Kathleen Clarke, left, with Countess Markievicz, Mrs Kate O'Callaghan and Mrs Pearse is in the University of Limerick archive

A patriot and feminist well ahead of her time

■ Part of the 1916 Rising, Kathleen Clarke opposed Constitutional sidelining of women

Then&Now

with Tom Aherne

KATHLEEN CLARKE nee Daly was born in Frederick Street Limerick to Edward and Catharine Daly on April 11, 1878.

They were a family of small business people with an exceptionally strong republican background. She was the third daughter in a family of nine girls and one boy, Edward junior (Ned), born in 1890, five months after the death of his father. Edward senior, along with his brother John, had been involved with the Fenian uprising of 1867, and had spent some time in prison.

Her mother, while rearing the children ran a successful dressmaking business. At the age of 18, after her father's death, Kathleen opened her own dressmaking business. In 1901 she emigrated to New York to marry Tom Clarke her uncle's close friend from Millbank Prison in England where the latter had served 15 years. At the time she was 20 and he was 40. Their first child, John Daly Clarke, was born on June 13 1902. Tom worked for John Devoy and the American Fenian group, Clan na Gael. Kathleen had two more sons, Tom, born in 1908, and Emmet, born in 1909.

The couple ran a successful farm and market gardening business until they returned to Ireland in 1907. Tom became a tobacconist and newsagent in Amiens Street, Dublin, later opening a second shop in Parnell Street.

Kathleen supported her husband's attempts to organise another rebellion against British Rule. She was active in Cumann na mBan from its inauguration in 1914 organising the central branch and heavily involved in lecturing and pamphleteering, while rearing three children.

The Supreme Council of the IRB entrusted her with details of the intended 1916 Rising and with the task of reorganising the republican movement should the rebellion fail. After the week-long fighting and the surrender, in 1916 Kathleen was taken to visit her husband in Kilmainham Jail the night before his execution.

Their meeting lasted almost two hours, then Kathleen had to leave; Tom was shot in the early morning on May 3 for his part in the Easter Rising.

The following night she was back in the jail, with two of her sisters, to say goodbye to their brother Ned; he was executed on May 4.

Kathleen was expecting another child, but did not tell her husband during their last meeting. She fell seriously ill shortly afterwards, exhausted by her work (establishing a fund for Volunteer dependants,) and lost the baby.

It was Kathleen who gave Michael Collins his first position in authority in the republican movement by appointing him secretary.

In 1918 she became vice-president of Cumann na mBan and was one of four women elected to the executive of the new Sinn Féin.

She campaigned against conscription and, on the pretext of suspected treasonable conspiracy with Germany, was jailed for nine months in Holloway Prison England with Maud Gonne, and Countess Markievicz.

In 1919 she was elected alderman for Wood Quay and Mountjoy wards in the Dublin municipal elections, and chaired the north city republican courts set up by Sinn Féin.

At the same period she was also highly involved in the White Cross which had come to the aid of war victims throughout Ireland.

Kathleen, elected to the second Dail in 1920, fiercely opposed the Treaty with the other six women deputies. She chaired the failed negotiations to avoid the Civil War and lost her seat in the elections immediately afterwards.

She left Sinn Féin in 1926 and, with Countess Markievicz, joined the newly-formed Fianna Fáil and was elected to its executive. Having served as a senator from 1927 to 1936, she became the first woman Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1939.

Kathleen opposed de Valera on the conditions of Employment Bill (1935) along with Jennie Wyse Power; she protested that the Bill was in contradiction to the 1916 Proclamation in its sections affecting women.

She protested again, and on the same grounds against de Valera's 1937 Constitution and in the 1940s actively campaigned against the treatment of republican prisoners by the Fianna Fáil Government.

When her term of office as Lord Mayor ended after five years in 1944, she resigned from Fianna Fáil and, four years later at the age of 71 stood unsuccessfully for the newly-formed Clann na Poblachta Party in the general elections.

Thereafter she retired from politics, and became active on numerous boards and committees, including the National Graves Association,

Kathleen Clarke was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate of Law by the National University of Ireland during the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising. She lived for some time in Sandymount with her son John Daly, but in 1965 moved to Liverpool to live with her son Emmet, who had two sons, her only grandchildren. Here she died on September 29 1972, aged 94. She was given a State funeral in the Pro-Cathedral Dublin and is buried in Dean's Grange Cemetery.

MICHAELMAS, or the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, is celebrated on September 29 every year. As it falls near the equinox, the day is associated with the beginning of autumn and the shortening of days, and is one of the quarter days.

