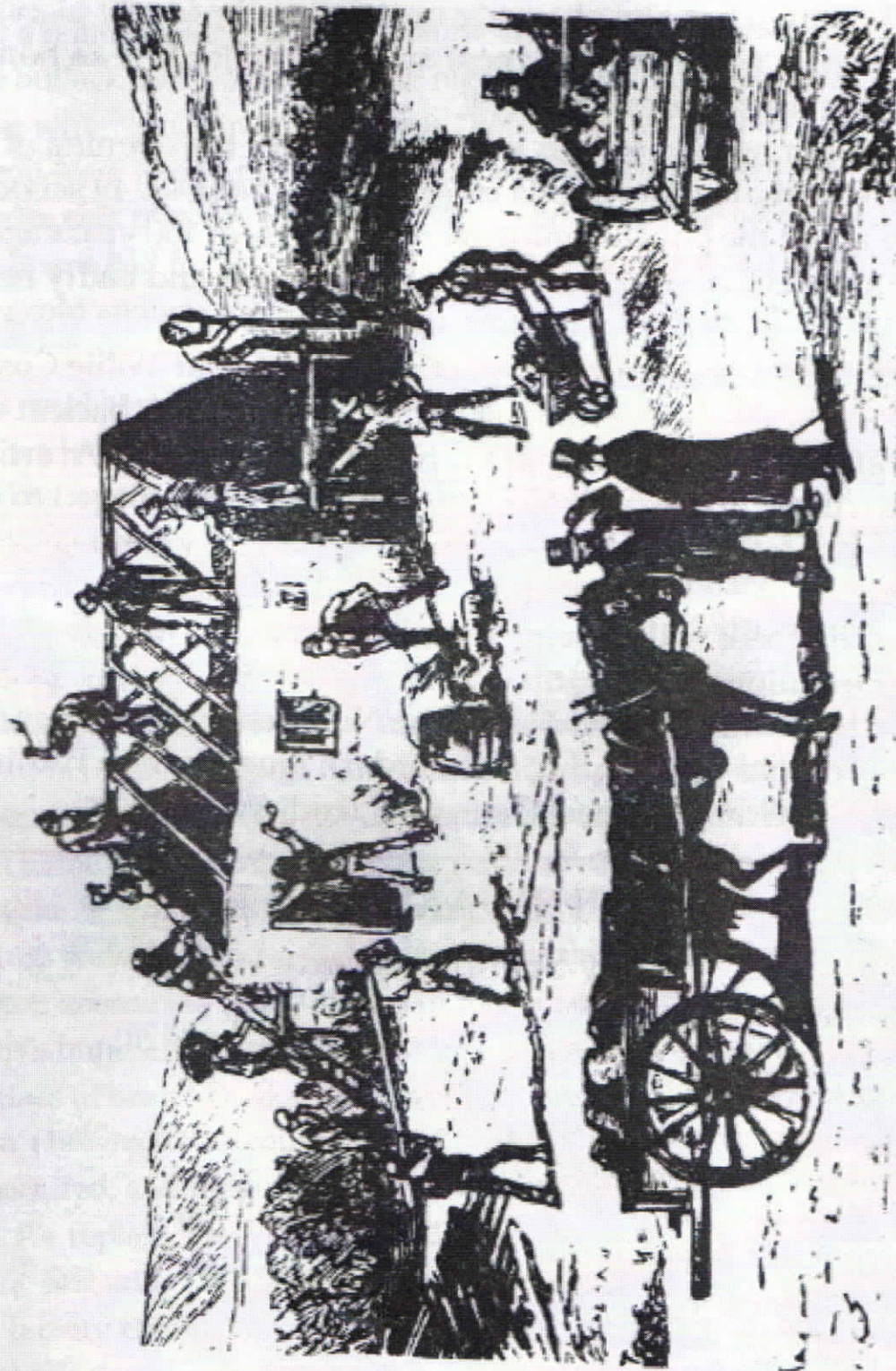


Millstown Newsletter

Eviction Scene — A common sight during the Famine which took place 150 years



September 1995

£1

Editorial

This, the September 1995 issue, coincides with the historic first visit to Milltown of a party of our friends from twin town Llandarog in Wales. On behalf of the entire community we extend a hearty welcome to them and we hope it will be the first of many such exchange trips. A group from Milltown has already made one visit to the lovely Llandarog area and received wonderful kindness and hospitality. It is an honour for our parish to return the compliment.

Also in your newsletter this time is a photo of the opening of Belmont N.S. and a photo of its pupils taken during the 1948/49 school year, an article about the Great Famine which took place 150 years ago by Maureen McCormack, item on yet another new and badly needed facility in Milltown the "Sticky Fingers Playschool"

In the hot seat on this occasion is the ever-popular Willie Costello, an interview with a local emigrant Todd Greene, a look back at the June fundraising amphicat row on the River Clare and G.A.A. articles by Oliver Turner and Ciaran Murphy. We are also privileged to publish a short story by the late M.J. Molloy which continues our series of tributes to him.

Hopefully there will be something for everybody and don't forget that all contributions in the form of photos, memories, ideas, poems etc. would be greatly appreciated by the Newsletter Committee. The committee consists of (in alphabetical order): Noel Carney, Pauline Larney, Deirdre McGrath, Michael Oates and Trudi Varley.

THE FAMINE YEAR

by Speranza (Lady Wilde)

Weary Men, what reap ye!
Golden Corn for the stranger.
What sow ye?
Human corpses for the avenger.
Fainting forms, hunger-stricken.
What see ye in the offing?
Stately ships to bear our food away
Amid the strangers scoffing.
There's a proud array of soldiers
What do they round your door?
They guard our masters' granaries.
From the thin hands of the poor.

Sent in by Maureen McCormack, Kilgeuri

The Spalpeen's Tale

Long tramps through thinly populated countrysides were a regular feature of the spalpeen's campaigns in England. It often happened that no shelter for the night could be got for love or money. When that happened the spalpeen's "slept with Mrs. Greenfield". That was their phrase for sleeping in the fields. They would pick a field where cattle had settled down for the night. They would give a bullock a kick, and drive him away, and then sleep on the ground the bullock had warmed for the night. The spalpeens agreed that the chief danger with "Mrs. Greenfield" was "your landlord the bull". If the bull "thought you were winking at his cows, he'd make a rag ball of you." The spalpeens also said that sleeping with "Mrs. Greenfield" too often was unhealthy. It was bad for the kidneys. Especially late in the year when the nights were cold and wet.

