

SHANNON MEAT GAZETTE



Volume 1 No. 2. February/March 1976.

Telephone : Rathkeale 49/50.

NEW BONING LINE

John Mulcahy, Production Manager.

The Meat Packing Industry in Ireland had undergone considerable updating and expansion over the past number of years. This updating has been achieved by the installation of very costly and varied equipment, notably powered on the rail killing lines. These killing lines have resulted in massive increases in the slaughtering capacities of the plants and have necessitated the installation of mechanised aids in all other departments to cope with this increased throughput. Boning-Halls have been one of the main areas in most plants where mechanisation has been introduced.

The two main types of mechanised systems available for Boning Halls are (a) "Powered" on the Rail Boning and (b) Conveyorised cutting tables. Of these two systems the conveyorised cutting table is the most favoured within the Industry. This stems from the fact that very often it is possible to introduce this system into existing Boning-Halls without major alteration whereas, in the case of the former, the reverse usually applies and may even involve a complete new building. The latter system is far more flexible, and is also conducive to the cleaner removal of bones, and a higher standard of workmanship as far as removing cuts is concerned. This, or course is a must where vacuum packaging is being done. Both systems offer many advantages over the old conventional method of boning i.e. increased output, space saving, elimination of walking, lifting and fettling and removal of heavy aspects of the job.

In the case of the "Powered Boning Line", carcasses are brought into boning hall on a high level power line and the operators are arranged along the length of the line on stands of various heights. The deboning operation is carried out by the operators working, firstly on the forequarter and gradually working upwards until the entire carcass is deboned leaving almost the complete skeleton on the rail. This skeleton is usually moved to the end of the line where it is dumped into a bone grinder through a conveniently placed chute. As the meat is being deboned, it drops on to a very slow moving conveyor, directly beneath the powered line, and is removed from this conveyor by the trimmers, whose tables are adjacent and at right angles to this conveyor. When the trimmers have completed their part of the operation, the meat is placed in trolleys and removed by porters to a central packing area and thereafter is removed to the blast freezers. Quite a bit of manual moving of meat is involved in bringing meat to packing area in this system, whereas in the other system it is mechanically conveyed.

CONVEYORISED CUTTING TABLES

In the case of conveyorised cutting tables, the carcasses are brought into boning hall, on a rail of the usual height, and moved to a pre-break-down area arranged at the start of the table. Here, the forequarter is severed and placed with the aid of a special hoist on a low level boning rail, where an operator using a powered circular saw, breaks it down into various cuts. The hindquarter is then moved to a high level breaking station where a second powered saw is used to break-down into various cuts. As the cuts are removed from both quarters they are dropped on to reinforced angled stainless steel belt which feeds the main conveyorised table. The boners are arranged along both sides of this table and remove bone-in-cuts as they are brought along the central table-conveyor. The boners de-bone and trim the various cuts, placing cleaned bones on a high level bone conveyor, and returning the boned meat to the central bank conveyor for conveying to the packing area. Special small conveyors are placed directly beneath boners work benches for the removal of fat and trimmed trimmings. Boxes are powered conveyed from packing area to stopping area. The boners work on this system is very much eased since no lifting is involved and cut sizes are very considerably reduced.

Both these systems are a major step forward over the old conventional methods of boning, and fatigue and boredom are very much reduced.



A View of the Company's Premises in Rathkeale, Co. Limerick.

LIVESTOCK TOPICS

Cattle slaughter in 1975 in the U.S.A. was up 11% from 1974's previous peak. Weekly slaughter in federally inspected plants exceeded a record 800,000 head in early October and again in November, 34% of the slaughter being cows.

In the U.S.A. the December 1975 Cattle on Feed viz; in corn feed lots was 8.3 million, 25% more than last year and the largest feed lot total since May, 1974.

The Japanese have allowed a further beef import quota of 25,000. This will be filled by Australia and New Zealand. The present size of the Australian cattle herd at 33,000 million allows a slaughter potential annually of 11,000,000 head. 27% higher than 1974-'75.

New Zealand is confident that her wool clip will realize as good

a price of last year with prospects of a 10% increase. China, Japan and Eastern European countries have all been meeting tentative bids for substantial quantities.

E.E.C.

The following chart shows the % Average Seasonal Distribution of Cattle Slaughtering for Different E.E.C. Countries 1971 - 1974.

	Quarter			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Ireland	23.0	18.5	25.8	32.8
U.K.	24.5	22.8	24.3	28.8
Belgium	24.0	24.8	25.3	26.0
Denmark	26.0	24.5	24.2	25.7
France	24.5	23.9	24.5	25.5
Italy	25.2	25.0	25.9	24.4
Netherlands	25.0	23.0	23.8	28.0
W. Germany	24.9	23.5	24.5	27.3
E.E.C.	24.3	23.8	24.5	27.0

From the chart above, one can see at a glance how Beef Production in Ireland has not got the same steady flow as has all the other E.E.C. countries. One of the immediate problems one sees from this chart is continuity of supply. The other major problem which arises is the flow of cattle not being sufficient to maintain the high level of employment in the Industry.

However, one could assume, if a similar share were available for the late '50's or the early '60's the difference would be even still greater.

RESUMED

We have now resumed slaughtering of Hoggets for our home freezer customers.



Mr. Donie Donovan Livestock Procurement Manager.

CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION

D. Neville, Personnel/Training Officer.

At the time of writing, the 1975 Committee of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union still hold office. We are now close to the Annual General Meeting and installation in office of the 1976 committee. Through the medium of the Shannon Meat Gazette I wish on behalf of the Management and on my own behalf to thank the 1975 officers for the trojan work done and for their contribution to Shannon Meat Ltd. during 1975.

I found them at all times constructive and fair in their approach to their duties as union officers. Much I think was achieved by our discussions and especially by our weekly meetings. We had at these meetings very open and frank discussions on the day-to-day problems in the organisation and decided between us on a common approach to solve these problems. On occasions we may have differed but always agreed to

differ, and agreed on the procedure to solve these differences.

Through these weekly meetings the Management got an accurate feedback of opinions and comments from the shop floor. Conversely, Management had an avenue to convey their plans and to enlist the co-operation of the work force. This was readily forthcoming. It could not I believe be achieved without the constructive contribution of the I.T.G.W.U. itself. I am confident that the incoming group will have the same mature approach to their duties and responsibilities as their predecessors. Much credit for the above happy position must go to Mr. Joe Skerritt, assistant branch secretary of the I.T.G.W.U. who initiated and encouraged these "discussions at local level." To Pat Joe Jones and his committee I say "Thank You". To the new committee I say "you have a wealth of experience to draw from. Use it".

COMMENT

The Editorial Group of the "Shannon Meat Gazette" wish, through this issue, to thank sincerely the large number of staff for their congratulations and interest in the first edition of the Gazette. We find this very encouraging and has instilled a determination in us to make this magazine a success. For this we need the full support and co-operation of everybody connected with Shannon Meat Ltd.

