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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you all again to the 16th edition of An Caisleán. We extend a special welcome to those living abroad who look forward every year to receiving “a little bit of home” in the post.

As always, we have tried to have a good mix of articles and features as well as lots of photos from the past and the present. Thank you to all who contributed material to us and if you haven’t done so yet, maybe next year you may delve into your old family albums and share some of its memories with us!

This year we have *A Brief History of All Saint’s Church* by Mary Moloney which makes some very interesting reading and a *History of Lisnagry School* by Joan O Siochru which chronicles the long, hard struggle to get a new school built in Richill. We have submissions from all four schools in the parish detailing their many activities and achievements. As it is the centenary of the sinking of the Titanic, we are including *Nora Keane A Night to Remember* again written by Dermot McCabe. Many sporting organisations and other club’s activities are also within the pages to be explored. We are extremely proud of our village receiving “Runner-Up Award” at the Pride of Place Gala Dinner only last week. Congratulations to all involved.

This year sees two of our natives Mairéad Murnane from Castleconnell and Don Mescall from Lisnagry receiving honours in two very different disciplines, but both as a result of sheer hard work, dedication and excellence. We extend our congratulations to them both.

We would like to thank our advertisers, and the local shops and businesses who sell the publication on our behalf. We are grateful to those of you who generously give of your time to ensure its success, whether it is contributing an article, a photo, a poem or by buying the journal for your own perusal and sending it to those away from home. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mossy Kirby of Mulcair Print for his patience, attention to detail and professionalism.

The proceeds of An Caisleán go to local charities and this year we were delighted to present cheques to Care of the Aged, Ger O’Sullivan Benefit Fund and Tidy Towns.

We sincerely hope that you will find something of interest to enjoy.

Steve Reidy, Pat Skehan, Mary Dillon, Anne Berkery

Pastoral Message

Fr. Brendan Kyne

My very best wishes to all readers as I respond with pleasure to the invitation to contribute an article to this year's edition of 'An Caisleán.'

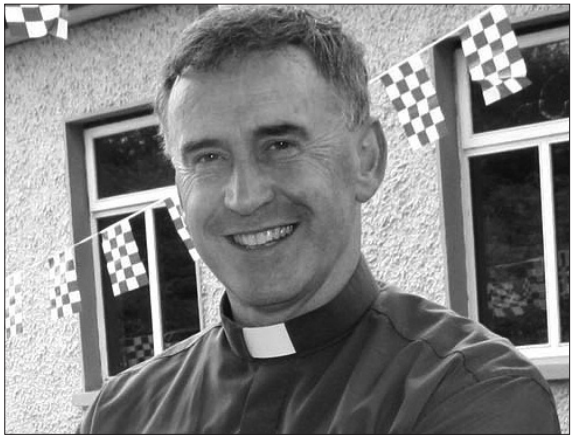
The recent International Eucharistic Congress had as its theme "Communion with Christ and with one another." In these most challenging of times the Congress was a much needed opportunity to renew our faith and rediscover the genetic code of communion with one another in Christ, which is at the heart of the Churches' identity. In a particular way all of us are challenged to find new ways to pass on the life of Communion to young people, living in a world where even the plausibility of faith is often denied.

The communion among the faithful in Christ is based on a sharing in holy things. There is communion in faith, communion of the sacraments, communion of gifts/charisms and above all a communion in charity. Communion extends to the sharing of goods, both spiritual and material. Our communion is extended to members of other denominations. It is not limited to those on earth, it is also with those who have gone before us and especially with the saints.

Thankfully, there is still a vibrant faith expressed by the many people who trek to weekly worship, those who go out to care for the poor and needy and all those who direct their energies to deprived children and the forgotten elderly.

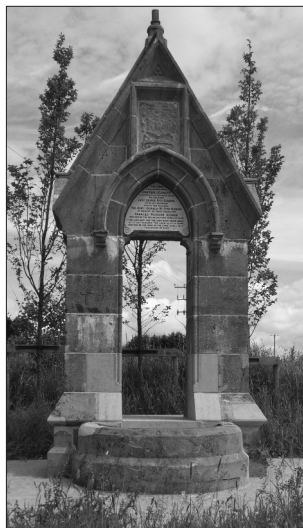
Let us continue to strive for the restoration of strong neighbourhoods so as to bring again a sense of greater justice and courtesy to each other which marked the greater side of this nation.

Finally, my congratulations and very best wishes to Rev Lucy Green, recently ordained in Killaloe and on behalf of all parishioners, I wish Fr. James Minogue every good health and God's blessing as he recuperates in Milford Nursing Centre.



REINSTATEMENT OF FITZGIBBON MONUMENT

On a windswept wet Wednesday afternoon, October 5 2011, a large gathering of parishioners turned out to witness the reinstatement of the Fitzgibbon Monument which is situated opposite the entrance to Tom and Mary Clifford's farm. Cllr. Mary Harty, Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council, attended to officially reinstate the historic memorial. Cllrs. Noel Gleeson, Mary Jackman and Brigid Teefy attended the ceremony. Before Cathaoirleach Mary Harty was called on to perform the ceremony, local historian, Pat Touhy gave a brief history on the origin of the monument. Local man, Paddy Rainsford, Knockbrack, who played a huge part in making sure that the memorial was restored to its former glory, also spoke about his involvement in it. Castleconnell Historical Society chairman, Henry Nash and members of the Society who played its part in the location of the monument, also attended. Dave Hennessy, Administration Officer, Mid West National Road Design Office, acted as MC for the occasion.



In performing the reinstatement Cathaoirleach Mary Harty said:

“It is with great pleasure that I am here today in Rich Hill in my capacity as Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council to officially reinstate the historic Fitzgibbon memorial.

“The original pump was placed in Carrowkeel, on the southern side of the Dublin road, by John Fitzgibbon of Mountshannon Estate, Earl of Clare K.P. He served as Lord Lieutenant of Limerick and was a one-time governor of Bombay. The original well was sunk on the Dublin-Limerick road for the benefit of his tenants just north of where Finnegan's pub is now located.

“His niece, Lady Louisa Fitzgibbon, and her husband Gerald N. Fitzgibbon, renovated the pump and erected the memorial over it in 1875, in memory of their son, Charles Richard George, who died in 1870, aged 21 years of blood poisoning.

“The memorial was known locally by various names, such as the “The Pump”, The “Carrowkeel Fountain”, and “The Annacotty Fountain” and was a famous landmark on the road into Limerick. In recent times it had become much

neglected and had suffered some damage. The Maltese cross that once surmounted the arch has been missing for some time

“In its previous life, the Fitzgibbon memorial and pump was an important local landmark used by weary travellers and local people to water their horses. It is fitting therefore that the new location of this monument lies adjacent to the new M7 Limerick to Nenagh Motorway where once again it will serve as a landmark for those travelling.

“The memorial was dismantled in 2001 as part of the construction of the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase 1 project. The realignment of the junction at Finnegans, to facilitate the tie in of the M7 Motorway with the Limerick Southern Ring Road Phase I scheme, meant that the monument could not be reinstated in a suitable setting which respected its historical and cultural links until this time.

“Limerick County Council acknowledges the significant cultural heritage of this monument, a fact that has been further recognised by its listing as a protected structure in the current County Development Plan.

“The new location of the memorial here in Rich Hill lies within the boundary of Mountshannon Demesne and therefore the historical connection between the monument and the Mountshannon Estate is maintained. This site was chosen following extensive consultation with local residents, the Castleconnell Historical Society, local elected members and the Conservation Officer of Limerick County Council.

“Special thanks are owed to local resident Mr Paddy Rainsford, whose enthusiasm and determination were so important in ensuring that the memorial was restored to its former glory,” she said

After the ceremony all present were invited to Finnegans Restaurant for light refreshments, where everyone expressed their delight that the monument was reinstated.

Martin Naughton

THE CASTLECONNELL GATHERING

Community Groups, Voluntary Organisations, Sporting Organisations, Businesses, Schools and Individuals came together over the summer months to enable Castleconnell to “put its best foot forward” for the national Pride of Place competition. Another golden opportunity is now presenting to



enable the people of the village to generate the excitement of this 2012 project with the news that Ireland is hosting a Gathering in every County in 2013.

This is a project designed to reach out to family, friends, school and work colleagues home and abroad to encourage them to return to a place where they have fond memories. Castleconnell now should extend this welcome to 2013 as part of the Limerick Gathering initiative. Some events under consideration around the country include Walking Tours, a Fleadh, Clan Gatherings, an International Harp Festival, Tracing Your Roots, Twin Towns, Celebrating Local Heroes, Reviving Past Traditions and School Reunions. Have you any other ideas?

Preliminary meetings will be held over the next few weeks to explore interest, seek support and ideas and look at opportunities for networking to ensure that Castleconnell plays its part in making this an event to really remember. Let's pool our resources and experience once more, let's seek out our distant and not so distant connections and let's get the ball rolling to show how proud we are of our village and how much we miss our friends and family who no longer live here.

Do you think that this is a good project; do you think that you can come on board and make a difference? A successful gathering starts with good planning. Come along and contribute. No idea will be too big or too small or too quirky.

Limerick County Council is providing a support team for all areas and a website has been set up to give guidance, inspiration and encouragement. Have a look at www.thegatheringireland.com.

For more information locally, look out for the Community meetings that will be held over the next few weeks to establish interest and produce a few ideas for our own gathering in 2013.

Walking to Mass on Christmas Morning

*Christmas morning, cold and dark
Arm stretched out, sweet-laden sock
Scent of orange, glimpse of toy
Anticipation turned to joy.
Candle quenched now Mary and Joseph pass
It's time to get up and ready for Mass.*



*Re-kindled embers, sausages, warm tea
No time to play, the crib to see
Silver trees, frosty dawn, starry skies
Footsteps crunching, glistening ice
Two short legs on either side of large size ten
Tiny hands safely clasped in velvet strength.*

*Decorations and holly, puzzles and books
Glimpses of trifle, goose ready to cook
No white or red then or pink champagne
Liqueurs or appetizers or choice of main
Never heard of computers, laptops or playstations
Just songs and stories and great recitations.*

A. Berkery

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This Old House

*I'll rest against this little wall and close my eyes a while,
And let my memory wander back to when I was a child.
But what intrigues me most of all, there is no one to tell
Who lived in all those walls until the time they fell.
Down many little country lanes we see as we pass by,
The remains of many homesteads, was someone's pride and joy.
Shelter to their family, whether big or small
Or was he someone's hero when he answered to the call?
Those old stone walls, standing there have stood the test of time.
No one knows who put them there, just built with sand and lime.
Mostly standing straight and firm as if when they were new,
Not knowing how long they've been there, like something that grew.
Those tiny little windows, their earthen floors as well,
If only it could speak to me what stories it could tell.
Who was the last to light the fire, or even close the door,
Or hang the oil lamp on a nail, or what clothes did they wear?
Who was the one to thatch the roof, or get water from the well,
Or did they even emigrate, with nothing left to sell?
It may have been the famine, or even gone to sea,
Or was it the misfortune, the plague they called TB.
Those walls are now a monument, to man of yesterday
Have served their purpose long ago, for those now passed away.
No more we'll see their off-springs, standing here alone,
Or will someone just knock it down, just to use its stone?*

Gilhooly's Lisnagry

***Good Luck & Best Wishes from . . .
Lisnagry Post Office***

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Overtaken

*Technology's leaving me standing,
Progress is passing me by,
I feel relegated to yesteryear,
Not knowing the how or the why.
I'm quite all right with the telephone-
Landline, I hasten to add,
For a mobile has me all fingers and thumbs,
I know... I know...ain't it so sad!
I can cope with the kettle, the toaster's a breeze
And the pressure cooker's okay,
The microwave, though, I secretly fear-
Might well run amok one fine day.
I am on good terms with the washing machine,
Show me an iron...I'm cool,
The telly's a friend, though that video thing
Can make me look quite a fool.
But PCs and laptops and aught of that ilk
All leave me a quivering wreck,
I'm convinced they have minds of their own,
And how do you keep them in check?
I'd never dare to switch on one,
I wouldn't be so rash,
I know that they may go awry,
(I've heard those things can crash!)
And should I chance to touch a key-
This really makes me fret,
I fear that I might punch a hole
Right through the internet!
So I'll just give the high-tech stuff
A nod, and e'en a wink,
And continue to write letters
On paper and on ink.
Let others use the fast lane,
I wish them all God's speed,
I'll settle down in Fogeyland
And simply go to seed.*

Poet's Corner

*No, it wasn't you I saw today-
That made me sadly turn away,
But some other you, that you've become
That left me tearless, lost and numb
And walking on my own again
Through mists of softly falling rain.*

M. Tuohy

The Disappearing Poster 1999

*Twass in the year of '99 when election time came around,
And Castleconnell's hinterland with posters did abound,
They were stuck on poles, trees and walls depicting many a face
And playing the game of politics in The Local Election Race.*

*Here's the story of a poster displayed at Howley's Cross
A noble piece of carpentry it stood on stones and grass
Its fair election message was colourful and clean
Then one night without a warning it suddenly disappeared.*

*The electorate all marvelled at this phenomenon
Twass strange to think an object could have simply up and gone,
And everyone agreed that there could be no common cause
For the disappearing poster defied all Earthly laws*

*Twass universally agreed that sorcery was abroad
That a paranormal wizard just waved a magic wand
For though the poster disappeared, tis double strange to say
It came and went a second time in the length of a night and day*

*Did the ghost of William Howley come back to haunt the site?
Did he shift the heavy poster in the middle of the night?
Or did "Black Jack" Fitzgibbon return for the campaign
And engage in wanton thievery, some power to wield again?*

*Twass said a headless horseman was seen around one night,
With a ghoulish and hairy leprechaun trotting by moonlight
An opportunist poltergeist came sailing through the air
And carted off the poster, headless man and mystic pair!*

*Now as a fair and just campaign is fought by earthly beings
Of the disappearing poster the mystery remains
It can only be assumed by their ethereal abrasion,
That those creatures from another world need "political persuasion".*

Joan O Siochru

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NORA KEANE AND A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

“It was terrible that wreck! It cannot be described in all its horror and detail. I think of it with the terrible fear upon me again”. These are the words of Castleconnell woman Nora Keane who made her own small place in history as one of only 705 people to survive the sinking of the Titanic. More than 1500 more perished in the early hours of April 15th, 1912, less than three hours after the world’s biggest and most luxurious liner struck an iceberg. Nora’s recollections of that disastrous night, told to a reporter at “The Patriot News” of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, resonate down the generations. “I was ready for bed, as were most of the passengers who had not already gone to sleep when the officers came and told us to leave the ship. They told us to put on life preservers as the vessel was in bad shape. We did this: then went on deck” she said. “Prior to the steward’s announcement, there had been no indication of trouble” Nora said, although she recalled sensing a slight shock. The night was cold and clear on deck and Nora found the officers had perfect control of everything.

There was some excitement amongst some of the people but not what you would expect under the circumstances. The officers called out who was to go in the lifeboats and the crew showed every courtesy in lowering women and children into the boats. Nora Keane was fortunate, she got out in the fourth or fifth lifeboat. “The men passengers stood back, without doubt they sacrificed their lives to give the women and children the preference”, she said. One man, however, made it into their lifeboat. “No one saw him go when we got into the boat, we tramped over him for some time, but didn’t see him or even know that we were stepping on a human form”, said Ms. Keane. But the man afterwards proved useful: being able to handle the boat which contained 55 passengers. “The sea was calm, it was not a large boat and we were much crowded” had the sea been choppy, the lifeboat surely would have capsized”. Nora told the reporter. She also recalled the horror of being unable to help the victims in the water. “Two men floated by us. Both of them had life preservers; one of them dropped low in the water. He did not call, the other called us to take him on board, but it was impossible. Our boat barely floated. The man in the water called “Goodbye”, and then his head went down a little later. He disappeared out of sight... that was the case with many others”.

“It was a terrible sight to witness, one which cannot be forgotten. The sight of men in the sea was awful”, she recalled. From the lifeboat, Nora saw the Titanic go down, at approximately 2.20am on April 15th. “The ship seemed to go down, forward and rise to an awful height all at once. There was a roar

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and a deafening sound. The cries and moans of those passengers and crew in the water were awful... very soon, there was nothing to be seen or heard". Nora recalled that the ship went down about 100 yards from where their boat was, with bodies drifting past them and pieces of the wreck all around. She remembered the band playing. "And that band played. I don't know how the men did it, while we drifted". Men jumped into the sea, but the band played on. "Some of them must have stood in water that was by then over the deck, while they played, for we were on nearly the same level with the deck, then". They played "Nearer my God to Thee" 'till the ship rose and then went out of sight. "they must have been playing when it went down" said Nora. "And the 705 survivors were picked up by the Carpathia about daybreak". It was "The Patriot" who told her brothers in Harrisburg that she was safe, having previously reported their anxiety about her. At 9.15am on April 18th, the Carpathia docked in New York where Nora was met by her brothers Dennis, William, Patrick and John Keane. Dennis described the scene for "The Patriot". "The ship made a beautiful appearance as she came almost silently up. There was no sound. I believe that a pin could have been heard fall up to the time the gangways were lowered for the passengers. Down the planks came the survivors. The big lines of police stood silent too. Then people would break out of the ranks and take their loved ones in their arms", he said. Nora was born on March 30th 1864 to John and Hanora Keane and was one of a family of seven boys and two girls. She emigrated with five brothers to the US in the 1890s and settled in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She had been on an extended visit to her mother in 1912 when she booked her passage back on the Titanic. It is believed that she intended to return on an earlier boat, but decided she would be more comfortable on the Titanic where she was a second class passenger; having paid £12/7shillings for her ticket numbered 226593. She was just 48 at that time. Sr. Noreen Keane, her grand niece recalls "She was a tall woman who walked with a very straight back". She also remembered that she was a very religious person who spoke about the Titanic and how she lost her rosary beads when she was on the tender bringing her out to the ship in Cobh, then Queenstown. She considered this a terrible augury and kept repeating to her cabin companion Edwina Trout, later Mackenzie that she felt something awful was going to happen. Mrs. Mackenzie told Sr. Noreen when they met in 1983 that on the night the Titanic sank, Nora's response to the stewards' pleas to hurry up to the deck was "I am not going anywhere without my corset". This corset nearly got in the way of Nora Keane being saved from a watery grave...because it took so much time to lace it up that her companion, Edwina Trout became quite anxious with her. Arthur Merchant, Titanic Scholar explains: "Winnie returned to her cabin, one woman Susie Webber had already left, the other

Nora Keane from Ireland was still dressing". The three women had been sharing compartment 101 on E deck aft, Edwina Celia Trout, 27 was from Bath, heading back to a sister in Massachusetts. Aussie Webber was from Devon, bound for Hartford, Connecticut. Both also survived.

After the tragedy, Nora returned to Harrisburg where she made her home with another brother, Michael who had a hotel there. Her name continued to appear in local directories until 1919. According to Sr. Noreen, Nora

returned to Castleconnell in the 1920s and lived with her brother, Peter and his family until her death on December, 20th, 1944 at the age of 80.

Dermot McCabe



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One Hundred Years Ago

Excerpts taken from The Limerick Leader 1912

January

A man named was charged before Mr. P.D. Sullivan, R.M. in the city with the larceny of a cap. Formal evidence having been given, the prisoner was remanded to the next Petty Sessions.

LANDS FOR SALE:

Mountshannon, Lisnagry--- For Mr. Martin Fenton, part of the lands of Mountshannon containing 51 acres 20perches Statute, subject to an annuity to the Irish Land Commission of £19 os 4d, P.L.V. £40 5s od., with the residence and offices thereon.

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February

SCHOOL OF MATRIMONY

The United States is very largely a country of novel experiments. Its latest venture is a School of Matrimony. In Kansas city recently, a Rev. Mr Kennedy called a meeting of young people in a church and announced “that it was his opinion that any bachelor aged 24, earning £15 a month and any girl over 18 ought to marry and he intended that they should”. His object is to increase the number of marriages and for that purpose he formed a matrimonial club and enrolled over 50 couples. To the present members we read that “the Pastor is now delivering weekly lectures on Courting, Buying Furniture, Cooking, Saving Money and Rearing Children”. One is almost tempted to say that a Branch of the Club is required in Ireland, marriages are so few amongst us of late. By the way this is a leap year and the ladies should make better use of the prerogative it gives them than they appear to be making.

March

80Lb. SALMON IN CASTLECONNELL

A Correspondent writes: A magnificent salmon, weighing over 80 lbs., has been captured on Mr A. Mackey’s preserves at the World’s End, Castleconnell by Rev. William Foley, C.O. The currents being rather strong in the Shannon at present lent additional vitality to the fish, which valiantly struggled for fully half an hour, giving the fishermen, “Tyler” Mackey (of hurling fame) and Billy Carroll as much cot work as they cared for to keep pace with the fish in the many desperate runs it made. However, their skill combined with the efficient manner in which the salmon was played succeeded in bringing to the gaff in true Waltonian style, a beautiful salmon fresh from the Atlantic.

April

QUESTION OF OVERCROWDING

At the Limerick Guardian's Meeting today, Dr M. McDonnell, in reply to questions by Mr McSweeney Inspector, that in the fever hospital he had two patients in the one bed, due to overcrowding.

Mr McSweeney said that unless the Guardians looked seriously to the very grave and dangerous condition of the hospital he should ask the Limerick Guardian's Board to interfere. He asked them to get the medical officers of the house to tackle that serious danger and to suggest a remedy without further delay. On the motion of Mr P. Bourke, who stated that there were 54 more patients in the hospital this year than last year, the increase in the fever hospital being 21, it was decided that the medical officers of the house meet at once and draft a scheme to prevent the overcrowding and submit same to the Board at next meeting.

TITANIC

Suggested Benefit Entertainment in Limerick,

Dear Sir,

Whilst the world stands appalled at the awful disaster to the Titanic, to the practical mind, the thought suggests itself, how can one help. I am prepared to place The Theatre Royal and staff for one or two nights (entirely free of any charge whatever) at the disposal of any responsible committee of citizens who would organise a performance or concert in aid of the sufferers. Perhaps our Limerick Operatic Society might, if possible, repeat their excellent performance of 'The Gondoliers'.

Yours truly,

George V Fogarty, Theatre Royal,
Limerick 20th April

May

OLD AGE PENSIONS CASTLECONNELL SUB-COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above committee was held at Ahane on Friday, May 3rd. The members present were Rev. J.J. Duan, P.P. of Murroe Chairman: Messrs J.B. Barrington J.P. High Sherriff of Co. Limerick, Nicholas Humphreys, J.P. D.C. Ballyvarig: Timothy Humphreys, D.C. Glenstal and Patrick Ryan, Raheen. Mr T. Collopy, clerk submitted the claims for investigation. Four of the applicants were allowed 5s per week each, one was provisionally allowed 5s per week and one was allowed 4s per week. One claim was disallowed as the claimant was not of statutory age.

June

CITY PETTY SESSIONS

The City Petty Sessions were held today before Messrs J.J. Delaney (presiding) and E.J. Daly. The business of the Court only occupied 45 minutes and the cases listed for hearing were few and unimportant- simple drunks and the like.

Litigation in the city has been decreasing of late years and the city magistrates

have rarely, as in former years, to hold an adjourned court. This in a way is due to the increased spread of temperance which has been so successfully promoted by the Cappuchin Fathers in conjunction with the local clergy in the city. Long may this peaceful condition of affairs exist.

July

THE HURLING FINAL

We have received from Mr W.F. Lee, Castleconnell, a long and interesting letter, which we regret we are unable to publish in full owing to pressure of our space, expressing the hope that the Central Council of the GAA at its meeting on Sunday next will re-fix the Hurling Final. Mr Lee urges that when the Limerick and Kilkenny teams are willing and anxious to meet, the Central Council should “rise to the situation, unanimously fix a date and put an end at once to this uncertainty which undoubtedly is playing havoc with the success of our Gaelic affairs”. With reference to the same question, a representative of the “Freeman’s Journal” has been informed by M. L.J. O’Toole, Secretary of the General Council, that he had received a letter from Limerick offering to play Kilkenny at Thurles. Afterwards, also at Jones’ Road. The representative was informed by the Chairman of the General Council, Alderman James Nowlan, Kilkenny that he could not receive the notice at next Sunday’s meeting which proposed to reverse the decision regarding the final come to at the last meeting.

HAPPY HAYMAKERS

A Farmer at Brickwood, Herts. has provided a large gramophone for the use of his haymakers so that they may work to music. The results are said to be highly satisfactory.

HOME RULE CAUSE

Mr W.A. Redmond, M.P. and the other Irish delegates sent out to Australia to collect funds for the Home Rule cause, have concluded their tour through N.S.W., where £7,000 has been received by them, making the total for the whole of Australia, £30,000.

August

UMBRELLA PIERCED BY HAIL

The weather is of the worst possible type, rain, hail and thunder and lightning being in evidence during the past three days. At one time or another yesterday, thunder, lightning and hail. Today, rain and hail while Sunday, a rainstorm raged about mid-day. Yesterday a man had the unique experience of having his umbrella pierced by hailstones.

September

EXPENSIVE GOATS

Two goats owned by Isidore Steis, a New York man, have between them, eaten a bundle of bank notes worth £28.

FOOT AND MOUTH OUTBREAK

A further case of foot and mouth disease was confirmed yesterday on a farm in

Cloonfane, Co. Fermanagh, situated within a ¼ of a mile of the place already infected.

DEATH OF MR. JEFFERSON

Mr W.G. Jefferson, K.C. died suddenly on Sunday when leaving London for Dublin after a holiday. He was for a number of years and up to his death, Senior Crown Prosecutor for the City of Limerick.

October

GUARDIAN AND INSPECTOR

At their meeting last Wednesday week, the Limerick Guardians refused a request made by Dr McDonnell R.M.O that the Vice Chairman of the Board, Mr P. Bourke, be prevented from visiting the workhouse Hospital on Sundays and unanimously passed a resolution that Mr Bourke could visit the hospital at any reasonable hour. Since then, Mr McSweeney L.G. Board Inspector came along and instructed Mr Godfrey, the Hall Porter of the Workhouse to allow no Guardian in without asking where he was going and what was his business. This order has apparently, met with the strong disapproval of the Guardians for at their meeting last Wednesday, they decided to ask Mr McSweeney for an explanation of the reasons for his instructions. Officialdom in this country is very liable to be a bit too assertive, if not aggressive, and a little check now and again is necessary to keep it within its bounds.

MONUMENT AT WASHINGTON

American women have already raised £8,000 of £14,000 which they require in order to erect a monument at Washington “in honour of the men aboard the Titanic who died that the women and children might be saved.”

November

HOME RULE BILL

The amendment to the Home Rule Bill proposing to give votes to women in the first Irish Parliament was defeated in the House of Commons yesterday by a majority of 173.

PAPAL VISIT

The Pope yesterday received in private and separate audience six Irish Bishops, one of whom was the Most Rev Dr Fogarty, Lord Bishop of Killaloe. His Holiness entertained all with the greatest cordiality and enquired after the condition of Catholicism in each diocese.

December

MILD WINTER

Several primroses have been found in full bloom around Limerick during the past few days and while on his way to school one day last week a schoolboy in Co. Wexford found a quantity of wild strawberry plants bearing full fruit.

WOMEN AS JURORS

The first women jury in Idaho, USA interrupted a case at Twinfalls by going home to cook the dinner for their families despite the Judge's request that they should

remain. They returned and resumed their places without a protest from the Judge. In bringing in a verdict against a woman charged with attempting to shoot a Mexican, the forewoman said “we commend the defendant, who is a neighbour of mine, to the mercy of the court”.

SALE OF FARM

A farm of 8 acres and a small house at O'Brien's Bridge has been sold for £820 and fees.

Compiled from Archives of Limerick Leader 1912

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Lisnagry School

(A History)

In the year 1820, John Fitzgibbon Junior (son of the infamous ‘Black Jack’) who now owned Mountshannon House and Estate, and who was also the local landlord, had a one roomed rectangular building constructed on his property, for the education of the children of his workers – about fifty six in all. It was regarded as more than adequate for purpose at that time.

Fast forward to 1881 and 1883 respectively, when John and Bridget Fitzpatrick were appointed to Mountshannon School. They established a teaching dynasty there that lasted until 1975 (ninety four years).

In 1887 Lady Louisa, the last of the Fitzgibbon family to own Mountshannon House and Estate, sold the land on which the school was situated in order to pay some of her debts. It was bought by the rich family of Woodlands House Castleconnell, (now the Castle Oaks Hotel), and Mountshannon School became known as Richill School. Lady Louisa also handed over control of the school to the local parish priest.

By 1913 the school was in bad condition and a grant was sanctioned by the British Government (who ruled Ireland at the time) for major improvements and enlargements. Then World War One broke out in 1914 and all grants for schools were cancelled. During the next five years Ireland became an independent republic and the Irish Department of Education replaced the old English model.

It took until 1935 for the Irish Government to order an investigation into the state of primary schools around the country, and a grim picture emerged as inspectors reports arrived daily at the department. Four hundred schools around the country were in a deplorable condition and Richill School was regarded as one of the worst seen. It was recommended that a new school replace this semi derelict outdated building as soon as possible. Soon after this recommendation, an attempt was made to close down Richill School altogether and to transfer the children to the already overcrowded Castleconnell and Ahane Schools respectively. After much debate between the department, the inspectors and the school manager, the idea was dismissed as unworkable and a new school agreed upon. Just as efforts were again being made to put a grant in place for this purpose, World War Two broke out and Ireland’s emergency began. Once again all grants for schools were cancelled. The 1939 – 1945 World War came and went, and in 1949, the department invited the then school manager to apply for a grant to build a new school. Two things were needed to facilitate the construction of the

building - A suitable site with a water supply and a local contribution of one tenth of the cost, about £900. Unfortunately the local parish fund was considerably depleted at this time as both churches had required extensive renovations that year costing several thousands of pounds. For the next six years the school manager and the department disputed the amount of the local contribution and the site issue as Richill School continued to deteriorate. Small children arrived there every September and crammed into whatever space was available. The school was freezing in winter because of an inadequate heating system (a rusty old stove situated in one corner of the room). Sometimes the chimney got blocked causing black smoke to billow out around the interior and the speedy evacuation of pupils. It left a smoky smell on coats, books and schoolbags – and the fire was then quenched leaving the room cold for the rest of the day. In early summer the building overheated, exacerbating the damp musty smell of oldness and decay, so Miss Josephine Fitzpatrick often took the younger children outside and taught them under the big pine trees. Rat holes, in the floor and skirting boards as well established as old houses were yawning and gaping and the rats peeped out now and then perfectly content in their ideal habitats. Nervous pupils gazed back at the rats, not so comfortable in theirs. Sanitary conditions were appalling and drinking water came from a bucket left standing uncovered near the main door. The water was obtained from a pump situated across the road. No progress was made regarding the building of a new school until the end of 1954 when a concerned parent, Mrs Mary Roche, and a local nurse, Ms Newman, became alarmed at the conditions that the local children had to endure in order to receive a primary education. The school was now a real health hazard. Mary and Ms Newman, with the support of some other parents, sent an s.o.s. to the Sunday Independent Newspaper, inviting a journalist to come and look at the school and to report on it.

The heading in the Independent Newspaper on the following Sunday read, *“One of Ireland’s Worst Schools”*

“This is what is said about the one hundred and thirty five year old school. They call it the “sardine tin school” because ninety children are packed into its 44’ x 17’ single classroom. Cobwebs and dust cover the crumbling walls and cracked ceiling because a touch of a duster would bring down an avalanche of plaster. The ceiling has not been painted for years in case it would collapse. Desks built for four pupils now hold six or seven and sway dangerously under the weight. In summer, when the number of children rises to one hundred, some have been known to faint in the sweltering heat. In wet weather the small playground becomes flooded, (indeed the building itself has become flooded once or twice daily in very bad weather). The outdoor dry toilet facilities for both boys and girls are appalling and a real danger to health. Parents have threatened drastic action if the authorities continue to ignore their plight”.

A few days after that newspaper report the local inspector for Richill School received a letter from the Department of Education.

“In view of the defective condition of this school and the press criticism that it has attracted, it is desired to have the matter of the local contribution and the issue of a site for a new school dealt with as soon as possible. The issue of the amount of the local contribution has been argued back and forth for the past seven years with no satisfactory result”.

There was no further correspondence about Richill School in the national archive file for the rest of 1955.

Strike

Then, the unthinkable, the impossible, the unimaginable happened.

On Monday morning January 16th 1956, Paddy and Josephine Fitzpatrick arrived at their cold damp school to begin the days teaching. Snow and sleet hammered at the old door on which a notice was pinned. It read, *“We the undersigned have decided not to send our children to school as conditions there are appalling”*. There followed the signatures of thirty one very brave and desperate parents whose children were pupils of the school at the time. A packed meeting attended by parents and politicians was held in Railway House in Lisnagry and on January 18th 1956 a strike committee formed. Their names were; Joe O’Brien, Pat Ryan, Thomas Bridgeman, Thomas Meskell, John Roche, James Moynihan, Michael Madden, Robert Hall, Pat Ryan, Michael Moynihan and John O’Brien. The strike received almost daily national press coverage and the rest of the country read with great interest about a little known place called Richill and its citizens who dared to challenge church and state on behalf of their children, (a very rare occurrence in 1950s Ireland). The strike was a very dramatic event with many revelations and incidents unfolding as it went on, too many to detail in this article. So here is a synopsis.

1. Quote from Mr Thomas Meskell in one newspaper article. *“One small stove is supposed to heat the room and the children suffer greatly from the cold in winter time. Sanitary accommodation is shocking and there is constant overcrowding creating strain on teachers and children alike. Even from an educational point of view, with the best will in the world, children cannot benefit from classes while they are frozen with the cold and packed in like sardines”*.
2. During the first week of the strike an inspector called to the school and showed the principal, (who still attended there daily without the students), an ordinance site and block plan to show the department’s commitment to the building of the new school. The principal told the inspector that no site had yet been purchased.

3. Quote from a letter in the national archive from the Richill inspector to the department. *"It turns out that a large site adjacent to Richill School was offered free of charge by a very wealthy local land owner many years ago. Despite numerous requests by the land owner, the principal and a number of other local people, the site was never enclosed and no written record of the offer exists. The land owner has since died and his nephew, who inherited the property, is not interested in giving it for free but will sell at a price".* The price quoted was regarded as too high.
4. Bishop Rogers of Killaloe was called upon to assist the school manager in purchasing a new site. Mr Garrett O'Mara, a local farmer who lived across the road from the old school agreed to sell a site for which to build the new school for two hundred pounds.
5. On Sunday January 29th 1956 the striking parents were verbally attacked from the pulpit at Sunday Mass. This had the effect of prolonging the strike for a further week. The parents were now more determined than ever to keep their children at home until improvements were carried out to the old school and a new one guaranteed within a reasonable time frame.
6. Bishop Rogers finally wrote a letter which was read out at Mass on the following Sunday February 5th. He exhorted the parents to send their children back to school. He told them that a site had been purchased and that with Government approval a new school would be a matter of months. The strike was called off the following week.

An editorial comment appeared in the Limerick Leader a week after the strike ended.

"There is little doubt that if the parents had not taken drastic action in this particular case nothing would have been done to remedy the situation for a very long time. There are four hundred schools in a deplorable condition throughout Ireland but few are in as bad a state as Richill School in County Limerick".

Building work was scheduled to begin in July 1956 but delay after delay for reasons too numerous to mention here meant that the title to the site was not registered nor the necessary leases prepared until February 1958. Finally the local contribution of £525, (the sum eventually agreed on), was ready to be lodged. The plot was cleared and an obstructive telephone pole removed. A well was also divined on Mr O'Meara's property which proved an ideal water supply for the proposed school. Another year went by before the sinking of the well was completed in February 1959 at a cost of £428.