A spalpeen neighbour used to tell about an encounter with an English girl at midnight on a lonely road in the far-off days when he was in his prime. For the sake of his kith and kin I will call him Luke Durkan, but that was not his name. The harvesting season was over in Lincolnshire, and he set out on the long walk westward to Liverpool and the cattle boats back to Ireland. He would save money by walking most of the way and by sleeping with "Mrs. Greenfield" on fine nights. If he got a temporary job on the way, that would suit, too. Then he would have a few more pounds to bring home for Christmas. At the end of his second day on the road the night got very cold, and he decided that "Mrs. Greenfield" was too dangerous. So he would have to keep going until he got some kind of lodgings in the next town. That turned out to be farther away than he supposed. So it was nearing midnight when he overtook a good-looking, well dressed English girl walking the same direction. She showed some uneasiness at the arrival of this big, rough man with a big stick and a tramp's bundle. She said earnestly: "I amn't worth robbing. I haven't the price of a glass of beer." Durkan did not believe her, but he was no thug. He said: "I don't belong to the rough gang. I'll be as good as a brother to you." She seemed reassured, and they walked on together. She asked: "Are you walking for a job?" He replied: "It'd suit if a building ganger, or the coal mines'd give me a while." She said: "My father was a collier, and their day was night." He said: "The factory chimneys are as plentiful as trees in a wood, but they're mostly cotton factories. All they want is women cotton-dodgers." This was an old name for the cotton mill workers.

The gas lamps of the next big town began to brighten the horizon. She asked: "Have you a place to stay"? "No," he said. "And the lodging house will be asleep and locked for the night. And we'll have to go down to the bottom of the rag to buy a night in a hotel." The "rag" was the cloth purse hidden under the spalpeen's shirt, and suspended by a string around the neck. She replied: "If you come with me, I'll bring you place where you'll have to pay nothing."

The invitation reminded Durken of similar invitations which other spalpeens had accepted. They had been offered half a girl's bed, and all her charms until morning. In the morning they had awakened to find the girls had disappeared, after stealing all their money and all their clothes. Those girls were what the spalpeens called "man-traps", or whores. So this girl was a whore, although she did not look like a whore! Or talk like one. He asked if the house she would take him to was a safe house. She assured him that his life and his money and his health would be safe in it. He thought to himself: "That was all the 'man-traps' say". But there was no harm in having a look at her house from the outside. If he did not like to look of it, he would bid her good night. She led him through street after street of the sleeping city. The streets grew darker and poorer. At last, she stopped before a grim gateway like the entrance to a jail. She said: "This is the Workhouse. We be charged nothing here." He saw it was a workhouse, and he said: "I'll be charged one day, or two days, breaking stones: She said: "You won't, if we say we're man and wife." Durkan had never heard this, but he had no choice now. "Anything is better than a November night in the streets," he said. So she rang the gate bell and they were admitted to the Workhouse as that well married couple, Luke and Ruby Durkan. She was taken to the women's wing, and he was taken the men's wing. He was given the regulation, cold bath and long shirt, and then a bed. He was so exhausted and sleepy that he wondered if he would ever waken again.

But he was awakened some hours later by hearing a man shout: "Luke Durkan! Luke Durkan! Which of ye is Luke Durkan"? A man with a lantern was walking around the big ward. Durkan answered: "I'm the man." Put on your clothes, and follow me." Durkan put on his clothes and followed the official through long, dark corridors. He feared now that the English girl had trapped him, the wild Irishman, by telling him to say they were married, and then telling the officials it was a lie invented by him. Now he'd spend the Christmas in jail, instead of at home in the farm-house. They came to a door, and the offi-

cial knocked on it. A woman in nurse's uniform opened it. The official said: "Go in there, Durkan. Your wife is having a baby."

He found himself in a ward of the Workhouse Hospital. She was in bed in obvious pain and fear. She asked the nurse for something, and when the nurse turned away to get it, she put a finger across her lips as a sign to him not to betray their secret. He nodded reassuringly, and said to her: "Thank God our breed isn't going to die out!" He thought that was what a real husband would say. "Maybe I'm going to die out,!" she murmured weakly. "Not you!", he said. "Women do get health out of this ." He wondered if in England husbands were expected to help at the delivery of their babies. Maybe that's why he had been sent for. He told the nurse he had assisted at the births of many farm animals, but never the birth of a baby. The nurse went to the door, and told the official to bring Durkan back to his ward. Next day he was brought back to the hospital for another brief meeting with his "wife and child."

For a fortnight both were maintained in that Workhouse. Durkan supposed it was to give her time "to take to" her baby. At last, all three were discharged, and left the Workhouse together. This gave them their first opportunity of a really private chat. She told him she was unmarried, and her seducer had disappeared. She had worked as a parlour-maid in a Big House until they found out that she was pregnant. She had no training or experience as a "cotton-dodger". Her father was dead, and her mother had married again. Her stepfather regarded her as his enemy. Her old home was gone. So she had no home, no job, and only a little money. How could she work and look after her baby? There were no single parent, or children's allowances in those days. She had known unmarried mothers who had been driven into prostitution to keep themselves and their babies alive.

Durkan said little, but listened closely to all she told him. He was about to make a proposal which he had been considering for the past week. He knew that his small and out-of-the-way farm in the West of Ireland was unlikely to win him an Irish wife. The English girl in her extremity might be willing to marry him and come to Ireland to the small farm. There she would never be rich, but she would never be hungry as long as he had the health to sow his garden and kill a pig, and she would always have plenty of fuel as long as he could cut his bog banks. But his parents might not be too pleased at an English wife, whose baby could not be his. And from the door of his thatched farm-

house in the fields she would see nothing all day, but fields and bushes and farm animals, and wild animals: hares and rabbits and foxes and weasels. She, who had lived and worked in a great rich mansion, and who had been reared in big towns.

But before he could launch his marriage proposal, and tell her all the pros and cons of the case, something happened. The baby stung by the cold began to cry and loudly wail, and its mother had to concentrate on soothing it. Durkan felt it would be very unfair to propose to her, while she was having difficulties with the baby. But it may have seemed to her that Durkan's silence was due simply to the fact that he had nothing to say: and wanted to get away from herself and her bastard baby. She felt that she should make the inevitable parting easier for both of them. At the crowded noisy street corner she suddenly stopped and said: "Goodbye, Luke and thanks!" Before he could say anything she was gone around corner and lost in the crowd. He walked every street in that town, and along the two banks of its river. But dead or alive he never saw her again, or the child who might have become his.

