

scenes

party politics and give status which would be fitting back to a more sed system to honour duals by the civic rities, of course the honour the city can w is the Freedom of ick. But the annual would be a way of ag on-going recogni-

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board at the back of St. Senan's Church.

An outing by the Youth Club to Ballyloughran House, which was due to take place on Sunday last, had to be cancelled due to the unforeseen illness of the instructor of the complex. On Sunday next the club will take part in the county finals to the basketball in the University. Team members are requested to attend club night prior to the event.

Parents are required to ferry the children to the college before 11.30 a.m. which is the starting time of the competitions. Afterwards a disco will be held in the Parkway at 5 o'clock. Each child is required to bring £1 and a packed lunch.

An outstanding player in the replay of the junior rugby semi final between St. Munchin's College, Corbally and Christian Brothers, Cork, was young Marcus Horan of Monaskea, Clonlara. A third yer student he has been a keen sportsman from a relatively young age. His brother, Philip, is a member of the senior team and with a ten nil victory under his belt in the replay Marcus hopes to lead his team to a comfortable win over PBC in the final.

A teenage disco will take place in the hall in Broadford on Friday, April 2 from 10 p.m. until 1 a.m. Disc jockey for the night is Ger Corbett and admission is £2. All the young people of the parish are asked to please come along and support this event.

Bridgetown ICA will hold a fund raising table quiz in Ginivans on Friday, April 2. This is an open event and teams are being invited to take part. Support would be very much appreciated.

ODDS AND ENDS

AN MANGAIRE SUGACH

Placenames and street names

THE latter part of 1992 saw the publication of a little book of great interest. Bearing the bilingual title, *The Placenames of Ireland in the Third Millennium — Logainmneacha na hÉireann sa Trú Mílaois*, it is published by the Ordnance Survey for the Placenames Commission.

The book carries a preface by James V. Rogers, commissioner of valuation and director of the Ordnance Survey; as well as an introduction by Professor Tomás de Bhaldraithe, chairman of the Placenames Commission.

The work, which for the most part is comprised of talks given at a seminar in Dublin on February 28, 1992, includes the texts of addresses delivered on that occasion by Bertie Ahern, Minister for Finance, and Michael Smith, Minister for the Environment, and also the texts of the following papers: *The Background and Present Role of the Placenames Branch of the Ordnance Survey*, by Art Ó Maolfabhail, chief placenames officer, Ordnance Survey, and secretary Placenames Commission; *A future for Irish Placenames*, by Donncha Ó Corráin, associate Professor of History, UCC; *Urban Placenames: Streets and Districts*, by Dr. Liam Mac Mathúna, lecturer, Department of Irish, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra; *Some Thoughts on Placenames and the Law*, by Leachlainn Ó Catháin, solicitor and administrator of Fasach; the *Placenames Branch of the Ordnance Survey*, by Dónall Mac Ghiolla Easpaig, higher placenames officer in the Ordnance Survey; *The Welsh Experience — Criticism and Example*, by Clive James, office of the chief executive, Gwynedd County Council, Wales;

Bilingual Streetnaming — Dublin Corporation's Approach, by Peter Morley, administrative officer, The roads and traffic department, Dublin Corporation.

Michael Smith, Minister for the Environment, referred, during his speech, to the tendency of developers to give "genteel-sounding" names to housing estates, especially in cities.

"Names like 'Windermere Court' or 'Grasmere Heights' may well be fine in the Lake District of England or even in Welwyn Garden City but they are hardly appropriate in historic Irish towns, and cities . . . the really distinctive names are the local indigenous placenames. Names that speak so eloquently of local history, archaeology and topography. It is a tragedy to see these names set aside in favour of the quaint and the corny."

Donncha Ó Corráin, at the commencement of his paper, makes the following remarks: "The suburb where I live in Cork is called Bishopstown. I have no objection to that name: it is simply a translation of Baile an Easpaig."

He goes on to say that these were lands owned by the bishops of Cork in the Middle Ages, and probably by the abbots of the great monastery of St. Finbarr long before the Normans, or even the Vikings, came to Ireland.

And he adds: "This local name mirrors the history of the area: in short, it has historical resonances."

Continuing, he says: "In that same suburb there is an estate called Tiffany Downs. It lies in low wet lands . . . and I object to that name."

The Tiffany part of the name, he says, came from Truman Capote's Break-

fast at Tiffany's (1958), a collection of short stories later turned into a film. Saying that he doubts whether the builder or his adviser had the remotest suspicion of the ultimate origin of the word Tiffany, Professor Ó Corráin explains that it derives from early medieval French *tifanie*, and that French borrowed it from ecclesiastical Latin *theofania*, which, in turn, borrowed it from Greek *theofaneia*, a word found in the work of fourth-century Christian writers and meaning "the manifestation of God to man."

With regard to the Downs part of the name, Professor Ó Corráin says that "whatever the builder or his adviser may not have known about Tiffany, they knew less about Downs, for evidently they thought 'Downs' had something to do with lowlands or bottoms. They could not be more wrong. The word down, Old English *dún*, means, in the first instance, 'a hill'; it is, in fact, the same word as *dune*, 'sandhill'.

Professor Ó Corráin gives examples of the rash of pretentious and alien-sounding estate names that has disfigured the environment of some many Irish towns and cities: Trafalgar Court, Ailesbury Oaks, Woodleigh Heights, Beechlawm Mews, Aylesbury Downs, etc.

In contrast to these "genteel" names is a name from early 17th century Dublin referred to by Liam Mac Mathúna in his paper, *Urban Placenames: Streets and Districts*. The name is Keasers Lane, and Speed in his map of Dublin (1610) has this to say of it:

"Keasers Lane. This lane is steepe and slipperie, in which otherwhyles, they make more haste

than good speede clinke their bummes to the stones. And therefore the ruder sorte, whether it be through corruption of speache, or for that they gye it a nickname, commonly terme it, not so homely, as truly, kisse arse lane."

In his paper, Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig, stating that the work of the Placenames Branch of the Ordnance Survey is to make our placenames available in the language in which they were composed — in other words, to ascertain the original Irish form of the placenames — gives us some idea of the amount of research this task entails.

Among the sources consulted is the wealth of surviving native material written in Irish and Latin between the seventh and nineteenth centuries, as well as the great bulk of non-native material in English in which anglicised forms of the placenames appear.

Art Ó Maolfabhail's paper is a wide-ranging one, covering the period from the scholars, O Donovan, O Curry and O Connor, who were employed on the original Ordnance Survey, to the researchers of today in the Placenames Branch who are engaged in the research work mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Art also deals with the setting up of An Coimisiún Logainmneacha (The Placenames Commission) in 1946, and refers to the great number of requests for information, in connection with placenames received by the Commission from State and semi-State organisations and from the general public.

There is a huge amount of interesting information on our placenames in this well-produced booklet of 144 pages, which is a very good bargain at £4.