

NOVEMBER 2018

ISSUE 36

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# GU AIRE

MAGAZINE

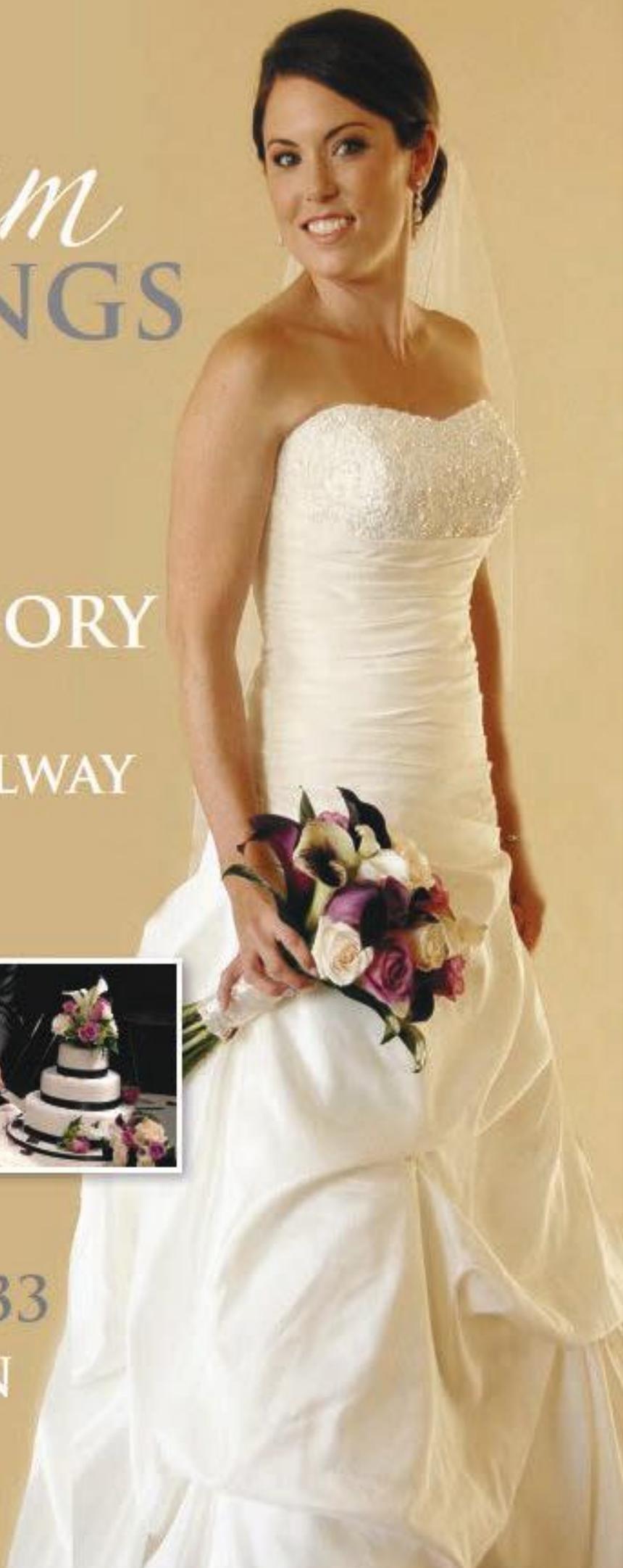
**CELEBRATING 40 YEARS  
AS GORT'S COMMUNITY MAGAZINE**

# *Dream* WEDDINGS

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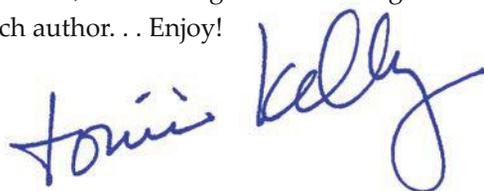
# Editor's Note

The Guaire Magazine celebrated some amazing “firsts” this year. The first Guaire Magazine Children’s Writing Competition was a huge success, with workshop attendees from as far away as Portumna and Kinvara. The creativity of our contestants is astounding! You can read the winning entries inside this edition. I’m certain you will want to see more in 2020, as we have already had enquiries for future workshops and contests.

Another first was the Guaire Magazine’s donation of a plaque, carved by Jethro Sheen of Sheen Stone Works, to identify the entrance to the Lavallylisheen Children’s Graveyard. As one of our commitments to community service, we were delighted to contribute to the work done there. And of course, this year the Guaire Magazine Committee celebrated 40 years of existence.

Many changes have occurred in Gort since that first issue. Today, new initiatives in town are fueled by the synthesis of natural beauty and cultural history that make this location such a magnet for tourism. Inclusion into the Wild Atlantic Way, local efforts to finally create a River Walk, and an increased recognition that residents must protect the assets that attract tourism-related industry indicate the truth of the old saying: “If you don’t use it, you can lose it.”

This year we have articles from a variety of Gort residents and descendants. We could not choose between them, so we used them all! As you read this 2018 edition, one message shines through: the love of home shared by each author. . . Enjoy!



We thank the following for their support of the Guaire: An Post Ardrahan; An Post Gort, Crowe St.; Gerry Burke’s, Georges St.; Centra, Georges St; Corrib Oil, Crowe St.; Education World, Bridge St.; Emo Oil Wild Atlantic Way Service Station, Kinvara; Gillane’s, Clune; Gort Credit Union, Bridge St.; Gort Garden Centre, Tubber Road; Gort Parish Office; Hawkins, Georges St.; Howley’s Service Station, Ennis Road; Keane’s, The Square; O’Callaghan’s News and Views, Bridge St.; Quinn’s, Labane; Super Value’s First Chapter, Tubber Road.

Running for the past 40 years, Guaire Magazine 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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November 2018/Issue 36

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# ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE 2018



GRAND MARSHALLS FROM LEFT: AISLING ROCK, CLIONA D'ARCY AND SOPHIE BURKE-CAHILL LEAD THE PARADE IN A HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE. AISLING, FROM GARRYLAND, HAD JUST WON GOLD IN THE EUROPEAN YOUNG CHEFS AWARDS, WHILE CLIONA AND SOPHIE, BOTH FROM GORT, HAD EACH WON GOLD IN THEIR RESPECTIVE WEIGHT DIVISIONS IN THE EUROPEAN GOLDEN GIRLS BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS.

Thousands braved the bitter cold to witness Gort's St Patrick's Day Parade which was one of the most successful to date. Proceedings started with Fr Tommy Marrinan PP blessing the shamrock and distributing it to a colour party of Gort Scouts Group. Grand Marshalls, Aisling Rock, Cliona D'arcy and Sophie Burke-Cahill led the parade in a beautiful horse drawn carriage. The walking groups and floats took to the theme of "The Flight of the Dishes" in many imaginative ways.

The overall winners were Sullivan's Hotel, celebrating the family's sixty years in Gort. They were presented with the John "Tractor" Lally Memorial Trophy, and the Gort Credit Union cash prize.

The Runners-up were Busybees Creche.

Category prizewinners:

Most Humorous: Gort Credit Union

Best Children's Entry: Tobar Pheadair Boxing Club.

Best Commercial Entry: Tommy O'Donnell's Pub.  
Best Community Entry: Gladiators Rugby Club, anticipating Ireland's Grand Slam victory later in the afternoon, and promoting their "He Rose of Tralee" on 30th March.

Most Topical: "Food Cloud" prepared by Mary Helly and Annie Rozario.

Best Vintage Car: Gareth Chapman, Peterswell with his 1959 Rover 105.

Best Vintage Tractor: Eamon Dempsey, Tierneevin with his early 1960's Fordson Dexta.

Best Entry to Theme: Gort Scouts Group with an active display of cooking and outdoor fires on their float.

Window Displays: 1st, Keanes, Bridge Street, 2nd, Kitty Gillane, 3rd, Community Aid Thrift Shop.

Best Schools Group: Gaelscoil na bhFili.

Gort Fire Brigade promoted their fundraising sleep-out in aid of the homeless on 22nd March.

Gort Set Dancers and Gort Gymnastics Group performed under cover in the new marquee



MEMBERS OF GORT ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE COMMITTEE AND HELPERS PICTURED WITH THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL VINTAGE FOOD VAN. FROM LEFT, SHANE CASEY, COLIE BIRMINGHAM, MARY MOLONEY, ADRIAN FEENEY, ANNA O'DONNELL, JOHN SULLIVAN (SULLIVAN'S HOTEL OVERALL WINNERS), SEAMUS KILLEEN, NOEL CORLESS, TERESA BUTLER AND PADRAIC GIBLIN. MISSING FROM PHOTO; MARY FORDE FLAHERTY AND BRID QUINN.



PROVIDING MUSIC ON THE SQUARE AFTER THE PARADE; FROM LEFT, CHRISTY HURLEY,, COLIE MORAN, FR TOMMY, WILLIE DOORHY, SIOBHAN O'HALLORAN, GRAND MARSHALLS CLIONA DARCY, SOPHIE BURKE-CAHILL, AISLING ROCK AND TERESA BUTLER.

purchased by the parade committee, the Gort Show, and the Cooley-Collins committee. The Galway County Council Vintage Food Van attracted much attention. Anna and Hannah O'Donnell provided working demonstrations, with commentary on various cookery dishes as part of Galway's status as European Region of Gastronomy in 2018. Working vintage displays were provided by Francis Linnane, Gort, Sean Collins, Six Mile

Bridge, Paddy Joe McMahon, Boston, Tubber and Matthew Orford, Castledaly. The Parade was reviewed by Sr De Lourdes and Teresa Butler (both Burren Lowlands), Michael Fahy MCC, Gerry Finnerty MCC, Anne McInerney, Gort Credit Union and Adrian Feeney, Chairman, parade committee. Colm Farrell provided a lively commentary as the parade passed the review stand.

# ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY

## TRAVELS IN MYANMAR

BY PATRICK HYNES

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The lady at Yangon airport was the first person that I saw with some kind of lemon yellow paint adorning her cheeks and forehead. Later in the city, I passed by women with the same lemon yellow paint coating their cheeks, and sometimes their nose and forehead. Called thanaka, it is made from the wood of several trees. It is seen as a statement of beauty but also protection from sunburn!

You could be forgiven for asking what is going on in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). The country had been closed to outside world for more than 50 years. Back in 2013 there was excitement that this was starting to change since a new government came to power in March 2011. Prior to this, rule was under an oppressive military junta from 1962 to 2011. Following the lifting of Western sanctions, Myanmar became a magnet for tourists. Sadly, since my trip to Myanmar, much of the news from Myanmar focuses on the plight and persecution against the Rohingya people, who live in Rakhaing (Arakan) State in the Western part of Myanmar,

many of whom have now become refugees as a result of conflict and violence. Since August 2017, over 600,000 Rohingya refugees have fled Myanmar for refugee camps over the Bangladesh border. Sometimes described as the “world's most persecuted minority”, there are allegations of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya people by the Myanmar military. International observers have criticised Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, for her failure to condemn the alleged ethnic cleansing. When I was in Myanmar, tourists were not encouraged to visit the Rakhaing State area and now in hindsight I wish I had had the opportunity.

Myanmar has several wondrous sights including over 2000 temples scattered across the countryside in Bagan, the floating gardens and leg-rowers on boats on Inle Lake, and golden temples to mention a few.

However, the big draw was the chance to see a country where the 21<sup>st</sup> century world had reportedly not yet massively

intruded.

In Yangon (formerly Rangoon), a rickshaw turned a corner at snail's pace and the driver must have been at least 80 years old. His body was sculpted by prolonged strenuous sinewy movements and his skin darkened from a lifetime of work under the sun. I hailed him to take me to the towering golden Shwedagon Pagoda which contained Buddhist relics and dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The next few spins of his pedals looked as though there was an inner mountain to climb. We got into conversation and my rickshaw driver told me how pleased he was that we had chosen to use local transport as opposed an organised coach trip through the country. This as a trend that we quickly noticed throughout our travels. Indeed there were signs hanging up everywhere with the message “warmly welcome tourists”.

The road to Mandalay is familiar in song, poetry and movie. Our trip on the road to Mandalay was in a luxurious coach with the equivalency of first class if one was flying, not



PATRICK HYNES  
AT SUNSET ON  
MT. KIYAIKTIYO.

at all what I expected. Later on in the trip I would experience the opposite type of coach trip.

Mandalay is considered Myanmar's cultural capital, despite the traffic.

Mutton curry sounds revolting. Yet, it was one of the best dishes that I had in Mandalay. Perhaps it should have translated as lamb curry. We sat outdoors on small plastic stools on the kerbside with our knees almost touching our chins while we consumed the most tender, tantalising, aromatic curry that I have ever had. The other traditional dish that we had several times throughout Myanmar was tea leaf salad. Tea leaf salad is an eclectic mix of flavours and textures that includes soft pickled tea leaves, crisp roasted peanuts and other crunchy beans, toasted sesame seeds, fried garlic and

occasionally dried shrimp and chopped tomato. It is meant to be served with all the ingredients in separate piles so that you can pick out a combination to your own preference when eating.

Betel nut chewing and spitting is a common scene throughout Myanmar. At first sight, the sputum that is meandering down the side of the mainly white cars, after it is splendidly discharged by its recipient, resembles blood. However, we discovered that this results from chewing and spitting the betel nut.

Other trips included going to U Bein Bridge which is the world's longest teak footbridge and gently curves 1300 yards across the shallow Taungthaman Lake. Accompanied by a magnificent sunset, we met local crimson robed Buddhist monks who

wanted to practice their English. We got a great barter scheme going: English language practice in exchange for photos with the monks.

On the road again, we headed to Bagan, an ancient city on the eastern banks of the Ayeyarwady River where more than 2,000 Buddhist stupas (temples) jut up out of the surrounding landscape. We hired electric bicycles to explore this vast area. About 10 miles out of Bagan my bicycle broke down. Our mobile phones would not work to phone back to the bicycle hire company for help. However, some locals came to our aid and phoned for the bicycle hire company to come with a replacement battery for us. While we were waiting, our new found friends produced artwork and

---

“precious stones” for sale. Again the barter system worked and I now have beautiful paintings hanging in my living room in Gort.

The next bus journey that we took was not as luxurious as the previous one. Perched between two strangers, behind my friends, I had the unenviable task of ensuring that I sat upright and maintained this position without a support for hours.

No need to work on core strength in a gym on that occasion.

We arrived in Taunggyi for the fire-balloon festival, one of the most exciting but most dangerous events that we went to. Hundreds of specially made hot air balloons, in a kaleidoscope of colours and shapes, filled with fireworks are released to the skies. The concept is that sins are placed in the balloons and are thus carried away and this forms part of the full moon festival celebrations.

Exploding balloons are not uncommon and apparently people have been injured and killed in the past. Men with wooden poles dipped in paraffin oil ignite the balloons. The smell of paraffin is everywhere!

Entire families come out to celebrate this important festival. It struck us that a time will come when this festival will probably not exist in its current format due to health and safety concerns. Another problem is that burning remains of balloons sometimes land on people’s

homes.

Our last destination was the Golden Rock on Mt. Kyaiktiyo. This is literally a huge gilded rock perched on a mountainside which is considered one of Myanmar’s most important pilgrimage sites. The journey up to the rock was on the back of a pick-up truck, where about 60 people sat on wooden planks.

Another great place to develop and maintain core strength, especially when you are positioned somewhere in the middle of the truck. Sunrise was as important to experience as sunset at the rock and both compete in terms of awesomeness.

It was at this juncture in the trip that I was reminded of Mark Twain who said “throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbour. Catch trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”. Three weeks was too little time to fully immerse oneself in all

that Myanmar has to offer, but it was a great taster. As we departed the airport, ladies wearing the thanaka were one of our last sights of Myanmar, a county rich in traditions and cultures with a turbulent history.

---

Patrick Hynes lives in Gort. He works as a Senior Occupational Therapist and is also a university lecturer. Patrick enjoys travelling and has been to a range of countries worldwide.

Mark Twain  
said “throw off  
the bowlines,  
sail away from  
the safe  
harbour. Catch  
trade winds in  
your sails.  
Explore. Dream.  
Discover.”

*Good Luck  
to have you*

# THE QUIET MAN

BY ALAN MARLBOROUGH (RIP)

In 1952, there lived in a house called Woodley, in the center of Gort, the Marlborough family. The house is now listed, and is the only red brick house in Gort. Woodley was so called as it bounded a small wood alongside the river, currently the home of Deidre Marlborough, also operating as a B and B.

*Sincerely,  
Arthur Shields*

In 1952 the family consisted of Doctor J.J., his wife Emily (nee Coen), daughters Deirdre and Anne, and son Alan. The Doctor was a quiet gentleman. Normally he was very undemanding, but he nearly always insisted that the family go for a Sunday afternoon 'Drive'.

Destinations for the drives were Durras, New Quay, Rathorpe (near Tubber, his original family home) and many other places.

One sunny and warm Sunday afternoon that year, the family set

off for Cong, Co. Mayo, where The Quiet Man was being filmed. Back then, film making was relaxed, with little security, making it possible, in between shoots, to mingle with the famous stars.

Young Alan (age 13), had come with his autograph album. Much to his father's embarrassment, he raced across the open field, successfully getting the autographs and a few words from John Wayne, Maureen

O'Hara, Barry Fitzgerald, Victor McLaglen and others. Deirdre and Alan and Anne (living in Malahide and Foxrock) have very happy memories of that special 'drive' and mixing with those famous stars, 64 years ago.



*Victor McLaglen*

*Maureen O'Hara*

# GORT SHOW CELEBRATIONS 2018

## A GREAT FAMILY DAY OUT



ABOVE LEFT, 14 YR OLD SARAH FLANAGAN, CRANNAGH, GORT SHOW QUALIFIER CAME IN 2<sup>ND</sup> IN THE ALL IRELAND COOK OF THE YEAR 2018 AT MOATE AGRICULTURAL SHOW. ABOVE RIGHT, ANDREA CAREY, BALLINAKILL, WON THE STRICTLY AMATEUR ONLY PHOTOGRAPHY SECTION, AND LAURA HEGARTY, TERMON, GORT CAME IN 2<sup>ND</sup>.



PICTURED AT LEFT WITH THEIR PARENTS REGINA AND DES, 9 YR OLD CORA CREAN, BALLYTURN, WON THE OVERALL CHILDREN'S SECTION AND HER BROTHER DYLAN, 11 YRS, WHO CAME 1<sup>ST</sup> FOR HIS PHOTO IN CLASS 72--PET IN THE ADULT SECTION. ABOVE RIGHT, MARY MAHON , GURTEENBOY, GORT, WAS THE OVERALL WINNER IN THE HANDCRAFTS SECTION, PICTURED HERE WITH HER GRANDCHILD SOPHIE.



AT LEFT, PAT HEGERTY, COSYHOME HEATING, SPONSOR OF GLAMOROUS GRANNY WITH WINNER KITTY GILLANE; FIDELMA KILLEEN BYRNE, WINNER OF MOST APPROPRIATELY DRESSED LADY WITH JUDGE MANDY MAHER, AND PAUL KILLILEA, WINNER OF MOST APPROPRIATELY DRESSED GENT; JOHN SULLIVAN MC. AT RIGHT, BERNIE JENNINGS, KINVARA WON THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXHIBIT IN THE FLOWER SECTION AND ALSO CAME 2<sup>ND</sup>.



AT LEFT, BONNIE BABY EVA JOSEPHINE GINTY, ARDRAHAN, THE UNDER 12 MONTHS GIRL. AT RIGHT, KATHLEEN CURLEY PRESENTS KITTY MCGRATH WITH THE SUSAN CURLEY PERPETUAL CUP FOR OVERALL WINNER OF THE SPECIAL HANDCRAFTS SECTION.

PHOTOS BY LAURA HEGERTY AND MARY FORDE FLAHERTY

## BALLANGERS OF KENT AND BALLINGERS OF GORT

# THE MYSTERY

## OF BALLINGER'S CORNER

BY JUDY BALLANGER

---

My husband Nick is a Ballanger from Kent, as was his Father, Cyril. However his Grandfather, Patrick, is a Ballinger from Gort. So how did this all come about? Family tradition told us that Ballinger Corner was in Cork, but we realized from talking to relatives that no one had ever been to Cork to find out the truth. In fact "Cork" was "Gort" spoken with a London accent!

We started out on the Ballinger trail by quizzing a cousin, Ray Ballanger, who came over to Gort in 1992 and talked to several people who remembered the Ballingers living at the cottage on what is still referred to as Ballinger's Corner, once on Crow Lane, then Crow Street. They had memories especially of Willie Ballinger on his bicycle. He was Grandfather's younger brother. Sadly the names of those people are lost, and there are now no Ballingers in Gort at all. Cousin Ray had also learned that there were meant to be glorious sunsets seen from the house on the corner. Even with the new road, it is possible to see a wonderful backdrop of Galway Bay and the Burren, so this was not just a family myth!

Our own first visit to Gort was in 2009, and from talking to Sr. de Lourdes Fahy, who was generous in giving her time and effort to helping us, we found out that Grandfather Patrick's sister, Bridget Small, had been a Nun in the Sisters of Mercy Convent, but died in 1957 so there were no

Sisters left who remembered her. Bridget had been married twice, and may have joined the Order when her second husband James Small passed away in 1943. We did hear a rumour that "Bridie Small" kept a sweet shop in Gort, but we have not been able to confirm this.

Patrick was one of 10 siblings, according to his Mother Bridget's answers to the 1911 census.

However Bridget also told the enumerator she

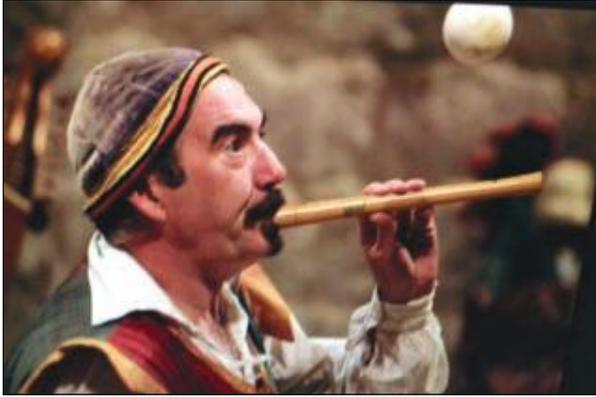
had been married for 50 years when she did actually get married in Craughwell near Loughrea in 1877, 33 years previously! Neither Bridget nor her daughters Mary, aged 36, and Bridget, then 21, could read. They were working as domestic servants and son William, at age 18, was a general labourer. Bridget had had 10 pregnancies, she told the census taker, but only 5 of her children were alive in 1911.

Grandfather Patrick had been born to Bridget, nee Forde, in 1880, as the oldest of the family. His father was William, born about 1837, to Michael Ballinger of Normangrove near Kinvara. So where was Patrick

in 1901? By then he had been recruited into the Connaught Rangers, and had left Ireland for good. We are sure that he would have been attracted by the brilliant red uniform, and the talk of travel to exotic lands! The brutal reality of the South African Boer Wars would have loomed larger and more menacing, however, and although we cannot find out when he joined up,



RAY BALLANGER



JOHN BALLANGER

we know that he was one of the 4th Battalion that moved to Britain to serve in the Thames Defences near London in May 1900. And then he made sure he stayed in England by marrying ASAP!

Patrick's new wife was Sarah Kezia Fuller, eldest daughter of a Thames barge captain. The Ballanger family story goes, that her Father forbid Kezia from marrying the man of her choice, so in a fit of pique she told him that she would defy him by marrying the very next man to ask her, and this was our Patrick. So on 11th October 1900 Patrick and Kezia were married in St. John's R.C. Chapel, Gravesend Barracks, Kent. Somehow Patrick had managed to be invalided out of the Rangers, and the Battalion returned to Galway without him on October 16th, just 5 days later.

The Ballanger spelling appears on the marriage certificate, and we feel that Patrick may not have felt like correcting the Priest, so the Register signing went through with no hitches. In fact on the 1911 census, his wife filled in the form, so he may not have been confident at spelling and writing. (The wife filling in the form was certainly not the usual census procedure.)

Despite being invalided out of The Rangers, Patrick went on to have a full working life as a Council labourer. Already by 1911 there were 4 small Ballangers in Kent, and Nick's Father, Cyril, was the 6th child, born in 1916. It was a bittersweet occasion for Patrick and Kezia, as they registered Cyril's birth on the 25th April, the very same day as they gave details of the death of their youngest daughter, Maud, aged just 4. Poor little Maud had been ill for 1 week with pneumonia, a sudden killer in the days before antibiotics.