During the fifty years of bachelor existence which remained to him, he told that story a thousand times. In every telling he blamed the wailing baby for the loss of the only girl who might have become his. He could not propose until she had soothed the wailing baby. And the noise of the traffic made things difficult also. Then suddenly, before he could say anything, she was gone for ever. Maybe she was afraid to marry an unemployed, wild Irishman. And afraid that the rebel and Papist Irish would murder her, because she was English. Luke Durkan's Workhouse honeymoon belonged to the period before the First World War. During that war the Workhouse inmates lost their greatest privilege and luxury, which was to receive two eggs every year: one on Christmas Day and the other on Easter Sunday. Probably they lost that privilege again when the Great Depression of the 'thirties hit the world. Then the spalpeens found it harder to get work on the farms and in the towns.

Michael J. Molloy from Milltown, has long been a leading Irish dramatist. Among his best known plays are *The King of Friday's Men*, *The Paddy Pedlar* and *The Wood of the Whispering*. He has now written a book based on the stories of folk-memory of North Galway. The above is an extract from that work.

Todd Greene Remembers

Memories came flooding back for a returned emigrant Todd Greene when we spoke to him recently during a holiday to his native land. The visit gave Todd a chance to renew acquaintances with old friends now drastically reduced in number with the passing of the years. Now 85 years old he has the unique recall of the past peculiar to those who have spent their working lives in a foreign land.



Born in 1910 in the premises now run as a pub and meat processing plant by his nephew Joe Ryan and his family Todds earliest memory is of riding to Davris on a giant draught horse led by Tom Burke, Kilgervin. He would cling to horses neck until he got to John Keanes house from where incidentally John's grandson Oliver and his wife Mary now operate a very successful egg wholesale business from their farm.

Like most children his favourite part of his schooldays were the long summer holidays, three months to be exact. In those times the change from English to Irish in the Education system was under way. His teachers included Pat Diskin while Mr. Ned Connolly, Kilgevrin, whose son the late Edward John took over the family farm, taught Irish for a few years there.

In those days a lot of teachers spent their summer holidays in Spiddal, not, we hasten to add because it was a seaside holiday resort but because it gave them the chance to mix the local native Irish speakers and consequently the chance to improve their own knowledge of the language.

On March 11th, 1926 Todd went out into the great big world of business when he started work as an apprentice draper at the prestigious Moons of Galway. Prestige and a trade were all he got because he received no wage just his keep. Luckily for him his aunt Anne Costello lived nearby at the time. She was

matron at Woodlands Hospital, now known as Merlin Park.

Anne had been a nurse in the Mater Hospital, Dublin and came to Galway as District Nurse and ended up caring for the T.B. patients. She got a bungalow built and kept and a few wards exclusively for victims of that disease. She became matron of the sanatorium in the early twenties. Todd spent most of his free time with her and vividly remembers playing tennis and croquet on Thursdays.

As a child he helped out in the family business with his brothers Joe and Mick and their sister Una (baby) who later inherited the concern and with her husband Miko Ryan from Dalgin ran it successfully until their son Joe took over the reins in the 1960s. In the early part of the century it was a hive of activity, particularly on market day when dozens of asses and carts would ferry local produce to town to be sold.

Eggs in particular were very important to the economy and dealers or "eggler" as they were known came to Greenes each week to buy vast quantities from local farmers. Todd remembers counting the eggs, three in one hand and two in the other as they were divided into scores. They were placed into boxes which were split into two sections with straw packing.

A favourite pastime for many people at the time and one which brought tangible reward at the dinner table was catching salmon which abounded in those days in the River Clare. The fish were caught by throwing "Mills bombs" into the water. The stunned fish would soon float to the top where they would promptly be seized by the fishermen. Their task was made easier still by the very small number of bailiffs employed at the time.

His formative years co-incided with a turbulent era in Irish history which saw the emergence of the I.R.A., the Civil War and the presence of the Black and Tans. He remembers going to his bedroom window on hearing gun shots on the night two R.I.C. men were shot at nearby Cnocán Mór by The I.R.A. Sergeant Moran (who ironically was to retire the following day) and Constable Day died in the ambush across the road from where the empty house formerly owned by the Lohan family stands.

There was great tension in those years. The police were always escorted and if attacked they would release flares known as Vera Lights into the air. Different towns had their own colours so that if for instance the lights were seen in Tuam the colour would indicate whether the alarm was being raised in Milltown, Dunmore or somewhere else within range.

He remembers lorry loads of soldiers going through the town after the 8 o'clock curfew which was in place even on summer evenings. He remembers hearing that a lady milking a cow in Davris had been shot at but not hit. His brother Mick who was at the time a student at U.C.G. and his friend Paddy Sheridan were once arrested by the I.R.A. on suspicion of being informers because they frequented pubs where the police often socialised. They were kept in a stable in Millbrook for a few days but were then released.

When another I.R.A. ambush claimed the life of Jack Lohan his brother Mick attended the funeral at which a volley was fired over his grave. Shortly after returning to his digs the Black and Tans quickly arrived. He was taken away, questioned and beaten up and at one stage had a gun put into his mouth. He was then thrown into Galway Gaol (where the Cathedral now stands) and stayed there until his father negotiated his release.

When guards first arrived in Milltown they spent some time living in Greene's. Five of them lived in the house and the kitchen actually served as a day room with the large wooden table doubling as a desk. The living quarters were upstairs at the time to facilitate the guards temporarily while the barracks was being prepared.

Like many other young men and women at that time the idea of going abroad appealed to him and young Todd eventually set sail for England. The England of the 1930s was not paradise with work in very short supply. Once again Todd Greene was to encounter the awful consequences of war and death. World War Two commenced in 1939.

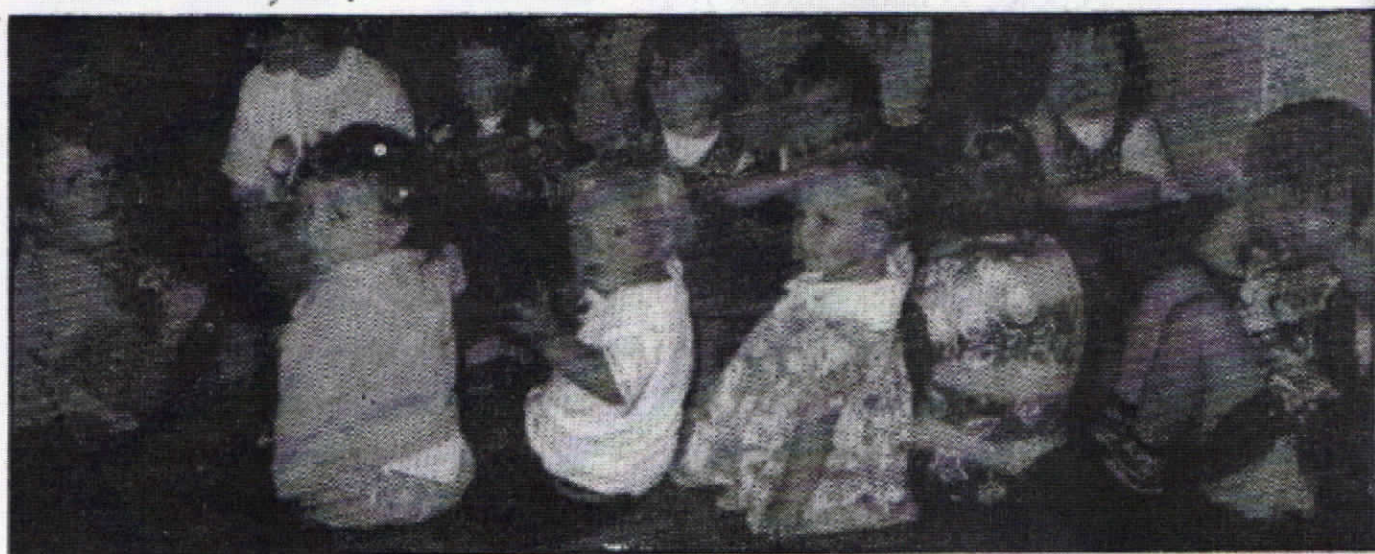
He had a stark choice to make return home or enlist in the Armed Forces. With seven other friends he opted to volunteer for duty. Of the eight only two returned. One of them Paddy Finnegan became a legendary Spitfire pilot before losing his life in action.

