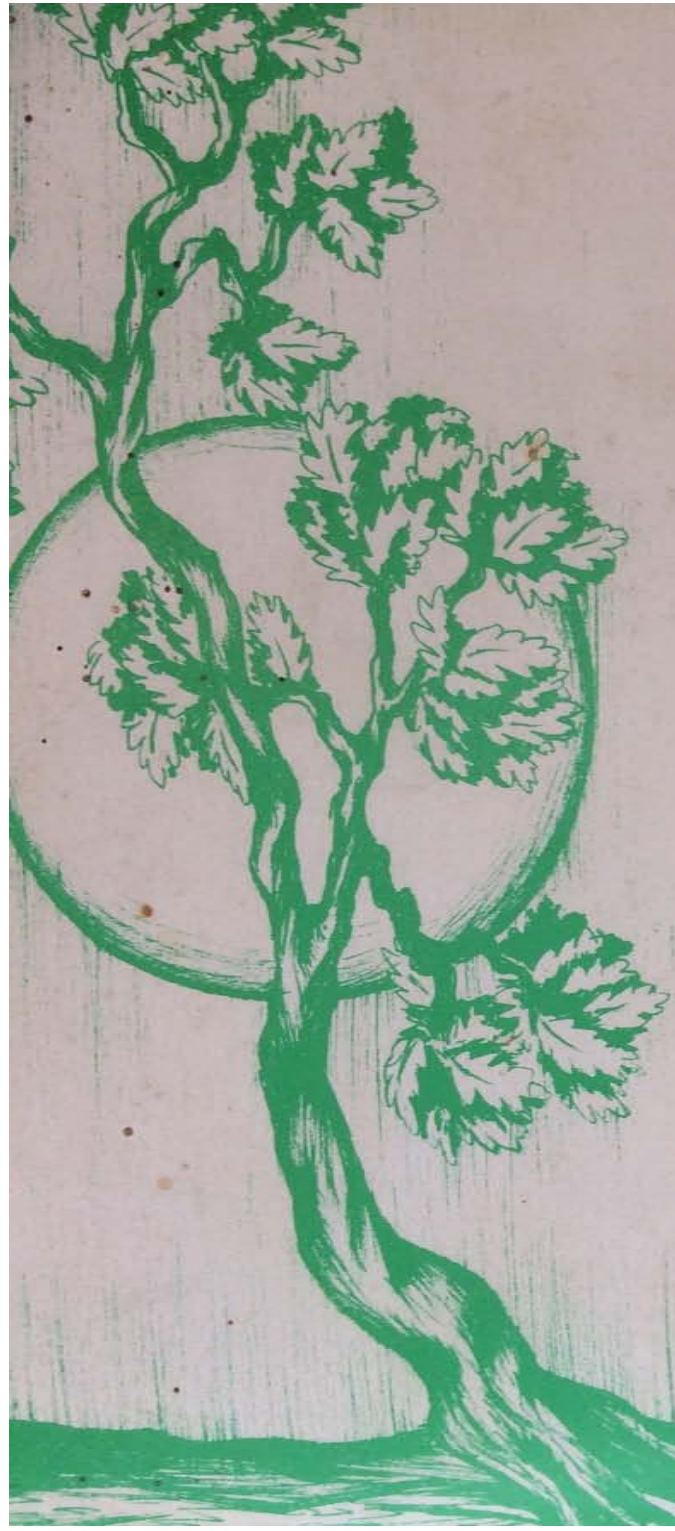


poems folklore
history
and piscosa
of old circann
by ned kavanagh



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POEMS FOLKLORE
HISTORY
AND PISEOJA
OF OLD CIREANN
by NED KAVANAGH

Books by the same author

Poems for Posterity - 1991

The Revival of the Kavanagh Clan at Ferns Castle - 1993

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FOREWORD

This collection of poems and stories are mostly about the haunts of rural Ireland which were alive until the mid sixties. With the introduction of television many of our characters and the places they frequented disappeared completely. This collection, although only small, will, I hope, give future generations an insight into what happened in many of those areas in our isle of green.

Ned Kavanagh

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Claire Kavanagh '95

*The Beansidh of Ballinascough
sitting on the bridge*

THE BEANSIDH OF BALLINASCOUGH

*SHE HAS OFTEN SAT ON THE OLD STONE BRIDGE
COMBING HER LONG DARK HAIR.
THINKING OF WHO ON THIS EARTHLY PLACE
THAT SHE'LL CAST ON HER DEADLY SNARE.*

*WHEN SHE COMES AROUND TO THE CASTLE OR CABIN BOLD
WERE SURE TO WAIL ASTORE.
THE FAIRY WOMAN OF OUR CELTIC RACE
LIVES ON IN OUR ANCIENT IRISH LORE.*

*IN OUR STORIES TOLD BY THE WISE OLD
LEARNED SEANCHI.
WE FIND LEGENDS OF THE FAIRY WOMAN
AND HER KINSHIP WITH THE HAUNTING DUINE SHEE.*

*SHE HAS FOR CENTURIES SAT ON THE EDGE OF
THE FAIRY MOUND.
FOR THE PERSON THAT SHE SINGS FOR HER WAILING LAMENT
WILL NOT BE LONG ON THIS EARTHLY GLOBE AROUND.*

*WE KNOW NOT THE SONG THAT SHE SINGS IN THIS
SAD SITUATION.
IT COULD WELL BE A SONG OF REJOICEMENT
AND NOT ONE OF SAD LAMENTATION.*

*HER WAILING CRY IS OF THE HOLLOW WIND
HER MOURNFUL TONE IS OF DEADLY INSISTENCE
AND IS AUDIBLE AT TWO OR THREE MILES
OR MORE OF A DISTANCE.*

PRESENTING HERSELF AS A SMALL AND MOST
BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN
WITH LACES AND SHAWLS OF OUR OLD CELTIC RACE
SHE'S SURE TO BE HEAVILY LADEN.

WITH HER MOURNFUL AND MELANCHOLY CRY
SHE BEWAILS HER MISFORTUNE ON THE ONE THAT SHE LOVES
WHO IS GOING TO DIE
IN THE MIDST OF OUR SORROWS, OUR PLEASURE AND PAIN
OUR EARTHLY ATTENDANT WILL RETURN WHEN DEATH
IT WILL COME TO OUR OLD GAELIC RACE AGAIN.

The Banshee has a legendary place in the life and death of the Irish people. In Ireland of old, certain talents that some people possessed such as music and poetry were said to be gifts of the Duine-Shee or people of the spirit race. Manys an old Irish musician and bard is said to have obtained their lovely airs and poetic verse from listening to the fairy musician or bard. The Duine-Shee and the Banshee are close relatives and work hand in hand together.

The Banshee gets her name from Bean (woman), sidh(fairy) Fairy Woman. The MacMurroughs mentioned in this article got their name from the sea. They were originally fierce sea warriors of the eastern seaboard and their dug-outs were very seaworthy and manoeuvrable in battle.

FOLKLORE OF THE BEANSIDH

The last sighting of the beansidh in my locality was back in the early forties, at the T-junction at Ballinascough in the old parish of Millenagh, in the Barony of Ballaghkeen county Wexford roughly 7½ Irish miles south east of Enniscorthy.

On the night in question a local man was lamping rabbits when he was crossing the road at the above junction, he spotted sitting on the bridge as he thought a young girl in her twenties. On coming closer he noticed that her costume was not of that period. He eagerly gave his dynamo a spin and there before his eyes was the beansidh with long black hair, as black as a raven's wing. A beautiful shawl of black and red inlaid with diamonds with embroidery work around its perimeter. The belt which surrounded the shawl was made from plaited leather with a sapphire set in its double toothed golden buckle. Her shoes were made of alder with laced velum for their uppers, stitched together with waxed end. They sported a silver buckle on their instep into which was inlaid two red diamonds - oval in shape and surrounded by celtic designs. The hunter being quick sighted, made a thorough examination of her in a very short period, but within seconds she vanished over the bridge heading south bound. She then made a u-turn and went back under the eye of the bridge and headed northwards for the fairy rath over the Owenavarra River.

Three nights after that sighting a man by the name of Kavanagh in the townland of Boolavogue passed away from this life and it was unmistakably the same beansidh that was sighted at Ballinascough which was sighted at Clone Bridge not far from the dead man's dwelling, as the two people that sighted her had the same description.

It was well believed that this man was the descendent of the high kings of Leinster who had their seats at Ferns Castle and as far back as 1172 the beansidh was sighted at the castle on that occasion. It was before the death of Dermuid MacMurrough the last high king of Leinster.

Later on in the fourteenth century the Kavanaghs assumed the title of the MacMurroughs and thus giving us the clan name of the MacMurrough Kavanaghs who ruled the country Reogh or Rough Country and the northern parts which included Hy-Kinselagh in the county of Wexford, and it was the beansidh that came to the castle at Ferns to sing her wailing lament of immortality for the passing of this great clansman. She was said to be a special friend of that particular clan and when a death was close at hand she would come to pay her last respects and sing a song of joy not of sorrow. The above story was said to be well documented in the annals of Leinster by a scribe named Ciaran O'Doran.

Of course the human race is now at a great disadvantage with the introduction of motorised vehicles as the beansidh and her close relatives the Duine-shee can easily hear the engine noises and see the lights for miles around and so a sighting is hard to come by. In the forties the mode of transport was foot, bicycle, hores and cart or horse back. So none of these unearthly people could be distracted to much. Ballinascough is abut 2 miles from he Dublin to Wexford road. About half a mile from the bridge there lived a man by the name of Curran, the ruins of the house where he lived are still there. It was said that he was the first person at the bridge the next morning and that he found the brush she was grooming her hair with. It's handle was made of bog oak, and it's red bristle of squirrel hair. he was also supposed to find her lantern under the eye of the bridge. It was octagonal in shape and it would shine light the 360 degrees. It contained eight candle holders into which was set eight candles. An inch and a quarter in thickness these were designed so as if she had to go a long journey she wouldn't have to replace them. Both the brush and the lantern were lost or were left in some place for safe keeping. Who knows if a dig of the ruins was organised they might be found. Who knows if they strolled along this beautiful wooded area in the small hours of the morning, they might see this maiden of elegance with her long black hair. But come to think of it, she'd be grey now, as that was over 40 years ago. But it's quiet possible she might be after taking on an apprentice and one might see two beansidhs.

The Kavanagh man who died on the night in question was living in Clone, Boolavogue. He originally came from the ancient parish of Donaghmore. He is interred there in it's beautiful surroundings looking out onto the Irish Sea.

WILLIE THE WISP

*EACH MONTH HE CROSSES THE HOLLOWES WITH THE MOON
AT ITS HEIGHT,
CONTENTED FOR CENTURIES ON HIS LONESOME FLIGHT.*

*HE WINDS WITH THE RIVER THAT GENTLY FLOWS,
HE IS DESTINED TO ROAM FOR HOW LONG ITS GOD
ONLY KNOWS.*

*WHEN HE COMES TO THE BOG FIELD HE RESTS AWHILE,
AND ONCE AGAIN WHEN HE CROSSES THE ROAD AT THE
KILLINCOOLEY STILE.*

*IT'S THERE THAT WILLIE THE WISP HE LIGHTS HIS
PIPE,
TO THE PLAINTIVE NOTES OF THE CALLING SNIPE.*

*STUMBLING OVER STONES, RUSHES AND TUFTS OF
SEDGE,
AS HE SCAMPERS CLOSE TO THE RIVERS EDGE.*

*HE WAILING SOUNDS OF FEAR AND DREAD,
WAKE THE SLUMBERING DOGS IN THEIR KENNEL
BED.*

*HE CROSSES THE BRIDGE AT THE ISLAND AND HEADS
ON BY OLD CREMOR,
AND FOLLOWS THE RIVER TO THE SALT SEASHORE.*

HE'S BEEN SEEN LONG AGO BY DOZENS OF MEN,
AND WHEN THE MOONS AT ITS HEIGHT HE'S SURE
TO PASS BYE AGAIN.

HE'S OF THE GHOSTLY TYPE NOT AT ALL LIKE
A MAN,
OLD FOLKS HAVE SAID HE'S OF THE FAIRY CLAN.

HE'S NEVER SEEN IN THE DAY HE ONLY TRAVELS
AT NIGHT,
WITH A CUMBERSOME WALK AND HIS FAIRY LIGHT.

WHEN THE MOON IS FULL HE'LL TRAVEL AGAIN TO
THE RIPPLING TIDE,
AS HE SWAYS HIS RED LIGHT FROM SIDE TO SIDE.

OVER THE OLD PATHWAYS HE GOES AT NIGHT, WILLIE WITH
HIS FAIRY LIGHT,
HE FOLLOWS THE RIVER THAT GENTLY FLOWS, WHERE HE ENDS
UP NO ONE KNOWS.

THE HISTORY OF WILLIE THE WISP

Willie the Wisp has a legendary roll in the folklore of the people of Ireland. Every parish in days of yore had a character like Willie the Wisp or one of equal importance. Sadly very few people of the younger generation ever heard of him or his origins.

Most of our folklore was kept alive by people who sat around the open hearthed fires of the thatched cabins in the early and up to the last quarter of the twentieth century. They told stories of past occasions which were handed down from one generation to the other by word of mouth. Some were preserved, more were lost or died with the old people who told them. With the introduction of Logie Baird's invention people stopped telling them altogether. Mind you some of these stories had fierce characters in them and one would not be very much inclined to be around when night time closed in on the places where these characters were sighted. Now Willie was seen every time the moon was at it's height which is a full moon. His pathway was from the T-junction at the island to the Gap at Tinnabearna's Golden Beach. Rumour has it that he was sighted at the T-junction way back in the early seventeen century. I believe he is said to be of fairy stock. It is said that he was of great importance to the little people and he received many presents of every description. He would be to the fairies a sort of a high king and that would be the equivalent of a high king of Leinster. So, now that will give you an idea of his importance.

He is said to be dressed in a beautiful scarlet cloak with diamonds and pearls set into patches of leather. Around it's perimeter was embroidery work interlaced with gold braid. For it's trimmings he had a peculiar looking head dress much on the style of the modern turban with a gold harp set in the centre, carrying a most beautiful orange sapphire at it's top left hand corner. His shoes were a great creation especially for the seventeenth century. They had velum uppers and alder soles stitched together with leather thongs. These fairy people were no cods when it came to clothing and footwear as they were out in all types of weather when the ordinary people of the country

were asleep in their beds. Modern clogs are made of alder wood as it will neither crack or splinter. Alder soles will wear until a hole will come in their midst. So, Willie's feet were always safe from the rough terrain of those days. On the instep of the shoe there sported an octagonal buckle of enormous proportions with intricate carvings of Celtic design.

Well now the belt he wore was supposed to cap the can altogether. It was made up of two thousand rectangular links of gold, three inches in height by 5 sixteenths in width, and not more than three thirty seconds in thickness. They were very carefully interlocked together. The human eye could scarcely see the detail of the interlocking system. Well of course very few people would ever get that close to have a good inspection anyway. But mind you some people did. The belt had an elliptical buckle with silver inlay and twenty eight precious stones inlaid around it's perimeter. It's said that each stone was a different shape and colour and that they represented the 28 clans of fairies. He visited each month when the moon was high.

The lamp he had was of very plain design with red glass in every consecutive pane. It was pentagonal in shape with one rush candle fixed in it's centre, surrounded by a layer of bees wax at least 2 and a quarter inches in diameter. It threw light 360 degrees. It's handle was made of 12 thongs of leather plaited together and interwoven into the sides of the lantern. When the people of the human race saw this shape of lantern swinging at the dead of night they knew on the minute who it was and all the children would be locked indoors and not allowed out until first light the next morning. One of these lanterns is supposed to have been found in the Bog field at Ballinlow - now the property of Mick Kavanagh - the field not the lamp. Surely, there is little chance of finding it now as it was made of perishable material all barn the glass as I have already stated.

He was first sighted at the Island Bridge. He'd then come on his way through Cremore by Newtown, then into the Bog Field at Ballinlow. He is said to have rested in this field. It's then out of his leather pouch which he kept hidden under his cloak, he'd take out a rather peculiar looking bottle which had in it poteen. He'd take five or six quick shots of this liqueur to warm his gullet. At this point the clay pipe would be brought out and sure whatever

mixture was in it would fill every corner of the 2 acres the Bog Field contained. It's mixture was said to be made up of different tobacco that he'd get from the different clans of fairies along his way through the countryside. Anyway he'd then cross the road at Ballyadam then on to where Hatter's Bridge stands on the Blackwater road further on by Saint Machines Well and the old graveyard of Killenchooley. Then across the road at the stile beside the next T-Junction. It's said that it's there he'd take his next and final rest. Of course, more poteen and clouds of smoke not forgetting the rich aroma of his tobacco, then off to the Gap at Tinnabearna and at this point he vanishes without a trace. It is said he probably takes on the disguise of a tramp or some local person, as not to be identified, as at this point he is said to have in his possession a bag of gold that he had collected from the tenant fairies along the way. These fairy people were gold panners from one generation to the other. It's said he would give them instructions of happenings at each fairy camp he called to along his way. He also had a set of laws laid down for all the fairies in his jurisdiction and if any fairy broke them he'd be given a hard task to do for the next month. These fairy clans had to conduct themselves. They could not act the blackguard on the people of the human race for as you have probably heard it would be well in their power to do so. Of course you could not cut a tree off a fairy mound or raheen or interfere with their property as there would be severe repercussions. It's said that people who did such things on the fairies got their fair share of bad luck.

Willie was a fierce lad for moaning and groaning and it could be heard for miles around. The reason for this is said to keep a bit of fear and respectability in some of the bad fairies. The bad fairies would steal the sight out of your eye and to make matters worst they'd come back the next day and persuade you that you're better off without it.

Well now to conclude it would be in everybodys interest to know when there is the coming of a full moon especially in the locality. I have mentioned a close look out could be kept and one might never know they could spy Willie the Wisp in reality especially, if you are a late night traveller.

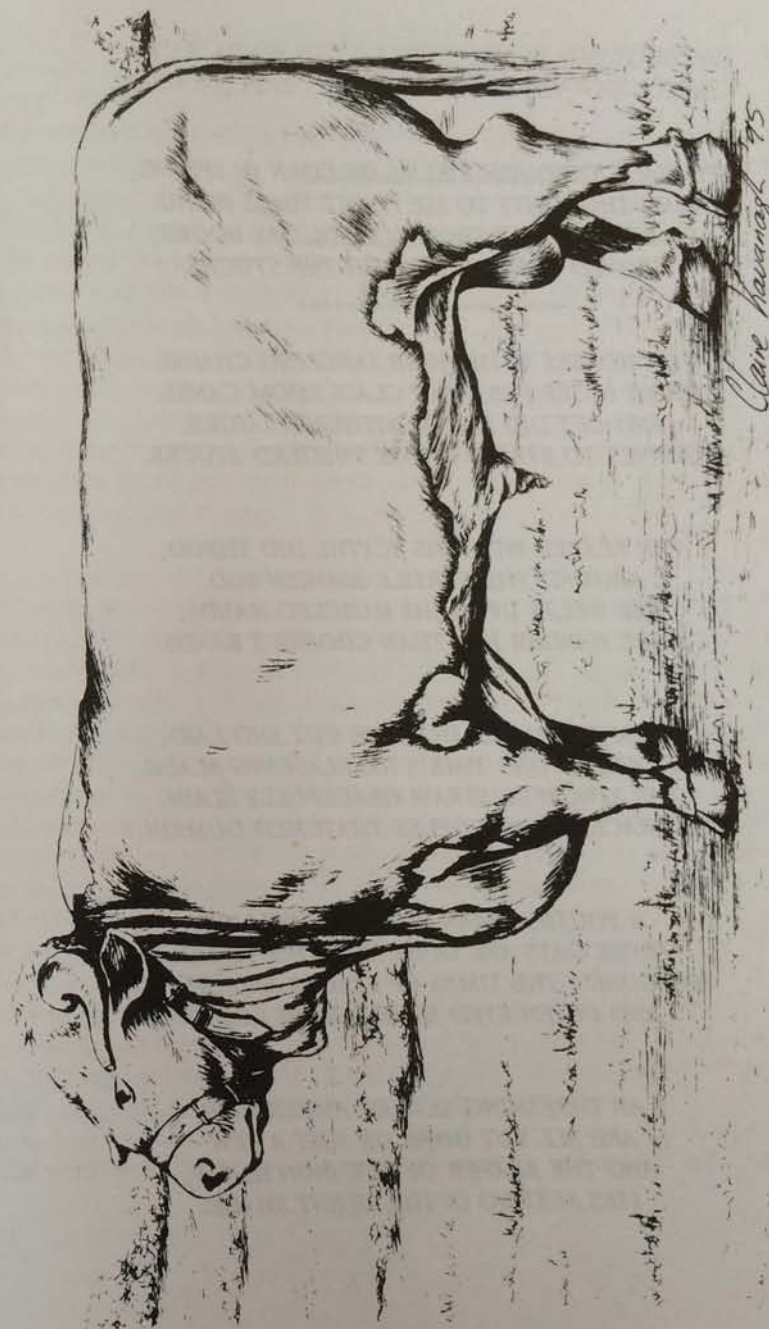
As mentioned the wood that made Willie the Wisp's shoes came from the alder tree. The Irish for alder is Fearnog. It grows in dampish areas especially along river banks.

The shields of our Bronze Age ancestors were made from alder as it was relatively light and quiet tough. It also would not splinter and nowadays it is used for clog making. In our ancient folklore it was known as a common tree of the woodland. Ferns in County Wexford was known for centuries as Fearnog Mor (the great plane of the alder trees).

In the locality of Kilmuckridge parish in Wexford county barony of Ballaghkeen - tradition has it as unlucky to cut alder trees as the fresh wood when sawn down is white in texture it soon changes it's colour to red and is deemed unlucky as blood might soon be spilled in a battle or feud between rival clans or friends.

There was a clog factory in operation in Enniscorthy at a place known as the Still. Much of the timber for these clogs came from the South and North Boira in the Kilmuckridge area. As far back as the 1700's harps were made of a mixture of willow and alder wood.

All types of lights have been sighted all over Ireland through the centuries especially over quagmires, marsh ground and around graveyards. These lights were known by different names in other localities. Here are a few examples: Teine Side (Fairy Fire), Teine Sionnic (Fox Fire), Eamonn na Lasoige (Ned of the Small Flame) and of course Willie the Wisp. All these lights are said to be omens of death especially to the people of old Erin and are known collectively as The Water Sheerie. The old people thought that these lights were carried by condemned souls who were neither allowed to enter heaven or hell and were destined to roam the earth as punishment for deeds they had done whilst in human form. As I have said they frequent marsh land and have over thousands of years lured people to their deaths in these bottomless marsh lands. These lights have been documented by people all over the known world for centuries past. Now at last we have a scientific explanation, but modern science will always lack the beauty of ancient mythology. The scientist theory is that these lights are caused by burning gas. The gases involved are said to be either phosphorated hydrogen or methane. Now we must assume that someone lights this gas - if not we have no light, for both these gases are susceptible to spontaneous combustion. So once more I'll leave it up to the reader to form their own opinion.



Livestock of the Sixties
Hereford Bull

THE REAPER

TO WALK THROUGH FIELDS OF CORN IN SPRING,
KIND THOUGHTS TO ME IT OFT TIMES BRING.
WHEN FAR AWAY FROM SCHOOL DAY BOOKS,
I ROVED FOR HOURS AMID THE STUCKS.

FOR HORSES WITH THEIR JANGLING CHAINS,
WERE NICER FAR THAN CLASS ROOM CANES.
AND OFT DID I WITH WITHERED LOOKS,
CONVEY TO STACKS THOSE THISTLED STUCKS.

THE REAPER WITH HIS SCYTHE DID THROD,
AROUND THE FERTILE BROKEN SOD.
THE WELTS UPON HIS MUSCLED HANDS,
WERE HARDER FAR THAN COOPER'S BANDS.

FROM DAWN TILL DUSK HE CUT AND LAID,
AND WHETSTONE TIME'S HIS FLASHING BLADE.
THE STOUTFUL STRAW GRACEFULLY SLAIN,
IT GRACED OUR PEOPLES THATCHED DOMAIN.

A YOUTH, A MAN BUT ONCE WILL BE,
THOSE DAYS ARE GONE NO MORE TO SEE.
FOR GONE'S THE TIMES OF STACKS AND STUCKS,
AND OFTEN EYED BY OLD MENS LOOKS.

AN THRESHING SETS OF AMBER HEW,
ARE ALL BUT GONE OR JUST A FEW.
AND THE REAPER OF THE IRON BLADE,
LIES RESTING IN THE SILENT SHADE.

NE'ER AGAIN HE'LL STRIKE THE BLADE TO HONE,
WITH HIS FINE OLD DOUBLE BROWN WHETSTONE.

SCHOOL AND FARMING IN THE SIXTIES

In the sixties when I was growing up school was more like an institution than a place of learning. Methods today of teaching are of a different nature and have improved for the better. That time the bamboo cane was in liberal use and if a teacher took a dislike to a student he had the authority to punish him or her at will. The cane was used on the tops of ones fingers and in most cases with full force and the inflicted could do nothing against their inflictors barbaric methods. Ways like this, never taught anyone anything only hatred of ones inflictor. Punishment of this type is no longer tolerated in our schools. It should never have been allowed in the first place. Kindness is the key to learning. If you beat any kind of animal the tendency is for them to run away from you. A small reward and kindness and they'll do anything that's asked of them, even though they can't communicate by direct speech.

Students were caned for stupid and small offences. For not knowing a question in the catholicism, not being able to have homework completed, or being late for school in the morning and this punishment had the full approval of the parish priests of that era. Scanty clothes and footwear was in common use on the majority of students and on a cold winter's morning it was punishment enough to walk 3 to 4 miles to school in frost or rain without getting a caning when you arrived. Heating in schools in those days was very inadequate. A fire graced a room of 27' x 16' and in some cases larger. This was positioned behind the teacher's desk. The ceilings were very high and were clad with ceiling boards or what's known as T G and V and the wind of a cold winter's day would howl through the joints of the boarding.

In those days it was a great thrill to be kept at home during the harvest. It was necessary for the majority of parents to do so as the harvest in the sixties was far different than nowadays (1993). At first the reaper with his scythe would make ample room around the headlands of the corn field. These reapers were experts at their job.

It was usually a man in his forties or fifties that did this job. It was a tricky business. The proper swing had to be obtained and the blade kept lance sharp. These reapers would leave the opening round in a swart as neatly as if a modern flayel mower had cut it. The tyzac scythe was held in high esteem for this job. It had no equal for balance, edge and durability. Many reapers would add weights to the top of the handle to acquire the perfect balance. My father was one of these men.

When the opening was done the binder was pulled into the field. It was originally horse drawn with the arrival of the tractor on the scene. It was converted by means of a draw bar. These machines were ground driven. They were an American invention by Macormac. He made the first mechanical reaper. Afterwards the notter was applied. It was a revolutionised machine in it's day. A loose sheaf now and again but otherwise they worked perfectly.

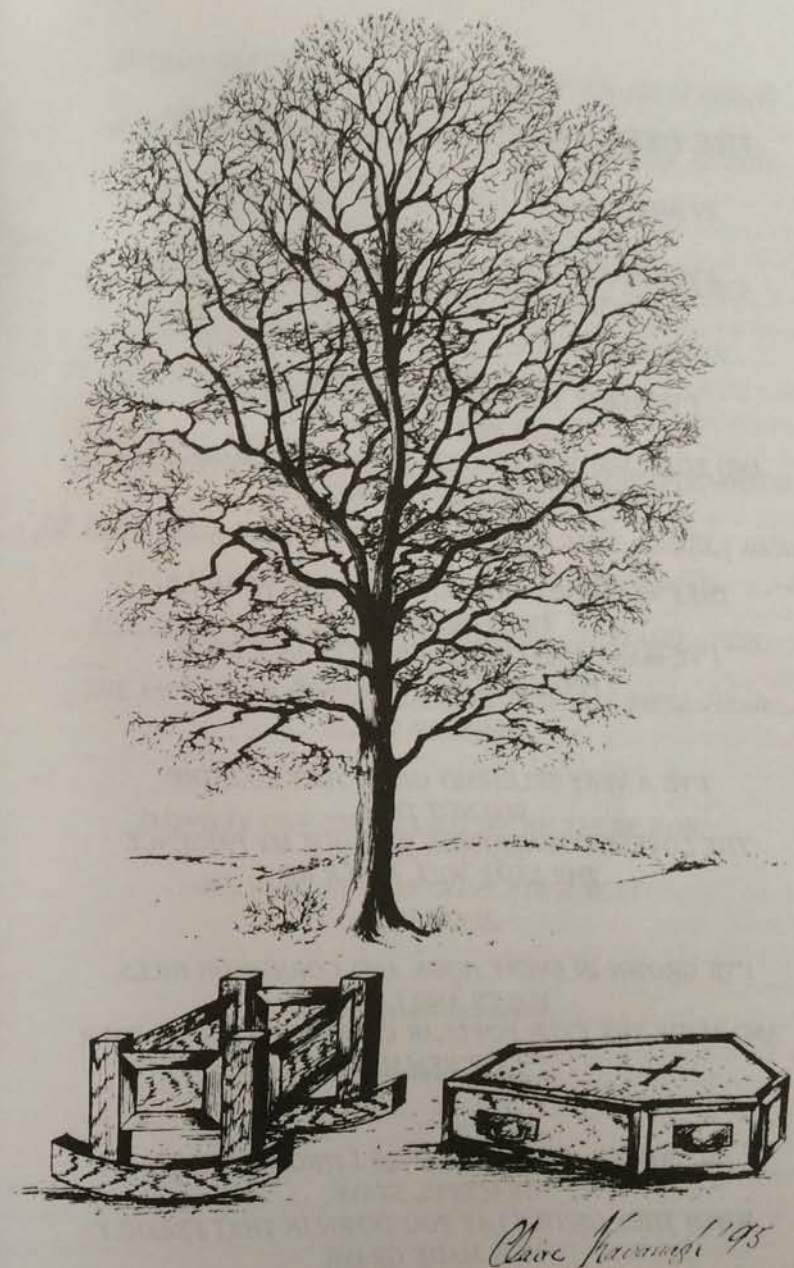
When the binder had finished in the field the sheaves of corn were stood upright in stucks 4 to 6 sheaves made up 1 stuck. They were left in this position for upwards on a week. They were then conveyed to a dry bank of the field and built into field stacks. No stack was built near a ditch as it was vulnerable to rodent attack. The stacks were left for a period of upwards on 8 to 10 weeks. They were then conveyed to the haggard and made into large stacks or ricks when the owner of the threshing set was on his annual rounds, the threshing would be done.

The neighbours helped one and another on threshing days. There was always a good few bottles of porter stirring on that day and plenty to eat. It was a ritual not to be missed for if the threshing yielded, everything was going to have ample food for survival. The straw for thatch, grain for food, chaff for mattresses and the winnings to the dung heap to make manure for next year's crops of potatoes. This was organic farming at it's best and in some cases yields of up to 4 tonne of wheat were received per Irish acre.

The steam threshing can be seen through out Ireland today, as a novelty. If one is seen by the reader it will give him or her an idea of how the threshing was done in those days from the 20's up until the mid sixties.

The introduction of the diesel and the TVO tractors with their trailer drawn combined harvester seen the decline of the haggard threshing. The straw from the mill threshing was of superior quality for thatching as it was not as bruised as the straw from the combined harvester and so it would not rot as easily. Farming ways in those days was very laborious but still there was ample time for conversation and celebration.

Sports days were also quite common. Nowadays all types of manures of artificial type and sprays are applied to the soil. The result is over producing cereals which are not in popular demand. Therefore, stores have to be built to accommodate this produce. The land is being overworked. Whilst products lie in stores costing more to store them than producing them in the first place. Mixed farming is no longer acceptable to the majority of farmers. But, somehow I think it will creep back within the next decade or two.



Elm Tree cradle and casket

THE DYING WORDS OF THE IRISH ELM

*IN BOTH PROUD AND STATELY GRANDEUR,
IN LONELINESS AND PRIDE,
I'VE GRACED ENCHANTING HAUNTS IN THE
SPLENDID COUNTRYSIDE.*

*I'VE MADE THE WOODEN SPOON TO STIR
THE SKILLET POT,
AND SUPPLIED THE CURVED TIMBERS TO MAKE THE
EVER GRACEFUL FISHING COT.*

*THEY'VE CARVED ME INTO CABINETS TO HOLD
THE FINEST WINE,
I'VE MADE MANY A CHAIR AND TABLE SO AS
PEOPLE ALL COULD DINE.*

*I'VE A VERY SPLENDID GRAIN JUST LIKE THE
WALNUT TREE,
THE LOVELY COUNTRYSIDE WITHOUT MY PRESENCE
THE SAME WILL NEVER BE.*

*I'VE GROWN IN EVERY NOOK AND CORNER ON HILLS,
DALES AND LANES,
AND MADE THE EVER POPULAR CASKET TO CONVEY YOUR
LAST REMAINS.*

*SO SOME DAY YOU MIGHT BE LYING WITHIN MY
GRACEFUL STAVE,
WHEN THEY GENTLY LAY YOU DOWN IN THAT FRESHLY
NEW MADE GRAVE.*

*IF YOU ARE LUCKY THAT MIGHT HAPPEN OR IT MIGHT
NEVER COME TO BE,
FOR NOW WE'RE DYING ROUND THE COUNTRY AS YOU
CAN PLAINLY SEE.*

*THE DISEASE OF THAT DUTCH ELM WAS IMPORTED
IN A LOG,
WE'RE NOW GETTING RATHER SCARCE ON PLAIN,
HILLOCK AND BOG.*

*FUTURE GENERATIONS MIGHT NEVER SEE THE SPLENDOR
OF MY TRUNK,
OR REST THEIR WEARY HEADS IN MY GRACEFUL STATELY BUNK.*

*I'VE MADE THE STOUTEST FURNITURE TO STAND UPON
THE FLOOR,
THE MOURNING OF THE COUNTRY STREAMS WE'LL HEAR
AGAIN NO MORE.*

*DYING IN OUR THOUSANDS WE'RE THERE FOR
EVERYONE TO SEE,
WE WERE IN DAYS GONE BYE A VERY
USEFUL TREE.*

THE ELM TREE AND ITS USES IN THE OLDEN TIMES

In rural Ireland in the nineteen and up to the middle of the twentieth century many implements were made from the wood of the elm tree. Since the introduction of Dutch Elm Disease not many specimen trees remain in our Isle today. The disease is said to have been introduced in a cargo of foreign timber around the late sixties. Once it strikes it's incurable and no part of our island has escaped. If a tree is spotted, especially in the early stages of decay, it should be removed immediately as the disease is highly contagious and can easily spread to neighbouring trees.

The elm tree was mostly popular for the making of coffins and caskets. Of the latter now oak is more commonly used. It is a very durable and dense grained wood, with a darkish colour - much the same as walnut. The grains and colours are very characteristic, with traces of silver colour dotted here and there throughout it's planks. It's very appealing to the eye. In many fever hospitals long ago double coffins were in use as it was a saving on a lid and a bottom and as timber that time was in great demand it was classed a necessity.