The family know that Patrick only came back to Gort 2 or 3 times in his life. His family grew to 7 children and he would have had to be working all the hours he could. In fact Cyril, my husband's Father, held down 2 or 3 jobs at once and he only had 1 son!

So where did the Ballinger name first come from? Whenever we have referred to it in Ireland, people have told us, "That's not an Irish name!" Cousin Ray was convinced that it had exotic origins. The Pat Neylon website, which centres on Gort families, mentions the "Black Irish," dark skinned and dark haired, and descended from shipwrecked Spanish Armada sailors. Other authors say that no Spanish survived at all, anywhere along the Irish coasts. However, the Spanish Arch in Galway is proof there was constant trade with Spain throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. So, the typical Ballinger colouring is, dark skin that tans easily and jet black hair. Nick's Father was a bus driver in Kent, and his passengers would always ask him about his holidays, when it was simply the sun shining in through the bus windows and giving him a deep bronzed suntan!

Bearing in mind that cousin Ray's son John has this same colouring and is often taken for a Galician Spaniard in his profession as a Fool, Clown, or Jester, (see photo,) we were intrigued to read an article in a family history magazine that mentioned Valencian Spanish fighters moving north to Galicia in northwest Spain around the 9th century. V and B sounds can be the same in Spanish, and they were the BALLINGERO, or VALENCERO, Valencian tribe. The most important saint in Galicia was Gulielmo, who lived as a hermit in the 6th century. In Irish Church records of birth and marriages written in Latin the name Gulielmo Ballinger appears several times, and William is the translation.

Galicia has always been known for its adventurous fishermen, who travelled up the coasts of mainland Europe, Britain and Ireland in search of catches which they would sell locally. The Ballingero story continues into the 11th

century when the Spanish tribe is supposed to have emigrated to Brittany, then ruled by England. They would have continued their wide ranging fishing and when French troops overran Brittany in 1488, some ex Spanish fighters may have escaped to England, landing near Gloucester.

The first records of the Ballinger name in England

date from this time. After the Gunpowder Plot to blow up King James 1st and his Ministers, Catholic Ireland was partly settled by "Plantation." Protestant English farmers and tenants were encouraged to emigrate to Ireland, and Gloucester was a farming county so this may have been when the Ballingers arrived. But this may be total hearsay and supposition!



BILLBOARD AT BALLINGER'S CORNER IN 1958. FROM L-R, COLIE MOLLOY, COLMAN KEANE, RALPH KEANE. (NO RELATIONSHIP TO THE BALLINGER FAMILY) PHOTO BY GERARD KEANE (RIP).

# ST JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL CONVENT OF MERCY REUNIONS



CLASS OF 1968: REUNITING IN GORT ON 9TH OF JUNE, 2018. BACK ROW, (L-R), MARY DOLAN, RENA NAUGHTON, RENA McALLEN, TERESA NOLAN, SR MAURA CROWE, ANNA CUNNINGHAM, LILIAN McMAHON, AILEEN HIGGINS, PEGGY CLEARY. SECOND ROW, (L-R), SR FRANCIS, BB MAHONY, MARY FOGARTY, MARY KILROY, MARY COUNIHAN, PATRICIA WALSHE, MONA CAHILL, LUCY THOMPSON, MARY O'DEA, RITA DFONAHUE. FRONT ROW (L-R), MARY BOURKE, MARY HEALY, GERITA BREW, KATHY NEWELL, KATHLEEN MAHONEY, BERNIE SMYTH, PAULINE QUINN, MARY GERAGHTY.



CLASS OF 1977, "REELING IN THE YEARS" IN GORT ON 29TH OF APRIL 2017. BACK ROW (L-R), MARY MORAN, MARTINA MAHONEY, CATHERINE CUNNAIRE, MARY NOLAN, BERNADETTE LALLY, MARGARET NAGLE, MARY COONEY, MARY T. MURPHY, SR FRANCIS (TEACHER), RITA GLYNN, GERALDINE MURRAY, CARMEL KEOGH. THIRD ROW (L-R), ANN KEANE, RITA HOWLEY, CATHERINE DONAGHUE, DEIRDRE FAHY, NOREEN GLYNN, ANN BURKE, MARY LEE, JOAN REGAN, GERALDINE FALLON, HILARY O'QUIGLEY, MARY LYNCH, MARY MORRISSEY. SECOND ROW (L-R), MARGARET HEHIR, CORINA MCCARTHY, MARION CAHILL, ROSE GARDINOR, MARY GANTLEY, MARGARET NOLAN, MARY HEALY, BRIDGET NOONE, DETTA SKEHILL, GERALDINE MARTYN, ANN KILLEEN, MARY ITA CROWE. FRONT ROW (L-R), MARY HANNON, MAURA DEELY, EILEEN MULKERRINS (TEACHER), BERNADETTE LINNANE, FR MICHAEL KING, SR DE LOURDES, SR MAURA CROWE, JACINTA GLYNN, ATTRACTA CAHILL.

# 'I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT THE BLUES'

BY NIAL FINNEGAN

In the shadow of Tiernevin Church spire in early July and with the tar melting on the road outside I sat to have a chat with a legend of the music scene in South Galway. In the cool shade of Tony Cummins kitchen we reminisced about all the bands he had seen come and go since the trailblazing "Ballyhugh Blues" first hit the scene back in the early 1960s.

Thirty one degrees outside in the hottest June on record, memories flooded back of the "Virginians", "The Ramblers" and a multitude of other bands. "I suppose the Ballyhugh Blues were the first real band," Tony explained. "Back in those days the equipment wasn't as readily available as it is now and bringing the new pop music around Gort was a big change." At the time most of the music was the Ceili bands and sessions of trad music in people's houses or local hostleries.

The leader of the "Ballyhugh Blues" was the late Dodo Scanlon and anyone I have spoken to about him says he was a gifted guitar player who played all the hits of "The Shadows" with ease. As far as I can tell the other original members were Kieran Manto, Mike Wallace and the tragic Jay Porter.

Jay was the accomplished drummer in the band and was unfortunately fatally injured in a motorbike crash all too early in his young career.

The band played on a regular basis in Christy Fennessy's Cinema at the bottom of Barrack Street. The story is told that different members "filled in" at times if musicians were scarce. . . some of dubious ability. . . some of no ability!

Tony remembers one individual who will remain nameless who was given a newly painted white guitar and told to "look like" he was playing. This he did very well until at the end of the night when the freshly painted guitar stuck to his shirt and the secret was out!

After the "Ballyhugh Blues" finished other bands took up the mantle with varying degrees of success. Most notably in various guises were "The Virginians" founded by Tony. Over the years Michael Kenny, Colie Moran, Sean and Rosie Whyte, Paddy Graham, Pat Carty, Michael Naughton, Fergus Keane, Pat Kilkenny, Mike Howley and myself among others have soldiered with Tony belting out the hits of yesteryear.

Towards the end of "The Virginians" just myself and Tony played together. It was a

wonderful time and I remember in particular the Sunday afternoon sessions from two till five o'clock in Donaghues in Fanore during the month of September. It was an experience to watch expectant singles and a flood of peroxide take to the floor having been transferred in several forty seater buses from twelve o'clock mass in Lisdoonvarna.

The "Eagles" were another home grown band. They were led by the beautiful voice of Eithne Manto and the stage presence of Sean Leahy. Sean and Rosie Whyte having returned from England formed "The Ramblers". They were a true Country and Western band, Sean a great drummer and Rosie with a voice to rival Philomena Begley.

Only recently the saxophone of Chris Nestor RIP fell silent, a member of the "South Galway Group" who with Paddy Jordan and Paddy Joe Lyons had a loyal following throughout Galway and North Clare. Over the years I have been involved in other projects. With Atty Brennan and beloved Maurice Cotter RIP we played Spelman's "Singing Lounge" in Crowe St. That gentleman of all gentlemen Jack Spelman RIP came up with a name for us, "The Yew Three", I think in an



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: KERIN MANTO, MIKIE WALLACE, JAY PORTER AND DODO SCANLON. PHOTO BY WILLIE QUINN IN 1960.

effort to ward off those other upstarts, U2.

Another great character, Willy Quinn RIP, formerly the "Manager" of the Ballyhugh Blues wrote a song for us and was fully intent on entering us in the Eurovision! It never happened but the way recent entries have fared, it might be time to look it up!

There are so many stories and so many great entertainers I have met along the way. I remember the excitement of playing before "The Indians" in the Classic and the gentle strains of the great Roly Daniels.

I remember the "Cabaret Scene" starting in Sullivans "Red Rose Club" and a singer called Paddy Riley singing a song called "The Fields of Athenry". The same night he wasn't pleased as he thought people weren't listening to him. Little did he know that his version of that

song would become an anthem all over the world.

In the last few years I have been lucky enough to have teamed up with David Murray, Mike Sullivan and the multi-talented Anto Thistlewhaite, formerly of the "Waterboys" and the "Sawdoctors" and if you see an advertisement for "The Last Bandits", that's us.

Of course I was part of a band in the play "If Only" who couldn't really play at all but that didn't stop eager fans trying to book us for weddings and other functions!

It was a long and lovely visit to Tony and we reminisced on so many stories that would fill another four pages. Music is a great gift and to be able to share and play or sing along with others is a blessing.

We are fortunate in Gort that through the work of Ceolthas Theas, Coole Music, the Cahill sisters and others that a new

generation of musicians are on the way.

The genre of music doesn't really matter but there is something about playing in a band. . . Something about young people spending time to learn and practice and like Dodo Scanlon, be brave enough to bring that talent to the stage and bring joy to others.

It won't be thirty one degrees in Tiernevin forever! So with the winter evenings coming it is a great time to think about learning an instrument for young and old. To Tony and all the people I met trying to research this article, thanks for all the anecdotes too numerous to mention.

I think it was while playing recently with the best mouth organ player around, our own Fr Tommy, an interested observer came up to us and said, "Jes yer great. We'll be talking about ye after ye're dead." Kindly, I hope!

# 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CRICKET IN GORT

BY STEVE DOLAN

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In the later nineteenth century, cricket was the most popular pastime in the country, yet today only echoes of that popularity survive. A favoured sport of the landed gentry, the sport was played throughout County Galway by all classes of society, with some villages and towns fielding several teams.

Through the prism of sometimes blind nationalism, cricket in Galway risks being portrayed as elitist, protestant (or 'castle catholic'), an older man's pastime; however the research in County Galway and of Patrick Bracken in County Tipperary and Tom Hunt in County Westmeath paint a very different picture.

The first cricket match reported upon in Ireland took place in 1792 in the Phoenix Park between an Irish eleven and a team from the military. Cricket was played in County Galway from the early nineteenth century and the first established club in all of Ireland was the Ballinasloe Cricket Club who achieved a notable victory over the City of Dublin in 1828.

The early Ballinasloe CC (Cricket Club) sides were solely Protestant and landed or professional line-ups so it is unclear to what extent others played the sport. While landlords acted as patrons of many sides, initially maintaining its 'exclusive' element, by the late 1860s cricket in the county was more wide-spread. This is not surprising as versions of the sport had already been common.

Ballinasloe CC, whose profile had been 'national' since the middle of the century, remained one of the most successful clubs in the country throughout this period. Ad hoc matches were being played throughout the county in this period, as far north as Clonbur (An Fhairche) and as far west as Clifden.

More akin to Westmeath than Tipperary, it

appears that cricket in Galway had grown steadily, both geographically and demographically. Unlike Westmeath or Tipperary however, it is unlikely that cricket was ever the number one sport in the county. But like Westmeath and Tipperary, it did attract support from all classes and was played by the widest section of the community.

Likely inspired by the success in Ballinasloe CC, and eventually Tuam CC, Gort CC would not be left behind. The driving force behind Gort CC was Robert Algernan Persse, its founder and president. Mitchell Henry, a wealthy doctor from London, and MP for County Galway (1871 to 1885), was also involved with Gort CC as well as Kylemore CC in Connemara.

The year of 1872 appears to have been the breakthrough year for Gort CC – one which would see them do the double (home and away victories) against both neighbours and rivals Loughrea CC,<sup>1</sup> and also the experienced County Clare side.<sup>2</sup> A notable victory over Tuam CC came in 1874,<sup>3</sup> but it was victory over the Galway CC (city) side in 1875<sup>4</sup> that really put the town's side on the map.

The star that day was George Gough of Lough Cutra.<sup>5</sup> Gough hit 25 out of Gort's 58 total. Gough and Persse later became more than team-mates after Gough's sister Eleanor married Persse. While Gort would lose Gough after the 1875 season, as he left for military service in India,<sup>6</sup> that loss was mitigated by the return of William Gregory which the club celebrated with a fireworks display.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Galway Express, 17 August 1872.

<sup>2</sup>Freeman's Journal, 17 September 1872.

<sup>3</sup>Irish Times, 15 August 1874.

<sup>4</sup>Tuam Herald, 28 August 1875.

<sup>5</sup>Tuam Herald, 28 August 1875.

<sup>6</sup>Tuam Herald, 18 December 1875.

<sup>7</sup>Irish Times, 9 June 1877.



PICTURED WITH COOLE CC PLAYERS IS W.G. GRACE (BEARDED). DIRECTLY BEHIND GRACE IS ROBERT GREGORY, WHILE TO THE FRONT OF GRACE (LOOKING DOWN) IS HURLING LEGEND NED TRESTON. PICTURE BY KIND PERMISSION OF COLIN SMYTHE.

In comparison with larger clubs, Gort CC<sup>8</sup> were most fortunate in being able to call upon the exceptional Persse (of Cregg Castle, Ardrahan) – perhaps the finest Irish player of his generation. The sport blossomed in the town and the *Dundalk Democrat* of 2 August 1873 referenced a traveller arriving in Gort Station and noting ‘a number of young men busy at the game’.

Some clubs were now having their structures and results recorded in national yearbooks like John Lawrence’s *Handbook of Cricket in Ireland* – notably Mountbellew CC, Tuam CC and Gort CC in 1875,<sup>9</sup> though only the latter two made returns in 1876.<sup>10</sup> In 1875 Gort won five, lost two and drew one of eight formal matches. The following year, they won seven and lost two of nine.

Some of the big houses, e.g. Gough at Gort, provided fields on their estates and/or in their nearest town or village. In the case of Gough, cricket pitches were made available both on the estate and on the outskirts of Gort town at Rindifin. Though Gough was Protestant, a feature of the Galway gentry was the high proportion of Catholics in their number.

The land war of the early 1880s and the establishment of the GAA in 1884 challenged the growth of cricket. In the eyes of some, its incompatibility with the cultural revival where it risked being seen as the symbolic game of ‘the Empire’ meant that its decline was inevitable. The evidence however does not support this hypothesis, at least not initially.

In comparison to some other counties, the growth of cricket had arguably been to a smaller scale in County Galway, albeit arguably built on stronger foundations. By the late nineteenth century the Galway County side had finalised their home at Athenry and, far from declining, cricket blossomed right to the end of the century as division wreaked havoc within the GAA.

Many of Gort CC’s victories in the 1880s were against military sides e.g. Gort Garrison<sup>11</sup> and the 18th Hussars.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, into the last decade of the century cricket was being played in areas which had heretofore been associated with hurling. The Gort fixture versus Kiltartan, in 1897, was an indication of what was to come as the latter introduced a star player in Robert Gregory.

<sup>8</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 11 April 1874.

<sup>9</sup> John Lawrence, *Handbook of cricket in Ireland 1875-76*, (Dublin, 1876), pp 121-122.

<sup>10</sup> John Lawrence, *Handbook of cricket in Ireland 1876-77*, (Dublin, 1876), p.103.

<sup>11</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 20 August 1881.

<sup>12</sup> *Irish Times*, 6 June 1883.

Secretary of Kiltartan CC was Ned Treston, a man who had captained (South) Galway vs. (North) Tipperary in 1886 in what is termed the forgotten All-Ireland hurling final. A saddler by profession, before the final Treston had famously made a sliotar acceptable to both captains and this ball became the prototype for the modern sliotar. He was also quite an excellent cricketer.

The last fixture of the nineteenth century in County Galway saw Coole CC defeat a star-studded Headford CC, as reported by *Irish Times* on 25 September 1899. Treston and Gregory were ably assisted that day by a guest of Gregory's at Coole, Thomas Arnold Harvey, who would later become an Irish international and a prominent Church of Ireland bishop.

County-wide, the new century saw a marked decline in the numbers participating as the growth of nationalism and the second coming of the GAA saw a decline in the numbers of players in County Galway.<sup>13</sup> The exceptions to that decline were on estates like Coole, with the Kiltartan CC side very active through this period.

In an exceptional victory, Kiltartan CC defeated County Galway CC by three runs at Athenry in 1900,<sup>14</sup> with Gregory top-scoring. And, led by Gregory, Kiltartan CC also enjoyed notable successes over Ennis CC,<sup>15</sup> Ennistymon CC,<sup>16</sup> and Headford CC.<sup>17</sup> The players of Kiltartan CC and Coole CC were interchangeable, and they also played Lough Cutra CC in an annual fixture.

The inclusive nature of the sport in Kiltartan and south Galway is noteworthy with the team made up primarily of small farmers, some estate workers, along with two merchants.

Coole has since become synonymous with the sport particularly during this extraordinary period with the likes of literary giant George

Bernard Shaw playing when visiting, as well as cricket legend W G Grace.

The regard in which Robert Gregory was held in was often mentioned. And, in a timeless image of a rural club, in her diaries Lady Gregory gives an account of Kiltartan CC playing against an Ennis side which was partly made-up of 'sappers' (Army-side). Her commentary suggests that nerves may have gotten the better of Kiltartan and they were in real trouble when the giant local publican Pat Shaughnessy entered the fray and 'strode around'. His confidence – "*he didn't do very much, but looked as if he did*" – coupled with the composure and style of her son, saw Kiltartan claim the win with the last ball to Lady Gregory's very great satisfaction.<sup>18</sup>

This was a golden era for the county-side, frequently inspired by Robert who was by now also an Irish international. However, other than a rousing victory for Kiltartan CC over the likes of County Clare and the 'Freebooters'<sup>19</sup> in 1906, the trend was not positive. Fewer fixtures were now being reported, as Gaelic games really began to prosper.

Towns like Loughrea and Gort, once homes to active cricket clubs, soon abandoned the sport entirely. Gort won two of three consecutive county hurling finals they appeared in from 1914. And that year, 1914, Kiltartan won the south board county hurling final<sup>20</sup> which speaks volumes. A further sucker-punch came with the outbreak of the Great War.

Typical of those lost was, famously, Major Robert Gregory himself. He was not alone. His first-cousin Rodolph Algernon Persse, son of the previously mentioned Robert A Persse and another excellent cricketer who had represented the county, was also killed in action. He was aged only 22, dying at Ypres in 1915.

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<sup>13</sup> Katherine Tynan, *A Galway Girl* (London, 1901), pp 274-7.

<sup>14</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 4 August 1900.

<sup>15</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 28 July 1900.

<sup>16</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 4 August 1900.

<sup>17</sup> *Tuam Herald*, 22 September 1900.

<sup>18</sup> James Pethica, *Lady Gregory's Diaries 1892-1902* (England, 1996) p.189.

<sup>19</sup> *Irish Times*, 7 August 1906.

<sup>20</sup> Padraic O'Laoui, *Annals of the GAA in Galway 1902-1934* (Galway, 1992), p.110.

After the war, matches were now covered by the newspapers only in referencing other events as with a fixture in 1919 which coincided with an accident at Oranmore Aerodrome.<sup>21</sup> While cricket in Ballinasloe temporarily shone one final time, this did not last. Putting matters into perspective,

<sup>21</sup> *Connacht Tribune*, 9 August 1919.

<sup>22</sup> *Connacht Tribune*, 9 July 1921.

in July 1921 the Pavilion at Athenry Cricket Ground was burnt down with an individual inside.<sup>22</sup>

Ireland was changing and there would be no resurgence for the sport in a nation seeking to throw-off all semblances of Britishness, and one not yet secure enough to tolerate difference.

# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

## CRICKET IN GALWAY

BY ARUN BABU,  
SECRETARY COUNTY GALWAY CRICKET CLUB

The Cricket Club is Galway's only cricket club and we have teams who play in both the Munster and Connaught Cricket Unions. We own our cricket ground which is based in Lydican, Carnmore Cross only a fifteen minute drive from Galway city. The current club was formed in 1971 and we now have over 50 players. We're a multi-cultural club with Irish, English, Indian, Pakistan, Australian, New Zealand, South African, Bangladesh and Sri Lankan among the many nationalities that make up our members. One of our main aims is to establish a youth section for the new season to allow children of all ages to learn cricket and have somewhere safe and enjoyable to play the sport in Galway.

During the summer, we train twice a week and play matches on both Saturdays and Sundays. We have a strong affiliation with NUIG, the defending Irish Inter varsity champions, whose



OUR SENIOR MEMBERS AND UNDERAGE PLAYERS WITH INTERNATIONAL CRICKETEER, TRENT JOHNSTON.

cricket team use our cricket ground for their outdoor University matches. NUIG Cricket has grown rapidly over the last few years with All-Ireland championships under our belts and a select number of us being chosen to represent Ireland in international Universities competitions abroad. This year NUIG and CGCC have combined to form a larger and more diverse club.

Over the past number of years, the first team have tasted a great deal of success. We won the Munster Senior cup in 2014 & 2016. This meant we qualified for the Irish Senior Cup, the oldest and most prestigious competition with the top 32 clubs in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. For more information please call 087 626 2022.

# GILLANES OF GORT

# EXACTLY

## WHAT YOU WANTED ANY TIME YOU CAME IN

BY ANGELA DONOHUE

Shop, with the name “Gillanes Bakery” over the door had been a stalwart institution in The Square, Gort, for nearly a century and a half. There is no record of it in Slater’s Directory 1856 but according to the Census of 1901 William aged 80 and Mary, his niece aged 41 resided there, so it would be safe to assume that it was acquired by the Gillane family in the latter half of the 19th century. The business was bequeathed by Mary to Michael her nephew, an agricultural advisor from The Midlands in the 1920’s. Michael married a local girl, Hannah Deely, and they had three children Anne, Liam and Michael. On the death of Michael senior in 1963 Liam took over the running of the shop with his mother and continued doing so with his wife Kitty until his untimely death in June 2017.

Everybody that was asked what was unique about Gillane’s Shop invariably agreed that for a shop of its size it sold everything and provided a service second to none.

### A Shop of its Size

Most rooms in houses built in towns during the 17th and 18th

centuries were relatively small compared to those being built today mainly due to the fact that they were totally dependent on solid fuel for heating. Gillanes was no exception even though the solid fuel that once heated the shop has long since gone the size of the shop remained the same. Three out of four walls were shelved from floor to ceiling, the counter to your right of the entrance was L-shaped and had a little bureau (closed off section of the counter) next to the window behind which ones business was conducted with the utmost privacy. Every square inch of the cement floor space, with the exception of the pathway, and a small section in front of the counter for customers was stacked with 8 stone (cwt.) bags of sugar, 4 stone bags of flour, wooden tea chests, chicken nuts, and other animal feed stuffs. Hooks hung from the ceiling and everything that could hang was hung. On the counter stood small glass display cabinets, sheets of brown paper that were used to wrap that loaf of bread, and a weighing scales and weights (sometimes substituted with a

pound of butter) for measuring out all the products that were delivered in bulk. The window area was originally shelved and was a valuable display and storage area where all non perishable goods were on show. Outside was an equally important space to display bags of new potatoes, cabbages turnips and other vegetables all sourced from local farmers, together with any other product that could withstand the odd shower of rain including bags of colourful beach balls buckets and spades. There was an awning that would be rolled down for shop front protection on a sunny day. The outward appearance of the building did not change very much over the years and consisted of a hall door on the left, the double door shop entrance in the centre and a large window to its right. Throughout its lifetime Gillanes shop maintained that lovely old-style counter service. In olden days shops were usually managed by the owner sometimes ably assisted by a spouse. They often had to combine domestic duties with commercial. So a small window into the kitchen at the back of



LIAM (RIP) AND KITTY GILLANE OUTSIDE SHOP. PHOTO BY JONATHON DAVIS MEDIA CIRCUZ

the shop was a convenient way of knowing when a customer had arrived in the shop. More sophisticated shops had bells, and lesser ones had a front shop door or floor boards that creaked or squeaked. Liam would take up his position behind the counter and get whatever messages the customer wanted very often written down on a list or in a small book. Sometimes a chair would be provided if the customer was in anyway incapacitated, while Liam attended to the list. It would not be unusual in earlier times to bring out a cup of tea and maybe something stronger with a slice of cake around Christmas time. Every item was entered in

an invoice book, totted up and paid for, maybe. Sometimes a bit of credit would be extended to some customers depending on their circumstances. The local farming community often had to wait until cattle were sold; or for the cheque to arrive from the creamery; money from the sale of beet, corn or wool only arrived once a year. Everyone had their shopping bags and when everything was wrapped and packed another satisfied customer went home often all the more knowledgeable after a nice little exchange of local news, world affairs and maybe even a tip for a "dead cert" in The Grand National. Colman Sherry remarked that "it provided

much needed company/therapy for many and it could be said to be a fore runner for Citizens Advice Bureau. There was no express check out, service was slow and personal; and credit was granted before credit cards came into existence, and a home delivery service before shopping on line was even thought about"

Because of its ideal location in The Square near the Church there is nobody that did not cross its threshold at one time or another. In the days when shops were closed on Sundays (and Christmas Day) one could always slip in Gillanes hall door after mass for that one forgotten important item; the batteries Santa forgot and the fix for the nicotine addict. Neither did they ever mind anybody knocking on the hall door late at night for whatever it was that was needed. The service extended way beyond the counter of this shop as Liam had a travelling Shop and provided those living in remote rural areas of South Galway and North Clare, with the all the basic necessities; tea sugar paraffin Tribune, Champion and lots more. This service was invaluable to those without transport and to those living alone a lifeline to the outside world. A service brought with kindness and compassion in ALL kinds of weather.

