

# GLIN: rather unique ... and very beautiful

AN agricultural community wholly imbued with tourism, and one of the few towns in Co. Limerick not clamouring for a factory and whose priorities lie in another direction, Glin is surely rather unique.

It is also very beautiful, in an untapped manner, and justifies the interest taken in its tourism potential by its locals.

Scenery, swimming and future sea-bathing prospects are a few of its amenities and the town's year-on-year development association is going to see that they don't go to waste. One of its big projects at the moment is the erection of cottages which would be put to tourists.

Mr. Joe Cunningham, secretary of the development association, told me:

"There was talk about this rent-a-cottage sort like the cottages in Clare — providing houses for tourists. Bord Fáilte would contribute some money to it and we would lease the houses out."

## Discussions

"We have had discussions with Bord Fáilte but nothing definite has been decided. We intend to build eight altogether."

Development association chairman, Joe Cunningham, said nothing had been passed yet.

"This last time we met there was no final decision."

"We have a site for the cottages but don't know whether they will be allocated here or to some other town in the area."

Councillor Michael Barrett, F.R., a native of Glin, said that there were a few towns being considered for these cottages.

Another item on the local development agenda is the Desmond Park in which the tennis court is situated at present. The association proposes to put a car park, footpaths and benches there, making it into a replica of the town park.

Mr. Hogan said that this would cost £1,000, that the land would be paid for by Glin people and the other two-thirds by Bord Fáilte and the Limerick County Council.

But not all the development association's plans are confined to tourism. They allot time for looking into educational matters too and were incensed last autumn when the Minister for Education declared his intention of erecting a comprehensive school at Tarbert.

"We are more entitled to a comprehensive school in Glin, because we have bigger numbers here."

"There are currently 47 pupils in Glin Vocational School, and 122 in the secondary school. Tarbert Councillor, Barrett, told me: "There are only fifty pupils altogether."

## Deputation

The development association sent a deputation to meet the then Minister of Education, Mr. Brian Lenihan, on the subject, and a public meeting was held in Glin to see if the school could be investigated there. On the platform at the meeting were men like the local C.E.O., Sean Rushe; Michael Herbert, T.D. (chairman of Limerick Co. Vocational Committee); Canon Ryan, Councillor Barrett; Very Rev. M. Tynan, P.P.; Croom (vice-chairman of Limerick Co. Vocational Education Committee); Fr. Costello, C.C., Glin; and a representative from the Department of Education.

The outcome was that Tarbert did not get a comprehensive school, but the Glin people still don't know who's getting it.

Joe Hogan: "We're hoping we may eventually, if the new Minister is sympathetic towards us."

Meanwhile, Councillor Barrett has succeeded in another sphere: "I moved the Vocational Education Committee some time back to get two prefabs for Glin. They agreed to this, and the prefabs will be put up in the old national school, where the vocational school is held at present. And the Canon has agreed that the pupils may use the toilets of the national school."

All formal instruction in Glin is given by lay people; the only religious participation in education there was that of the Christian Brothers, who up to two years ago ran an industrial school and orphanage in Glin. Now that they have closed it, the development association is very interested in their property, St. Joseph's.

Joe Hogan: "We had debates as to whether we could afford to buy it or not. If we had enough money we could go ahead."

"We thought of using

it as a possible site for the comprehensive school if we got it and we thought of it as a holiday centre for children. We had Mr. Mulligan down from Aer Lingus about that and he was very helpful. We don't know exactly what the outcome of the school will be at the moment."

## Festival

To finance their projects the development association are running a festival from this week-end, July 18, to July 21. The following is part of the hurdy gurdy, fun and good cheer which is offered you at it:

Friday, 18th—Jackie Faulkner and wife, Katie, via boats, welcomed by John B. Keane and comedian, Billa O'Connell, and cavalcade to Football Field; 8.00, football match; 7.30, cycle race from Ballyvongard, Moyvane, Athea, Foynes. Dance, 9 to 1, Skyrockets.

Saturday, 19th—Ballads in pubs; free open-air dancing on platform, 8.30, roasting of pig in the Square, 9.0, wheel of fortune, Bar extension.

