



Clutching a book and relaxing in his natural surroundings, Mannix Joyce was a great champion of the Irish language and a prolific and popular columnist

Joyce a hero of native tongue and Limerick

■ Tenth anniversary of death of famous Limerick Leader columnist this Sunday

An *Mangaire Sugach* (Mannix Joyce) graced the pages of the *Limerick Leader* from December 2, 1944 to 2002.

This was an extraordinary record in Irish journalism which was unmatched by any other local or national columnist. On the 10th anniversary of his passing I would like to recall some of his life and times as a great promoter of history in Limerick.

An *Mangaire Sugach* means the merry pedlar and Mannix, adopted his *nom de plume* from the pen name, first used by a leading Maigue poet of the 18th century, Aindrias Mac Craith.

Mac Craith, too, was a Kilmallock man and Mannix was profoundly influenced by him and the other Maigue poets who flourished in the Croom, and surrounding area in the eighteenth century.

Throughout his articles in *Odds and Ends* he made several references to their rich legacy in the Irish language. Mannix was also a great admirer of the Irish scholar Aodh de Blacum who also contributed to a national newspaper under the *nom de plume* Roddy the Rover.

It was quite common at that time in the 1940s for newspaper contributors to use pen names.

His first article in *Odds and Ends* was titled the man of the roads, and in this article he stresses the importance of story or the seal in our lives.

In the 1940s it was not uncommon for a poor man of the roads to call to houses and recount tales of adventure and romance.

His love of story is a recurring theme throughout his articles and he also promoted the joy of reading and the value of books in one's life.

In subsequent articles Mannix returns time and time again to writing about the folklore and legends of County Limerick.

He ends this first article by telling his readers about the spirit woman or bean sidhe, who it was said warned families of Os and Macs of impending tragedy.

As a fluent Irish speaker, he promoted the value of the Irish language and the richness in the meaning of our place names.



Then & Now

with Tom Aherne

In his column he sponsored several competitions which encouraged people to document the Irish still remaining in Limerick.

Religious themes often featured in *Odds and Ends*, where he recalled stories attached to festivals such as Christmas and Easter.

Folk customs too were also written about. Along with folk customs he also recorded rural living and the natural world. *Odds and Ends* was also a great column for publishing the songs of Limerick. Mannix held a competition to collect all local songs, the results of which were published in April and June 1948.

He wrote articles for the Irish Press and all the Irish-language weeklies and monthlies. He also contributed to the *Capuchin Annual*, *North Munster Studies* and other journals, sometimes writing under the English form of his name.

Mannix Joyce was born in 1920 in Kilmallock, and he was the eldest child of John Joyce, a small farmer, and his wife Nora (née Deady). He developed an interest in history and the Irish language at an early age.

He had a teacher called Donncha Horgan, a native of the parish, who was very keen on Irish. He had taken part in the War of Independence, and he was also a great promoter of local history.

When the Irish Press started publication, it included a weekly feature for children edited by Roddy the Rover (Aodh de Blacum). Prizes were offered for stories, poems and snippets of local history and Mannix was an early prize-winner.

Aodh de Blacum gave him great encouragement and they began writing to each other. Mannix even went up to his home in Blackrock in Dundalk to visit for a week.

MJ McManus, the literary editor of the Irish Press, was also a big influence, in his writing. Mannix spent a year in Kilfinane technical school, and next he enrolled in Charleville CBS.

At 17 he won a scholarship to Coláiste Uí Chomhraide in Carrigaholt, Co. Clare. This broadened his horizons and gave him his first taste of travel.

Up to that time he had only been in two counties - Limerick and Cork. "It was a beautiful day and it was the first time I saw the sea," recalled Mannix in his column. In later years he travelled to over 30 countries, so that bus trip to Clare was the beginning of it all. Mannix became a trustee of the college and was chairman of the management committee from 1997 to 2005.

After completing school, he began his one and only job in Limerick County Council. He started on February 17, 1941, and retired on August 18, 1985.

It was a lovely place to work, as there was a cross section of people from all backgrounds and all walks of life. When he started there was still some people working there who were there at the Council's beginning in 1889, he remembered fondly.

In all his time working with the County Council, he always travelled to work by bus. He used to cycle into Bruree and then get the bus from there into Limerick.

Petrol was very scarce during the Second World War so sometimes he had to cycle to work.

His 57-year relationship with the *Limerick Leader* began after a chance meeting with its long-time editor, Con Cregan. He remembered Cregan as being a nice man, who asked him to submit an article to the paper.

Mannix was shy about putting his name to it, so he used a pen

name, *Mangaire Sugach*. To his surprise the article was published so he submitted another and that was published also.

