

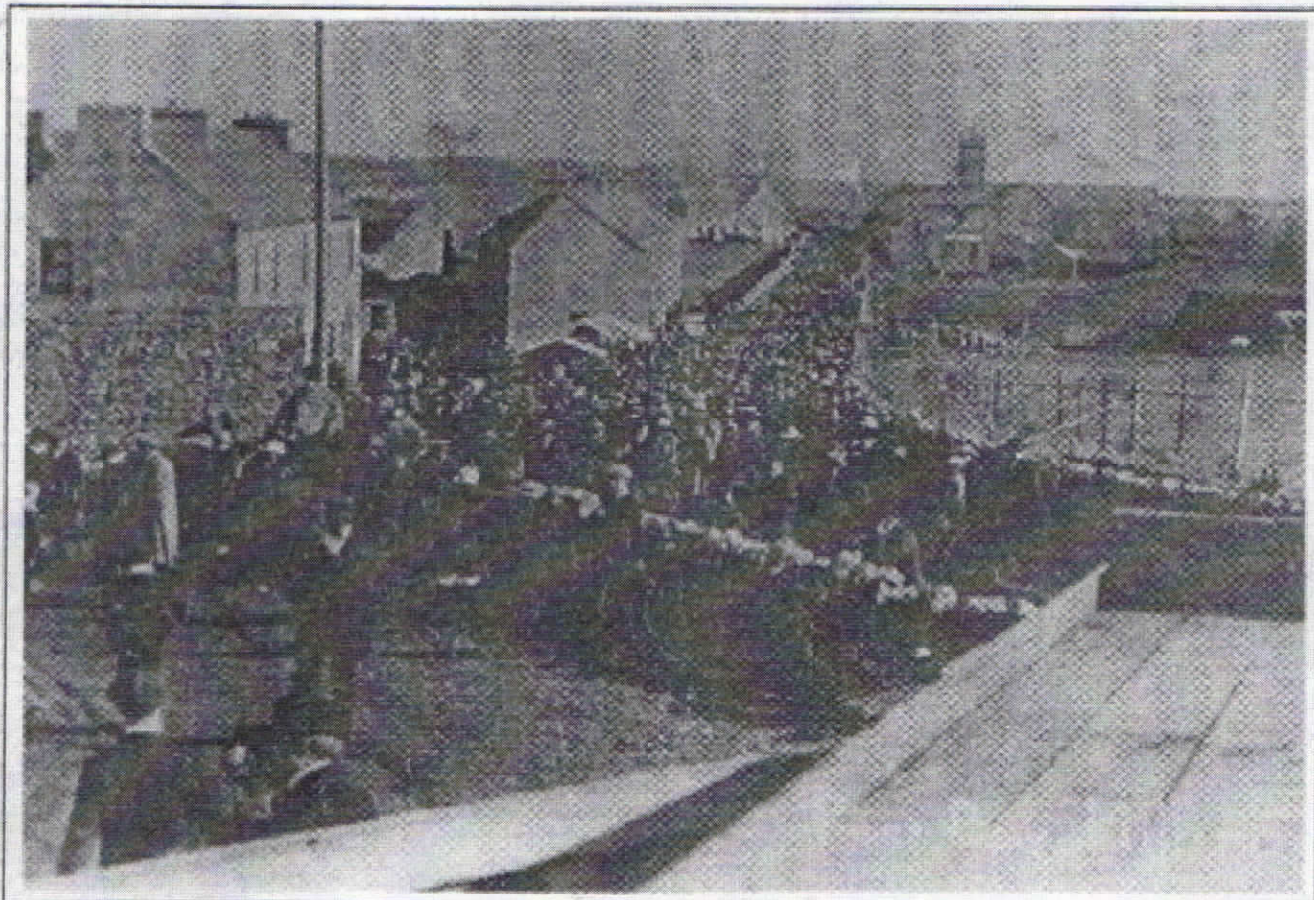
Milltown Newsletter

PRICE £1

EASTER 1994



Milltown Races



Easter 1915

Editorial

This, the Easter Issue 1994, is the first of the year and comes out as the first quarter of the year elapses. It serves as a reminder of how quickly time flies. Easter was traditionally a time of great colour and excitement in Milltown with the famous race meeting and dancing carnival combining to attract enormous crowds from far and near. Those events have, unfortunately, died out and a huge void remains. Perhaps somebody out there can think of an idea to recapture even some of that atmosphere.

