

PLASSEY . . . 1972

THESE lines were written by an old angler who looked in amazement at the great number of anglers converging on a stretch of the river which is really capable of accommodating no more than eight anglers in comfort.

'Twas just like Croke Park at the "Bulldogs"¹,
Right down to the Garrison Wall;
From "Davy's"² right up to the "Beager"³,
And down to the brow of the fall.
They were shoulder to shoulder at daybreak,
Like soldiers about to attack.
By noon they were there in their hundreds,
Getting high up on each other's back.
The wobblers were flying like shrapnel,
And splitting the water like cloth,
The flies were befuddling the spiders
And lashing the surface to froth.
The boys on the bridge were like lancers
Preparing to storm the foe;
Jenny Ryan was unable to pass it
—Her journey she had to forego.
People who came from the town for a stroll
Were thinking it must be a dream;
To hear all the shouting and swishing of rods
And see hundreds a-straddling the stream.
Some thought the regatta was once more
revived,
Though the absence of boats had 'em boggled.
Here there were races without any boats
Where each foot on the river was wobbled.
Others thought that a drowning took place,
And a search for the body was on.

It must be a person of note or great fame
To attract such a kind-hearted throng.
A rambled who passed on his way up to
"Jack's"⁴,
Said he never had yet seen the like.
"There must be some gold in the ripples out
there,
Like there was long ago in Klondyke!"
But the true situation came slowly to light,
As the gist of the language came clear,
And three or four fish were hoisted clean out,
With shouts of "more money for beer!"
The likes of it never was witnessed,
By an angler of four score and ten,
To see the poor fish thus surrounded,
And frightened to death by the din.
They had not got on their crash helmets,
To protect them from copper and brass;
They couldn't fly over the rabble,
Nor slither their way through the grass.
They lingered for days round the Groody,
In the hope of a chance to get by.
When they rose they saw hordes of the rod-men
With their wobblers and worm and fly.
Some got to the fall and escaped it,
(And even passed "Davy's" as well);
But when they got up to the "Beager",
Sean Kirwan was givin' 'em hell!
McDarby was out with his legions,
Though the weather be foul or be fair,
Making sure that none got through the dragnet,
To find rest in the tranquil Mulcair.
Like black iron bars in a prison,
Their waders stretched over the stream,
With no gap large enough to squeeze into

To escape from this murderous team!
"Gal"⁵ reconnoitred the stretches
From the bridge up to farm Tannyvuir,
But no place could he see for to fish in —
So he went in and fastened the door.
But 'twas hardest of luck on Tom Hanley;
He paced up and down all the night;
But he dozed at the critical moment
And was late for his place on the height.
John Doherty was tense as a tiger
About to spring on his prey;
His worms were moving well upstream
—But 'twas Kavanagh that would them away!
The "Lamper"⁶ was thinking of quiet days gone
by,
Paul O'Connor was under the trees;
They weren't to lonely or lost for a chat
—There were hundreds around them like bees.
Paddy Barry was grumbling and grouching
About picnics, swans and the rest,
But he still kept his bait in the water,
And, like others, he hoped for the best.
Frank Lynch was fishing the worms
In the tall of the Garrison stream,
John Bromwell was fishing beside them
But neither of them could be seen.
There were so many others around them,
Above and below and abreast.
They couldn't tie up and go over
To sit on a stone for a rest.
In the top hole John Hennessy hooked him
In the teeth of a southerly gale;
For more than an hour did he play him;
But 'twas only a bream — by the tail!

Jim Ryan was the greatest tactician
That the fishermen ever had seen,
But he can't throw a bait in the water,
In the place where he always has been.
Though his house is surrounded by water
since the day that he first saw the light,
He can't see the stones for the anglers
Who gather from morning 'til night.
Oh! Ye salmon who come to this haven,
In the hope of contentment and rest,
Turn back while you've still got a scale on,
Or you'll end on a slab like the rest.
If you don't feel like taking a worm,
Or a wobbler all burnished and bright,
They'll tease you with flies and with devons
And batter you with all their might.
So, unless you've a strong suit or armour
And the speed of an arrow in flight,
You've no business coming to Plassey
And expect things to turn out right.

