

# Kilfinane reJoyces

THE best ever . . . that was the unanimous verdict when the 1993 Scoil na Seogheach — The Joyce Brothers School — closed in the Kilfinane Education Centre last Sunday.

A very large crowd attended the formal opening on Friday evening by Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, chairman of Bord na Gaeilge.

Councillor Michael Barry, chairman of the organising committee of Scoil na Seogheach, welcomed all those present, in Irish and English. Indeed, it was a feature of the evening that all the speakers spoke bilingually.

Councillor Jim MacCarthy, chairman of Limerick Co. Vocational Education Committee, praised the organisers and referred to the wonderful work being performed in the Kilfinane Education Centre.

Mr. Ó Muircheartaigh said, in a witty and very much appreciated address, that events such as Scoil na Seogheach helped greatly to re-awaken interest in our native culture and to promote the use of the Irish language.

He paid tribute to the Joyce brothers — P. W. Joyce and Robert Dwyer Joyce — for all they had done to preserve so much of our native heritage for us.

After the opening, Mainchín Seoghe, organising secretary, presented Professor Breandán Ó Madagáin, U.C.G., with a copy of a rare book, *Memories of Staker Wallace*, to mark Breandán's installation as Éarlamh, or Patron, of Scoil na Seogheach. Staker (Patrick) Wallace was a much-respected United Irishman who was hanged in Kilfinane in 1798.

The first lecturer of the weekend, Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, U.C.G., spoke on "The Gaelic League one

cultural dependency. In terms of fashion, ideas, leisure activities, of what was read, of what were the models of behaviour, in every domain of life, Ireland was provincial in that it took its lead from the centre, which was London.

Because, 100 years ago, Ireland was an integral part of the largest empire the world had ever seen, many Irishmen, unselfconsciously, and certainly without shame, looked upon themselves as part of the British Empire, and found fulfilment within it as soldiers, administrators and so on.

But, said the lecturer, there were others who felt uneasy about the other side of the equation, namely, the clear evidence that a great deal of the indigenous culture of Ireland, particularly the language, was withering away at a very rapid rate.

The decades after the Famine saw the penetration of every area of the country by the English influences of the State and its bureaucracy and institutions, including the schools. In the media, and in all the affairs of State, the Irish language was utterly marginalised, so much so that everybody believed that its demise would take only a very short time.

That, said Professor Ó Tuathaigh, was the predicament which the Gaelic League sought to address. The League sought to anchor the people in their own tradition, to make the people feel that they were at the centre of their own world rather than being at the periphery of somebody else's. That was the project, a huge ambition. The restoration of the Irish language, and rendering the present a rational continuation of the past, were the main aims of the League.

People talk of the failure of the Gaelic League, said the lecturer, but in a very short space of time the League brought about a radical change in the thinking of the Irish people. It gave the Irish people a cultural re-assurance. The



Eimear Quinn, left, with Mary Woulfe, Carmel O'Connor and Joan Tracey, all from County Limerick VEC. (LL)



Paraic Pairceir, Meath, left, Patricia Lynch, Joanne Hurley, Pauline Lynch and Andrena Dowling, all from Kilfinane, at the opening. (LL)

the largest cultural project ever undertaken, and it left large numbers of Irish people deeply in its debt".

The first day's programme closed with a rousing session of music, song, recitation and dance by a 50-large prize-winning Comhaltas group from the Castleconnell/Ahane/Herbertstown area.

On Saturday there was another outstanding lecture on Cherishing The Environment by Macrooom teacher and naturalist, Kevin Corcoran.

Kevin had his audience under a spell with his flowing and fascinating dis-

cowslip, for example, now being almost extinct.

The lecturer saw plastic as a major pollutant of our time, since plastic, among its many dangers and disadvantages, takes centuries to decompose. In the States and in Germany, he said, you now get your purchases in shops and stores in cardboard boxes rather than in plastic bags.

Every species of plant and animal life, he said, has its place in the plan of creation; all are interlocked in the great life-support system of the ecology.

On Saturday afternoon there was a bus outing to

setting of a long white-washed room with a barrel-vault roof; Nóirín Ní Riain gave a recital of Dánta Dé, religious songs from many traditions.

Listening to the unearthly beautiful singing and music in the old monastic setting proved a powerfully emotional experience.

Back in the Education Centre in Kilfinane that evening, Nóirín's husband, Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, recently appointed Professor of Music in the University of Limerick, added another memorable contribution to the Joyce School

general. He spoke about interesting developments in Irish music in the 1970s and 1980s, but said it was vital that the essence of the traditional thing should be preserved.

After the lecture there was an informal programme of music and song, and a cuirt éigse (poetry reading) conducted by Fr. Micheál Liston. There was also a tribute to Elton-born Frank Roche (1866-1961), musician and collector of Irish music. Michael Quinlan spoke of Frank's life and work, and airs from his collection were played by Eimear and Colm O'Keefe.



Kathleen Ryan, Celia Cassidy and Denise McInerney, all from the County Limerick VEC. (LL)

## School takes its place on literary calendar

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

NOT since the night in 1897 when burning tar barrels and lighted candles in every window greeted the victorious Kilfinane team which brought the first all Ireland hurling title to Limerick, was there such nationalistic fervour abroad in the village.

