Is this GORT?

Bridget Noone

Have you ever wondered what makes Gort click? Personally I don't ever expect to arrive at the answer.

Gort is a town with advantages and disadvantages. Some love it, some don't. Is it Peyton Place or Utopia?

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

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

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

PEYTON PLACE

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

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

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

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

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Introducing

The inhabitants of Gort reach back into the mists of time. The

three districts of Co. Galway were known as Hy Fachiachail Ealgen in the
county.

There were two royal residences in this territory, one on the present site of

guire Castle and the other on the island formed by the Gort river.

Guire was the king of Connacht at the time and the town is supposed to

got its name from him. Gort House Guire means "the field on the island

Guire" and of course the island is the one on which his castle was built.

At the end of Barrack St. you can see the military barracks on the island

these barracks are now used as stores by Coen's in Gort. Guire was

named for his generosity and we all learned at school that one out of his

arms longer than the other from giving.

IKEE'S AND O'SHAUGHNESSY'S

the middle of the 14th century

Burke's (or De Burgo's) had

ted extensive territories in Galway

were known as Clancassans

ricardis included the baronies of

Dunleelin and Loughrea

were all in the diocese of

End of the 14th century

De Burgo's controlled the

eastern portion of the diocese

the remainder was controlled by

chieftains. The O'Shaughnessy's

local chieftains of this area

their chief residence was on

3 in the site of Guire's Castle.

few years prior to King Henry

becoming Supreme Head of the

Church in England, the O'Shaughnessy's

made a Knight and

ed his hereditary estates by royal

1599 Sir Dermot O'Shaughnessy

tained the Lord Deputy when he

ed near Gort and from this we

that he paid lip service to the

ation and thereby to the Crown.

16th century

At the beginning of the 19th

called John Prendergast

Smith inherited the O'Shaughnessy

estates. He became Baron of Killarney

on May 1st 1810 and was created

Viscount Gort on 2 January 1816.

He lived in the Bridge House in

Gort which is now the Convent of

Mercy. Under his patronage factories

were established and flourished — a

brewery was the most famous of these.

Colonel Smith commissioned Mr.

Payne, an architect, to build a mansion

for him on the southern shore of

Lough Cutra. It was completed after

his death by Colonel Venner, his

nephew, who succeeded to his titles

and estates. Colonel Venner also had

the grounds landscaped by a Mr.

Sutherland.

The castle is in the Tudor style and

the walls are of finely chiselled

limestone. The building cost £50,000.

In 1847 the 3rd Viscount Gort

inherited, but the estates were saddled

with debts amounting to £60,000.

Because of the famine he was unable

to pay the interest on the mortgage and

so the castle and property were sold for

£17,000 to Mrs. Bell, superintend

of the Religious Order of Loreto,

Dublin.

It now became a convent and

school but some years later was sold to

Lord Gough for £24,000. Some years

ago it was bought back by the present

Lord Gort.

THE MILL

The Mill was built in 1805—06 and

the miller was a man named Mannion

from Dublin. It was built on the

mainland to the East of the now

famous island. The miller eventually

became bankrupt and the mill was

taken over by the Hynes family

towards the end of the last century.

The mill was joined to the island by

bridge, probably for the convenience

of the troops stationed in the military

barracks. The mill stopped functioning

about fifteen years ago, but the mill

can still be seen — though rotten —

and so also can the cobblestones and

original buildings.

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

The minutes of the Church of

Ireland state that the original Church

on the site was wooden and that it was

built in the middle of the 18th

century. Some headstones in the

graveyard support this theory — for

example one erected to the memory of

Robert Miller who died in 1762 aged

69 years.

Local people substantiate this

wooden Church theory as they say they

heard it from their parents and

grandparents. The present stone

structure was designed by Mr. Payne

and built in 1814 at the estimated cost

of £2,000.

The style is late Gothic with a

Tower and Spire. In 1877 it was

renovated and the Church built by the

subscriptions of parishioners and

friends. It is interesting to note the

original cost in comparison to the cost

of the present innovations — estimated

locally to be in excess of £40,000.

