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A diamond bright occasion

Sixty years after the official unveiling of its Marian Shrine, **Norma Prendiville** reports on how Mungret re-enacted the occasion

A VERY special day in the history and folk-memory of Mungret was re-enacted at the weekend when the community marked the diamond jubilee of the official unveiling of the Marian Shrine.

And the celebrations took place 60 years exactly to the day on August 14, 1955 when hundreds took part in the procession and blessing ceremony.

Happily, some 35 people who were part of the 1955 procession, also took part in last Friday's ceremony, re-enacting, as far as possible, the formation of that long-ago day.

And leading the procession as Grand Marshal on Friday was Denis Hehir, who was a member of the organising committee back in 1955.

Another stalwart from that time and a member of the 1955 work-group, Pa O'Brien, was also back to lend a helping hand again and to lead the group of "veterans". But the honour of being the most



Flying the flag for the faithful: Evan McInerney and Denise Quinn, assisted Fr Richie Davern at the Diamond Jubilee Picture: Dave Gaynor

senior fell to Bridie Fitzgerald, another veteran of 1955.

"I was only a young lad at the time," laughed Nesson O'Donoghue, hastening to explain his place among the veterans. But Mr O'Donoghue, a member of the Mungret Heritage Society, was one of the chief organisers of Friday's ceremony.

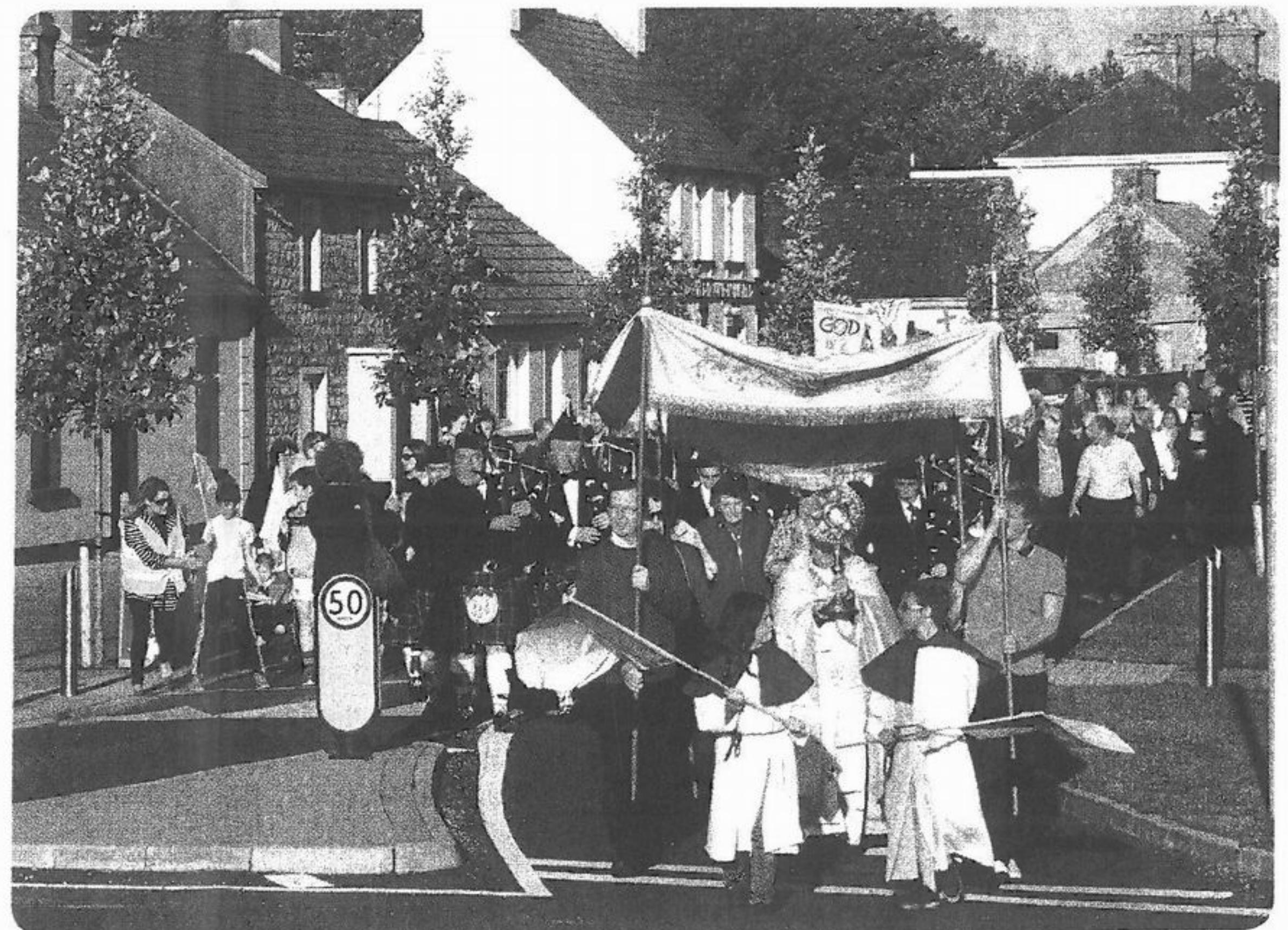
The Mungret shrine was one of several Marian shrines built around Limerick in the wake of the Marian year of 1954. Mr O'Donoghue explained to the Limerick Leader.

