

Not one man
a patch on
Pride of the

John B. Keane

OUT IN THE OPEN

I WAS UP the west coast last week and in the town of Ballisodare too in the County Sligo. As I was coming out of a public house in the company of a friend I was approached by an old lady who told me that she hailed originally from Askeaton but was then in the process of spending her fiftieth year in Ballisodare.

"You wrote lately," she said to me, "about the woman on her honeymoon who wore the night dress made from the Sunrise floor bags. I saw it in the Leader and the first thing it reminded me of was the Pride of the West."

An explanation was called for and she told me that she was once upon a time married to a man who was nicknamed the Pride of the West. Three years previously, he had succumbed to a winter 'flu and is now, we all hope, the pride of heaven.

It appears that when he was a young man in Ballisodare the times were anything but good, and there was only one good suit of clothes between himself and his two brothers.

He had, however, a great mother, a pure genius at putting patches on trousers and so skilled at her trade that the patches soon took over from the original material of the trousers.

Anyway, to make a long story short, the year 1932 came around and Dublin was the venue of the great Eucharistic Congress.

Many is the special train that pulled out from Sligo for Dublin on that memorable occasion and seated aboard one of these was none other than our friend from Ballisodare.

His brother wore the good suit, and he himself wore a lovely white báinín and his father's second best trousers with a large patch on the seat of it, cut from a flour bag which originally contained Pride of the West flour.

All was well while the train passed through the westlands for they were well used to such patches there. When he arrived in Dublin it was a different matter.

When he alighted from the train he set off walking towards the city centre. Soon he discovered that he was being followed by a large crowd. He could not know that the patch was the cause, for it sported in large red print the words "Pride of the West".

It is a known fact that city people are far more gullible than their country brothers, and the reason so many followed him was in the expectation of a fight.

If, they thought, this man goes around advertising himself as the Pride of the West, sooner or later he must be challenged by the prides of the north, south

and east.

For the length of time they followed, and went into a restaurant waited patiently for finish his meal. They went by and even came to train time.

Our friend headed station followed a huge crowd. From time they would patch on his pants and their heads in admiration such a display of courage.

He was far from big man. In fact, he was mediocre and somewhat inefficient in the post would expect to be a fighting man.

When he boarded the train they applauded loudly and they gave him a wide berth. He was the better-built men of the country.

The fact was that he never lifted his hand to his life. He was the legend of the West lingered in Dublin and old people who remember the metropolis, like their grandchildren.

He was far from being a man. In fact, he looked meagre and somewhat deficient. He would expect to see in a fighting man.

nondescript, looking fellow who used the city of Sligo went home unbeaten from his own beloved Sligo.

Letter

Now from an a letter from Miss Nicker, Pallasgrees. "Dear John B. Keane till you read this of way to Listowel on Thursday, the last I decided to invest in Henri Winterm Cromes and a bottle of wine.

"I called to Ash and got my messages decided to try and opened the box to find notes and silver.

"I turned the box at once in case it became too strong counter to lady. name of pub. twenty-six pound box she informed kindly gave me and another by way thank you. It was dren of the house the money in the

"Incidentally, the end of my luck. I



Tommy Quaid pictured as most people knew him - in goals for the Limerick senior hurling team - a position he held for some 18 years

Tommy Quaid a star on the field and off it

■ Former Limerick keeper was taken from us tragically early after an accident at work

OCTOBER COMES with sad regret for many families, similar to the falling leaves that signal the end of growth and better weather.

This week we cast our minds back to the passing of one of Limerick's greatest goalkeepers Tommy Quaid from Feohanagh.

It was a sad time for all Gaels especially his wife Breda, family relatives and friends. The outpouring of grief and the crowds that attended his funeral was immense. He was a kind, sincere person who was sporting and immaculately behaved on the playing field.

Tommy Quaid from Danganbeg enjoyed a very successful career for club and county and carried on the great tradition of the Quaid family.

He was brave and courageous with talent to match, and he had razor sharp reflexes, but a very humble heart. The teachers in the Vocational School in Newcastle West which I was attending at the time, had predicted from day one that he would play for Limerick after seeing him play in goals during lunchtime matches in the school field. He was small at the time but the potential was there and he did not disappoint them.