The grant for the new school was sanctioned soon afterwards. It would cost £9,000 (including the local contribution) to build. The school would include two classrooms to accommodate forty students and one to accommodate

thirty students with provision for cookery classes. (Later removed from the overall plan and deemed unnecessary).

By September 1959 all the paperwork was completed and an inscription decided on.

*“Scoil Naisiunta Lios Na Groí
Lisnagry National School”*

It was the third change of address since 1820 and remains so to this day.

The invitation to tender was held up for a further six months and the bishop’s assistance once again sought as the school was now the subject of a Dáil debate.

Finally

On June 9th 1960

A note in the national archive file stated,

*“To the Department of Education
From*

The Office of Public Works

We have accepted a tender for the erection of the new school at Lisnagry”.

The building contractors were McNamara’s of Lisdoonvarna Co. Clare.

The building of the school proceeded without further delay. It took one year to complete and progress was watched daily by young heads peeping over the wall of the old school at lunch time. They were waiting patiently to leave that damp musty relic of a bygone era, and step into a brand new school building with its three brightly painted classrooms, its highly varnished desks and wood floors, its black and white tiled corridors, its boys and girls separate cloakrooms with flush toilets and hand basins and its concrete school yard with two shelters and a sizable playing field at the back.

Finally the 11th of July 1961 arrived. Teachers and school children gathered outside the old school for the very last time. A photograph was taken, after which they all marched across the road and into a state of the art new school building. Parents gathered there and Mass was said to celebrate the opening. At the bottom of a page in the roll book for that date is written;

“I have blessed and opened Lisnagry School on this day July 11th 1961.

Signed: Fr. John Fogarty P.P. and School Manager”.

Joan O’Siochru

Sources:

National Archives File 338265

Limerick Leader Files

Irish Independent Files

Limerick Chronicle Files



*Bernadette O'Reilly and Aileen O'Keeffe
enjoying a chat.*



*It all became too much for one little
chap! Lisnagry Golden Jubilee*



*Principal Michael
Feeney showing
Bishop Kieran
O'Reilly around the
school*



*Past pupils
Joan Tierney
Joan Ó
Siochru,
Tony
Kennedy,
Deirdre
Connolly,
Breda Carey
and Marie
Byrnes.*

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It tastes lovely lads! At Lisnagry Golden Jubilee



Kerry Hurley, Mary O'Mara and Martina Molloy at the Golden Jubilee.



Michael Tierney, Grainne Rowsome, Michael Feeney, Irene Hynes, Denis O'Grady and Bernie Kennedy at the Golden Jubilee



Joan and Micheal O'Siochru enjoying the exhibits at the Golden Jubilee with Matt and Emmie Byrnes.

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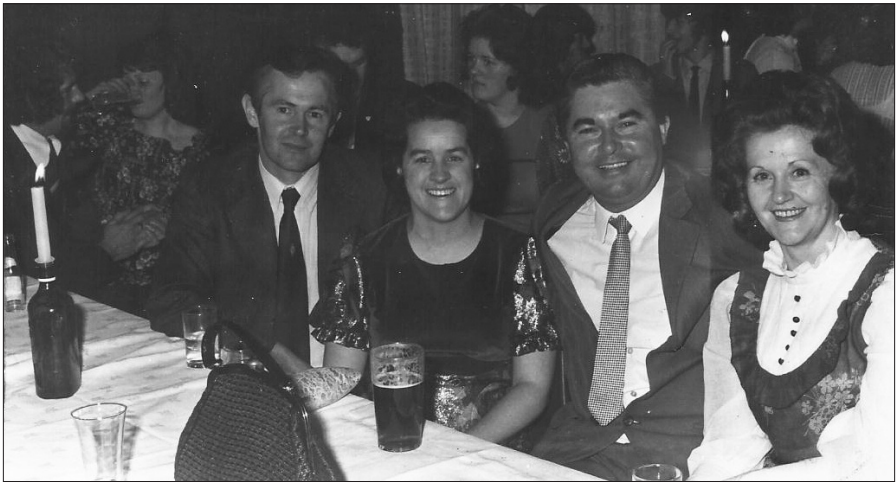


Ballrooms of Romance

The death this year of two of Ireland's most popular singers, Bridie Gallagher and Larry Cunningham prompted us to include a small feature on Ireland's Showband Scene and the fantastic songs which are still ringing in our ears after many decades have passed. Bands such as Eileen Reid and the Cadets with her hit 'I Gave My wedding Dress Away,' Larry Cunningham and 'Lovely Leitrim,' and 'I Guess I'm Crazy.' Who can forget Brendan Bowyer and the Royal Showband as they belted out 'The Hucklebuck' and 'I Ran All The Way Home?' Nostalgia abounds when Dromkeen is mentioned and we all have a story to tell. The excitement of the bus to and fro...the bottle of lemonade or orange you may be lucky enough to receive, the total exhaustion from the heat, the dancing and the hustle and bustle of the crowd. There were many dances held in the Parochial Hall in Castleconnell too and they were not without drama either! 'From The Candy Store On The Corner', which was a big hit for Dickie Rock and The Miami, 'She Wears My Ring' and 'Distant Drums' sung by Sean Fagan and The Pacific, 'Aching, Breaking Heart' also a huge hit for the late Joe Dolan and so many more. We include here a selection of photos which we received and maybe the 'Ballroom of Romance' may become a regular feature for future editions. So please keep the photos and the memories coming. Thank you to everyone who contributed.



***All boys
together
attending
Ahane Dinner
Dance 1974
Willie Nicholas,
Mike Nicholas,
Jimmy Hassett,
Pat Herbert,
Ger Ryan, Liam
Collins, Patsy
Nicholas and
Basil Cosgrave.***



Jimmy and Peggy Hassett with Mort and Brenda Cosgrave at the Kelly's Dinner Dance in 1974.



Deirdre (Moynihan) Connolly and Billy Connolly in Dromkeen.



Noel O'Connell and Esther at Dromkeen in 1971.



*JJ Ryan and Mary Jo in Dromkeen
1971.*



*Geraldine Moynihan and Ann Foley at
Dromkeen.*

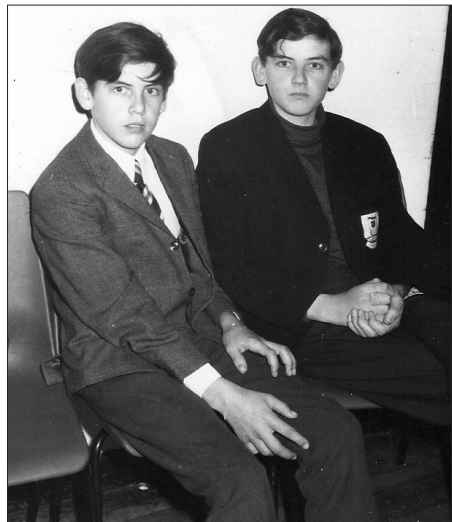


*Mary
(Ryan)
Shanahan,
Anne
(Costelloe)
Hayes,
Mary
Shanahan
and
Geraldine
(Moynihan)
Hayes at
Dromkeen.*

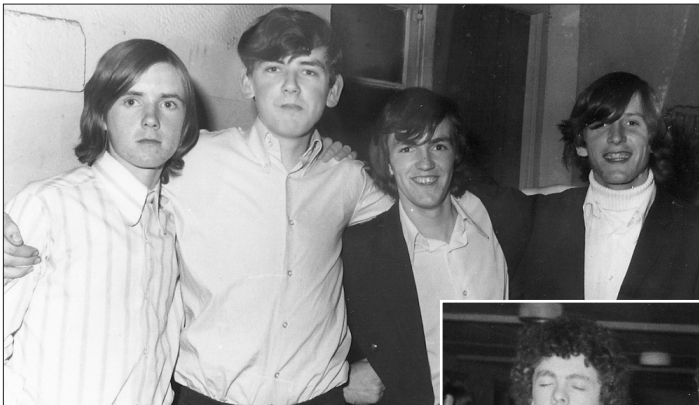
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Tom Coleman and Seamus Walsh at Dromkeen 1971.



Patrick and Seamus Walsh at Dromkeen 1971.



Above: Mike Conroy, Seamus Walsh, John Coleman, William O'Connell at Dromkeen 1971.



Right: Jack Byrnes and John Conroy at Dromkeen 1971.

Michael Kelleher

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St. Patrick's Day 2012



Castleconnell Boy Scouts



Taking part in the St. Patrick's Day Parade

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St. Patrick's Day Parade 2012



Mrs. Hartigan and daughter Ann on St. Patrick's Day



Paddy Guerin's Angling Cot in the St. Patrick's Day Parade

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Paddy Rainsford and John Joe Daly watching the parade



Timmy watching the parade



Anne Ryan, Maureen O'Sullivan, Willie Humphreys enjoying the parade



Ann Berkery, on behalf of 'An Caisleán', presents a cheque to Mary Tierney for 'Care of the Aged'.

Youth Club



*Castleconnell
Youth Club*

*Below:
Castleconnell
Youth Club on
an outing*



Castleconnell Youth club on fishing trip

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Karate Club



Castleconnell Karate Sparring Competition Winners at the Parish Hall



*Castleconnell
Karate Club
Members*



*Black belts at a seminar
including: Ray Hogan, T.
Twomey, N. Hogan, M.
Hogan.*



Castle Golf Society's Tim McCarthy presenting the Presidents Prize to the winner Joan Garahy.



Jo Aherne presenting the Captains Prize to Tim McCarthy.



Members of the Historical Society at Glenstal Abbey



Right: Ann Murphy and Henry Nash

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Care of the Aged



Nuala Coleman Renee Hurley Mrs Walpole at the Care of the Age Christmas Party.



Nancy Lyons and Ann Rainsford enjoying the Christmas Party.



Dancing at the Christmas Party were John Shire and Breda Joyce.



Rita Fennessy Paddy Rainsford Nuala Coleman and Sally Harvey enjoy the Care of the Age Summer Outing July 2012

*Frankie Ryan,
Pa Fitzgerald,
Mike
Fitzgerald,
Jimmy Ryan.*



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Anne and Paddy Madden were at Ann Hayes' Party in Herberts.



John, Anne, Pat and Mary Hayes at Anne's Party.



Ann with some of the Board Members of Castleconnell/Ahane Credit Union that attended her party.



Tina Joyce, Shelia Culhane, Deirdre Connelly, Anne Hayes and Mary O'Regan at Anne's Retirement Party in Herberts.



*Near the Footbridge Two cousins
Suzanne Tuohy and Grace
Cunningham playing in a hollow
Beach Tree.*



John, Anthony and Tom Joyce.



*Mary McCabe celebrating her 90th Birthday
in the Castle Oaks Hotel with her sisters
Annie Meaney and Margaret O'Sullivan.*



Julie McCabe, Eila Moloney, Caroline McCabe on Inisheer this year.

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Seamus Ryan and Seamus Ahern



A. Ryan, H. Nash, S. Hartigan, M. Bourke, A. Ryan on Daffodil Day.



A. Bourke, E. Madden, R. Reidy, P. Keane, M. Butle, r W. Keane, S. Ahern at the Castle Oaks.



The Folk Club at Herberts

Pride of Place Exhibition in Community Hall



*Pastoral Council
Banner*



Edmond Carroll, Irene Cullen, Anne Berkery



*Tony Condon, Willie Keane,
Mary Murrihy, Donal
Morrissey, Ahane G.A.A. Club.*



*Gus Egan and Tom
Tyrell*



*Mary Likely and Anne
Ryan of the Care of the
Aged.*

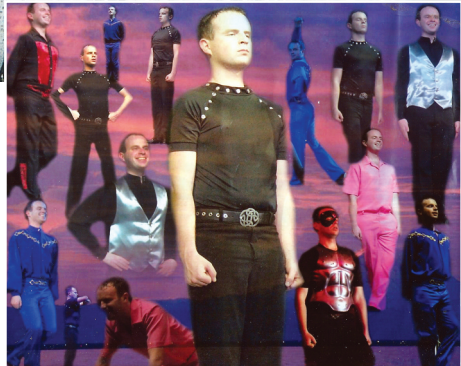
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Walter J Healy, Willy Breen & Sean Hartigan at the Tontines Garden Party.



*Dancers: L/R Cian Nolan, Limerick;
Sean Boyle, Niamh O'Dwyer,
Newport; Geoff Hayes, Ahane;
Darragh Nolan, Limerick.*



Right: Geoff Hayes

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Ahane Girls U16 Novice Shield County Gaelic Football Champions

Congratulations to our Under 16 girls Gaelic football team who captured the Novice Shield County Championship when overcoming Gerald Griffins in an exciting game played in Mick Neville Park, Rathkeale on Sunday last, on a score line of Ahane 1-10, Gerald Griffins 1-2. In a very sporting game, the girls were well up for this game and opened the scoring in the second minute and never looked back, always in control from start to finish. The girls played brilliant football, displaying great heart, skill and determination, in what was a superb team effort. The panel on the day were: Nicole Lavin, Niamh Cullimore (Captain), Siofra Keane, Karen Leahy, Rebecca Hartigan, Ailbhe Keane, Kate Feeney, Kate Herbert, Aoife Quinn, Niamh Reynolds, Eimear Hartigan, Aine O'Curry, Abi Fox, Niamh O'Curry, Caoimhe Macken, Sine Hartigan, Catriona O'Halloran, Niamh Martin and Aine Reynolds. Mentors: Joe O'Curry, Mary Feeney and Breda Ahern-O'Halloran.



Ahane Girls U16 Novice Shield County Gaelic Football Champions
Nicole Lavin, Niamh Cullimore (Captain), Siofra Keane, Karen Leahy, Rebecca Hartigan, Ailbhe Keane, Kate Feeney, Kate Herbert, Aoife Quinn, Niamh Reynolds, Eimear Hartigan, Aine O'Curry, Abi Fox, Niamh O'Curry, Caoimhe Macken, Sine Hartigan, Catriona O'Halloran and Niamh Martin.

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Ahane U16 Camógie Team County Finalists

Back Row: Aine Mooney, Aoife Quinn, Eileen Vaughan, Ellen Curtin, Sadhbh Moran, Kate Herbert (Capt), Chloe Blake, Emer Kenny, Niamh Reynolds, Robyn Nugent, Rachel Slattery, Eimear Hartigan.

Front Row: Aine Reynolds, Sine Hartigan, Caoimhe Macken, Niamh Martin, Niamh O'Curry, Aine O'Curry, Alana Casey, Roisin O'Mara, Missing from photo is Abi Fox.

Peggy Duffy Tournament

Ahane Camogie and Ladies Football recently hosted the Peggy Duffy Memorial Cup in Mackey Park. Over 80 young girls from the ages of eight to thirteen from the three local schools, Ahane, Castleconnell and Lisnagry participated. The girls were divided into two age groups, third and fourth class (4 teams) and fifth and sixth class (4 teams). This year the girls played in two separate competitions with the Peggy Duffy Memorial Cup awarded to the Camogie Winners and the McMahon Cup awarded to the Gaelic Football Winners. Each team played each other with the top two reaching the final.

It was great to see so many girls enjoying the day and the standard of camogie and football was a joy to watch. There was nothing between the teams in the final, with the Golden 8's piping Sonarerjcsn by a single point to win the Peggy Duffy Memorial Cup. The winning team was: Emily Knapp, Caoilionn Keane, Aisling Herbert, Ailish Reynolds, Ellen O'Sullivan, Tara Ryan, Kornelia Krususka and Rebecca Jennings. Coaches: Aine O'Curry and Catriona O'Halloran.

The McMahon Cup for football was won by team Sonarerjcsn: Sinead Mesckell, Orla Twomey, Aoife O'Halloran, Sinead Callinan, Roisin Allen, Emma Ryan, Noemi Soboszak and Jade Bridgeman. Coaches: Niamh O'Curry, Roisin O'Mara and Christine O'Grady.

Peggy Duffy was a major driving force behind Ahane Camogie Club, having restarted the Club in 1960 with Fr Murray. Peggy went on to win five County Medals playing with her beloved Ahane and played with Ahane in a Camogie Club All Ireland Final against St Paul's, Kilkenny, played in Castleconnell. Peggy served as Secretary of the Limerick Camogie Board for a number of years and was a selector on the Limerick Junior All Winning team in the 1970's. During this period Peggy trained a number of underage teams in the parish.

Our thanks to SuperValu Castleconnell, Ahane GAA Club, the players, schools, parents, referees: Mike Flannery Niamh Mulcahy, Aoife Quinn and Niamh Power. Team mentors: Niamh Martin, Rachel Ryan, Siofra Keane, Chloe Blake, Aine O'Curry, Catriona O'Halloran, Niamh O'Curry, Roisin O'Mara, Christine O'Grady, Ber O'Curry, Emer Kenny, Toni Macken, Nicole Byrnes, Geraldine Greaney, Sarah Ryan, Niamh Reynolds, Alice Reynolds and Breda Ahern, organising committee and anybody who helped to make the tournament such a huge success.



Winners of the Peggy Duffy Memorial Cup: Golden 8

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Winners of the Mahon Cup: Sonarerjcsn



Camogie participants from all three schools in Parish who took part in Peggy Duffy Memorial Trophy

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A Tale of Two Choirs

The Mid-West Vocal Academy Community Choir was the brain-child of Owen Gilhooly, Director of The Mid-West Vocal Academy and myself (I am its Choral and Artistic Director). The Watch House Cross Community Choir was formed by Dolores Doyle and myself of which I am Choir Master, we both come from a background of choral singing with many years experience. Traditional cultures have always known that group singing has a power unlike any other to bind people together. There is an ancient African concept, ubuntu, which speaks of our interconnectedness and interdependence. It means "I am because we are." What defines us as individuals is achieved through our relationship with others. Nowhere is this more evident than in a community choir.

One of the main aims of both choirs is to make the wonderful joy and benefits of unaccompanied harmony singing available to everyone. Hence, we do not have auditions. The atmosphere is deliberately informal, people feel welcome, supported and unpressurised. The purpose of the choirs is not predominantly to perform, though this we do with great enthusiasm, but to sing for the sheer joy of singing. Choir members get the opportunity to receive a thorough grounding in Community Music Theory and Practice and are allowed to consider Irish community music within a larger geographical framework. We are privileged to have Irina Dernova the accomplished pianist as our accompanist for many of our performances. Irina is from Russia but now living in Adare.



Both choirs are very new, the Mid-West Vocal Academy Community Choir is in existence just one year since last March and we now have a membership of 85, the Watch House Cross Community Choir started up two years ago also

Ger Hanley and Choral Director of Combined Choirs Timothy Schinnick on their way to Classical Concert in St. Peter and Paul Church Krakow.

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in March and 65 members are now registered. The members are from all walks of life and different backgrounds and come together once a week because they have a keen interest and love of singing and being part of a community Choir. Both Choirs have given separate public performances and in doing so have raised money for local charities. We know we are not yet perfect but we are having a lot of fun trying to get there. We are united in our love of Choral music and song. We have also performed together on a number of occasions, the first time at the National Memorial Day Ceremony held at Limerick City Hall in July 2011. It was immediately after this performance that the combined choir was invited by Krystyna Kowalczyk, Choral Director of the Teachers Chamber Choir of Poland-Concentus, to travel to Poland in July 2012 to take part in the 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the choir.

We spent many months learning new material including Sacred and Inspirational Songs in Latin, English and Polish. Our frequent get-togethers during the combined choir's rehearsals resulted in making many new friends from our respective groups.

On July 6th 2012, ninety one choir members embarked on a tour of Poland. We landed in Krakow in 35 degree heat having left a cold and wet Dublin airport. Our first outing that evening was to a Golden Classical Concert in the Church of St. Peter and Paul. This was a really wonderful experience. Afterwards we wandered around the cobbled streets of Krakow and some of the group decided to explore in a horse and carriage!

The following day was spent firstly on a Walking Tour of the city, which was both informative and enjoyable. We visited 'Wieliczka Salt Mine' that afternoon. This place has to be seen to be believed. Although it has not been used as a salt mine now for many years, the miners have carved out some fantastic statues, monuments and biblical scenes from the salt. They have also constructed beautiful Chapels and Churches and even a Cathedral, complete with altars and magnificent chandeliers from these caves and caverns of salt. The Choirs came together in the Cathedral and sang 'Dona Nobis Pacem,' which was very well received by all the other tourists present, but the highlight for many was the dark chamber which looked down into a pool of black water while the enchanting strains of Chopin echoed around the darkness.

Then we travelled to Starachowice by bus where we were based for the rest of our stay. The Polish people we encountered were so hospitable and arranged many entertaining evenings for our enjoyment, from bar-b-ques to cultural nights and even shopping! We spent long hours rehearsing in the heat to make sure our performances were up to standard and thankfully the audiences appreciated our efforts.

We left Poland having gained an insight into Polish life, with strong feelings of gratitude to the people who tried so hard to make us feel welcome. They

were so generous with their time and expertise to make our stay as comfortable as possible. We feel enriched by the experience and also by the wonderful friendships which began there and which have continued to prosper.

Imagine...a world where every city, town and neighbourhood had a community choir, one where the music of many cultures and faiths was celebrated. Imagine...a non-auditioned choir in your community where all are welcome. Imagine...that this choir could support and engage in powerful community-based activities, this is the ethos for setting up such a choir.

Timothy Schinnick

*Choral Director and Voice Coach of The Mid-West Vocal Academy
Community Choir and Choir Master of the Watch House Cross Choir*



Billy Connolly almost beheaded by Medieval Knight in Krakow, and not getting much help from his friends!!!

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Phylla Lynch and Martha Laffan, Choir members enjoying Krakow



Choir Trip to Poland

Theresa Cosgrave, Sinead Sweeney, Paula Ryan, Helen Ryan, Sheila Byrne, Anne Berkery

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Our Trip To Poland

Four-thirty a.m. the bus leaves Lim'rick n' Lisnagry

Heading for Dublin with all on a high!

"Have we all got our passports", out goes the call,

"Our luggage, handbags and music for all"?

Arriving weary in Krakow in 35 degree heat,

With crutches and walking sticks, high heels and tired feet!

Perspiring and glowing, so relieved to have lift

To the Classical Concert, that musical gift.

'My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding' sprung to mind,

The poor horse quite jaded but with sturdy behind,

Carrying us in our finery, waving and smiling,

As we trundled the streets looking tanned and beguiling!

"Lo-cal" beer was on tap to quench the thirst of the guys,

On the tour of the city, we almost lost one of our boys

As he was nearly beheaded by a medieval knight!

Then on to the Salt Mine to experience amazing sight.

We rekindled our friendships and started some new

From city, county and Poland to mention a few,

In song and in laughter we all got along

"We toast romance and joyous song!"

There was roaring and snoring and singing so deep

Men ironing shirts while the wives were asleep,

Hangovers disguised with dark glasses and smiles!

As we tried to recover from a night on the tiles!

We ran through the streets in the thunder and lightening

We screamed with each flash indeed it was frightening,

Then under the parasol we started to sing

It eased all our fears and we danced with a swing.

We danced 'The Siege of Ennis' to great acclaim

And taught a few Poles how to swing and to whirl.

But one of our men was more used to "Pole Dancing!"

So he spent the time moving and prancing!

*We ate cabbage and beetroot on a regular basis
'Till our stomachs cried out in pain and distress!
The en-suites in the rooms were on a go-slow
And with no air – conditioning we were constantly a-glow!*

*We had had our sing-songs, fun and plenty of beers,
But the night of the Mass, we banished our fears,
Black attire, made-up faces and hair so sleek,
We obeyed Tim's rules so we'd perform at our peak.*

*The Church was full, the task before us was daunting
'Oh Danny Boy' was wistfully haunting,
We sang from our hearts as we recalled our loved ones
And we raised our voices in mournful tones.*

*The audience clapped teary-eyed and enthralled
Delighted and with pleasure we answered their call,
'Abba Ojczę' rang out to thunderous applause
As we sang to the Polish people without a pause!*

*As the dust settles down, we look back on our trip,
We had songs and laughter and indeed a little sip
Singing and by just being together
Will be of great value to us, in future choral endeavours.*

*Now who can we thank for this marvellous feat?
Mr. Timothy Schinnick with his rhythm and beat
His enthusiasm and faith in us is so strong
We'll be back in September when the evenings get long!*

Members of MWVACC

Good Luck and Best Wishes to
“An Caisleán”
from
Anne & Paddy Madden
9 Maple Grove

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ROSARY HILL — House —

Castleconnell, Co. Limerick. Tel. 061 377530

Rosary Hill is a 24 Bed Nursing Home set in the picturesque village of Castleconnell. We cater for residents with various dependency levels, 24 hours daily. We have nurses and carers on duty 24 hours, with a high dependency unit for both men and women.

It is a home from home and as such you go to bed when you want and get up when you want, but meal times and drug rounds are kept to time for obvious reasons.

We have a wonderful team of nurses, carers (most of whom have completed Fetec Level 5), catering and housekeeping staff.

Our hairdresser visits weekly to our wonderful salon. Physiotherapy is Monday to Friday. You can also have a massage from our masseuse if required. The chiropodist visits monthly or more often if necessary. Why not try our jacuzzi bath!

We have Bingo and Music Sessions weekly - mild exercises daily. The residents love to watch sport and old time movies on our 50" television in the main sitting room. Papers are supplied daily. Birthday parties for each individual - also special events are celebrated.

All future residents and their families are encouraged to come and look around for themselves prior to booking a bed in our home.

We hope to renovate the old part of the house that was once a Boarding School in the near future thus bringing the bed capacity up to fifty, and making it a more enjoyable place to live for the residents.

**Contact: Martin Lynch,
Service Provider,
anytime on 087 2273297**



O'Brien's Bridge Community Group

A Lough Derg Regional Guide Map board that stood in the centre of O'Briensbridge village for a long number of years has now been removed and replaced with an O'Brienbridge Heritage Map board that highlights what the village has to offer like the splendid Riverside Walks and heritage sites, the Riverside Park with Car Park and Picnic Areas and a modern Riverside Children's Playground.

For years motorists who stopped to view the old map board were given directions as to how to leave the village and it was like hello goodbye this is how you can get out of here. The O'Briensbridge Community Group now hopes that this new map board will encourage motorists to Stop and Stay and that is their slogan. Now that you have stopped why not stay and enjoy the amenities that O'Briensbridge has to offer.

This new map board highlights and provides a guide to the various heritage sites that are located all along the now famous O'Briensbridge National Loop Walks Loop Walks like the ruins of the twelfth century church on Inislosky Island or indeed the spectacular ESB Hydro Electro Dam built as part of the historic Shannon Scheme.

The seven quaint and very attractive little humpback bridges or horse bridge built during the Limerick to Killaloe Navigation are also highlighted as is the beautiful decorative Cast Iron Bridge. The Capstan, Anchor and the Errina Treble Lock are also part of our historic waterways past and information on all of these artefacts is provided on this new map board and heritage guide.

This Heritage Information Board was unveiled during Heritage Week by the Deputy Mayor of Clare Councillor Pascal Fitzgerald and the Community Group

are hoping that this new initiative will attract extra visitors to the villages of Montpelier and O'Briensbridge.

**Mick Murtagh,
Chairman**



*Deputy Mayor of
Clare, Cllr Pascal
Fitzgerald unveils
new Mapboard in
O'Brien's Bridge.*

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O'Brien's Bridge



Major Upgrade of Walks in O'Brien's Bridge.



Summertime Colour in O'Brien's Bridge



Swan family in O'Brien's Bridge



The Well-Maintained Shrine in O'Brien's Bridge

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Peter O'Donnell Photographer



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Landscape photography of Ireland by Peter O'Donnell.

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Castleconnell Tidy Towns Committee

The Tidy Towns Committee has had a very successful year. In October 2011, the AGM took place. Vincent Warfield was elected as Chairman, Frances Clifford as Secretary and Julie McCabe as Treasurer.

In November, the Facebook page was set up. The Limerick in Bloom award was presented to Castleconnell by Cllr. Bridget Teeffy.

On New Years night a Gala Event was hosted by the Tidy Towns Committee at the Castleoaks Hotel. The night was very well supported and was a great success.

In February, a camera and birdbox were purchased for Castleconnell National School and were connected to the classroom whiteboard to allow pupils to observe any activity – it is hoped that some of our feathered friends will move in next spring.

Limerick County Council was contacted regarding Dog Fouling Signs. A box of poop scoop bags was donated to the village and supplies were given to Lee's Shop, McDermott's Butchers, Post Office and Supervalu to encourage dog owners to co-operate with keeping the streets clean.

A tree planting scheme commenced with the school in March and 3 Ash, 3 Beech and 3 Sycamore Trees were planted. The Litterpicks took place on Saturday 10th March at Belmont Road, 24th March at Dalys Cross to Nelson's Cross and 31st from Nelson's Cross to Metal Bridge on the O'Brien's Bridge road. Thanks to all who participated in the ongoing effort to keep our back roads free from litter and to discourage illegal dumping. The Village was decorated with a bright display of flags to celebrate the St. Patrick's Day parade.



Attending the Opening of our Community Garden were Pauline Bradshaw, Frances Clifford, Zita Casaite and Caroline McCabe.

In April, 3 Rosebeds were planted at the green area of St. Flannan's Terrace and front of St. Patrick's Villas and four of the twelve Cherry Blossom trees were replaced. A Cake Sale took place on Easter Sunday and a Church Gate Collection took place on 21st and 22nd April. Both events were, as usual, very well supported by the community.

The Castle St Shrubbery was completely replaced and 2 new shrubberies were planted at the Spa and Stradbally North. These 3 projects were part-funded by Ballyhoura Ltd.

A Fundraising Summer Fete was organised for Sunday, 10th June. The weather was kind to us on the day and the Sun was a very welcome visitor to the village. The event was a major success with a number of stalls including Bric a Brac, Plants, Pin the Tail on the Donkey, Milk the Cow, How Many Balloons in the car and a very busy Burger and Hot Dog Stall. St. John's Brass Band entertained all day under "Pop McCabes" tree and the Tidy Towns Hall Garden project was unveiled by Fr. Kyne with an invitation to all to sit and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of the garden at any time in the future. The local pubs joined in the fun in the evening with a Barman's race and our younger community residents danced the afternoon away at the Kiddies Disco, while the adults enjoyed a cup of tea and a burger in the garden. Thanks to all who supported the day.

In late June, the wall around the Chinese Restaurant was planted with a bright display of flowers and shrubs and is now affectionately known to the committee as "The Chinese Wall".

Castleconnell again won the "Overall Development Approach Award" in the Limerick and North East Cork Region, from Ballyhoura Ltd and the awards ceremony took place on 28th June. The Annual Summer competition took place for the local estates and businesses.

Results will be announced in October.

In July, the committee were busy preparing for the Pride of Place competition and were willing participants at the judging day on 8th August.



Cllr Mary Jackman looking for a bargain from Linda Hardiman

In September the results of the Tidy Towns Competition were announced. The village gained another 16 points bringing the total points to date to 266. The village was again given an Endeavour Award. This time for the “Highest Percentage increase in points in the County”. It is important to note that in our competitive category, Castleconnell gained the second highest increase in points in the country in the 250+ category, second only to Monaghan Town!

The Tidy Towns committee are very grateful for all the support we have received from the community this year. Particular thanks to the FAS workers for all their hard work.

The committee are looking forward to a busy year ahead with a number of new projects planned for 2012/2013 and would welcome a few extra “pairs of hands”.

If you have time to spare or ideas to share, check out our facebook page “Castleconnell Tidy Towns” or contact us on our dedicated mobile number – 086 8446505.

Committee Members: Vincent Warfield, Frances Clifford, Kate Shannon, Julie Mc Cabe, Pauline Bradshaw, Terry Poole, Sean Hartigan, Roisin Hartigan, John Hardiman, Linda Hardiman, Margaret Freeney, Paddy Tuohy, Rose Kennedy, Willie Reddy.



Enjoying the garden are Breda Ryan, Nellie Hartigan and Nuala Coleman.

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Fr. Brendan Kyne cutting the tape of our new Community Garden being assisted by Margaret Freeney and Roisin Hartigan.



Taking part in the Barperson's Race as part of the festivities are Andrew Hartigan, Mags Byrnes, Lisa Hayes and Anthony Moore.

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Village Singers performing for residents of Rosary Hill Nursing Home



Another group of Village Singers enjoying Singing Tour of River

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Kate Duckett of Clooncommons smiles for Crumlin



In summer 2011 local girl Kate Duckett was entered in the “Smiles for Crumlin” calendar competition by her auntie.

Over 13,000 children were entered into this competition and Kate was shortlisted to the final 100 and then went on to be chosen as “September” for the 2012 charity calendar.

Smiles for Crumlin is a fundraising initiative by Cow & Gate to raise funds for the redevelopment of the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit, Our Lady's Children's Hospital Crumlin, which cares for Ireland's youngest cancer patients and their families.

Each photo entry to the competition raised €1 for the charity and between those entries and the sales of the calendars Cow and Gate raised

€62,456 for Crumlin Children Hospital.

Supervalu were involved in the selling of the calendars and they were also available online.

When Kate's mother Roisin contacted the local Supervalu in Castleconnell they were more than happy to stock them and they kindly sold over 600 calendars.

The chosen photo was taken by Vig Gleeson of WonderWorks photography in Castleconnell.

Kate was then invited to the cheque presentation in Crumlin hospital with her Mother and her Auntie Pauline Hartigan.

Kate is the youngest daughter of Roisin and Mattie Duckett and the grandchild of Sean and Noreen Hartigan.

Kelly Ryan, All Ireland Scór na nÓg Champion 2012

On Feb 18th 2012, Kelly Ryan of Schoolhouse Road, Lisnagry was crowned All-Ireland champion in the solo singing category of Scór na nÓg. The talented fifteen year old's rendition of 'The Lady of Loughrea' won over all who listened in the Royal Theatre, Castlebar, the judges unanimously awarding her first place.

Kelly first represented Ahane in Scór in 2010. The same year, at just thirteen years of age, she also reached the All Ireland. For the following two years she showed immense persistence and hard work, competing until she finally gained her All Ireland title. It is a remarkable achievement given the high standards in this particular competition.

In the history of Scór, Limerick have only won an All Ireland in Solo Singing twice previous to this- Michael Ryan , Pallasgreen in 1973 and Eadaoin Ni Bhriain, Na Piarsaigh in 1984.

Kelly also has made it a hat-trick of All Irelands for Ahane. Our Figure Dancers won in 2002, and Instrumental Music in 2005.

Kelly has made her father and mother, Joe & Claire and her sister and brother, Rachel and Joey very proud. Her performance and success on the national stage has been very much appreciated and applauded by her parish and county. We can be sure to hear more great things about Kelly in the future. Comhghairdeachas!



Kelly Ryan who won The All-Ireland Scór na nÓg 2012 and The All- Ireland Fleadh Cheoil 2012.



Bill (Curley) Connolly celebrating his 90th birthday recently with family and friends.



Fiona Connolly helping her grandad Curley to blow out his candles.

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Best wishes and continued success to
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Ahane Under 8 Team who played their end of year blitz in Gaelic Grounds.
Back Row; L-R James Myers, Eugene Og Hurley, Stephen Hassett, Colm Slattery Wright, Ben Hourigan, Mike Carmody, Ciarán Buckley, Jack Butler, Harry O'Brien, Tristan Ryan, Seán O'Neill, Rhys Richardson, Daragh Lehane, Abby Murrihy, Daragh Humphreys, Sam Flynn, Will McCormack, Cathal Quirke, Kyle Furlong, David Carr, Ryan O'Keeffe
Mentors: Cathal O'Connor, Larry O'Connor and Seamus Hassett



Ahane Under 10 team who played in Gaelic Grounds at half time in the Limerick v Antrim Senior Hurling Championship.
Back Row: L-R Liam O'Mara, Tom Marsden, Aidan Carroll, Adam Murrihy, Peter Donoghue, Jack Barry, Adam O'Brien.
Front Row: L-R Jack Keane, Shea Doyle, Conor O'Brien, Kevin Morrissey, Conor O'Shea.