The project was undertaken at the behest of local parish priest Canon Punch. Because it had two public houses, the Canon was against locating the shrine in the village and wished to have it sited near the Catholic Church in Raheen. However, he was prevailed on to change his mind when the proprietors of O'Donnell's pub in the village offered to donate a site on their grounds free of charge.

An all-male voluntary committee oversaw its construction, with local men doing the building work and Jack O'Donoghue with Paddy Leyden, both stone masons, carrying out the stone work.

The women were responsible for the decoration of the shrine and village, Mr O'Donoghue

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Fanfare in Mungret: The Diamond Jubilee celebrations sought to repeat the colour, crowds and pageantry of 1955

Crowds celebrate in Mungret

➔ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

explained, with Mrs May McKeown selecting the marble statue of Mary which was procured in Italy. A report on the occasion described the scene as "inspiring and impressive".

"We are fortunate in having a comprehensive photographic record of the event, being the work of the great Limerick photographer Eamonn O'Connor," Mr O'Donoghue told the Limerick Leader. "The photographs vividly portray how a community celebrated a major religious event in the 1950s."

An exhibition of those photographs drew scores of people to the GAA Club where they went on open display last Friday evening.

And it was from the GAA club that the procession of remembrance set out, led by the Limerick Pipe Band. "They did that same job in 1955," Mr O'Donoghue recalled.

At the church, they were joined by Fr Richie Davoren, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in the same monstrance as was used in 1955. But in a nod towards the changes that have taken place over 60 years, Fr Davoren's ceremonial canopy was carried by Eucharistic Ministers, two women and two men and preceded by two altar servers, one boy and one girl.

In a bid to recreate as nearly as possible the scenes of 1955, the formation of the "veterans" followed as nearly as possible to the strict code of the time, Mr O'Donoghue explained: men first and then the women. "We were following the old photographs as far as we could," he said.

But, a sign of the times, there were fewer banners in the 2015 procession than in the original.

For all that, the sense of occasion and of nostalgia was strong on Friday evening, as the procession made its made through a bunting-festooned Mungret and particularly during the familiar rite of Benediction at the Marian Shrine. And the past came in waves when tenor Michael Nash gave his rendition of Queen of the May.

Afterwards, memories came thick and fast as old neighbours



Mary Moore and Doireann Langton, Mungret at the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Marian Shrine in Mungret

Pictures: Dave Gaynor



Greg and Ben O'Dwyer, Michelle O'Brien and Ellen and Jake Hogan, Mungret



Michael Nash, South Circular Road with Sean O'Dwyer and Patrick O'Brien, Mungret at the Diamond Jubilee

and old friends met up at the reception in the Westward Ho. It was like a reunion, Mr O'Donoghue remarked, something which was one of their objectives. "They were meeting, some of them, for the first time in 50 years," he said.

But Friday's ceremony was not just about re-enacting the past and recalling history. It

was about safeguarding that history as the future beckons. Thousands of new families have moved into the old parish of Mungret over the past decades and new chapters in Mungret history are being written.

"Mungret now has 20,000 people," Mr O'Donoghue explained. But he pointed out, with satisfaction: "There was a

huge community involvement in this."