Here in the Newsletter it has been unanimously agreed that it is time to feature one of the fairer sex and that gender could have no better representative than Mrs. Nora Varley, Belmont who graces the Hot Seat for this issue.

Sadly our last choice for that guest spot, 102 year old Thomas Kirrane, passed away in February so Milltown's only remaining link with the last century has gone. A gentle, kindly and gracious man he retained his wonderful memory and good health right up to the end. We feel humble and deeply privileged to have met and interviewed him. Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

The school photos in the last issue proved extremely popular and brought a wave of nostalgia over the local area, parts of Ireland and various other countries where many of those pupils now reside far from their native land. Some, sadly, are no longer with us having passed on to their reward at an age far less the allotted span of three score and ten years.

As well as the Hot Seat and more photos this issue contains an other part of the M.J. Molloy story and an article by M. J. Molloy himself on his trip to Fatima, plus a nostalgic look at Milltown Races by Frank Glynn.

Many people, especially those away from home have been enquiring about the identity of the 'gang' responsible for putting the Newsletters together. We did include our names in the first one (rather brave of us really) but as new readers may not have seen it we have decided to come out into the open and admit responsibility each time. Confession is good for the soul provided it does not involve controversial articles or libel.

Milltown Newsletter is compiled by (in alphabetical order): Noel Carney, Pauline Larney, Deirdre McGrath, Michael Oates and Trudi Varley.

Don't Quit

*When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow . . .
You may succeed with another blow.*

*Success is failure turned inside out
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worst that you must not QUIT.*

The Hot Seat

Full Name: Nora Grehan Varley.

Occupation: Housewife.

Favourite Food: Chicken & Potatoes.

Favourite Colour: Black.

Favourite T.V. Soap: Keeping up Appearances.

Favourite Chat Show: Late Late Show.

Favourite Actor / Actress: Mary McEvoy / Gabriel Byrne.

Earliest Memory: As a very young child I danced a hornpipe at the sports centre near "The Blue Pig" on the trailer of a lorry. I got first prize and won £3.

First Job: I left school early to look after my mother.

First Dance: At Connolly's Dance Hall in Drim. We would get a 'Stand up Supper' for 1 shilling. The dance hall owners reckoned if we got a 'Sit down Supper' no one would dance.

Favourite Song: Streets of London.

Favourite Pastimes: Watching T.V. and attending Fine Gael Meetings.

Favourite Drink: Vodka and White.

Person you most Admire: Some good looking fellow – such as Gay Byrne.

Worst Moment at School: My first day at school I scraped a pen on the desk and was told off by the teacher or should I say was 'Belted Hell for Leather'.

What is your greatest regret: No regrets – worked hard.

If you won the Lotto: I would look after my family and the starving children all over the world.

Motto: It's wiser to listen than to argue.

If you weren't Nora Varley who would you like to be? Elizabeth Taylor – one should have 9 or 10 husbands????

Biggest change you have seen over the years: The majority of young married couples have their own homes. When I got married most couples moved in with parents/inlaws and worked very hard on the farms etc.

Your Favourite Quotation: Never let trouble get to one and always look on the bright side of life.



Nora Varley lives in Ballinlough, Belmont, Milltown
with her husband Miko.

M.J. Molloy

(Part Two of a series on the well-known Milltown Playwright)

As a teenager M.J. went to St. Jarlath's College, Tuam where he was a boarder and after he had completed his Leaving Certificate examination he decided, like the majority of his fellow-students, to become a priest. An ambition to minister to the Chinese foreign Missions led him to St. Columban's College, Dalgan Park in Shrule, where he enrolled as a student in 1931.

After his first novitiate year he did two years Philosophy and Classics followed by a year of Theology but then fate took a hand when he became afflicted with bone tuberculosis, a very painful disease. For five years he bravely fought for his health and a number of drastic operations left him with a permanently short left leg and a stiff knee. Unfortunately no missionary order would accept a young man with such disabilities and plans for the priesthood had to be abandoned.

Fate again intervened one evening as he hobbled away on crutches from a Dublin hospital. A friend persuaded him to go along to the Abbey Theatre and although he had no interest whatsoever in the world of drama he reluctantly went there to pass the time. Two plays by the great George Bernard Shaw were being staged, the first a one-act comedy called "The Village Wooing" followed by his wonderful masterpiece "Candida".