Ahane Under 14s

Back Row: L-R Liam Conroy, Tom O'Dowd, Eamon O'Keefe, Matthew Hartigan, Joe Lavin, James Tuohy, Gearóid Harnett, Daniel Minihan, Tristan O'Sullivan, Mikey Power, William Brennan, Harry Healy, Josh Hoen Quinn.

Front Row: L-R Cathal Flannery, Ciaran Barry, Dara Cullimore, Peter Cusack, Ralph Carty, Conor Morrissey, Sean Feeney, Josh Power Hurley, Jessy Casey, David Kennedy.



James Tuohy, U14 Captain

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St. Vincent's



St. Vincent's Special School Lisnagry Co. Limerick continues to go from strength to strength with 80 pupils now enrolled. A new Pre-School for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder opened in September 2012. It's a regional pre-school catering for children from Limerick, Clare and Tipperary. There is a child-centred focus with a fully qualified Primary School Teacher following the Department of Education and Skills Curriculum. This is available from the child's third birthday and free Bus Eireann school transport is provided. The Pre-School is a free service Monday to Friday and is paid for by the Department of Education and Skills. We are always delighted to welcome any suitable children to our pre-school or main school from our local parish.

St. Vincent's School activities



ST. VINCENT'S CENTRE, LISNAGRY, CO. LIMERICK

The Daughters of Charity are in Lisnagry 60 last May (2012). The request for the Daughters of Charity to provide services for people with disabilities came from the Department of Health.

Looking back over the years great developments have taken place. These changes are attributed to the vision and ethos of the first Daughters of Charity in Lisnagry.

Interestingly, these developments were instigated at a time when funding was scarce. It seems we have come full circle as funding is scarce again. These ups and downs in relation to the economy are familiar to the services. Even in 2012 a development was opened in July.

This development is a great improvement in the accommodation for 24 adults now all are settled and staff are very relaxed in their new improved working environment. All funding was through the JP McManus Pro-Am Golf Tournaments, The Lisnagry Association, the Daughters of Charity and many groups who organized fundraising events during the lead up to the opening. The services in Lisnagry include, primary school, rehabilitative training, day service for adults both day and residential.

The services are not confined in on campus, it extends to Cappamore, Dooradoyle, Limerick City Centre and community houses in Castletroy/Annacotty/Lisnagry areas.

The Daughters of Charity services have the management of St. Anne's Centre in Roscrea, Co. Tipperary over the last number of years.

We are very appreciative to all our benefactors over the years. It is through these funds that all the service users can enjoy and benefit from the extras that are not available through government funding.

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Bernard Berkery & Co

Castleconnell NS Shares Its Memories of Eventful Year

Another year is drawing to a close for us in Castleconnell NS. It was a year which saw many exciting events happening. As always education and enjoyment combined to provide many happy memories, which we will share with you now!

2012 dawned with Castleconnell NS on the national airwaves as we helped launch a new charity “Child of Haiti.” This charity plans to raise awareness about the lives of Haitian children by linking schools in Ireland with schools in Haiti. Our school is Ecole Roseline Petit Frere and we have been learning all about the children there. Consequently Haiti became a focus for our fund raising activities this year. Our other major charity in 2012 was “Children’s Liver Disease Ireland” and children had a fun filled afternoon, at the movies, (complete with popcorn!) all the while raising money for this worthwhile cause. Learning to be sensitive to the needs of others is an integral part of our education and what better way to learn than this!

Physical Education class is a big favourite with children and school staff ensured they experienced a wide range of activities over the course of the year. Basketball, hurling, Gaelic football, camogie and soccer were coached and children participated in many competitions—East Limerick Basketball League, Futsal Soccer Tournament, 5 a side Soccer League, Camogie blitz, East Limerick Inter Schools league in hurling and the City Sports. We are lucky to have the wonderful facility of the Castle Oaks Leisure Centre on our doorstep and it was the turn of third and fourth classes to enjoy swimming classes this year. The highlight of our sporting year was no doubt our Sport and Fitness Week. Having had a huge success in 2011 we decided to go for it again and everybody cycled, danced, played basketball and practised martial arts getting fitter by the day! A new addition this year was a school walk. Parents, teachers and children from every class put their best foot forward and headed for the World’s End. All were in high spirits and there was a great sense of camaraderie evident.

*Rugby Champs 2012 at
Castleconnell NS*



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Our school choir is still singing sweetly along! Twelve months ago they entered the Christmas spirit entertaining the Christmas shoppers at SuperValu with some well loved carols. In March they travelled to The Woodlands



Castleconnell NS Football Team

House Hotel to sing in the Community Games Choral Competition, where they performed to a very high standard. Never a group to take it easy they are now at time of writing busy practising for a choral competition organised by the Tipperary Peace Convention

We continue to crusade on behalf of the environment as we work towards receiving our fifth Green Flag. This flag is for biodiversity and the aim is to educate the children on the interdependence of all living things so that they will admire and care for every aspect of our wonderful world. Geoff Hunt (Environmentalism with Heritage in Schools) is due to visit us shortly. Geoff will take children from fourth and sixth classes on a field trip to our picturesque River Shannon, helping them learn about the abundant wildlife that inhabits it.

We are delighted with the pupils from our school who were part of the Community Games Chess team who became Munster Champions. They had a day out to remember in Athlone at the All Ireland Finals and came home with bronze medals. We are also delighted that some boys in our school were on the All Ireland under 11 rugby team who represented us at the community games finals. Some pupils also participated in the Community Games Draughts Competition and received silver medals at county level. Well done to all! Other projects in which our students took part include Discover Primary Science, Feile Luimni, and Credit Union Quiz and Art Competitions, achieving success and representing them in a laudable manner.

Of course the bread and butter of our daily graft cannot be forgotten about. Woven in and out through all these exciting ventures is the dedicated commitment of our staff to providing an excellent standard of education for all our pupils. Without the hard work of everyone involved none of this would be possible. We are also very lucky to have the valued support of our Parent's Association and Board of Management. We are very grateful to them and indeed to all those who offered us assistance along the way this year.

Lisnagry National School's Busy Year

This was a very special year for Lisnagry National School as we celebrated our 50th Anniversary. The Golden Jubilee Celebrations took place in the school on the 8th October 2011. It was a joyous occasion for everyone involved. Many of our past pupils returned to reminisce on their time in the school. The walls in the school halla were covered with old photographs showing the history of the school since its opening in 1961. Our current pupils engaged in many activities for the jubilee, local history lessons, a look at artefacts from the olden days, art work and songs from each era to name but a few. Bishop Kieran O'Reilly concelebrated mass with Fr. Kyne and Fr. Dwyer. It was a wonderful historic occasion for the school.

As in previous years, the 2011/2012 academic year has been another busy and productive year in Lisnagry. We always try to focus on excellence in teaching and learning with all partners in education including staff, parents, Board of Management and the wider community working together to improve the school. During the summer this year, the Board of Management have continued to renovate and upgrade the facilities with the construction of an all-weather playing pitch. It has proved to be a wonderful addition to the school. This facility along with our new classroom was officially opened by Bishop Kieran as part of our Jubilee celebrations.

During the course of the year our parents and pupils supported our bid to gain our second Green flag for energy. An awareness of energy conservation was raised in the school among the pupils and Limerick County Council was very impressed with our efforts. Former pupil and Limerick Hurler Niall Moran officially raised the flag on sports day.

In Lisnagry N.S, we embrace opportunities to become involved in any project which ensures that the interest and needs of all our pupils are catered for. On the 25th October, the pupils from 5th class were fortunate to be involved in painting a new mural in Annacotty. Under the direction of artist Neil O'Dwyer, the pupils helped contribute to the mural by painting otters, sea lamprey and swans etc. At the launch of the Mulkear River Project, Minister Michael Noonan thanked the class and the organisers for their help in creating such a wonderful wall mural under the bridge.

Once again this year, we were involved in lots of sports activities, basketball, football, hurling, soccer, swimming and athletics. The boys won the East Limerick Basketball blitz and lost on penalties in the County soccer semi-

final. They were also successful in reaching the INTO 7's hurling final where we lost out to Doon C.B.S in a replay after an epic contest. Both the boys and girls athletics teams were very successful at the Annual City Sports event in UL. Both teams won their division which was a fantastic achievement. The most important aspect of any of our sporting programmes however is to raise the awareness of pupils in relation to the importance and pleasure of physical activity. On the 2nd April we had a skip hop day. Every child gained the opportunity to skip and the instructor taught the children lots of different moves. At the end of the day the whole school gathered together for a skipping extravaganza. Even the teachers got the bug.

In June Anne Berkery retired from Lisnagry N.S. Anne joined the staff in 2000/2001. Prior to that, she ran a successful pre-school in Newgarden. As result of this Anne brought a wealth of experience with her. She was of particular benefit to the children with special needs. We wish to thank her for not only her dedication, professionalism and hard work but particularly for



Lisnagry NS Staff and fifth class pupils who took part in the painting of the Mural on Annacotty Bridge.

her kindness and friendship. She was thorough and professional at all times and was indeed a trusted ally. She will be sorely missed. We wish her well. At the end of another event packed and fulfilling year, we wish our sixth class pupils every success as they start in secondary school and we extend a special thank you to all the families and friends who helped us throughout this busy year.



Pupils of Lisnagry NS with their Winning Shield

Boat Club



Homes International 2012 Irish Senior Mens Quad Winners, including Cian Pidgeon 3rd from left Castleconnell.



Ireland Paralympic Mixed Coxed Four including Shane Ryan Castleconnell 2nd from left, who competed in London 2012 Paralympic Games.



Castleconnell Boat Club members enjoying St. Patrick's Day Parade in village.



Irish Rowing Championships 2012 Mens Senior Quad UL-Castleconnell Composite Crew (1). From left David Quinlan, Stephen Penny, Liam Rice, Adrian Sheehan Coaches Eugene O'Brien and James Mangan.

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

Coffee Morning at Herberts



Bridget Quinn, Martha Laffan, Maureen O'Sullivan, Organiser and Sheila Byrne all enjoying coffee and cake in Herbert's in aid of Milford Hospice.



Sean O'Sullivan, Ballinacourty with his daughter Ailish and his grandson Emmet sampling some of the delicious cakes in Herbert's in aid of Milford Hospice.

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012



Members of Ahane Church Choir with Fr Kyne on a night out in Castle Oaks Hotel



Kay Hickey and Betty Tuohy supporting the coffee morning in Herbert's in aid of Milford Hospice.



Coffee Morning - Sheila O'Mahony and Mary Smith in Herbert's having coffee in aid of Milford Hospice.

Ahane National School

2011-2012

As the school year begins, September 2012, we recall the activities and events from our last school year.

In our school we have a very active Leadership Club, which is comprised of all child from 5th and 6th class. At the beginning of the school year the children come together to elect a Chairperson and a Secretary. The Chairperson and Secretary then liaise and work with children and teachers on various different projects and initiatives throughout the school. One of the initial projects for last year was to construct a model of our school. The children measured the school with a trundle wheel. Then they drew it out on cardboard using the scale of 1m; 1cm. After finishing drawing it they built the school with lollipop sticks. Once they finished sticking the walls they started painting the walls. Then they started building the prefab. They had to mix different paints to get the colour and texture right.

In the first term a graphic designer Laura Maye visited our school. She consulted with the Principal about ideas for logos and visual timetables in the school. She also consulted with the Leadership Club regarding designing a logo for their club. The children drafted their ideas, which were then collected and created into a new logo by Laura. Laura also designed visual timetables for use in all the classrooms incorporating all curricular areas being taught. A past pupil and past member of our Leadership Club, Kate Griffin went to South Zambia on a project. Thanks to all who helped raise funds for her project at colours day and face painting.

The children from 5th and 6th class went on two educational field trips. The first trip they went to U.L. to 'Tales from out of this World', where an astronaut talked about going into space. The second trip was the 'Extravaganza of Sensational Scientists'. At this they heard about Boyle, Newton, Buffon and Euclid. These visits may inspire pupils for future Science projects.

The children from 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils attended swimming classes in the U.L. swimming pool. Not only is it a swimming experience, many aspects of local Geography and the skills of Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) are learned in an informal way. The children are also developing their independence and life skills.

Our Parents Association entitled Friends of Ahane N.S. were very active throughout the school year helping out in many ways. They helped with school policies such as homework and R.S.E., also reading groups, coffee

mornings, tea party, book fairs, election process, sports day, cleaning up the school and school grounds etc.

We held a Grandparents Day where grandparents were invited to visit the school as part of Catholic Schools Week. They were welcomed by members of our Leadership Club. They helped the children with the making of St. Brigid's Cross and with knitting and crocheting and also baking scones.

All children throughout the school developed an awareness and interest in the history of the Titanic as part of the commemoration of the Titanic experience. A small-scale model was designed by a group of children, while another class painted a large picture of the Titanic.

All children in the school were treated to a visitor who spoke on Rainforests including the flora and fauna of the rainforest. The children enjoyed the visual and aural presentation which brought the rainforest into Ahane N.S. for a day.

We have engaged with a wide range of sports activities and have achieved a lot of success over the past year. We participated in hurling, football, camogie, basketball, indoor hurling, cross-country, relay racing, swimming splash and dash etc

The hurling team got to the final of the East Limerick 9 a-side schools league but were beaten by Oola. The girls went to the final of the camogie but were beaten by Cappamore.

Both boys and girls had teams that took part in the basketball blitz in Newport. We had great success in the cross-country competition on Allen's farm and in the relays at St. Joseph's College, Newport.

The girls also took part in a camogie blitz called the Peggy Duffy Cup in Newgarden. Children from 5th and 6th classes took part in a Splash and Dash competition organised by the Limerick Sports Partnership and finished in first place. Well done to all.

Ahane N.S. had great success this year in the indoor hurling competition for children in Third and Fourth Classes. We have taken part in this competition for many years without much success but this year the lads have surpassed all expectations and won out in East Limerick against formidable opposition. They beat Caherconlish and Knockea in the first blitz. On their second day out they drew with Crecora in the first game, beat Tineteriffe well in the second and then faced a well supported Lisnagry outfit coached by Shane McGrath in the decider. Ahane finished the stronger side and celebrated their win in a welter of excitement. We competed well in the county final of the blitz which was won by Kilfinny

Indoor Hurling Panel:

Conor O'Brien, Pádraig Hartnett, David Brennan, Kevin Morrissey,
Michael Ryan-Lane, Michael Hourigan, Denis Hayes, James Collopy,

Shaun McNamara, James Allen, Conor Ryan, Christopher O'Sullivan, Shea Doyle, and Jack Barry.

Coach: Micheál O'Shea.

Children also attended the Willy Carey Hurling Blitz for boys in Newgarden on Monday, June 11th. They had a great day and met stars like Dan Shanahan, Shane McGrath and the Moran brothers, James, Ollie and Niall.

Our annual Sports day was held in June with great support and assistance from our Friends of Ahane N.S. and some of our past pupils. The day was co-ordinated by a parent Colm Barry who with his team of helpers organised a very successful event. Children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class participated in running races and novelty events including egg and spoon races, penalty shots and three legged races. Children had their faces painted by past pupils, which added to the fun of the day.

In June the sixth class children and their parents attended the Graduation Service. The event was very personalised as children wore t-shirts which they designed themselves to reflect their own interests and hobbies.

We wish our Sixth Class of 2011-12 the very best as they head off on the next stage of their education and we look forward to another successful and exciting year ahead.



Ahane N.S First Holy Communion Class

Back Row L/R: Aoife Cranley (Teacher), Colm Slattery-Wright, Cormac Greaney, Cillian Lynch, Samuel Hartigan, Ethan Lynch, Conor Hartigan, Fr. Kyne.

Front Row L/R: Emily O'Sullivan, Amy O'Connor, Katie Moloney, Caoimhe Flannery, Emma Kett, Conor Moloughney.



Ahane N.S Camogie Team 2011-12

Back row: Ciara Coughlan Daena Ryan Roisin Allen Sinead O'Curry Ellen O'Sullivan Orla Twomey

Front row: Alish Reynolds Aisling Twomey Ruth Allen



Ahane N.S Graduation Class

Robert Collins, Craig Leahy, Thomas Coughlan, Kevin Hussey, Jack O'Connell, William Brennan, Eric O'Neill, Conor Morrissey, Caoilinn Keane, Aisling Twomey, Natasha Culhane, Orla Twomey, Aine Reynolds, Annabelle Buttery, Christina O'Connell, Cathal Flannery, Carolina Borcan.

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpellier Annual 2012



Ahane N.S Full Attendance in 2011-12 school year

Back row: Aine Reynolds, Kevin Hussey, Sinead O'Curry, Ciara Greaney, Padraig Harnett.

Middle row: Aoife Whelan, Dylan Keppel, Michael Herbert, Dara Kennedy, Amy Blackwell, Niamh Lunn.

Front row : Sian Fahy, Niamh Devitt, Cormac Greaney, Jennifer Keppel, Keelan Fitzgerald, Emma Kett.

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結合武術

Community Games

2012 was a very successful year for ACM community games with participation across a wide range of activities and successes at county, provincial and National level. The committee, children and parents are most grateful to parishioners for their continued support of our activities via the annual church gate collection held every March. Community Games provides an opportunity for children across all parish schools as well as children resident in the area, but attending schools outside the parish, to get to know each other through participation in Community Games activities.

Our Season started off in January with U13 Indoor soccer and U10 draught teams winning silver county medals. The chess team then started on a very successful run which brought them to county and then provincial glory -becoming Munster Champions in March 2012 and progressing to National Finals in Athlone. We had individual participation and county successes in the talent and swimming competitions while more than 30 children from Castleconnell National school choir got bronze medals in their county final. We entered 2 boys U12 soccer teams this year and bronze medals were collected in the soccer A competition while the U13 table tennis team won county silver medals. Our Boys U11 mini rugby team created history becoming the first Boys team from the parish to become National Champions winning county and Munster titles on the way - the last parish team to win a National Championship was the Sarah Lavin led U16 relay team a few years ago.

Athletics is always very popular and we had some excellent individual and team performances at county and national level. We plan to focus on athletics in 2013 with light weekly training planned from the end of January in advance of the cross country events in March and the track events in May/June. Notice of main events is via area notes of Limerick Leader, local schools or contact Margot Marsden on marsden1@eircom.net or 061 331453

***Community Games U12 Soccer
Team who won bronze medals in
the County U12 Soccer Competition***

Back L-R: Padraig Harnett, Caimin Ayres, Andrew Shanahan, Peter O'Grady, Andy Rowsome, Aaron Farrell, Ronan Fox.

Front: Christopher Jastrzebski, Ben Davey, Tom Marsden, Sean Foley, Rory Murphy.

Missing from the pic: Evan Power, Christopher O'Sullivan, Cian Smith and Troy Porter.





Under 11 Mini Rugby Team All Ireland Champions 2012

*Back L-R: Billy Glynn (IRFU Pres), Jim Murphy (Coach), John Davey (Coach), Carmel Grealley (Community Games VP)
Middle: Andrew Shanahan, Rory Murphy, Joseph Dundon, Aiden Carroll, William O'Leary, Adam Murrihy.*

Front: Oscar Davey (Team Mascot), Hugh Brady, Ben Davey, (Capt), Tom O'Hanlon, Jamie McNamara, Joe Tanner.

Missing from the pic: Brian Murphy.



Anna Farrell and Niamh Brennan who ran great races at Community Games U8 County Finals in Mungret.



Comm Games Under 10 Draughts Thomas O'Neill, Odran Furlong, Ruairi Cronin, Jamie McNamara, Sean O'Neill and Aoife Ryan.



Community Games Table Tennis County Bronze Winners Peter O'Grady, Ronan Reale, Andy Roesome, Luke O'Sullivan and Josh O'Keefe.

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpellier Annual 2012

Castleconnell Drama Group

Castleconnell Drama Group was established in 2009 under the Music, Art and Drama committee of ACM. In December of that year it successfully staged "Big Maggie" by John B. Keane in the ACM centre. The group thoroughly enjoyed participating in the local St. Patrick's Day Parade 2010/2011 and won awards for best new entrant and most entertaining group. During the Festival in June 2010 the group performed two One Act plays; "Only You" by John A. Geraghty and "On The Outside" by Tom Murphy. Last years production of John B. Keane's "Moll" was a great success. Following the installation of a state of the art sound and lighting system by Castleconnell Development Committee the group moved into the Parish Hall to perform "Don't Tell the Wife" by Sam Cree in February 2012. This production was a roaring success as indicated by the article in the Limerick Leader. The group was really delighted that the local community turned out in such numbers to support the play. After the summer the group will reconvene and begin reading some scripts with a view to staging some One Act plays in the autumn. Following this the group will concentrate on selecting a script for their next major production in the spring of 2013. Notices will be posted locally inviting and encouraging new members to come and audition for parts and sign up to assist with set construction, set painting, costumes, advertising etc. Further information can be obtained from our chairperson John Franks at johnfranks@eircom.net.

Above: Bobbie & George entertaining the huge crowds who went to see 'Dont Tell The Wife'

Cast (right): Noreen Hussey, Claire Fitzgibbon, Sean Hartigan, Johnny Sheehy, Clodagh O'Brien, TJ Murphy, Matt Byrnes and Mary Ryan.



Bob Sweeney

When you think about used car parts 'Bob Sweeney' is surely the first name that springs to mind but for those of you who don't know, Bob Sweeney's is much more. Apart from supplying top quality and warranted used parts, Bob Sweeney's also, as a registered ATF (Authorised Treatment Facility) can dispose of ELV (End of Life Vehicles) and issue Certificates of Destruction.

The other side to Bob Sweeney's business is a thriving vehicle recovery company, consisting of five recovery trucks which are on the road seven days a week, fifty two weeks of the year.

The recovery company, Autotowing, is contracted to various insurance companies such as AXA and also to motoring organisations such as the RAC, Ireland Assist etc. And has gained a reputation for speedy and reliable response to call outs ranging from jump starts and wheel changes to long distance recovery. Over the years Autotowing has received many awards from the recovery industry for outstanding customer service and reliability. Autotowing is also on contract to An Garda Síochána for recovery and storage of motor vehicles.

Over the past 28 years Bob has expanded and nurtured his business to become one of the biggest local employers in the area. To date, Bob Sweeney and Autotowing employ 20 members of staff from the local and surrounding areas.

As you can see from the photographs, Bob started on a very small scale and has steadily grown to the size the site is now.

A far cry from the days of wandering amongst the vehicles to remove parts yourself, nowadays parts are removed, cleaned, labelled and stored ready for sale. As the business has moved forward so has the site and today boasts a fine tarmac parking area and reception building. With the new legislation regarding ELVs and the processing of waste Bob Sweeney's has kept ahead of the game and has been the first facility to be awarded a five year waste treatment licence.

So, come the time you need any used parts for your car or if you need to dispose of a vehicle, you should give Bob Sweeney's a call. The staff here will be delighted to help you in any way we can. We look forward to hearing from you.



An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

Wedding Bells

Congratulations and a long and happy life to the following couples who were married during the past year.



Peter Costello, Limerick and Denise O'Neill, Lisnagry
Dominic Moran, Wexford and Linda Ann O'Rourke, Limerick
John Carman, Cork and Laura Devane, Kerry
Kieran Scarffe, Spain and Claire Riyanage, England
John O'Halloran, Limerick and Edel Roche, Clooncommons
Desmond Hayes, Limerick and Irene Shyne, Gooig
Dermot Mullane, Limerick and Karen Carey, New Garden
Michael O'Sullivan, Newport and Tracey Blake, Scanlan Park
Robert Hughes, Wales and Niamh Jones, Wood Road
Cathal Reilly, Wexford and Noreen Mackey, Knocksentry
Eugene Coffey, Kerry and Clerrly Paul, England
John Tracey, Tipperary and Alyssa Gannon, Canada
Kevin O'Sullivan, Castletroy and Elaine Berkery, New Garden
Jeremy Schwrger, America and Patricia Moore, Limerick
Gerard Nolan, Limerick and Edel Coleman, Lisnagry
Michael Denning, Grange and Emma Ryan, Lisnagry
Tadhg Mulcahy, Newcastle West and Clodagh McCaffery, Lacca

Baptisms

Matthew Patrick Power, Newport
Charley Noel O'Connell, Coolready
Killian Michael Walsh, Lisnagry
Mary Kate Margaret Fitzgerald, Killeenagariff
Ava Faye Ryan, Limerick
Annie Rose Gillen, Wood Road
Scott Joseph Mulqueen, Castleconnell
Hanno Lauren Dundon, England
David Patrick Coughlan, Garden Hill
Cian James Howard, O'Briensbridge
Lexi Elle McNamara, Castleconnell
Darragh Patrick McBreaty, Garden Hill
Imogan Anne McEntyre-Parker, England
Emma Louise Claire Pinsent, Lisnagry
Noah Senan Burns, Killaloe
Ciara Breda Allen, Castleconnell
Sarah Mary Hayes, Bog Road
Fionn Tadhg O'Malley, Castleconnell
Saul Eli Birdthistle, Castleconnell
Isabella Maria Green, O'Briensbridge
Lily Faye Murphy, Lisnagry
Anna Brid McDonnell, Lisnagry
Callum Harry Sneddon, Scanlan Park
Emmet O'Sullivan, Kildare
Mark Anthony Quinlivan, Newport
Jacob Andre Galvin, Garden Hill
Alistar Peter Hourigan, Scotland
Kalen Marcello Liam Oslakovic, Castleconnell
Emma Mary Nolan, O'Briensbridge
James Raymond Buckley, Castleconnell
Harry David Buckley, Castleconnell
Leuan Cathal Carmody-Rees, Murrroe
Gearoid O'Callaghan, Garden Hill
Maeve Geraldine Cosgrove, Newport
Sophie Jean McNamara, Wood Park
Annie Kathleen Atterbury, Sydney
Joseph Justin Murray, Ahane
Zara Mary McDonough, O'Briensbridge
Mebh Fanny Turley, Belfast



Lily Mary O'Connor, Castleconnell
 Aoibheann Willow Foley, Castleconnell
 Chloe Kate Buckley, Newport
 Lucy Eve O'Brien, Castleconnell
 Tadhg Paul Lee-Conaty, Lisnagry
 Fintan Dylan Whitelock, O'Briensbridge
 Ciara Laura McCarthy, Castleconnell
 William (Billy) Kevin Kavanagh, Lisnagry
 Luke William Walker, Lisnagry
 Jake Sean Byrnes, Castleconnell
 Liam James Power, Gouig
 Ciaran Edmond Power, Gouig
 Mia Nicole Kelly, Killaloe
 Oscar Richard Brockart, Castleconnell
 Aaron Thomas Molloy, Castleconnell
 Romy Hanna Cullinan, Coolnahila
 Ronan Stephen Toohey, Birdhill
 Amelia Rose Dooner, Lisnagry
 Daniel Noel Madden, Castleconnell
 Dylan Christopher White, Castleconnell
 Luke John Freeney, Castleconnell
 Alan Thomas Sharkey, Cork
 Emily Kate Quirke, Lisnagry
 Kelesy Katherine O'Reilly-Guerin, Castletroy
 Oisín Francis Frawley, Lisnagry
 Alexandra Janelle Maynor, Castleconnell
 Liam Dominic Taligaba, Castleconnell
 Diarmiud Eamon Moran, Castleconnell
 Zofia Kwiecinska, Castleconnell
 Jayden Gerard Hayes, Castleconnell
 Andrea Murphy, Madrid
 Elsee Sloan, Scotland
 Darragh Michael Sloan, Annacotty
 Dalma Tivadar, Castlerock
 Sean Timothy Hourigan-Garraun, Lisnagry
 Dylan Kevin O'Connell, St. Patrick's Villas
 Mark Oliver Frawley, Castlerock
 Cillian Andrew Auckland, Cragg, Birdhill
 Donagh Sean Jackson, Cobh, Cork
 Dan Condon, Garden Hill

These We Remember

Sean Aherne, England, formerly Montpelier
Tom Wallace, England, formerly Montpelier
Bridie Hannon, Ahane
Teresa Muller (nee Casey), England, formerly Gouig
Elizabeth Roche, Lisnagry
Jimmy Coffey, Scanlon Park
Peggy Sheridan (nee Murphy), Nenagh, formerly Castleconnell
Eamon (Monty) Joyce, Scanlon Park
Susan Coleman (nee Curran), Dublin, formerly Ballyvarra
Maurice Keating, Bog Road
Beattie Hockey, Montpeiler
Allen Sheehy, Mount Shannon Road
Paddy Doyle, Wood Road
Denis Joyce, St.Patrick's Villas
Jim Ryan, Knocksentry
Theresa Carey (nee Mulqueen), Cappamore, formerly Wood Park
Audrey Hoskins (nee Murphy), Plymouth, formerly Main St., Castleconnell
Maudie O'Dea, formerly Ballyvarra
Eileen McGrath, Limerick, formerly Rivers, Lisnagry
Paddy Hickey, Main St., Castleconnell
Christina Fallon, Lisnagry
Helena Byrnes, Lisnagry
Liam Shaw, Shannon, formerly Castleconnell
Christy Storan, Montpelier
Kitty Ryan, Drominboy
Tony Cooke, Murroe, formerly Castleconnell
Joe Coonerty, Galway, formerly Castleconnell
Hanna Hanley (nee Tierney), Cork, formerly Castleconnell
Fr. Michael Hourigan, Florida, formerly "The Orchards", Annagh
Billy Murphy, Coolready
Pat Keane, Coolriree
Monica Hayes, Birdhill, formerly Belmont
Seamus Ahern, Derryshasna
Nora Minihan, Ardvarna
Maureen Hourigan, Murroe, formerly The Meadows, Castleconnell
Muriel Shyne, Annacotty, formerly Castleconnell
Catherine McDonald, Killaloe, formerly Castleconnell
Helen (Nellie) Hartigan, Main St., Castleconnell
Ann (Baby Ann) Hanrahan, Bruach Na Shionna, Castleconnell
May Burns, Wood Road
Thomas Joyce, Shannon, formerly Stradbally
Caroline Cosgrave, Richill
Pearse McGee, Wicklow, formerly Castleconnell



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A Review of Events and Happenings in the Parish since October last:

OCTOBER 2011:

ANNUAL WALK A HUGE SUCCESS:

The Castleconnell Tidy Towns committee held their annual walk. The walk was well attended with about 50 walkers taking part. Thanks to everybody who sponsored the walkers and those who took part in the walk. The wildlife signs were unveiled by Mr Vincent Warfield, followed by the announcement of the winners of our Summer Competition.

The winner of the best-presented business was Green Cross Pharmacy. The adjudicator looked at overall appearance, floral display and litter in the area.

There were 3 categories in the housing estates competition which were won by Castlerock, for best kept green area; Meadowbrook, for the most litter free, and St Flannan's Terrace for the best floral display.

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS:

On Saturday, October 8, Lisnagry National School celebrated the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of their opening in 1961. Bishop Kieran O'Reilly celebrated Mass of thanksgiving in the School to mark this very special day for teachers, students (past and present), staff and parishioners, and all who supported the school in any way over the years

ANDY EXACTS HIS REVENGE:

Local middleweight boxing hero Andy Lee sought and got his revenge against Brian Vera when he fought and finally

beat the only man who defeated him since he turned professional. The fight took place in Atlanta.

AHANE BEATEN IN FINAL:

Commiserations to the Ahane senior hurling team who were beaten by Na Piarsaigh in the county senior hurling championship final in the Gaelic Grounds.

REINSTATEMENT OF FITZGIBBON

MONUMENT: On a windswept wet Wednesday afternoon, October 5 last, a large gathering of parishioners turned out to witness the reinstatement of the Fitzgibbon Monument.

DEATH OF SR. CHRISTINE: The death took place in Presentation Convent, Matlock, Derby, of Sr Christine Loughran, aged 97. She lived in Castleconnell in the 1950s. It was she who had the foresight to open Rosary Hill Secondary School for girls in what was then a derelict old house adjacent to the convent. It opened in 1955 but unfortunately closed in 1977.

CASTLECONNELL BC's HEAD OF

THE RIVER: Despite the constant rain which fell, the conditions on the water at the World's End were ideal for the 215 entries from 14 clubs which took part in the Castleconnell Boat Club's Head of the River incorporating the Bulls & Bears Invitational Race. The first of the crews took to the water at 10am and as with a rolling head, crews started every 30 seconds or so and continued until timing finished at 3pm.

NOVEMBER 2011:

TIDY TOWNS AGM: The tidy towns committee held their Annual General Meeting in Hickeys Bar. The meeting was well attended and four new members joined. A new committee was elected Vincent Warfield is chairperson, Frances Clifford is secretary and Julie Mc Cabe remained on as treasurer. Sean Hartigan is schools co ordinator. The committee decided to set up a facebook page.

CRAFT FAIR A GREAT SUCCESS: Castleconnell's 23rd Craft Fair held at the October Bank Holiday weekend was such an enjoyable and very successful two days, thanks to its wonderful local support. The Annual Craft Fair Raffle was held on Halloween evening at the close of the Fair. The winners were: First prize, an all Irish Food Hamper, John Reynolds; second prize, a Christmas Hamper, Margaret Coffey; third prize, a Children's Hamper, Siobhan O'Reilly; fourth prize, a Gardener's Hamper, Babs Meskeil; fifth prize, a Kitchen Hamper, Ciara Kelly, and sixth prize, An Outsize Christmas Candle, Michelle O'Donoghue.

ACM COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS: When all the excitement of Halloween was over, there was no rest for the enthusiastic staff as they swung into action with Midterm Madness, a camp for children aged 6 to 11, packed with games and activities which was described as "The Best" by the participants. The Committee of the ACM Community Centre was busy too, creating for the first time a Halloween Cavern at the Craft Fair, designed with great flair and imagination by Clare. It was a magnet for the many children who attended the Fair; it included free goody bags and Halloween balloons and a painting competition, judged by Dilly

Edmonds, who commented on the high level of talent, with prizes for 2 lucky winners, Rebecca Bradley, aged 8 and John Hickey, aged 9 both of whom won places in the Midterm Madness Camp.

AHANE LADIES FOOTBALL CLUB: Ahane Ladies Football Club hosted their Annual Under 8 and 10 Football Blitz in Ahane GAA Pitch on Saturday, 12 November, with teams from Ahane, St Ailbes, Mungret, Monaleen, St Bridget's and St Patrick's taking part.

AN CAISLEAN 2011: A very enthusiastic editorial committee launched the annual parish journal "An Caisleán". This was the 15th edition, covering the year's events in Castleconnell/Ahane and Montpelier areas.

DECEMBER 2011:

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER: The Pioneer annual Christmas dinner was held at the Castle Oaks House Hotel.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN: The parish of Castleconnell welcomes and encourages the participation of children and young people in Church life and activities. The parish does all in its power to ensure the safety of children, young people and adults in the carrying out of any such activity. A meeting was convened with the new parish representatives, Maura McCaffrey, Julie McCabe and Margaret Byrnes.

LISNAGRY N.S. ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FAIR: Lisnagry National School hosted their sixth annual Christmas fair.

CASTLECONNELL BOAT CLUB : Congratulations to David Quinlan, Megan Donegan and Claire Silke, who, based on their performance at the first assessment for trials for Rowing Ireland's International Teams' Selection 2012.

CASTLECONNELL GUILD OF ICA: On international night a young man from Georgia was the guest speaker. He left his country to look for work in Ireland having no English. At the time work was easy to get. He worked for a nice man who encouraged him to go to classes to learn English. He is a fluent speaker, and could answer all questions about Georgia.

JANUARY 2012:

PAT CULHANE IS APPOINTED NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR: Pat Culhane has been appointed National Co-ordinator for Go Games in Croke Park. Pat, is son of Larry and Mary Culhane, Mountshannon Road, Lisnagry and took up his new position after six very successful years as Hurling Development Officer for Limerick City, where he dramatically increased regular participation levels in primary schools and juvenile clubs.