- 1: The "Bulldogs" — six great stones at the beginning of the Drominbeg innure. These were originally situated in the main stream and were moved nearer the soothe shore by the Abbey fishermen.
- 2: The "Davy's" — Faudromasota, on the south shore (at the boundary of Roselawn and Castletroy). This was once an excellent fishery pioneered by the late Davy Ryan.
- 3: The "Beager" — a large stone on the upper dam, at the tail of Bun-an-Abha.
- 4: "Jack's" — Walsh's pub in Gillogue.
- 5: "Gal" — the late Donal Gallagher.
- 6: "Lamper" — the late Ned Daly.

POETS CORNER

Anniversary

There's a flower amongst
those thistles,
My mother has put it
there,
She said my dad's the
only one
For her did ever care.

She remembers as a little
girl,
How the boys would pass
her by,
Until one day she met
my dad,
And how she caught his
eye.

It was as if a bolt of
lightning
Had hit her in her heart,
She knew that very
moment,
From him she would
never part.

She told me of the
clothes she wore,
And how she changed
her style,
It was always on her
mind
That Dad would catch
her smile.

They married at the
altar,
It's all on thirty years,
That's why we gather
here tonight,
To wish good luck and
cheers.

they don't need gold or
silver,
Just wish them all the
best,
For they have gone so
very old,
All they need is rest.

MICHAEL O'BRIEN
44 Creagh Avenue,
Killeely.

Christmas

Sparkling eyes, happy
hearts,
Jingle bells all the way,
Every child in the coun-
try,
Is living for Christmas
Day.
Christmas tree lights
burning bright,
Carollers singing in the
night,
Happy, tired, their faces
a-glow,
Oh, how kids love play-

ing in the snow.
The greatest gift at
Christmas time,
Is the joy on a child's
face,
Nothing in this whole
wide world
Could ever take its
place,
It's Christmas, and all
families united,
Santa's coming and the
kids are excited,
The turkey's in the oven,
The mince pies are nice
and brown,
Dad is playing with the
kids

And acting the clown.
Then it's sleepy eyes to
bed,
Three sleepy boys lay
down their heads,
Santa's food is all left
out,
Must not forget his pint
of stout.

Then we go downstairs
on tip toe,
Sssshhhh, quiet, the kids
musn't know!
Santa comes and leaves
the toys,
For three excited little
boys.

Must get some sleep
before morning comes,
When we will be woken
by our three happy
sons,

"Oh look what Santa
brought for me,
Daddy, mummy, come
and see."

These are the years we
will always treasure,
On Christmas morning
their faces is our plea-
sure.

Mrs. Carmel Sullivan
7 Innis Rfi,
Shannon Airport.

Remember

Remember when you
were small,
And sat on daddy's
knee,
Remember when sweets
were golden treasure,
And new-born babies
were free.
Remember the Tooth
Fairy,
Who claimed all those
first teeth,
And Peter Pan flew
about at night,

Although we never did
meet?

Remember Old Santa,
Down the chimney he'd
come,
And when I grow up
I'll touch the sun?
Now the Tooth Fairy has
gone,

Peter Pan has grown up,
Daddy's knee is too
small,

And the sweets I gave
up.

Peter Pan, the Tooth
Fairy and Santa all
gone,

Innocence is lost,
The years have won.

Mrs. Carmel Sullivan
7 Innis Rfi,
Shannon Airport.

Pat Lawless

Great sailor, you've
departed,
To sail the worldwide
seas,
We wish you luck, Pat
Lawless,
On your voyage lone and
free.

In the day of night out
on the swell,
Along beneath the sky,
Stormy seas you'll have
to battle,
Waves as tall as buildings
high.

On the calm and balmy
summer nights,
You can gave up at the
stars,
Listen to the gentle lap-
ping waves,
Her the cry of whales
afar.

Truly all at one with
nature,
Out there on the ocean
wave,
There's not many would
trade places,
With you, Pat, there is
few so brave.

For it takes a special
person,
To sail the world alone,
But our hearts are all
gone with you,
We'll be there when you
sail home.

PAT AMBROSE
Raheen, Limerick.

DAVID

Poets Corner . . .