The means of cutting planking that time was with a pit saw, with its teeth facing downwards. One man stood in a pit in the ground, the other stood on a platform above him. The man above had to pull the saw back idle while the downward thrust split the log - which was lying horizontal on the platform. This process was repeated time after time until the log was sawn from one end to the other. It was a very laborious job. In old buildings you can see evidence of this type of sawing. On inspection of a piece of beaming, you will see the marks of the saw at an angle of about 30 to 35 degrees from the edge of the beam. It's a pity that such a fine wood had to be used for burials, on such sad occasions but culturally the Irish people gave their loved ones as the auld saying goes "a good send off". Elm coffins have lasted forty years and more completely intact especially in dampish burial grounds.

The elm was also used in the construction of the traditional Morristcastle fishing cots. Their ribs of sawn frames and both stem and stern posts in the making of these craft. There was little use for measuring tape or square. One had to have a keen eye as there was strength and elegance combined. These cots often landed 60 boxes of herring and with nets and fish together the weight would be in excess of 3 tonne, and as the cots were landed on the beach and winched out of the water and hardened on the strand to shake their catch, they had to be of sound construction. In 1982 I built one of these cots. She was 28' in length and her beam was 7'. She was a two stemmer and could be launched or landed by either stem or stern. In the stem the springing never should exceed more than 4". No springing should be in her stern as she would run broadside if she was topped by a wave and that might be disastrous to both cot and crew. In obtaining the timbers for the ribs it would be better to go to we'll say a marlhole or some lonely place rarely frequented by man. It's there you'd get the right specimen. It would be growing out of the bank of the marlhole with a perfect curve at its stem and most of all there would be no nails or spikes of iron in it. As in the old days threshing sets were winched into the haggard and oft times there was iron spikes driven into these stout trees to winch the machine to set her up for threshing. If one of these trees were used life and limb would be at risk when sawing not to talk of the damage done to the saw blade. A tree that was grown in a sheltered area was not as good as one grown in exposed conditions, as the fibres would be much stronger in the latter and it would be better able to stand hardships.

Some fine examples of four poster beds can be seen in the mansions of the large estates around the country. there were also house utensils made from elm, such as wooden spoons, rocking cradles, kitchen chairs and tables, dressers not forgetting the three legged milking stool. This stool had a circular top into which 3 - 1 1/2" or 2" in diameter legs were fixed, by means of boring the top through, inserting the leg into the hole and driving a wedge into its centre. This stool could find its own level on the rough floors of the byres in which the cows were milked by hand. These objects were made by the local carpenter for the poor part of society in days gone by. They can still be seen in folk villages and museums around the country.

Our native elms are very prone to this highly contagious disease. But it's likely in the near future that a sapling might be propagated that will be immune to its effects.

The only elms native to Ireland are the Wych elms. As mentioned they are very prone to Dutch Elm Disease - it's a fungal infection spread by a small beetle.



Caroline Kavanagh '97

*Open Hearthed Fireplace in the
Kavanagh Homestead, Ballinlow*

THE IRISH FIRESIDE

WITH SAPLINGS FROM THE SALLY BUD.
I'VE FRIED BOTH HERRING, TENCH AND RUDD.
WITH EMBERS IN MY HEART AGLOW.
I'VE BOILED THE SPUDS IN FROST AND SNOW.

THE BELLOWS ME, IT OFT TIMES FANNED.
TURNED BY THE OLD TRAMPS WELTED HAND.
THE OLD TRAMP, TIMES I OFT DID GREET,
AND PUT THE LIFE BACK IN HIS FEET.

BUT BEFORE HE'S TURN AROUND TO GO,
HIS BLESSINGS ON ME HE WOULD BESTOW.
AND WITH "HEAVENS BLESSED SAINTLY CHOIR",
GOD BLESS YOU MAM AND YOUR SALLY FIRE.

THE LAST OF THE JOURNEY MEN

The last journey man to ply the roads of the Kilmuckridge area was a man by the name of Michael Redmond from the Ford in Kilmuckridge. He was well into his eightieth year when he died on 3rd March, 1973. He is laid to rest in the new cemetery in The Ford.

He was most of the time in a jolly mood, and of a very gentle disposition. He had no fixed abode. He'd stay in a barn here and there. In his last years he stayed in an outhouse at Ruanmore. It's oft I remember him coming into our thatched house in winter time. His desire would be a mug of red tea, bread with no butter and a saucer to pour his tea onto in order to cool it for consumption.

He was the last of the breed of old journeymen to frequent this area. He had relations in the Treasury (Department of Finance). If I'm not mistaken, one of Mick's relations had his signature on the ten-shilling note of that era. When Mick's relative died, he didn't forget him when he made his will. He left him over £60, quite an amount of money back in the fifties. Mick headed for Enniscorthy and lived it up while the money lasted. As he said himself "he was Mr. Redmond while the money lasted, when it was all gone he was plain Mick again."

When Mick would finish his mug of tea, he'd then head for the fireplace. Off with his short rubber boots, which were lined with hay wadding, they would be left with their mouths towards the open flame. He wore no stockings. As soon as the boots were the proper temperature, he'd put them back on his feet. But before he'd open the half door, you'd hear him say in gentle tones, "heavens blessed saintly choir, may God Bless you mam and your sally fire".

POULDER

*LARCH AND ELM FROM OUR NATIVE TREES,
WOULD IN SPLENDOUR SOON SAIL THE SOUTHERN SEAS.*

*A FINE WYCH ELM GROWN ON FERTILE LEA,
MY STOUTFULL RIBS SOON IT WOULD BE.*

*THE PLANKING OF LARCH THAT WILL MAKE MY FLOOR,
WILL SOON HEAR THE SOUND OF THE BRAKERS ROAR.*

*FROM GARBOARD TO GUNWALE THEY SHAPED OUT MY HULL,
SOON I'D BE ON "THE CREST" LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL.*

*WITH NETS IN MY HOLD AND A SWONG AT MY SIDE,
MY STEM WILL SOON ENTER THE OCEANS'S TIDE.*

*MY HULL WILL SOON REST ON MORRISCATTLE'S STRAND,
AND IT'S THERE I'LL BE BLESSED BY THE PARSON'S HAND.*

*I'VE FISHED AT MY EASE IN SUNSHINE AND RAIN,
HOW JOYOUS TO BE ON THE RAGING MAIN.*

*SO THANKS TO THE HANDS OF THE BALLINLOW MEN,
WHO CARVED OUT MY HULL FROM STERN TO STEM.*

*ALAS I'M GOING TO FISH WITH PLEASURE AND EAST
ON THE OCEAN'S CREST IN THE COOL SEA BREEZE*

Poulder was a cot or flat bottomed boat 27' in length. 8' beam built of larch on wych elm frames. She was clinker built a method of construction not changed since the Vikings built their longships. Copper rivets and rooves kept the overlapping skinning together. The garboard is the planking next to the keel. The Sheer strake is the last plank at the top of the boat. The outward plank at the centre bottom of the boat outside is the keel and the inside one is the keelsome. A deadman's hench is the join on a strake, which is held by 5 rivets. The top of the boat is called the gunwale.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BOAT BUILDING FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE 20TH CENTURY

It's thousands of years since man discovered that he could make a vessel that would float and carry him on water. It's quite possible that the first boatman would have travelled on water sitting on a log. From this primitive start man in turn learned different techniques to aid him to what we have and know today in regards to boat building. As time went along he hollowed out the middle of a log and the first dug-out was made in ancient Briton. Coracles were made by the means of covering wooden frames with cured animal hides. In the west of Ireland (Connemara) this type of construction is still practised in the making of the "Currach". Canvas is stitched onto the frame work and many helpings of pitch raw linseed oil or some other type of water proofing method is used.

Rafts were also built by early man. In 1947 Thor Heyerdahl (a Norwegian) built a raft of balsa wood. Like it's early predecessor she sailed over 7,000 miles across The Pacific Ocean proving that rafts of early times could sail long distances. The Egyptians used reeds from the river bank of the Nile to construct boats. These boats were used mostly on the Nile but they also made journeys across the Atlantic Ocean.

The people who lived around the Mediterranean Sea such as the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans built strong boats which carried a square sail and many oarsmen. They were used to carry soldiers to battle and cargo.

The Vikings of Norway, Denmark and Sweden made longships which were pointed at stem and stern. The top of the stem post was in some cases highly decorated with a dragon's head. They had many oarsmen and one large sail. The longship was steered by an oar at the stern known as a 'skulling oar'. Leif Ericsson, a Viking, sailed to America around 1002 A.D..

The design of ships and boats began to change drastically. Sails were in common use around that time. Voyages at sea became longer as man discovered the world. The next step was navigation - which simply means finding the way. The first method used for navigation by sailors was that they kept close to the coast, so places such as castles and other landmarks were easily recognisable. Later on stars at night and the sun by day were used for navigational purposes. The Chinese invented the first compass called a "Loadstone" - this stone was attached to a piece of wood and as it was magnetised, it's ends always pointed to the magnetic south or north poles. About 600 years ago the magnetic compass was invented. It contains a magnetised needle which always points to the magnetic north. There is a few degrees between the true North Pole and the magnetic North Pole.

With the introduction of more sails on ships the rudder was invented. to steer ships as they got larger. The handle of the ruder was known as the tiller. With ships larger, safer and quite a large amount of sail on them exploration and trading journeys were undertaken. St. Brendan from the Aran Islands sailed to America in his well built primitive craft of leather and wooden frames.

In 1492 Columbus sailed in a ship known as The Santa Maria from Spain across the Atlantic Ocean to America. She was a three master made up of two square sails and one triangular.

Francis Drake sailed the Golden Hind around the world in 1577. She was a galleon with a main mast and a foremast, she also had a mizzen sail.

Cook was an eighteen century sailor who sailed all over the known world in a ship called the Endeavour. Cook was killed in Hawaii by aborigines of that island.

Next in line came the clippers - these were a new breed of fast ship. They were long and slender with narrow bows upon them three masts which carried many square feet of canvas or sail. The Cutty Sark was one of the fastest clippers ever built.

A Ships Sails:

Fore Topmast Staysail
Jib
Flying Jib
Fore Spencer
Main Spencer
Spanker
Fore Sail
Fore Royal
Fore Sky Sail
Main Sail
Main Top Sail
Main Top Gallant
Main Royal
Main Sky Sail
Mizzen Topsail
Mizzen Top Gallant Sail
Mizzen Royal
Mizzen Sky Sail
Lower Studding Sail
Lee Studding Sail
Fore Topmast Studding Sail
Lee Topmast Studding Sail
Fore Top Gallant Studding Sail
Lee Top Gallant Studding Sail
Fore Royal Studding Sail
Lee Royal Studding Sail
Main Topmast Studding Sail
Lee Topmast Studding Sail
Main Top Gallant Studding Sail
Lee Top Gallant Studding Sail
Main Royal Studding Sail
Lee Royal Studding Sail

With the age of steam fast approaching the sailing ships were not as numerous on the seas. The American Savannah was the first steam ship to cross the Atlantic Ocean in 1819. She was originally a three masted sailing ship which was later fitted with a steam engine. She was propelled by two paddle wheels at either side. The screw propeller was invented around the 1840's and ships are propelled by them ever since.

Steel was then used in the construction of larger ships which man thought were unsinkable. One such ship was the Titanic - built at Harland and Wolff Shipyards, Belfast. She sunk on her maiden voyage in the North Atlantic with most of her passengers and crew. The reason many went down with her was there were not enough lifeboats on board to accommodate the passengers and crew as she was deemed unsinkable. She hit an iceberg which ripped her hull and her airtight compartments open. She was built of hard Steel which would not dent or tear. With the result when she came in contact with the iceberg it actually burst her hull open. The year of her sinking was 1912. Her number was 390904 which spelt 'no pope' backwards. No matter what a ship is made of, her name is always painted on timber.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, R.N.L.I. was founded in 1824. Life boats are small land based vessels specially designed to save lives at sea, the modern lifeboat is virtually unsinkable. Measures over 50' long and is self righting. A master coachmaker by the name of Lionel Lukin who lived from 1742 - 1834 was the inventor of the first immersible lifeboat, he was determined to construct a boat that was unsinkable, even should it be filled with water. He bought an Norweign yawl in 1784 and started his conversion work upon it adding cork outside its gunwales covered with cloth onto which a waterproof substance was added to. Water tight containers were added to stem and stern and underneath seatings. Iron was added to the keel to keep her in an upright position. He patented this invention in 1785. He lent this boat in good fate to a pilot for testing in rough water. It fell into the hands of smugglers who plied the channel from England to France. It was seized in France but not before it had made hundreds of crossings across the Channel. Needless to say its conversion was successful.

His next conversion was a Scottish fishing boat a 'Cobel'. The year 1806 with her conversion complete she was to be the forerunner of the lifeboats we are accustomed to today. At Lowestoft on the English coast he supervised the building of the "Frances Ann". She had 3 masts fitted , lug sails and 12 oars. During her 42 years of service she and her crew saved over 300 souls.

Lionel Lukin died on the 16th of February, 1834. He was 92 years old and interred at St. Leonard,s Churchyard, Hythe in Cornwall. Inscribed there on his humble tombstone is "Builder of the first lifeboat". Even today the cousins of his invention are responsible for saving hundreds and in some cases thousands of lives each year around our coastlines. Most of the men who are responsible for manning these vessels do so voluntarily. There are 32 lifeboat stations and many more inshore craft stations in operation around Ireland today (1996).

THE HEEL STONE

*I'VE BEEN SITTING HERE FOR YEARS, I THOUGHT NEVER
MORE I'D ROAM,
SINCE THE MASON CARVED A HOLE IN ME, SAID THE FINE
OLD FIELD HEEL STONE.*

*MEN HAVE PASSED ME BY WITH SHEEP AND DOGS
AND COWS,
I'VE SEEN THEM TILL MY HEADLANDS WITH HARROWS
SPADES AND PLOUGHS.*

*I'VE HEARD THE PLOUGH CUT THROUGH THE CLAY WITH ITS
PIERCING RASPING SOUND,
THE GREEN SOD IN THE MORNING DEW, IN THE EVENING
REDDISH BROWN.*

*I'VE SEEN THE RAIN IN TORRENTS AND HEAVY
THUNDEROUS SPILLS,
AND I'VE LOOKED FOR MONTHS ON END DOWN THOSE LONG
POTATO DRILLS.*

*IN THE EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FORTIES, IF I COULD
I'D HAVE SHED A TEAR,
FOR THE HUMBLE POTATOES GOT THE BLIGHT AND
THOUSANDS DIED THAT YEAR.*

*CHILDREN, MEN AND WOMEN DIED, OH LORD IT
WASN'T FAIR,
BUT THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL CAILIN I CAN NEVER FORGET,
'T WAS THE ONE WITH THE LONG RED HAIR.*

I LOOKED UNTO THIS CAILIN DEASA IN A FERTILE
HOMELY LAND.
AND I CURSED FOR DAYS ON END TO THE WRATH OF THE
TYRANTS HAND.

FROM WEAKNESS WITH THE HUNGER FOUR DAYS SHE
THERE DID LIE.
MY HEART WAS FILLED WITH ANGUISH FOR I KNEW
THAT SOON SHE'D DIE.

THEY LAID HER HERE TO REST BESIDE ME NE'ER AGAIN
NOW FOR TO ROAM.
AND NOW I AM HER HEADSTONE, WE'RE TOGETHER
ALL ALONE.

SHE WAS A CAILIN OF GREAT BEAUTY WITH ELEGANCE
AND PRIDE,
SHE WAS ONLY IN HER SEVENTEENTH YEAR WHEN OF
STARVATION THAT SHE DIED.

I SAW HER GASPING ON THE COOL CLEAR AIR AS SHE DREW
HER PAINFUL FINAL BREATH,
THE LANDSCAPE THEN FOR MILES AROUND WAS CAST IN
A GLOOM OF DEATH.

THE BANSHEE CAME TO LAMENT THREE DAYS BEFORE
SHE DIED,
AND WHEN SHE SAW HER SLIP AWAY, 'T WAS WITH
FRUSTRATION THEN SHE CRIED.

SHE IS LYING TO THIS DAY BESIDE THAT MOUNTAIN
LANE,
SHE'S SHELTERED FROM THIS TROUBLED GLOBE, AND IT'S
THERE SHE WILL REMAIN.

THE TOMB NOW WHERE SHE LIES FOREVER MORE
IS SEALED,
CATTLE, SHEEP ARE GRAZING THERE FOR NOW IT'S
A FORTY ACRE FIELD.

FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF I'VE MARKED THAT SPOT AND
PROUDLY THERE DID STAND,
UNTIL DIGGERS AND DOZERS CAME TO RAPE MY
LOVELY LAND.

MY CAILIN IS STILL LYING THERE WITHOUT ANY
MARKING STONE,
WITH THE GREEN SOD RESTING LIGHTLY ON HER GRAVE
WHERE FOOTSTEPS SELDOM ROAM.

THE USE OF THE HEEL STONE

A heel stone was a stone usually found in the locality and the stone mason would cut a hole in it about one inch in diameter and five-eighths to three quarters of an inch in depth. The stone for to do this job was rough in appearance and when fitted in its place it would hold its position for hundreds of years. Granite was usually chosen, but I have seen many varieties of large field stones which did the job just the same. The reason granite was used was probably because it wasn't too hard to cut. When the stone mason was finished with the stone, the blacksmith would then fashion a round piece of iron to fit into the hole. A clasp was then welded to the spike in the forge fire, which in turn was fitted unto a wooden gate. In some cases up to 26 heel stones have been found in an area of about forty acres or so, which is ample evidence that there was up to 26 fields in number on that land.

In the majority of cases a field would be surrounded by a dyke or a ditch on which furze bushes and many other species of trees grew. Notably ash, elm, willow, black and white thorn and the Irish maple which is of course sycamore. Well now in the early nineteen hundreds when in some cases the rabbit was the staple diet of many country folk, these ditches harboured many different species of wild life and sure it's there you'd have to go for your dinner and you'd also get the firewood to cook it especially from the wood of the furze bush. Men were employed at this job and were known as Faggot Cutters by trade. Well now I'm wandering a bit off the uses of the heel stone, but now you might as well read on.

If you cut down a bush it would sprout up in a couple of years and the suckers could then be used for fire wood. This rotary system worked very well especially for the small holders. Incidentally, the yellow or gold bloom of the gorse and the purple bloom of the heather make up the purple and gold flag of Wexford.

The heel stones are still around today and can be seen as show-pieces or you might happen on one in a heap of stones gathered off a field before the crops were planted. It's sad to say that modern technology and so many different ways of farming have done away with the ways of nature. It's now forty acre fields and in some cases over one hundred acres and that would make up two sizable farms in the early to middle nineteen hundreds. The small fields or pastures as they were known had names on each and every one of them. These are a few examples that I have heard, some of them being referred to not more than twenty five years ago (1967). Mogue's Bush, Willie's Acre, The Longfield, the Devil's Eye Brow, Poulder Meadow, the Barn Field, the Mangold Field, the Snipe field, the Partridge covey, the Still Field - you might guess what went on in that one, Uisce Beaha galore, the Horse Paddock. This number of fields would make up a sizable farm in the fifties. Each field would have from about 1½ acres to 2½, maybe 3 acres in area. But now sadly all that is gone in this area of the county Wexford (i.e. Kilmuckridge).



Clare Kavanagh '95

The phantom horseman of The Boira Bog
and his dreaded hound

THE PHANTOM HORSE MAN OF THE BOIRA BOG

IN YONDER BOIRA BETWEEN OAKEN TREES,
IN A HOLLOWED SALLY LIVED THE HONEY BEES.
THIS TALE TO YOU I'LL NOW RELATE,
THERE LIVES A PHANTOM HORSEMAN IN A RUINED ESTATE.

THOSE WHO'VE SEEN LIVE IN FEAR AND DREAD,
FOR THIS HORSEMAN'S ONE OF THE LIVING DEAD.
IN WINTER NIGHTS ROUND THE BOIRA BOG,
HE ROAMS WITH HIS HORSE AND DREADED DOG.

AT THE DEAD OF NIGHT NEATH THE HOLLOWED TREE,
HE MEETS WITH REVERENCE THE BOLD BEANSEADH.
THEY PLY THE OWNAVARRA FROM SOURCE TO TIDE.
WITH THE DREADED HOUND RUNNING BY THEIR SIDE.

IN DAYS GONE BY WITH VEAL AND MEDE.
HE FULFILLED HIS LIFE OF POWER AND GREED.
ON A WINTERS NIGHT LONG LONG AGO.
HE MURDERED ONE IN THE WINTERS SNOW.

TOOK POSSESSION THEN OF GOLD AND STOCK,
AND LEFT HIS BODY TO ROT IN THE BOIRA LOCK.
NE'ER THINKING ONE DAY HIS MAKER TO MEET. WITH A
DREADED SENTENCE LAID DOWN FOR THIS MURDEROUS FEAT.

*HE WAS SENTENCED TO GO BOTH TO AND FRO,
IN THE BOIRA BOGS IN FROST AND SNOW.
HUNDREDS OF YEARS SINCE THEN HAVE LAPSED IN TIME.
SINCE COMMITTED HE DID THIS BLOODED CRIME.*

*THIS PHANTOM HORSEMAN WAS KNOWN AS JUDD.
FOREVER MUST RIDE IN HIS CLOAKEN HOOD.
ON WINTER NIGHTS HE IS DESTINED TO GO.
UP THE BOIRA BOGS WHERE THE COLD WINDS BLOW.*

*IN THE ETERNAL WORLD HE KNOWS BOTH DREAD
AND FEAR.
FOR HIS DEVIOUS DEEDS HE MUST TRAVEL EACH
YEAR.*

HISTORY OF THE BOIRA BOG

This is a tale of the Boira Bog. It's set back in the 1690's. The Bog at that time covered hundreds of acres - made up of marshes, lakes, quagmires, rivers, a small portion of dry land and a fine oakwood around it's perimeter. It was partly inaccessible and it had but two entrances which were a well kept secret known only to the occupants of the Bog (who were known as the Bog people on the mainland). The people who frequented this area kept well to themselves especially in the daylight. Four families were residing in the Bog in that era. They were descendants of the notorious Cocker Judd. The Cocker wasn't very well liked on the mainland, but manys an exploit committed by the Cocker captured the imagination of the settled communities around the Bog. When the old Cocker snuffed it he was at the ripe old age of 98 years. It's said he was buried on a crannoig in the Bog, but as no one ever ventured that far it has not exactly been proven where his last place of burial is. Mind you it wasn't his last resting place for each winter he is destined to travel on horseback up and down where the Bog once stood. The Cocker was a son of a small farmer who lived in the townland of Douclone (The Dark Meadow), his dislike for manual labour was intense. However, he soon discovered a taste for other peoples valuables.

He started his highway operations along the old coach road from Wexford to Dublin. Firstly, he robbed the rich to help the poor - much like Jack Duggan of Castlemain, but as time went on and the authorities were close at his heels he started robbing the poorer part of society. Much of his wealth was stored on the Bog camouflaged with moss floating on a plank of timber and tied to a rush scull with straw roping. When he died his descendants swore they'd not take part in any illegal activities of murder and plunder. At the time of his death the Bog was completely under Judds jurisdiction. Anyway as the revenue of the cockers ran out they soon changed their minds and the families then rode together carrying on their gruesome trade of murder, rustling and robbery which happened always at the dead of night.

The authorities ventured into this wasteland on two occasions but what was their end is anyone's guess. As I said that it's pathways were only known to those who lived there. It's quagmires were bottomless and on their top

floated a layer of peat and vegetation. Once this layer was broken underfoot the chance of survival was minimal. The process of decomposing was a long one in these conditions as the humic acid of the peat preserved the bodies. But when it did start the large cannibal eating Pike that frequented it's waters would soon devour the largest body - be it of animal or human.

The trees that surrounded the Bog's perimeter were cut down by the English and used in the making of ships. They graced the stout hulls of the men of war when Britain ruled the waves. That was the golden age of the British crown. But thankfully it didn't last.

The descendants of the Cockers were more human and in turn they helped the poor and those that hard luck had fallen on. Still they earned for themselves the title of the Boira Robbers. Where their homesteads once stood it is now prime agricultural land of the highest quality especially for grass and cereal crops with it's rich loamy peat soil. But it was once home to thousands upon thousands of different species of wildfowl in winter. It had some of it's natural habitat intact up until the early 1960's. But gradually it was reclaimed by means of large rivers fed by tributaries. Evidence of it's fine oakwood surface now and again in the form of large chunks and butts of silvery grained dense dark wood known as Bog-Oak. It's quite visible that the trunk had been sawn off as there is a straight cut left on the stump.

The Cocker was destined to ride each winter for a month of nights starting on December the first, it being a festive season for everyone and he had to witness this as punishment. For his evil deeds a widow put a curse on him after he slew her husband and made off with their 2 gold half sovereigns, 4 sheep and a cow. It is said that once the curse was put on him that he was suffering until his death. She predicted that he'd never have rest in the spiritual world. She indeed had foreseeing powers and it was also an example to the rest of his descendants.

The names of the families involved in robbing and rustling in the aforementioned area were Whaley, Judd, Stacey and Bailey.

THE SCHOOL INKWELL

*COME LISTEN A WHILE TILL I RELATE NOW IN STYLE
IT'S OF THE SCHOOL DAYS OF OLD THAT I TELL.
HOW TRUE WERE MY FEARS I'M LYING AROUND NOW FOR YEARS
MISFORTUNE ON ME HAS BEFELL.*

*'T WAS IN A DESK OF PITCH PINE IN A FAR OLDER CLIME
I SERVED ALL OF THE STUDENTS QUITE WELL.
BUT FAR SEEING MEN THEY CAME ALONG THEN AND IT'S OF
BANISHMENT NOW THAT I TELL.*

*NOW I'M KEEPING IN MIND ALL THE STUDENTS WERE KIND
THEY USED ME FOR SIXTY ODD YEARS.
BUT THE AULD FOUNTAIN PEN IT CAME ALONG THEN AND
TRUTHFUL WAS ALL OF MY FEARS.*

*IT'S SAD FOR TO SAY I'VE SEEN IN MY DAY BAREFOOTED
THE CHILDREN TO SCHOOL THE DID COME.
THE GIRLS AND THE BOYS MADE PLENTY OF NOISE AS
AROUND THE SCHOOL YARD THE DID RUN.*

*AND MAY I RECALL MANY'S OF THEM GOT A FALL ON THAT
NEATLY OLD STONE COBBLED GROUND.
IT'S SAD FOR TO SAY THAT SOME ARE RESTING TODAY
IN THE CHURCHYARD BENEATH THE GREEN MOUND.*

*THE FINE OLD NIBBED PEN WITH ITS GRACEFUL LONG
STEM WAS USED FOR TO WRITE IN THOSE DAYS.
IT WROTE ESSAYS SO BOLD ABOUT PIRATES AND GOLD
AND THE HISTORY OF OLD BYGONE WAYS.*

*MADE FROM THE FINEST OF DELPH I NOW REST ON THE
SHELF A RELIC OF OLDEN SCHOOL DAYS.
AND THAT FINE OLD NIBBED PEN WITH ITS GRACEFUL
LONG STEM NE'ER AGAIN WILL RELATE ITS FINE LAYS.*

THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSES

The school that I went to in Kilmuckridge was erected in 1896. It was a fine stone building built of local rock from Dundrum Quarry. It's roofing timbers were yellow pine, the slates were the blue bangor quarry type. It was a fine building for it's time. It's a pity it was sold off and more of a shame that it was demolished. It would have made a fine museum to house the many fine objects of antiquity that abound in this area. Just imagine it's fine stone walls sandblasted and glistening in the sun. A modern type bungalow now stands on it's site.

The forerunner of all such schools in Ireland was of course the hedge schools. It's said that one of these schools existed in the townland of Ballyrahan in the parish of Litter about a ½ mile due North West from The Ford. The men who conducted these schools were usually poets. Some of them went to study for the priesthood. But before taking vows they decided it more beneficial to educate members of rural communities throughout Ireland. Teaching them the art of reading, writing, adding, subtracting and so on, but most of all they collected the stories and songs, and beautiful haunting airs from the people who attended these schools. So in this manner the literary heritage of our country was preserved. There was a price of £10 on the head of such a person that conducted these schools. The hedge poet or master was much like a modern day lecturer only his students had no pen or paper. Whatever he lectured was retained by his students. So in this manner no manuscripts were in circulation as proof of such an operation. At weddings, wakes and funerals the pupils of these schools could congregate legally. An oath was taken by these pupils as it was classed by the English authorities as treason to teach singing or recite any of our old Gaelic songs. The hedge schools gradually developed to become a clay walled cabin with a rough thatched roof, supported by hazel or willow rafters. There was usually a hole in the centre of the roof to emit the smoke. It was around these fires that the pupils sat on field stones on which was placed a mat of rushes. Each pupil was required to bring a brasnett of sticks or a faggot of bushes to keep the fire burning.

Such classes were conducted at night with some students keeping a close look out for the authorities. Some of these poets or hedge masters had a vast amount of knowledge and had a fine command of many foreign tongues, such as greek, french, latin and english. So we should be thankful to these poets and their pupils for keeping alive our literary heritage of our olden Gaelic feats and pastimes. In modern times they could be quiet easily shoved aside. First let us be Irish and secondly Europeans. Always strive to protect and guard our heritage as we are its custodians for coming generations.



*A stream in our once
un-polluted countryside*

Clare Kavanagh

THE OWENAITEANN

This river flows from near Ballinaskough Bridge at the Island and empties its waters into the Irish Sea at Tinnabearna Gap. Its name is Owenaiteann, translated it simply means the River of the Gorse or Furze Bush. (Near where it rises is said to be a regular haunt of the Beansidh mentioned in this book in another article). It flows eastward through Cremeor, Newtown, Ballinlow, Ballyadam, Ballymacsimon, Killencooley Mor and Tinnabearna. At Ballinlow it is joined by a small tributary called Owenbeg - which when translated means the little or small river. It crosses the road at Ballyadam where it was once harnessed to operate a corn mill. No trace of the mill or its race exists. Its next crossing on the Kilmuckridge to Blackwater road at a place known as Hatter's Hill. A mill was in operation there in the early part of the 1900's by Tom and Henry Dumphy. A few of its granite grinding wheels were lying there over grown with weeds and on inspection of the site in all probability they could still be found.

Its next crossing is at Killencooley Bridge. In the late 1800's a mass path ran from Tinnabearna beside the river. The stile is still in a good state of preservation and can be viewed near the above bridge. In that era it is said that 112 worshippers frequented the mass path from Tinnabearna alone.

It was at Hatters Bridge that the Pike Men of Kilmuckridge and the Ford assembled before their march to Oulart's Hill. They walked the river and its banks to its source. Then they walked a tributary of the Owenavarra river known as Owenea (The river of the deer). Then after about a mile or so distance they turned left and followed the Owenavarra to its source at the foot of Oulart's Hill. Then they ascended the hill on Saturday night and rested with the rest of the rebels from the surrounding districts in preparation for battle on Sunday the 27th day of May 1798. It's on this hill that the first decisive battle for freedom was won during the rebellion.

The North Cork Militia was routed on that day. They were a body of 100 highly skilled soldiers from Cork under a leader by the name of colonel Foot. Only three of the soldiers made good their escape - a Sergeant and the above mentioned Colonel. In the rebel ranks the losses were Tom Donovan of Boolavogue, the man who fired the first shot of the rebellion at the Harrow. A. Crowley from the townland of Kilpierce, John Dempsey from Monavouling, Sean Somers of Finchogue and The Weaver Mythen of Courtclough. A man by the name of Murphy from Kilpierce was killed in mistake by the rebel side on the same date. The "cowardly Hawthry White and his Cavalry" fled killing in their wake upwards of thirty defenceless old men, women and children. The rebels fought on that occasion with mostly implements of labour such as slash hooks, scythes and pitch forks. Many had no weaponry only the humble field stones that abounded on the hillside.

The arrival of Lord Kingsborough as the merciless head of the North Cork's took place in April of 1798. He brought with him the notorious pitch cap. The North Cork Militia were the scum of the orange population of Cork. They had plenty of practice in their murderous ways on their neighbours in Cork County. Needless to say they showed no compassion to the inhabitants of Wexford as previously mentioned. Their leader Kingsborough was the inventor of their most dreaded instrument of torture (the pitch cap).

This cap was made with sacking or paper into which was poured hot pitch. The victim's head was shaven and then this cap forced upon it. The hot pitch came in direct contact with the scalp. It was then allowed to cool and the Yeomen would tear it off bringing the entire scalp with it. These victims, if a stationary object was near, bashed their brains out against it or were put to death at nightfall by a neighbour with some farming implement.

In May of 1798 revolution erupted in Wexford County, at Boolavogue and Oulart. A Wexford republic was established by the forces of the army which consisted of between three to four thousand men and the navy which consisted of 4 oyster boats. The Republic was formed on the 30th May and lasted for a period of only three weeks. It fell on June the 21st, 1798 on Vinegar Hill. During that period the rebels although ill equipped fought twelve major battles. Lack of artillery finally proved their downfall.

The men from Kilmuckridge and Morriscastle were known as the Morriscastle Fowlers because of the fondness of shooting game with their long barrelled guns of the sea. The area which they inhabited was bountiful in bogland - Tinacree Bog, the Bog of Warren and of course the South and North Boira Bogs, not to mention the hundreds of marlholes that abounded in the area.

These Fowlers helped to rout Hawtry White and 3 Corps of Cavalry at Castle Ellis. They then marched to Meelnagh, then to Bolton's of the Island. When on Oulart Hill, Morgan Byrne gave encouragement to the rebels who were going to desert their ranks. He restored their confidence and needless to say they fought gallantly on the day.

Oulart Hill was the scene of the first success of the men of 1798 under their leader John Murphy of Boolavogue Oulart, (Abhal Chort-an Orchard) In the 17th Century the parish of Oulart was known as Meelnagh and Kilnamanagh in 1760 its name was changed to Kilbride and Oulart The Old Church of Kilnamanagh (the church of the Monks) was dismantled in 1735 but the cemetery marks the site and a holy well near by was dedicated to Saint Moling.

Kilcormac old church was in the townland of the Glebe it has long disappeared. A holy well is here dedicated to St. Cormac whose feast day falls on June the 21st. There was a castle at Clondaw built by the O'Morohoes, Oulart's Catholic church was burned on November, the 28th 1798.

The name Meelnagh means abounding in small round hills. Turlough Connellan was the first parish priest of Meelnagh from 1680 to 1710. He was ordained by Oliver Plunkett at Dundalk in 1671. The church has long disappeared. Not far off is a holy well in the townland of Killygowan. It's called the Tobenaclura Well. People visited it on the 22nd of June the feast day of Saint Cronan. In Castleellis cemetery lies Michael Murphy c.c of Ballycanew who was killed at the Battle of Arklow on June the 9th 1798. It was at this little thatched church of Castleellis (this church was dedicated to John the Baptist) that a cowardly scene took place in 1599. Hugh Allen the then protestant Bishop of Ferns - with some of his friends pulled the statues of St. John and the Virgin Mary down. Allen was dead within the hour, suffering from severe cramps to the stomach. He flung his body time and time again against the headstones of the adjoining cemetery.