There are traditionally four quarter days in a year (Lady Day (March 25), Midsummer (June 24), Michaelmas (September 29) and Christmas (December 25)). They are spaced three months apart, on religious festivals, usually close to the solstices or equinoxes.

They were the four dates on which servants were hired, rents due or leases begun. It used to be said that harvest had to be completed by Michaelmas, almost like the marking of the end of the productive season, and the beginning of the new cycle of farming.

It was the time at which new servants, were hired or land was exchanged and debts were paid. This is how it came to be for Michaelmas to be the time for electing magistrates, and also the beginning of legal and university terms.

Traditionally, on St. Michael's Day, Irish families sat down to a roast goose dinner. In many parts of Ireland, farmers gave geese as gifts to the poor, and the feathers and down were used for filling mattresses and pillows.

Domestic geese were probably introduced into Ireland in the first few centuries AD having been domesticated in Egypt three to four thousand years ago.

The young or green geese were preferred to the older or stubble geese which are tougher in texture. Green geese were often corralled for a while beforehand and fed with milk and potatoes, to make the meat paler and tender.

Long and slow cooking was recommended to get the best result and the women had their own country recipes to produce the most succulent goose.

In the traditional farmhouse kitchen the goose was cooked in a large iron pot with a heavy lid which was placed on the open hearth surrounded by fire. The lid was covered with sods of turf which were replaced when they began to cool. Potatoes and onions were used to stuff the goose. Some households preferred to boil the goose for the soup which when flavoured was creamy and thick and delicious to taste.

The woman of the house kept goose grease, which was used as polish for shoes, to treat burns, chapped hands and face, and to treat a sore cows udder. In parts of Ireland a goose was cooked when the bridegroom was invited to the bride's family home before the wedding. This in time led to the old saying his goose is cooked.

Begrudger great insig human co

JohnB.Kea

OUT IN THE OPEN

THERE WAS once a neighbour of mine who became very annoyed when he heard people talking in a different accent to the one used by himself. He was the same about clothes.

The less he knew about people the more he resented them and if he heard a neighbourhood success story, such as honours in the Leaving Certificate, he would say of the successful party, "Blast him, that's as far as he'll go."

This man, without knowing it, was a great asset to me personally because he gave a new insight into that most complex of all creatures, the human being.

We are all like him in one way or another.

We are adequately endowed with a choice stock of natural resentment which, when properly treated with personal failure, can turn into healthy jealousy. This, in turn, can lead to dislike, disgust and even hatred.

The gentle reader will be asking at this stage why I have opened in this vein.

The answer is that I recently received an extremely nasty anonymous letter and I would prefer not to have found out who the author was. I posted the letter directly back to her and had my worst suspicions confirmed when she stopped saluting me on the street.

However, as the old woman said when she was being swept away by the flood: "It's only all going through life."

Canavan talking

SONNY CANAVAN, without his talking dog, was the subject of a half-hour-long television programme in his native Dirha Bog last week.

The makers of the film were Danish Television and the subject was the making of bodhráns, on which Canavan is an undisputed authority.

His herd of 37 goats, led by the veteran puck, Rajah, cavorted between stoolins of turf to the delight of the cameraman.

One would think they were specially primed for the occasion. Canavan explained that they were unused to cameras and only the hoary-headed puck was familiar with humans.

These are in the habit of bringing she goats to him to be serviced at a rate of twenty-five pence per head.

Canavan, in his own inimitable way, explained in detail how a bodhrán was actually made, from the killing and skinning of the goat right along to the final tacking of cured skin over the timber rim.

As to the origins of the bodhrán, he was not prepared to comment and the dog, Banana the Six returned home recei nowhere to be seen.

It is fairly however, that the b or tambourine is of origin, although it sembles in almost e tail the Greek inst known as a tympano

By the end of the f century it seems to clined in use except survived as a folk ment.

The origins of all are obscure but I wo gine that the bodhr originally a leather which was beaten its carrier to intimi enemy.

The effect a thou so would have on posing group beatin same time with fur difficult to imagine.

As time passed, into use more as a dr

According to Cana old people would n cipins to beat the b They preferred to knuckles and some, larly ladies, would

We are adequate endowed w choice stoc natural resentme which, wh properly tre with perso failure, can into healt jealousy. T in turn, c lead to dis disgust a even hatr

fingertips but the so muted when only th were used.

Dump gulls

MANY IS the fi which was comp honour of that onc bird to whom we ref seagull.

Take Gerald Grif mortal piece:

White bird of the thou beautiful thing,

With the bosom and the motionless w

Passing near a tov the other day, I beh the surface was w over and I presume that a shower of l fallen before its tim

I was wrong, how as I drew nearer a gr of seagulls soared in all directions, sq furiously at being d

EX : LIMERICK LEADER