NIALl SPEAKS OF HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE PEOPLE OF HAITI: At weekend Masses, local parishioner Niall Moran spoke to the congregations about his experience with HAVEN and the people of Haiti. Located in the Caribbean, Haiti has been ravaged by corruption, poverty and hunger for many years.

FEBRUARY 2012:

CASTLECONNELL PARISH HALL UPDATE: "Following our last update, we are delighted to announce that the new state of the art lighting and sound equipment has now been installed in Castleconnell Parish Hall".

KELLY WINS MUNSTER FINAL: 15-year-old Kelly Ryan from Lisnagry, representing Ahane GAA Club, won the Munster Final of Scor na nOg in Solo Singing, held on Sunday, January 29 at

Cappoquin in Waterford.

COMMUNITY GAMES: Congratulations to our under-10 draughts team who won silver medals in the county final. It was a fantastic achievement for this very young team, consisting of Tomas O'Neill, Odran Furlong, Ruairi Cronin, Jamie McNamara, Sean O' Neill and Aoife Ryan and their manager Trish Furlong.

AHANE CAMOGIE CLUB: At the recent AGM the following officers were elected for the coming year: Chairperson, Ann-Marie McGill; vice chairperson, Fiona Godfrey; secretary, Margaret Hickey; assistant secretary, Denise Kelliher; treasurer, Margaret Hickey; PRO, Breda Ahern O'Halloran; registrar, Claire Hickey, and child welfare officer, Aisling Conroy.

"DON'T TELL THE WIFE" A HUGE SUCCESS: The new stage lighting system got its first outing with the performance of the hilarious comedy "Don't Tell the Wife" by the Castleconnell Drama Society, which was performed in Castleconnell Parish Hall. Each night over the weekend of February 3rd, 4th and 5th, the Hall was packed to capacity, and everyone left with a great feeling of total enjoyment each night.

KELLY IS CROWNED ALL-IRELAND CHAMPION: There was great celebrations in the Royal Theatre, Castlebar when fifteen year old Kelly Ryan representing Ahane and Limerick was crowned All-Ireland Champion in the Solo Singing Competition of Scór Na nOg 2012. Kelly singing "The Lady of Loughrea," gave an outstanding performance and was a very worthy winner.

GOOD SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLD TAX MEETING: There was a good cross section of the community in attendance at the meeting, despite the short notice, which

was organised by the Campaign Against Household and Water Tax, held in Castle Oaks House Hotel.

DEATH OF WELL-KNOWN LOCAL PUBLICAN, PADDY HICKEY: The death occurred of Paddy Hickey, at his home, in the Shannon Inn, Castleconnell on Saturday, February 25 last. Paddy, whose untimely death at the early age of 52 years, was a very popular member of the community.

MARCH 2012:

LOCAL GAA MEN HONOURED: Two parishioners namely Pat O'Connor and Pat Herbert of Ahane GAA Club were among those honoured at the Old Time Gaels of East Limerick annual awards night which was held at the Millenium Centre, Caherconlish.

SENIOR SCOR COUNTY FINAL: The county final of Senior Scor was held in Cappamore Community Centre. Representing Ahane was Kerry Hurley in the Solo Singing competition and Louie Quirke, Tony Harnett and Mike Tierney in the Question Time. Well done to all competitors and thanks to all who supported them.

UNDER-13's TABLE TENNIS TEAM WIN BRONZE: Ahane/ Castleconnell/ Montpelier who won bronze medals in the under-13 community games table tennis.

SUNNY WEATHER FOR CASTLECONNELL PARADE: St Patrick was smiling on Castleconnell and the sun shone on all the enthusiastic participants who marched from the Castle Oaks House Hotel and around the village and back to the viewing stand on Castle Street. The Parade was led by a superb St Patrick aka Matt McCormack.

AHANE/ CASTLECONNELL GUILD OF

ICA: At the March meeting of the Guild, traditionally our Irish night, we were entertained by Siobhan Egan on the harp. An evening of ceol fonn agus amhrain. She was accompanied by Nuala Egan and Joan Ryan, who sang songs both in Irish and English. Members of the guild also joined in with many of the old songs.

APRIL 2012:

UNDER 12 CHESS TEAM WIN MUNSTER FINAL: Ahane Castleconnell Montpellier under-12 Chess team won the Munster final, beating Tipperary, Cork and Clare teams on the way.

CONFIRMATION: The following pupils of Ahane, Castleconnell and Lisnagry Nationals Schools received the Sacrament of Confirmation recently, in St. Joseph's Church, Castleconnell:

Ahane National School: William Brennan, Annabelle Buttery, Robert Collins, Thomas Coughlan, Natasha Culhane, Cathal Flannery, Kevin Hussey, Caoilinn Keane, Craig Leahy, Conor Morrissey, Christina O'Connell, Jack O'Connell, Eric O'Neill, Aine Reynolds, Aisling Twomey and Orla Twomey.

Castleconnell National School: Sinead Meskell, James O'Connor, Kieran O'Malley, Aishling Walsh, Deeann Fitzpatrick, Dean Ryan, Ann Marie Fitzgerald, James Byrnes, Shannon Walsh, JJ Corbett, Rachel McLeish, Aoife Walshe, Gemma Keane, Arann Fitzpatrick, Danny Murphy, Jakub Jastrezebski, Weronika Raczewska and Conor Devereaux.

Lisnagry National School: Kieran Ayres, Graham Bourke, Bobby Byrne, Conor Cosgrave, Amanda Counihan, Warren Daly, Sean Feeney, Sine Hartigan, Josh Hoen-Quinn, Robert Holmes, Rebecca Jennings, Ronan Keaveney, Michael Kitt,

Emily Knapp, Dion Lynch, Paul Metcalfe, Cathal Murphy, Adam Myers, Eoin McDonough, Stephen O'Connell, Cian O'Connor, Philip O'Dea, Eoghan O'Duffy, Aoife O'Halloran, Aoife O'Mahoney, Michael Ryan, Hilary Smyth, Josh Power-Hurley and Meg Vaughan.

SHANE WINS BRONZE IN ITALY: Castleconnell Boat Club member, Shane Ryan and his crew, won bronze, in the Irish Adaptive Mixed Coxed Four, Varese, Italy, on Saturday, April 28.

CASTLECONNELL ICA: Marie Hayes, Limerick Federation Information Officer attended the A.G.M. of Castleconnell Guild of the ICA, which was held on Wednesday, April 18, in Lisnagry National School. Officers elected were as follows: President, Kay Hickey; vice president/social secretary, Maureen Kenny; secretary, Betty Tuohy; treasurer, Kay Green; crafts, Phyllis O'Brien; sports, Breda Cregan; timre, Maureen O'Malley; An Grianan, Mary O'Grady; international, Agnes Collins; P.R.O., Rosaleen Kelly; hostess, Pauline Minihan and Nuala Coleman.

MAY 2012:

ST. VINCENT'S CONFIRMATION CLASS: The following pupils received the Sacrament of Confirmation on Thursday, March 22: Adam, Patrick, Laura, Joshua, Marios, Brandon, Laura, Wesley, Sean, Kym, Paul, Callum, Jamie, Katie, Sam, Gavin & Patrick.

SONGS AT SPRINGTIME A GREAT SUCCESS: A very successful "Songs at Springtime" concert was held in St. Joseph's Church, Castleconnell. The first half of the concert featured Owen Gilhooly, baritone; Helen Houlihan, soprano, and Edel O'Brien, mezzon-soprano. The second half featured the Mid-West Vocal

Acadamy Community Choir, with conductor Timothy Schinnick, and accompanist Trevor Selby on Piano.

CASTLECONNELL CHOSEN IN PRIDE OF PLACE COMPETITION: The Castleconnell Development Association was informed that Castleconnell had been chosen by Limerick County Council as the County Limerick Representatives in the very prestigious all Ireland Pride of Place competition.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION IN THE PARISH: The pupils of three schools in the parish received the Sacrament of Holy Communion during the month of May. The names are as follows: Castleconnell National School – Mark Burns, Aisling Scully, Charlie Ryan, Tomas O'Neill, Clodagh Carmody, Sarah Hogan, Megan Birdthistle, Ele Madigan, Hugo Porter, Jamie Walsh, Alyssia Ryan Lynch, Glyn O'Connell, Leah Cooke, Candice Clancy, Ryan O'Grady, Meabh Moore, Turlough O'Gorman, Ruairi Cronin, James Loftus, Jack Sheehy and Nicole Sheehy.

Lisnagry National School: Mr. McGrath's Class: Conor Davies-Molloy, Hannagh Keane, Alex Holmes, Daniel McDonough, Odran Furlong, Ellen Costelloe, John Donoghue, Gavin Cole, Julietta Brennan, Nathan Hayes, Áine Herbert, Kate Clohessy, Ciaran Coulter, Eoin Connolly, Caoimhe Lenehan, Aoife Mulkern, Roisín Callinan, Niall Byrnes, Caylum Hurley, Lughaidh Shortt and Nathan Daly. Ms. Carroll's Class: Patrick Mulkern, Ciara Mulkern, Gavin Rowsome, Liam O'Mara, Kieran Roche, Ellen Tobin, Áine O'Connor, Eva Ní Cheallaigh, Evan O'Laoire, Aisling McGill, Aidan Smith, Emily O'Sullivan, Leah Timmons, Grace Rennison, Aisling Sheehan, Aoife O'Byrne Cassidy, Orlaith O'Byrne Cassidy, Eugene Óg Power-

Hurley, Job Magabo, Shane O'Grady, Ben O'Connell, Mark Murphy, Abigail Hayden. Ahane National School: Caoimhe Flannery, Cormac Greaney, Connor Hartigan, Samuel Hartigan, Emma Kett, Cillian Lynch, Ethan Lynn, Katie Moloney, Conor Moloughney, Aimee O'Connor, Emily O'Sullivan and Colm Slattery Wright.

JUNE 2012:

CASTLECONNELL BOAT CLUB REGATTA A GREAT SUCCESS: Even the weather didn't disappoint at the Castleconnell Boat Club's Summer Sprints Regatta which was held at the World's End in Castleconnell, sunshine and passing light cloud was the order of the day with racing running non-stop from 9.00am to 6.30pm. **PEGGY DUFFY TOURNAMENT:** Ahane Camogie and Ladies Football hosted the Peggy Duffy Memorial Cup in Mackey Park. Over 80 young girls from the ages of eight to thirteen from the three local schools, Ahane, Castleconnell and Lisnagry participated.

COMMUNITY GAMES: The under 11 mixed rugby team had great success emerging victorious in the county final against Monaleen, in June. They went on to represent Limerick in the Munster Finals in UL last weekend and saw off challenges from Clare and Cork to become Munster Champions.

JULY 2012:

COUNTY CAMOGIE BLITZ: The Ahane under 10 team took part in the County Blitz in Newcastlewest. The girls had a great day coming second in their group and unlucky to lose out in the semi-final to Adare. Ahane Panel on the day: Hannah Keane, Aine O'Connor, Caoimhe Hackett, Anna Rose Carr, Jane Hussey, Ellen Tobin, Clodagh Dunne, Fiona Herbert, Aine

Herbert, Aoife Cross, Leanne Cole, Amy Keogh, Chloe O'Brien, Niamh Conroy, Katie Murphy, Emma Roche, Clíodhna Twoomey, Claire Cantillon, Amy Keogh, Sinead O'Brien and Niamh Devitt.

CASTLECONNELL TIDY TOWNS WIN AWARD: The Tidy Towns Committee is delighted with the news that they have won an award in the Ballyhoura County Tidy Towns competition. They won the prize for the Overall Development Approach.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S ANNUAL OUTING A GREAT SUCCESS: Castleconnell Historical Society had a very enjoyable annual outing. "Our first visit was to the Franciscan Friary in Ennis followed by a visit to Quin Abbey and finally to Killowen Abbey outside of Ennis. Our guide for the day was the renowned medieval historian Brother Colman O'Clabaigh OSB, from Glenstal Abbey. His insightful commentary enlightened and entertained us and he painted a wonderful picture of the life that was lived by the inhabitants of these abbeys in the middle ages."

AUGUST 2012:

CIAN HELPS TO BRING HOME GOLD: Cian Pidgeon from Castleconnell Village was a member of the Irish Senior Men's Sculling Quad, who came back with gold from the Home International Rowing Regatta.

PRIDE OF PLACE JUDGING, A GREAT SUCCESS: Castleconnell was on show on Wednesday, August 8 last, as the village was judged in the Co-operation Ireland 32-county Pride of Place Competition. The competition recognises and celebrates the involvement of the local community in coming together to shape, change and enjoy all that is good about their local area.

COMMUNITY GAMES ALL-IRELAND SUCCESS: Congratulations to the Ahane Castleconnell Montpellier Community Games under-11 Mini Rugby team who won Gold at the All Ireland finals in Athlone recently. Having won the County Competition in June, they went on to win the Munster Final in July beating the Clare and the Cork champions on the way. They became All Ireland champions on Sunday, August 26 last, by first beating Ulster champions, Monaghan in a tough semi final and then Connaught champions, Ballinasloe, in a thrilling final. Team members: Rory Murphy, Andrew Shanahan, Aidan Carroll, Tom O'Hanlon, Joseph Dundon, William O'Leary, Adam Murrihy, Hugh Brady, Jamie McNamara, Brian Murphy, Joe Tanner and Captain Ben Davey, who led by example and was identified by many neutral spectators as one to watch for the future.

SEPTEMBER 2012:

AHANE CAMOGIE: The under-12 team qualified for the semi final of the under-12B Championship with a great win over Cappamore in Ahane last week. In a very sporting, with both sides given it everything, Ahane had the extra edge and ran out worthy winners. The Ahane Team on the night were: Sinéad Callinan, Aisling Twomey, Orla Twomey, Emma Ridder, Sinéad O'Curry, Ciara Macken, Ciara O'Keefe, Aisling Herbert, Aimee Tuohy, Aoife O'Halloran, Ailish Reynolds, Daena Ryan, Siobhán O'Reilly, Rachel Maher, Ellen Minihan and Ciara Greaney.

AHANE GIRLS U-16 NOVICE SHIELD CO. GAELIC CHAMPIONS:
Congratulations to Under 16 girls Gaelic

football team who captured the Novice Shield County Championship when overcoming Gerald Griffins in an exciting game played in Mick Neville Park, Rathkeale, on a scoreline of Ahane 1-10, Gerald Griffins 1-2. The panel on the day were: Nicole Lavin, Niamh Cullimore (Captain), Siofra Keane, Karen Leahy, Rebecca Hartigan, Ailbhe Keane, Kate Feeney, Kate Herbert, Aoife Quinn, Niamh Reynolds, Eimear Hartigan, Aine O'Curry, Abi Fox, Niamh O'Curry, Caoimhe Macken, Sine Hartigan, Catriona O'Halloran and Niamh Martin. Mentors: Joe O'Curry, Mary Feeney and Breda Ahern-O'Halloran.

Compiled and Submitted by Martin Naughton

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Castleconnell Fishery Association

Castleconnell Fishery Association (CFA) was formed in late 2007 to give local people, organisations and businesses a platform to care for one of the most distinctive aspects of local heritage – our river. This was triggered by a long-held feeling that the river environment, and salmon and trout stocks in particular, had for a long time been on a declining curve that nobody seemed to be able to do anything about. Most of the factors affecting fish, and salmon in particular, were seen to originate outside our area, but we took the view that things here weren't too good either, and if we did something about what we could do something about i.e. improve or revive the river environment, we and our local fish would be at least that one step ahead. We would be making an effort instead of standing by.

With that in mind, we set-up a common platform for the various groups and individuals involved in fishing, for the purpose of carrying out remedial work on the river. We are at pains to point out that CFA is not a fishing club (that is well catered for around here). Our aim is to improve, renovate or maintain the river environment to enable indigenous species to thrive. We offer nothing except the prospect of occasional hard work and the chance to make perhaps a small difference to the river and the fish in it.

Our Heritage

Up to the 20th century, the Castleconnell fishery was world-famous thanks to the Enright World Championship casting successes, tackle-making, and the size and number of salmon living in these waters. It was also a significant eel and trout fishery. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, eel fishing gave employment and brought money into the area by exporting live eels mainly to the large English cities. To this day, many structures of rock, concrete and some iron eel-net poles remain in the river, a testimony to the great productivity of the river at the time. So it is a top quality river, and it is worth the effort to try to take care of it.

Changing times

We live in times of constant change, and anyone who has been in the habit of walking by the river in our locality will have noticed many changes over the years and decades. Of course, a river is a natural ecosystem, and change is to be expected in any ecosystem. However, when human activity is a major influence, as it is in our river, the river will change as human activities change. When we needed electricity, a dam was built which diverted all water in excess

of dry summer-period flow (10 m³/sec) away from Castleconnell. When agriculture became intensive, nitrates and phosphates built-up in the water causing excessive plankton, weed and tree growth in the river. When movement of goods became global, we were visited by plants and animals from around the world.

So you could say that the river is a meter of the change in our own lives. Anything we eat, drink, build or buy eventually ends up in the watercourse, one way or another. It may only take a minute to end up in the river; like milk or petrol spilled in the street, running down a gulley, along a pipe, and into the river. Or it may take a week – like a toilet flushing or a washing machine emptying, down a pipe, to settling tanks, aerating ponds, bleaching tanks, maybe a reed bed to get out some of the nitrates and phosphates, and then into the river. Or it may take up to a year: like a farmer spreading fertilizer on his land. Or it may take decades: a look in any watercourse where there are houses upstream will show an assortment of old bricks, bottles, bits of iron, parts of vehicles, electrical goods etc.

This does not necessarily mean that all these things were thrown in, it is just that the movement of water toward the sea is relentless, and everything has a tendency to gravitate in that direction sooner or later. You may imagine that this could be stopped by careful management, but anyone who has ever watched a flood in progress will realise that one cannot plan for every eventuality, and every system has a point at which it fails. After a flood, one can find in the river almost anything that can float or tumble, or was not tied down. Usually this comprises outdoor equipment, such as boats, balls, nets, wooden items, bits of sheds etc., but also armchairs, beds, fridges, televisions – in fact anything that may have been thrown or left untended at the side of a river.

There is at this moment a bath stuck on the weir above the Ferry carpark. A huge ski-jump has been stuck on the dam at the Worlds End for over a decade. Wooden pallets, ropes and buoys from sporting activities litter the river. But all these things we can deal with.

What we cannot easily deal with are the chemicals. There are over 60,000 types of synthetic chemical in the biosphere today, very few of which existed in our grandfather's time, and we as a society will be dealing with the cumulative effects of these chemicals from now on. The productivity and diversity of nature on land and in water has been affected by these new entrants into our world, particularly since some of these chemicals, like herbicides, pesticides and germicides, are specifically designed to have impact on the diversity of life. It has been said that the amount of insect life in the countryside today is roughly 40% of what it would have been a human generation ago, and, just as an example, it seems indeed true that the amount of fly-kill on our windscreens today is greatly reduced now from what it was

back then. It will be the same in the river, and of course insects are the first building blocks of the fish food pyramid. It is hard to believe this when you see some of the huge fly hatches on the river, but then the amount of fish that used to eat them was certainly much higher in former times. Diversity in insect species is very important, because it is no use having an oversupply of insect food at some times of the year, and long hungry gaps when small fish may not survive.

The present situation

In one generation, our river has lost a great proportion of its original fauna of salmon, trout, eels, crayfish, and swan mussels. Myriad factors have caused these changes, the main factors being diversion of water for hydroelectricity, pollution, invasive plants and animals, overfishing, disease, silting, tree-growth, and loss of habitat. All these are associated with increased technology, global trade, and need for more food for ourselves. Here are some of the effects on our fish:

Salmon: have been hugely affected by commercial overfishing at sea and in river, added to by disease, genetic damage due to fish farming/ranching/hatcheries, habitat loss in rivers, loss of their marine food, and now climate change. The spawning beds and nursery streams in Castleconnell had in places become overgrown by trees, covered by silt, and the flow of water slowed or even blocked in some streams by debris or weed growth. In some places, the beds had been taken over by zebra mussels.

Trout (Brown trout) do not go to sea, but seem to have suffered largely in line with young salmon from habitat loss in nursery streams, and were also affected by pollution, and impact of invasive fish species like Rudd and especially Dace. Trout and Salmon both need clean, fast-flowing water, clean gravel substrate, and enough light for their insect food to prosper.

Eels have been overfished both at elver and mature stage, and have apparently been badly affected by weakening of ocean currents that used to help them get back to spawn in the Sargasso Sea on the other side of the Atlantic. However, their biggest problem seems to be an infestation of a parasite which was introduced from the Pacific, which fills their swim bladder (air sac) and makes it impossible for them to return to breed. Eel numbers have crashed in the last few years and they are no longer a common sight in the river.

Native River Crayfish had been affected by the changing chemistry of the river water but, again, were finally almost wiped out in the Shannon by disease.

Swan mussels seem to have been killed off by the arrival of the exotic Zebra mussel, which crusts over the breathing holes of the native swan mussel.

In the place of these native species, we now have Rudd, Roach, and Zebra Mussels, and in the last couple of years even the Rudd and Roach have been largely supplanted by a fish called Dace, that can live in still or flowing water,

in huge shoals. All of these fish were brought to Ireland by fishermen illegally using live bait, who had no idea of the incredible damage and ecological destruction they were about to cause by letting their escaped bait run free in our rivers.

As regards water weeds, which are part of the substrate on which most river life depends, our waters are filled with exotic weeds from Canada and South Africa, and the banks have in places been taken over by Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, and occasional Japanese Knotweed.

So globalisation has had a huge effect here in introducing species that have run rampant at the expense of native species. In many cases, this is an irreversible process, and nature will eventually have to find an equilibrium in which all these get on. However, if we don't want some of our native species to disappear altogether, we have to take steps to stop the spread of new species, or at least to preserve some of the old ones until they can adapt.

A case in point would be the situation with coots and moorhens, two waterbird species which were common on these waters. The release of mink, and their proliferation across the country, has practically wiped out these birds that were once a common, cheerful sight around here. In the last year we have had a program of trapping mink which resulted in nine mink being killed. The temporary elimination of these voracious and indiscriminate predators has made a huge difference to the birdlife on parts of the river. Unfortunately, this is something that will have to be carried on indefinitely if waterbirds and young salmonids are to have a decent chance in life. It also has to be carried out properly and legally under strict guidelines so that other animals, especially otters, are not affected.

What we are doing about these problems

CFA was formed to give everyone interested in helping the river a common platform to carry out necessary work. Initially, we had a series of lectures from acknowledged experts in many aspects of river ecology, to help us define the problems and to work out some solutions. We ran courses and riverside visits to help local anglers to understand these problems. These have been popular and well supported, with our oldest participants in their eighties and the youngest less than ten (accompanied by parent). It became obvious that the main remediation needed in this locality was to get the spawning and nursery streams back into good condition.

Partnership

To be allowed to work on the river, we obviously require the permission of the owner, which is the ESB. We also had to have agreement on proposed work with both the regional fishery board (now called Inland Fisheries Ireland or IFI), and the ESB fishery staff. After a long period of discussion and

presenting our credentials, we were accepted as a partner with the fishery owner (ESB) and the IFI. This is known as the Castleconnell River Partnership. This is the first time since 1929 that local people have had a direct say in the management of the river. Hopefully, it is an acknowledgment of our seriousness, capability and determination.

Permission for our activities

Because we are in partnership with Inland Fisheries Ireland and the ESB, all proposed works are initially discussed and agreed in principle with these two bodies. After that the permission of the landowner is sought, which in most cases is the ESB, but in places can be farmers and householders along rivers or streams. Because the type of work we do is generally in everyone's interest, support has been excellent and permission is gladly given.

However, the river is now part of the Lower Shannon SAC, protecting salmon, lamprey eels, otters and alluvial wet woodland from overt human activity. This means that any work being considered by anyone within the confines of the SAC must be approved by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. All the work we have carried out has been with the approval of the NPWS, with permissions to date being on a year-by-year basis for specific projects.

Work to date

The focus of work to date has largely been on the spawning and nursery streams for salmon and trout. A great deal of work had been carried out in this area in former years by the ESB, but in recent years the work had not been kept up. Many of the spawning areas where salmon make their redds had begin to silt up or compact, or to become overgrown, and many nursery and trout streams had become blocked so that there was insufficient flow for salmonids to live. Some areas had become so overgrown that no light was getting in and so no insects or fish could live in there at all. Our work has involved cutting selected bushes and trees at overgrown streams to let sufficient sunlight in, raking spawning gravels, clearing obstacles to stream flow, and controlling invasive weeds.

This has been a huge amount of effort, carried out at first by volunteer labour, with volunteers (mostly fishermen). In the last two years this has been greatly augmented by local community employment schemes in co-operation with other local organizations, bringing workers from FAS and TUS. This concerted effort has made a significant difference, with some very encouraging signs.

This year has seen our first major program of Giant Hogweed, Knotweed and Balsam control. This involved using a chemical weedkiller, which we would not be at all keen on using, but such was the scale of the problem that there was no other way forward at this stage. Weedkiller use near a watercourse

must be licensed by the NPW, and we followed the Best Practice Management Guidelines laid down by the NPWS for the Invasive Species Ireland Project. The Invasive weed is a program that will have to be maintained over many years to keep our banks free of these insidious weeds.

Hogweed is dangerous to humans. In contact with the skin, it leaves a nasty blistering that can last for years. Thankfully, this weed is spread by water and grows normally in damp areas, so it can be controlled.

Knotweed and Balsam can completely take over an entire area, to the exclusion of all native plants. A walk by the river in Plassey will show you what happens if these plants get out of control. The Mulkear Life project is spending many thousands of hard-earned euros trying to control these nuisances along the Mulkear river, and it has to be done. Beekeepers favour these plants, because Balsam and Knotweed produce a lot of food for bees, which apparently like these plants so much they ignore the native species. Knotweed is now to be seen on almost every roadway and breen in Ireland. It is evident in many areas of Castleconnell, not just the riverbank, where it was probably brought in on the tyres of vehicles. These plants have the potential to be a significant economic timebomb in Ireland. If you don't get them early, they can be very expensive to control. I hear that in parts of the UK, homes and land cannot be sold unless it can be certified clear of these weeds.

Cooperation and Funding

Our funding is limited to the annual fee that our members pay. We have approximately 35 members.

We contribute to and benefit from involvement with Castleconnell Project Ltd, the local entity that runs the FAS scheme, which provides workers to keep our streets clean and which provides crucial staff to many of the valuable local services that make Castleconnell what it is. FAS workers have taken part in several of our projects over the last few years and were greatly appreciated. We currently have two workers from TUS, a community employment scheme run by Ballyhoura Development Ltd, which gives work experience for a one-year period.

We have excellent ongoing cooperation with other community groups, such as the Tidy Towns, in terms of swapping manpower, equipment, materials and expertise. A number of local businesses have given invaluable assistance in sponsoring equipment and materials needed, and in use of rooms for meetings. We have had fantastic co-operation and encouragement from land and property owners adjoining the river who have given permission, resources and direct help, and who are delighted with the result so far. We have had excellent cooperation with fishing clubs from Castleconnell, the Mulkear, Lough Derg and Limerick. We have had some assistance from the

County Council in providing materials. Inland Fisheries has provided expertise, data and information, as well as personnel to run courses (e.g. Invertebrates Identification course, Invasive weed control course). ESB have provided significant materials and expertise whenever asked.

Benefits to date

The amount of salmon redds (heaps of gravel in a stream made by spawning fish) have been increasing slowly. This year a number of streams that have exhibited very little life in the last few years have had smolts gather to go to sea. Some of the longer standing streams had large gatherings of smolts prior to their journey to the sea. With fewer than 2% of these smolts returning as adult salmon, this needs to continue for some time to bring the returning numbers up.

The numbers of trout in the fishery have begun to improve, but this is from a very low level. There is a long way to go before we reach the self-sustaining levels we had some decades ago. There is still a serious shortage of young trout, and we would ask all fishermen to observe a catch-and-release policy with respect to trout, especially bigger trout, because the amount of trout that mature to spawning age in this heavily-fished area is clearly nowhere near adequate at the moment.

The first pair of crayfish in many years were spotted in the Castleconnell river last year. These are small but amazing looking animals, and they form an important part of the food chain, of which salmonids are at the top. So the more of these we have, the better off we will be. They are a sign of the increasing quality of our water.

Thanks to the TUS workers, who carried out a mink-trapping program last year, the amount of waterbirds on the river has increased hugely this year.

Lamprey eels (a protected species) have recently returned to spawn in streams that they have been absent from for years. These had often been regarded as a parasite on salmon, but anyone who has raked a bed of spawning gravel will appreciate the role the lamprey fills in keeping the gravels free and clean.

An intangible benefit is that many people have become more aware of the flip-side of globalisation in terms of species transfer, and are now more willing to take care to protect the diversity that we have naturally here.

Another major benefit is that, already, in the last few years, more young people are fishing. Fishermen here had become almost as endangered as the fish. Now hopefully we have a new generation coming on. Anyone fishing the Shannon must have an appropriate license and permit, as it is a private fishery belonging to the ESB. It is also very important to respect the season closure for salmon and trout (i.e. don't use inappropriate lures when fishing for pike in the winter) so that salmonid fish can breed in safety.

Sustainability

We have taken the attitude that we will look after the environment on our doorstep, and make sure that any salmon returning from the increasingly precarious marine environment will find as supportive an environment as we can manage. For that we need good quality water, good flow in the streams, enough sunlight but not too much in these global warming years, and good gravel substrate to spawn in. This is also exactly the environment that will sustain our native trout, as well as the Silver and Lamprey eels, and all the other natural species of our river. We have compiled and will maintain a map on which we will assess the health of each of the streams in the fishery. It is taking a lot of work to get these streams into good shape, but hopefully identifying what is important will make it easier to keep the river in good condition. This will hopefully allow our natural species time to adapt to their changing environment.

Future plans

We hope to continue increasing awareness of our environment among fishermen and the public, and will continue to maintain or improve those spawning and nursery streams that have deteriorated. Hopefully this will provide ongoing benefits of a cultural, sporting and heritage nature to locals, with the obvious follow-on benefits for local businesses, especially in terms of visitors and tourism. We hope, as part of the Castleconnell River Partnership, to develop and agree a long-term plan of action that will put the upkeep of the local river on a steady footing.

There is also the hope that with the upcoming Water Framework Directive being enacted across the country, the quality of water in the river will continue to improve. We have to remember that this is also the water we drink, and if fish cannot live in it, it will require expensive chemical treatment to make it fit for humans.

We would like to sincerely thank the TUS workers, John Shannon and John O'Brien, for their work over the past year, in all sorts of weather and conditions. The TUS program only lasts one year and we will be sorry to see them go. They made a significant improvement to the river and its wildlife, and hence to the environment of Castleconnell.

CFA Committee

Anyone who would like to join or help, please contact:

Duncan McInnes (Sec) 086-8110011

Pat O'Connor (Chairman) 087-2311068

Turlough Herbert (Treasurer) 087-9611998

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Don Mescall

International Songwriter of the Year

Don Mescall (or Donal Meskell as he is known in his native Lisnagry) has achieved International fame and recognition as a highly successful and extremely talented singer/songwriter, performing all over the world and penning hits for artists such as Ronan Keating, Eleanor Shanley, Frances Black and many more over the past number of years.

Don was born in Lisnagry to Babs and the late Tom Meskell and is the second youngest of eleven children, with eight sisters and two brothers. His love of music began as a young lad, listening to such greats as Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, Paul Simon, Richie Havens and Joni Mitchell among others. He started his career singing the songs of the sixties in pubs around Limerick and West Clare. He moved to England in order to work in the various clubs on the singer/songwriter circuit, as he realised that the pub scene here was not conducive to listening to his original material. Eleanor McEvoy recorded his song, 'Road to Glory', having been given it by Christy Moore's manager, with whom Don had managed to make contact. A big hit in the U.S.A. 'Celtic Heartbeat Irish Compilation Album' later included this song.

His remarkable talent for writing lyrics and original material earned him a major publishing deal with Hornall Brothers in London. This led to gaining the respect of many greats in the music industry such as Graham Lyle of Gallagher & Lyle with whom he co-wrote songs before moving to Nashville. Here he worked with Randy Goodram (who had written 'You Needed Me' for Anne Murray) and their song 'All Over Again' was recorded by Ronan Keating and became a big hit for him. Artists such as The Rascal Flatts (who are enjoying huge fame in the US), The Back Street Boys, Richie Havens of Woodstock fame, Boyzone, The High Kings, Garou (No 1 Male Singer in Canada) our own Frances Black and the fantastic country singer Neal McCoy in the US, are among the countless bands and singers who have recorded and had hits with Don Mescall's songs.

Don has been enjoying much acclaim over the past year, he was invited by Sharon Corr (with whom he became friends after he had written two songs for her to record) to work as assistant coach on the RTE Production 'The Voice'. He enjoyed this experience very much and was gratified to see the transformation in the participant's performances, after they had benefited from his experience and expertise. In May Don won the "International Songwriter of the Year" Award, at the Hot Country TV Awards. He has written a string of hits and has had major song writing successes, his song 'Secret

Smile' which was included in the Rascal Flatts Album 'Still Feels Good'---debuted at No. 1. The 'Back Street Boys' included 'Trouble' in their album 'Unbreakable' and he came third with the song he co-wrote with Ronan Hardiman, 'Jennifer' in the 'Late Late Show Eurosong Special'. He also wrote 'Too Late For Hallelujah' which was recorded by Aslan and reached number 1 in the iTunes Singles Chart for Ireland. He has also penned 'Faith and Friendship' for the International Gospel Choir Festival which was held in Kilkenny in September of this year.

He divides his time living between Ireland, London and Nashville. He spends as much time as is possible with his daughter Eve and makes regular trips home to see his Mam and extended family. He likes to relax by riding his motorcycle, restoring old furniture and reading.

Don is now deservedly recognised as "a musical genius" (Ireland's Eye Aug 2012). He has travelled a long and tough journey to where he is now enjoying International recognition and the whole parish wishes him continued success. As An Caisleán was going to press, Don won another major award in London and was also presented with a platinum disc from EMI. A Press Release from Don's publicist Carmel Mannion of Jump the Moon, which catalogues his successful songwriting career follows this article.

A. Berkery

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Singer-Songwriter Don Mescall Scoops Platinum Award

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Don Mescall picked up a Platinum Disc from EMI Records, alongside an International Songwriter Of The Year award, at The Irish World Newspaper Awards in London recognising his contribution as a songwriter to the Irish Music industry, as well as to a number of international artists.

The awards, which took place at the Novotel Hotel in Hammersmith, London, featured a wealth of Irish talent including Sinead O'Connor, Mary Byrne (X-Factor) who incidentally received three standing ovations, BBC correspondent Fergal Keane, Daithi O'Se. Don was presented with International Songwriter Of The Year from The Irish World by The Irish Ambassador To Britain, Bobby McDonagh. Alongside the award, EMI Records presented Don with a platinum disc for the sales of 'Too Late For Hallelujah', which Mescall wrote for Aslan, who had a No. 1 hit with it earlier this year.

After receiving his award, Mescall performed three self-penned tracks 'Too Late For Hallelujah', 'Home' and especially for his 14 year old daughter Eve

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

who was also present, he performed 'Lighthouse Keeper' – which he wrote for her when she was 8 years old.

