

Playing a Limerickman's score



This picture is of the Foxford Senior Orchestra which played the musical score of "A Pageant of Foxford" in 1942. The members, left to right, and beginning with the back row, were:

Pakie Tynan, violin; Philip Morris, flute; Brendan Ward, clarinet; Frank O'Donnell, trumpet. Middle row: Delia Durkan, violincello; Tina O'Malley, violin; Seamus Mulroy, violin; Margaret Thornton, violin; Frank Turnbull, clarinet; Annie Holmes, viola; Patrick Morris, double bass-violin. Front row: Margaret Quigley, violin; Noreen Gallagher, violin; William Henry Michael O'Shaughnessy, L.R.I.A.M., I.S.M.; and Mai Morris, leader of the orchestra.

The score of the pageant was the work of Professor O'Shaughnessy, of Limerick, and at this time teacher in Foxford School of Music.

The libretto was by Rev. John Ryan, M.A., Jesuit priest, a native of Nenagh. Father Ryan's degrees were in European History (Louvain) and in Higher Celtic Studies.

Father Ryan based his script on the account given by St. Adamhnan, the VIIIth abbot of Iona, who, like St. Columba or Columcille, was of the O'Donnell Clan, i.e., "Clan Conaill" of Donegal. The whole pageant was a celebration of the legend and the history of the River Moy, the river of victory, from, according to St. Adamhnan, its discovery 300 years after Noah's Flood, by the Greek, Partholan, and his companions, who named it "The River of Victory", because of the nine rivers of Erin, it alone was fruitful in fish.

The pageant began with the celebration in song and dance of the pagan festivals along the banks of Moy . . . the arrival of King Winter (Roger Jones), "With Ice and Sleet and Frosty Ice I Come to Freeze the Land," with appropriate lighting, chorus and dance waltz. Then came a festival to cel-

ebate the arrival of the Goddess of Spring (Celtic Brigid). Summer and Autumn were celebrated in similar vein.

Next, the pageant celebrated the coming of St. Patrick (part played by Brendan Ruddy), and the Baptism of St. Attracta (Kathleen Ruddy) by St. Patrick in the River Moy. St. Nathy's Monastic School, too, was portrayed. Some very amusing "novices", one of whom is now a missionary priest, admitted their "pranks" to St. Nathy-Bertie Morris.

The era of the Mass Rock and Sean-a'-Sagairt was poignantly

portrayed (Mr. Jack Dorr, father to Foxford's own Ambassador taking the part of a schoolmaster whose pupil tells the tragic tale of the capture of a local priest).