It was the start of a magnificent obsession as Joe was totally captivated by the plays and from then on read every play he could get his hands on, particularly those by Shaw, and went to the theatre as often as possible. He had already harboured ambitions about becoming a writer, now he clearly saw a path down which he wanted to travel. It was playwriting.

A spell in a Wicklow sanatorium gave him the opportunity to experiment with his new interest and he wrote an hour long farce which was produced by the patients. Encouraged by the reception it got he started writing sketches after returning home and he also produced plays for local amateur groups. So many and varied were these productions, especially during Lent when dancing was effectively banned, and so great was the list of actors that an entire article would be required to do them justice. Among M. J. Molloy's own plays were "The Will and Way" starring P.J. Garvey, Jim Costello, Michael Egan, Jarlath Connolly and Brid Quinn, and "The Paddy

Pedlar" which featured Michael Egan, Jim Costello, Padraic Ruane, Kathleen Forkan (nee O'Brien), Mary Sheridan (nee Forde) and Kathleen O'Donnell.

Meanwhile further afield his career was beginning to take off. In 1943 he wrote a three-act play "The Old Road" and entered it in the Abbey Playwriting competition. Much to his surprise and delight it won first prize. It was produced at the Abbey in April of that year and again in 1944 and was published by Progress House. The plot concerned the conditions of farm labourers in small farm areas and was also an attack on the matchmaking system where arrangements were usually based on mercenary, commercial or sometimes even desperation reasons rather than romantic ones.

"The Old Road" was, incidentally, staged in Tuam in 1944 by the Abbey Players. Produced by Louis Dalton it was presented at the Odeon Cinema in Shop Street which closed down some years ago and is now part of Sean Fallon's Menswear Shop. It was to be the start of a long and fruitful relationship between the author and Tuam theatregoers and, of course, with the local Theatre Guild.

His next Abbey play was about a subject dear to his heart – the visiting houses. Called "The Visiting House", it starred the man widely recognised as probably the greatest Irish actor of all time – F. J. McCormack who played the leading role. The plots for his next two plays "The King of Friday's Men" and "The Paddy Pedlar" were gleaned from interviews with William Kelly, an old man from Tulrahan, Co. Mayo a place famous for notorious shillelagh battles at St. Brigid's Well on St. Brigid's Day. Those fights continued well into William's childhood.

In all a total of eight Molloy plays have been produced by the Abbey, a tremendous achievement in itself. "The Will and The Way" was staged in 1954 with "A Right Rose Tree" following in 1958, "The Wooing of Duvesia" in 1964, and "Petticoat Loose" in 1979. It is a truly remarkable record of consistency and creativity at the highest level. His work is still as popular as ever on the Drama Festival circuit, appealing to groups all over the country and has won prizes galore for those who have staged it.

To be continued

Dalgin National School 1948/49



FRONT ROW: Tom Keane, Noel Burke, Michael John Burke, Frank Kelly, Michael Curran.

SECOND ROW: Ann Connolly, Alice Burke, Sarah Quinn, Breege Quinn (R.I.P.), Pat Rhattigan, Sal Rhattigan, Rosemary Ryan, Eileen Keane, Sadie Mongan, Nora Curran.

THIRD ROW: Jimmy Diskin, Paddy Connolly, Mary Connolly, Mary Kirrane, Mary Theresa Mongan, Mary Higgins, Peg Curran, Jack Feerick.

FOURTH ROW: Val Varley, Stephen Mongan, Tom Joyce, Michael Keane, Martin Kelly, John Waldron, Tony Ryan.

"Hall Restoration Fund"

By Liam Glynn

The Hall Restoration Committee are presently preparing estimates for the work to be undertaken on the parish hall. These estimates will be presented to the Community Council at the next meeting.

Meanwhile the work of fundraising goes on with Dances, Table Quizzes, Card Drives and Dart Matches being run on a regular basis. Most houses in the Parish have been represented at the fundraising events and we hope this trend will continue.

The Finance Committee report that £2,500.00 has been collected to date, with a number of events planned for the coming months.

Watch the Milltown Notes in the Tuam Herald for details of up coming fundraising events.

Name the five "Handsome Gentlemen" taken in this photo in 1950 in the marquee in Milltown.

Write your answer on a piece of paper and hand in to Milltown Post Office before May 31.

Special Prize for the winner.