OTHER GORT BUILDINGS

In 1815 the present courthouse was

built which was a very spacious

structure for the time. The God,

dating from about the same time was

built above the bridge, bespoke

Marlborough and on the site where

Coen's now have their shops.

If you go up the railway road and

stop just at the back of these shops,

you can still see a portion of the

original wall of the God, extending to

the height of the present building and

forming part of the back wall.

The R.I.C. barracks was situated

where Tony O'Connor now lives. A

large building, it had a facade of the

usual chiselled limestone. An

important addition to the military

barracks was made in 1814—15

containing quarters for commissioned

officers. Unfortunately, virtually every

trace of the old castle was done away

with by this new building.

Good business houses were built in

Bridge St. and the Square about this
time. They were built with strict

towards symmetrical appearance of

the streets. The topographical

dictionary listed 565 houses in the

town at the time. The population was

over 3,000 before the famine but

dropped to 1,500 after it.

Local people say that the houses on

the Church side of the Square were

originally built with the idea of the

front overlooking the river and the

back looking out on the Square. One

can imagine the view from those

houses at the time as being one of

green fields with two Churches on the

extreme right and the ground sloping

gently to the river bank. Locals

say the southerly facade of these

houses is the most ornate side, though

this is difficult to see after all the

building additions.

HOUSE DESIGNS

These houses have two interesting

features. Some of them are four stories

high and have several steps leading

towards the front door, while others

have only three stories. The houses

appear to the naked eye, however, to be

of uniform height. One feels that it was

for this reason that some steps leading

towards the front door; others where the

slope downhill is greatest have steps and

a basement — the remainder have no

steps or basement.

Secondly, all these houses, like all

the other buildings built in the town at
Gорт CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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

Question: What about industry? Any progress in this area?
Answer: At the moment there are no Chamber members that have been co-opted to the Local Development Committee. However, we hope that these Chamber members will work towards trying to improve employment prospects in the town.

Question: How would you review progress to date?
Answer: We are satisfied with what has been achieved in the last two years. I suppose the two festivals are what have made most impact on the town, but we are also working well in other areas.

Question: Would you mention some of these?
Answer: We promoted two big car rallies, the Galway International Circuit of Ireland rally, securing an all day stop-over for the two of them. This helped business in the town. We also succeeded in improving Gört's overall position in the Tidy Towns Competition. In this year's competition we jumped from the "Very Good" to the "Exceptionally Good" category. We painted some derelict buildings and built up some walls.

Question: You mentioned the Tidy Towns Competition... What is it?
Answer: The Tidy Towns Competition is an annual event where towns compete to improve their appearance. Gört has been participating for the last few years and has been improving its position consistently.

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Festival Week

John Finnegan

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

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

FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

With hunting, banners and street music providing the Festival mood, the occasion was officially opened on Sunday September 29th, by Mr. Tom Hussey T.D., then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and now Minister of State at that Department. In spite of the awful weather conditions, the weekend activities commenced and thousands of people flocked into the town to participate in a most varied programme. Highlights of the programme included Boxing, for the first time ever in Gort, Cabaret and Dancing, a Donkey Derby, a Bonnie Baby Show, Sporting activities of all kinds, Ballad Group Competitions and an Open Air Feast. The selection of representatives of the town, Gort's Wild Rose proved to be a most popular event and that first year the honours went to Miss Dervilla Moore, a University student from Kilcolgan.

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

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

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

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Poet's Corner

Nature

Niall Shaw

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

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

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

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

YESTERDAY

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

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

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

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

Bernadette Halvey

DISCARD

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

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

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

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

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

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

The High King, who had watched his interest, pretended to be moved. "Your tears will not save your life", he said. "Have you another request?" "I have", replied Guaire, "do not take my life until I take off my shirt to give to this poor man".

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

AONACH TAILTEANN

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

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

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

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

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

Déana mar a dhéanadh Guaire an t-teann abhuaise croí ceannach dar gcait ní oscaí Caith le díre nach a bfoiltear.

GORT G.A.A.

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

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

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

THE PAST

This past is laden with some honours: A senior championship was back in 1934; Intermediate 1956, Junior 1964 and Minor in 1957; 59 and 74. Gort also won the County Junior football championship in 1938.