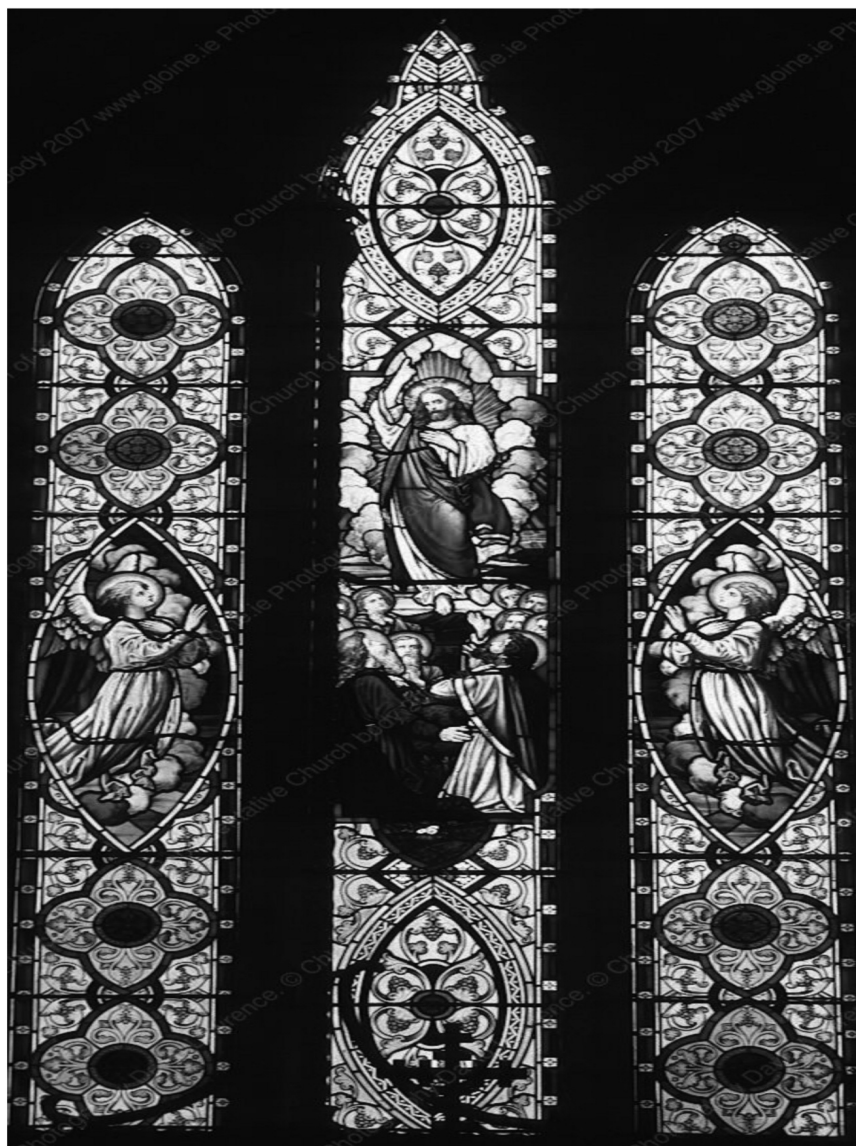
The award rounds off a successful year for Don Mescall, after having appeared on RTE's The Voice of Ireland as assistant coach to Sharon Corr earlier this year. As well as having written the No.1 hit for Irish Rock group Aslan, Mescall has also penned songs this year for American country band Lonestar, pop superstar Ronan Keating, Bryan Kennedy, Ramin Karimloo, The Three Amigos and the World Gospel Choir. The current UK and Irish charts currently have four albums featuring Don Mescall songs by Ramin Karimloo, Ronan Keating (Fires), Brian Kennedy 'Voice' and Aslan. His songs have also recently been featured in an award

winning short film, 'The Underground'. He also received 'International Songwriter Of The Year' at the SKY 191 Hot Country TV Awards back in May. After receiving the award, Don said: "It's always lovely to receive an award, but tonight was extra special as my daughter Eve was in the audience. A huge thank you also to Paddy Cowan and his staff at The Irish World and also EMI Records for their awards. I'm totally honoured and overwhelmed to receive these."



Don and his daughter Eve with his award and platinum disc which he received recently in London.

A History of All Saints Church Stradbally, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick



East Window "The Ascension"

www.gloine.ie

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

Early Days

The Parish of Castleconnell is located on the picturesque banks of the River Shannon in County Limerick and it is here that there is supposed to have been a small church built as early as the 6th Century. In the 8th Century AD the Vikings began to raid the coasts of Ireland. At first they attacked the monasteries along the coast, but soon they began raiding inland as the 'superior technology' of their boats which allowed them to traverse the open seas also allowed them to navigate the rivers of Ireland. Stradbally or Stráid Bháile (the town of one street) was not immune to their quick and efficient escapades where they most probably kidnapped the natives, using them as slaves, and attacked the little church, looting and burning it in their wake.

Between 1400 and 1410 a church was erected once again at Stradbally. The first priest was Dermot O'Hanrachayn.¹ It is interesting to note that he served only one year in Stradbally Church as he "vacated [the] Vicarage [of] Stradbally (Killaloe) in 1411 by not being ordained priest in a year". He was followed in 1411 by Donald O'Mulluyn who remained on until c 1436. Part of the walls of this old church can still be seen to the rear of the present All Saints Church. This original building was first used for Church of Ireland worship in 1615² (though it is listed as "vacant" of clergy at this time) However, by 1618 the vicar was one William Jannes who remained on until 1621. The church continued in use until it became "unserviceable" in 1765. The idea of the church being "unserviceable" in 1765 was shared by the Rector, Church Wardens and Protestant parishioners as is recorded in the Vestry Notes dated Monday 9th day of April 1787. The record states that "the Parish Church of Castleconnell is at present in so ruinous a situation that it is with danger the congregation do assemble to divine Service therefore we do adjourn this Vestry to take the same into consideration to Monday next" signed by W. De Burgho, John Murray (Rector) John Frewen Church Warden, James Crawley, Francis Frewen, William Frewen, Thomas Graham and Thomas Graham. In spite of this however, Mr. John Frewen and Mr. James Crawley were appointed Church Wardens for "ensuing year" and it was "further agreed that the sum of ten pounds Sterling shall be levied on the union of Castleconnell and Killeenagarraff for the maintenance of William Flood, Clerk and for the maid of the said William Flood one pound two shillings and nine pence Sterling for washing and cleaning the said Church, one pound two shillings and nine pence was levied for "a Church gate and one pound two shillings and nine pence Sterling to buy bread and wine for the sacraments. Prior to the restoration of All Saints, Stradbally was united in 1803 to Killeenagarraff. This is verified in Lewis (1837)³ when he states re Kilnegarruff or Killeenagarraff "It is a rectory and vicarage, in the diocese of Killaloe, forming part of the union of Castleconnell: the tithes amount to £271.14.9 ¾. The Church was destroyed in the war of 1641 and was rebuilt, but is now in ruins".

On Monday the 11th June 1787 "it was agreed upon by the Rector, Church Wardens and protestant parishioners ...that the sum of three pounds eighteen shillings and ten pence Sterling be levied for the following purposes and uses viz:

¹ Clergy of Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert and Kilmacduagh (2010)

² "Clergy of Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert and Kilmacduagh" (2010)

³ Samuel Lewis (1837) A History and Topography of Limerick City and County, Mercier Press.

	£	s	P
For Timber to prop the Church	1.	19.	4
1 day to Gillespie in Limerick to buy the timber	0.	1.	7½
1 day to do for examining the roof & church	0.	1.	7½
3 horses to draw timber from Limerick	0.	5.	4½
Sawing the timber	0.	3.	9½
Henry Cuningham Examining 1 day	0.	1.	7½
Turning an arch over the Gate	0.	8.	8
A lock for the Gate	0.	8.	1½
Propping the Church	0.	8.	8
Total:	£3.	18.	10.

Signed W. De Burgho, Francis Frewen, James Crawley Church Warden and John Murray Rector”

John Murray served as Vicar from 1777 to c 1789 when he moved on to become Dean of Killaloe until his death on the 25th June 1790. He had been educated in Queen’s College, Cambridge and was married to Elizabeth, daughter of William Murray, 4th earl of Dunmore. They had two daughters. ⁴

The Present Church

However despite their gallant efforts the church at Stradbally had fallen into such a state of disrepair that the place of worship had to be completely abandoned and the Rector of the time Josiah Crampton held service in the “ballroom of the widow Mulloughny (the local ballroom at the Spa, later Hartigan’s Hall) prior to 1800 and until the new church was ready”. ⁵

From 1803 to 1842 the church was served by the Reverend Josiah Crampton. Under his tenure the present Protestant Church All Saints was built at Stradbally fronting the old church ruin. A memorial plaque to Rev. Crampton is situated behind the pulpit.

⁴ Clergy of Killaloe, Kilfenora, Clonfert and Kilmacduagh (2010)

⁵ Kevin Hannan, The Old Limerick Journal, Castleconnell, Part II.



It reads as follows, "to the memory of the Reverend Josiah Crampton 40 years Minister of this Union, the inhabitants amongst whom he resided for the whole of that period, whose wants he relieved, whose sickness he visited, whose disputes he composed, whose affections he gained by the simplicity of his manners and the kindness of his heart, erect this table, in token of their lasting gratitude, and respect. He died on the 2nd day of April in the year of Our Lord MDCCCLXII and in the 68th of his age".

Plaque to the memory of Rev. Josiah Crampton

Unfortunately not all held the dear Reverend in such high esteem. During his time in Stradbally he is said to have antagonised quite a number of his congregation including the Richardson, Graham, Frewen, and Benn families.

In spite of this All Saints Church stands as a permanent monument to his memory and care for his people. According to Lewis (1837) "the church, [All Saints] was erected in 1809, by local architect Welland and Gillespie with the aid of a grant of £250 from the late Board of First Fruits. This was greatly enlarged in 1830, and is now a beautiful cruciform edifice with a lofty octagonal spire. There is no glebe house, but a glebe of 2 acres 0 roods and 14 perches". Today the church at Stradbally is not cruciform in shape and a "mellow Tudor" style house, which served as the Sexton's lodge, is located in the chapel yard. Much of the church has been renovated throughout the intervening years.

In 1809 during his tenure as Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenora, Bishop Robert Ponsonby Tottenham dedicated and consecrated All Saints Church, Stradally. Robert Ponsonby Tottenham (Robert Ponsonby Loftus until 1806) was an Irish Anglican Bishop in the first half of the 19th century. He was born the younger son of Charles Loftus, 1st Marquis of Ely in Woodstock, County Wicklow on 5 September 1773 and educated at Christ Church, Oxford. He was Precentor of Cashel from 1798 until 1804 when he was elevated to the Episcopate as Bishop of Killaloe and Kilfenora (1804-1820).

James⁶ (1779–1877) and George Richard Pain (Architects) were commissioned by the Board of First Fruits to design churches and glebe houses in Ireland. More than likely it was in this context that Pain was responsible for the enlargement of the north transept and porch, the conversion of transept into nave and resiting of the chancel in 1826.

Again in 1844 Pain was commissioned to design a sarcophagus for Anne, Countess of Clare, while in 1855 he designed the burial vault for General Sir Richard Bourke of Thornfield, Lisnagry who actually passed away while at divine service in this Church. In 1833, James Pain became one of the four principal architects of the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He settled in Limerick and many of his designs were produced in collaboration with his brother George Richard who practiced in Cork.

Architects Welland and Gillespie undertook “extensive works according to plans by architects to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, including the resiting of chancel at the East end of original nave and the reseating of the entire church” in 1863.

William Joseph Welland and William Gillespie were appointed joint architects to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in May 1860, following the death of Joseph Welland. Both men were already in the employment of the Commissioners. They held the post until the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland on 31 December 1870. During their ten years in office, they developed an increasingly personal and idiosyncratic version of Gothic in the churches which they designed.⁷

There are many unusual features in the present church which are worth a closer examination, including wooden panelling, chiming bells, and the Columbarium. The panelling in the chancel area was brought from St. John’s Church, Newport on its demolition and was erected personally in All Saints’ by the rector of the time, the Rev. Canon James Pennefather. A small plate inset in the panelling records this fact.

The set of eight chiming bells came from St. Mary’s Church, Ovens in Co. Cork after its closure. They are over one hundred years old and were cast by Barrington’s of Coventry.

The Columbarium consists of twenty-five niches where ashes can be laid to rest following a cremation. Each niche is covered with a marble tile upon which the name of the deceased may be engraved.

The baptismal font at the rear of the church is inscribed with the words *“In memory of Alice Mary Bourke born 1877 died 1880, of such is the kingdom of heaven”*

⁶ James was born into a family of English architects, his grandfather William Pain, his father James Pain and his brother George Richard Pain. James Pain served as an apprentice to the architect John Nash of London.

⁷ Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720-1940

The Baptismal Font situated at the rear of All Saints' Church is inscribed with the words "In memory of Alice Mary Bourke born 1877 died 1880, of such is the kingdom of heaven".



The pulpit is a magnificent piece of limestone carving and is dedicated to "To the glory of God and in loving memory of John Ulick Bourke of Thornfields 17th May 1910".

The front of this pamphlet is adorned with the stained glass of the East Window which depicts the Ascension. It was dedicated in 1877 to the memory of Crofton Moore Vandeleur a member of yet another distinguished local family. There are several other windows of great beauty all around the church.



Vine Window

“God is our hope and Strength”

Erected in loving memory of Gerald
& Hilda Goodbody, by their sons &
daughter



Easter Lily Window

“They shall walk with me in white”

Rev. 3 v 4

To the memory of Anne, the beloved
wife of Richard Bourke of Thornfield
Ob 11 Sept. 1878

Memorial Plaques

Famous Families

Internally the walls of All Saints' are thickly covered with plaques serving as memorials to the various families associated with the area. Included in this august body are the names Massy, Bourke, Fitzgibbon and Vandeleur.

Massy Family

The church contains memorial plaques to the following members of the Massy Family.

- Hugh Hamon 4th Baron Massy died 1836 at 43 years old
- Matilda Baroness Massy widow of the 4th Baron died 1883
- Her eldest son Hugh Hamon 5th Baron Massy 1827-1874
- Isabella Baroness Massy wife of 5th Baron Massy 1829-1917
- Lucy Maria Baroness Massy wife of John Thomas William 6th Baron Massy
- John Thomas William 6th Baron Massy died November 1913.

The Massy family had a long association with the parish church at Stradbally and the area in general. Hugh Massy arrived in Ireland as a captain of cavalry in the forces sent by King Charles I in 1641 to suppress an outbreak of rebellion and was subsequently awarded landholdings at Duntrileague in Co. Limerick for his services during Cromwell's Irish campaign. In 1776 his great grandson, also Hugh Massy, was created Baron Massy of Duntrileague.⁸ By 1880 the family had amassed landholdings of over 30,000 acres and a number of large mansions in various parts of the country including The Hermitage here in Castleconnell in the 1790's.



A view of The Hermitage
circa 1900

(Now demolished)

© Vanishing Country
Houses of Ireland (1989)

⁸ Frank Tracy, 'If Those Trees Could Speak, The story of an ascendancy family in Ireland', South Dublin Libraries (2005).

The Limerick Evening Post of Wednesday June 24th, 1812, contained the following death notice:- *On Sunday morning inst. at three o'clock the Right Honourable Hugh Massy, Lord Baron Massy, (3rd) died at his seat, Hermitage, in this county, to the inexplicable grief of his truly affectionate and disconsolate family – and regret of his numerous tenantry and friends.*



Memorial Plaque to Rt. Hon. Hugh Hamon, fourth Lord Baron Massy

He is succeeded in his title and estates by his son Hugh, a minor, now Lord (4th) Baron Massy. He succeeded to the title in June 1812. He died aged 43 and is buried in Castleconnell. During the 17th and 18th centuries a succession of members of the Massy family sat in the Irish House of Commons. The Hon. John Thomas William Massy (5th Baron) succeeded to the title in 1874. Appointed Sheriff of Co. Leitrim in 1863 and of Co. Limerick, 1873 he also served terms as Deputy Lieutenant of both counties. They had one son Hugh Somerset, and two daughters Lucy Matilda and Matilda Isabella. Lady Lucy Maria Massy died on 28th July 1896 and is buried in the family vault at Castleconnell. The Hon. John Thomas William Massy (6th Baron) took his seat in Parliament as a Representative Peer (conservative) in 1876. He died on 28th November 1915, aged 80 at Killakee, Co. Dublin.

On 2nd December 1915, his remains were brought by train from Dublin to Castleconnell and following a funeral service in the local Church of Ireland parish church he was laid to rest in the Massy family vault alongside his wife and mother.⁹

This same Lord Massy led an extravagant lifestyle living life to the full. He became famous for hosting shooting parties at Killakee and fishing parties at Hermitage.

⁹ Frank Tracy, 'If Those Trees Could Speak, The story of an ascendancy family in Ireland', South Dublin Libraries (2005).

Following his death the contents of The Hermitage were sold including paintings by Rembrandt and Vermeer along with valuable Irish silver. Despite this, this barely paid his debts and his heir was left penniless.

The privilege of sitting in the Lords' Gallery in All Saints Church was accorded to the family of Baron Massy, the highest ranking aristocrat in Castleconnell at the time.

Although now boarded up the Lord's Gallery is still clearly visible, and also within All Saints' is an ornate brass lectern presented in memory of the sixth baron who died in 1915.

A story is told of how during these lavish parties at Hermitage Lord Massy brought all his house-guests to Church on Sunday. In order that they would not be bored by long sermons, he had a clock erected, facing the pulpit so that the rector would know when to stop. If the sermon went on too long, Lord Massy would start to rattle his stick on the floor of the Lord's Gallery to hasten the end of the sermon.

The Fitzgibbon Family

The church contains the following plaques to the Fitzgibbon Family:

- Anne Countess of Clare widow of John 1st Earl of Clare also known as "Black Jack Fitzgibbon" died 1844
- John 2nd Earl of Clare Lieutenant & Chief Justice of the Peace for the County of Limerick and also sometime Governor of Bombay. Erected by his brother Richard 3rd Earl of Clare and his sister Lady Isabella Fitzgibbon.

The Fitzgibbon family were established at Ballysheedy, county Limerick from the mid-18th century. In 1795 John Fitzgibbon, 1st Viscount Fitzgibbon, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, was created Earl of Clare. It was approximately at this time that he re-modelled and extended Mountshannon House in Lisnagry which became the family seat.



A view of Mount Shannon House
circa 1900

(Now demolished)

© Vanishing Country Houses of
Ireland (1989)

Copy Photograph William Garner

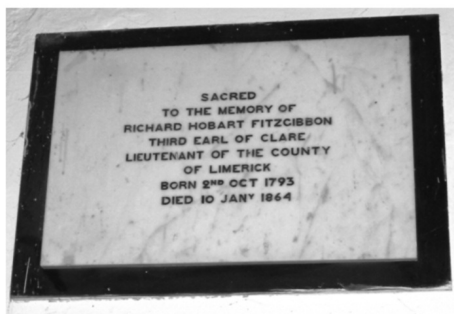
According to local lore John Fitzgibbon earned his name 'Black Jack' because of his black heartedness. In Belmont House – now Rosary Hill Nursing Home, 'Black Jack' made plans with Lord Castlereagh for The Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland which came into being on the 1st January 1801. Lord Castlereagh and 'Black Jack' drank heavily while making plans for the Act of Union. It is said that he vowed he would make the Irish as "tame as a dead cat". The next day suffering from a severe hang-over he had the dogs set loose on his women workers, badly injuring one woman, to whom he later paid compensation in the sum of five pounds.

Consistent with local folklore one day 'Black Jack' was riding on his horse around his estate in Mountshannon when he saw a hovel with an old woman living in it. He decided he wanted it for his dogs and had her evicted. As she was being evicted crows flew overhead cawing loudly and menacingly. She stared hard at Lord Clare 'Black Jack' and said "May the curse of the crows be on your lordship, within six months you will fall off your horse and break your neck! And the crows will fly through the windows of your house". She also informed him to the day that his family would become extinct. The widow's prophesy came true. Black Jack was thrown from his horse and died a fortnight later as a result of injuries sustained from the fall. At his funeral a dead cat was thrown on his coffin reminding all present of his promise.

He was succeeded by two of his sons as 2nd and 3rd Earls.



John FitzGibbon, 2nd Earl of Clare
 KP GCH PC (10 July 1792 – 18 August 1851)



Richard Hobart Fitzgibbon 3rd Earl of Clare 1793-1864

In 1826 the 2nd Earl married Elizabeth Burrell, daughter of Peter 1st Lord Gwydyr. The title 'Earl of Clare' became extinct in 1864 following the death of the 3rd Earl as his only son and heir was killed in the Charge of the Light Brigade.

Mount Shannon was inherited by his daughter Lady Louisa who owned an estate of over 10,000 acres in county Limerick and over 3,000 acres in county Tipperary in the 1870s. Lady Louisa married twice. Her husbands were Gerald N. Dillon, sixth son of Viscount Dillon and the Marchese della Rocella.

Situated on the Main Dublin to Limerick Road is a pump endowed by the Fitzgibbon Family. In times past long before any public water schemes, this pump provided the area of Ahane with a plentiful supply of fresh water. It has since been removed from its original setting of Carrowkeel and the monument can now be seen just off the main Dublin Road in Lisnagry. Engraved on it are these words:

"The pump placed on this spot by John, Earl of Clare K.P. was renovated in 1875 and this memorial erected by his niece Lady Louisa Fitzgibbon of Mountshannon and by her husband the Honourable Gerald N. Fitzgibbon, in memory of their eldest son, Charles Richard George, who died on 30th July, 1870 in his 21st year. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. As it has pleased the Lord so it is done. Blessed be the name of the Lord. JOB 21.V. Requiescat in Pace.

Sir Richard Bourke

There are several memorials to members of the Bourke Family but the most significant one is that of Sir Richard Bourke (1778-1855), sometime governor of New South Wales. He was born on 4 May 1777 in Dublin, the son of John Bourke of Drumsally, County Limerick, and his wife Anne. He was educated at Westminster School and at Oxford (B.A., 1798). His vacations were spent at the home of his distant relation, Edmund Burke. He joined the British Army and having attained the rank of General retired to farm in Thornfields. In 1800 he married Elizabeth and they had two sons and three daughters.

In 1825 he was called upon to give evidence before the Select Committee appointed in 1825 to enquire into the "State of Ireland". Bourke testified that 'the Roman Catholic peasantry in Ireland are aware that they labour under certain civil disabilities; that they are to a certain degree, a proscribed and degraded class in their own country...and that to his knowledge there had been instances of partiality in the administration of the laws by the justices, where favour had been shown to a Protestant to the prejudice of a Catholic...and that such perversion of justice inevitably led to disrespect and distrust of the law and as a consequence to law breaking.'

Such broadmindedness and such statesmanlike utterances as these were only to be expected from a kinsman of Edmond Burke the great orator. General Bourke carried these liberal principles with him when he was appointed shortly afterwards Governor of Cape Colony in South Africa. In 1828 he passed ordnance which liberated the coloured inhabitants of the colony from past laws, guarded them against unfavourable labour contracts, and placed them on an equal footing with white persons before the law. It also removed doubts which had previously existed as to their legal ability to own land and protected them and their children in many other ways.

But before the year was out Bourke was recalled, and while his Ordnance served as a guide and influence in other countries his successor saw to it that it was not implemented at the Cape as Bourke had intended.

In 1831 Sir Richard was appointed Governor of New South Wales, Australia and he brought the same altruistic liberal views to bear on his work there. Approximately two-fifths of the colony were convicts and they worked for the remaining three-fifths. This gave rise to serious social and economic problems not the least of which consisted in brutal discipline by the masters to control the convicts and make them work harder. This in turn brutalized the convicts and drove them to violence and crime. Sir Richard, with the experience of years behind him saw the futility of this system and bent his mind to improving it. Improve it he did, but in the face of very bitter opposition.

According to Reid (1990) 'to the Irish Roman Catholics of New South Wales in 1833, Bourke was their champion; despite his own Irish Protestant background, he ensured that all churches received government support in proportion to their adherents. He tried unsuccessfully to introduce a national system of education for all, irrespective of religion or ability to pay.'¹⁰ Sir Richard's term of office was ended in 1837. When he left New South Wales in 1837, £3,500 was collected to erect a statue to a man who according to its inscription, "...raised the colony to unexampled prosperity and retired amid the reverent and affectionate regret of the people".

This monument still stands today outside the Mitchell Library in Sydney, but is not only in New South Wales that this great Irishman is remembered as a humane and enlightened administrator with all the Irish traits of compassion for the underdog and a fierce sense of justice and fair play. He is recalled with affection in Ahane as it was he who in 1823 with the aid of a £50 subsidy from the Kildare Place Society, built what came to be known as Ahane School on his property. Stone House Ahane was built in 1825 by the British Government and was given to Sir Richard. It is popularly believed that it was originally intended as a barracks to protect him from the "Republican element" of Irish society. He is said to have retorted that he "did not need protection from his own people" and gave the building as a dispensary to Ahane which according to Lewis (1837) is "connected with that of Castleconnell". Sir Richard concentrated for the rest of his life on farming development and forestation.

Plaque to Sir Richard & his wife Elizabeth Jane



The plaque reads as follows: "In memory of General Sir Richard Bourke K.G.B. of Thornfields in this parish, Colonel of her Majesty's 6th Regiment and sometime Lieutenant Governor of the Cape of Good Hope and Governor General of the British Colonies in Australia. A man whose justice ability and wisdom in the discharge of his high public duties whose signal courtesy gentleness and charity in every relation of private life are reflected in the laws of the Dominions where he governed and are written in the hearts of all connected with him by the ties of dependence of friendship or of kindred. He was born on the 4th of May 1776. He was suddenly called in this House of Prayer and fell asleep in the Lord on the 18th of August 1855.

¹⁰ Richard Reid, 'Some Limerick Links with Australia', Autumn Edition (The Old Limerick Journal) 1990.

He was among the local gentry who helped by giving employment during the famine years and was very much concerned with local affairs. The former police barracks was a soup kitchen for the people of the district. Reddin (1993) states that "Bourke and his wife were very active in providing poor relief in the district. Bourke was chairman of both the Limerick Agricultural Association and the Limerick Relief Committee, and Elizabeth was the Secretary of the Limerick branch of the British and Irish ladies Society for Relief of the Irish Peasantry as well as the district association of Castleconnell and Killeenagarraiff". As befitted such a kindly man he passed away in All Saints Church, as it states on the plaque "he was suddenly called, in this house of prayer, and fell asleep in the Lord on the 12th day of August, 1855".

Battles Far and Near

In All Saints Church history speaks from the quiet walls as we remember those who lost their lives in warfare while serving with the British Army in distant countries from India to Flanders, many of whom died gloriously on the famous battlefields of the world – at Waterloo and Balaclava, Afghanistan and Iraq, in places as far apart as Cawnpore and the Somme – their names honoured and their deeds recorded for posterity.¹¹

The Peninsular War and The Battle of Waterloo

John Vandeleur Late Colonel of HM Hussars who died at Ballinacourty aged 71 years is memorialised in a plaque which reads he 'served with distinction through The Peninsular War & Waterloo as aid-de-camp to Gen. Sir John Ormsby Vandeleur also in the 71st Regiment and 12th Lancers'

The Peninsular War lasted six years from 1808 to 1814. It was basically the efforts of the British Army under the Duke of Wellington and his Portuguese and Spanish allies to oust Napoleon and his "Grande Armée" from Spain. Towards the end of the campaign, Napoleon surrendered and was sent into exile on the island of Elba. He escaped from the island approximately a year later and was free for one hundred days. His final fall came at the Battle of Waterloo.

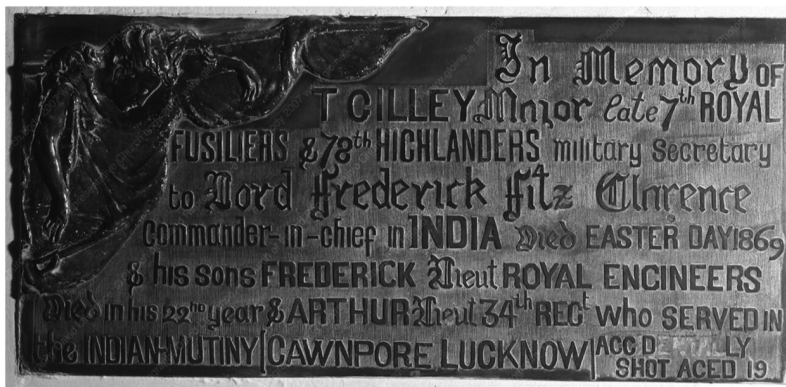
This battle was fought on Sunday, 18 June 1815 near Waterloo in present-day Belgium. An Imperial French army under the command of Emperor Napoleon was defeated by the armies of the Seventh Coalition, comprising an Anglo-Allied army under the command of the Duke of Wellington combined with a Prussian army under the command of Gebhard von Blücher. It was the culminating battle of the Waterloo Campaign and Napoleon's last. The defeat at Waterloo ended his rule as Emperor of the French, marking the end of his Hundred Days return from exile. He was then banished to the island of St. Helena where he died.

¹¹ Joe Carroll & Pat Tuohy, *Village by Shannon, the Story of Castleconnell and its Hinterland, (1991).*



Plaque erected to the memory of John Vandeleur who "served with distinction through the Peninsular War and at Waterloo" (Died aged 71 years)

Indian Mutiny Cawnpore

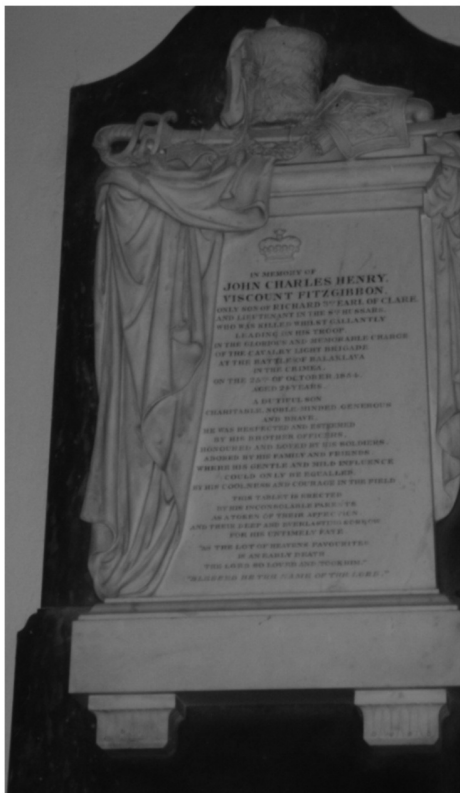


Memorial to amongst others Arthur Gilley who served in the Indian Mutiny, Cawnpore Crimean War

The Siege of Cawnpore was a key episode in the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The besieged British in Cawnpore (now Kanpur) were unprepared for an extended siege and surrendered to rebel Indian forces under Nana Sahib, in return for a safe passage to Allahabad. However, under ambiguous circumstances, their evacuation from Cawnpore turned into a massacre, and most of them were killed.

The Crimean War

The Crimean War (October 1853 – February 1856) was a conflict between the Russian Empire and an alliance of the French Empire, the British Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Kingdom of Sardinia. The war was part of a long-running contest between the major European powers for influence over territories of the declining Ottoman Empire. Most of the conflict took place on the Crimean Peninsula. It was during this campaign that the Charge of the Light Brigade took place and the only son and heir of the 3rd Earl of Clare lost his life.



**In memory of John Charles Henry Viscount Fitzgibbon
who was killed ...at the Battle of Balaklava in the Crimea**

In memory of John Charles Henry Viscount Fitzgibbon, only son of Richard 3rd Earl of Clare and Lieutenant in the 8th Huzzars who was killed whilst gallantly leading his troop in the glorious and memorable charge of the cavalry light brigade at the battle of Balaklava in the Crimea on the 25th of October 1854.

A dutiful son, charitable, noble-minded, generous and brave He was respected and esteemed by his brother officers honoured and loved by his soldiers, adored by his family & friends where his gentle and mild influence could only be equalled by his coolness and courage in the field.

This tablet is erected by his inconsolable parents as a token of their affection and their deep and everlasting sorrow for his untimely fate As the lot of heaven's favourites is an early death . The Lord so loved and took him

"Blessed be the name of the Lord".

Maiwand

Among those remembered in All Saints' Church was Edmund G. Osborne, RHA, killed in action at Maiwand, Afghanistan, July 27th 1880 aged 26 years. The Battle of Maiwand on 27 July 1880 was one of the principal battles of the Second Anglo-Afghan War. The Afghans under the leadership of Ayub Khan defeated two brigades of British and Indian troops under Brigadier General George Burrows, though at a high price: between 2,050 and 2,750 Afghan warriors were killed, and probably 1,500 wounded. 969 British and Indian soldiers were killed and 177 wounded.

Kut-al-Amara

Otto Charles Ward from 124th Baluchistan Infantry died near Kut-el-Amara on 11th January 1917 aged 33 years. The siege of Kut-el-Amara (7 December 1915-29 April 1916) was the besieging of an 8,000 strong British – Indian garrison in the town of Kut, 100 miles south of Baghdad, by the Ottoman Army. Following the surrender of the garrison, the survivors of nearly five months of siege were marched to imprisonment at Aleppo where most of them perished.

Somme – First World War

Among those honoured in All Saints' Church are Captain John Forrest Rutledge M.C. who was killed in the Somme Battle July 1st 1916 (aged 21 years) and Major Edward Craig Robertson, York and Lancaster Regiment, who was killed in France on 29th September 1915. The Battle of the Somme, also known as the Somme Offensive, was one of the largest battles of the First World War. Fought between July 1 and November 1, 1916 near the Somme River in France, it was also one of the bloodiest military battles in history. On the first day alone, the British suffered more than 57,000 casualties, and by the end of the campaign the Allies and Central Powers would lose more than 1.5 million men. 49,400 Irish soldiers gave their lives in the Great War.



Plaque commemorates Capt. John Forrest Rutledge, M.C. who perished at The Battle of The Somme.

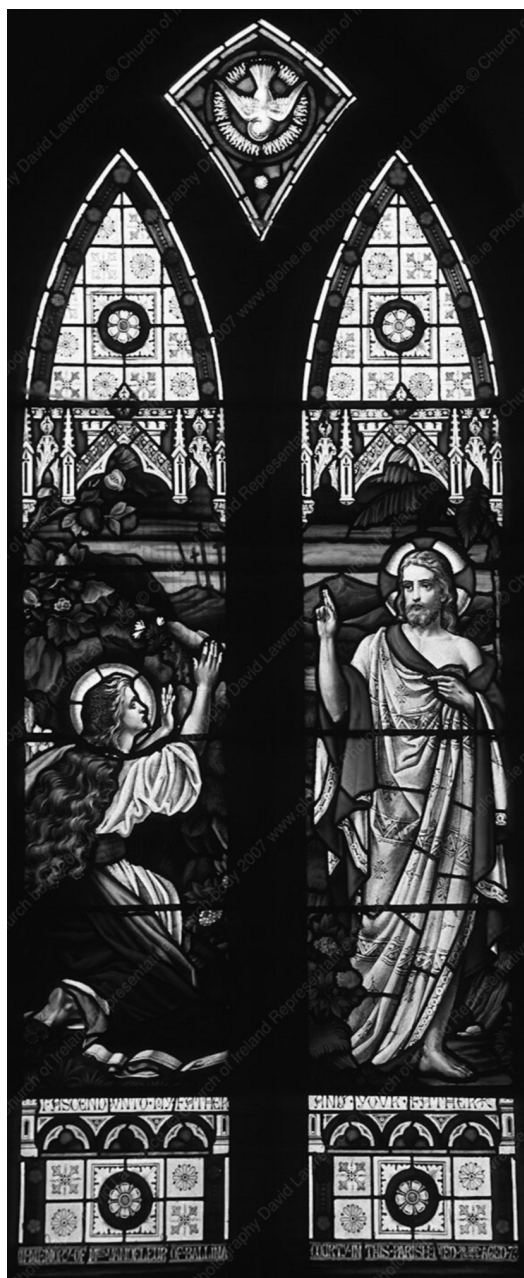


This plaque commemorates Major Edward Craig Robertson, York and Lancaster Regiment, who was killed in France on 29th September 1915.

As we have seen the history of All Saints' Church Stradbally is inextricably linked with the area of Castleconnell, the valiant and the proud, the brave and the bold, the munificent and the charitable many of whom are commemorated within its walls and within the hearts of those who worship here.

