylan. My final student placement was in John the Baptist School in Clontarf, in the classroom vacated by John McGahern a few years earlier. My supervisor Mícheál Jordan (father of film maker Neil Jordan) wished me well in my quest for a teaching post. My first application was successful and I was

appointed to Rath N.S., Co. Laois, with the proviso that I passed all my final exams. There was of course the last piece of the social whirl jigsaw to be put in place, i.e., the Graduation Ball in the Shelbourne Hotel. Let's say a good night was had by all on that sultry June night fifty years ago!

I got lodgings in Portarlinton and joined the O'Dempsey's football club. The senior team was going well in the County Championship and I was delighted to be selected on the team after a trial. We won our way to the County Final against Portlaoise which ended in a draw. Unfortunately we were beaten in the replay mainly because of some brilliant saves by the Portlaoise and County goalkeeper, Paddy Bracken. I got two stand tickets from the club for the All-Ireland football final which I watched with my girlfriend Judy (who later became my wife), on Sept. 25. Galway completed the three in a row that day, beating Meath. Unbridled joy and celebrations!

On my arrival in Gort, I called on Dean Hynes, the P.P. and school Manager. He

brought me to my lodgings in Mattie Cummins' house, where I spent two happy years. I joined the INTO at the behest of Tom Donnellan, Principal of Northampton N.S. Gort Branch was male dominated at the time with people like Gerry Heenan, Joe Muldoon and Paddy Fahy holding key positions.

The first person from Gort town I got to know was Frank Lally. A very cultured person and a staunch GAA follower, he introduced me to football enthusiasts like Gardai Noel Sullivan and JJ Weir. Frank refereed school matches, organized parish leagues and supplied hurleys to young hurling enthusiasts.

I joined the Vincent De Paul Society in Gort. It was a small but active group comprised of Fr. Paddy Carroll (the Spiritual Director), Johnny Kelly, Tomás O'Quigley and Paddy Coen. People who stand out in my memory from those early years are Séamus Conway—the genial chemist in Coen's Pharmacy and Mossy Clabby—who looked after the money I didn't have in the Bank of Ireland. He always managed a smile even at the

worst of times. I got to know the Reilly brothers, Jack and Mattie in their Crowe Street garage and the Roche brothers, Michael and Ollie. Matt O'Connor always reminded me he was not a Gortonian but a native of the Royal County! Jack Bourke brought gas to school without fuss or bother --a quiet, unassuming gentleman. I didn't frequent the shops very often in those early days in Gort but a few shopkeepers stand out in my memory—John Joe Coen, Birdie Sylver, Madge Burke, Gerard Keane and Eddie Treston. They were characters in their own right and passionate, decent people.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the people of the Kilmacduagh school catchment area for their support and understanding as I tried to come to terms with the demands of principalship of a school at the age of twenty! Their children were a credit to them. They are now scattered throughout the world. Some of them are proud grandparents now delivering cherished grandchildren to schools in a vastly different world to that which they and I experienced fifty years ago.



BACK ROW, (L-R) MARY HELEBERT, MARY HANNON, GERALDINE ROCHE, RIP, RITA WATERS, JOSIE FLAHERTY, CATHERINE CUMMINS, PATRICIA LALLY, BERNIE LALLY, GERALDINE HELEBERT, MARIE FLAHERTY. MIDDLE ROW, (L-R) BRIDGET ROCK, ANN MORGAN, NOREEN ROCK, DYMUNA O'CONNOR, MONA LALLY, FIDELIS KELLY, GERALDINE LINANE, JOHN FLAHERTY, KIERAN FINNEGAN, MICHAEL HELEBERT. FRONT ROW, (L-R) PATRICK HELEBERT, WILLIAM ROCK, AIDAN FINNEGAN, MICHAEL FLAHERTY, PATRICK FLAHERTY, RIP, BRENDAN O'CONNOR, CHRISTOPHER KELLY, GERRY CARR.

# 'FIRST LADY' OF THE GORT MART

She has a new title, but Bernie Fahey is well-known at the Gort Livestock Mart. She actually began there when two committee members asked her to work in sales. She started working one day a week and built it up to three and a half days. That was fourteen years ago and she hasn't looked back since.

"A woman in the managerial job is a big change here in Gort, but they're all well-used to me so no problems there. There hasn't been any reaction to me being a woman in the job because I started at the Mart in 2001. Fourteen years later, I became the manager," Fahey said. She added, "I don't eat beef or lamb myself, and I haven't done so from a very young age. Maybe I'm a bad advertisement for the job!"

Regardless of her personal preferences, Fahey was invited to a committee meeting and offered the job for first of February 2016. When asked if going to management changed her relationships with staff, she laughed. "No, having being a member of staff for over fourteen years, I think made it easier as we had a good working relationship and maybe the devil you know is better than the devil you don't!"

Fahey considers her success is due in part to the great team she has supporting her – office and yard staff plus the management committee of the Mart. There are two fulltime staff members and the Mart can have up to 20 part time seasonal yard staff. The seasonal work may be only for one day, but requires a lot of work in preparation, using the entry system to book in the livestock. Despite the potential for chaos, Fahey manages to remain calm. "I'm a very down to earth

person. Communication is the key to managing. Any situation that pops up, well, get it sorted and move on." The Mart itself is owned by shareholders and ran by a management committee with representatives on the committee from the catchment area of the Mart.

She is proud of achieving her licence this year. In her office it is displayed alongside the cards she got from well-wishers in her new role. "On the 20th of May, we finally got our mart licence. It was a big occasion for me due to the amount of work that went into it and we can go forward now." The mart's numbers picked up in February with buyers coming in from all over Ireland on our special show day. Mondays are live weighing sales of lambs. Farmers get a price per kilo and can come to get lambs weighed knowing how much they will get. Wednesday mornings are sheep sales while Thursday weanlings sales are still the biggest day of the week. The sellers remain local Galway and Clare farmers but the buyers come from around the nation. There is also a monthly horse sale with buyers and sellers coming from all around Ireland and abroad for some special sales.

There is other activity at the Mart as well. A canteen upstairs has become a meeting place for farmers of all generations to meet, compare notes and generally socialize in a way that might otherwise not be available. Good home cooked meals in a friendly and relaxed setting. It's a far cry from the old days of the Gort Square mart. "It is convenient here because we keep the late hours. No one has to take a day off from work. This time of the year (May) we don't finish too late. Last night we finished early about 11 pm.

We have to do paperwork after the actual auction, but the sale itself is not closed until the following day." Fahey smiled and said, "It is a long day, on Thursdays. We need to be here early and stay on until after the auction itself. And it could be a 12 or 15 hour day in the winter."

She says the Gort Show days draw huge crowds. "Each February, August and September, we need a fine day for the shows because local businesses sponsor prizes and there is a photo shoot on the day for the Connaught Tribune, Clare champion and the Farmers Journal. Those are without a doubt our busiest days."

Last year, the Mart suffered a huge loss when vandals broke in and did €20,000 worth of damage. Another loss was to the canteen, run by local person, which was destroyed. Fahey recalls coming in to work the morning after. "Things were scattered, all the files were on the floor and tossed everywhere. They even



BERNIE FAHEY AT WORK

took stuff from the freezer upstairs in the canteen." It took days to sort out all the paperwork again. She said there is an alarm system now in place, and that cash has never been kept in the Mart overnight. "So they were wasting their time," she said grimly. Fahey worked in a farm supplies store for seven years so was well exposed to the agricultural business. She grew up

on a dairy farm in Kilbeacanty, feeding the stock, helping out with the milking, bringing in the bales and all the jobs around a farm and a lot of days in the bog! She remembers those times as full of good memories. "My own son interacts with my brother on the farm. I want both of my boys to have contact with the animals and get the benefit of that as I did." She also worked for two agricultural

contractors local to the area so has a good grasp of the agricultural sector. In closing, Fahey was asked if she might not be a role model for girls wanting to break into traditional male jobs. She brushed it off. "I wasn't frightened. Managing was a natural progression of the job I did anyway. Don't think about it, just naturally do it!"

## Kilmacduagh Easter Sunrise Service

This year was extra special in Gort Parish on Sunday 27 March with the celebration of a dawn Mass in the ruins of the ancient monastic cemetery of Kilmacduagh. It was a cold and dark morning, but despite this, hundreds of people came out to celebrate the Lord's resurrection from the dead. As Mass progressed, the day began to break, and it was a powerful

symbol of the message: out of darkness comes light and out of death comes resurrection. Fr Tommy Marrinan led the blessing of the fire and the blessing of the Easter water. It was a huge success due to the hard work of a young and energetic Kilmacduagh committee and it is hoped to host the event on an annual basis. Photo by Tony Hannon.



FR GEARÓID Ó'GRIOFA AND FR. TOMMY MARRINAN LEAD A BLESSING OF THE FIRE AND A BLESSING OF THE WATER.

# LISA MCINERNEY

## WINS ANOTHER AWARD

In the last issue of Guaire you may remember an article about Lisa McInerney, an exciting author from Gort whose first novel *The Glorious Heresies* was about to be published. This darkly funny story is set in the seedy underbelly of Cork City and revolves around the antics of five misfits that exist on the fringes of post Celtic Tiger recessionary Ireland and a messy murder that entangles them.

Described by top Irish writer Joseph O'Connor as a 'big, brassy, sexy beast of a book' it's hardly surprising this award-winning author has not only gone and scooped The Baileys International Literary Award 2016 Prize of £30,000 but also landed the prestigious Desmond Elliott 2016 Prize of £10,000 a mere two weeks later. Reacting to her win of Elliott Prize Lisa said, "It feels shocking, validating and very humble", a boost she hopes for working class stories "that aren't always centre-stage in literary fiction".

Novelist Iain Pears, one of the Elliott judging panel, described Lisa as "a major literary figure of the next generation", a view shared by many readers and critics alike. Google her name and explore a long list of articles published in the media about this astonishing Ballyhugh native whose rapidly ascending star has largely gone unnoticed locally, although it might be easier to consult her Proud mother/grandmother (go figure!) Mary Monaghan for the 'inside' story.

*Glorious Heresies'* launch in the USA in August 2016 grabbed the attention of *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, highlighting the impact this book has had on the literary world.

Celebrity Actress Sarah Jessica Parker posting on Instagram described *Heresies* as "feckin brilliant" lamenting the arrival of the last page while U2's Adam Clayton also congratulated Lisa on Facebook following her success.

Back in Gort, in June, O'Grady's Bar & Restaurant very kindly insisted on hosting a night to mark Lisa's success following her return from London's award ceremonies. A huge crowd of family and friends gathered to celebrate her achievements and to wish her well in her future writing career.

In September 2016 '*Heresies*' landed a TV deal with prestigious production company Fifty Fathoms, with series adaptation being done by Lisa herself. Fifty Fathoms has developed projects with the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Sky and engage director Julian Farino who described '*Heresies*' as 'ideal for a classy TV series, hugely cinematic and made for the screen.' Further deals have been done in Spain, France, Holland, Czech Republic, Denmark and Italy, with others pending.

McInerney's 2nd novel, '*The Bloody Miracles*' a follow-up to *Heresies*, continues the saga of some of the characters and is again set in Cork City - fans will be pleased to hear it hits the shelves here in April 2017.

This talented writer's career is well and truly launched. Described by the *Irish Times* as "the most talented writer at work today in Ireland", this powerful storyteller's recognition is well deserved – may Lisa's success continue long into the future.



LISA MCINERNEY WITH HUSBAND JOHN AND DAUGHTER ROISIN



# GORT TIDY TOWNS

## EFFORT

By Fiona O'Driscoll

The Gort Tidy Towns section of the Burren Lowlands got together on Saturday March 19th for the first of several monthly cleaning/planting mornings. A total of 45 people met at Gort Garden Centre armed with gloves, bags, hi viz jackets and shovels to begin work.

All access roads into Gort were cleaned. This was necessary due to the movement of litter from bins during the winter storms and from general dumping which is at epidemic levels all over the country.

A smaller amount of people planted to add colour to the town. Burren Lowlands is also in the process of getting the roundabout planted for the first time ever this next summer.

The past year was very busy for tourism.

Bord Fáilte Ireland gave their full support to the Gort tourist office for the first time, supplying quantities of brochures for all of Ireland's areas of interest. Laura Coppinger reported an average of 800 visitors a month and kept tourists in the area for local sights and businesses, rather than see them pass through Gort on the way to the Cliffs of Moher and/or Galway.

The tourist office participated in Harvest Studio's Let's Get To Work programme, headed by Teresa Mannion. Christine Helebert and Majella Jordan were just two of several volunteers who deserve appreciation from the town.

We also want to thank Thomas Nash and Andrew Quinn for their diligent care of

the flowers in the Square.

Burren Lowlands donated to the ThoorBallylee Society with funds from a grant given to the group last year. At Ballylee, money went toward upgrading the tower's heating system and other facilities. At the Kiltartan Museum, recycled picnic tables renewed the outdoor seating.

2017 will be even busier! We need to keep the town in order and need to remember THE THREE 'P's. Paint, Plant and Pick up litter.

We have a fantastic town but we need to mind it.



FROM LEFT: THOMAS NASH AND ANDREW QUINN WATER FLOWERS AND PICK UP THE SQUARE THREE TIMES A WEEK TO KEEP THE TOWN TIDY BETWEEN ORGANIZED CLEANUPS.

# WOOOFING IN ARGENTINA

By Billy Kilroy

The term WWOOFing means World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. My son Ronan who lives in Perth, W.A. told me that he and Aoife Cahill were going to get married in 2014. Noelle Gough and I decided this would be an opportunity to do some travelling, and not just to Fiji where the wedding was going to take place. Our job was to see how could we organise a seven month trip that would take in both Argentina and Fiji ... and of course, how we'd pay for it?

Noelle had come across the concept of WWOOFing through the Organic Garden at Enniscoe, Crosssmolina, Co. Mayo. They had (mainly) young students who worked 30 hours a week in exchange for accommodation and three meals a day. We thought that this would be fantastic as we were both well qualified in farming and gardening. Where would we have a better opportunity to meet local people than by working with them, eating with them and finding out about the history and cultures of a particular region?

We joined the WWOOFing Argentina website and received their list of

over 300 farms who were looking for WWOOFers. Out of this list, we agreed on five in Argentina and one in the US that interested us. We wrote to these farms and were accepted by all.

We flew to Buenos Aires on New Year's Eve 2013, and stayed a few days doing touristy things. We visited the main cemetery and saw the grave of the founder of the Argentine Navy, Admiral William Brown, who was born in Co. Mayo. We also visited the grave of a Fr. Fahy originally from East Galway. He had been hugely important in the Irish community, and was reported to be a confessor of the late President of Argentina Evita Peron.

On Jan. 3rd, we travelled by bus south to Patagonia. With an overnight in the city of Bariloche, a four-hour bus journey took us to the town of Lago Puelo where our first farm was situated. Our accommodation was a mere 8ft x 6ft and was, to say the least, awful. Before we were able to unpack the backpacks we had to clean the place, as it hadn't seen a sweeping brush or a drop of Jif for a long while! Our work varied; there

were three horses, a pig, hens and three large kitchen gardens to look after. We started work around 8 a.m., first feeding the animals and then coming in for our breakfast. We normally worked outside until 11:30 a.m. It was impossible to work outside after this hour so we spent between 11:30 a.m. and lunchtime cracking walnuts, making jam or baking bread. We had a siesta each day between lunchtime and 5:30 p.m., then worked up until 7 p.m.

Apart from taking care of the animals we put up fences, removed the honey from the hives, picked walnuts and cherries. After a few days the owners recognised that we knew what to do around the farm, and they left us to our own devices. We stayed there a month and they cried when we left!

We had a few worrying days as our second farm let us down. We found a farm about four hours further south in a town called Trevelin – yes, the same as in The Fields of Athenry. The owner received a very bad review in a blog headed "Why I will never WWOOF in Argentina again". Michael (the



BILLY KILROY, THE IRISH AMBASSADOR TO ARGENTINA, MR. JAMES MCINTYRE AND NOELLE GOUGH ON ST PATRICK'S DAY.



NOELLE GOUGH WORKING ON THISTLES

owner) was willing to take us on and as we were in a fix and needed somewhere for six weeks we went to Trevelin.

We were going to be at Michael's for up to six weeks until we were due in Buenos Aires for St. Patrick's Day to celebrate with the (extensive) Irish community there. We had a room in his house, which was a big improvement on the previous farm, but he was as mean as a church mouse. On the first morning he made porridge for four of us with an egg cup of oatmeal – on the second morning, we were up before him and made the porridge with a good mug-full of oatmeal! From then on we were up each morning to make breakfast. Our main job was to dig out and remove the thistles. I dug out each one individually and Noelle pulled them to the headland and piled them up.

We enjoyed a wonderful day with the Irish Community at their St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Their celebrations began with Mass and ended with a 'hooley'. The Irish Ambassador, Mr. James McIntyre, was in attendance and he invited us to the Embassy celebrations the following evening which we duly accepted – it's not often one gets an invite to a diplomatic party!

We left the party and took an overnight bus to Cordoba – the city in the heart of Argentina. Our farm was about an hour outside of the city in a small town called

Alta Gracia. The farm itself was at the end of a road that wouldn't be out of place in Beirut! The hosts were wonderful, the accommodation and food was excellent, and I was at home rounding up and herding Aberdeen Angus cattle on horseback every day on their 700 acre farm. While there, we cultivated the gardens and sowed peas, beans, onions, lettuce, etc. First up though every morning for me was the cleaning of the swimming pool!

After Cordoba, we went south to the coastal city of Mar de Plata to a goat farm. Our contact left on holidays the day after we arrived, and we were left in the care of her sister and father. The accommodation was so bad it is best not to describe it. We were given hardly any food and not as much as a cup of tea in the family's restaurant. We started work at 7 a.m. each morning milking 100 goats, which we repeated each evening. Now we felt very hard done by so, as soon as our six hours a day was up we downed tools!

Our final farm was a Yoga centre about an hour out from the centre of Buenos Aires. There was a WWOOFer from Israel there before us – a really nice lad who was in Argentina to go through medical examinations so that he could donate a kidney to his father. Our main job was constructing 'Sweat Houses' which were originally used by Native Americans.

Sticks were entwined into an igloo shape, then covered with a mixture made of clay sand, horse manure, straw and water all mixed together by stomping on it with our feet!

We decided to use the time before our departure date to do some travelling. We crossed the River Plate in Buenos Aires to Uruguay to a very quaint town called Colonia. We then travelled to the Brazilian border to Iguazu Falls – the most impressive sight I saw while in Latin America. We also visited Paraguay to see the remains of the Jesuit missions from the 1780's.

We left Argentina on May 30th and headed for Oregon, U.S.A. where we worked for a month on a 55 horse ranch. Between leaving the ranch and our flight to Fiji we just had ten days to appreciate Route 1, down through the Giant Redwoods - they were awesome as the Americans say! In those ten days after we had picked up my son Evan in San Francisco, we visited San Francisco, Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon and Los Angeles. We flew from Los Angeles to Fiji for a family reunion and to celebrate with Ronan and Aoife on their special day.

