

**RATHKEALE
COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

Silver Jubilee 1998

Incorporating "Deel Views"



Rathkeale Community Centre

Price: £3

941
9493
005



NR.

Phone 314668



TELEX 70155 LIME EI

This Book is issued subject to the Rules and Regulations, a copy of which may be had on application. The Book must be returned not later than the last date stamped below.

Class No. 941.9493005 ✓ Acc. No. 44794

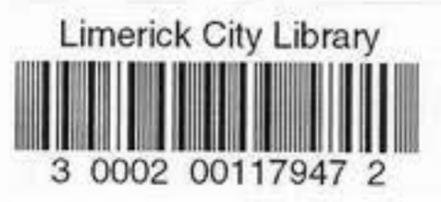
Date of Return	Date of Return	Date of Return	Date of Return
LIMERICK CITY LIBRARY REFERENCE DEPT.			

Foreword

This booklet has been published to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the foundation of Rathkeale Community Council in 1973. The setting up of the council was a most significant event in the history of the town and parish and it has contributed in an enormous way to the development of the area in the twenty five years that have elapsed since. We wish to congratulate the members who gave of their time and energy, down through the intervening years in helping to implement the many projects successfully completed and the improvements that have taken place. Without the Community Council, Rathkeale would certainly be lacking in most of the amenities that exist to-day.

I wish to thank the editorial committee who were involved in the production of the book and the numerous contributors who co-operated so generously with their time and efforts.

Editorial Committee:
 Jack O'Dwyer, Maurice Cowhey, Michael Hanley,
 P.J. Madigan, Patrick Coleman.



Chairman's Note:

It gives me great pleasure as chairman of Rathkeale Community Council to express warmest congratulations and 25th Anniversary greetings to Rathkeale Community Council.

For 25 years, Rathkeale Community Council has been at the heart of the community; providing leadership and amenities for the people of Rathkeale. On behalf of the people of Rathkeale I would like to thank the founders of the Community Council for their foresight in starting and nurturing this wonderful Community Council.

In the 25 years we have seen the Community Centre, Sports Complex, Dohyle Lake, Credit Union, Brass Band, St. Patrick's Day parade, Sheltered Houses and our 1st commercial venture, converting the old creamery into the Rathkeale Workspace, and many other projects. I would like to thank Fás and West Limerick Resources for their help and support. Thanks also to Limerick County Council for their help. We look forward to their help and co-operation in the future. But most of all; thanks to the Community Council members who have given their time and energy for the good of Rathkeale.

For the future I would like to see more support from the people of Rathkeale; after all it's your town and the Community Council needs your help. Here's to the future and many more years looking after the interest of Rathkeale.

*Yours sincerely,
Noel White, Chairman.*

Rathkeale Community Council *Silver Jubilee 1998*

The very first meeting of the Community Council took place on Friday, 4th May 1973. This was the culmination of an intensive preparation during which the old Muintir na Tire Guild, which had been in existence since 1965, was transformed into a formally elected body for the first time. A most detailed election process was introduced to the community whereby the parish was divided into thirteen areas and each area was to nominate and elect a number of councillors, depending on its population. The election was organised and took place over a period of weeks with ballot boxes available in five or six locations throughout the town. Assistance was received from officials of the National Council of Muintir na Tire and the counting of votes was supervised by members of the Cappagh Guild of the same body. The lead up to the actual voting was extremely exciting and many candidates carried out their own canvas along the lines of Dáil or Co. Council elections. Over one hundred stood for election for thirty-four seats. Those elected to the first Community Council were as follows:

Town: M. Foster, J. J. O'Kelly*, Miss E. Neville, S. McDonnell, A. O'Dea, Mrs. B. Dunleavy*, J. Griffin, W. Nestor, M. Geary*, P. Donovan, Mrs. N. Hennessy*, M. Hennessy*, W. Quinn*, D. Gammell, Mrs. J. Lynch, M. Hanley, Rev. B. Snow and Miss C. O'Rorke*.

Rural: J. O'Dwyer, E. Scully (Ballywilliam, Wilton), C. Crowley,

E. Roche (Ballymacave, Blossom Hill, Beechmount), T. Geaney, Mrs. R. Teskey (Courtmatrix, Ardbohill, Killeheen, Reens), J. Nash*, M. Daly*, Mrs. L. Noonan (Kilcool, Cloghanarold, Riddlestown, Kyltaun, Cloghatrida), P. Keating, J. McEnery, Mrs. S. Lenihan*(Rathnasare, Dromard, Amogan, Ballyeawood, Moanwing), J. O'Connell*, J. Power (Duxtown, Ballyea, Kilcolman), Mrs. E. Chawke*, D. Dillon (Ballyallinan, Loughill, Ballywinterourke). **deceased*

At that inaugural meeting Mr. Pat Cahillane, who was the chairman of the outgoing Muintir Guild, took the chair and the officers elected were as follows:

President: Rev. Canon Costelloe; Vice-President: Rev. Mr. Snow;
Chairman: Jack O'Dwyer; Vice-Chairman: Miss C. O'Rorke;
Hon. Secretary: Miss E. Neville; Asst. Secretary: John Griffin;
Treasurer: Con Crowley; Asst. Treasurer: John O'Connell.

The agenda for the following meeting of the Council was agreed as follows: 1. Pedestrian crossing. 2. Public toilets. 3. Community Centre. 4. Venue for meetings. 5. Play areas in housing estates. 6. Tidy Towns. 7. School buses.

At subsequent meetings a number of sub-committees were set up. Tidy Towns under the chairmanship of Miss O'Rorke;
Finance: Peter Donovan; Social: Rev. B. Snow;
Credit Union: Maurice Foster; Swimming Pool: Andy O'Dea;
Community Games: Jack O'Dwyer; Rules: Michael Geary.

It is interesting to note that only Jack O'Dwyer and Peter Donovan remain as members of the present Community Council, and sad to relate that twelve of the original thirty-four members have passed to their eternal reward. Two others have left the locality - Con Crowley is living in retirement in Dungarvan while Rev. Brian Snow works in Dublin.

Originally meetings were held on the first Friday of every month at the Carnegie Library. In recent years this was changed to the first Mondays. Jack O'Dwyer was succeeded as Chairman by the late Patrick Johnson in 1976 while he in turn was followed by Joe Dunleavy in 1991, Peter Donovan in 1994 and the present Chairman, Noel White in 1997. Elections continue to be held every three years on a parish wide basis in order to ensure as far as possible that the Council is fully representative of the community. This has been very significant in dealings with the Local Authority and state bodies over the years.

The Council has been affiliated to Muintir na Tire since its inception, and much assistance was forthcoming from this national body, particularly in the early years. John Griffin and Stephen McDonnell were the first delegates appointed to the County Federation of Muintir while the Chairman attended the National Conference in Killarney later in 1973.

The first major undertaking of the Community Council was the development of a Community Centre and fund-raising and preparation of plans were put in hand early. Detailed drawings were produced before the end of 1973 and the minutes record that £1,200 was contributed to the building fund from the proceeds of the festival held that year. The initial estimate of cost produced by the architect was £50,000 - big money even by 1974 standards. A site was made available by the Limerick County Council and everything seemed set to go. However, concurrently with this project, discussions were ongoing with the Local Authority with regard to the old Courthouse. At one stage proposals that it be demolished provoked strong resistance from the members of the Community Council and suggestions arose that it might be suitable for a Community Centre. Faced with this option, it was decided to proceed along these lines and plans for a green field centre were dropped. Reconstruction work on the courthouse commenced in 1977 and the hall was made available in 1980. This became a huge task, for while the structure was in good condition, the entire inside had to be gutted. The building and fitting out of the stage became a project of much complexity and the successful outcome is evidenced by the high

regard for the facilities, held by those in show business. It is considered to have one of the finest stages outside of the city. A new entrance was opened at ground level and is now a prominent feature of the building. At this level also were the original old cells for prisoners awaiting trial, later used by the administrative staff of the County Council. This area underwent considerable change in the reconstruction and now consists of meeting rooms, kitchen for Meals on Wheels, Senior Citizens Centre and the headquarters for the Civil Defence organisation. The old clock which adorned the front facade for over a hundred years could not be restored but its replacement provides an excellent substitute. AnCO (now FAS) contributed to a large extent and an amount of voluntary help was also needed to complete the work. Many difficulties were encountered, especially the shortage of skilled tradesmen, and tribute must be paid to Michael Neville, foreman, and all the other many people who took part in the venture. President Hillery formally opened the Community Centre in 1983.

Other notable successful projects undertaken since then include: Abbeylands Park, including the Sports Complex (containing handball, squash and snooker facilities); the Sheltered Housing development at Abbeyview - soon to be further extended in the old Creamery building; the initiation of such bodies as Community Games, Festival Show, Annual Gymkhana, St. Patrick's Day Parade, Deel Views, Siamsa Tire, Tidy Towns, Doohyle Lough and Rathkeale Credit Union.

A major initiative in 1980/81 was the organising of a Social Survey of the town which was carried out by students from Bolton St. College of Technology. This was funded by the Community Council and culminated in an excellent and detailed report containing fine recommendations as to the future development of the town. Most of these are still relevant today even though, unfortunately, they have been generally ignored by the powers that be. The suggestions as regards traffic and development of derelict sites are still worthy of consideration to the present day.

An interesting involvement of the Council in 1980 was in a venture into Community Radio in conjunction with R.T.E. This was in the pre local radio period when plans were being formulated and, of course, the national station was keenly interested in being part of the decentralisation of broadcasting. For one week in September of that year a mobile studio in The Square was the centre of attraction in the locality when programmes on many diverse topics were broadcast, written, presented and produced by local people. We listened to our antique dealers, sports people, musicians, local historians, I.C.A., voluntary bodies and many more. Despite the great interest and involvement of the community nothing came of the experiment and when local radio did arrive it was taken over by private enterprise.

The Community Council began publishing a regular one-page newsletter in 1974 and this eventually evolved into a community magazine the following year. A competition was run with a view to finding a suitable name for the publication. The winning name was that nominated by the late Canon Tom Costelloe - "Deel Views". At present it issues three times per year and has been of great interest, especially to many of our emigrants. In 1983 a special souvenir booklet was published to celebrate the official opening of the Community Centre by President Hillery and in 1989 when the 700th anniversary of the foundation of the Augustinian Abbey was commemorated "Deel Views" was instrumental in producing another booklet on that occasion.

1978 was an interesting year in the history of the Council. Because of the acquisition of property such as the old Courthouse and the swimming pool, it became necessary to appoint trustees and those elected were: Peter Donovan, Patrick Johnson, Michael Neville, John Griffin and Margaret Guinane. The tennis court was opened and a group of work camp volunteers spent three weeks working for the benefit of the community. They were accommodated in the C.Y.M.S. building in Lower Main Street and their stay was so successful that another camp took place the following year when the members helped to paint the Courthouse. While work had not been fully completed the new

Community Centre became available for use early in 1980.

Currently the efforts of the Council are concentrated mainly on the development of the old creamery at Enniscouch, which was purchased from Golden Vale Creameries. Part of this building has been altered to include workspace units on the ground floor, some of which have already been taken up, and shortly work will commence on the remaining space on the upper floor. Side by side with this, part of the area is being transferred to the Sheltered Housing Company and plans are being prepared for up to seven houses to add to the complement at Abbeyview.

At the time when Community Councils were being set up around the country efforts were also made to organise Regional Councils. In so far as is known these never really got off the ground. The plan at the time was to create structures in local and regional areas in anticipation of major changes in local government generally, particularly in regard to devolved statutory powers from county level down. Unfortunately, successive governments since then have failed to follow through with any such proposals on the decentralisation of power in this manner.

Rathkeale Community Council has had a major influence on Rathkeale and the hinterland since its formation in 1973. The achievements and continuing efforts on behalf of the community call to mind the old Irish proverb "Níl neart go cur le ceile" - "strength is only realised by pulling together" and let us hope that "le ceile" will be the motto which will inspire all future activities of the Council.

The present Community Council was elected in 1997 and the members are: N. White, L. White, T. Steele, T. Shiels, J. Dinnage, F. Fennell, M. Kenneally, J. Dunleavy, J. O'Connell, M. Markham, P. Sheehy, M. Brosnan, M. Noonan, P. Coleman, M. Daly, S. Hennessey, B. Guinane, K. Neville, J. O'Dwyer, D. Hourigan, C. Horan, S. Hogan, M. Hughes, V. White, P. Donovan, J. McCann, B. McEnery, P. Flaherty, L. Hanley, Fr. O'Sullivan, Fr. Dempsey, P. Moloney.

Muintir na Tire

M. Cowhey

Muintir na Tire was founded in 1937 and over the next twenty or thirty years began to take slow steps towards becoming a national organization. Its founder was the charismatic Canon John Hayes, a native of Murroe, Co. Limerick. His parents and their six children were one of the thirty-two tenants evicted from the Cloncurry Estate in Murroe in 1882. The Land League provided a type of prefabricated hut for each of the evicted tenants. Four more children were born in the hut, making a family of ten in all, John being the youngest, born in 1887. The family spent another thirteen years in the hut but five of the children died in this period.

After being ordained priest, John spent nine years (1915-1924) in Liverpool, which sojourn greatly influenced his social outlook and thinking. He was strongly nationalistic but without any bitterness. As someone said of him "treasured wrongs he discarded as explosive souvenirs". He had seen and felt the results of the Parnell split of the 1890's and the split on the 1921 Treaty and he made the bringing together of people his main aim. The other aims of Muintir were rural renewal and the revival of community spirit. Canon Hayes died in 1957.

Following an initial meeting in the Vocational School on 20th November 1964, Rathkeale Guild of Muintir na Tire was founded in 1965. The first elected officers were: President - Canon Costello, P.P. Chairman - Maurice Cowhey. Treasurer - Jack Shier. Joint Secretaries - Michael Power and Joan Lyons. One is sometimes asked what influenced one to join Muintir. I was influenced by the nature of its activities and by the unselfish work of the organization's leadership.

Muintir had no published policy and each Guild was allowed and encouraged to formulate and carry out its own ideas. As Canon Hayes said it was time to stop the flag waving and get on with doing practical work for the community. At this time there was a kind of stagnation in the country and continuing huge

emigration. One hoped that the togetherness of the Muintir Guilds would help in some small way to alleviate this debilitating social problem. "It is better to light one little candle than curse the darkness" was a favourite saying of Canon Hayes.

We admired the work being carried out by our two neighbouring Guilds of Askeaton and Cappagh - Dermot O'Riordan being Chairman of the former and Wally Ruttle (a member of the Palatine community) of the latter. They had helped in setting up their own Guilds and those of Kilcornan and Rathkeale. Askeaton and Cappagh had the usual cross-section of their communities on the Councils but as well included people from different religions. Rathkeale followed this example and also benefited from their advice. There was excellent co-operation and consultation on many matters between the four Guilds.

The Parish Council of Rathkeale Guild changed to the new format of an elected council, to be known as Rathkeale Community Council, in 1973. At all times both the old and the new have been fortunate in setting such high standards. In the early and not so early days they carried out jobs and projects which, in recent years, would have qualified for grants and Euro funding.

I left the Council in 1973 but have always taken an interest in its activities. There have been so many wonderful people on the Community Council since its inception and, while mentioning names is not my business, I feel I must, without apology, refer to two people who have made outstanding contributions and were a credit to the district and the country.

Christine O'Rorke of Rathkeale Cottage was my near neighbour and she built up a successful business from very small beginnings. In her different farming enterprises she became one of the tops in the country and when one got to know her found her to be a very caring person. She has left some wonderful legacies. Her social work was outstanding and so also was her general organizational ability. She was a 'doer' who sometimes may have tread on some toes but she insisted on the work being done at all times, leading by dedication and example. She was elected Vice-President of the Guild when Rev. Mr. Nicholson left Rathkeale for Tullamore in 1972.

Patrick Johnson was a very successful farmer and this did not go unnoticed by his colleagues who elected him Chairman of Golden Vale, a position he

held for a number of years. He was a tremendous community man who put unbelievable time and effort into every project taken up by the Council. Any tribute I can pay him pales into insignificance compared to that paid to him by successive Councils over the years. He was Chairman for fifteen years from 1976 to 1991 and he will be particularly remembered for his gift, in 1994, to the Rathkeale Sheltered Housing Association of the prime site, with all services laid on, at Boherbuoy. The houses will always be a testament to his memory. The gift was the act of an exceptional and patriotic man.



Ms. Christina O'Rorke

NEWS EVENTS OF 1973

P.J. Madigan

The A.G.M. of Rathkeale Handball Club took place at Patsy Doherty's house on Thursday, 25th January and the following officers were elected: Chairman - Noel Wilmott. Vice-Chairman - John Kelly. Secretary - Jim Langan. Treasurer - Peter Donovan. Committee: Noel Fitzgerald, John Griffin, John Young, Stephen McDonnell, Pat Markham and Michael Hayes.

The Rathkeale I.C.A. Guild was awarded first place in the county final of the Eleanora Gibbon Trophy for Drama. The event took place in Adare on Sunday, 4th March. Five Guilds took part and Rathkeale won, scoring 95 marks out of 100. The title of the entry was "Voices of Ireland" with the script written by Church of Ireland Rector, Brian Snow. The cast was Maura Lenihan, Terry Devlin, Irene Donovan, Helen Roche, Mary Geary, Monnie Wilmott, Joan Roche, Margaret Moloney and Josephine McNamara.

A meeting of past and present members of the C.Y.M.S. was held recently in an effort to revive the branch and the following were elected: President - Very Rev. Canon Costelloe; Chairman - Michael Hanley; Secretary - John Griffin; Spiritual Director - Rev. Fr. Irwin. Committee: John White, Joseph Daly, Patsy Doherty, Tom Glenny and Peter Donovan.

By kind permission of Very Rev. Canon Costelloe and courtesy of Dean Empey, the choir of St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick will visit St. Mary's Church, Rathkeale on Tuesday, 17th April to sing J. S. Stainer's "Crucifixion". The choir, which consists of men, women and boys, will be under the direction of Mr. Brislane, organist.

The A.G.M. of the County Limerick Federation of Muintir na Tire was held in St. James' National School, Cappagh and the following Guilds were represented: Cappagh, Castlemahon, Rathkeale, Kilcornan, Dromcollogher, Templeglantine, Athlacca, Askeaton and Murroe. A welcome was extended to all by Mr. Wally Ruttle, Cappagh, Chairman of the County Federation.

The outgoing Secretary, Mr. Pat Lynch, in his report, detailed the progress being made by Tom Keane, Community Adviser. The liaison committee, which had been set up to co-ordinate Mr. Keane's work, had undertaken the reformation of six Guilds in the county on a pilot basis. There had been considerable progress in this area and he congratulated Murroe on being the first democratically elected and fully representative Community Council in County Limerick. The following officers were elected for 1973: President - Most Rev. Dr. H. Murphy; Vice-President - Right Rev. D. Caird and Sister Caoimhin; Chairman - Wally Ruttle; Vice-Chairman - Pat Fitzgerald; Secretary - Frank Lyddy; Treasurer - J. J. Maher; Competitions Secretary - Paddy Clear; P.R.O. Pat Lynch.

A branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann was formed at a meeting at Patsy Doherty's residence on Tuesday, 20th March. A total of 24 members was enrolled. Present at the meeting, to provide assistance in getting the branch started, were two C.C.E. executives i.e. Tadhg O Maolcatha, Templeglantine and Donal de Barra, Athea. Patrick Sheehy, M.C.C. was elected Chairman with Nora Flynn, N.T. as Vice-Chairman. Secretary is Maura Mooney and Irene Donovan is Treasurer. The auditor is Denis Hartnett and the delegates to County Board are Tom McNamara and Maura Mooney.

The counting of votes for the election of members to the newly formed Rathkeale Community Council took place at the library on Tuesday, 21st April. Members of Cappagh Guild of Muintir na Tire supervised the count.

The centenary of the consecration of St. Mary's Church was celebrated on the Feast of the Assumption, 15th August. Mass was concelebrated by the Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Murphy assisted by Very Rev. Canon Costelloe, Very Rev. G. Enright, Janesboro; Very Rev. Dr. Fitzgerald, Cappagh and Very Rev. D. Wall, Kilcornan. In the sanctuary were Very Rev. Canon M. O'Grady, Adare; Very Rev. Canon M. Purtill, Abbeyfeale; Very Rev. T. Culhane, Parteen; Rev. J. Irwin, Rathkeale and Rev. A. Elliot, Rathkeale. With the exception of Canon O'Grady, all the other priests had been curates in this parish.

After many happy years at the C.Y.M.S. the Red Cross 'Friday Club' is changing its time and venue from this Friday, 21st September. The club will meet at the dispensary on Friday afternoons from 3.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. The committee hope that many of our senior citizens will come along to enjoy a friendly chat and a cup of tea. As far as possible, transport can be arranged

for those who need same.