THE STREAMLET

*BY CHESTNUT BUDS NEAR ISLANDS WOODS I'VE SEEN
THE SWIFTFUL SWALLOW.*

*I DART ALONE TO JOIN THE FOAM O'ER SHALLOWS
THROUGH THE HOLLOW.*

*I MURMUR ON AND SING MY SONG UNDER HAZEL AND
THE SALLY,
IT'S ON I GO AND GENTLY FLOW TO WHISPER DOWN
THE VALLEY.*

*BY OLDEN FARMS I'VE SEEN THEIR CHARMS, I'VE
WATERED THEIR FINE CATTLE,
AND SIXTY MEN WALKED UP MY GLEN TO JOIN IN
OULART'S BATTLE.*

*FROM DUNPHY'S MILL TO OULART'S HILL THEY MARCHED
BENEATH THE MOON.
WITH PIKE IN HAND THAT GALLANT BAND FOUGHT
SASSENACH DRAGOON.*

*THE SUPPRESSING REIGN OF THE BRITONS CHAIN WAS
BROKE UPON THAT HILL.
THEY WERE BOLDLY SLAIN AT THE NORTH CORK LANE,
IT'S MEMORIES WITH ME STILL.*

*BRAVE MEN WERE THEY THAT FOUGHT THAT DAY, THEY
NUMBERED JUST A FEW.
WITH PIKE IN HAND TO FREE OUR LAND THEY FOUGHT
AT BOLD CARNEW.*

MANY SLEEP TODAY IN UNMARKED CLAY WHERE THE
SLANEY WATERS FLOW.
OR ON OULART'S HILL SOME LIE THERE STILL WHERE
SOUTHERN BREEZES BLOW.

FOR COME WHAT MAY I'M ON MY WAY I QUIVER IN
AND OUT,
WHETHER DARK OR BRIGHT BY STILL OF NIGHT I GLIDE
BY HATTERS SPOUT.

THEN TO TINNABEARNA TOWN BY THE BURIAL GROUND
I REST IN THE POOL AWHILE.
IT'S HERE I MOAN WHEN I'M ALL ALONE THEN I CROSS
THE ROAD AT THE OLD MASS STILE.

NOW I'VE FLOWED FOR MILES SEEN BRIDGES AND STILES
IN THIS ANCIENT CELTIC LAND.
SO I LEAVE MY HOME AND ENTER THE FOAM ON
TINNABEARNA'S GOLDEN STRAND.

OTTERS

'T WAS DOWN BY BALLATEIGUE BY CHANCE
THAT I DID STRAY.
AND TO MY STAUNCH AMAZEMENT I SPIED TWO
OTTERS MAKING PLAY.

UP TO THAT OLD DUCK POND WITH GUN AND DOG
I STROLLED.
THEY SCAMPERED ALONG THE BANKS AND IN THE
WATER ROLLED.

THOSE DARK FURRED CUNNING FISHERS HAVE GRACED
OUR COUNTRYSIDE.
AS THEY DID IN DAYS OF YORE WITH ELEGANCE
AND PRIDE.

FOREVER IN OUR ISLE THEY SHOULD BE LEFT
TO ROAM.
OUT IN OUR WILDS OF OLD WHERE WINDS OF
WINTER MOAN.

FACTS OF THE OTTER

Otters are belonging to a group of animals called mustelids, in Latin it means "Weasel". Skunks and badgers are also members of this family. The fresh water otter is a native of Ireland. Once upon a time they frequented every river and their tributaries. In the early 1900's they were almost hunted to extinction for their fur, which was used in the making of gloves, hats, neck scarves and fur coats. The fur is a rich dark brown in colour. Nowadays, the otter is a protected species. There are quite a few pairs around but they are a rarity to spot in the wilds. They may roam an area of 25 miles radius. They have their nest in a river or lake bank. This hole leads to a den which is covered in leaves and dried grasses. The female gives birth to two or three of a litter usually in late winter or early spring. At first when the young venture from the nest they take a free ride on mothers back until they are able to swim. Before long they are swimming and diving and with the parents help catching an odd fish. They can stay submerged for four to five minutes underwater. They are also very playful in their natural habitat, but unfortunately very little of it is left. I have seen a pair with three young at Cahore, and I have spotted a male and female in the mating season at a marlhole in Balliteague (both of these areas are in north Wexford).

Otter's legs are not the same length. They are especially adapted for river bank scamping. The right hand side ones are shorter than the left ones. They will run up one side of the river bank and return back the other one. Otters are quite fierce when cornered. Once they get a grip of a limb they'll not let go until they feel a crack. It's only then that they are assured that their victim is easy prey. Special dogs were bred to hunt the otter (Otter Hound). When an otter hunt was in progress and the handlers of the dogs had to enter the water, they used boots with oversized legs which were filled around the legs with cinders, when the otter caught the boot and felt the crack he promptly let go the victim. This was the only safeguard for limb protection up until the early 1950's.

Packs of otter hounds were used for hunting back as far as the 13th century. The type of hound employed then was unlike the hounds that are used today. The old race of hound was far superior than the breed we know today. They were slower, more courageous and powerful than the modern breeds, which are made up of strains such as the Blood Hound, The Griffon Vendeen and the Welsh Hound. These hounds are faster than the old breed and stand roughly 24 to 26 inches in height, with a weight of between 50 to 66 pounds. Their colour varies from black, blue, red, grizzly and sometimes tan markings through their coats. Up to the 18th and 19th century, man used the skin of the otter to protect him from the elements of winter and even so they survived. It was only when a commercial trade for fur was set up that they were threatened with extinction, but gladly they are on the increase once again. All is needed now is more stringent anti-pollution laws so that the main staple diet of the otter can grace our rivers and streams once more. (The rainbow and brown trout).

*THE PAGAN PIE
(CHRISTMAS PUDDING)*

*WHEN WINTER WINDS DO SWEEP THE SHORE,
THEN NEPTUNE'S VOICE IS SURE TO ROAR.*

*THE GOOD WILL SEASON IT EXPANDS.
TO SPREAD ITS VEIL O'ER MANY LANDS.*

*OUR DEAR ONES HOMEWARD THEY COME TRUDDING.
TO TASTE THE CELTIC CHRISTMAS PUDDING.*

*FOR A THOUSAND YEARS THIS CUSTOM SPANNED.
STIRRED STILL BY EACH RESIDING HAND.*

*THIS PAGAN PIE LONG LIFE IT LENDS.
AND BRINGS TOGETHER DISTANT FRIENDS.*

*WHO'VE TRAVELLED O'ER THE OCEAN'S SANDS.
TO MAKE THEIR HOMES IN FAIRER LANDS.*

*TO WORK ALL DAY THE WEARY HOD.
AND RETURN EACH YEAR TO THE EMERALD SOD.*

**FACTS OF THE PAGAN PIE
(CHRISTMAS PUDDING)**

The Christmas pudding as we know it today, has had many changes since it's formation, over one thousand years ago. In those days it was known as (Frumentum) - which is the latin for corn. It's ingredients in that era were corn and milk with curative spices added to give it flavour. They were all then boiled in a cauldron or large vessel of some kind. It was of Celtic origin. The Dogda was the harvest god of the Celtic race and it was his eternal labour to stir the large vessel that the Celts put the fruits of their pastures in.

When the Celts awoke in the morning after feasting all night and the frigasey in the cauldron was moving, they were then full sure that the Dogda was active, and in their midst, and he insured that there would be a plenty in the coming year.

To honour him in his laborious works, the Celtic race imitated him, or one could say they gave him many helping hands. Everyone of the tribe stirred the frigasey before feasting on it. This was classed as a way of thanking the Dogda for a bountiful year gone by, and hope for a plentiful one ahead.

As time went on, the Celtic race experimented with different fruits, herbs and roots. Damsons and plums were added in abundance, Meat and milk were also in it's ingredients towards the close of the seventeenth century. Meat was taken from the recipe and more plums were added to supplement it. We then arrived with its name which hasn't changed since then "Plum Pudding".

In the district of Kilmuckridge and it's surrounding parishes, puddings were usually boiled in a sacking or cloth. They were spherical in shape, but nowadays they are boiled in a pot and are much the shape of a sand castle. The same ritual applies to the modern pudding as to it's predecessor. When boiled it is dowsed in poteen, whiskey or brandy, and is set alight and brought around the kitchen table three times - once for health, once for

wealth and once for prosperity. May I add the person who fires the pudding should get a large helping of whatever liquor was used in the torching process - before and after as it was classed as bad luck if not.

The torching of the pudding goes back to the time when fire was classed as a symbol of immortality. When they were lit around enclosures to ensure that the wild animals did not attack the settlement, or break into it's stockade, which housed the tribes' treasured possessions - such as goats and cows, which were used in the survival of the settlement.

When the pudding is stirred in our locality, everyone in the household participates in it. It's stirred to follow the path of the rising sun i.e. from east to west, as the harvest would not be bountiful unless it got the sun in June and July to put flour in the grains of golden corn. A sprig of holly with it's berries is placed on top of the pudding nowadays, but in days gone by many different types of trees and shrub were used - such as ivy, rowan, elderberry and of course the sceagh thorn, which has mystical powers over any of the above mentioned. With the first mouthful of pudding, it is possible to make one wish for the coming year - as the Dogda is now in it's midst, and if one could be so lucky as to find a hidden charm in his or her mouthful (which were added by the housewife in the stages of it's making) one's fortune could be in hand. A coin signifies a plentiful cash flow, rings signifies marriage, a brooch signifies that a new chieftain might be inaugurated in the coming year, with the possible death of the reigning one.

So when we're going to make the pudding next Christmas, let us take into consideration the rituals we practice, had at one time a specific meaning in them. Although we're not familiar with their meanings, we have practised them, since our ancestors worshipped the elements. Only for the sun no life would be possible on earth. Their sun god was called Crom and he symbolised for them the ultimate life and survival.

Frigasey and ancient dish made of whatever natural ingredients were cultivated in the area where the tribe or tribes existed.

BROWN BESS

*MANY'S A BRAVE OLD FENIAN PLOT,
WAS MADE WHILST STIRRING THE SKILLET POT.
'T WAS INSIDE THE BEAM BROWN BESSIE LIED,
FOR MANY'S A TAN SHE KILLED WITH PRIDE.
AND BLACK WAS SHE WITH ASH AND SOOT,
FROM MUZZLE TOP TO SHOULDER BUTT.*

*IN THE MOUNTAINS HIGH ONE MOONLESS NIGHT,
WITH HER HOST SHE JOINED IN A FEARLESS FIGHT.
AND SHOT THAT NIGHT WERE THE BLACK AND TANS,
THEY WERE AMBUSHED THERE IN THEIR ARMoured VANS.
THEY SUFFERED THE SAME MERCILESS FAITH,
AS THE YEOMEN BACK IN '98.*

*'T WAS INSIDE THE BEAM SHE FOR YEARS DID HIDE,
WHILST HER HEAVENLY HOST LOOKED ON IN PRIDE.
IN A CASTLE HIGH WHERE THE NIGHT WIND MOANS,
IN THE ISLAND OF THE STANDING STONES.
SHE PROUDLY STANDS FOR ALL TO SEE,
WITH THE LONG BARRELLED GUNS OF THE RESTLESS SEA.*

(ENNISCORTHY) INISCORTHE - THE ISLAND OF THE STANDING STONES.

FOLKLORE OF ERIN

The kitchen with its open hearth fire was the principal room in the old thatched dwellings of Erin. The fire was seldom quenched as the old folk said that the spirit or soul was after leaving the house on such an occasion.

The fire was kept alight by a process known as smoorring when the last occupant was going to bed a he or she would light up the turf or coal with the aid of a bellows. When it was glowing it was then placed under a layer of hot ashes and by this means it was easy to make a good fire the next morning with little effort. It was also said in the folklore of Kilmuckridge that the fairies would descend the chimney when everyone was sound asleep in bed and get a free heat especially, in winter.

Above these fires huge canopies and chimneys were constructed. They were built with the aid of a stout beam of oak. In the maritime counties they were constructed of mast poles of shipwrecks. On these beams the canopies were built. They were from 10 to 12 feet in length and up to 6 feet in width. There were slight curvatures built into the chimney on construction to create a draught. The crane hung over the fire and on it hung the utensils that were needed for survival. It was up the chimney in those days hung the side of bacon. It would be flavoured by the sweet smoke of the turf or black sallies. The furze was said to create a sour smoke and therefore it was not used in the smoking process.

There's one instance I'll relate to the reader, it concerned a thatcher who was hired to thatch a house in the now townland of Ballintubrid (the townland of the well) in Blackwater parish. The deal consisted of 3 shillings a day with the grub supplied. Eggs were served for breakfast, dinner and supper. The woman of the house was an expert with eggs. All but a few of the chickens of this household were killed in the egg stages and may I add she travelled to every corner of the Emerald Isle to acquire the best breed of laying strain

of hens. In her opinion the Rhode-Island-Red was supreme. She even thought of going to Norway at one stage in her life on hearing about a new strain of laying hen. Well now to make the long story short, this woman in question had received a wireless from a son in England and they were few and far between in those days. There would be a good auld programme or two on the wireless. The favourite one I suppose was The Kennedys of Castleross. As it came on the air the thatcher was flashing the chimney and didn't he stick his ear to the top of the chimney and behold what did he spy three quarter ways down the chimney only a side of bacon. He thatched on and after almost 11 weeks he was still on the eggs and may I add he was omitting a fowl air continuously from the hind quarters. At the end of the 12th week the thatching complete he went into the kitchen to bade the woman of the house good luck. He then went over to the fireplace and lifted up the smoke board, I'll bade you good luck also my friend he said to the bacon, but isn't it a sad thing that looking at you for almost 2 months we never got acquainted.

When brown bess was mentioned in rebel homes of the troubled era, (The War of Independence 1919 - 1921) the people involved were talking about the weaponry they had or could obtain to fight the Black and Tans, (who were the scum of the prisons in England). They were given their freedom by the British authorities if they would come to Ireland and commit atrocious activities through its length and breadth.

The beam that the canopy and the chimney stack rested on was used to hang the fowling pieces on so as they would be aired. Powder shot and caps were hidden in a hole in the beam. A stone or flag was placed at the entrance to the hole.

THE BREHON FRUIT

WITH A POLLARD SACK UPON ME BACK, IN AUTUMN I
I WENT CLIMBING.
ON A CLEAR NIGHT WHEN THE MOON WAS BRIGHT AND THE
STARS WERE BRIGHTLY SHINING.

IN AN APPLE TREE 'T WAS THE PLACE TO BE AT NIGHT
OR MORNING EARLY.
'T WAS A SENSE OF PRIDE WHEN THE BARNOWL CRIED TO
ALERT THE COBBLER FAIRY.

WITH HIS APPLES GONE FOR TART AND BON AS HE STOOD
IN THE MORNING AIR.
THE SCOUNDRELS GONE WITH THE SWEETEST ONE HE
CURSED IN WILD DESPAIR.

HOW THEY STOOPED SO LOW, "I JUST DON'T KNOW" WITH
TEMPER HE WENT PRANCING.
THEY WERE TO BE PICKED THAT DAY AND STORED IN THE
HAY AND KEPT FOR HARVEST DANCING.

WE ATE OUR FILL BY THE RIPPLING RILL IN THE MIDST
OF SOME SHADY BOWERS.
IT WOULD ONLY BE FAIR THAT EACH GOT HIS SHARE OF
THE BOUNTY THAT WAS OURS.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS OF THE HORSE DRAWN DRAYS AND
THE IRONCLAD COMMON CART.
ON THE OLD ROADWAYS IN THOSE BYGONE DAYS PAINTED
GAILY, GOOD LOOKING AND SMART.

THE ORCHARDS TOO ARE NOW BUT A FEW IN ABUNDANCE
THEY ONCE DID ABOUND.
IT'S SAD TO SAY THAT THEY'RE LEVELLED TODAY AND
SCARCELY ONE'S TO BE FOUND.

SO IT'S PLAIN TO BE SEEN IN THOSE ORCHARDS I'VE BEEN
ACQUIRING THE RIPE BREHON FRUIT.
WITH ME AULD POLLARD SACK LYING ASTRIDE OF ME BACK
IN THE DAYS OF ME CARE FREE YOUTH.

USES OF THE APPLE TREE AND IT'S FRUIT

All youngsters years ago (up to the mid 1970's) participated in the art of obtaining apples from various orchards without the prior consent of the owner. It was classed as a bad omen to ask for an apple. It would taste much better if obtained by self consent. When the apples were ready for gathering there was great vigilance on the part of the owner. They were a valuable source of food for domestic use and on the farm. Pigs were fed them when there was a bountiful year. Hens and the majority of other farmyard fowl also ate them. On the domestic side they were made into cider, wine snaps (a form of whisky), apple tarts, cakes, jams and jellies and many other refinements too numerous to mention that graced the kitchen tables of that period.

The apple tree held a very reverend spot in ancient Ireland. It was considered one of the seven chieftain trees in the ancient brehon laws. It was planted with a yew tree beside it on manys a chieftain or kings grave in the middle ages. When the apple and yew trees came to maturity they were cut down seasoned and made into tablets. The successors of the deceased king or chieftain summoned the clan bard to write a lament about his or her predecessor upon these reverent tablets.

The apple tree grows fast and it should be pruned back quite often. It's a dense wood and is suitable for carving and furniture making (cherry is equally as good), gunstocks. It also made good sweet pipes and the old wooden hair pins. Wood turners used it in the making of cradles and reaping hook handles. There was a good supply of apple wood in the mid 1900's as old trees were cut down and new ones replaced them. There was an orchard at nearly every household. The main species of apple tree that grew in them were the brambly, beauty of bath, lady-finger, James Greives, coxs orange pippin, russet and last but by no means least the crab apple.



*A thatched dwelling of the
early and mid 20th century*

MY OLD THATCHED HOME

BLOW, BLOW YOU MARCH WINDS BLOW, BLOW.
BLOW O'ER MY OLD THATCHED HOME IN BALLINLOW.
WHERE IN MY CHILDHOOD I RAN FREE,
AND CARVED MY NAME IN THE CHESTNUT TREE.

WITH OUR NOBLE STEEDS IN THE MONTH OF MAY,
WE TURNED THE BRIGHT RED FERTILE CLAY.
THE RASPING SOUND OF THE OLD HORSE PLOUGH,
T'IS SELDOM YOU WOULD HEAR IT NOW.

IT'S TO THE GROVE I OFT TIMES RAN,
TO SEE THE FLOWERS OF DARK AND PALE.
AND APPEARING THROUGH THE FERNS,
THE HANDSOME LILIES OF THE VALE.

THE COWSLIP AND DANDELION WITH THE FLOWER
OF PUREST GOLD.
IT'S OFT I STOOD IN THE MORNING AIR TO SEE
THE PANSIES FLOWER UNFOLD.

IT WAS THERE I HEARD MY FIRST CUCKOO,
BY THE SHALLOW RIPPLING RILL.
WHERE OFT I DAMMED THE RIVER TO CATCH THE EEL,
AND SILVER ARMoured BRILL.

OF MY CHILDHOOD HOME I'VE NO REGRET, IT'S OLD THATCHED HOUSE,
ITS LIVING CHARMS I JUST CANNOT FORGET.
I'LL GUARD THEM ALWAYS WITHIN MY HEART,
AND FROM IT THEY WILL NEVER PART.

I'LL ALWAYS GLADLY THINK OF THEE
WHERE I CARVED MY NAME IN THE CHESTNUT TREE.

THE SMALL HOLDING AND IT'S THATCHED CABIN

My homestead in Ballinlow was a clay walled thatched house. It was a two storey. The ground floor consisted of a bedroom, a dairy, a spacious kitchen with a dresser and a large open fire, also a parlour with a cast iron fireplace. The first floor had two bedrooms - one had a stairway from the dairy and the other had a stairway from the parlour. The upstairs rooms were known as the dairy loft and the parlour loft. There was a window in each gable which showed adequate light to each of the upstairs rooms. In the entrance there was a scullery (a wall which sheltered the kitchen when the front door was open). In this wall there was a spyhole. It was triangular in shape, it's sides measuring not more than 10". In it there was inserted in the clay a pane of glass and whenever anyone entered through the door it was quite easy to spy who was there. The windows and the outside door were constructed of pitch pine, probably from a ship wreck. As the ocean going vessels of that period were built of timber and no better a quality could be obtained. They had oak ribs and pine planking. The seats of Ballygarrett chapel are made from ship wreck timber from the Irrawaddy.

Many lentles in stone buildings especially in maritime areas are made from the stout beams of the fine sailing ships which were grounded on the notorious Blackwater Bank which is situated about 7 nautical miles off Blackwater Head and runs north to Arklow. The Pamona was the last big disaster which happened on the bank with the loss of all souls.

The rafters were made of alder, willow, hazel, or ash and in one case I have seen black and white thorn used. Across the rafters were skivers or light branches onto which a bundle of straw was tied with a wound straw or hay branches. This preparation was a foundation for the thatch. The thatching rope. This preparation was usually done with oaten straw as it was around the Kilmuckridge area was usually done with oaten straw as it was cut with the binder. When the straw and grain was just ripe it would then be

stucked, left to ripen a few days, then it was stacked. After a month or so it was removed to the haggard and made into one or two large haggard stacks. After a period it was then threshed, put into a rick, then used for bedding live stock, fodder and thatching.

The outside of the clay walls and in some cases the insides were white washed with burnt lime mixed in water. It was first wet and then left in a bucket for a few days before application as it would bond better. It gave a dazzling white finish after a few days drying. The partitions in the inside of the house were hessian bags fixed to timber uprights and white washed they were quite sound proof after a few applications. The inside doors were of ledged braced and sheeted design with a latch fitted about 4'6" from the ground. Hinges were usually made of a strip of stiff raw-hide. All the timber work inside was usually left raw and was scrubbed every now and again.

A crane hung over the open fire and it's there all the cooking was done. Bacon was usually left up the chimney to be smoked after curing and it had quite a distinct flavour. That's if you were lucky to get acquainted with a piece.

The builders of these simple, but well designed cabins were very fine craftsmen. No house is as snug as a thatched one, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They could build a house in a very short period with the pullings left over from the straw rick chopped up and mixed in the clay. They could build a wall 2' in height and the clay wouldn't slip as it had the particles of straw to hold it together. A lift a day for 4 days and you had a wall 8' in height. These houses were a beautiful construction. When firstly constructed with their white walls, pitch pine door and windows and to top it all the golden roof of oaten thatch. When set in a farmyard and their out offices thatched which on our holding consisted of a stable, a barn, a hen house and a cow byre, and there was also a few pigs kept to eat pratie skins and cabbage leaves mixed and boiled with a few turnips and a sparing helping of pig meal. The animal kingdom of the place was: 2 horses, 4 cows, 8 sheep, 2 pigs, hens, ducks, turkeys and not forgetting the ass - who was the mode of transport for shopping and the creamery.

The land was of small acreage which comprised two orchards. The name of the fields were the high field, the long field, the half acre, the well field, the back of the house field, Mary's field and the bog field. The clover meadows which consisted of two small paddocks - Mary's park field and Willie's rest. It was said that Willie the Wisp rested in that field. Willie was a character of ancient Folklore in the area. The farm implements on the farm in that period (the 60's) was a horse plough made by Howard, a grubber or scuffold, a springtooth harrow, a roller, a spike or flat harrow, a tumbler hay rake, a trip cart, an asses cart, a hay bogey, a turnip sower, a spade, a shovel, forks and sprongs. There was always a river or marlhole on the farm as they were the main source of drinking water for the farm animals and washing in the household. But, alas this simple way of life is extinct in this area of Kilmuckridge. The small fields are gone, the rivers highly polluted, the marlholes are all but a few. Modern farming methods are responsible in most cases for the destruction of our land and wild life. But with a little re-think on the peoples' side we could have it all back again.

The non-pollution of our waterways would be a big step forward and instead of rearing birds in captivity leave some habitat for them in the countryside. They would gladly propagate and breed to capacity in such habitat and then maybe all of us could try to live with nature again.

THE THATCHED DORMER

'T WAS ONCE A FARMLETS THATCHED DOMAIN.
THAT SHELTERED ALL FROM WIND AND RAIN.

IT'S FIRE QUENCHED OUT, IT SOON DECAYED.
THEN IN ABUNDANCE NATURE'S CREATURES STAYED.

THE HY-MACS HUM THAT DREADED SOUND.
HAS REDUCED ITS WALLS TO USELESS GROUND.

IN STILLNESS NOW IT WILL REMAIN.
TO SONGSTERS OF THE TRANQUIL STRAIN.

THE BARN OWL HERE IN SPLENDOUR SQUEALS.
AS MOONBEAMS THROUGH ITS SPY HOLE STEALS.

OF NATURES PRESENCE THERE IS NO LACK.
WITH JACKDAWS IN IT'S CHIMNEY STACK.

THE STREAMLET BY THE GABLE FLOWS.
AND O'ER IT'S DOOR THE SUMMER ROSE.

IT CLIMBERS UP FROM THE COBBLED STONES.
ALL O'ER THE GARDEN WALL IT ROAMS.

PLANTED BY A HUMAN HAND.
THAT RESTS NOW IN A FAIRER LAND.

THIS CABIN NOW'S A DERELICT RUIN.
WITH NO ONE LEFT THE ROSE TO PRUNE.

IT'S CLAYED WALLS, IT'S OATEN HOOD.
NOW MINGLES WITH SURROUNDING MUD.

ALAS ALL'S GONE IT'S NOW FLAT LAND.
WHERE ONCE THE SMALL HOLDER TOOK COMMAND.

NOW IT YIELDS IN FULL TO MAPLES WOOD
(SYCAMORE, IRISH MAPLE).
WHERE ONCE THIS CLAY WALLED CABIN STOOD.

WHERE IN SPLENDOUR ONCE AN EYE DID SEE.
CHILDREN ON A MOTHERS KNEE.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF A THATCHED HOUSE

Not many fine examples of clay walled architecture remain intact through Ireland today. A different design of clay cabin graced every parish in days gone by. Very few had dormers in their upper storey. Only one that I knew of which was the homestead of the Hughes family of Ballinlow. There was also a cobbled stone yard in front of this house. It's interior consisted of 3 bedrooms upstairs, 2 downstairs, the ground floor had a spacious kitchen, a parlour and a dairy. It's stairway had 3 winders, three quarter ways up, it's handrails, newels and bannisters were of pitch pine. It's windows were small in size - 3 feet in width and 3 feet 6 inches in height. They were of sliding sash design (up and down windows). In it's entrance there was a full door and a half door. Adequate light would grace the kitchen when it's full door was open, and it's half one shut. A rose was planted at either side of it's front porch (these were known as the last roses of summer). One was white the other red. They climbed up to the eve of the thatch where they were entwined and trained to run along under it. It's open fire had all the necessary utensils around it, a kettle, a pan, bake pan and skillet pots of different sizes. A tea drawer was on it's hob over the centre of the fire, also a crane hung - it could be swivelled out on to the floor and could be heightened or lowered by means of a shaft fitting into different holes on the hanging bar.

When this house was freshly thatched and got a rub of white wash it's doors and windows were painted bottle green - it was a splendid sight and very homely looking. It is now levelled to the ground, it's orchards cut down, nothing remains of it's out offices or it's rick stand. It was completely demolished in 1993. I saw it in 1965 when it was freshly thatched by a local thatcher, Peter Hamilton of Ballinamona (the townland of the turf). It was in complete contrast with it's surroundings.

John Hughes from the above mentioned homestead was in a cot that sailed from Morristcastle to the Blackwater Bank - which is a least 4 to 5 nautical miles from Morristcastle Beach. He swam the full distance from the Bank back to Morristcastle Strand on a Sunday afternoon. This family were struggling for survival and the majority who died from TB were buried in the old cemetery at Kilmuckridge. Pat, Owen (and their mother Mary) are interred in the cemetery at the Ford, Kilmuckridge.

THE MOTH

*LEAVE OPEN DOOR AND WINDOW VENT,
FOR MOTHS MY STUDY TO FREQUENT.*

*IT'S NICE TO SEE SOME COLOUR THERE,
BEFORE STROLLING IN THE MORNING AIR.*

*THEIR COLOURS BRIGHT AS LUSTFUL SPRING,
THEY CLING AND ADORN JUST EVERYTHING.*

*WITH DELICATE ART THEY DO UNFOLD,
AND GLISTEN JUST LIKE PIRATES GOLD.*

*THEY COME FROM THE FAR OFF DARK WELSH COAST,
OUR EMERALD ISLE IT IS THEIR HOST.*

*THEY CAN SEE A SHINING CLEAR AND BRIGHT,
THE BEACON OF OUR TUSKAR LIGHT.*

*WITH COLOURS OF THE BURNING FLAME,
THEY WILL WITH YOU FOR DAYS REMAIN.*

*THEY'LL REST UP FOR A DAY OR SO,
AND TO THE NEXT BRIGHT LIGHT THEY'LL GO.*

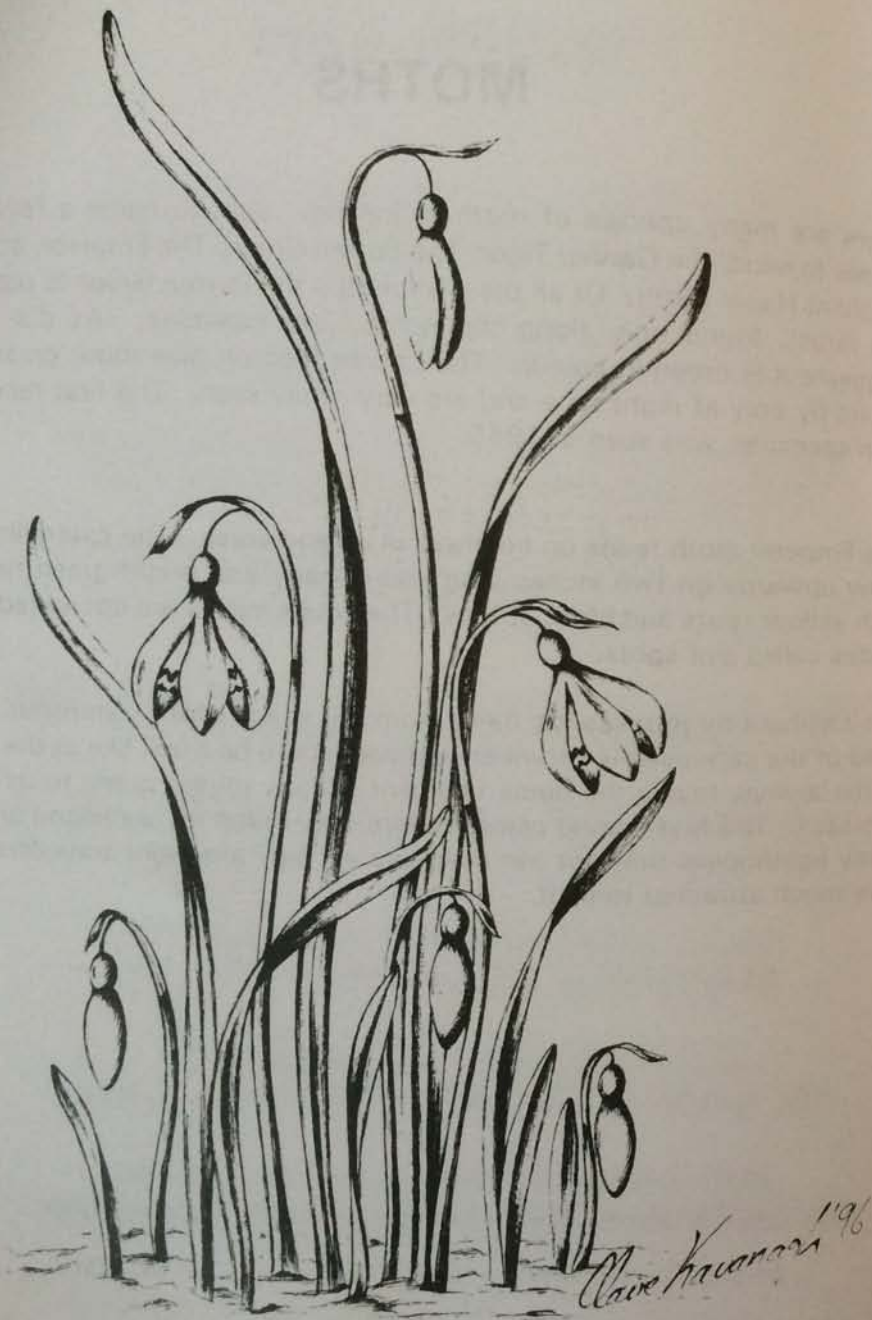
*SO BE GENTLE TO THIS CREATURE FAIR,
WHICH TAKES TO FLIGHT IN THE COOL NIGHT AIR.*

MOTHS

There are many species of moth in Ireland. Just to name a few that comes to mind, the Garden Tiger, The Burren Green, The Emperor, and the Elephant Hawk Moth. Of all the Irish moths the Burren Green is possibly the rarest, found only along the north Clare coastline. As it's name suggests it is green in colour. The Larvae feed on blue moor grass, the adults fly only at night time and are very rarely seen. The first recorded Irish specimen was seen in 1949.

The Emperor moth feeds on heathers in upland areas. The caterpillar can grow upwards on two inches long and is hairy and bright green flecked with yellow spots and black stripes. The adults wings are decorated with circles called eye spots.

The Elephant moth takes it's name from the shape of the caterpillar. The head of the caterpillar is shrunken and appears to be trunk like at the front of the animal, hence the name Elephant. Many moths come to us from overseas. The first resting places before they come on our island are the many lighthouses that dot our coastline as they are night travellers and very much attracted to light.



Snowdrops

SNOWDROPS

GREEN SHOOTS BEGAN THEIR UPWARD THRUST,
THEY SWAYED BOTH TO AND FRO.
SOON WOULD SEND FORTH A FLOWER AS WHITE
AS PUREST SNOW.

THEY HAVE SURVIVED THE HARSH NORTH WINDS
THAT BEAT IN FROM THE SHORE.
AND GROWN BESIDE THAT OLD CLAY WALL FOR
A CENTURY OR MORE.

'T WAS DARBY BRENNAN THAT PLANTED THEM BESIDE
THE GABLE WALL.
IF A STORY THEY COULD TELL WHICH ONE WOULD
THEY RECALL.

WOULD IT BE OF FAMINE TIMES OR ABOUT THE OLD
MASS PATH.
OR WOULD IT BE OF MYLES O'BRIEN OR HIS
SEAFARING BROTHER MATT.

'TWOULD, MAYBE, BE OF OLD TOM KING AND OF HIS
EXPLOITS FAR AND NEAR.
WHO BOARDED WITH HIS FISHERMEN THE ABANDONED
"VIVANDEER".