Blog: [billykilroy.wordpress.org](http://billykilroy.wordpress.org) [www.woof.net](http://www.woof.net) The Mission (film, 1986)



# SEÁN DEVLIN,

## GENTLEMAN ON AND

### *Off the Field*

#### Noel Lane delivered the following remarks at the Gort Golf Club in June 2016:

Seán Devlin of Gort is one of those individuals who though they have a low profile, are hugely regarded by those hurling men who have come across them. In Seán's case, during his active hurling career, he would be spoken of as one of the finest stickmen in Galway, with an accolade that is generally given to few, that of the "beautiful hurler".

During his coaching career, especially with Our Lady's College Gort, he would be credited with shaping the careers of some of the finest hurlers to ever wear the maroon and white of Galway, and indeed many of them would credit Seán with being the biggest influence on their careers

It was a privilege therefore for Báireoirí na Gaillimhe, the Galway hurlers' network, to present the 2016 Hall of Fame award to one of Gort Inse Ghuaire's finest sons, Seán Devlin.

Seán Devlin was born in Georges Street, Gort which is the birthplace of other such illustrious hurling greats as Bernie Gibbs, Jim Morris and Coach Jack Berry. The aforementioned are all members of the successful Galway hurling team of 1923. Seán began his sporting career as a street hurler in Georges Street and could be seen pucking up and down the main road before attending school.

In 1958, Seán played at centre half forward for Galway Minors who were defeated by Limerick. The journalist Joe Sherwood reported in his sports column in the Evening Herald after

witnessing the Minor Final. "And surely there's a star in the making in Seán Devlin, one of the most natural hurlers I have ever set eyes on. He is different from most if not all others, his style is his own and quite out of the ordinary rut. I could imagine this young man, as brilliant overhead as on the ground, becoming as big a menace and as adept in handling his hurley as Stanley Matthews is with bewildering feet in world soccer."

In 1957, Seán was a student in St Flannan's college Ennis, and played in the half forward line in winning the Harty Cup, beating North Mon, Cork. In 1958, Flannan's went on to beat Limerick CBS in the semi-final and proceeded to win the Dr. Croke Cup beating The Bish, Galway in the final. Seán was the star forward and free-taker on these teams.

In 1962, Galway were competing in the Munster Hurling Championship, winning the Intermediate title in that year, beating Cork in the final. However, his hurling career was put on hold for a couple of years, as Seán left for a teaching post in Nigeria where he took up the game of soccer. Little hurling in Nigeria, but rumour has it that were there some very tough football encounters.

Seán returned to teach in Our Lady's College where he also managed many successful school teams. He coached All Ireland winning senior players such as Noel Lane, John John Commins, Bernie Ford, and Anthony Cunningham.

Ever loyal to his local club, Seán won many titles with Gort including County Minor Titles '57 and '58 as captain of the team. He also won a county league title in '61 and county intermediate title in '64. His media profile continued to rise, in the 1982 Guaire Magazine Seán was listed among the best Gort hurling team of the previous 50 years. Seán is also an exceptional golfer, and was captain of the Gort Golf Club in 1982.

One could say Seán married into the hurling tradition, his good wife Maria is granddaughter to Ned Treston who invented the first prototype sliothar.

To sum up, Seán is without doubt an exceptional player, teacher and remembered for his skill and class, with a reputation as a gentleman on and off the field.



#### FROM LEFT

1. SEAN DEVLIN,
2. TOM CASEY,
3. RAY CANNING,
4. DAN NOLAN,
5. JOSEPH QUINLAN,
6. LIAM KILLEEN,
7. TOMMY FAHY,
8. MOSSY DEVLIN.

# THE GORT HURLERS

By Jack O'Shaughnessy

*i* Gentle sweet waters of Ceanahown flow,  
By the foot of that street they call Carronroe,  
Good Hurlers were there and tis many we know,  
But there were few to compare with our own little Joe.  
There may be kings and earls and great filmstar shows,  
But the thrill of the world when the ball it would go,  
And over the bar it would curl from our own dear little Joe,  
He could pull he could pick, he could hit in is stride,  
And seldom if ever his ball did go wide.

There was Deely and Brennan played many a hard game,  
And if Galway were not winning they were not to blame,  
But the next I predict is rising to fame,

If he keeps from the women,  
Is that darling Joe Keane,

*iii* There was another with his fiddle and bow,  
He toiled on the anvil while his bellows would blow,  
He was fond of the women but was a little too slow,  
And he had the finest black curls in old Carronroe,  
He would go down to the lane when the boatman was gone,  
And all night he'd stay playing till the cock he would crow,  
And then he would go back again across Ceannahown stream  
And then he would dream the nice things he knew.

*v* Stand in Gort Square and right well you might see,  
Raftery the poet from old Ballylee,  
Maire Ni Heyne to him some kind words might say,  
Or out of the castle might come the great Mr. Yeats,  
Poor Raftery was blind but right well he could see,  
That the people were kind in old Ballylee,  
You might see that great mansion, that dramatic school,  
Or that Lady so handsome that Lady Of Coole,  
You might see the Ward or the Workhouse of late,  
Or the bold Tenant farmer of Galway jail gate,  
Last and not least the Rising of the Moon,  
Now look to the west you see the round tower and seven churches in ruin,  
But of all those great men and deeds,  
There was one thing for certain sure,  
That O'Shaughnessy was once king of old Gort Inse Guaire.  
mn .

*ii* When Galway were champions in the year twenty three,  
That street had Gibbs, Gilmartin and the bold Morrisey,  
But in the midst of life poor Morris did go,  
And said goodbye to the caman and old Carronroe,  
He was the pick of his kith and his kin,  
He was the star of the West that gentleman Jim,  
And now for the prayers let the Gaels say Amen,  
That his soul is with God in Heaven within.

*iv* Now all those great hurlers you must honour and love,  
Not forgetting Tagh Kelly who was fond of the pub,  
But what is in life for a man to be happy,  
But a few pints, a woman and a bit of tobacco,  
And that is what you will find when you call to the café,  
Where you will be let in,  
Whether you are a man of money or straw,  
And you could fill to the brim and wasn't that the right kind of café.



# A YOUNG GARDA'S EXPERIENCE: GORT IN *the '60's*

By Noel O'Sullivan.

I was born on a farm in South Kerry. A magnificent view of the sea and the mountains was my daily vista. I loved primary school and when I did the Primary Certificate I got 11th place in Ireland. After that I went as a boarder to the diocesan seminary in Killarney until I did my Leaving Certificate. During my school days I loved sport and in the "Sem" we had the opportunity to play football, handball, tennis and even croquet. I played football with my local club, Waterville. I was privileged to have played with the great Mick O'Connell and Mick O'Dwyer.

I was happy to join An Garda Siochana in September, 1960, at Garda Headquarters in the Phoenix Park. I arrived in Gort in February, 1961, as a Recruit Garda. Other than two weeks on the beat in Abbey Street I had no policing experience. I wondered, could I do the job or was I suitable? I arrived with my suitcase by train and was warmly welcomed by the then station party. As I began to work in Gort I found the people most helpful and friendly. This was where I sharpened my skills and will ever be grateful for all the help both from the Gardai and locally. These people spoke from experience and it was always enlightening. I recall a night at Shaughnessy's Corner, while chatting to a local man, a car came along "taking the two sides." As I went to check, that man commented, "Remember; I'm behind you." This was typical of the encouragement and support I got. I never forgot it. I may not meet these people very often now, but I have kept in touch with Gort and drop in now and again to old friends.

I worked as the Superintendent's Clerk. There I learned management skills, criminal law and policing priorities. Early on I realised that police work is all about teamwork, working closely with the local people and colleagues. Supervisors have a crucial role to play in keeping morale high so that all Gardai do their job properly and effectively, and the people they serve are happy with the service given. Together nothing is impossible. When incidents are reported you place yourself in the other person's shoes and imagine how he or she is affected. Gardai need to keep everything relating to police work confidential, and by that I mean nobody is told; not even your wife or partner. It can be read in the papers when the courts have dealt with it. People put the Gardai on the right track if they listen. You may

be asked, "Are you still investigating X?" You could expect a comment like "Did you check the Sullivans of Caher?" That's all a policeman needs if you don't ignore such comments. The public were always right, and a 90% detection rate was possible. Today comments are often made about the violence on the streets, but the Garda who keeps a level head can cool down all involved and it can be easily dealt with. Even in riot situations the secret was to talk to the ringleaders and that too was easy enough. It's rarely necessary to use a baton. In forty years of service I saw no reason to use it. As for arming the Guards I can see little reason for that. There may be a need for some specialist units in the bigger cities. Those who promote it don't seem to understand policing or police training.

While working in Gort I was Secretary of the GAA club and played football with them and have South Galway championship medals to remind me. It was a great club and the hurlers were



NOEL O'SULLIVAN

always a major force in the county. I was involved with the Basketball Club and enjoyed playing with the Gort and Galway teams. I always advise parents to get children into sport and away from drugs and drink.

Young people can have great fun in sports clubs and make lifelong friends. Teams integrate the fast and the slow, the strong and the weak, the brilliant and the not so brilliant players into one unit, where little things can be the difference between losing and winning. They learn so many skills that benefit them throughout their lives; including teamwork, fitness, self-control and community spirit. I remember when I played with Waterville a well-known player said "Sullivan you had a stormer; keep it up; you'll make the county team". He didn't know my father had advised "play by all means; but don't take it too seriously." In all my dealings with players I was conscious that football injuries had life lasting effects. To-day it's sad to see some of "greats" of

sport crippled from injuries.

After leaving Gort I served at twelve other locations until retirement came along as Chief Superintendent in Limerick. I was police Commissioner of the Garda and Australian forces with the United Nations in Cyprus. I represented the Gardai in Brussels on organised crime and drugs and in 1997 was awarded the U.S. Law Enforcement Respect for Law medal for "exemplary direction of Crime Branch, Garda Headquarters, in the fight against organised crime in the nation and the European Union."

I married Angela in 1971. We have two sons and two daughters and we enjoy the company of our eight grandchildren.

## AN 80TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Joe Cahill celebrated his 80th birthday at O'Grady's on the 24 June. Born in 1936, he grew up in turbulent times and went to Kiltartan NS before completing his education at Garbally College, Ballinasloe. Joe was not a believer in all work and no play. In the '60's, Joe frequented the Classic Ballroom along with stops in Kinvara, Loughrea, or Paddy Con's in Ennis. Anyone who knew him at that time thought he would never fall in love and settle down. He surprised them all in 1969 when he followed his wife-to-be, Mary Kilroy, to Scotland. They married on the 24

Feb 1973. Tommy Fahy of Ballyaneen flew in from New York to act as Best Man and ensure the deed was done! Five years later the Cahills were back in Ireland to settle in Coole. In 1983 son David arrived, followed by Sean in 1986. Joe drove a bus for the Brothers of Charity in the '80's while continuing to run the sawmill. On the 11 March 2011, Joe and family were blessed with grandson Jayden. Joe continues to involve himself in the community with regular visits to O'Grady's to keep up on the latest news!



MARION CAHILL COLLINS, JOE CAHILL AND EITHNE STAUNTON

# ON YER BIKE!

By Renee Brennan

On the 10th October 2015, over 50 cyclists met at the Town Hall in Gort for the launch of the Burren Lowlands South Galway Cycle Loops. The two loops, Monastic Way 17.5K and Finding Yeats 21K take in many places of interest within easy cycle of Gort. Fr Tommy Marrinan blessed the group with a reading of J.O.D's Irish Blessing, then hopped on his Honda 50 to lead everyone on the Monastic Way.

Marian Fahy, with her usual enthusiasm and good cheer, was waiting at the car park in Kilmacduagh to offer refreshments. Many cyclists were awestruck with the breathtaking scenery of Poulataggle.

As a last minute request, Nell Giblin had to don a hi-vis jacket and was dropped off at a remote part of the Burren to direct

traffic. She had no phone, just a smile on her face as she was confident one of her fine sons would collect her, at some stage! Eamonn Broderick missed his true vocation as he aptly directed traffic at Tierneevin Church junction with just a flick of his hand and a céad míle fáilte.

The leading bus with the able-bodied Gearóid Giblin (7 years) as co-driver, led the cyclists back to Gort in gig time.

John Sullivan, with his usual Guaire inspired hospitality and kind sponsorship insured we all had ample delicious food and refreshments. Brochures sponsored by Church Street Motors are now available at the Tourist Office and Hotels. Bicycle rentals available from Church Street Motors, so no excuse. "On yer bike!"



FR. TOMMY MARRINAN INAUGURATES THE NEW BIKE PATH ON HIS HONDA 50 WITH 'W.B. YEATS' BY HIS SIDE.



## 16 Moore Street

Squalor in the strumpet city  
The garrison and the rosary  
Trade to the funeral parade  
Burial grounds of a nation's rising  
Penny apples the street of treasure,  
Doorway of the cities key to freedom  
Surrender to  
The bitter aftertaste  
Of that view.

Hats in the air  
Rising from the rubble  
Flags of unity for our status  
Flags of stone for our dear departed  
And more for breaking in the Breaking  
yard.

Displaced delegate of the voices  
Of independence  
Hands that gave their sign  
A capital proclamation  
Strike with full confidence  
The underdog of August destiny  
In May execution seated in a chair  
To put the colours flying over the GPO.

Squalor in the strumpet city  
Sackville street and Sean Heuston  
station.

Anthony Coppinger

(Tribute to Roger Casement)  
2011

## Ode To An Irish Painter

Oh, you artist.  
Little goes unnoticed in the plain  
canvases  
on small cottages hidden in the Burren.

Little do the Homeowners know  
behind every stroke of the brush  
there is an intricate story.  
  
Some are full to the brim with  
heartache,  
others happy-endings, but most are  
about  
the supper after a hard day's work  
of painting a fence that seems to touch  
the ends of the Earth,  
to houses so big they seem to be a  
sanctuary to the Nation.

Oh, you painter,  
who fills the land with hues of muted  
grasses,  
lively buttercups and humble clovers.

Oh, you Irish man  
who is still searching for where the path  
of destiny leads.

Oh, you artist.

Your life is unwritten.  
Waiting to burst from the dull, yet life-  
giving soil.

Your soul lingers in the clouds,  
but you know where your path leads...

For you are an Irish painter.

By Clarise E. Reichley

## Wild Swans

The Wild Swans of Coole  
The autumn leaves are swirling down  
Hence the coming of winter  
Ending the summer breeze.  
Water reflected the sun's setting  
Intensifying its glare.  
Lying down on the shore, a poet  
Dreaming of a world of words.  
Swans floated across the  
Water, peaceful, silent, watching,  
And elegantly swimming towards each  
other.  
Needless to say they were beautiful.  
Sparkling stars spread across the sky, as  
the poet headed  
Off home, to dream of the graceful swans.  
Flowers bloomed as spring came around,  
Causing the swans to leave.  
On the first day of spring, the tweeting  
Of birds awoke the poet, instantly making  
him  
Leave for Coole and discovering the  
departure of the swans,  
Ending the winter storm.

-Georgia Somerville



# PROGRESS AT COOLE PARK

## *A Return to Native Woodlands*

By National Parks and Wildlife Service

Cooles Park is loved and cherished by the many locals and visitors from all parts of the world, who walk its trails, learn its history or marvel at its unique landscape. Purchased by the Irish state in 1927, Cooles-Garryland Nature Reserve comprises about 450 hectares (1,000 acres) of woodland, wetland (including river, turlough and lake), limestone pavement and calcareous grassland and was designated a National Nature Reserve in 1983 in recognition of the global importance of its wetland. Approximately 178 hectares of the nature reserve is woodland.

Cooles-Garryland formed part of the great woodlands that covered the island before people arrived to make their mark. Small pockets of this natural woodland still exist in the nature reserve. More recently the Gregory family planted exotic

species from all corners of the world, such as the Oriental Plane (*Platanus orientalis*) beside the site of the house or the famous Autograph tree (a Copper beech *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea') in the walled garden.

The playwright, Sean O'Casey referred to Lady Gregory's chief comforters as her books and her trees, her books nearest her mind and her trees nearest her heart. Cooles was to become most famous through the poetry of W B Yeats who spent many summers here and described it as the most beautiful place in the world. "In the Seven Woods at Cooles" describes various sections of woodland some of which had different uses in times gone by, Pairc na Tarav (from the Irish for the bull's field) or Pairc na Carriag (the rocky field).

From the 1930's to the 1960's Cooles was managed by the Forest Service and during this time large blocks of conifers were planted, to be harvested as commercial timber. The removal of the conifer plantations was recommended in a conservation report over 35 years ago, prior to the designation of the site as a Nature Reserve.

Compared to native woodland, a coniferous plantation supports relatively low biodiversity. Thus in a native Oak woodland, you might find 284 different insect species on individual oak trees, while on a spruce tree in a plantation you might find only 37. These invertebrates form the basis for the food web in the woodlands, being eaten by birds, small mammals etc.

About 15 years ago, in the interest of improving the diversity of plant, bird, insect and animal species at Cooles, it was decided to remove some of these mature conifers in the "Nut Wood" (on the left as you leave the walled garden). After being cleared, these areas seemed bare but now, 15 years later, there is a closed canopy of native tree species (ash, hazel, holly, oak and birch) about 6m in height. It was decided in 2014 to remove the remaining 20 hectares of mature (and over mature) Norway spruce. While a gradual approach to tree removal over several years was considered, it was decided against for several reasons:

- There are no deer roaming free in Cooles at the moment, but it is quite possible



4 Willow & ash reclaiming clear felled area

that they will arrive in the near future. Deer eat new tree growth and so this could seriously restrict the ability of new woodland to grow in Coole.

- When trees are thinned, they are more likely to be blown over in the storms. Coole is a high amenity area and safety of walkers is hugely important.

- Felling smaller areas over several years could actually have caused more disruption to visitors, by closing off large areas of Coole to walkers for several years in a row.

Now that the conifers have been cleared, the native species such as ash, oak and hazel will have more room and light to grow. Over the next few years these will become new areas for Ireland's native species of butterflies, beetles and woodland flowers. And the pine marten and the red squirrel will make their homes there too.

Visitors to Coole may find these areas initially a bit more difficult to walk



FIFTEEN YEARS LATER, NATIVE TREES HAVE REGROWN.



Increased wildflowers & insect numbers

through than before, but over time the trees will grow and shade out the smaller shrubs (including brambles!) and the woodland will become more open and accessible. This might take a while but Coole has a long history and we hope that in future the areas of native woodland will still be the haven for Ireland's native biodiversity that they are today.