The first objective of the magazine is to improve communications within the firm, to "provide for our organisation a forum for information and discussion" to quote our Managing Director, Mr. Cowhey.

The success of the Gazette depends on the continued active support of all the members of Shannon Meat Ltd. We hope that interest and reaction to the first edition will be translated into a determination by everybody to ensure its continued success. Everybody connected with the Company has a contribution to make. Articles and comments are invited. This may be in the form of comments for discussion on existing practices or on future developments of the Company. It may take the form of contributions completely unrelated to the Company, sport, pass time, or any item you feel is of interest. We, the editorial group are confident that this will be enthusiastically forthcoming.

EXTERNAL

The interest in the Gazette shown by those outside the Company is also very encouraging. This was particularly evident from the farming community and from the inhabitants of Rathkeale and surrounding areas. We would favour this interest being converted into active discussion on the affairs of this organization or any item of interest divorced from it, through the medium of the "Gazette". An example of this might be comments and discussion of activities and developments in the agricultural sphere.

Cupid in a recession

by Eros.

The year just concluded - January - December, 1975 that is, could without question be termed a boom year, from a "number slaughtered" point of view, in the life of Shannon Meat Ltd.

1976 may yet be remembered by the Meat Industry, as the year in which a sterling Cabinet Minister, with an after dinner mint connotation "Lowered that Boom."

Perhaps, this in unfair criticism, our friend's predicament may not be of his own making. Maybe it was a direct result of the policy of exporting rather than killing the fatted calf, condoned it would seem by another with portfolio of Roman Christian name.

But, be that as it may, booms and depressions have relevance only where this article is concerned in so far as they make available or otherwise, a sufficient stock of arrows for the purpose of Cupid's practice within the firm. For the past number of years at Shannon Meat Ltd., Little Boy Cupid's quiver has never lacked a plentiful supply of arrows for his bow. It has also been said that he has never had to rely on help from his father, Aphrodite.

So, therefore, let us sincerely hope that any shortage of heart piercing arrows which may arise due to any depression, does not in any way re-

sult in the reduction of the number of entrants for the 1976 Shannon Matrimonial Handicap (Here it is noticeable that some of our more experienced, high-handicap performers had their final gallop at the end of the '75 season). In the past, the mysterious ways of Cupid were something to behold. It was a delight to observe the transformation on the face of the comely colleen from the Casting Dept., when meeting with her princely packer from the tripery. Likewise, the Boning Hall operator, regaled in white, laden with the impedimenta of his trade, and looking like a gladiator of old, became meekness personified when a chance meeting with the Cannery girl of his choice, presented itself at the Holding Room door.

Refrigeration is not effected by human passion, otherwise our refrigeration engineers would be hard pressed to maintain low temperatures after such chance meetings.

Finally, let us hope that the results of previous unions and hopefully of many more such alliances to come, may in future years, find job satisfaction in the firm, where a random shot from Cupid's bow, brought their parents together in the first place.

P.S. We refuse to pun on calf love. All our staff, male and female are more mature than that.

TRIBUTE

The sudden death of Mr. Owen Gleeson, M.R.C.V.S., on Tuesday, 20th January sent shock waves right through the organization. Owen Gleeson was with us for almost 2 yrs. During that time, everyone came to know and admire him for his friendliness and joviality. He had something to say to everybody and was extremely popular in the Slaughter Hall, with which he had most connection. He was surely one of nature's gentlemen. Mr. Gleeson took ill suddenly while at work in Shannon Meat Ltd; and died on his way home to Killarney. His cheerful word and his whistling will be sadly missed by all. Sympathy is extended to his wife.

We would like also to express our sincere sympathy to John Fitzgibbon of the Tripe Department on the recent tragic death of his wife, Ellen and to James Moone of the Home Sales Department on the death of his Father.

UP GRADING

Congratulations to Mr. & Mrs Jerry Fitzgerald, on the upgrading of Rathkeale House Hotel from Class C to Class B ratings, under the Hotel classification in the 1976 Guide to Hotels and Guest houses. Thirty seven of the 714 hotels registered with Bord Failte have been downgraded by the Tourism Authority and 15 more upgraded.

I.T.G.W.U. NEWS

CONCERN AND THANKS

By P.J. Jones & G. Molyneux.

At a recent meeting in Dublin with the Department of Agriculture, the Shannon Meat Branch of the I.T.G.W.U. was represented by Vice-Chairman, Mr. Christy Jones. Representatives of the Union from about 10 factories were present and they were met by Mr. Brennan spokesman for the Minister for Agriculture. Previous to the meeting with Mr. Brennan the representatives came together and agreed on certain common points which they put to him.

The discussion was based principally on the situation which had developed concerning the export of young calves to other E.E.C. countries. The representatives led by Mr. Kelly, Head Branch Dublin believed that this factor combined with the enormous increase in slaughtering in 1975 would lead to a drastic shortage of cattle in the future. This prediction now seems to have materialised.

In a recent statistical survey it has been shown that total beef outputs for 1975 reached £175 million compared with £126 million in 1974 and a mere £15,000 in 1964. In 1975 the total cow slaughterings reached 600,000 the number of calves exported was in the region of 140,000 and live cattle exports was about 642,000. These facts indicate how depleted the livestock population has become.

It was suggested to Mr. Brennan that farmers should be encouraged and subsidised to rear their own calves and so stabilise the Meat Industry in this country. The subsidy recommended should be similar to the suckling sub-

sidy, an emergency measure introduced some years ago but should also include a sealing or quantity limit. This would insure a fair distribution of benefits.

Though Mr. Brennan was in complete agreement with the majority of the points he stated that due to E.E.C. policy of inter trade relations the alternatives were severely limited. He said that he would convey their opinions and suggestions to the Minister and that he would attempt to organise a meeting between representatives of the Department, farmers and meat industry at a future date. At this meeting the entire situation could be examined and discussed and it is this hope that a policy can be formulated for the benefit of everybody concerned. The meeting ended on that note.

UNFAIR DISTRIBUTION

At the present time, the Meat Industry seems to have entered a temporary period of depression, which has already cost a number of Union members their jobs. This unfortunate situation is due to a scarcity of Livestock. The cattle shortage which is prevalent throughout the Country has been made more serious by the unavailability of Dept. cattle to the majority of Meat Plants. We feel that there should be fair distribution of these cattle and that each factory should be allocated a certain amount so as to maintain a steady level of production. This, in turn would maintain a high level of employment. We believe that it is a very unfair system which allows a minority to monopolise the market by succeeding in getting the majority of Dept. livestock while other factories have to let go large numbers of employees, because of a scarcity of cattle. Surely, something could be done to control this, and ensure that everybody gets a fair deal.