### The Bakery

Another important feature of Gillane's Shop for many years was the Bakery out the back. Billy Kilroy recalls how Liam's father Mick "spent all his time out the back making dough for grinders. These were big long

loaves that were sold in sections. They were baked in ovens that appeared like holes in the wall. He often spent time there in awe of the skills of this gentle man". This bread was baked daily and delivered to the other shops and boarding houses around the town. But the skill was not just confined to bread but Barm Bracks as well. This is immortalised by Lady Gregory, as recorded by Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh in "The Splendid Years", "the Gort Barm Brack was a huge cartwheel of a fruit cake, filled with the richest ingredients, made especially by her own bakers for the casts of any of her new plays. It was a huge affair of several pounds weight and tradition had it that it usually took two to carry it. Wrapped around with silver paper, bits of candied peel and glace cherries sticking out all over its shiny surface, it held a place of honour on a table near a stove. " The baking tradition was continued by Liam into the early seventies when sadly all small local bakeries succumbed to the bigger regional and national brands. The shop, without the Bakery continued until March 2017 when sadly the "closing down" sign went up. Liam's health went into decline and Kitty needed to devote her time to his care. The last surviving grocery and one of the oldest shops in the Square closed its doors for the last time. The end of an era! The smaller shops once the very heartbeat of the town, are now no longer viable entities. Another closed shop in the town leading to the loss of its very soul.

## WHAT DID HE SELL?

The Tea was behind the Sugar and the bread in front of the jam Butter wrapped in greaseproof paper and somewhere over there was ham.

With the Rashers and the Sausages pudding and clothes pegs  
The Ice Cream and Buttermilk and fresh country eggs  
On the counter are the Gateaux, bracks & homemade tarts  
Thin Arrowroot & Marietta conceal the Signed Mass cards  
The corner shelf has Sweet Afton and Gold Flake in packs of ten  
A shilling an ounce for Players Plug and a pinch of Snuff thrown in.

Chivers Jelly, Birds Custard, Lambs Jam and Lemon curd  
Are on the shelf with Mac Smile blades and Seeds for a little Bird.

Cod liver oil, Sloan's Liniment and cures for this and that  
Were found on another shelf beside a hanging galvanised bath.  
Galtee and Calvita the only cheese we knew

Were sharing the same space as White Wash balls of blue.  
Bulls Eyes, Emerald and Colleen sweets in big glass jars  
Were next to the window with Peggy's Leg and Macaroon bars.

Tins of Pears & Peaches were beside the peas and beans  
And directly underneath were Angel Delight and Sardines.  
Batteries, Flashlamps Bulbs and pairs of Bicycle Clips

Were down beside the carrots, Cabbage and parsnips.  
Boxes of Surf Daz and Omo and bars of Sunlight Carbolic Soap  
Were somewhere under the counter for Liam to find in hope.  
Beechams and Cullens powders Hair nets, pins and Aspro  
Hidden on some shelf with Gripe Water, Ponds Cream and Bisto.

Pennysworth of toffees, Gobstoppers and tins of Zubes  
And bought especially for The "Stations" packets of sugar cubes.  
Darning needles, knitting needles and threads of every colour  
Shared a drawer with pencil toppers and rubbers for the scholar.  
Wicks and globes for tilly lamps, enamel teapots and mousetraps

Up there hanging with Plastic toy guns and leather boot thongs perhaps .  
At Christmas time the shelves were filled with sultanas, currants and raisins

With cherries, peel and spices all ready for the baking basins  
Christmas boxes wrapped in fancy paper had cigarettes in tins of fifty,

A custom long since gone and Oh! So more's the pity  
These mentioned are but a few of the innumerable items in stock  
To have to mention them all you'd be there and back from Bangkok

Alas it is no longer there and so very sorely missed  
It is a sad loss for all to share, the absence of Liam Gillane's Shop  
Up across the Square.

# KILTARTAN CELEBRATES 175<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

St. Attracta's Church, Kiltartan was the scene of a joyful outpouring of faith on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August as the parish celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the church. The clergy, led by four Mass servers, walked in procession from the old church while the large outdoor bell was rung by Tommy Nolan. The faith journey of the parish was recalled by the chief celebrant, a native of the parish, Canon Martin Downey. He recalled the years when the church was severely flooded – 1994, 2009 and 2015 – and how the resilience of the people ensured that all these obstacles were overcome. Canon Downey was joined in the celebration by the diocesan administrator Canon Michael McLoughlin; Dean Patrick Callanan, Kilbeacanty; Mons. Colman Cooke, Gort; Canon Tommy Marrinan P.P. Gort, Fr. Barry Horan P.P. Clarinbridge; Fr. Michael King C.C. Gort and Fr. Colm Nilan, S.M.A.

Sr. de Lourdes Fahy gave a short resume of the history of the church, including its restoration by the architect Professor Scott in 1916, who then went on the following year to restore Thoor Ballylee for W.B. Yeats. This summary was followed by the presentation of symbolic gifts: water from St. Colman's Well, Corker; a stone from the Mass Rock, *Poll an Aifrinn*; a plate of potatoes to recall the Great Famine which devastated the country just three years after the opening of the church; a Rosary Beads; an old Penny Catechism, a hurling ball and *The Guardianship of Galway*, written by the late Fr. Martin Coen. They were presented by Michelle Fahey, Hubert Diskin (RIP), Dick Burke, Eileen Quinn, Rian Forde, Peadar Burke and Nora McLoughlin, respectively.

A passage from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians was read by Liam Nolan and meaningful Prayers of the Faithful were recited by Anne Burke, Ellen Egan, Micheal Cahill, Rena



THE PROCESSION OF PRIESTS AND SERVERS MOVES FROM THE KILTARTAN GRAVEYARD TO THE CHURCH.

McAllen, Gavin O'Sullivan and Rena Regan.

It was fitting that the two longest-attending members of the congregation, Tom Nolan and Colman O'Shaughnessy, carried up the chalice and paten for the Offertory Procession.

A special word of praise was accorded to the members of children's choir who were led by Marie Nolan and Majella Piggott and accompanied by the organist Marie Diskin.

The celebrations concluded with a buffet in Kiltartan National School which was organised by Carmel Kelly and Marion Collins, who were ably assisted by willing helpers. Sincere thanks is due to all who provided delicious food for the occasion. *Ad Multos Annos!*

# A MARATHON EFFORT

BY MARTIN HALVEY

---

He collapsed and died. Having run from Marathon to Athens bearing the good news concerning the unlikely defeat of the Persians in 490 BC, Pheidippides ran around 26 miles bubbling with the exciting news. Dressed in his fighting armour, it proved too strenuous for his pounding heart, but not before he imparted the good tidings!

So was born the marathon.

Apart from the Boston marathon, which had its 121<sup>st</sup> running in 2017, most modern day marathons stem from the early eighties, due in no small part to Jim Fixx. He introduced the jogging craze in the US, and wrote a best-selling book in 1977. He too collapsed and died while out jogging. If you contemplate running 26 miles, it might be best to ignore the tragic beginnings. Most marathons at the time were run in bigger cities. Nowadays they are on your doorstep. In the Galway area alone you have Connemara, Clarinbridge, Burren, and Kinvara.

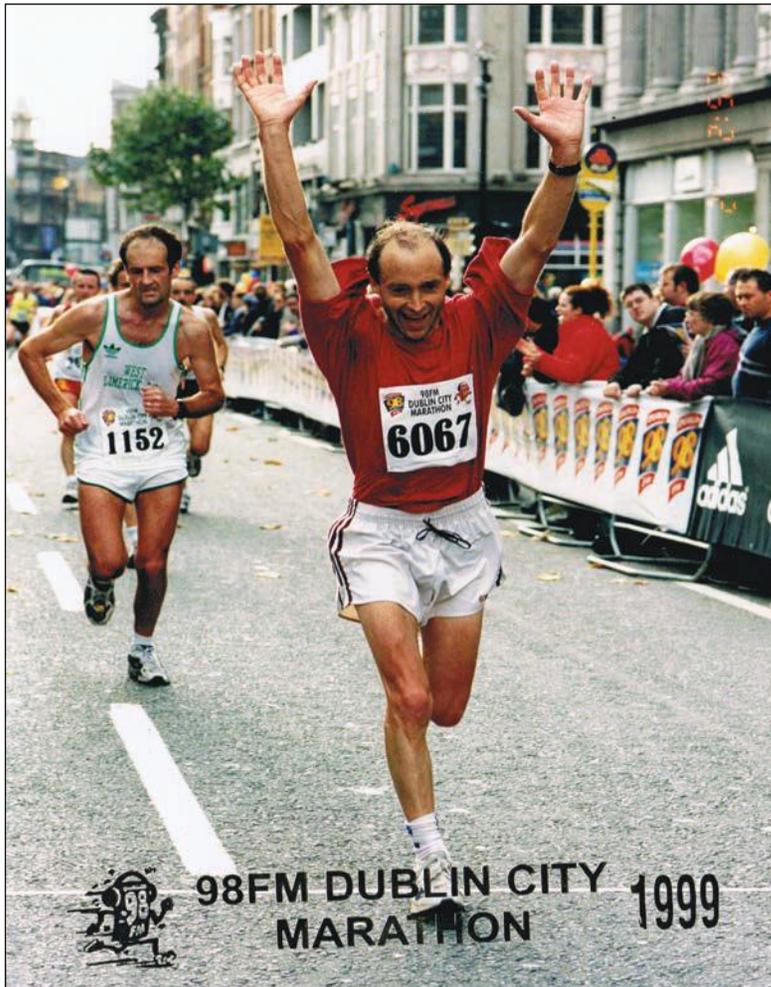
I ran my first marathon in 1999 when my fortieth year came upon me. However, due to a previous hamstring injury, my first foray in London lasted six miles, when I was advised by the St. Johns ambulance medic to call it a day. Head bowed, I shuffled my way to Tower Hill, boarded an underground train in my running gear and avoided the gaze of other

passengers who no doubt wondered was I taking a shortcut to the finish where my belongings would be waiting in one of the many lorries driven from the start area in Blackheath and Greenwich Park. It is very difficult to cheat as a microchip attached to your shoe or vest is provided in almost all races.

It wasn't until October 1999 that I completed my first marathon in Dublin. To run 26 miles 385 yards requires endurance which can be determined by your genes and improved with training. Growing up on a small farm in Cloughnacava provided us with a basic fitness and endurance oblivious to us at the time. The workload on such a farm was at times onerous but somewhat satisfying. Harvesting hay with a pitchfork, corn with a scythe, or thinning carrots and other root crops strengthened our calloused hands and knees. We flexed the lumbar region by picking potatoes, providing

hay in winter to ravenous livestock, and carting out dung from cows housed overnight. This organic fertilizer nourished the vegetables in springtime. Needless to say, we were not familiar with the word organic even though all our meals were organic, all produce grown on the small farm.

We were active from morning until night, walking to primary school from Cloughnacava to Ballyhugh, the school sadly no longer in existence. We strolled reluctantly into the embrace of Mr. and Mrs. Heenan. Mrs. Heenan was an excellent teacher but her husband was a product of his time, his discipline maintained by use of the dreaded stick. I found out from an early age there is no such thing as soft wood. Gaelic was introduced in my final year at primary school by Peter Conroy who was a breath of fresh air and made the acquiring of knowledge enjoyable.



MARTIN HALVEY

As the days lengthened we would play hurling until the light faded during the summer evenings. Depending on the size of the field, we alternated between Gaelic and soccer. The reason why soccer is so popular worldwide is due to its adaptability. It only requires a football and can be played in a school yard or a small field adjacent to a house. Of course during the summer fields were full of livestock, hay or too ploughed up after a wet winter. On one occasion I kicked a football gaelic style at the rear of Our Lady's College only to see it sail through a toilet window where Canon Burke was checking for any blockages!

Together with the Mulcairs and Walshes, our ball playing continued until darkness enveloped us, forcing us to return to our homes often in wellingtons, that when removed released fumes not fit for indoors.

Before the advent of smart phones, computer games or indeed television, pastimes included card playing and reading comics. Each week we waited eagerly for the next edition of our favourite reading material bought from Farrell's in Bridge Street or Kilroy's in Barrack Street. Not content with our recently purchased comics, we swapped with the Cunninghams of Ennis Road

and Colman Glynn who lived at the top end of Cloughnacava. A house located in Georges Street housed the local library, ably run by Mrs. Mae Brennan who had a good rapport with her regular borrowers.

Obesity? The word itself was strange, necessitating the procurement of a dictionary. Sugar was something that came in a packet. As money was scarce, chocolate was a luxury. Walsh's bakery on Bridge Street at times provided us children returning from primary school the means to buy a bar of Klipso toffee coated with chocolate. As the counter was raised off the floor it was possible to bend down and with a sweep of the arm drag out the odd penny, threepence or sixpence coin dropped while conducting a sale, exit quickly and scoot to Gallagher's grocery or Hart's (now Hawkins) to use our ill-gotten gains.

Fast-food outlets didn't appear until later, any allusion to such food would have referenced rabbits and runner beans. Pizza was a tower leaning on the Kildare side somewhere in northern Italy. Mullin's Classic Ballroom provided calorie rich chips from a chipper based outside the entrance, and was a welcome boost after having failed to attract the attention of fair maidens standing expectantly alongside the forbidden wall.

Physical activity continued after entering Our Lady's College where Bertie Keely invited us to run a few laps of the hurling field to assess our potential while outside school

a very patient and motivational Frank Lally took charge of the underage teams.

Later, the recession hit eighties and compelled some to take the boat (few low-cost airlines) to London, a city whose many attractions could, if permitted, lead one to enjoy the excesses to one's detriment, as I discovered while working in the Passage, a homeless concern in Victoria. With the permission of Cardinal Basil Hume the sisters of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God and in particular, Sr. Mary Barry from Cork, made use of the Cathedral Hall. Mattresses were supplied voluntarily in what became a makeshift haven for those down on their luck. They later moved to a derelict Ministry of Defense building in Pimlico and it is there I arrived. There are numerous reasons why people became homeless, but I was especially struck with the volunteers who gave up their own free time to help with the washing, cooking and chatting with the appreciative residents. On one occasion there was a coming together of an Irish traveller and royalty which necessitated a timely intervention.

While in the employ of the Passage I decided to run the 2000 London marathon, whereupon Sr. Mary asked me to run for their order based in Kenya. She said I was to run while she would cajole 25 lay people to collect the money. I agreed, and when my sister Bernadette Mullins teaching in Ballon, Co. Carlow got news of this, she and her fellow teachers decided to involve the children in fund-raising. As luck would have it, the superior in Kenya, Sr.

Madeline Ryan, originated from Carlow and greatly assisted in channeling the donations. To date, Ballon N.S. has raised €60,000 to help build a health clinic, buy food and seeds and the education of children. One small step for a marathon runner, a giant leap for the sisters of The Poor Servants of the Mother of God.

I have run in most countries in Europe, from the vineyards around Jarnac, the cognac region in northwest France to the open road from Marathon to Athens.

That was a difficult run consisting of a twelve mile climb in 28 degree heat. There is usually a tale to be told from each race, but recently in Brescia, northern Italy, I let my frustration show as I neared the finish when glycogen levels were running low. A meandering runner in front prevented me from overtaking. As I moved left, he moved left, when I veered right, he veered right and so it continued. Maybe gravity was the cause but I found a burst of speed and on overtaking him, I threw a few old Irish expletives his way and reached the finish shortly after. I saw him cross the line a minute or so later. As he recovered, he spotted me and walking purposefully in my direction extended his hand. In accented English he thanked me for my words of encouragement!

To date I have completed 68 marathons, 53 in under three hours. I have at one time or another won my age category in Cologne, Florence, Dublin,

came in 2<sup>nd</sup> in Athens and Munich, 3<sup>rd</sup> twice in Karlsruhe and 5<sup>th</sup> in London. I am convinced my active upbringing in Gort was instrumental in maintaining a level of stamina and endurance even as the years float by. Many elderly people born in less affluent and more physical times are still hale and hearty with a wonderful zest for life. A life lived in moderation can be beneficial.

A result in a marathon is more satisfying when the Irish flag is on the result sheet alongside the name. There is some merit in longevity but the real kudos should rightly be conferred on younger athletes and sportspeople. To come out on top is a magnificent achievement, to be able to compete against sportspeople in a world of seven billion plus people is to be treasured. Irish athletes, despite some criticism, have always competed well in the world and Olympic Games.

It is my wish that someday an athlete with talent and a positive attitude to training and setbacks will emerge from within the South Galway athletic clubs able to compete internationally. After all, South Galway has in the past produced the Egan brothers and more recently Gerry Staunton from Kinvara and Michael O'Connor from Ballindereen, two able marathon runners. It is also important to remember every person who completes a marathon, irrespective of time, deserves a resounding pat on the back as most of the time we compete against ourselves.

# REUNION AT ST COLMAN'S VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

BY STAN MAC EÓIN

The gathering of St. Colman's Vocational School past-pupils in November 2017 was a night to remember. Vincent Keehan came from San Francisco to be there and Gerard Geoghegan came from New York. Others came from the UK and different parts of Ireland. Old roll books were studied. Friendships were re-kindled. There was pride in hurling achievements, but there was also reminiscing on drama productions as Gaeilge, and other highlights from the past. Teachers (at least eight of them) and pupils met again and all enjoyed the experience.



SOME STAFF WHO ATTENDED THE PAST-PUPILS REUNION TO RECALL THE SCHOOL'S SENIOR HURLING ALL-IRELAND SUCCESS. (L-R), STAN MAC EÓIN, TONY DONOGHUE, MÁIRE GREALISH, PADDY LOUGHNANE, ANNA CASEY DONAHUE, PADDY GREALISH, JUDY CONROY DICK BURKE, MÁIRE DONOHUE.

The school closed in June 1995 and the following September it was replaced by Gort Community School. The two Deputy Principals are now Máirtín Killeen, a

contemporary of Gerry McInerney, and a great hurler in his own right, and Margaret Linnane, wife of Sylvie. The legacy of St.Colman's is safe in their hands, as it is in the hands of Claire Fahey and her

assistants in the GRETB, Galway Roscommon Education Training Board. The spirit and the values of St. Colman's Vocational School live on.

1978 ALL-IRELAND CHAMPIONS ALUMNI: BACK ROW, (L-R) PAT EGAN, JAMES MCINERNEY, MARY FAHY (REPRESENTING HER BROTHER MICHAEL MOONEY), JAMES KENNEDY, TOM GARDINER, OLIVER HIGGINS, JOSEPH O'GRADY, JOHN RYDER, PAT O'TOOLE, TEACHER, MANAGEER AND COACH. FRONT ROW, (L-R) GERARD NILAND (REPRESENTING HIS FATHER GERARD NILAND RIP), JOHN MOYLAN, PATRICK CAULFIELD, JOE CALLINAN, VAL NILAND. MISSING FROM PHOTOGRAPH: DECLAN GARDINER, MICHAEL CLOONE, MICHAEL GREANEY, GERRY LOUGHNANE, GERRY GLYNN, THOMAS MAHON, BILLY CONNEELY, BARNEY MURTAGH.



# THE FRIDAY MARKET

## FROM FARM TO TABLE

BY CATHERINE HAYES

Gort is a market town with a lovely big square well suited to a market day. The centre is dominated by a statue of Christ the King which was sculpted by Albert Power (sculptor of the famous Paraic O'Conaire statue in Galway) standing tall on an octagonal cut limestone plinth designed by Thomas Cullen (Criost Ri, Market Square, n.d.). It was erected in the mid 1930s and dominates the centre of market square. Pre-dating this is the local weigh house which was erected in 1880 by Lord Gort<sup>1</sup>.

In the past the market square was used for cattle fairs on certain days of the week. The weigh house was used to weigh animals, grain and other produce that were brought to market by the surrounding farmers.

The market in its current form has been trading in the square for over 30 years. Currently there are 14 trading bays that are licenced by Galway County Council. The trading licence allows traders access to their bays from 12 midnight on Thursday to 12 midnight Friday. Usually traders set up between 8 and 9 and stay till between 1 and 3 (depending on the time of year and how business is doing). Presently there are organic vegetables, home baking, cheese (and other delicatessen goods), candles, cards and nursery plants (all produced locally) as well as clothes, fruit trees, music, delph and crockery all from further afield. Some of the traders have been trading in the square for more than twenty years, keeping the tradition alive even when times were hard. Others (including myself) are relatively new to the market. However the camaraderie among the traders each and every Friday is great – every one helps out and is keen to see business going well for all the traders. Complimenting the market

<sup>1</sup>Gort Crane House. (n.d.). Retrieved from National Inventory of Architectural Heritage:  
<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=GA&regno=30341015>

### DISCOVER THE BEST OF:



FRESH PRODUCE WEEKLY



HOME BAKED GOODS



CHEESES AND DELI ITEMS

are the many permanent businesses dotted around the square – butchers, coffee shops, local eateries, gift shops, hairdressers etc.

Catherine Hayes is a local person who started up her organic vegetable market garden on the family farm just under four years ago.

# THE FRIDAY MARKET

## FRIDAY FUN DAY



BY RENEE BRENNAN

For the past couple of years I have worked at the Gort Tourist office i.e. the Weigh House in Gort Square. It has been a great experience meeting people from all over the world, from Tokyo to Toronto. The foreign tourists enjoy hearing the story of St Colman of Kilmacduagh . . . If you have a bad back and lie on his grave, you will be cured instantly. Also, if you take a piece of the yew trees surrounding his grave and place it in your car, you will never crash! They realize it is all pure true!

What also has been most enjoyable was getting to know the stall holders who trade from the square every Friday, beginning with Ute, who with her lovely plants and shrubs always has a cheerful greeting.

Ann, as she is known because we cannot pronounce her Indian name, often gives me advice on medical issues. Ann believes golden milk (tumeric in warm milk) is a wonder cure (not sure if her medical consultant son would agree)!

Martin (grandfather of 25, great grandfather of 12) is ably assisted by his caring wife Winnie. He is a true believer in hard work. I suggested to Martin one wet Friday morning that it was a bad day to be putting up his tent. As he was once on the flat of his back for five months with a spinal injury, he said every day was a good day if you can get up and do something.

Roland, with his various fruit trees and shrubs which are grafted and grown in Co. Galway, is another friendly face.

Some days you will hear music coming from the back of the stalls as Catherine and her friends (including our talented Parish priest) give us a blast of ceile music to lift our spirits. On these occasions Catherine seems more interested in the music than selling her lovely fresh organic Hayes vegetables.

I try to avoid Caroline with her simply delicious mouth-watering cakes and buns (her brownies are to die for)! She sometimes throws in an extra one just for luck (in case I fade away)!

Alan...with his stall of cheeses, fresh pesto and local honey is my final shopping stop. I once commented to him that there were a lot of wasps around his stall. With a serious face he explained to me that the wasps had sipped from the empty booze bottles down at the bottle bank and had arrived at his stall in a drunken state!

My fondest memory of this past summer at the tourist office, was seeing Kate arriving over from the Gallery with my coffee on a tray.