*MODERNISATION HAS CREPT IN AT TINNABEARNA'S
SHELTERED STRAND.
AND THE SNOWDROPS THAT SURVIVED YOU'D COUNT
THEM ON ONE HAND.*

*EACH YEAR THIS FLOWER DID HEAR THE SOARING
SKYLARK SING.
AND TO THE PEOPLE OF THAT TOWNLAND, 'T WAS THE
FIRST SIGN OF THE SPRING.*

SNOWDROPS AND FOLKLORE OF TINNABEARNA

The snowdrop with its flowers of purest white and their bottle green centres (*Galanthus Cavacasicus*), is one of the first bulbs to flower in late winter and early spring, January and February. It has many cousins which vary in height and floral design. To the older people of Erin, they were the first sign that spring was on it's way and that the weary days of winter would soon be past. Although, winter at Tinnabearna (the house of the gap) wasn't an idle one as there was upwards on 20 cots fishing off the beach for herring. These crafts were powered by oars and sail. The long line men oared the cots to and from the herring grounds. Their payment was that they could fish with the long line whilst the drift netting was in operation for the herrings.

A long line consisted of a hemp rope about a quarter of an inch in diameter. It could range from 100 yards to upwards on half a mile in length. Hooks were tied onto it with a light line at intervals of about 3 to 4 feet. They were baited with pieces of mackerel or herring. They were in a container on board the cots and were expertly shot by these longliners. The main species of fish caught by them was cod, hake, ling, ray, rockbreem and conger. There were occasions when the owners of the cots got no herring and occasions when the long liners caught nothing. On such occasions one would divide with the other, but on a few occasions this didn't happen and a fierce row would break out when the vessels hit the shore. The owners of the cots always had the upper hand as if a long liner was run off the cot his place would be easily filled. Many of these long liners were men from as far inland as Scarawalsh and Monageer.

Tom King who lived at Tinnabearna Gap not more that 50 yards west up the road was one of a group of fishermen who boarded the "Vivandeer" (a cricumnavigator) which ran aground on the notorious Blackwater Bank. The crew took to the lifeboat and left her completely abandoned on a flood tide. She floated off the bank in a northerly direction. King and a party of 15 men took to sea in a fishing cot. Twelve of them boarded her north of Tinnabearna and sailed her back to Wexford Harbour. She was brought into port by a tug. The salvage money when collected was divided equally sixteen ways. It's believed it was about £8 per man, quite a considerable amount of money in those days. (This grounding took place in 1885).

James King - a native of Tinnabearna and a distant relative of Tom's was on board the CCS Alabama (a confederate raiding ship), which was engaged in a fierce sea battle with USS Kearsage (a union warship) off the French port of Cherbourg on June the 19th 1864. He was of a long line of seafarers. He went to Liverpool and 'twas in this port that he boarded the Alabama. He was killed in action at the battle and is interred in Cherbourg's city cemetery.



A character of our ancient folklore

A TALE OF THE PAST

*IN OLD NED'S WALLS WHERE THE OWL OFT CALLS TO
HIS MATE IN THE IVIED BUSH.
WHEN A WALKING HOME AND YOU'RE ALL ALONE
YOU'LL SMARTLY STEP ON IN A RUSH.*

*THE OLD MEN THAT I KNEW BUT NUMBERED A FEW
TOLD THIS TALE SO HAUNTING AND SHRILL,
ON A DARKENED NIGHT WITH FEAR AND FRIGHT
I'D TAKE TO THE FIELDS AT OLD NED'S HILL.*

*WITH HIS CLOVEN FEET IN FROST AND SLEET AND
HIS HEAD BENT DOWN HE'D GO.
ONE FREEZING NIGHT WHEN THE STARS WERE BRIGHT,
HE WAS TRACKED NEXT MORN IN THE SNOW.*

*YOU CAN REST YOUR FEARS HE'S NOT BEEN SEEN FOR
YEARS AND NE'RE AGAIN WILL HE ROAM.
IN FROST OR SLEET WITH HIS CLOVEN FEET IN THE
DARKENED HOURS OF THE MORN.*

FOLKLORE OF BALLINLOW

The character who frequented a small length of Ballinlow Lane from where Ned Murphy lived to where Hughes shop stood. A sappers stone stands at the wall to this day where the shop stood. It is inscribed with a bench mark, it means so many feet above sea level. The men who made these symbols did so in prominent places and they surveyed Ireland from coast to coast. The English governments sent them over here for training during the occupation of our country. Neds abode was just at the bottom of the first hill travelling southward from the lane entrance. I remember the ruins of it's dwelling and out offices and it's well laid out orchard. It's there this character was supposed to hang out and on the approach to my home on the other side of the lane a character of equal proportion also hung out at Ballinlow Bridge, so as you could not dilly dally, at these places especially at night fall.

Back in the early 17 and 18 hundreds and as late as the 1970's the way of getting a child to obey their parents was to tell them haunting stories about different characters that would spring to life once the daylight left the sky. This would insure that a child of up to 12 or 13, if on an errand or going to a friend's house to play for an evening, would be home before the dusk fell. If you were disobedient or had done some bad deed you would have to repent or if not all types of characters would haunt or annoy you for the rest of both your living and eternal life.

Willie the Wisp was supposed to be a fierce character. The Hag, Bo Humpus, Old Nick himself with the cloven feet, The Vetch, The Beanseadh, or Fairy Woman - now she was dangerous. As if she was around the place someone was going to pass on to the other side in the hours of darkness. All these fairy characters have disappeared from the scene with the introduction of modern day living. I hope this will give the reader some insight into days that are gone - never to return. And the beautiful haunts that are also gone in our once "Rural Ireland".

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

THERE STOOD THE RICKS OF HAY AND STRAW WITH WHITE
FROST ON THEIR GABLE,
THANKS TO OUR SAVIOUR'S BIRTH UPON THIS HOLD DAY
FINE FOOD WILL GRACE OUR TABLE.

THANKS TO HIM THAT WE'LL EAT THE FOOD THAT'S BORN
WITHIN THE CLAY,
AND OF HIS BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM HE GAVE US
CHRISTMAS DAY.

LETS THINK OF THOSE AT CHRISTMAS TIME WHO ARE
HUNGRY AND ALONE,
AND OF OUR DEAR ONES PASSED AWAY THAT LIE BENEATH
THE GRANITE STONE.

FOR NE'ER AGAIN UPON THIS EARTHLY SOD THEY'LL
NEVER EVER ROAM,
A PRESENT PRAYER PLEASE SAY FOR THEM FOR NOW
HEAVEN IS THEIR HOME.

THEY'RE GONE TO FAIRER PASTURES LEAVING ALL
OF US BEHIND.
BUT UPON THIS HOLY FEAST OF CHRISTMAS LETS
KEEP THEM ALL IN MIND.

IT'S NOW THE TIME FOR HYMNS AND CAROLS AND
JOYFUL CHRISTMAS MAIL,
AND TELL TO ALL THE CHILDREN THAT HAPPY
CHRISTMAS TALE.

OF THAT EVERLASTING SANTA CLAUSE TRAVELLING
FROM THE NORTHERN BREEZE,
AND HOW HE DOES HIS VERY BEST ALL CHILDREN
FOR TO PLEASE.

ON HIS ANNUAL ARRIVAL HE'LL COME TO EACH AND
EVERY CHILD THERE'S NO NEED FOR TO FEAR,
HE'LL BRING DOLLS AND GUNS AND KETTLE DRUMS AND
LOTS OF CHRISTMAS CHEER.

ALL CHILDREN ON THIS HOLY NIGHT MUST BE FAST
ASLEEP NOT MAKING ANY NOISE OR SOUND,
FOR SANTA WITH HIS RED NOSE REINDEERS IS ON HIS
CHRISTMAS ROUNDS.

SO IT WAS GREAT FOR ALL MANKIND ON THE NIGHT
THAT HE WAS BORN,
A SAVIOUR TO ONE AND ALL AND TO THE CHILDREN
HE GAVE THEM CHRISTMAS MORN.



Emigrant Ship

EXILED FOR EXISTING

WE WERE FORCED TO GO IN THOUSANDS TO AUSTRALIA
AND FAR OFF VAN DEMONS LAND.
SHIPPED OUT FROM OUR NATIVE SHORE BY THE CRUEL
TYRANTS HAND.

IN THE SPRING OF 1791 WE WERE FORCED TO GO NO
LONGER COULD WE STAY,
THE NEXT TIME WE SET FOOT ON LAND WAS ON THE SHORES
OF FAR OFF JACKSON BAY.

FROM 24 COUNTIES OF HIBERNIA WE WERE ROUNDED UP
AND TREATED JUST LIKE DOGS,
SAINT PATRICK HAD IN HIM MORE RESPECT FOR
SLEMISH HERD OF HOGS.

STOUT HEARTED IRISH MEN AND WOMEN OUR POVERTY
WE OFT TIMES DID TRY TO OVERTHROW.
THEY TOOK US FROM OUR NATIVE SHORE EXILED,
TO FAR OFF LANDS WE HAD TO GO.

STOWED AWAY DOWN IN THIS FILTHY SHIP WITH OAK
PLANKING FOR A BED.
SOME WERE TIED UP TO THE MAST POLE AND FLOGGED,
TILL NEARLY DEAD.

MANY OF US PERSISTED BUT 'T WAS ALL IN
FRUITLESS VAIN,
FLOGGED WITH WHIP AND MUSKET BUTT OUT ON THIS
RAGING MAINE.

WE KNEW BEFORE WE'D TREAD ON GROUND AGAIN THAT
MANY WOULD BE DEAD,
CONFUSION SEEMED TO RULE THE SHIP SINCE SHE ROUNDED
KINSALE HEAD.

WE SAILED FOR MONTHS AND MONTHS ON THIS WILD
DEMENCE TO SPEND,
AND FOR SEVEN UPON THIS DREADFUL VOYAGE IT
PROVED A BITTER END.

MY HEART WENT OUT FOR YOUNG JIM BLACK ONLY TWELVE
ALL IN HIS YOUTH AND PRIME,
WHEN WE TOSSED HIS LIFELESS BODY OUT INTO THE
ANGRY BRINE.

HIS POOR OLD GENTLE MOTHER WHEN HEARING OF THE
NEWS SHE SAID I AM UNDONE,
I'M ROBBED OF ALL MY HEART'S DELIGHT MY ONE
AND ONLY SON.

OUR HEARTS THEY BEAT LIKE THUNDER WITH
LONELINESS AND FEAR,
WHEN THE SHIP THEY CALL THE QUEEN INTO PORT JACKSON
SHE DID STEER.

WE WERE A NOBLE RACE OF PEOPLE EXILED FROM EIRE IN
SEVENTEEN AND NINETY ONE,
ALTHOUGH OUR BODIES LIE IN A FOREIGN LAND OUR
DEEDS THEY STILL LIVE ON.

Seven people died on this Voyage (1791). They were the first convicts to go to Australia directly from Ireland, which included a youth from Dublin town - by the name of Jim Black. He was only twelve years old, just a gosoon. He died five months before the ship ran into Port Jackson.

THE EMIGRANTS VOYAGE

A ship by the name of The Queen was engaged in bringing Irish men and women named by the oppressors of that period as convicts. She was a 400 tonner. 136 men and 23 women were forced to sail in this filthy tub to Port Jackson on the Australian coast. Conditions on board these convict ships were cruel. Scurvy and all types of disease broke out amongst the transportees as there was no sanitation, no fresh water and the British crews showed no compassion for men, women or children. In most cases these people were exiled for trying to feed themselves and their families. Taking an object maybe not worth a shilling and sixpence to seven and nine pence carried a sentence of 7 years. Many of those exiled had served up to 6 years of their sentence in jails in Ireland. Still they were transported with only 1 year to 6 months to spend in jail. In many cases their sentence was served when they were half way to Australia.

The fate of these convicts on their voyages in such deplorable conditions sapped much of their strength. They were beaten and tied up for days by the British authorities. Many of them died on the outward journey. Those who reached Australia when pardoned by the Crown oft times made a fine reputation for themselves. Turning into sea captains, statesmen, and tradesmen of the highest quality. As many as 47,000 men and women were involuntary emigrants from Ireland in a period of less than 70 years. Today in 1992 as many a fifty thousand people leave Ireland for all parts of the globe to find work and a better way of life. Today there is close on 82 million of Irish or Irish decent scattered all over the globe. Most of them went involuntarily to seek employment. They return as often as they can to set foot again on the auld Green Sod of Erin.

Vinegar Hill - overlooking the Slaney and Enniscorthy town was the last battle of the 1798 rebellion. Everybody is well versed about the United Irishmen great stand against highly trained British troops and cannon. On the other hand very few people have heard of the battle of Vinegar Hill in Australia which occurred on March the 5th 1804. On May the 23rd, 1793 Irish men on board the "Sugar Cane" were caught planning a mutiny. The authorities on board ship executed one man and punished with whip and musket butt nearly all until they were dead. In the year 1796 the Marquis of Corawillis reached Australia. On her were 233 convicts. News of the Vinegar Hill Battle came with the arrival of some convicts who were exiled after the 1798 Rebellion and after much planning but with inferior weaponry the battle of Vinegar Hill in Australia started.

On March the 5th, 1804, 233 rebels were soon crushed by two government forces with superior weaponry. Johnson a Major from the British army asked Cunningham what the rebels wanted. His reply was "death or liberty and a schooner to take them home". The British immediately opened fire. Within seconds 15 rebels lay dead. Cunningham and 8 of his comrades were executed without trial. The remaining rebels were sent to the chain river coal gang working while two changes of guards guarded them. They were allowed 2 hours rest in 24. This battle was a brave stand, by a gallant band of ill equipped Irish men against the superior equipped English tyrants - and tyrants they were from top to bottom. Lets face it, everybody knows when they are doing wrong. It's widely known about the evils of Hitler (it's with reluctance I mention his name - it should be banished from the annals of History), but let us not forget that Hitler was a tyrant to the Jews on whose shoulders lies the murders of 7.5 million Jews. But the British oppressor has 7 centuries of murder and oppression against nearly every nation on earth. It's unmeasurable what murders, crimes, tortures and barbaric methods they inflicted on the Irish peasantry. Over a period of 7 centuries much of South Africa's history of humiliation has been recorded and it cannot be condoned. Wherever the red white and blue has flown corruption has blossomed. The British were experts at this trade and even now in the 20th century they should do what they never did i.e. make an apology through the European Union for the hardships they have inflicted upon the most natural and gentle nations of the earth. Their rules which even to this day are adhered to should be classed as void and sent back to their place of origin and a new draft be written.

Laws which apply to landlordism, shooting and fishing should be revised by the appropriate boards, so as Irish natives can fish and shoot in their native rivers and habitats at their will. Some people fed families of 15 and over on pigeon, rabbit and other species of wildfowl up until the late 1960's in many rural places of Ireland.

In 1851 the Lord Governor sailed from Liverpool with five hundred passengers their destination America. It took five weeks for this old tub to reach America. This was forced emigration for the 490 Irish on board. It was usually a treacherous voyage for all on board. 12 babies died on this journey through lack of milk as the cows that were tethered below decks died after a few weeks at sea. In the first class cabin was a handful of passengers. One was a young scientist named Gail Borden. Returning from London to America where he had received a gold medal for preserving meat and other foods. He saw the conditions on board and was moved to pity for these babies being buried at sea. When he went back to America he spent 5 years trying to preserve milk. He succeeded and in 1856 his patent was approved (condensed milk in cans). It was the concern for those Irish emigrants on aboard the Lord Grosvenor that gave him the inspiration to preserve milk so as such happenings on board ship would never happen again.

THE SUN'S LIFE GIVING RAYS

LISTEN A WHILE TILL I RELATE TO YOU
THESE SIMPLE PROFOUND LAYS.
A SIMPLER TALE CANNOT BE TOLD
ABOUT THE SUN'S LIFE GIVING RAYS.

WITHOUT THEM THEY'D BE NO SWINE TO MAKE THE HAM
NO FRUIT WOULD EVER FORM TO MAKE THE POT OF JAM.
THERE WOULD BE NO MOVEMENT IN THE SEA.
AND DAY OR NIGHT IT NEVER WOULD BE.

WITHOUT IT NOTHING WOULD BE FED.
NO GRAIN WOULD EVER FORM TO MAKE THE ODD AULD
SQUARE OF WHEATEN BREAD.
IT SHINES THROUGHOUT THE DAY BUT WE NEVER STOP TO THINK
IF IT STAYED INSIDE ITS CLOUDY COAT, IT'S OF
STARVATION WE'D SOON BE ON THE BRINK.

ONLY FOR IT'S PRESENCE WE WOULD NEVER SEE A TREE.
NO PLANT OR FLOWER WOULD EVER GROW.
TO ATTRACT THE TIRELESS HONEY BEE.

WITHOUT IT THERE WOULD BE NO LIFE UPON THIS EARTH.
THE HUMAN RACE WOULD WITHER AND DIE.
NO BIRD TO GLIDE UPON THE SILENT WING
TO CATCH THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE.

WITHOUT IT BEAST OR PLANT WOULD FAIL TO GROW.
TURF OR COAL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TO KEEP THE
HEARTH AGLOW.
WHEN IT SINKS TO SLUMBER IN THE WEST THE FOX COMES
BOUNDED FROM HIS DEN.
SEARCHING HIGH AND LOW THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT FOR
THE LITTLE OLD RED HEN.

SO TO THE ALL MIGHTY WE SHOULD BE THANKFUL.
AND FOREVER MORE BEHOLD.
ONLY HE GAVE US THE LIFE GIVING RAYS OF THE SUN.
WE'D DIE WITH STARVATION, THE DROUGHT
AND THE COLD.

BRIEF INFORMATION ON THE SUN

Without the sun no life would be possible on earth. Scientists know very little about it's construction. They know it has four outer gaseous layers of matter that keep secret it's interior. The inner most one is called photosphere, the next two are called the chromosphere. These two layers are said to form the sun's atmosphere and the outside layer is called the corona.

The diameter of the sun is 109 times that of the earth. Scientists believe that the mass of the sun is 330,000 times that of the earth. At it's centre the temperature is 127 million degrees fahrenheit. The earth orbits the sun every 365 days and 14 seconds short of 6 hours. The life span of the sun is expected to continue for another eight thousand million years.

THE HAT

*THEY WERE WORN LONG AGO TO FAIRS AND
SUNDAY MASS,
AND THE GIRLS AND BOYS SPORTED THEM LIKEWISE
THE EMERALD LASS.*

*BE YOU POOR, RICH, LEAN OR FAT,
THE STYLE TO TOP IT OFF WAS TO WEAR YOUR FINEST HAT.*

*I'VE WORN THE HIGH PITCHED BOWLER WHILST OUT A
SHOOTING GAME,
BUT THE WIDE BRIMMER I POSSESS IS BETTER FOR
THE RAIN.*

*A FELT HAT TOO I'VE WORN BUT WHEN I THINK IT
MAKES ME SAD,
IN IT'S CONSTRUCTION LONG AGO IT DROVE THE
THE HATTERS MAD.*

*IF A HAT IS WORN NOWADAYS BY ITS MASTER ON
THE MOP,
THE PASSER BY WILL RAISE AN EYELID WHEN THE
RARITY THEY'LL SPOT.*

*SOME WILL SAY IN WORDS OF RAGE 'T WAS THE DEVILS
OWN INVENTION,
BUT THE WEARER AT ALL TIMES GIVES IT HIS VERY
BEST ATTENTION.*

THEY SAY THAT NOWADAYS THEY ARE A GRAVE
DISTRACTION,
BUT NOT MANY YEARS AGO THEY WERE THE MAIN
ATTRACTION.

THEY WERE WORN BY SOUTH SEA PIRATES UPON
THE RAGING MAIN,
AND THEY'VE SHELTERED GRANDAD'S HEAD FROM FROST
AND WINTER RAIN.

BUT NOWADAYS YOU'RE SURE TO FIND THEM AT BALLS
AND LOCAL PLAYS,
AND ON A SUNNY SUMMER'S DAY THEY'LL HIDE YOU
FROM THE RAYS.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HATTERS

In years gone by hats were manufactured in many English towns and cities notably Bedfordshire and Luton. Few people in the 1700's knew the dangers of Mercury. The felt used in the making of hats in by gone days was produced by shearing away the fur from rabbit skin. The skin was then treated with a chemical to improve its qualities. It was known in the hat trade as "carrotting". This process was used for centuries for treating the fur. The curing agent for this process was known as nitrate of mercury. The vapour of the above chemical was inhaled by the hatters and over a period of time it was the curse of ill health. The hatters got the shakes and in some cases went around the bend altogether. Hence, we get the phrase "as mad as a hatter". Many of these gifted tradesmen had to be admitted to lunatic asylums and destined to end their days there. The scientific symbol for mercury is H9. This symbol derives from the Greek word Hydrargos which simply means silver water. Mercury is belonging to the zinc family and at ordinary room temperature mercury vaporises. Its gas is both odourless and colourless.

The vapour it omits are highly poisonous and if inhaled over a period of many years they are very harmful to the human system and it was by these means that the hatters were subject to such a senile disease. Hats nowadays are produced by machinery with the touch of a button, but I'm sure that the emissions from factory stacks are poisonous to the atmosphere and in turn we humans are subject to them by the air we breath. The hatters are now safe but come to think of it, it's probably the reason why all the rest of us are going mad.

THE SHOW GOES ON

AN ODD GOOD DEED, DON'T DO NO WRONG,
FOR IN FAIRER LANDS WE ALL MUST THROG.

A DEED THATS DONE OF GOOD WILL BIND,
AND GIVES US ALL A PLEASANT MIND.

A DEED THAT'S KIND WILL ACCOMPLISH FAITH,
A WRONGFUL ONE OF BITTER HATE.

ALL TIMES LET US SPARE A THOUGHT,
IT'S WITH KINDNESS THAT ALL MEN ARE WROUGHT.

AS SURE AS THE STARS ARE IN THE SKY,
THE TIME WILL COME WHEN WE MUST DIE.

THEN DRINKS ALL ROUND MERRILY AND GAY,
WHEN LIE WE MUST IN REDDENED CLAY,

IT'S THERE BENEATH THAT GRAVEYARD PLOT,
BODIES DECOMPOSE AND ROT.

SOME WILL WEEP BUT SHORTLY AFTER,
WILL BREAK THEIR SIDES IN PORTER LAUGHTER.

SOME WILL SAY IN WORDS SO QUAIN'T,
WEREN'T HE THE EARTHLY SAINT.

THEN SOME WILL GET THE WHISKEY DRIBBLE,
AND SAY WEREN'T HE THE VERY DEVIL.

SOME DO GOOD AND MORE DO WRONG,
BUT STILL SOMEHOW THE SHOW GOES ON.

THE DEPARTING

The wakes of ancient Ireland were a special function. They were the meeting places of many's a character. Just to mention a few; the hedge school master, poets, musicians, story tellers, matchmakers and last but no means least the local fortune teller. If a person was dying a close watch was kept on them as it was classed as unrespectable if someone slipped away to the promised land unwatched. People would stay up night after night until he or she drew their final breath. The corpse and the bed clothes at the time of departing would be sprinkled with holy water. This was the most vulnerable time for the soul of the departed to be left alone as every devil in hell would be after arriving in the vicinity of the room trying to entice the soul to join them to their place of damnation. The angels on the other hand would indulge in holier water (poteen).

These angels were in a plentiful supply and came from many miles around on horseback, bicycle, pony and trap and on foot. There was always a plentiful supply of alcoholic liquor at these wakes. The fiddler alone would drink at least a half barrel of porter. It was the poor or middle class people of that era who gave their loved ones a good send off to fairer pastures. Upper class funerals and wakes were private affairs and were of no importance to the people of rural Ireland only the undertaker and in the majority of cases the gentry wouldn't entertain the local undertaker. Many of the landlords of gentry had vaults in Glasnevin. There are quite a few vaults in Wexford county. Whites had one in Donaghmore, Doynes in Kilnamanagh and there are numerous ones in the towns, but in the majority of cases the vaults or their occupants are not worth mention, the people who are in them were ruthless to the Irish people. They were the people who had the power to condemn, relieve or evict. The middle or lower class could not grow an oak, beech, elm, breadnut, walnut, chestnut or any tree of equal importance on their holding no matter how big or how small it was. Willow or alder could only be grown with the landlord's permission. The people were quick to harness the uses of both these trees. Alder was used in clog making, willow made good baskets. The floors of the rutlock ass drawn carts of that era were made of alder. Harps were made of willow, sprays for the thatched houses and runners to keep and beautify the eaves of the thatched cabins.

Anyway getting back to the waking. A wake was the period of time from when a person died until they were removed to the church or chapel. A good wake would last for two days and as many nights. The burial would take place on the third day. A high mass was said if the deceased or the next of kin had money, if very little money was at hand an ordinary or low mass would be said. As I said if plenty of revenue was at hand a high mass would be said every month for upwards on a year. They would be said on the date of the burial of each month they were called the month's mind mass. These month's mind masses were a ritual not to be missed as the altar boys would get a half day off school and a half crown for serving the mass. The more money the more priests would congregate. Mind you, the majority of them were fine singers as the high mass was mostly sung. The procedure for the month's mind mass was as follows:

Two pedestals would be placed at the front of the altar on top was placed a board cut in the shape of a coffin, a black robe hung over this boarding and it was flanked by 3 four foot candle sticks on either side. The candles were lit and the service continued in the same manner as if someone were dead. After the high mass the altar boys would tidy up the vestry and the church. The clergy would retire to the parlour of the parochial house to wine and dine. All this practice is now discontinued.

Miles O'Connor, the fiddler, liked a sup of alcohol and one day after a high mass Miles went down the next morning to the parochial house to get a cure. There was a heap of empty whiskey bottles outside the back door of the priest's house. The priest in question heard Miles making a racket trying to put sups out of one bottle into another in order to make a mouthful for himself. The priest who was residing there at the time put his head out through the first storey window and says "it's not worth your while trying them Miles, there are all dead men"... Well now, says Miles, "isn't it lucky that the priests were with them and they dying".

In many cases years ago the few wealthy people and large land owners in Ireland used the poorer people to slave for them for a little to eat. When a wealthy person passed away they usually left money with the parish priest to fit a few windows in the church of stained glass with the name of who donated it written on the bottom pane. (This money was called conscience

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money). Devereux the shop owner from Wexford left conscience money to help build the twin churches in Wexford town.

In that era when the rich man or woman died a monument would be placed over the grave in the form of an oblique or a Celtic cross. The poorer class would have to be content with a field stone.

When the rich man dies he always lies,
With tombstones fine an classy.
When the poor man dies he always lies
With jam-pots on his chassey.

On patron days the poor would bring a few flowers in a jam-pot to place on the graves of their loved ones. Jesus had no earthly wealth. I wonder if he happened to come back on the earth nowadays what would he think of the institutions that are run in honour of his name. In all probability the heads of churches would try to make him redundant. Well of course no job is safe nowadays.

THE LEINSTER BEANSIDH IN MOURNING 1851 - 1861

*I AM THE BEANSIDH OF LEINSTER, MY MEMORIES NOW
QUITE VAGUE.
COME LISTEN TO MY HUMBLE WORDS AND I'LL TELL YOU
OF THE PLAGUE.*

*MY VOICE IS NOW QUITE HOARSE I'VE WAILED FOR JUST
TEN YEAR.
MY EYES ARE ALL BUT DRIED UP AND CANNOT SHED
A TEAR.*

*IN THE CORNER OF A GRAVEYARD BESIDE THE BAMBOO
CANE.
NEATH THE YEW TREE'S ANCIENT TRUNK WITHOUT A
MARKER THEY ARE LAIN.*

*A MOTHER AND A FATHER WITH SIX CHILDREN THEY
DO LIE.
'T WAS THE TYRANTS HAND THAT FORCED THEM IN THEIR EARLY
YEARS TO DIE.*

*NO NUTRITION WAS AT HAND THE BAKE PAN IT WAS
DRY.
THE PASTURES WERE ALL EMPTY WITH NO HOGS TO GRACE
THE STYE.*

FROM THEIR HOME ON BALLINLOW LAND DOWN THAT
GRACEFUL SMALL BOREEN.
THE CHILDREN ONCE THEY PLAYED AROUND THAT NEATLY
THATCHED TIGEEN.

A DECADE SCARCELY PASSED WITHIN ITS WALLS THERE
WAS NO SOUND.
SIX CHILDREN LAY IN STILLNESS IN THE COLD
KILMUCKRIDGE GROUND.

ON THOSE HEARTLESS ENGLISH TYRANTS TO OUR CHILDREN
THEY WILL FOREVER OWE A PARDON.
ASLEEPING THERE FOREVER IN THE CORNER OF
GOD'S GARDEN.

THE WHITE PLAGUE

From 1951 to 1861 over 140,000 people died from the white plague or more commonly known as "Consumption", because it consumes up the body. With consumption comes a heavy fever, loss of appetite and one becomes thin and weak with little or no resistance to fight off the disease. However, on the other hand if plenty of nutrition is available this disease is curable. It thrives in poorly ventilated conditions and it is highly infectious. Sometimes wiping out whole families in its wake.

In the mid 1800's the Irish people were just after the ravages of famine when the disease struck. It's not known how it entered Ireland but is widely believed that it came back by means of an infected Irishman that went overseas to Wales to seek employment at harvest time. A diet of 3 to 4 solid meals a day was in 97% of the cases able to bring the infected person back to normal health in four to six weeks. But not many of the Irish peasantry of that era would have one solid meal in a week. The diet was smoked fat bacon, porridge made from maize, pork, potatoes, chicken, various types of wildfowl and fresh vegetables followed by a generous helping of port or meade. This disease was a killer from the mid 1800's up to the early 1900's. Streptomycin and many other type of drugs with plenty of nutrition controlled the disease but sadly whole families were wiped completely off the face of the earth by it. In graveyards through the length and breadth of Ireland, there are unmarked graves, bearing the remains of in some cases a mother, father and 12 children laid to rest years before their time. Coffins were constructed at that time by the local coffin maker. If two people from the one family died at the same time a double coffin was ordered. It would be cheaper than two as there was the saving of a bottom and a lid. A layer of hay or sacking was placed between the two victims and the burial proceeded in the same way.

Once again the tyrant from across the water was to take full blame for such dreadful happenings. For hundreds of years they treated the Irish peasantry like swine. They stole their produce inflicted unbearable taxes and rents so that they had to surrender all their stock. With their produce gone their chance of survival in such cases was very small. Now in the late 1900's if a child dies from an incurable disease, it is a sad event. So what must it have been like to see twelve children from 1 year to 12 years going into the graveyard before their father and mother went shortly afterwards if not from consumption it would be of a broken heart. Whilst the gentry, the landlords magistrates of England sat back in their stately Irish mansions and castles, and ate the fat of the Irish countryside. Feasting at the expense of poor families misfortune i.e. defenceless children and country folk who had been tyrannised for over 700 years.

THE MEANING OF LEINSTER

In the third century Leary Lore the then high king of Ireland and his son Olioll Aine, were murdered by Leary's brother Coffagh Cael Bra. Coffagh took the vacant throne and banished Olioll's son whose name was more commonly known as Labradh the Mariner.

In due course Labradh went to "Gaul" where he became involved in military operations. As soon as he had a body of soldiers under his command he set sail for Ireland to recover the lost kingship that was taken from Coffagh. Many of these foreign soldiers settled in the province of Leinster which was known in those days as Galian (many of these settlers were known as Gaul when translated it means foreigner). They used a spear which was known as Laighean. It's from this spear that the province took its name, (Laighean is the Irish name for Leinster). Later on in years Ireland was invaded by different races from Scandinavia. They too settled and intermarried with the natives. They added the word "ster" meaning a place with the name spear and place behind it. We get the modern name for our province "Leinster".

THE MESSIAH

*BEFORE THE LONG PATHWAY WE TROD,
WE SHOULD FOREVER MAKE OUR PEACE WITH GOD.
AT DUSK OF NIGHT OR EARLY DAY,
A SIMPLE PRAYER TO HIM LET'S SAY.*

*HIS LAWS ARE SIMPLE TO ABIDE,
WITH FORGIVENESS THERE ON EVERY SIDE.
FOR THOSE WHO'VE WALKED AN EVIL TRACK,
FOREVER MORE HE WANTS THEM BACK.*

*WHEN OUR DAYS BE O'ER OUR LIFE TO CLOSE,
HE'LL PICK US LIKE THE SUMMER ROSE.
IT'S ON THAT ROAD WE ALL MUST GO,
LIKE CRYSTALS OF THE WINTER SNOW.*

*OUR DESTINY HE WILL COMMAND,
WHEN WE FLOAT INTO THAT FAIRER LAND.
MANY A CHANCE THROUGH LIFE WE'RE GIVEN,
IF OUR WAY WE WANT TO MAKE TO HEAVEN.*

*BUT IF WE'RE MEAN AND DO NOT SHARE,
ANOTHER PLACE IS WAITING THERE.
WE MUST TAKE THAT TRAIN AND JOIN THE CLIQUE,
AND SPEND THE REST OF TIME WITH NICK.*

WHERE EVERY MORN HE'LL CALL THE ROLL,
IF YOUR NAME BE ON HIS VELLUM SCROLL.
LIFE'S SHORT SPAN IT GOES SO FAST,
THE FIRST STONE OF EVIL REFUSE TO CAST.

THE MAN WHO SITS UPON THAT THRONE,
POSSESSED NOT HE AN EARTHLY HOME.
HIS BEST FRIEND HIM, HE DID BETRAY (JUDAS),
WHILST THE REST OF THEM DID RUN AWAY.
'T WAS O'ER A DUMP IN GALILEE,
CRUCIFIED HE WAS FOR ALL TO SEE.

A FEW SHORT YEARS ON EARTH HE STAYED,
AND WAS LAID TO REST IN A BORROWED GRAVE.
NINETEEN CENTURIES HAVE COME AND GONE,
SINCE WALKED ON EARTH THIS MIGHTY ONE.

SO IF WE GET TO THE "GOLDEN GATES"
AND PETER GIVES A NOD,
HE'LL GENTLY SAY "I THINK YOU'VE MADE YOUR PEACE WITH GOD".

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HOLY LAND IN THE FIRST CENTURY A.D.

Jesus was an infant born in the poorest of circumstances in a stable at either Nazareth or Bethlehem. It remains uncertain to this day, December 1995 what day Jesus was born on the 21st of April, the 1st of May, the 29th March and the 29th September, but in the fourth century Pope Julius put an end to all the argument when he decreed that the official date of Jesus birth was December the 25th. Many scholars of that era debated this date, but it was in vain. The church with it's power soon dispelled the confusion. Julius's choice was a clever one for in the pre-christian era pagan festivals were held to mark the winter solace, days would get longer but the worst of the winter wasn't over so hopes would rise for a better and brighter future. The festival of Jesus birth was proclaimed December the 25th and great jubilation would continue for several weeks with gifts being exchanged by all in celebration.

Julius in his wisdom made the 25th of December the centre piece of Jesus birth when the christian festivals joined with the pagan ones. Jesus grew up with Joseph and Mary and tracked the dusty roads of Palestine in the first century. It is widely known that this itinerant preacher and wonder worker who was responsible for many recorded miracles in his short stay on earth (33 years) was the son of God.

It was at the Wedding Feast of Cana which lasted for over a fortnight that Jesus performed a miracle, turning water into wine and it was so compatible to the palate that the guests believed the good wine was kept until last. Where as it was the rule to serve the best wine first as when one would have consumed a bottle or two of good liquor the taste buds of the palate would not be as accurate as before. Anyway to make the long story short it was after the wedding which of course Joseph and Mary attended, poor old Joseph was in an awful state in the morning altogether and he gently rose his head and prising his tongue from the roof of his mouth with his forefinger he says to Mary would you ever do us a favour and slip down to the pantry to fetch me a pitcher of water and whatever you do don't let that young lad of yours go near it.