The 1975 Irish Transport and General Workers Union Committee, Back Row (L. to R.) J. Meehan, P.J. Jones (Chairman) C. Jones, K. Hannafin, Front Row (L. to R.) P. Hennessy, H. Mulcahy, G. Molyneux.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

We wish every success to the Safety Committee which has been reformed within the Plant. We feel that the work of this Committee is very necessary and beneficial.

F.U.E. INVOLVEMENT

We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the F.U.E. and representative, Mr. Harty, for the very valuable contributions he gave on their behalf, to negotiations between Management and the Union. He has been very helpful to us during the past year and we hope that this close co-operation will continue.

We would also like to thank Mr. Barry Hixon and Mr. Joe Skettit for the help given to this Committee by them.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody within the Factory, both Workers and Management, for their co-operation and support during 1975. Also the 1974 Committee for the valuable help given to us by them.

We wish the 1976 Committee every success and we will be willing, at all times, to assist them in any way.

BEST WISHES

Irish Transport & General Worker's Union, Head Office, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1.

31.12.'75.

Dear Mr. Neville,

Just prior to Christmas, we received a copy of the Shannon Meat Gazette (Volume 1, No. 1) and I would like to offer congratulations and every best wish for the success of the Gazette.

We are particularly pleased to note the involvement of our membership in the publication and of the space reserved for Union news.

The undersigned would be pleased to receive a copy of each issue.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Irish Transport & General Workers Union per S.B. Kelly, National Group Secretary.



PICTURE PARADE



At the Devon Inn - Kitty Guinnane, Ann Dunne and Helen Dunne.



John Reddin of the boning hall and Mary Shine of Ballyhahill who got engaged at Christmas.



Recently engaged - William Crowley and Catherine Meade.



Pat Reidy who hales from Athea joined Shannon Meat Ltd in Spring 1975.



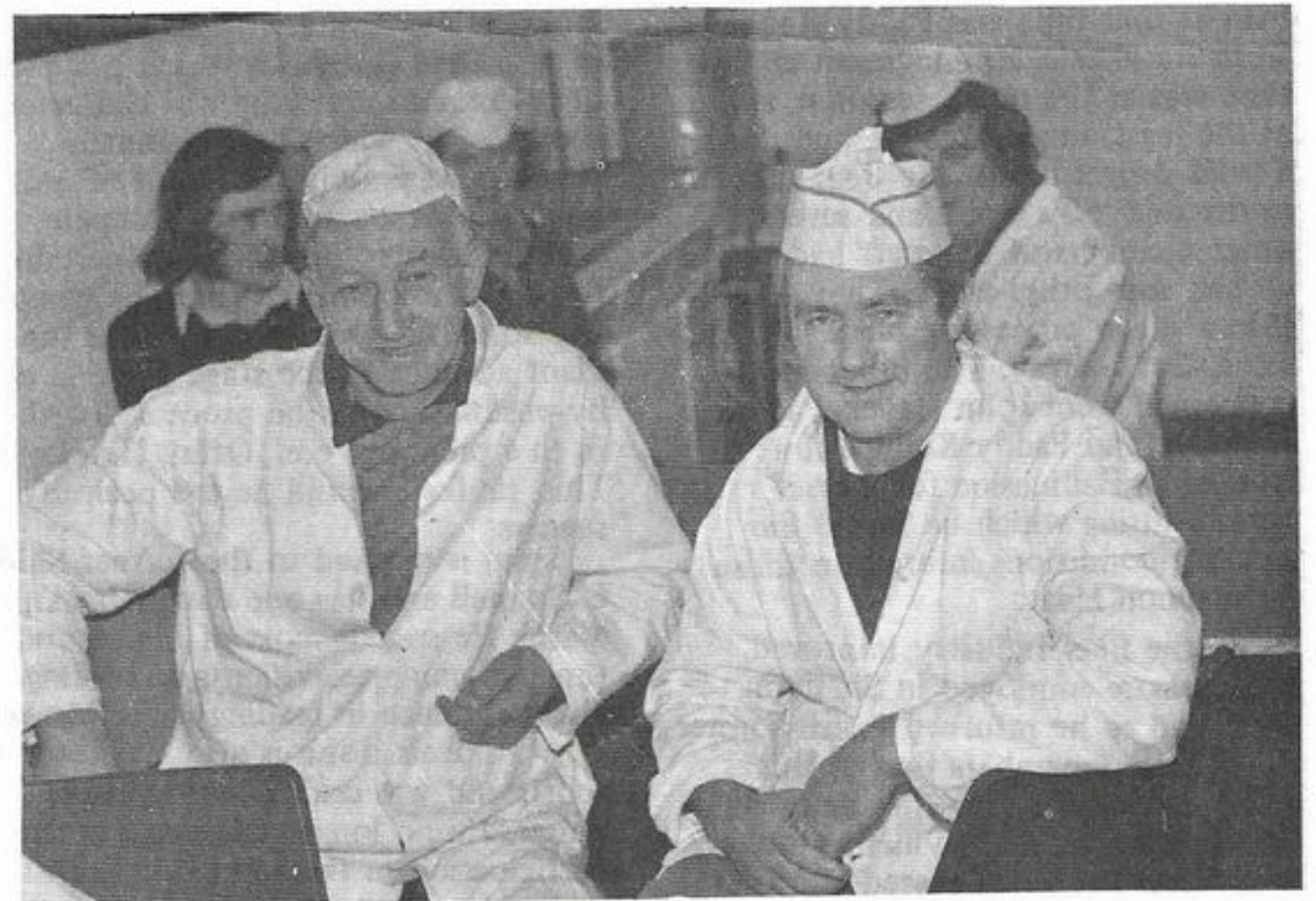
Sheila O'Connell and Peggy O'Carroll photographed at the Devon Inn.



John Lynch assistant Production Manager who was very active on the Gaelic front last year.



James Moone of the Home Sales Department Check Weighing one of Shannon Meat's Home Freezer Packs.



John Hayes and David O'Keeffe of the boning Hall relaxes during lunch in the Canteen.

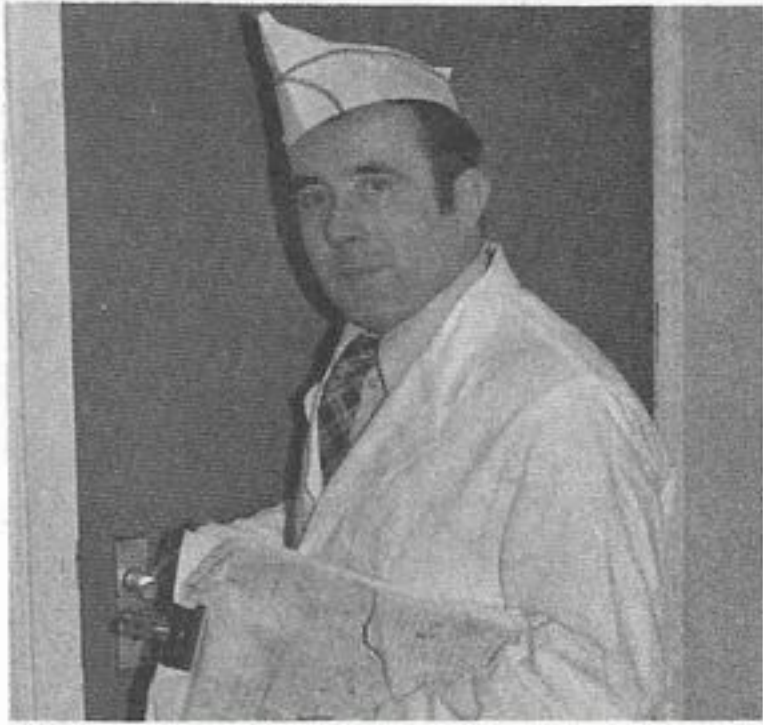


Cupid strikes within the firm Pat Hennessy of the Boning and Tina Enright of the Casings who are getting married this month.