Happily too, this time, in addition to a photographic record of the occasion, a short version of the ceremony has been captured on video by Mr O'Donoghue's son, Ross and has been posted on YouTube. The link is <https://youtu.be/ceKzaWDlofQ> or go to marianshrinemungret.com



Vanessa and Kate Cussen get a great view from Noel Long and Lilly Cussen, Mungret



Teresa O'Brien and Kathleen Hehir, Mungret at the Marian Shrine anniversary



Sophie and Vivienne McInerney, Mungret waving flags at the celebration



Paul Broderick and Gerard Synnott, Mungret helping out

Sharon's tour aims at the best possible taste

NORMA PRENDIVILLE

AN Antrim woman with a passion for food and living in West Limerick is fermenting that passion to introduce Southerners to the joys of food, Northern Ireland style as part of a food tour to the North which she will lead this October.

Sharon Devlin came to live in Newcastle West in 2007 when she married Michael Noonan and settled among all the Noonan clan who are, happily, also interested in food. And for the past two years she has presented a weekly hour long programme on West Limerick Community Radio called Best Possible Taste which broadcasts every Tuesday night at 8pm.

But now, her deep interest in food, how it is grown and the people who produce it and cook



Sharon Noonan wants to enthuse fellow foodies about her Belfast Food Trail

it, has opened a new chapter in her life. She has teamed up with Killarney based O'Callaghan

Coach Holidays to offer a three-day Food Tour of Belfast.

"The tour will run from October 9 to 11," Sharon explained. "And we are keeping the numbers at 20 as we feel that is the optimum for the Belfast Food Tour."

"I would anticipate the 20 people on the trip would be like-minded," she continued, pointing out that people interested in food tend to use social media to connect and maintain friendships between various food-based events. And she is convinced that the group will meld well, and that solo travellers will easily fit into the fold.

The tour involves a two-night stay in the famous Europa Hotel in Belfast, wine-tasting and a five course dinner at the Ox restaurant and dinner at Graze

Restaurant. On the trip back, dinner with wine will be served at Harte's Gastropub in Kildare. But there are lovely add-ins like meeting the designer of the edible roof top garden in the Europa and a gin tasting.

Sharon is excited about the tour and showing off what Belfast has to offer.

"I grew up with food shops," Sharon told the Limerick Leader. Her parents owned a number of greengrocers within Antrim, and, she was always curious about the world, and the world of food in particular, whether it is artisan producers or restaurant critics.

However, she continued: "If you had told me I would be carving out a career in food I would not have believed you."

Much of it happened

fortuitously, and through volunteering, she explained. She volunteered for the Taste of WestFest some years ago and from that was asked to be a judge in the Great Taste Awards. She has since acted as a guest judge for Blas na hEireann and the Irish Cafe Quality Food and Drink Awards and has contributed to the McKenna food guides. She is currently making a documentary based around Yellow Man, a very iconic food ingredient in the North and, ultimately, hopes to bring groups from the North on food trips to West Limerick.

"I do love Newcastle West and I love West Limerick," she enthused. And she is particularly keen to promote West Limerick's food producers and restaurants.

To find out all the details go to O'Callaghan Coach Holidays.

CHRISTOPHER CORRIE

Art reviews and news of Limerick's bid to

Every picture has a harrow

WE'RE living in the renaissance of history. Whether it's the packaging, or even YouTube swimming through a sea of photography, the very photograph has always threaded a line between the past and the present. Especially in the early days, when the camera struggled to have their

Today, the ease and speed of the camera has led to a major change in public, understand photography happen without some taking a photo of it. It represents something whether photography become an integral part of our lives.

So, when we look back at the different cultural attitudes on the world totally altered. The Hunt Museum's First World War, showing Father Browne, an Irish priest as a chaplain. Running the story of hardship and the lines during the First World War.

The exhibition begins with the experience the exhibition unfolds through the trenches, the crumbling lines, the soldiers at rest.



Hardship: soldiers captured by the Germans at Wytschaete Ridge, Belgium

is shown is as varied as the experiences of the war. There is a wide range of images, some recording the collapse of the front lines, others peer into the trenches, resting or arranging themselves. Images like Wytschaete Ridge, and the story, as it shows the looking trench. The exhibition is further enriched by the photographs of the French (1918) as they arrived in dead bodies, while exhausted.

It's not just what is shown, but every exhibition. Each photograph is what is shown on the wall, its own creation. For Father Browne's salary, unlike most other soldiers, matters.

In looking back at the exhibition, it reminded of the stories of Irish people looking back and reflecting on the past.