The county final of the juvenile Scor 1974 was held in Limerick where the following group from Rathkeale won the set dancing competition: Richard Mooney, Catherine Carroll, Seamus Doherty, Rosemary Hughes, John Talty, Eileen O'Shea, Liam Fitzgerald and Breda O'Sullivan.

Schoolchildren from Rathkeale, Cappagh, Croagh and Coolcappagh were entertained to a free show at the Central Cinema, Rathkeale on Friday, 21st December. The function was organised by the local Social Services Committee and was thoroughly enjoyed by all the children. There were two separate film shows, one in the morning for the locals and then in the afternoon for the neighbouring parishes. Refreshments were served to all.

A number of weddings took place in 1973 as follows:

Tuesday, 2nd January, Holy Rosary Church, Limerick
John Shiels & Geraldine Clyne

Thursday, 22nd March, St. John The Baptist, Croagh
Michael Noonan & Marie O'Connor

Wednesday 28th March, St. Mary's Church, Rathkeale
Patk McMahan & Kathleen Sheehan

Tuesday, 5th June, St. John The Baptist, Croagh
Patk Madigan & Mary Ahern

Saturday 1st September, St. John The Baptist, Croagh
Liam Hanley & Pauline Ryan

Wednesday 12th September, St. Mary's Church, Rathkeale
James Kennick & Veronica White

Tuesday, 28th August, St. James' Church, Cappagh
Robert Jones & Ann Madigan

Saturday 15th September, St. James' Church, Cappagh
Mossie Hennessy & Mary Quinn

Wednesday 17th October, St. John's Church, Nenagh
Timothy Shiels & Mary Condon

Saturday 3rd November, Church of Assumption, Abbeyfeale
Francis Wilmott & Joan Lane

Saturday 24th November, Church of Holy Ghost, Killarney
Martin Roche & Mary F. O'Sullivan

The Old Order Here Becomes The New



The coach passing through Adare

To the ringing call by the scarlet-coated guard, the first coach from Rathkeale arrived in Limerick yesterday. It was the beginning of what is to be a regular daily service. Hundreds of people lined the city's main thoroughfare as the gleaming yellow and black coach, drawn by four horses, and carrying its full complement of 25 passengers, trotted by to stop after its 18 miles run before Cruise's Hotel, once the halting place of the Bianconi coaches.

COACHMAN CHEERED

The onlookers gave the coachman, Mr. J. Keane, and the passengers, a rousing welcome. Viscount Adare, the owner of the coach, and the promoter of the new service, was the first to alight. He was welcomed by the Mayor, Mr. D. J. O'Malley, solr., and received numerous congratulations on the successful completion of the trip and well-wishes for the success of the service.

Lord Adare said he was delighted with the first run, which had been perfect, and he thought, too, the passengers had enjoyed their novel experience. He hoped in a short time to have a second coach on the road which would do the

journey from Limerick to Rathkeale.

Twelve horses are needed for the present service, including four which are changed at Adare on each run. The weekly cost of running the coach will be around £30, and the fare is 6/- return.

When the coach reached the Dunraven Arms Hotel at Adare, where a halt was made to change the horses, waitresses appeared with stoups of ale and other refreshments which were handed to the passengers with Lord Dunraven's compliments. Then, with a flourish of the horn, the remainder of the journey was undertaken. The passengers on the coach for the first trip were:- Lord and Lady Adare, Hon. Frank Pakenham, Lady Charles Cavendish, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Pollock, Mrs. Merrifield, Capt. M. Fennell, Mr. C. Jenkins (sec. to Lord Adare), Miss J. O'Shaughnessy, Mrs. and Miss Keogh, Mrs. R. O'Sullivan, Mr. B. Tansie, Mr. McAulay, Miss O'Rourke, Mrs. Cotter, Capt. Jones, General McCleere and Capt. Armstrong.



Refreshments for the passengers on the coach.

Memories of The River Deel

Fr. Brendan Connellan, P.P.

OLD ROAD

For a young lad at Castlematrix, the river had a special fascination: the old road came down the weir road, across at the weir beside the Castle and up the old avenue and out past Rathkeale Cottage (O'Rourke's) to Court Matrix. Many a weary traveller must have gone that route, and I always liked to think they may have stopped at the weir for a drink or maybe a swim in Summer time.

FISHING

The river appeared to have a life of its own, always moving gently along, with a constant hum, as if an eternal hymn. The life within the river was very obvious with the trout rising for the thousands of flies over the water. In the late evening many anglers would arrive at their favourite pools, and cast their flies in competition with the natural flies enjoying their normal habitat. One of the constant visitors to the river was Garda O'Brien, an accomplished angler who was always the last to trod his way home in his waders, well after dusk.

Those of us, who did not have the luxury of a fishing rod or the skill to cast the line, had to resort to night-lines to catch eels. We soon got to know the best spots for this surreptitious fishing, and hoping that no early raider would reach our prey before we got up. We did not realise that eels were a delicacy, but we did enjoy them once we succeeded in killing this slippery specimen, skinning it, and mother cooked them on the pan for tea. But we envied those who could catch trout: the nearest we got to them was to peer down at them in the river from the metal bridge on our way home from school, usually accompanied by our neighbour Jimmy Dunne.

ISLAND

The river was too small for boats, but we did make a raft on one occasion to get access to the island just below the Castle. Then my father decided we would build a bridge, just a home-made one, no need for special engineering - just knock down two trees across the river near each other on the bank of the river which formed the platform to put planks across. This was hailed as a major achievement, and during the war years (1939-45) we cleared a large area in the middle of the island and set potatoes. The soil was very rich as a result of centuries of deposits and we clearly understood why the Nile Valley in Egypt was so important to the Roman conquerors for growing wheat.

SWIMMING

At school, the other lads spoke about swimming at Kelly's Weir, but we had two pools of our own below the island; one called the "Flagged Bottom" was where we learned to swim in shallow water with a bundle of rushes to keep afloat; the other was known as the "Popular Hole" which was quite deep and surrounded by poplar trees. It was suitable only for good swimmers, and we nearly had a serious incident one day when a school friend, Con Collins, jumped in with us and failed to surface. It was then that Colm, my older brother, came to the rescue and pulled him out, little the worse of his experience.

NUNS

During the summer holidays there were always some Mercy Sisters on holidays at Rathkeale Convent who would go for a walk down the weir road and sit for hours on the rocks across from the Castle, enjoying the peaceful surroundings. We sometimes paddled across the river to chat with them. We were often wading in the river at that time, pursuing the hobby known as 'forking eels' - you lifted a rock in the river bed and tried to nail the escaping eel with a dinner fork. I don't ever remember catching one in this way - it was always very nearly!

THE GLEN

Once every summer we went on safari 'down the Glen'. This was a magical trail along the far side of the river, a few miles down stream, till you came to a deep glen with the trees growing well over the river. The great thrill was to swing off the branches till you nearly touched the water. A real danger were bulls in the various fields we had to traverse to get to the Glen and to return home.

GEESE

We always had a flock of geese which made their way to the river every morning and in the late evening they had to be enticed home calling "Baddie, Baddie". Usually that was successful except when the river was in flood: they would get swept down stream as they made their way back from Magner's field and efforts to rescue them would go on until late into the night.

FLOOD

The river in flood was an amazing sight. You felt that this gentle being had erupted in anger, and one had to beware. The fields on both sides of the torrent were covered with brown water and it often looked as if the valuable island would be swept away. From time to time a family of swans used to visit the river, with their cygnets, but we never found their nest.

DREDGING

In more recent times, the entire river bed was deepened and the stones piled up on either side. I suppose one must progress with the times but the natural beauty of the river, as we knew it, was gone for ever. The verse "flow on, lovely river, flow gently along" is now only a memory.

ITEMS OF INTEREST RELATING TO RATHKEALE

The following article is from the collection of folklore carried out in 1937/38 by the Department of Education in schools around County Limerick. It was written by Denis Hayes, a pupil at Rathkeale No. 1 School in 1937 and signed by Mrs. Hayes, N.T., Rathkeale.

The first chapel to be built after Penal Days was in Chapel Lane. Only the stone piers and arches of the gateway now remain. It was closed over one hundred years ago when the church in Thomas Street was built near the convent school. It was called after some member of the Walker-Casey family. Rumour has it that a Fr. Clarke, then parish priest, wanted a road to the new church and applied to the foreman of the Grand Jury (said to be the father of the late General Lloyd of Beechmount) to have the work carried out by that body. He was promptly refused and then applied to the parishioners to take on the work themselves. Over a thousand of them with horses, carts, spades, shovels and picks responded to his call and the road was ready by the following Sunday (now known as Thomas Street). The priest in thanking them said the road would still be there when there were no longer any of the Lloyd family left. These words came true for now the Lloyd family is extinct with the last of them being killed in the Boer War. Thomas Street was built in 1812 and called after Fr. Thomas Hogan who was parish priest at the time. He was a fearless man and employed a bell ringer to go through the town announcing the times of Masses. It was then illegal for a Catholic to hang or ring a bell in his own land. Fr. Hogan died in 1842 and is buried in Rathnasare Churchyard.

Old Rathkeale was mostly over the bridge (supposed to be 700 years old). The High Cross would be the cross at the Mill Height. Markets were held there on every Thursday and fairs twice a year for the space of two days on the eve of the Blessed Virgin and for two days after. Rathkeale was always famous for its fairs even in the days of the Desmonds, during the famine of 1848 and down to the present day. The large house on the right as you go through Church Street is supposed to have been the inn for the stagecoaches. The '98 memorial at Rathkeale has the inscription 'Pray for the croppies killed

at Incharourke and buried in Rathkeale' (at the bridge mentioned above joining the Main Street with Church Street). During 1798 some Palatine gunsmiths were in sympathy with the rebels and made their pikes. The old creamery on the town side of the bridge, on the left as you go down, was a creamery in the old days but was later converted into a barracks for the military.

An ancient chronicler in these parts tells that Rathkeale was disenfranchised by Oliver Cromwell because it refused sufficient provisions to his troops. This might have arisen from the fact that the soldiers occupied a castle nearby known as Rathnasare (belonging to the Desmonds). This castle is a well known landmark and is said to be the only square fort in Ireland. At the North East of the town are the remains of an Augustinian Abbey founded in the 13th century by an Englishman named Gilbert Harvey and there is supposed to be some buried treasure there. Legend has it that the people tried to unearth it but each time they were driven back by unseen hands.

In 1581 when the English soldiers were on their way to Smerwick to meet the Spaniards they encamped in Rathkeale, supposedly, in a field close to Castlematrix. The inhabitants fled on their arrival and when the former had departed the inhabitants returned, only to be surprised and surrounded by the soldiers, 700 of them were massacred by Captain Raleigh (later to become Sir Walter Raleigh) who had doubled back secretly on them.

Castlematrix, a Desmond castle, built to guard the pass of the Deel, is prettily situated on the river. The 9th Earl of Desmond was murdered here in 1489 through the treachery of his brother John. The castle was destroyed by Pelham and rebuilt by Sir Walter Raleigh. Glebe Castle is another of the Desmond's castles, and there is supposed to be a tunnel leading from it to Castlematrix and also to Mountsouthwell.

St. Patrick's Well at Clouncagh, near the ruins of an old church, was founded by the saint on his journey from Ardpatrick, near Foynes, through Ardagh, where he rested here and blessed the well. People still make rounds and bring home the water which is supposed to be very efficacious in curing the sick. The church is built inland and is surrounded by a moat and it is said that this moat was at one time encircled by a huge serpent who had the habit, at sunset, of putting his tail in his mouth and springing into the air. This was terrifying to the natives, who complained to St. Patrick. One evening, on seeing the serpent, he threw his missal at it and killed it.

There is another legend connected with the church but dealing with a much later period. 'Poor scholars' were a band of people who roamed the countryside in search of knowledge. One scholar stayed in the neighbourhood for a day and saw a tablet on the church wall on which some hieroglyphics were inscribed. No one had been able to translate the inscription and the scholar was asked to do so. He did as required and the tablet told where buried treasure was hidden and gave the location of same. The scholar did not give the correct location, however, as he feared if he did he would not get anywhere and the treasure would be removed in his absence. His fears were well founded for on returning to the place mentioned he found the people already digging. Of course, their efforts were in vain and the scholar was so incensed at the treachery that he refused to divulge the correct location and left the place never to return.



Viscount Guiltamore (on right) presenting the Desmond Cup to J. Lombard, trainer of "Castlecour", winner of the last race at Rathkeale, Wednesday, Sept. 6th 1939. Included are: Dan Johnson, George Boyle, Bill Boyle, Aine Boyle, Martin Treacy, Jimmy Ward, P. B. Cahill and daughter.

Rathkeale I.C.A.

A public meeting was held at Moylan's Hotel (now Mann's) on 11th October, 1943. Its purpose was to form a branch of the Irish Countrywomens' Association in Rathkeale and the following members were enrolled on that first night:

Mrs. Marguerite Hickey, Mrs. Florence Woulfe, Miss Maureen O'Connor, Mrs. E. Talbot, Mrs. M. Byrne, Mrs. Marie Fitzgerald, Miss Irene Hayes, Miss Eileen Keyes, Miss Ellen McHugh, Miss Helen Madigan, Mrs. N. Noonan, Miss C. Harnett, Mrs. Nan Mooney, Mrs. Kitty Donovan, Mrs. C. Johnson, Miss Lily Power, Mrs. Rita Magner, Mrs. Rita Cosgrove, Miss Nancy Daly, Mrs. Dorothy McEnery, Miss Kitty Madden, Miss J. Hurley, Mrs. Mai O'Leary, Miss Chris Roach, Miss Bridget Ahern, Mrs. P. Frawley, Mrs. I. Binchy, Miss C. O'Dea, Mrs. M. Dunlea, Miss L. Howard, Mrs. B. Graham. The following officers were elected: President: Mrs. P. Frawley. Vice-President: Mrs. F. Woulfe. Hon. Secretary: Miss C. Roche. Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. C. Johnson. Press Secretary: Miss M. O'Connor.



Founder Members I.C.A.



"Eleanora Gibbon" Group I.C.A.

The activities of the Guild in those early years were many and included various crafts such as patchwork, rushwork, cookery and nature study. It was difficult at times to find suitable venues for monthly meetings as Moylan's Hotel had been sold. Meetings took place in Healy's, The Square; CYMS Hall and in the Courthouse. When necessary, they also were held in private houses. Children were encouraged to take part in competitions like Irish dancing, singing and sales of work.

The Guild ceased to exist in the late-1940's but re-established itself in the early 1950's and is thriving since, up to the present day. Activities engaged in included Public Speaking, Choral Singing, Verse Speaking and, last but by no means least, Drama. In 1973 Rathkeale Guild won the much coveted All-Ireland Eleanora Gibbon Trophy for Drama. This competition took place in Mullingar and the theme was 'Into Europe' and involved a half-hour presentation in music and verse under the title 'Into Europe in Song and Dance'. The script was written and produced by Rev. Brian Snow and the cast included Mrs. Connie Collinge, Mrs. Deirdre Donovan, Mrs. Maura Lenihan, Mrs. Monnie Wilmott, Mrs. Mary Geary, Mrs. Terry Devlin, Mrs. Irene Donovan, Mrs. Margaret Moloney, Mrs. Joan Roche, Mrs. Helen Roche and Mrs. Josephine McNamara. Each received a 'Medallion Europa' to mark

Ireland's entry into Europe in that same year. This medallion is a treasured possession of the recipients as they retain the unique distinction of being the only holders of it in the country. The award also marks the first All-Ireland success of a County Limerick team in the contest. It brought great jubilation to the I.C.A. not only in Rathkeale but throughout the county. The Rathkeale ladies had previously won a county final in the same competition and been narrowly defeated in later rounds but their determination to succeed brought them the honours in 1973.

In more recent times, Rathkeale has taken part in dramas at inter-guild level and Maura Mooney received 'best actress' award for her part in the play 'Marrying Mary' in Askeaton.

One of the major events at Rathkeale Festival Show each year is the I.C.A. inter-guild competition. This became part of the Show in the early 1970's and attracts widespread interest from around the county. All in all, Rathkeale I.C.A. Guild is an important association in the locality and is still going strong.

Below:

Tom Enright, Billiards Champion pictured in action in Rathkeale.



EDUCATION IN RATHKEALE

Pádraig Feahan

On Monday, 4th September 1995, Coláiste na Trócaire opened its doors for the first time. Four hundred and fifty students and thirty teachers entered. An amalgamation was taking place, bringing together the Vocational School and Scoil Bhanríon na hEagna. These schools had provided an education for most of the students of the town of Rathkeale and a large rural catchment area. A small number of students went to boarding schools and to the more prestigious schools in Limerick city, commuting daily on public transport.

THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

Scoil Bhanríon na hEagna evolved from St. Anne's Primary School. A Secondary Top from 1954 under the management of the Sisters of Mercy, it received official recognition as a secondary school in 1962. At first, it catered for girls. Pupil numbers increased from the initial 71 in 1962 to 300 in the late 1980s. Three factors contributed to growth in the late 1960s:

- the introduction of co-education (1966)
- an amalgamation with Mrs. Keating's Secondary School, Ballingarry (1967)
- the impact of Donagh O'Malley's initiative (1967 also) making secondary education free and providing free transport to all children living five kilometres from the nearest school.

Anticipating this growth, the Sisters of Mercy had purchased a site and planned to build a secondary school on it. The Department of Education requested that these plans be shelved. Major rationalisation was planned for the country based on the "Investment in Education" Report (1965) drawn up by a survey team set up jointly by the OECD and the Department. The Government had committed itself to comprehensive education. Rathkeale was designated as an area for rationalisation. The Sisters of Mercy complied with the request.

In the meantime, the school consisted entirely of prefabricated buildings placed, initially, in the primary school yard and, as expansion continued, on the site referred to above. This was across one of the access roads to the

town. A room in the adjoining primary school was made available for Home Economics, the only solid structure in the school. The curriculum was an academic one, though the emphasis on Art, Speech, Drama and, later, Music was innovative in the late 1960s and 1970s. Students looked to the Public Service, Semi-State bodies and the financial and commercial institutions for employment. Third-level colleges attracted more and more students as employment prospects for holders of Leaving Certificates dwindled.

THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Rathkeale Vocational School was built in the early 1960s and opened its doors to 80 boys and girls in 1962. The subjects taught in the early years were restricted by the Vocational Education Act (1930). So was the length of the school cycle, ending with the Group Certificate for many but extending for others who stayed to avail of commercial or secretarial courses. From 1966 the Common Intermediate Certificate Course was made available to Vocational Schools and Rathkeale Vocational School took up the challenge immediately.

The Leaving Certificate followed the Intermediate logically and this too was embraced by Rathkeale Vocational School. In addition, adult education was a significant and valued service to the local community. Courses provided over the years ranged from Diploma Courses in Social Science (validated by UCC), to Winter Farm Schools and cultural, craft and hobby classes.

The number of students outgrew the original building and prefabricated buildings made a temporary appearance. These were replaced by a solid structure in the 1980s. Students attending the Vocational School tended to seek apprenticeships on leaving. The establishment of the RTCs helped to make more technical and applied studies available at third level and students were attracted to them in increasing numbers on completion of second level.

A LONG WAIT

Nothing further was heard from the Department on the rationalisation until 1973. Then confirmation of the need for it came in response to a letter seeking information. This letter, addressed to Minister Richard Burke, acknowledged the inadequate curricular and physical provisions in each school and was signed by most teachers. The Minister would be in touch again in the near future. All waited. Throughout the 1970s the initiative was left, mistakenly, everybody now knows, with the Department. When its officials would

come to Rathkeale to establish a school, they would have to consult and satisfy interested parties, parents, management bodies and teacher unions. This was the age of innocence!

By 1980 patience was thin and a parents' meeting in the secondary school led to the election of an action group. Pressure was exerted effectively at local and central government level by this committee and a Community School was eventually sanctioned by Minister Gemma Hussey in 1983. It is obvious now, in hindsight, that a joint parents' committee, if such were feasible at the time, would have helped to foster mutual trust and might have been equally effective.

The decision to seek the establishment of a Community School was taken at a meeting of all interested parties - parents' representatives, unions and management bodies - convened by the Department of Education. At the end of this meeting the CEO suggested that the new school could be built on land adjoining the Vocational School. Both the decision and the suggestion were controversial and divisive. Some would have preferred a Community College and others wanted a completely new site for the school.

In the meantime, a meeting of representatives of teachers, parents and management bodies was held in December 1983. Ministerial sanction for the Community School was welcomed. Priorities were agreed - one, to secure the best possible accommodation and facilities and two, to maintain a united front in dealing with the Department of Education. To achieve these aims a joint committee was established consisting of the two Principals, two teachers and two parents - one of each from both schools. The VEC member and Chairman of the Vocational School Board of Management offered to act as convenor and chairman. This joint committee replaced the parents' action group that had been campaigning for a new school since 1980. To preclude any possible conflicts or misunderstandings it was agreed that the joint committee alone would deal with all aspects of the proposed new school and that it should report back on progress to the parent group on a regular basis. Regrettably, this did not happen.