The above Photograph was taken in Summer 1952 during the erection of the Company's Premises. Included are :- Tim Finnucane, Tim Dillon, P. McCormack, D. Lynch, John Farrell, Tom White, Martin Ryan, J. Casey, J. Royce, J. Cregan, Eugene O'Sullivan, M. Enright, T. Glenny, S. Guiry, B. Meade, P. Lynch, J. Lynch, P. Royce, B. Stack, M. Meehan, B. Daly, Joe Wilmoth, P. McNamara, M. Hogan, P. Reddin, M. Tierney, Jim Hennessy, Mario Zoncada and Carlo Tentarelli. Also included are the following who have departed this life :- Patrick Jones, Henry Doube, Moss Lenihan and B. Jansey. May they rest in peace.

Profile no. 1



John O'Connell

John O'Connell, one of Shannon Meat's most formidable employees, is the present Foreman of the Slaughter House Line. First impressions of him would tend to remind one of a Sherman Tank, unemotional and impregnable, and having known him for about one year, I still think the same. He was born in Ballingarry in the 20th century, (we hope), and seems to be suffering from acute amnesia. However, he modestly admits to being over 21.

EARLY DAYS

He was first employed in Shannon Meat at its commencement in 1953, as a butcher. At that time, the Plant's workforce consisted of about 20 employees and so their duties concerned all aspects of production, loading, boning, packing etc. He recollects those early days with clear intensity when he worked an 18 hour day and travelled to and fro to work on his bicycle. The bicycle is now gone into full retirement and is held in high sentimental value. The foreman at that time was Paddy Kennedy from Rathkeale. Employment at this time was at the most, seasonal, and at the least, unpredictable, and during a brief depression of the Beef Industry in the mid '50's, John and several other members of the staff had to go and seek other work. They found it in a sheep processing plant in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The other men concerned were John Hayes, Paddy Kennedy and Paddy Kelly. John worked in Ballinasloe for a brief period during which he found the working conditions inferior to those in Shannon Meat.

As the Beef Industry improved, John was re-employed in Shannon Meat and so he returned to his former duties. He remembers that at this time, the industry became more stable and as a result, employment more secure. As the years passed and the Plant "blossomed" and developed into one of the most essential Industries in West Limerick, a vacancy arose for the position of Slaughter House Foreman. John applied for the position, and was successful. He has retained what is termed by some of his more humorous subjects, as his tyrannical position until the present day.

SUCCESS

He speaks of the success of Shannon Meat with a real sense of pride, and attributes that success to good constructive work done by both Management and Union. He describes his own men as a "great bunch" and it is his opinion, that it would be difficult to find a group of workers to compare with them. During the earlier years of the company. John held the position of Vice-Chairman of the I.T.G.W.U. for a period, during which time he remembers a spirit of co-operation; The Union in his opinion, has developed into an essential body and he is particularly impressed by the achievements and control of the

present Committee.

The greatest change which has occurred in Shannon Meat over the past decade concerns the Automated Line which has been installed. Of the increase in production and prosperity directly resulting from the Line, John is fully aware and speaks highly of its efficiency. However, one sad aspect which has superceded the process, in his opinion, is the lack of individualism which it has caused. He considers this to be a common, though unsavoury characteristic of modern development.

REMINISCENCES

John is the fourth generation of O'Connell's involved in the Meat trade. His immediate ancestors have had a butcher's stall in Ballingarry for years and his father, now retired, is an ex-employee of Shannon Meat Ltd. He reminisces on his youth (Just passed!) with a broad grin on his face and one has the feeling that he is concealing a lot of devilish activities which he is not about to reveal. However, he expresses his dislike for school and evasively declines to give reasons. Ballingarry, in his opinion, has not changed much since then, except that it has become depopulated and a little more prosperous. John finished school at the earliest possible time and began serving his time at Sheahan's butcher stall in Rathkeale. Here he learned his trade and when finished, went to work in Slane, Co. Meath for about 2 years. When the opportunity of a job arose in Shannon Meat Ltd; he grabbed it, and returned. That was his first connection with the Plant and to this day, except for the brief period he worked in Ballinasloe, he has been associated with it.

He states clearly that he has always been very happy and contented working here and he has never ever considered changing employment. He looks to the future with an attitude of hope and optimism which is typical of his zealous and youthful character, the latter of which he continually stresses. He is fully confident of Shannon Meat's ability to compete within Industry but there are certain further developments which he would like to see. He would like to see the Plant advance to the stage wherein all by-products could be processed within the premises, o.e., Offal, Hides etc. This, he feels would be the peak of success.

John is married to the former Shiela O'Connell and has one daughter, Anne Marie. He spends most of his leisure time watching television and reading. His preference in reading is for historical novels. John is also interested in sports and was once a very capable hurler. He no longer takes any active participation in the sport but I must emphasise, that this is due to his very busy life and definitely has nothing to do with the fact that he may be entering the period in one's life, when the broad mind and the narrow waist begin to change places.

To conclude the profile of a very popular and humorous employee, we would like to congratulate him on his success to date, and to wish him, his wife and daughter every blessing in the future.



John O'Connell photographed following his return to Shannon Meat Ltd.

Profile no. 2



Thomas Glenny

Thomas Glenny is one of the Company's most experienced Operators. Tommy has spent all his livelihood in and around the Rathkeale area. It was in this parish that he was born on 6/6'23 In 1952, Tommy assisted in the "birth" of Shannon Meat Ltd., when he was one of the first of six men to commence work with Contractor, Charlie McDonald, in the building of the Factory.

EARLY TIMES :

It was in December, 1953, that Tommy started working within the premises. He remembers distinctly those early times in the history of the Company. His first task as a factory employee, was loading frozen beef. Let us note, that the de-boning beef was non-existent then. Tommy recalls clearly the primitiveness of loading, which resulted in long and tiring hours. He recollects commencing work at 4.00 a.m. and concluding late that night. This was a regular routine "so much for a forty hour week then" he says. The average daily kill yielded about 160 cattle per day. Prior to 1960, Tommy was employed on a seasonal basis. During the '50's his weekly wage was 5 guineas. He recalls that he had to work six hours overtime to earn the princely sum of £1.