Recent finds in the Holy Land have provided much proof of insights into the milieu from which belief in Christ emerged. In the 1940's over 800 documents (known as the Dead Sea Scrolls) were unearthed in caves near the Dead Sea. There is reference in these documents to the coming of the Messiah. Much of this literature relates to the first century Judaism. At that time Jews were greatly oppressed by the Romans and other corrupt societies including the hated King Herod. It is widely believed that Jesus was one of the many political rebels that frequented Palestine in that era. His proclamation that the meek would govern the earth was in its own a demand for a new political order or governing body. Recently finds indicate that biblical names such as Joseph and Judas were common names used in the first century. Judas was Jesus best friend and he betrayed him for thirty pieces of silver. silver coins have been discovered in many sites through the Holy Land dating from the first century. After almost 20 centuries it's well known to this day that if one betrays one's friend they are known as "Judas".

Diggers in the Jewish part of Jerusalem's Old City Boundary found an ossuary (a container to house bones), it's inscription read Joseph Son of Caiaphas. This was ample evidence that the high priest Caiaphas who was present at the trial of Jesus was a real man not a myth as some believe. Evidence was found at Caeparea in the form of a plaque with the inscription of a building dedicated to Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea. Nazareth was in the first century a small agricultural village. There wasn't much work there for the skilled or unskilled and as Jesus was a carpenter by trade it is quite possible that he travelled the few miles to Sepphoris to acquire work. The above village was a major commercial centre where different dominations and creeds worked in harmony, regardless of their religious beliefs. It is said of Jesus that he possessed at least four different languages including Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew. He could quiet easily communicate with people of different nationalities once he had a command of their tongue. He stayed with another small fishing community at Capernaum, on the shores of Galilee. It was there he began his first public ministry. A building has been uncovered there with a large room and it's believed that this was the first synagogue where Jesus preached as recorded in John 6:59 in the Gospel. There are at least 45 different references to boats and fishing. Jesus is mentioned or related

to in each one. A 27 foot boat or dory was unearthed there recently. It was carbon dated back to the first century. It's quite possible that this was the make of craft that Jesus, Peter, John, James and other fishermen of the village used, whom Jesus recruited as his first disciples

The discovery of first century coins explains the need for money lenders whom Jesus drove out of the great Temple of Jerusalem. The Pharisees were the high priests of Jerusalem during Jesus life span. They became so powerful (where power reigns corruption blossoms) in their excessive religious principles that they spent most of their time seeking out the wickedness in others and not perusing their religious life. In time their man made rules were more important to them than the rules and principles of God. They even appointed themselves judges and would condemn anyone who would not adhere to their self-righteous standards. Their attitudes of superiority generated a need to control and direct other peoples' lives. Their inability to control Jesus life enraged them so they plotted his murder. When any Christian displays a spirit of superiority because of his or her god given gifts he or she is robbing the just one of the glory and credit that only he deserves. Jesus judged the Pharisees and called them an offspring of vipers deserving he said of self and eternal destruction, which within a few short decades proved right, although there is always an inclination of such a person in our midst at all times. Many people who have visited religious places of service find religion but some never discover the beauty within it which is our saviour Prince of Peace, of loving and understanding.

St. Stephen accused the high priests of the murder of Jesus. The high priests rallied and the people who were afraid to oppose them, hauled Stephen outside the Judgement Hall and stoned him to death. Stephen was the first martyr. His feast day falls just one day after the birth of Christ, December 26th.

As archaeologists uncover more burial chambers through the Holy Land and trace their origins back to the first century, especially if the markers on these tombs are inscribed, the evidence is quite clear that it relates to much of the writings in the Bible, an odd word might be added here and there to embellish the story.

Yet again archaeologist claim to have found the remains of Goliath in the valley of Elah. It was in this valley in the foot hills of the Judeah Mountains a discovery was made. On the morning of June the 21st 1996 a human skeleton was unearthed which measured 9 feet 8 and three quarter inches from head to toe. Examining the massive skeleton and its large skull, a large stone was found embedded in the forehead of the skull. The archaeologists at once thought it was Goliath's skeleton. Tests confirmed that the skeletal remains were between 2,000 and 3,000 years old, which meant that this giant lived at the precise time the Bible tells us that David fought Goliath.

The Bible stated that David fought Goliath during a confrontation between a band of Israelites and a bank of Philistines prior to David becoming King of Israel. At that time, warring tribes often sent one man a piece to fight for their side in a dispute with the tribes so as to avoid massive casualties on both sides. In this case the Philistines sent Goliath standing at almost 10 feet in height to fight for them, against David of the Israelites who stood at 5 feet 10½ inches. David fortified by his faith killed the giant with a throw from his slingshot at a distance of 30 yards. He then cut the head from the body with his sword. When the skeleton was examined it was found that the head had been severed from the body with a sharp instrument. Again is this story in the bible.

After almost 20 centuries no one can despise this itinerant preacher born in a stable with no worldly possessions. After all these centuries he is the one that christians of every creed look to when trouble arises and the feeling is that we are always accepted back by him no matter how long the lull in communications. He gave up his death and sufferings for the good of mankind. In death he possessed not. The Chamber where he lay was a borrowed one. During his short stay on earth he set an example for everyone, to be peaceful, giving and kind to one and all. After all, if we are lucky and health is generous to us the average lifespan is but three score and ten (70 years), just a mere drop in the ocean.

THE HAWTHORN

*THE MYSTICAL HAWTHORN'S SWEETEST FLOWER,
ENCHANTS BOTH HILL AND SHADY BOWER.*

*IN SPLENDOUR IT ADORNS THE OLD TROUT STREAM,
IT'S OUTLINES REFLECTING IN THE BRIGHT MOONBEAM.*

*WITH IT'S LUSTFUL FLOWERS GRACEFUL AND PLAIN,
IT'S WHERE ALL THE TUNEFUL SONGSTERS STRAIN.*

*ATOP IT'S PINNACLE WHERE SINGS THE THRUSH,
SHE ADDS ELEGANCE AND GLAMOUR TO THIS FAIRY BUSH.*

*OF ALL THE SHRUBS IN THE WORLD THAT BE,
NOT ONE IS FAIRER MORE THAN THEE.*

*FLUTTERING IN YOUR BRIDAL LACE THRUSH, SPARROW, ROBIN
AND THE JAY,
YOU ADORN OUR COUNTRYSIDE IN THE MEETING MONTH OF MAY.*



Border Collie

BEN THE BORDER COLLIE

WHAT WILL BECOME OF POOR OLD BEN,
HE'S ALL TIED UP LIKE A BATTERY HEN.
I KNOW IN MY HEART HE'LL NEVER BE FREE,
FOR HE'S TIED FOR YEARS TO THAT WILLOW TREE.

HE'S BOTH PROUD AND HANDSOME IN HIS LOOKS, HIS WAYS,
I CAN SEE IT IN HIS GENTLE GAZE.
HE HEARS THE BUZZ OF THE BUMBLE BEE,
COLLECTING NECTAR FROM THAT TREE.

IN THE QUAGMIRE BY THE FEN,
HE HEARS THE CROAK OF THE WATER HEN.
HE'S TIED THERE ALL DAY, HIS PAW HE LICKS,
AND SEES THE MOORHEN WITH HER CHICKS.

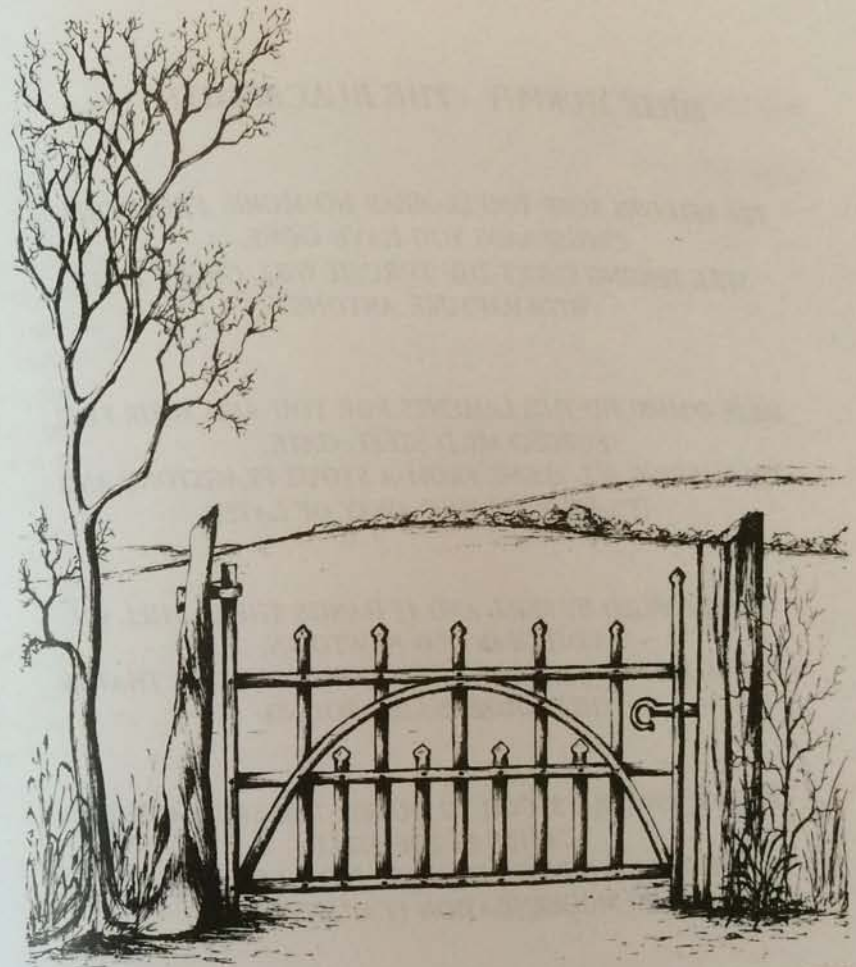
HE'S PURE AND GENTLE JUST LIKE A DOVE,
HE HAS NO ROOF BUT THE SKY ABOVE.
BEN'S BEEN TIED UP FOR SIXTEEN YEARS,
WITH ONLY NATURE'S SOUND TO PIERCE HIS EARS.

IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HIM IF HE PASSED AWAY,
AND WAS ENTOMBED A YARD BENEATH THE CLAY.
HE WOULD NOT EVEN A CHILD OFFEND,
SO LET US KINDER BE TO OUR CANINE FRIEND.

ENCOUNTER WITH BEN THE BORDER COLLIE

My first encounter with Ben the border collie was in the autumn of 1990. He was tied with a chain and wire to a willow tree whilst all natures creatures were busy overhead, and the moor hen gliding across the marlhole with her clutch of half grown chicks. His master "if he should be called so" had tied him there when he was not more than 6 months old. He was in his sixteenth year and even though he was tied up there was not an ill-inch in his body. He was quite friendly and kind as I soon found out as I was re-roofing an old dwelling house near by. Each day I would share some food with him. I worked there for a fortnight and each day he had a better welcome for me. He died shortly after I left.

It was Ben that inspired me to write this poem. As everything around him was free whilst he was forced to live in captivity, by an animal of a far harsher nature than Ben. It was mans selfish ways that forced this versatile collie of in some cases more intelligent than the people that force these magnificent strain of working collie to live a life in captivity from birth until death.



Clare Kavanagh 1995

*Milie Murphy's
Hand Forged Gate*

THE HISTORY OF MILIE'S FORGE

Milie Murphy the smith had a forge at Milie's 'T' junction, situated on the road from Wells Post Office where it entered the road from Kilnarnagh to The Ford about 1½ Irish miles from The Ford due west in the townland of Ruanmore. The remains of the forge are still visible, but are in a bad state of preservation.

Milie was a master at his trade and so were his prior descendants. They forged the pike heads for the '98 Rebellion for Oulart. In the making of the pikes at the Murphy forge they used half of a slipper or what is more commonly known as a worn horse shoe to make the hook of the pike, that was used to cut the girth strap which left the rider horseless and of course more vulnerable in times of battle. There is ample evidence of this as a pike was unearthed at Milie's rickstand in the 1930's, but it disappeared and it's whereabouts is at the moment unknown.

Another object which was made for the rebellion was forever shaped like the first quarter of the moon, sharpened to a point at the outer ends of it's circumference. It never really got into production as metal was nearly impossible to obtain and as it was a hand thrown object it would have to be retrieved each time a strike was made and if the terrain was heavy in undergrowth it would be impossible to find. If a rebel could have around 8 to 10 of these objects it would be feasible for him to go into battle for if he got a kill he could easily get hold of the opponents sword. The pike on the other hand was always held in both hands and could inflict upon the Yeomen heavy casualties - when in the hands of these strong fearless (Irish) Wexford men.

A horse whose rider was slain by a pike whilst on horseback was reluctant to go into battle with another rider, when this did occur battle after battle. The horses involved often made a hasty retreat. These men who fought for freedom in the '98 rebellion were feared by both man and beast.

Anyway Milie's descendants passed on the trade to the next generation and therefore we had a complete line of Smiths for hundreds of years. These men were also great historians. Milie often told of the informer who lived at Doughlone on the left just before Tomgarrow Bridge heading northwards to Gorey. He informed that pikes and a new weapon were being produced in the Murphy forge. He was slain one evening coming home from an Inn in Enniscorthy where he was enjoying his ill gotten gains. Killed with one blow to the side of the head inflicted by an ades. He was disposed of in a dried up draw well which was on one of the estates of the landed gentry. Milie said he didn't deserve to be with his countrymen dead or alive. I've heard from some old folk that his name was Furlong.

I have seen some of Milie's workmanship in the making of a gate in Newtown. The rails were morticed into the stiles with great precision, as accurately done as if in wood. It's uprights had an appealing looking arrow head on them and were all uniform in dimension. A marvellous feat from fire to anvil until the perfect shape was acquired. It was then riveted together and would undoubtedly stand the test of hundreds of years. Milie's gate hangs there today, the same as the day it was forged. A fine testimony to a skilled craftsman.

MILIE MURPHY - THE BLACKSMITH

THE BELLOWS ROAR YOU'LL HEAR NO MORE, FROM THE
CROSSROADS YOU HAVE GONE.
STILL SINGING SWEET THE THRUSH WILL GREET YOU
WITH RAPTURE ANYONE.

MILIE O'MURCHU THIS LAMENTS FOR YOU AND YOUR FINE
FORGED MILD STEEL GATE,
IT'S HANGING ALL ALONE FROM A STOUT FLAGSTONE AND
IT'S BEEN RUSTING AWAY OF LATE.

IT WAS FORGED BY SKILL AND IT HANGS THERE STILL ON
A DITCH IN OLD NEWTOWN,
IT'S USELESS NOW LIKE THE OLD HORSE-PLOUGH THAT IN
THEIR DOZENS LIE AROUND.

IT ONCE PROUDLY STOOD TO GUARD THE SPUD AND THE
CATTLE IN THE FIELD,
IT'S USELESS NOW ON ITS HIGH PITCHED BROW, IT'S
TO MODERNISATION IT MUST YIELD.

BY AN EXPERT HAND BUILT TO COMMAND THIS PASSAGE
NIGHT AND DAY,
IT GUARDED RICKS AND HORSE DRAWN STICKS, 'TAS WHERE
CHILDREN DID OFT TIMES PLAY.

WHERE NOW YOU STAND IN A FERTILE LAND AT YOUR FOOT
THERE FLOWS A FLOOD,
YOU'RE LEFT TO ROT WHERE THE HORSE ONCE TROT AND THE
RICKSTAND SMARTLY STOOD.

NOW MYLES I MUST SAY IN MY HOMELY WAY WHEN I SAW
IT I PROUDLY DID STARE,
FOR IT'S SAD I FELT AND KINDLY I KNELT AND WHISPERED
FOR YOU A PRAYER.



Claire Kavanagh '75

Father Christmas (Santa)

A CHRISTMAS POEM FOR THE YOUNG

ON CHRISTMAS EVE A STROLL I TOOK,
AND WANDERED BY A STILLY BROOK.
IT'S THERE IN SOLITUDE I FOUND,
SOME CHRISTMAS WRAPPINGS ON THE GROUND.

'T WAS THERE BESIDE THE RIPPLING STREAM,
WAS SANTA WITH HIS RED NOSED TEAM.
SORTING PRESENTS IN THE COLD,
SOME FOR YOUNG AND MORE FOR OLD.

RED NOSE WITH HIS TEAM SO STILL,
WERE GRAZING ON THE STREAMLETS HILL.
AND CUSHIONED THERE IN SCENTED HAY,
LAY BAGS OF PRESENTS IN THE SLEIGH.

WHEN ALL THE PACKING HE HAD DONE,
HE WHISTLED TO THE RED NOSED ONE.
THEN BOUNCED INTO THE PASSING SLEIGH,
AND WITH LIGHTENING SPEED HE SPED AWAY.

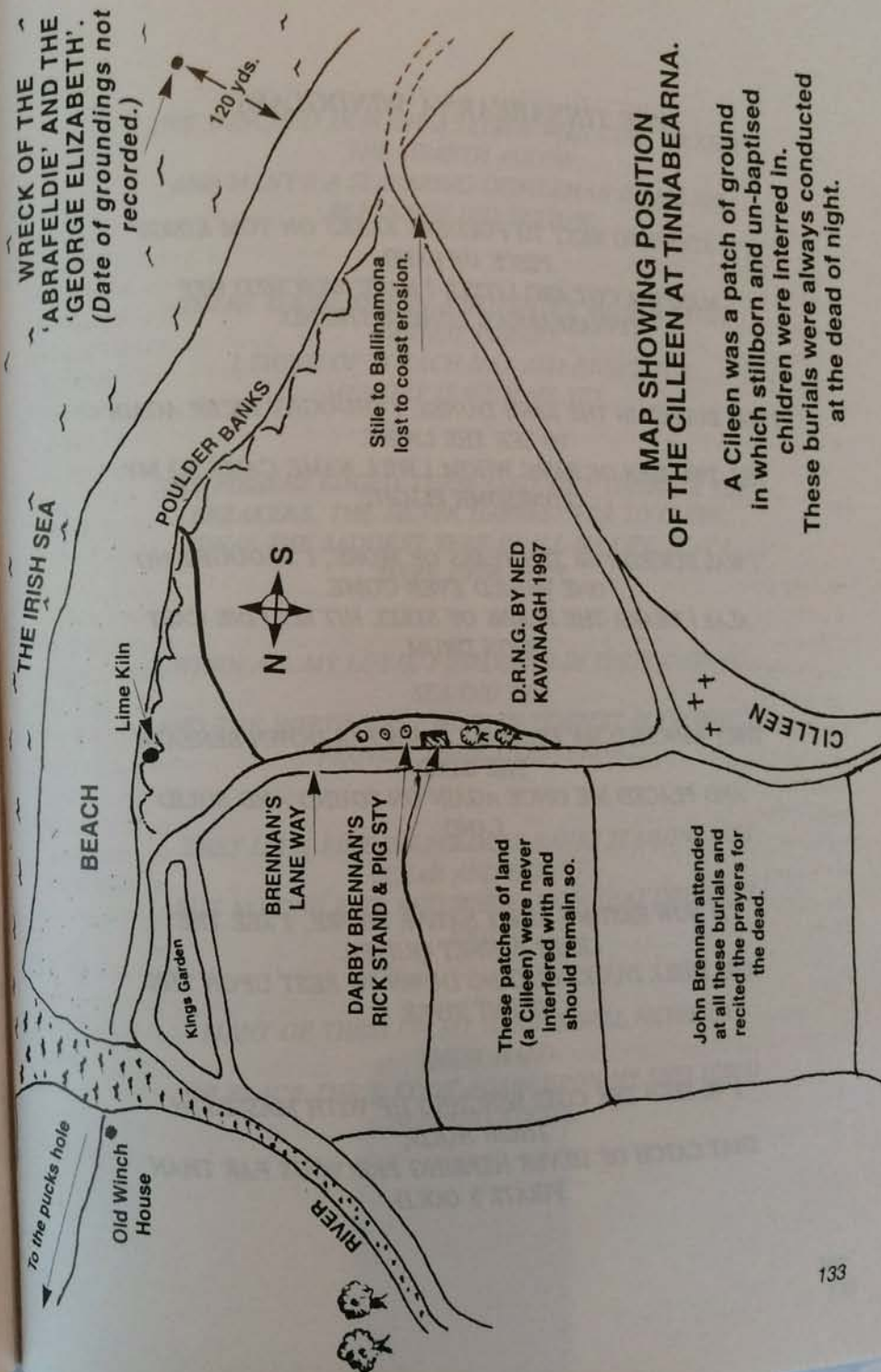
HE VANISHED FASTLY FROM MY SIGHT,
FOR CHILDRENS HAPPINESS TONIGHT.
UNDER EACH GREEN XMAS TREE,
IT'S THERE THAT ALL THOSE GIFTS WILL BE.

WRITE LETTERS NOW WITHOUT DELAY,
SO THAT SANTA'LL COME ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SANTA CLAUSE AND HIS ORIGINS

Santa Clause and his reindeers live in Lapland, between Russia and Norway. Santa has always been associated with the frozen north. He was a boy bishop who lived around the fourth century A.D. He was said to have special powers of healing and in due course was canonised a saint. He is the Patron Saint of Brewers, Boatmen, Pawnbrokers and Pilgrims. He was adopted by the Finnish Laplanders into their traditions and customs. His mode of transport was reindeer and sleigh and in the wink of an eye he could make himself small enough to descend any size of chimney, in order to bring all children presents and toys at christmas time.

He loves prancing around in his fluffy white and red attire in shops and stores a week or so before christmas night. He will upon that night descend every chimney especially where there are children, and in many cases bring a gift of the child's choice - that's if he's not after running out of that item. If so, he will leave one of equal importance in its place. It's necessary for all children to be in bed early on that night, as if he's passing and the children are not asleep, he might pass on to the next house. As his reindeer are very timid not a sound should be made when he's putting the presents under the tree. The only sound to be heard is the ringing of the bells on the reindeers tackling. With all the modern modes of transport nowadays he still chooses his beloved red nose and his team to pull the sleigh on the holy night of Christmas, and to us older ones he brings us the spirit and good will that is Christmas for centuries past and hopefully will remain so, for ever.



THE TINNABEARNA WINDGLASS

I'M STANDING NEXT TO POLDERS BANKS ON TOM KINGS
PIECE OF LAND.

MANY'S A COT AND LITTER I HAVE WINCHED OFF
TINNABEARNA'S LONELY STRAND.

I WAS BURIED IN THE SAND DUNES, I THOUGHT NE'ER AGAIN
TO SEE THE LIGHT.

TILL TWO MEN OF FAME WHOM I WILL NAME CAME TO MY
LONESOME PLIGHT.

I WAS BURIED FOR TEN YEARS OR MORE, I THOUGHT NO
ONE WOULD EVER COME.

ALAS I HEARD THE BLADE OF STEEL HIT MY FINE CAST
IRON DRUM.

THEY WINCHED ME FROM MY TOMB FAR DOWN BENEATH
THE SAND.

AND PLACED ME ONCE AGAIN ON SOUND AND SOLID
LAND.

I'M NOW RESTING AT MY NATIVE SHORE, I SEE THE
LEAFY BENNET QUIVER.

AND SHELL DUCKS GLIDING DOWN TO REST UPON THE
SILENT RIVER.

I'VE SEEN THE COTS WINCHED UP WITH MASSES IN
THEIR HOLD,
THAT CATCH OF SILVER HERRING PRECIOUS FAR THAN
PIRATE'S GOLD.

I'VE WINCHED IN MANY A LITTER WITH COAL TO KEEP
THE HEARTH AGLOW.
AND MANY'S A SEAFARING GENTLEMAN ON ME HIS
BLESSINGS DID BESTOW.

THERE IS ONE DAY IN A NOVEMBER MONTH I JUST
CANNOT FORGET,
I THINK OF IT EACH DAY AND NIGHT, IT'S
MEMORY IS WITH ME YET.

THE FISHERS EDGED THEIR COTS OUT THROUGH THE
BREAKERS, THE SILVER HARVEST FOR TO GLEEN.
'T WAS THE SADDEST YEAR IN ALL MY LIFE THAT I
HAVE EVER SEEN.

WHEN ALL MY LOYAL FISHERMEN IN THEIR COTS TO
SEA DID GO.
AND THE NORTH WEST WIND IN TEMPEST BLEW WHICH
PROVED THEIR OVERTHROW.

THEY LIT A FIRE ON POLDERS BANKS IT SHONE OUT
CLEAR AND BRIGHT.
BUT NO ONE E'ER RETURNED UPON THAT DREADFUL
NIGHT.

MANY OF THEM ON MY HANDLE WILL NEVER LAY
THEIR HAND.
OR PLACE THEIR FOOT AGAIN UPON MY SHELTERED
SLOPING STRAND.

THEY ARE GONE TO THEIR ETERNAL REST, 'TAS ON THE
DARK WELSH COAST THEY DIED.
THE WOMEN, CHILDREN AND OLD FOLK LOOKED OUT
TO SEA FOR WEEKS, BUT NO ONE E'ER THEY SPIED.

THE PARISH ALL FOR MILES AROUND WAS IN A STATE
OF MOURNING.
WHEN THEY LEARNT DOWN FROM ROSSLARE THAT ONLY ONE
CREW WAS RETURNING.

FOR A CENTURY NOW OR MORE LIFE TO ME HAS BEEN
RATHER KIND.
BUT OF THE LOSS OF THOSE BRAVE SEAMEN LET US KEEP
THEM ALL IN MIND.

I'M SITTING NOW UPON MY THRONE ON TOM KINGS PIECE
OF LAND.
THANKS TO THOSE TWO FINE GENTLEMEN WHO LENT THEIR
HELPING HAND.

*Joe Kavangh of Ballinlow and Jack O'Leary dug up this winch which was buried 14
feet down in the sand dunes and erected it on Tom Kings garden*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TINNABEARNA

Tinnabearna which means when translated - the house of the gap. Walking due east Poulders Banks are on your right and half mile or so to your left is the Pucks Hold. Goats and pucks were driven down the strand from Tinnabearna Gap by the poorer part of society to graze, as it was in days gone by no mans land. So in the harsh penal times and beyond people with no land took advantage of this crevical pasture. Darby Brennan's land in Tinnabearna had all its small fields or paddocks intact the way they were laid out probably for hundreds of years up to March 1992, but sadly people from the pale acquired it. And where once was a spot of great beauty it will soon be an eyesore, as modern type dwellings have been erected all over this beautiful coastline with its furze and rolling hills and O'Leary's Lock situated in their midst.

At the landward side of Poulders Banks there was a lime kiln in which limestones were burned to acquire lime for many uses especially for the white wash for the beautiful thatched cottages of that period. A bit more landward still standing but in a state of disrepair is Brennan's Pig Sty built with stones from the beach. They were heaped up in abundance where the river enters the sea at the entrance to the beach. Up hill a little further there is three circular objects built of stone and lime mortar. I think they were erected to build the hay rick on as there would be ample space for sheep to winter under them.

On November the 14th in the year 1813, seven fishing cots from Tinnabearna were blown across the Channel. Six of the cots with their crews were lost on the dark rocks off the Welsh coast in the early hours of November the 15th. The crew which manned a cot for John Walsh of Walshfield in Litter Parish (Kilmuckridge in Wexford County) dragged their nets as a sea anchor and landed safely in daylight on the 15th morning. The cots which fished off Tinnabearna's Strand were thirty footers and over - they could withstand a heavy sea fishing out flood tide and returning on the ebb.

Upwards on eight men manned these craft which had centre boards and sail (likely the leg of mutton). The crews came from as far away as Monageer. It's thought upwards on fifty people were drowned on that fateful night. They were buried without identification in the sailor's hole. There was a sailor's plaque hole in every graveyard especially, in Maritime Counties. It's where unidentified bodies were interred that were found washed up on the surrounding beaches.

Many seafarers remains were buried with haste and with little or no identification, as they could decompose quickly when in contact with the sea. There was at that time a fear that the plague or some other disease would break out.

Also situated here is a cilleen (see map) it's where the still born and unbaptised children were buried. It was also the home to "the Soldier Poet - Tom Ryan". His poems, an inspiration to many a man in a foreign clime - he was known as the "Cornal", he was a relative of mine on my mother's side.

Jack o'Leary of Tinnabearna furnished me with the information of this cilleen. He in turn obtained it from John Brennan who lived no more than eighty yards from it. John Brennan had great respect for this reverend spot as he assisted with many of the burials of these unfortunate infants. These children were usually brought to the cilleen by their fathers who would call to John and he would help with the internment and say the prayers for the departed. These funerals were always conducted at the dead of night. In 1894, 125 people used the mass path which went through a field known as the Gorrymore to the stile at the bridge. There were some beautiful names on some of the fields in this district such as the Narvine and the Golnaha.

THE HONEY BEE

*SHE LABOURS HARD EACH DAY MAKING HONEY
AND SOME WAX.
THE HONEY BEE IN HIVE OR TREE IS GETTING
HEAVILY TAXED.*

*SHE'S A VERY GENTLE CREATURE AND VERY FEW
DO UNDERSTAND.
THIS GLOBE OF OURS WOULD STERILE BE AND BARE
WITHOUT HER HELPING HAND.*

*SOME MEN OF LATE I CAN RELATE WHO THOUGHT WERE
RATHER CLEVER.
IT'S NITROGEN WENT ON EACH DAY AND NIGHT UNTIL
THE SUPER LEVY.*

*IF YOU GAZED UNTO THE PASTURES WHERE THE CATTLE
THRIVE AND ROAM.
THERE WAS NO SOURCE OF NECTAR FOR THE BEE TO TAKE
INSIDE HER HOME.*

*THE SPRAYS TODAY THAT ARE USED UPON THE MODERN
FARM,
THERE'S PESTICIDES AND INSECTICIDES BUT THEY SAY
THEY ARE NO HARM.*

*WEEDING NOW BY HAND IT SEEMS AN AWFUL BOTHER,
SCIENCE WILL SOLVE MANY'S A DIFFERENT PROBLEM BUT
WILL ESCALATE ANOTHER.*

*IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT THE ANIMALS NEED TO
PROPAGATE.*

*JUST LIKE THE HUMBLE BEE IS MEANT TO
POLLINATE.*

*SHE GOES UPON HER DAILY TASK MAKING VERY LITTLE
SOUND.*

*JUST LIKE A CIRCUM NAVIGATOR THAT SAILS THE OCEANS
ROUND.*

*SO YOU MEN OF SCIENTIFIC NATURE BREATHE A WHILE TO
PAUSE AND THINK.*

THE HONEY BEE BUT YOU CAN'T SEE IS CLOSE AT EXTINCTIONS BRINK.

*THE POISONOUS SPRAY THAT ABOUNDS TODAY WITH MANY
AN ILLNESS YOU COULD LINK.*

*THE WATER OF OUR SPRINGS OF OLD IS NO LONGER SAFE
TO DRINK.*

*SO COME BACK AGAIN TO NATURE'S GENTLE SIDE.
WHERE THE WAYS OF OUR FOREFATHERS IN ABUNDANCE THEY ABIDE.*

BRIEF INFORMATION ON THE HONEY BEE

The honey bee is a major wonder of nature. Her wax or honey cannot be made by man with all his ingenuity. It defies all chemical analysis and cannot be produced in a laboratory. Its scientific ingredients to this day are not understood. Bees wax is a product of their digestive process and the nectar of flowers is transformed into honey. The bees stomas must be one of the great wonders of nature. It can do all this work at an alarming rate and without little effort and as the honey is produced so is the wax secreted by glands. These press out flake after flake of wax under the abdomen of the bees body. The infertile worker bees transfer these portions of wax to their jaws and then mould them into a hexagonal honeycomb city starting from no foundation.

When a new queen is driven from the hive she takes from 20,000 to 32,000 escorts with her. Each of these will have eaten enough honey to last a few days so they can produce enough wax to start off their hexagonal honeycombed city.

Nature intended only one use for honey bees and that's to pollinate. Man gradually learned ways to steal the honey and the wax from the bees. The first men to achieve this were hermits and monks. Man gradually learned to take excess honey and wax from the bees. As time went on man discovered many uses for bees wax. Tailors, shoemakers, saddlers all used it on their threads as a means of water proofing their hemp. These threads became known as waxed end. It also makes fine candles. Its uses are beyond reckoning when it comes to the moulding of intricate ornaments such as medallions, artificial flowers and fruit. It's used for floor polish, furniture polish and boot polish.

It was also used in medical ointments and chewed for stomach ailments. Yet, the bee is the master of it. They can mix it with the exact proportions of pollen to make cell-lids porous enough to enable air to circulate around the unhatched eggs in the hive. Honey is one of the purest forms of syrup and has its own anti-bacterial layer. If stored in an open jar it can last for centuries. It has been found in the tombs of the Pharaohs in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt and it's as pure as the day it was left there in its open vessel. But, sadly there are sprays nowadays for almost anything and much of it is used for control of weeds in pastures and cereals from which the bees get its nectar, and an apiary could get contaminated easily in this manner. Nobody is sure when the first bees arrived in Ireland. It's widely believed that St. David of Wales sent a young monk by the name of Madonmac to Ireland and with him came the first swarm of bees. As the bees reproduced they were introduced to different locations around our Island by the monks and hermits that lived in the abbeys and monasteries. It was in 1851 that the Rev. Larenza Lorrain Langstroth made an amazing discovery. He found that if the bee-keeper leaves a space of a quarter to three-eighths of an inch between the sides of the inner hive and the frames the bees would not stick the whole lot together. This meant that the hive could be opened, the bar frames taken out and honey removed. (The ancient civilisation of Ballytracey Bog had a process much the same but it got lost in the middle ages). Queen cells could be killed off and swarming controlled. Prior to this the hive was smothered over a sulphur pit and the honey removed. A few swarms would be kept for production the next year.

In the hive there live 3 different types of bees: the Queen bee is the head of the hive. She is responsible for egg laying so as the hive will survive. She can lay more than her own body weight of eggs in a day. When a young virgin queen hatches out in the hive she flies off in a mate searching tour. She mates with several drones on the wing and then returns to the hive. The next time she leaves the hive she will bring a swarm of bees with her. When she is mated its for life, she lays her eggs between two types of wax cells on the honeycomb - the worker cells and the drone cells. The queen moves over the comb to lay her eggs until she comes to a worker cell where she inserts her abdomen in the cell and lays an egg and fertilizes it. This will produce a worker bee which is female. When she comes to a drone cell she also lays

an egg but does not fertilise it. This produces a drone bee which is the male of the species. The drone has no father as he is a product of the queen.

There is about 200 or so drones in a hive. Their main function is to mate with the virgin queen. After doing so they soon die. What's left of the drones around mid August when the swarming is over - the worker bees throws them outside the hive to die of hunger and cold.