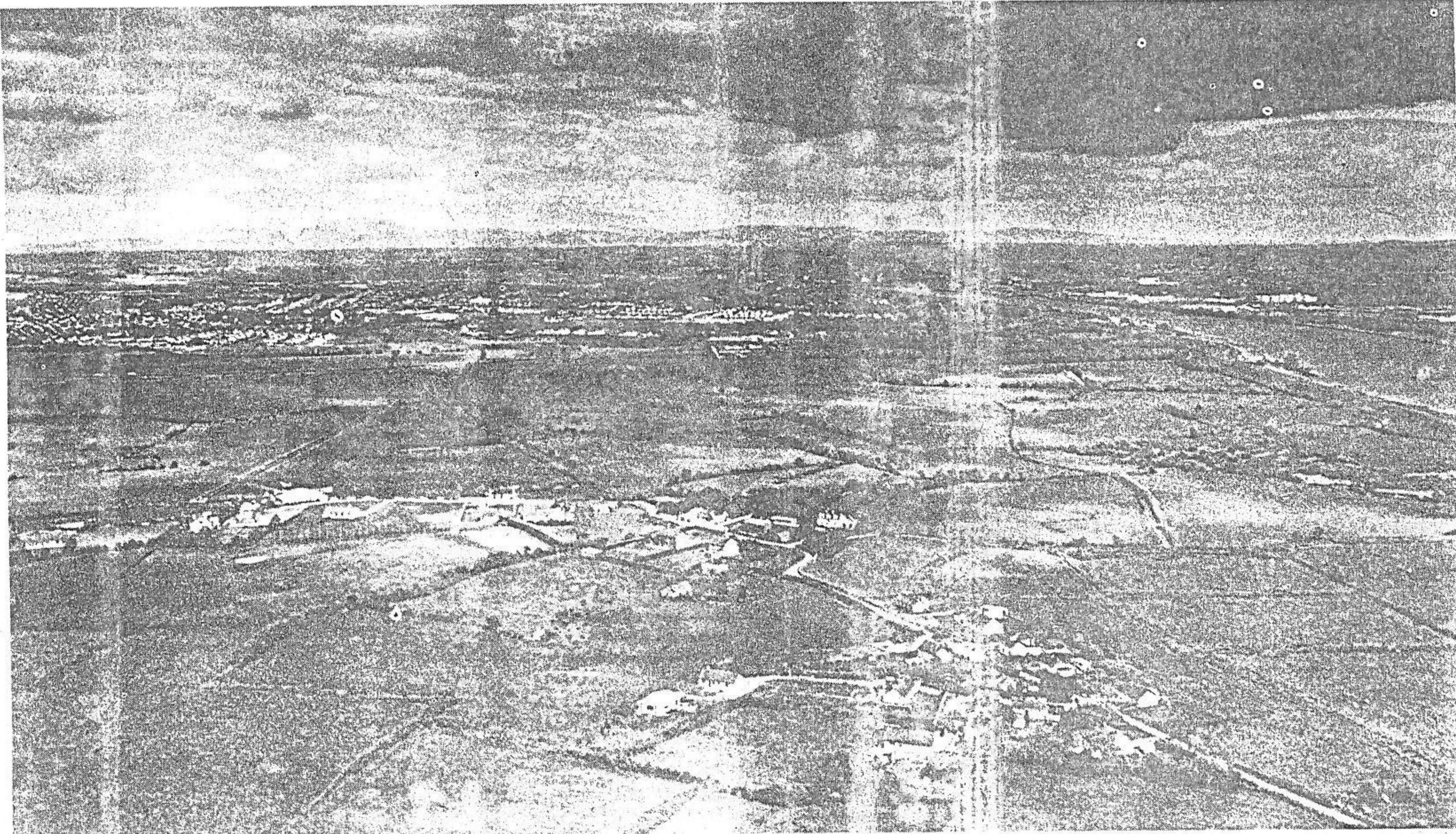
Finally, the scene changes to a day in 1891, when a young nun, Sister Mary Arsenius Murrrough-Bernard, stands on Foxford Bridge and "hears" the rush of "The Mad Falls" (now, regrettably, long since blasted away), as it seemed to call out "Harness me, harness me" (her own words). She did, in the following year,

1892, and this, too, the pageant celebrated.

This is a tribute to all the fine, talented people who took part in the pageant of 1942, the golden jubilee of Providence Woollen Mills, the artists who painted the exquisite scenery, the wonderful choir and soloists, the actors and actresses who were coached for their parts by Denis Barry of the Abbey; the electrician who made sunrise and sunset and even made clouds to drift across the face of the moon, all through extremely

clever lighting effects, Martin Tolan; nor must we forget John Mac Gowan, who 'wrote' in tulips white and gold, "Golden Jubilee" in a plot in the rose garden by the Moy.

Lastly this is meant as a tribute to the great-hearted Mother Mary Arsenius whose faith and "vision" brought a new era to Beal Easa (The Mouth of the Cascade), who was born Mary Agnes Murrrough-Bernard at Cheltenham, Gloucester, England, and whose natal day was February 24, 1842.



A view of Limerick city from Coonagh, taken from a Conair Europe Bell 206 fire-fighting helicopter during the Limerick Flying Club "Fly In".

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