

Cooking turnips

OUT IN THE OPEN



JOHN B KEANE

viewed on Radio Eireann recently by Donncha Dulaing. The trend of the interview was towards Canavan's glass eye. I myself had the honour and distinction of putting in the first glass eye that Canavan ever wore. I was serving my time to chemistry. The year was 1949. Canavan had just left the army where he was a cook and he decided that he would wear a glass eye. With some difficulty I got the eye in. The socket was too small and the eye was too big. It was coloured pale blue whereas the other good eye was coloured grey. He caused quite a sensation when he walked out of Keane-Stacks Chemist's Shop and proceeded down William Street. People looked after him and a woman crossed herself as he passed.

"That was my first eye," said Canavan, "and it was my favourite."

The real reason that I write about Canavan this week is because of his prowess as a cook, particularly as a soup maker. Recently a party from the North of Ireland were in Listowel for the horse fair and it was Canavan's job to make soup for thirsty travellers who might want it. People who drank the soup on that day declared it was the finest soup they ever drank. Only the other day he received a letter from the wife of a horse blocker in Castleblayney.

Her husband had drunk a plate of the soup and he declared when he got home that he never tasted anything half as good in his life.

Canavan himself disclosed the special formula that he used on the occasion. The ingredients were normal enough, carrots, parsnips, onions and a hock of prime beef. The secret weapon, however, was his glass eye, which fell into the soup unknown to him. However it happened the glass eye somehow gave a unique flavour to the soup and men who drank it on that memorable horsefair day still talk about it.

"There's no two glass eyes alike," said Canavan, "so I wouldn't advise chaps with glass eyes to go making soup out of them."

A letter

And now for a letter from Michael Cregan of "Muintinn," Shanbally, Castletroy.

"Dear Mr. Keane, mention of Ballinivrick and Cappagh in your column this week prompts me to comment. All my family for a few generations back came from Ballinivrick and indeed many of them still live there. I often heard my father mention the name of Keane, so perhaps Mr. Keane of New York may have heard his parents mention the name of Cregan.

The parish of Cappagh is significant inasmuch as it is the only parish in County Limerick without a shop or public house and it is thus a completely rural parish. A substantial number of the Palatine community still live there and they are the most respected people in County Limerick.

"If I am not trespassing too much on your space perhaps your readers might like to hear of a famous athlete who lived in Cappagh a long time ago and who became known internationally as Noonan the Runner. Well Noonan's house was situated about half way between the centre of the parish and the church. He usually had callers as they went to and from Mass.

On one notorious occasion he was in bed when one of these lads called. When Noonan rose later on to go to Mass he could not find his pipe or tobacco. He quickly concluded that the culprit was he who called while he himself was in bed.

"Without waiting to dress, he ran after him, wearing only his night-shirt. He overtook him near the church and retrieved his stolen property. He then returned home and was a sight to behold for all the people going to Mass.

he had spoken at all. "I paddled every inch of the Suez Canal," Faulkner went on. "I seen a crocodile in the Nile was nearly as good-looking as you are and there's mark here under my arm where I was bit by a lion. I rode in a camel race and was second. Your brother with the lamp on his back was first."

"There was no need for more. The field was Faulkner's. He has no equal in fiery debate. Teletis Eireann is really missing out in not having him on a few programmes. He would enliven the dulllest debate as everybody knows but Teletis Eireann are slipping. Fair play to Frank Hall. He once tried to get Faulkner to appear. However, Jack was not available on that occasion. He is available now and will be right across the winter.

Glass eye
SONNY Canavan was inter-

MY LIFE AND TIMES

Washday blues

The worst of the black were simmering in another pot on the range for no woman living could rid them of the week's residue without first boiling them in scalding water.

It was no job to be envied. It grew hot as Hades in the back-potch, and with the steam and

he made himself as scarce as possible. Rarely on a Monday would he be around the yard; more likely in the farthest corner of the land and the work would be so important that he would be delayed there. When he appeared, the tub had gone and some of the ensuing temperment would have disappeared with it.

Who could have blamed her? That was long before the housewife market had been discovered and every article of clothing had

RTE GIVES LIMERICK A POOR SHOW

THE RECENT R.T.E. programme that purported to give an appraisal of the arts in Limerick had all the appearance of being poorly researched as far as the visual arts in the area are concerned.

Among the many surprise omissions from the programme were College Players, Cecilians, Feile Luimni, Limerick Musical Society. No overall picture of the great activity that has been going on in our midst for a very long time in the arts was even attempted by this programme.