**These woods have been well loved, well tended by some who came before me, and my affection has been no less than theirs. The generations of trees have been my care, my comforters. Their companionship has often brought me peace."**

**Lady Gregory, Coole, 1931**

# COME IN FOR COFFEE AND A BOOK, *Stay for a Chat!*

## The Harvest Studios`

The Harvest Studios is a day programme supported by the Brothers of Charity Services and attached to the Orchard Centre, Gort. We support adults with intellectual disabilities to maximise their personal choices for educational, social, and employment goals and dreams.

We provide on-going training in independent living skills and personal development, and are very pleased to have the collaboration and support from local GRETB centres to access Fetac accredited training courses such as Culinary Skills, Retail Skills, Art & Design, and ITABE. We are active members of the South Galway Local Learning Network.

Through our *Let's Get to Work Programme* we support people seeking meaningful employment in paid or voluntary roles within their community. Some are engaged in part-time open employment whilst others are supported to fulfil their employment goals by actively seeking work placements in their chosen area, and develop employability skills.

Our vibrant *Second-hand Bookshop* is a non-profit making

'Social Enterprise' run by the service users themselves and was set up to create meaningful sustainable employment, to foster learning opportunities, and show the wider community what talents and skills they have. We provide participants with retail skills and customer service training in the Bookshop, where we also display for sale our beautiful art, craft and delicious homemade produce made on the premises. It is a lovely place for people to come and search for a good book, relax with a coffee and a piece of cake, and have a chat to the people who work there.

In Jan 2016 the Harvest Studios were delighted to win the AONTAS STAR Awards for Connaught. The STAR Awards (Showcasing Teamwork, Awarding Recognition) acknowledges the fantastic work undertaken by adult learning projects throughout Ireland. If you would like to know more about the Harvest Studios you are welcome to drop in and chat with us. (Phone)091 630547

helengriffin@galway.brothersofcharity.ie

READY TO MAKE TEA IN HARVEST STUDIOS, (L-R) CHRISTINA HELEBERT, LOUISE O'CONNOR, LORAINE MAHON, HILARY MURRAY.



We are open  
Mon-Fri, 9.30 - 4.30.

[www.harveststudiosbookshop.ie](http://www.harveststudiosbookshop.ie)

The Harvest Studios, Brothers of Charity Services, Bolands Lane, Gort, Co. Galway



# MUSIC AND MAISIE GALLAGHER

There is a point in every singsong when the hour is late and singers begin to tire, sometimes letting the words fall away to a hummed melody. On Georges Street, one woman keeps the music alive no matter the hour. Maisie Gallagher is famous for her knowledge of every lyric to every song sung in Kelly's Lounge whether it be a ballad, a rebel song or one of the classic favorites that ends a session. Maisie says, "I credit my late mother, Lord rest her. She taught us all the old songs and I remember them.

"My husband, Josie, sang beautifully as did my daughter Anne, God rest her soul. My son Michael sings in a different vein. Music was the scene day and night way back when but then you got into the new music, a different type altogether. The traditional music changed. Mind you it wasn't quite au fait for several years, it's only now again that it has really come back to what it was when I was young. There are wonderful musicians now. The Coole Music string orchestra is fantastic!"

Maisie was born in Arch Lodge, very close to Ahascragh. "I came to Gort on the 9th of September 1946. My father had heard that Coens in Gort were looking for someone to run their office and he thought I could do the job. I'd only been on a train once. I didn't know where Gort was or that I had to change in Athenry. When I came on the train I met a lovely priest. I told him I didn't know where I was going and I was a bit down. He said I have a first cousin, Bernard Coen. He said I'll take you down to meet Bernard and he did. He was Father Martin O'Connor. I was put on a month's trial for the Coens."

Maisie recalls those first years. "I lived over the pub across the street. It's now Harte's pub, but was Quinn's then. There wasn't a lot of money, mind you, but once I had paid my digs, I had enough. They were happy times. I settled in soon enough and made lots of lovely friends.

"My biggest treat coming from the country was on a Sunday morning after mass, going to Glynn's hotel. I had never had ice cream in a dish with raspberry cordial and wafer until then. My friends and I went there every Sunday morning. No brandy or anything, just the ice cream."

She had another favorite pastime. "I love to dance. We had little hops going on at the old town hall, the lovely stone building. We had a local band, Glocca Mora. Vinnie Maloney, Mae Hanbury, Paddy Nolan, and Paddy Burke. I loved to dance and wouldn't leave until the last one. When I was at home actually, we had a hall where we used to have dances as well. I wouldn't

be allowed to go without my brother, who was a year younger than me, as my escort. He had two left feet and never danced. After every dance he'd come over and say are you coming home yet? I remind him of it now.

"Josie married me the 18th of November 1958. When I came to Georges Street I couldn't weigh a pound of sugar. We stayed open until 11 o'clock at night. For about forty years I got up at seven o'clock in the morning, went to eight o'clock mass and brought the paper home to Josie.

"I was always interested in history, and politics. My two biggest heroes of all time, though my son Michael says "Mam, don't let anyone hear you say so", are Michael Collins and Che Guevara. In that order! I always said I'd love to go to Bolivia where Che was shot.

"Hawkins was open when I closed, but not for all those years before. The supermarket era had just started. One thing is funny. Lots of people came to me for our ham because they said it was beautiful. And it was freshly cut to whatever depth they needed it. Gerry O'Donoghue Butchers opened around the time I closed. I met him one day and he told me he had a woman in for 'Gallagher's ham'. No such thing, but it was the way we cut it."

"I think we were more easily satisfied with the life we had, than somehow people are now. Of course the one thing I say is the most important thing in life is having your health. I never thought I'd live so long. Thank God I am still compos mentis!"



MAISIE  
GALLAGHER





# A CONUNDRUM .

## BY NIALL FINNEGAN

(Reprinted from Guaire 2014)

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Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea. However, as I relished the cucumber delight from the second tier this was to be more about sustenance for the night ahead rather than an afternoon treat for my palate.

It had been a long train journey from London to Pitlochry and as I surveyed Blair Atholl from this Victorian splendour I knew that this current conundrum would test my powers of observation to the limits.

I had made acquaintance with the guests earlier and suggested we would meet in the library at four thirty sharp.

This far north the evenings seem to close in much faster and as I watched from the drawing room of the Atholl Palace hotel, the sun was already sinking below the horizon.

It had been a long winter in this part of Perthshire and although there was still snow on Glenshee, the heather had started to bloom as if creating a welcome mat to the highlands.

All around me the opulence of the Palace Hotel suggested privilege. On the walls were several tartan tapestries of Scottish clans and over the imposing granite fireplace a gleaming claymore. On a closer inspection of the blade an engraving suggested that this sword had been wielded by Bonny Prince Charlie at the Battle of Culloden.

The room itself was dominated by a magnificent chandelier which had been hung to commemorate the visit of Victoria herself in 1842. It seemed slightly at odds with the Scottish memorabilia and perhaps suggested an intrusion by the English overlords who had made Pitlochry their playground.

Advancing to the top tier, I chose a square of treacle cake to embellish my last few sips of tea. The clock on the mantelpiece had ticked its way to twenty five minutes past four. It was time to begin the business of the evening.

The Hotel had not been busy over the last few days and as I opened the oak wood doors of the library only twelve sets of eyes fixed their gaze on me.

It was a period room with mahogany wall paneling centred by a majestic Italian marble fireplace surrounded on both sides by book shelves which rose all the way to the ceiling. Above the fireplace was a portrait of Mary Queen of Scots.

In the alcove of the bay window sat Lord and Lady Alderton. He was a short reserved man and seemed to have an extra thick sole fitted to his left shoe which I was later informed was a result of an accident while on service for the Empire in India. They were both in their seventies but Lady Anne looked at least ten years younger than her ailing husband. She was a strong willed woman who quickly displayed an impatient tendency I had found before among others of her social standing.

"I find this whole business a total charade," she exclaimed. "I would remind you Sir that we are well connected at Windsor and have spent the last two summers in Balmoral."

I thanked her for the candidness and brief glimpse of her lineage before turning my attention to the next table.

Three somber faced gentlemen dressed in shooting gear sat at the table next to the fire. They seemed to be in their forties and ruddy faced outdoor types, one clean shaven, one with a mustache and the other with a full facial growth. I had been informed earlier that they were a shooting party from Germany but on further consultation the man with the beard insisted indignantly that they were Bavarian.

As I moved from the gaze of Mary Queen of Scots, I acknowledged the elderly couple with their spinster daughter. She was a handsome looking woman though soberly dressed which seemed to match her demeanour. Her eyes seemed to tell a story of compassionate duty but of opportunity missed and perhaps love lost. She turned her eyes from me preferring instead to fix them on the glow of the fire.

An American man in his thirties stood by the grand piano, beside him his stunningly beautiful young wife. His voice rose impatiently as he enquired, "Is this gonna take much longer? We gotta sail to New York in three days' time." His wife shifted nervously in the Rococo

sofa, smiling politely as her right hand grasped her left which had started a slight tremble.

In the far corner of the room stood two servants, both Scottish. One was an older man who had spent his life tending to the needs and whims of a class above him. If the walls of the Palace Hotel could speak, he would be their voice. Soon to

retire he would bring with him years of dangerous liaisons and secrets not to be exposed.

Beside him stood a frightened young girl just sixteen. She had only started her new position in the hotel two weeks ago. She looked awkward in her black dress and lace apron and as the tears ran down her cheeks her superiour handed her a

spotless white handkerchief. They were the only staff in the hotel that night.

"Ladies and gentlemen," I announced. "As you all know, a forty seven year old gentleman was found stabbed to death in this hotel two nights ago. The twelve of you were the only other people here. It is time to find the murderer. . ."

# AND A SOLUTION

BY MARY MORAN

## ...or murderess."

"Lord and Lady Alderton," I continued, "I see no reason for you to have a motive regarding the unfortunate demise of this man. The staff have informed me you reside here often to rest."

"Correct sir," replied Lord Alderton in a deep gruff voice, eyeing his wife to indicate enough had been already said.

I turned my attention next to the three hunters, out for the kill and accustomed to taking life from beast and bird. "Gentlemen," I said, "skilled with bullet and blade, a hunting ye did go! A man hunt would repulse you despite your creed. There are plenty of grouse and pheasant on the Plain. Your kill is enjoyed on your dinner table here each evening, washed down with plenty of ale in the comfort of this blazing fire."

The Bavarians laughed knowing they were no longer suspect.

"This is vile Mr. Everton!" exclaimed Lady Anne, "Insufferable and vile!"

I paused momentarily to let the atmosphere settle among the twelve. I turned my attention to Miss Elizabeth and her aged parents, too feeble to attend to their daily needs, much less murder an able bodied man.

"Miss Elizabeth, you were observed walking the gardens with the deceased Mr. Whittington the night before last, holding hands at the fountain, were you not? A possible romance blossoming?"

Miss Elizabeth turned her gaze from the fire, scarlet from embarrassment rather than flame. "Mr. Ev, Everton," she

stammered, "I have given a life of service to my parents, always prioritising their needs above my own. My encounter with Mr. Whittington was just that; an encounter. He was rather intoxicated you see, his intentions were not as honourable as they may have appeared. Despite what my observer may have told you," she continued gaining confidence, "I most certainly am not a murderer. I accepted his invitation to walk and enjoy some male company, however I misjudged his character which mama has always told me is my failing and I fled from his clutches." Miss Elizabeth once again turned her eyes towards the glow of the fire, a lonely barren spinster who possibly misjudged other situations left to lead a life of loneliness.

The American and his wife, missing the glamour of New York City had no motive either. Vacationing here to see how the other half lived and bored to tears by this interrogation, they would sail to New York in three days and never come back, inconvenienced by the whole affair and readily airing same.

Now to my two servants; the Butler; William Russell, within a whim of retiring with his hard earned fortune. He knew the comings and goings of all the guests from the time they rose until they retired and everything in between and everything thereafter. A man of knowledge educated by his job.

"Mr. Russell," I started, "you were aware Mr. Whittington was angry after his encounter with Miss Elizabeth in the garden."

"Aye sir," replied Mr. Russell. "I was, I met the lass on the staircase and we spoke briefly."

"You were also aware that Mr. Whittington was becoming

a regular guest here, fond of cognac and eager for female company?" I questioned.

"Aye sir, that would be correct," said Mr. Russell.

"You also noted his interest in Miss Rebecca, the chambermaid, did you not?"

"Aye sir, noticed for sure," replied Mr. Russell clearing his throat uncomfortably. "Miss Rebecca knows her place here sir, she learns smartly, is eager to work and to please and has good prospects here for her future, the bonnie lass."

"I see," I replied, "which is why additional to your duties you kept Mr. Whittington and Miss Rebecca apart as much as possible."

"Mr. Everton, sir, I feel you are reading far too much into this situation," answered Mr. Russell at speed. "Miss Rebecca is but a novice, still training and it is my duty to oversee this at all times."

"Of course Mr. Russell," I continued, "but the demands of your day mean you are weary at night and sleep comes easily." Mr. Russell nodded.

"I put it to you Mr. Russell that while you slept on the night in question, you presumed Mr. Whittington would sleep well too after the decanter of complimentary cognac you personally delivered to his room. You did not bargain on Miss Elizabeth taking a midnight stroll to his chambers."

Lady Anne gasped.

Miss Rebecca was drained of tears by now apart from an occasional sob, therefore I turned my attention to her. "Miss Rebecca, you are in charge of the dusting and polishing of this room," I stated.

"Yes sir," she replied.

"Impeccable work," I complimented.

"Thank-you sir," she answered timidly.

"Mr. Whittington asked you to attend to the grate in his room the night he died?" I asked.

"Yes sir," answered Miss Rebecca growing paler by the minute. "I met him returning from the garden in haste and I went directly so as not to anger him."



NIALL FINNEGAN, LEFT, AND TONII KELLY, FAR RIGHT, PRESENT PRIZE TO CONTEST WINNER MARY MORAN





"Was Mr. Russell aware of this, Miss Rebecca?"

"No sir," she replied.

"Miss Elizabeth, I take it you were aware?" I said. The shocked Miss Elizabeth did not answer. "Given the hour with the house retired Miss Elizabeth, you lifted that claymore with an energetic anger after hearing Mr. Whittington ranting on to your daughter. While she stoked the grate, you pierced his heart, downing that blade with a strength you didn't know you had. While he lay on the four poster anaesthetised with alcohol, you watched his life and his blood flow out of him like a river."

Miss Elizabeth was motionless. Miss Rebecca was sobbing uncontrollably again.

"You were not going to let Mr. Whittington ruin your daughter's

life as he had ruined yours. With no promise of love, commitment or money he was of no use to either of you in your eyes. Ignored and neglected by a selfish man who was getting worse with age and ale, you could see no other way out. Unrequited love. There would be no second chances. Rebecca polished the blade in shock under your instructions and returned it once again under the gaze of Mary Queen of Scots. What say you now Miss Elizabeth?" I challenged but no reply sounded from her solemnly sealed lips.

"Miss Rebecca?" I turned to face her.

"Yes sir," she sniffled. "I polished the claymore, as instructed by my mother. I left my parents alone in that room."

Lady Anne fainted. Silence sealed the scene.



# ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SHOW

The Gort Agricultural Show 2016 was successfully opened by double All-Ireland Boxing Champion Sophie Cahill and Gary O'Donnell who recently captained the Galway Senior Football team that won the Connacht Championship. The rain thankfully held off for adults and children to wander the grounds listening to live music, rambling among the stalls, trying their hand at archery and enjoying the atmosphere of the day.

Ooh's and aah's from the Bonnie Baby competition room attracted the admiration of all passing. Winners included Tara Murphy, Kilbeacanty and Liam Fogarty, Beagh for the under



MIM MOLONEY PRESENTS THE PERPETUAL TROPHY, IN HONOR OF HER LATE HUSBAND, TO DAMIEN FINNERTY OF RINEED, GORT FOR HIS ENTRY OF SIX PODS OF GARDEN PEAS.

12 months' sections; Abbey Diviney, Crannagh, Gort and Rowan Conroy, Kildare won the 1-3years sections.

The winner of the All-Ireland Photography Final was presented with the Perpetual Cup by Giblin's Trophies, Gort. Liam Jones of Corofin, Co. Clare not only won the competition but also came second as well as being selected as Best Overall Photo in the Amateur Section. Geraldine Nagle also from Co. Clare won the Best Overall Photo in the Amateur & Professional section.

The Best Preserved Farmyard Implement for the Tom Joe Scully Memorial Perpetual Cup was won by the Burren Nature Sanctuary, Kinvara who introduced the famous Micro Pig, Amelia to the Gort Community throughout the day. The Best Preserved Indoor Utensil was won by Sean Downey, Gort for a well preserved butter churn.

The outdoor Boules competitions was won by Declan Flaherty, Gort while the Wellie Throwing competition winners included: Junior section - 1st Jason O'Malley; 2nd Grace Bermingham. Senior section- 1st Anne Gazali, 2nd Gary O'Donnell.

Mary Griffin, Kilrush & Tom Newell, Claregalway took the Curley Family Perpetual Plaque for Champion & Reserve Champion Young Horse of the Show. Michael Fahey Perpetual Cup for Champion Foal of the Show & Reserve Champion went to Jon Burke and Marcus Donnellan both from Tuam. Champion Brood Mare of the Sow & Reserve Champion for the Barry Family Perpetual Cup went to Michael Martyn, Kinvara &

Marcus Donnellan, Tuam.

Alanah Glynn, Ardrahan won Champion ridden/lead rein Pony of the Show while Anya Thorington, Caltra, Ballinasloe won Reserve Champion. Gearoid Larkin, Ballina shown & Roisin Gannon, Inverin won the Johnny Walshe's Bar Plaque for Champion & Reserve Champion Pony in Hand. The O'Scullly Cup for Open Donkey Mare and Foal went to Martin Kelly, Oughterard.

Mandy Maher of the Catwalk Model Agency who recently judged the best dressed competitions at the Galway Races had her work cut out for her judging the Most Appropriately Dressed Lady and Gent (not a couple). The winners were Claire Diviney, Lough Cutra, Gort and Michael Moylette, Gort who receive prizes sponsored by Pat Smyth, Ladies & Gents Outfitters, Gort.

The show was also attended by Pat Corbet, Co. Laois, ISA National President; Michael Hughes, Mountbellew, ISA National Secretary and David Devane, Ardrahan, Western Regional Board Member of the Irish Shows Association.



THE YOUNGEST AND OLDEST CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SHOW ARE LUKE MCGRATH, AGED 5 AND MARY O'REILLY, 93 YEARS YOUNG.

**A big THANK YOU to all our sponsors Gort Credit Union, Gort Lions Club, Galway County Council, Gort Community Centre, Gort Community School, SuperValu Gort, Committee Members, Exhibitors, Judges, Stewards & to all who help out in any way.**

# SOUTH GALWAY JIGSAW NETWORK LAUNCHED

*To support young people's mental health*

Youth mental health support service Jigsaw Galway have launched a new initiative to support the mental health and well-being of young people (aged 15-25) in Gort and South Galway. The South Galway Jigsaw Network initiative is made up of local people who are helping Jigsaw Galway raise awareness and support to help remove barriers for young people in the community from accessing Jigsaw Galway's supports. The launch, which was attended by over 120 people, took place last March 2016 in the Lady Gregory Hotel in Gort.