Sunday, 20th—2.0, junior and senior sports; army pipe band display, 8.00, wrenboy parade, 9 to 1, old-time dance to the Devon Band, Bar extension.

Monday, 21st—8.00, Fancy dress parade; 8.30, fashion show; Glin and Hollypark present autumn and winter collection as shown in U.S.A., Paris, London and other continental cities. Free raffle on door ticket.

Tuesday, 22nd—8.00, football match; 8.00, barrel race, wheel of fortune; 9 to 12, dancing for the youth to discotheque.

Wednesday, 23rd—8.00, Soccer: Limerick A.F.C. v. Cork Celtic; 8.30, walking race. Dance 9 to 1, Clipper Carlton.

Thursday, 24th—8.00, Donkey derby; 8.30, Tom and Paschal; Owen Neville and Gerry O'Brien with local talent Fig Roll competition.

Friday, 25th—7.30, Cycle race final; 8.00, football final; 9.00, wrenboy parade. Dance 9 to 1, Houston Wells and The Trident. Heat of Colleen Bawn competition—winner £100.

Saturday, 26th—8.00, Wheel of fortune; 8.30, barman's race, final of ballad competition; 7.00, tennis tournament. Free creeps, bar extension.

Sunday, 27th—2.0, Feis; 3.30, Abbeyfeale v. Glin old team; 7.30, soccer final. Dance, The Ascot Showband. Draw for £50 note at dance. Bar extension.

## Last year

Last year Glin held a one-day sports festival and, due to its success, decided to embark on a bigger venture this year. For the past five months the members of the committee have been meeting every Monday night and out of the full committee membership of the development association, about 20 always attended. Sean Adams is treasurer of Glin Development Association.

Councillor Barrett considers that "Glin is one of the nicest towns I have been in, though I have been away from it for eight years. I consider it one of the loveliest parts of Ireland."

The Foynes-Glin road, which I helped to push through, is a fine road. The shops here are quite modern; the town is very clean (it came four marks short of the best first-year entry in the area in the Tidy Towns Competition) and I'm proud of it."

The councillor is also aware that Glin hasn't a lot to hope for in the sphere of big industrial help from the Co. Council.

"There are no plans for industry here. The bigger towns like Newcastle West, Kilmallock and Abbeyfeale are next in line."

And yet this does not worry him or indeed worry the Glin people. They are about the most contented and satisfied people in Co. Limerick.

Even their local authority houses supply their considerable needs in an almost unheard-of remark. Thirty-two standing and eight are going up.

One thing the Co. Council did offer Glin was improved swimming facilities. But, according to some sources, the local Canon objected to mixed bathing so the scheme did not progress. Only some small improvements were done.

## 'Nice sites'

There is a dance hall cum cinema in Glin, several pubs, drapery and grocery shops, an hotel owned by Patrick Conway which bears his name and who also runs the hotel; a few guest houses and two garages. The development association considers that there are a lot of "nice sites" along the Shannon for development and a lot of "nice sites" along the Shannon for development and a lot of "nice sites" along the Shannon for development.

A great Glin asset is its youth hostel which makes it a mini international centre. It is run by Miss Young and would have up to 40 or 50 young people there in the summer months.

Emigration is a problem which has been palliated greatly in the past two years in Glin. About 50 locals work now in Tarbert

Island; but this is only transitional, and as Joan O'Leary, a local person and a contributor to the cottage industries, remarked: "There will have to be an extra boat called in to take them away after the scheme has finished."

Not only does this scheme employ Glin men, it has increased the passing population in Glin by about 30 to 40 men, who stay with local families.

The population of Glin village is about 600 while its district, which is considered large, is placed at roughly 2,000.

Mr. Barrett says: "The population went down here recently. A lot of it was due to the closing of the orphanage. There were about one hundred pupils there a few years ago and the population had gone down even then."

## Gate shop

One of the little industries to open in Glin because of the local tourist growth is Glin Castle gate shop, open a month now, it is started by Mrs. Glin.

Four locals—and is doing so well that its summer managers, American Miss Claire Freiburger, could afford to go away last week and leave things in the hands of Mrs. Kay Guiney and cook Miss Joan Stack.

