

# Some memories of Limerick's Irish Volunteer Band

ONE of our older citizens, Mr. Richard "Dixie" McNamara, a retired Superintendent of the Cleansing Department, Limerick Corporation, makes some interesting references to an article on "Brian Boru's Band" which appeared in these columns recently, and recalls memories of his experiences with the Irish Volunteer Band of half a century ago.

In the course of a letter, Mr. McNamara writes: "In the feature on the Brian Boru Band, it was stated that the Irish Volunteer Band 'was started by the men you named in the feature. That was not so, as none of those mentioned (other than McKeon, McCarthy and Flaherty) played with the Irish Volunteer Band until 1917."

"The Irish Volunteer Band attached to the Limerick City Regiment was started by Tom Glynn in February, 1915. Our first outing was to Castleconnell on a snowy Sunday."

He goes on to say that the Band went to Dublin to take part in the funeral of the great patriot, O'Donovan-Rossa. They led the Irish Volunteers to Killybegs, O'Callaghan's Mills, Lough Gur and to many other places on route marches until 1918.

"Early in 1916," Mr. McNamara continues, "the City Regiment left Limerick on a Saturday night and marched to Lough Gur, led by the Band. On the next day the Band and Regiment were reviewed by Eoin Mac Neill, Chief of Staff, Irish Volunteers, and we returned to Limerick that Sunday night."

"Shortly after this review I remember that the Regiment and the Band were issued with emergency rations. My rations consisted of a tin (half painted in blue), which I took to contain Mullaghatawny soup!

## KILLONAN

"The Band that went to Killonnan to take part in the intended Easter Rising of 1916 was made up of: Johnny McCarthy, 'Yankee' Flaherty, Taddy McGrath (all since dead, may they rest in peace) and Mick Ahern, who is still hale and hearty, as drummers. I myself beat the bass drum that day, as our usual drummer, Paddy Walsh, was sick. The five players were: Larry McKeon, Joe 'Boxer' O'Mara, Oscar Hoffstad (a German who was staying in Mallow St. and with whom we lost contact after 1916); I would welcome any news of later meetings with him from any of your readers), Jackie Malone, Mick Hayes, Tom Glynn, Brian O'Brien, Jack Cronin, Johnny Laffin, Pat Gallagher ('Gallahad') and Ger Cronin." Mr. McNamara recalls that the first place the Band was housed was in Arthur's Quay at the corner of Francis St., and it was from there that they left for Killonnan on the morning of the intended Rising of Easter, 1916.

After that year the band's premises were moved to Bank Place. Among the first of the new recruits for the Band were the late Deputy James Reddy, Charlie Troy and others, all from St. Mary's Parish.

The most popular tunes were: "The Rallying Song of the Gael," "Men of Freedom,"

"Our Native Tongue," "Clare's Dragoons," "The Irish Emigrant," and "Oro Se Do Bheath Abhaile." They were all arranged by the bandmaster, an old and esteemed friend of Richard's, Tom Glynn.

At the end of every route march, the band halted at the O'Connell Monument—the City Regiment's reviewing stand—where they played "Sean

O'Farrell," the march past tune.

## LONG-CARS

Mr. McNamara concludes:—"From 1917 the band travelled on long cars to attend aeriochts and feiseanna, at Doon, Castleconnell, Scariff, Lough Gur and many other places. The band was usually accompanied on these

aeriocht and feiseanna outings by the very fine Sallymount Fife and Drum Band, who, in the years before the Rising, always played the Castleconnell Volunteer Company (who came from the same district as this band) to the Killonnan training ground."

Many thanks, Mr. McNamara, for a very interesting piece of local history.



Ken Sullivan, right, director of the new greyhound track at Ballybunion, points out some of the features to Paddy Sullivan, left, Secretary of the greyhound track and the Ballybunion Development Association, and to Eddie Hanrahan, track director.

# Filming with T.E.

At a recent Tuairim-sponsored poetry and music session in King John's Castle, the young poet, Caitlin Mande, recited two of her poems, "Concerto" and "An Mathair." For good measure, she delighted the audience, too, with her singing of two old Connacht love songs, "An Caisdeach Ban" and "Amhran Mhaigh Inse."

It was the first time since the days of Daithí O Bruadair (a Limerick poet and a follower of Patrick Sarsfield) and his contemporary, an unknown soldier poet who wrote "Slán Chun Pádraig Sairseal" in the late 17th century, that an Irish poet recited in King John's Castle.

## CAITLIN

Caitlin, a vocational teacher from Rosmuc, Connemara, is a relative of Pádraig O Conaire, the Irish novelist and short-story writer. In addition to being one of the best of our present-day poets in Irish, she is an accomplished

actress. Harold Hobson, drama critic of the Sunday Times, had high praise for her acting in the part of "Maire" in "An Triail" during the 1964 Drama Festival.

While yet a student at U.C.G. and a member of Taibhdhearch na Gaillimhe, one of her first roles was in "An Larair Choille," a one-act Irish play which she wrote in collaboration with Michael Harnett, a young poet from Newcastle West, and which was presented at the Ring Drama Festival some years ago.

## WITH T.E.

During the last few weeks, Caitlin Mande has been playing the part of the "Ballif" in "Cuir an Whean Oiche" which Telefís Éireann are filming at North Clare and South Galway locations.

Leading the cast is Eoin O Suilleabhain, a son of Muiris O Súilleabhain, author of "Fiche Blain Ag Fas." Eoin is an actor with the Abbey Theatre

and is well known to Telefís Éireann viewers as the companion of "Labhair Gaeilge Linn."

One of the locations used in the recent filming of "Cuir an Mhean Oiche" was the woods of Coole, the former demesne of Lady Gregory, who was a founder of the Abbey Theatre; a dramatist, a collector of the poems of Antoin O Raffeire, and a friend of Yeats and other leading writers of the Irish Literary Renaissance.

This dramatised version of "Cuir an Mhean Oiche" will be seen during the coming autumn or winter on T.E. "Cuir an Mhean Oiche" is a long poem in Irish about the love manners and troubles of the Clare peasantry. It was written by Brian Merriman, a schoolmaster, in Feakle, Co. Clare, in the latter part of the 18th century. Some years afterwards Merriman came to Limerick to Old (now Back) Clare Street. He died here, as the Limerick Chronicle of the day records, in 1806.

Sister Mary Ir recently on va law, Mr. Patri

# German Industr Expert

Mr. Ferdinand Reil for the past tw ecting as tssista Fritz Krups, M Director, Messrs (Engineering) Ltd has a distinguish industry, and our mechanical eng Austria.

A native of the Vier went to Germar and prior to join Krups Ltd, worke plant in the Rhu tion to mechanic ing, he has studie but did not hav time to obtain : this latter subje pressure of work. Last June Mr. R joined in Limeri and family of t Irene (7), Iris (5 (3). They will re many in Decemb

Mrs. Reischitz w. Budapest, Hungr to Hamburg, Vis 1956. Her p brothers are livi pest, and she vi regular intervals, student of mat Hamburg when Reischitz.

They have travelle rank Ireland as most beautiful e have seen. Th Irish landscape and restful, and greatest pleasure on the traffic fr try roads. To Peninsula they place as a scen they have also h such places as I Galway, the Cl Killaloe and Co For outdoor rec Reischitz favou ing and lawn was a well-k woman in Hun played first d ball, together throwing and She was voted t in Budapest. Her earnest wis any Hungarian living in Limer are invited to cs which is situate