The meetings of the joint committee were infrequent and irregular, the first occurring in January 1985, over twelve months after its inception. Though numerous letters were written and several phone calls made to the Department expressing anxiety at the apparent slow progress of the project, there

was no response until June. Negotiations to acquire a site had been protracted due to constraints on Department officials to purchase land adjoining the Vocational School and to retain and use some of the existing accommodation there. The cost was a factor also. If negotiations had not been concluded by July 1985, the letter from the Principal Officer stated other options would be considered.

The committee replied, offering its assistance and co-operation in relation to the purchase of the site and the planning. A note of disquiet was sounded about the size of the field (a little over six acres). The priority of the committee - that the school be a cohesive unit - was clearly stated. The committee also proposed that extra land be purchased. Two adjacent properties were suggested. One of these was on offer at the agricultural price of land and any amount, from one to sixty acres, could be purchased. Limerick County Council invited the Department to jointly purchase and develop the latter site as an amenity area for Rathkeale and to provide outdoor activities for the new school.

In late February of 1986, a letter from the Department apologised for the delay and confirmed that agreement had been reached on the purchase of a site, the one adjoining the Vocational School. No reference was made to the committee's objections to the inadequate amount of land nor to the proposal re extra land. Some solace was offered though: "Architectural planning will now proceed without delay", the letter concluded.

Between July and December 1986 the Principals worked, with the assistance of Department officials, on accommodation requirements. A draft schedule - the Department's one - was considered by the committee in December. It found, unanimously, that it was inadequate in several respects. Its main concern, however, was the inadequate number of class rooms.

Interestingly, a survey of demographic trends, ordered by Minister O'Rourke in 1990, led to the drafting of a new schedule of accommodation, reducing the size of the school to cater for 400. Then in 1994, with spectacular inconsistency, Minister Bhreathnach sanctioned the building of seven extra class rooms as the builders laid the foundation for the school for 400! (This extension is now completed and in use).

Inertia set in - for many reasons. The joint committee's reservations forwarded in January 1987 fell on deaf ears. The creation of a sub-committee of

Rathkeale Community Council - proposed by a member of the joint committee - to promote the school project did not help either. Further, access to information by members of the public that was not made available to the joint committee led some to conclude that the committee was irrelevant. The embargo on spending during 1987 and 1988 and the redeployment of staff from the planning section to other areas of the Department contributed also. As a result, the committee met once a year from 1987 to 1990 and ceased to function after that.

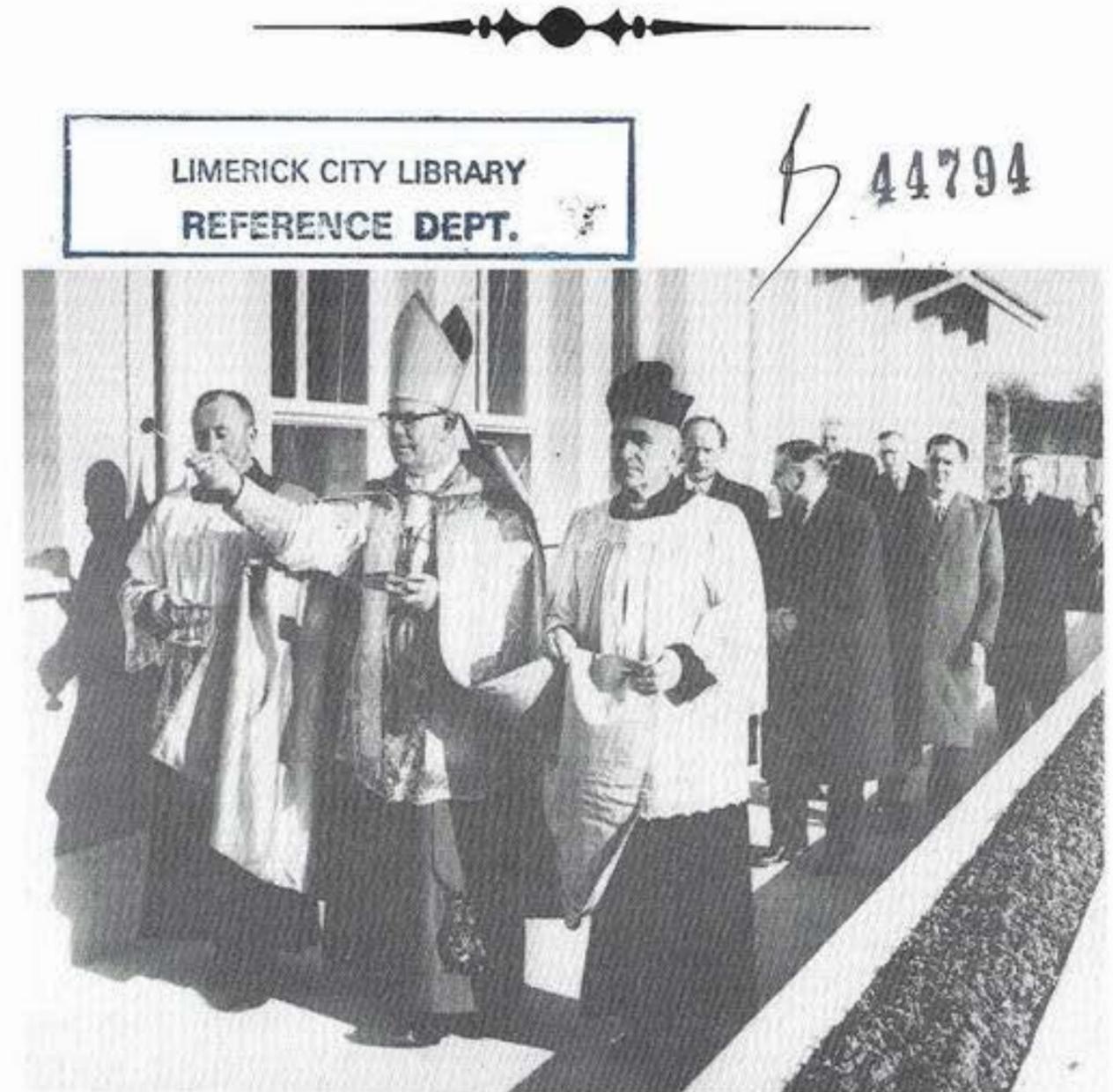
In 1990 another event took place which caused difficulty. Bishop Newman withdrew as the guarantor of the local contribution required for the Community School. The Sisters of Mercy felt obliged to comply with his directions and were unable to act alone as guarantors. It was in these inauspicious circumstances that Coláiste na Trócaire, a Community College under the aegis of Co. Limerick VEC, was agreed.

A campaign for a budget allocation and a commencement date for building was launched. It was a concerted effort involving teachers, teacher unions and parents carefully orchestrated by the CEO of Co. Limerick VEC. These were the more notable landmarks in it:

- the circulation to lobbyists of an architect's report, commissioned by the Sisters of Mercy, on the conditions of the prefabricated classrooms. They were "dangerous and unhealthy", it concluded.
- the drafting of a report for use by the CEO and ASTI on the inadequate facilities in the secondary school and the rising cost of essential repairs and heating. An album of corroborative photographs was compiled.
- a visit to the secondary school of the President and General Secretary of ASTI. ASTI then adopted Rathkeale as a priority.
- the Minister for Education visited Rathkeale in October 1993, admitted to being shocked at conditions and gave a commitment to expedite the project. (Department officials subsequently confirmed her deep interest in Rathkeale!).
- the involvement of local representatives - TDs Gerry Collins and Michael Finucane and Senators Dan Neville and Mary Kelly.

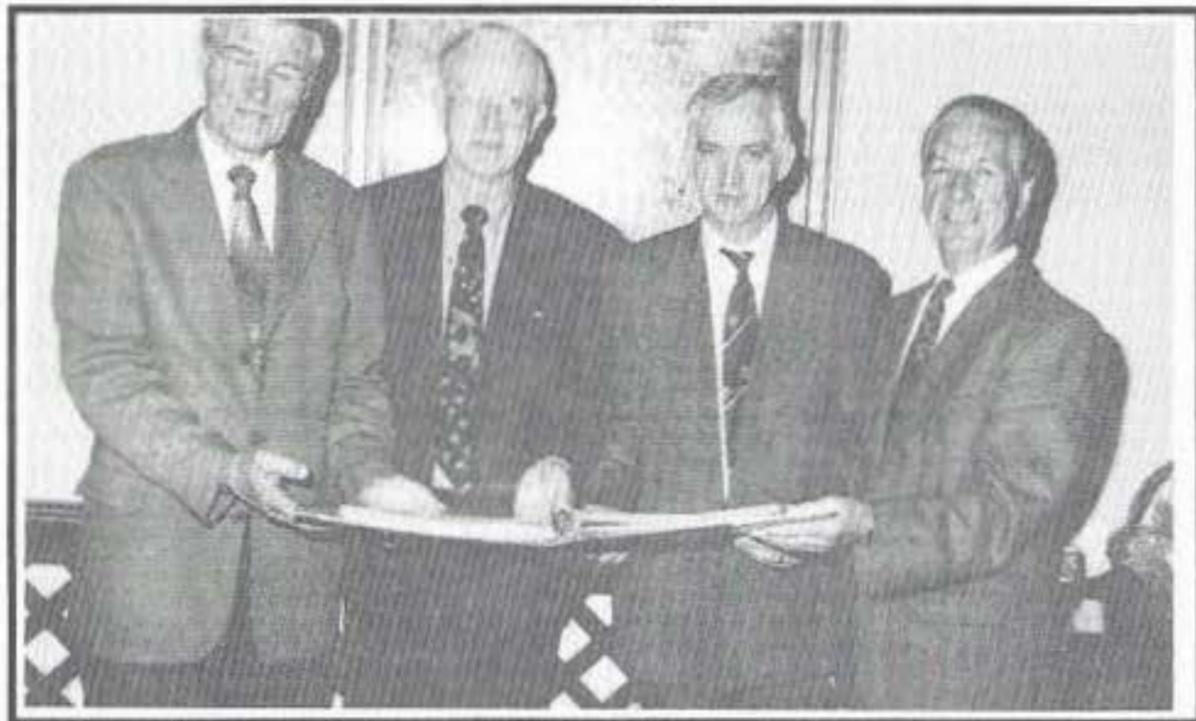
- the merciless harassment - with letters, phone calls and frequent and prolonged visits - of the Department officials by the CEO, Seán Burke.

A budget allocation was made. Tender and contract arrangements followed quickly. Construction began early in the Spring of 1994. And, as stated earlier, the school opened in September 1995. Had Rathkeale's turn finally and inevitably come or did the strategic campaign bear fruit?



Opening of Girls' Convent School
Fr. Enright, Dr. Murphy, Canon Carroll. In background; Jack Lynch, Minister for Education, Doncadh O'Briain, T.D., Denis Jones, T.D.

Rathkeale Community Council



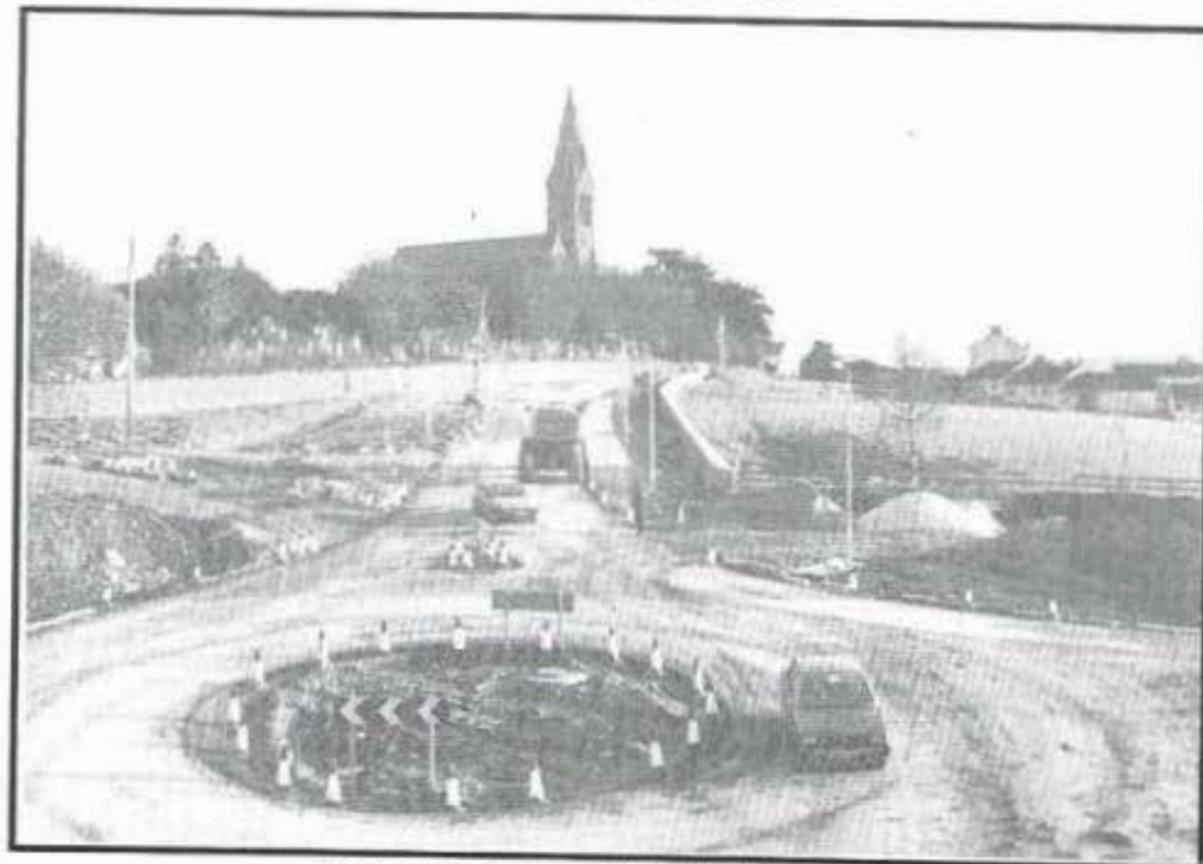
*All Chairmen of the Community Council
Joe Dunleavy, Peter Donovan, Noel White, Jack O'Dwyer*



*Survivors of the First Community Council
Back: W. Nestor, D. Gammell, S. McDonnell, E. Roche, J. McInery, J. Power,
P. Keating, M. Hanley. Front: P. Donovan, R. Teskey, T. Geaney, J. O'Dwyer,
E. Neville, L. Noonan, D. Dillon.
Missing: C. Crowley, B. Snow, J. Griffin, M. Foster, E. Scully, J. Lynch, A. O'Dea*



Sewerage Scheme in Progress



Work in Progress on New By-Pass Road

Rugby Football in Rathkeale and District

Rugby was in its early stages in Ireland when an inaugural meeting was held on 6th March 1874 to form a governing body. Thus comes into being the Irish Football Union (I.F.U.), now the Irish Rugby Football Union (I.R.F.U.).

Rathkeale Rugby Club, formed in the early 1870's, was the only club from Munster represented at this meeting, its delegates were Capt. Boyer and T. B. Bolton. A second club, Limerick County, was affiliated in 1876. Very little is known and less recorded of the progress or activities of the Rathkeale Club and this is not surprising as the game was mostly confined to cities and travel was difficult and uncertain for the small clubs, making it next to impossible to provide any match opposition for rural teams. The Great War, War of Independence and the Civil War halted all activities until the 1920's.

During the 1930's rugby flourished in Rathkeale. The team was formed by John O'Connor, Principal of the Secondary School with Jack Killackey as trainer. For a while they played in the old race course and when enough funds were raised a field in Enniscouch, opposite the present coursing field, was leased from Mr. Tom Enright. This same field had previously been used by the local G.A.A. A set of red and black jerseys were also purchased. The club took part in all junior competitions, including the Munster Junior and Garryowen Cups. Because both Newcastle West and Askeaton were inactive at this time, players from both clubs joined Rathkeale. With the onset of the Second World War activities ceased but there was a small revival in 1976 with a Shannon Meat inter-firm team which did well in inter-firm competitions until 1982. From the 1960's to the present day Rathkeale players have been prominent with Newcastle R.F.C.

Newcastle Club was founded in 1924, followed by Rathkeale and Askeaton circa 1929-31. The three were great rivals but wholeheartedly co-operative, putting their esteem for the game first. When one or other of these clubs became inactive many of their players joined one of the neighbouring teams. In the 1920's Newcastle were of a standard to take on any senior team. They

had some wonderful athletes and nine of the squad had learned the game at Ireland's greatest rugby nursery - Blackrock College, Dublin. A number played with well known Leinster and Munster clubs and won Provincial caps and Cup medals in both provinces. Two won Irish caps - Jerome Mullane won two and Denis Cussen won fourteen. As well as being an international wing threequarter, Denis was an outstanding athlete, being Irish 100-yards champion for a period and is still the holder of the Irish record at 9.8 seconds for the 100 yards. The club won the Garryowen Cup in 1927 and the McElligott Cup in 1945-46 and 1976-77.

Askeaton was a very keen and enthusiastic club and after ceasing playing in the 1930's revived again in the 40's. They were very strong with an excellent team during this revival period. They competed for all the junior trophies and played and won against all the best in Munster except for Clanwilliam from Tipperary, a team they failed to crack. In one particular season they played fifteen matches and won thirteen. They won the Transfield Cup and reached the final of the Garryowen Cup. For a short time there were players in their squad from the Meteorological and Air Services in Foynes.

As time went by players from the three clubs distinguished themselves with many senior clubs, winning further honours in the game. Mossy Curtin from Newcastle West became a prominent member of Garryowen and won Munster Cup medals in 1939-40 and again in 1946-47 and gained a number of Munster caps. The Mulcahy brothers, John and Bill, from Rathkeale won Munster Cup medals with Bohemians in 1957-58 and 1961-62. Bill is probably Rathkeale's most famous sporting son and a legend in the game of rugby. He played with U.C.D., Bohemians, Bective and Skerries. He won thirty-five Irish caps and captained Ireland on twelve occasions. He was selected for two Lions tours - to Australia/New Zealand in 1959 where he played in all four tests and South Africa in 1962 where he played in two and missed the remaining tests through injury. Basil Fitzgibbon, Pat Moran and Pat Sheahan from Askeaton won Munster Cup medals with Bohemians and also played with their province. Declan Madden from Rathkeale won a Munster Cup medal with Garryowen and captained the club from 1982 to 1984. In the 1990's and to the present day Paddy O'Grady won Munster and All-Ireland League medals with Shannon and also played several times for Munster. Likewise, Dan Larkin won Munster Cup and All-Ireland Leagues with Garryowen while Michael Fitzgibbon from Askeaton won Cup and League medals with Shannon and gained eight Irish caps.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to the following for help in preparing this article on rugby in the district: Maurice Cowhey (Rathkeale), Ger Fennell (Rathkeale), Michael Collins (Askeaton), Newcastle West Rugby Club Golden Jubilee Booklet 1924-77, "The Revival" by William Madden in the Shannon Meats Gazette 1980, Club History, Garryowen Centenary 1994, Club History, Shannon Centenary 1994.



Bill Mulcahy

The Deel Hall

Ger Fennell

When 'Rakealers' cross southwards over the Deel river, on their way to the Marian Shrine, the Pike, Castlematrix, or wherever, by way of the town bridge, and see the tattered roof and red bricked walls of the building on their left, what are they looking at? Most will tell you they are looking at the old dance hall - the Deel Hall - as it was known in the 'old days', and right they are.

But, for what its worth, they might even be looking at what quite possibly are the remnants of an old British Military Barracks. That possibility is reinforced by Mr. Michael Madden's work dealing with Commdt. Seán Finn which includes, in an appendix, the description of the burial in quicklime of three Croppy Boys on the land in front of what might well have been an earlier building on the site of the Deel Hall, the event being witnessed by some ladies watching from "the windows of living quarters close by". If true, they could only have watched the gruesome happenings from the windows in a building facing the Deel river where the present building now stands. There is no doubt that there was a military barracks situated at least in the present County Council yard (i.e. behind the Deel Hall) and it would not be unreasonable to assume that the building that would end up as the Deel Hall could have been part of that barracks.

From my earliest youth I remember the dreaded 'Croppy Tree' that supposedly marked the grave of the unfortunate "croppies" that stood roughly half-way between the northern wall of the present hall and the bank of the Deel river. It was an observation made with some delight and even trepidation among 'Brooklyn' young lads of my age group that no leaves ever grew on the tree. The tree was rooted up some time in the 1960s for a reason best known to the 'rooter-uppers' (certainly not with the permission of my father).