I have been assured that the shop's greatest enticements are Joan's Virginia ham (done in a light brown sugar and cloves), legs of lamb, home-made bread and the veritable piece de resistance: her scones.

The shop is open 'till 9 p.m. daily while visitors are around, and the girls find the mornings and week-ends their busiest times.

The perfectly-finished rugan chairs and square stark tables in the tea-shop were done by a factory through the order of Cullane's, a local drapery shop. Light lunches and meat salads are served on these tables. Tourist buses don't stop at the castle, however—they go to the local hotels for refreshments so the gate shop is dependent on the passing trade. The most popular buy in the fabric souvenir shop across the floor from the tea-room is Donegal-manufactured mohair.

One of the goods contributors to the gate shop is Glin Cottage industries run by Mrs. Dorrit O'Shaughnessy.

This enterprise has been functioning for over a year now and over 100 local people submit work to it. All the work is done in the people's own homes—hence the title "cottage."

This was the first idea of its kind to bud in Glin and Mrs. O'Shaughnessy and the local ladies deserve a lot of credit for their courage.

## The ferry

Last year they had a successful financial period but this year they find themselves affected by the ferry. "This is a big, big thing to us," Mrs. Dorrit O'Shaughnessy said, and her words were corroborated by fellow-helper, Miss O'Leary.

Not many societies are active in Glin today.

Even the I.C.A., that raison d'être for rural town ladies is defunct; of course, Cottage Industries could be termed as its more productive sister.

The tennis club is very much alive, however, and this year, overwhelming in numbers, is consistently strong.

Its officers are: Treasurer, Mrs. Dorrit O'Shaughnessy; Secretary, Mrs. James Reid.

It is mainly football that is played in Glin G.A.A. circles and the local committee, headed by chairman Patrick Cullane, secretary Thomas Mulvihill, and treasurer James Reid, have just bought a "£2,000 field which they intend to develop."

The local club has won several tournaments recently, including the £100 one in the Moyvane carnival.

Soccer, though still in its infancy locally, is very popular and the local team set up a record by playing Askeaton in a cup match for several hours with neither side having a decisive victory. Both minor and junior teams have been formed and their venue is Clareview Park, overlooking the Shannon.

Chairman is Jimmy Cunningham, who certainly seems to be a man for local participation; treasurer is Tommy Wallace, and secretary, Con Sheehan.

A social club has its headquarters in the courthouse and provides billiards, snooker and like games for the entertainment of Glin's youth.

## Chairman

Its chairman is Bill Cullane, and secretary is Mike Adams.

Glin's greatest club is its coursing club. Chairman is Joe Healy; vice-chairman, John Fitzgerald; secretary, Captain John O'Shaughnessy; and treasurer, Jimmy Stack.

Next to Clonanna, Glin is the oldest coursing meeting in the country. Its first meeting was held in 1905 and except for the first world war, when it lapsed temporarily, it has held a meeting every year since.

The meeting's biggest stake is the Desmond Cup, which has the combined prize money of £360.

Councillor Barrett considers that Glin is an ideally situated village "with Foynes nine miles away and Tarbert Island six miles."

Captain John O'Shaughnessy, whose family have been in Glin since the 16th century, does not dispute this statement on the present-day Glin but considers that in the past Glin "was a very isolated community and had no contact with the outside world. It was in no way commercial, its only commerce being with America."

On the other hand, John O'Shaughnessy also says: "Glin was always regarded as a strategic military location and was one of the definite entries into Kerry from the plains of Munster. That is why the Knights built here."

The route was very well known and is used by the tinkers today. The Earls of Desmond defended it and all life in Glin was centred around the castle."

Other users of the route today are the horse-drawn caravanners.

Captain O'Shaughnessy talked of the lack of historical files to be found generally.

## Displaced

"There are no recorded facts of ancient Irish history. The people were on the run from the 15th century onwards and were displaced persons. There are no records of births, deaths or marriages to be found here in Glin."