Gort native and resident Justin McDermott of Jigsaw Galway said, "The response since we launched this initiative from right across the community has been amazing. We are now working closely with such great people who are passionate and committed to helping us support young people's mental health in our community."

This South Galway Jigsaw Network is assisting Jigsaw in raising awareness to young people in South Galway of the supports Jigsaw provide. They are also running an ongoing fundraising campaign to fund the roll out of a Jigsaw Galway outreach program. This program will see a member of the Jigsaw team

based in Gort and South Galway one day a week to meet young people on appointment.

Pat Regan of Kilbeacanty, and a member of the South Galway Jigsaw Network, speaking at the launch said, "We all know people who have been affected by mental health issues. It might be someone's mother, daughter, sister, or wife; someone's father, brother, husband or son. In other words, people just like us. Mental illness is an issue for families, neighbours, and friends. This is a chance to make a difference in your Community. By supporting this wonderful initiative you can make that difference."

Jigsaw Galway is a free and confidential support service for young people (aged 15 – 25) living in Galway city and county. Jigsaw support young people experiencing difficulties that affect their mental health and wellbeing. Jigsaw also provides advice and guidance to anyone concerned about a young person in their life.

For more information on how Jigsaw can help you or a young person you care about, call Jigsaw on 091 549 252, email [galway@jigsaw.ie](mailto:galway@jigsaw.ie) or visit their website [www.jigsaw.ie/galway](http://www.jigsaw.ie/galway).



PICTURED ARE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH GALWAY JIGSAW NETWORK AT ITS LAUNCH IN THE LADY GREGORY HOTEL LAST MARCH. (L-R) SUZANNE O'DONNELL, NUALA MCCANN, PAT REGAN, MOLLY FITZGIBBON, CONOR WHELAN, MARY LEE, JUSTIN MCDERMOTT, VINCE WALSH.

# FLOODING SITUATION IN SOUTH GALWAY

By David Murray

November of last year was the start of a very anxious and stressful time for many of our communities in South Galway. Several winter storms provided a protracted rainfall over the Slieve Aughty catchment area which resulted in severe flooding that had devastating effects on many of our communities. This article gives an overview of the flooding mechanics, issues and suggests two of the key solutions for flood alleviation in South Galway.

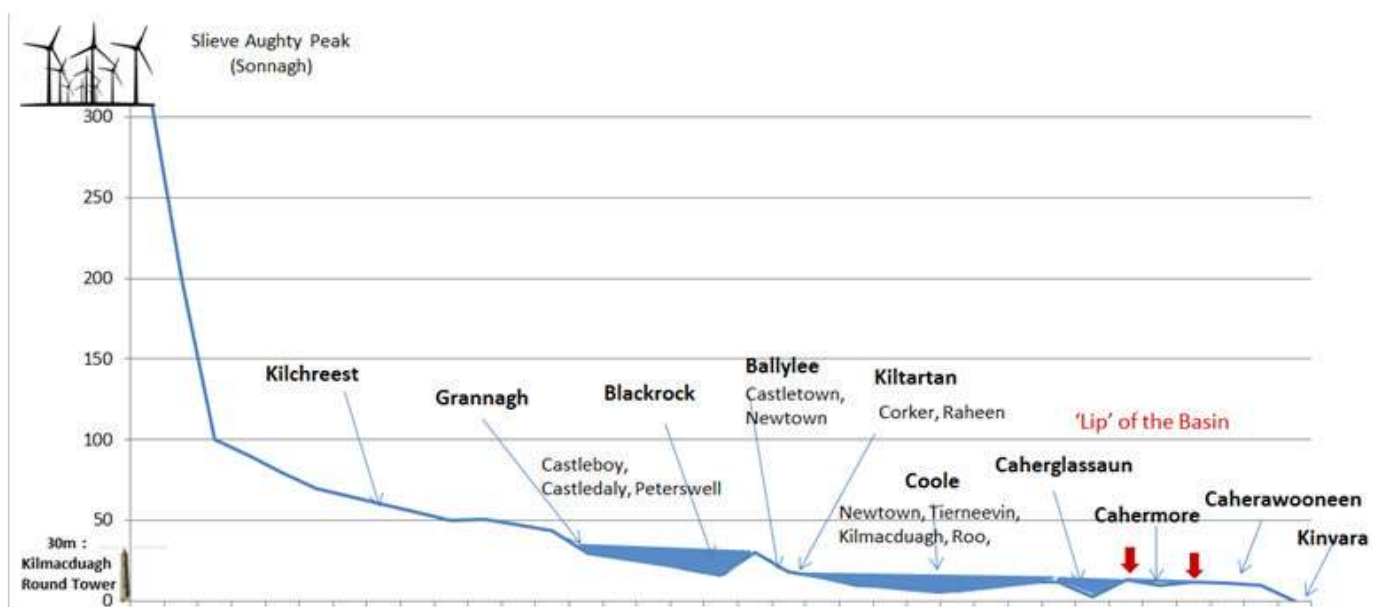
## Overview

The Slieve Aughty Mountains are the highest point in South Galway with a main catchment area of 500 km<sup>2</sup>. These mountains rise to over 300m and are the source for the three main rivers including; the Owenshree river that flows from the north side of Slieve Aughty under the seven-eye bridge at Kilchreest; the Boleyneendorish river that flows between two of Slieve Aughty's peaks, through Peterswell, Ballylee etc.; and finally, the Owendalulleagh/Beagh river that flows through Gort.

The most unique feature of the drainage of this whole landscape is that these rivers disappear into the ground as underground rivers; the nearest one to the sea disappears at Kiltartan Castle over 10 km from the sea. These three rivers disappear underground and emerge as a single river behind Kiltartan church where it quickly disappears underground into Coole Lake. Coole Lake is drained underground via Caherglassaun and emerges as springs close to Kinvara Quay, Dunguairé

castle and as far west as Corranroo. The Owenshree River in fact may go underground over seven times as it emerges and disappears in the South Galway limestone landscape.

With normal to heavy winter rains the rivers rise, the underground caverns become swelled, and the turloughs rise, but all waters are still brought to the sea underground. With severe winter rains, however, and questionable woodland management in the Slieve Aughtys, the volume of water within a given timeframe simply cannot be drained quickly enough by the underground systems. This leads to severe flooding situations where the turloughs rise to the point that they are flooding large tracts of land including farmland, farm buildings, roads and homes. These turloughs eventually overflow and create more flooding situations and in fact, in 2009 and 2015 became a continuous full from mountain to sea. This is illustrated in the first diagram.





### To address these systems

There are three main issues to address if we want to help eliminate the threat of flooding to South Galway

- The mountain hydrology needs to be managed properly
- The water needs to be kept flowing through the system
- The maximum water level of Coole/Caherglassaun Lake needs to be kept to within 12 m above sea level.

### Managing the mountain

Coillte owns a lot of land in the Slieve Aughty Mountains and its main business is 'forestry'. The Forestry Code of best practices promotes the healthy growth of the trees through forest drainage whose objective is "to prevent the soil water rising into and saturating the root zone and waterlogging the soil. ... To be successful, forest drainage must remove surplus water rapidly and must be designed against the cause of saturation and waterlogging". It is obvious that while this is a good guideline and best practice for the healthy growth of trees, it changes the hydrology of the mountain and actively promotes rapid run-off. The Slieve Aughty Mountains, rather than acting like a sponge, behave like an irrigation channel with water flowing off the slopes unnaturally quickly. From my experience as a local in the area and talking with many other people, it is very obvious that water is coming off the mountain much faster in the past few decades than before. This has to be addressed by Coillte and Windfarm owners. There are plenty of examples in other locations where specific solutions were implemented to successfully 'slow-the-flow' of water from mountainous areas.

Another solution that has been evaluated is where it would be possible to divert excess flood waters to the Dunkellin River via the Aggard Stream, which is located 300 m from the Owenshree River.

### Just keep flowing

It is important that water keeps flowing safely through the catchment area. One area that causes a lot of debate is that of swallow-holes. Swallow-holes are the natural drainage channels in South Galway and these are sometimes the only way of water getting out of a particular area. It is important that swallow-holes are cleared to allow the most optimal draining. There has been a lot of hassle in recent times with the Natural Parks and Wildlife not allowing clearance of swallow-holes for fear that they will damage special areas of conservation (SAC). It's ironic that this position is probably doing more damage to the South Galway SACs.

### Managing the level of Coole Lake

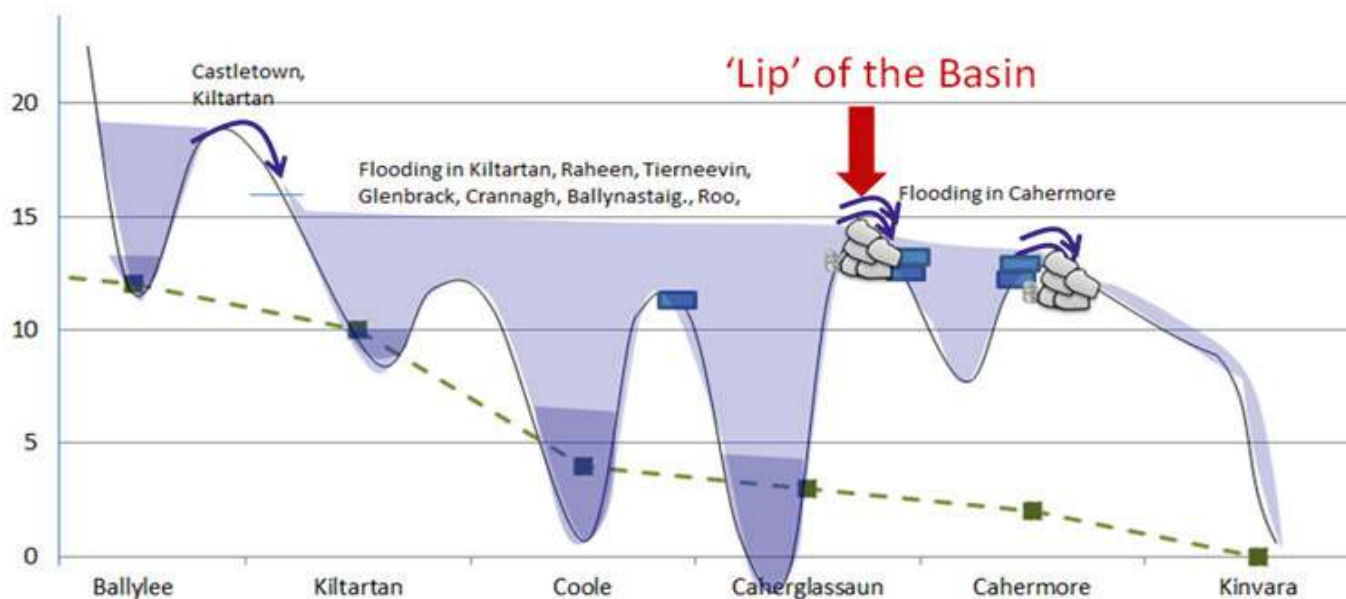
One of the biggest impacts of any flood alleviation solution in South Galway is to be able to manage the maximum level of Coole and Caherglassaun Lake and channel overflow waters safely to the sea. Local on-the-ground analysis has contradicted OWP recommendations on the construction of a 6km channel through South Galway which had an estimated cost of over €48,010,384 (excluding VAT).

During severe winter flooding conditions, Coole Lake overflows into Caherglassaun Lake at Ballinastaig. However, the overflow level from Caherglassaun Lake is actually higher than the overflow level from Coole, leading to the level of Coole Lake having to rise as it is held back from Caherglassaun. This is what I have referred to in several posts as the 'Lip of the basin' and you see it in the second diagram.

The surprise is that this 'lip' is actually a man-made, 2.4m wall and was formed in the 1970's when the whole countryside was caught within a 'land-reclamation' frenzy. It is interesting that our community elders do not remember any floods within the Coole basin before the 1970's. However, it's not just this lip that blocks water flowing to the sea. The Coole/Caherglassaun overflows into Cahermore and also causes serious damage in its wake, flooding houses, farm buildings and land. Cahermore struggles to drain over-ground and this is where in Winter 2015/2016 a channel was cut through reclaimed land to help alleviate Cahermore flooding. [Big credit here to Adrian Glynn and family]. This channel saved Cahermore from flooding and has since been replaced with a 5ft pipe, but this is not correctly sized to alleviate the overall flooding situation if we aim to keep the level of Coole Lake down. It will also be important to help guide the overflow to the sea which means profiling the land around Caherawooneen and providing the right size of culverts as water is guided to the sea.

Note: There are other areas that may require bespoke solutions targeted to their areas – like Tarmon, Roo, and Labane, but the levels of Coole, Caherglassaun and Cahermore turloughs may have the positive impacts on the surrounding areas.





### Progress on Solutions

From the emergency situation of last winter, flooding became high on the political agenda. On Taoiseach Enda Kenny stated, "Last Saturday I spent 8 hours in South Galway. As Taoiseach, the most important thing for me in the matters of the storms and floods has been to look after our people whose lives have been sent trína chéile by them. . . I can assure the people of Ireland and this House that the Government will move with all alacrity, and purpose to deliver these new flood defences." Sean Canney was assigned as Minister of OPW and Flood relief, and has, in recent times, stressed that flood alleviation in South Galway is a national priority. In September, the OPW assigned Galway County Council as the lead agency to deliver flood relief to the Gort and South Galway region. Galway County Council, however, don't currently have the adequate resources to start work on the project so this will delay any start date of the project.

It is looking likely that on the anniversary of last year's floods, not a single person will have started the work of designing a solution, not to mind the actual work on the ground.

The community has a keen sense of where the problem is coming from and how to solve this. Local knowledge and local history provides a rich background to flooding situations, frequency and potential solutions – yet our Government bodies need to be able to work with the local community – and more often than not – the simpler and more efficient solutions can be realized.

Solutions to flooding issues in South Galway can be both simple

but at the same time complex. You may have a simple technical solution but by the time you get a lot of the Government state bodies to align on a solution things can get very complex. Sometimes, the main thing stopping solutions here are the levels of bureaucracy that have to be passed before we get any solution.

In order to deliver the best solution in the fastest time, state agencies need deeper and collaborative involvement with local communities, as well as a stronger focus on inter-departmental collaboration.

In Sept 2016, due to the lack of meaningful progress and priority, a non-political public group, the South Galway Flood Relief Committee, was established to progressively drive the rapid delivery of solutions to alleviate flooding crises in South Galway – Slieve Aughty to Sea. This committee is focused on raising awareness of the flooding situation in South Galway, ensuring that this remains high priority and working with the Minister for Flood Relief to get the job done.

We can only get timely results if we work together and keep the focus on these solutions to the front. We will be looking for solutions that immediately eliminate the threat to houses and livelihoods as well as the longer-term solutions of ensuring we get the water flowing safely through the catchment area and relieve the stressful flood situation that we currently find ourselves in. Please support us at 'South Galway Floods' on Facebook or South Galway Flood blog at <https://southgalwayfloods.wordpress.com/>



# CANNON PROPOSES FLOOD FORUM

Galway East Fine Gael TD, Ciaran Cannon, has proposed the establishment of a Co. Galway Flood Forum to ensure that the maximum amount of funding makes its way to the county and long standing flooding issues are resolved once and for all. Deputy Cannon has secured the support of his Dail colleagues, Minister Sean Canney and Deputy Anne Rabbitte. They met recently with the Chief Executive of Galway Co. Council

we need to work together to ensure that a very significant amount of that money makes its way to Co. Galway and in particular, South Galway. All of the communities who have been so adversely affected by flooding over the past 20 years have placed their trust in their public representatives to deliver solutions and we must honour that trust", said Deputy Cannon.

is now being resourced to appoint a team of engineers to focus solely on flooding in South Galway. This is a very significant and most welcome development. In addition the OPW, the NPWS and Coillte also have a major role to play."

"Up to this point the OPW has been ineffective in communicating to the public how exactly it intends to solve flooding problems across South Galway. We need to establish the Co. Galway Flood Forum and to invite senior officials in each of these agencies to the first meeting of the forum. At this meeting our public representatives, both local and national, will articulate the views of flood victims and seek an initial response from each agency as to how they intend to address the flooding challenge over the coming months and years. It is our intention that this forum will meet regularly and at each meeting the representatives of each agency will be invited to provide updates on their individual contribution to finding flood relief solutions. We will also be inviting representatives of the recently established South Galway Flood Committee," he continued.

"It will take a joint and coherent response across all agencies to ensure that we provide lasting flood relief solutions. We need to hold all of these agencies to account to ensure that they are all playing their part and a Co. Galway Flood Forum is the best mechanism for doing so. We will shortly have a team of expert engineers in place to drive this project forward. A crucial element of their success will be their willingness to actively engage with the local community", concluded Deputy Cannon.



Ciaran Cannon

to impress upon him the importance of establishing such a forum.

"Our government has already committed to spending €430m on flood relief projects over the next five years and

"There are four distinct agencies who have a role to play in solving flooding in South Galway. Firstly Galway Co. Council has recently been appointed as the lead agency in delivering flood relief solutions locally and our local authority

# MAY MARATHON

## MADNESS

By T. ÓC.

"You must be mad," "What did you do that for?" and "Congratulations, but you're nuts!" is just a brief selection of some of the kinder comments on my completing the Burren marathon on May 23rd 2008.

In a way it's hard to blame people for their attitudes, which were mostly made out of genuine care for my well-being. How then did it happen? Well, it's like this: on the Thursday I met my friend Renee.

She said, "There's a marathon in the Burren on Saturday and a group of us are doing the 'mini one', so get your arse in gear and come along."

"Maybe," I replied. As it happened I was alone for the weekend, so when I got a text at about 7:20 a.m. to remind me, I said, "What the hell I will!" I pulled out my hiking boots, put on a pair of heavy woollen socks, packed two bottles of Galway spring water, two apples and four Panadol and headed for Ballyvaughan.

My first meeting with marathon officialdom occurred at the entry office where a lady told me dismissively that I needed to have pre-booked, and that I would have to plead my case with another lady of higher authority.

This I did, explaining how I had heard about the event, etc., and fair dues, she said O.K. and asked which of the three events I wished to enter for. Foolish pride made me dismiss the mini; while the entry fee difference between the half and the full was such that I deemed the full a better value for money.

I subsequently felt that that kind of rationale posed major questions about my mental capacity!

In any case, I met up with Renee and her sister Mary at the start and at 9 a.m. we were given the "Ready Steady Go" by film star Brendan Gleeson together with the blessing of Fr. Des Forde, the local PP. The day was mild with an east wind which kept us all nice and cool, and for the first few miles it was all smiles and banter.