Folklore and conjecture aside, records show that the area where the hall now stands was purchased from Viscount Southwell in 1871 by what was then known as The Rathkeale Gaslight and Coke Company, for the purpose of generating the gas that would light the gas lamps on the streets. The

supervisor of the venture was a man called Mr. Barrett who lived in the house in the grounds of the Deel Hall. Later it became the local plant for the generation of electricity, which I believe was a locally run concern. It was bought over by the ESB in 1929 who, in turn, sold it in 1934 to my aunt, Eileen Fennell.

I am not sure what possessed the Fennells to turn the erstwhile gasworks into a dance hall but I would suspect that it was linked to supporting Fennells pub up the road (where the Seabhac Wine Bar now operates). There had been a strong tradition of house dancing and dances at crossroads in and around the parish and, of course, the Carnegie Library was a well established dancing centre. But Moss Fennell wanted a dance hall and so the work would start.

At the time, what was to become the "hall" was not a single building but two separate buildings (no idea of the distance between them but, at a guess, no more than a few yards). Many, many times my father told me, at the kitchen table, of how the new "hall" was put together, of old tanks being hammered down to ground level and buried, of how the two buildings were joined together, and of how stalwart men helped him to accomplish such a task, in those day before the mighty machines were born. Done it was - and in a hurry by all accounts - to be ready for the first dance to be held there, and if memory serves me correctly, the "hall" was all set for its grand opening for a fine garrison romp, a rugby dance hosted by the Rathkeale Rugby Club. The year might have been 1938.

For the next sixty years the hall saw many people, many changes and many diverse activities. In the way of change, the stage was originally set up in the centre of the southern wall (many older and maybe not so old folk will remember the oval painting of a waltzing couple, painted by and presented to Moss Fennell by J.J.Lynch, that hung directly over the stage; the painting, though now in poor condition, still survives); was later moved to the western end of the building and finished up on the eastern wall. Ladies and gents' cloakrooms were added and an alcove (a fine word at the time) was built on. The mineral bar was moved from its original position in what was fondly known as the 'tennis pavilion' (on the southern wall) to the newly built alcove on the northern wall. A ticket office, with hatch and all, was built at the western end of the hall, and when gas heating was installed in the middle 1960s a building was added to the eastern end to house the gas cylinders.

But the 'piece de resistance' was the laying of the maple floor in the early 1960s. People came from far and near to slide, stomp or glide on this new phenomenon. New windows were added from time to time, metal grilled doors were installed (air conditioning purposes for the hot Summer nights!!) and the place was constantly being repainted (the not so onerous task of painting being the unhappy lot of the 'author' more often than not).

The 'Act of God' most often visited on us was the stripping of the roof by strong winds. This happened with tiresome regularity and good friends often risked life and limb to repair the damage, sometimes at the height of the offending storm.

But the dance hall was much more than just a dance hall. By times the crowds roared for blood at boxing tournaments there, and the very next week the same patrons might be seen sedately dancing at a dinner dance in the same venue. On a Tuesday one might be playing badminton there and on Friday be sitting enjoying a performance by the local or a visiting drama group. The hall was a parade ground for the local F.C.A. and a concert venue for Muintir na Tire. It was a Bingo hall for the swimming club committee, and a store house for Shannon Meats. It was the venue for 'Record Hops' for the local tennis club and, in latter years, a school house for Youthreach.

"If walls could talk"!! The ghosts and talents of Anew McMaster, Bridie Gallagher, Christopher Lynch, the Jack Hayes Band (The Terpsichorean), The Donie Collins Band, The Ludlows, Emmet Spiceland, The Gallowglass Ceili Band, The Berwin Nua, Moll Connell, Sweeney's Men, Tadgh Keating, The Legionnaires and many, many others mingle freely in that old building.

To me? Well to me it was a place to play 'ghosts in the well' or 'hide and seek' in, a place to skate up and down the polished floor in, a place to listen to great music and watch great plays. It was a place to watch flushed expectant 'Bingo faces' in, a place that had to be locked up on creepy Winter nights when all the fun was over. And do you know something ... I never ever 'smooched' there, and that's a fact.

The Bothán Scóir

Caoimhín O Danachair

This article is from the "North Munster Journal" 1967.

Caoimhín O Danachair has strong Rathkeale ancestry.

The officials who took the Census of Ireland from 1841 to 1921 were instructed to record the number of the dwelling-houses as well as that of the inhabitants. They were directed to classify the houses under four headings: "in the lowest, or fourth class, were comprised all mud cabins having only one room; in the third, a better description, still built of mud, but varying from two to four rooms and windows; in the second, a good farmhouse, or in the towns a house in a small street, having from five to nine rooms and windows; and in the first, all houses of a better description than the preceding classes". In the countryside we may take class one as the 'gentlemen's residences', class two as the big farmhouses, and class three as the small farmhouses and the dwellings of rural craftsmen. Class four was found to include a wide range of one-roomed dwellings, from neat small cabins to the vilest of hovels; the enumerators became aware, too, that 'mud cabin' was not an adequate term for this fourth class, since many of them were made from sods, dry-stone, clay-mortared stone, indeed from whatever material came easiest to hand, while many large and fine farmhouses were built of tempered clay.

The figures returned in the Censuses of 1841 and 1851 for the County of Limerick (not including the City of Limerick) are as follows:

Year	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Total
1841	567	5,237	15,575	21,493	43,944
1851	722	6,204	16,459	7,460	32,562

Taking into consideration the fact that the period from 1841 to 1851 was the decade in which the Great Famine occurred, these figures are especially significant, showing as they do that, while the three better classes of houses all increased in number, class 1 by 155, class 2 by 967, and class 3 by 884, the fourth class, the dwellings of the poorest class of the population, fell by about two-thirds of the 1841 figures, from 21,493 to 7,460, a loss of 14,033 such dwellings.

It is not easy to assess from the census figures the gain or loss in numbers of the various classes of the rural population in this decade. It is safe to assume that in County Limerick, as elsewhere in Ireland, the population increased between 1841 and 1845. There was migration to and from other parts of Ireland - the 1841 Census shows 441 farmers and 1,837 labourers and servants not born in County Limerick but then resident in that county. The 1851 Census shows that the population had fallen by 72,844 since 1841. The number of recorded deaths for the county is given as 44,498 for this period about one half of which, if we are to judge by the average annual death rate in the county in the years 1843, 1844 and 1845, would have occurred independently of famine conditions. Against this must be set off the natural increase over the period. We must conclude, therefore, that the total decrease figure for the decade of 72,844 includes a substantial number of emigrants. We have seen that more than 14,000 of the poorest class of dwellings vanished during this decade, and we learn from the census that the average number of persons per family in County Limerick at this period was 6 (actually 6.04 in 1841 and 5.91 in 1851). If then we suppose that the vanished houses were each occupied by a normal family, we may also suppose that their loss represented the loss of 84,000 persons. This figure is significantly close to that obtained by adding the actual loss in population (72,844) to the number of people in the workhouses of the county (16,056), a total of 88,900 persons dead, emigrated or displaced from their homes. The argument is not entirely decisive; nevertheless we must conclude that in County Limerick the main weight of the Famine fell upon the poor, landless people, and that while the farmers and others with some degree of substance in the main survived the catastrophe, a very large proportion, perhaps two-thirds, of these poor people was swept away.

The rapid disappearance of the little houses continued in the years following the Famine. In 1851, as we have seen, 7,460 of them remained in County Limerick. By 1881 the figure had fallen to 3,628, and there is no doubt that emigration was mainly responsible for this; we now that emigration was at that period heaviest among the poorest people - we learn from the Census that between 1st May 1851 and 31st December 1855 the number of emigrants from the whole of Ireland included 15,088 persons classed as farmers and their families and 356,262 persons classed as farm labourers and servants and their families, and while the 'farmers' included only 2,830 women and children, giving the impression that they were mainly single men, probably farmers' younger sons, 136,074 of the latter were women and children,

obviously indicating the departure of whole families.

The 1880s brought a new factor into rural housing, the first provision of 'labourers' cottages' by local authorities for rent to farm labourers and other workmen; the houses replaced by these, especially in the earlier years, were those of the poorest type.

By 1891 the number of houses of class 4 in County Limerick had fallen to 1,291, and by 1911 to 350. The middle of the 1930s saw about 20 still surviving ; it is doubtful if even one is still inhabited today.

In short we may say that a hundred and twenty years ago a large proportion, roughly one half, of the rural population of County Limerick lived in small one-roomed houses roughly built of poor materials, that the famine decade saw the disappearance of about two-thirds of these dwellings in the county, and that they vanished entirely from the County Limerick scene in the following century.

Many of these dwellings were miserable in the extreme. Some would not be recognised by a casual observer as human habitations. There are traditions of people living in holes in the ground, roughly roofed, as for instance, this from the uplands of west Limerick: "His house was cut into a turf bank. I mean that he had cut out the turf to the size of the hut, and put up a wall of bog sods in front. The other walls were the sides of the hole. He had a few sticks, with sods on top, and then thatch. It must have been a damp, miserable sort of hovel, but he lived in it for years". This was about 1870. Another tradition tells of a family living in the dry arch of a bridge, they had built a rough wall on each side for shelter. Most of them, however, were built in imitation of the local building tradition, but of poor materials and the roughest of methods. Their builders had to find their own materials, which meant the nearest to hand. Some had walls of sods cut from the surface of a field or bog, and since no farmer would permit the stripping of sod from a good field, even the sods were of poor quality, gathered from here and there. Some had walls of rough field stones; the builders could seldom afford to quarry good stone. The stones were laid with mud, often the mud scraped from the surface of a road, as a cheap substitute for mortar. Some had walls of clay, but here again the quality was usually poor; good clay walling, as used in many farmhouses in the county, required careful selection of the material, considerable skill in the mixing, tempering and building and a large amount of la-

bour, all usually beyond the means of the poorest people.

Most difficult to obtain was roofing timber; any sort of rough poles, boughs or lengths of bogdeal had to do. Some could not afford even these; witness the case of a poor widow near Rathkeale in the early 1830s: "Her daughter's husband built for her the walls of a cabin on a waste close to her former residence, but was unable to roof it in. She got a few poles, and made a narrow shed, by placing them against the wall of her cabin and covering them with loose weeds; the end is open to the air and has no door. She has lived in this manner some weeks with her boy (a son 10 years old), and expects to pass the winter under the same shed. She stated that her daughters are not able to do anything for her, and that she lives on potatoes collected from the farmers; that she goes out twice a week, and collects three or four stones each time. Her son-in-law seemed to be a respectable man, and said that he had no potato garden, but lives by wages as a common labourer. He owes 6s. for the mason work of part of the cabin walls, and he pawned his wife's cloak to buy some poles for the widow's shed, and has not redeemed it; and the widow applied to a gentleman for some wood, but had been refused, and she only expected to finish the building of her cabin by the assistance of God Almighty. The walls are built of stone and are better than the average".

The general run of the 'cabins', as they were called to distinguish them from the farmhouses, was somewhat better than the wretched shelter of the poor widow, but very few of them had any degree of comfort. A report from the barony of Coshlea, the south-eastern part of the county, a mainly rich and fertile area, says: "The walls of cabins are composed of mud and straw mixed, and are about seven feet in height. A cabin has generally but one apartment, which is about 16 feet long, by 13 wide; it serves as kitchen and sleeping room. A cabin never has, in this barony, a second storey; the only covering is the thatch which is composed of straw and generally in bad condition; the floor is simply the earth on which the cabin stands, it is very uneven, damp and full of holes, which in wet weather become full of water. In general, cabins have no chimneys, but merely a hole in the roof to let the smoke escape; however, chimneys are becoming more common here; they are made of scollops covered with plaster mud. There is no such thing as a grate to be seen in a labourer's cabin. Windows are usually about 12 inches square; however, larger ones are coming much more into use. There are regular stalls in the market at Limerick for the sale of windows, which are generally two feet long. A cabin door has iron hinges, wooden bolts, and a hasp and

padlock outside; the only outhouse is a pig sty. There has been an improvement of late years in the habitations of labourers; whitewash is used more frequently, the windows are better and are kept more cleanly".

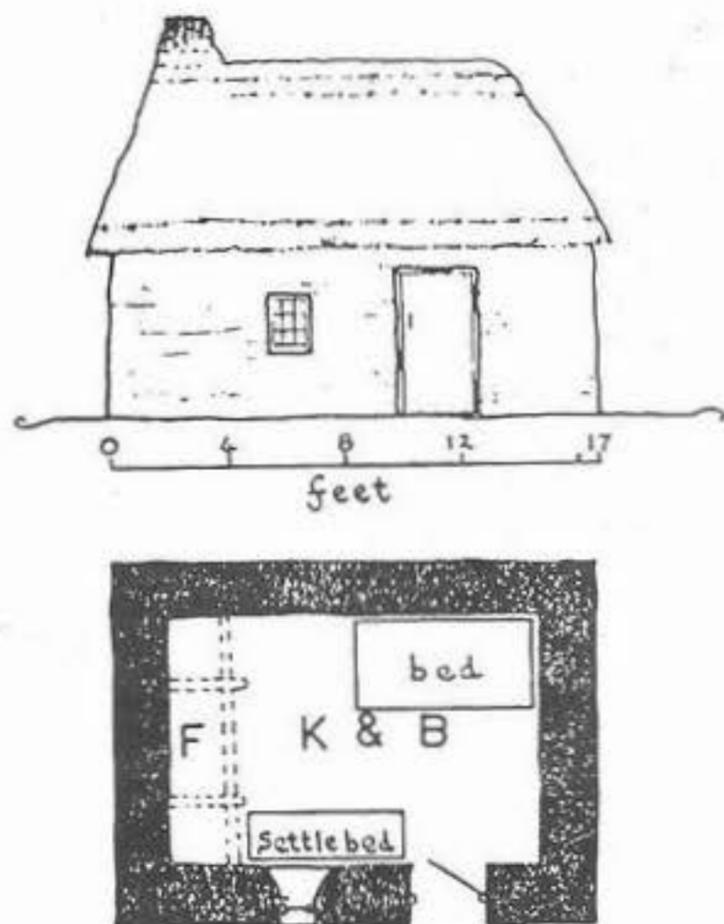


Fig. 1. A Bothán Scóir.

Those which survived into the twentieth century were of the better sort. Fig. 1 shows the plan and elevation of one of these, at Ballymurrugh East (near Barna station), still inhabited in 1940 but demolished since then. The date of its building is not known; a small building, shown on the site in the first ordnance survey (1841), may well be the same. The walls were of clay-mortared stone; the roof timbers were partly of sawn wood, and partly of trimmed boughs of various kinds, clearly a miscellaneous collection of wood scraped together from any available source, in plain collar-rafters with light purlins, with thatch of rushes underneath which was a layer of sod. The chimney was a four-sided funnel of mud-plastered hay-rope on a wooden frame, incorporated into the hip-roof at one end. The door and only window were both in the front wall, and the internal dimensions were 13 x 8 feet.

This may be taken as a typical specimen of the last survivors of the type and, except for its small size and rough construction, it did not differ in any significant way from larger, better-built houses of traditional form in the area. It can scarcely be regarded as the survival of a primitive type from which the larger houses developed; rather is it to be seen as a poor copy of the more developed building tradition.

Who were the people who lived in these little houses in the early 19th century? Some of them, no doubt, were what were then classed as "cottier tenants", that is to say people who held small portions of land, less than 10 plantation acres, from a landlord or sub-landlord for a money rent in the ordinary way, but were unable to subsist entirely from their holdings and had to take conacre, or to engage in labour for hire for some periods of the year on public works, as migratory labourers or for bigger farmers in their own districts. For these there was always the chance that with thrift and with luck they might gain a larger holding and so become self-sufficient farmers, but there was also the risk that they might sink to the status of landless labourers. Many of them, however, in their aspiration to better things, had houses somewhat superior to those we are now considering.

Most of the little one-roomed houses belonged to those who were classed as "cottier labourers", that is, workmen who held no ground at all, or only a small patch of potato ground. Usually these were permitted by the farmers to have a quarter or half an acre of land on which to build a cabin and till a garden. Frequently the rent for this was calculated in a number of days of work done for the farmer. Often it was calculated in money but the labourer was expected to pay it off in days of work for his farmer-landlord at the current rate of wages. Sometimes it was purely a money rent scraped together from the labourer's wages or the sale of fowl, eggs or a pig. Most of the labourers took some conacre to supplement their means; conacre, as we know, is land rented for the raising of one crop, in this connection almost always potatoes. The labourer entered on the allotted piece of land to plant the crop; sometimes he must find the manure; in other cases the farmer supplied it, and the rent was adjusted accordingly. The labourer tilled the ground and raised the crop and vacated the land as soon as the potatoes were dug in the Autumn; the amount of land so taken by a labourer was generally about half an acre. The system was loaded with risk for the labourer; if the crop failed he had to stand the loss. "Except where the conacre is let by the farmer to one of his cottier-labourers, the agreement is generally that the rent of the

conacre shall be paid in money, but from the poverty of the labourer the farmer is frequently obliged to take part, and sometimes a large part, of the rent in labour. When the produce is not worth the rent, some farmers sell the crop and proceed against the labourer for the balance; but it is more usual to take the crop for the rent, without putting the labourer to any further loss than that of the seed and labour". Some poor men had no means of support other than conacre, and had to derive the rent of their cabins as well as their subsistence from this uncertain source.

This association of the one-roomed house with conacre gave it the name by which it was known to the Gaelic speakers of the area, bothán scóir, in which bothán means a hut or cabin and scóir comes from talamh scóir, conacre or "score ground", the name might thus be translated "conacre cabin".

From the foregoing it will be seen that the people who lived in these houses were balanced precariously between meagre subsistence and starvation, in the years before the Great Famine. The volume of available work was limited; Limerick is traditionally a dairying rather than a tillage area, and at sowing and harvest time they had for rivals the spailpíní from west Kerry and west Clare. Of public works there were few, mainly in building roads, and work on these was closed to many: "Very few labourers are of late years employed in road making, as the grand jury have given contracts on most of the roads to farmers to keep in repair for a specified time; the little work that is done on these the contractor, with his several men and horses, is able to do, or, if he does employ those who hold cabins and lots from him, the work is placed to their account, as if given on the farm. There is an extensive new line of road making, for the last two years, through the western part of this parish, at which about eighty labourers got occasional employment during the last year; these complain bitterly of the hire, 5d and 6d in winter and only 7d in summer, no diet, and to work almost from daybreak until dark, with the exception of the short space that they occupy in eating their dinner near the work, not being allowed to go home to eat it; most of the men thus employed are the labourers of the road maker and his friends; this winter, I am informed, the men are paid regularly at the end of every fortnight".

Three factors are very evident in the lives of these landless labourers, the lowest and poorest class of the rural population, in the first half of the nineteenth century. First, they were increasing not only on actual numbers but also at a higher rate than other classes. They married earlier, and with much

less care for the future than the farmers, who were bound by the tradition of social and economic parity between bride and groom, by the settlement, the dowry and the made match. "Early marriages are most common among the lowest, who have no ground; marriages are settled between the parties often at fairs, but among those who have land, they are arranged by the parents". "All marry young, the labourers youngest as the farmers look more before them". This is confirmed by other witnesses, and we know that the pattern of earlier marriages and larger families among rural labourers has continued into our own century. The second factor was a progressive deterioration in their condition. Wages in the early 1840s were no higher than in the 1770s, while the labourer was less sure of employment. Arthur Young noted that most labourers had a cow, some two, in 1778, but the possession of a cow was wealth beyond the dreams of a Limerick labourer in 1845. In the third place, the poor people had become utterly dependent upon the potato not merely as a cheap food but as a way of life. "The whole system of Irish labourers must be changed before corn can be substituted, as their food, for potatoes. If I were to offer a man meal, or potatoes, containing equal quantities of substantial food, he would choose the potatoes; he would say that they would give him more refuse food for his pig; that they could be thrown into a corner, whilst the meal ought to be put into a cupboard, a thing which he has not in his cabin; that if the potatoes are wasted by his children, or dropped in the mud or dirt outside his cabin, the pig eats them and they are not lost, and that he has no oven or place to bake and keep his bread; in fact, an Irish labourer must have a better cabin, and better furnished, before he can economically use corn food".