His travels in that awful episode took him to Durban, South Africa, Freetown, Sierra Leone and the Belgian Congo among other places. Mind you he never actually set foot in those cities as they only called there to refuel. He remembers clearly the incredible heavy rains that would hit Africa occasionally. On returning to England he settled down to a more normal and peaceful life with his wife Ruby. He worked for many years in the Custom House in London. After his retirement he restarted visiting his hometown and is now a regular visitor to Ryans Pub where he is very popular with friends and customers alike.

Sticky Fingers



Milltown's newest facility is "Sticky Fingers" play-school in Milltown's Day Care Centre. Sticky Fingers is open since March 1st this year, and has had 18 children attending regularly. It is run by Noreen Maloney originally Fitzpatrick from Corranageehy. Noreen worked and lived for the last five years in Celbridge, Co. Kildare where she obtained her Certificate in Child Care Studies from Vocational Education Committee, Inchicore, and a Diploma in Nursery Management from the school of Practical Child Care, Dublin. Noreen has also completed a Certificate with the Irish Pre-school Playgroup Association. Noreen has a lot of experience in working with the pre-school child gaining most of her experience from working in a pre-school for mentally handicapped children run by St. John of God Brothers.



Sticky Fingers has a relaxed atmosphere, friendly and humming with activity. There is always plenty of conversation among the children. Parents are always

welcome to stay while their child is settling in. This September, seven of Noreen's little toppers will be heading off on their own journey and starting "big school". They are wished well and hope they enjoy it as much as Noreen has in having them in the playschool.

On July 3rd Sticky Fingers went on their first outing, heading off with 28 children and 16 adults. A brilliant day was had by all. Noreen would like to say a very big thank you to all the parents who have supported her so far and looks forward to meeting more new children and parents come September. Sarah Carney who has worked in Sticky Fingers will be going back to College in September and will be sadly missed by the children and Noreen. We wish her the best of luck. Bookings are now being taken for September. Phone Noreen (093) 51977.

Amphicat Rowing on River Clare

An amphicat row on the River Clare which started at Russelstown, Milltown on Saturday, June 3rd raised several thousand pounds for a number of Charities. The row which finished four to five hours later at Weir Road, Tuam had a number of official Rowers who had to raise a certain amount of sponsorship plus dozens of other supporting participants.

Among the leading fundraisers was Milltown businessman Liam Glynn who collected the magnificent sum of £1,572. Many other local people also took part in the event which provided great colour, excitement and spectacle for the huge crowd of onlookers and well-wishers.

Incidentally the unique amphicats are manufactured by Rom Plastics, which is managed by Emeracly man P.J. Feerick who himself rowed in the event.

Liam Glynn offers sincere thanks to the Milltown Community Council and all other individuals who did so much to help this sponsorship campaign.



Geraldine Hynes, Tonemoyle

Amphicat Row



Liam Glynn, Milltown



P.J. Feerick, Emeracly



Rowing new Milltown Bridge

Photo Competition



Guess the four young men in the above photograph

Post entries in 'Newsletter Boxes' in the local business in Milltown before, September 29th.

Hot Seat

This issue of the newsletter, we feature Mr. William Costello, from Belmont, Milltown. Willie lives with his wife Tess and daughter Anne in Belmont.

Full Name: Willie Costello

Occupation: Retired Farmer and Business Man.

Favourite Pastimes: In my younger days I enjoyed taking part in plays during lent and advent. My favourite play was Bands and Plans and a favourite actor at the time was a local man Mattie Mullen. Now, I like to read the daily paper, smoking the pipe and enjoy making and receiving phone calls.

Favourite T.V. Programme: Coronation Street and Brookside.



Favourite Actor/Actresses: James Cagney, Grace Kelly and Julie Goodyear.

Person you most admire: Albert Reynolds and John Hume.

Favourite Food : Pork Chops (support home industry).

Favourite Drink: Pint of Guinness.

Favourite Sport: Boxing (I was good at it during my younger days).

First Job: In 1937 I served my time as a grocery assistant at Cahills, Tuam and not one penny did I get paid.

Favourite Singer: That fella that is always sweating — Christy Moore. I also like Brendan Shine singing *Do you Want Your Old Lobby Washed Down* .

First Dance: In a hay barn over at Cosgroves. We also went to tailor Rattigans where we had to pay 3 pence to go in.

Favourite local band: I was the roadie for this band. It consisted of Kieran Ansboro, Pake Connolly, P.J. Moran, Paddy Varley (R.I.P.) and Al Hynes. Al Hynes played the trombone — some fella said isn't he awful then — sure I said no wonder when he is pushing that thing up and down his throat. Jim Comer from Dunmore was our Taxi man. We were a famous six together and got in to many a scrap — mainly over WOMEN.

Favourite Quotations: Don't be 'coddling' yourself — (Do you think you are smart)?

Happiest moment: The day I bought my first new van and of course that day I got married.

Biggest change you have seen over the years: No young lad wants to do any-work without machinery — Goodbye Spade.

Persons I most admire locally: Dr. Nora McGarry and Christy Molloy.

If you won the lotto: I wouldn't tell anyone I would go around to the pubs and slip the odd tenner into a poor fellas pocket, and tell him to say his prayers and if he prayed hard enough, his prayers would be answered, and he might find a tenner in his pocket.

Motto: A wrong doing can never be hidden.