From 1960 onwards, Tommy was employed permanently. The Company, he says, was going from strength to strength. This, Tommy relates, "Was mainly due to the introduction of a Cannery Department which was made possible by the joint efforts of the I.T.G.W.U., the I.C.M.S.A. and by local politicians". From the Yard to the loading Bay, every department has experienced the dedication and willingness of Tommy Glenny.

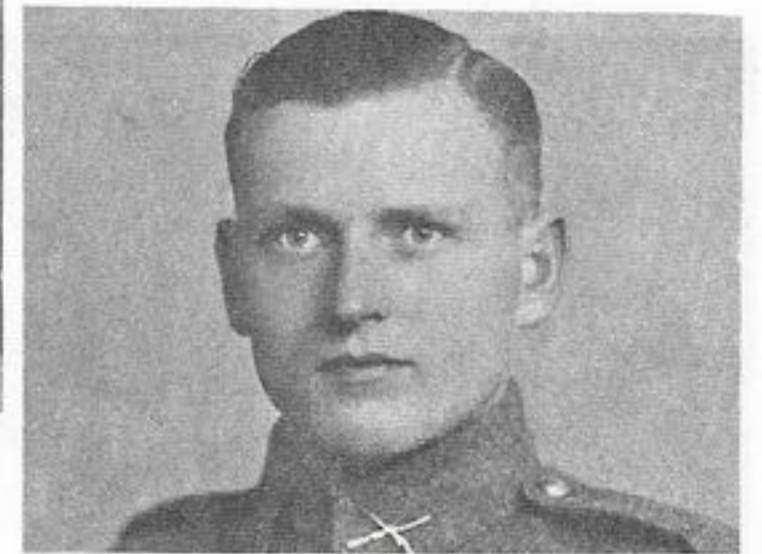
Tommy Glenny's career in Shannon Meat Ltd; can be closely allied with that of the I.T.G.W.U. On a number of occasions, Tommy has been chairman. Whilst in the "Chair", the forty hour week was introduced.

Tommy received all his education in Rathkeale. He draws a distinct comparison between his former school days and those experienced by his children. He tells of the cold and barren classroom, of the derelict school-house without sanitation or heating, of the ruling master, in comparison to what he terms "comfortable education" of the present day

ARMY

On leaving school Tom commenced work as a farm labourer service. His annual wage amounted to £14.20. 1940, saw Tommy joining the Army. He was attached to the Southern Command at Collins Barracks, Cork. He states that his army career was a continuation of the harshness, discipline and severe strictness he endured whilst attending school. He views the Army life of 1940 and of the 1970's in the same context, as he viewed the school of both generations. His starting rate at that time in the Army was 12s.10d

per week. Tommy remembers with distaste one moment of grief when three of his comrades were drowned on manouvre. On leaving the Army, Tommy began a series of temporary jobs including, switchboard operator, postman, a period with the Co. Council and some time with the E.S.B.



Thommy Glenny photographed during his Army days.

Tommy recollects vividly the Rathkeale of his youth. He remembers the cobblestoned streets. He recalls the candle-light houses. In fact, he tells of the first house to have proper lighting facilities - Liston's of Lower Main St. He recollects the time when there were only six cars in the parish of Rathkeale. Tommy, nevertheless, is glad to admit that the friendliness and coherence of the Rathkeale people has never changed, and he expresses desires for this happy "co-existence" to continue. Tommy's recreation amounted to cross-road dancing and the picture hall.

Tommy Glenny is married to the former Josephine Mackessy of Rathnasare, Rathkeale, and they have five children, Michael, Thomas, James, Bridget and Josephine. His eldest son, Michael, is presently employed by the Company. His second son, Tommy, is a private in the Army.

May they accomplish as much in their respective careers as their Father did in both.

DON'T CUT BACK

A plea to farmers not to stall increases in production on their farms because of the threat of the taxman has been made by the President of the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, Mr. James O'Keeffe. He stressed: "The number of farmers who will pay a sizeable amount in income tax will be very small, and those who will be eligible to pay tax will be far better off than those who will not be paying it".

"It would be very foolish of farmers to cut back in production because of the threat of income tax." Mr. O'Keeffe was speaking at the annual dinner of the South Limerick and North Cork executives of I.C.M.S.A. at Cronin's Hotel, Charleville, which was attended by almost 300 patrons.

THE NEW YEAR

By Paula Lillis, Typing Pool.

The Christmas festivities are over for another year. We have had our fill of turkey and sweet cake. Our Annual Dinner Dance has come and gone.

"If Winter Comes,
Can Spring be far behind"

Well, we had a very mild Winter so far, thank God. Looking back on the seasons last year, we were very fortunate to have such a beautiful dry Summer, the warmest in over a century. Autumn was also pleasantly dry and crisp.

The countryside is most beautiful in all seasons. In the city the seasons pass unnoticed. Out the country one is much more in touch with nature. The peace and quiet is blissful - no bustling city crowds jostling on another with supermarket trolleys or endless queuing in post offices and banks, no rushing to beat the red traffic lights.

"What good is life,
If full of care,
We have not time
To stand and stare." (Chaucer)

Payroll in transit

By M. Dooley, Accountant.

Our Personnel Officer Dan Neville, walked into my office one day recently and casually asked me to write something for the Gazette. He further elaborated that it might possibly be on the recent computerisation of the Payroll. I felt a bit weak at the knees and my first reaction was to run for cover. Before I had time to protest, however, he had departed as quietly as he had entered and I was left with no option but to take, appropriately enough, the Bull by the horns.

The Company's payroll has taken many a twist since I sat down to calculate my first one at Shannon Meat away back in September of 1960. As misfortune would have it, the then Minister for Finance had chosen the same week to introduce a monster amongst us - a fierce greedy monster indeed that cast a dark shadow at the time, and has grown even most insatiable ever since. His name - P.A.Y.E. Needless to say, all hell broke loose that first Friday night. Tax, at the time, was a vague nasty word to most people and deduction that first week to the tune of 4/- to 5/- were a liberty not to be taken lying down. Of course, you guessed it, Yours Truly was at the butt of much of this initial emplosiveness. If the Gazette had been in existence then, I would have used its pages to protest my innocence in Capital letters, but alas, it was not so. P.A.Y.E. remained a very explosive subject for a long time to come. On one occasion, I witnessed a member of the office staff, who shall remain nameless, being cornered in the corridor by a very irate taxpayer. Some rather immoderate language filled the air and eventually only some very deft verbal footwork enabled him to make a tactful retreat and to maintain body and soul intact.