The abundant return of the potato crop meant less ground to be tilled, less rent to be paid, and less labour to be spent. The minimum of preparation and cooking, merely rough washing and plain boiling in a simple pot, were all that was necessary. Only the simplest kind of storage was needed, and all the offals, peels, scraps and leftovers went to feed the poor man's scanty livestock, a few fowl and a pig. The labourer's whole way of life was determined by this one crop and he had become utterly dependent on it. Very seldom did any other kind of food come his way. Not often did he see bread or porridge. When he was in good employment he might have milk or herrings, when he was out of work he must do without these. The fowl, the eggs and the pig had to be sold to buy clothing and other absolute necessities. He and his family ate meat not more than two or three times a year. When the crop was abundant, as in most years it was, he fared well. Young and other observers were

glad to see that the Irish labourer, in spite of his poverty, had his "bellyful of potatoes". In such time of plenty even the unemployed, the destitute, the swarming beggars, did not go empty, for the farmers distributed their surplus potatoes with a lavish hand - it was calculated that the farmers of Ireland gave away as alms potatoes to the value of one million pounds a year, an almost incredible figure. A beggar could easily collect two or three stone of potatoes in a day; the farmers also gave them straw for bedding. But the labourers, who were too decent to beg, were often glad to give a night's shelter to "travellers" so as to get a share of the potatoes and the straw which these had gathered during the day.

The partial failure of the crop, the carelessness of the labourer's wife, the deterioration or destruction of the stored potatoes, any of these meant hunger in the early summer when potatoes were scarcest and dearest. "Hungry July" was a sad reality for many. Nettles, praiseach bhuf, and other wild growths were gathered and cooked to fill empty stomachs. Part of the immature crop might be dug and eaten, with consequent stomach disorders, and lessened return in the coming harvest. The total failure of the crop meant utter destitution, for not only was the poor man's own food resource gone, but there was so much less work on the farms, the farmer's bounty ceased for lack of potatoes to give away, and all foodstuffs became scarce and dear beyond the labourer's means. All this became a horrid reality in the Great Famine. The farmers were had put to support themselves and their own workmen; the present writer's grandmother, born in 1840, remembered her mother's grief at not being able to "reach her hand" to the poor who came to the door. For the casual labourer, the conacre-cottier and others who lived solely by the potato, there was nothing left but flight, the workhouse or starvation. They and their poor dwellings were swept from the face of the county.

Relations between the farmers and the landless labourers were seldom happy. Usually a farmer had one or two labourers, whom he regarded as his own men, in permanent employment, and these usually shared his fortunes. But it appears that the mass of landless labourers was exploited; their cabins, their potato garden and their bits of conacre were let to them at a high rate of rent; £2 for the patch on which the cabin stood, and £4 for a half-acre of "score ground" were usual. Against this, the rate of wages was low, about 8d per day, which meant thirty days' labour for each £1 of rent. "When conacres are let to labourers and work taken in exchange, the highest possible price is exacted, and the workman, although he attends ten hours a day, does little

more than half as much work as he could perform with ease; this is because he knows that he does not get anything like value for his full labour, on account of this overcharge, and works unwillingly; employers charge more, and labourers work less, to meet their reciprocal extortion and idleness".

A general description of the labourers' condition by a Church of Ireland clergyman who had lived in west Limerick for many years is worth quoting - it was written in the early 1830s:

"The labourers' cabins are, upon the whole, the most wretched hovels that can well be imagined; there are some exceptions but, upon the whole, they may be stated as very bad indeed, in almost every case without windows, many without chimneys, and some without doors; almost universally badly thatched, and letting down the rain at all sides; in some so much so that the inhabitants were compelled to hollow the floor in two or three places, and then teem the collected water from one to another, until it was teemed out at the door. As for furniture, in many neither chair nor table is found, and the bed is only a sop of coarse grass, rushes or straw, thrown in a corner on the floor, without any covering but a canvas sheet, and their daily clothes spread over it; these cases preponderate over those cases in which are found anything like comfort; the majority, however, of the labourers have their beds raised on some kind of sticks from the floor, and have tolerable bed covering over a straw bed. I have visited all these labourers' habitations. I have also ascertained the rent paid by the farmer for the farm on which such cabin was built. I have also viewed the garden and valued same in reference to the quality and value it bears to the whole farm occupied by the farmer, and I have no hesitation in saying that, in most instances, the labourer pays five, ten, nay even twenty and thirty fold as much as the farmer pays the head landlord; beside, in six cases out of ten, the cabin has been built and the land reclaimed by the unfortunate labourer; and what is still more extraordinary, that I may say that in near nine times in ten he has no term of the spot he has expended his labour, his all, upon and is liable to be turned out at the capricious will of his landlord, whose covetousness wants but a slight excuse to possess himself of the improvement and labour of his confiding tenant; thus it too often happens that the industrious improvement of one of these holdings is the surest way to cut short the term by which the labourer holds it; in proof of this ascertain I will mention this fact - that, in the year 1823, I accompanied the proctors sent out by the rector of the parish to value his tithes, and I made those persons take down the names and value the little lots

of all the poor people, distinct from the farmers, for the purpose of forgiving them their tithes; this book I still have, and in comparing it with the notes I have now taken, I do not find twenty in the same holdings they were in; this, coupled with daily complaints of poor people turned out of their holdings, after building their cabins and improving some waste or barren spot, convinces me that this is a fact that the Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the poor should attend to.

In case where the farmer sets a house out of which the person who built it has been turned, or sets a house built by himself, he generally contracts to keep it thatched and repaired; in case he wishes to get rid of his tenant, he has only to neglect his part of the contract, and the unfortunate tenant must quit by something like what is termed Scotch ejection. In the mountain districts, it is pretty generally part of the agreement, on a poor man's taking a lot to build on, that he is to get the grass of his pig and sometimes the grass of one or two goats, and some geese; the turning off the farm is one of the ways often resorted to of turning out the labourer, as it is only for the farmer to notice him to quit, and if he refuses to comply on the March following, his pigs, or goats, and geese, if he has them, are, if not cleared off the lands, sent to the pound, and must either be housed or parted with; thus is the labourer often compelled to surrender what he has lost much time and labour to improve.

It is true that it must be admitted that a labourer and his family are often very annoying to the farmer, sometimes breaking down or burning his fences, his fowls injuring his corn fields, or his frequently unringed pigs rooting and injuring the pasture land; but for this damage the farmer is often more than compensated by the assistance given by the labourer's family in weeding his gardens, cutting, making and saving turf, or in helping on the harvest; in the mountain districts this damage of pigs, etc. must be of no consequence, while the place where the poor man's cabin stands shows, at least, that the heath has given way".

The circumstances and conditions of the labouring poor indicated in this and similar accounts may be contrasted with those of the moderately prosperous farmers, as shown, for instance, in *The Farm by Lough Gur*, to reveal the very deep and very real social and economic gulf which existed in the nineteenth century between these classes of the rural population of County Limerick. That this class distinction persisted into the twentieth century is well known: that its effects persist even today is still evident.

"I Remember....."

by Sister M. Immaculate (nee D'Alton)

Rathkeale..... what lovely memories the name recalls, such happy thoughts, dreams fulfilled. My first teaching post was in Rathkeale in September 1943. "Nach iontach an ghairmbheatha e an mhuinteoireacht mar is fut fein ata intinn an linbh a dhealbhu agus a threoru" (Padraig Mac Piarais). With this ideal in mind I stood before the infant class. There were rows and rows of beautiful looking bright eyed children "they stretched in never ending line". They smilingly turned loving trustful but curious eyes on me as they lisped their welcome "cead mile failte romhat a shiuir" and I immediately felt at home, completely at home, with these little smiling "beauties of Erin".

I was astonished at the perfection of their dress. There wasn't much money around at that time but here were thrift and cleanliness. Each child was neatly and beautifully dressed, mostly in clothes that had been "handed down", as I learned later, but clothes which Mammy had patched or darned, washed and ironed so painstakingly that they looked just perfect. I can still see their neat pinafores, brightly coloured bows perched high on their heads and above all I can see their smiling faces.

I remember well their efforts and enthusiasm to talk our own language and one in particular stands out. If all had kept up the effort Rath Caola might be an Irish speaking town today.

There is a little incident which I must relate. We had learned the phrase "Dia Linn" and that it is said when someone sneezes but nobody had sneezed for some time and we had forgotten all about it. One day I sneezed myself and a little curly headed child jumped up and began beating her head with her small fists. Then she stopped and shouted triumphantly "ting a ling". I was mystified for a moment and then realised she was trying to remember "Dia Linn". We laughed a lot and she was quite proud of herself. I hope God was good to her.

Of all who read this article I would love to know if there is anyone who remembers building the rockery for Our Lady in honour of the proclamation

inspector arrived, looked through the roll and then checked the children's copies. He took up the two with the name Gazette, checked again with the roll, called me and asked for an explanation. Here were two children in my class whose names were not on the roll and nothing would convince him that they were actually on the roll. In the end we had to send for Sr. M. Columba (still alive) to settle the problem. Inspectors, though kind and helpful, were very strict in those days.

One morning another inspector, who was a very good friend of mine, called just to visit me. I had gone back to the convent for a few minutes and on entering he found the class sitting in silence.....God be with the days..... but they stood and greeted him with "Cead mile failte romhat a dhuine uasail". He chatted away with them and then asked "Where is the nun?" They chorused "She is gone back to the convent". "For what?" said he. "She didn't tell us" came the reply. One bright spark piped up "She goes back there every morning for herself but she won't be long". Another said "You know she wears two big long sleeves and when she comes she will have a few sods of turf up her sleeves". "For what?" said the inspector, drawing her out. "She puts them into the fire to keep us warm and then she puts our bottles of milk around the fire to heat". There were no secrets that morning. When I arrived back, laden with turf, there was a big laugh as much as to say "weren't we right" and "here she comes now" was the introduction. The inspector (Mr. McCurtain, R.I.P.) told me the story and how much he had enjoyed the children's company. He loved their innocence and openness. It was well that he was a friend.

The following story has never lost its terror: Outside the first class room, Sr. M. Sylvesters, was a narrow corridor, at the other side of which was a very small room with a gallery. Typing was taught there once by Sr. M. Magdalen (now in Westbourne Convent), so it was called the type room. The infants called it the tight room and we sometimes used it. One hot summer's day we were working quietly there when I suddenly heard "clump, clump, clump" and a big rat stalked into the room. Shock, fear, responsibility for over seventy little children, Holy Spirit help.... all in one split second. I shouted "don't stir, look" as I pointed to the wall behind the class. There was nothing on the same wall... "Keep looking" as I moved the pointer around the wall. "What do you see Sister?" from a puzzled voice and then a small frightened voice whispered audibly "He's gone into the hole Sister". To this day I thank God for his fatherly protection and of what might have happened.

of the Dogma of the Assumption in 1954. It was a time of great excitement. The site chosen was the back yard or infants yard and it was decided that the workforce would consist of all the boys and girls who lived near the school. However they came from far and near and were not satisfied to leave all to the town folk. They arrived that Saturday morning with spades, buckets, shovels etc. while the enthusiasm was infectious and so was the fun, little backs bent under heavy loads of earth and stones were gathered from all around the school yard and around the church. Rocks were a problem as they were rather scarce but Andrew, the convent gardener, of happy memory, came to the rescue and delivered a few cartloads from the convent garden. The rockery was finished and where to get a statue was our next problem. Sr. M. Camillus helped and provided a lovely statue in a little house which protected it from the elements. When Our Lady was put in place all the children cheered and clapped and we knelt and recited a decade of the rosary as Gaelige and sang the Lourdes Ave. Mission accomplished!! All were overjoyed. I will never forget that Saturday.... such care, prayer, fun and laughter went into the work not to mention the joyful enthusiasm of youth. We set some plants and the Canon came during the week and blessed the grotto. In our innocence we thought it would become a place of pilgrimage. It was honoured for many years during the May processions until it was finally demolished for the building of the new school..... progress?

Lovely memories come floating back when I think of the singing lessons and the preparation of duets, trios and choirs for Feiseanna and Feile Luimnigh. Those children could sing like birds and their voices were soul uplifting, never out of tune. Whenever wanted for a practice they came and it was never too much trouble for them. No wonder they brought home so many cups, medals, shields and other trophies, some of which still decorate the school premises. God be with the days! I was young then but can still sing some of those lovely Irish melodies.... "Oro mo Bhaidin", "Beidh Aonach Amaireach", "Roisin Dubh". If time has dimmed your memory and you need the words just drop a line to me in Iceland and you will surely have an answer in a year or two!! Do it all the same and let me know your maiden name. My address is: Eyrarlandsvegur 26, 600 Akureyri, Iceland.

This reminds me of another little story. One year I had twins in my class who were on the roll as Nic Mhathuna. Their grandfather owned a company called Gazette and this name the children frequently used. We knew them by both names and did not mind which they used. All very fine until one day an

Now for a little humour. Those were days when we were not allowed out except in pairs. We had to keep together and walk in silence. One afternoon I was walking along the New Line with Sr. M. Peter when all of a sudden a small brown and white pup put his two paws around my left ankle. How could I possibly walk with a pup hanging on to my leg? I tried to shake him off but he would not be deprived of his prey. I bent to remove him but unfortunately my veil blew sideways and the pup saw his opportunity. He let go my leg and grabbed the veil for all he was worth. Now I had an added problem. I could not stand up unless I took the pup up as well and what might he grab next? A kind lady came to the rescue and removed the reluctant little villain. By this time, Sr. Peter, who was totally unaware of the episode, had walked almost to the other end of the New Line and like the pup I saw my opportunity. I tucked up my habit and ran as good as Sonia O'Sullivan until I arrived beside my companion. She noticed the puffing and panting and must have thought I was getting a heart attack. She slowed down the pace but like a good Sister of Mercy never broke her silence.

My time in Rathkeale was very special and very happy. Now it is very different where I live in the north of Iceland and do parish work. I teach religion and prepare the children for the sacraments. I love Iceland. It is a beautiful country and mostly unspoiled. Our bishop says it is the nearest to Creation. It is a country of contrasts: glaciers and volcanoes, barren rocks and rich grassy slopes, clear spring water and turbulent glacial rivers, stark mountains and lake studded lowlands. It is often called the "Land of Fire and Ice" or "The Land of the Rising Sun". During Winter we have much snow and ice and only about three or four hours of daylight with a hushed silence everywhere. Then come Spring and Summer when the buds unfold, the birds sing and the light increases. It fills all Iceland, not only the day but the night as well. It fills our minds and everywhere the atmosphere is full of joy, with the night as bright as the day. You must come yourself to see it but first make sure you visit the bank manager as it is a very expensive country.

Before I finish I want to thank all who have prayed so faithfully for us here in Iceland or who have sent donations for the building of the church here in Akureyri. I am very grateful and the people much appreciate your efforts and your help. You will be glad to know that the work has started..... maybe you will come out for the opening! I will always love Rathkeale and its kindly people. You are close to my heart and in my prayers. Beannacht De oraibh agus faoi chumhdach na Maighdine sibh go leir.

MEMORIES OF THE CENTRAL CINEMA

John Dinnage (Gazette)

I often stop and look at the old cinema - the place that was once the entertainment centre of Rathkeale. Mine are very happy memories as I grew up in the 50's and 60's but I must go back a bit in time to write this article.

My story begins in the early 40's when my grandfather, Henry Dinnage, arrived in the town and set up his tent in Neville's field in Boherbuoy and the original plan was to build a cinema in the same place. Circumstances changed and he bought instead the site of the present structure from Paddy Brandon who ran a saddlers shop where 'Patsy's Fashions' now stands. The actual site was once a public house owned by a Butler family and was part of the Delmege estate.

Work commenced on the building in 1945 with Johnnie O'Callaghan as foreman while the names of others who worked included Denis Mulcahy from Castlemahon who did most of the carpentry work; Jack Scanlon and Pat Collins of Adare who did the plastering and a number of locals, Sean Lynch and his father Patrick, Mick Kelly from Boherbuoy and James Fitzgerald from Holycross. The building was of mass concrete and the gravel came from Teskey's pit in Ardbohill.

The work was completed and the cinema opened its doors to the public in 1946. A gala concert on this occasion featured Rathkeale's own Christopher Lynch and the first film shown was "Intermezzo" starring Leslie Howard and Ingrid Bergman. Over the next thirty years or so almost 5,000 films were shown and some of the world's most famous stars appeared on the big screen: Bing Crosby, Tony Curtis, Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, Alan Ladd, Judy Garland, Betty Grable and all the funny men, Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, Martin and Lewis, the Three Stooges, Leon Erroll and Bob Hope; cowboys like Roy Rogers, Gabby Hayes, John Wayne, James Stewart, Tom Mix and Hopalong Cassidy; song and dance stars such as Donal O'Connor, Gene Kelly, Doris Day, Gordon McRea, Howard Keel and Mario Lanza. I could go on and on as the list is endless.



Cinema Proprietors: The proprietors of the Deel Cinema, Rathkeale pose for our cameraman. (From left to right): Messrs. Victor and Henry Gazette Mr. and Mrs. Jack Hayes.

The best films always made their way to Rathkeale. "Showboat", "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers", "Singing in the Rain", "The Sound of Music" and, of course, all the Elvis musicals. Then you had the westerns or 'cowboys and Indians' as we called them, such as "Shane" and "High Noon". All the Hitchcock films were shown like "Dial M for Murder", "The Birds", "Rear Window" and the big war and pirate films. We saw romantic dramas as well but had little interest in those. The cowboy films were always the favourites.

Down through the years I can recall many regular filmgoers who rarely missed a night and two that come to mind are Jim Murray and Angie Royce. Jim was the town crier who would walk up and down the town each day announcing the name of the film to be shown that night. My father often said that Jim would give an extra loud shout when he came to the cinema itself. Jim was totally blind but this did not stop him from enjoying the films and he was able to follow the stories as well as everybody else.

Of course, films were not the only activity in the cinema, there were numerous plays and variety shows. The G.A.A. Club had a major concert on Easter Sunday night each year with practically all local talent. There were Jimmy

McGrane and Arthur O'Shea on accordions, Dick Woodruffe and others in a variety of sketches. Visiting shows included Bailey's Roadshow, The School Around The Corner and the Paul Goldin Show. Annie D'Alton and John Cowley of "Riordans" fame were regular visitors as were "Tom and Pascal". I recall a marvellous show featuring Nita Norry, the girl from Strabane, with Ben Bono, Kevin Casey and John Fowler.

When the cinema opened in 1946 all family members had their own jobs to perform. My Aunt Queenie worked in the ticket office, my Uncle Harry checked tickets downstairs and my father did likewise upstairs in the balcony. They were helped at times by Sean Lynch. My father also ran the projector and when Aunt Queenie got married to local bandleader, Jack Hayes, he in turn took over as manager and looked after all the booking of the films. I myself started first in the projection room at 12 years of age. Admission prices at that time were 4d, 9d and 1s. You could go to the pictures and buy your ice-cream and sweets at Kitty Reidy's sweet shop all for only 6d (2.5p in today's money).

From when I started in the projection room to when the cinema closed in 1974 I must have seen thousands of films and I was once asked to name the three most memorable ones I saw. They were "The Greatest Show on Earth" starring Charlton Heston, Betty Hutton and Cornel Wilde; "All Quiet on the Western Front" with Lew Ayes (probably the best war film ever made) and "The Best Years of our Lives" starring Frederic March, Dana Andrews and Myna Loy.

The 40's, 50's and 60's would have been the best years of the cinema but, with the introduction of television, lounge bars and bingo halls, the attendance dwindled and the end was near. The last film was "From Bangkok with Orders to Kill" in November 1974. For the next few years, until 1978, the Community Council ran a very successful weekly bingo and the building was finally sold in September 1978 to Sheahan brothers from Askeaton. While many plans were proposed for the place, it has lain idle since, empty and quiet. The family members who put their all into the business are now all gone. My grandfather died in 1949, Jack Hayes in 1957, Queenie in 1975, my father Victor in 1977 and my Uncle Harry in 1997. All that are left are memories. The entertainment, the music, the drama, the laughter and the tears of almost four decades have long disappeared from The Central Cinema, Rathkeale.

*A Great Chairman:
the late Patrick Johnson*

Patrick J. O'Connor



In and about Rathkeale, the one certainty that you'll hear of the late Patrick Johnson, is that he was 'a great chairman'. It is a warm, spontaneous and generous tribute to a singular man, of great power and presence, who invested his considerable gifts in the service of his community over long years of his life. For fifteen years, from 1976-1991, Patrick Johnson held the chair of Rathkeale Community Council, and he grew in the role from start to finish. His handling of long and complex agendas was exemplary, his self-effacing business-like approach undeviating, his sureness of touch and brief, superb. Never in all my time in Irish universities have I seen a chair perform at anything like the optimal ease and efficiency of Patrick Johnson. Such

indeed were the qualities that he espoused and exhibited that it would be easy to envisage him as chairman of a high powered national or international committee.

Yet apart from his distinguished chairmanship of Golden Vale, he kept his great gifts for home community service, where in the fullness of time his towering contribution to local life has come fully to be appreciated.

Strange to relate, I did not know Patrick at all well. I was first introduced to him in 1989 by Austen Bovenizer in the context of the launching of my book *People Make Places* by the then President of Ireland, Dr. Patrick J. Hillery. We met the night of a community council meeting. The first thing I noted about Patrick was his spot on punctuality, his courtesy, and the warmth of his greeting. I then sat in on the meeting, which was remarkably well attended for a high summer gathering.