Did I say I WORKED at the tourist office?

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact [burrenlowlands@gmail.com](mailto:burrenlowlands@gmail.com) for more information.

# GORT INSE GUAIRE

## A TALE OF TWO FUTURES?

BY PAT FARRELL

Of recent years Gort has been seeing a renaissance. Since the first Burren Lowlands public meeting in February 2014 and perhaps more unexpectedly, the Gort bypass, business in the town is increasing. The Burren Lowlands committee have in fact commissioned a local architect Brent Mostert to design a new look for the Square with less parking, more seating and more trees. This raises the question does Gort have a tourism-based future? Why would people stop here? The fact is that they already do. In 2017 many of the tourists popping into the Gort Tourist office were people driving through from Kinvara or the Burren, most of them wanting to eat or look around for half an hour. Perhaps any rural town in Ireland would find 29 points of interest for tourists if they thought about it but this fact surprised and encouraged the small committee which drew up the town walking plan published by the Burren Lowlands in 2017 (available from the Tourist Office). We also have a rail and bus connexion to Galway and Ennis, five café/restaurants, two hotels, three pharmacies, a craft outlet (the Framing Studio), a pottery retail workshop and a whole food shop as well as three large supermarkets. Being close to Coole Park and Thoor Ballylee doesn't hurt either. We have

most of the infrastructure we need in place. At a town meeting in 2017, Fáilte Ireland outlined a route off the Wild Atlantic Way which would pass through Gort. This will probably be called 'The Burren Loop'. In 2017 approximately 10 million tourists visited Ireland (Bord Failte estimate that 2/3 of these would have visited elements of the WWW) and one could hope that at least half would go inland after the Cliffs along the new route and maybe half again would stop in Gort. All these people would need to eat, shop and perhaps stay for a night. This would not only benefit existing businesses but could in its turn provide more local employment. Of course, tourism comes with problems as well as benefits. Many of these tourists would arrive in cars. Our present parking, apart from supermarket car parks, is metered which could be a deterrent and mostly on street. The optimal solution would be a large free car park near the town centre, the location of which at present is not obvious. Tourism is also seasonal and so employment generated by this would also be seasonal and not in a way that would be helpful to people on farms who really need extra income in the winter. So, if tourism is one future what is the other possibility. Some people feel that it is industrial and indeed Gort does have at least three thriving industrial

concerns Topform, on the Tubber Road, Lisk Ltd. on the Old Ennis Road and Natus Medical on the Glenbrack Road. All of these employ local people, are on back roads and involve minimal disturbance to people living in their vicinity. The latest industrial proposal is more contentious. It is proposed to build a BioGas plant on a 7.85 hectare (18.53 acres in 'old money/measurement') site near the centre of Gort. This will be the largest BioGas development of its kind in Ireland and will be 10 metres from the Gort River, 700 metres from The Grove estate and less than a kilometre from the Town Square. The nearest comparable plant, in Donegal, is 5 kilometres from dwelling houses. The Donegal plant is half the size of the proposed Gort plant. At going to press the planning permission application for this plant is on hold waiting for the company concerned, 'Sustainable Bio-Energy Ltd' to answer eight pages of queries from the Galway County Council planning department. The original application was discussed on June 18th 2018 and the company have six months to answer the questions raised. It may well be by the time this article is read the application may have been refused, it may have been passed. Either way it is useful to look at the proposed objections and advantages of the scheme. Proponents highlight: the

environmental advantages of converting farm slurry, human waste and vegetable compost into energy, the benefits to local farmers who would have their slurry collected rather than disposing of it in other ways, the possibility of local employment.

Even people, and there are many in Gort, who are opposed to the scheme see the inherent usefulness of BioGas as such. However, the proposed site negates its possible environmental appeal: the site will be too near a water source which feeds the Garryland/Coole nature reserve and surrounding farm land, the site is in an area which floods frequently, there will also be noise and traffic pollution from the trucks (perhaps 50-100 a day) servicing the site.

It is undeniable that local

farmers would find the plant useful to them initially but long term they might find the possible pollution would affect their own wells and livestock. In terms of employment, even in their own application the company state that there will be only 20 long term jobs, most of which are highly technical. This does not seem a huge advantage in comparison with the 'side effects' of the plant. However, the key problem this writer sees is that this project will negate Gort's other possible future, the growth of tourism in the area. None of the current industries in Gort are detrimental to the area. They do not produce effluent or potentially dangerous

emissions, they do not cause undue discomfort to residents or visitors to Gort, they are well-screened from the road or on back roads. It is impossible to quantify how many extra jobs extra tourism will bring but it is worth remembering that every euro spent in Gort will generate two more ( the multiplier effect) locally. It would not seem extravagant to say that the net result would be more than 20 jobs.

By all means let's attract industry to Gort but let's make it clean and compatible with our tourism future. It is worth noting too that if there was a proposal to site a BioGas facility some kilometres out of town few would oppose it.

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Pat Farrell is a local volunteer and full time Mature student. Although involved with Burren Lowlands activities, she wishes to state that the above article is her personal opinion and should not be misconstrued as a Burren Lowlands statement.

## MY VISION FOR GORT

BY CIARAN O'DONNELL

The first public meeting of the Gort BioGas Concern Group was held to inform people of a proposed Slurry processing Plant within the town's limits and provide an open forum for discussion about the development. This initial meeting attracted upwards of 150 people. Most people's response was one of dismay, as for many this was the first instance of hearing about the development. Overall, the meeting was a great success and galvanised the community against the development. What was overwhelmingly obvious from the meeting was the community spirit and the genuine love people have for the town and its future. Although mutually independent, the Concern Group and the Burren Lowlands share a common vision; that of the long term development and positive future growth of the town.

What is the Concern Group's long term vision for Gort? Gort is wonderfully positioned at the

gateway to the Burren; it has a motorway connection and is serviced by two international airports. We have fibre broadband in the town connecting us to the global economy. Capitalising on this type of infrastructure will attract meaningful, long term investment into the town and create jobs. Capitalising on this will benefit not only the town by making it an attractive place to live and work but will draw tourists too. Who wouldn't like to take a peaceful family walk or cycle down Kinincha Road straight to Coole or take a loop river walk around the town without the rush of traffic at your heels? Or meet up for chat and relax in a town square that is designed for people not cars. The Concern Group's long term vision for Gort then is to use the existing momentum of the town's people to push for change that will benefit and develop the town as a place our children may like to live and work in, not leave at the first opportunity.

# GETTING A GORGEOUS GORT

# RIVER WALK

BY DAVID MURRAY

I was very lucky as a child to grow up by a river. It offered an incredible world with endless adventure and discovery - especially when that river used to disappear into the ground just 20 metres from where I slept at night! That river was a fundamental part of my growing up and – with my work on researching flooding solutions I’ve discovered more and more about the rivers in South Galway and how and where they disappear. Have you ever seen the Gort River as it comes out of a vast cave at Cannahowna? Did you know that you can walk down into it? While this beautiful river flows through Gort – there is no real easy access to it, no walks and no amenities around it. The communities of Gort and South Galway would really benefit from getting access to the river and being able to stroll through them and take in the beauty. River walks in Gort have been talked about for decades. Over 30 years ago, Church street residents, including Damien McGrath and Josie McInerney sketched a vision of several river walks around the town. It’s time that we change this.

The Galway County Council (GCC) 2013-2019 Gort Local Area Plan highlights the

“establishment of an accessible network of greenway linkages and amenities through the town for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community” including “an amenity walking circular route along the Kinincha Road returning via the riverbank to Georges Street.”

Unfortunately this objective has not been met and GCC are in the process of reaffirming these objectives for the next five years.

How do we start the process of getting a river walk? One step at a time – the Gort River as it flows downstream from Aldi touches mostly GCC land – so this should be the path of least resistance (they own both the area and the area plan!). This would give a beautiful 45 minute loop – So this is where we should start!

We are actively ramping up a team here, some of our county councilors are becoming very active on this and we are looking for early and rapid engagement with GCC. This can be made a reality – but we will need community support to activate this.

If we want to start a river walk in Gort – then we need to start to walk the river.



ABOVE, RIVER AS SEEN ALONG THE KININCHA ROAD. AT RIGHT, THE RIVER RUNS PAST THE CONVENT GARDENS PHOTOS BY DAVID MURRAY



# TOURISM 2019

# WILD ATLANTIC WAY

## TO INCLUDE GORT IN BURREN DRIVE



BY CIARAN CANNON

I met recently in Shannon with representatives of Fáilte Ireland to impress upon them the importance of having the “Burren Drive” in place for summer 2019. I am greatly encouraged to have received confirmation from Fáilte Ireland today that it is progressing its plan to develop ‘Looped Drives’ off the Wild Atlantic Way and that the Burren Drive, which will benefit tourism in the Burren Lowlands is a priority for development and should be in place next year.

I am informed by Fáilte Ireland that the first step is to establish a Steering Committee which will

be comprised of key stakeholders.

These will be the Local Authorities (Clare and Galway County Councils), LEADER and Fáilte Ireland and it is envisaged that this group will be in place by the end of October.

Public consultation meetings will be held before the end of 2018 to seek feedback from locals and in particular from those operating businesses along the route. Fáilte Ireland plans to develop the Burren Drive in time for the 2019 tourist season. Congrats to the great team at The Burren Lowlands who continue to make a very strong case for this looped drive.

# BURREN LOWLANDS CLG PROJECTS FOR 2020

BY TERESA BUTLER

The Burren Lowlands project has created structure for rural development of the region of south Galway and north Clare in community, enterprise and tourism. It provides a framework for a bottom-up approach, whereby people at grassroots take the initiative to develop projects with the support of Burren Lowlands CLG. The project in turn is supported by the local authorities and relevant support agencies. It stimulates community spirit and innovation, under the ethos of using the strengths of its people and place, working across the board to partner with a large variety of organizations that promote the well-being, prosperity and sustainability of our region.

This work is more important than ever because it forms the basis of sustainable development. Since the projects' inception four years ago, the region has been designated as a Rural Economic Development Zone which creates leverage in terms of funding opportunities and statutory focus. The regions' cross county and cross provincial location has had a negative impact in terms of development over the years therefore this shift has been important. Gort is also a key town along the Atlantic Economic Corridor and the Burren Lowlands project is

## SMALL TOWNS, BIG IDEAS!

Burren Lowlands CLG have launched a Small Town Big Idea! Project as part of its work in regenerating Gort town. It is called 'Our Space: A Community Led Characterisation of Gort Town Centre and its Environs'. This project is in association with Báile NSC of ICOMOS Ireland in partnership with Galway 2020 and Galway County Council. A collaboration which blends local, national and international expertise and creativity, to support local development objectives, animate the town for community activities and envision a future for the town. The idea is a celebration of Gort town serving the Burren Lowlands' region for hundreds of years as a Market Town, with plans to engage with all of the communities that inter depend with it. It consists of two parts. An interactive session which is a collaborative forum for envisioning future development of their town, generating project plans and concepts. And the festival and community event where local artists, artisans and service providers take over segments of the town in spaces which are animated through local artistry supporting local engagement and interaction.

facilitating the support of this development. The concept of developing the hinterland of the town of Gort and Kinvara as a region is essential as towns and villages thrive better when their hinterland is included as a whole. There are about fourteen communities interdependent with Gort and Kinvara. The successes of Burren Lowlands CLG so far, have been in attracting a Loop from the WAW through the region which is expected to be launched in the near future. This shows the importance of highlighting the potential of the natural landscape, heritage and culture that is within the region. A tourist office has been running on a voluntary basis for the last four years as well,

there is also a food and heritage programme called The Flight of the Dishes. A regional business network is underway called Burren Biz which is part of the enterprise focus as well as plans for an enterprise centre in Gort. There is a Town Renewal scheme in place which utilises the positive impact of the recently opened motorway that runs just minutes from the town. To get involved or for more information please email [burrenlowlands@gmail.com](mailto:burrenlowlands@gmail.com). Contributions of advice, time, finance, skills or otherwise are welcome to this hugely important and exciting venture, it will not only have an impact on current, but also future generations of our wonderful region.



BACK ROW (L-R) VINCENT KEANE, HUBERT DISKIN (RIP), PJ BALDWIN. FRONT ROW, (L-R) ANNE DEWINTON AND CATHERINE KENNEDY, LADY GREGORY'S GRANDCHILDREN, SR DELOURDES FAHY, RENA MCALLEN, MARY ROBINSON, FORMER PRESIDENT OF IRELAND.

# KILTARTAN GREGORY MUSEUM CELEBRATES 21<sup>ST</sup>

BY RENA MCALLEN

On a sun - filled day in early August, 2017, the members of Kiltartan Gregory Cultural Society hosted a picnic, at Kiltartan Cross, to celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the Kiltartan Gregory Museum.

Entertainment on the day was provided by Gaillimh Theas Comhaltas. Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats, aka Ellen Keane & Donal Connolly, stopped by, bearing apples for the children and delicious, homemade brack for the adults.

They also performed a dramatic piece based on the lives of Yeats and Lady G. The children delighted in having their faces painted by Hannah Mahon.

The museum, which is housed in what was the former

Kiltartan, red - bricked school house, was officially opened by the then president, Mary Robinson, on August 8<sup>th</sup>. 1996. Special guests in attendance on the opening day were Catherine Kennedy & Anne de Winton, Lady Gregory's grandchildren. Over the past twenty one years the museum has attracted thousands of visitors from all over the world. Of special interest are the many artefacts relating to Lady Gregory and Coole House.

A special feature of the Museum is an early 20th Century classroom. Past pupils enjoy visiting this room where they can walk down memory lane and hear their names on the roll call.

'Kiltartan Cross' is immortalized

by W.B. Yeats in The Irish Airman poem. This year, 2018, Kiltartan will be at the centre of celebrations which will mark the centenary of Robert Gregory's death in Italy during World War 1.

So if you have an interest in local history, literature, genealogy, folklore or you just want to reminisce, visit Kiltartan Gregory Museum at the renowned Kiltartan Cross. Knowledgeable, local volunteers will be there to greet you throughout the summer months.

Every success in the years ahead to the Kiltartan Gregory Museum, congratulations to Kiltartan Gregory Cultural Society and a huge thanks to the volunteers who run it.

# THE HURLING ALL-IRELAND 2017 SENIORS

BY TOMMY FAHY

We all love to watch "Up for the Match" on the Saturday night before the All-Ireland final, especially when your county is playing, but what is it like to be "away for the match" when your county is playing? It happened to me last year.

I had a longstanding commitment to be in London for three weeks from the end of August. One of my duties, but not the only reason for me being there, was to babysit a cat. Pangur the cat does not like cat hotels or cat B and B.

I had a feeling from early summer that this might be Galway's year, but I knew I was going to miss the final after Joe Canning got that wonderful last minute point against Tipperary. The first thing I did in London was to suss out where to watch the match on TV. As I was staying in the Fulham area, I found out that McGettigans sports pub was nearby. They advertised that they showed all sports, which indeed they did. I checked it out the week before, and watched Dublin beat Tyrone, so at least I was sure I would see the final.

Going out the door to McGettigans on All-Ireland final day, the cat looked at me with a blank expression which suggested that he didn't

care whether Galway won or lost. McGettigans had a decent crowd, but the problem with sports pubs is that they show all sports on a screen in one area. Millwall were playing Derby County in soccer on one, another screen was a Premiership Rugby game and in a corner, an elderly couple were being bored to death by a cricket match.

I am sure that in London there are clubs and pubs that come alive on All-Ireland final day, but McGettigans was strangely subdued. It was as if the Waterford or Galway supporters were reluctant to give full voice to cheering on their team. As four different sports were shown at the same time, I think people were afraid to upset those who were watching the other screens. I got the distinct impression that many of the people watching would prefer to be anywhere in Ireland that day instead of London

After the cup was presented to David Burke, the TV channel was switched to soccer, and however much you may dislike listening to Ger Loughnane, it is surely better hearing his views than watching Doncaster play Blackpool.

Incidentally, the cat never asked me who won the match!



MEMBERS OF THE 2017 ALL-IRELAND WINNING GALWAY TEAM WHO WENT TO GORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL: BACK ROW, (L-R) CONOR WHELAN, AIDAN HARTE, COLM CALLINAN, CONOR COONEY. FRONT ROW, (L-R) GREG LALLY, ADRIAN TOUHY, PRINCIPAL BRIAN CROSSAN, GAVIN LALLY, JACK GREALISH.

# THE HURLING ALL-IRELAND 2018 MINORS

A PROFILE OF JASON O'DONOGHUE FROM GORT,  
MEMBER OF THE GALWAY ALL-IRELAND MINOR TEAM

AGE: 17 years old

OCCUPATION: Fifth year student at Gort  
Community School

CLUB AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS: In my  
club, U13B Championship, U15 A1  
Championship. At school, Three Connaught Post  
Primary Championships, 1st Year, U15 and Junior

COUNTY ACHIEVEMENTS: 2016 U15 All  
Ireland, 2018 All Ireland Minor

WHEN DID YOU FIRST PLAY HURLING: I  
would say I started off at about 5 years of age in  
our back garden with my two brothers, Gerard  
and Darren. We always had such fun and I  
learned a lot from them.

WHAT DOES YOUR CLUB MEAN TO YOU: My  
club means everything to me! It has given me the  
tools to play and I wouldn't be anywhere without  
it. Hopefully there will be many successful days  
ahead in the Gort jersey!

BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CAREER: My  
whole family! We are a very close family and  
everybody gets on with each other. They are  
always very supportive and have always been  
there for me.

ADVICE TO UNDERAGE PLAYERS: My advice  
would be to believe in your ability and always  
believe you can be a better player. If you practice  
and train hard everything else will fall into place.

IF YOU HAD THE PICK OF ALL THE SENIOR  
INTERCOUNTY MIDFIELD PLAYERS IN  
IRELAND, WHO WOULD YOU PICK TO PLAY  
BESIDE YOU: I would choose Cian Lynch from  
Limerick. David Burke is up there as well. They



are two seriously talented hurlers. Cian edges it  
for me due to his work rate, skill and vision as a  
midfielder. He is some man to find a pass and he  
was the engine of this year's victorious Limerick  
team.

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO PLAY IN AND ALL-  
IRELAND MINOR HURLING FINAL AND WIN:  
It was a huge occasion for me waking up on All-  
Ireland Final day and realising I was playing for  
my county in front of a massive crowd in Croke  
Park. The whole day was a savage experience.  
Once the game started the nerves flew away and  
when the final whistle went it was such a relief.  
Getting my hands on the trophy and realising all  
the hard training all year was 100% worth it. It's a  
moment I will never forget!!

# GUAIRE MAGAZINE LAUNCHES FIRST CHILDREN'S

## WRITING CONTEST, 2018

BY CHRISTINE BRENNAN

Guairé Magazine launched its inaugural children's writing competition in 2017 covering stories and poetry for children aged 9-12 years. The themes for the competition was 'The Loop' and a series of free creative writing workshops involving leading children's authors were scheduled in Gort Library during between winter 2017 and spring 2018.

The winners of the 2018 competition were Aíde Coughlan of Kiltartan National School winner of the short story competition and Híudaí Mulkerrins of Peterswell National School winner of the poetry competition. The shortlist included: Daniel Walsh, Nora Curran, Grace O'Loughlin, Lela Kingsnorth, and James Kenny in what was a very high quality field of submissions.

The Guairé Magazine Children's Creative Writing Competition was kindly sponsored by Gort and District Lions Club. The winners were presented with the Guairé Award - a commissioned sculpture of King Guairé crafted by Jethro Sheen of Sheen Stone Works in Gort. The award will be on show at the winners'



AÍDEE COUGHLAN OF KILTARTAN NATIONAL SCHOOL WON THE SHORT STORY PRIZE AND HÍUDAÍ MULKERRINS OF PETERSWELL NATIONAL SCHOOL WON THE POETRY PRIZE.

schools for the next year. They also received an e-reader and their winning entries are published on page X of our magazine.

The Guairé workshop series saw enthusiastic attendance at our creative writing workshops delivered by leading Irish authors. The workshops were very well attended by children from Galway and Clare. The authors involved included: Debbie Thomas, Will Collins and Brian Gallagher. Debbie Thomas is the writer-in-residence with Our Lady's

Children's Hospital Crumlin. She has written four comedy adventure books for children: Dead Hairy (2011), Jungle Tangle (2013) and Monkie Business (2014). Her most recent book is Class Act (2015). Brian Gallagher is a full-time writer whose plays and short stories have been produced in Ireland, Britain and Canada. He has worked extensively in radio and television, writing many dramas and documentaries. He collaborated with composer Shaun Purcell on the musical, Larkin, for which he wrote the book and lyrics, and on Winds



GORT'S LITERARY TRADITION CONTINUES WITH BRIAN GALLAGHER



WILL COLLINS

of Change for RTE's Lyric FM. Brian is the author of six books of historical fiction for young readers: *Friend or Foe*, set during the 1916 Easter Rising, and *Across the Divide*, set during the 1913 Dublin Lockout, have been particularly



DEBBIE THOMAS

popular with the general reader, schools and One Book One Community projects. Brian is also the author of four adult novels. Will Collins is a screenwriter whose credits include the Oscar-nominated *Song Of The*

*Sea*, the acclaimed follow-up feature to Tomm Moore's, *The Secret of Kells*; Will received an Annie Award nomination for his 'Achievement in Writing for an Animated Feature'. Will also wrote *My Brothers*, his award-winning live-action debut feature which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and was the opening film of the Galway Film Fleadh 2010. Will won the Pitching Award at the Galway Film Fleadh in 2007 and was nominated for Best Film Script IFTA, 2015 & 2011. Will has also written for television. He has lectured in Screenwriting in NUIG and has worked as a Script Editor. Will graduated from the NUIG Huston School of Film and Digital Media with a Masters in Screenwriting in 2006.

## FIRST PRIZE FOR FICTION

# THE LOOP

BY AIDEE COUGHLAN

They were only an hour awake when they heard the wailing of the air sirens. The Johnson family lived in London in 1945. Emma Johnson was originally from Connemara in Ireland. She moved to London to live with her beloved husband Frank. They had a simple but happy life, until war broke out that is. "London is under attack," came the muffled broadcast from the old transistor radio on the sideboard. "Evacuate, evacuate." Their identical twin girls, Stella and Juliette, were only two years old and therefore had no concept of what was happening. Frank and Emma, however, exchanged worried looks and instinctively grabbed a few possessions. Frank took Stella in his arms and Emma clutched Juliette's hand tightly as they ran into the street. There they joined the hundreds of others who were also fleeing their homes as bombs began to rain down upon them. They jostled their way through the crowds, trying to get to the trucks that would take them to safety. In all the chaos, Juliette holding her mother's hand was falling behind—"Mom!" she cried, but Emma couldn't hear



her. Her mother was running too fast and Juliette couldn't help but let go. She was lost in the crowd. Realising she had lost Juliette, Emma began to scream as loud as she could, "Juliette, Juliette," she cried over and over again but the noise of the bombs drowned her voice out. Suddenly she felt herself being shoved onto a truck. She tried to push against the crowd but the force of the distraught people was too strong. Moments later she found herself being driven away without her precious Juliette. The truck took Frank, Emma and Stella to the waiting

boats and as they queued to embark, they frantically asked everyone they met if they had seen their little girl. They searched the boat in desperate hope, but there was no sign of their daughter. Their baby girl had been left behind in the middle of the

blitz.

Ten years later, the Johnsons (who were now living in Connemara, with Stella's grandparents since they fled London), sat in a hospital room caring for Stella's grandmother. Emma's Mom, now 87 years old was very unwell. "Stella dear, would you mind getting me a cup of water?" her grandmother asked. "Of course," Stella said, jumping to her feet. As Stella returned to the room with the water, she came to halt outside the door when she heard her name mentioned in a hushed

voice.

"Darling, please tell Stella about her sister Juliette," pleaded her grandmother. "Stella is nearly 13 now, she needs to know."

"Mother, I just can't," Emma said. Stella could hear her mother's voice breaking as if she was going to burst into tears.

"My sister Juliette!" Stella thought, she never remembered having a sister, but she always felt that a part of the family was missing and sometimes when she came into a room, her parents would go silent and her mother's eyes would be red and puffy as if she had been crying. Stella listened at the door to see if she could hear anything more.

"Emma. Before I go I need to know someone will complete the family loop," said her grandmother in a weak voice, "so you have to promise me you will tell her."

There was a moment of silence, then Emma spoke. "Yes Mother, I promise." A moment later Stella walked into the room to find her mother sobbing at her grandmother's bedside. Stella's grandmother now lay still and peaceful with her eyes shut.