PREDICTABLE

Of course, this reaction was all too predictable and understandable. As I remember it, P.A.Y.E. was introduced with hardly any forewarning at all. There was nothing much in the Press, no trumpeting and bearing of drums on "7 Days", in fact no television either in which to do so. The net result was that people were taken completely unawares. It is interesting to recall the position of tax on personal earnings up to this time. It was collected twice yearly - in January and in July. Jobs were scarce, then, and those that were available were often of a part-time or temporary nature only. Earnings rarely reached the level where tax commenced. Those lucky (or unlucky) enough to be in the tax bracket were obliged to forward their cheques to the local tax collector. However, the half-apologetic twice-yearly demands were generally completely ignored. A person who persistently failed to pay up could expect a visit from the Collector himself. The simple ploy of being absent from home on this occasion, normally ensured the total avoidance of the amount due.

On occasions, when the Collector became persistent in his demands, it was often the lot of a good man to seek refuge, from the long arm of the law, on the immigrant ship. Who would blame him too, I suppose, and the times that were there. Needless to relate, that in these circumstances, the amount of personal tax finding its way into the Government Coffers was very harmless indeed. The Minister for Finance cast envious eyes across the water and concluded that their newly introduced method of tax collection P.A.Y.E. was definitely for him.

ARCHIVES

Browsing in the Company's archives recently I came across an Old Wages Book which if it were a piece of furniture would surely qualify as an antique. Sure enough, there is my illegible squiggle was that same week of September, 1960. It made inter-

esting reading. The basic rate for butchers was £7.2.9 per week and was Only £1.00 more than it had been eight years previously in 1952. Females got £3.6.8 and office girls £2.11.8 The National Insurance Stamp was a mere 2/9 (14p) for males and 1/8 (8p) for females. The first timid P.A.Y.E. deductions were in the range of 3/- to 6/- surely a case of "coming in like a lamb." In fact the whole layout was all very simple. There were four headings (1) Gross Pay, (2) National Insurance Stamp, (3) P.A.Y.E., (4) Nett Pay and no more. When I compare it with that jig-saw of a puzzle the computer now spews out I could weep. But, of course, all aspects of life seemed gentler then. State Intervention, in private or industrial life, seemed hardly to exist. We weren't constantly badgered from Dublin for this and returns for that, to be signed by Ar. A, countersigned by Mr. A.N. Other and initialled by whomever you please. To be fair though, all this intervention has not been entirely for the bad. From a payroll view point, the introduction of National Pay Agreements have had a settling effect on both sides of the table and has obviated much time wasting and sterile horse-trading.

For many years there was no great change in the basic payroll format. A Remington Rand pegboard was the basis for the long, slimline, often obscure paysheet well known to most of us. Then, suddenly, everything changed. It all happened on a sunny Friday afternoon last June. Bill Chawke came into the office. He was pale around the gills and was visibly shaken. "My God", he said but I've had enough - never again - no money would pay for this . . . job. Bill has just returned from the Bank with about £9,000 in raw cash. He was ably supported on the occasion by Donal Ahern and Sean Harnett, both of them looked equally shaken. Incidentally, our Cash-in-Transit Insurance Policy makes it obligatory for two persons to accompany the cashier to the bank on pay-day. They're not meant to be there for the fun of it, but, confronted with a serious hold-up I ask you - ? Anyway, it subsequently came to light that while he was collecting his money at one Bank there was simultaneously at the other local bank, a full-blooded hold-up in full swing, a mere hundred yards down the street. If fate has been otherwise on that day, who knows what the outcome might have been. I got the message. Handling large amounts of cash was becoming far too risky even in a comparatively quiet place like Rathkeale. Wages would have to be paid by cheque. P.J. and Christy Jones gave the green light on behalf of the Union and on the 3rd July, '75 cheques were paid for the first time. It was a simple and logical development to computerise the payroll subsequently. This was done just before Christmas.

Where does the next payroll twist lie, who knows? This computer job is supposed to be the last word in efficiency - infallible - they tell me. At a cost of over £100,000, who am I to doubt them? By the way, we haven't bought it, we just hire out its time from the Computer Centre at Shannon Airport.

Probably, I shouldn't admit it, but in fact I experienced a mild glow of satisfaction some weeks ago when our infallible computer made a whopper of an error in failing to allow the appropriate tax-free allowances for the week. Our Wages Department would never have survived such a traumatic oversight.

'Tis human after all.

THE DESCENT OF MAN

A Personal View by R.J. Wood, Plant Engineer

In the beginning, Man was a hunter, he had to be to survive. He found it necessary to find water, and finding in that water an abundance of animal life called fish, Man found he could eat this "food", but how to obtain it was another question.

Thus, the bent pin, pole and cat gut was born. For bait he used worms. Man found that he could sustain his family and himself on the food and drink that rivers and lakes could supply. This was life for him. Indeed, if we believe the theory of evolution, water was the beginning of all life.

From these humble beginnings, Man progressed to cane rods, reels, strong lines. For bait he used the artificial flies, and still continued to use the favourite worm. Only one item changed. He no longer fished for food. His dependence on water was total and remained.

But now he fished for pleasure to see if he could catch a "bigger one" than anyone else, to outdo his fellows. Thus, competition in the fishing world was born.

CONVENIENCES

To-day, Man has all conveniences offered him. Food is no longer a problem, (except to pay for it!) All are presented to him in fancy packs to catch his eye. Water is brought into his house for him, and he pays a small fee to the Local Authority, and he fishes for pleasure, to get away from the office or the job. Somewhere

to unwind. Now, Man has all the most modern fishing tackle available to him, for pleasure and for competition. The "big one", that record, that monster that lurks beneath the surface. That is the idea that Man has now of his fish, to be better than anyone. To land the biggest ever.

But unfortunately, that fish is not there anymore. Man is destroying his pleasure and his existence.

Man is slowly killing himself. He is polluting his life - his water. Lough Ennell, the Dodder, the Tolka, the Liffey, part of the Shannon, and recently a lake near Athlone, wiped out of fish. The Suir, the Blackwater, Whiddy Island, Dublin Bay? The efforts of Man to make more money, but is slowly poisoning himself, and Mankind.

When will man realise what is happening? Is he adopting the attitude - "live now, pay later?"