The serious contenders took off at speed and were soon out of sight. The main body began to stretch out according to their experience and ability. We quietly reached the turn off for the mini competitors where I made my goodbyes to the girls and turned to the left. For about a mile or so I was on my own in that group and then I met up with Cecilia – a friend of my son whom I had met on a previous occasion – and so we journeyed on, chatting away all the time.

At this stage we were on mountain tracks and climbing. For the first time, a little strain began to show. The beauty of the Burren, the primroses, gentians, hyacinths, violets, mountain avons, and indeed the other flowers whose names I didn't know, offset any physical discomforts. The cuckoo was in full voice – with hindsight I feel he might have been telling me that I was one of his own!

Suddenly we were at the turn off for the half way contestants and all my group except myself turned right. Somehow I connected this turn off as being "half way" – a major error! From this point on I was on my own and very much enjoying the air and the countryside. I even sang a few songs and answered the cuckoo (rudely).

Now and then I passed a sign with a number written on it, and mentally noted them as 'stages' – much later, at about number 15, I realised they were mile markers. I had a long way to go. I arrived at a staging point where I took a Mars bar, which I offered to pay for – at which the gentleman offering it asked me if I was for "F.....ng real?" It was only then I realised that they were sustenance stops!

On and on I marched – "courage never to submit or yield", admiration of the Lord's work, the odd expletive and many prayers kept me going. I got a text from Renee wanting to know if I was still alive. I replied, 'going well' – this I think was about mile 12. I began to notice that if I let my concentration lapse I veered from side to side!

I was now back on a tarred road. Another text from Renee wondering was I 'sore from my arse to my elbow'? I politely texted 'yes' but there was so much sweat in my eyes I could hardly see the phone. At the end of the tarred stretch, I would say about mile 14, the course took off up a steep mountain path again. There was another pit stop here manned by John Neilan (whom I knew from his time as a Garda in Gort).

"You're still going!" he said as he offered me a fistful of barley sweets. I amazed myself by taking just two, as I felt if I ate too many I'd lose my concentration (figure that out if you can!).

Suddenly it happened: I tried to accelerate and all at once severe cramp hit both my thighs, bringing me to an abrupt halt. Panic hit, but thank God at the same time my brain clocked in with, "THINK WHAT TO DO."

Firstly it said, "Stay cool and breathe deeply" – I did – then it said, "You have your mobile phone and you have the event



emergency number and you know your location." The inner voice now said, "See if you can move slowly."

I tried left leg, a foot, right leg, a foot and so on for about five minutes. All the while the cramp was easing, and my composure returning, so it was that after about half a mile I was back to a normal gait.

I eventually reached the Fanore stop, where the very helpful ladies told me I would be taking the Green Road (the most scenic part of the route) for some miles. I thanked them and then for the first time the enormity of what I had taken on coupled with great tiredness really hit me. The courage mantra and the prayers were now getting full vent and the cuckoo was getting his call returned in a rather rude version. Boy, it was rough at this stage! I came to a 'stop' (overlooking the road and the sea) which was manned by some Mountain Rescue guys with a stretcher. The only thing that stopped me feigning a faint was that with my big mouth I would later tell someone what I had done!

So on it went. Now and then I passed someone or they passed me, the latter the more often. I began to feel out on my feet but I knew I had passed mile twenty and that my progress had been authenticated by at least three check stops so I just couldn't give in.

Eventually I came out into a big green field that sloped down to the road at an angle of 40°. I recognised the road as the Fanore/Ballyvaughan route, about four miles the Fanore side. At the end of the field was a roadside gate in which was parked an ambulance. As I made my way down, it started up and began to come towards me.

My immediate thought was, someone must be in trouble, but on looking around I saw that there was no one in the field but me! The driver opened the window as he pulled alongside.

"Are you all right?" he called.

"Fine," I replied.

"Do you want anything?" says he.

"What's on offer?" I replied.

"Well a drink or maybe a lift," quote he.

"You must be f.....ng joking, I bloody well intend to finish," I said.

"OK," the poor man said. "It's just you seem bent to one side."

"That's great," I replied. "I thought I was bent both ways."

At this he laughed and drove away.

When I met the road, I thought the tarmac never felt so hard underfoot. Two cars and a motor bike offered me a lift, all of which I "politely" declined. A French bus coming towards me came so close – even though I was standing on the grass verge – it managed to upend me into a clump of briars and nettles. If I could have caught up with the driver, I would have rammed my walking staff up part of his anatomy it was never intended for! At last I passed mile twenty six, but those last few hundred yards were the straw that broke the camel's back, not to mention Fr. Des calling out my name, my address and the fact that I had taken nine hours and seven minutes for "my marathon" as I crossed the line!

I got my certificate and my medallion, staggered my way to my car, sent some texts, drank some water, drove home, had a Jacuzzi, fell into bed and slept until 8 a.m. on Sunday. I awoke sore, stiff, but supremely happy.



ART BY JOSEPHINE WARD

# GSC STUDENTS BECOME LEADERS

By Fidelma Larkin

My daughter came home from school one evening, convinced she wanted to go to Esker to become a Meitheal Leader. She had very little other information to give me about it. I can't tell you all the thoughts that went through my head in the few split seconds after those words, but the main one was, what the hell – does my daughter want to become a nun? Highly unlikely knowing her! Maybe she wants to become some sort of a she-monk? No, can't imagine her living without internet access 24/7.

So what is this Meitheal Leadership? As I grew up, Esker was a place of holiness, praying, silence, novenas and pre-marriage courses. I just couldn't see where my daughter fitted in to this picture. A little bit of motherly investigation was needed!

A few words with Mrs. Orla Duggan, the

Chaplain in Gort Community School, set me in the clear. "Meitheal," she advised me, "is a community development support and training organisation based in Cork since 1995 which are running courses in Esker for the first time. This is a brilliant opportunity for students to become leaders in their school in order to help fellow students. They will be trained and supported throughout the year in carrying out various group activities." Thank you Mrs. Duggan – my mind is at ease.

So in June 2015, five Transition Year students headed off to Esker. They met up with other like-minded students from different schools around the county and had a weekend of skills training, confidence building, team work and glorious food. I caught up recently with some of the Gort students and asked them what they had gained from their

year of working Meitheal into their school life.



BACK ROW, CONOR CLEARY, GROUP LEADER PA COTTER. MIDDLE ROW, (L-R) JOANNE O'HALLORAN, EMILY AHERNE. FRONT ROW, (L-R) LAURA HEGARTY, SINDEL ALVES

## Joanne O'Halloran

My name is Joanne and I am a member of the Meitheal team at Gort Community School. My experience with Meitheal has been an interesting one. While in TY we attended the course in Esker. I have learned many valuable lessons from being a member of the team. We have worked with the first year students in our school and I have found it very rewarding. We touched upon the subject of bullying with the first years to give them an understanding about how to stand up for themselves and to know that we are here for them if they ever need us. .

## Sindel Alves

Meitheal has been wonderful to all of us. That's something I can't complain about. Meitheal did nothing but good to all of us at Gort Community School. Meitheal taught me and my four classmates how to stand up in front of people and talk. It may not seem a lot but it was for me. For me that was something that I found impossible to do. That's not all we got out of Meitheal. The training allows us to become young leaders. Young future leaders of this world! If anyone was to ask would I recommend it, I wouldn't think twice!

## Emily Aherne

To me Meitheal means support. Sometimes in a school with upwards of 700 people, you would think that your voice wouldn't be heard. I decided that I wanted to make my mark – I like to be able to support people in any way that I can. Since a buddy system was set up I have first year students coming to me with their problems and some even spending lunch with my friends and I. I would have loved having a "big kid" to rely on when I was in first year, so now I'm delighted that I have the opportunity to do that for current first years.

# KATHMANDU EXPERIENCE

On 25th April 2016, Nepal was struck by one of the worst earthquakes ever, resulting in a death toll of around 8,000, with over 21,000 people injured.

For 23-year-old Darine Flanagan from Gort it was a life-changing experience, one she is unlikely to forget anytime soon. Lying on her bed in a hostel in Downtown Kathmandu suffering a bout of 'Delhi Belly' Darine thought she was hallucinating as a wobbling wardrobe waltzed across the room and the building began to shake violently. She promptly legged it down the stairs, out onto the street where chaos reigned, joining hundreds of others fleeing the swaying buildings. Bizarrely, in a moment of madness, Darine raced back to her room to grab her stuff as the walls vibrated around her. Back on the street crowds surged forward, fleeing the City Centre, terrified as strong aftershocks continued to occur.

Crowds of people poured out of the city in all directions on every mode of transport imaginable. Wi-Fi and phones were down and there was no electricity. Darine was lucky to be offered a seat in a taxi which drove a few of them out of Kathmandu to a music festival site not affected by the earthquake.

She says, "I really feel so lucky to have experienced an event like this and survived. I guess all of Nana's Hail Marys for us paid off after all. One of my favourite memories is straight after the initial earthquake, I sat down on a kerb for a second, taking it all in and looked across from me and saw some Indian guy. We both shook our heads and started laughing. It wasn't really something I'd ever thought of happening when I woke that morning."

It was several days before visitors updated them on the extent of devastation and the enormous loss of life. Meantime, back in Gort her family had the grim task of reporting her missing to the Irish Embassy who added her name to the Red Cross Missing Persons list – it would be a worrying 72 hours before getting confirmation that she was OK and had been flown to safety in India. Darine continued her travels, getting a teaching job in Thailand where wages were high, enabling her to explore extensively at weekends. She eventually returned to Ireland

and currently teaches English as a foreign language in Dublin. Of her time in India, Darine recalled, "This is only a little detail but I loved eating with my hand. I remember the first time I did it, I was in a local Indian person's house and I was being quite delicate with the food trying not to get it all over my hand. The Indian woman across from me started laughing, dug her hand into her food, squashed it into a little ball and flicked it into her mouth. I asked some people why they eat with their hand and one person told me it's because all food tastes different



DARINE FLANAGAN

depending on what you eat it with and another told me it's because how special your hands are and it's important to connect to your food. Either way, I'd happily eat mash and stew with my hands any day of the week, not left hand though."

Her family had the grim task of reporting her missing to the Irish Embassy who added her name to the Red Cross Missing Persons list



# A TALE OF TWOMEDALS

## THE MORRIS FAMILY

By Eamonn Weber  
eamonnweber@eircom.net

### Who can remember the Morris family from Georges St, Gort?

John Morris was the second eldest of six children born to Edmond Morris & Catherine Hanrahan at the family home in Glenaskaugh, Grangemockler, Co Tipperary. He was a carpenter by trade and like many of the family, worked for the Great Southern & Western Railway. The railways were big business at the time and his occupation meant that he travelled quite a bit around the country looking after maintenance and repairs. He married one Maryanne Phelan, a Publicans daughter from Mayors Walk in the city of Waterford on the 28th February 1876. The couple were to have ten children. Elizabeth, Catherine (Katie) and Johanna were born in Waterford. Edward, my grandfather, was born in Clonmel on the 18th July 1880. Anastasia, William Joseph, Bridget, Alice,

born in Millstreet in 1914 and John Patrick born in Bantry in 1916. Edward joined the Royal Engineers in England on the 1st November 1916 and from there he was selected for duty with the 15th Battalion of the newly formed Tank Corps. He served for two years rising to the rank of Sergeant. He saw action in Flanders and Picardy. Why Edward joined the British army is unclear. It would not have been an easy choice to leave his wife and young children behind. All enlisted men had to undergo six months of very strenuous training. Bearing in mind that Edward was 36 years of age at the time, he must have found training alongside 18-20 year-old recruits very difficult. The Battle of Amiens commenced on the 8th August 1918. This offensive led

must have been appalling cramped into such a tight space along with the heat, incessant noise and fumes.

At 1 p.m. on the 9th August 1918, twelve tanks, in three groups of four, of the 15th Battalion set out for the German lines. Their objective involved the seizure of two villages, Framerville and Vauvillers. "Oppressor" was in-group three and commanded by Lt. Fred Gummer. They were spotted by German planes and were machine gunned. The Germans were waiting. To reach their objective they had to advance across nearly 2,000 yards of open level ground and were subjected to heavy artillery fire.

The War Diary records that "Tank Oppressor, driven by 2nd Lt Fred Gummer, reached its objective and exploited success beyond it" The tank failed to

**Bearing in mind that Edward was 36 years of age at the time, he must have found training alongside 18-20 year-old recruits very difficult.**

John Michael and James Anthony were born in Gort. In or around 1886 the family settled in Georges St, Gort. They had a shop there. Edward was a carpenter like his father. He joined the RIC as a police constable on the 15th January 1903 aged 22 years. He served in Limerick, Millstreet and Bantry. He married my grandmother, Maryanne Eaton, on the 11th April 1907 in St Michael's Church, Limerick. The couple had three children, Mary, my mother, born in Limerick in 1908, Edward

to the collapse of the German Army and the Armistice Treaty three months later in November 1918. The 15th Battalion Tank Corps had been allocated to the Australian Corps in 5th Tank Brigade under the command of General Courage. They were operating on the left flank of the Australian front. Sgt Edward Morris served in a Mark 5 \* tank named "Oppressor", crew number O48. These tanks had a crew of eight men consisting of a Lieutenant, Sergeant, Corporal and 5 Crewmen. Conditions

return. On the 13th August, as the Allies advanced, the tank was discovered far beyond the objective, knocked out by a direct hit. Lt Gummer and all his crew were killed. They found their graves close by, 2000 yards south of the village of Vauvillers. The remains were obviously buried by the Germans. The bodies were subsequently interned in Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, South of Albert, Picardy. Lt Fred Gummer and McLachan are buried there and named in Plot III, Row H, Grave 7. The remainder



of the crew, who could not be identified, are also buried in Heath Cemetery in unnamed graves to the Unknown Soldiers of the Tank Corps.

There were thirteen men from the 15th Battalion, Tank Corps, killed in action on the 9th August 1918 from the crews of two Tanks, Oppressor & Overland. The entire crew of Oppressor, my Grandfather's tank, were killed. Only the remains of Lt Fred Gummer and A. McLachlan could be identified.

Edward, along with the other four unidentified crewmembers of Oppressor, are commemorated on a stone panel in the Vis-en-Artois Memorial along with other members of the Tank Corps. The Memorial is the back-drop to the Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery which is west of Haucourt on the north side of the main road between Arras and Cambrai, about ten kilometres from south-east of Arras. Vis-en-Artois and Haucourt are villages located on this main road on either side of the cemetery

On the 6th November 1918, Edward's wife Maryanne was found dead in their

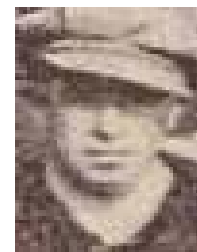
home in Bantry. She died from influenza, which was rampant at the time. The local community took the three children, now orphaned, into care. Eventually, the children's Aunt Brigid Corless (nee Brigid Morris) brought them to her home in Gort. Sadly, within a couple of years, Brigid was to succumb to TB and passed away. The three children were brought to orphanages in Dublin.

James Anthony Morris, the youngest child of John & Maryanne Morris and brother of Edward, was born in the family home in Gort on the 14th July 1896. Known as Jimmy he became a great hurler. He played hurling with the Gort Hurling Club and was a member of the team that won the Senior County title for the first time in 1914. Beaten in the 1915 final by Craughwell, Gort regained the title in 1916. Members of those teams included Jim and Joe Stanford, Pat, Michael and John Hayes, Jack & Josie (Crab) Fahey, Eddie & Matt Nestor, Matt Halvey, B (Babby) and S. Stack, Pat Cook, Tom Mack, Pat Roche, my great Uncle Jimmy Morris, Josie Kelly, D. Reynolds and B. Gibbs,

P.J. Cooney, John Cooney, John Quinn, John Spelman, Martin Farrell and Colman Quinn. Many of these also played with Galway County Senior Team.

The political upheavals from 1916 onwards pushed hurling into the background and it was not until the 1923 Senior Hurling All Ireland Final that the Club again came to the forefront when club members Jimmy Morris, Ned Gilmartin and Bernie Gibbs were on Galway's first All-Ireland winning team. The Galway team was trained by Jack Berry of Gort.

Jimmy was an all-round sportsman playing rugby and hockey and a noted swimmer. It is said he also played hurling for Clare. Jimmy worked as a postman. Sadly, he died at the age of 32 from pneumonia. He is buried in Shanaglish cemetery, Gort. The Galway and Clare Gaels erected a large memorial to him there.



James Morris



DERMOT KERAN, RIGHT, RETURNS MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO EAMON WEBER. DERMOT WAS GIVEN PLAQUE BY MARTIN BURKE, ALSO KNOWN AS "MATTIE JOE" AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER, EDWARD MORRIS' SISTER. THE PLAQUE, SOMETIMES CALLED "THE DEATH PENNY" HAD BEEN SENT TO EDWARD'S WIDOW.



## 60 Years Ago



15 SEPTEMBER 1956 HERALDED THE OPENING OF OUR LADY'S COLLEGE FOR BOYS, SITUATED IN BRIDGE ST WHERE THE SURGERY OF DR. RICHARD JOYCE NOW EXISTS. IT WAS A WONDERFUL DAY FOR THE GORT AREA. AT LAST YOUNG MEN OF SOUTH GALWAY HAD ACCESS TO 2ND LEVEL EDUCATION UP TO THE LEAVING CERT AT A LOCAL LEVEL. THE SCHOOL CLOSED IN JUNE 1995. BACK ROW, (L-R) JOHN O'CONNOR, JIMMY TRESTOM, PAUL WHIRISKEY, LAWRENCE FORDE, JOHN NOLAN, PADDY QUINN, PAT FLANAGAN, KIERAN STANKARD, PADDY COOKE, JOHN KERINS, LIAM COLLINS, CHRISTY GLYNN. THIRD ROW, (L-R) MICHAEL REGAN, MICHAEL SPELMAN, CHRISTY LEE, FRANK FAHY, MARTY MCGRATH, JOE CUNNIFFE, JOHN CUSACK, JOHN QUINN, FR. JOHN QUINN PP SHANAGLISH, FR P. VAUGHAN CC GORT. SECOND ROW, (L-R) MICHAEL DOLAN, MICHAEL MOYLAN, CANON HYNES, ANTHONY GILESPIE, MICHAEL FAHY, PAT SHAUGHNESSY, TOM SHEEHAN, JAMES NESTOR, PAT COLLINS, VINCENT CUNNINGHAM, MASS SERVERS: MOSSY DEVLIN, LIAM GILLANE, JOHN MURPHY, ALFRED MURPHY, JAMES NILAND, PADDY CALLANAN, PAT O'GRADY, MICHAEL HASSET. FRONT ROW, (L-R) FR. B. MULKERRIN CC KINVARA, FR E. CONWAY PP KILBEACANTY, CANON M. MITCHELL PP CRAUGHWELL, DEAN M. FALLON PP GORT, BISHOP BROWNE, FR. CHRISTY BURKE, PRESIDENT, CANON J. CONSIDINE PP LABANE, CANON M. CORCORAN PP KILCREEST, FR. D. GLENNON PP BALLINDERREEN.