The bees have been classed a ruthless colony of females. They do what ever governs their laws of nature for survival. The drones would be classed a liability to be kept over the winter months consuming food, whilst not contributing any. A swarm of bees in May is worth a cock of hay - a swarm in June is worth a silver spoon - a swarm in July is not worth a butterfly. But, on the other hand I have caught swarms in July fed them syrup and they have survived the winter and built themselves into a strong working hive.

The last line of defence at the Castle of Bagnal Harveys (one of the 1798 leaders) was the bees. They were placed at the entrance to the garden. When the Yeomen came to search the grounds of the Castle the head bee-keeper knocked down a swarm. The Yeomen panicked and when panic sets in all the swarms of bees are signalled by a buzz known to the bees that patrol and guard the hive, and soon the whole apiary is involved in driving off any intruder. It's known for a swarm of bees to sting a horse to death. In our modern consumer society, the safe disposal of garbage and other dangerous waste products has become a nightmare, if we take an example off the honey bee they are a marvel of economy and recycling. Let us take for example, the honeycomb. Beeswax, the building material of the honeycomb is a very expensive commodity. A honey bee needs a $\frac{1}{2}$ an ounce of honey and an undetermined amount of pollen to make just $\frac{1}{32}$ of an ounce of beeswax. The bees budget their beeswax. The way walls of the honeycomb's cells come together in threes at precise angles of 120 degrees forming a regular array of hexagons. This pattern lets the bees minimise the amount of wax they use, while providing a rigid structure in which to store honey, so an ingenious structure combines beauty of form with economy of function and it can be recycled.

Not all people can handle bees and therefore, extreme caution should be used at first until ample experience is gained to handle them without a veil or any other protective clothing.



Fishing scene at Morriscastle Strand

MORRISCASTLE STRAND

ON THE STRAND AT MORRISCASTLE IT SEEMS BUT
YESTERDAY,
SINCE WE LAUNCHED OUR FISHING COTS INTO ITS
SHELTERED BAY

WE'D STEAM UP TO RUSKE RIVER AND DRIFT UPON
THE FLOOD,
'T WAS THE BEST TIDE TO BE ON WHEN THE FISHING
IT WAS GOOD.

THEN OUR HERRING NETS WE'D CAST INTO THE
BRINEY DEEP,
AND TO SEE IF FISH WERE RUNNING NOW AND THEN
AT THEM WE'D PEEP.

WE'D DRIFT ON BY THE CUSH WITH OUR NETS BEHIND
US STRINGING,
IN THE CRISP AIR OF NOVEMBER WITH BALLYGARRETT'S
BELL A RINGING.

AT THE POINT OF BALLINOULART WE'D HAUL IN O'ER
THE LEE,
WITH OUR NETS OF SILVER HERRING FROM THE
EVER GIVING SEA.

THEN WE'D SOUTHWARDS TURN AND HEAD HER FOR
THE STRAND,
WITH THE NEIGHBOURS KINDLY WAITING TO LEND
THEIR HELPING HAND.

WITH HERRINGS IN ABUNDANCE THERE'S SOME WOULD
BUY A CRANN,
AND A DOZEN TWO OR THREE WOULD BE BOUGHT
BY EVERY MAN.

WITH THE EVENING'S FISHING OVER AND THE NETS STORED
IN HER HOLD,
THEN WITH STORIES GALORE WE'D LET THE PAST
UNFOLD.

THOSE DAYS ARE ALL GONE PAST WHEN THE NEIGHBOURS
LENT A HAND,
TO SHAKE THE SILVER HERRING ON MORRISCASTLE'S
SHELTERED STRAND.

SOME OLD FOLKS THEY ARE LEFT AND TURNING
RATHER GREY,
AND MORE HAVE SAILED AND ANCHORED IN HEAVEN'S
PEACEFUL BAY.

MORRISCATTLE - A BRIEF HISTORY

In the early seventies herring fishing was in full swing in Morristcastle. From November to the end of December it brought great plenty to the area when the casual or seasonal work came to a finish in the area for the winter months. Kilmore Fishermans Co-Op bought the herrings from the in-shore fishermen, the price ranging from £9 to £12 per box. A good box of herring contained about 24 to 26 dozen of average size herrings.

There were 9 fishing boats at Morristcastle at that period:

Matt Morrissey	(1)	Gathally
Tony Coote	(1)	Ballymacsimon
Aidan Murphy	(1)	Castleannsley
Watt Gahan	(1)	Killencooley
Eddie Sinnott	(1)	Castleannsley
Ned Kavanagh	(1)	Ballinlow
Murphy Brothers	(2)	Castleannsley
Jack & Tom Leary fished from Tinnabearna Strand.		

Many of the vessels were traditional cots or lighters. They were flat bottomed and were very manoeuvrable for launching as they had no keel and would sit upright on the beach when entering the water for launching. The boat on the other hand would lie on it's side and could easily be swamped by a wave. These cots were clinker built. A method of construction that has not changed since the Vikings built their long boats. The skinning or planking which surrounded the sawn frames or ribs was usually larch. Ribs stem and stern posts were of elm. These cots were two stemers as they could be launched or hauled by stem or stern. In the 1830's there were at least 14 cots fishing for herring out of Morristcastle and up to 50 boats fished for oysters, which were landed at Arklow. Most of the boats which took part in the oyster fishing were from the above mentioned port.

Coal was landed in Morristcastle in the 1830's. The cots or lighters would row out to the coal boat. The coal would be shovelled from the coal boat into bags or sacks, which were held by the crews of the cots. There was illicit liquor made in the locality at that period which the clergy called Satan's Buttermilk. It was said that a thimble full would make a horse drunk. On one occasion a bottle or so of their liquor was passed on to the crew of the coal boat. When the cots' crew saw how drunk the crew were they cut the bottom out of the sack and they ended up with a cot full of coal instead of a sack full.

The ruins of a castle can be seen on the right as you head for Morristcastle. About half a mile from the coast a tunnel was supposed to link this castle to Ferns Castle, but it has never been found. Such a feat in days gone by would have taken years to dig and many entrances would be needed to convey the materials to the surface. None of these entrances have ever been found. So I think this yarn might be a bit of a pisroque. The market for the herring was lost to some overseas buyer in the late 1979's and has never recovered. Some herrings are stored in freezers, but they lose their flavour. Salting was the method of preserving them in the old days. They were packed head to tail in wooden casks which were found on the beach. When the wind was in the east they were washed overboard from the sailing ships or from a wreck which would hit the notorious Blackwater Bank only five miles due east from Morristcastle Strand. The salted herrings would last all year round till the next season. Before eating they were tied in the river in a cage to wash some of the salt away. The method of cooking them was on a grid iron upon the open fire.

Herring fishing stays in the blood and when the season comes the urge is always there to challenge the sea for it's silver harvest of protein.

In many large estates of the mid 1950's the men that worked the land for the strong farmers were fed herrings all year round. They were tasty if eaten once weekly but herring for breakfast, dinner and supper for 364 days per year was a different story. This happened to a gardener who worked at Boltons of the Island Estate. Auld Bolton had a fishing craft at Morristcastle fished by Johnny Whelan. Needless to say the herrings were salted down in large wooden barrels and the order of the day for all but Christmas day was herrings, fried, grilled and sometimes boiled. Anyway the gardener went

away to sea and when he returned he went to visit Auld Bolton - I'm sure Tom you must have seen some queer sights in your extensive travels and would you ever relate to me the queerest one of them all. Well now say Tom "we were coming around Cape Horn on the African coastline when a stiff north easter blew up. Our ship had all her rigging in threads and at intervals the gunhals were at water level and 'twas at this point I was accosted by the queerest sight I have ever seen in all my years at sea". Well gracious me says Auld Bolton what on earth was it. It was a herring that stuck his head out of the water and in a hoarse tone says "would you ever be able to direct me to Bolton's of the Island".

Many wrecks are to be found along the coastline from Ballyvaldon to the Arklow lights. In the waters south of Tinnabearna lies the Abrafeldie and the George Elizabeth. Their names were handed down from one generation of seafarers to the other as they interfered with the drift netting of herring. These wrecks would tear a train of nets to ribbons should one be so unlucky to drift upon them. The dates when these ships went aground are long lost but some old shipping records might still have their dates and cargoes on their files. Off Ballyvaldon in the seventeenth century three families were said to be at the business of luring ships into the shallows. Then the natives would wait till first light in the morning launch their cots and take off any plunder that was of value. The method used for luring was a lantern which hung on the side of an ass. He was trotted along the irregular banks. This gave the crew of the ship the belief of a harbour beyond the light and a safe haven to ride out the storm in. Lore has it that the "Welcome Home" was one of these ships. Her bell hung from a sycamore tree outside the entrance to Litter's first thatched chapel (mentioned in another article in this book). The inhabitants of Ballyvaldon were always tight lipped about such happenings. The above named ship was said to be carrying tobacco, wine, brandy and a quantity of golden guineas. Workmen at work on the entrance to a certain house in the district of Killenchooley in the 1900's came across a large slab of stone. On seeing it the proprietor of the dwelling summoned them to halt their digging and suggested as it was nearing dinner time that they retire to the parlour and have a drink of brandy. The owner of the property had information that there was treasure buried there. The hospitality of the above mentioned household was not what it was on that day. After the drink of brandy they were told they were to retire for the rest of the day. On their return the next morning the slab had been removed for safe keeping -

according to the owner of the property it was an ancient mass stone whose whereabouts has never been found to this day. It's said that under this stone there lay a chest full of golden guineas but no one in the vicinity could prove it. Years went by and the relations of the inhabitants of the said household were not forgotten when the will was being made. Large amounts of money went to four relations in the parish of Litter. Extensive properties were bought inside and outside the parish. All have gone to their final reward with not the trace of a relative left behind them. Such money and ill gotten goods were always classed as bad luck in Ballyvaldon townland. Large rings of enormous proportions were said to be found not later than the early 1990's. They were said to have been plundered off the bodies of large seafarers who met their doom when their ship floundered on the shallows off Tinnabearna and Ballyvaldon. Most likely they were lured on a stormy night to meet with almost certain death. On one of these encounters the seafarers escaped death and swam ashore. On this occasion Parker's Banks were said to be red with blood. I'll leave it to the curiosity of the reader to make their own mind up on the nature of this encounter.

The inhabitants of this townland were known back in the eighteen hundreds as the "kill-em and ate-ems", and as one knows there is always a small trace of truth in the old folklore. Two objects were washed ashore off the above townland in the 1970's. They are now housed in the Maritime Museum in Arklow - one was a vase or drinking vessel. This vase measures nine and three thirty seconds of an inch in height. It's base is three and three quarters of an inch in diameter and it's mouth three and seven eights of an inch o.d. It's mouth is two inches in diameter. In all probability it was carved from native wood. It looks very much like Irish maple (sycamore). The vase was slender and around it's perimeter which was circular was carved a hand clasped around it in an upright position. The amputated wrist formed the pedestal on which the vase stood, but, the most important thing about this find was it had the name and the location of the person who had carved it. "Fred Christian, Pitcairn Island" which lies in the Pacific Ocean just below the Tropic of Capricorn. New Zealand is roughly 3,000 odd miles to the west-by-south west, Tahiti lies 1,350 miles to the west-by north west. This vase was most likely carved by a descendant of Fletcher Christians who was the master's mate on board the armed vessel the "Bounty". On the 28th April 1789 Christian led a mutiny against William Blight the Captain. The mutiny complete, Blight with his crew members were set adrift on a small rowing

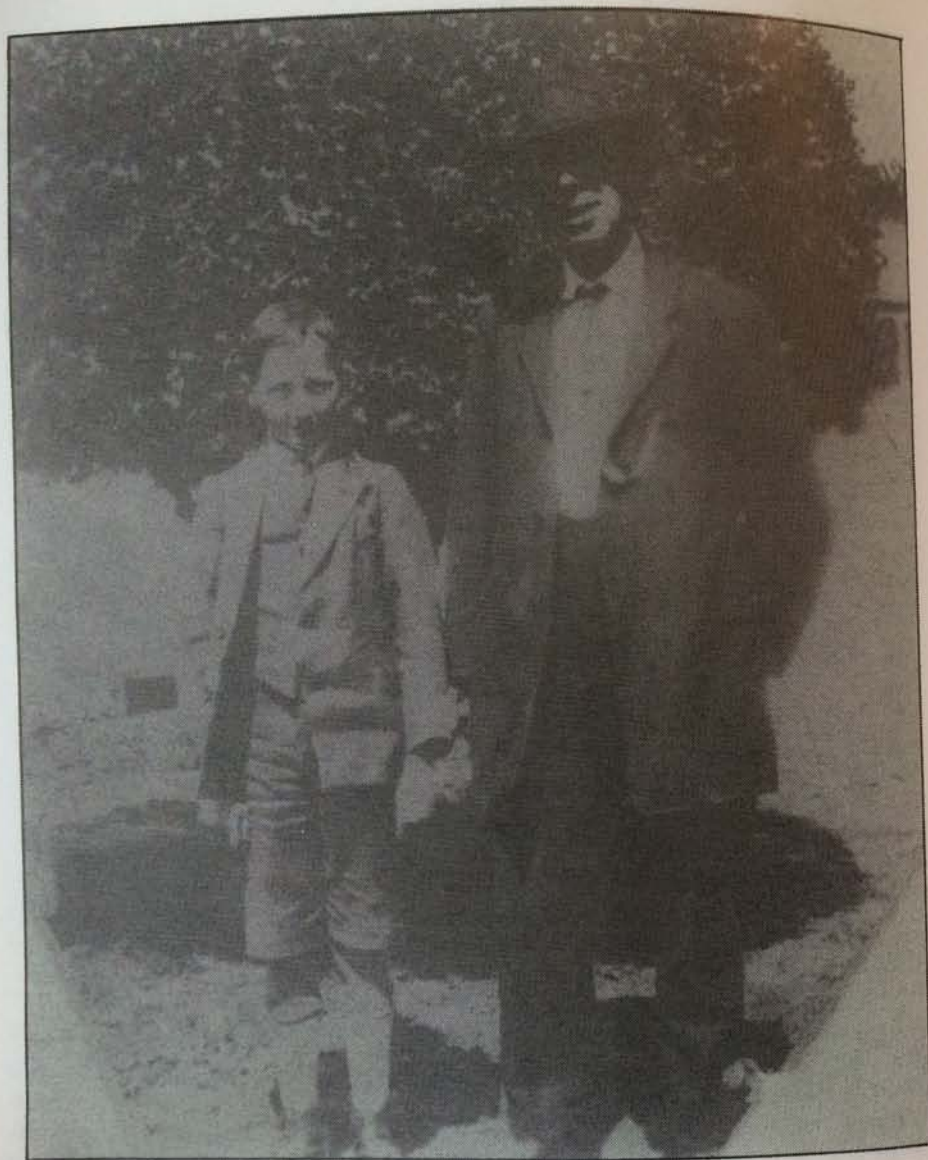
boat, the mutineers sailed for Tahiti where nine of them took wives. They sailed shortly afterwards out into the open Pacific to escape the British authorities. In due course they made landfall on a Volcanic tip known as Pitcairn Island. They landed provisions and items of use from the "Bounty". They then proceeded to set her on fire. The one thread they had with mankind and the developing world was severed for almost two decades.

The other find was a hand carved fish which was carved by Christy Warren - another descendant of one of the mutineers. Before I go any further may I add that these two objects are carved to perfection even though they were carved with no doubt ancient tools. This fish is nine and a half inches in length and three and three quarters in depth. It has a fixed fin on it's right hand side held in position by a slot headed screw. The teeth of this fish are protruding forward from it's jaws, again it looked to be carved from sycamore. On my examination of these two pieces at the Museum, I came across two bottles which are said to be off the ill fated emigrant ship "The Pomana", which was grounded on the Blackwater Bank on Wednesday the 27th April 1859, with the loss of 372 passengers and 39 of a crew. One of these bottles to this day is corked and full of champagne. I also came across a fish carved by a Wallace Warren which measures fourteen inches by four inches, and another one carved by Parkin Christian which measures fifteen inches by four inches - both from Pitcairn Island. I noticed that whilst all these objects were hand carved the names of who carved them were tapped into them by punches. All the letters had the same dimensions in height and width. These were probably a set of alphabetical punches which were taken off the "Bounty" before she was set alight.

The Arklow Maritime Museum is well worth a visit especially to seafaring stock or those interested in the days of the three masted schooners and square riggers. The word "square" does not refer to the shape of the sail which the ships carried. These sails were not square - it refers to the fact that this type of sail was set at right angles or square to the ships' keel. There are beautiful hand carved models on display. Something to catch everybody's eye - be they young or old.



*The Fairy Cobbler with
Moses Redmond*



*Joe Kavanagh and Johnny O'Brien of Ballinlow
- taken in 1927.*

Johnny was the last of the cobblers of Kilmuckridge

MOSES REDMOND AND THE FAIRY COBBLER

The event that I now write about is said to surely have happened in the remote hamlet of Ballyhubbock in Kilmuckridge, in the county of Wexford which is situated on the south eastern seaboard. A remote but still accessible area of ancient Ireland. There hailed from this remote townland of Kilmuckridge men and women of great fame. There were just to mention a few trades - coffin makers, bakers, cobblers, fishermen, musicians and some very fine story tellers and had it not been for them nearly all our past culture would have vanished into the realms of obscurity.

Well now in Kilmuckridge there is a place called Ballinlow Lane and it is on this laneway a cobbler by the name of Johnny O'Brien lived with his wife Bridget (in a thatched cottage). Johnny and Bridget had a small patch of land which was to become my homestead in years to come.

The hair would rise on the top of your head with the stories Johnny would tell you. He had many stories of Beansidhs, willie the Wisp, the Poccha and the little people who were the fairies (and I may add they were all true). incidentally, Johnny was a very old man when he expired. He is said to be the only man in the surrounding districts who cut oats with the Sickle, scythe mowing machine, binder and the revolutionised tractor combine harvester of class design, but this is not surprising as he lived well into his ninetieth year. Himself and his wife are fittingly laid to rest in the old cemetery in Kilmuckridge in the second grave as you enter the gate on the left hand side.

Now, I myself wouldn't be a great believer in Leprechauns or fairies, but I have done a small bit of research into this story I am going to relate to you now. It is about the fairy cobblers and their pots of gold. There was plenty of gold in Ireland in those days and sure the Leprechauns had plenty of time to extract it from the streams that flowed down from the hills where the gold

was concealed. It would take maybe five to six hundred years to fill a crock of gold, that is if you had a bit of luck on your side, because the fairy cobblers would only work in the early morning panning for the smallest pieces of gold, as it would be ground into sand after coming such a long way before it reached the beautiful hamlet of Ballyhubbock, in the shades of Ballinhowan. The crock of gold would be handed down from one generation of fairy cobblers to the next in line and you may be sure it was guarded with great reverence and security. So in the late eighteen and nineteen hundreds you could imagine your luck if you were fortunate enough to happen on the fairy cobbler and his crock of gold, and sure enough, there were people in our locality that did find them and it is hardly necessary to mention that the crock of gold was with them.

Well now if you were lucky enough to catch one of the cobbler fairies (Leprechauns) he would gladly offer you the gold he had inherited through previous generations in exchange for his freedom as these small men with their dress of green, white and gold, not forgetting their fine footwear decorated with gold buckles on the instep, could not bear to live in captivity. In actual fact if they were imprisoned from dusk to dawn they could collapse and die.

In those days as you probably know the ordinary people of our little country were very poor but in the majority of cases they would just get enough to eat. So, it goes without saying the people were always on the look out for the fairy cobbler but, mind you if you were lucky enough to catch him it was necessary to keep a firm hold of him for he was a master in trickery of every description. If he got loose at all he would vanish in the blink of an eye.

So now there is one instance I will unfold to you, as told by Johnny O'Brien, in the nineteen and fifties concerning a Moses Redmond who hailed from the townland of Ballyhubbock, which is joined by the Island Estate on one side and the Owenavarra river flows by it's borders on the other side, through the beautiful shades of Ballinhowan. It then pours it's tranquil waters into the basin in Courtown Harbour or Kiltennell as it was known in those days.

Well now, not to wander too far off the story, which is factual. Moses searched all his life for a fairy cobbler, for his lands were very wet and so he could not carry on an extensive type of farming. So he found it very hard to meet his repayment to one of the tyrants of the Irish people in those days, a landlord by the name of George Irvine. He searched high up and low down every morning for the cobblers as he knew that they must be around because there were three to four different societies of fairies in that district alone.

The search for the cobbler went on and on until one foggy morning in the month of May, Moses was on his rounds in search of his prey that had eluded him for the past half a century. At this stage in his life he was in his late sixties, a fine frame of a man for his age with an athletic looking figure. Of course, he wouldn't be too subtle as one could expect for a man of his age. Well now to make the long story short he was on his rounds to have a look at two cows he had in the field below the quagmire as they were due to calve any day within the week. They had to be watched closely as he could not afford to lose the calves as auld Irvine was looking for his stone of flesh which included his calves, some turkeys and geese in repayment for letting Moses work the small farmstead.

Well now what do you think in the dusk of the morning he spied tapping on his last with his miniature hammer but, the lord deliver us, it was none other than the cobbler Leprechaun. Moses studied the morning and took preface stock of the wind and would not make a move until all the elements were in his favour. So eventually with his face in the crisp early morning air, he tip toed across the quagmire and heavens above he seized the little man so hard by the scruff of the neck that he knocked the wind straight from his windpipe leaving the rich little man completely agasp for Moses knew very well that his chance would never come again in his lifetime.

Straight away Moses asked for the gold, the Leprechaun dilly dallied for a few moments trying one trick after another - like trying to persuade Moses that his cows were calving. Although Moses could not afford to lose the calves he was on the other hand having none of his trickery for Moses quite well knew that if he lifted an eye off him he would vanish like snow in a river.

So, after a while with great reluctance, the wee fellow gladly spoke up in exchange for his freedom. He would tell him where the crock of gold was buried. The Leprechauns brought him out to the middle of the field and pointed to one large buachlan that stood proud of the pasture by twenty four to thirty inches. He did so with great reluctance and said it's depth was at least 2 to 2½ days digging with shovel and spade. So Moses gladly released the cobbler as it is written down in the annals of ancient fairy literature that a Leprechaun that tells a lie will be banished from the practice of gold panning and other fairy activities, and sure one might as well be dead as that to happen.

All Moses had to do now was head for home and get 2 trustworthy neighbours to dig up his fortune with him so he would at long last be able to pay off auld Irvine and live the rest of his earthly days in comfort. But, before he headed for home he reached into his trousers pocket and took out his old rusty penknife and cut from the sleeve of his old red worn flannel shirt a sliver and carefully tied it around the stalk of the buachlan, as he was taking no chances for as I have said before these small men were fierce tricksters and as the fairies had raths in the Island woods, another across the Owenavarra in Malones of Ballinahowan and yet another in Newtown which is just across the road from Ballinlow Lane where Hughes shop stood.

Well anyway, off goes Moses home in a delightful mood whistling and addressing himself about his wealth. The only answer he got back was from the waterhen in the quagmire. Pressing down the latch he stepped into the kitchen and from a cupboard beneath the spy hole he took from it a bottle of uisce-beatha (whiskey) which was kept for special occasions. He made a fine strong mug of punch to celebrate his good fortune. The punch cut the morning air from his throat, then at once he headed for the two of his most trustworthy neighbours. If my memory serves me right I think it was Murphys and Hanleys. Moses told them the story and said he would gladly split the gold giving them one tenth each and keeping the other eight tenths himself.

So with shovel, pick and spade they headed straight for the field across the quagmire to dig up their fortunes. But to Moses dismay there were two hundred thousand buachlans in the four acres where their had been just a dozen or more and not alone that they were all identical in shape, flower form and size and a piece of red flannel was tied nice and neatly around each stalk.

So now, that's the true story of Moses Redmond and the trickster of a cobbler Leprechaun as told by Johnny O'Brien, cobbler and small holder from Ballinlow Lane, Kilmuckridge, in the county of Wexford.

THE WILDFOWLER

IF E'ER YOU ROVE WITH GUN AND DOG,
ON HILLOCK HIGH OR SEDGY BOG.

IF BETWEEN YOU AND NEIGHBOURING GUN,
A BIRD TAKES WING OR A BEAST MAY RUN.

THIS RULE YOU SHOULD ALL TIMES OBEY.
LET BIRD FLY ON AND BEAST AWAY.

ON STUBBLE, DITCH, BOG OR LEA.
NEVER SHOOT WHERE YOU CAN'T SEE.

"REMEMBER" ALL THE GAME THAT WAS EVER BRED.
WILL NOT PAY FOR ONE MAN DEAD.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WILDFOWLER

The opening season for pheasant shooting starts on November the first. Things are tense on that morning as one hasn't fired a shot at game since the end of January. On the morning in question I headed for Garrybran, which is on the borders of Kilmuckridge and Oulart. This morning was dark with a mist of rain advancing from a southerly direction. This in all probability wasn't going to be a good day for shooting as the scent would lie low to the ground. A crisp morning is by far the better for a good scent. With my two spaniels I headed for to check on the nearest marlhole. Many still abound in this area. This marlhole was of about a half acre in area, sadly it was drained completely dry in November of 1994. It stood at the white gates in the back avenue to the Island Estate. I peeped in over the rushes onto the marlhole, ten duck rose into the morning air. I singled out a pair to the left of the flock, fired my first shot, the pair still carried on. I did what many sportsmen do when firing at a pair of birds, my shot went between them. I next fired the choke barrell and a drake came tumbling down, the spaniels quickly retrieved it. I slipped him inside my shooting bag and quickly made myself scarce, as this fine piece of Irish property is owned by a foreigner who hardly ever sets foot on it. It's a total disgrace to see our fine estates being taken over by our wealthy overseas neighbours. The people who run these estates are not much better than the tyrants of landlords that owned them in the first place.

I then headed north-west into the townland of Killagowan. There were two fields sowed there with maize and I suspected that any pheasants in the vicinity would be feeding on it. My assumption was correct. The dogs picked up a good scent and darted into the maize, a cock pheasant of two to three years rose from the maize cackling as he did so. He was about thirty five yards when I downed him in a cloud of feathers. The first bird of the season and at this point I didn't care if I got another shot at a pheasant all day, but before I left the maize I had bagged two more fine birds and it was only nine forty five.

I then carried on for about half a mile, the dogs got on a good scent, they tore into the heavy cover of the ditch. Next there was a cackle and a fine cock bird crossed me at a seventy to eighty yards distance. I didn't fire - in some cases I've shot birds at this distance, but in the majority of cases they would carry on in flight. Even if wounded they would probably die of their wounds slowly and painfully - such fine sporting birds should not be allowed to do so.

I headed the direction he flew for. I knew he might be in a wooded area on the estate. In this wooded area there was the remains of an old rath. The springers gave tongue in the heavy cover. I peeped in through the cover and there sitting on the dyke of the rath was old reynard himself. I waited for him to take off as I did not desire to fire at him until he did so. There he lay and wouldn't stir no matter how loud the dogs gave tongue. It was thought that the old tyrant of a landlord who had lived there had been reincarnated in the form of this old cunning fox and was now being subjected to the same treatment he was pretty used to dishing out in his own heyday, which was of course shouting and demanding his servants to do as he ordered. Old reynard jumped from the top of the dyke with the dogs in hot pursuit. He ran straight across me, not more than twenty five paces away. I levelled the sidelock and fired the choke barrell. He tumbled over and never gave a kick. This fox I brought to the roadside and I later collected it. A taxidermist who lived in our locality later called for it that Sunday evening.

Next I crossed a tributary of the Owenavarra, and went into the townland of Ballyhubbock. When across the streamlet the dogs went into a knock of briars which were at least ten to twelve feet out into the pasture, which was well cropped after hay cutting. A rabbit bolted to my right, he was going like a swallow from the racket the dogs were making. I fired the open barrel and from the point where I shot him, he didn't come to a halt for at least another four yards. May I add a running rabbit flushed by a good cover beating dog such as a springer or labrador, is my favourite shot. It's even quite rewarding if you miss with both barrels and see him darting up the field until he finds cover.

I next went across to a quagmire. If my luck was in I'd get a shot at a snipe or two. The first snipe got up under my feet. I could see every feather in his coat. I fired both barrels, but to no avail. I never as much as put a grain in him. Snipe should be shot when they first rise as they are inclined to zig-zag when they get into full flight, and a kill is unlikely. Upwards on thirty snipe were in the quagmire. I got three kills out of seven shots.

I then crossed the road heading south east to Cremor. I spotted two cock pheasants picking near a river ditch on a stubble field. I circled the stubble from a westward position, as I knew these birds would fly a path back to the cover of the estate. I got out into a grass field at Ballascough and walked down to where I had seen the two birds. I worked my way down along at the back of the ditch. I had used a holly tree as a marker where I had seen the pair of cocks. Just before the holly tree I sent in both springers. Both birds broke from the cover of the ditch at my side. I shot them both. It has only happened to me on three occasions to shoot a pair of cock pheasants (I have shot pigeon teal and duck on several occasions). The first pheasant I shot was at close range and badly shot in my excitement of knowing there were two birds there. I fired at the first one too quick, but it was better than wounding him and leaving him to die from minor wounds. It has seldom happened to me that any type of animal or bird that I wounded was not retrieved.

In 1987 I was shooting in Monamolin in a turnip field, may I say that this turnip field possessed a phantom pheasant. I had shot at him on five different occasions, but the more times he got away the more I was determined to capture him. On the day in question I was shooting over a golden retriever, he was a bit fast, but a very good dog. I had bred him myself from an old shooting strain, I had when I was 18 years old. Their breed has now died out. The retriever hunted the pheasant up, he rose like a bolt from the turnips. I fired the choke barrell at him, as he was a bit out of range. I barely clipped him, but being a strong bird, he carried onwards to the sanctuary of the woodland in the Hallows with the retriever in full gallop after him. I waited by the bridge in the Hallows for at least 2 hours whistling and firing an odd shot to get the dog back. He returned in 2 hours 35 minutes after with the bird in his mouth still alive. This was a bird with fine plumage, 39½ inches in length. It is mounted at my homestead in Ballinlow.

Well I've wandered a bit off the track, anyway, I then headed in a north easterly direction and into the townland of Ballyvadden. Joining this townland and Newtown there is an old rath. It's outline is plainly visible. It's here that I potted my first woodcock of the season. These birds fly in from neighbouring countries at this time of year. Not many woodcock are residents of Ireland. I then hunted the stubble fields in Newtown. I rose a few hen birds and two young clutches of pheasant, the cock birds were just getting their colours.

I then headed homewards up Newtown Lane and across the road where Hughes shop stood, which was demolished in the 1980s. The reason for it's demolition to me is unclear as it was of sound construction. From this point my homestead is not more than four hundred yards southwards.

I hope this story will give the reader a small insight to a "day in the life of a wildfowler" in the countryside in 1990. A working knowledge of any firearm should be compulsory before a licence certificate is obtained from the department. Much the same as a full licence is obtained for a mechanically propelled vehicle. Guns are made for one purpose only "to kill", no matter what the target is.

SAINT PATRICK

FOURTEEN LONG CENTURIES AGO YOU LIT THE
EVERLASTING FLAME,
UPON THAT GENTLE RISE THAT'S KNOWN AS THE
HILL OF SLANE.

ON THE NIGHT YOU LIT THE PASCHAL FIRE IN THE
YEAR OF FOUR AND THIRTY THREE,
YOU GAVE BELIEF TO ONE AND ALL SO AS THEY
WOULD ALL MIGHT BE FREE.

IN THE LIGHTING OF THAT FIRE YOU TURNED A LEAF
NOT YET UNFOLDED,
YOU CHANGED THE HISTORY OF OUR ISLAND AND
ALSO OF THE WORLD.

UPON YOUR SCANTY VESSEL IT'S SAID YOU TOUCHED
AT WICKLOW BAY,
AND THEN YOU COASTED ONTO SKERRIES WHERE AGAIN
YOU STOOD ON IRISH CLAY.

THEN COASTING ON TO STRANGFORD LOUGH UPON THE
SOUTHERN BREEZE,
YOUR FIRST CONVERT THE CHIEF DICHU WITH
REVERENCE AND EASE.

'T WAS ON YOUR MISSION THAT YOU WENT IN THE YEAR
OF FOUR AND THIRTY THREE,
YOUR LABOURS WERE REWARDED THAT YOU LEARNT AT CECINA
UPON THE TUSCAN SEA.

*YOUR NAME IS WELL REMEMBERED FROM SLANE TO
BOTANY BAY,
FOR EVERYONE IS IRISH UPON SAINT PADDY'S DAY.*

INFORMATION ON SAINT PATRICK

Skerries was called Inishpatrick ever since Patrick stopped there for provisions on his voyage back to Ireland, to convert its people to christianity from their druidic and pagan ways. It was on Easter Eve in 443 that Patrick lit the paschal fire which gave warning and menace to the High King and his druids. It was a bold challenge, for a great Druidic Festival was in preparation and no man in Meath was permitted to light a flame till Tara itself should give the beacon signal and surely the night of that challenge was a turning point in the history of Ireland.

Patrick was a Briton by birth almost certainly of Welsh extraction. His father was an official of the Roman Empire. Patrick was taken into captivity by outer Barbarians of Ireland and placed to Herd Swine on the Slemish Slopes of Meath. He escaped and went to learn in the "College of the Lateran" at Rome and Cecina on the Tuscan Sea. Patrick spent almost thirty years in these colleges before he returned to Ireland to convert it's inhabitants. He founded his first church now known as Down Patrick where many years later he returned to die. Still after 14 centuries no man can despise Patrick for what he did on the hill of Slane that night, not so long after the Roman Empire crumbled. But from Patrick's teachings came the foundations of the great colleges and monasteries of learning in Ireland - such as Clonmacnoise commanding a fine view on the Banks of The Shannon, Glendalough in Wicklow, Monstraboice and Mellifont Abbey - incidentally which is the burial place of Dervoirgilla O'Rourke's wife who was abducted by Dermot MacMurrough. MacMurrough was banished from Ireland for this deed and it's him that can be blamed for bringing some hostile aid back to our shores.

Anyway Saint Patrick's Day falls on the 17th day of March. The day of his death was either the 8th day or the 9th morning of March, and no scholar down the ages could verify this. The 8th and 9th day were added together and it gives us his feast day which is the 17th day of March.

