

More about Lough Gur

Would that we had a politician at this point in time with the courage to stand up and ask the same question of us as a nation.

Our politicians as of now are proving a very poor vintage.

But they are well insulated from the awful psychological hangover that now smothers this country through what amounts to a betrayal of our national pride.

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Easter Mass for the senior members of the parish will be celebrated at the community hall on Saturday at 3pm.

Eight members of the Nolan family of dancing in Ahane competed in the World Irish dancing championships at the Burlington Centre in Dublin last week, between which won a total of eleven medals. Competing in the figure dancing and right hand reel the medal winners were: Geoff Hayes, John Hayes, Mary Hayes, Carol Condon, Eileen Hourigan, Aileen Harrison, Eileen Cosgrave and Katie O'Sullivan.

Winners in the Community Draw held last week were (1) Eileen Tobin, Brookhaven, Montpelier (2) Breda Bourke, Scanlan (3) Billy O'Keeffe, St. Mary's Villas. The draw was held on the night of this year's Community Draw in the parish.

Castleconnell Community Development Council will hold its AGM on Friday at the Castle Oaks at 8.30pm. The meeting will discuss the work of the council over the past year and it is also hoped to elect the committee to become representative of all groups in the

a change for good weather from now on for the dairy and tillage farmers.

The usual 45 card game every Friday night at the G.A.A. hall.

KILLALOE

THE hawthorn trees are laden with flowers. According to tradition the

I WROTE last week about The Lough Gur and District Historical Society Journal, but because I hadn't described even half of the interesting contributions in it by the time I reached the end of my space, I said I'd have to hold over the rest of the review until this week. It seems to me now that I'll have to continue my review into a third week!

I found the article, The Century Sped On, by Tom Mac Namara, very interesting. Tom says that from the start of this century up to 1911 farming in the Lough Gur district changed but very little. In 1991 all the small holders in the area got an additional five or six acres when Count de Salis's estate at Ballycullane, Grange, was divided among them. This greatly improved the lot of the small holders. Valuable employment opportunities came to the Lough Gur area in 1936, when archaeological excavations commenced there under Professor Seán P. Ó Ríordáin.

Tom Mac Namara quotes from an account by the late Tom Bourke, of Cloghnavillier, Herbertstown, who was employed on the excavations in June 1937. In all, thirty-six local men were employed at that time, and there were more later. Tom Bourke's description of the excavations and the people employed on them makes wonderful reading. He tells, for example, of the reluctance of the workmen to disturb the skeletons that lay in their shallow prehistoric graves!

Tom Duhig writes about that extraordinary ancient tale of magic and fantasy called Forbais Droma Dámhgháire, or The Siege of Knocklong (Droma Dámhgháire was the old name for Knocklong), which tells how Cormac Mac Airt, High King of Ireland, invaded Munster for the purpose of forcing the Munstermen to pay taxes. Cormac camped with his

forces on the hill of Knocklong, while Fiacha Muilleathan, King of Munster, camped on nearby Sliabh Riabhach, or Ceann Chláire. The ensuing encounter between the rival armies became a matter of magic spells cast by the opposing druids rather than military action, with victory eventually going to the Munstermen, who had enlisted the aid of the great druid Mogh Roith. Incidentally, a retelling of Forbais Droma Dámhgháire, done in modern Irish with English translation, by Fr. Seán Ó Duinn, OSB, Glenstal, was published in 1992 by the Mercier Press.

An extract entitled The Servant Boy and the Servant Girl, from Up the Boreen, by Maurice Walsh, gives a very full account of the life of the boy or girl who, in the days of the hiring fair, hired for a year with a farmer. The kind and volume of work that had to be done by these employees before the days of rural electrification, milking machines and running water is well described. Some of the servants were treated well; the treatment of others sometimes left a lot to be desired.

The Ballinscoola Evictions is the subject of a contribution by Billy Baggott. These notorious evictions took place on the O Grady estate on the 31st August, 1887. Billy Baggott's parental great grandmother, Margaret Moloney, a widow, was one of those evicted; so too was James Baggott, his great grandfather.

The Ballinscoola evictions attracted a lot of attention, not only nationally but internationally. Among those who visited the evicted families, Billy tells us, was Congressman John O'Neill, from St. Louis, Michigan, and Alderman Whitehead of the city of London. The atmosphere of the stirring days of the Land War is captured in an excellent reproduction of a page of the weekly illustrated newspaper, The Graphic, dated Saturday, November

13, 1880, showing some half a dozen views of a Parnell meeting in Limerick city. One illustration shows a group from Knockainy arriving on a long cart complete with huge banner; and another shows a marching group from Herbertstown, these also with banner.

The copy of The Graphic from which the illustrated page was copied is in the possession of Michael O'Sullivan, of Hospital, who writes about one of the worst incidents to take place in Limerick during the War of Independence. That was the cold-blooded murder of Patrick Lynch, a 43 year old harness maker from Hospital, who was taken from his home on the night of Saturday, August 14, 1920, by a number of Black and Tans and shot dead.

Michael O'Sullivan says that the motive for the murder was simply robbery. A raid on the Lynch home a little earlier that night, and a search of all the inhabitants, found Patrick Lynch with a substantial sum of money in his pocket, with which he intended to buy leather in Limerick on Monday. A short time after the raiding party had left, with apologies from the officer in charge for the trouble caused, a small group of Black and Tans came back, told Patrick Lynch he was wanted, took him off and murdered him.

Local historian, Michael O'Dwyer of Pallasgrea, whose writings are never other than very informative, authoritative and readable, writes about the Burkes of Clanwilliam in north-east Limerick. The Norman family of Burke, who had lands in Connacht as well as in Limerick and Tipperary, was one of the most powerful in Ireland. Their lands in the barony of Clanwilliam, Michael tells us, extended from the Shannon by Castleconnell to Fedamore, covering in all an area of 17,672 acres. It consisted of two lordships, the lordship of Brittas and

the lordship of Castleconnell. The Burkes intermarried with some of the powerful Irish families, including the O Connors and the O Briens. Michael has assembled a great amount of interesting information in this article.

Professor Eoin Mac Neill, Chief of Staff of the Irish Volunteers, was present at a parade of Volunteers at Lough Gur on September 5, 1915. An article by R. O'Shea, of the Pearse Battalion Association, deals with the rather confused situation that existed in the immediate lead-up to the 1916 Rising, when Mac Neill was kept in the dark about the preparations being made by Pearse, Mac Donagh, Clarke, Mac Diarmada, Plunkett and the others, to rise out at Easter.

By countermanding, in a notice in the Sunday Independent of Easter Sunday, the orders that had been issued by the Volunteer command for a general mobilisation on that day - which meant, in fact, a Rising - Mac Neill effectively ended any hope of a general rising throughout the country. The failure of the attempt to land arms from the German ship, the Aud, the capture of Casement, and his belief that the British were now alerted to what was planned, were the factors that decided Mac Neill to countermand the order for a general rising. A few days later, from his command post in the GPO, under shell fire and rifle fire, Pearse issued a proclamation in which, at the supreme hour for him and his comrades, he was generous enough to say: "Both Eoin Mac Neill and we have acted in the best interests of Ireland."

The final part of this review of the Lough Gur and District Historical Society Journal will appear in next week's column, le cúnamh Dé. In the meantime copies of the journal can be purchased from Pat Quilty, Draper, Main St., Bruff, price £3.