## 50th ANNIVERSARY



THE 1996 LEAVING CERT CLASS OF THE CONVENT OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL REUNITED FOR THEIR 50TH ANNIVERSARY. BACK ROW, (L-R) MARY O'DONOVAN- BRENNAN, BREDA HOGAN- MCDERMOTT, LILIAN FITZGERALD- MCMAHON, JULIANA DEACY- KEELY. THIRD ROW, (L-R) MARY O'CONNOR- CASEY, CLAIRE MORISSEY- O'GRADY, CARMEL KELLY- FAHY, KATHY KEANE- MALONE, ANNE KEEGAN- COLLINS. SECOND ROW, (L-R) GRETTA TALEBZADEH- MOLONEY, MARY O'NEILL- O'NEILL, ANN MURPHY- O'GRADY, MAURA O'ROURKE- DILLON. FRONT ROW, (L-R) MARY DUFFY- HAWKINS, EILEEN FINNERAN- FAHY, MARY COEN- KEARNS, BERNADETTE O'GRADY- WALSH.

# THE SWEET SUCCESS OF BAKING!

Sarah Kaye Harty shared two favorite recipes from the Gallery Café with home baker Laura McMahon. As a second year college student, Laura felt the brownies would be most popular with her fellow students. Try them yourself!

## Brownies



### Ingredients

400g of dark chocolate  
400g of butter  
1 tbsp. of coffee essence  
10 eggs  
350g of sugar  
50g of almond flour  
50g of gluten free flour

FROM POT...

### Method:

Preheat the oven to 150 degrees Celsius. Melt the chocolate and butter in a saucepan, then add the coffee essence. Separate egg yolks from egg white, then whisk them separately. Sieve the almond and gluten free flour and sugar together and fold them into chocolate. Then fold in egg yolks and egg whites. Pour the mix into a deep tray and then put into the oven and bake for 35 minutes.



THE GALLERY CAFE'S USUAL TEMPTATIONS

## Brown Bread (Makes 3 loaves)

### Ingredients

375g wholemeal flour  
375g strong flour  
1 tbsp baking soda  
375g pinhead oats  
A handful of pumpkin seeds  
75ml sunflower oil  
¼ cup of treacle  
30g of brown sugar  
1 egg  
1 cup of buttermilk

### Method:

Preheat the oven to 175 degrees Celsius. Sieve the two types of flour into a large bowl. Add the oats, baking soda, sugar and seeds and mix well. Add the sunflower oil, treacle, egg, buttermilk and mix well. Divide the mixture into 3 loaf tins using a spoon and spatula. Sprinkle the loaves with pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds if desired. Place the loaves into the preheated oven for 40 minutes.

...TO PLATE!



# FOOTSTEPS FROM THE PAST INTRUDE UPON THE *Present*

Photos and Story By Hannah Rushe

There appears to be no account of the names or the identity of the thousands of mortals who passed through the doors of Gort Workhouse. I always knew there was a Workhouse in Gort. It seems nobody really wanted to talk about it. I walked down Georges Street many times and was unaware of the place where this institution was in relation to the town of Gort.

On getting directions I parked the car at the top of the town and walked through the road... That led me to the dilapidated state of the building that once housed our people in their hour of need.

I stepped into a large courtyard. Building supplies and road signs were stacked in various areas around this very large space which pointed to a modern Ireland. It was all enclosed by sturdy walls reaching to the skies. They were forbidding walls. I wondered what stories were embedded in these walls.

What was it like to arrive into this place with your family in 1845? You were destitute. You had been forced out of your small holding and you had nothing to eat. On arrival into this place of last hope the family was separated - husbands and wives and children suffered further indignity by being forced to live apart from each other. Babies under two years of age were allowed to stay with their mother. Women washed and cleaned. The men broke stones and separated oakum all day non-stop. The Workhouse literally meant work. The adults were obliged to work to earn their keep and from this regime the term indoor relief was named.

This all happened in Gort.

The ruins of the workhouse now stand as a memorial to the suffering, destitution and horror that was visited on a generation of our people. There is a large open court-yard and the remains of the main building block. This building was built to the same

specification as all the workhouses around Ireland.

The original building was built on a seven acre site at the top of the town. It was built on a design of the workhouse already in use around Great Britain and designed by the architect George Wilkinson. It was ready for occupation by 6th December, 1841. There is The Master's House, still standing and robust but falling apart inside. The Fever Hospital is at the back of the main building and is still in good repair. I believe it is presently occupied. I wandered in and out of the different buildings. I recognised the remnants of the chapel...

In 1838 Ireland was divided into 130 poor law unions. Each union was designated the dreaded workhouse. The Gort Workhouse was governed by the local gentry. They also supported the running of this place of degradation and enforced labour. The workhouse was built in the town of Gort but was actually in the parish of Beagh - Beithe.

In South Galway large estates were in the ownership of the landed gentry. Viscount Gort from Lough Cutra Castle was guardian for the Beagh district. William Gregory from Coole Demesne, husband of Lady Gregory, was also appointed guardian of the workhouse and they along with others were responsible for the running and expenses of its upkeep.

The Gort Workhouse was initially intended for 500 inhabitants as a form of poor relief during the Famine. On the 14th April, 1849 the number of people in the workhouse was 1611 with 105 deaths recorded. By 29th June, 1850 the numbers had swollen to 3,565 according to the information recorded by the Board of Guardians.

The people were dependent on the potato as a means of survival. A blight that started in Canada made its way to Ireland and wiped out the potato crop.

Comment by William Gregory of Coole taken from "Beagh A History and Heritage Story. Marie McNamara and Maura Madden."

**"The destruction of the potato crop was so sudden and universal that fields flourished today with all the appearance of a healthy and luxuriant crop were, before tomorrow's sun reduced to a heap of weeds."**





REMAINING WORKHOUSE WALL: HISTORY OBLITERATED BY PROGRESS

The tenant farmers were unable to buy seed potatoes and the land was not cultivated. The tenants and their families

were without food and unable to pay the required rent to the landlord. Most of them were evicted from their small holdings. In his book "Famine. Galway's Darkest Years", William Henry tells us: "Adding to the misery facing the people, the brutal winter of 1846/47 was the worst in living memory. There was continuous snow and blizzards which lasted until April 1847. The fierce weather conditions, along with inadequate clothing, proved fatal for many destitute people who could not gain access to the workhouse"



ENTRANCE TO BURIAL FIELD KNOWN AS BULLY'S ACRE

Interesting at this time it has been recorded that £17 million pounds sterling worth of grain, cattle, horses, pigs, flour, eggs and poultry was being exported from the ports around Ireland. Tight security was maintained at the ports to prevent sabotage. These commodities were being exported to markets abroad for the benefit of profit. "In November 1848 cholera struck and it spread like wildfire through contaminated water supplies, which spread in the overcrowded workhouses, market towns and ports. By the time the disease had exhausted itself in the summer of 1849 thousands of the most vulnerable had perished." Gort Inse Guaire by M. Grey. During the passage of The Poor Law Act of 1847 in the House



of Commons, Sir William Gregory proposed a clause which became law - "anyone possessing more than a quarter of an acre of land should not be entitled to assistance". This became known as the Gregory Clause with dire consequences for the poor and impoverished tenants of South Galway. The British administration believed providing help would make the Irish lazy so they were abandoned without food or clothing. Reading through the minutes of the Board of Guardians of the Gort Workhouse a picture emerges of dire need. Letters and requests were continually sent to London requesting assistance and remuneration for clothing, bedding and food. Their pleas were ignored - "laissez-faire" was the attitude adopted. They got "Indian Meal" which the poor could not digest.

I came across one wonderful enlightening story about a young girl who left Gort Workhouse for Australia in 1849.

The governments of Australia and Great Britain agreed to receive 4,114 young women from the Irish Workhouses to Australia to marry and raise families. There was a need for young women in Australia. The young girls would be healthy, probably have lost their parents and had no means of survival. The emigration scheme was run from London by the Secretary of the State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, and so came to be known as the Earl Grey Scheme.

Margaret Hurley from Gort Workhouse was one of these girls. On the 28th October, 1849 she left Ireland with 192 others aboard the ship "Thomas Arbuthnot". Margaret was one of 16 girls from the Gort area. The surgeon on board kept a diary of the journey and praised the girls although they cried and were probably apprehensive about what lay before them. When they arrived in Sydney they were eventually hired as domestic or farm servants and paid £8 pounds per annum.

Margaret married a Dublin-born shepherd Joseph Patterson on 7th February, 1852. Joseph was from Edenderry. They had seven children. Two of their sons returned to Edenderry in Offaly and set up a business "Patterson's Funeral Business". Margaret died in 1922 aged ninety years of age and is buried in Burrowa, Australia with her husband.

Margaret's story and journey along with other girls is written by Dr. Perry McIntyre Chair of Great Famine Commemoration Committee and current historian on the committee and recorded in Ireland XO. Ireland Reaching Out.

Lord Gort provided a plot of land for a graveyard for the deceased from the workhouse. It is situated outside the town of Gort on the Loughrea road. I visited the graveyard to witness the loneliness of the nameless souls from the workhouse. A sturdy gate and plaque identified the graveyard. I walked around to the back of the green area. Some sheep grazed the land. The field was dotted with gravestones probably taken from the walls. Towards the end of the graveyard a long mound of earth remains. Here the bodies were buried one on top of the other. No name or other recognition, just cast into the earth and barely covered.

I was determined to recall the dreadful circumstances of the Workhouse when I read the wording on the plaque in this cemetery. It said the people buried in this graveyard died "needlessly".

There are many opinions and debates as to whether the huge population of famine victims died as a deliberate act of "genocide" or from natural causes resulting from the potato blight. The fact is they died from starvation and disease. They died because they did not matter. They died from neglect and were buried in mass graves. The importance of the market mattered more than their wretched lives.



INSCRIPTION BY ENTRANCE TO BULLY'S ACRE

"In Memory of all who died needlessly in Beithe and Gort Union. 1845 - 1848."

# AMAZING APPLES

## CONTINUE SWEET

*Success*

By Laura McMahan

Young, energetic and talented - the Galway quintet Amazing Apples is comprised of five very talented young Galway musicians: Anthony Ryan, Darragh Crehan, Eanna Fahey, Brian Grace and Cian Crehan. These Apples drew considerable buzz in the music world when they made it to the final six of the Hot Press Big Break Competition in June 2015.

During an interview with Eanna Fahey, the fiddler and co-frontman of the band, I found out why the Amazing Apples are the pick of the bunch. Fahey, the fiddle player and co-frontman of the band is no stranger to hard work. "We started playing together in 2008. We were originally a wedding band." Eanna admits that it did get a little tedious after a while. "The lads wanted to do originals so we started writing."

In 2012, they did an EP with the sound engineer from the Monroes, Ed Kenehan. "We said we'd record it for the craic, and whatever happens - happens," he told us. What happened was that the EP reached number one in the iTunes charts. At the same time as the launch of their EP, the city was hosting the Volvo Ocean Race. The Apples got the main stage for that, which bolstered their position in Galway. The band's versatile style is undoubtedly a reflection of the many musical influences they draw from. Eanna told us that he has always loved Bruce Springsteen and Blue Grass. Darragh is very much into house music, and was once in a metal band. Cian loves Damien Dempsey and Damien Rice, while Brian

keeps up with the pop charts. Eanna and Brian share a love for film scores.

"Unfortunately if you go down the folk route, you're limited to a more niche market. We've been added to Sea Sessions, Electric Picnic and Indipendence, which were the three main festivals we were hoping to get. The truth is a lot of young people just don't like trad music. At the end of the day, you have to know what your target audience really wants."

While most fans reacted favourably to the new album, Eanna admitted it received mixed reviews. "The problem with the music industry is that you can't mix things... they don't want you to change your original style of music."

While the Irish Times seemed none too pleased, Hot Press gave them a great review. Then again, they certainly have earned Hot Press's seal of approval as they made it to the final six of the Hot

Press Big Break Competition.

What advice does he have for aspiring musicians? "DON'T DO IT!" he said. "Well look, if you're really serious about it, gig as much as possible. Make investments - buy your own equipment. If you want to do original stuff, you really do have to persevere. Focus all your energies on it. Commit to it 100%. I don't know how many birthdays and celebrations I've missed. The girlfriend wants to kill me every single weekend!"

With a nostalgic smile, he recalled his first festival. "Three years ago, we arrived down with 24 cans, started drinking. Now we watch other bands who are in the position we were three years ago doing the same thing. They've a lot to learn yet!" he said. Judging by what I've heard today, the band's no nonsense approach will pay dividends and the future will be sweet for these Apples.



THE AMAZING APPLES AT SULLIVAN'S HOTEL (FROM LEFT), CIAN CREHAN, EANNA FAHEY, DARRAGH CREHAN BRIAN GRACE, JIMMY MORAN.



# BUSY AS A BEE

By Mary Wall

## Did you know that there are 97 species of bees in Ireland?

There are 20 Bumblebee species (14 True Bumblebees and 6 Cuckoo Bumblebees), a mindboggling 76 species of Solitary Bees (Miner Bees, Leafcutter Bees and even a bee that nests in snail shells). Oh, and one Honeybee!

The Honeybee performs a vital function, pollination. About one third of our diet is derived from insect pollinated plants and Honeybees are responsible for 80% of this pollination. Unfortunately, our tidy, manicured gardens and the destruction of hedge rows is a disaster for our foraging Honeybees. Not to mention the harm pesticides and insecticides are doing. . . Think of how clean your car windscreen is after a long summer's drive today compared to twenty years ago!

A colony of Honeybees consists of 3

castes: 1 Queen, in the summer 40,000 to 60,000 Worker Bees and several hundred Drones. The average Worker Bee produces 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime. A hive of bees will fly 90,000 miles, the equivalent of 3 orbits around the earth, to collect 1kg of honey. The Queen controls the temperament and mood of the hive. She is the heart and soul of the colony. Without a Queen the hive will not survive. She can lay up to 2,000 eggs a day during the spring build up, which is more than her own body weight in eggs every day!

The Worker Bees are all female. They live for six weeks in summer and six months in winter. They begin their working lives inside the hive, cleaning, providing food for Larvae, Drones and the Queen. Next

they build the wax honeycomb that forms the hive's integral structure. Finally with just seven to ten days of life to live, they graduate to flying Honeybees. A single Honeybee can visit up to 3,000 flowers a day, making 50 to 100 trips. Most will die in flight attempting to bring one last belly full of nectar to the hive. Their wings will just give up!

Drones are male bees and live for approximately three to four months. They are the product of an unfertilised egg, therefore do not have a father, but they do have a Grandfather (figure that one out!). The Drones only purpose is to mate with new Queens and on successful mating, the Drone will die. In late autumn, all the Drones are kicked out of the hive to die.



MARY WALL WITH HONEYCOMB





#### BEES SETTLE INTO COLORFUL HIVE

Swarms are nature's magical way of expanding the number of hives in an area. Swarming usually occurs in the months of May, June and July. The old Queen leaves the hive to find a new home and a new Queen takes over. The reason the swarm looks like a clump is because all the Worker Bees gather around the old Queen. A swarm can form for a few minutes to a few days, depending on how long it takes Scout bees to find a suitable new home. During a swarm, their focus is on finding a new nest not on attacking. That said it is important to keep your distance. If they are threatened, it is possible that they could sting.

If you come across a swarm, please ring

your local Beekeeping Association or a local beekeeper you may know. If they are re-homed with a beekeeper, they stand a better chance of surviving and then continue to work their wonders in new surroundings. Perhaps you might be interested in your own Beehive?

The end of August/September is honey harvest time. Apart from the lovely honey the Honeybees provide us with, there is wax and propolis. Both of these bi-products have some wonderful uses. The wax can be used for making candles, cosmetics and healing products for treating conditions such as acne, dry skin and eczema. Propolis can be used for healing burns, infections, immune

system support, dental care to name just a few.

Think! When you buy your 454g jar of pure local honey - it took 22,700 Honeybee trips to fill that single jar. The Honeybee is by far the most selfless organism in the World, not because she labours, but because she labours for others. Anything she eats is clean, anything she drops is sweet. Bee kind to the Bee!

**"If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left. No more bees, no more pollination, no more plants, no more animals, no more man."**

**Albert Einstein**



# DOWN MEMORY LANE



VINTNERS TOUR TO SMITHWICKS BREWERY IN KILKENNY 30TH MAY 1969. BACK ROW, (L-R) SMITHWICKS REP SHEAMUS MCEVOY, JOHN O'DONNELL (BRIDGE ST), MICHAEL MCNAMARA, JOE EGAN (DERRYBRIEN), PADDY FINN, JOE KEANE, JACK BURKE, JIMMY CONNORS (GEORGES ST), KEVIN SEXTON, MICHAEL TULLY (KINVARA), UNKNOWN, GERARD KEANE (BRIDGE ST), DERMOT KERAN, JOHNNY KELLY (GEORGES ST). MID ROW, (L-R) MICHAEL JOHN CORLESS (KINVARA), ROBERT GAYNOR (NEW QUAY), TOM CASEY (CHURCH ST), MICHAEL HANNON, NED WALSH (THE SQUARE), GREGORY LUNDON (KILCOLGAN), GEORGE MCDONAGH (ORANMORE), JOHN GRAHAM (KILCOLGAN), RAY SPELMAN (THE SQUARE). FRONT ROW, (L-R) EILEEN KILROY (THE SQUARE), ROSALEEN KEANE (GEORGES ST), MARY BRADLEY (LABANE), MAUREEN HANRAHAN (THE SQUARE), MARIE GEOGHEAN, MAY MONAGHAN (BRIDGE ST), NONIE FAHEY (NOGRA), MARY ANN O'CONNOR (ORANMORE), MARY GREEN (KINVARA).



1980S BIRTHDAY PARTY, BACK ROW, (L-R) ALISON O'CONNOR, PATRICK GAMBLE, COLM BRENNAN, TERESA GRIFFIN, ANNA GRIFFIN, NIAMH COEN, CHRISTINE BRENNAN, LORRAINE JENNINGS, NESSAGH QUINN. FRONT ROW, (L-R) BRYAN BRENNAN, PATRICK HAWKINS, PATRICK HARTE, ANGELA SPELMAN, ANDREW JENNINGS, EMER LARKIN, MARK HAWKINS, ELIZABETH SPELMAN, JENNY GRIFFIN.