Milltown Races

By Frank Glynn

Milltown Village dates back to the Elizabethan Conquest in 1589, when it formed part of the land granted to the Birmingham's, who subsequently built the mill on the River Clare, from which the Village later took its name.

It is probable that from shortly afterwards, even as early as the early 1600 there was some sort of an annual racehorse/hunter, cross-country or point-to-point challenge between the landlords, with a farmer's race to keep the tenants happy, which later grew into the Dalgin Races and later still the famous annual Milltown Races.

The first 'modern' Milltown Races and Carnival was held on Easter Week 1957 - April 21st to April 28th. I say modern because as far back as 1916 an advertisement appearing in the Tuam Herald states that a "Grand Easter Carnival Bazaar and Races" was held in Milltown that year and I also have a photo of the 1915 races on Easter Monday, which shows the village black with people from the "Race Park" - Bernie Keane's field at the back of the old pump - to the old church.

The best way to embrace the nostalgia of that almost now forgotten era is to reprint in full the 1916 advert.

GRAND

EASTER CARNIVAL

- AND -

B A Z A A R

Spend your Easter well and happily by visiting and enjoying the above Grand Fete in aid of the repair and renovation of the MILLTOWN CHURCHES

BAZAAR OPENS ON EASTER SUNDAY at 2 p.m. and continues on EASTER MONDAY, when the Annual Popular Racing Fixture the

Milltown Races

will be also brought off.

Among the principal features of the occasion are:

First Class Dancing ????? and Orchestra, Tea and Luncheons, Marquees, Cinimatograph and Cafe, Childrens Entertainments, and a number of well-equipped and up-to-date Stalls.

A large variety of Amusements will be also provided, including - Tofts Merry Go Rounds, Swings, etc. also Volunteer Shooting Galleries, Roulette and other Games of Chance and Skill.

TRAIN ARRANGEMENTS - As Follows:-

Special trains will be run on Sunday from Tuam at 3 p.m., and Claremorris at 4 p.m., returning to Claremorris at 11 p.m. and Tuam at 12 midnight. On Monday in addition to the ordinary train service special late trains will be run as on the previous night. Holders of books of tickets are requested to send in blocks of duplicates and remittances as early as possible.

President: REV. M. DISKIN, PP.

Hon. Chair.: REV. M. CONCANNON, OC and JOHN J. HOBAN esq.

MASTER CARNIVAL AND BAZAAR AT MILLTOWN

CAKE COMPETITION

In connection with the above grand Carnival and Fete at Milltown on Sunday and Easter Monday, 23rd and 24th April, '16 a Cake Competition will be held under the auspices of the Tea and Luncheon Room Committee. Prizes will be offered in the following classes:-

- (1) For the best Plain Soda Cake made by a resident in the parish - Lady's handsome silver watch.
- (2) A competition open to all competitors for Best Fancy Cake - Prize, silver wristlet watch.

Cakes to be sent in on 20th April. Entries close April 12th with MISS KILEEN FORDE, Liskeevy or MISS M. M. KIRWAN, Dalgin.

Christy Molloy has traced mention of the Milltown Races back as far as 1877 and the Dalgin Races to the 1830's.

For the younger generation I must point out that the word 'Carnival' had somewhat a different meaning in the 1950's than in 1916.

In early 1956 a meeting was held to revive the traditional Easter Monday races. Two 'green horns' who some months earlier in 1955 had arrived in town, one recently retired from the G.S. after a long, eventful and distinguished career, the other fresh from his 'mothers nest' and college and not yet fully feathered. We both volunteered 'to collect' Tuam town in order to ensure the success of the races (all members of the old committee having given various excuses). We had a reasonable amount of success financially, by 1956 standards, but endured more than a fair share of abuse on our pilgrimage.

The two new 'bright sparks' realised by now why we had been delegated to collect Tuam and were informed later that this abuse was 'par for the course' in Tuam. Some of the more seasoned members of the old committee like C. Grogan (Treas.) agreed to collect Milltown provided J. J. Sheridan and myself accompanied him.

Experience always tells. Milltown was more friendly territory. Willie Burke (Sec.) with his political experience, out manouvered Grogan and agreed to collect from the wholesalers. The show was on the road. The races would be revived and Milltown's pride was saved yet again.

The 1956 Races were a great success. There were 5 races: the entry fee was 2/6 per horse or pony (when you got it) and Tom Malyn's horses were free - Tom was joint starter. Total prize money was £36 and adm. was 1/= (all old money). The Tuam Collection amounted to £9-19-0; Milltown £8-10-0; wholesalers and others £5-12-0; gate receipts were £23-16-9 and the secretary and treasurer of the old race committee contributed £8 each which was the credit balance from the last races.