The annual Joyce Brothers School, commemorating the two scholars from South East Limerick, was also celebrating the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Gaelic League, and memories and traditions abounded.

This year's school was a celebration, not only the memory of Limerick's two literary brothers, but of the fact that the Gaelic League had changed the course of history.



There were signs too, that the annual school has definitely taken its place in the literary/social calendar of the country.

In fact, many of the attendance on Friday night had come to Kilfinane already culturally primed from the Merriman School.

They also came from much farther afield. Professor Richard Martin, Professor of Greek and Latin at Princeton University told the Limerick Leader: "I've already read the book on Irish placenames. I'm very interested in this event."

Professor Martin said that his wife's people came from Rathkeale.

Kay Landreth, from Boston, who works for Digital, comes to the Joyce School every year.

"This is my fifth year coming here," she said enthusiastically. "In fact, I come for a month to study the archaeology and history of the area."

Two other attenders, Ter-

ence and Mrs O'Gorman from Monaghan, got a special welcome, because they've never missed a Joyce School since it opened in 1984.

There was a higher than usual sprinkling of local politicians at the events, probably because the Limerick County VEC were among the organisers.

Guests were welcomed by Cllr Michael Barry, chairman of the Joyce School.

Limerick County VEC chairman, Cllr Jim McCarthy, said that they were proud to be associated with this major cultural event and added that there had always been a close association between Scoil na Seogheach and the VEC.

With approximately 150 visitors per week, the Kilfinane centre, he said, had provided the equivalent of three or four businesses, or a small factory, in terms of economic impact and employment.

Micheal Ó Muircheartaigh described the Joyce brothers as "writers and scholars, interested in every aspect of Irishness".

The main objective of Bord na Gaeilge, he said,

1798. The first lecturer of the weekend, Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, U.C.G., spoke on "The Gaelic League one hundred years on".

Professor Ó Tuathaigh reminded his audience that when the Gaelic League was founded Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and was in a condition of economic and

short space of time the League brought about a radical change in the thinking of the Irish people. It gave the Irish people a cultural re-assurance. The change that it brought about was a remarkable achievement for a voluntary organisation.

Concluding, Professor Ó Tuathaigh said of the founding of the Gaelic League: "It embarked upon

ment by Macroom teacher and naturalist, Kevin Corcoran.

Kevin had his audience under a spell with his flowing and fascinating discourse which was profusely illustrated with a series of incredibly lovely and dramatic slides showing unspoilt countryside. We saw, too, a slide of a riverside made sterile by the ill-advised clearance of trees and all kinds of vegetation which had once been the habitat of countless forms of animal and insect life.

The lecturer expressed his concern at the effect on the environment on the continuing extension of coniferous forests which, because they cut out so much sunlight, leave the ground underneath them completely sterile. And he mentioned how the use of fertilizers has made "green deserts" of many of our fields, wiping out wild flowers, the sweet-scented

its place in the plan of creation; all are interlocked in the great life-support system of the ecology.

On Saturday afternoon there was a bus outing to Kilmallock. A tour of the town's historic buildings and sites was led by Mainchín Seoighe. Places visited included Crochta, the site of the martyrdom of Blessed Patrick O Hely and Blessed Conn O Ruairc; the old town walls, John's Castle, Blossom Gate, the old 13th century Collegiate Church. Beside the entrance to the Collegiate Church is the grave of the famous Gaelic poet, Aindrias Mac Craith, and here Máirín Ní Loinsigh conducted a group of young people from the parish in the singing (accompanied by music) of Aindrias's great song, Slán le Máigh.

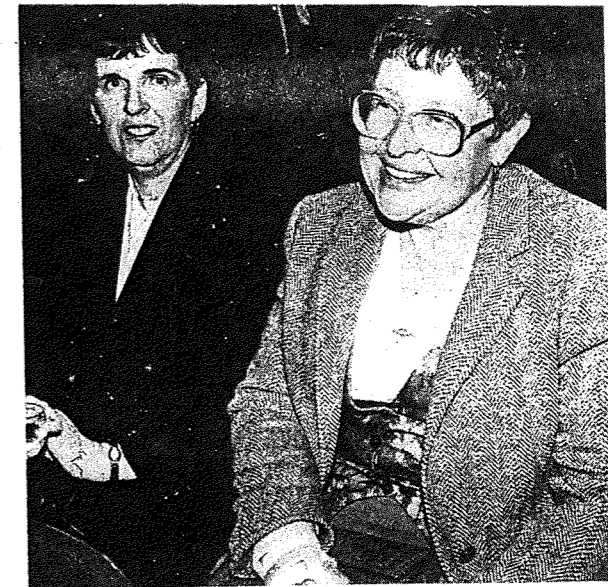
The last place visited was the town's lovely 13th century Dominican priory, where, in the impressive

Micheál O Suinteabháin, recently appointed Professor of Music in the University of Limerick, added another memorable contribution to the Joyce School programme. This was an informal programme of words and music called Ceol agus Caint.