THE KERAN FAMILY OF GEORGES ST WITH HORSE AND BACK TO BACK TRAP IN THE EARLY 1900S. (L-R) MAY, LINDA, AND TILLY KERAN (DAUGHTERS), MARGARET KERAN, AND WILLIAM KERAN (GRANDPARENTS OF DERMOT KERAN OF GEORGES ST). MR. CARCKERY WAS THE BLACKSMITH AT LOUGH CUTRA, WHERE PHOTO WAS TAKEN.



OUR LADY'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL TEAM OF 1973. BACK ROW, (L-R) MURRAY PIGGOTT, DON COEN, JOHN O'DONNELL, TOM MULDOON (COACH), RORY O'DONNELL, DECLAN MCCARTHY, PAUL COX. FRONT ROW, (L-R) CHRISTY MONAGHAN, COLMAN COUNIHAN, ANTHONY BRENNAN, RAYMOND PIGGOTT, NIALL FINNEGAN, GERRY P. FAHEY.





DARTS TOURNAMENT IN 1974 OR 1975, (L-R) COLMAN KEANE, GERRY LEONARD, TOM COUNIHAN, VAL HOARTY, MICHAEL COEN, MICHAEL RUANE, PAKIE WHELAN, GERRY BURKE.



THE GORT BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL WON THREE TROPHIES IN 1971: THE BISHOP BROWNE FOR ATHLETICS, CORN NA BPIARSACH FOR FOOTBALL AND THE STREET LEAGUE CUP. BACK ROW, (L-R) MÍCHÉAL BREATHNACH, PEARSE PIGGOTT, GERARD MCINERNEY, PETER CONROY N.T., FRANCIS WALSH, MICHAEL LOUGHREY. MID ROW, (L-R) TOM MURPHY, DERMOT DUFFY, JOHN SULLIVAN, PETER CUNNINGHAM, ANDY MURPHY, SEAN MULLINS. FRONT ROW, (L-R) MICHAEL KILROY, PHONSIE MULCAIRE, GERARD WALLACE, MARTIN HALVEY, DERECK FAHEY.





# GORT STREET LEAGUE REMEMBERED

Reprinted from Gort Street League Program, 1971

The Gort Street Gaelic Football League was inaugurated in 1971 by Peter Conroy, Principal of Gort Boys' National School. As the name indicated it was an autumn inter-street competition, with the final usually taking place in mid-November. The winners were presented with the O'Conaire Cup and medals. The runners-up also got a set of medals.

Each street appointed a manager, usually the father of one of the players. Excitement reached fever pitch the week before the final, when the cup and medals were displayed in Finnegan's shop window in Bridge Street. Jerseys were borrowed from Tierneevin National School. Referee duties were carried out by Frank Lally.

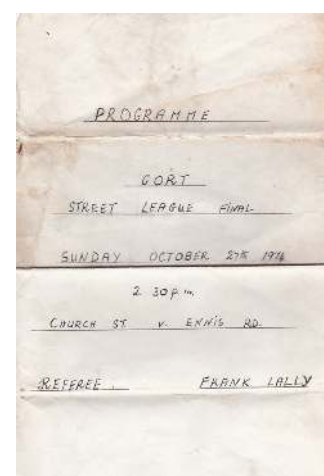
The 1981 final drew a very large crowd as the past pupils organised an exhibition game involving players who had played street league football in the previous ten years. They also made a presentation to Peter Conroy that evening. The league which ran for twenty years was a little All-Ireland in Gort. Boys (who are no longer boys!!) still talk about league matches that were won or lost, great players, scores and saves, but above all the great memories they have of the league.

The students prepared their own match programme and

interviewed the managers of teams. For the 1974 final, they spoke to Michael Reedy, Manager of the Ennis Road squad. He said, "Excitement is mounting on the Ennis Road. "It should be a good close game. We are as good as Church Street are and I think this is our year."

The manager of their Church Street opponents, Michael Roche, father of team captain Colie, had a quick response. "Church Street always had a middling team. Under their new trainer and manager we expect a good win. We'll be celebrating in Sullivan's again but this time for Church Street. The rd training must go on."

However, by the game's end Ennis Road had defeated Church Street. The competition celebrations took place in Colum Spelman's Shop, Ennis Road. Jack and Eileen Kilroy treated visitors and vanquished alike to refreshments after the final.



BACK ROW, (L-R) MATT O'CONNOR, MICK REDDY, PETER CONROY N.T., JOHNNY COMMINS. MIDDLE ROW, (L-R) KIERAN REDDY, MATTHEW SPELMAN, DAVID HAYES, MICHAEL MULLINS SR, NIAL SHAW, JOHN MULCAIRE, MIKE CARTY, JOHN HAYES, GERARD O'CONNOR, MEL CONWAY. FRONT ROW, (L-R) KEVIN GLYNN, JOHN SPELMAN, AENGUS MCCARTHY, ADRIAN MOLONEY, JIM CONWAY, JOHN JOHN COMMINS. REFEREE: FRANK LALLY. PHOTO BY W.M. QUINN, GORT 1974.

# CRAIC AGUS CEOL...

By Brid Mac Namara

Considering that C.C.É. is a non-profit movement, it is a very impressive achievement that it is the largest organization involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish culture worldwide. We are a group of people of all ages with various musical instruments and abilities - both amateur and professional - who delight in the opportunities C.C.É. affords us to come together through the language of Irish culture - be it song, music, dance, Gaelige, storytelling and more.

We enjoy activities, which include our 'Tune Swap', local 'Pub Sessions' and public performances. At the Tune Swap music



(FROM L-R) MÓIRÍNA MAC NAMARA-MULLINS, AVA ROCK, KATE GREHAN, SAOIRSE OWENS, ALEX KELLY, ANDREW MURRAY

sheets and notation are provided for all. A professional music teacher, Karina Cahill, gives her expertise in teaching the new tune, and we all practice it together. The evening of the third Friday of every month we have our Pub Sessions. They start at 8:30p.m. for our junior players and are a great night's entertainment for all.

We are invited as guest performers at some great occasions. When Limepark was celebrating its 1916 Centenary commemoration this April we provided the music. Again when Thoor Ballylee was being reopened we performed... and even met our president's wife, Mrs. Sabina Higgins!

Watch out for our activities, advertised in the local Parish newsletter and elsewhere. We also welcome you to contact us, Aidan Murray, chairperson (087 6995427), P.J. Brady, secretary (086 3751714) and Brid Mac Namara, P.R.O. (087 9445876).

Perhaps the most important and enjoyable benefits of being in C.C.É. for me is the great friendships I've formed with a remarkable bunch of people and the great, great fun we have together...craic agus ceol! Maybe we'll see you next time!

Guíonn muidne gach rath's déa ghúí ar Guaire arís i mbliana!

## Gaelscoil na bhFilí ag súil leis an scoilbhliannua.

### Gaelscoil na bhFilí looks forward to the new school year.

Gaelscoil na bhFilí opened its doors nine years ago and is the first Irish-medium school in Gort. The school offers immersion education to boys and girls, a method which is shown to improve language skills, and means that children speak and learn Irish throughout their daily activities. Our latest results show pupils performing above the national average in both English and Mathematics as well as in Irish. With this solid foundation, the new Board of Management are looking forward to the new school year, where we hope to foster and strengthen the school community. Library visits, swimming classes, and sports competitions were all a feature of last year and we hope to keep up the fun activities.

Information about enrolment can be found on the school website [www.gaelscoilnabhfilí.com](http://www.gaelscoilnabhfilí.com).



HILDA-MAE AND SISTER NÓRA NÍ CHURRÁIN THE FIRST DAY OF THE 2016 SCHOOL YEAR.

# SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

By Pat Farrell

At the time they called it Global warming. Indeed for some countries, for a while, it was hotter. Disastrously so, causing famines and soil erosion.

Then it became Climate Change and most people woke up a bit. Wind power became fashionable, there were ads for electric cars. We insulated our houses more effectively. The long winters came. Ten years of extreme cold even for temperate climates like our own. People died, of course they did, but the worst was feeling that we were living in an unknown land, not Ireland at all.

The government was bland. There were more sitcoms and game shows on TV. News was parochial. We all knew something was happening but whoever was in power issued the same anodyne statements. Even Google let us down when figures and meteorological history disappeared from the Net. There was a sense of being groomed.

We began meeting in each other's houses. Very quietly we started 'chess clubs' and 'knitting clubs'. One club even posed as 'swingers'. Group sex was fine: asking questions wasn't.

Late in the autumn one of our group started plotting daily temperatures. She had a cousin in Vancouver who was doing the same. Numbers became letters. We sent them round Facebook as ehs and ohs and smiley face 'likes'.

Nicknames grew, it was safer not to use our own names. These were vaguely 'eco', some more obscure and some silly. More and more often we heard the name 'Dark Star'. It made us unsettled, fearful. It was an ambiguous but powerful presence on

the Net with an unknown allegiance.

Each year was getting colder, at least in Ireland and Canada by our Facebook posts.

When one of us got an email from 'Dark Star' we were terrified. The Chess Club had an extraordinary meeting. We looked at the email together. It contained a graph of average temperatures from all over Europe for the whole of the 21st century. How long before it disappeared?

"Put it on a memory stick and erase it from the account," one suggested.

"Send it back," said another.

"Delete it." Would delete be enough? Who was watching us read it and what would they do? Were we safe?

Roger took charge. While we ostensibly played chess, Roger broke up the information into small discrete pieces. We each had one to remember for now, not an easy process. It was years since any of us learned by rote. We researched

memory tools, short cuts, repeated facts to each other. It took all night.

By next month we agreed to have told our facts to two other people and asked them to do the same.

Mine was about Scandinavia. My head was full of freezing fjords and summer ice. Who could I tell? Outside of Chess Club I wasn't sure who I could trust. Church? Probably not. Book club? Definitely not. Work?

Who was asking questions? Fred, definitely.

Sometimes, Suzy.

We sat in the large canteen eating tofu and bean sprouts. Meat disappeared off most people's menus after the 'processed meat' scandal. Not quite SoyLent Green but bad enough.

"Fred."

"Mm?"

"Can you remember something for me?"

"Can you remember something for me?"



1978 SNOW IN GORT WITH SULLIVAN'S HOTEL IN BACKGROUND. PHOTO BY WILLIE QUINN, GORT



# DISABILITY AND THE PROCLAMATION

By Mary Kealy

The anniversary of the events of Easter 1916 has been understandably a time of justifiable national pride and commemoration, and it has also been a time of national self-examination. It is therefore opportune to reflect on the progress we have made regarding fulfilling our promise to 'cherish all the children of the nation equally', with regard to how we treat those with intellectual disability in Ireland today.

We live at a point in history where within a span of a few generations we have seen great advances in the kind of lives that are possible within communities for people with disabilities. This progress is evident today with the majority of children who have disability attending regular schools along with their siblings, neighbours, and friends.

This has been achieved through the love and support of parents and their families and of course by the individuals themselves. Service providers have taken conscious decisions and steps to meet the needs and wishes of people in their local communities and so bring to a welcome end the practice of sending people away to an institution.

However we need to take a careful look at the detail of people's lives and the presence in their lives of the essential ingredients of a good life such as employment, a decent income, good health, a home of one's own, value and respect, genuine lasting friendships and interesting leisure pursuits, to mention just a few.

Though there has been considerable progress with people being better integrated in communities, there remains a persistent reliance on segregated support options with all of their predictable effects. The fact that the needs of people can and have been met well for at least some people is heartening, but alas this is only for the few, not the many.

Most adults with intellectual disability in Ireland today continue to live and work in congregated, segregated settings, travel on service buses, their only income a weekly disability allowance; leisure activities taking place at 'special times' and usually in 'special groupings'. The major impact of such a lifestyle is that individuals rarely if ever have any real friends. People spend most of their time with staff who are paid to be with them. The general population on the other hand make decisions about their lifestyle choices all the time. These choices include going to college, deciding on a career, sharing a house with friends

who share common interests, falling in love and sharing a home. If you have an intellectual disability, it is likely that you will be offered a bed in a house with strangers you have nothing in common with other than a disability!

## The Importance of Home

A home means much more than simply having a place to live. Your home is your castle, and it sustains and upholds much that is deeply personal, private and intimate about ourselves, and reflects our identity, values, and preferences for a good life. Though many individuals who have an intellectual disability may require assistance to fully secure, establish and manage a home of their own, this is no reason that they can't be central to the major decisions that we all make in our homes. These include buying the furniture and fittings, deciding who to invite for dinner or stay over, paying the bills, choosing paid staff whomay be employed in our home, and deciding who should have a key. These are all important roles that the majority of us take for granted, but unfortunately are rarely if ever experienced by those living in a group facility. Protection and safeguarding of people who require assistance need not come at the expense of the sovereignty of their homes and lives. There is much cover in the media currently regarding the plight of the homeless, yet individuals with disability who are forced to live in service facilities are not considered to be part of this group.

There are some examples of exciting change taking place in Ireland over the last fifteen years or so where the theory of practice known as Social Role Valorisation, initiated by the late Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, is being applied and implemented. This theory is underpinned by the premise that we are valued in society through the social roles that we hold. These roles include parent, sister, uncle, employee, member of GAA club, neighbour, car owner, church member, and many many more. We are admired and respected in these roles and have numerous opportunities to display our skills, talents and interests. It is through these roles that we meet new people, experience rich and varied things in life, build sustaining relationships that lead to friendships, happiness and fulfilment.



Through the application of this theory of practice, service providers focus on supporting individuals to 'have a life' in ordinary places and establish meaningful interesting roles in their daily lives, instead of keeping people occupied in segregated settings. There are a growing number of excellent examples in Ireland and around the world of people now living a very different life than was previously believed possible.

I worked with a woman who had gone to live in an institution when she was 14 years of age. She described the frightening experience of being brought up the long driveway of the institution that she thought was a prison. She missed her mother so much that she felt a big lump in her throat and she couldn't eat. She lost several stone weight and was given a tonic. As time went on she told me a monster grew inside her and would come out and attack people who made her angry or sad. When she left the large institution she was sent to live in a house with five other people who had a disability and they were total strangers to her. She didn't get on with them and was moved to another similar facility. This went on for several years until the agency changed the way in which people were offered support. This woman went on to rent her own apartment, obtain two part-time jobs, join the local gospel choir and make friends for the first time in her life. Cherished at last and valued.

A person's disability too often defines their life's journey and influences the way in which they are perceived by others. This can include being seen as a child, as a sick person, as content to live and work with others with a disability, unable to have a home of one's own or own a car, not able to have a real job and be paid for it. This causes us to have unnecessarily low expectations of people's potential. When encountering and observing an individual in the company of others where everyone has an intellectual disability, we see the disability first, and we fail to appreciate and recognise that each person

is a distinct human being with personality, ability, strengths, dreams and a strong desire to enjoy the good things of life alongside all of us. I recommend watching Chimamanda Ngozi Adachie on YouTube as she describes her life growing up in Nigeria in a video entitled 'The danger of a single story'.

When our children are young we frequently ask them, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" This ignites the process of dreaming, imagining, playing, striving for 'the good things of life' for their future. Along this journey there is lots of praise, nurturing, fun, pride and just ordinary things that lead to ongoing education and learning about life and relationships. Sadly, the opposite may occur if a child is born with a disability and a family's dreams are often replaced by appointments and many of the ordinary places are replaced by 'special'.

### The ordinary is the most precious thing in life.

Being among family, friends and loved ones keeps us safe. We blossom when we are loved and admired, and grow into valued participating members of our communities with a sense of belonging.

A service to a person with disability needs to be designed 'from scratch' so that intentional supports are put in place to give every opportunity to them, so that they can go on to lead an inclusive, meaningful life together with family and peers.

While we work out new roles for community, service providers and people with intellectual disabilities, and indeed others on the fringes of our society in 2016, we need to remind ourselves that community is better when we are all part of it, thereby ensuring 'the pursuit of the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation'.



MARY KEALY HELPS PRESENT THE THEORY OF SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION TO SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM ALL OVER IRELAND IN A FOUR DAY CONFERENCE AT THE LADY GREGORY HOTEL MAY 2016.

# OVER 55S WANTED, ACTIVITY REQUIRED!

The Gort Active Retirement Groups was formed in 2001 and welcomes active men and women who are retired or over 55. The present committee is Maureen McMahon (Chairperson), Kitty McGrath (Secretary), Maura Costello (Treasurer) and Kathleen Curley (PRO).

Current membership includes 45 members from Gort and surrounding areas such as Labane, Peterswell and Ardahan. Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month in the Social Service Centre, Queen St. when activities, talks and outings are planned and refreshments are served. A trip to a show in Galway is usually organized as well as a pre-

Christmas dinner, concerts and a summer coach trip to places like the Bloom Flower Festival, National Stud and Japanese Gardens or Ashford Castle. Four or five day trips are often combined with the Loughrea ARA and other groups.

This year, recent speakers included a Garda Liaison Officer on how to keep safe, how to apply for personal alarms and Croi on heart health and what to do in the event of a stroke. The Committee also writes letters to local TDs and County Councilors regarding reductions in pensions and other subjects of interest to older people in the area, for example, the flooding that occurred last winter.



BACK ROW, (L-R) TERESA DENIS, MAUREEN MCMAHON, ANN CASSERLY, MONA FAHY, TERESA MURPHY, EIMEAR FAHY, ANN WALSH, KITTY REYNOLDS RIP, UNA MCCOTTER, EILEEN HANSBURY, KITTY GILLANE, EILEEN KELLY, MARY O'REILLY, MARY QUINN RIP, CHRIS HIGGINS, BRIDIE MURRAY, JOHN MURRAY, NOREEN FLAHERTY, MARIE DALY, JOHN DALY, BIRDIE NOLAN, CISS O'DONOHUE, NANCY WALSH, MIM MOLONEY, MARY DOLAN, PHIL NILAN, MARY SCULLY, MARY MELVILLE, BRIDIE CONNOLLY, MARIE DEIGNAN. FRONT ROW, (L-R) MAISIE MURPHY, CAROLINE FORDE, NANCY STANFORD, MAURA COSTELLO, KITTY MCGRATH, KATHLEEN CURLEY.

# 'IF ONLY' A ONE AND ONLY

'If Only', the successful brainchild penned by Shane Counihan and Kevin Glynn of the Wild Swans Theatre Company, came about largely by accident. Unable to find the right play for the cast of actors available to them, the lads, in frustration, decided to do to write one themselves.

'If Only' catapults us back in time to the showband era in Ireland. This original production captures that era's mixture of innocence and darkness as it played out in venues up and down the country, including the famous local institution called the Classic Ballroom in Gort.

'If Only' offers its viewers a chance, for one night only, to open the door to memory and imagination, to lose oneself in a world of freedom and music and love. Each live performance is of course unrepeatable, lending it a highly-charged air, crazy with possibility. It was a brave decision to include 'live' musicians, though difficult to produce, particularly with regards to the complex lighting system executed perfectly under the first class expertise of the late and sadly missed Michael Kilroy, a founder member of the Swans who passed away suddenly this year.