It was surprising, for example, that Limerick's oldest gallery, the Goodwin Galleries, where most of us got our first real introduction to the works of leading Irish artists, and also to the works of artists of international repute, did not figure in the programme at all.

This is all the more surprising since another "commercial" gallery was featured and also the work of an English artist whose work was being exhibited there at the time.

At the present time, there is an exhibition in progress at the Goodwin Galleries in which the work of ten of our local artists is on display. This fact did not appear to be worthy of mention at all.

Why was the principal of our School of Art not interviewed?

Why was the very interesting fact that Dr. E. Walsh, director of The National Institute for Higher Education, Limerick, who has purchased paintings by Limerick artists with a view to having a collection of paintings at the institute, not worthy of mention?

What about the fact that Limerick has an art society of 25 years standing, and which now has 40 members who hold an exhibition each year at the Municipal Art Gallery?

What about the work of Mr. Phil Andrews, curator of the Municipal Gallery, who knows more about art in the Limerick region than any other authority?

For example, in the coming months, debates, demonstrations and film shows on the history of art have been arranged for meetings in the Municipal Art Gallery, but this proof of the living world of Limerick art was not given in the programme.

The efforts being made to give our post-primary school attenders an appreciation of art by bringing them in organised groups to the gallery, where they are given instructive and educational talks on art, seemed to count for nothing in the programme.

Certainly, the RTE programme did less than justice to the Limerick visual arts, as well as to the artists or Limerick, and those who are doing so much to promote art appreciation in the city.

MY WAR ON WASPS

I WONDER does anyone know how to get rid of a nest of wasps from a mound of earth in a garden?

One day recently, I was in the process of moving a mound of earth, in order to level off a patch of garden, when I pulled a tree branch from the mound.

I was immediately surrounded by hundreds of angry wasps - at least they sounded and acted as if they were really mad!

Not being well versed in such things, I sought the help of a neighbour who said that he had got rid of such a nest



my gardening plans are at a standstill. Has anyone got any other ideas as to how I might put an end to them without taking them on one at a time in hand-to-hand combat

IDENTITY CARDS FOR DRINKERS?

THERE must be very few indeed in this country, be they drinkers or non-drinkers, who do not believe that the present campaign in Press and T.V., publicising the problem of alcoholism, is vitally necessary at the present time.

It has been estimated that one in every 13 men, over the age of 20 years in Ireland, is an alcoholic. This means that there could be as many as 60,000 male alcoholics in the country.

There are also a number of female alcoholics, who would bring the total well up on this figure.

This will give some idea of the size of the problem, when we consider that the relatives and families of alcoholics suffer much as a result of the heartbreak and trouble that normally follow in the wake of alcoholism.

One rather disturbing fact in this connection, is that according to figures issued by the Central Statistics Office, a comparison of the percentages of income that are being spent on food and alcohol, show that the percentage being spent on food is reducing, while that spent on alcoholic drink is increasing.

In 1971, for example, which is the latest year for which figures are available, out of every £1 spent on consumer goods and services in this country, 11½ pence is spent on alcoholic drink, and 28.9 pence on food.

If what we hear from sociologists is correct, the problem of teenagers drinking is little short of a scandal, and if this is not checked, it could count on having an even more serious problem in the future.

I have no doubt, that if every teenager were issued with an identity card, with a photo of himself/herself, stating his name and age, and if it were obligatory for them to produce this in bars and hotel lounges, as well as on off-licences, before they could purchase drink, then publicans and hotel staff and shopkeepers would really co-operate in the stamping out of this scandal.

Something drastic like this must be done, if youngsters with too much money, are to be saved from a lifetime of misery, caused by drinking to excess and so probably becoming alcoholics.

We should all be willing to help to reduce the dangers which youngsters face to-day, and this is certainly one sector in which we can do so.

JOIN THE SAILING CLUB

THOSE of us who have for years been ploughing lonely furrows across the waters of Scariff Bay, in lovely Lough Derg, were pleased when we learned some time ago of the formation of the Iniscealtra Sailing Club, based at Mountshannon.

On Friday last, at the Clare Lakelands Hotel in Scariff, the first annual general meeting of the club was held. It was a well attended meeting at which the future plans of the club were discussed enthusiastically and efficiently; and at which, also, those from foreign parts like Limerick had their first look at the gallant band who had got the club off the ground.