REMEMBER LIMERICK

It has watched o'er the Shannon these three hundred years

*With a heart often broken, and eyes filled with tears,
Its memory is full of that Siege long gone by,
So 1691 still brings a deep sigh.*

*To so many in exile is owed a great debt,
But to those who gave lives it is far greater yet,
The call, 'Remember Limerick', is implanted forever,
We are proud of our city and our ties we'll ne'er sever.*

*The City of Limerick is home to us all,
Whether we live or have answered the call;
Our fathers who died in that Siege long ago
Will watch us and guard us wherever we go.*

*We pray for their souls - and they pray for us too -
The bonds of dear Limerick are always on view;
Forever we celebrate, wherever we've been,
For Our Lady of Limerick is truly Our Queen.*

*So, whatever you do, or wherever you go,
Remember the debt to these heroes you owe;
Our Queen will present our prayers that are due,
And their prayers will ensure God's blessings for you.*

E. P. HARTNETT,
18 Pear Tree Avenue,
Wickersley,
Rotherham,
South Yorkshire S66 0LQ

THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER

*I am going for an interview
To a house in Castletroy,
I have long been fascinated by the sea;
The job is on a lighthouse
Which would suit me very well,
Watching ships, drinking endless cups of tea.*

*They said no experience necessary,
So I'm in there with a chance,
I have almost perfect eyesight for my age.
So here I am in waiting,
I've been here since ten o'clock
It's now twelve, I'm in somewhat of a rage.*

*Have you ever done this work before?
Can you scrub and how's your cooking,
Are you honest, do you smoke of take strong drink?
Do you iron to perfection
Can I come and see your house?
Forty questions without any time to think.*

*Hold your horses for a moment.
Is the lighthouse far away,
And do many ships pass by there in a season?
If the pay is to my liking,
And binocular supplied,
I'm prepared to do some housework within reason.*

*Well, the snooty one stood p with scorn,
Her lips were all a quiver,
And her piercing eyes could not bore any deeper,
I'm not looking for a sailor
And binoculars are out,
I'm just looking for a light house-keeper.*

MARY O'SHEA,
95 Norwood Park, Singland, Limerick.

THE MAN AT THE BAR

*The man at the bar is sleeping,
He is slouching over his pint,
His life is a tunnel of darkness,
He is legless, out of his mind.*

*He came in for a pint in the evening,
To escape from his troubled life,
To forget his five screaming children
And abandon his poor nagging wife.*

*He began with two large whiskeys
Which he downed at enormous speed.
Three creamy pints were quickly consumed
To appease his excessive need.*

*Several small ones and many pints later,
The man at the bar is alone,
His fair weather friends have deserted
They took off when he started to moan.*

*Now he lies slumped over the counter
Blaming everyone else for his woes
Reality fades into oblivion
He has gone where nobody goes.*

*Someday he'll come to his senses
Maybe go home to his wife,
Become a responsible husband,
And pick up his faltering life.*

*Or maybe he'll sit in the corner
Night after night on his own,
Having lost every ounce of decorum
While he rants in monotonous tone.*

MARY O'SHEA,
95 Norwood Park, Singland, Limerick

MY YULETIDE MEMORY

*Jingle of bells merry, carols and snow,
Soft as sleigh song Christmas night,
And all week silent sleet did blow,
To rest awhile, like fleece so white.*

*Indoors I tarried like hermit weary
With my dog, Amy, when illness spread;
That had big bones like carcass dreary
Etched on her side from tail to head.*

*So sad was I, dejected and worn,
All alone in my flat in city so cold,
To await, again, a new Christmas morn
In hope of visit from friends of old.*

*Amy, my friend true in life's plan,
Was my solace, my joy to behold.
But Christmas Eve I saw her wane;
Dark eyes no lustre, nose warm, not cold.*

*Christmas Day came at midnight time;
Choirs of angels in high heaven above;
Gloria in Excelsis from radio chime;
On earth a message of hope and love.*

*Amy awoke to the proud praises of old:
A carol of peace as silver bell peal.
Her eyes became bright as new gold,
And I saw her soul return: her wound heal.*

*She licked my hand, nuzzled my knee,
I spoke about crib where infant holy born:
Like the child I never had she went to tree
And to me gave gift for new life, this morn.*

*That was many years ago, 'ere her time came,
To leave me alone; in solitude to abide,
With only a memory of Amy in my humble home
To sustain me, when lonely, at yuletide.*