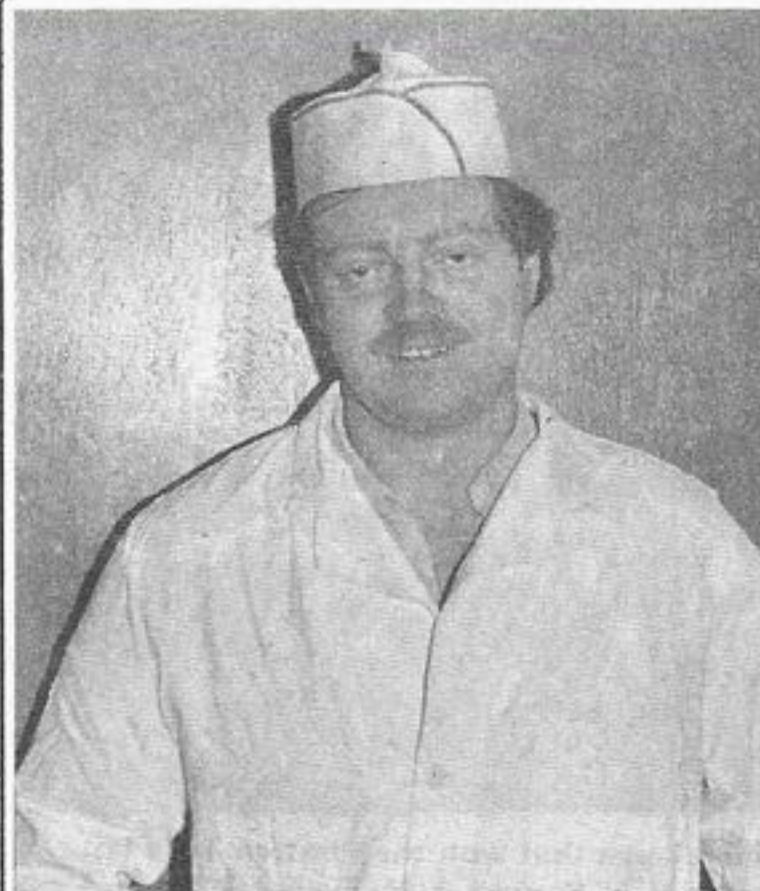
Thank God some people are aware of it, and are doing something about it. Many Companies are installing equipment to reduce their effluent to rivers. Shannon Meat is no exception. A very large plant is already installed to reduce the factory's effluent to acceptable levels. This is being extended at the moment to make the Plant more efficient.

Man depends on water for his existence. I do not wish to fish to live, but only for pleasure. Is the 20th Century the beginning of "The Descent of Man"?

Shannon Meat chat

By The Scribe

- * Congratulations to Liam Aherne on his recent marriage to Mary Lyons of Abbeyfeale.
- * Donie Aherne got engaged over Christmas to Margaret Collins.
- * William Crowley of the Boning Hall got engaged lately to Catherine Meade, daughter of factory employee, Mr. Bill Meade.
- * Best wishes to John Reddin on his recent engagement.
- * Patrick Hennessy of the Boning Hall and Tina Enright of the Casings Dept; are to be wed-locked on February, 28th.
- * Congratulations to Michael and Bridie O'Donnell on the birth of their son.
- * Soccer stalwart, Liam O'Doherty, formerly of Newcastle Utd; and Celtic Rangers, is currently playing successfully with Limerick A.F.C. in the League of Ireland.
- * Larry Kelly, Boning Hall Supervisor, got engaged over the holidays to Miss T. O'Connell of Kanturk.
- * Congratulations to the following staff members who succeeded in getting new Council houses :- Michael Dunne, John Lyons, Tom Steele, Peter Mullins, Pat Morrissey, F. Dinnage, John Brynes and Mattie Williams.
- * Dan Cagney has now fully recovered from his rugby baptismal.
- * Congratulations to Andy McMahon who celebrated his coming of age recently.
- * The word "check" is now commonly used in the Training Dept; after the many Bingo successes by the individuals working there.
- * Congratulations to Michael and Nora Dooley on the recent birth of their daughter.



Mr. M. Williams Chairman of the Shannon Meat Ltd., G.A.A. Club who has been appointed Vice-Chairman of the interfirm County Board.



Mr. L. Kelly, Boning Hall Supervisor who got engaged recently.

by Denis Noonan (Secretary)

The football team got a walk over from Clover Meats in the Inter Firm Championship. This was a big disappointment to the players as they were looking forward eagerly to this match. However, they are now in the Semi-Final of this competition and their chances of bringing off this title are bright indeed. The club wish them the best of success in doing so.

At the General Meeting it was decided upon to have a Manager over the Hurling Team this year. The man picked for this position was Mikey Keating. Mikey will have complete control of the team on the field of play. Every one in the club wishes Mikey the best of success in his new job. The captain of the Hurling team for the coming year is Billy Lynch and the Vice-Captain is Frankie Dalton.

Last year during our run in the Inter Firm championship, our expenses came to £409.10. The most expensive item in this was the cost of hurleys which cost £120.00. There were numerous other expenses including doctors, insurance, hurling balls. Our income during the year came to £493.29. This was raised by our two collections, cheque from Social Club and a cheque from Management, and cash from vets and by our ticket sellers. This left us at the end of the year with £84.19 cash in hand.

HANDBALL

The year gone by also saw our Handball team reach the County Final in the Inter-Firm championship. In this competition we had two singles and two double teams in action. The singles players were Pat Hennessy and John Kelly. The first double included Jimmy Lanigan and Patch Markham. Second double was Matty Williams and Denis Kenneally. There were three subs, Anthony Woulfe, Pat Costello and Liam Woulfe. They failed in their bid to annex the County title and were beaten by Clover Meats. On route to the County Final they defeated Castlemahon and Scanglo International.

The G.A.A. Club would like to take this opportunity of wishing each and everyone a Happy New Year.

FOOTBALL SUCCESS

After some years of trying the Rathkeale Junior footballers carried off the Western Title in 1975. This feat was made possible by determined and inspired performances by players and officials alike. The panel includes seven members of the staff: John

Lynch, Sean Harnett, Patch Markham, Denis Kenneally, James O Grady, Tom White and Liam Woulfe. Five of the above played in the Western decider against Kileedy. James O'Grady and Tom White were amongst the substitutes.

Liam Woulfe was left corner back throughout the campaign, and he proved to be a resourceful defender. The left half back position was also filled by a member of the staff. Here, one of the veterans on the side Denis Kenneally showed that he is still capable of holding his own amongst his younger counter-parts. The "Company Representative" at mid-field was John Lynch. John had the honourable distinction of being selected in the Limerick Senior football panel for their League Campaign. During the Junior football championship, he proved that he was worthy of selection with some sterling performances in the centre of the field. The centre-forward berth was filled by Patch Markham. Patch as he is amicably called is a clever and astute player. These qualities were never more in evidence than in the final, where his shrewdness and clever distribution allowed his forward colleagues to shoot scores. The final member of the team from the firm was Sean Harnett. The youthful Sean occupied the left half forward position and he was the captain of the team.

Having won the Western title Rathkeale lost disappointingly in the Co. Semi-Final to Na Fianna, who went on to win the County Final.

HOPE

Having achieved this success at Club level, (keeping in mind, the fact that the firm are in the semi-final of the Inter-Firm Football Championship) let us hope that a similar feat can be achieved by Shannon Meat G.A.A. Club.