What is like it to be in the Hot Seat? It's like being in court, but according to the Newsletter Committee — you get a couple of pints, which you don't get in court.

Milltown G.A.A.

Over the past few years, a dramatic decrease in numbers in the parish has resulted in mixed fortunes in Milltown's juvenile teams. But this year a particularly talented group of young players have been gathered and what with the effort put in by both the players and the management team of Tony Murphy and Mary Hernon, success just had to come. This year, the school team represented the village with pride in both the mini-sevens tournament and in the Cumann na bunscoil league.

The Mini-Sevens tournament

This tournament is held every year and the winners of this tournament may get the chance to display their skills at the half-time interval at the All-Ireland semi-finals and finals. The Milltown team travelled to Claregalway, not expecting to get by the group stage. In our group were ourselves, S.N. Baile na hAbhann, S.N. An Cheatur Rua and Killimor N.S. A stunning performance in our first match against An Cheathru Rua in which none of the team members hardly set a foot wrong, and two rather straight forward wins against Killimore and Baile na hAbhann set up a quarter final meeting with Barnaderg N.S. This proved a very tough assignment and we needed a Dermot Forde point to bring the tie into extra-time. We scored two points in the additional period to seal at 0-5 to 1-0 victory we had to work very hard for. So, onto a semi-final meeting with Corrandulla and with the sun beating down mercilessly, tiredness was beginning to take its toll. But we scraped through, narrowly, on a score line of 3-4 to 2-2. Onto the final hurdle and Collinamuck stood between us and glory. But in the the final things just didn't go our way and we ended up losing narrowly on a scoreboard of 3-3 to 3-1. The players could count themselves very unlucky, but their day would come.

Team: John Devane, Dermot Forde, David Hernon, Diarmuid Blake, Ciaran Murphy, Brendan Molloy, Fergal Nicholson.

THE CUMANN NA MBUNSCOIL LEAGUE

Our Cumann na mBunscoil campaign kicked off with a game against Gardenfield. We won extremely convincingly and this trend continued against Glinsk, winners of this title in 1988 and 1992. However, a much tougher assignment faced us against Kilkerrin N.S. on a sweltering hot day. Milltown turned on a display of footballing excellence to win in a canter 5-6 to 2-2. Our next match was against Glenamaddy at home but this proved to be a lowpoint. A bad performance by the team saw us lose 1-4 to 0-5. This now meant that we

simply had to beat Kilconly in our last game to make it to the final. This tie, eagerly awaited by both pupils and players, started badly and at half-time we were narrowly behind, 1-7 to 3-2. At half-time John Feerick was moved to midfield and this proved a master stroke. The Kilgevrin man proceeded to give a masterful display in his new position ably assisted by his midfield partner, Diarmuid Blake. Feerick got 1-4 in that second half, and we ran out eventual winners 4-12 to 3-5. So, with just one loss in the group stage, we were through to meet Glenamaddy in the final. This eagerly anticipated final was played in bright sunshine at a resplendent Tuam Stadium. Before an unexpectedly large Milltown contingent, Milltown started well with a point apiece from Ciarán Murphy and Brendan Molloy before Glenamaddy replied with a point. Then Brendan McGrath and Diarmuid Blake got a grip at midfield and our tactical formation swung into action. Fergal Nicholson moved out to midfield and Ciaran Murphy was left alone inside. Murphy duly delivered and got four points before halftime to leave the score 0-6 to 0-1 at the interval. But in the second half, things would become a lot harder, as Glenamaddy would have a strong wind at their backs. But, typically, Milltown proceeded to give a display of great skill and steely determination to win out in a brilliant game. The final score was Milltown 0-10, Glenamaddy 0-4. The Milltown fans raced onto the pitch and amid wild scenes of jubilation Captain Ciaran Murphy was presented with the shield. All the players involved can be very proud of their performance throughout both tournaments. In goals John Devane was soundness personified and he pulled some saves right from the top drawer. The fullback line of Dermot Forde and David Hernon were well nigh unbeatable in all the games. Forde was also an asset going forward while Hernon played a real captain's role in the mini-sevens tournament. Both had particularly good games in the final against Glenamaddy. The half-back line of Joseph Lavelle and John Feerick were consistently excellent right throughout. The tough tackling Lavelle gave blood (literally!) for the cause in the final while "Figgies" performance in the final despite a back injury merits great praise. The midfield partnership of Diarmaid Blake and Brendan McGrath were dominant in all the games. Blake, a very consistent performer, has great catching ability, while McGrath's forays upfield was another feature of the final. Fergal Nicholson and Ciarn Murphy in the half-forward line proved to be a successful combination. Nicholson's tireless efforts when he was needed most while Murphy (who played in the full forward line in the final) can be well pleased with his performances. The delightful ball skills of Brendan Molloy and Michael Feerick were a joy to watch. Molloy chipped in with a beautiful point in the final. Feerick with his efforts up and down the wing, earned some valuable possession in the final. There were also many substitutes who did not play in the final but who featured in the earlier rounds like Edric McEvoy, William O'Connell, Trevor

Kirrane, Liam Donnellan, Brian Diskin, Sean Hehir, P.J. Kelly, Cathal Blake and Stephen Hernon. The management team of Tony Murphy and Mary Hernon deserved great credit too, for all the effort they put in and for the tactical formation that worked so well. Finally, a special word of thanks to our supporters who turned up in hordes to cheer us on, and to Jarlath Connolly, who organised the cans and crisps back at the dressingrooms in Milltown. All these people made this day very special.



This picture below shows the jubilant team and squad.

Back row, left to right: Mr. Casby, Mary Hernon, Trevor Kirrane, Liam, Donnellan, Sean Hehir, John Devane, John Feerick, Diarmuid Blake, Brendan McGrath, William O'Connell, Tony Murphy, Cathal Blake, Edric McEvoy, Joseph Lavelle. Front row, left to right: Brian Diskin, Michael Feerick, Brendan Molloy, Dermot Forde, Ciaran Murphy (c), Fergal Nicholson, David Hernon, P.J. Kelly, Stephen Hernon.

Milltown G.A.A. Winners

Part II — North Board Minor Champions 1954

The second part of this feature takes a detailed look at one of the finest minor teams ever produced by Milltown; the North Board Champions of 1954. In only its second year of existence the newly formed Milltown G.A.A. Club had now won its second title, following the Juniors Great North Board triumph the previous year. On their way to the 1954 North Board Minor crown, Milltown beat Cortoon, Dunmore, Glynsk, Headford and Moylough before eventually losing

the county semi-final to a top class city side called St. Kieran's. A number of Kilconly lads joined the Milltown panel that year also, namely Kevin Doherty, Mick Coen, Liam Costello, Joe McGough and Eamon Doherty. These lads proved an invaluable addition to an already brilliant group of local lads, and under that watchful eye of trainer John Joe Brennan they proceeded to beat all teams in their path to that elusive North Board title. The following are the five Tuam Herald reports on Milltown's great wins in '54.