First prize money ranged from £9 to £5, with £2 + £1 for 2nd and 3rd prizes. The prestige of winning was a huge factor. We made a few bad friends and a profit of £20-3-11. The pubs had a great day which was very important. All agreed that the races should be run again in 1957, but Miko Ryan had lost his enthusiasm to collect Tuam another year and swore that he would never, ever, make a 'beggar' of himself again. I agreed without much prompting. It was then agreed that we organise a marque carnival of dancing in conjunction with the Easter Races. With the sole purpose of funding a much larger races, with stakes of at least £100 for 1957. The rest is history and folklore which I will deal with in another issue.

The era of the bicycle clips and the Brilliantione look for men was really at an end. For the ladies the 'New Look' (ask your mummies) had arrived. For Milltown the annual Easter Carnival and Races which was to last for 24 years had been launched.

Milltown Carnival/Race Committee 1958



BACK ROW: Miko Ryan, Paddy Varley, Fr. Jennings, Andy Keane, Willie Burke, Richard Mullarkey, Joe Mallon, Michael Keane, Thomas Tierney, Kevin Feeney.

FRONT ROW: Frank Glynn, Luke Hehir, J.J. Sheridan, Padraic Flannery, Christy Grogan, Mattie Ronayne.

Milltown National School 1948/49



BACK ROW: Imelda Ryan, Mary Octigan, Kathleen Keely, Maureen Mallon, Teresa Connolly.

MIDDLE ROW: Mary Teresa Coyne, Josephine Murphy, Maureen McCormack, Delia Turner, ——— Mary Murphy, Margaret Naughton, Kathleen Monaghan.

FRONT ROW: Maura Corcoran, Nuala Lohan, Brid Donnellan, Mary Concannon, Thecla Flannery, Dorothy Mullarkey, Mary Connolly, Mary Francis Acton, Irene Ryan, Anne Hernon.

Social and Personal 1994

BIRTHS:

December 18th, 1993: Sarah Louise Varley, Milltown.

January 6th, 1994: Katie Marie Wrynne (Clashaganny).

January 19th, 1994: Andrew Martin McGinley (Carrowreagh).

ENGAGEMENTS:

Michael McCormack, Kilgevrin & Tina O'Connor, Tuam.

Dennis Fahy, Ballindine and Eileen Quinn, Milltown.

MARRIAGES:

January 1st, 1994: Noel Boyle, Lurgan, and Mary Donoghue, Furbo, Co. Galway.

March 19th, 1994: Gary Donnellan and Cathy Concannon, Carrowpadden, Dunmore.

January 15th, 1994: Tim Ryan and Nadine Leech, Dublin

DEATHS:

January 30th, 1994: Paddy Keely, Milltown.

February 6th, 1994: John McCormack, Kilgevrin.

February 6th, 1994: Thomas Kirrane, Dillonbrook.

March 10th, 1994: Elizabeth Moran, Carrownageehy.

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY:

In February: Martin and Kathleen Walsh, Liskeavy, Milltown.

Milltown I.F.A.

S. Mongan/M. Flaherty

The Irish Farmers Association as the name suggests is a national organisation representing farmers. There are 879 branches nationwide of which there are 68 in Co. Galway. Milltown has a membership of approximately 80 farmers.

It has been a historic year for I.F.A. in Co. Galway with the election of a Galway man as national President, John Donnelly from Abbey, Loughrea defeated Tom Parlow by an overwhelming majority in last December's election.

At local, national and E.U. level I.F.A. is standing up for the rights to a decent livelihood for all farming families. Over the past year I.F.A. has fought on over 50 specific issues affecting farmers. Milltown I.F.A. officers have had a particular interest in some of the issues and represented the views of their members at county executive level. Those issues of most importance to the parish were as follows:

- (1) Re-opening of the live cattle trade which has restored a competitiveness to the market place.
- (2) Negotiations have resulted in a fairer deal for farmers under the E.U. Milk Hygiene Regulations.
- (3) Area Aid: I.F.A. secured a simplified form for livestock farmers and a commitment from the minister that unwitting errors will not be penalised.
- (4) Through the ewe premium campaign extra payments were secured for our sheep farmers and we are still fighting to get the calculation of the ewe premium more beneficial to farmers.