According to the Captain, Glin was one of the last bastions of Gaelic Irish was spoken in Glin up to the 90's of the last century. Most people spoke it and it was understood by nearly all the people."

Miscellaneous facts about Glin are: Lord Kitchener's father had land in the parish. And the oldest existing house in Glin today is that at the back of the O'Shaughnessy premises. It is used to store timber and house greyhounds nowadays.

At the top of Tuillyglass, a hill overlooking the town, one can see five counties: Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Kerry and Galway—so it is affirmed—on a clear day.

Beside the village stands the ruined keep of the ancient castle of Glin. This was destroyed by Carew, Elizabeth's Lord President of Munster, after a gallant two-day defence ending in a fierce hand-to-hand struggle on the battlements in which the Knight of Glin and the remnants of his garrison were killed.

On a site overlooking the pier stands Hamilton's Tower, a large castle-like structure built by a Doctor Hamilton in the 19th century.

Another interesting curiosity may be seen in Kilfergus graveyard: the tombstone of Timothy Costello, one-time farmer in the neighbourhood, who composed his own epitaph in verse and carved it himself on the stone. The poet is an ancestor of present-day Glin garage owner, Tommy Costello, a man deeply interested and erudite in the local history and archaeology.

## Fostered

Tommy told me that his family fostered all the Knights of Glin from 1550 to 1850.

He was also one of the first people to introduce the Ford car to the area.

He is very interested in his hard-forefather and has some items of his work, among them the words on his grave:

This is the grave of Tim Costello.

Who lived and died a right good fellow;

From his boyhood to his life's end,

He was the poor man's faithful friend.

He fawned before no purse-proud clod,

He feared none but the living God;

And never did he do to others,

But what was right to do to brothers.

He loved green Ireland's mountain's bold,

Her verdant vales and abbey's old;

He loved her music, song and story,

He wept for her departed glory.

And often did I hear him pray,

That God would end her spoliators' sway;

To men like him may peace be given,

In this world and in heaven. Amen.

## A song

A song in Tommy's repertoire, which he claims has been sung in Glin on many auspicious occasions, is: The Humours of Glin. Here is an extract from it:

O'er dark wooded valleys and sky-kissing mountains,

I bore the sweet clairsach my father once bore;

From Nephin's wild heather and Moy's crystal fountains,

From Lough Neagh's summer

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Home Rule Demonstration.

A Home Rule rally in Glin. Date: 1910.



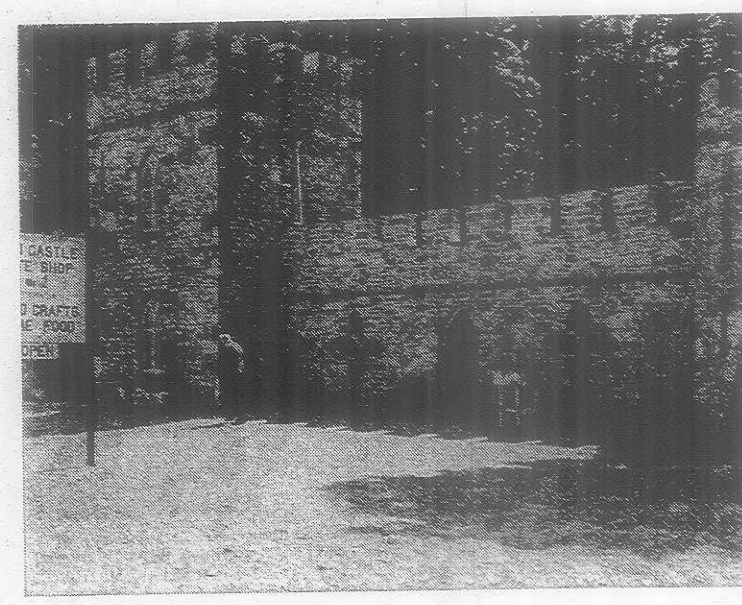
Councillor Barrett.

REPORT BY LIMERICK LEADER STAFF

WRITER, HELEN BUCKLEY



Capt. and Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, pictured outside Ivy House, where they run a cottage industry and snack bar.



Handcrafts shop and home food bar at Glin Castle.