In the chair Patrick gave a virtuoso performance through a long and complex agenda, taking reports, instigating action, filling in gaps from his own intimate knowledge of issues, moving business along with such remarkable facility and expedition that I have never seen anything like it before or since. It was all so seamless and uncontrived, so masterful, so tantalisingly sweet.

Long time friend and community council colleague, John Dinnage, is unstinting in his praise of Patrick. 'When Patrick came into a room, everyone there knew about it', John once said to me. He also acknowledges the sheer selflessness and dedication of Patrick, who might easily have focussed upon his own family, farming, business and equestrian interest to the exclusion of all else.

Patrick was a big man in body and intellect, who spread himself generously, gave unstintingly, and unapologetically promoted the town and neighbourhood of Rathkeale in difficult times, and in the face of many vicissitudes.

It appears almost trite to cite the proverb, 'Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís'. In Patrick's case, it is profoundly true.

Some early Newspaper Reports regarding the erection of the 1798 Memorial in Rathkeale"

October to December 1898

RATHKEALE 98 CELTIC CROSS (October 12, 1898)

The Committee who have taken upon themselves the erection of the above, are most anxious to complete the Celtic Cross this year, and they will thank their friends in the United States and at home to send in their subscriptions immediately and that they honour the patriots of '98, 1821, '48 and '67 who died for Ireland. The officers of the Committee are: Joseph Sheehy, T.C., President; Timothy Cusack, T.C., Vice-president; William Hayes, treasurer; Wm. D. Power, hon. sec.

RATHKEALE (WOLFE TONE) MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

(November 9, 1898 Limerick Leader)
The treasurer to the above, Mr. W. Hayes, writes that the committee will thank their brother Nationalists in Askeaton, Cappa, Pallaskenry, Stonehall, Coolcappa, Ardagh, Croagh, Ballingarry and other parishes, to send their subscriptions immediately so as to commence this work, as the year is drawing to a close, and they

are anxious to lay and finish the erection of the Celtic Cross in this memorable year of 1898. A sum of £9. 1s. 11d. has been already subscribed, including: Nationalist, Rathkeale, per William Hayes, £1; A Lady Nationalist, 10s; A Rev. Gentleman, 10s; A National Friend, 5s; Mr. Patrick Barrett, Brooklyn, 5s; Mr. Maurice Fennell, 5s; Mr. E. J. Culhane, Abbey Bar, 5s; Mr. Pat McHugh, a '48 man, 3s; Mr. Charles Mulcahy, 2s.6d; Mr. Daniel Daly, 2s.6d; A Sympathiser, 5s; Mr. T. Condon, a labourer, 1s; Mr. J. Wilmott, 1s; Mr. Pat Cullinan, 2s; Mr. M. Mulcahy, 2s; Mr. T. Normoyle, 1s; Mr. James Whyte, Brooklyn, 2s.6d; Mr. Michael Reidy, 2s.6d; Mr. John O'Mahony, merchant, 10s; Mr. William Hayes, treasurer, 10s. Subscriptions will be duly acknowledged by the committee - Joseph Sheehy, T.C., President; Timothy Cusack, T.C., Vice-President; William Hayes, treasurer; William D. Power, hon. secretary.

RATHKEALE CELTIC CROSS

(December 9, 1898 Limerick Leader)
Mr. William Hayes, treasurer to the Rathkeale Memorial Monument Committee writes - The foundation stone of the Celtic Cross will be laid on Sunday, 18th December. Well-known Nationalists are to address the men of Rathkeale and surrounding districts on the patriots of '98, 1821, '48 and '67. The committee are collecting funds at present for this worthy object, and they hope their brother Nationalists in the city and county of Limerick will send in their subscriptions immediately and assist them in erecting this monument in honour of the patriotic dead. The Nationalists of West Limerick are invited to attend in their thousands and prove that they are faithful to the true-

hearted lovers of Ireland and demand the release of the remaining political prisoners. The treasurers most heartily returns thanks to his kind Nationalist friends for their subscriptions. Already subscribed £16. 10s. 5d. A National Friend, per Mr. J. Sheehy, T.C. 10s; Mr. M. Austin, M.P., West Limerick, per Mr. William Hayes, £2.2s; Mr. John Burke, 10s; Mr. James McDonnell, per Mr. P. Barrett, 5s; A National Friend, per Mr. William Hayes, 5s; A Limerick Friend, do., 2s; Mr. Bryan McMahan, Bruree, do., 5s; Townsmen, per Mr. T. Cusack, T.C.; E. J. Culhane, William Hayes, W. D. Power, Patrick Barrett, William Ward, £3.10s; Mr. K. Reidy, teacher, per William Hayes, 1s; Mr. J. McDonnell, Courtlodge, 5s; Mr. Denis Connolly, 2s; Mr. Thomas O'Regan, 10s; Mr. Powell, Ball-alley, 4s; Mr. John H. Danaher, Imperial Hotel, Ballybunion 2s.6d; Mr. Butler 2s; Mr. John Finn, 2s; Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, 1s. The people of the town are sending in their subscriptions, and the committee are surprised the Nationalists of Limerick city are not responding to the circulars sent them.

RATHKEALE MEMORIAL CELTIC CROSS COMMITTEE

(December 2, 1898 Limerick Leader)
At a meeting of the committee, Mr. Joseph Sheehy presided. Arrangements were made for holding a meeting here on St. Stephen's Day, 26th inst. to lay the foundation stone of a Celtic Cross to the memory of the martyrs of '98, '21, '48 and '67. Together with this object there will be a grand Labour Demonstration, which is expected to be one of the largest National gatherings witnessed in West Limerick for years, and that the several Trade

and Labour Associations will come in their full strength and hear Mr. John Daly's address on the labour question. The chair will be taken at one o'clock, but contingents should be in before eleven to join in the procession precisely at that hour. It is hoped there will not be a Nationalist absent on St. Stephen's Day. After the meeting a convention will be held, at which candidates will be selected to represent the people on the local boards. Mr. William Hayes addressed the meeting in a spirited National speech, and said the Nationalists of Ireland were unanimous in honouring the memory of the noble patriots of '98, '21, '48 and '67 and he hoped that the Nationalists of Limerick would show their love for those noble men who died for Ireland. He would also thank the Nationalists, who promised their subscriptions, to do so at once for this noble object in honour of the patriotic dead.

RATHKEALE MEMORIAL CROSS (December 23, 1898)

Mr. Wm. Hayes, treasurer to the committee in charge of the above, writes stating that committee are prepared for the great demonstration and procession through the principal streets. The following is the order to be carried out on St. Stephen's Day: The members of the United Irish League are to assemble at their rooms, Roche's Street, at 10.30 o'clock, join their friends, and march to the Railway Station to meet Mr. John Daly, Limerick and his friends. They are then to march back to the rooms. After a short rest the order will be given to fall in four deep in processional form, and march on to the Square, where Mr. Daly and his friends

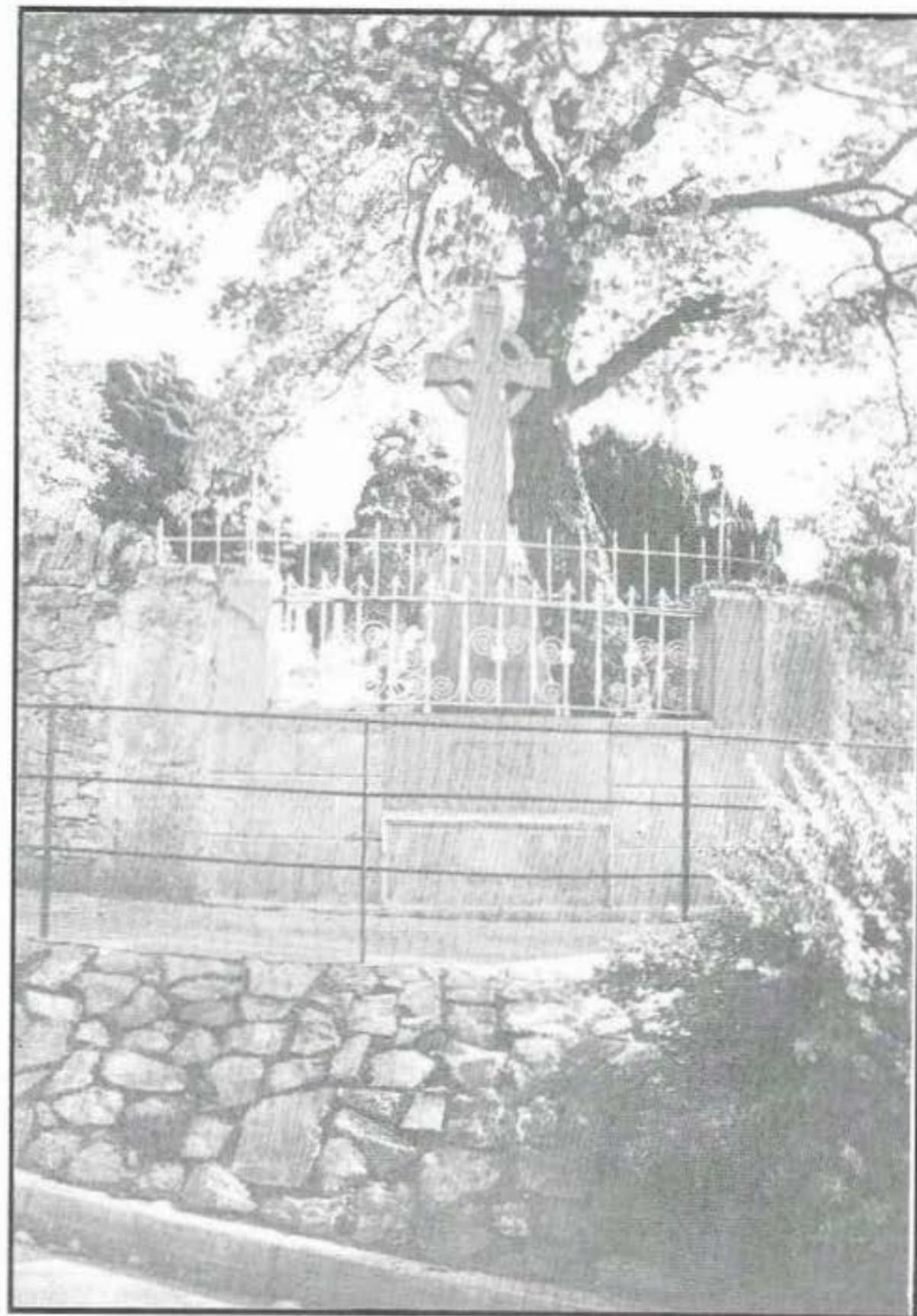
will address the meeting. After this the procession will be again formed, and will march through the Main Street on to the Croppies' grave at the bridge. There a halt of fifteen minutes will be made, while a short account of the three martyrs killed at Incherourke, Askeaton will be given by a local Nationalist. The procession will then march through Church Street, to Mount Southwell Gate, and back through Church Street, Croppies' Bridge, West End, Main Street, New Road, leading to the cemetery where a halt will be made and an address will be delivered. After the ceremony the foundation stone will be laid, the processionists will again fall into line, march back to the rooms in Roche's Street, through New Road, Main Street. After the meeting a convention will be held and the delegates from all the branches in West Limerick will attend to chose their candidates for the District Councils.

A CELTIC CROSS

Great Demonstration in Rathkeale (Limerick Leader, December 28, 1898)

The foundation stone of a Celtic Cross in memory of the men of '98 and those who died later on in the various struggles to further the cause of Ireland was laid on Monday with befitting ceremonial in the Catholic cemetery at Rathkeale. There was a large gathering present, and in addition to the residents of the town, who attended to do honour to the occasion, there were contingents from districts distant eighteen miles from Rathkeale. Subsequently an outdoor meeting was held in The Square, and towards evening a Convention of Nationalists took place, and being held as they were in the full

swing of the Christmas holidays, with races at Limerick, and other attractions elsewhere, it was not anticipated that the meeting would have been the success it was. The people, however, were present in their thousands, and at the laying of the foundation stone, and at the subsequent procession and meeting there was a heartiness and unanimity evident that spoke well for the efforts being made to close up the ranks of all classes of Irish Nationalists. Mr. Terence Moran of Askeaton performed the ceremony of laying the stone, and in the procession which followed through the town the Ardagh contingent carried their banners, and the contingent from Coolcappa furnished a number of green painted pikes, the heads tipped with yellow, which were borne by men walking four deep in the demonstration. Rathkeale from the close of the great rising in '98 down to well into the closing century was the theatre of the tithe war, and an agrarian disturbance which King George's troops constantly engaged in the endeavour to suppress, and the details of the fight that went on for thirty years are sad reading today. The Croppys' Hole just outside the town, and where many of the unhappy peasantry were interred after being shot down mercilessly by the British forces, was visited and allusion to the sad events made by Mr. William Hayes, Rathkeale who stated that the bridge which crosses the Deel in the immediate vicinity would be known in future as Croppy Bridge. He stated that three men buried in the place - John Hayes, O'Callaghan-Garvey and John Fitzgerald - were martyrs as good as ever shed their blood for Ireland, and their example should plead for unity and Irish-



men doing their duty under the Local Government Act.

The procession, after Mr. Hayes' observations, proceeded to the Market Square, and here the open-air demonstration was held amid great enthusiasm. Mr. William Hayes was unanimously voted to the chair, and in the brake from which he addressed the assemblage were: Messrs. John Daly, Limerick; Michael Joyce, do; John O'Brien, Joseph Sheehy, T.C., Rathkeale; E. J. Culhane, do. The following contingents attended:

Askeaton: Michael Conway, J. Sheahan, Daniel Collins, Daniel Conway, Edmond Murphy, Wm. O'Shea, Michael Fehaney, Terence Moran, Matt Fehaney, Michael McNamara, Patrick Frawley, Patrick O'Shaughnessy, Michael Halloran, M. Carroll, Edward McDonnell, Thomas Kelly, John Canty, Robert Sheehy, Patrick Hough, Patrick Ryan, Charles McDonnell, Terence Moran, Jnr.

Limerick City: John Daly, Michael Joyce, J. F. O'Neill, John O'Brien, Daniel McNamara, Hon. Sec. Mechanics' Institute, P. O'Dwyer, Michael Barton.

Coolcappa: James Scanlon, Hon. Sec., Michael Moore, Thomas Enright, Patrick Downey, James O'Donovan, Patrick O'Hara, Patrick Hennessy, Con Scanlan, John Harrington, John Ward, Tom Scanlan, John Sheahan, Pat Collins, Denis Madigan, John Lyons, Tom O'Shaughnessy, John Scanlan, Michael O'Mara, Patrick Foley, James Scanlan, Junior, Jeremiah O'Grady, Pat Gaffney, Junior, John Collins, John Scanlan.

Ardagh United Irish League: W. Cronin, M. Cronin, G. O'Shea, J. Byrnes, D. Keating, J. Cronin, P.O'Hara, T. Enright, John Magner, P.L.G., T. Ambrose, M. Cremin, P.L.G., D. Power, J. Duggan, J. Tobin, J. Barry, P. Magner, J. Naughton, P. Brosnan, M. Murphy, E. Canty.

Croagh Wolfe Tone '98 Club: Maurice Cowhy, James Cowhy, William Blake, James Naughton, Maurice Hogan, George Culhane, Pat Cowhy.

Glin Trade and Labour League: John Mangan, John O'Connell, T. Mangan, James Normoyle.

Kilcoleman Trade and Labour League: James Nolan, Pat Hanrahan, Pat Mulqueen, Daniel Hayes, Pat Histon, Edmund Enright, Hon. Sec., Pat Moran, John O'Donovan, P.L.G., M. Meade.

Rathkeale United Irish League: Joseph Sheehy, T.C., President, W. Hayes, Treasurer, W. D. Power, Hon. Sec., E. J. Culhane, William Sheahan, D. Cosgrave, Pat Moran, Michael Moore, W. Dowling, Wm. Lind, J. McNamara, M. Brennan, J. Dore, S. O'Grady, Michael Slattery, John H. Power, James Fitgibbon, Daniel McMahan, J. Ambrose, T.C., James O'Dea, John Frawley, J. Supple, J. Tuohy, Thomas Kennedy, Patrick Grady, John O'Sullivan, Pat Mangan, John Sheahan, Pat Sheahan, R. Makessy, W. Heffernan, J. Glenny, Patrick Keating, P. Lynch, J. O'Connell, Michael Moran, Thomas Condon, Maurice Condon, Maurice Fennell, M. Cahlane, Wm. H. Power.

Knockaderry: M. Kennedy, M. Cussen,

J. Walsh, J. B. Condon, D. Cregan, M. Moran, M. Danaher, R. Nealon, J. Corbett, J. Guiry, J. Liston, P. Moran, J. Donovan, J. Clifford, C. Donegan, D. Noonan, W. Donegan, P. Meehan, J. Cregan, D. Scanlan and M. Scanlan.

The chairman said the object of their meeting was the most glorious one that could occupy Irishmen - to honour the memory of the patriotic dead. If they were true to the noble heritage which had been left them by the men who sacrificed all for Ireland they would be united and send the right men to represent them on the Council until they had a Parliament once more in College Green.

Mr. John Daly, who was received with cheers, said Rathkeale, with the rest of Ireland, had today taken its place in marking with approval the men who had the courage and tenacity of purpose to die or suffer for their country. He was not there as the representative of any League - he knew none. Nor was he there in defence of any Parliamentaryism, but as one who had suffered for Ireland. Today it was not possible for Ireland, with four millions and a half of population, could fight thirty millions of Englishmen, but if Irishmen could not work out their freedom now England's difficulty might soon come, and with it regret that her policy to this country had not been fair and honest to have Ireland her best friend in the hour of need. An Act of Parliament had been passed by the Government whereby every man in the land would have the privilege of voting, and that the government was fully in the hope their friends and representatives of the Ascendency party in Ire-

land would be elected to the County Councils. (A voice - never, they will get a back seat, cheers). With their votes now the Irish working man could bounce out of every local body the representative of West Britonism in Ireland, and the Government now challenged them to know if Irishmen were fit to govern themselves. (A voice - we will let them see we are). It was in the polling booths the answer should be given by casting their votes for Ireland a Nation (cheers). They should show the world that nothing but the right to govern themselves would satisfy them (cheers). The Ascendency Party in Ireland would no longer have the Grand Jury system to hold and tyrannise over the people, and now the Grand Jurors were to fall in line with the people. Some of them were converted to Home Rule, were ardent Home Rulers but, in days gone by, the people knew the sort of Home Rulers these men were when they had a chance. Now they talked of a Catholic University for Ireland in order that the people might know how to sing 'God Save the Queen' on the best approved situation. They talked of building cottages, and when the people were in those men's power they brought the bailiff and the bobby to tear down the people's homes. They were now swearing eternal love and friendship, and the landlords, the agents, and all the cliques of the country that had been waging war against the people, were now confederating, amalgamating and combining into a solid body to try and cheat them out of the power they should use for themselves (cheers). All party differences and dissensions should be laid aside and the people use their power wisely. He did not come there that day to

ask for any concessions. He was not going into the County Council. But they should vote for no man but one prepared to stand by the people for their independence. Were they fit to govern Ireland? (cries of yes). Then let them use the power entrusted to them, or rather not abuse it. Bribes would be offered to support Castle hacks; efforts would be made to sow dissension amongst them, but the electors should declare that it was in the name of Ireland and not England her representatives should sit in the County Councils (cheers). He concluded moving: "That we, the Nationalists of West Limerick, at this public meeting assembled for the purpose of laying the foundation stone of the Celtic Cross in memory of the martyred patriots of '98, '21, '48 and '67, pledge ourselves to follow in the footsteps of those noble-hearted Irishmen, whose chief aims in life were to right the wrongs of their native land. That we, the people of West Limerick, at this meeting, hereby pledge ourselves to oppose at the forthcoming Local Government election the candidature of any person seeking to be elected a member of any Board unless such person be a staunch and tried Nationalist and a friend to the working man".

Mr. John O'Brien, Limerick seconded the adoption of the resolutions, which were supported by Mr. E. J. Culhane, and Mr. Michael Joyce, and unanimously adopted.

Subsequently a convention was held, Mr. Terence Moran, presiding, and Mr. Joseph Sheehy, T.C., President, Rathkeale United Irish League, was selected as the representative of the Rathkeale division to the

County Council.

The selection of a candidate for the Askeaton division was postponed to Sunday next, the convention to be held at Shanagolden.

ONE MAN'S MEMORIES OF 1973

Pat Coleman

They seem a lifetime away now, those sunny days of 1973. Of course, while our memories are of sunny days this is but a trick of the mind. I am only too aware that the picture painted in this article is somewhat false in that, like most people, I remember the good times. Yet that in itself is important. My parents like countless others strove to do what was good for their children. At that particular moment in time we may not always have appreciated the fact. Yet the fact that we have good times to recall is testament to the fact that in time we came to appreciate their efforts on our behalf. I am also aware that not all the memories I will recall can be placed firmly in the year 1973. In time the years have become blurred and merged together. All I can say with certainty is that I am recalling the early 1970's as I remember them. I trust you will allow me that license.