AN AUTUMN THOUGHT

*IN SEPTEMBER'S EVE BY MURPHY'S RUINS,
PICKING NATURES WHITE CUPPED MUSHROOMS.*

*THE EASTERN SUN IN GOLD IT GLEAMS,
AS I SPY THEIR HEADS AMONGST THE GREEN TRAININS.*

*WHEN SURROUNDING HOLLOWS ARE DENSE WITH FOG,
THEY'LL GROW IN THE HILL FIELD BY THE BOG.*

*THEY'VE GROWN UP THERE SINCE TIME BEGAN,
IT'S SOD UNTURNED BY THE HAND OF MAN.*

*IT'S THERE YOU'D SEE THE QUAIL AND MINI-GOWER,
AND THE GOLDEN GLOW OF THE IRIS FLOWER.*

*I VIEW WITH SADNESS THE OLD BOREEN
IT'S NOW A MASS OF GREY AND GREEN.*

*'T WAS HERE LIVED JOHNNY AND BIDDY OF THE BOG,
WHO KEPT THE HEREFORD COWS AND THE LANDRACE HOG.*

*AND TROTTED THE JENNET OFT DOWN THAT LANE,
SPORTING HIS FINE GREY FLOWING MANE.*

*THIS NEIGHING BEAST PLOUGHED MANYS A ROOD,
WHILST NOT IN HIS FRANTIC GARRON MOOD.*

*HE DREW BLACKTHORNS FROM THE OLD QUAGMIRE,
TO KEEP AGLOW OLD BIDDIE'S FIRE.*

*HE DREW THEM BOTH IN RAIN AND SQUALL,
I SEE HIS FORESHOW ON THE WALL.*

*THE JENNETS HOUSE THE OLD COW BYRE,
ARE NOW LAID LOW IN THE OLD QUAGMIRE.*

*THE ORCHARDS GONE IT'S FRUIT SO GRAND,
'T WAS PLANTED THERE BY JOHNNIE'S HAND.*

*IN THE AUTUMN'S NIGHT WITH THE EARTH SO STILL,
'T WAS WHERE OLD GRAINOIG ATE HIS FILL.*

*THE HOUSE WHERE THE ROOSTER MADE HIS STAND,
NOW MINGLES WITH SURROUNDING LAND.*

*AND BOTH JOHNNIE'S AND BIDDIE'S FINE SLATED HOOD,
LIES IN THE MARLHOLE WITH THE RUDD.*

JOHNNY AND BIDDY MURPHY OF THE BOG

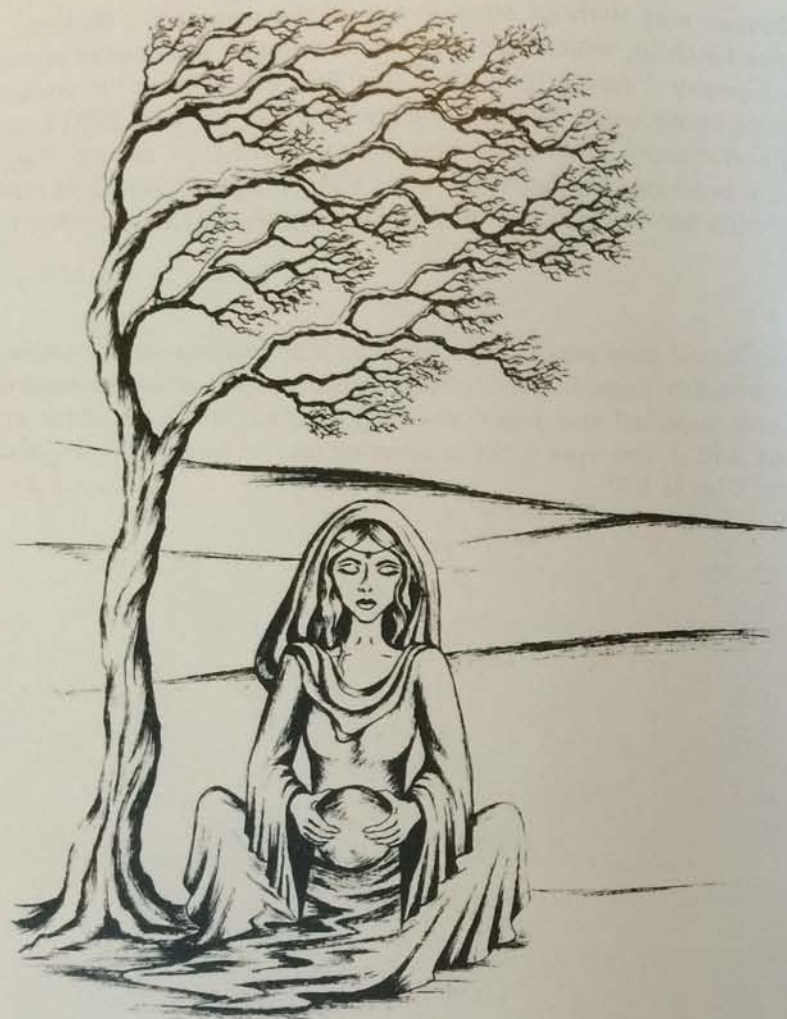
Johnny and Biddy Murphy lived on the outskirts of Ballygarron Bog (the townland of the grove). They had few dry fields on their farmstead which extended far into the bog. This farmstead was as one could say very good for the soul. It was seldom without the harmony on nature. The mini-gower waterhens abounded. Quail, pheasant, duck, geese, teal, widgeon, pigeon, rabbit, hare and of course their predators - foxes, badgers, falcons, owls and hawks. It had an abundance of song birds just to mention a few, bluetits, robins, finches, thrushes, jays, blackbirds, wrens and many more varieties too numerous to mention. I shot many species of game bird in it's bogs and quagmires in the late 1960's.

Johnny kept a well cultivated garden with all the necessary vegetables to keep the household going. His apple trees were always well limed around their trunks and their branches sprayed with bluestone to kill mosses and other types of diseases. He also went to the creamery - his mode of transport was cart and jennet. This jennet was as the lad says "a ball of smoke". At all times he'd be kept well fed with oats and hay - 'twould be only bawnog hay (it would be cut off the same pasture for years on end.) but it would have clovers, cowslips, daisies, docks, thistles and many more types of weeds in it. They were full of different minerals - unlike today's pastures. Animals nowadays have to be given mineral substitutes as artificial nitrogen kills many weed bearing minerals in our pastures, notable clover.

Johnny's dairy herd would comprise of three or four cows. Of course Biddy made butter and the wheaten loaf and the blackberry jam was very delicate to the palate. She kept quite a few hens and 'twas with the egg money that she bought the groceries, mind you the shopping list of the 60's was much shorter than the ones going today. It would be 1 lb of lard, 7 lbs of flour, 4 lbs of wheaten meal, sugar, rice or tapioca, a bit of bacon and a few rashers, a gallon of lamp oil and 3 or 4 candles. Just the necessity, the rest was farm produced. The field as you entered the farm was noted for it's mushrooms.

Their flavour was without equal in any of the surrounding districts. They made fine ketchup, which was stored in the dresser and used all year round. In my memory I never remember this field being tilled. It produced in abundance most years beautiful mushrooms. In the year 1993 I saw the tractor and manure spinner moving across it giving it a pasting of artificial poison. It produced no mushrooms in 1994, no clover adorned it's meadow. Just nothing but broad leaved grass. Once again man stands in the way of nature.

This field is now over producing something that's not wanted. It's mushroom spores probably dead forever. They graced peoples tables for hundreds of years and supplied the heart warming ketchup that was shook on the potatoes and if one was lucky a sliver or two of bacon. All this is called progress - "or is it"?



Came November '15

The Fortune Teller

THE DEVIL'S PRAYER BOOK

IN WINTER EVE'S LONG LONG AGO,
THEY CAME ALL O'ER IN FROST AND SNOW.
WITH BLACKTHORNS FROM THE OLD QUAGMIRE,
THEY SAT ASTRIDE THE OPEN FIRE.

AND MANY'S AN EYE WITH AN AILING LOOK,
GLANCED TO THE TABLE TOP AT OLD NICK'S BOOK.
THAT ANCIENT SPORT WAS A REVEREND GAME,
'T WAS PLAYED THOSE DAYS BY THE CANDLE'S FLAME.

WITH THE SLEEPING DOG AND THE PURRING CAT,
THE COBBLER OLD WITH HIS TATTERED HAT.
THE EMBERS GLOWED ON THE OLD BAKE PAN,
AND 'T WAS ON THE HOB THE CRICKET SANG.

THEY WERE WELCOMED TO OUR OLD THATCHED HIVE,
TO PLAY IN A FRIENDLY FORTY FIVE.
THOSE WERE THE DAYS OF THE PLAYING CARDS,
AND THE FRIENDLY CHAT OF THE LOCAL BARDS.

THOSE OLD FOLKS TRUE THEY WERE SO KIND.
AND RESTING NOW IN A FAIRER CLIME.

THE DEVIL'S PRAYER BOOK

In years gone by it was the custom in manys a townland in rural Ireland to attend different households to participate in a card game. Thirty and forty five were the most common games played. The players would play for a few half pennies and it was classed a social night out and was not to be missed as if you were absent your vacant seat would be filled by a spectator, and as long as the spectator wanted to stay there, it was his privilege to do so. There was manys a row and in some cases blows were struck which inflicted severe injuries (hence the pack of cards were called the devils prayer book).

To pass away those long winter evenings there was also draughts, rings and by no means least fortune telling. In the townland of Ballinlow there was an old lady who was uncannily accurate at this trade. She would read the tea leaves that were left in the bottom of the mug after the tea was consumed. She predicted manys a match, good or bad luck, emigration and many others. She told manys a one then they would depart this life. She even predicted her own departure. Here are a few of her signs that were taken very seriously back in the 1920's up to the 1950's. Now read on! If the teas leaves are in the shape of a star success will come in abundance, especially, if the person involved is of good nature. Rings could mean marriage, or the hope of full time employment with a good salary thrown in. Semi-circles, one was after breaking their word and could not be trusted. Crosses now this is a very serious one, these usually represented a loss of some kind. A cross beside a rectangular shape of leaves meant a funeral was close at hand for the person whos fortune was being told, or for someone in the immediate family. The death could be at least 3 years off, if there was no moisture left in the bottom of the cup as this signified tears would soon be falling for the mourning of a loved one. Triangles, an untrustworthy person would soon be on their rounds selling inferior merchandise. Rectangles were signs for fishermen it meant an escape from drowning in the event of a boat being capsized.

Birds indicate that there is mail on the way with a small amount of revenue inside. In many cases a letter from England or America from a son or daughter who had no other choice only face emigration. They nearly always contained a £10 note or \$20 bill. Lines stand for distances. A crooked line meant a voyage by boat. Two straight lines meant a journey by train. An oval, this had to do with musicians, especially, fiddlers and the 10 button melodeon players of that era. There was a win for them at the next Feis. This did not apply to teetotallers as the exponents of these instruments were not to enter such a competition without consuming a quantity of alcoholic liqueur as this particular fortune teller believed that no fiddler or boxplayer could play their sweetest airs when completely sober. She said that the strains of music and body would harmonise and be of one if the brain was subdued and relaxed.

The small farmers would turn up in abundance as they needed fine weather for at least 3 to 4 weeks if they were to save the harvest as so much depended on it. The thatch for roofing, grain for bread and liqueur making chaff for mattress making and for feeding farm animals and fowl. If the farmer had in the bottom of his tea cup a complete circle with rays projecting from it's centre with the longest rays projecting from him, the weather was going to be good for at least 6 to 9 weeks. Bad weather was prophetsied by the shape of a fish much like the shape of a brown trout which frequented the steams of that era, and were easily caught when there was a fresh in the streams (a fresh is an addition of water to a river by means of a shower of rain). It makes the water in the river swell and flow faster and when in doing so it tears mud from it's banks which contain worms and it's at this period that trout are easily caught by line, hook and maggots. In my research of this article I found only a few signs that the fortune teller used. So if the reader knows any more perhaps he or she would be kind enough to let me know.

THE DIVINER

HE CUT IT BOTH CAREFULLY AND NEAT,
A UNIFORMED FORKED WILLOW ROD.
AND STRODE FROM EAST TO WEST UPON
THE DARK GREEN EARTHEN SOD.

THE WILLOW WAS HELD IN GENTLENESS BY
THE FEEBLE ARMS OF THE V,
AS HE STRODE THERE BACK AND FORTH O'ER
THE FERTILE SOD OF THE LEA.

I STOOD THERE ENCHANTED AWAITING, SOON MAN
WILLOW AND WATER WOULD MEET,
THEN THE STICK POINTED EARTHWARDS JUST
INCHES IN FRONT OF HIS FEET.

HE HELD THE STICK ONCE AGAIN IN HIS IRON
LIKE GRASP,
THEN SKIN ON WILLOW AND HAND SOON STARTED
TO RASP.

THE ROD STOPPED WHEN ITS HEAD STOOD FACING
THE GROUND,
YOU'VE A GOOD ONE HE SAID THERE, IT'S THIRTY
FOOT OR SO DOWN.

THE WATERS FLOWING DOWN THERE IN PLENTY
OF STOCK,
BUT BORE TEN OR MORE FEET WHEN YOU COME TO
THE ROCK.

FOR WHERE THERE'S WATER THERE'S LIFE,
THAT PUTS GROWTH IN THE SOD,
DON'T TAKE EVER FOR GRANTED DIVINERS OR
THEIR Y WILLOW ROD.

THEY CAN FIND THIS LIFE GIVING LIQUID IN THE
BARRENNESS OF PLANES,
THEY'RE THE SAVIOUR TO MANY WITH THEIR
Y WILLOW CANES.

THE ART OF DIVINING

Divining is as old as humanity itself. The diviner or dowser as they were sometimes known can by means of a forked willow or hazel rod locate minerals such as water and oil far beneath the surface. As for water the diviner walks from east to west to locate the spring as they run from north to south. Once the spring is found he then can follow it to the nearest point accessible for boring. The plunger drilling apparatus is used in marly soils as the borehole has to be lined with a metal liner. They are welded on in sections of 8 or 10 feet and driven into the ground. The cutting bit of the drill is guided by the liner. The liner is driven down as far as the rock. The borehole should be drilled 10 or 15 feet down into the rock to insure an ample flow of water. A compressor drilling rig is used for places where rock is just a few feet below ground level, as it is necessary to line down to the rock formation. Diviners have found water in the barrenness of regions, even in the Sahara Desert. At times down a mile in the desert sands.

Divining only works for a very small percentage of people. If you ever see a diviner at work, ask him can you have a try with his divining stick. As you might have the gift that very few possess don't hesitate to ask as the majority of diviners are compatible people, and should be very amused to see if a new recruit has been discovered. Water can be found by drilling anywhere if you go deep enough, but the spring might not supply an ample amount of water. It might even go dry when the springs are at their lowest (October). The majority of well drillers nowadays have mechanically operated machines so the process is not very laborious, and in many cases will call on a diviner only as a last resort. Whereas he should be called on first.

In the olden times the diviner was every bit as important as the drilling team. As the men operated a hand winch it was a very laborious job and the sooner water was hit the better. The team of drillers and the person for whom the well had been found would head for the nearest watering hole (the pub) when they could guarantee an ample amount of water for the household and its out offices. Very few people had a hand pump in their yards back in the early nineteen hundreds, but to this day the wells that were dug by hand are still

giving the water of life in abundance. Their old hand pumps removed and in their place an electric one fitted.

Pete Redmond of the Boira Bog left his divining skill to Jim Crowe of Crowscort, Ballyedmond and Jim left it to Edward Kavanagh of Ballinlow. Whenever called on there is no fee, but the diviner would usually get a £10 or £20 note. 'Twas known as porter money. Plumbing went hand in hand with well drilling and if a wet day came, the drillers would head for the pub, where they would soon run out of money. One publican when he'd see them coming would say "here comes Redmond, Crowe & Co., plumbers and bummers".

MOTHER AND CHILD

THIS SQUALID PLACE OF BUILDING RUINS,
WITH ITS CHOKING SMELL OF DIESEL FUMES.
THE LANDLORDS HERE ARE STAUNCH AND GREEDY,
UNBEARABLE RENTS THEY CHARGE THE NEEDY.

SIXTY QUID THEY CHARGE FOR A ROOM IN A HOUSE,
WITH NO COMPANION BUT A VICTORIAN MOUSE.
THE RATS THAT FREQUENT THESE RUN DOWN SHACKS,
HAVE WHISKERS GREY WITH HUMPS ON THEIR BACKS.

IN THE HEDGEROWS HERE ALL DAY THEY LIE,
AND TAKE NO HEED OF THE PASSER BY.
THEY SEEM AT EASE AND QUIET CONTENT,
INSIDE THIS DISMAL JUNGLE OF CEMENT.

WHILST WALKING DOWN BY OLD RATHMINES,
I SPIED A SIGN OF THE MODERN TIMES.
IN A BLANKET BY A MOTHER'S BREAST,
A SIBLING SLEEPS THAT'S SCANTILY DRESSED.

WITH MOTHER'S HANDS A WARMING TOES,
SCURRYING UP AND DOWN THE RAT RACE GOES.
BIG BLUE EYES HAD THIS FINE BOY,
UNDIMMED BY POVERTY WAS MOTHERS JOY.

LYING THERE IN RAIN AND SQUALL,
THIS BABE FOR NOTHING IT COULD CALL.
A POOR START TO LIFE'S LONG STEM,
JUST LIKE THAT NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM.

THIS BABE HAD NOT BUT MOTHERS LOVE,
AND A STARRY SKY FOR ITS ROOF ABOVE.
IN A STABLE OUR SAVIOUR SHELTERED FROM A STORM,
WITH THE BREATH OF THE BEASTS TO KEEP HIM WARM.

MANY KINDLY BENT AND PAID THEIR DUES,
SO AS SHE'LL GET FOR HER BABE A PAIR OF SHOES.
THERE'S NOTHING MORE LEFT FOR ME TO SAY,
SURE A POUND OR TWO WON'T GO ASTRAY.

FOR A MOTHER AND CHILD THATS HIT HARD TIMES,
ON THE FOOTPATH THERE IN OLD RATHMINES.

MOTHER AND CHILD

It was on Friday evening, the 30th September, 1994, that I saw this lady with her child sitting down on the footpath at Rathmines - begging for a few bob to cloth and feed her offspring. Needless to say, she was subject to the lowest form of humanity. On the other hand luck was with them. They were healthy and reasonably hefty looking. Much more needs to be done in our society to combat such poverty. This lady just wanted the bare necessities of life for existence - food, clothes, shoes and shelter.

Crime stems from such cases. This child wasn't getting much of a start in life and probably never will. These happenings are quite common in our large cities today. Elimination of such poverty should be number one on our government agenda.



The hedgehog in our orchards of old

AN GRANNOIGE - THE HEDGEHOG

*IN HIS WARM SNUG NEST OF MOSS AND FEATHER,
HE HEARS NO SONG ALL WINTER LONG
OUR THORNY PROPHET OF THE WEATHER.*

*ON THE 2ND OF FEBRUARY FROM HIS NEST HE CREEPS,
THERE'S NO HUM OF THE BEES,
BUT IF A SHADOW HE SEES,
HE CRAWLS BACK IN AND IN SLUMBER SLEEPS.*

*FOR IF ON THAT DAY IT IS BRIGHT AND CLEAR
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE OF TWO WINTERS IN ONE YEAR.*

*OUR THORNY FRIEND ALTHOUGH BEING SMALL
IS THE MOST ACCURATE PROPHET OF THEM ALL.*

*IN THE LONG MAY NIGHTS WITH HIS FRIENDLY GRUNTS,
FOR WORMS AND SNAILS HE SOLITARY HUNTS.*

*HE HUNTS AT EASE WHEN THERE'S NO ONE ABOUT,
WITH HIS THORNY COAT AND HIS COCKED UP SNOUT.*

*AND IF IT'S ON HIM THAT YOU HAPPEN TO STALL,
HE'LL ROLL UP INTO A SPINNEY BALL.*

*HIS EXISTENCE IS TRACED TO THE PLEISTOCENE TIME,
THIS MAMMAL OF OLD THE PORCUPINE.*

*HE HAS NO ENEMY BUT MAN ALONE,
AT NIGHT TIME WHEN OUT ON HIS FRIENDLY ROAM.*

*THOSE MACHINES INVENTED BY HENRY FORD,
KILL THOUSANDS YEARLY ON THE ROAD.*

*THIS FRIENDLY CREATURE WITH ITS SNORTING SOUNDS,
WILL VISIT NEXT YEAR ON IT'S NOCTURNAL ROUNDS.*

Henry Forde was the first automobile engineer to use the production line system.

In 1876 Cologne Mon August Otto made a four stroke internal combustion reciprocating piston, four-stroke motor, the principle of this motor is used in almost every motor car to this day.

FACTS AND LEGENDS OF GRANNOIGE

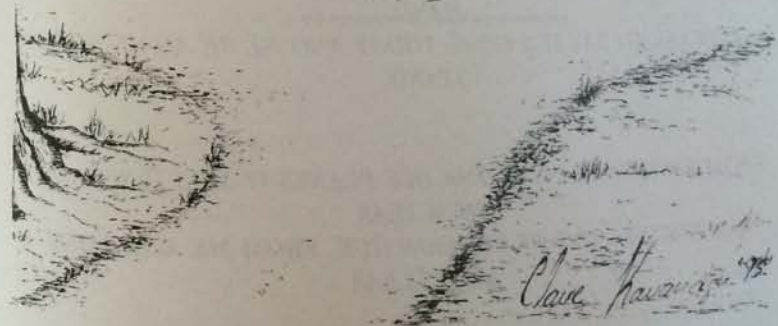
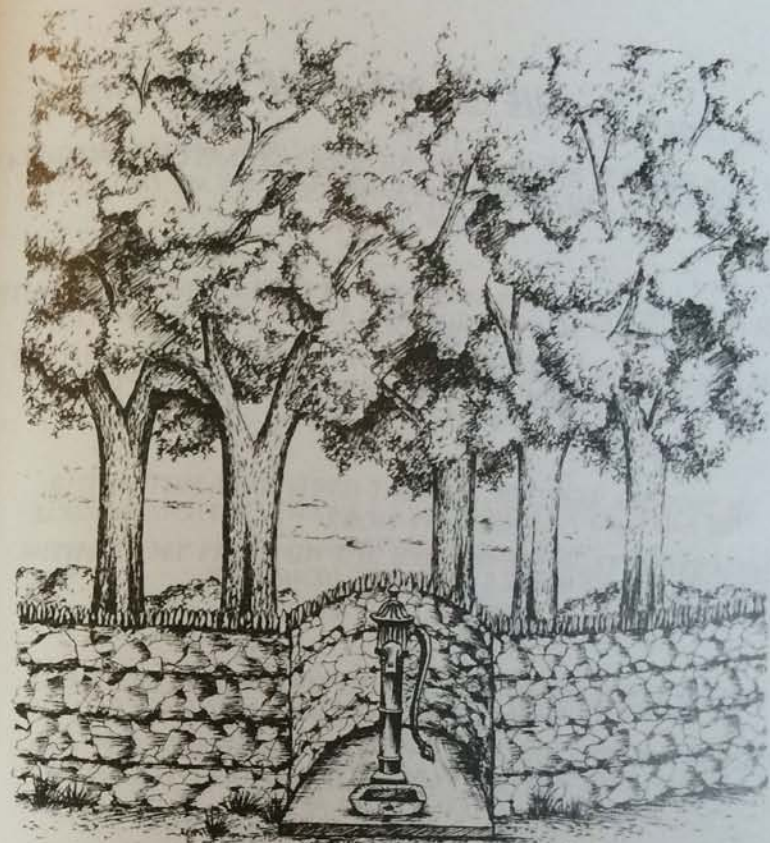
The hedgehog is one of our oldest living mammals (*Erimaceus Europaeus*). He has survived since the pleistocene period. He hibernates throughout the winter season. If he comes out of his hideout on the 2nd day of February (which is Candlemas Day) and sees his shadow, he'll go back into hibernation, for at least another six weeks. If this day is bright and clear, there is sure to be two winters the coming year. On the other hand if he sees no shadow, he comes out of hibernation as he knows that the weather will be fine for his coming ventures.

He will roll into a spinney ball when annoyed and with his spikes sticking out in every direction, no predator can break through his coat of armour.

He is a nocturnal creature moving around at dusk. His main diet is slugs, worms, snails and moths. If a hedgehog is spotted around ones grounds a saucer of milk should be left out. If you keep a close look out Grannoige will appear and quickly lick it up.

He is the subject to many a legend. One legend accuses him of sucking the cows as they chew their cud lying down in the field at nighttime. It's said he'll suck a portion out of each of the four teats, getting the start of the milk flow which is creamiest, thus leaving the dairy maid of long ago with an inferior butter.

He is also said to be seen in the orchards late at night crawling out on the thin branches at the top of the apple trees shaking off the sweetest apples and transporting them to his hide-out. He will feast on them for weeks before going into hibernation. When in hibernation his body temperature drops dramatically and his heart beat slows down and it's there he will remain until next Candlemas Day.



*The village pump and its
surroundings at the Ford*

THE VILLAGE PUMP

I'VE PROUDLY STOOD NEAR UPTON'S WOOD UPON MY GRANITE STAND,
BOTH RICH AND POOR IN DAYS OBSCURE ON ME DID REST
THEIR HAND.

THE FOUNDRY MEN DID POUR MY STEM LONG CENTURIES
AGO
AND COBBLERS OLD DID SOAK THEIR SOLE IN MY PUREST
WATERS FLOW.

THE FAIR DAYS TOO THEM WELL I KNEW, I WATERED HORSE
AND CATLE,
THE COMMON CAR ITS WHEELS AJAR, I'VE HEARD ITS
FRIENDLY RATTLE.

MY GRANITE TROUGH OF ANCIENT STOCK IT GLITTERED IN
THE DAY,
CHISELLED OUT BY HAND IN MY NATIVE LAND ENTICED THE
CHILDREN FOR TO PLAY.

MY QUARRIED WALL I OFT' RECALL BUILT BY THE MASON'S
HAND.
NEEDLESS TO SAY IT'S GONE TODAY AND NE'RE AGAIN WILL
STAND.

FROM EASTERN RAINS OF FAR OFF PLANES IT SHELTERED ME
EACH YEAR
AND ENGINES TOO OF CRIMSON HUE, FROM ME ALL TIMES
KEPT CLEAR

I KNEW SO WELL THE TYRANT'S BELL RANG OUT AT BREAK OF
DAY,
NOW THE TYRANTS GONE HE'S JOINED THE THRONG BURIED
DEEP BENEATH THE CLAY.

WITHOUT A SOUND LYING IN THE GROUND THEY ENSLAVED THE IRISH
CRAYTHER
THEY LOOKED SO SMART IN THEIR CROYDEN CART BUT NOW ARE
ANSWERING TO THEIR MAKER

BUT IN THIS YEAR (1992) THEY ME DID STEER AND TORE ME
FROM THE CLAY.
WITHOUT MY PRIDE ON THE BARE ROADSIDE, I FOREVER MORE
MUST STAY.

GONE ARE THE WOODS OF OAKEN BUDS THAT ONCE O'ER ME
PROUDLY SWAYED,
AND THE CHILDREN TOO IN THE MORNING DEW THAT AROUND
ME OFT TIMES PLAYED.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FORD AND KILMUCKRIDGE

The Ford is a village in the parish of Kilmuckridge, situated in the Barony of Ballaghkeen County of Wexford about one Irish mile distant from the Irish Sea on the old coast road from Wexford to Dublin. The Ford stands on the River Ruske (the River of the Marsh) which enters the Irish Sea about half an Irish mile distance due south from Morriscastle Gap.

The parish of Litter represents the old parishes of Killincooley, Kilmuckridge and Monamolin. Killenchooley gets its name from Cill An Cuil the church of the Angel. The parish in reality being divided into three angles. The old church was dedicated to Saint Mokeen. Litter is situated in the old parish of Killincooley and was formed in 1789.

Kilmuckridge was dedicated to St. Mochnoc and in the Irish martyrologies there is mention of St. Mochnonc of Cill Mucraise whose feast day is on February the 11th.

Monamolin was a foundation of St. Moling Bishop of Ferns who was successor of St. Aden the founder and first bishop there. Thady Grannell was parish priest from 1700 - 1715 he registered himself in 1704 as Parish Priest of Killenchooley residing at Tinteskin.

In the year 1770 Father Redmond aided by his parishioners built a thatched chapel at Litter and near his death in 1789 was presented with a bell which came off a ship by the name of the Welcome Home which was wrecked off Ballyvaldon in the year 1766. This bell which hung from a sycamore tree near the chapel called the worshippers to Mass. Michael Lacey and his

parishioners rebuilt the chapel in 1796 and used the stones from the derelict church at Killincooley which was 45 feet in length and 18 feet in breadth (internal dimensions).

During the 1798 Rebellion Father Michael Leacy and 834 people of the parishes of Kilmuckridge, Kinnincooley and half of Monamolin signed an oath before Lord Mountnorris of alliance to his majesty King George III and to the succession of his illustrious family to the throne promising to use all possible ways to keep good behaviour, to repel any riot or secret conspiracy and to inform against any man keeping arms without being registered. Two protestants from Monamolin (Monamolin means the shrubbery of moling) Robert and Issac Earle were killed in the 1798 rising.

James Sinnott - Parish Priest with the aid of his parishioners in the year 1842 enlarged the church and built a parochial house beside the church. It was demolished in 1992.

In 1916 a curate's house was built to house a Reverend T. Moran. The funds were raised from a Feish held on July the 25th, 1915.

In 1797 not a trace of the church at Killincooley survived. Adjoining it's site is situated St. Mokeens Well at which "Patrons" were held on September the 28th till 1825.

Lying eastward from Kilmuckridge protestant church is a Moat which is positioned on the summit of a hill. Morriscastle near the sea front was a former stronghold of the O'Morochoes. North west of Morriscastle is a forth called Dundrum with 2 raths. In the year 1641 Turlogh O'Morchu was lord of Dundrum.

Good soil abounds in the area which has an acreage of 2,500 acres. It's a loamy soil resting on a layer of marl. This marl was the chief manure for the soil in the early 1800's it was drawn to many neighbouring parishes and as far away as Marshalstown. The holes left after the digging of this marl varied in size depending on the quality of marl they possessed. In time these holes filled up with head water from the surrounding terrain and became a flourishing habitat for wildlife. Many species of wild fowl frequented them. Rudd, eel, tench and carp abounded in their waters. They were also the

habitat for the disappearing otter. Sadly these marl holes are now but a few. They were filled in by men of short sightedness, and many more are being used as dumping grounds for refuse and effluent.

The Ford was in days gone by a beautiful thatched hamlet of clay walled dwellings with their half-doors painted in yellows, greens, reds and blues. Some fine photographs can be seen of them in the Public Houses of the Village back in the early 1900's. There abounded in this hamlet, men and women of nearly every trade that was needed to keep this close knit population self sufficient.

In the early 1900's The Ford had a bakery, 2 cobblers, 6 seamstresses, 2 tailors - who not only made suits and other garments but also made the mizzen and leg of mutton sails for the traditional Morriscastle cots or fishing craft that plied the coast from the Point of the Raven to within 2 nautical miles of Arklow Port. They fished both tides. These crafts were very strong in construction and ranged from 23' to 36' in length with beams of 7' to 11'6". They had larch floors, elm or oak ribs and the outer skinning was deal or red larch. In the parish at that time 6 carpenters were at work, 1 cabinet maker, 2 wheel rights, 1 cobbler, 1 coffin maker - who made his own coffin, 2 blacksmiths, 2 nailers, 47 fishermen, a resident midwife, and many a man that could turn his hand to doing almost anything from the fixing of watches and clocks to making a tea-drawer from start to finish.

The village could boast a population of 5 to 6 hundred on fair days which were held on January the 1st, June the 24th and September the 29th. The fair days are no longer an event in the village. When they were discontinued it did away with many of the fine characters that frequented them. Tom the Bee was one of those such characters - a fine exponent of the harmonica but his trade lay in his voice, not as you might think for singing but for the buzz of the Gad-Bee. He'd imitate the Gad-Bee with precision and he'd always be there for the fair on the 24th June when the cattle jobbers had the day dealing done and the stock impounded or tied to a sign post. It's then Tom would appear on the scene. The jobbers would gladly give him adequate revenue to go to the nearest Inn so as to get him highly intoxicated for if not he was sure to cause a stampede as the cattle were terrified of the Gad-Bee. It had a very painful sting.

Jim the Farmer although he hadn't an acre to his name (Jim Murphy) was his proper title. He could make up verses as quick as a dog would trot. I once heard him giving a rendering of Kilmuckridge, composed I should say to perfection:-

KILMUCKRIDGE

K FOR KILMUCKRIDGE THE HOME OF THE GALE, OUR HOSPITALITY TO
STRANGERS WHO NO ONE PREVAIL.

I FOR THE ISLAND THE NAME OF THE HOUNDS RUNS OVER THE HILLS
AND DOWN BY THE GLENS.
AND KEPT THE RED FOX FROM TAKING OUR HENS.

L FOR OUR LADIES WHO ARE HARD TO PLEASE,
THAT THEY MAY KNEEL DOWN AND REPENT ON THE KNEES.

M FOR OUR MAIDENS BEAUTEIOUS AND FAIR
THAT THEY MAY NEVER FORGET TO PERM THEIR HAIR.

U IS FOR YOU WHO HAVE STRAYED AWAY,
AND THE VERY BEST WISHES WE SEND YOU TODAY.

C FOR OUR CINEMAS TWO OF THE BEST
BRING ON THE CROWD AND WE'LL DO THE REST.

K FOR KILNEW OUR ONCE FAMOUS BAND,
CONDUCTED BY MYLES WITH ONE WAVE OF HIS HAND.

R FOR OUR RACES THAT ARE HELD ONCE A YEAR,
AND BRING US GOOD LUCK WITH A PINT OF LETTS BEER.

I THE AUTHOR, THE YOKE AMONGST YOU I LIVE,
IF I HAVE BEEN TOO PERSONAL I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE.

D FOR OUR DEAR ONES WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY,
AND LIE IN THE CHURCHYARD BENEATH THE COLD CLAY.

G FOR GYMKHANA A SPORTING VARIETY,
KEPT UP BY THE HUNT AND THAT TYPE OF SOCIETY.

E FOR THE END THAT COMES TO US ALL AND WHEN IN THE PARISH
GIVE US A CALL,
AND BRING US A CROWD TO FILL OUR DANCE HALL.

Many artifacts that came from this area can be seen in the County Museum in Enniscorthy. Such as spear heads in flint, urns and many objects in different metals.

It was on this south eastern seaboard that early man thrived amongst it's fine hunting grounds and streamlets abundant with trout and eel. Ample evidence abounds of these early settlers, they can be traced well back into the stone age. Urns, axe heads in bronze and stone used flints, food vessels can be viewed in many Museums in Ireland and abroad. In the year of 1842 a hoard of objects was unearthed in a sandpit at Ballyvadden not more than 1 ½ miles distant due west from The Ford. They were about 40" beneath the surface. They consisted of 2 axe heads, a knife and a gouge. They were unfinished and made of bronze. They were inside a crude pottery vessel with a cloth placed over the mouth of the vessel. They can be viewed in the National Museum. Not far from this find there stands today a ringfort in the townland of Newtown. Many food vessels from that by gone era have been unearthed in the vicinity of Killencooley. They are housed in the County Belfast and National Museums.

A cinerary urn was found in the townland of Ballintubrid on the extreme outskirts of Kilmuckridge. In Blackwater parish in 1974 this type of burial was in use from about 800 to roughly 1200 B.C. Inside this urn was a broken battle axe, a quantity of cremated bones and some used flints. It's dimensions were at it's mouth 10½, its height 13½, its base 4.25. It is on display in the National Museum. This burial was known as a Cist. The burial chamber was made up of 4 stone slabs, 2 longer ones formed the sides, 2 shorter ones the head and foot. The remains were laid inside in some cases a food vessel, flings, knives, a quantity of cereal accompanied the vessel and in many cases a broken stone axe head. It was then covered by a large slab of stone. These early settlers must have been believers in reincarnation or some type of here-after. The broken axe head was a symbol of peace and when one died or was killed in conflict the battle axe head was broken and interred with the remains. If one is quarrelling with ones neighbour another way of saying let us be friends is "we'll bury the hatchet or axe", as it was known in by gone days.