CATHLEEN O'BRIEN-GRENNAN,
Shannongrove, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick

AUTUMNAL AMBUSH

*As early dawn broke the black blanket of night
And a smiling sun sent silver beams of light,
To dance on the Shannon like diamonds ablaze
And gently wipe away all over night, damp haze.
With light in the East came rooster's proud lay,
To join echo of birds and seagulls in the bay,
As along a narrow Ringmoylan breen I went
Where bramble thorn, sloe and elderberry bent
Away from autumnal mist, as ominous as sable skies
Hiding marauders that trap confused flies:
The mist had hidden, like lurking enemy alert,
Spiders' silken webs as varied as crochet insert;
Oblong, square, circular, geometrically made;
Right, acute, obtuse angles, accurately laid.
So many designs - different like loops entwined
And as varied as from precise patterns defined:
How many hidden spiders wove such silken thread,
Or where came skill of silkreeel apt to spread
Along a Ringmoylan road where spinneret vicid fluid
Made adhesive cobweb mesh as flies in panic fled?
Here, there, everywhere those traps carefully hung;
Plotted by spiders - architecturally spun.
As wide a choice as diaphane from adroit hand
On trees artistically draped like nets on sand.
Any Diptera fearfully fleeing Autumnal haze,
Like quarry pursued by hounds to honeyed maze,
Would forfeit life and never this new day see
Dawn on the Shannon when sun chased mist to sea.*

DESMOND GRENNAN,
Shannongrove, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick.

Peter's Penance

*We returned in the
Spring with the cup
held aloft
And we sang 'till the
rafters they rang,
But now someone in
Dublin
Thinks we've gone soft,
And they'll bring us to
earth with a bang.
But they must realise
that we're tougher
than that,
And won't take their
jibes lying down,
Remember it's rugby
you're playing ye boys,
Whenever you visit this
town.
Tell me who is that video
nasty,
Who copped that piece
from the press,
It's rumoured around
here*

*It was "ugly",
And I must agree I con-
fess.
They say what we do is
unique,
It's a theory that's bred
in this camp,
So to celebrate the
triumph of ninety-
three,
We are producing our
own very stamp.
So, lick that if you can,
you begrudgers,
Stop pussy footing
around,
Young Peter's our star,
Shining better by far,
"Oh, look, there's his
feet on the ground".
MICHAEL MEANEY
111 Ballinacurra
Gardens,
Ballinacurra,
Limerick.*

The late Sean Herbert

Over many decades the Herberts of Lisnagry have made an enormous contribution to hurling and on a broader front to the Irish ideal. Playing career over, Sean continued to be involved in club affairs, meetings were regularly held in the Herbert home and in turn members showed their appreciation by electing him president of the Ahane club.

After a long illness, Sean passed away on the weekend of the All-Ireland final and the huge attendance at the removal and funeral reflected the high regard in which he was held by people from all walks of life throughout Ireland.

Some lovely things have been written and spoken about one of hurling's great personalities and my own small tribute in verse tries to give a wide perspective on the well-spent life of a devoted husband and father and supreme sportsman, by one of Sean's former Cle colleagues from Fedamore.

I lionta De go geastar sinn.

*Sean,
We mourn your passing on this September day,
On the even of the All-Ireland, we sadly kneel and pray
For a gentle son of Limerick, who crossed the great divide,
A sportsman among sportsmen,
Let's carve your name with pride.*

*In boyhood days your grew to love
Our graceful national game
And saw great games and players fine
Who won much hurling fame.
Then in the early forties your big moment'twas to be,
Selected on the county team 'gainst the men from the Lee/*

*Then for a dozen golden years
You wore the green and white,
At venues throughout Ireland
And followers did delight,
In Thomond Feis, in Championship, League and Railway Cup,
You always gave your very best with standards near the top.*

*A versatile performer on many a field of play,
A champion rugby centre, a sprinter too I say,
A skilful, adept handballer in your Crescent College days,
Your devotion was to hurling giving many class displays.*

*In 1947 a Croke Park debut you made,
Kilkenny, All-Ireland champions, a really strong brigade,
A most memorable occasions it did become for you,
The League title came to Limerick, that medal was your due.*