I will start with what I remember of the elections for the Community Council. I recall an air of excitement. This was as it were a new dawn for the town and parish. Through local democracy the people of our community were to be given an opportunity to voice their opinions and effect changes in their lives. Local communities were to select candidates who they felt were most qualified to represent their areas. Though we were led to believe that canvassing was not allowed, I recall that some people actively pursued elected office. This gave the whole election an added air of excitement and indeed tension as people watched to see if these individuals would be successful in their efforts. They were. I did not have a vote and consequently once the initial excitement was over the elections largely passed me by.

"Boys will be boys" is how the old saying goes. There were five boys in our family along with the one sister who was able to scrape and fight with the best of us. Our cousin Joe Healy would also have spent time with us particularly around these years as his mother, our aunt, Alice Healy of Healy's Garage in The Square had just died. Joe had moved to the old family homestead in Kilmeedy where he lived with our uncle, Mike Coleman. Usually our

notion of fun was pretty harmless, playing games of soccer or some form of chase game through the fields like 'cowboys and Indians' or 'cops and robbers'. By 1973 the older members of the family like myself would no longer play these games or chase. We would make our way to the back of Goodwins, the 'Crab Path' or Fitzgeralds for games of soccer with other lads from the Church Street area such as Sean (Milo) O'Shea, Jimmy Glenny, Eugene, Liam and Brian Goodwin, Seamus Cawley, Tony and Martin Fitzgerald among others. Frequently we would go off cycling around the countryside. Excursions would also be made to the local swimming pool when the weather allowed.

As we were reared on a small farm we were expected to help by performing chores of various descriptions throughout the year. The chores we were obliged to do varied according to the season. They were rotated among those of us who were of similar ages. During the winter months John, Brian Og and I would have been expected to come home at the break between school and study, to clear out the cowhouse, put in some feeding and let the cows in for the night. This chore would rotate on a weekly basis and would usually be done quietly and efficiently. We usually had time to have a cup of tea before heading back to school. On Saturdays we would be expected to help out around the farm. During the summer time a number of other chores would have to be undertaken among which was the milking of the cows. My father always insisted on being around while this job was being done. Of the jobs my father held, I think farming was the one he got greatest pleasure from. He had been raised on a farm and I think he viewed the various bits and pieces that had to be done on the land as a hobby rather than a chore.

The most popular job during the summer was the saving of the hay. The cutting, turning and bailing of the hay was undertaken by Jimmy Baggott of Rathnasare. My father insisted that the hay be turned by fork as well as by turner. This chore, along with the stooking of the bales, was not particularly popular. However, even these jobs had their saving graces. On days spent in the meadow, my mother would bring out a canteen of tea and jam and bread sandwiches. The thought of those 'feasts' even today make my mouth water. On weekdays my father would assist in the evening after his own work but before milking the cows. He usually tried to avoid taking days off at this time of the year so that he would have some free time later in the year to take us on holiday. We were usually under the supervision of our uncle Mike or granduncle Tommy Salter for the bringing in of the hay. Over the years this

job was particularly popular among those of my brothers who fancied themselves as tractor drivers. In 1973 the only brother who would have been listened to sympathetically on this front was John. While I learned to drive the tractor myself in time, it was always a job I was happy to leave to others.

Other jobs also had to be completed at this time of year such as the white-washing of the various farmhouses, the painting of gates and doors, the cutting of weeds (usually done with a scythe) and the cleaning out of the fowl houses. Apart from the latter job which we all tried to avoid, these duties were popular. They could be done alone and without any great rush. Our neighbour, Donal Ross, would frequently come calling, seeking assistance at one job or another. These might involve chasing cattle in Courtmatrix Common or indeed bringing in hay from the Courtmatrix area to his barn in Castlematrix or the old Palatine property which had belonged to the Modlers in Ardbohill and which Donal had bought and on which he had a haybarn.

The summer of 1973 was a time of some anxiety in that I had sat my Inter Cert. that year. I was never a particularly good pupil. I only ever studied the subjects that interested me. These were history and geography. I would devour books on these topics. I did my maths every evening though that was the limit of my study on this subject. I seldom learned poetry or indeed read those pieces that had been requested of us by our teachers in English and Irish. With regards to Irish I could never see any relevance to learning the language. In class I reckoned that if I wasn't asked I didn't have to worry about it. While I had some knowledge of the meanings of words I was totally at sea with regards to Irish grammar, an aspect of the subject that I have never mastered.

And yet Irish was the one subject that could destroy any aspirations I had to pass my exams. Up to the year before I was due to sit my Inter. Cert. Irish was compulsory as a subject. If I failed it I failed my exam regardless of how well I did in other subjects. Efforts to send me to Irish college for the purpose of improving my knowledge of the language were strenuously resisted. I had spent a summer in Ballybunion and did not relish the experience. I still recall stumbling upon the brutal beating one of my student colleagues was getting from his father as punishment for getting himself expelled for some minor misdemeanour. While disciplinary action would undoubtedly have been taken if I had managed to get myself expelled it would not have been anything of the nature of what I witnessed on that occasion. It was the triviality of the

reasoning that justified the expelling that put paid to any desires that my parents had of sending me to Irish college for a second year. Irish was never my favourite subject but I always seemed to do enough to just about get by.

In English class I recall some pieces were genuinely enjoyable. I still recollect the laughter in the class as Sir Francis Bacon's piece "Dissertation on a Roast Pig" was read by the teacher. However, I could not fathom Shakespeare and while I would learn a poem by heart I seldom bothered to stop and understand the meaning of what was being said. With regards short stories and prose pieces, I usually finished off reading what was not on the course, to see what I was missing rather than the pieces that were designated for the exams.

Latin and art were my two remaining subjects. I could never understand the need for Latin. It seemed to me to be an irrelevant language. As with Irish, time and maturity has changed my attitude to these two languages. Art was more enjoyable than most subjects as it was an opportunity to paint and draw. A double class was held in the subject every Friday morning. This broke up the usual monotony attached to the classroom. It has to be said that there were other subjects also which we studied. Religious knowledge, civics and sports (or was it called recreation?) were all on our curriculum. Pádraig Feehan took religious knowledge the year we were in 3rd Year and I recall it as being interesting in that he encouraged debate on matters such as poverty and pacifism among other subjects. Given that I always had an interest in politics, the civics class was frequently a disappointment. The school usually used it as an opportunity for study. I doubt if I ever attended more than a handful of classes which genuinely addressed the issue of the democracy in which we lived.

For those who lived in Rathkeale, school did not end at 4.00 p.m. Study started at 5.30 p.m. and we were encouraged to attend. Study, as it was known, lasted until 8.00 p.m. It was supervised by Sister Jerome. Usually, if we (local boys) could locate a football we would play soccer on the tarmac strip in front of where the new houses, that subsequently became known as St. Mary's Park, were being built. When the weather was bright we would occasionally stay put, playing football until 6.40 p.m. with local lads from Shannon Meat who would have joined us on the way home from work. Sister Jerome usually took a 20-minute break at this time during which she was replaced by an older nun. At 6.40 p.m. it was up to the study room to sneak

in while Sister Jerome was out. We didn't fool anyone, as Sister Jerome would greet us with a smile on her return and warn us that this type of behaviour was not to happen again. It didn't, for another week or so. It is easy for people like me to be nostalgic about those years I attended school. Yet we received a good education from our teachers and didn't have to endure the threat of violence that many of our contemporaries had to cope with.

In the evening time we might well go to see a picture in the Central Cinema. The pictures were advertised on a board placed at the bottom of Thomas Street. As well as this, posters could be seen of the current films being shown in the window of the cinema and in the glass case outside the building. People gathered at Shiels' or Nolan's shops while waiting for the cinema to open. Here they stocked up on sweets or cigarettes to last while the picture was shown. While the trailers were being shown the cinema was usually noisy as people talked with each other, or cheered and hissed the goodies and baddies that appeared in the various trailers. If the film wasn't particularly good or if the trailer went on for too long 'battles' were fought between various of the young patrons. The core of apples, water pistols and/or elastic bands with paper would be used by the various participants. Harry Dinnage would endeavour to keep the peace and would venture forward with his flashlamp calling for quietness. He would bring anyone caught in the dispute back towards the entrance door where an eye could be kept on their activities. Directly underneath the gallery was where the courting couples would be found enjoying each other's company for the duration of the film.

For us, holidays involved going away for two weeks or so in the month of August. In our house the family holidays were usually to West Cork as my mother was a native of that part of the world. The journey south would be punctuated with a stop at our grand-aunt and grand-uncle's house in Coachford. If we got away early enough in the day, dinner would also be enjoyed at this house. As only one of our grandparents survived into our childhood and as this couple - Annie and Tommy Salter - had no children of their own, we treated them as honorary grandparents, an arrangement they appeared happy to accept.

I believe that we may have rented a house alongside the lagoon in Rosscarbery this year. There would have been the usual visit to relations in the Skibereen, Baltimore and Rosscarbery areas. There were also days spent at the beach at Owenahincha, Tragumna or Tralispean. It was in West Cork I believe that

most of the family learned to swim. Occasionally, if the weather was good, my mother would load all of us young ones onto a boat in Baltimore and we would head to Sherkin or Cape Clear islands for a few hours for the day. My father was too fond of dry land to venture forth to these places. No doubt it gave him a brief respite from driving an occasionally unruly mob of children about the place. The trip to Sherkin lacked the romance of the journey to Cape Clear. The name of the bay that laps the shore at Baltimore is Roaringwater Bay. However, the trip across the sheltered portion of the bay to Sherkin was in my memory always over placid waters. It was only after the boat ventured beyond Sherkin and travelled through the open sea to Cape Clear Island that you came to experience the occasional rough sea crossing. Cape Clear had another advantage in that, once we reached the island, we had to stay four hours or so before a boat made a return trip. This meant that a trip to Cape Clear was always a day long adventure. Thus we had time to explore the island. In the case of Sherkin, with boats travelling over and hither every half hour or so, our time spent on the island was much shorter.

I do not know to what extent the holidays were in fact a break for our parents. Our father was kept busy driving us from post to pillar, while my mother still had to prepare meals for us. Occasionally we would be entertained to a meal by cousins or we would eat out in places like the 'Busy Bee' in Skibereen. In retrospect I think our annual outing to West Cork was the result of the fact that my parents wanted us to enjoy a holiday. For them, I think they were happy to apply the philosophy of a change being as good as a rest in their own case.

Of course, 1973 was significant for another reason. It was the year Limerick won their last All-Ireland senior hurling final. For us, the young people of the family, soccer was the game we played. It was an easier game to organise, one only needed to have some markers for goal posts, any number of people and a ball. It also seemed to be a more glamorous sport as it was played in England. As many of my mother's cousins had emigrated to England, the visitors we had at home or met in West Cork added a certain glamour to that country for us in our childhood. Every year my father, who had a great love of hurling, would arrange that hurleys would be among the gifts that would be given to us at Christmas time. Invariably in our childhood these would be used as 'guns' in those games of 'cowboys and Indians' or 'cops and robbers' which we played. Hurling was not encouraged at national school. I once overheard the late Dean say that he did not encourage violent

sports, no doubt a reference to the often agitated county hurling finals in the 1940's and 1950's. Furthermore, Pdraig Cahalane, being a Kerryman, had a preference for Gaelic football. Even though I was better at Gaelic football than the other sports, I have never warmed to it as a game. The only member of our family to achieve any glory with the hurley stick was our sister Kay. Some years after 1973 she was a member of the Rathkeale Community Games team that won the county final of the camogie championship and proceeded to the Munster championship. Unfortunately that was as far as the team progressed. Today I rate hurling as the greatest of all sports.

I recall that we listened to both the 1971 and 1973 Munster hurling finals in the car on Sunday afternoons as my father took us to Kilmeeedy. The hero of the team to us was Richie Bennis who was the Limerick free-taker. The failure of Limerick to beat Tipperary in 1971 made the success of 1973 all the sweeter. I don't know how we viewed the prospects of the team in the All-Ireland hurling final, I suspect the relief of having beaten Tipperary was so great that the fact that the county could go on and win an All-Ireland final was an added bonus. I still remember watching the game on television at home. I had been in Croke Park some years previously to watch Limerick play. This journey was on a tour organised by Tadhg O'Connor who then taught in the local secondary school. I think it may have been to the League final against Wexford in 1968. If memory serves me right, Limerick lost that game. I can only guess that no one sought to arrange a tour for the young people of the town on this occasion. Given the dampness of the day, we were probably fortunate. It seems to me now that the rain poured down throughout the game. I recall that Kilkenny were without a number of key players. Who cares? We won. It felt marvellous. I think my father went to Kilmeeedy to watch the game, no doubt he felt that the house there would be quieter and that he would be able to concentrate on the skills and spectacle of the occasion. I can still recall the tension and excitement of the game. At the end of the match we gathered around the television cheering with pride and excitement. We caught a glimpse of Mike Hanley in the crowd who had gone onto the field to cheer the team. It was the first time I can recall we saw someone we knew on T.V. My hero of the day was Eamon Grimes who seemed to be everywhere. In truth enough, Limerick had fifteen champions on that day.

I think it was Tuesday of that week that the Cup was brought to the school in Rathkeale by two of the players. We spent the morning learning the first line of the Cliff Richards' song "Congratulations". Our teachers did not consider

the remainder of the song appropriate for the occasion once they heard the words. The Cup and players arrived about 2 o'clock. I remember being able to handle the Cup, sadly it was very battered and that was something of a disappointment. Attempts to fill the Cup with orange/lemonade weren't successful as our refreshments leaked out as quickly as they were put in. To an onlooker it must have appeared quite comical to observe us singing the first line of 'Congratulations' over and over again to honour our heroes. We were oblivious. To cap our joy, we were given a half-day to celebrate this championship victory.

It was an age in which we only had one television channel to view. The T.V. critic of the 'Cork Examiner' was at the time getting a campaign under way to challenge this perceived injustice. RTE2 was to be set up some years later as a result of the success of this campaign. Looking back now, it is difficult to recall what programmes we watched on television. I remember that usually on a Monday night RTE showed American detective serials. The most popular of these in our house were "McCloud", "McMillan and Wife" and "Madigan". "Cross-Country Quiz", which was an inter-county quiz, was also popular at the time. The participants in the teams were members of Macra na Feirme and the show was presented by Peter Murphy. During the winter time RTE occasionally had a sports programme on a Thursday night where they would show the highlights of England soccer matches. Lucille Ball featured very much on the comedy menu offered by RTE at the time. Maureen Potter usually had a variety show at Christmas time. English comedians that featured on RTE at the time included Tommy Cooper and Harry Worth. Of course, Gay Byrne was popular on Saturday nights. It was about this time that I was being allowed to stay up to the end of this show. On Sunday evenings my parents would religiously watch 'The Riordans', a programme which as we got older we also developed a taste for.

Not alone had we only the one TV channel which we could watch but the country also had only the one national radio channel. My parents were always quite happy to listen to this channel, namely Radio Eireann. I remember that at lunch time in those days Radio Eireann had various sponsored programmes. I remember two of these in particular - I believe it was Tuesdays at one o'clock that Frankie Byrne used to do the Jacob's programme. This was a programme to which people wrote, giving details of some problem or other they were experiencing in respect of their private life or relationships they were in. Frankie was a great fan of Frank Sinatra whom she played

at the start of the programme and again in the interlude between which we had outlined the week's problem and would be about to provide her solution to the person's difficulties. The other programme I can readily recall from this time was the Waltons programme which went out on a Saturday afternoon. Dinner was always later on a Saturday so we were usually at the table while this programme was on the air. It was a collection of popular Irish songs and airs presented, if memory serves me right, by a gentleman named Maguire. The programme always ended with the refrain "and remember if you do feel like singing please sing an Irish song". My parents listened religiously to the radio news in the morning and again at lunch time. Two other programmes I took pleasure in listening to were 'Sunday Miscellany' and 'Paddy O'Brien'. Though I had a poor appreciation of classical music at the time, Paddy's gentle manner and his relaxed style in introducing the various tunes he played was to cultivate an interest with the passing of time.

At this time I recall that the radio fascinated me. It may have been the fact that we had just ceased to use the old electric radio that had been around throughout my childhood and we now had at our disposal a new gimmick called "the transistor". Turning the dial allowed me to open up whole new worlds. The first foreign channel I located was BBC Radio 2. I recall the first time I tuned into this station a soccer match was being broadcast. I quickly became familiar with the programme 'Sport on Two' through which I could listen to the second half of an English soccer match every Saturday and get the results of the remainder of the games. In those days BBC Radio 2 broadcast on long wave and it would continue to broadcast after midnight. If I was up late on a weekend night and Radio Eireann had closed down I developed the habit of tuning into this station. It was also around this time that Terry Wogan moved from Radio Eireann to BBC 2 and quickly became the most popular disc jockey in Britain with his early morning slot. The fact that he was a Limerick man doing well for himself along with his zany sense of fun encouraged me to listen to him occasionally in the morning.

In time I also discovered Radio Luxembourg, Radio Caroline (the original pirate station), North Sea International (another pirate station) and BBC Radio 1 which I listened to in the winter months. These were all pop music stations. News programmes also held a particular interest for me. Sometimes I would tune into American Forces Network or the BBC World Service. Along with different types of music, American Forces Network broadcast baseball and American football games which didn't hold my attention

for very long. The early 1970's were a time of industrial unrest in the E.S.B. which may have encouraged me in my pursuits as there was little else I could do on long dark nights when we were without light. Radio Eireann went off the air for some days in the early 1970's when the trade unions at the station advised their workers to stop work in sympathy with the RTE Authority which had been sacked by the government. At that time I felt great pride in locating BBC 4 on the radio dial (in those days it was on medium wave), thus keeping the family in touch with the news of the day. Once the strike ended, however, my parents immediately went back to listening to Radio Eireann.

Apart from Radio Eireann and BBC Radio 2 (which was on long wave) the remainder of these stations could not be picked up during the summer months - for some reason reception of foreign stations on medium wave is always better after dark. So on summer evenings when I had little to do I switched to short wave and tuned into stations such as Radio Moscow, Radio Prague or indeed even on one or two occasions Radio Peking. I remember now that the presenters at these station always spoke with impeccable American accents. My interest in these stations had less to do with what the presenters were saying (invariably they always spoke, music was seldom if ever played) - though I would listen attentively to their programmes for as long as time allowed - and more to do with the excitement of tuning into the furthest away station I could locate. I think looking back on this rather peculiar hobby that if I had known someone with an interest in radios at that time or indeed if the C.B. craze had arrived a few years earlier than it was to, I might have developed this hobby further. That was not to be and by the time that the C.B. radios became popular some years later my attentions had strayed to other interests, hobbies and outlets.

Since I commenced this article my father had gone to his eternal reward. We were privileged children. Our parents were always there to help us. I can genuinely say that our childhood was happy. Looking back we never wanted for anything. My father held down three jobs, a sacrifice he was happy to make to give his children the best possible start in life. This fact and his understanding of the role of fatherhood meant that he kept a certain distance between himself and his children. Yet his gentle smile always betrayed his quietly held pride in our achievements.

RATHKEALE SOCCER CLUB

The story so far 1961 - 1998

By Sean Harnett

IN THE BEGINNING

Rathkeale Soccer Club was formed in 1961 by a dedicated group of young men, many of whom were interested in playing different sports and equally so testing their abilities against other young men from different parishes and counties.

Soccer in the early 60's was growing in prominence with Manchester United, Spurs and Liverpool and their flamboyant players. Best, Law, Greaves, Ian St. John etc. giving the sport a fashionable footing (excuse the pun) and many young men in rural Ireland could identify with this.

Seamus Tierney, formerly of Abbeylands (now domiciled in Ennis) was the main thrust behind the move of bringing the game to Rathkeale, but he had willing and able allies in the Woulfes, Whites and Jones brothers.

FIRST GAME

The first Rathkeale team played their first game in Ennis and for the record the line-out was as follows: Mike Dunne, Liam Dunne, Mike Smith, Michael McNamara, Mike Dillon, Mossie Woulfe, Johnny Jones, Liam Woulfe, Christy Jones, Seamus Tierney and Vinnie White.

The team togged out in all white (like Real Madrid, although the real reason probably lies in the fact that it was the cheapest gear they could buy). The team was trained by the late Jimmy McGrane, who many will remember as a very popular parish clerk.

In the 1960's there were many obstacles in developing a 'British' game in rural Ireland, primarily the 'ban', which meant you couldn't play Gaelic and soccer and if caught one would be suspended by the GAA authorities. The other main constraints would be finance and amenities.