Researched, Compiled and Written by

Mary A. Moloney, Edward Richardson and Margaret Jackson



Christ appears to Mary
Magdalene.

"I ascend unto my
Father and your
Father"

In memory of Mrs.
Vandeleur, of
Ballinacourty, in this
parish died December
20 1884 aged 73.

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An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

Pride of Place in Our Village

by Shannon

On Wednesday, August 8th last, Castleconnell was judged in the Co-operation Ireland 32 County Pride of Place Competition. This competition was introduced in order to appreciate and honour the efforts of the community who come together to improve their local area and its amenities. Castleconnell is in the category of population of over 1,000 people and the committee is made up of representatives of the local ACM, Tidy Towns, Development Association, local Cultural and Sporting Organisations with Colm Martin as Chairperson.

The following piece by Barbara Hartigan introduced the Judges to our lovely village and its many amenities.

Good morning!

You could have travelled to Castleconnell by helicopter, by river or by rail!

But, you probably arrived by road from Daly's Cross, past Castleconnell National School with its well-earned "Green" flags proudly fluttering, displaying its students environmental awareness.

You have passed the Award winning Station, festooned with flowers. Here we take a right turn, down Main St heading towards the romantically named World's End.

Today, on this fantastic stretch of river, stands the Boat Club with its fine purpose built club house that introduces 100 boys and girls of all ages to the sport of rowing.

Last year, 2011, they won three National Titles, had two members selected for the Irish National Team, and one rower on the Paralympics Team in London, even as we speak.

For close on thirty years dedicated volunteers have fund raised tirelessly to ensure that the red and grey vests of Castleconnell rowers are participating in Regattas both nationally and internationally.

The construction of a slipway to facilitate disabled rowers has proved a unique, wonderful and most welcome innovation.

As we return to the village, let us take a quick detour into Scanlan Park to admire the Soccer pitch where recently, Johnny Giles encouraged 230 young, eager boys and girls to work towards fulfilling their dreams.

There too, let's pause at the Community Allotments, an initiative with Limerick County Council and Ballyhoura to see how the future is in the capable green fingers of 22 families.

Heading back to the village, past the imposing Church with its great windows and Celtic monuments, to the Community Hall with its newly refurbished stage and sound system, where groups gather to play badminton, to dance, to direct drama, to tackle the skills of Scouting, Judo and Tai Chi. The ICA is also a strong organisation in the parish and they meet monthly to share their talents, their opinions and their friendship.

The old pump still stands at the top of the street, lovingly decorated with flowers, planted and cared for by the ever vigilant Tidy Town's members whose "Pride of Place" is so much in evidence.

As we face down towards the ruins of the great castle we see the ACM on our left. What vision and foresight to take the brave steps in 1998, to embark on making such a financial investment, not to mention the years voluntary commitment and hard work needed to make this building become the heart of the community.

It is here that the Evergreen Rambling House meet once a month to share their music, their memories and their laughter over a cup of tea.

Here too you will find Poetry readings, Art exhibitions, History talks, Fetes, Festivals and Fancy dresses that involve people of all ages and interests and provide a venue for friendship, fun and for fundraising.

What joy to see the now Annual St Patrick's Day Parade grow from a modest beginning, to snake right around the village, followed everywhere by cheering crowds and excited children.



Colm Martin and the judges leaving the A.C.M. Centre

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

At the bottom of the street to the right, you can see the Credit Union that backs and supports families the length and breadth of the Parish.

Most recently, the new Playground, beautifully located draws parents and children together, to swing, to slide, to spin, to climb and to chat. What better place to make new friends!

Next door, the old School House now resounds with the sound of music as the Harp is joyfully taught to eager students from far and wide in the Irish Harp Centre.

Taking the river walk to the footbridge, we can stand and watch the mighty Shannon gain speed, to prepare itself for some white water that entices intrepid Kayaks, filled with the spirit of adventure, to lurch, slide and tumble towards the Falls of Doonass. It was on this stretch of river that to great excitement, the World Kayaking Championships were held in November 2007.

Continuing along the river path through the most wonderful avenue of trees, that tip their toes in the water and sometimes even wade in waist high as the water levels rise. We follow this nature trail and admire its many points of interest, listen to the sounds of its wildlife and smell the scents of its surroundings.

Pride of Place is shared with visitors who stay in the Castle Oaks Hotel, where we climb the twenty five steps that link the grounds to this unspoilt riverside walk.

Across the road, in All Saints Church of Ireland, a wonderful Autumn Series of Concerts is held, organised by Limerick County Council, the Arts Council, Music Network and local parishioners, bringing renowned international artists to perform in this beautiful and intimate venue.

How proud we are to share the magic, as a capacity audience sit transfixed in candle light listening to beautiful music.

On Summer evenings, here in Mackey Country, you can hear the cheers, the whistling, the shouting and the clapping as sportsmen and women meet to train, to practice, to compete and hopefully to win. Every triumph is heralded with a lap of honour around the village with cheering players, supporters and a cavalcade of horn blowing cars and we all get to share the glory and excitement.

Castleconnell is full of People who Share, People who Care and People who want to make a difference.

Those like the Care of the Aged Members who, with a small committee of 12 and 24 voluntary drivers, tirelessly look after the elderly and the more vulnerable in our society. They have provided approximately 1,600 meals on wheels every year, for the past thirty five years, not to mention much needed friendship, foot care and fuel.

We have wonderful Singers, Choirs, Musicians, Groups and Bands who delight in providing entertainment for every occasion.

The Annual Craft Fair, has gained the reputation of being one of the best run and most innovative craft fairs in the country. For the past twenty four years, it has ploughed back its profits into the community, while giving a platform to local creativity.

The Folk Group, now in its seventeenth year, meet every Tuesday night in Herberts to provide music for all tastes, poetry, prose and participation. And if Tuesdays don't suit you, on Wednesdays you can enjoy a traditional evening of toe tapping rhythm, atmosphere and craic in Guerins.

Last month, forty seven members of the Mid-West Vocal Academy Community Choir and forty three members of the Watch House Cross Choir from Limerick City, returned from a highly successful visit to Poland, where unlike the Irish Team, they definitely scored!

We are proud of the time and effort spent in restoring Gouig Bog. We are protective of our environment and as you will see, we are passionately determined to assist in the survival of the honey bee!

The fifty eight organisations that exist and thrive in Castleconnell are a testament to the vibrance, the enthusiasm, the dedication and the vision of its people.

This is our Place. Our Pride and Joy - OUR VILLAGE BY THE SHANNON!

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One Day in August

At 1:45 in the afternoon of 8th August 2012 the door gently closed and the vintage car containing the two judges pulled out down Castle Street, turned left on to the back road and away from the village.

The TG4 van was loaded up, the local garda giving a wave as they passed by, the community hall emptying of people and equipment, shopkeepers taking posters down, volunteers sweeping the detritus away. The village was strangely quiet following its earlier bustle and intensity.

The judges had just carried away a jumble of memories and events that had occurred here that would no doubt be discussed and collated, and form the basis of their report. What they left behind in Castleconnell however was a myriad of emotions, relief, satisfaction and sense of achievement not only how we stood together and displayed the best of what we were about, but in more important and long-lasting terms, the renewal and re-energising of our community bond and spirit.

The competition, Pride of Place (PoP), started in 2004, a 32 county initiative run by Co-operation Ireland in conjunction with local authorities, was designed to recognise and celebrate the vital contributions that community groups make to foster and improve their communities in sports, cultural activities, civic pride, caring groups, future planning, heritage and environmental awareness. It all seemed to fit.

Our preparations had started on May 23rd 2012 when representatives of community groups and individuals responded to an invitation to a public meeting held in the local Harp Centre and heard that Limerick County Council has asked Castleconnell to consider being the county nomination in the over 1,500 population category of the PoP competition.

The strong consensus was that we were happy to be nominated, thought it would be a good event for the village, as well as strongly believing we had a good shot at doing well. After all it wasn't every day that one was asked to become a member of a PoP group!

A committee of 14 was quickly formed, made up of representatives of committee groups and other activists in order to organise ourselves for the day. Little did we know

A survey of the active community groups (58) showed the depth of volunteerism and activity present in the village and hinterland as well as a sense of the work we had in front of us. The committee formally met weekly at the start and more intensely as judging date loomed, handling the various issues that needed to be addressed, harnessing the community groups and their members to assist in the task.

We planned a program for the day, developed a series of presentations, prepared to show photos and clips and provide a tour of the village and also a forum to give the judges the opportunity to meet and put questions to the community. Decisions to be made abounded, what venues to use, what sights to include, how we should make our pitch, who to make it and how to fund it, but how to involve everyone was critical. Mail drops to every house in the area, communications via the community groups, notes into the local newspapers and pamphlets, holding a competition in the national school and elsewhere as to why they like living in Castleconnell and countdown posters XXDays to Go! were some of the activities undertaken to engage local interest. One by one tasks were assigned and issues raised and addressed. Meetings were always lengthy and intense and not without heat along the way. But all of these sprung from passion and drive with the best interest of the village in our hearts and together we forged our agenda.

That morning at precisely 10am, the judges arrived at the ACM and were warmly welcomed by a packed room of locals, many of whom had taken the day off just to be here.

The judges listened to local presentations of the history, present day and future plans, and watched a DVD of the sights and sounds of Castleconnell at work and play. They asked searching, provocative and challenging questions about funding, planning, supports and linkages to other areas and agencies. The contribution from local voices in the audience cannot but have impressed them. This engagement with the community with so many questions and our responses, threw our timetable completely out!

A tour of the ACM, World's End, Scanlan Park, Playground and Ferry area. Harp Centre, Hotel and Churches followed, including musical interludes and planned activities. The day was kind to us, overcast but warm and dry. At each point, the judges were informed of the history and present day activities and plans that took place there. We had fishermen and rowers, gardeners and footballers, singers and comógie players, beekeepers and toddlers, storytellers and musicians, parsons and priests all dropping by. However our train driver who held up the judge's car for 10 minutes at the level crossing was not at this time, considered in the same high regard!

The day cumulated in a visit to our aptly named community hall where our community groups had set up stalls advertising their activities. The presence of a Castleconnell Pride of Place banner that ran the length of the hall, with each letter individually handcrafted by locals framed the presence of the whole community who attended in such numbers. The judges toured the hall with some difficulty given the crowds and spoke to each of the groups manning stands all of which just radiated enthusiasm and passion for what they represented. The artefacts on display, the vibrancy and colour, the

presence of young and old, the representation of local sports, heritage, environment, arts and music, leisure and community support groups, each of whom proudly displayed their endeavours with pamphlets, videos, trophies, books, clothing and pictures. The excitement and buzz in the hall was palpable.

It was great that we took a moment to show enormous pride in ourselves, and to witness how our community bound tight together on this special day. Our special place — Castleconnell — Our Village by the Shannon.

Castleconnell Pride of Place Committee; Irene Cullen (Treas) Janet Harbison, John Hardiman, Barbara Hartigan, Turlough Herbert, Majella Hynan, Colm Martin (Chair), Brendan Murphy, John Mc Namara, Nicky McNamara, Gobnait O'Connell, Catherine O'Doherty, Judy O'Hare (Sec).

Postscript: On Saturday, November 3rd at the Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony held in Thomond Park, Castleconnell Village was awarded Runner-up in the 2012 All-Ireland Pride of Place Competition.

Congratulations from An Caisleán and the whole parish.



Little Tara Gets New Liver

Tara Madigan, little daughter of Seán and Anne was born without a bile duct which is necessary to drain bile from the liver. It affects about 1 in 15,000 people and she needed to have two operations, one of which they performed immediately and the second one would have to be a liver transplant when the need arose.

Tara attended Dr Blaithnaid McCurtain, our local GP, the Mid-Western Regional Hospital and Crumlin Children's Hospital for regular check-ups and was on continual medication since birth, but, she took all this in her stride and grew up like any other little girl, starting school in Castleconnell N.S. and playing with her two sisters Éile and Érin and her many little friends.

In December last year, while on a routine visit to Crumlin Hospital, doctors discovered that the complicated blood flow around her liver was causing a problem with absorbing oxygen into her lungs known as hepatopulmonary syndrome.

Her parents had to prepare themselves and their little girl very quickly as she was going to be sent forward to be assessed for a liver transplant. This assessment took place in London in January and she was placed on the transplant list in February. It was now a waiting game for the Madigan family and although they had been told it could take from six to twelve months for a donor to become available, they received the call they had been both dreading and hoping for at the same time, just seven weeks later.

It was all systems go as Sean and Anne got ready to leave for London, but Tara was quite cool about it all. They were escorted to Baldonnel by the Limerick Traffic Corps and flew to London on one of the Air Corps fisheries



Tara and
Mrs. De Paor

patrol planes. Without delay they arrived in Heathrow where an ambulance was waiting to take them to King's College Hospital. Sean explains that speed is of the essence in these situations as they cannot harvest the organ from the donor until they know for certain that they have a recipient waiting and available in the Hospital.

The operation commenced at 7am and lasted for nine hours. The only information the family have on the donor is that it was a seventeen year old girl whose liver was divided between Tara and another child and her heart and lungs were also donated. For this Anne and Sean are so very grateful and extend their heartfelt thanks for such a "precious gift" and thank God that this seventeen year old girl was carrying a donor card.

Tara is such a resilient and strong little girl that her recovery progress was very steady and they returned home on April 6th, her sister Éile's eighth birthday. Her parents, sisters and extended family are delighted that Tara's ordeal is over and she is continuing to make great progress she was even back in school before the summer holidays to receive a cheque on behalf of Children's Liver Disease Ireland from Derbhile De Paor, Principal. This was the proceeds of a movie day organised by the Parents Association.

Tara is a truly remarkable little girl who has been through such a huge ordeal but has inspired all those around her.

A. Berkery

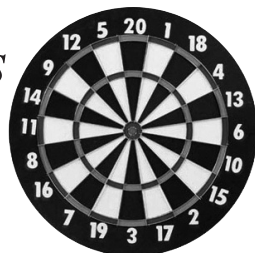
The Ramble Inn

(Pat & Marie Culhane)

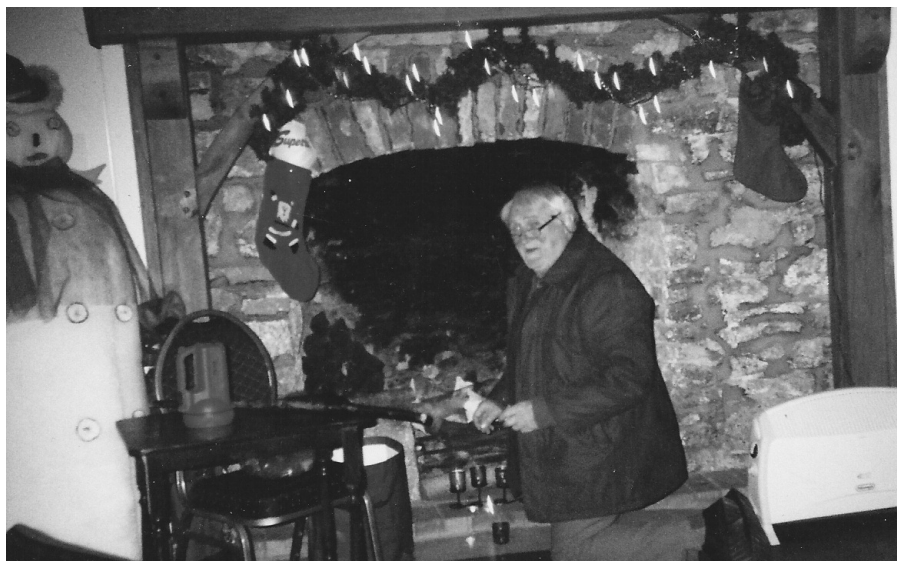
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Evergreen's Rambling House is now in its 6th year. We meet on the third Friday of each month from September to June, 8pm to 10.30pm. at the ACM, with a regular attendance of 20 to 25 people. ALL AGES ARE WELCOME. It is like a pre-television Rambling House with song, story-telling and a little light music and monologues, with no pressure to perform. We break for a cuppa and a chat. We have members from Silvermines Singers Circle and Dromineer.

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Mairéad Wins 2011 RDS Irish Times Boyle Medal For Scientific Excellence



It is with great pleasure that the committee of An Caisleán congratulates a native of our parish Professor Mairéad Murnane on her outstanding achievements to date and in particular her winning of the 2011 RDS Irish Times Boyle Medal for Scientific Excellence, only the second woman ever to do so.

Mairéad is daughter of Nell and the late Matthew Murnane, Gouig. She

attended Castleconnell National School, the Model School in Limerick, where her father was a teacher and she completed her Secondary education in Laurel Hill. She studied Science in U.C.C. where she received her B. Sc. and M. Sc. in 1981 and 1983 respectively. She attributes her success to “the love for learning instilled through the strong education I received in Ireland through my primary, secondary and university years”.

She was awarded the Pfizer scholarship to Berkley University in California and continued to work there even after she had received her PhD in 1989, where her work on laser design began. She later joined the faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Michigan University. Mairéad has worked on laser design for over twenty five years and together with her husband, Henry Kapteyn and a dedicated team of students from the University of Colorado. Boulder, where she is Professor of Physics, she continues to make major breakthroughs in the field of laser light. Her work involves “developing faster and more powerful laser systems that are used in a wide range of disciplines, from medicine to chemistry and physics to nanotechnology.” (Irish Times). As well as teaching, Mairéad and Henry have set up The Kapteyn/Murnane laboratories which manufacture ultrafast laser instrumentation.

Her many awards include the Maria Ceoppert-Mayer Award of the American Physics Society, a prize established to recognise and enhance outstanding achievements by a woman physicist in the early years of her career. In 2000, Mairéad also won the \$500,000 MacArthur Fellowship- known as the “Genius Grant”. She was just one of twenty five recipients in the United States of this annual award. In 2004, she was accepted into the prestigious US

National Academy of Science.

The RDS Irish Times Boyle Medal for Scientific Excellence is the highest prize in Ireland for scientific endeavour. The recipient of this most distinguished award receives a specially designed bronze medal and €20,000. The medal is named after Sir Robert Boyle, widely accepted as the father of modern chemistry.

The judges praised her work saying “that her super-fast laser systems represented outstanding research that would have a major impact on research activity in other disciplines”. (Irish Times) The world of science does have x-ray lasers but they are cumbersome and expensive however, the method designed by Mairéad is a “tabletop X-ray laser, small, cheap and easy to use version that allows the power of light to be exploited.” (Irish Times) “The blink of an eyeis staggeringly slow compared to the bursts of light produced by the lasers designed by Mairéad Murnane”. The lasers she puts together are “measured in the trillionths of a second”.

In her spare time, Mairéad likes to go hill-walking with her husband and they both enjoy living and working in Boulder where “the sunshine is wonderful”. We wish them many more years of scientific excellence in their endeavours and every happiness and success in life.

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Mick Mackey



Michael 'Mick' Mackey

(12th July 1912– 13th September 1982)

A great captain among captains and a hurling legend among hurlers.

Brian O'Mara

Much has changed in Ireland since Ahane GAA club was founded over 80 years ago in 1926, and if there is something positive we should take from the very difficult economic times through which we are living it is our ongoing appreciation of the importance of tradition and a sense of where you have come from. In Ahane there is no more significant example of our tradition than the legend that is Mick Mackey.....

Mick Mackey was born in Castleconnell, in 1912. He was educated at the local national school in Castleconnell. As was common at the time he received little in the way of a second-level education and left school at an early age due to the economic realities of life in the newly-independent Irish Free State. As an aside, legend has it that the war cry 'Come on Ahane – The spuds are boilin' originated from Mrs. Mary Mackey mother of John, Mick and Paddy. It appears that her boys went practicing after Mass in Castleconnell on Sunday and to herald a halt to proceedings, Mrs. Mackey would stand at the kitchen door and shout 'Come on Ahane – The spuds are boilin' to make sure her trio were on time for Sunday dinner!

Mick was just fourteen years old when the present Ahane GAA Club was established. He was too young to play on the team but was often to be seen at the field which was located in Knocksentry back then. Little was he to know that the clubs' new grounds in Newgarden would be opened 70 years later in 1996 and named Mackey Park in his honour. It wasn't until September 1928 that Mick was asked to wear the club colors for the first time. The occasion was the official opening of the Ennis Road Gaelic Grounds which was the first grounds with the exception of Croke Park to be completely owned by the GAA.

An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

Two junior hurling games served to open the new grounds. In the first South Liberties beat a Young Ireland's side and Ahane with the help of a young Mick Mackey beat Fedamore. One of his first tournament medals was that secured at Abington, with victories over Ballybricken and Cappamore. The tournament was organized in aid of the Benedictine Fathers of Glenstal Castle, who had some time earlier bought the ancestral home of the Barringtons for conversion to a monastery. Between 1933 and 1939 he played a key role in helping Ahane to an unprecedented seven county titles in-a-row. Not only did he have major success on the hurling field but Mackey also won five consecutive senior county football titles with Ahane between 1935 and 1939. From 1942 until 1949 Ahane captured another unprecedented seven county titles in-a-row, with Mackey featuring prominently in all these victories. Other family names still prominent today in Ahane were also key to the successes of the 30s and 40s... Power, Herbert, Ryan, Roche, Hayes, Hickey, Byrnes, Conway, Keane, Joyce, Scanlon to name but a few.

Mick Mackey first became involved with the Limerick senior hurling team in 1929 when he was listed as a non-playing substitute for the Munster Championship. In 1930 he made his senior debut at the relatively young age of eighteen when he went as a spectator to see Limerick take on Kilkenny in a National Hurling League game. The Shannonsiders were short the full team so Mackey was called upon to line out. Mackey's brother, John, soon followed him onto the county's senior team. With Mick's characteristic flamboyance and John cool and stylish, they formed the perfect partnership and together they would both enjoy a remarkable run of success.

Mackey's status as one of the all-time greats is self-evident. In a senior inter-county career that lasted for seventeen years he was the star player on the team during Limerick's golden age of hurling. Mackey won three All-Ireland titles, five Munster titles, five consecutive National Hurling League titles and eight Railway Cup titles with Munster.

Mackey's importance to Limerick is impossible to overstate. When he burst on the hurling scene in the 1930s he was unquestionably the greatest hurler yet seen. From his usual position at centre-forward Mackey inspired the whole team, and their reputation as great entertainers of hurling owed a lot to his charismatic style and his new hurling techniques. He was physically imposing and his swashbuckling style brought huge crowds to see him play. During his playing days it was Mackey that developed the solo-run style, preferring to bounce the sliothar on the hurley as he charged at defences.

While his exploits on the field are well documented, Mackey has also been the recipient of many awards and honours off the field. In 1980 he was the first recipient of the prestigious All-Time All-Star Award. Mackey was also posthumously honoured in 1984 when he was named, by popular opinion, in

the centre-forward position on the GAA Hurling Team of the Century. He was named in the same position on the GAA Hurling Team of the Millennium in 2000.

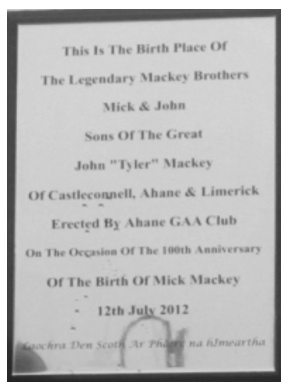
In retirement from playing, Mackey came to be regarded as one of the true legends of the game and is frequently touted as one of the greatest players of all-time. In his later years he maintained a keen interest in the game. He officiated at games as a referee and as an umpire and he trained the Limerick side, known as “Mackey’s greyhounds,” that defeated warm favourites Clare in the 1955 Munster final. The Mackey Stand at the Limerick Gaelic Grounds is named in his honour.

Mick Mackey died on 13th September 1982. His funeral was one of the biggest-ever for a sportsperson in Ireland with thousands coming to Castleconnell, not alone from all parts of Limerick, but from the heartlands of his traditional rivals, Tipperary, Cork and Kilkenny. He was posthumously honoured on the GAA’s Hurling Team of the Century and on the Hurling Team of the Millennium.

It is fitting therefore that in this centenary year of his birth, that Ahane GAA club have unveiled a plaque to Mick and his brother John in the place of their birth in Castleconnell. The club is also actively working to commission a bronze life size statue in the village of his birth, depicting Mick in the midst of one of his characteristic solo runs as it was Mackey that developed the solo-run style, preferring to bounce the sliothar on the hurley as he charged at defenses.

And so the tradition of Mackey, Castleconnell and Ahane GAA lives on in the playing pitches of Newgarden and the young pretenders that can be viewed on any Summer evening attempting to live up to the heroes of yore, as quoted on Mick and John Mackey’s plaque in Castleconnell - Laochra den scoth ar pháirc na himeartha.....so yes Come on Ahane the spuds are boilin’

The plaque in Castleconnell commemorating the Mackey Brothers (Mick and John) and the centenary of Mick Mackey’s birth in 1912.



Donal Coffey and Willie Keane in front of the plaque in Castleconnell commemorating the Mackey Brothers (Mick and John)



An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012

Old Time Gaels of East Limerick

The Old Time Gaels of East Limerick held their 9th Annual Awards Night in the Millenium Centre, Caherconlish on Friday night, February, 24th. They are an organisation founded in 2003 by a committee comprising of chairman Eddie Wade of South Liberties, secretary Ger O'Connell of Pallasgreen, treasurer Seamus Walsh of Ahane and John Cooney of South Liberties, Mike Clarke of Cappamore and Tony Hickey of Boher. It was founded to acknowledge the contribution of Gaels in the East Limerick Division who have given lifelong voluntary and dedicated service to the Gaelic Athletic Association in various capacities over the years. Many of these people worked quietly in the background in areas like administration, fundraising, field maintenance, refereeing and endless other important chores. Others have excelled on the field of play and brought honour to their clubs, division and county. Each year we honour a person from each club in the East division who is carefully selected by the above committee and this year's recipient from the Ahane club was Pat Herbert.

A new innovation this year is the Jimmy "Butler" Coffey Referees Award which will be presented each year to a referee in the East Limerick Division and the first recipient was Pat O'Connor of Ahane. The following are the profiles of both Pats which appeared on the well-produced programme on the night by the committee.

Pat Herbert – Ahane

Pat Herbert comes from the famous Herbert hurling and political family from Lisnagry who have been steeped in the traditions of Ahane and Limerick hurling. The Herbert contribution to Ahane and Limerick exists since the founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884 to the present day. His grandfather and grand-uncles were involved from the beginning and from the 1930s onwards, his father, uncles, brothers, first cousins and himself have given sterling service to Ahane, Limerick, Munster, Dublin and Leinster.

His father Sean won 5 Railway Cup medals with Munster, a National Hurling League medal with Limerick in 1947 and 8 County Senior Hurling Championships with Ahane and was selected in 1984 on the Centenary Team of Best Players Never to have Won an All-Ireland



Pat Herbert Ahane receiving his Old Time Gaels of East Limerick Award from Committee Treasurer Seamus Walsh

Medal. Sean played in 5 Munster Senior Hurling finals with Limerick without success and was very unlucky not to have won at least one medal. Pat's uncle Tony won a Munster and All-Ireland Senior Hurling Medal with Limerick in 1940, 5 Senior Hurling and 4 Senior football medals with Ahane and Leinster Hurling medals with Dublin in 1948 and 1952, 4 County Hurling Championships with Faughs of Dublin, in addition to a Railway Cup medal for Leinster in 1952. Tony played in the 1948 Railway Cup final, losing to a Munster team which included his brother Sean, and later served as a Fianna Fail Senator in Leinster House. He was the recipient of the Tom O'Brien Personality Award in 2008 from the Cumann na Sean-Ghaeil, Luimneach Thoir committee. Pat's uncle Michael won a National Hurling League medal with Limerick in 1947 and 5 County Championship medals with Ahane, but had to retire in 1949 after receiving a very serious injury playing against Croom/Young Ireland's in that year's County Championship. Afterwards, he served as a Fianna Fail County Councillor, MEP and TD. Pat's brothers Sean Og and Kevin played at all grades for Limerick and Sean Og also played Championship Hurling with Dublin when he transferred there in the 1980s, while Kevin won 2 County Championship medals with Ahane in 1998 and 1999, captaining them in the "never to be forgotten" 1998 final when Ahane won their first Senior Hurling Championship in 43 years. His first cousin Turlough won 2 Munster Senior Hurling Championships with Limerick in 1994 and 1996, a Harty Cup and All-Ireland Colleges medal with St. Flannan's and 2 County Championships with Ahane in 1998 and 1999 and Turlough's brother John won Harty Cup and All-Ireland Colleges medals with St. Flannan's of Ennis. Pat Herbert won an East Under 14 Hurling Championship with Ahane in 1968 and an East Junior football medal in 1970 when Ahane beat Oola in the final. He captained the Ahane Minor Football team when they beat Oola in the East Minor Final of 1971. He was secretary of the Ahane Juvenile Club in 1971. Pat left for the Cadet College in the Curragh in 1972 after he had made a great success of the Junior Section of the Ahane Club. He was also a committee member of the Ahane Athletic Club and the local Community Games committee, and he was a member of the Ahane Senior Club Committee in the 1970s.

He played senior hurling with Ahane during the 1970s and 1980s and was most unfortunate to come up against a great South Liberties team in those years, because Ahane could not get the better of them in the Championship and seldom progressed beyond the East Championship, which was the system in those years, when you had to reach the Divisional Final before you could progress to the County Quarter-Finals. At that time, there were also strong teams in Doon, Fedamore and Killeely-Dromkeen. During that time, he played in a very formidable Ahane Half back line with John Byrnes and Mike Fitzgibbon and later with Sean Kelly and in a full-back line with PJ Keane and Donal Coffey. Pat won a Senior Hurling Cup final with Ahane in 1974 against Doon and in 1981 against Cappamore.

He played minor and under 21 hurling for Limerick in the early 1970s and he

played on the Limerick team that was beaten by Cork in the National Hurling League Final in 1974 but did not make his Senior Championship debut until 26th of June, 1977 when he lined out against Clare. He played 16 Championship games from then until his last appearance on the 1st of June, 1986, also against Clare. He won 2 Munster Senior Hurling Championships with Limerick in 1980 and 1981 when they beat Cork and Clare respectively in the finals. He won 2 National Hurling League Medals in 1984 and 1985 defeating Wexford and Clare in the finals and 2 Railway Cup medals with Munster in the same years. He was on the Limerick teams that were beaten in the All Ireland final in 1980 against Galway and the Semi-Final against the same opposition after a replay in 1981. He played some great hurling in those years and his clashes with Kevin Hennessy from Cork, Pat and Enda O'Connor from Clare, Billy Fitzpatrick from Kilkenny and Noel Lane and PJ Molloy from Galway, were legendary. Pat was a stylish, tenacious, tough as teak, hard pulling defender who was soundness personified, giving nothing away in hard fought exchanges during his hurling career.

He transferred his club allegiance from Ahane to Ballyboden-St. Enda's of Dublin in 1986 as the travelling up and down to matches and training was too time consuming and played in the full-back line with his brother Sean Og when Ballyboden were defeated in the 1988 Dublin Senior Hurling Final by St. Vincent's. In later years, he managed Ballyboden St. Enda's in Dublin, Oulart the Ballagh in Wexford, Wolfe Tone na Sionna in Clare and the Kildare Senior Hurling Team. He managed his native club Ahane to a County Senior Hurling Final in 2002, losing narrowly to Adare. In 2006, he managed Toomevarra when they won the Tipperary Senior Hurling Final and the Munster Club Championship. Pat was nominated for the position of Limerick Senior Hurling Manager in 2003 and again in 2008 but the position was given to Pat Joe Whelahan from Offaly and Justin McCarthy from Cork respectively. The Limerick County Board in their wisdom decided that an outsider should fill the post in both instances, but we all know how both of those managers ended their tenures in a lot of controversy. The County Board could have done worse than appoint the genial Ahane man to the position on either occasion as Pat Herbert's passion and experience of Limerick hurling was second to none, and there is no man as shrewd and as keen as a judge of hurling and hurlers than Pat. He was treated very shabbily by the "powers that be" in 2003 during the interview process when "GAA politics" decreed that Pat Joe Whelahan should be appointed as manager. Maybe Pat's turn will come yet! Pat remains a member of the Defence Forces to this day since he left his native parish for The Curragh in Kildare in 1972. 40 years of service to his country and has risen through the ranks to the rank of Colonel in the Irish Army.

We, the committee of the Cumman na Shan-Ghaeil Luimneach Thoir welcome the Herbert family here tonight to the Millenium Centre in Caherconlish and salute Pat Herbert for his lifetime of dedication and service to his beloved club Ahane as a player, mentor and officer and for his undying commitment to the green jersey of Limerick during the 1970s and 1980s.

Jimmy “Butler” Coffey Referees Award

Pat O’Connor – Ahane

Pat O’Connor of the famed Ahane club is the unanimous choice of the Cumann na Sean-Ghaeil committee to be the first recipient of the Jimmy “Butler” Coffey Referees Award, a new innovation by the committee starting this year and to be presented annually and dedicated to the memory of the late, great Jimmy “Butler” Coffey. Jimmy won All-Ireland Minor and Senior Hurling and Railway Cup medals with Tipperary in the 1930s and Senior Hurling and Railway Cup Medals with Tipperary in the 1930s and County Senior Championships with Ahane in the 1940s, trained Cappamore to Championship success and was a selector to Mick Mackey’s Greyhounds in the 1950s. Jimmy was the recipient of a Sean Ghaeil Award in the inaugural year of the awards in 2003. He died on the 29th of December, 2012 at the ripe old age of 101.

Pat O’Connor is receiving this award for his outstanding and dedicated service to the East Limerick GAA Board as a referee since 1982. 30 years of refereeing at all levels, his service to the Board as an officer, for his service to his club Ahane as a player and an officer, and his service as a referee at national, provincial and county level.

The referee is such a central figure in administering the playing rules and the disciplinary codes relating to GAA games that they tend to figure in the folklore of the games. How many times have we heard the comment “only for the referee we would have won the final that year”. In truth, referees make serious mistakes in games as do all of the players and team officials, but when a referee makes a mistake it is too often classified as biased. But the supporters do not realise the degree of preparation, of analysis and of self-criticism that our top referees are subjected to in regard to our games.

A referee is a very unique individual as he is subjected to abuse from a variety of sources, video analysis which subjects him to critical examination and the potential for character assassination on radio phone-ins. But one has to consider the commitment that is required to be a top referee and the courage demanded in meeting challenges head-on every time he takes charge of a game.



Seamus Walsh presents Pat O’Connor Ahane with the Jimmy “Butler” Coffey Referees Award.

Pat O'Connor is one referee who, during a career which has lasted from 1982 to the present, has been fortunate that he has avoided controversies, serious mistakes and incidents. He has been "a common sense referee" in the style of John Moloney, Frank Murphy, Dickie Murphy, Terence Murray and Willie Barrett.

Pat's playing career with Ahane started in 1967 and ended when he took up refereeing at East Board level in 1982. During that period, he won East Under-16 Football Championships in 1968 and 1969, East Minor Football Championships in 1970 and 1971, East Under 21 Hurling in 1972 and East Under 21 Football and Hurling in 1975 when he captained the hurlers to victory. He won East Junior Hurling League medals in 1974 and 1976. He played senior hurling with Ahane during the lean years from 1978 to 1982 and won an East Senior Hurling Cup medal in 1981 when Ahane defeated South Liberties in the final.

Pat was a member of the Ahane Bord-na-nOg committee in the early 1980s and became PRO of the East Limerick Senior GAA Board in 1986 serving until 1992 when he took up refereeing at national level. He became Secretary of the Ahane Senior Club in 2000 and gave 3 years in that job and was one of the most efficient secretaries that the club ever had. He gave great service to the club as a player, mentor and officer, as did his brothers Larry and Liam and his son Aidan who was a member of the Ahane senior hurling team for the last few years before emigrating to Australia in 2011.