CROAGH WIN

On Sunday, 11th January, Croagh camogie club took their first Munster Club title by defeating the Tipperary champions Drom-Inch in a thrilling game at the C.B.S. grounds, Adare. The final score line was Croagh 2.0, Drom-Inch 0.4 Croagh now join At Athane as the only Limerick teams to win the Munster championship. The Croagh team that achieved this feat were as follows: Helen Sheehy, Margaret Hickey, Margie Neville, Eileen O'Keeffe, Ann O'Flynn, Mary T. Hannon, Breed Stokes (Capt), Ann Sheehy, Margie O'Sullivan, Marion Doyle, Helen Mulcair, Shiela Murphy. Sub: Mary Fitzgerald for S. Murphy.



Members and Mentors of the Rathkeale Junior Team that won the Western Title last year. Back Row (L. to R.) P. Wilroth (Secretary), A. Supple, J. McEvery, G. Bollard, D. Kenneally, J. Lynch, J. O'Grady, D. O'Dea, T. White, P. Markham, L. Woulfe, D. Doherty, T. Markham, Ml. Neville (Trainer), J. Kennedy (Chairman). Front Row (L. to R.) :- J. Kennedy, Ml. Tully, N. Fitzgerald, P. Clancy, S. Harnett, T. Wilmoth, N. Harnett, Ml. Sullivan, T. Fitzgerald, P. Sheehy.

Hello again, we have now reached the half-way stage in our league programme and our results since the last issue have been very much up and down. We beat Magobar 4-2, Kildimo 5-2 and lost to Kildimo 5-4, Celtic 2-0, Glin 4-1, Broadford 4-2 and Pallaskenry 4-1. We ended the bad run by beating Kildimo 3-1 in our first game in 1976.

We had strengthened our panel by signing 4 lads from Adare. They are Timmy Mullane, Chris Condon, Henry Vokes and Bobo McNamara. We have also lost the services of one of our most promising young players in Mario Zoncada who has like so many before him, go, as we say, glory hunting to the big name clubs. If these clubs were interested in promoting the game they would let our players get on with playing their football with Shannon Utd.

OUR PLAYERS

Over the next few months I would like to introduce you to the members of our panel with some facts and figures. Frank Lynch now playing the

best football of his career has played in nearly every position for Shannon Ltd. but prefers playing in the back-four, was a member of our successful under 16 team and graduated to our junior side '71. Left for a short spell to play with St. Bridgets in Limerick but is happy to be back, age 20 yrs, height 5' 10", wt: 11½ stone supports Derby County.

Sean Harnett rated by many the best midfield player in the Desmond League, made his debut for the club at the ripe old age of 14 years. Has had spells with Newcastle and Pike Rovers. Played in our successful under 14 and under 16 team, a model player who always gives 100% age 19 years, height 5-6" wt 10 stone. Supports Manchester Utd.

John Lyons a strong tackling back four player who has been playing junior football for six years. Had a spell in goals, but is much happier in his present position. A great club man who is always on hand when there is work to be done. Age 22 years, height 6' 1" wt. 12½ stone. Supports Manchester United. MICHAEL DUNNE



Shannon United A.F.C. :- Back Row (L. to R.) Henry Vokes, T. Glenny, N. Harnett, F. Dinnage, J. Lyons, D. Brennan. Front Row (L. to R.) M. Zoncada, T. Mullane, F. Lynch, S. Harnett and S. O'Shea.

BADMINTON STAR

Competitive Badminton is non-existent in the Rathkeale area. However Adare can boast one of the most formidable clubs in the Country. And one of the most prominent players in their club is Pat Marron. Pat, as many of you know, is employed as a clerical officer in the Company's Sales Department.

Pat, first commenced playing Badminton at the age of eleven. In his first year he was a member of the Adare team which won out the County 2nd Division, a great achievement for a club in their inaugural year.

He states that the success of the game of badminton in Adare can be contributed to the guiding influence of Brother Dwane. Pat adds that this Christian Brother is "a natural coach in any field of sport", and says that it was this coaching genius of Brother Dwane that generated him to prominence.

ALL IRELAND TITLES

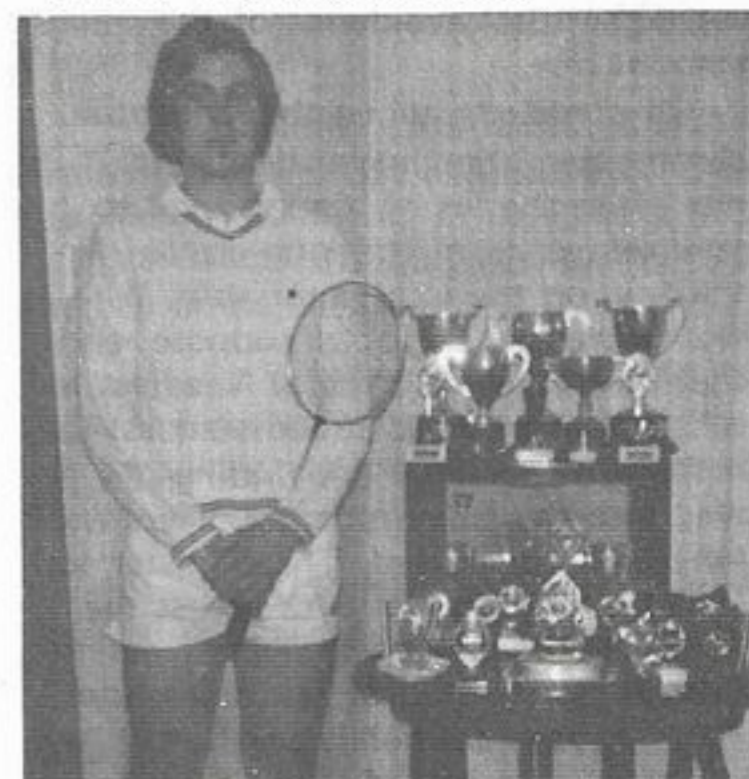
All-Ireland titles and international appearances are the dreams of most boys, but to Pat Marron these have already become a reality. In 1972 Pat partnered by E. Mackessy won the first of his two All-Ireland titles when he again won the under 15 Doubles. In 1974, Pat, partnered by his sister Mary, won the All-Ireland Mixed Double under 18 Badminton title. This notable achievement can be added to other trophies he won in Limerick and Munster.

Pat has had the notable distinction of representing his country at his favourite sport. In 1973, he played at under 17's in Edinburg against Scot-

land and England. The following year saw him in Birmingham representing his country in a triangle international. Last year, he visited Copenhagen for the European championships at under 8 level.

The qualities, Pat feels are essential to make a good badminton player are: fitness, determination, anticipation and deception. Pat says that his expenses last year amounted to a staggering and unbelievable figure of £400 - £500, all of which comes out of his own pocket. This latter statement is not meant to dishearten anybody interested in the sport, because, firstly, by the time you have reached Pat's high level, sponsorship may have attained a sufficient revenue as to decrease the Capital Expenditure on the individual. Secondly, you may never reach Pat's standard, conclusion, you may never spend a "bob."

In conclusion, let's hope Pat can achieve further success and glory in the game of "flying shuttlecock"



Pat Marron pictured with his Trophies.

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