A week later, Frank, Emma and Stella sat at the dinner table in silence. "Stella, your father and I need to tell you something. . ." her mother said slowly.

"Stella, you have a sister," her father finished.

"I know," Stella said abruptly. "I heard mother and grandmother talking in the hospital."

"Oh," said her father, taken aback. "Stella, I'm sorry, you



weren't supposed to find out that way."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner, what exactly happened?" Her mother and father told her everything about Juliette and the war. When they finished Stella didn't speak for a moment and then shouted, "WHY DIDN'T YOU GO BACK FOR HER? HOW COULD YOU LEAVE HER THERE?" Stella stood up from the table and stormed off to her room. Her parents could hear her sobbing as she ran across the hallway. Emma gave her daughter a few minutes to calm down before knocking at her bedroom door. "Stella, can I come in, please?" asked Emma.

"I guess," Stella answered.

"I'm so sorry," her mother said as she sat beside her. "I loved Juliette so much, your father and I tried our best to find her but we couldn't do anything."

"I know Mom. It's okay, but I was thinking Juliette must be out there somewhere. We have

to try to find her, we have to complete the family loop. It's what grandmother wanted," Stella pleaded.

"Darling," her mother began. "I won't take no for answer," Stella said, interrupting her mother.

"We'll try," Emma said and pulled her daughter to her. "You're the best mom ever,"

Stella whispered into her mother's ear and then ran back into the kitchen to tell her father. The family talked for a while and thought about how they could find Juliette.

"Alright," said Stella in a loud, confident voice. "Let's start with the basics. Juliette was last seen in London in 1945. She was lost in a crowd so anyone could have taken her. What could have happened to her?"

"Well, someone could have found her and brought her to the police," Frank started.

"Great idea father, so let's go to the post office and call London police first thing in the

morning," Stella said proudly. The next day Stella woke up bright and early and ran to the post office. When she got there she made a call to London police station and asked about Juliette Johnson. "Can you describe what she might look like miss?" the policeman asked.

"Well," said Stella, unsure at first, then realising that they were identical twins, she described herself as best she could. They told her they would pass the information on to all the other police stations in London.

She then went to the local newspaper office, asking if they could write a report about her sister. The newspaper agreed and the following day a reported came to their house to gather information on the story. The Johnsons spent months sending letter after letter to orphanages in London, but got no relevant replies. Eventually the family gave up on their darling Juliette.

LONDON 1963

Back in London a college graduate sat in his local library leafing through old newspaper

articles for a story he was working on. All of a sudden he stopped when he saw a picture of his sister, Abigail Clark. He examined the picture and scanned through the text. GIRL WENT MISSING IN WORLD WAR II ONLY TWO YEARS OLD it said in bold writing. He carefully folded the article, discreetly sliding it into his back pocket. James went home to his parents and showed them the article. For a moment they stared at it in disbelief, before saying a word.

"It can't be," stuttered Mr. Clark.

"Did you ever meet Abigail's real family?" said James sternly to his parents.

The couple glanced at each other. The family discussed the situation in detail, before coming to a conclusion. They must contact the police. James found a phone number for the Connemara police. They called the number immediately and told the Johnson family of Abigail, or Juliette's, whereabouts. They informed them of how they had found Juliette in an orphanage during World War 2 and had been caring for her all these years.

The Johnson family were overjoyed. Finally the Clarks decided they would go over to Ireland to meet the Johnson family. And so they did.

Three days later in Connemara, Ireland, the Johnson family heard a knock at their door.

Stella put her hand on the door handle and took a deep breath. She opened the door to see a mirror image looking back at her. Tears filled her eyes.

"Juliette?" she cried.

"Stella?" Juliette answered.

The girls hugged each other. Even though they were complete strangers they felt like they had known each other their entire life. After the families got to know each other, Juliette, her foster family and her birth family discussed who Juliette was going to live with. Stella and Juliette were 18 and would soon be going off to college.

The two families decided since the Johnsons were quite poor, they would split their money to send the girls to college together in London. The twins found an apartment to live in and visited the families during the holidays. Finally the family loop was complete!

## 2018 FICTION SHORTLIST

Nora Curran,  
James Kenny,  
Lela Kingsnorth,  
Grace O'Loughlin,  
and Daniel Walsh

FIRST PRIZE FOR POETRY

# THE LOOP

BY HÍUDAÍ MULKERRINS

I love the loop in Peterswell  
It's where people go to walk.  
Some people cycle, some people run  
Some others like to talk.

I like to think the loop is mine  
And so I don't like to see  
Other people on the loop,  
The loop belongs to me.

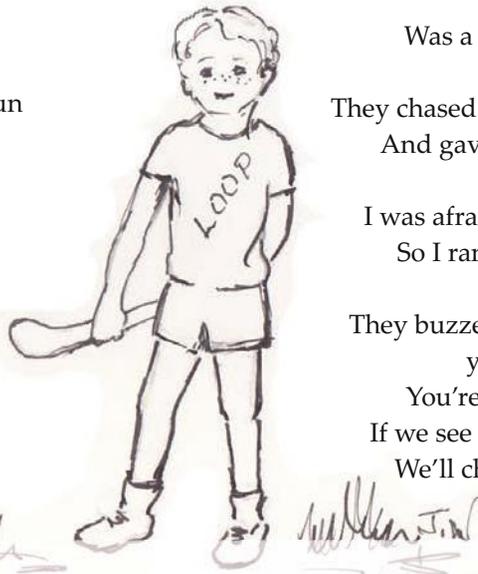
So I say . . . You're on my loop  
you big galoot.  
You're on my loop today.  
If I see you on my loop again,  
I'll chase you right away.

I met a man on the loop today.  
He was big and broad and burly.  
I looked him up and down  
And I chased him with my hurley.

I caught him at last on my loop  
I boxed him on the chin.  
I thought he didn't have enough  
So I kicked him in the shin.

I roared. . . You're on my loop  
you big galoot.  
You're on my loop today.  
If I see you on my loop again  
I'll chase you right away.

I was out on my loop one morning  
And I looked up in the trees  
And what I saw buzzing there



Was a hive of honey bees.

They chased me down my lovely loop  
And gave me a terrible fright.

I was afraid they might sting me  
So I ran with all my might.

They buzzed. . . You're on our loop  
you big galoot.

You're on our loop today.  
If we see you on our loop again  
We'll chase you right away.



# FOOTSTEPS FROM THE PRESENT

## THE REMARKABLE STORY OF MARGARET HURLEY

BY HANNAH RUSHE

Australia in 1850 was to our ancestors a foreboding place, a place of exile and a place of punishment. My article, "Footsteps from the Past", published in the Guaire Magazine in 2016 tells the harrowing story of the people who suffered and died in the Gort Workhouse during the Famine. It also featured the remarkable and arduous journey taken by 16 young orphan girls from the Gort Poor Law Union, including Margaret Hurley, who travelled to Australia under the 'Earl Grey Scheme'.

These and other orphan girls from around Ireland were encouraged to emigrate to Australia to escape the Famine. The emigration scheme was run from London by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Grey, and so the scheme became known as the 'Earl Grey Scheme'. Decades of convict transportation had left the Australian colony with a shortage of women and British Government policy was to provide each orphan girl with domestic work for which they were to be paid £8 per year.

Margaret Hurley and the other young girls from Gort travelled to Plymouth, England where they boarded the ship the 'Thomas Arbuthnot' on the 28th October 1849 and it arrived on the other side of the world in Botney Bay, Sydney on the 3rd, February 1850. The surgeon on board the ship Dr. Charles Edward Strutt, who accompanied the girls on their journey', recorded in his diary in February 1850 that....

"Landed all the girls in a large steamer and walked at their head to the Depot (Hyde Park Barracks). There was such weeping and wailing at leaving the ship; when on board the steamer an effort was made to give three cheers, but with very indifferent success. I stopped nearly all day at the Depot with them and got them settled as well as I could and saw that they all got their

dinner, which unluckily was a meagre one, being a fast day. They will now be visited by the Catholic clergy and nuns for about a fortnight, confessed and persuaded to take the pledge. They will then be permitted to take situations."

Following the end of convict transportation in 1848 after an estimated 50,000 convicts passed through its entrance gates, Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, New South Wales was then converted into a female immigration depot. The girls from the "Thomas Arbuthnot" were among the first occupants of the newly refurbished depot. When the girls were processed, the authorities set about finding employment for them.

This was the end of my story on the orphan girls until September

2017, the week of the All-Ireland Hurling Final, when I received a phone call from the Diskin family in Kiltartan. Galway and Gort was in a state of euphoria following the memorable All-Ireland with a number of Gort heroes on the team. Tony Diskin was home from Australia on holidays and here to see Galway win in Croke Park. He had read my article and wanted to meet me as he had information on Margaret Hurley. The Diskin family in Kiltartan had sent a copy of the Guaire Magazine 2016 to Tony in Australia at Christmas time. He realised its significance to the area where he was working at the time in Burrowa, New South Wales.

I made my way to Kiltartan without delay and was warmly welcomed by Tony's brother Hubert (RIP) and Marie Diskin. Although Tony had left Kiltartan many years ago he had never lost his soft Galway accent and I listened intently to the story that he recounted. When he realised the connection with Margaret Hurley from Gort and the area of Burrowa where he was working,



MARGARET HURLEY  
PATTERSON



MARGARET HURLEY PATTERSON, SEATED. FROM L-R, GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER ISOBEL, GRANDDAUGHTER MARGARET STEWART, AND DAUGHTER MARY DONNELLY.

he went on a mission to find out more about this young woman from his home county.

Tony visited the local Council offices and the council official was able to identify that Margaret Hurley was buried in the Catholic section of the graveyard at Burrowa, number 301. A lady standing in the queue overheard Tony, and said she knew the family! She told him there was a Patterson family in Young related to Margaret, they ran a funeral parlour business and she gave him their phone number.

Tony made his way to the graveyard in Burrowa and found a long line of Celtic Crosses. He soon found the headstone for Margaret and her husband Joseph Patterson and their son Michael. The next day he rang the phone number for the Pattersons in Young and was invited to meet with the family. They were the fifth generation and lived one hour away from Burrowa. They knew Margaret was from Gort and they had photographs and information about her life and family in Australia.

They told him that Margaret's father Thomas Hurley had died and her mother, Mary Hurley (nee Walsh) was unable to look after her.

Margaret had sailed with 193 other orphan girls from Plymouth to Australia. After leaving Hyde Park Barracks she was employed by a Mr. W.H. Broughton of 'Broughtonsworth', Burrowa for two years and she was paid £7 per year.

Margaret Hurley married Joseph Patterson in 1852 in St. Augustine's Catholic Church in the county of Yass. Joseph was the son of George Patterson and Mary O'Toole from Edenderry, County Offaly, then known as King's County. He had emigrated to Australia in 1838 and began working as a shepherd on Broughtonsworth. Margaret's first child, George, was born at Broughtonsworth in April 1853.

Joseph Patterson then bought land on the Burrowa River. Margaret and Joseph had six more children - Thomas, Joseph

E., John P., Mary, Patrick, and Michael. George, Margaret's eldest son opened a store in Burrowa. He was a builder, contractor and undertaker. Few people can now imagine the difficulties encountered during the early pioneering days in Australia. Roads were few and in one instance, when George had to penetrate a long distance into the bush in the course of his undertaking duties, he had six men cutting the road for him through pine country to enable the hearse to pass. In this way the hearse proceeded ten miles with pines falling before it all the way.

Mary was the only girl born to Margaret and Joseph and she married Thomas Donnelly. It was Mary Donnelly's descendants who met with Tony Diskin in Australia. Mary had cared for her elderly mother Margaret (Hurley) Patterson before her death in September 1922, aged 91 years. Her husband Joseph Patterson had died in 1903.

Two of Margaret's sons, Joseph and John, remarkably returned to Ireland in 1870 in order to continue the Patterson family business of merchants and undertakers in Edenderry, County

Offaly. George Patterson, Margaret's brother-in-law, was the proprietor of 'The Old Established House' in the second half of the 19th Century.

According to its bill head it was established in 1821 which would have made it the oldest business in Edenderry and it continued in business until 1970.

George Patterson died in 1891 and Margaret's sons inherited the

business. Both Joseph and John were married in Ireland and in the census of 1901 and of 1911, both men were recorded as having been born in Australia. Unusually for the time, John was proud to carry his mother's maiden name as "John PH", John Patrick Hurley Patterson. John PH died in 1925 aged 65, while Joseph died in 1945 aged 89.

The Great Famine Commemoration Committee was formed in 1997 to honour the memory of the "Irish Orphans" who came to Australia during the Famine. The Hyde Park Barracks was selected as the place to erect a sculpture with the names of the Irish orphans inscribed on it. The sculpture was unveiled in 1999 and contains the names of over 40 Irish orphans, including Margaret Hurley, representing some 4,000 orphan girls who were sent to the Australian colony.

Hyde Park Barracks is today one of the most significant convict sites in the world and is now a listed Unesco World Heritage site. All that Margaret had when she travelled to Australia was a simple trunk with a few possessions - some clothing, a bible, a rosary beads, reading glasses and a small chalice. The trunk had been made in Gort and had passed on



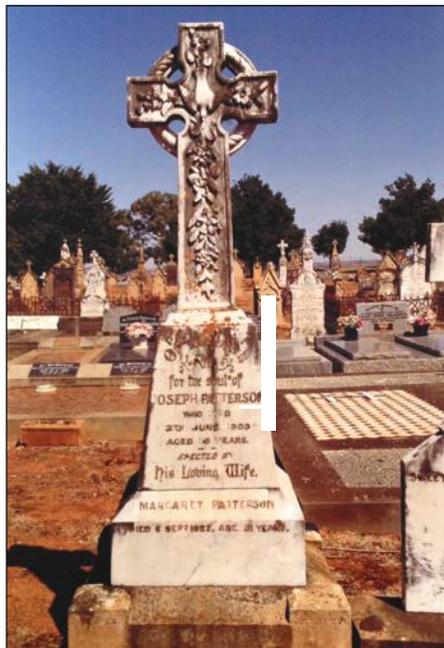
FROM L-R, TONY DISKIN, THE DONNELLYS OF BURROWA.

who now number many thousands of Australian citizens.

I would like to thank Tony Diskin and the Diskin family in Kiltartan for inviting me to their home and sharing this significant information with me about Margaret Hurley and her life in Australia. It is interesting that Margaret's name attracted me to record her journey to Australia. I wonder how she remembered Ireland and her family down through the years. It is possible that she never had any more communication with

Gort after she set sail for Sydney. Her resilience and fortitude to survive to 91 years of age and rear her family is worthy of recognition. Tony Diskin brought Margaret Hurley Patterson home to me and to the Parish of Gort and Beagh she left in 1849.

Sadly, Tony's brother Hubert died 6th May 2018. I had visited Marie and Hubert in Kiltartan to meet with Tony on that September day. Hubert was most gracious and appreciated the work we were doing. May he rest in peace.



FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR MARGARET HURLEY PATTERSON AND HUSBAND JOSEPH PATTERSON

# ST. PATRICK'S IN LAVALLY

# THE FAMINE CEMETERY

BY MARGARET CARR

With much help from many people and under the direction of the Heritage Officer of Galway Council, I have been compiling a book on St. Patrick's cemetery which was land granted by Lord Gort who was on the Board of Guardians of the Workhouse, for the burial of persons dying in the workhouse. The numerous internments in 1848 in the confined grounds about the workhouse were "quite enough to create contagion."

Following the famine, the Fever Hospital remained open until 1924 when the Regional Hospital in Galway was opened.

We do not know how many people were interred there during the famine, but from 24th June, 1848 to 18th May, 1850, the number of deaths was 367. In the week ending 7th April, 1849 there were 89 deaths. The following week, 101 people died as direct result of cholera. Most, if not all, were buried in St. Patrick's. Following the famine, the Fever Hospital remained open until 1924 when the Regional Hospital in Galway opened. Between January 1891 and 21st November, 1921 seven hundred and twenty-two people died in the Fever Hospital of varying ages, accidents or ailments.



ENTRANCE ON THE LOUGHREA ROAD

Many were buried in family cemeteries but most were buried in St. Patrick's. Gort Catholic Church Records contain names, addresses and dates of death for people who were buried in St. Patrick's from January 1919 to May 1987. These records are not complete. Do you know of people who are buried in St. Patrick's cemetery? Do you know where any member of your family who died in the Fever Hospital is buried? If you have

information, please send it to me by email:

derrybrien2@eircom.net

The book will soon be on sale and the income from it will be used to erect a plaque in everyone's memory. Your information will be recorded in a journal in the Gort Parish Office.

I believe every person who is buried in St. Patrick's is entitled to be remembered and prayed for.

To be forgotten is to die twice.

# HELLO FROM THE OTHER SIDE

BY FIDELMA LARKIN

What would you do if you saw the ghost of someone you loved who was long gone from this world? Would you freak out and book an appointment at the nearest psychotherapist? Why? Are we not told from a young age that when you die your spirit leaves your body to journey to Heaven? What if you could make contact with spirits – would you see it as a gift? Well I met one such person who lives a life of bringing messages to people on this earth from loved ones from another world – the spirit world. He sees it as a gift – the gift of bringing joy, peace and harmony. Patrick is a medium who held a group session in the Lady Gregory Hotel which I attended. No, he wasn't a neurotic, long haired, mantra chanting hippie, but a very down to earth, man who welcomed the opportunity to discuss his gift.

"A lot of people have difficulty believing in what I do and I respect that" he said. "People have difficulty because of their faith or religious beliefs. They believe that they are disturbing spirits, and are terrified because of the usual tv misbeliefs, but if someone feels the need to come and see me it usually means that their loved ones are

directing them to me because they either have a message for them or they want to give them closure by letting them know that they are at peace".

A lot of jaws hit the floor during the group session that night. with nervous giggles, and utter amazement at some of the messages delivered. People were adamant that there was no way he could have known the information he gave them

**"A lot of people have difficulty believing in what I do and I respect that."**

except by talking to the spirit of their departed loved one. I must say that this is the perfect way of introducing oneself to this world especially if you are a bit fearful of a private session.

I decided to take it one step further and go for a private session with Patrick. I'm not sure how much I can tell you because of the personal nature of messages given to me but I



PATRICK DOAK

will say that most of what he said resonated with me. My mother, as some of you will know was a gentle woman and he described her to a tee. She wants me to explore the importance of herbs and herbal medicine as her ancestors did – I had just the week before bought a book on herbal medicine!!! Uncanny or what?! My father wants me to move house and he will direct me to this house – didn't happen yet and to be quite honest I'm not sure it will but time will tell. It will have to be in flashing neon lights for me to see it though!

It was an enlightening experience and hey - I'm still alive so God didn't strike me down. I hope that I have helped calm the nerves if you feel a need to visit a medium. I highly recommend Patrick Doak - you can find him on facebook Centre of Angels Loughrea.

# HEAD ABOVE THE FLOOD

BY ROGER PHILLIMORE

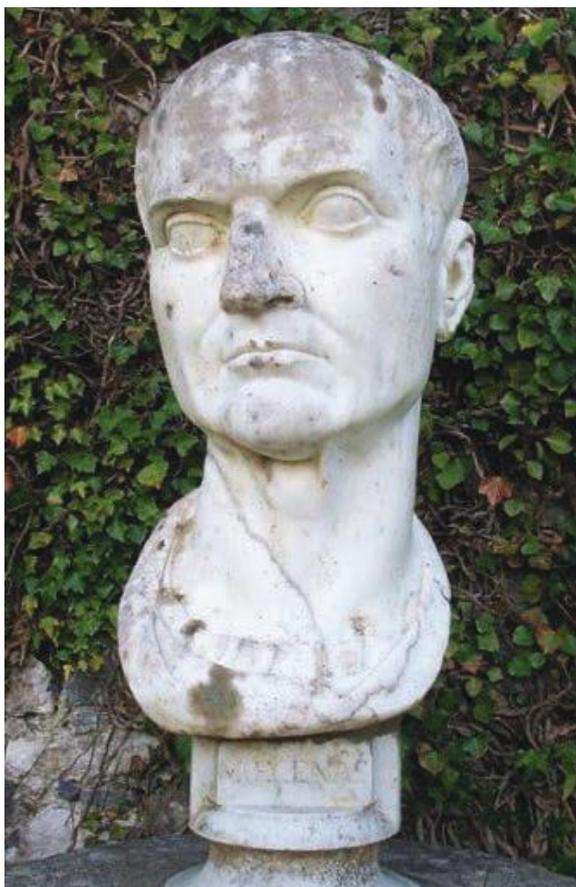
Only your marbled head  
Above the flood, Maecenas,  
looks out on Coole's  
Walled-Garden.  
Set there a century ago  
Augusta Gregory  
announced her own  
'Augustan Age'

Chose you as founding father  
instead of Lordly Gregory  
or hard-riding Persse,  
Sought your talisman  
Protection against insurgents  
rattling her great door.  
The Poet alone  
should have the final word.

Six thousand miles away  
I climb Potrero Hill  
searching for a house  
no longer here  
where legendary Rexroth  
kept his salon  
for the 'beats' and anarchists  
of San Francisco town

Pacifist by principle  
he weathered out another war  
worked the psychiatric wards  
to dodge the greater madness  
Not even a plaque  
on wall or pavement  
echo unbearable tender lines  
to Andree, his dead wife  
"every atom or your learned  
and disordered flesh  
is utterly consumed"  
I make the invisible sign  
of Maecenas at his door.

Here he translated  
Tu Fu's verse  
"War breeds its consequences,  
it is useless to worry"  
written a thousand years before.  
Across the Golden Gate



in Devil's Gulch  
He would sit all night  
with conscious breath  
where two waterfalls  
joined beneath his hut  
"As men and beasts  
of the Zodiac  
marched overhead  
once more"

'Endurance overcomes  
the strongest enemy'  
Words from Virgil's mouth  
Being both the Path  
and Virtue most desired.

They say Augusta Gregory  
sat with open shutters  
each night in Civil War  
in defiance  
of the breaking of her Dream  
and none dared  
lift a hand

With a similar  
reckless disregard  
Maecenas himself  
threw a paper  
at Augustus  
sitting in tribunal  
on his enemies  
after Phillipi  
'Come down you butcher'  
scrawled upon it  
And conspirators were spared.

Defiance of all caution  
is the cause of truth.  
Not discountenanced  
by floods,  
nor winds, nor fire.  
Look up the night  
is full of stars.  
Believe in "All those  
fugitive compounds  
doomed to waste away"  
"Be true to these things"

# FLOOD REMEDIATION

# THE KILLING

## OF COOLE PARK

BY DAVID MURRAY

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In 1768 Robert Gregory, Chairman of the East India Company, bought 600 acres from Oliver Martyn of Tulira and this became the foundation of Coole Park as we know it today. In 1770 he built Coole house and also started the construction of a Walled Garden in 1775. In 1776, it is reported in 'A Tour of Ireland' that many miles of walls are being constructed and also that "Mr. Gregory has a very noble nursery, from which he is making plantations, which will soon be of great ornament to the country". As part of the Walled Garden, beech trees and a line of Yew trees are planted. In the Ordinance Survey 1838 maps we see an outline of the walled garden with the paths, pumps and the line of 'evergreen' trees where the current Yews stand. In 1983, Coole Park, Garryland was designated a Nature Reserve but it is also a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with special focus on lakes, turloughs, juniper formations, limestone pavements and yew trees. The Coole-Park/Garryland complex is therefore one of the most specially protected areas in Ireland with significant ecological benefit. It is operated

by the Irish National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) who are part of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, currently under Minister Josepha Madigan T.D. It is their responsibility to ensure that Coole Park (and other turlough areas) are protected.

### Severe Flooding

Several times in the past 30 years Coole Park has experienced severe flooding. While local people experienced the worst flooding seen in the area in their lifetime, Coole Park was subject to the worst flooding in centuries - many of the famous Yew trees that have been around for an estimated 220 years were destroyed by the flooding in Winter 2016 and water was very close to the Autograph Tree.