Pat started refereeing at East Board level in 1982 and took charge of divisional finals in all grades from Under 12 to Senior in both hurling and football. At county level, he took charge of the County Minor B Hurling Final in 1987 between Bruree and Killeedy, the Minor A Final in 1989 between Na Piarsaigh and Hospital-Herberstown and the Intermediate Hurling Final in 1990 when Garryspillane defeated Ardagh and on the same day was linesman for the senior final when fellow East-Limerick man Timmy Lyons took charge of his first Senior Final.

Pat took charge of his first County Senior Hurling Final in 1992 when Patrickswell accounted for Kilmallock and he graduated to the Inter-County panel in the same year. He refereed 3 further Senior Finals during his long and distinguished career, in 1992 when Patrickswell defeated Adare, in 2001 when Adare hammered Patrickswell and in 2005 when Garryspillane won their first and only Senior Final at the expense of Kilmallock.

Pat was appointed to the National Refereeing Panel in 1992 and rose to the top fairly quickly. He took charge of his first Munster Minor Hurling Final in 1994 between the same two counties. He was in charge of the 1997 Munster Senior Hurling Final between Clare and Tipperary and in 2003 when Cork defeated Waterford. He took charge of 5 Munster Club Hurling Finals, in 1993: Toomevarra v Sixmilebridge, 1995: Sixmilebridge v Eire Og, Nenagh, 1996: Wolfe Tones v Ballygunner, 1998: Toomevara v Sixmilebridge and in 2001: Ballygunner v St. Joseph's Doorra-Barefield.

He refereed the 1997 Connaught Hurling Final between Galway and Roscommon and was the man-in-the-middle for 3 Leinster Senior Hurling Finals. In 1999: Kilkenny v Offaly, 2001: Kilkenny v Wexford and 2007: Kilkenny v Wexford. He was in charge of the 1995 All-Ireland Minor Final between Cork and Kilkenny and the Under 21 All-Ireland Final in 1996 between Galway and Waterford.

Pat refereed 6 All-Ireland Senior Hurling semi-finals between 1998 and 2003, but his proudest moment arrived when he was appointed to take charge of his first Senior All-Ireland Hurling Final in 1999 when Cork beat Kilkenny by a point and refereed a further 2 Senior Finals in 2001 when Tipperary defeated Galway and in 2003 when Kilkenny accounted for Cork. He took charge of 2 All-Ireland Club Finals, in 1995 when Birr defeated Dunloy after a replay and 1999 when St. Joseph's Doorra-Barefield accounted for Rathnure. He handled 5 National Hurling League Finals, in 1995: Kilkenny v Clare, 1996: Galway v Tipperary, 2000: Galway v Tipperary, 2001: Tipperary v Clare and 2003: Kilkenny v Tipperary. He refereed a Shinty International in 1996 between Ireland and Scotland and was in charge of 2 Fitzgibbon Cup Finals in 2000 and 2004.

Pat has travelled to America on 3 occasions with the All Stars Teams, in 2000, 2002 and 2004 and refereed games in Boston, Phoenix and Las Vegas. He was honoured by Croke Park in each of those 3 years when he was chosen as Referee of the Year. He was appointed to the Rules Revision Committee in Croke Park by current GAA President Christy Cooney in 2009. Pat has refereed some great games at national level during his career and he deserves to be credited for the important part he played in adding to the enjoyment of those games. He is up there at the top of the pile with his own favourite referee and the man that he styled himself on, the late John Moloney from Bansha in Tipperary. Croke Park and Munster Council could do with Pat's experience and expertise in future years and should appoint him to take charge of the National Referees Appointments Committee which oversees the appointment of referees for all league and championship games at national level, or to some other refereeing committee. He would be a very valuable asset to them. All Gaels of East Limerick are proud that one of the greatest referees in the history of the game since the founding of the GAA is "one of their own" and Pat O'Connor is richly deserving of the Jimmy "Butler" Coffey Referees Award here tonight from Cumann na Sean-Ghaeil.

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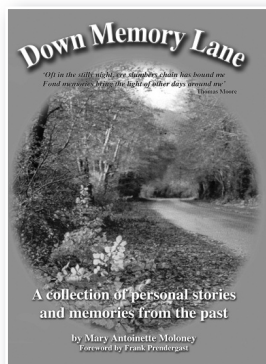
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Down Memory Lane - A Collection of Personal Stories and Memories from the Past has been published by Mary A. Moloney and is a substantial volume of 320 pages, containing over one hundred interviews with people from diverse backgrounds in the Mid-West of Ireland, covering stories going back over a century. With the foreword written by Frank Prendergast, former Mayor of Limerick, the book contains narratives from Nora Keane and Edwina McKenzie (two survivors of the ill-fated Titanic). These are prominently featured along with farming life, stories of creameries, threshing and fair days, History and

Politics in the Making; Overseas Connections stretching to the Congo, and elsewhere in Africa, Poland, Australia as well as the UK and USA etc; Personal Stories, Religious Practice and Devotion, stories of school days, work and sport are contained in this compendium of essays and memories which is an essential collection for anyone remotely interested in local and social history.

Down Memory Lane is available at a very reasonably priced €15.00 (incl. P&P) from the author Mary A. Moloney, Clyduff, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick and from shops in the Annacotty/Castleconnell/Ahane area for just €12.99.

Caisleán Miscellany

LOCAL HISTORY

The De Burgos (Bourkes) figure very prominently all through the early history of Castleconnell. In the 14th Century they allied themselves with the O'Briens of Thomond and became the most powerful family in East Limerick. In 1337, William de Burgo was recognised as the Chief of Barony of Clanwilliam-which barony was called after him. The family adopted Irish ways and customs and maintained their independence of England until the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1. In 1580 it is recorded that Queen Elizabeth created a Sir William de Burgo a Peer of the Realm with the title Lord Baron Bourke of Castleconnell. He died in 1584 and was succeeded by Sir John de Burgo who was treacherously killed in London in 1592. His brother Richard succeeded him as 3rd Lord of Castleconnell. Richard had a dispute with the O'Briens of Thomond about the possession of lands at Portcrusha. The widow of the 4th Baron Inchiquin had claimed the lands as her own and had crossed the Shannon with a large force of soldiers and workers intending to cut the harvest and take it home. Richard and his forces attacked them and drove them back into Clare. During the fierce encounter many were killed on both sides including Sir Richard's uncle.

Castleconnell is not mentioned much during the Siege of Limerick. In August 1690 the Castle was besieged and after a short attack the defenders, numbering 126 submitted and were taken prisoners. Although a number of cannon were used in this attack, the fortress suffered no great material damage. When the attacking forces withdrew, it was again occupied by a large force of soldiers who reinforced it. During the second siege in 1691, a force of 700 men led by the Prince of Hesse marched to Castleconnell and demanded the surrender of the garrison of 250. They refused and the siege of the Castle began. This lasted two days, during which great destruction was caused, and the defenders had to submit and were taken prisoners of war. The remains of the Castle as they are today do not convey an adequate impression of the size and importance of the original structure.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the front railing of St Joseph's Church in Castleconnell was donated by Mr George Peabody, a well-known philanthropist who happened to be on a fishing trip in the village soon after the erection of the Church. He had already donated considerable sums of money for charitable purposes in the USA and England. On being asked for a contribution towards the railing by the parish priest at the time, the late Fr Hennessy, he replied that he would defray all the cost. He was a non-Catholic and a monument to his memory can be found in a spot quite near St Paul's Cathedral, London.

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The stained glass window and the Church bell were presented by the White family in memory of their father John White who died in 1858. The family lived in Belmont House (now Rosary Hill Nursing Home) and were of an ancient and distinguished lineage. They lost their lands during the Cromwellian Confiscations, and one of John's ancestors went to France with Sarsfield and the Wild Geese, after the second siege of Limerick in 1691. He returned later to Limerick and founded a grocery and wine business. His great, great grandson John lived in Belmont House. In his early youth, John had immigrated to the West Indies where he amassed a considerable fortune and owned a sugar plantation. He was also a Colonel in the West India Regiment.

CLAREVILLE WATERWORKS

Since 1888, many changes have taken place at Clareville but still retained in the old pump house are the four turbine pumps used in the first system, obsolete now for many years but still in very good condition and of great interest to the many visitors, for it was here that Clareville Waterworks began supplying water to Limerick city over 86 years ago.

Staffs employed at the plant are all local men, Supervisor is Pat Gleeson, and the men who operate the plant in a round the clock shift are Brian Berkery, Willie Joyce, James Hassett and Pat Jones. Day workers are Davy Givens, Thomas Hayes, Jerry Poole and John Gleeson.

CHARITY WALK

The recent Charity Walk organised by the girls of Rosary Hill School and the local Youth Club raised £220. This money is being given to the Drop-In youth centre in Patrick St Limerick: to Sr Rosa for her mission in Rhodesia, and to Fr Conor Moloney, a Kiltegan Father, for his mission in Kenya. Sincere thanks to all who took part in the Walk and to those who sponsored walkers.

The Youth Concert which took place some time ago was very successful and enjoyed by a good audience.

CLONDALKIN CONCRETE LTD.

Best wishes are extended to Clondalkin Concrete Ltd on the opening of their new factory at Annaholty. The plant, which will manufacture roof tiles, will boost employment in the area.

ST. PATRICK'S VILLAS

Eight new houses are at present in course of construction at St Patrick's Villas. Work on the roofing of the houses is now in progress. When completed, it will bring to 46 the number of houses in this estate.

Compiled by Steve Reidy

Stradbally Graveyard Committee

Nearly 20 years ago a committee was formed to tidy up and maintain Stradbally graveyard. It was set up by a group of like-minded people, most of whom are no longer with us. It is a testament to them that the work is continuing to be done to the present day.

The committee are dependent on the public for the funds needed to carry out this work and we get this support in the following ways.

1. An annual church gate collection takes place in November.
2. A grant from Limerick County Council.
3. Donations from the Craft Fair Committee, An Caisleán and some private donations.

With these monies the grass is kept cut on about four occasions in the year. There is machinery needed and used for heavier work. Maintenance is an all year round process.

An Fás has very kindly given extra manpower when available.

We the committee are very grateful to all who contribute to this very important work as there are graves in Stradbally of people who no longer have anyone left to look after them.

The present committee are:

Donal Hynes, Pat Skehan, Eileen Joyce, Beth O'Connell. Phylla Lynch, Louis Ryan, Tony Kennedy, Mary Tierney, Patricia Burns and Tess Mulready.



Michael Fagan with members of Cemetery Committee D Hynes, T Kennedy, J Ryan, P Skehan and L Ryan.

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Paddy Hickey

Obituary



When Paddy Hickey passed away on 25th of February this year, Castleconnell lost a legend. At the age of 52, he had so much knowledge of the local area, the history, the fishing, the hurling and above all, the people who turned out in their throngs to say goodbye to a true Castleconnell man. Paddy was born to Grace and Mick in 1959, the youngest brother of Mary and Mike. He attended Castleconnell N.S. and later St. Mary's Secondary School in Newport. After a few years working in Limerick, he eventually returned to work fulltime in the pub which became his domain. He loved people and enjoyed nothing more

than a chat with locals or strangers alike. He always had a story to tell and no-one ever felt that they were alone in his pub.

The Shannon Inn or Hickey's as it was known locally was the place to meet up with all age groups. He welcomed, as his father before him everyone who entered the pub for a drink or a chat or both. All clubs in the village used the premises for meetings and get togethers, from the Scouts to the Care of the Aged. He also generously sponsored many organisations in the area.

Paddy was a larger than life person in every way. He had a huge capacity for fun and loved whenever a sing-song started, usually rounding off the night himself with an energetic rendition of 'The Rose of Tralee' and if the patrons were lucky, they were treated to a powerful and resounding 'The Bells of Shandon'.

The pub was as welcoming as the publican, with a turf and log fire and Paddy is remembered very fondly by his staff, most of whom were college students and all of whom received a fantastic training not only in bar work but also in conversing and interacting with people of all ages.

Paddy Hickey is a huge loss not only to his family but to the wider community of Castleconnell, Ahane and Montpelier.

A. Berkery

“Shanks” Tuohy – Fisherman

By Daniel F. McCrea. (Cork Examiner – Monday May 10th, 1976)

At the door of a little one storey house on Chapel Hill in Castleconnell village (pp 350), some six miles north of Limerick City, I came face to face with 90 year old “Shanks” Tuohy.

He invited me into the house that’s been his home since the day of his birth, May 8th 1885. Even before we had seated ourselves at his hearth we were talking.

“Ah God I suppose I am” he said in answer to my question if he was aware that he was the last fisherman in Ireland today. “And I’d still be fishing if I had my sight”. My wife’s dead these seven years and I’m living on my own and the nuns (from the neighbouring Presentation Convent) looking after me.”

While his hearing wasn’t quite as good, I rarely had to repeat a question. Neither did he pause nor hedge in his reply. As to how he had acquired “Shanks” as a nickname, he had no idea. “Every one of us had a nickname” he said, “Mine was “Shanks”. “That’s what the Englishmen I fished with called me. Willie Bowen the head fellow never called me anything but “Shanks”. Indeed if you went into Nestor’s now in Limerick and it’s a great tackle shop and you said “Bill Tuohy”, they wouldn’t know who you were talking about.”

His fishing career started with eels. “I had a few brothers and they went away sailing” he volunteered. “My father was dead and I was here with my mother. I was 14 years old and done with school and I had to go out and earn money. All I got from the eel fishing was a shilling a night – from 4 o’clock in the evening till next morning. I was only holding the bag for the fellow that was at the net and there were about 30 nets. I stuck at it four years”. In 1903, he became a fisherman on the Landscape beat, one of ten private salmon fisheries on the Shannon. He was then only 18 years old but stood 6 foot two inches tall and weighed 15 stone. His first week’s pay as a fisherman was £2 plus ten shillings for Sunday.

FIRST SALMON

When I asked “Shanks” what age was he when he caught his first salmon, he answered: “I don’t suppose I would be ten. My eldest brother had been fishing but caught nothing. He brought in the rod. There was a prawn on it. He was going for a pint to the pub when I came home from school. I was barefooted. I took the rod and went down to where the bridge is crossing the river and threw out my prawn. In a couple of minutes I was in a fish of 30lb. I landed it”.

When I voiced my admiration of a 10 year old child playing a salmon, he told me that his son, now living in Whitegate, Co. Clare has a photo of himself with his first salmon. It was 20lb and the boy was only nine years old.

It was in the late 1920s that “Shanks” caught his last big salmon, a 40 pounder. As to how many in the intervening 35 years he had boated, he had no idea, though he recalled taking specimens of 44lb, 48lb and 49lb.

He gave me a graphic description of hooking and playing a big salmon on a fly. “If he had the hook in the front of his mouth”, he said, “it would come out of him, but you nearly always found it in the side of the jaw. Some of them would pitch right out of the water and you could see he was a big fellow. He might be 38 or 40lbs or more and he might run across the stream. As soon as the current caught his side, you’d want a steel rope to hold him because of the weight of the water against his side. And if the line caught your fingers, yo ho, but it would cut them off”.

And all the time, he reminded me, the fisherman had to keep his mind on his work. “It was the most dangerous job in a dangerous river”, he pointed out. “Make the least mistake and your boat would be matchwood against a stone while you’d be thinking, Thank God, I never had an accident of any description. That’s why everybody wanted to be with me. Before they would take one of the ten boats, they would want to know if I was on it, and if I wasn’t they wouldn’t come at all”.

He fished with men from all over the world, but had difficulty in recalling all their names. Names which rolled freely off his tongue were “Mr. Hancock of the Birmingham Post” he wrote of me in that paper and in “The Field” and Mister Thompson and Mister Henderson – he was a millionaire – and Harrison Cripps who was the Surgeon Cripps that operated on King Edward the Seventh for appendicitis. I was fishing with the Surgeon the Sunday (in 1920) when he caught a 40lb salmon. It was the day that Mister O’Donovan (father of Dermot O’Donovan and owner of the Shannon Hotel) was shot dead by the Black and Tans at the hotel. And I fished with Lord Parmoor, the Surgeon’s brother and father of Sir Stafford Cripps. I fished too, with General Corry and his daughter and Mister Adams, Colonel Robinson (of Robinson and Cleaver), Lord Somerset and the Earl of Kingston and Sir Peter Walker, the whiskey distiller from Macclesfield, and John Jameson, another whiskey man from Dublin. They were all of them generous and paid us well.”

He cited Colonel Robinson as an example “He would come into the house here in the morning” he told me “and sit there beyond the hob with me and give my mother a five-pound note before we went off to fish”.

He laughed as he recalled a particular morning “when the Colonel said as they approached the river – ‘I don’t know but I have a feeling I’ll get a 40 pounder today’ “I hope in God you do”, says I, Do you know? We weren’t twenty

minutes fishing till we got the 40lb fish. The Colonel made all Castleconnell drunk". Another generous patron, he said "was Mister Henderson, an Englishman, who had made his money in India and retired on an income of £40,000 a year. He engaged myself and another fisherman on the Doonass beat. This other fisherman is dead now. He died in America. The pair of us would go down to the river in the morning and lay two boxes of matches in a tree. Mr. Henderson would cover them with two gold sovereigns. For every salmon that came into the boat, we'd draw the two sovereigns. If we got ne'er a fish that day, Mister Henderson got the two boxes of matches.

From the way he spoke of Lord Parmoor I was in no doubt as to who was "the kindest and best man that ever paid me". That they had to be wealthy to fish in Castleconnell is obvious from the rental of the ten fishery beats. "In the early 1900's", "Shanks" recalled, "Doonass beat cost £1,000 and I don't know if any of them was as low as £400. There were plenty of them wanting the fishing and ready to pay for it". And the big money was matched by the big fish. The biggest salmon which he know to have been caught in the Shannon weighed 64lbs. "An Englishman by name of Moore or Moorhead killed it" "Shanks" told me, but he couldn't recall the year. "The biggest taken in the nets weighed over 60lbs and was caught at the Lax Weir in Limerick City".

Nor was he in any doubt that "the greatest year that ever came on the Shannon was 1927. In one draw at the Lax Weir the nets took 300 Salmon. All big salmon. The smallest one would be about 30lbs"

It was somewhere around that year he caught the Shannon's last "Portmanteau" salmon in the 40lbs plus bracket. He couldn't recall the exact date but he was sure it was after the "hydro-electric scheme" which the newly emerging Irish Free State sponsored as a national source of light and power. "Mine was the only one. There was ne'er but the one caught" he said. "My son Pat has a photo of it up in his home in Clare".

To my point blank query. "Would you go down now to the river for a big fish?" he replied, "Indeed I wouldn't, all they get now is salmon of 6lbs or 7lbs. The river wasn't too bad for maybe two years after letting it in the water but then it went right bad. The electric scheme finished the Shannon".

Professional Photography

David Gaynor

Newgarden, Lisnagry, Co. Limerick.

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Seamus Ryan (Andrew) remembers his youth and talks of times past

Four score years ago, it was the years of the first Eucharistic Congress held in Ireland in 1932, I was born in Annaholty Middle, the same place where I am now living today.

I am an only child and was born to Ellen Carroll and Jim Ryan. My father Jim, a carpenter came from Ballintoe where his brother Tom continued with a carpentry business.

Annaholty is a big towns land divided into three parts- Annaholty Lower, Annaholty Middle and Annaholty Upper. The towns land is situated in Co. Tipperary with a postal address of Killaloe. From a GAA perspective, the young people gave their allegiance to Ahane, a team in the Limerick championship. So the Coffeys, the Darcys, the Quinlivans, the Hickeys, the Sammons, the Kellys and Willie Ward among others, all played for Ahane, although at heart they were real proud of Tipperary and could recite the Tipp teams of the 40s and early 50s as easily as a person could recite 'The Our Father.'

Annaholty was part of the ancient parish of Kilcomentry, called after the female Saint Comenath of Cragg where a church was built and dedicated to her in the year 1470. The real reason or the exact year that Annaholty came into the parish of Castleconnell is lost in time and ambiguity. Some say that Knockaunbawn/Waterpark near Bunkey which is in Co. Limerick was swapped for Annaholty by an agreement between the parish priests of Newport and Castleconnell sometime post 1823. It also meant a change in the boundaries between the diocese of Killaloe and the diocese of Cashel.

My memories of my very early days are vague, I lived at home with my mother and father and my mother's father, Pat Carroll. There is one incident that is very clear and vivid in my mind even to this day. It was Good Friday in 1939 when I was six years of age. While walking with my grandfather to Gleeson's house of Lower Annaholty, I was involved in a very bad accident suffering serious head injuries. I was struck by a car travelling on the Limerick – Nenagh road. Cars at that time were a rarity on the road.

I was rushed to St John's Hospital where the prognosis was very bad. The trauma and anxiety suffered by my parents and grandfather can only be imagined. The doctor, who was a Dr Feeley with nurses and nuns stood around my hospital cot and told my father that I would not make it. Then my father decided on the spur of the moment that he would contact Fr. James Russell, a curate in the parish of Kilcommon in Co. Tipperary. This priest was

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known as a very holy man who had the reputation of healing and curing people. When he came to visit me in the hospital he stood at the foot of the cot and prayed in Latin for a long time from a black heavy missal. When he stopped he looked at me and said "I WILL TAKE YOU HOME MYSELF WHEN YOU ARE BETTER." I began to improve each day after that. I had many visitors bringing me sweets, biscuits and chocolates. I had a big supply of these in my locker and I shared them with a little boy of the same age from Mungret St., Limerick who had a broken leg as a result of a kick from a horse. His leg was in heavy splints and one night after lights out he was getting sweets from my locker when he collided against it and with his splinted leg he upset the locker across the hospital ward with a huge racket. The matron, who was a tall nun appeared at the doorway-she was not amused.

Father Russell visited many times praying from the same black book in Latin and as a result of one such visit, the imprint of a cross appeared on my forehead over my right eye. It was an imprint as if it was made by a biro without any ink, it was clearly noticeable and even my ward companion pressed the crucifix of a rosary against his own forehead hoping for a cure.

Father Russell was born near Tipperary town in the 1880s and served as a curate in Ballina before he was transferred to Kilcommon. While he was in Ballina in November 1920 four men were killed on the bridge of Killaloe by British forces. Fr. Russell attended the dying men and gave them spiritual assistance.

After four weeks, I was good enough to be discharged and Fr. Russell brought me home as he had promised. He died as a curate in Kilcommon in 1957 and he lies buried there. I am convinced to this day, seventy three years after that accident, that I was cured by the intervention of that saintly man.

Father Devanney P.P. of Castleconnell also visited and blessed me from the foot of my cot, his visit was short. Sometime later I returned to the hospital with my father to pay. The bill, for four weeks stay and all the medical treatment came to twenty pounds. A legal case followed against the driver of the car, who happened to be a solicitor from Co. Sligo. I was awarded eighty pounds made payable when I would reach twenty one years of age, the legal team retained twenty pounds for expenses so I had to wait fourteen years for my sixty pounds.

One and a half years later when I had recuperated fully my grandfather and aunt took me on holidays to Salthill and it was there in August 1940 that we saw in the paper that Fr. Devanney had died. We went into the church and lit a candle for the repose of his soul.

My father was a good carpenter with very good hands and sight, but our living was mainly from the land like all our neighbours. We kept milch cows and

took the milk to Birdhill creamery. We joined with two other neighbours going to the creamery so we only had to go one week in three. The neighbours were Mick Hennelly of Upper Annaholty and Mick Bourke Maum from Annaholty Middle. When it was our week we would have to go first to Mick Hennelly's to collect his milk and then to Mick Maum's to collect his and our own last of all. Then we would join the queue of other horse and carts, ponies and asses on the way to Birdhill where the milk was delivered and bring home the skim milk for pig and calf feeding. The creamery was a great centre of activity where people spoke of prices and crops and of the bog and turf saving. The E.U. was unheard of, there were no farm payments, no area aid, no headage, no premia payments, no intervention or aid from any source. The produce of the land or bog was produced and the surplus sold on the open market. Most homesteads were almost all self-sufficient-milk, eggs, poultry, bacon from home fed pigs, fuel for the fire and all sorts of organic vegetables from the tillage plots.

The breed of cow was predominantly Shorthorn- a healthy, hardy breed that could be classified as a dual purpose cow. The purchase of a young pregnant cow took a lot of judging and assessing. The colour was important, the most sought after were dark greys, or light greys, or speckled, or the dark blood red...The all-white or snowball was not popular. The shape and structure of the cow's horns were looked at. Apart from the expected yield from the animal it was important that the cows looked good, so ones with cocked horns were particularly sought after.

During the forties war raged in Europe. The Emergency with ration cards prevailed at home but it meant that ourselves and our neighbours had a real market for the hard black turf which was harvested at the bog nearby called the long bank. People like Mick Maum and Mick Hennelly were great slanes men blackening the bog in a day with freshly cut peat, then leaving it to save and dry and stack before bringing it home for the winter fires and also for the kitchen cooking.

My father and Neddy Ryan (Gun) made an important purchase when they bought a horse drawn mowing machine between them. It was new so we could cut our own hay whenever we needed to do it. We shared our horse to pull the mowing machine and the plough with Mick Gleeson (Halpin). He owned a big black Irish Draught and our own big grey made a great pair pulling the harrow, machine or plough.

I have vivid memories of my father sitting with a bag across his knees and the blade of the mowing machine resting on the bag. He also had a file or a whet stone with a drop of oil on it for sharpening the blades. He was very, very exact rubbing the little triangular cutters, he just rubbed until he had them

perfect then rolling up the sleeve of his shirt and testing the edge on the cat hairs of his arm and only then did he know that he had perfect edge.

There was no radio or T.V. and he had to rely on the ancient signs to forecast the weather. Looking across at the hills of Clare and picking out Moylusa, the highest peak in Clare, he would judge by the colour of the mist rising and how long it took to clear. A correct prediction was of paramount importance to farmers and people in rural Ireland who depended so much on the weather for sowing, reaping and saving hay. The people had a fairly reliable system of their own to predict the weather. They understood that all life on earth depended on the sun so they looked to the moon and planets, wind and water, bird and beast which all depended on the sun for guidelines. The heavenly bodies were all studied carefully by the old people of my area for any sign of changes on the weather.

I remember my father mowing hay, Gleeson's big black and our own big grey pulling the machine and the "clack clack" of the mower intermingled with the "creik creik" of the corncrake. I remember the scent of the newly mown hay, it was meadows of permanent hay, of grass and clover of several species, grown without any chemical fertilizer that smelt so sweetly. Round and round the meadow went the pair of horses, my father holding the reins and sitting on an iron seat. When they came to a corner the machine had to reverse and its gears went "click click." In memory I can still hear that click click and remember the beautiful scent of new mown hay.

In ploughing my father was, as always, exact. He measured the check reins and draught chains, his drills were straight and true and uniform in size. I remember looking as a child at the drills and they would remind me of the waves that I had seen in Salthill.

There is one episode that will remain embedded in my mind forever, it was a day in May 1951 and my father was scuffling furrows with a hunter hoe pulled by our big grey horse. It was potato drills he was working on when my mother looked out the window and horror of horrors, she saw the horse walking up the furrows but my father was not driving him or holding the handle of the hoe. He was lying dead at the headland.

I was eighteen and a half years of age. Great sorrow and sadness dominated our home for a long time afterwards.

My father was an honest man who worked hard whether it was at his trade or at his farming, he could always walk tall because of his honesty and he didn't owe anything to anybody. May he rest in peace.

In the late 1940s, a branch of the Pioneer Total Abstinence was established in Castleconnell and I was enrolled as a member in 1949. I have been a member ever since. We had many social outings with the pioneers together

with a bi-monthly ceili in the Gaelic Hall at our meetings. Big rallies were held annually in the parish of Newport with some great speakers extolling the virtue of temperance. I remember some of the talks and messages such as “no one ever sets out to be an addict to any sort of drug.” The Pioneer Movement was started by Father Cullen a Wexford born Jesuit in 1898 and from humble beginnings, the association which was to have a profound influence for good on the Irish nation grew to have 500,000 members in 1957. I have always held the values and ideals of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association dear to me.

I have seen many changes in my lifetime some of which I would consider to be very beneficial, such as the installation of electricity and running water in houses and outhouses.

Wrenboys, when they visited the local houses on St. Stephen’s Day would always have a song or verse in praise of the E.S.B. such as:

*Then fill your glasses my lads and lasses
All creeds and classes of the Irish name
And toast the statesmen
Those wise and great men
Who boldly tackled the Shannon Scheme*

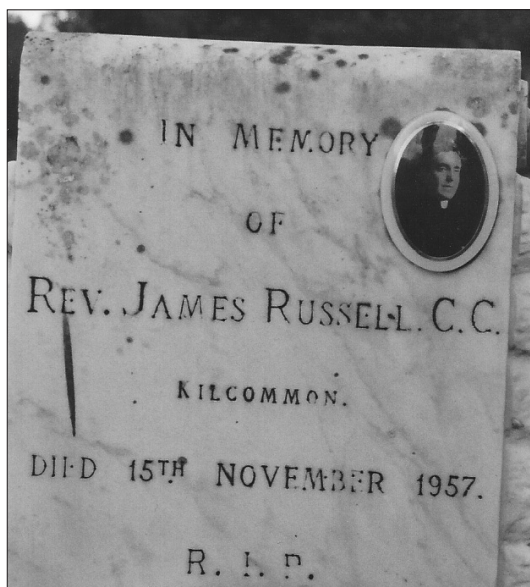
The advent of the motor car and consequent ease of travel was another change I would see as beneficial. I have seen changes in the values of life when I was young during the 1940s and 50s when people had enough money to put food on the table they were content. The emphasis on profit and ways of making quick investments for more profit was light years away. We had to wait until the 1990s to see the fruits of that culture.

Much later, another big physical change was the building of the new motorway the M7, it split my farm in two and where once the cry of the curlew was heard is now a victim of the never ending roar of heavy lorries and cars. I have been extremely lucky in the very fine neighbours who resided here in Annaholty. If I was to talk for an hour I would find it difficult to express the generosity, kindness, neighbourliness and goodness which I experienced from the people around. It did not matter what time of day or night but if you had a cow about to give birth or a mare about to drop her foal or a cow in a bog hole, they came. They came and didn’t expect thanks or didn’t want thanks they gave of their best and then went their way. The same can be said at haymaking and harvesting. They continued a tradition and a culture of generosity which they had inherited from generations of proud Tipperary people who had gone before them. Those neighbours are gone their way now

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just like the great slea'n's men
and the horse drawn mowing
machine or the corncrake. I
see them now in my mind's
eye standing in God's Garden
discussing drills of mangolds
and turnip fly or maybe the
spraying of potatoes and I
think that I was extremely
lucky and fortunate to have
known them and still to have
neighbours as fine as ever you
would wish to live near.

*Think where man's glory
most begins and ends
And say my glory was I had
and have such friends*
W.B. Yeats



Seamus Ryan was in conversation with Paddy Tuohy



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Old Photos



Presentation Ceremony for Ahane U12s and U14s hurlers in Castleconnell Hall in the 1980's.

Front Row: Kieran Bradshaw, Cormac Hassett, T.J Collins, Dermot Harrison, Sheamus Hassett, John Hassett, Turlough Herbert, Barry Smith, Liam Cosgrave, Emmet Graham, Paudie Conway, Daragh O'Neill.

Second Row: Martin Cooke, Fergal O Callaghan.

Third Row: Ger Murphy, Tony Byrne, Mike Flannery, Robbie O Connell, Kevin Herbert, Paul O Sullivan, Paul Humphreys, Mike Conway, Kieran Harrison, Diarmuid Collins, Tommy Graham.

Fourth Row: Paul Kennedy (Trainer) John Naughton (County Board) John Bourke, Mike O'Brien, Diarmuid Herbert, Mike Clancy, Gearoid Herbert, Kieran Cosgrave, Cliff Naughton Ger Bourke, Pat Conway (Selector) Tom Foley (Selector)

Fifth Row: Martin Murnane, Paul Madden Pat Quinn, Mike Keane, John Herbert, Joe O Grady, Vincent Harrigan, T.J Burns



Ahane Hurling Team in the 1930s.



*Peter Keane Ahane receiving the cup
after they won the East Senior
Championship early 1990s.*



*Chris Fallon, Peggy Duffy and Phila
Lynch.*



*E. Kingston, P.
Duffy, M. Tierney
and J. McCabe.*



Ahane N S Confirmation Class 1992.



Ahane Senior Hurling Team Early 1990s



Music class in Ahane early 1990s.



After Christmas Morning Mass in Montpelier about 2002.



Group of musicians, stewards and patrons probably at a Carnival in Castleconnell in the 1950s.

Including from the back: Seamus Ahern, John Joe Shyne, Timmie Byrnes, Willie Bourke, Willie Keane, Ned Rohan, Maura Hynes, Noreen Keane, Baby Hartigan, Dave Whelan, Cait Hynes, Bride Keane, Donal Hynes, Michael Murnane, Cyril Murphy, Jim Conway, Peggy McCabe, Madge Ryan, Sheila Hynes, Davie Quade, Imelda Callenan, Peggy Kingston, Sean McCabe, Eddie Bourke.



Castleconnell Fancy Dress Parade 1970s.



Fanny Coffey and Peggy Duffy



*Patsy Hartigan, Peggy Duffy,
Sister Placida and Baby Hartigan.*

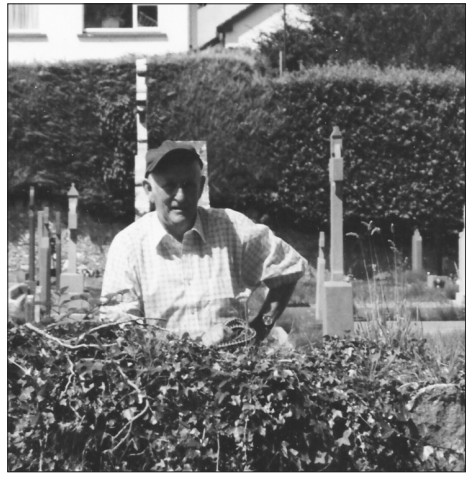


*Mary Guerin and
Janet Harbston.*

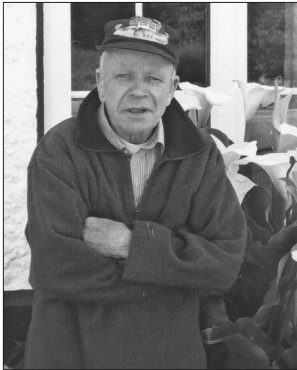
An Caisleán - The Castleconnell, Ahane & Montpelier Annual 2012



Michael McNamara Rich Hill and Limerick and Joe Carroll.



Tom Kearney



Maurice Keating



Michelle Madden is the winner (Scanlan Park 1980s)



*Scanlan Park Mothers Race 1980s.
L to R: Breda Coffey,
Kay Quinlan, Ann
Shepard, Carmel
O'Brien, Breda
Fitzgibbon, Sally
Madden, Ann Coleman.
(boys - Kennett Hayes,
Ollie Conway, Edward
Madden)*



Castleconnell N S Confirmation Class 1990

Back L/R: Valerie O'Gorman, Tony O'Dwyer, William Hayes, Andrew Hodnett, Clair Jones.

Front: Stuart Bond, Una Murphy, Seanie Byrnes, Michelle Madden.



Tom and John Foley.

*Ridht: The Butler Family
visit Santas Grotto at
Christmas 1960.
Mary, Nellie, Will, Martin,
Ed. and John*



*Ed, John and Will Butler
in Mahers Bar in 2000.*

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Babs Mescall, Paula Ryan and Kay Coughlan

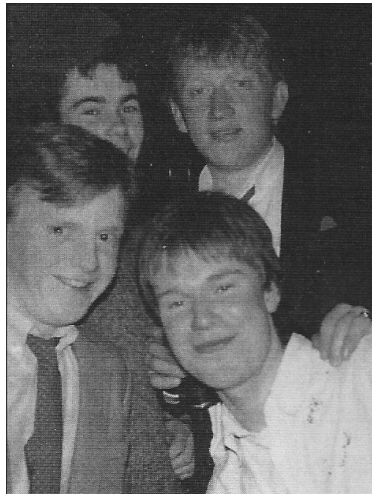


Bob Hogg, Paddy Rainsford and Paddy Lee.