These are just some of the issues the branch have been involved in during the past year. While looking after the direct farm problems is the I.F.A.'s first concern, there are many other benefits in I.F.A. membership. All I.F.A. members are automatically insured for personal accident benefits with F.B.D. Insurance. In the event of death £15,000, loss of limbs £7,500, hospitalisation up to one year £125 per week (rehabilitation period following hospitalisation) is paid.

Members also qualify for (1) V.H.I. Discount of 10%; (2) 12 Monthly Draws for £1,000; (3) A.C.C. Interest Rate; (4) Premium Planner.

These benefits of membership as well as professional representation at home and in Europe are available to all farmers in Milltown for a small annual fee.

The Officers of the Milltown Branch are: Chairman: Padraic Godwin, Secretary: Stephen Mongan, Registrar: Michael Flaherty. If you have any problem contact the Regional I.F.A. Office in Athenry at (091) 44268 or any branch officer.

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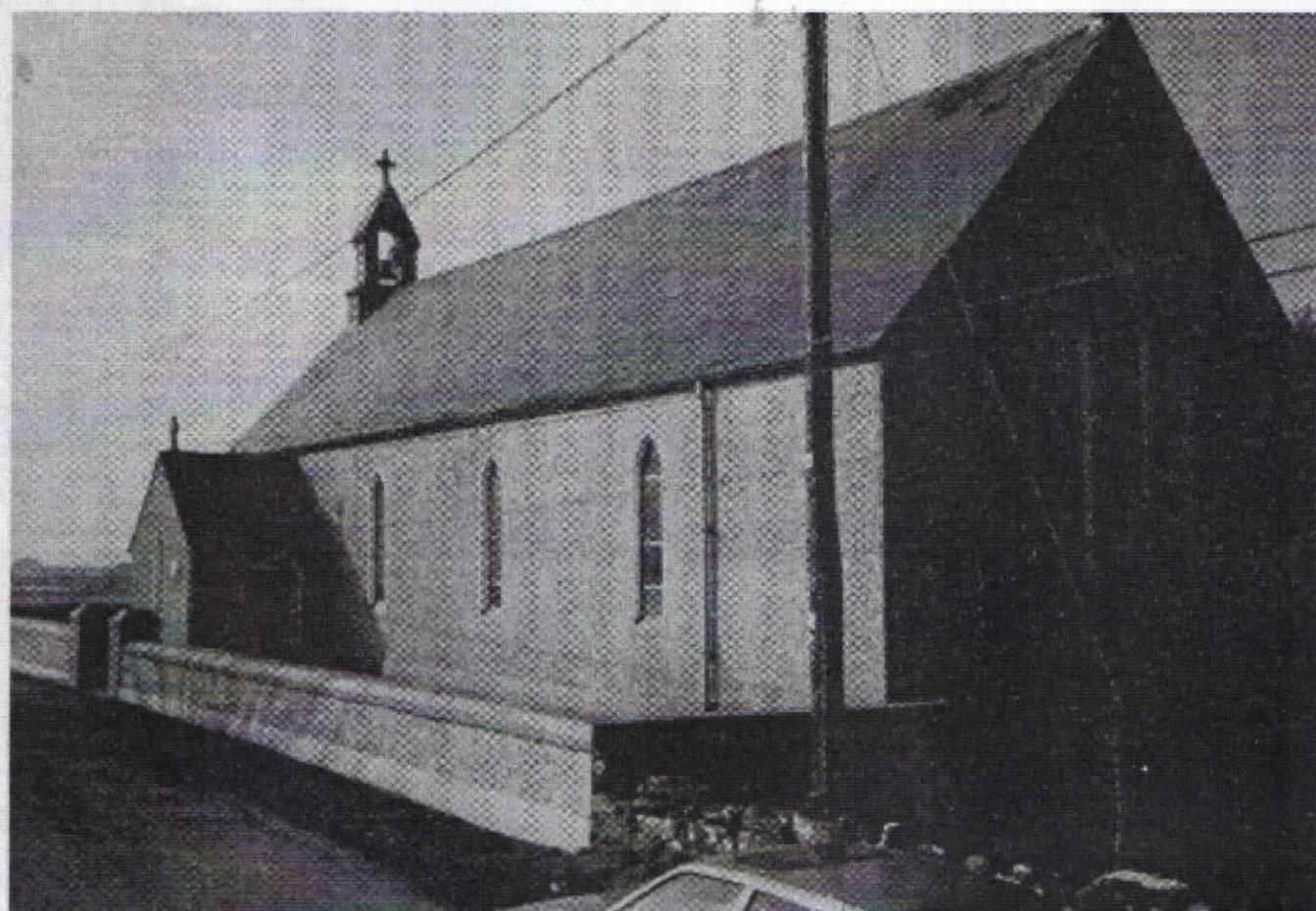
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Ballyglass Church