MILLTOWN MINORS WIN

Milltown minors, on their first outing of the year at Brownesgrove on Sunday last, had a runaway victory over Cortoon to the tune 7-6 to nil. Despite the heavy total against them, the Cortoon boys never gave up trying but could not cope with the dashing Milltown team.

Outstanding for the winners was county minor Liam Costello, who dominated the midfield exchanges.

He was well supported by P. Forde. The half-backs McGough, Godwin and Doherty were in unbeatable form so that Walsh, Coen and Bermingham in the last line had an easy hour. All six forwards played very well, and prime mover in all raids was Séan Diggins, who has already won football and hurling honours with St. Jarlath's.

Milltown's scorers were: M. Concannon (3-2), S. Diggins (2-1), P. Flannery (1-1), J. Connolly (0-3) and L. Costello (0-1).

MILLTOWN SHOCK DUNMORE IN MINOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Milltown 4-5 Dunmore 2-5

Milltown created something of a sensation at Tuam Stadium on Sunday last when they had a two goals win over Dunmore in the North Board minor Football Championship.

Although they are newcomers to the competition, Milltown were a better balanced side than their neighbours who had two county minors, Ryder and Mahon, on their fifteen. The Milltown boys had the edge in speed and with good forward work got into an early lead which Dunmore failed to overhaul, although they fought hard to the last whistle.

It was a keen game all through the hour and there were some grand bouts of

football at the centre, where Godwin and Forde put up a sterling display against Dunmore's Ryder and Sharkey.

Milltown went into top gear from the throw-in and Concannon had a goal in the first few minutes. This was followed by a goal and a point from Flannery. Dunmore recovered from the shock and returned for Rushe to send over the bar. Neat work by Flannery and Concannon was finished by Diggins who sent to the net and followed up with a nice point to put Milltown well in front. Walsh broke up further Milltown attacks and Ryder centred for Rushed to score a good goal. Ryder pointed a free to leave the half time score: Milltown 3-2, Dunmore 1-2.

The second half was only a few minutes old when Concannon sent in a rasper to beat the goalie for Milltown's fourth goal. Dunmore were not going to give up so easily and in a determined assault on the Milltown citadel they netted a goal, followed by points from Sharkey and Ryder. Diggins replied with a Milltown point and Walsh had a similar score for Dunmore. In quick returns Concannon and Ryder exchanged points and Milltown had the final score when Concannon again raised the white flag.
Final score: Milltown 4-5, Dunmore 2-5.

E. Doherty, L. Costello, Walsh, McGough and Iggoe were sound in Milltown's defence. Full forward Padraic Concannon played a star game and Sean Diggins, Padraic Flannery, P. Connolly and Devane were always dangerous.

MILLTOWN INTO MINOR SEMI-FINAL

At Dunmore on Sunday last Milltown minor footballers reached the semi-final of the North Board championship when they completely blotted out Glynsk, who were expected to put up a good show.

From the throw-in, Milltown broke away and Sean Diggins after a fine solo run sent the ball over the bar from their first score. Diggins also had their second point and P. Flannery from a well taken pass netted to put Milltown well ahead. Kelly in goal saved well for Glynsk before J. Connolly, after being fouled, sent the ball over from 30 yards out. Best score of the game came when Padraic Concannon went right through the Glynsk defence to score a great goal. The same player added a point and his brother Seán, with another point, left the half-time scores: Milltown 2-5, Glynsk 0-1.

The second half was all one way traffic and Milltown's scores were M. Devane (1-0), P. Forde (1-2), S. Diggins (1-0), S. Concannon (0-2) to leave the full time

score: Milltown 5-9, Glynsk 0-2.

Once again the Milltown defence had an easy time with Padraic Godwin, who played an outstanding game at centrefield, helped in defence and attack. Outstanding in defence were two juveniles, Eamonn Doherty and James Walsh, and of the forwards Séan Diggins outwitted the defence from start to finish.

MILLTOWN MINORS HAD SHOCK WIN OVER HEADFORD

Milltown minors created a major upset when they defeated reigning champions Headford by a twelve points margin at Tuam Stadium on Sunday Evening.

Headford, with more than half their championship side in action were hot favourites, especially after their facile win over Tuam, but Milltown proved that their form to date makes them worthy aspirants to honours. Though conditions were against good football, the game being played in heavy rain late in the evening after the senior final, Milltown showed neat, constructive style and always had their opponents on the run.

Headford made poor use of the wind advantage in the first half, and a resolute Milltown defence was never shaken. The champions opened the scoring with a point from D. McHugh, but Milltown soon worked to the other end, where six-footer Padraic Concannon drove a free well in. The ball was blocked down, but S. Diggins flashed in to drive to the net. There were no further scores in this half and Milltown led by a goal to a point.

Milltown pressed hard on the change of ends, but McHugh and Wall were sound backs for Headford. Padraic Flannery notched a point for Milltown and then a move started by Diggins netted a goal per Mattie Concannon. Headford returned for a point by Costello but further attacks were cleared. Milltown had another point from M. Concannon, to which Colleran replied for Headford. Milltown stretched their lead with points from P. Concannon, Diggins and Flannery, and a goal by M. Concannon. Final score: Milltown 3-6, Headford 0-3.

Milltown had a very good pair at midfield in P. Forde and P. Godwin, though Colleran and Costello also had a fair share of the play. M. Coen was outstanding in the winners defence with Walsh, Birmingham, McGough, Costello and Doherty forming a sound back division. While Diggins, Flannery and

Concannons took the scoring honours, all six forwards worked well together.

MILLTOWNS MINORS WIN FIRST TITLE

Milltown 1-4 Moylough 1-3

Milltown, shock team of their minor grade this year, captured their first title by defeating Moylough in the North Board final at Tuam Stadium last Sunday. The match was played in the worst possible conditions, with wind and rain proving a severe handicap, but there was fairly good football, though both sets of forwards were wide off the mark. Moylough, the heavier team, seemed to be best suited to the conditions, but Milltown did better in the second half and successfully resisted an all out finish by their opponents.

Both sides fielded depleted teams due to the absence of college stars, and it was in the replacement of these players that Milltown ample reserve talent was shown. Paddy Coen, who replaced college star Seán Diggins, led the forwards with great dash and to him must surely go a large share of the honours. Moylough, helped by wind and rain, were quick to settle down and were a goal up in the first minute from Cunningham. Milltown then got going and with P. Forde and Godwin gaining a slight edge at centrefield, despite great work by Cunningham, play was even for the next quarter. From a side-line kick, Mulrooney got possession and breaking through from the wing sent over the bar for Moylough.