Gort has supplied many distinguished players to Galway teams over the years. The Gallagher brothers, Josie and Stephen, and Tadgh Kelly were members of the great Galway hurling teams that won the Railway Cup in 1947 and National League in 1951. Paddy Donnelly of Dublin, who twice held Christy Ring, scored a goal during the summer that he regarded Josie Gallagher as one of the all-time greats of hurling.

THE FUTURE

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

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

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

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ST. COLMAN'S WELL

Brendan Long

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

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

Another story says that Roinneach is thrown into the Poll Tuathail in stieltown. This is a dry hole and it called Poll Tuathail because the ter there swiths against the 40 underground. Roinneach was left there subterranean by the sun and earth surface again below the terraced new school.

THE WELL

Roinneach made her way across the retail to Corker where she rested. Her baby was born. Ther was no terr to baptise the child. Roinneach yed and two monks happened to be the first. One of them, desstanding Roinneach's dictum, pulled a screw from the ivy and immediately water sprang. The child was baptised and received name Colman which means 'little sea'.

As for the two monks, one of them was a bane and the other blind. Both were cured after they bathed in the river. The monk who had been blind looked towards the North east and observed: "Ta sé inni bín" and that is how Lahane got its name.

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

"Chuir an Thathair Hieron O Fatha O.D. agus muintir an Phharaisde an Crois seo mar in oinóir do Naomh Mac Duiach a rugadh i an áit seo. Aois Christt 916 BC."

THE ORATORY

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

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


The oratory is about fourteen feet in height at the apex and about ten feet wide. It is all concrete. The sides of the domed roof are perfectly symmetrical and beautifully converging to the central point on which a concrete cross is erected.

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

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

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

On the 29th October, the feast of Ceremonies begin at the Well with Mass and Holy Communion at 3 o'clock. This is followed by the traditional Station - the 'rounds' are made while reciting seven Our Father's and seven Glory be to the Father's. A talk on St. Colman is now given and the ceremonies finish with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in Kiltarman Church.

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

Tradition says that St. Roinneach is buried under the Cross at the spot where she gave birth to St. Colman. The people of Kiltartan take a pride in their ancient heritage. Year after year they come led by their parish priest to prepare the Well and its surroundings for the pilgrimage. Patrons and sons work feverishly for evenings beforehand tending with loving care to the paths leading to the Well - trimming the grass, clipping branches of the famous ash tree near the Well. Here is a community spirit in action.

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

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

SALUTE TO YEATS

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

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

But Yeats, we do salute
And grant him justice, thank him
For a wondrous heritage.

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

Niall Finnegan, the youngest member of Gort Golf Club was called and the big step was taken. Gort Golf Club was to move to lands at Layhite Shaughnessy. Problems were but reasonable to expect, financial and otherwise. Every Joe McEnery handicap was cleared by an outstanding team of men who came to clear away walls and bushes, design and develop what we now enjoy. Voluntary subscriptions from some, a £100 levy from all, wonderful fund raising efforts by a magnificent Ladies Section all made progress possible. By March of 1976 we had our first competition - later that year the clubhouse was completed. The men and women who made all this possible have every reason to be proud and certainly people of this calibre will no doubt continue to develop this course still further. It is worthy of mention that no state aid or grant of any kind was received.

SUCCESS
Gort Golf Club won two Connacht title in 1978 – the Connacht Shield and the Jimmy Brun trophy. This was a fine achievement by a small club. The team panels were:

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

Jimmy Brun: Gerry Cahill, Noel Mullins, Val Hoarty, Joe McEnery, Niall Finnegan, Johnny Cummins, Chris Nestor, Frank Shaw, Thomas Quigley, John Molyman, Pat Burke.

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

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

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

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

author unknown

Princess Grace of Monaco with her daughter Caroline outside Glynn’s Hotel Gort in May 1981.
The two slender church towers rising into the skyline can be seen from any road approaching Gort. They belong to the Protestant and Hocic communities of Gort. Nowadays they belong to the people of Gort.

The Protestant Church was built in 4 at the then enormous cost of 100. Its architect was John Nash of London who also designed Lough Cutra Castle. His two assistants were George and John George of Gort. Banbridge the estate bridge over the Gort river in 1800 going on to build Lough Cutra Castle and the Protestant Church in early 19th century.