St. Patrick's Church, Ballyglass, Scardaune, Claremorris, Co. Mayo

By Fr. Keenan



In 1838 some 20,000 people met here to protest the paying of tithes to absentee clergymen. Among the speakers were the following: Frs. P. Garvey, Milltown, P. Mullins, Ballindine, J. McHale, Hollymount, P. Joyce, Kilconly, P. Gavin, Crossboyne and John Birmingham, Millbrook, and Luke Prendergast, Ballindine.

Originally this area belonged to the parish of Crossboyne. It had a small thatched chapel and on Sundays half of the congregation had to kneel outside often under the down-pour of rain.

Planning for the present church began in 1879. The Ballyglass committee was as follows: John Coyne and Rev. James Heaney (secretaries), Mark Culkin (treasurer), John Gill, Peter Dermody, Martin Singleton, Michael Heaney, John Coyne, James Heaney, Martin Keenan and Michael Lavelle.

The contractors were brothers Patrick and Peter McHugh, Lisduff, Ballindine. The following worked in its Construction: Michael and Thomas O'Malley, Patrick Burke, Michael Mullins, Christy and Michael Joyce, Peter

Walsh, Denis Hogan (mason), Martin and William Keenan, John Devine, John Joyce, Luke Gilligan, George Bush and John Kennedy. Wages ranged from 7.5p a day for labourers to 25p a day for skilled workers.

The materials were purchased from James Griffith and Matt Higgins, Ballindine, the lime came from Prendergasts, and the cut stone from Duffy's and O'Connors, Cong. The total cost of the cutstone was £19.4. The arch-way for the door cost only £1.75. Michael Kane was the slater. The roof took 13.5

tons of slate at a total cost of £58. The timber, pitch pine and white and red deal for the roof cost £56. Slating nails – four stone – cost only 80p. Three stone of latting nails cost 24p and four stone of roofing nails cost 40p only. The total cost of the roof including labour was £167.00.

The belfry took nine days to build and was completed on September 25th, 1881. The total cost of the church was £410.00.

The Very Rev. Thomas McWalters, a native of Conagher, Irishtown, was the parish priest in Milltown and Rev. James Heaney was the curate. Father McWalters donated the beautiful stained-glass window in the east gable.



Christmas Nativity Play held in Ballyglass Church Dec. 1993



BACK ROW: Kieran Cunningham, Enda Varley, Billy O'Toole, Eamon Cunningham, Kieran Varley.
MIDDLE ROW: Michelle Burke, Lisa Hyland, Eimear Heaney, Michael Oates.
FRONT ROW: David Burke, Susan Burke, Rosemarie Heaney, Michelle Hyland, Gerard McWalter, Sarah McWalter.

Reflections of a Travelling Woodcutter

By Paddy O'Grady

*Well take a look at me now
I'm having some strange kind of fun
Sweating myself dry,
Getting burned red by the sun
And puzzling over you . . .*

*Some old questions keep turning through my mind
Why did I leave and leave your love behind?*

*Yes I can see me now
Reaching out to touch your face
If I keep my eyes closed tight
You're here, filling in this space
And I'm thinking over you.*

*Crazy questions churning in my mind
Why did I leave and leave your love behind?*

*I call your name out from my sleep
And wake up far away
From where I really want to be
But here I am, and here I guess I'll stay.*

*But that same old question keeps on turning
And my bad old heart keeps yearning
I never realised I was unkind
That day I left and left your love behind.*

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A Visit to Fatima

By M. J. Molloy

In January 1950 I was flying from Rome to New York via Lisbon. At Lisbon I stayed for three days in order to pay a visit to Fatima ninety miles north of Lisbon. I travelled by bus to Fatima where the Blessed Virgin had appeared to three children six times between May and October of the year 1917.