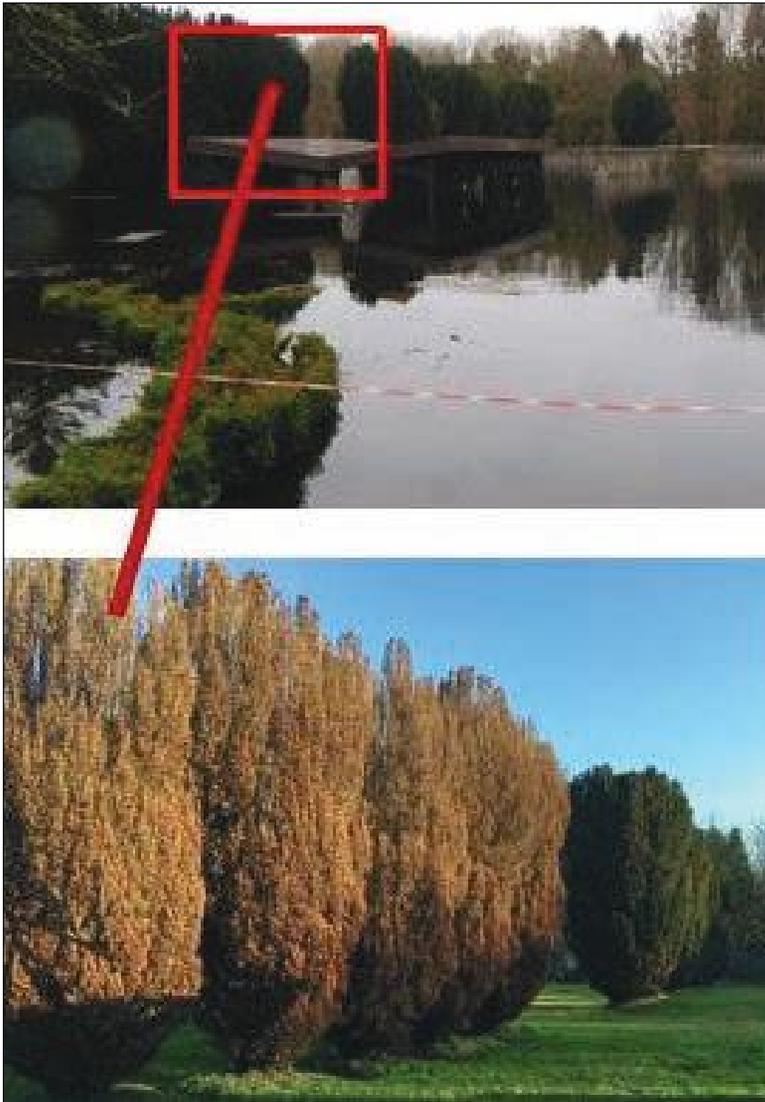
In the past 30 years, we have had a large set of hydrology changes in the South Galway / Kinvara Catchment. The Slieve Aughty mountains now have significant developments around forestry and windfarms (with their corresponding roads and drains). Uplands farming improvements have resulted in land being drained more than in times past. In the Slieve Aughty lowlands there have been rivers streamlined, new culverts

installed and inadvertently, some swallow-holes damaged and overflow channels obstructed through land reclamation.

Whatever the reason for hydrology changes, the consequence is that Coole Park has become the defacto dumping ground and holding site for enormous amounts of contaminated flood water in South Galway. This flood water includes pollutants and contaminants from septic tanks, farmyard slurry tanks and farmyard pollutants as well as farmland run-off and significant amounts of silting. This not only has severe consequences for the environment and human health, but it also drastically affects the overall community as the water levels threaten homes, businesses, churches and severely restricts access around several communities in South Galway.

### Flooding Impacts

In 1995, 2009 and 2014 and 2015, the famous Walled Garden in Coole Park was inundated with flooding - 2015 being the highest levels. Five of the main yew trees did not fully recover and have since died. These Yew trees had survived over 220 years and it shows that the levels of recent flooding in



YEW TREES AFFECTED BY FLOODING IN RECENT YEARS.

Cooles Park are record levels. Coole Park is a Special Area of conservation (SAC) and Yew Tree (*Taxus Baccus*) woodlands are mentioned specifically in this. We are therefore failing in adequate protection of this SAC.

Another impact on woodland is that flooding leaves the forest more vulnerable to storms. In 2014, the waterlogged ground made trees more susceptible to falling in windy conditions. This is what happened to the Yew tree at the Walled Garden Car Park in Winter 2015. Water

levels rose close to the base of the famous Autograph tree which would have made it more vulnerable to falling

### Pollution

Several farm yards around the area are 13m above sea level. In 2015, Coole Lake rose to 14.78m, and it overflowed into many farmyards, homes and businesses. Common farmyard pollutants can include chemical fertilizer, engine oil, grease, fuel, silage wrap, weed killer, pesticides, veterinary medicine etc. With flooding, at 14.78m, the contents of over 40 septic

tanks were being washed into Coole Lake.

In many places, there was black plastic silage wrap spread through trees and shrubs all over the park. With extremely high-levels allowed in Coole, this pollution will also be spread into the lower-lying turloughs and SACs.

### Wildlife impacts

During the floods of Winter 2015, some habitats were completely flooded, and hibernating animals sought refuge from flood waters. Another key impact on an SAC is the Kiltartan Cave SAC (probably the smallest SAC in Ireland!) This is an 800m long cave and is a habitat for a colony of bats and the SAC protects this habitat. This is the key reason the now famous 'bat-bridge' was built (at substantial cost) across the M18 Motorway. With extreme levels of flooding in Coole, this habitat is lost and the bat population displaced - something which grates against the EU habitats directive.

### Silting

As the water levels of Coole Lake rose, the rivers feeding it lost pressure and this resulted in significant amount of silt deposits. This has a big impact on the natural ecosystem, marine life as well as impacting hydrology of the system.

### Damage to park amenities

The main damage to Coole Park amenities was around the walled Garden and picnic area. Also, the little hut beside the river had its roof lifted too and damaged. The Coole Park Interpretative center became flooded. In 2015, there was as estimated €20,000 of damage

done around Coole Park amenities.

## Local Flooding from Coole

In Winter 2015, when Coole Lake rose to 14.78m, it essentially backed into Kiltartan to a height of 18 inches in Kiltartan Church. High Coole lake water levels also mean a drop in pressure upstream causing more water to gather. Swallow holes almost completely stopped working in Kiltartan, Roo and Tierneevin as the Coole Lake level backed into them and some other flows were impacted - even as far back as Ballylee and Blackrock.

## Access

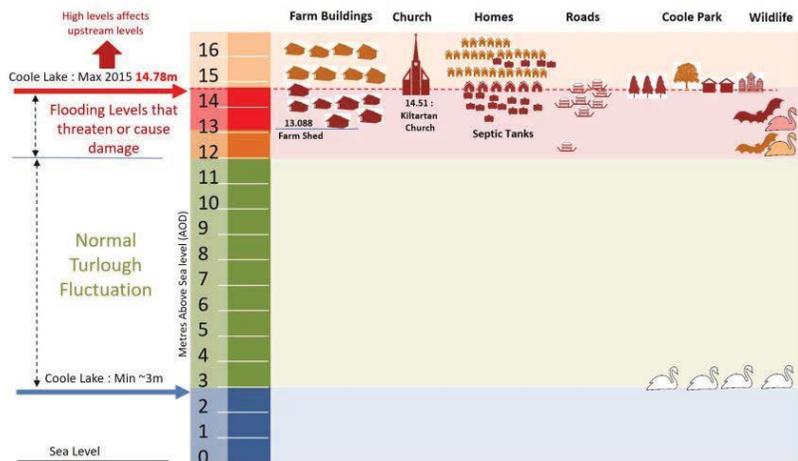
As Coole Lake flooded it blocked many roads all around its periphery. It also flooded the M18 motorway construction for several weeks.

## Health Impacts

There is a significant threat to human health from this flooding scenario. The mental stress and anguish of having your home or livelihood threatened is enormous. Also, many people were affected by the severe isolation – not being able to leave your home conveniently. The threat to physical health from contaminated water and health schemes is significant, and private wells can continue to be contaminated long after flood water recedes.

## Impacts on Farming

As Coole Lake rose, it covered a large amount of farmland and stayed on the land. Many farms in the area had to be reseeded at a significant cost to the farmer. As with wildlife, another significant threat is that to farm



animals and threat to their health from contaminated flood water.

## Tourism and Heritage Impacts

Coole Park is a very attractive destination in the west of Ireland. Trip Advisor shows it as the #1 attraction with 4.5/5 star reviews. Allowing Coole Park to flood increases the risk of damage to the park, the infrastructure, the trees and the wildlife and therefore also to the Tourist potential of the area.

## Putting it all in perspective

Coole Lake minimum levels are around the 3M above sea level and the maximum level recorded level in 2015 was 14.78 (OPW). Here is summary of what different water levels in Coole Lake mean :

- < 11m: No major flood threat,
- > 12m: Road access is impacted and farmyards are threatened.
- > 13m: Septic tanks and farmyards start to flood and homes are threatened.
- > 14m: Major flooding. underground systems (Kiltartan, Tierneevin and Roo) are no longer working and homes start to flood.
- 14.5m: Many homes and farmyards are flooding and

many homes are now threatened. Severely restricted access around South Galway.

## Solutions

Solving the flooding in Coole Park is a not a choice - it's imperative. Coole Park is one of the most protected areas in Ireland and allowing severe flooding is devastating to the nature reserve, several communities and in fact against EU law. The organization which is accountable for Coole Park nature reserve, and owns the responsibility for ensuring this is adequately protected against threats (including flooding), is the National Parks and Wildlife service - NPWS. We have the best possible chance at getting a right solution here as the South Galway/Gort Lowlands Flood Relief Scheme gets underway. Galway County Council is running the project, we now have design consultants, environmental consultants working on getting a solution. The NPWS will also play a key role here according to Dr. Enda Mooney, regional Manager, the NPWS is committed to "working constructively with the design team for the South

Galway flood relief scheme and Galway Co. Council to help steer the proposed scheme through the legal requirements under national and European legislation."

The South Galway Flood Relief Committee has had several meetings over the past 2 years with Dr. Mooney to try and demystify the situation that will enable flood relief solutions to progress seamlessly so that the South Galway Community gets its flood relief solution, and that it also keeps to the letter of EU legislation. We've made some great progress on certain aspects, and there is some very good collaboration here. We are looking at solutions being developed in 2020. As a community affected by flooding we need to continue to keep this as a hot topic with our public representatives. We cannot

## PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR REMEDIATION EFFORTS

Stages	Description	Duration*	Expected Completion
<b>Stage 1</b>	Feasibility Study and Preparation of a local Flood Risk Management Plan and General Scheme Development	~12 Months	End of 2018
<b>Stage 2</b>	Public Exhibition/Consultation	~8-9 Months	Autumn 2019
<b>Stage 3</b>	Detailed Design & Confirmation	~6 Months	Autumn 2020
<b>Stage 4</b>	Construction Stage	~18 Months	Spring 2022
<b>Stage 5</b>	Handover of Works and Closeout	~3-4 Months	Mid 2022

afford to lose momentum on this issue, and we need to keep the focus on this until the solution is delivered.

Cooles Park was developed by the Gregory's for hundreds of years and has become a magnificent nature park, with strong cultural and heritage ties. It was left in the care of the

Government in 1927 and taken over by the Forest Service and since 1987 is now in the care of the NPWS. They now have a key responsibility to be part of the solution and help and advise the consultants to get a full flood relief solution that will help the South Galway Community and halt the killing of Cooles.



PHOTO COURTESY SEAN BRADY AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

# BALLYTURN HOUSE

## SITE OF HISTORIC AMBUSH MASSACRE

BY LEROY SMITH

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Growing up in Ballyturn meant being surrounded by relics of the past that would stir my imagination. That stone structure we knew as a “Dolmen” lay yards from our house. Intriguing ruins on the islands of Lough Cutra, the old church at Kilbeacanty with its legend of the reappearing skull, and the imposing ringfort at Russaun visible from that same church’s graveyard, all had their own mythology and stories attributed to them.

The great hulking, crumbling shell of Bagot’s house, in its commanding position wedged at the highest point between Ballyturn Lake and Lough Cutra, always made me wonder who had lived there and why it had fallen into ruin. Everyone in the locality knew it as Bagot’s house, though in Ballyturn NS I learned that it was also referred to as Ballyturn House. We also learnt about its connection with the ambush of 1921, and how a group of “Tans” had lost their lives at the spot where in later years the school bus would drop us off from Gort CS. I was gripped by tall tales of treasure supposedly dumped in Ballyturn Lake ahead of the ambush. A detail that seemed baffling was that the ambush targeted a group who had just attended a tennis party. My playing soccer was seen as exotic enough by some at the time— and now we were being told people used to play tennis up there? The idea seemed



THE GATE LODGE AT BAGOT’S HOUSE

completely alien to me as a child.

As an adult, studying and working in archaeology helped me understand more about those same monuments. While I am no historian, my interest in local history led me to delve into the events of the Ballyturn Ambush. I am not here to describe what is right and wrong, but rather to tell the story. All research is from freely available sources and I would urge anyone with an interest in local history to use them also.

The releases of the Bureau of Military History in the last few years allow us to read first-hand accounts of IRA volunteers and get a feel for the atmosphere in Ireland around the time of the ambush. There can be no doubt that South Galway was dripping with grit and determination, even though terrible atrocities were suffered. We see uplifting stories of Cumman na mBan members using dances to gather intelligence and help further advance the plight of the IRA.



ABOVE AND BELOW: DETAIL OF PLAQUE PLACED AT CROSSROADS NEAR BALLYTURN SCHOOL AND BALLYTURN LAKE IN 2017. PHOTO BY LEROY SMITH.



We read of getaways across Kilbeacanty graveyard, of fugitives hiding in the bell tower of the church, and first-hand accounts of the heartbreak and shock that heartless acts like the Loughnane Brothers' murder and the shooting of Ms

Quinn wrought on the community during the War of Independence. The events of Sunday 15th May 1921 are important not just from a local perspective but as part of the wider story of Ireland's bitter and bloody War of

Independence. For British Crown Forces it was a cataclysmic event, while from the IRA's perspective it was a successful operation. The ambush would put Ballyturn in the global news and involve a cross section of Irish society at the time:

Up to 17 ordinary people of the parish — halted on the road and ordered inside the Gate Lodge of Ballyturn House by the IRA as part of the operation. IRA volunteers, no different to those they had held up in the Gate Lodge, in that they too had farms to tend to and livestock to feed. Choosing to fight forced them into a life on the run. They could only duck in and out of their houses occasionally and often spent nights in horse carts and on hay blankets.

An RIC District Inspector, his

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wife and two British Army Officers - the Ford motor car pictured was driven by Captain Cecil Blake, accompanied by his wife Eliza, Captain Fiennes Cornwallis, Lt. Robert McCreery and Margaret Gregory. All three men came from military families and all had served in WW1 previous to the fateful afternoon in Ballyturn. The interests of the group were at odds with those of the local populace - keen cricketers, tennis & polo players stationed here as part of a force whose role included the suppression of even the national game of hurling. Margaret Gregory was the daughter in law of artistic royalty in the form of Lady Gregory. Her late husband had been immortalised by WB Yeats in the poem "An Irish airman forsores his death." The landed gentry of Ballyturn House - John Bagot and his family, their own home itself a character in the story. Living as they did in an opulence totally at odds with conditions for the local populace meant the Bagots were used to encountering the IRA, having been raided for guns and ammunition before.

The events that brought this diverse group together started early in May with intelligence from Cumman na MBan stating that a "military looking man" had been seen leaving Ballyturn House. That man was local District Inspector Cecil Blake, and since he was clearly fraternising with the Bagots, it was assumed he would be attending a tennis party the family were hosting the following Sunday 15th. Around 1pm that Sunday, 20 IRA volunteers gathered at the Gate Lodge opposite the entrance to Ballyturn House. Their mission was to identify the target on his way to the house and lay in wait for his return. Volunteers were positioned both in and outside the Gate Lodge, with a British report noting that some coping stones were removed from the front wall to allow for a "better field of fire." Cecil Blake drove from Gort with his wife and colleagues, with a statement from Margaret Gregory reading; "the absence of traffic on the roads afforded more relief than suspicion", as Blake "had the reputation of being somewhat reckless." It

wasn't long after the IRA had taken up positions that the Ford was approaching from Kilbeacanty. Its occupants would soon be playing tennis, unaware of the scouts who had crawled up the steep incline to watch them. Several tense hours followed for the IRA Volunteers lying in wait, the early summer air wrought with anticipation. Finally at around 8.30 pm the Ford began rumbling its way back down the drive. Margaret Gregory's statement suggests the group were in high spirits, with DI Blake swerving playfully before they reached the gate. As Captain Cornwallis got out of the car to fully open it Margaret even joked, "maybe we should just drive through the gate." It dawned on Mrs Blake first, as she apparently stated calmly, "It's an ambush." A cacophony of gunfire pierced the air, with Margaret's statement describing shots "spluttering up the gravel all round me." Caught in the crossfire, Margaret "Felt that death might come at any moment and hoped that the bullet might come through my head and terminate that long



THE FORD,  
PHOTO TAKEN  
HALF AN HOUR  
AFTER THE  
AMBUSH.  
PHOTOS  
COURTESY OF  
THE BUREAU OF  
MILITARY  
HISTORY.

drawn out agony." Her concise telegram to Lady Gregory later stated, "sole survivor of five murdered in ambushed motor." The other four occupants of the Ford lay dead, with a minor bullet wound the only IRA injury suffered. Once Molly Bagot had got word to Gort, RIC backup arrived, no doubt confused and out for blood. IRA Volunteers had already slipped back into the surrounding countryside and evaded immediate capture. RIC bullets were directed seemingly at random and one of their own, Constable Kearney, was shot. He became the fifth and final fatality at Ballyturn that day. A note had been handed to Mr Bagot stating his home would be set on fire should there be any reprisals, but it would ultimately be time that led Ballyturn House to become the ruin that looks down on us today. The same could not be said for Ruane's Provision Shop in Georges St, a house on Queen St or multiple homes in Ballyahalan. All were burned by Crown Forces that night. People apparently fled the town of Gort in anticipation of the terror they knew was to follow. A

curfew was imposed from 8pm to 8am. Just two months earlier the Tuam Herald had pleaded for a respite from such reprisals describing how "the country is bleeding to death, bleeding at every pore." That bleeding was not stemmed in the days after the Ballyturn Ambush, but intensified. A curfew was immediately imposed in Gort from 8pm to 8am after the ambush, and would continue until the truce of 11th July. A witness statement in the BMH states "From the time of the Ballyturin Ambush until the truce, we were evading the enemy," but that did not mean all normal operations ceased. On a Sunday after the ambush a Cumman na Mban member met as usual with a Volunteer and informed of a planned large-scale round up of Volunteers in East Clare and Galway from midnight that night. Providing troop numbers & the exact areas to be enclosed offered a lifeline to those in fear of capture.

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Leroy Smith is a musician and archaeologist who is lucky enough to have a normal job also. Local History has also become a passion of his- indeed many of the archaeological monuments he surveyed for college work came up in his research for this, with IRA volunteers using tower houses and ringforts for cover while on the run. The land of South Galway is teeming with tangible evidence of the past, steeped in history.

Lough Cutra castle was to be Crown Forces HQ, with 1500 cavalry, and search-planes flying low over Beagh, Kilbeacanty and Peterswell. One of those planes did catch two Volunteers hiding in a cave, but given the number of captives Crown Forces hoped to round up in the operation, it's safe to say that the CNaB information had proved invaluable. A commemorative plaque was placed at the site of the Ballyturn Ambush on 15 May 2017 - an important occasion of remembrance and recognition of the role the ambush & South Galway in general played in the War of Independence. 2017 was a year of tumultuous global politics, yet here was an occasion that brought together relatives of those from both sides of a bloody and complicated conflict, in a spirit of reconciliation. The efforts of those behind the event are to be commended.

# VICTORIA'S SECRET:

## A LISTING OF GORT MEN SERVING THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

BY STEVE DOLAN

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Necessity opened the door to Irish Catholics in the British Army at the end of the eighteenth century . . . the British necessity to defeat France. At the beginning of the French Revolutionary Wars the British army was a poorly administered force of 40,000 men, but by the time of Queen Victoria's birth in 1819 numbers had reached over 250,000.

For much of the nineteenth century well over a third of that army were Irishmen, yet today a perhaps understandable amnesia hangs over the role of Irishmen in the maintenance of an empire that spanned the globe. That Gort produced several of these soldiers is unsurprising and from this remove we can only speculate on the motivation of young men in enlisting in the British Army.

How many of these boys and men were seeking adventure, or just a wage to escape starvation, we will never know. What is clear is that they were present from the early days of the empire. The men listed herein represent only a fraction of those who served in the British army in the nineteenth century. The listing is compiled from discharge papers, so lists only those men from Gort **who survived to discharge**.

### FAR AND AWAY

The soldiers served in close to thirty different countries around the world and were involved in some of the defining conflicts of the nineteenth century – from the Napoleonic Wars, through to the Crimea War, and latterly the Boer War.

The men served in now forgotten regions of British interest like the Straits Settlements (modern Malaysia), as well as the East Indies (the region encompassing modern India, Afghanistan, etc.) and West Indies (Bermuda, Jamaica, etc.).

The men would also serve in Africa, Australia, and the Americas.

Close to half of the listed men appear to have been from Gort itself, albeit close to 50 or about a sixth of the men were from Kiltartan and another sixth from Beagh. Men from Kilbeacanty, Kilmacduagh, and Ardrahan who include Gort in their address are also included herein.

### ATTESTATION

The quality of life of a farm labourer in early nineteenth century was appalling. Earning under four shillings a week, in economic terms he had little purchasing power and relied heavily on barter and his own resources (e.g. raising a pig) for his very survival. Even by 1870, when earning seven shillings and ten pence, his income could only provide the poorest standard of living.

In the ten years up to the year 1855 i.e. the years of the Great Hunger in Ireland, 70 men – some 17% of the total 412, attested / enlisted and survived to discharge. This suggests that poverty was the major push-factor for those enlisting. The final decade of the century saw a similar period of peak-enlistment.

That said, these were also the periods of major conflict, notably the Crimea War and Indian Mutiny (India's First War of Independence) in the middle of the century, and the Boer War at the century's end. Overall, the listing represents different eras in army life, different regiments, and different issues in terms of performance and discharge which in turn reflect the wider experience.

The experience of the men, sometimes within weeks of enlisting, was often harrowing. This is therefore not a history with pretty pictures of the



MEDALS AWARDED TO FERDINAND REILLY FOR SERVICE IN PERSIA, INDIA, CHINA

medals won, it is more often a story of suffering and premature death. In times of peace, disease and the conditions were the scourge; while in times of war, death and injuries / wounds were a constant threat.

### SPECIFICS

The occupation of the men prior to their enlistment in the case of Gort and elsewhere was overwhelmingly that of 'Labourer', with these men generally being illiterate and making 'their mark' on enlistment and discharge. As the century progressed, men were increasingly literate – which made promotion possible – and the variety of professions also widened somewhat.

James Cooney was the oldest soldier on attestation at 47 years in 1808. He served 3 years and 4 months in the 88th regiment of foot, later renamed the Connaught Rangers. Charles George was the youngest, serving in 10th Dragoons and discharged aged just 33 years having attested at 14 years in 1818. The average height of the men, as per a sample taken was 5ft 7ins.

### DESERTION

Of the men listed below, some deserted or went 'absent'. For example, Patrick Rooney who served in both the 23rd foot and 73rd foot deserted in 1821 a year after enlisting. He was discovered and served on, eventually being discharged in 1844 aged 40 years. Similarly, John Dawson had deserted in 1828. He served in the 30th and 49th Foot between 1825 and 1840, before discharge

aged 33 years.

Not included in the listing are the likes of William Miller of the Royal Artillery who enlisted in 1830 aged 18 years, but deserted in 1832. No discharge papers could be sourced so it is possible he was one of the few to get away. Others from Gort who deserted and are not listed include - in 1831, Patrick Broderick and John Cahill (both aged 20), in 1837 Patrick Guilford (21), in 1839 James Jennings (20), and in 1840

James Kirby Burke (25) and John Cassidy (20).

Many men deserted when based in British North America (Canada). Typical was Private John Gardiner of the 97th foot. Along with two countrymen, he deserted at Fredericton, New Brunswick, in July 1851 having served only two years. The British sought to overcome the high levels of desertion in Canada by dispatching veterans and seeking to avoid sending Irishmen.

### EARLY DISCHARGE

In general, the men enlisted 'for life' (unlimited service), for twenty-one years, or as the century progressed for 'limited service' of say seven years. Limited by their education and arguably nationality, only a small minority of the men ever served above the rank of Private. Details of all soldiers discharged who listed Gort as their nearest town are provided, some 412 men.