Cunningham next got possession and made no mistake to increase the Moylough tally. Paddy Coen cut through the defence and from his pass M. Concannon sent over the bar for Milltown. M. Higgins sent Moylough attacking and just on half-time pointed to leave the interval scores — Moylough 1-3, Milltown 0-1.

On resumption Milltown forced the pace, and with Godwin and Forde fetching well, Moylough were under constant pressure. After ten minutes play, a move started by Padraic Flannery was finished to the net by Michael Devane. From the kick-out Milltown stormed in again but Mulrooney and Higgins kept them out. After some hard play at midfield, Forde reduced the margin to one point when he sent over a point from long range. Excitement was high as Milltown strove for the equaliser, which came when Paddy Coen pointed a free. Minutes later, the same player sent over what proved to be a winning point. Moylough in an all out effort had the defence beaten but shot wide from an easy scoring position. Good work by M. Coen and Godwin saved Milltown in the last minutes.

Milltown were best served in defence by M. Coen, Walsh, Igoe, Doherty and newcomer P. Brennan. Paddy Coen was the star of the attack, with Devane, Flannery, P. Concannon and Connolly also doing well.

Milltown: K. Doherty, J. Walsh, M. Coen, P. McCormack, P. Igoe, E. Doherty, P. Brennan, P. Forde, P. Godwin, F. Quinn, P. Coen, J. Connolly, M. Devane, M. Concannon, P. Flannery.

Pictured below are the Milltown Minor Football team that won the 1954 North Board championship. Back row: (left to right): John Joe Brennan (trainer), Kevin Doherty, Mick Coen, Padraic Godwin, Liam Costello, Mattie Concannon. Middle row: Jimmy Walsh, Séan Birmingham, Joe McGough, Sean Concannon, Padraic Flannery. Front row: Michael Devane, Paddy Forde, Sean Diggins (captain), Eamonn Doherty, Jarlath Connolly.



Next issue: North Board Minor Champions 1960.

An Gorta Mór — 1845

by Maureen McCormack

By the 1840s, Ireland was one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. The 1841 Census of Ireland recorded the population as 8.2 million people. The potato was the only nutritious food that could be cultivated on this land. The unreliability of the potato was amply documented in the crop failures which occurred in 22 of the first 44 years of the 19th Century. It became clearly a case of not whether a full-scale famine would occur but rather when it would strike.

Virtually all of the land of Ireland was owned by landlords, most of whom were permanent absentees who governed their Irish estates through agents. These middlemen sought to extract the highest possible rent and profit from the land to support the political careers of fashionable living of the landowners in England, while also ensuring their own personal gain.

The land system as structured was vital to the economic well being of Britain. The plentiful and continuous supply of grains and livestock exported from Ireland was seen as necessary to fuel the Industrial Revolution. At the height of the famine, the export of grain and livestock continued, sometimes under military escort. It was borne from the Irish shores on every outward flowing tide, when people were dying of hunger in the streets. The image of food being loaded on to ships in the ports while people were dying in their thousands, remains, seared in the Irish psyche. "No issue has provoked so much anger, or so embittered relations, between the two countries as the indisputable fact that huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were dying of starvation."

The blight, as it came to be called, first showed itself in 1845 in Great Britain and Ireland. It was first seen in Wexford, thence it marched with invisible tread all over the land, poisoning with the fatal breath of the Simoon. When the blight struck "death from starvation was not a possible but an immediate fate." Compounding the misery of starvation was the spectre of eviction.

The 1847 Amendment to the Poor Law Act, commonly known as the "quarter-acre clause," was drafted and passed "to prevent any person holding more than a quarter of an acre of land from receiving relief until he had parted with possession of the land." This law was an incentive to the landlords to clear their estates of what was deemed "surplus population". In 1847-8, at least 260,000 people were evicted from the land.

To superintend in public works, a horde of 7,000 officials were spread over the country. Some being insolent, refused work to the destitute, others, being corrupt, delayed to pay for it when it was done, and many minimised the famine in the midst of the famishing crowd.

Women and children, half naked and perishing with the cold, swarmed over the turnip fields, devouring the raw turnips, while the little children looked on screaming with hunger.

Weakened with hunger or sick with fever or dysentery, they lay down in their cabins, without a bed to lie on, without food or fire, often without clothes. In one house, 17 persons were found lying together, in fever; a young man was found dying in fever by the side of his brother, who had been dead for five days. A mother putting her five children to bed at night, found some of them dead with hunger in the morning. Often, when all but one of a family had died, the survivor barred up the doors and windows of his cabin to keep out the dogs and then lay down, dying amidst the dead. In the midst of such horrors, the living began to envy the dead, for they had ceased to suffer. Some of the resident landlords were doing their best to relieve suffering, but absentees, with callousness which it would be hard to equal and impossible to surpass, remained unmoved, and to the relief funds, not a penny did they subscribe. The law allowed them — and shame for parliament that it did — to seize for rent. And in the midst of hunger and horror, bailiffs and agents supported by police, laid hand on everything. They seized the people's sheep, cattle and oats, their scanty furniture or potatoes grown from seed given in charity. They turned the people out-of-doors; levelled their cabins or set them on fire, and sent their starving tenants without money or clothes, with the result, that in the Barony of Erris in Mayo, 6,000 died of famine in a single year. I have visited, said Mr. Tuke, the wasted remains of the once noble Red Man on his reserva-

tion grounds in North America and explored the Negro Quarter of the degraded and enslaved African, but never have I seen misery so intense, or physical degradation so complete as the dwellers in the bog holes of Erris.

In 1849, the sufferings of Ireland were greater than in any previous year except 1847. Within twelve months the landlords dispossessed half a million people. The partial failure of the harvest of 1848 sent many to their graves; fever and dysentery added their victims; and in 1849 Cholera first appeared, killing 36,000 — the total deaths from famine and disease in that year reaching 240,000. During all this time the tide of emigration continues to flow. In 1847, 215,000 emigrated and almost the same number in 1849 and 1851. When the famine was over, 257,000 people left Ireland, so as a result, over a fourth of the population were lost. When they landed in America and Canada, they landed only to die. Along the bank of the St. Lawrence were to be found "one unbroken chain of graves where repose fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers in a commingled heap, no stone marking the spot. The number of men, women and children who are buried in Grosse Ile may be as high as 30,000.

On August 15th, 1909, a 45 foot Celtic cross was erected at the highest point of Grosse Ile. The inscription declares in Irish, English and French:

Sacred the memory of thousands of Irish emigrants who, to preserve the Faith, suffered hunger and exile in 1847-48, and stricken with fever, ended here their sorrowful pilgrimage.