Micheál spoke of the demise of the great Irish harp-playing tradition which was just coming to an end when Edward Bunting recorded the music of the harpers at the Harpers' Festival in Belfast in 1792. He then played, on the piano, some harp pieces by Carolan and Lyons. From there he progressed to dance music and slow airs. All along he had most interesting comments to make about the pieces he played and about Irish music in

music. Michael Quinlan spoke of Frank's life and work, and airs from his collection were played by Eimear and Colm O hUaithne.

Mass in Irish on Sunday was celebrated by Fr. Micheál Liston, P.P., Cratloe, and Fr. Patrick O Sullivan, C.C., Kilfinane, and the very fine singing of the Kilfinane choir was much admired. Ciarán Mac Mathúna, a loyal friend of the Joyce Brothers School, was M.C. at an excellent concert on Sunday afternoon. At the formal closing of the school, warm thanks was expressed to Sean Burke, C.E.O. of Limerick Co. Vocational Education Committee; to Anne Kelly of the Vocational Education Office, and to the staff of Kilfinane Education Centre.



Mary Crowe, Caherdavin, and Kay Landroth, were in Kilfinane for the Joyce school. (LL)

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This requirement applies from 27 September, 1993 to pigs being exported to Northern Ireland and other destinations.

All pig producers should, therefore, apply to the local District Veterinary Office for registration as soon as possible. Application forms will be supplied on request.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & FORESTRY

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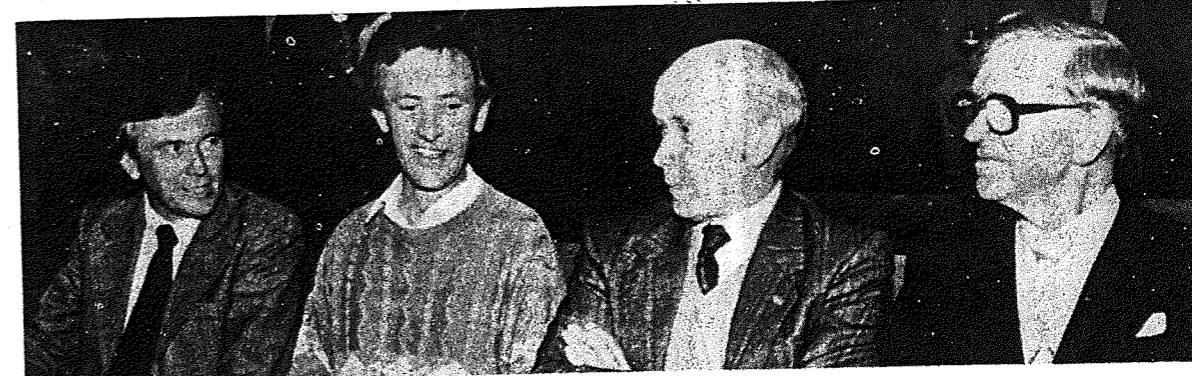
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Patrick and Kieran O Donovan, Newcastlewest, at the opening. (LL)



Gerry Morrissey, Hospital, Sean Bourke, CEO, Limerick VEC, Michael O'Muircheartaigh, guest speaker, John Egan, Askeaton, Cllr Matt O'Callaghan, Liam Dochartaigh, University of Limerick, and Donie Crosbie, manager, Kilfinane Education Centre, at the opening of the Joyce Brothers School in the centre. (LL)



John Walsh, Dublin, left, with Jim Walsh, Effin, Tom Meaney, Bruff, and Pat Quilty, Bruff, at the school. (LL)



The organising committee, front row, from left, Ann Kelly, Mainchín Seoighe, secretary, Cllr Michael Barry, chairman, Michael O Muircheartaigh, chairman Bord na Gaeilge, Cllr Jim Burke, secretary, Limerick.



Joyce brothers as "writers and scholars, interested in every aspect of Irishness".

The main objective of Bord an Gaeilge, he said, was to get people to use more of whatever Irish they may have.

But whatever about the Gaels, Mr O Muircheartaigh produced gales of laughter as well when he delved into Limerick's early prominence in the GAA. When Limerick Commercial brought home the first all Ireland football title in 1887, Kilfinane might very well have made it a double in the hurling but for an unfortunate cock-up by the Limerick organisers.

Kilfinane was due to meet the famous Tullaroan, but unfortunately two Limerick teams arrived at the final, and while they argued about who was to compete, whatever officials were around, awarded the final to Tullaroan, thereby denying Kilfinane a place in the history books, although they made up for it nine years later, when Patrick Weston Joyce was probably among those who welcomed home the victorious hurling team.

Mr O Muircheartaigh paid a special tribute to Mainchín Seoighe, saying "You don't get many Mainchíns in any country."

The opening lecture by Professor O Tuathaigh took a look at the role of the Gaelic League and a look forward to the future of the Irish language.

He spoke of the courage of those who forged the new cultural identity 100 years ago saying: "How beguiling membership of the British Empire must have been then."

Professor O Tuathaigh, referring to the advance of the language said that he was proud to be a member of the National University of Ireland which had imposed the language as a necessary qualification for admission.