As evident from their ages at discharge, while many of the men did survive to discharge in reasonable health and receive their pension, it is also a case that very many had to be released early suffering from illnesses (e.g. chronic rheumatism) or disease (e.g. blindness). For very many men however, 'worn out' is simply given as the reason for discharge.

Other examples of discharge reasons include Bartholomew Fahey (88th foot) in 1817 being blind from ophthalmia, William Reagan (83rd) in 1823 suffering from visceral disease, John McNamara (32nd) in 1829 suffering from tuberculosis, Pat Moore (97th and Rifle Brigade) in 1840 suffering from a pain in the heart,

Lawrence Mitchell (60th) in 1841 due to chronic catarrh, Patrick Rooney (23rd and 73rd) in 1844 due to chronic disease of the liver, and Edward Lally (77th) in 1847 due to chronic hepatitis.

## WOUNDS

Others had been wounded in action, sometimes horrifically so. Both James Conway and Matthew Dooley of the 11th foot suffered gunshot wounds to their legs during the Siege of Pamplona (28 July 1813) and at Battle of Nivelles (10 November 1813) respectively.

Others wounded in the Napoleonic Wars on the continent included Patrick Corcoran (87th foot) who wounded his left hand at the Battle of Chiclana (Battle of Barrosa) on 5 March 1811, and John Fitzpatrick (95th) who lost his right leg in the Battle of Vitoria on 21 June 1813.

Many more were wounded in Crimea, South Africa, and elsewhere.

## MEDAL WINNERS

Dozens of the men were decorated for both India (particularly in 1857) and Crimea (1853-56) during mid-century, and these were sometimes among other awards. Several of the soldiers were also awarded medals for long service and good conduct, or good conduct badges.

An example of a less common decoration was that which was awarded to Michael O'Halloran, decorated for Suakin and his service in Egypt. He boasted a long and distinguished career serving in the West Indies (1873-74), Bermuda (1874-77), Cyprus (1878-79), Egypt (1882-83 & 1885), and Cyprus (1885).

Ferdinand Reilly of the 31st regiment is another noteworthy soldier. He *'served in the Persian campaign for which he has rec'd a medal & clasp, served in the Indian mutiny of 1857-58 for which he has rec'd a medal, served in the campaign in the North of China under Sir H Grant GCB in 1860 for which he had rec'd the medal and clasp for Taku Forts clasp. Served against the Taiping near Shanghai in 1862*

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Note that many of these records have been / are being made available at [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk), an excellent subscription website.

*under Brig Gen Staveley CB. Was present at the capture and recapture of Kahding'.*

## RULING THE WAVES

While not the subject of this article, men from Gort also served in the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines. Among the longest serving in the Royal Navy was Seaman Joseph Carty who had attested in the Navy, not yet sixteen, in 1875. Carty would go on to serve for more than two decades aboard several vessels with his performance universally considered very good.

## LEGACY

This article is an effort to shine a light on what is a challenging topic for some. It is not an endorsement of empire or occupation, rather an effort to acknowledge, perhaps for the first time in the case of Gort, the role of Irishmen in British military history.

That the empire was built on a military dominated by Irishmen is an uncomfortable truth. It is a most ambivalent heritage, but it is nonetheless a significant aspect of our heritage.

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Steve Dolan is a historian based in East Galway. He holds an MBA from NUIG and an MA in History from UL. He is manager of the Irish Workhouse Centre – Portumna, and editor of the SEGHS Journal (<http://www.clonfert.org/download.htm>).

# VICTORIA'S SECRET

## WHO WERE HER MEN FROM GORT?

BY STEVE DOLAN

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### **Listing from WO (War Office) records held at Kew.**

1800: Patrick Morris (23);

1801: Robert Flaherty (21), Michael Hynes (19), Patt McDermott (17);

1802: Thomas Glinn (21); 1803: Patrick Diveny (22), Charles Enright (19), Patrick Keane (20), Thomas Kelly (20), Patrick Killalee (19), Christopher Lane (18);

1804: James Burke (22), James Fitzgerald (24), John Gahagan (21), Patrick Kilkelly (17), Michael Martin (17), John Tuttle (20),

1805: John Fitzpatrick (22), Patrick Kennedy (17);

1806: Dennis Daly (23), John Daye (18), James McGrath (19), Willm Reagan (28);

1807: Patk Corcoran (25), Mark Fahey (19);

1808: James Conway (20), James Cooney (47), Mathew Dooley (21), Thomas Lally (19),

1809: John Lane (20), John McNamara (20);

1810: John Burke (16);

1811: John Conway (21), John Cusack (26), Robert Douglass (15), John Farrell (23), Domnick Flanagan (25), George Jordan (18);

1812: Lackey Dillon (24), Dennis Gallagher (25), Michl McIntyre (21), Bernd Mulkern (20);

1813: Pat Connolly (24), Barthw Fahey (18), Edward Holliran (20), Owen McDonough (23);

1814: Patrick Gegan (18), Patrick Hart (18), William Kenny (20);

1815: Patk Hart (17), James Steinson (25);

1816: Patrick Moore (18), Thomas Shea (23);

1817: John Bronggy (16), Michael Brouggy (21), Michael Donohue (18);

1818: Charles George (14);

1819: John Day (34); 1820: Timothy Daly (19), Edward Lally (19), James Leonard (18), Michael Moylan (18), Patrick Rooney (16), William Wiggins (17);

1821: John Bruggy (23);

1822: Thomas Healy (24);

1823: Patrick Hagan (20), Patrick Hogan (21), Patrick Lopdell (18);

1824: James Beegan (18), John Callanan (18), Michael Ford (19), Thomas Fox (18), Matthew Glynn (20), Lawrence Mitchell (18)

1825: Fergus Callanan (17), Myles Clunan (23), Lawrence Coleman (23). John Collins (17), John Connolly (20), John Dawson (19), Michael Deely (19), Patrick Geary (17), John Hanlin (19), Michael Hanlin (20), Patrick Monaghan (17), Patrick O'Dea (18), Patrick Prenderdast (19);

1826: Anthony Glover (18), John Phillips (20),

1827: John Flanagan (20);

1828: Lawrence Cassidy (22), Patrick McDermot (21);

1831: Martin Connolly (19), Patrick Donaghue (19), James Flanagan (19), Michael Moore (19), John O'Shaughnessy (18), John Price (18);

1832: Daniel Furdome (18);

1833: Martin Devanny (18), George Lysight (16);

1834: Edward Coen (18), Alexander Miller (18), John Spelman (18), Thomas Stanton (18);

- 1835: Martin Grealy (18), Dennis Madden (20), Martin Ruberry (18), Patrick Swift (23);
- 1836: John Harrerhill (22), Robert Kelly (18), Thomas O'Donnell (21);
- 1837: Dennis Horan (20), Denis Maguire (18);
- 1838: John Blackist (19), James Kerney (18), Thomas Moylan (17);
- 1839: Michael Glynn (19), Edward Heather (22), Patrick Jordan (20), Anthony Killeleagh (20), Michael Mahoney (18), James Miller (20), Michael Mulhoney (18), Edward Silk (18), James Stanley (17), William Swan (20), Daniel Taggart (22), Michael Ward (17);
- 1840: John Fahey (36), Timothy Fahy (20), Timothy Fahy (20), John Pole (18),
- 1841: Thomas Moloney (17), Thomas Powel (19), Chas Geo Vallancey (19),
- 1842: John Brown (17), John Donnelly (18), Michael Donnelly (19), William McCormick (18), John Raftary (19), Michael Reuberry (19), David Stanley (15), John Twitzen (21);
- 1843: Andrew Glynn (20), Darby O'Brien (17);
- 1844: James Keely (20), James Ward (17);
- 1845: Patrick Barrett (17), Patrick Kean (21), Luke Noon (20), John Ward (20);
- 1846: John Broderick (17), Michael Bryan (17), Patrick Burke (19), John Cahill (17), John Daly (17), Malachy Donnelly (16), Thomas Donnelly (17), Patrick Egan (20), Thomas Ellis (19), Fardy Fahey (17), Benjamin Flavell (20), John Hanlon (18), Michael McDonald (24), Michael Price (17), Patrick Shaughnessy (17), John Whealon (19);
- 1847: Thomas Cuniff (18), Patrick Deely (19), Thomas Fahay (19), Patrick Finn (22), Stephen Gallagher (23), Michael Geeghan (16), Thomas Gill (20), Michael Keeley (17), Michael Kelly (17), Thomas McLoughlan (17), Thomas O'Brien (21),
- 1848: Patrick Brown (20), Patrick Doherty (18), Martin Fahy (22), John Gaddock (20), Martin Glynn (20), John Kelly (17), John Kerssay (20), Michael Morrissy (27), John Mullins (22), Michael Quinn (18);
- 1849: James Conroy (17), Michael Farrell (18), John Glin (21), Dominick Greaney (20), Martin Higgins (19);
- 1850: Michael Stephenson (22);
- 1851: Thomas Deely (19), Thomas Donoghue (18), Peter Gallagher (17), Thomas Hinds (18), Thomas Kane (18), Michael Rathburne (20);
- 1852: John Anderson (21), Michael Donohoe (19), Michael Grady (17), Terence Hanbury (19);
- 1853: Patrick Broderick (20), Thomas Donohoe (17), Ferdinand Reilly (19);
- 1854: John Brogan (17), John Burke (17), Edward Carr (16), David Cawfield (19), Michael Devaney (18), Patrick Devaney (18), Thomas Fallon (17), James Flynn (17), John Hair (17), John Mulloy (20), Patrick Quinn (28), Michael Rooke (26);
- 1855: Stephen Devaney (18), Patrick Gallaher (29);
- 1856: James Ford (20), Dennis Higgins (18), Maurice Kenny (18);
- 1857: John Donohoe (19), Patrick Eyers (15), John Flaherty (24), Martin Galigan (19), Patrick Hehir (18), James Johnson (26), John Kempsey (22), Patrick Kildea (20), Michael O'Connor (20);
- 1858: William Body (18), Patrick Connell (21), Martin Conway (19), James Egan (19), Patrick Flynn (19), Michael Ford (18), John Marriott (18), Thomas Toohey (20), Joseph Ward (18);
- 1859: Martin Donlan (18), Patrick Farrell (20), Patrick Finn (21), Patrick Finn (19), Patrick Ford (22), Michael Gallagher (22), James Glynn (20), John Joyce (21), Patrick Kearns (19), Thomas Larkin (18), Michael Maher (23), Michael McNamara (20), Michael Millar (22), Patrick Monahan (20), Timothy O'Grady (19), Richard Quinn (18), John Shudy (22), John Walsh (20);
- 1860: Patrick Fahey (23), Martin Glynn (20), John Hanley (26), Thomas Price (18);
- 1861: Stephen Burke (17), Michael Donohue (18);
- 1862: James Kelly (19);

- 1863: John Fynn (21), Patrick Lydon (19), John Smith (18);
- 1864: Michael Connell (20), John Connell (19), Patrick Higgins (20), Thomas Killeen (18), Martin Loughery (19);
- 1865: John Carmody (22);
- 1866: Martin Fallon (22);
- 1867: Michael Connors (19), William P Glynn (18);
- 1869: Thomas Kelly (18), Patrick Shea (21);
- 1870: Thomas Flaherty (28);
- 1871: Lawrence Glynn (19), Michael O'Halloran (19);
- 1873: John Connell (19), Thomas Flanagan (20);
- 1874: Michael Cahill (18), Denis Farley (17);
- 1876: Joseph Carmody (17), Patrick Connier (20), Patrick Donnellan (18), Patrick Farrell (18), Patrick Finn (18), James Haddock (19), Martin Hanlon (19), John Murphy (20);
- 1877: James Diviny (23), Patrick Glynn (20), Martin Lynch (18);
- 1878: Fergus Farrell (18), Francis Glynn (20), Michael McGrath (21);
- 1879: Thomas Linnane (20);
- 1880: Michael Hehir (19), John Kenny (17), John Moor (23), William Murphy (19), Patrick Welsh (19);
- 1881: Patrick Geoghegan (19), John Holland (23), Alfred George Murphy (19), Michael Slater (24);
- 1882: John Flynn (20), Thomas O'Laughlin (23);
- 1883: John Gantley (30);
- 1885: Patrick Collins (19);
- 1885: Martin Conley (19), Timothy Curley (20), William Hanlon (24), Eugene Murphy (24), Thomas Murphy (20), James Ramplan (18), James Regan (23), John Riordan (19);
- 1886: Patrick Daly (17), Thomas Glynn (20), John Haley (24), Peter Joseph Martin (24), John Whelan (19);
- 1887: John Connelly (18), Michael Foley (24), Charles Gunn (18), Edward McCarty (23), Micheal Mullens (19), Patrick O'Halloran (18), William Quinn (20);
- 1888: Robert Doolan (31), James Fulton (24), Patrick Gantley (30);
- 1889: Patrick Glynn (19), Henry Baker Lahiff (23);
- 1890: Martin Daly (18), Michael Macklin (21), John McLoughlin (20), John Walsh (18);
- 1891: John Walshe (21), John Ward (18);
- 1892: John Burns (18), Michael Carmody (18), Thomas Daley (26), Francis Donnelly (20), James Glynn (18), John Hogan (24), Michael Joyce (22), Richard Kenny (18), John Ryan (18), John Walsh (19);
- 1893: James Blake (23), William Doolan (17), Patrick Fox (18), John Kennedy (22), Patrick Kernon (18), Patrick Kerrins (18), Joseph Regan (21), William Roe (23);
- 1894: John Fox (18), Patrick Gantley (30), John Kelly (20), Christopher Leary (20), Dennis Sullivan (21), Michael Williams (18);
- 1895: Frank Conroy (21), John Daly (18), John Greaney (19), Frances Roche (21);
- 1896: Michael Broderick (24), James Costello (19), John Gilligan (18), Michael Harney (18), John Kelly (17), James Lahiff (23), Joseph McNeven (23), James Moylan (19), Patrick Prendergast (18);
- 1897: Thomas Cahill (22), Patrick Cunningham (22), Thomas Devaney (20), Patrick Dinan (18), Henry Doherty (18), John Geoghegan (17), Patrick Grady (28), William Green (18), Patrick Harrington (20), Thomas Hartnett (18), Martin Keane (17), John Kennedy (17), Patrick Mangan (18), Michael Moran (23), Michael Reilly (31);
- 1898: Thomas Galvin (19), John Kelly (26), Martin Kelly (29), Christopher Kildea (18), James Sims (31);
- 1899: John Deveney (18), Thomas Egan (23), John Flynn (17), James Hassett (19), Patrick Kenny (17), Patrick Leech (18).

# TEACHING, MAKING MUSIC A TRADITION CONTINUES

BY JAN SUTTON

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Mary O'Sullivan and Clare Sawtell are well known in Gort and beyond as they have both been teaching music in the area to young (and sometimes not so young) people for many years. Mary teaches guitar and Clare the 'cello but they are also very fine musicians in their own right and have been collaborating musically together since the mid 90s.

At the end of April this year I had the great pleasure of interviewing Mary and Clare for the Kinvara Area Music slot programme on Kinvara FM, Kinvara's Community Radio Station and we were able to explore some of the music that they make together. As they are shortly to launch an album of their music, and Clare a book of her poetry, it seemed like a good moment to talk to them about their music and other creative endeavours.

Together they play a wide range of instruments, some of which we would not normally expect to hear together. Mary plays the guitar and melodeon and a selection of other stringed instruments including mandolin and dulcimer as well as percussion and harmonica and she also sings. Clare plays 'cello and piano and has recently started playing the

psaltery - a medieval stringed instrument. This provides them with a rich array of different sounds and they are not afraid to experiment.

Mary and Clare grew up in very different environments both musically and culturally. In many ways this has enriched the music that they make. This is underlined by the diversity of the music that they have explored together.

Mary comes from Miltown Malbay which many would regard as the heartland of the Irish music tradition in County Clare. She says that she grew up "bathed in music". Her love of song comes from her parents who were both lovely singers and they encouraged Mary and her brothers to play music from an early age. Santa Claus would always bring something like a tin whistle or a harmonica at Christmas. Mary remembers Willie Clancy very well from her childhood. She has a lovely memory of Willie playing for her when she was very small. He was a carpenter and one time when Mary was about 5 or 6 he was working in the house next door. She called in one day, and he pulled his tin whistle out of the pocket of his overalls and played tunes for her. When she was a little older

she remembers Johnny Moynihan visiting with friends not realising at the time that these included members of Planxty, the Dubliners and Sweeney's Men. Mary travelled widely when she was younger, picking up music along the way and she also started to write tunes and songs. In 2005 she completed a Master's degree in Traditional Music Performance at the University of Limerick.

Clare's musical beginnings were rather different from Mary's. She was born and grew up in England, and learned to play the piano from the age of 6. There was a great love of Classical music at home and this was the biggest influence on her musical development at that time. She took up the 'cello when she was 11 and played in both a symphony and a string orchestra. However, like many people, once she left home the 'cello was left behind and languished in a wardrobe for 17 years! It was moving to Ireland in the early 90s that reawakened Clare's interest in playing music and, at the urging of a musical friend, Gaie Stewart, the 'cello was brought back with her to Kinvara. She started playing again. A number of people helped and encouraged her to develop her music in a new direction. She was attending



CLARE SAWTELL AND MARY O'SULLIVAN

classes given by John Hoban and she started experimenting with improvising the accompaniment to Irish dance tunes. She was also playing with Sue Fahy, accompanying her songs on the 'cello. As she says, "Your musical journey is so much about who you meet along the way and we all influence each other".

Mary and Clare started playing together in about 1993 or 94. They developed a particularly unique sound with 'cello and melodeon and used the 'cello as an accompaniment to songs that Mary was singing, providing depth and body to their sound. They were playing a mixture of traditional and some Early Music. They played regularly both in Galway and locally and they made their first album at that time called "The Idle Road".

They have continued to play and write music over the years but have had a particularly creative period over the past year which has crystallised into a new album called Turas - Turning which will be released during the summer. This album is a collection of songs and tunes written by them. Clare is also a published poet and a number of these poems have been transformed by Mary into songs.

Their work is suffused with the natural environment of the Burren where they live, but the music and landscape of Brittany has also provided much inspiration.

Clare is also launching a new book of poems called "Soft Notes and Departures" at the end of June. Here is one of Clare's poems that Mary has set to music for the album:

#### The Hawthorn

The hawthorn in the blue night  
And the starry ship on the sea  
Sea all around  
Wind from the west  
And thoughts running free

The hawthorn in the bright day  
Blossom white on the tree  
Larks in the air  
Breeze blowing fair  
And a hare running free.

The hawthorn in the evening  
sun  
Warm and still is she.  
Thrush sings  
As the light fades  
And peace returns to me.

We wish them all the very best for the launch of their new album "Turas - Turning" and Clare's new collection of poems "Soft Notes and Departures".

THE



CELEBRATES

A 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
WITH UNUSUAL STYLE



IN SULLIVANS FOR FEATURED PLAY, "THE HISTORY OF GORT ICA". BACK ROW, (L-R) MARY KELLY, THERESA NESTOR, TERESA HELEBERT, ESTHER FAHY, CATHY CURLETTE, ANNE BURKE, NORA GORMAN. FRONT ROW, (L-R) SARAH FAHY, MARION BRODERICK, TINA EARLEY, PHIL GLYNN. MISSING FROM PHOTO, VERA KILLEEN, VERONICA CURLETTE-PLAYWRIGHT AND DIRECTOR, SOPHIE GONZALEZ-SLIDE PROJECTIONIST, FIDELMA LARKIN-MUSIC.



STANDING, NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE ICA, MARIE O'TOOLE. GORT ICA MEMBERS, (L-R) MAISIE MURPHY, MIM MOLONEY, JOSEPHINE HELLY, MAISIE GALLAGHER.



VISITING MEMBERS FROM OTHER ICA GUILDS IN CO. GALWAY JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS OUTSIDE THOOR BALLY-LEE

# THE LEGACY OF MARIAN DIVINEY



These lovely teddy bears were born in Mrs. Marian Diviney's Class at the Convent of Mercy, Gort. In what was a very progressive class in gender equality, all children in this class were taught to knit. Boys and girls alike created their own teddy bears, many of whom have been keeping the home fires burning as their owners have been busy off gallivanting. These bears have been lovingly preserved by their owners (and many parents) as sweet mementos of simpler times.



TEDDIES COURTESY OF THE  
ATTICS OF JOSEPHINE WARD  
AND CHRISTINE BRENNAN

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

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KILMACDUAGH NATIONAL SCHOOL, 1949. BACK ROW (L-R) BRIDGET KERANS (TEACHER), THERESA O'GRADY, PAULINE GEAGAN, MARGARET GEAGAN, MARY CARROL, JOSEPHINE GREALISH, DOLLY MOYLAN, MARY GREALISH. MAURA GERAGHTY, KATHLEEN MCGRATH, MARY FLAHERTY, ANN KELLY, BRIDGET MOYLAN, GISELA LIEBE, PATRICK SKEHAN. THIRD ROW, (L-R) PAT MCGRATH, MARTIN GREALISH (GARRYLAND), EAMON KERANS, MARTIN GREALISH (HAWKHILL), OLIVER KERANS, MICHAEL FLAHERTY, BRIDGET BURKE, CARMEL FLAHERTY, PATSY ROCHE, EILEEN KELLY, MARIA CUMMINS, BRIDGET LEECH, MARIA LEECH. SECOND ROW (L-R) ANN BURKE, FRANCIS CUMMINS, ANN MITCHEL, MAUREEN MITCHEL, MARGARET FLAHERTY, JAMES NESTOR, MARTIN MCGRATH, CHRISTY GREALISH, MARTIN ROCHE, PATRICK NESTOR. FRONT ROW L-R), TONY MITCHEL, MICHAEL KELLY, FRANCES GEAGAN, JAMES FLAHERTY, MICHAEL CARROL.



CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION, GORT, 1951. (L-R) NORA MOLLOY, BRID BURKE, MARGARET CURLEY, FIONA CAROLAN, MARIE TRESTON, MYRA ROCK, MARY KELLY, UNKNOWN, BRIDIE COLLINS, EILEEN MANTO, VALERIE BRODERICK, HANNAH FAHY, UNKNOWN, KITTY MINOGUE.

# DOWN MEMORY LANE



DRESS DANCE AT THE OLD GROUND HOTEL, ENNIS SOMETIME IN THE 1940S. MICHAEL O'SHAUGHNESSY (THE SQUARE), MAIRE GEOGHEGAN, JOHNNY GEOGHEGAN (BRIDGE ST), KATHY PIGGOT (CROWE ST).

AT RIGHT: 1967 RE-OPENING DAY OF MERCY CONVENT SECONDARY SCHOOL, BRIDGE ST. (L-R) PATRICIA WALSH (COOLE), RENA NAUGHTON (ROO), MARY FOGARTY-RODGERS (BUNNAHOW). PHOTO BY WILLIE QUINN.



1979 CHURCH STREET LEAGUE FOOTBALL WINNERS. BACK ROW, (L-R) PADDY JOE LYONS (MANAGER), MICHELLE FENNESSY, SHARON MCGANN. SECOND ROW, (L-R) JOANNE KENNY, DERMOT MURPHY, ADRIAN MCGRATH, JASON KENNY. FRONT ROW, (L-R) BRIAN MURPHY, RENAGH MCGRATH, MICHAEL MCGANN, CHRISTOPHER FENNESSY.

# DOWN MEMORY LANE

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1969 GORT STREET LEAGUE CHAMPIONS FROM CLOUGHNACAVA. (L-R) COLMAN HALVEY, MAURICE COTTER (CHURCH ST), PHONSIE MULCAIR, JOE MULCAIR, FRANCIS WALSH, MARTIN HALVEY, PATRICK MULCAIR.



GORT YOUTH CLUB IN 1984 BED PUSH TO KINVARA FOR CHARITY. BACK ROW, (L-R) FABIAN MCGRATH, BERNARD COSTELLO, DEREK KENNY, ENDA MONGAN (KINVARA), CHRISTOPHER PIGGOTT, JOHN SPELLMAN. SEATED, (L-R) BILLY GLYNN, AUSTIN MCINERNEY, COLM MOLLOY, TÓMAS O'DRISCOLL, MICHAEL GORMALLY. FRONT ROW, (L-R) MARTINA CONNORS, ANGELA DOLAN. PHOTO TAKEN OUTSIDE MCMAHON'S FILLING STATION, KINVARA.