*Eight County Senior titles you helped the club to win,
The Railway Cup, then at its height, six medals you won then;
On Centenary Team of '84, a grand distinction too,
As president of famed Ahane, the members honours you.*

*Your home gave hospitality to that club you did adore,
Round which is built such glory for three score years and more.
The Herberts and the Mackeys and the magic of Ahane,
Served hurling well through decades and many a tough campaign.*

*You bore your illness manfully with fortitude and faith,
And help from family and friends you did appreciate.
An Fr. Liam's words as you were laid to rest,
Touched hearts in Castleconnell in the loving way expressed.*

*So many priests with Fr. Tadhg concelebrated Mass,
Ahane's proud colours, green and gold lay draped across your chest,
Old friends they came from far and near and also CIE,
To sympathise with Maureen dear and your loving family.*

*Through the length and breadth of Ireland you were held in
high esteem,
We know the good Lord welcomes you to join his heavenly
team,
So dearest Sean, we say goodbye on this sad Autumn day,
Sleep well in Castleconnell, eternal peace, we say.*

Christy Fitzgerald,
20 Rockbarton Park,
Saltilly,
Galway.

A Christmastime Reflection

On Christmas Day while strolling, through fields, where as a youth,
I roamed in blissful innocence, unafraid, inspired by truth;
It seemed to me a whispering, came drifting from the sky,
Speaking of those young wild day, when I was but a boy.

Back through all the years, there came, those games we used to play,
When each moment had a happening, every hour, of every day,
When the cowboy and the Indian deftly stalked the land.,
When Robin and his merry Men used to lend a helping hand.

O'er the Shannon's ebbing waters, buddies cast a hopeful line,
There with Mother Nature carefree hearts would fair entwine,
With the laughter and the banter, echoing in the air,
A legacy to youthfulness, to life without a care.

As soldiers we fought battles amongst the hanging trees,
Tore our clothes, cut our hands, and sometimes skinned our knees,
As twilight sneaked upon us, we marched on home as one,
Reminiscing on our fun-filled day and battles lost and won.

With my Christmas dream concluding, I reached the old ruined mill,
Thoughts of halcyon yesteryear, dispelled by the winter chill,
I stood and watched the waters, resolutely rush and flow,
And pondered on a fireside with a Yuletide friendly glow.

As winter cast its darkened veil upon the frosty ground,
I walked on home, along, content, I knew that I had found,
Here in this quiet haven, time has stood quite still,
Where memories live on in time, I hope they always will.
—Jack Byrnes,
O'Brien's Bridge,
Co. Clare.

Eve of Christmas

On the Eve of Christmas
Scurrying bodies frantically
Search for that last gift.

As liminate Hosteleries
Entice us to bathe
In a sea of musical intoxication.

Lament at the lambrequin,
Lachrymation,
As the latch is lifted on
lucid dreams.

Absence of Autumn,
Bells bellow belligerently
Down on elevated electric lights.

Ham cooking constantly,
Permeates past
Decorated Dickensian
doors.

Where herbaceous Holly
And magnetic Mistletoe
Hang around fuel filled
fires.

Sumptuous succulent
sprouts,
Tender Turkey,
Illuminated Icing.

Neon Nativity,
Urbi et Orbi,
Universal Unity.

JIM DUNDON
27 Revington Park,
North Circular Road,
Limerick.

Peace

Peace is just a little
word,
But oh, it means so
much,
To live beside your
neighbour,
And always keep in
touch.

In touch with those so
far away,
Let them be rich or
poor,
God never sent a man
away,
That knocked upon his
door.

Some people think the
bomb's the way,
To press yourself on
others,
But peace is stronger
than the bomb,
Christ says we're all his
brothers.

Peace is just a little
word,
That wahses out your
pain,
Peace can heal the
wounded
And peace can keep you
sane.

Put pece upon your man-
tel,
Sweep out that hate and
venom,
Destroy your bombs and
handgrenade,
Spread out your mat of
welcome.

Let peace grow up within
your home,
Let's break a loaf
together,
Let's drink the wine of
happiness,
And we will feel much
better.

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Killeely.

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**WHEN IT COMES TO WINDOW
DRESSING ONE NAME SHINES OUT**

WE PUT EVERYONE IN THE SHADE