

## Electronic monitoring of sex offenders welcomed

The Government has proposed that an electronic tagging system will be introduced to monitor sex offenders on their release from prison.

At a Forum on the Management of Sex Offenders in Dublin, Minister for Justice Dermot Ahern, said a consultation process was underway on reforming the way in which offenders are monitored once they are returned to society.

Independent Clare County Councillor Patricia McCarthy, has welcomed the proposal and noted that any measures taken to monitor identified high-risk sex offenders after their release from imprisonment, would be welcomed by society at large.

The proposal is one of a number of measures being looked at by the Government to deal with the management of convicted sex offenders.

"I welcome the announcement by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr. Dermot Ahern, that convicted sex offenders will be allowed only three days instead of seven before they must register with Gardai upon release from prison or arrival in the country. "While I do believe that this period should be shortened even further, it does signify a significant step forward in tightening legislation in this area," the councillor stated.

"I am sure communities across the country will welcome the proposal. For many years, community and public representatives have sought legislation that provides the Gardaí and the Probation Service with sufficient powers and resources to monitor convicted sex offenders in the community," concluded Councillor McCarthy.

## Teachers needed in Cameroon

A NEW initiative has been set up to train teachers in special education in Cameroon, and Irish teachers are needed to administer the programme.

The initiative called ICTIG SENTI is an institute promoting integration of special needs pupils in to mainstream schools and promoting community development in Cameroon.

Those in a position to volunteer their services or who have any queries in relation to the initiative, contact Ugenia Urwick on 0857345504, or her husband James on 0857341674.

## Maria shortlisted for prize

A LIMERICK woman has been recognised at a national level for her outstanding work in communicating with patients.

Maria Boyce, a Research Officer with the Irish Society for Quality and Safety in Healthcare has been shortlisted for the second annual Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards for her project 'Let's Talk Medication Safety', a booklet, which provides the public with information, advice and tips on medication safety.

Maria received her nomination in the category Literacy Innovation in Health Promotion.

As a result of being shortlisted, she will be invited to attend the awards ceremony in Dublin on Monday April 20.

There were over 135 entries across six categories this year, a 33 per cent increase on 2008 entries, highlighting the high level of interest in the healthcare environment in Ireland.

For further information on the MSD/NALA Health Literacy Initiative or the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards log onto [www.healthliteracy.ie](http://www.healthliteracy.ie).

# Book recalls murder of nurse in Castletroy in 1953

By Brian McLaughlin

## 'Beneath Cannocks Clock' delves into background and trial

THE full facts of what led to the Limerick murder which sent the last man to be hanged in Ireland to the gallows, are documented in a new book to be published at the end of April.

Michael Manning was just 25 years old when he was executed in April 1954 for the murder of Barrington's Hospital nursing Sister Katie (Catherine) Cooper, which occurred below the medieval castle ruins at Newcastle on the Dublin road to Castletroy. The 64 year-old nurse was from Killimer in west Clare and had been visiting the retired Barrington's Hospital Matron, Miss Alphonsie Curtin, at her Castletroy home.

Sister Cooper had taken the bus out from town but decided to walk back to the city because the November night was so fine. But she had not walked more than 200 yards when she was savagely attacked. When she attempted to cry out, her attacker stuffed grass sods in her mouth from which she suffocated. But she also suffered extensive injuries, including crushed ribs and bloody injuries to her face and head, from a struggle in which five of her teeth were knocked out, one of them found beside her body, and one was recovered from her stomach during the post mortem examination.

The events which brought docks carman Michael Manning and the nurse 40 years his senior, together on the Dublin Road shortly after 9.30 p.m. on Thursday, November 18, 1953 are reconstructed in "Beneath Cannock's Clock" by local author and journalist Dermot Walsh.

"I secured copies of the full Garda file of statements made by Michael Manning, his family, members of the local Garda investigation team and members of the

murdered nurse's family. The file contained a horde of information that did not emerge in the court hearings which drew milling crowds around Limerick courthouse and later in the Dublin trial at the Central Criminal Court, where Michael Manning was condemned to death," the author explained.

The book recounts that neither the murderer nor his victim should have been where they were on the November night. "Michael Manning was supposed to deliver cement and lime to his father's place in Castleconnell that afternoon, but got diverted when he met up with another carman of his own age and they took off on a round of pubs between William Street and the Fairgreen. He nevertheless decided to go ahead with the delivery to his father and had just returned to the city and put his horse and cart away for the night at a rented field on the Dublin Road, when he encountered the nurse walking in front of him.

It was the distinctive hat like those worn by the Canadian Mounties, that brought the gardai to the door of Michael Manning in Moore's Place, off Clare Street, in the early hours of the morning. His hat and the yellow tam and hatpin worn by Sister Cooper had been found and picked up by a couple of young men as they returned from an evening walk to Annacotty. Gardai who swarmed around the murder scene, soon heard of the find and traced the young men. From that find, the book relates, came an extraordinary scene when Michael Manning was roused in his bedroom at 2.30 a.m. to find two garda inspectors, two sergeants, a plain clothes detective and a uniformed garda in the room with him. He immediately agreed that he had been on the Dublin road some hours before, and when told that the woman was dead, he lit a cigarette and said - "I'll tell you all. Drink was the cause of it".

The written statement of confession that he made there and then was to be a key issue of contention in the subsequent court proceedings but was allowed

Katie (Catherine) Cooper, pictured in Kilkee.



as evidence at the trial where Michael Manning was condemned to death.

Despite a concerted effort led by his pregnant young wife and her mother, which brought the Bishop of Limerick into the campaign for clemency, and a petition which was signed by Sister Cooper's brothers and sisters in west Clare, Michael Manning was hanged on April 20, 1954.

The book owes its title of "Beneath Cannock's Clock" to the fact that so many of the witnesses who made statements were domestic servants working in the Castletroy area and were able to

give accurate estimates of the time because they noted the time by Cannock's clock as they returned from cinema and other outings to the city and were under strict curfew for getting back to their places of employment.

"Beneath Cannock's Clock" is published by Mercier Press and will be in the shops from April 27.

\*Dermot Walsh is the author of three other titles "Tragedy At Tuskar Rock", "Getting Better" - living with cancer and the killing of detective garda Jerry McCabe titled "To The Honour of Jerry McCabe".



Sister Cooper with her nursing team at Kidderminster Hospital in London