'If Only' charts the lives of a handful of characters thrust apart by a sequence of events, then 25 years on, thrown together again for a funeral. The lapse in time has altered everyone's perspective, influenced by life in the intervening period. All of the characters profiled are familiar, engaging the audience from the get-go and developing chemistry as the play unfolds at a steady pace.

Jack Junior innocently pokes the sleeping bear of this defunct showband, provoking a maelstrom of deeply buried emotions about to be unleashed with significant consequences. Following the sudden death of his father, Jacko, Jack's plucked from a hectic college life in Galway City, duty-bound to help his ailing mother, Maisie, who's struggling under the weight of the family pub and undertaking business as well as a secret illness.

JP, back from England, aches for a time when things were simpler, when life was exciting, fresh and pregnant with expectations. Coming home reminds him that a chunk of his life remains unfulfilled - the chance to get the band together for one night only awakens a dormant excitement, presenting him with an opportunity to close a chapter of his life left unfinished. Mattie, a disillusioned drunk, spends most of his time in Maisie's pub, drinking himself into oblivion to mask the pain of unrequited love, and the bitterness stemming from the break-up of the band. He worries Jack's dreamy notions of being in a

showband will destroy him, like it did the rest of them, and uses every chance he gets to turn him away from music and trouble. Mattie rejects outright any suggestion of putting the band back together, refusing to be part of 'that nightmare', and rears up on JP and Tommy for filling Jack's head with nonsense.

Vera, Mattie's sister, who cleans the pub, is an absolute ticket who says everything out loud, with hilarious consequences. She ball-hops off everyone, especially Tommy, the fast-talking ex-band member and oldest swinger in town, whilst encouraging Jack Junior to follow his dreams and have no regrets.

Tommy, a jolly, harmless character and band member, keeps the audience in stitches with stories of romance and song, breaking the hostile tension in his stride.

Maisie, the love of Mattie's life, drinks to ease the heartache and pain of lost love, while burning hospital appointment letters she thinks no-one's aware of. We learn that long ago when Maisie told Gerry she was two months pregnant, he walked out the door and never came back, or so she believes. Ol' Jack provided Maisie with a wedding ring, and regular beatings over the years to remind her of her fall from grace.

Gerry eventually arrives to complete the line-up. Attacked by the others for running out on them as a band, Gerry defends himself by branding them a shower of drunks and good time merchants who expected him to do everything while they enjoyed the good life on the beer.

'If Only' becomes 'For One Night Only' at full throttle, as hit after hit is belted out to thunderous applause and participation from the audience.

Shane and Kevin have done us proud with this debut - now that they've made a start may they continue long into the future. Keep an eye on the Wild Swans Facebook page for future dates, as well as details of other productions coming on stream in 2017 and beyond.



# GORT'S HAWTHORN BABIES

By Tonii Kelly

In the website maps of the National Monuments Service, a small dot sits just outside Gort, separated from the Gort River by the Pound Road. This is Lavalleylisheen's official 21st century presence, the lingering recognition of a burial ground for unbaptized children, or cillin. On NMS maps it is known as GA 123-063002. The location includes two other historic monuments, a ringfort and a souterrain. None of them have been visited by the NMS since August 24, 1982.

Evidence discovered during archaeological surveys done by the Road Authority suggest there could have been habitation in the area since 2000 BC. The NMS dates the cillin, ringfort and souterrain from 500 to 1000 years AD. Ringforts are generally seen as homesteads of the free social classes of early medieval Ireland. The souterrain could have been a storage area for such a freehold, a place to keep food safe from spoilage. But the cillin had another, later reason for existence: the burial of



CROSS AS GRAVE MARKER

unbaptized babies, babies deemed unfit for church cemeteries.

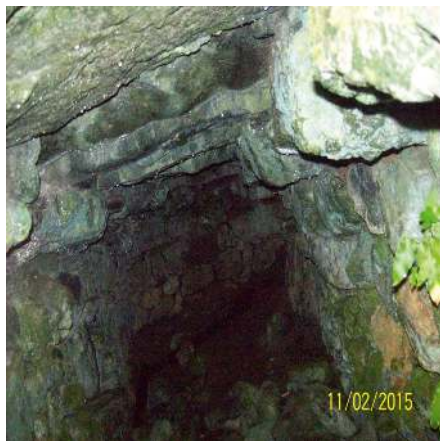
There is hesitation in dating the origin of this graveyard's use as a cillin although most surviving cillini can be dated from the 19th century on. Ireland has a long tradition of separate burials for children, a history discerned from customs, folklore and archaeological investigations. One theory by archaeologists who study prehistoric burials is that burials were used as boundary markers to establish ownership of the land.

The use of a space separate from daily life for cemeteries in Ireland was not really established until the eighth and ninth centuries. It was not until after the eleventh century that clerics in Ireland determined a level of sacredness for burials by the graves' proximity to the

altar of an ecclesiastic site. The liminal, the boundary between the living and the dead, emphasized this distance between a sacred or profane afterlife.

By the 13th century, the Catholic Church had defined Limbo as a place for those who died in a state of original sin, i.e., not yet baptized. In 18th century Ireland, Maynooth began to welcome Jansenist priests from France. They brought with them an uncompromising view of Catholicism that offered no solace for a grieving parent.

This strict interpretation of theology moved through Ireland with the clergy after the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. Limbo, considered a lighter punishment than damnation to hell, was still a place from which no devout parental prayers could move a beloved



INTERIOR OF SOUTERRAIN



child from the stain of Original Sin. Perhaps the significance of the ringfort at Lavallylisheen was its connection with those distant ancestors who could be counted on to protect the child. At other sites in Galway, once-spiritual places offered protection to the unbaptized. Proximity to the walls of abandoned churches or monasteries enabled parents to feel they had provided the best they could for their child's afterlife. Many beliefs grew out of this desire to find some safety for a lost loved one. One such is the belief in the protection of a hawthorn tree. Many cillini contain one, as the hawthorn is seen as the entrance to the realm of the fairies. If the new religion wouldn't protect the unbaptized, perhaps the old one would. The desperation of parents after a pregnancy, perhaps a difficult birth, and then the most tragic outcome of all, a child that doesn't survive, is timeless. Compound that despair with anxiety about that child's afterlife, thanks to the Church's refusal to accept an unbaptized infant. Fear and desperation culminated

in a midnight trip by the baby's father to bury his child into an unmarked grave before the sunrise and sunset of the day following the death. This, as much as any other rule, kept the burials secret and undocumented. Within the 20th century, it is known that several children buried in Lavallylisheen were baptized and may have been placed to rest next to unbaptized siblings. Local tradition says that soldiers from Lough Cutra Castle are also interred. In 2007, the concept of Limbo was revised by the International Theological Commission. Without compromising the importance of baptism, a recognition that the Church did not know what happened to the unbaptized softened its previous hard line. That recognition comes too late for many cillini that, completely forgotten, have been destroyed by development and farming. Unfortunately, others remain concealed. Change has come slowly to Lavallylisheen. In 1957, Fr. Patrick Vaughan held a service for a local family. He sought to organize a team of parish

men to trim and weed the cemetery, but the effort did not last. In later years, Fr. James Walsh consecrated the graveyard. More recently, a Mass was organized by Fr. Noel Gillespie in September of 2013 to honor the loss of baby John Fintan Gillespie in 1943. Some of Lavallylisheen's burials can be identified, such as the Drumm boy's grave, which has broken railings. There are three metal ringed crosses with visible stones. Other grave markers may be covered by the long grass. A wall between the railway and the graveyard now stands as a remembrance wall with stone tablets to record a family's losses. Today, as the generation who knows of these burials passes away, the opportunity for other families to acknowledge a lost one disappears. Editor's Note: Thanks to Professor Toni Maguire, of Belfast University, for allowing me access to her 2014 paper to the EU, Shoe-box babies of Ireland. Thanks also to Dr. Brendan Wilkins of University College Galway.



MEMORIAL WALL AT LAVALLYLISHEEN



# HOLISTIC FAIR: THE WHOLE *Story* By Fidelma Larkin

On 12th May 2016, a sense of nervous curiosity and intrigue descend on Sullivan's Hotel as the Holistic Fair run by Anna Holian set up in the hall downstairs. People milled about: some not wanting to be the first there, some dragging friends along for support and eyeing these mysterious psychics, mediums and healers with trepidation. Some people, afraid to approach said healers and mediums because of what they might told, were still compelled to find out. Today and give themselves time to size up which lady they would eventually approach, the curious browsed the few stalls. The stalls offered an array of books from health and well-being to connecting with the angels, cds of meditation and journey drumming, hundreds of crystals from all over the world, jewellery with precious stones and a host of other goods to improve your life.

One such table had a most peculiar bowl-vase type apparatus with what looked like white smoke coming from it. I was to discover from the lovely Carrie Cotter that it was a diffuser for the essential oils that she sold. Carrie who runs the Care Charity Shop in Gort became an independent distributor of Young Living essential oils last year after being introduced by a friend.

She was enthusiastic about their benefits from general health to using them around the house – did you know adding a few drops of Thieves essential oil blend to your dishwasher helps clean dishes thoroughly and eliminates odours? Or that diluting a few drops of peppermint oil and applying to the temples and the back of your neck will relax muscular tension? Well, we could all do with a little TLC from Carrie.

Beside her was another lady from around Gort – Fiona McDonagh, who is a licenced Acupuncturist, Sound Therapist and soon to be a Cranio Sacral Therapist. What caught my eye on Fiona's table was the huge Tibetan bowl which could fit a small baby in it. Quick as a flash she had me sitting in a chair, taking off my shoes and placing my feet in the bowl. She gently drummed the side of the bowl to make it sing while the vibrations ran up my legs and into my body – a most amazing feeling, I have to say. Fiona runs Soundbath sessions regularly to groups of people where she plays her Tibetan singing bowls to help relax and calm them. It is nice to take time out for oneself every now and then so maybe this would be a great chillax experience to try. In her one to one sessions she combines all three of her therapies to give a deeper healing to the client.

Then I came to the table of Precious Crystal, also known as Margaret, who is a Psychic, Medium, Healer and Teacher. I wondered how she had started this work and what exactly it was. Margaret is as down to earth as you and me. Living near the border when times were chaotic and dangerous, she grew up scared and frightened. Later, she working in a financial job with its own stresses so she joined a course to meditate during her lunch hour. This piqued her curiosity on the whole holistic healing aspect and she went on to do other courses in Reiki, Seichim, Quan Yin. She moved from the border and is now living in Gort. I spotted a machine beside her.

"The Radionics machine," she explained, "does a lot of diagnoses for example checks for viruses in the body, checks the aura, chakras, vertebrae, energy field and for shock/trauma." In doing



CARRIE COTTER



FIONA MCDONAGH





all the courses her intuition and sensitivity grew and her psychic abilities evolved so that she could communicate with energies or spirits of people that have passed over.

This was fascinating. The idea that she could give evidence to someone seeking answers that only that person would understand hence giving them some peace of mind, ease their pain could only be a good thing surely.

Wow! I was gripped by an insatiable need to know more. I spotted a younger lady sitting at her table waiting for clients. I approached her with a little apprehension explaining who I was. Paula was a nurse, she told me, and was born intuitive. I asked her to explain what this meant.

"Well," she said, "when I was a child I was tuned into the energies of others – the knowing, their feelings, their thoughts and their emotions which was quite difficult growing up." She spent a quite a few years developing herself psychically and spiritually for her own healing but along the way people sought her out, asking for help.

I noticed on her business card she did chakra balancing and enquired about this. There are seven main chakras in our bodies from the crown to the base of our spine= "visualize them as spinning energy wheels," she said. People pick up things during their everyday life that may clog these chakras and slow down the spinning. Different people would present with different problems and different extent of problems. Paula can show a client ways to help them clear their chakras and keep them spinning energetically, therefore enhancing their everyday life. She feels her own life purpose is "to empower people to find

their own path and to stay healthy – if more people got in touch with all that there would be less disease and illness in the world – prevention is better than cure." Isn't she just so right?

Hidden in the corner was a lady dressed in red sitting at a small table with only a deck of cards and a crystal ball in front of her I sat to chat to her. Jeanette Marshis from England and had been "born into this". Her parents and grandparents were psychic spiritualists so speaking to angels was very normal to her. She emphasised that it was not her doing the work, she was only a channel and if people in this line of work started to think that they were something special and let their ego take over, they were on a slippery slope and not working for the higher good of others. She reminisced about when she first started coming to Ireland: shemet people who thought they were going mad – they were seeing and hearing things that they didn't understand and thought they would be committed to the looney bin but in actual fact they were psychic – all they needed was to talk to someone who believed them.

Well that was an evening to remember. Could it be possible to heal ourselves physically and mentally without the use of modern medicine? I'm not talking about miracles or psychic surgery but in our general, everyday lives. Could it be possible to connect with spirits that have passed over? Why not? There is life after death, isn't there? Have you ever gone to a psychic, medium or healer for help? Why not? There is no more mystery now, only curiosity.

## A FIRST FOR GORT

GORT WAS REPRESENTED IN TWO PLAYOFFS FOR THE FIRST TIME. FROM LEFT, GARY O'DONNELL (CAPTAIN) OF THE TEAM THAT WON THE CONNACHT SR FOOTBALL 2016, AND AIDAN HARTE OF THE GALWAY SR HURLING TEAM THAT WENT TO THE ALL-IRELAND SEMIFINALS, BUT LOST BY ONE POINT TO TIPPERARY.



# IN OTHER SPORTS



MEMBERS OF THE KILBURN GAELS CYCLED 400 MILES FROM LONDON TO GORT TO RAISE €40,000 FOR THE CORMAC TRUST AND MS IRELAND IN HONOUR OF CATHAL FORDE. THEY WERE JOINED BY MEMBERS OF COOLE WHEELERS AND THE GORT GAA CLUB FOR THE FINAL PUSH INTO GORT ON 31 JULY 2016. (L-R) SEAMUS RICHARDSON, KEVIN CAMPION, BRIAN REGAN, LIAM FORDE, TOM BERGIN, SEAN FORDE, HENRY VAUGHAN, BRAIN FORDE, STEPHEN LAMBERT, GERRY BOOTS, FRANK KEATING, PAUL KILLILEA, KEITH KENNEDY, NIALL FORDE.



THE GORT GOLF CLUB WON THE CONNACHT SHIELD IN 2015. BACK ROW, (L-R) COLM GREALISH, JOHN KELLEHER, NIALL FINNEGAN, PADDY COGHAN (CLUB PRESIDENT), JOHN MELVILLE (TEAM & CLUB CAPTAIN), JIM MCGOVERN (CHAIRMAN GUI CONNACHT BRANCH) KEVIN MULKERRINS, DAVID QUIRKE, MICHAEL MCINERNEY. FRONT ROW: (L-R) SEAN ROCHE, NOEL O'SHAUGHNESSY, MICHAEL CAHILL, JAMES CRONIN RODGER, ROBIN LAHIFFE, EANNA MELVILLE.

# EILEEN BRENNAN TOURNAMENT

Written by Sixth class pupils of Gort National School

The Eileen Brennan Tournament is a memorial hurling competition. Pupils of 4th, 5th and 6th class of Gort National School were involved in the competition held over three weeks in June. Four teams took part in a seven-a-side tournament. Each team got to pick a county name: Waterford, Kilkenny, Clare and Tipperary. Each team had three matches to decide who would play the final.

The tournament was organised by Brian Brennan, who gives up his time to come to this school to train and encourage the pupils in hurling. This is the third year the tournament has been held. It is the first time the girls have had the opportunity to participate as Scoil Eoin and The Convent Primary School have amalgamated since September 2015. The final was held in the

school pitch on the 16th of June 2016. In the final it was Waterford vs Kilkenny. On the Waterford team they had Sean, Ava, Thomas, Alex, Zack, Culann and Deidre. (Substitute used was Eduarda). On the Kilkenny team there was Dylan, Chelsea, Daniel, Adam, Josh, Aoife and Alannah. (Subs used were Cáitlín & Gráinne).

Gort Credit Union generously sponsored our brand-new colourful jerseys. These attractive jerseys were worn by the Waterford team on the day with the Kilkenny team toging out in the old school kit.

Waterford started the strongest led by their outstanding captain Sean Gormally and were winning by 3-2 to 0-0. The second half proved that this was a

game of two halves. Kilkenny, who were deflated at half time, started the second half with renewed energy. Their hard effort and teamwork got them over the line at the final whistle.

The winning score was 3-2 to Waterford and 3-4 to Kilkenny. The medals were presented to the winning team by Eileen's nephew Colm Brennan and the Perpetual cup was handed to the team captain, Dylan Murphy, by Eileen's sister Mary O' Donovan.

A great day was had by all who attended and participated. No doubt this tournament will grow from strength to strength in the future. We are looking forward to many more exciting and sporting matches in years to come.



BACK ROW, (L-R) JOSHUA NESTOR, CHELSEA NOLAN, CAITLIN MCGRATH, ADAM DEELY, JUDITH GANTLEY (COACH). FRONT ROW, (L-R) TALITHA COSTELLO, GRÁINNE MONAGHAN, DYLAN MURPHY, DANIEL DONOVAN.

# NEXT GENERATION STARS



U13A1 HURLING CHAMPIONS 2015 - GORT GAA CLUB. BACK ROW (L-R) SHANE COUNIHAN (FIRST AID), GERRY QUINN (TRAINER), STAN CAHILL (MENTOR), SEAN O'CONNOR (MANAGER). MIDDLE ROW: EOIN KILLEEN, LUKE MURRAY, GABRIEL RODGISSANTES, JAMIE CALLANAN, ADAM MINOGUE, BARRY DERMOTT MURPHY, MARK DUFFY, EOIN COOLEY, JACK LINNANE, PAUL ZSIGA, BEN CAHILL, TADGH MELVILLE, JAMES GORMALLY, PADRAIG LINNANE (MENTOR), WAYNE WALSH (TRAINER). FRONT ROW: EANNA MARREN, ADAM O'CONNOR, NATHAN GILL, TIERNAN FINN, DIARMUID HELEBERT, IVAN MCGRATH, PATRICK COMMINS, LORCAN WALSH, KEITH MULCAIR, PETER NOLAN, NIALL CUNNINGHAM, NIALL CARR, NATHAN SMITH.



ST COLMAN'S U10 CAMOGIE TEAM DEFEATED CASTLEGAR IN DIV 5 SHIELD FINAL. BACK ROW, (L-R) MARIELLA SCANLON, MIA SHILLITOE, CAOIMHE FAHY, CHLOE O'GRADY, EMER STAUNTON, AMELIA HARDIMAN, ZARA COPPINGER, SARAH NOLAN, ANNA CUMMINS, AMY CONNORS. FRONT ROW, (L-R) LEAH KERANS, CORA GANTLEY, LUCY KILROY, CIARA GREHAN, LUCY CUMMINS, AVA O'DONOVAN, AMY MELVIN.