# DOWN MEMORY LANE



GORT TOWN HALL BILLIARDS, EARLY '70'S. ANTHONY BRENNAN (GEORGES ST), PETER CUNNINGHAM (ENNIS ROAD), JOHN NOLAN (RINEEN). PHOTO BY WILLIE QUINN.



CHRISTMAS CHOIR 2016: FROM (L-R) CARINA CAHILL, LOURDA KILLEEN, NICOLA CAHILL.



SCOIL EOIN, 1994. BACK ROW, (L-R) BARRY KILROY, ANDREW COEN, KARL CASEY, STEPHEN QUINN, THOMAS LOUGHREY, BRYAN BRENNAN, DES O'HALLORAN AND KEITH DALY. FRONT ROW, (L-R) NIAL HOARTY, PATRICK LOUGHNANE, EVAN KILROY, MARTIN MORAN, KEITH GLYNN, MAÍRTIN GREALISH (CAPT) PAUL GLYNN, JP DONOVAN AND DERMOT DONOVAN. PETER CONROY (TEACHER).

# JOHN DOYLE

# THE BARD

## OF ARDRAHAN

INTRODUCTION BY TOM O'DOHERTY

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Canon John Carr, P.P. Ardrahan, appointed John Doyle of Bohola, Co. Mayo as Principal of Ballyglass N.S. Ardrahan in 1915. Mary Linnane was the teacher in Ballyglass since 1907. Her family lived in Rosehaven, Cregclare House gate lodge, on the Lacken road. Her father was a car maker and carpenter at Cregclare House and gate keeper. John Doyle married Mary Linnane in 1916. They found themselves on honeymoon in Dublin during Easter week 1916. They lived in Rosehaven and reared a family of seven, four girls and three boys – Tom, Maura, Michael, Vincent, Philomena, Anna and Sheila.

John Doyle walked across the fields to school and arriving early stood at the school door blowing a whistle summoning his scholars to hurry from all directions. He was a good teacher, though sometimes “cross”, who taught a wide range of subjects including music and the violin. His wife Mary retired from Ballyglass early in 1943 and died on 28<sup>th</sup> April of that year. John retired in 1944 and during his retirement, composed rhymes which he published in two volumes – Random Rhymes and Poems. He lived in Rosehaven until his death in 1957 and is buried with his wife in Labane Cemetery, Ardrahan.

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### GORT POEM BY JOHN DOYLE

'Tis most certainly time to set Gort down in rhyme.  
So here I'm to try it and I will not shy at  
The troubles before me, though great they may be.  
To mention them all, the great and the small,  
Is no easy matter to put down in chatter.  
The charm of all those, all friends and no foes,  
That live in that place of fame and renown—  
The grand famous place called Gort—lovely town.

To begin, there is Spellman's, so grand and so free,  
The plainest, the best that you ever did see.  
John Nolan is there with his missis so fair,

And I must say to you they give you good cheer.  
And the Post Office grand, when there you do land,  
Will serve you with stamps, be you gent or tramp.  
And Piggot's of fame, sure, to mention their name  
Is enough to bring cheer to hermit or seer.

And Fitzgerald's for bread, the best, sure, 'tis said,  
That ever was eaten by a mouth in a head.  
Then we go to Spellman's again,  
To John, oh! So fine that does a big line.  
And Shaughnessy's shop is surely tiptop:  
He'll do what you wish while you'd be saying  
“pop”.



BRIDGE STREET VIEWED FROM THE SQUARE ON POSTCARD PRINTED BY JJ COEN, GENERAL DRAPER, GORT

And sure there is Coyne, who repairs torn shoes  
 fine  
 For a modest fee, as all can agree.  
 Then here is good luck to this famous town—  
 I've never seen better on hill or on down.  
 And may God bless them and to His heart press  
 them  
 And fondly caress them and evermore bless  
 them.

And I think now I've named a lot that were  
 famed  
 In this fairest town which should not be  
 defamed;  
 For I have spent days and will evermore praise  
 This Gort, sure enough, she is made of good  
 stuff.  
 And may God on them shine and to them  
 incline  
 With all things that are good in dress or in food.  
 Now this is my prayer and may ye go down,  
 And for me, what I've said, by Gort's lovely

town.

Its people are grand in this famous land,  
 Its story is good all along since the flood.  
 And this I do think, without e'er a drink,  
 And praise them I will when I have the skill  
 To put them all down in rhyme of renown.  
 I will raise them still higher and not let them  
 down,  
 And sure, there I've spent, well, many a crown.  
 But still I love Gort and its fame and renown.

I've nearly found one, all the shops none left  
 out,  
 But sincerely I name every shop all the same.  
 And here is to Gort, the town and the people,  
 And e'en to the cross on top of the steeple—  
 Or spire I should say—on Gort's lovely church,  
 And the priest and the people are certainly one,  
 And are ready to stand, or if need be, to run.  
 So here is to Gort, the best town of them all  
 From Cork to Athlone or old Donegal.

And Miriam Glynn will sell you some gin  
If you but go there when she is within.  
And Fahy's so famed, they should, dear, be  
named,  
And never be blamed and indeed not defamed.  
And then Bernard Coen, a better ne'er known  
Does a trade all his own, and money has flown  
Right into him there from, well, everywhere.  
And Brady's for sweets and grand teas and meats  
You'll get there, I'm sure, so good and so pure.  
And then Mr. Carter, a dentist ne'er smarter  
Ever pulled a bad tooth, I'm telling the truth.  
And Jack Burke is there well, stylish and square,  
And he'll give you good fare beyond all compare.

And Fitzgerald's have stout and meal good no  
doubt,  
Which they'll sell to you for the price that is due.  
And sure, Christy Kerins, he's big sure as four;  
Six feet and three from his head to the floor.  
And Kean's at the corner and no hearts are  
warmer  
Or better disposed, and none so composed.  
And then the garage to dear Matt O'Connor  
Who mends and who patches so well,  
'pon my honour.

And sure Willie Burke does hard blacksmith's  
work  
For which, sure, he's strong and it won't take him  
long.  
And Courtney's so sweet, the other side of the  
street,  
Sell you candles and sweets and very good meats.  
And Lambert's grand shop so grand when in you  
hop,  
You'd like to stay there and with them, dear, stop.  
And Jimmy O'Connor, who is not down over  
yonder,  
But well to the fore, and thereof I did ponder.  
And next is the Bank and you will, dear thank  
Them for money which there is, sure, sank.

And Coen's, sure again, where ladies win  
Your hearts and your cash, they cut such a dash.  
And then, sure Tom Quinn is always within,  
And he'll sell, no doubt, good beer and fair stout.  
And up Matty Geoghegan, you could not renege in  
His shop so fine on the street quite in line.  
And Mrs. Broderick so dear, all smiling with  
cheer,  
Is glad that you'd see her and be to her dear.  
And O'Grady's, Kilroy, the broth of boy,  
Where you can sit down and good things enjoy.  
And to Fahy's, sure then, you'll surely go in,  
Where you can talk sweet and yarns good spin.  
And then Maggie Casey, so sweet in the face, she  
Is grand and so fine, I'd say sure divine.  
And Good Willie Quinn buys a turkey or hen  
And gives a good price when you, sure, go in.

And there's a town hall for dance and for ball,  
Where you will find ladies at your beck and call.  
And Sullivan's, Dan is the best of a man,  
And he'll sell you the best that he can,  
Dangerous McGrew Dan, if you go in and stan'.  
And Ned Walsh has beer that will give you good  
cheer,  
But you've got to pay, or you'll go away.  
And then, Finnegan's meat is so good to eat,  
You'd never get better, and for it I'm debtor.

And then the Hotel, you'd stay there a spell  
And have, sure, a drink, and some stay to think.  
And dear Thomas Coen to please you has shown  
That he can do it in a shop of his own.  
And rounding the corner, to come to a charmer  
Who sells rivets, good leather in all kinds of  
weather.  
And dear Miss Gillane: does she want a man?  
Well, he's here spick and span and will do what  
he can.  
And dear Paddy Nolan, just over the way,  
Can settle your soles and give you some tay.

# COOLEY COLLINS TRAD FESTIVAL

# 2016

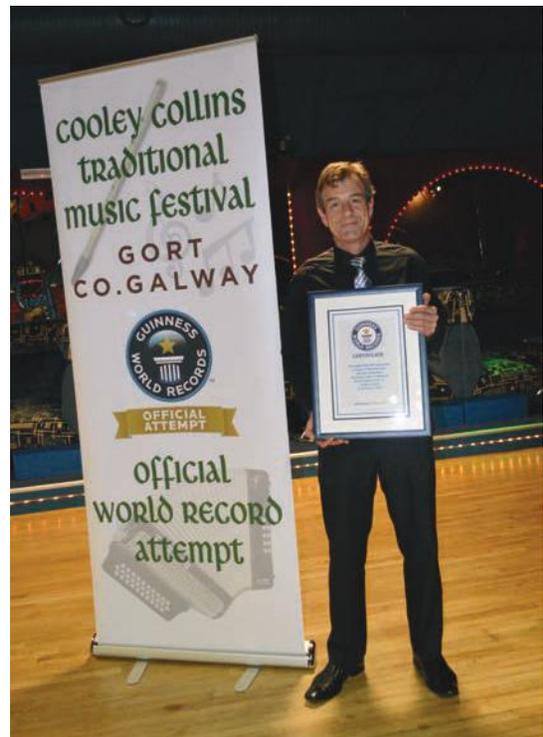
## GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS WIN



FROM L-R: MAIRE COSTELLO, ADRIAN FEENEY, NOEL CORLAS, ANDREWS DE STACK, TOMMY O'DONNELL, BILLY CARR, EOIN O'NEILL, MARY MOLONEY.



The 2016 Cooley Collins Traditional Music Festival succeeded in their attempt to win The Guinness World Record for the Largest Irish Folk Band of 406 Musicians. The Guinness attempt was to count the "Most traditional musicians playing at one time". At the time, the current record sat at 267 musicians. The 406 Gort musicians played three tunes for 7 minutes which were: Rattlin' Bog, Kerry Polka and Maggie in the Woods.



FRANCIS SULLIVAN DISPLAYS GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS CERTIFICATION.

# GORT RESOURCE CENTRE

# SOCIAL INCLUSION

## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN GORT

An invitation was extended to everyone to attend the official launch of Social Inclusion Week 2018 for Galway County Council in Sullivan's Hotel. This year's theme was 'Health and Wellbeing' launched by Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council Cllr Séan Ó'Tuairisg. The afternoon featured the much anticipated community screening of the Gort based film 'Town of Strangers', along with a range of entertainment from various cultural communities that included drumming from Community Spirit Drumming, didgeridoo playing, puppeteering, imagination playground and much more.

Gort Resource Centre was happy to host a Syrian feast during this year's Social Inclusion Week, welcoming our new Syrian friends into the centre for an evening of chopping, dicing, slicing and ultimately cooking up some fabulous Syrian cuisine. From authentic Syrian hummus to fabulous tabbouleh we enjoyed an evening of laughter and fun with our new Syrian friends.

The Gort Resource Centre opened in 2003 and moved to its present location at Church Street Gort in 2004. We are here to provide support and services to the people of Gort and the surrounding area. Our aim is to improve the standard of living of our community by providing confidential, non-judgmental and helpful services to families and individuals. We work towards providing Education and Training resources as identified by members of our Community.

Our service is managed by a team of local volunteers who through their understanding of this community inform and guide our work. The Resource Centre employs one full time coordinator, a part time administrator, and a part time Development worker. We also provide additional professional assistance through our



ELHAM TAEA CREATES A SYRIAN DELICACY AT THE RESOURCE CENTER.

services at the Resource Centre. These include our Citizens Information Clinic, MABS, Employment Mediation and The Teen Parent Support Programme.

We work closely with specific groups in our community, including Youth, Older People, Men, The Brazilian Community and People Parenting Alone. We work together with the other Resource Centres of Galway and Mayo of which there are twelve and belong to established Networks to inform and promote best practice; these include Domestic Violence Network, The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Network, and People Parenting Alone.

We also work with a variety of County wide groups through the Social Inclusion Measures Group led by Galway County Council are a member of the Community Forum and participate in the local Gort Area Network.

# EX COUNTY HURLERS GOLF SOCIETY

BY JOE BYRNE, PRESIDENT GORT GOLF CLUB, 2017

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June 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 was a special day in Gort Golf Club for long standing and prominent member of the Club Paddy Jordan, who as President of the Ex County Hurlers Golf Society 2017, hosted his Presidents Prize at the Club.

The event was attended by over 90 golfers from all over the country and we were delighted to have present on the day, some of the great hurlers of the past including Noel Skehan of Kilkenny, Pat Hartigan, Eamon Grimes, Joe Mc Kenna of Limerick, Fergal Tuohy of Clare, not to mention Galway All-Ireland winning medal winners Noel Lane, Andy Fenton, Vincent Mullins, Steve Mahon, and Finbar Gantley. It was also nice to see as Paddy's guest Miko McNerney from Ardrahan who played with Galway back in the 1950's in attendance, as well as Jimmy Duggan from Liam Mellows.

In his speech, Paddy spoke of the cultural importance of this area in the history of the GAA, with founding member Michael Cusack having taught in Lough Cutra NS and the



JOE BYRNE WITH PADDY JORDAN

late Joe McDonagh from Ballinderreen. He thanked the Course Green keeper Peadar Grealish for having the course in such good condition, and the ladies Siobhan O'Reilly and Christina Flaherty for the excellent food served.

President of Gort Golf Club Joe Byrne welcomed Paddy and all the players and spoke of Paddy's contribution to Gort Golf Club down through

the years and how Golf has become a social outlet for ex hurlers to meet and reminisce about time past on the playing field. Also in attendance was Michael Mc Mahon Captain of Gort Golf Club.

Needless to say, after the presentations were made, Paddy was joined by his musician friends Des Mulcaire and Catherine Hayes to play a few tunes.

# FROM GORT TO KHUMBA THE HIMALAYAS

## EVEREST MEMORIAL SLIOTAR

BY AOIFE KEANE

After a very scary flight to Kathmandu in Nepal, we landed in Lukla, the most dangerous airport in the world. And so the journey began.

There was no time to rest. We trailed uphill for over three hours until we got to a village called Phakding. Along this stretch we noticed the difference in the air as we were above the two thousand metre mark. Our tea house was called the Four Seasons but it was the exact opposite of what you would expect. We were so cold that night and alone with no other trekkers, no fire and no heat. I felt a massive sense of homesickness and loneliness for my mother.

That night was the start of many tears along the way. We were too cold to sleep, but swore we would not let the cold defeat us. It tested our limits every night. That morning we started a very difficult ten hour climb of ascents and descents. Headaches from altitude sickness reared their ugly heads and that, along with the cold, hampered our best efforts to sleep.

Despite our fatigue, the views were out of this world. It's truly a magical place. We stopped along the way in a children's home to give some of the gifts



STANDING IN THE SHADOW OF THE HIMALAYAS: (L-R) AOIFE KEANE AND GINA CASEY PRESS ON DESPITE COLD AND LACK OF SLEEP.

we had brought for them, coloring books and crayons. The joy on their faces was unbelievable.

After a night's rest and the staple, noodle soup, we trekked for five hours in searing daytime heat to reach the Everest View hotel. This was our first glimpse of Everest, so lots of photos and laughs were had before we descended again for the night to allow our body to acclimatize. We experienced the effects of the Diamox (altitude tablets) with tingling

fingers, toes and faces. Our desire to eat dwindled, but we pushed ourselves to drink seven litres of water a day to keep the altitude sickness down.

Our Sherpa Serky collected our permits for the mountain as it's illegal to enter Sagamatha Park without at least two permits. We crossed magnificent bridges: one was 1000 metres off the ground. They allow yaks, mules and donkeys to pass as they carry loads for people heading to the summit, and food for the villages up higher. I can



AOIFE SCORES HIT IN KHUMBA ICEFALL.

understand how an egg at the top cost nine dollars when you see what they have to go through .

We saw amazing mountains but the most outstanding by far was Aba Dablam. Everest didn't seem as inviting until we got close up, but on the trail from Namche bazaar to Tengboche we saw the whole Himalayan mountain range. We were literally taking breaks every three to four steps upwards as air got thin.

We stayed in a village called Deboche but early that night there was rumbling in the room and suddenly we realised we were not alone. Scrambling for our head torches as there is no electricity, we found a yellow large rat-style animal enjoying our protein bars. That was it, we were gone as far as ever we could move.

We slept in with about twenty

There are certain traditions on the mountain you abide with for luck: you turn all the prayer wheels clockwise, you keep to the left always and when walking past money stones you keep to the left. We stuck with these traditions and it served us well.

We pushed on to Base Camp. After an hour's hike upwards we came across the Everest Memorial where there are memorials and stones for all climbers that lost their lives on the mountain. There are no bodies here as there is no way of recovering them from such high altitudes. We also passed Lobuche East, the peak where climbers train for the last time before they summit Everest. We were beyond cold at this stage and just needed to keep moving.

Had we bitten off more than we could chew? Plough on and

Sherpas in the tea house room. We laughed so much that day telling everyone we could about being promoted to Sherpa status!

Each afternoon our highlight was stopping for hot water and a Snickers bar. Another was passing the 3000 metre as they say that's when problems with high altitude sickness can occur.

we'll worry about it later was our conclusion. Thoughts of family, friends and all our loved ones that had passed, especially my mother, were never too far from my mind nor were my frozen tears. We pushed on, up and down climbs with huge rocks and not much to see as visibility was poor. One sign finally pointed towards Base Camp so that's the direction we took for over two hours until we reached our destination. A sense of pure elation and relief possessed us both.

We placed Mass cards for loved ones that had passed including Jamesie Lee, Pateen Fahey and Maggie Hynes and my American friend Pat Casey. A final highlight was when I drove a Windsor sliotar kindly sponsored by Windsor motors into the Khumbu icefall with a Paddy O'Dea hurl in memory of my uncle Vincy Lynskey.

Twenty minutes there taking photos and hugs and kisses all round we experienced extreme cold of minus thirty degrees and an avalanche. Three days later we were back to our start point and could believe we achieved our goal. Did I enjoy it? I am asked since I came back and my answer is no, it was a horrific, tough, emotional and most of all physical journey. The only part I really enjoyed was the company of Gina Casey and when I got to hit a ball into the ice fall.

My mother's Mass card takes pride of place in the highest point I could find. I know she kept me safe and I'm hoping my grief is left there too.

Asked if I'd ever do it again. . . Never say Never!

# SOUTH GALWAY ATHLETIC CLUB

# RACES TO SUCCESS

South Galway AC had fantastic success winning gold in the U 14 Boys 4 x 200m relay in a time of 1.48.73 minutes on Saturday the 7th April at the National Indoor finals in Athlone. The team consisted of Andrew Horan, David Mannion, Ruairi Dillon, Stephen Mannion and sub Shane Cassidy. They won their heat comfortably in a time of 1.50.43 minutes and started in the final as the fastest qualifiers in lane 5. Andrew Horan ran a super first leg to position them in 3rd place. David Mannion took over the baton and after 30 m had gone into first place and when handing over the baton to Ruairi Dillon the South Galway team were 5 meters ahead of the Finn Valley runner coming second. Ruairi Dillon ran a

very determined third leg and kept a lead of four meters. Stephen Mannion ran an incredible last leg to extend their lead to 6 meters. Their finishing time was 1.48.7 minutes, two seconds faster than their heat and only one second outside a national record.

The South Galway AC U12 girls 4 x 100 m relay team also ran in their final and finished in 6th place.

South Galway AC have had a very successful indoor championship with 17 athletes qualifying for the National indoor finals and winning gold in the U 14 boys relay, a silver medal in the hurdles, two bronze medals in race walking, a bronze medal in the long jump, 6th in high jump and 6th in U12 girls relay.



ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONS: RUAIRÍ DILLON, DAVID MANNION, SHANE CASSIDY, STEPHEN MANNION AND ANDREW HORAN. THESE MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH GALWAY AC U14 BOYS RELAY TEAM WON GOLD IN THE 4 X 200M RELAY ALL IRELAND INDOOR FINALS IN ATHLONE ON THE 7<sup>TH</sup> OF APRIL 2018.

# SPECIAL OLYMPIANS BRING MEDALS

## HOME TO GORT



AT THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS IN UCD, 14 TO 17 JUNE 2018, PAULINE DALY SHARES A MOMENT WITH ANNE MAHON, WHO WON BRONZE IN THE BOCCIE COMPETITION.



ABOVE, LORRAINE MAHON WITH HER PARENTS STEPHEN AND TERESA. LORRAINE TOOK PART IN THE SWIMMING COMPETITION AS PART OF TEAM CONNAUGHT AND WON 4<sup>TH</sup> PLACE.

AT LEFT, ANDREW QUINN WITH HIS FATHER MICHAEL. ANDREW COMPETED IN BOCCIE TOURNAMENTS, AND WON GOLD IN THE SINGLES COMPETITION, AND SILVER IN THE DOUBLES.

# IRELAND'S FITTEST SCHOOL 2017



BACK ROW, (L-R), AOIFE LYNSKEY, STELLA HOWLEY, SHAUNA DOOLEY, SARAH BUTLER, OLIVIA CURE, SOPHIE HULL, DIOGO SANTOS, NAIMA BAKER, NATHAN GILL, CARRAGH LOUGHREY, GRAINNE MONAHAN, PATRICK BRIEDAS, BECKY MAHON, CLIODHNA FLAHERTY, AVA FLAHERTY, SHAUNA GARDINER, OLIVE VEALE. FRONT ROW (L-R), TALITHA COSTELLOE, CIARA BERGIN, JONATHAN SULLIVAN, CHRISTOPHER MCMILLAN, LEAH O'HALLORAN, DAROG BENNET, SOPHIE MOLLOY, KATIE CONNOLLY, LORRAINE DE JESUS, LAURA WALSH.

Gort Community School is proud to have won the 2017 Irish Life Health School's Fitness Challenge'. On Monday the 29th of January, the school was announced the overall winner of this National Competition in which 30,000 students took part this year. GCS also won the category for the 'Best Mixed School' and the 'Most Improved School'

Over 172,000 students have now participated in the challenge, making this the third largest school fitness study in the world. The challenge analyses shuttle run performance, which is recognised as an excellent tool to screen youth fitness levels. The challenge measures cardiorespiratory fitness (CRF) – low CRF increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD) while improving CRF is associated with a reduced risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, dementia and Alzheimer's. Long time supporter of the School's Fitness Challenge, Olympic 400m Hurdler, Thomas Barr says: "I think there has been incredible developments in the Irish mindset towards health and fitness in recent



PROFESSOR NIALL MOYNA, FROM OPERATION TRANSFORMATION AND AOIFE LYNSKEY.

years- and the boosted numbers participating in the Challenge is evidence of this. A huge congratulations to everyone who took part."

# LAVALLYLSHEEN CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL COMMITTEE APPEAL

# HONOURING THE PAST



ABOVE LEFT: ENTRANCE STONE BY JETHRO SHEEN OF SHEEN STONE WORKS. ABOVE RIGHT: NEW WALL SEEN FROM INSIDE THE GRAVEYARD. BELOW LEFT: NEW ENTRANCE FROM POUND ROAD. BELOW RIGHT: OUTER CURVE OF WALL ENCLOSING GRAVEYARD.

The Lavallylisheen Children's Memorial Committee have begun the work of making Lavallylisheen a peaceful and respectful place where families can, once again, visit to remember the children who are interred there.

This is possible now thanks to Mrs Sheila Duffy who has gifted, to the communities of the local parishes, the old access from the Pound Road/Riverside Walk up to Lavallylisheen Children's Burial Ground. The alternative route, used by the families for fifty years, was closed off when the Limerick to Galway rail link re-opened in 2010.

Already, people have contributed generously, giving time, materials, equipment, and financial help with the cost of the work. The Guaire Magazine Committee contributed the cost of the Lavallylisheen stone plaque at the new entrance.

This is a sacred site, one that holds a special place in the hearts of local families. Many of the grave markers do not bear names. We have begun a Memorial Record of the Lavallylisheen children. The children who have already been honoured in this way were interred between 1872 and 1961.

The ages range from birth to four years old.

For families whose children had died before they could be named, Fr Marrinan will respond to their expressed need by celebrating a Family Naming Ritual for their children. A welcome is also extended to the families who wish to name a child who was not buried in Lavallylisheen.

If you are interested in the Memorial Record, or the Family Naming Ritual, or would like to contribute to the work of the Committee, please contact Guaire Magazine at [guairemagazine@gmail.com](mailto:guairemagazine@gmail.com) for details.

# GU AIRE