*Have you heard our sighs,
Sometimes at Night,
We are your Famine Dead.*

Perhaps, if the world bears witness to this tragedy, it will save future generations of any culture the necessity of fleeing their homeland because of the threat of starvation. Remember there is always food available some place. All that is required is enough good will by the people responsible for the welfare of their nations.

Social and Personal

BIRTHS

Oisin Foye, Illaune.

Matthew Hernon, Musicfield.

Laura Varley, Kilclooney.

Maedbh Sheridan, Milltown.

Sinead Crowe, Milltown.

ENGAGEMENTS

Pat Garvey, Carrarea and Imelda Treacy, Ardnagall

Caroline O'Donnell, Davris and Peter Comer, Dunmore

Michael Diskin, Cloonagh and Anne Shaughnessy, Clonberne

Kevin Carney, Parkroe and Marie Birmingham, Irishtown

MARRIAGES

Billy Devane, Carrownageeha and Margaret Reilly, Ballindine

Gerry Walsh, Russelstown and Frances Bane.

Martina Rattigan, Bawnmore and Brian Carey, Athlone

Seamus Costello, Belmont and Caroline Dunne, Dublin.

Michelle McGuinness, Cloonaghcross and John Cline, Dublin

Mary T. Boyle, Lisconly and Martin Hett, Irishtown

Ursula Grogan, Milltown and Jerry Clifford, Kerry.

Margaret Singleton, Davris and Darren O'Leary, U.S.A.

Joseph Brogan, Dillonbrook and Assumpta Dowd, Kilconly.

DEATHS

Martin O'Donnell, Knock

Tom Charles, Cloonacross

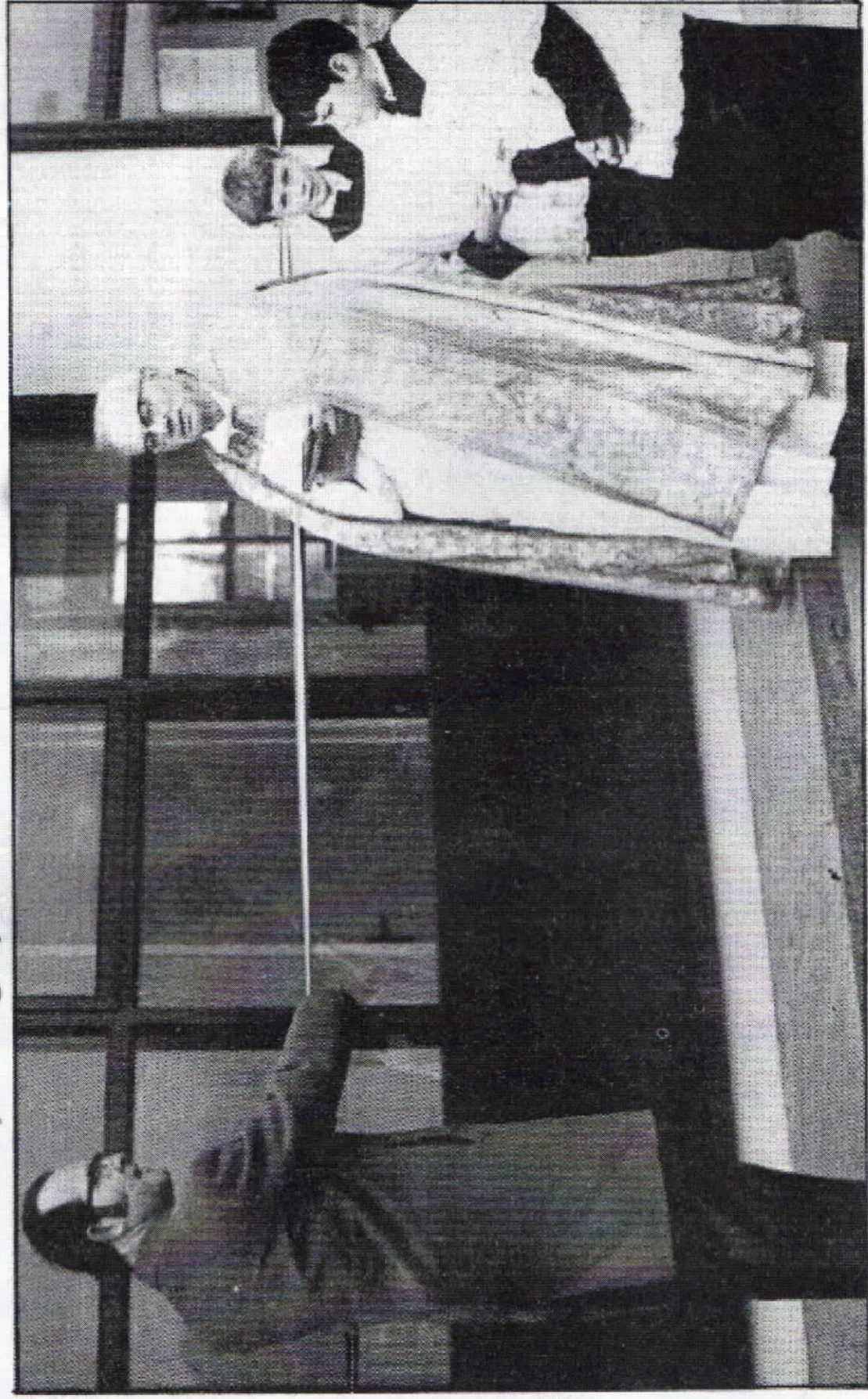
John Charles, Cloonacross

Moggie Lavelle, Kilgevrin

Delia Hession, Russelstown

Elaine Feerick, Emeracly

Opening of Belmont School, November 1972



Inspector Cooke, Fr. John Lowry P.P. (R.I.P.), Tommy Crowe and Gerry Brennan (Altar boys)

Students of Belmont National School — 1948/1949



Back row, left to right: Miko McNamara, Seán Daly, Peter Dolan, Gabriel Giblin, Michael Joe Ruane, Mattie Dolan, Johnny McNamara, John Sweeney, John Hannon, Joe Boland.

Middle row: Patrick McNamara, Jimmy Daly, Paul Ryan, Joe Stephens, Tommy Fitzpatrick, Paul Heaney, Michael Fitzpatrick, Tommy Fallon, Vincent Godwin, Padraic Godwin, Sean McHugh.

Front Row: Oliver Ryan, Christy Ryan, Kenneth Gill, Kevin Dolan, Frank Stephens, Mark Joe Varley, Mick Varley, Tom Ruane, John Walsh, Christy Ruane, Seán Brennan, Martin Fitzpatrick.