*Annie O'Sullivan,
Ballinacourty.*

*Celebrating the
victory of Ahane
in the U-21
hurling final
1986
Back row
Adrian
O'Sullivan, TJ
Burns
Front row
Turlough
Herbert, Paul
O'Sullivan.*



*Christoper O'Sullivan and
his sister Mary,
Ballinacourty*

The Walkers

Over twelve years ago, William Bird came in to Sean Walsh's pub in Castleconnell and chatted with Charlie Fisher who was already at the bar. William was elated and excited and was really on top of the world because he had climbed to the summit of Carrauntoohil the day before. He felt very happy with a great sense of achievement. Charlie said "if it makes you feel that good I would like to join you on walks." Thus was born THE WALKERS. We are not a formal club or society, we have no chairman, secretary or treasurer, we are a group of friends who just like walking in the open air.

On Tuesdays for almost twelve years we assemble in the Castleconnell region and drive in one car to a walking trailhead. We walk on Tuesdays it is the only rule we have and that rule is sacrosanct. We take our turn in driving, our walks are not competitions or tests of speed, or of time or distance. We usually stay out on the hillsides or green roads or mountain sides for three to four hours. During that time we walk, we talk, we stand and stare, we use our other senses, our sense of sight to view the surroundings, our sense of hearing to hear the trill of the lark or the call of the cuckoo, our sense of smell to scent the aromas of rural Ireland or the flowers of the Burren pavements.

It is amazing the kaleidoscope of colour and landscape that can unfold before your eyes if only you have the time to stop and stare. We visit ancient cemeteries and old church ruins, we visit old sites where ancient hermits lived, prayed and meditated five thousand years ago, usually beside a rippling stream. We savour the aura of solitude and peace that first inveigled those ancient hermits to reside there.

During the 1950s I travelled the Newport/Thurles road (The Anglesey Line) many times with my uncle to hurling matches in Semple Stadium. I never saw such beauty of the landscape abounding that road such as Mother Mountain which looks down on Kilcommon or the Tipperary highlands surrounding Upperchurch. Walking has unveiled all that hidden scenery.

Twice a year we go away for a two or three day outing. The Aran Islands, Connemara, the Blasket Island of Peig Sayer's fame have been our stamping ground during these outings. Many other places such as the Slieve Blooms, the Comeraghs, the Knockmealdowns, the Galtees, Skellig Michael and the bee hive huts of the ancient monks and the little unafraid puffins flying around our heads and landing on our arms, even Carrauntoohil itself have all felt our footprints. Over the years we have walked in marked ways of mid and east Clare and in the Arra mountains, the Slieve Felim Mountains and the Devil's Bit in Tipperary. We stop and respect the belief of past generations who prayed at holy wells over thousands of years and hung their petitions in the form of personal bits of clothing on trees near the well, which are now known as raggy trees.

We have been lucky to have observed some of our diminishing wildlife - a large dog fox slinking by a hedgerow, a red squirrel swinging through oaks or a large

hare bounding away through moorland and a herd of deer galloping at ease through the foothills of Keeper Hill.

Coming back to base we retire to a friendly hostelry where we relax, chat with the locals, sing a song, tell a story or recite a poem and plan our walk for the coming Tuesday.

*What is life if, full of care,
We have no time to stop and stare.*

W.H. Davies (Leisure 1911)

Paddy Tuohy



P. Touhy, W. Bird, H. Nash, C. Fisher, T. Touhy.

In the Burren - Galway Bay and Inis Oirr in the background - Photo by T Gubbins

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The Stranger

A few years after I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around from then on.

As I grew up I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors. Mom taught me good from evil and Dad taught me to obey. But the stranger....he was our storyteller.

He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future.

He made me laugh and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking but Dad didn't seem to mind. Sometimes Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to the kitchen for peace and quiet. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave).

Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obliged to honour them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home - not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our long time visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my Dad squirm and my Mom blush. My Dad didn't allow the liberal use of alcohol but the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly and pipes distinguished. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing.

I now know that my early relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was never rebuked....and never asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you could walk into my parent's living room today, you would still see him sitting over in the corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw pictures.

His name...we just call him TV. TV has a wife now...we call her 'Computer'. First child is 'Cell phone' second child is 'iPod'. Third child is 'Texting'....

Mary O., London

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No one believes seniors everyone thinks they are senile

An elderly couple was celebrating their anniversary. The couple had married as childhood sweethearts and had moved back to their old neighbourhood after they retired. Holding hands, they walked back to their old school. It was not locked, so they entered, and found the old desk they'd shared, where Andy had carved 'I love you, Sally'.

On their way back home, a bag of money fell out of an armoured car, practically landing at their feet. Sally quickly picked it up and, not sure what to do with it, they took it home. There, she counted the money - fifty thousand dollars! Andy said, "We've got to give it back." Sally said, "Finders, keepers."

She put the money back in the bag and hid it in their attic. The next day, two police officers were canvassing the neighbourhood, looking for the money and knocked on their door. "Pardon me, did either of you find a bag that fell out of an armoured car yesterday?" Sally said "No". Andy said "She's lying. She hid it up in the attic". Sally said, "Don't believe him, he's getting senile."

The cops turned to Andy and began to question him. One said "Tell us the story from the beginning." Andy said, "Well, when Sally and I were walking home from school yesterday..." The first policeman turned to his partner and said "We're out of here."

Letting Go

To let go does not mean to stop caring, it means I can't do it for someone else.

To let go is not to cut myself off, it's the realisation I can't control another.

To let go is not to enable, but allow learning from natural consequences.

To let go is to admit powerlessness, which means the outcome is not in my hands.

To let go is not to try to change or blame another, it's to make the most of myself.

To let go is not to care for, but to care about.

To let go is not to fix but to be supportive.

To let go is not to judge, but to allow another to be a human being.

To let go is not to be in the middle arranging all the outcomes, but to allow others to affect their destinies.

To let go is not to be protective, it's to permit another to face reality.

To let go is not to deny, but to accept.

To let go is not to nag, scold or argue, but instead to search out my own shortcomings and correct them

To let go is not to adjust everything to my desires, but to take each day as it comes and cherish myself in it.

To let go is not to criticize or regulate anybody, but to try to become what I dream I can be.

To let go is not to regret the past, but to grow and live for the future.

To let go is to fear less and love more.

Compiled by Steve Reidy

1962: Ahane Football and the World's Place In It

Turlough Herbert

It was a time of great change in Ireland, and in the world. It was the time of Seán Lemass, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Doyle and Mick O'Connell; the world had just come as close as it ever has to nuclear catastrophe because of a nasty spat in the Caribbean, and right up there was the victory of Ahane in the Junior Football Championship of 1962. To upset the symmetry of this story, in the typical traditions of the Gaelic world, the final itself was not played until the 10th March, 1963.

Ahane of course, is known as one of the great traditional powers of hurling, but the pigskin has its place in Ahane folklore as well. Ahane had won five Senior Football Championships in a row in the 30s whilst at the same time winning the Senior Hurling Championship on each of those years as well: heady stuff!

The 40s saw the Club cement its position in hurling super legend, but fortunes faded thereafter for one reason or another. 1955 did see a further hurling crown, but it was clear by that time that the great years were over. The Club now had to take its place among the mortals and life would never be the same again.

In the meantime however, the Club remained at the centre of parish life in Ahane and Castleconnell and enjoyed the support and good will of the indigenous peoples. With that, Ahane did produce some very promising juvenile and minor teams in the late 50s. By the early 60s it appeared that the Club had lifted its head and looked heavenward again, as in 1962 a formidable bunch of youngsters had come together to win Eastern titles in hurling and football at juvenile level, and the dose was repeated at minor level in the same year. Names like Connolly, Nash, Hassett, and Hynes were all in there ready to burst into the adult form like hatching Mayflies. Careful in its cultivation, the Ahane Junior Football Team of 1962/1963 saw the moulding of the different generations into a fine fighting unit, with several teenagers taking to the front line with more experienced old guns like P.J. Keane, Willie Keane, Sean Ryan, William "Curley" Connolly.

In 1962 Ahane had accounted for Caherline, Pallasgreen and Oola in hard fought battles in the Eastern campaign. It was at about this point, in October of '62, that Ahane, and the World, having faced down the threat of nuclear war with the Soviets, breathed a large sigh of relief as Khrushchev pulled in the horns in Cuba. Further hardship was in store though as the populous was then befallen by the astonishingly bad weather conditions during the "big

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freeze” of the winter of 1962/1963. That was the worst winter weather since the apocalyptic winter of 1740. Indeed that winter of ‘62/63’ Tom Hogg of Castleconnell is reputed to have walked across the Shannon at the World’s End. People from Annacotty ice-skated on top of the weir on the Mulcair River, car bonnets were used as toboggans on icy hillsides, while small birds lived and died as nature would decide.

Having survived through all of that, by late February Ahane prepared itself for the County Junior Football semi-final, and the resurgent World kneaded its hands at the prospect. It was Galtee Geals, or perhaps some mutation of that institution (sources are unsure), that stood in the way of a place at the county final. However, having fought gallantly the men from the mountains fell to the sword in Bruff, and the Ahane men dusted themselves off and headed home to harden themselves for the final fight.

The final itself had some billing in its advance. Fr. Casey’s were expected to win, and that was that. It was believed that the prevailing winds would have scattered seeds of footballing greatness from the homes of Kerry on to the border town of Abbeyfeale, and not an Ahane man could stand the coming tumult. Nonetheless, our boys were not for turning their back on the challenge, especially having put down a torrid half year such as they had. They were ready for the din, and they knew it.

As it turned out Ahane were dominant in the final, and played like tigers throughout the field. Proceedings were dictated by the towering P.J Keane and his diminutive foil, Seán Ryan at mid-field. With heavy conditions demanding the most of each man’s skill and stamina, the guile and gumption of the old hands, together with the sparkle and dash of the debutants saw Ahane run out winners 1-8 to 1-2. The local newspapers reported after, of “the teamwork displayed” and the fielding of “splendid balls”. Singled out for special praise were Martin Rainsford, Jimmy Hassett, Pat Nash (later General), P.J. Keane (later Commandant) and Seanie Hynes. Martin Rainsford scored 4 points, Harry Kingston had the goal, Seán Hynes had two points while Tommy Casey and Pat Nash had one each.

The team that lined out were as follows; John Coffey, Gardenhill, Donnie Houlihan, The Spa, Joe Ryan, Coolbawn, Gerard Kingston, Castleconnell, Michael Fitzgibbon, Woodpark, Billy Coffey, Gardenhill, Jimmy Hassett, Richill and later Mountshannon, P.J. Keane, Gardenhill, Seán Ryan, Gooig, Martin Rainsford, St Flannan’s Terrace, Willie Keane, Gardenhill, Pat Nash, Ballyvarra, Harry Kingston, Castleconnell, John Connolly, Cloon and Commons, Seán Hynes, Newgarden, Tommy Casey, Ballyvarra. Others to feature throughout the Championship were John Connolly’s father “Curley”, John Givens, Donal Coffey and Jerry Houlihan.

There were more, but sources are very scant. Indeed there is no photograph of the team that has come to light. However, on hearing a conversation between the two Ahane midfielders on the day- which inevitably descended into an argument- the memory of the '62/'63 season are still obviously very much alive in the minds of those who wore the jersey in that time, but the passage of fifty years may have taken its toll on the detail.

Regardless of the lack of account, the importance of this achievement should not be understated as it gave to us a bridge from one era to the next, and you cannot say that it didn't give hope in the most vulnerable of times that the club had known since its birth. The people were grateful for all of that, but times as they were, there was no celebration of the victory; they just went home, and perhaps, along the way they ran into the Limerick Harriers who were hunting in Bruff on the same day.

Different times: different people.

Turlough Herbert

Special thanks to Seán Ryan and Willie Keane.

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Memories of Paddy Ryan Baker

I was born in in Woodpark on 15th March 1924. I had three sisters Eileen, Kathleen and Nora, two of them are back living in The Spa at the moment, Nora and Kathleen. My brother's names are Tim, Sean, Tom and George. My father Timothy came from Nenagh where my grandfather who was called Tim the Baker had a Baker's Shop known as Sheehan's and Ryan's Bakery. He came to live in the Spa where he baked for Anthony Mackey and Murnanes (two Bakeries here at that time). He died in 1900. My father was a shoe-maker who worked in Mr. Hickey's business also in The Spa, making footwear. My mother was from Birdhill, Margaret Treacy, her own people came from Ballinahinch and her father worked with the Railway. They lived in the railway house in Birdhill. I went to school from Hawthorns, where we lived at that time. Richard Edmonds was our teacher, Bill Edmonds taught the big boys and Mrs Edmonds taught the girls. I went to school until I was 14 years, that would have been the usual at the time.



When we lived in Hawthorns, I remember all the neighbours and those in the big houses who lived near us. There was a lot of poverty when I was a child and most people tried to grow their own vegetables and had very little. Many children went to school barefoot from about April 1st and they ate colcannon (onions and spuds) as their main meal. Ballantines, who owned a flour mill, lived in the Grange and they were quite unique in that they produced their own electricity, when no-one had it. There was a brook across the road flowing into the river and they had a little sluice gate which stopped the water so that they produced electricity for themselves. I also remember Harold Barry holding dances in the Grange every weekend. Goodbodys owned the Island House and they moved over to Woodsdown where St. Vincent's is now located.

Anthony Mackey had a fishery in The Spa and some of my earliest memories are of seeing the men catch and collect the eels and salmon which were boxed and transported to England. This was a very big enterprise at the time. I can recall seeing Patrick Enright, Paddy Travers, Mick Mulqueen, Bill Tucker and many more men working at the fisheries, where they worked hard to look after their families. Anthony Mackey once put a pea-cock and pea-hen into the Island, but unfortunately they were stolen. Fishing on the Shannon was a

major source of income at that time in Castleconnell. I can recall all the people who lived around the area including the Hoggs, Quins and Carters who lived behind the Tontines. W.F. Lee, Leamy's Shop (later Johnny Richardson's), McCabe's Shop, (I remember Mrs. McCabe was a very kind woman), Keane's Hotel, Delaney's Butcher's Shop, Hickey's Shannon Inn and the Priest's house in the Tontines, as well as many more. The Mail Train used to drop off big containers of flour and other supplies for the shops and they were emptied into bins in the shop and sold by the scoop.

My father had been in 1914 war. He was in the army for some time and a house was built for them in Woodpark, our neighbour there was an ex-soldier called Tommy Bourke, who worked as a postman. When I left school, my first job was working as a labourer on a farm near World's End. That was very hard and as the winter came in, I left. My father wasn't too pleased when I told him I had left but I soon got another job, working for Mr Sheppard wheeling turf. I had absolutely no experience of this work but I told him I had and I got on really well with him. I liked the work and after I finished up with him six weeks later, I worked for more people in the Bog Road, Paddy Ryan, Ger Bourke and Dan Tierney. Then things slacked off and I got a job with Nan and Tom Brien in Gouig, they were relations of my mother and I was paid 8s a week (a rise of 3s). I brought home the turf, picked up spuds and anything else they asked me to do. Then when I had no more to do there, I worked in Newgarden with Paddy Ryan Madóg and also worked with Mrs Joe Ryan, Jim Connors and Wilmotts.

During the war I started cutting timber with my brother Tadhg. Then I was lucky enough to get a job in the bog as a slanesman, there were barrowmen and slanesmen (they were very particular about their work) I copied what they were doing (I really knew nothing about it but went in any way!) Later, I got a job in Knockbrack in the quarry and also in Newgarden Quarry. After that I started work in Limerick cutting timber as coal was very scarce. I was earning £3 a week but it was very hard work although we got overtime for staying back to cut the timber into blocks. As a young man, we used to walk across the river to go over to Doonass and Toddler Tuohy (Duck) would bring us back in his boat at 11.30 or 12 midnight. Judy Bourke would take people across in a boat at the ferry and Matthew Doyle used to take the post over to Clonlara.

I decided to go to England and join the RAF. I had to go by Belfast, I remember it was Christmas time and I had to up for a medical examination. Of course, I didn't know anyone up there and I was tired and cold with very little money. I met a man there and told him my story that I was going to join the forces and had to stay overnight but did not have enough money. It was Christmas and he took me to The Salvation Army (I will never forget the sight

of the uniform with the red stripes), where I got the nicest mug of tea and two most welcome slices of fried bread with eggs! I stayed the night there and the next day I passed the medical and was taken to Long Kesh, where I spent Christmas. On Christmas Day, a priest came in and asked if anyone could sing. I volunteered and sang the 'Plain Chant' as I had been a member of Mr. Houlihan's Choir (along with Timmy Murphy, Paddy Walsh, my brother Tim and many more, we had travelled to Nenagh and Ennis on many occasions to competitions and had won several cups). It was one of the most memorable Christmases of my life! Once I had joined up to the RAF I was paid 30s, this was a huge improvement on what I had been getting working on the bog and the farms. I stayed in England for three years and then came home.

I was lucky enough that I had learned to drive in the RAF and not that many people in Ireland had the skill because there were few enough cars. I took a job with Sweeneys driving a lorry, worked with him for 10 years. (Bob Sweeney's grandfather). Then I went driving a truck with Martin Bourke and later went to work in the Cement factory....that did not work out as I was ill one morning and because I couldn't work, I was fired and had to give back the boiler suit, coat, boots etc., I was wearing. I was fortunate enough then to meet up with a man called Ned Long, who helped me to buy my own truck. I was advised to go to Shannon and found work there for three months. I then got some work with Larry Kelly supplying the hospitals and jails and other institutions. Then work got very scarce. I had taxed and insured the truck but had no work for it. Luckily, I started working for Roadstone and stayed there for over twenty years.

I married Nellie O'Brien in 1951, she used to work in The Hurler's and that is where I met her. We have two sons in family, Cormac and Pat. Sadly, Nellie passed away seven years ago.

One of the great passions in my life was fishing, from when I was a young boy, using a bamboo and lucky to catch a perch to later years when I spent much of my spare time fishing with Willie Frewen and Johnny Davis on the Shannon at World's End. It used to cost about 10s to fish on Shannon and an extra 5s for the Mulcair but then when the Beats came in, it was very difficult for the ordinary person to fish as it became very expensive. I was lucky enough that Paddy Lee and John Wilmott would give me a day every so often.

I have spent most of my life living in Castleconnell, except for the years I was in England with the RAF (from 1946-49). Life was tough for many people economically but when I returned in 1949, things were a bit better as the war had ended and there was a bit more employment. I have seen many changes in the Parish from when I was a child and young man growing up here but I was content with my life...I had a happy home, a decent job and my beloved fishing.

(Paddy Ryan Baker in conversation with Pat Skehan and Anne Berkery)

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"I have so many wonderful memories of my daughter growing up in this beautiful place. A lot of those memories are linked with the ACM Centre...like pictures in my mind's eye....of each unique Patrick's Day Parade...she's taken part in all of them since she was four...whether she was dressed in glitter and gold or costume, or marching solidly behind Ahane GAA or Scouts...or to this year when she was 'too old' to march but loving the bustle and excitement of it all and enjoying being part of the crowd with her friends....of the magical summer festivals with bouncy castles and fancy dress, resplendent in her red Spanish flouncer and fan...of the special party we held for her at the ACM, with all her friends and family...a warm and inviting setting for that occasion...a true celebration of community that serves the community so well."

M

"...because of the people. They are so welcoming, the sports. I would never have had the chance to play football or camogie without Ahane GAA. I love Castleconnell because of my new friends!"

Niamh Martin

"...I have lived here for 23 years, I have travelled the world and have made my home here. The people, community, neighbours and friends are the best I've met around. I didn't expect to stay and yet here we are, three sons, 'Limerick men' and us from Cork!

Castleconnell is a very special place, you have never met such kind, caring people in all situations, when anybody needs support in time of sickness, grief and celebration, this community comes up trumps."

Josephine Aherne.

"...The flowers are pretty and nice,
The Chinese has delicious fried rice.
The people always laugh together
In both good and bad weather.
The choir sing each Sunday
The houses look merry and gay.
George Lee would give you a tip on hurling any day,
Matt Byrne's sketches are funny, hip hip hooray.
Niall Moran from Ahane plays for Limerick now,
Watch him score WOW!
The duck waddle and quack in the river,

Children paddle in summer and shiver.
 The Castle Oaks has many delights,
 With fabulous wedding lights.
 The Charity Shops are brilliant and kind,
 And always keep less fortunate in mind.
 Children immensely enjoy the playground,
 And in our village we found
 The nature and beauty this village beholds and boasts
 Deserves many celebrations and toasts.

Eileen Vaughan Age 14

“...is fear liom Caisleán Uí gConaing na áit ar bith ar domhain.
 Níl a leithéad áit ar bith.

Máire Ní Riain

“...Everyone is nice to meet,
 They always give the nicest greet.
 George sells the ice-cream, milk and bread,
 Coal for the fire or logs instead.
 The crèche is for children, whose parents work all day
 So they can get the money for the bills they have to pay.
 Tony the Butcher on the main street
 Sells eggs and veg as well as meat.
 I go to Whisps to get my hair done,
 Then next door to Lettie’s to get medicine.
 The people are coming to judge our town,
 We’ll do our best not to let the village down.”

Lauren McNamara

“...Here is where my heart is,
 And each day it beats with pride,
 To live among this beauty
 Here by the Shannonside.
 With the nature that surrounds us,
 And birdsong from every tree,
 Come see for yourself what I see,
 The best things in life are free.”

Mary Dawson

“...there are so many great things to do here,
 There is something for everyone here.
 Castleconnell is a beautiful village on the Shannon.
 There is a great sense of community in the village and there are so many
 wonderful organisations in Castleconnell who work very hard to make
 Castleconnell a better place for everyone living here. Castleconnell is such a lovely
 place to grow up in and I am proud to say I come from here.”

Mary Kate Hilliard

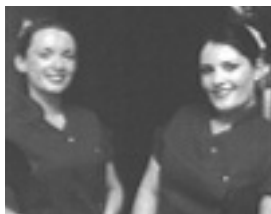
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The Australian Ambassador's Visit

Mary A. Moloney

On the 8th November 2012 the Australian Ambassador to Ireland Mr. Bruce Davis visited All Saints Church Stradbally and Thornfields Lisnagry, Co. Limerick. This was the result of an invitation by Edward Richardson to the Ambassador to visit the historic sites which held such significance for both the Irish and Australian peoples, going back to the nineteenth century when General Sir Richard Bourke, became Governor of New South Wales.

Holding a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Political Science from the University of Queensland, the Ambassador – himself of Irish descent was quite pleased to accept such a prestigious invitation. He along with his wife Meg were entertained to a delicious lunch at Thornfields the ancestral home of the Bourke's by Patsy Hazelbech Flynn and her sons Darragh and Seán. Following lunch the Ambassador along with his wife visited All Saints Church Stradbally to view the "historic gem" that is All Saints Church. While there he was entertained to tea by the parishioners.

He viewed the Bourke family vault and the many memorials to the Bourke family members in the Church. Edward Richardson later presented the Ambassador with a portrait of General Sir Richard Bourke by the local artist Barbara Hartigan. The ambassador, accompanied by his wife and Edward Richardson, went on a walking tour of the beautiful village of Castleconnell. The visit was a tremendous success leaving a feeling of goodwill all around as our ties with Australia have once again been reinforced.



The Australian Ambassador on a visit to All Saints Church Stradbally, pictured left to right, Mrs. Meg Davis (the Ambassador's wife), Mr. Bruce Davis (Australian Ambassador), Edward Richardson (Church Warden and Parish Reader, All Saints), Rev. Lucy Green and Patsy Hazelbech Flynn, Thornfields, Lisnagry.

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Local Artist Barbara Hartigan speaking to the Australian Ambassador Mr. Bruce Davis, following the presentation of her portrait of General Sir Richard Bourke to him in All Saints Church.



The Ambassador Mr. Bruce Davis views the Burial Vault of the Massey Family. Also present in the picture are from left to right, the Ambassador's wife Mrs. Meg Davis, Rev. Lucy Green, the Australian Ambassador, Edward Richardson and Mr. John Leonard.

Mrs. Meg Davis, Rev. Lucy Green, Mr. John Leonard, the Australian Ambassador Mr. Bruce Davis and Edward Richardson view the burial vault of Gen. Sir Richard Bourke.



From the Bog to the Bush

By Carmel McDonald

With additional material by Stephen Reidy

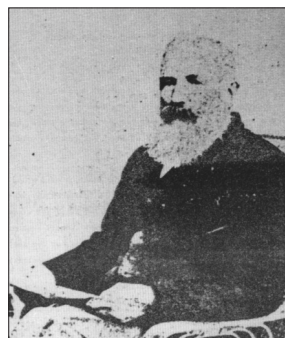
In the years during and after the Famine in Ireland a tradition of mass emigration to America and Australia became established in many parts of the country.

One of the more notable areas for emigration in this parish was the townland of the Bog Road, about a mile from Castleconnell village.

It was here in the 1840s and 50s that many of the families on the road were forced to take up their roots and flee from the ravages of hunger and primitive living conditions, leaving their small holdings and tiny cottages to fall into decay and ruin. Few, if any, ever returned to the homeland. Most of them were never heard of again, and it was left to those who remained behind to speculate and wonder what their fate might have been.

One exception to this was James Ready, an emigrant from the Bog Road to Australia, whose life and times in his native place and in his adopted country are well chronicled in a book entitled 'Shamrocks among the Gum Trees' written by one the descendants, Carmel McDonald whose grandmother was a daughter of the same James Ready.

James was born in the Bog Road in 1834. His parents were Patrick and Kate Ready (nee Moroney), and they had one other son Michael. The little Reidy homestead, now long gone, was situated



on a plot where the bridge of the New M7 motorway crosses the Bog Road.

The young James Ready had just entered his teenage years when the Great Hunger was at its worst, and the country was experiencing its most terrible era of sorrow, misery and devastation, with the failure of the potato crop and the subsequent starvation that brought pestilence and disease to the whole land. In Limerick city workhouse alone, deaths were running at over 130 per week, with corpses lying unburied for days on end.

To add heartbreak to the family's hardship, James' mother died. Sometime after her death, his father married again to Mary Boyle, and in the years that followed, James acquired two half-brothers, David and John, and a half-sister Ellen.

In 1854, James Ready, now in his twentieth year walked down the Bog Road for the last time. Bound for far-off Australia, it is believed he took the river boat from the World's End-as was the means of transport then-down the old

canal to Limerick city where he joined the larger ocean-going ship on his journey to the other side of the world.

James found work in this new land of opportunity, and met his future wife, Mary Hayes from Tipperary. The same age as himself, she had come to Australia after her parents died, and according to her shipping list, she paid the sum of one pound for the voyage.

The pair were married in St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney in 1858, four years after arriving in the country. They both worked in Gordanbrook on the Clarence River in New South Wales, a property of some 60,000 acres. Here their first child, Charles, was born in 1860.

Shortly after, the family loaded up their bullock wagon with whatever belongings they possessed and travelled north to try to make a future for themselves.

When they reached Fassifern Homestead in Queensland they met Richard Spencer, who was recruiting a party to bring a herd of cattle to Denison Creek and form a station there. James and Mary decided to join the Spencer party. James was put in charge of the bullock wagons and Mary was to cook for the men. One of the wagons had a tilt over it made of canvas. This was to be home for them during the journey, and it was here that Mary gave birth to Kate, her second child, under the bullock wagon with only her husband to assist (a far cry from today's maternity wards).

As the party bore away to the north east on their journey, Spencer decided to follow a creek for about six miles and pitched camp near a lagoon, a beautiful sheet of water with a circumference of about four miles, inhabited by wild fowl of every kind. To the north was a majestic mountain which Richard Spencer named Mount Spencer, after himself. They were the first white people to view this enchanting scene.

James and Mary later worked for a time in Greenmount, and James carried supplies in his bullock wagon from Mackay over the range. In 1863 their third child, James, was born – the first white boy to be born in the Mackay District of Queensland.

James, now in his late twenties was already a success, making handsome profits from his career service, so much so that he was able to pay the passages of his brother Michael and his step brothers David and John and their sister Ellen, who followed him to Australia and settled in the Mackay District.

The Ready's youngest child, Mary, was baptised on 22 July 1867. On the same day an Aboriginal baby girl was also baptised at the request of James Reidy. He had rescued the child from a mountain known as The Leap, and from which the infant's mother had plunged to her death while being pursued by the dreaded Native Police. No one wanted to take responsibility for the child, James and Mary took her home, christened her Johanna and reared her as one of their own.

James Ready had a great love for Australia and its people. A big robust man, he was no stranger to hard work, and was always a gentleman of his word. Little wonder then that he was highly respected and became a wealthy man.

In 1863 he built the Traveller's Rest Hotel at Hazledean, on the Eton Range, the first of the many properties he owned. He



was a Director of the Mackay Central Sugar Manufacturing Company. James and Mary also owned Fort Cooper Station before moving to Varraville, Nebo Road. James became a member of Nebo Shire Council.

It was here in 1900 that Mary died at the age of 69 years after a period of failing health. Nine years later, on New Year's Day, James Ready died in his 78th year. His obituary notice declared—"The late Mr Ready was a genial old gentleman, and though he had been ailing for some time past, his memory was fresh to the last".

So great was the esteem in which James Ready and his family was held that several streets were named after them, including Ready Street, Mary Street, Kate Street and a stretch of seashore called Mick Ready Beach. Named in memory of his brother Michael Ready who was Chairman of the Harbour Board and of Pioneer Shire Council 1905-06.



Joe and Carmel McDonald with their niece Kate Scott, Queensland.

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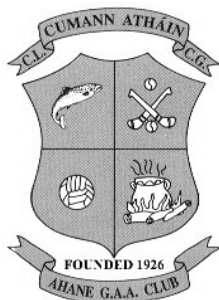
Descendants of James and Mary Ready number well over 500 including 272 great great great great grandchildren, and in August 1999 Kate Scott one of James Reidy's descendants retraced the journey back across the globe to Castleconnell's old Bog Road to see the place where her famous ancestor was born, where he survived the Great Hunger, shook off the shackles of poverty and hardship and set out to make a new life for himself in Australia over a century and a half ago.

Since Kate Scott's first visit, four more descendants of James Ready have made their way back to Castleconnell.

We have also made contact with another lady in the Melbourne area. One of her ancestors was Mary Judith Ready/Reidy who married a William Fox. They had two children Baptised in Newport. She was probably a sister of Patrick and Michael Ready/Reidy.

- Reidy is spelt and pronounced 'Ready' in Australia

- In Ireland the spelling changed from 'Ready' to 'Reidy' in the early 1900's.



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Old Photos



Castleconnell Girls N.S. Top of Independent House Dublin early 1960's.

Back L/R: Theresa Ryan (Teacher), Marie Delaney, Eva Dugan, Crissie Foley, Ann Kelleher, Margaret Ryan, Renie Hurley, Peggy O'Driscoll, Margaret Flynn, Phill Hyland, Kit Joyce, Annette Conway, Kathleen Reidy, Nuala Ryan, Mary Meaney, Pauline Joyce, Lizzie Tierney, Ann Doyle, Phyllis Quinn, Kathleen Hurley,

Kneeling Carmel Murphy, Catherine O'Connor, Eileen Mulqueen, Kathleen Power, Hannah Tierney.

Kate O'Donoghue, Phyllis Delaney, Angela Ryan, Betty White, Mary Tierney, Geraldine Kelleher, Annie O'Driscoll, Sheila Meskill, Freda Meskill, Onnie O'Donoghue.



I C A at work in 1987

Bella Walsh, Lenore Walsh, Ann Berkery, Rosaleen Kelly, Kay Hickey, Mary O'Grady, Betty Touhy, Babs Touhy, Susan Joyce, Camilla Mitchell, Kathleen Carroll, Chris Fallon, Fanny Coffey



The end result



John Coffey, Annaholty; Paddy Walsh, Gouig; Paddy Shyne, Gouig and Martin Quinlivan, Annaholty.

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Kevin Herbert, Paddy Hickey



The Walsh Family in Kilkee 1966.

*The Walsh Family of 7 sisters
and 2 brothers taken in Castle
Oaks Hotel, Castleconnell, in
April, 1990.*



Seamus Walsh and Tom Blake in Croke Park before the throw in for the 2001 All-Ireland Hurling Final.



Girls National School Castleconnell 1958

Back row:Keane, Margaret Meaney, Geraldine Ryan, Biddy O'Donoghue, Nancy Power, Mary Conway, Crissie Foley, Letty O'Sullivan, Margaret Reidy, Keane.

4th Row: Marie Delaney, Kathleen Reidy, Bride Walsh, Josie Keane, Theresa Mulqueen, Miriam Mackey, Ann Kelleher, Rene Hurley, Phyllis Quinn, Betty Hennessy, Margaret Ryan, Noreen Hyland, Elizabeth Tierney.

3rd Row: Pauline Joyce, Bernie Hennessy, Margaret Flynn, Peggy O'Driscoll, Nuala Ryan, Mary Meaney, Kit Joyce, Angela Veale, Phil Hyland, Kathleen Butler, Brigid O'Sullivan.

2nd row: Cathy Power, Geraldine Travers, Shelia Hurley, Nuala McMahon, Kathleen White, Carmel Keane, Keane.

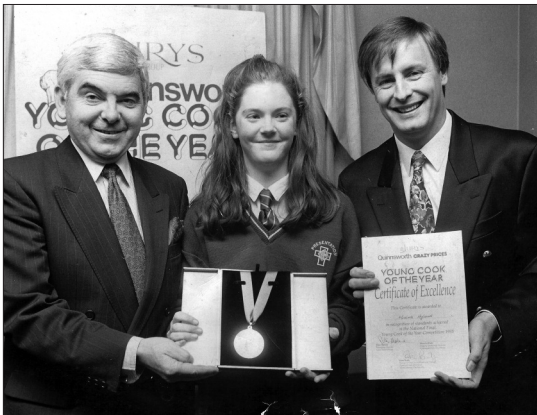
Front Row: Ann Tierney, Maureen Hurley, Mary Hurley, Peggy Fitzgibbon, Marchie Delaney, Eileen Joyce, Ann Mulqueen, Peggy Joyce.



Lisnagry Under 14 soccer team about 1990

Back row L/R: F Ryan, T Carey, M Hough, M Sheppard, S Byrnes, E Benn, T Byrnes, D Kennedy, T O'Brien, T Sheehan.

Front Row: J Coleman, L O'Sullivan, J O'Brien, N Doyle, O Cinneide, D Ryan, G Doyle, S Bond.



*Michelle Hyland,
Castleconnell - Winner of the
Young Cook of Ireland
Competition 1993 with Peter
Malone, Jurys Hotel and
Maurice Pratt, Quinnsworth.*



*Left:
Eamonn
Meskell &
Noel
Fennessy,
1964
Right: Bobby
& John
Fennessy,
1958*





*First Communion: Fr. John O'Dwyer U.S.A (cousin of Joe Barry)
Boys L/R: John Fennessy,,, Joyce, Joe Barry, Noel Ryan, Alfie
Donoghue, Bernard Meaney, Pa Hennessy, Denis Callaghan, Seamus Flynn.
Girls including: Annette Conway, Mary O'Halloran, Phil Hyland, Elizabeth
Tierney, Mary Tierney.*

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Acknowledgements

The Committee of 'An Caisleán' very much appreciate the help of so many people in the preparing and publishing of this year's Journal.

Our thanks to:

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- Those who loaned us photographs old and new.
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