He revealed his true identity then — and the rest, as they say, is history.

It is estimated that he wrote over 3,000 columns for the *Limerick Leader* and some were so popular that they were repeated.

He admired John Waters from *The Irish Times*, Dan Buckley from *The Irish Examiner* and Gene Kerrigan from the *Sunday Independent*.

He also read Foinse, and the Irish Catholic newspapers, and the Irish Press until it folded.

Mannix's wife Prionseas, was a former primary school teacher, whom he met while attending evening classes in Irish in Bruree.

He was active in Conradh na Gaeilge and Glór na nGael. He was the organising secretary of the Joyce Brothers School (Patrick Weston Joyce was a notable music collector and his brother Robert Dwyer Joyce a popular 19th-century poet).

He published *The Joyce Brothers of Glenosheen* in 1987. He was a former chairman of Kilmallock Historical Society and a member of the Thomond Archaeological Society.

Mannix was a member of the Place Names Commission, Honorary curator of the De Valera museum, part of the Bruree/Rockhill Development association, and he often taught Irish at night classes in Bruree and surrounding areas.

His books on local history are still much sought after many years later.

In 1990 an honorary doctorate was conferred on him by the National University of Ireland, Galway.

In 2001 he was presented with Gradam an Phiarsaigh, and in 2003 a room at the De Valera Museum in Bruree Heritage Centre was named in his honour.

Mannix deserved all the tributes that was bestowed upon him for his passionate promotion of all things Irish. We mark his 10th anniversary on Sunday July 3.

Cary Grant as 'Clark Gable' in Limerick

John B. Keane

OUT IN THE OPEN

THE fact that Cary Grant has decided to settle in Clare has attracted much publicity to the region.

His proposed holiday complex should bring the tourists flocking in, and we should him him every luck.

The fact that Mr Grant has decided to settle permanently in the Banner County has annoyed one female reader from Sexton Street in Limerick.

"What's all the fuss about Cary Grant?" she opens.

"What about it if he's going to live in Clare? There was great hush-hush when Thady Woods decided to live in Limerick. How is it that no paper apart from the *Leader* gave the event any publicity?"

"Thady Woods has been rightfully called the Clark Gable of Limerick and I think it is more important to have a man like Thady Woods settle in Limerick than it is to have Cary Grant settle in Clare. He might be no millionaire, but he had more sex appeal than any film star I know."

End of Saga

SO THE great football saga has ended. This was the saga that enriched the Finuge GAA Club by several hundred pounds and brought thousands of football fans flocking to the Finuge football pitch on three different occasions.

The first was a cold and windy Sunday night over a month ago. It was the final of the local tournament and Glin made the journey from Shannonside to compete with Moyvane for the glory and honour of emerging winners and also in an effort to collect the hundred pounds which was guaranteed to the winners.

The first match started with several interesting bouts of fisticuffs, beautifully timed kicks, some classic elbowing and tripping, and by and large, as entertaining a bout as one could wish to see.

Referee Pat Lane quickly took control, however, and there followed one of the best football matches ever seen in North Kerry. This match was memorable for some splendid point kicking, and it ended in a welter of excitement with the teams level. Everybody agreed that it was great value entirely for the meagre fifteen pence entrance fee.

The replay was billed for the following Friday week. Again there was a large crowd and again there was an epic encounter, with Glin recovering in the late stages and forcing a draw.

This was a match which Glin could have won, but Dame Fate decreed otherwise, as she did when Moyvane were coasting

home to victory game.

The second re all respects, a goal football, and old were present v opinion that it v as any encount ever seen.

speaking, I found most entertaini years. Men sp fierce meeting 'thirties betwe Abbeyfeale and isons were made.

Whatever the v thing remains that is that the final game, w played on Friday will be spoken many a day to cor

Again, Pat charge of the whi

There was suc tension before th thrown in that it have surprised m himself opened with a crack of th

The opening minutes was a bl the bloodiest I ha this venue. Blows

**Mighty b
were struc
there w
valiant de
either side.
were sev
black eyes
bloodied n**

changed at almo corner of the field, climax, after a fi onslaught, there fewer than five stretched off the

Mighty blows we and there were valia on either side. Th several black ey bloodied noses. Th sore legs and sor while the partisans sides cheered the hoarse.

It lasted for minutes and it look the game would ha abandoned.

Again it was refe Lane who ended th Firmly and decis order four players sideline, two from es

If he had int earlier I feel it wou done more harm th He did the wise thin the circumstance waited until the frenzy of the com had exhausted its when both sides growing anxious breather he stepped

Truth to tell Glin s more in the putting o Moyvane because Glin really recovered fro loss of Jotly Culhane.

If Glin won the figh Moyvane who