The Church of Ireland served a representation of the Gort community, which numbered about 40 at the time. Families included the landlords of the area, the Goughs of Lough Cutra, the Buggots of Shinn and Gregorys of Cookes.

CHURCH GIVEN TO PEOPLE

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

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

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

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

QUIZ

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

UNDER 14

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

OVER 14

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

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

PADDY NOLAN – THE LAST OF THE SHOE MAKERS

By a friend

On Good Friday 1977 Paddy Nolan, the last of the Gort shoemakers, was laid to rest. Paddy was a man of many parts, truly a man for all seasons. He was known to everyone, young and old. He was an expert at everything he turned his hands to.

Apart from being a wonderful shoemaker, he was an expert violinist, piper, fishermen, fly-maker, trumpeter, and a marvel on the flute, piccolo and tin whistle.

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

Paddy got some of his greatest delight when the flies he tied became perfect enough to entice the wary trout. Perfect the flies had to be as Paddy spent a lot of time examining material specimens under his magnifying glass, and faithfully copying them in his reproduction.

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

He loved Gort and Gort loved him. At dhiubh Dé go raibh a ainm uasal.
Charmmatic Movement has come to Gort. It was started by Larry Megan (R.T.E.) at the end of post. Prayer meetings are held in Convent Secondary School on Fridays at 8 o'clock. An ever-increasing number enjoy the get-togethers.

Mentally Handicapped

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

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

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

Chairman: Fr. Power; Vice-Chairman: Tom Staunton; Secretary: Mrs. Judy Conroy; Treasurer: Mrs. Marie Devlin; P.R.O.: Mr. J. Porteous.

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

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

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

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

Yeats

The Yeats Gregory Summer School is held every July. Under the direction of Dr. Louis Muirhead, Queens University, Belfast, a series of lectures is presented on a selection of Yeats' poetry at the Tower in Ballylue or, weather permitting, in Colee Park.

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

Youth

Kathleen O'Regan, the Square, Gort writes:

Gort has not got what the youth of to-day need. There is nothing but a Pool Hall and for some reason or other parents don't seem to like it.

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

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

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

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

Grease

Rosemary Shaw

The long awaited follow-up to the original hit movie 'Saturday Night Fever' reached the screens of Ireland on the 15th of September. John Travolta's 'Dog' could only be bettered by the performance of the King of Rock and Roll himself, Elvis Presley. The dance competition was won, of course, by Danny and his dance partner ONLY Cha Cha played by Annette Charles. Those of you who saw 'Saturday Night Fever' will remember her.

The story is based on Rydell High School and centres mainly around Sandy and Danny danced respectively by Olivia Newton-John and John Travolta. They have their ups and downs during the course of their relationship but happily and inevitably everything ends the way it's supposed to. Rizzo, played by Stockard Channing, was very entertaining as was Frenchy played by Didi Conn.

The high point of the show was of course 'The High School Dance' which showed John Travolta as the next best thing to Gene Kelly. The music for the dance was supplied by Sha Nae who is a very well known American Rock and Roll group. They made their fame in the film 'American Graffiti'.

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

Songs

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

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

The River Beagh is the largest river in Gort area. It is known to locals by different names, including the Blackwater, the Gort Water, and the Gorta River. The course of the river closely parallels the digit '2'; and it is an example of a water-way in one region since it is partly man-made.

Beagh has its source in Lough 2 miles S.S.E. of Gort town, leaving the lake the river flows in a steady direction, following a winding course until it reaches a depression called the bowl where the swirling water enters into the pervious limestone. Travelling underground for 1 hundred yards, the river re-enters again in a tree-lined hollow the Black Water. The water passes down a slope of three yards before sinking in a slow pool beside the Gort–Ennistymon road. River appears briefly in an open, steep-walled pot-hole the Ladle about 200 yards west of the Blackwater swallow-hole.

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

**WATER SUPPLY**

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

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

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

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

About 2½ miles North of Gort the river disappears again at a place called Peeloor Hill sink. It consists of an open rock face with the water running into a large cwm. Driftwood has accumulated about the sink and the ledges around the swallow-hole are littered with debris.