In the early years, the Rathkeale Club played their matches at Ballywilliam,

Wilton Hill and Courtmatrix. Prominent players in this period included the Woulfes (namely Mossie (goalkeeper), Liam, affectionately known as 'The Dad' and Anthony (striker), the Whites, Miko Dunne, Johnny Jones, Denis O'Shea, Declan Brennan, Tommy Butler, Tommy McCann, Tommy Glenny, Billy Hayes, the Reidys, etc. etc.

In 1976 the club moved to their current facilities at Holycross, Rathkeale. The move to Holycross now meant that soccer had its own home in Rathkeale and subsequently the club's fortunes took a turn for the better. The role of Shannon Meats was most important here and were a most generous benefactor to the club. The management team of Maurice Cowhey, Paddy Lynch (R.I.P.) and Dan Neville and others were very adept and knowledgeable in the area of human resources and were very much in tune with the needs of their sports-mad staff. At this time the club changed their name to Shannon United (a gesture to their sponsors).

Since their formation, Rathkeale soccer struggled along, training, playing games, each player paying to play so that the club could pay its way. If



RATHKEALES FIRST EVER SOCCER TEAM

Back: M. Smith, L. Dunne, M. McNamara, M. Dunne, M. Dillon, M. Woulfe, J. Jones. Front; L. Woulfe, C. Jones, S. Tierney, V. White, N. White.

statistics were available they would show in the early years that there were more defeats than victories. In the early 1970's Pa Sheehan and Mike Walsh put a very successful under-age team together and these young boys brought the first competitive trophies to the club. Furthermore, these young men were to remain the nucleus of Rathkeale sides for years to come.

Messrs. Sheehan, Walsh, Sean Hennessy, Noel White, Tommy Steele, John White, Mike Dunne and Seamus Tierney had a vision that participation in sport could be a massive contribution in the development of the overall character of the local youth, and that it would act as a catalyst to promote pride, unity and teamwork for the benefit of all the community. Today, their dreams have been revised and further testimony has borne fruit by the fact that the young recipients of the 70's, 80's and 90's are now some of the key pragmatists in bringing Rathkeale soccer into the millennium.

LEAGUE HONOURS

In the playing season 1976-77 the playing dreams of the club were realised when the Desmond League title was won. For many in Rathkeale it was akin to winning the Lotto! For years, people like John White, Noel White, Liam Woulfe, Frank Lynch, Noel Harnett, Pa Sheehan, Mike Dunne, Sean Hennessy, Tommy Glenn, Pat Hayes, Seamus Tierney, Liam & Anthony Woulfe, Tom Steele, Paddy & John Coleman and others worked tirelessly and unselfishly for this great day. The team was managed by Pa Sheehan and captained by the great Johnny Jones and the full panel was as follows: Johnny Jones, Mike Gallagher, Noel Harnett, Turlough McDonnell, Pat Lavin, Timmy Mullane, Bill Chawke, Mike Gallagher, Edmund Dollery, Brendan Culhane, Frank Lynch, Mario Zoncado, James O'Grady, John Coleman and Mike Sullivan.

Rathkeale were now becoming a soccer stronghold in the Desmond League and in 1978-79 they annexed the Desmond Cup with the following players: Denny Harnett, Noel Harnett, Don Gallagher, Timmy Mullane, Edmund Dollery, Eamon Daly, Johnny Jones, Mario Zoncado, Mike Sullivan, Seamus Doherty, Sean Harnett, John Coleman, Pat Neville, Sean O'Shea, Mike Meade, Frank Lynch, Sean O'Shea and John Sheahan.

At this time the Juniors were not the only club side in the winning enclosure, as both schoolboys and youth levels were winning County titles on a consistent basis. The upside of this was that there was a constant stream of good quality ambitious players now available to play Junior football.

SHANNON AND DEEL

The early to mid-80's saw Rathkeale having two Junior clubs, namely Shannon Utd. and Deel Utd. Whereas both had a degree of success and the respective committees did trojan work to promote and develop the game, in hindsight it was very much a game of divide and conquer.

Under the astute guidance of former curate, Fr. Tony O'Keeffe, the meeting of the waters took place in 1986 and nobody has looked back since. Neilie Hogan was a very popular choice as chairman and he was surrounded by a group of determined and eager young men who included Mike Walsh, Pa Sheehan, Jimmy Fitzgerald, Peter Mullins, Noel Harnett, Mike Hogan, Mike Gallagher, John Coleman, Johnny Roche, Jack Lyons, Frank Lynch, amongst others.

In that historic first year Rathkeale had four Junior teams, namely Rathkeale A, B, C and D. Subsequently, this became three teams which, nevertheless, is unprecedented locally. Each of these Junior sides have collected many trophies in the interim.

In the season 1987-88 Rathkeale won the Second Division and Munster Junior Cup (local winners) and this was a major boost to the new club. Prominent players were Brendan O'Connor, John Conmy, Edmund Dollery, Noel Kennedy, Pat Reidy, Eddie Geaney and Kieran O'Shea and a youthful Seamus Dollery. In the following season Rathkeale were crowned Desmond League champions for the second occasion, with all the aforementioned to the fore.

Since then, the club has gone from strength to strength, annexing upwards on twenty major trophies at Junior level and many many more at schoolboy level.

SCHOOLBOYS

In the 1980's the club were to the forefront in promoting and developing the game at under-age level. Boys were given good tuition on the various skills of the game and time has proved that they responded. Rathkeale were also fortunate that there were a lot of talented kids around. With a proper schoolboy structure in place, it meant a system was established whereby, an under-age team would play to the same style of your A side.

This has the added benefit that a young lad could step straight in from school-

boy to youth to junior football, only lacking in experience. In the 1980's and 1990's County titles at schoolboy level were won with regular monotony and there was a thirst to progress onto the Junior stage.

Apart from winning County titles, the club contested an under-14 All-Ireland quarter final where Home Farm were victorious at Tolka Park. In 1992 Belvedere defeated our under-17's in the All-Ireland semi-final, a superb achievement for a rural Ireland club.

Some of the schoolboys who started at that level and did so at Junior level with equal success would include: Woulfes, Riordans, Verekers, Paul Lynch, Paul Ruttle, Pat Madigan, Brian Mullins, Ollie Byrnes, Kieran Duggan, Kenny Hogan, Niall Ryan, Donovans, Hogans, Peter O'Connor, Pat Reidy, William Daly, McNamaras, Haughs etc. etc.

Throughout the 1990's rarely a season passed by that a trophy at either Junior or Schoolboy level did not come to the club.



County Champions U/12 1994

Back: M. Meehan, I. O'Donohue, R. Byrne, T. Nolan, K. Donovan, J. Hogan.
Front: G. Wilmoth, R. Markham, K. Harnett, B. Lynch, D. Muckell.

Special mention should go to our A team who won the Desmond League Premier title three years in succession - twice winning League and Cup doubles - under the management of William 'Chilly' Daly and Timmy O'Sullivan in season 1995-97.

LADIES

The ladies have also had a major role to play in the history of the club, both on and off the playing field. The names of Ann O'Brien and Kathleen O'Connor (now Lynch) will be synonymous with the club. In recent years Michelle Meehan, Grainne Coleman, Noreen Hogan and Mary Lynch have contributed handsomely to the success of the club.

The ladies played in the Limerick Ladies League and played with a large degree of success. The main motivation apart from the ladies were Pat Hayes, Maurice O'Connell, Johnny Daly, Joe Williams and Paul Lynch. Star players for the ladies included the Meehans, McNamaras, Ciara O'Sullivan, Gillian Hogan, Edel Ryan, Kathleen and Mary O'Connor, Orla Lyons, among others.

In the early 1990's Noel and Liam Kennedy, John Coleman, Brendan O'Connor, Tom Hogan, John Conmy and Ann O'Brien were very much to the forefront in running the club.

In 1995, under the chairmanship of Neilie Hogan, the club at committee level was restructured, bringing in some more dedicated hard-working people to assist with running all aspects of the club. These people now run the club, namely, Timmy O'Sullivan, J. J. Riordan, Anne O'Brien, Johnny Daly, Denis Kelly, Michelle Meehan, Joe Lynch, Mary Lynch, John Coleman, Grainne Coleman, Mike Gallagher, Kenny Hogan, Rob Collins, Brian Tierney, Mike Walsh, John Lyons, Barry Riordan, Robert White, Paul Lynch, Kathleen Lynch, Michael McNamara, Brian Coleman, Jimmy Dollery, Club President.

If the club were busy on the pitch, they were equally so off the pitch. The club purchased a 17-acre site at Holycross in 1996. Subsequently, three quality playing pitches were developed and were opened for the start of the current playing season and have received widespread public acclaim. A stand and three dressing rooms have also been erected. The total cost of these successful projects was in the region of £140,000. So not alone is the game of soccer just sport, even at this level it is a business.

The development of our grounds at Holycross were publicly recognised by the AIB, Nationwide Better Ireland Awards 1998 when Rathkeale AFC were listed as local winners receiving a certificate and cheque for £1,000.

It must be acknowledged that Rathkeale Soccer Club has received tremendous support from both the business community and the general public since its inception and without this generous support, the club couldn't have the progress and success that it has to date achieved.

On 28th September 1998 a FAS scheme was started and this should be a major assistance in furthering the ambition of Rathkeale A.F.C. The club's motto reads "Conari est Vincere" (to strive is to win). From the very early days in 1961 to the current members and players in 1998, all concerned in the intervening period have lived by our motto - long may it continue.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Desmond League Champions	5
Desmond Cup Winners	4
Munster Junior Cups	3
Division One Champions	2
Division Two Champions	3
Division Three Champions	2
Division One Cup	1
Division Two Cup	2
Division Four Champions	1
Division Four Cup	1
Minor League Champions	4
Minor Cup Winners	5
Under-16 County Champions	9
Under-15 County Champions	4
Under-14 County Champions	8
Under-13 County Champions	3
Under-12 County Champions	6
Under-11 County Champions	2

POSTSCRIPT: The club's colours are sky blue. In 1969 Miko Dunne switched his allegiance from Manchester United to Coventry City and as Coventry play in sky blue Miko used his influence to decide that Rathkeale AFC should wear these colours.

Rathkeale Community Council



Community Centre at Old Courthouse



New Developments at Rathkeale Creamery

Palatine Heritage Centre "Before and After"



ST. MARY'S CHURCH, RATHKEALE - SOME OBSERVATIONS

By John Shanahan

The building of St. Mary's Church, Rathkeale was part of the great upsurge of church building in Ireland in the latter half of the nineteenth century. An emerging successful Catholic business class and an expanding farming community, finding itself with disposable income, was willing and anxious to contribute to some impressive symbols of their newly attained status. With the encouragement of a very assertive and ambitious Catholic clergy and hierarchy, it could glory in the outward expressions of religious autonomy so recently restricted.

The 1832 Act, reducing the number of archbishops in the Established Church from four to two, and the Disestablishment Act of 1870, diminished to some extent the strong influence of the latter church. It was perhaps inevitable, therefore, that an ever more confident Catholic clergy would find little resistance from a docile laity to its ambition to build "to the glory of God". In a moment of exuberant fervour an article in the Catholic Directory proposed that the country be dotted again with restored monasteries and churches. More pragmatic counsels, however, eventually prevailed. Cardinal Cullen had formalised - some would say Romanised - liturgy and rubrics for ceremonies and this required larger and well appointed churches where possible for the ceremonial. It was also inevitable that whatever church architectural idiom prevailed would find favour in Ireland, and so, as in England, it was decided to revive an earlier style rather than invent a new one. Medieval Gothic being considered a more appropriate religious metaphor than the more secular classical, the great Gothic Revival had its counterpart in Ireland with the work of A. W. Pugin and J. J. McCarthy. The cry went forth: a cathedral for every diocese and a worthy building wherever possible.

In such a renaissance of church building, it came as no surprise that the newly appointed parish priest of Rathkeale, Fr. James O'Shea, would entertain ambitions of erecting an imposing new church to replace the more modest cruciform building in existence since 1812 (later St. Anne's Convent School). On 22nd January, 1865 a meeting of Catholic parishioners was held in the old church and addressed by Fr. O'Shea. A resolution was passed "that the

people of Rathkeale, feeling the necessity for building a new church suited to the extent and importance of the parish, do pledge to contribute according to their means to the good work". This was carried "viva voce". A subscription list was opened to accept contributions and some of the original committee elected were: Dr. O'Shea, Fr. O'Sullivan, Fr. Carrick, Dr. O'Hanlon, Pat Kennedy (National Bank), John Moylan, P. Barrett, Jas. Blackwell, T.C., Ml. Fitzgibbon, J. F. Cosgrave, Jas. O'Donovan, T.C., M. Lyons, T.C., Jas. Carey, Pat Condon, David Fitzgibbon, Cornelius Dore and Stephen Casey. Considerable sums were promised, to be paid on 1st July and 1st December each year for five years.

A house in Thomas Street, owned by Mrs. Higgins, was rented at £7 per annum, for use as a committee meeting place and money was collected for coal, oil lamps, candles, writing paper etc. Fr. O'Sullivan and Jas. Carey were appointed secretaries and a paid collector was appointed to collect contributions from parishioners. He was to be paid 1s. 6d. on each £1 collected. On 29th January 1865 Michael Ryan was appointed to this post and he had to lodge a bond of £50 as security for the monthly collections. Reports of meetings were to be sent to "Munster News", "Limerick Chronicle" and "The Freemans Journal". Some of the areas allotted to committee members are interesting in that many names have long gone e.g. "from Jas. Blackwell's corner at Pound Lane to Denis Hayes' corner at Thomas St" and "from Cornelius Hayes' corner of Well Lane up to Courthouse". The collection for one quarter, around the town, amounted to £14.6s. Patrick Gleeson was appointed caretaker to the committee at one penny per week.

J. J. McCarthy, a friend and pupil of Pugin and great Gothic exponent in Ireland, was chosen as architect and, in 1866, he exhibited in the R.H.A., by way of lithograph, a north west view of the proposed new church which highly impressed the committee in Rathkeale. Although somewhat idealised it is still the view which shows the architect's original design at its best. In May 1866 a notice appeared in "The Irish Builder" inviting tenders for the building of a new church in Rathkeale. Six tenders were submitted, three from Cork and three from Limerick, ranging from £8,080 to £5,465. The contract was awarded to Ryan of Limerick and Waterford at a cost of £6,226.

The site had been given by Magniers of Riverlawn but a surrounding wall and some levelling required expenditure of £52 and £30 respectively. The wall was built by Patrick Fitzgerald and the levelling and site preparation

was carried out by Simon O'Sullivan. Fr. Nolan, C.C. was sent to America to raise funds.

It was hoped that work would begin as soon as possible in order to provide local employment and, after a protracted dispute about the nature of guarantees for the money involved in building costs, it was agreed that Dr. O'Shea should sign the contract and act as sole guarantor. On Thursday 1867 the foundation was laid and, to mark the auspicious occasion, an impressive 'dejeuner' was offered to the notabilities of the town and country, both spiritual and temporal, in the Christian Brothers School. The 'dejeuner' (banquet) cost £59.10s. and was catered for by P. Coffey, Limerick. P. Mulqueen provided a display of fireworks at a cost of £5.3s.

The following would be some of the contributions to the building fund:

Rathkeale Parish	£1,266. 10s. 11d.
Limerick Diocese	£1,090. 5s. 9d.
Limerick City	£ 260. 15s. 0d.
Dublin	£ 156. 15s. 0d.
Cork	£ 132. 0s. 0d.
America - Fr. Nolan	£1,834. 10s. 6d.
Rathkeale Fair Tolls	£ 383. 13s. 6d.

It must be stressed that there were of course other donations and contributions, each one worthy of mention in a more comprehensive account.

The church was consecrated and opened for public worship on Sunday, 17th August, 1873. Cardinal Manning of Westminster was expected to give the special sermon but was unable to travel at the last moment and that inveterate enemy of Fenianism, Dr. Moriarty of Kerry, preached on the occasion. Full coverage of the event and ceremony as well as a minute description of the church was published in the Cork Examiner on 18th August, 1873.

The tower and spire were completed by 1881 by Mr. M. Walsh, Foynes at a cost of £2,800 and the bell was erected in 1882 costing £200 and weighing 22-cwt. The organ was built by the Dublin firm of organ builders Telford & Telford, at a cost of £600. St. Mary's is considered to be one of McCarthy's finest buildings and perhaps the most finely finished of all his work. The architectural style is 13th century French Gothic and, while McCarthy

preferred much more simplicity of ornamentation in his church interiors, he made an exception in the case of Rathkeale. The pillars of Askeaton red marble are surmounted by intricately carved capitals of Portland stone. Moulded Caen stone and highly polished marble shafts are richly used in the reredos of the high altar and one interesting feature, there is no correspondence between the two side chapels - they are in fact asymmetrical. The stained glass is colourful with some interesting heraldic markings but, as in almost all churches of the period, it is not of the best quality.

The doorways are very finely finished with double stone moulded arches and polished marble jamb shafts. Unfortunately the marble has been painted grey. Unfortunately also the spaciousness and expensiveness envisaged in the architect's original design for the sanctuary has been ruined by the re-erection of altar rails within at a contradictory level to the existing ones. Some high quality carved wood panelling has been lost by discarding the ornamental screen of the nuns chapel. This, I would suggest, is now a disaster. High quality 19th century tiling has been covered over with chipboard, thereby creating too many different levels. This latter move has also succeeded in concealing the burial tomb of the founder of the church, Dr. O'Shea.

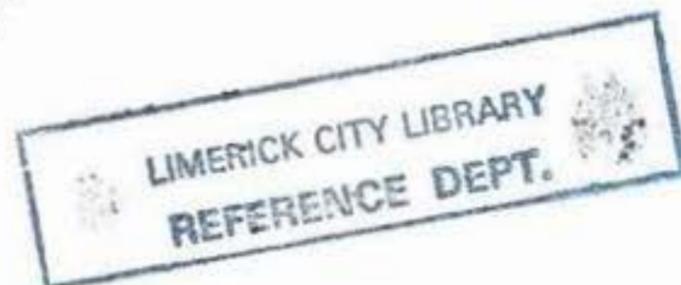
These are only some regrettable happenings but they are symptomatic of the sad decline of a once glorious building. On the brink of a new millennium it may indeed be timely for the people of Rathkeale to consider the heritage which they possess through the farthings, halfpennies and pennies of many long dead parishioners and begin the slow process of some enlightened restoration. I do not think that anyone should merit being accused by some future generation perhaps of earlier philistinism.

As one views the imposing edifice from the best vantage point of the old railway line one cannot fail to be impressed by the height and soaring quality of the spire on what must be one of the most eminent sites anywhere. It is undoubtedly triumphant, with all the obvious pride and triumph of a revolution or renaissance, but like many such Gothic spires one may be forgiven for thinking that it may appear that little bit arrogant - probing the heavens, daring to point an admonishing finger at the Deity - just in case. Like the legendary editorial in "The Skibereen Eagle" of old, Rathkeale, through McCarthy's piercing spire, may be keeping its eye on the Deity and, if such a notion be not blasphemous, issuing its own silent but watchful ultimatum to the Lord "Qui Sait".

The above is a reluctant response to a very persistent and perhaps intimidating editor and it is rushed with all the ensuing defects thereof. There is, however, so much more that might be explored e.g. how many stonemasons were working at the peak of construction? Those traditionally thirsty master craftsmen, from where did they come? Where did they stay? What were their diversions over six years of dreary evenings? What were their rates of remunerations or were there any industrial disputes? Where there any serious or fatal accidents? Hopefully not. Are there any photographs or artists impressions of the work in progress, still extant? All of this is most interesting and should prompt further research that will have to await a more enthusiastic explorer. In the meantime, any relevant material, cuttings or pictures would be greatly appreciated and should be part of the archives.

As has been pointed out so often recently in the national newspapers by those best qualified to assess, the recent history of church re-ordering throughout Ireland is, in many cases, a sorry one. Much lamentable work has been done, fine interiors have been destroyed and the integrity of fine original designs violated. It may be less obvious in smaller buildings but a church of the significance of Rathkeale deserves a better fate. Let us hope that, with the goodwill of everybody, one of McCarthy's masterpieces may still be, a hundred years hence, the pride of its people.

44794



Patrons

West Limerick Resources

Anderson Ireland Ltd.

Allied Irish Bank, Rathkeale

Bill O'Sullivan Iron Works

Mrs. M.T. Breen

John Dinnage

Noel White

Rathkeale Chamber of Commerce

Rathkeale Enterprise Group

Gerard Collins M.E.P.

Dan Neville T.D., M.C.C.

Tadhg O'Connor Ltd.

John Considine, Limerick County Council

Peter Donovan

Golden Vale

Donovan's Pharmacy

Rathkeale & District Credit Union

Anthony Fitzsimons

Brian Geary Car Sales

QAMIRON
210
ABMUNISABER JAGGERS