At the first apparition in May she had promised to perform on the 13th October a great public miracle "So that all will believe" she had added. At the next four apparitions bigger crowds gathered, and they scattered the news of the promised miracle on the 13th October, 1917. Seventy thousand people came to Fatima on that day. After the usual apparition of the Blessed Virgin, which only the three children saw, she opened her hands and a light shone up from them towards the sun which had just appeared from behind dark rain clouds. Suddenly the sun began to dart and whirl around the sky, throwing out great flames of many colours. After ten minutes or more of this, the sun began to fall and plunged towards the earth.

The crowd felt the increasing heat and they fell on their faces convinced that the end of the world had come. But the sun stopped falling, and climbed back to its usual position in the sky, and became normal, so that nobody could stare at it anymore, whereas everybody had been able to stare at the darting wheeling sun.

The earth by moving around the sun every twenty four hours makes us believe the sun is doing the moving. The astronomers tell us that the sun does not move at all. So the darting wheeling sun at Fatima must have been a miraculous sun created by God for the miracle. At the end of the miracle the miraculous sun disappeared into the everyday sun which had just come out from behind the dark rain clouds.

The eldest of the three children was Lucy who was ten. The other two were her cousins Francisco Marto who was nine, and his sister Jacinta Marto who was seven. Every day the three drove their parents' flocks of sheep out into a great plain of rough grass near Fatima, and the Blessed Virgin appeared to them there on 13th May, 1917 and told them to be there again on the 13th of every month until October. She told Jacinta and Francisco she would take them to Heaven soon, but Lucy would have to remain on earth. Lucy is a nun called Sister Maria of the Sorrows. She has been a nun for sixty nine years.

A year after the apparitions the terrible flu of 1918 killed all before it in Ireland and in Portugal. It killed Jacinta and Francisco and three more of their parents' eleven children. In 1950 I met their mother Olimpia, a tall thin 80 year old woman. It was not the pilgrim season, and I was the only pilgrim there. She

was dressed in worn dark working clothes, and she brought me into her old home where her son lived with his wife and family. We chatted and joked with his wife in their bad English and my worse Portuguese. The house was as small and as plainly furnished as any Irish thatched cottage of sixty years ago.

Then the old woman led me across the road to the smallest and the poorest house I have ever seen. In rural Europe they call it the Dower House, where the parents move into when their son marries in their old home. It was just big enough for two people. It had two chairs beside the fire. The table was just big enough for two to eat at. The kitchen was tiny, and there was one small bedroom. Here the most famous mother in the Catholic world of that time was ending her days in cheerful poverty. Fifteen years after their deaths her children Jacinta and Francisco were moved to a grave where they could lie together. Of Francisco nothing remained but the bones. But Jacinta's body was as on the day she died. Jacinta and Lucy had heard everything the Blessed Virgin said, but Francisco had seen her only. A hundred yards from their mother's tiny house a great new basilica towered into the sky. It had been built by the contributions of pilgrims. The great pilgrimage day is 13th May the anniversary of the first apparition at Fatima. On the thirtieth anniversary in 1946 750,000 pilgrims came to Fatima. When 30,000 pilgrims come to Knock it is like the Galway Races. Olimpia had seen these tremendous pilgrimages year after year, yet there was no more pride in her than if the greatest thing any of her children had done was to win the two penny raffle in the village hall.

At Fatima I met a younger sister of Lucy. She was a nun also, but she was not dressed like one. In Portugal it was illegal for nuns or monks to appear in public wearing religious habits. That is the strange thing about Catholic countries. Their governments and their people often persecute the Catholic Church and religion. One reason is that the most unpopular people are those whose job it is to civilise us and to keep us civilised: the police, the clergy and the teachers. Another reason is that politicians and journalists and broadcasters want to destroy all the religious and moral beliefs which don't agree with their vices. I believe that the Blessed Virgin appeared at Knock in 1879 because she foresaw that the same attack on the Catholic religion and morality would take place in Ireland. In Catholic Spain they say that they have followed their priests with a holy candle, or with a club.

During the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939 nine bishops and thirteen thousand priests and nuns were murdered in the half of the country controlled by the so called Republican Party. All the churches were desecrated and closed. The people who did those things are greatly admired by the people who dominate R.T.E. and the Dublin newspapers. In Spain in 1936 an old woman was murdered by having a crucifix rammed down her throat, her offence was that two of her sons were Jesuits.

KEEP MILLTOWN TIDY!

**Milltown Tidy Towns Committee request
your help in keeping our village tidy**