Having travelled underground for 1 mile in a westerly direction the river surfaces at Poulduagh rising in the vicinity of Kiltarmin Church. From here it enters Coole Demense, once the home of Augusta Gregory, it goes underground twice within the grounds and finally flows into Coole Lake, a turlough 1½ miles North East of Gort.

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

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

**Chairman:** Michael Cunningham

**Secretary:** Peadar O'Conaire

**Treasurer:** Colman Keane

The first Scout Unit was formed in Gort in 1931. John O'Gone was Chairman of the Committee. Scout Master was Gerard Keane, assisted by Joe Hanahan.

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

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

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The Square Gort
THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF THE "GALWAY STAR"
By W.M. Quinn

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

The seed that blossomed into the colourful, controversial adjudicated and led flower "The Galway Star" was planted at a political meeting in greta, circa 1947. say cefa, for my records and copies have been consigned to the garbage occasioned by a dumpy cellar and the waning interest that accompanied re - crumbling into understandable confetti.

hat Loughrea meeting was said over by the piece of editorial, enthusiastic and over-enthusiastic Stan ride - a meeting of the Clann na saigh party locally, of which I was much advocate. We heralded a new d - Socialist Party, that would t - the link with sterling and bring a needed reform to this country. And the last of the vestigialogical of the vested interests was attacked on us.

Given after session drink it was her deeply keen Committee ber, who suggested that a political success depended on a paper town.

The STAR ARRIVES

Anna Fail's first rise was due to its sufficient four page tabloid 'An Ach' later the Irish Press. By its ran writings in favour of Fianna, it helped put them in miment.

The next, William M. Quinn, contributing editor, Sub-editor, advertising agent, letter writer and columnist. Into that unhappy bargain I was a rotten bad accountant which later proved my undoing. Then I was riding high - a semi-detached house on the Ennis Road, two doors from the Classic Ballroom and now occupied by the Cox family. I pinpoint location lest some half-wit should decide to disgrace me with a plaque there when I was no longer present to protest. No laurels should be unfurled till the Printers Ink is a hundred years dry.

WHAT THE STAR WAS LIKE
It was a four page tabloid that embraced a miscellany of matter - Court reports from Gort, Kinnara, Ardbane, Loughrea and Galway. As now it was an age of suppression. Once a defendant offered crisp notes to ensure omission. Dare I be contradicted but I never accepted a bribe or published anything I deemed harmful or unjust.

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

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

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

I forestalled Angela McNamara by years with my 'Advice Column' - send your problems to me'. They came by post, often in the middle of the night by personal rattle on the hall door knob - mostly romantic intrigues or a man 'in trouble'.

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

EXIT THE STAR
The Galway Star dragged on to its inevitable conclusion - exit about 1953, wallowing deeper into debt. I had not the acumen to brain to foresee it in time. I lost my house on the Ennis Road - the Sheriff moved in. I found happy shelter in a caravan for twelve years - a heavenly haven, the happiest years of my life.

In hindsight it was an overpowering one man effort. It gave some enjoyment, I hope; occasionally caused embarrassment as most papers do at some time. However I have no regrets. I swapped wealth for justice. I survived. Financially I was in ruins from which I failed to emerge to this day. But there is a web of nostalgia, achievement and a feeling of self-righteousness that I wouldn't swap for a job 'permanent and pensionable'.

Sport for all day
Brendan Long

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

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

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

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

The stoney road off Gallaghers's Lane posed numerous feet problems. The road seemed to bob up and down before you. A sense of achievement was very much once the course was completed. All were presented with a certificate by Gaspoir on finishing.

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

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

The day proved a very enjoyable one. It is hoped that everyone will take up some form of physical activity. It would be nice if people shook themselves and livened up the weekends. Can might not be used as much now when we have to get across the road or down the street. Everything is to be gained. It will ensure good health for those who take it up regularly.
HYNES’ OLD WATER MILL GORT

W.M. Quinn

A few Irish districts can boast a heritage so rich in literary and historic citations as Gort. To this day it is a hospitable and architecturally pleasing town, and is renowned for its medieval and ogilvian beauty. The Round Tower of Kilmacduagh and St. John’s seven Churches. The seven woods of Coole, home of playwright Lady Gregory, are just one mile north and three miles further north is Turlough Castle, the residence of the Earls of Clanricarde. Here Edward Martyn, patron of the Arts and founder of the struma choir, lived — a benevolent bachelor.