The local dance hall was erected to the memory of the Gales of the Parish. It was the local Ballroom of Romance and there was many a match made there in those by-gone days of chivalry.

A creamery was established in 1896 and it was the life's blood of the small farmer who milked from 3 to 7 cows. It employed upwards of 5 people when in full production. The mode of transport for delivery of milk in the 1960's was by horse and cart or ass and cart.

The Ford is not Kilmuckridge as many people might think. Even the Wexford County Council think so. The Ford should be on the signposts. If you take a look at survey maps it clearly states the Ford. Whereas, Kilmuckridge is situated about half an Irish mile distant from The Ford due South West on the coast road to Wexford town. It's here the church of Ireland and it's burial grounds stand.

Within Ballaghkeen Barony there was to be found 7 stone crosses, 3 of these were in the parish of Kilmuckridge. They were all situated in the townlands that bordered the sea front. They stood on the coast road from Curracloe to Courtown Harbour. One of these crosses has survived to this day, 1994 and it's site is not more than 200 yards to the west of Kilmuckridge's old graveyard. This cross is carved from granite and is 40" in height and 21" in width at its extremes across the arms.

In the townland of Killincooley there is a locality known as Cros-na-stouc and it's here that a small stone cross was found as far back as the 1600's. Up to the 1950's there were 2 fine crosses - the first was situated near a fence on the western side of the road from Kilmuckridge to Ballygarrett at Dundrum. This cross was made of granite and was skilfully engraved on the front and back. The second cross was approximately 210 yards further on - this one was very highly engraved with intricate Celtic designs. The field in which it stood was known as the Stone Field. All those crosses date from the end of the twelfth century. These crosses were said to mark Church boundaries. The townlands where they stood were Ballyvaloo, Killila,

Ballyvaldon, Killenchooley, Kilmuckridge, Donaghmore and Ardamine. The Kilmuckridge cross has been shifted at least twice. Where it's original site was is anybody's guess. Its present site is partly in a lay-by and it quite safe from modern motorisation. It's decorations are hard to trace with the human eye, as it has many coats of whitewash added. If it had been exposed to the elements perhaps its artistic decor might not be traceable today as its face is exposed to the South East rains and winds that come with force off the Channel.

An ancient church land boundary existed between Newtown which was known as (Ballintaggart) and the townland of Ballinlow. This boundary was known as St. Mogue's Bush. This field is said to have remained unchanged since the 13th century. Anyone of the inhabitants of Mid Ballinlow will show you this ancient boundary.

The Ford has changed alot over the past 20 years. It's originality is gone forever. It's pump was removed in 1992 - it was the last original object standing in the Village. It's on a new site up the road from the village. There was another pump at the T-Junction to the roman catholic church. It was taken down and removed some years back. These cast iron hand pumps are a creation of beauty and have been in operation for a century or more. They should be left on their original sites and be fitted with a hose through their body, turned into their spout and a stop cock fitted into the back of them. When hooked to the mains supply they can send forth this life giving liquid of H O from their spouts. That's what they were designed for in the first place. They are assets to our villages and crossroads.

The Ford is well worth a visit to the tourist, especially in the summer time. It's natural asset is unspoilt and unchanged - which is it's miles of golden beaches at Morriscastle. All this area around Kilmuckridge and surrounding districts is steeped in history. Cist burial graves have been found. Ringforths or raheens abound in the district. These were the sites of early man and his impoundment for his animals to keep them safe from the wolves and wild animals.

These were pagan times and the people worshipped the sun, moon, stars and many other natural things. They had a great respect for one and other and ones rights could not be taken away as a fight to the death was expected if ones territory was invaded. The heads or chiefs of these little settlements would engage in conflict, thus only one would be killed. A new chief would be chosen and the settlement would carry on to thrive as usual.

Barley grain was found in a vessel unearthed in Killinchooley. There were two small bowls with the find. They are in the Belfast Museum (Artifacts from this historic area are on display in many locations through Ireland, England, America and Canada. The finders of these objects in the 1800's were the people who tilled the land and did all the laborious work to ensure survival. The finds were handed over to people in authority. In many cases they were not from the locality and they could do what they liked with these priceless treasures and that is the reason many are scattered around the globe in different locations. Early man ate a healthy diet of sea fish and the areas near to the coast were usually frequented by these early settlers.

There are some burial chambers of enormous proportion to be found through Ireland. These are known as Dolmens. Only two are to be found in Wexford - one on Bree Hill the other at Ballybrittas. None of these sites have been excavated and should remain so. All the cap stones of these Dolmens are inclined towards the east. They were used as altars to the then Sun God Crom. It was on this eastern inclined stone that the sun first shone and its said that sacrifices were offered up to Crom on these cap stones at sunrise. These Dolmens are the tombstones of the Stone Age. Under eachone that has been excavated human bones, weapons and stone tools have been found and that is evidence enough that they were erected in the Stone Age. It is possible that these monuments of Stone were the last resting places of kings, chiefs or some one of equal importance to the settlement. In some cases as many as four skeleton remains have been unearthed from their burial chambers and it means that they were used over and over again probably by the same family or maybe by successive nobles. The uprights of these Dolmens are up to 12 feet in height. As many as five uprights were placed in the ground and a cap stone weighing from 18 tonne to an excess of over 100 tonne would be placed over them. The method of placing this stone on

top remains a mystery. Some of these Dolmen may have been constructed around the Kilmuckridge area and it is possible they were broken up for building stone or maybe sunk over a period of time. If a large rectangular stone is spotted in the area it could well be the last resting place of our ancestors. It is my opinion that future generations will find objects of historical importance around this locality. If anything is found it should be treated with great care as they are priceless relics of antiquity and should be preserved for the future.

We should be forever upholding our ancestors. They were a noble race of people. It is a great task nowadays to rear a child from birth to their teens even with the technology that is available in today's modern world. Our ancestors on the other hand had no such amenities. They had to rear their young in unbelievable conditions. Wild pigs, dogs, bears and wolves abounded in the Stone Age, but somehow this great noble race survived through all types of hardships. They had little shelter although the seasons were inclined to be slightly warmer in that period. Nevertheless, it was a mammoth task. Any of their belongings that may be found should be handed to the County Museum at Enniscorthy - as they should remain in the county.

Early man worked with nature he never destroyed it. It is about time we took example from our ancestors

In the locality there was 1 Cilleen. These patches of land were never interfered with. They were places of internment for the unbaptised children who died at childbirth. The Catholic Church forbid these little infants burial in consecrated ground. To my opinion this was harsh judgement carried out by men with no understanding whatsoever for the mother and father of the child. The child in the first place never got a chance to be baptised as it was stillborn. This practice is now discontinued. It should never have been accepted by the people in the first place.

Killincooley is part of the parish of Kilmuckridge as is Monamolin. Saint Moling is said to have given his name to Monamolin and he was supposed to be a brother of Saint Aidan of Ferns. Saint Mokeen's Well is situated near the old graveyard in Killincooley. Mokeen is said to have been a brother of Saint Kevin of famed Glendalough. Kilmuckridge Church once had 3 galleries and beautifully carved altar rails to suit the altar. It was a master piece but sadly, it was torn down in the 1970's and thrown out. It's organ of bellows and pipe design was also taken down and I don't know its whereabouts. There were some very fine scripted grave slabs in the quarried tiled floor of the church. Sadly they were sledged in, filled with rubble and asphalted over where the graves were. After the asphalt cooled it rose in a dome over them. The theory was that the pressure in the void graves was greater than above them so the slab stones were sledged in, filled with rubble and asphalted over.

LIES AND TALES

*THEY'RE TOLD IN THEIR THOUSANDS WHITE LIES
AND TALL TALES.
FROM THE HEADLESS HORSE RIDER TO TRAINS
WITHOUT RAILS.*

*JUST STAY NOW A WHILE FOR TO PONDER
AND THINK,
THEY ARE A DELIBERATE EXAGGERATION FROM
TOO MUCH TO DRINK.*

*THE LIAR ALL TIMES ON SOMEONE WILL
REFLECT,
HIS LYING TECHNIQUES BEING OF VERBAL
EFFECT.*

*HERE'S A FEW I'LL RELATE BEFORE THAT
I GO,
THEY HAILED FROM THE TOWNLAND OF
SWEET BALLINLOW.*

LIES AND TALES

Tall tales and white lies are a part of Irish folklore. They are a slight exaggeration of a great deed done better. The telling of a good tale can enrich peoples lives as there is no medicine as good for the body as laughter. One feels more relaxed after a bout of laughter. Our lungs take in more oxygen and it's as if our bodies react to this extra intake of energy.

It's usually stories of local events embellished and totally exaggerated that make up these yarns or tall tales. Be it of sporting or toiling events some people had an art of telling them. One comes to mind - The All Ireland Champion himself Art Robinson. His last resting place, Kilnamanagh Church Yard. It's there in that churchyard that he made up some of his greatest lies or tales. Art tricked around at many trades and was a master of many if not all. On one occasion while Art and Jack Earle, r.i.p. were digging a grave for a neighbour, says Jack to Art, "I heard John Mangan was a great man with the half hundred weight". He would do anything he liked with it. I heard it said he'd go outside the front door of his home in Ballinahask, throw the weight over the dwelling and run around to the back and catch it before it hit the ground. "A great feat indeed", says Art. But I'll tell you one I heard from a man in the fair of Kilmuckridge. "It's said that Joe Quinsey, the blacksmith, from that region in his young days could shoe a jennet galloping, and now you'd hardly think that possible". Art continued the conversation and mind you it would last for hours.

There is the one about the man that went down to his next door neighbour for a loan of his single barrel shotgun and a cartridge, as the crows were landing on his small patch of corn, eating it and trampling it into the ground. Anyway off he sets to the corn field, sneaked upon the crows and discharged the contents of one cartridge into the quite large flock. And he going home passed the neighbour's home, he left in the shotgun and said a word of thanks. "How did you get on" says the neighbour, "Begor I shot 99 with the one cartridge". Ah! says the neighbour, "why don't you make it 100?". "Well now do you think I'd make a liar of myself for the sake of one auld crow", says he.

The yarn about the grandfather clock. It's said it was over 4,000 years old. Someone standing by said there is no clock that age in the world. Or if there was how could you prove it. Well now says the first man "it could be much older than that. It's that old that the shadow of the pendulum has worn a hole in the back of it's case".

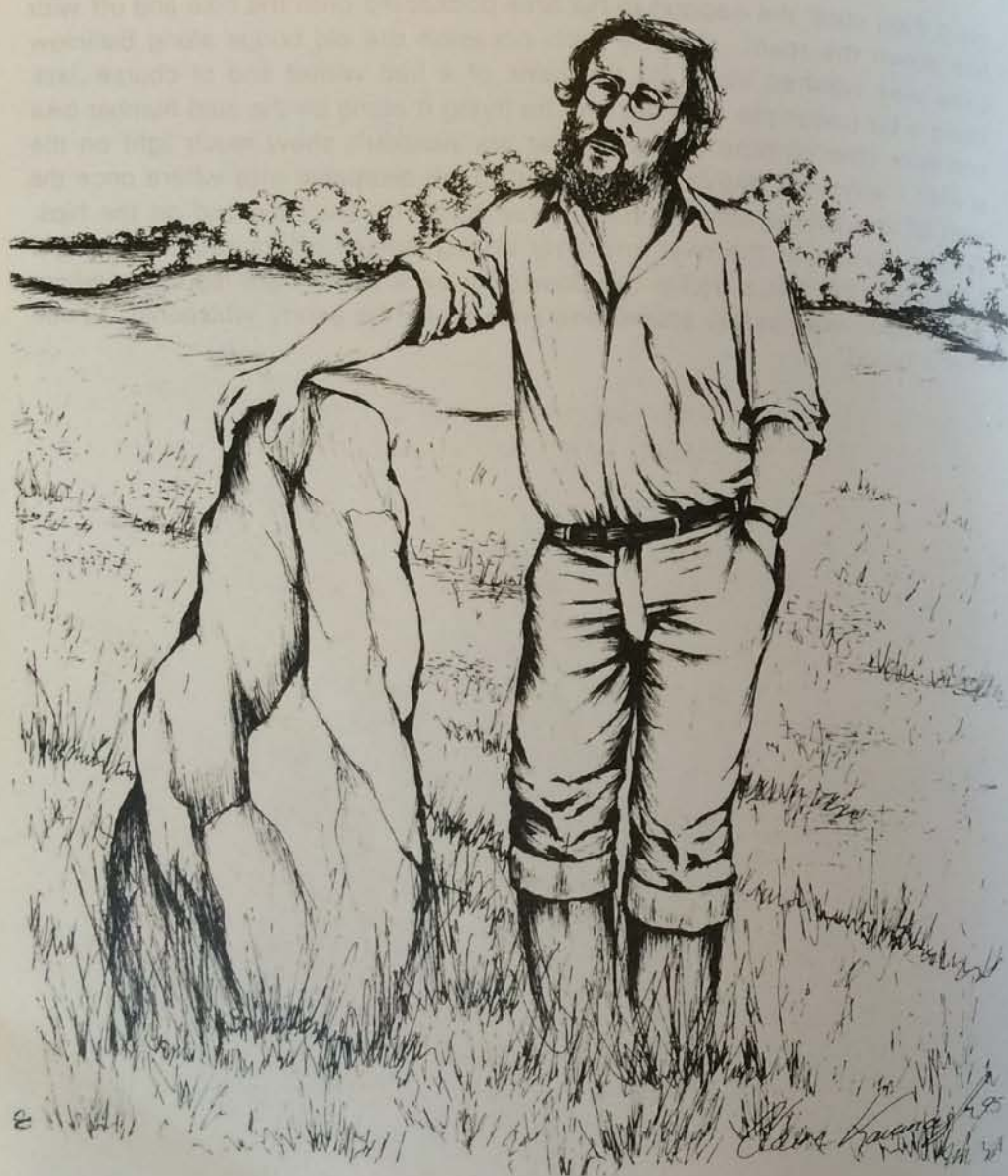
A friend of mine who was in England for a period of time told me he used to take a short cut to his place of work through the local graveyard. This morning he heard roaring and shouting from the direction of a freshly dug grave. On inspection he found a wino of about 45 or 50 trying to climb up the sides. On seeing my friend the wino says "will you get me out of here I'm perishing with the cold", "and sure it's no wonder", says my friend, "sure aren't you after kicking all the clay off yourself".

These are only a few examples, but they can add colour and laughter to nearly any type of conversation. The Irish are very quick with their wit and will give an apt answer instead of an accurate one. Although the two are known to them.

Myles Kehoe's premises is in Enniscorthy - a fine porter and ale house, and it was asked in a crowded conversation who owned the largest licensed premises in Enniscorthy. "Miley Kehoe" came a shout from the crowd and "why is that" says the questionnaire. The answer came quickly. "For when you go into the bar you can see Miles behind the counter".

It was Jack Riley from Ballinlow Lane who was a very bad man to sleep (Jack is interred in the Old Graveyard at Melina). He was travelling carpenter by trade - when he'd finish work in the evening time it's then he'd take a lep onto the auld humber bike he possessed and off with him to the nearest inn or shebeen in the area in which he was working in. He'd drink a liberal amount of whiskey or poteen at the inn or shebeen but on heading back to his place of employment where he would be dossing for the night in the barn or hay loft he'd always get a naggon of whiskey or liqueur of equal strength.

He'd then stick the naggon in his arse pocket lep onto the bike and off with him down the road. On one such occasion the old bridge along Ballinlow Lane was washed away by the rains of a bad winter and of course Jack being a bit under the weather and he flying it along on the auld humber bike and sure (the corbine lamps of that era wouldn't show much light on the scene) - anyway, didn't the bike with Jack disappear into where once the arch of the bridge stood. He got cut badly on the face and on the hips. Getting up out of the river and after drying himself off as good as he could he thought he felt a trickle run down the back of his right leg under where the naggon was safely stored and with a sigh he gently whispered "I hope that's blood".



Standing stone at Ballatracy Bog

BALLATRACY BOG

*MANY'S A TIME I'VE SPENT WITH GUN AND DOG,
IN FAMED OLD BALLATRACY BOG.*

*WHERE RUSHES SEDGE GREW RANK AND LUSH,
WITH BIRDS A SINGING IN THE HAWTHORN BUSH.*

*PLANTS OF DIFFERENT HUES AND GREENS,
APPEARING IN ITS DAINTY STREAMS.*

*IT'S FAR FROM THE BOG I ONCE WELL KNEW,
ITS ACRES NOW ARE JUST A FEW.*

*KIND MEMORIES IT SOMETIMES BRINGS,
WHEN I THINK OF YOUR ONCE SPLENDID THINGS.*

*YOUR LUSHFUL MARSH, YOUR OLD DUCK POOL,
YOUR LITTLE STREAMS SO CLEAR AND COOL.*

*A RUNNING DOWN FROM YONDER HILL,
WERE FILLED WITH TROUT AND SILVER BRILL.*

*WITH WALLY GAHAN I'VE WALKED THAT BOG.,
FROM END TO END WITH GUN AND DOG.*

*HE WALKED THAT BOG WITH PRIDE AND JOY,
AS IN DAYS OF YORE WHEN HE WAS JUST A BOY.*

*IT'S NOW GREEN ARABLE LAND LYING MOTIONLESS AND STILL,
WITH GREEN CROPS PLANTED A TOP OF EVERY DRILL.*

*SO LETS STOP THE RAPE OF OUR LOVING LAND,
AND WORK WITH NATURE HAND IN HAND.*

HISTORY OF BALLATRACY BOG

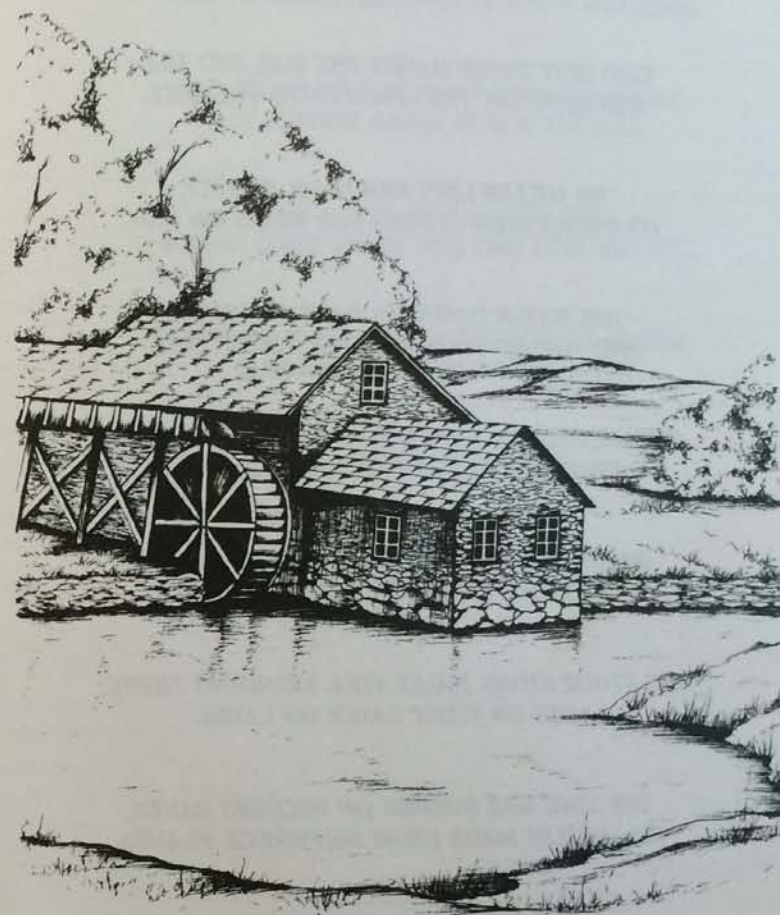
Ballatracy Bog ran from Barmona Bridge to Dan Kavanaghs of Monagrena (The Sunny Bog). I remember it fully intact as a haven for wildlife of many different species, notably pheasant, duck, rabbit, hare, snipe, rail, quail and all our song birds were there in abundance. It was a valuable asset to civilisation in general, but now sadly only a few acres of it remain intact. A place of great interest. There were many laneways leading to the Bog and this supports the theory that there was some type of thriving industry carried on in it in previous times. It's said that a candle factory was in operation in it back centuries ago. A rare species of rush is said to have grown in it and from the centre or pith of this rush the wicks of the candles were made. A large apiary is said to have surrounded the perimeter of the Bog and using wax obtained from the bee hives they completed the process of candle making.

Wally Gahan introduced me to this Bogland and wild life habitat. Its presence in the landscape was like an oasis in the desert. Wally was born just yards from the Bog. His homestead was virtually on it's perimeter, in the townland of Barmona. He knew every inch of it from top to bottom and it's from him I acquired my knowledge of this beautiful habitat. It's history, it's culture and it's lost civilisation.

I think future generations should be considered when the rape of such Bogs are taking place. Grants should be given to leave them intact not to destroy them. They can be destroyed in a matter of months. Whereas it takes millions of years to create them. So in years to come we can explain to future generations how our forefathers used nature, but never destroyed it.

There were two natural products in a natural environment making a produce that was needed in every household of that period. The rushes also made thatch for the clay walled houses that dotted the Bog. The bee hives were also spun from the rushes and were said to be circular in shape. Marl was used atop of the bee hives in the form of a capping. It's perimeter standing proud of the hive and this would act as waterproofing in the winter.

The ribs of the rush hive were made from sally or hazel, bound together at the joints by sedge, which was very strong when seasoned. The rushes were placed horizontally and vertically on this frame work until the hive was complete. The entrance was sawn out when the hive was complete. Hives of bees were left at strategic entrances to the Bog and in some instances when an intruder entered he stumbled on the hidden hive and was almost stung to death. So the bees were also guardians to the people who used them, but never blackguarded them.



Claire Kavanagh '96

*The water mill and
its natural surrounding*

THE WATER MILL

GOD REST THOSE HANDS THE SOIL DID TILL,
AND BROUGHT THE GRAIN UNTO THE MILL.

NO MILLER LEFT FOR IT TO ATTEND,
ITS DOORS BEEN CLOSED FOR YEARS ON END.

THE WATER DOWN ITS RACE DID STEAL,
AND TURNED ITS FINE PITCH PINE WHEEL.

WITH NEPTUNE'S POWER THAT WHEEL IT ROLLED,
TO GRIND THE FLOUR FROM GRAINS OF GOLD.

WHEN SPINDLES TURNED WITHIN ITS WALLS,
'T WAS LIKE THE HARPS IN TARA'S HALLS.

ITS STOUT STONE WALLS STILL STANDING THERE,
LIME ON STONE LAYER ON LAYER.

THE LIME WAS BURNED ON POLDERS BANKS,
ITS LENTLES MADE FROM SHIPWRECK PLANKS.

ITS WHEELS OF LEINSTER GRANITE STONE,
NE'ER AGAIN WILL TURN THE GRAIN TO HONE.

CONVEYED THEY WERE FROM LEINSTER HILL,
NOW LIE THERE MOTIONLESS AND STILL.

ITS RACE IS DRY, ITS WHEEL IS GONE,
ONLY REMEMBERED NOW IN VERSE AND SONG.

THE BREAD OF LIFE CAME FROM THAT MILL,
ON YONDER BANKS BESIDE THE RILL.

IT WILL REMAIN FOREVER STILL,
WHERE ONCE THERE WAS THIS FINE OLD MILL.

AND ITS MASTER WITH THE SKILFUL HANDS,
IS RESTING NOW IN FAIRER LANDS.

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BRIEF INFORMATION ON THE WATER MILL

The last mill to be powered by water in the Kilmuckridge area was in operation at Hatters River up to the early nineteen hundreds. It was operated by Henry and Tom Dunphy. The majority of cogs in these mills were made of horns beam or *lingum vieta*. They were very durable and stood the test of time for years on end. The journeys in these mills were made from beech. The river in most cases was realigned and the water was kept in a mill race. A sluice gate kept the water in the race until the miller wanted to operate the mill. The passage from the sluice to the mill wheel was wedge shaped and the water had a drop of three or four feet before it hit the blades of the mill wheel, with the wedge shaped channel, the water gained momentum which turned the wheel that operated the gadgets in the mill house. A few fine examples are in operation in Ireland at the moment (1994). They are now but a novelty, but they still work, a testimony to the skilled craftsmen who built them.

In south Wexford on the shores of Tacumshane Lake there's a mill which is powered by wind and sail. There's not many of this type of mill in the country. It's in a perfect state of preservation. Derelict mill houses and their races can be viewed around Ireland in their hundreds. The McConnell turbine took the place of the old mill wheels which were up to 12 feet in diameter. These huge wheels operated corn mills, flax mills and saw mills. With the introduction of electricity they were left to decay, but in many cases their races still exist today. They are the habitat to the brown trout and the disappearing otter.

THE FAIRIES OF COLEHILL (Colehill Hazel Wood) *The Cobbler Fairy*

FAR FROM THE PLACE OF MIDNIGHT LOVERS,
ON SILENT WINGS THE BARN OWL HOVERS.
WITH FEEBLE HANDS I SAW HIM TRACE,
THE WRINKLES IN HIS AGEING FACE.

UPON HIS THREE LEGGED WOODEN CHAIR,
HIS TAPPING CLEAR IN THE MORNING AIR.
WITH HAMMER, PINNERS, KNIFE AND LAST,
HIS HEELLESS SHOE HE SOON MADE FAST.

MY LUCK WAS IN I SMILED WITH GLEE,
AS I PEEPED OUT FROM THE HAZEL TREE.
A TRANQUIL AIR HE WHISTLED GAILY,
AS HE DRANK HIS FILL THE WISE OLD FAIRY.

NOT A SOUND I MADE AFRAID HE'D BOLT,
FOR HE'D FASTER BE THAN THE FRIGHTENED COLT
I WATCHED HIM FROM MY SECRET HIDE,
WITH THAT CROCK OF GOLD CLOSE BY HIS SIDE.

THE CLOUDLESS SKY IT'S ROOF OF BLUE,
THE RAYS OF SUN CAME SHINING THROUGH.
IT SHONE SO BRIGHT THAT SUMMERS MORN,
UPON THE GOLDEN EARS OF CORN.

I WATCHED HIM TAPPING IN THE SHADE,
AND A PAIR OF BROGUES HE CUT AND MADE.
HE FASHIONED THE HEELS AND MADE THEM ROUND,
AND THE UPPERS HE WITH LEATHER BOUND.

THE BROGUES HE MADE WERE GOOD AND PLAIN,
THEY WERE FOR USE TONIGHT IN THE DANCING TRAIN.
SNUGLY FITTING AND NOT TOO TIGHT,
HE'D CUT SPARKS FROM THE FLOOR OF THE RATH TONIGHT.

I SPIED HIM GO TO THE POTEEN STILL,
WITH HIS CRUISE IN LAN HE DRANK HIS FILL.
WITH AN HOUR'S DRINK I HEARD HIS GROANS,
THEN HE GENTLY SLEPT TO REST HIS BONES.

THEN AT ONCE I SAW MY CHANCE,
AND I STROKED AWAY THE HAZEL BRANCH.
I SPRANG OUT FROM MY SECRET HOLLOW,
BUT VANISHED HE HAD LIKE THE MIGRANT SWALLOW.

A MASTER OF ESCAPE HE WAS SUPREME,
AS I SAW HIM PRANCE O'ER THE DISTANT STREAM.
'T WAS HOMEWARDS THEN I WENT RETREATING,
TO THE LONELY SOUND OF THE LAMB'S A BLEATING.

IF BY CHANCE YOU SPOT HIM WITH HIS STILL,
LET HIM DRINK AND DRINK MORE THAN HIS FILL.
TAKE YOUR TIME DON'T POUNCE TO EARLY,
FOR IT'S HARD TO OUTSMART THIS AGEING FAIRY.

HIS SWIFTNESS IS OF THE MIGRANT SWALLOW,
AS HE SPEEDS AWAY O'ER HILL AND HOLLOW.
'T WAS ON THAT MORN HE WAS DRUNK AND AIRY,
BUT STILL I COULDN'T OUTSMART THE COBBLER FAIRY.

HE'S BEEN SPOTTED OF LATE ON OULART'S RIDGE,
AND A SIGHTING BEEN SEEN AT BALLINAHOWAN BRIDGE.
IT'S HERE HE MEETS WITH GERARD CAREY,
BETTER KNOWN AROUND AS THE PIRATE FAIRY.

DO NOT AT HIM ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW,
FOR HE'S THROTTLED A FEW NEAR OLD NED'S HOLLOW.
IT'S MANY A MAN HE'S KILLED AND SLAIN,
ON HIS DAUNTLESS QUEST O'ER THE RAGING MANE.

ON THE SOUTHERN SEAS THIS PIRATE SAILED,
IN HIS QUEST FOR GOLD HE SELDOM FAILED.
WHEN THE MOON IS HIGH HE SITS ALONE.
COMBING HIS HAIR ON THE GRANITE STONE.

ON THIS QUADRANGLE STONE ONCE A MONTH HE STAYS,
AS HE RELATES TO THE WEE FOLK HIS PLAINTIVE LAYS.
ON THE OWENAVARRA BY THIS LONELY SPOT,
HE TRAVELS FULL SAIL IN HIS LARCH BUILT COT.

HE'S BEEN DOWN TO JAMAICA AND UP TO THE CLYDE,
AND THE BOLD ROB ROY FROM HIM DID HIDE.
SO IF THE WEATHER BE BAD OR GOOD AND AIRY,
KEEP A CLOSE WATCH OUT FOR THIS PIRATE FAIRY.

ALL THE FAIRIES THROUGH THE WORLD ARE SUBJECT TO THE INEVITABLE
LAWS OF DEATH. BUT THEY HAVE SIX TIMES MORE OF A PROLONGED
PERIOD OF EXISTENCE THAN US HUMANS.

Fairies

The Irish fairies are small, the same applies to the Scottish fairies - rarely exceeding 24 inches in height. Irish fairies live mostly in Rathes, the Irish fairies are a breed of their own. Their attire is green with red hats and caps with white stockings and bright red brogues.

The fairies had the power to paralyse people (known as fairy-stuck), they have the ability to become visible and invisible and turn into any shape or form they please. We have in Ireland fairy-mushrooms, these small conical fungi grow in our hills and glens. We have a grass called 'fairy flax'. The foxglove bells are called 'fairy bells', many a bog is called 'the fairy bog' and as one knows there is always a slight element of truth in our ancient folklore.

The fairies are also known as the good people. In some cases they are known by the word 'shia' which means spirit. Fairies are known to participate in the ancient game of Eirin, which is hurling. It was at the Island Woods bordering the townlands of Ballahigh, Moneybow, Ballyscough, Creemore and Ballyduff that the fairies were spied back in the 1940's in a field on the left hand side of the road as you travel westwards from Ballyscough towards Meilnagh. There was a small wood in this field known as Hell's Grove. There were two different parties of fairies engaged in the game, their coats, caps and waistcoats were hanging on scoughs at the side of the river. One party had black and red handkerchiefs tied on their belts. The other party had green and white. They played for two hours or more coming near the end a fierce row broke out. The sole spectator of the human race saw his chance to stop it, when the ball landed beside him in the hazels. He quickly seized it, made off and hid in the undergrowth, with the sloither gone the fairies vanished. Of course it's well within their ability to do so. The evil fairies in the locality of Kilmuckridge were known as Cluricauns. theY were forever doing tricks and evil wrongdoings on the people of the human race.

When a fairy dies after his prolonged existence, (six hundred years or more), many clans of fairies attend the Berrin (a funeral). No human should interrupt this procession. The internment usually takes place in the Rath (these Rathes should never be interfered with as they are reverend places to the good people). After the burial there is great merry-making and dancing and the shrill music of the bagpipes. if one is lucky enough to happen on such an occasion and is spied by the wee folk, he or she should do exactly as their host says, then they will enjoy the merry-making. On the other hand if one refuses to do so anything is possible to happen, such as wakening up the next morning in a hung-over state in the midst of some old grave yard in the surrounding district. Misfortune came for disobedience. Good luck came if one complied with their wishes.

The Leprechaun is another dweller of the Irish fairy tribes. (Mentioned in another story in this book). He appears in the form of a little old man. He is a cobbler by trade making brogues for other fairies. His haunts in the area are usually secret locations chosen by him over centuries. His discovery is made usually by the tapping he makes on his last as he works, repairing or making footwear. He is very rich and only by the most violent threats will he make any gesture of parting with his wealth. He is the conjuror of many tricks and he usually induces the person who catches him to take his eye off him for a split second, in which time he is gone.

In the ancient tradition of Erin a changeling is a creature of the fairy stock left in the place of a human child which has been acquired by the fairies. The fairies are said to partake in such activities so that the survival of the clan will go from strength to strength. The writers of ancient folklore were under the impression that fairies can reproduce but it was also thought that this was a rare occurrence. The few fairy offspring that are born are of the inclination of being frail and weak as they are the children of old fairy women. This would support the need for fresh and healthy babies so as the survival of the colony would flourish. The substitute the fairies left instead of the human babies vary. Quiet often it was an ugly or stupid looking child. In actual fact it wasn't a child at all. It was an old fairy coming to the end of his or her days disguised as a baby.

When the fairies take a baby they subject it to different types of witchcraft. Some different spells would be cast upon them for upwards on two centuries. In some cases human parents who look after the needs of a changeling are very seldom rewarded in their efforts. These changelings are as I said before old fairies and they are inclined to get wicked and contrary, much like us all in our old age. It was thought that cruelty was the only answer for these changelings but as the changeling would in most cases outlive the adopted parents this was not a wise decision, as when the adopted parents got old the fairy would subject them to cruelty in their last remaining days on earth.

In a few cases in the townland of Kilmuckridge (and in all probability in townlands through rural Ireland) where there was music played in different households after a night of merrymaking and music. The exponent of the musical instrument left it down on the babies cradle and to the surprise of the household the baby (changeling) would start up a reel or jig and may I add it would be played to perfection. Many an old Irish air that these changelings played would have been lost to antiquity if not for the fairies. Many efforts were made by humans to convert these changelings. Some efforts were successful but in the majority of cases they were in vain.

Various methods were devised over many years to decide whether a child was a changeling or not. This usually involved ill treatment of the changeling but the most common method was to bring the child to a shrule (a stream) and repeatedly bring the child back and forth over the stream. When the child was brought over the stream for the 49th time it was said it would reveal its true identity - as these changelings were terrified of water. Although the fairies were gold panners (the panning of gold was left to a few experienced fairies). If a changeling was identified it would be encouraged to laugh as laughter was thought as good medicine to drive out evil spirits. The period between birth and baptism was the time when a child was most at risk of kidnapping by the fairies. Therefore children were never left alone during this period. Talented people whether male or female were at a high risk of kidnap by the fairies for the re-enforcing of the fairy stock. On the female side the nursing mother was most vulnerable on the male side the cobbler was at risk.

POEMS, FOLKLORE, HISTORY AND PISEOGA OF OLD EIREANN - NED KAVANAGH