Tourists are aware through Bord Fáilte of the many interesting sites of medieval remains. But most residents of the town itself are unaware of a link with our simple past — the water mill just off George’s Street, the Railway Station.

HOW THE MILL WORKED

Surely the intrusion of the oil and the E.S.B. is a vital in the lives of the farming community for miles around. Surely the Big Wheel went round and driven only by the free rushing of the Blackwater river — no fuel, no dependency on Saudi Arabia or imperial electric power. But its age of simple living, of hard work and of the need for independence from the outside world, is gone. And with it has gone the old-fashioned, old-fashioned way of life.

In my youth, fifty years ago it was a lucky school boy who had a bottle of milk or cold tea with a chunk of brown bread for his school lunch. The lucky ones had a scone of home-made Blackberry jam on the bread. Most ate it “natural” and licked the crumbs in hungry delight.

They were none the worse for it.

To-day it’s fast cars, frozen vegetables, butchers meat and costly crisps. Frozen banquet and a “fast-food” from home door to school door. A meal with a meal, but without the nourishment of the old-fashioned way of life.

The Round Tower

This building is unique in some respects. It is Ireland’s only leaning Tower; it is inclined about two feet from the vertical. It is also the country’s highest tower, being 11½ feet high. No satisfactory explanation has been given as to why it leans. The sill of the doorway is 26 feet from the ground being at the highest elevation of any of our Round Towers. The conical top was restored in 1978/9 and at the time birds’ eggs and oyster shells were found in the base; under these there is water under the foundation of the Tower, were skeletons.

The Cathedra1

The west part of the nave of the cathedral is a small structure, originating from the tenth or eleventh century which was lengthened eastwards in the twelfth century. A northern and southern transept, a new chancel and altar, were added later. The west door which is blocked up, has an inclining jamb and a flat-headed or lintelled. The northern transept was known as the O’Shaughnessy chapel and is believed to have been the mortuary chapel of that family. Opposite the entrance a small statue of the Annunciation stands on a small table in the round.

Seancloch

House of the Clergy, a large square building north of the cathedral. It is strong and well built. It was the residence of the Bishop on the upper floor is a room looking N.E. from which it is said, the bishop blessed the pilgrims who came there. It is being re-roofed at present.

Teampull Mhuire

This is on the opposite side of the road, a road which was built by
**Letters to the Editor**

_Coughswell_ 7 October 1978.

Dear Enda,

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

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

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

Don't forget all those great men and women who down the years helped make Gort what it is. Saint Colman, King Conaile, Paddy Nolan, Monsignor Fally, Jim Gallagher and Tadhg Kelly, George Daly and their splendid father, the Archdeacon, Sir Joseph Glynn, Sir Roger O'Shaughnnessy, Lady Gregory and Pat Mulhern, Birdie Forrest, Berdie Dalton, Molly Glynn O'Brien, Dr. Gerry Coyne and Mr. Carter, the dentist, Fr. Christy Burke and the ever faithful Mercy, Miss Bolan, Mossy Nolan, George Ross, Ned Treston, Fr. George Quinn and St. Colman's Park. Mick Jordan, Boyle Fogarty, Toinie Fally, Jack Scallon, Thomasen Dwyer, Ma Shaugnessy, Mattie Collins and your local editorial ancestor W.M. Quinn.

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

The magazine will require hours of hard work - much of it, as you know tedious. But it will be appreciated. Might I suggest here that people who want the publication to continue might consider giving you a donation above and beyond the selling cost. This will secure financial security at a time when printing costs are soaring. As a gesture in this direction I am happy to send you a small cheque. Every good wish, Enda,

Yours sincerely,

Martin Coen.

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**Kilmacduagh Monastery**

**John Lally**

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

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

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

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

The Round Tower

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

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

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