He was also a top class forward and how he thrilled the crowds with his 2-4 against Dromcollogher in the County junior final of '81 and his 2-11 against Ardagh in the County intermediate final of '88.

He was an All Star in 1992 in every sense of the word and a gentleman on and off the field and a perfect role model to encourage the youth to play our national games.

He won nearly all the top honours: Munster titles in 1980 and 1981; National Leagues in 1984 1985 and 1992, and Railway Cup medals with Munster in '81, '84, '85, and '92. An All Ireland medal, his ultimate ambition, eluded him. He played 36 times for Limerick, from 1975 to 1993, and also won football honours with his club.

His sons Tommy, Nicky, and Jack continue the Quaid tradition at present with Effin and Limerick.

The late Séan O'hAirneada, from Abbeyfeale composed a 20-line poem about his win in the Poc Fada in Cooley Mountain in Louth in 1992 and I include four of them in his praise.

When he won the Poc Fada, we



Then & Now

with Tom Aherne

cheered ourselves hoarse, With 57 pucks he completed the course,

Engineering in Milford, his fame will endure,

He took over in goals from Seamus Horgan from Tour.

The greatest game I ever saw Tommy Quaid play was in the County Senior Championship in 1992. It was a first round match played at Newcastle West on Sunday July 12. The opposition was Western Gaels drawn from ten other West clubs and a lot of pride was at stake.

The match had generated a lot of interest around the division and beyond and a large crowd turned up to watch the proceedings.

Tommy lined out at full forward but he was all over the field giving leadership and urging on his teammates. He scored points from all angles and distances from play and frees as only a master craftsman could do. He scored four points in the opening half to help Feohanagh to a five-point lead.

The Gaels came roaring back to leave just one point between the teams entering the final ten minutes. It was then when the need was greatest that the maestro caught fire. Tommy went on a scoring spree and had the defence at sixes and sevens. He drove six points over the crossbar without reply to leave his club 3-11 to 1-10 winners.

He played many outstanding games for club and county as a goalie and a forward and everybody will have their own personal favourite game. His list of high scores and his magical saves over a 20-year period have left wonderful memories for people who were lucky to witness them.

If all the greatest games were listed they would fill a fair-sized book. For the record the teams that lined out that never-to-be-forgotten evening were as follows.

Feohanagh: Joe Quaid, John

Madigan, John Lynch, Mike Quaid, John Kenny, Mike Sweeney, John Greaney, John Quaid, Seamus O'Keefe, Christy Phillips, (captain) Pat Hough 0-1, Liam Lynch, Pat Quaid 2-0, Tommy Quaid 0-10, Seamus Roche 1-0. Seanie O'Gorman the Cork hurler from Milford was their coach.

Western Gaels: Seamus O'Sullivan (Tournafulla), Mike Lane (Newcastle West), Con O'Keefe (Knockfierna Gaels), Mike Mulcahy (Newcastle West), John Danagher (Newcastle West), Gerard Moroney (Tournafulla), James O'Connor (Rathkeale), Gerard Galvin (captain) (Feenagh/Kilmeedy), John Flavin (Monagea), John Magner (Killeedy) 0-1, Don Flynn (Killeedy) 0-4, Tom Galvin (Feenagh/Kilmeedy), John Broderick (Dromcollogher/Broadford) 0-1, John Fitzgibbon (Killeedy) 1-2, Seamus Stapleton (Knockfierna Gaels) 0-2. Subs: David Woulfe (Ardagh), Declan Danaher (Knockaderry), and Maurice Curtin (Tournafulla). Referee: Terence Murray, Patrickswell.

In the next round Feohanagh drew with Emmetts 1-13 each with Tommy scoring 1-6. They lost the replay by 1-16 to 2-4 and Tommy contributed 1-3.

That evening in Newcastle West his hurley was like a magic wand as he cast a spell over the opposition. I will always treasure it in my chest of golden memories.

God gave us our memory so that we might have roses in December

For the memories are heartbeats that forever we will hold

Of Feohanagh's Tommy Quaid and his 18 years in the Limerick goals.

Tommy was born in Charleville, on April 23 1957. The son of Bridie (née Collins) and Jack Quaid, he was born into a family that had a strong association with hurling.

His father was one of the key players on the Limerick team which beat London in the 1954 All-

Ireland junior final. He won a senior Munster title the following year when a Mick Mackey-trained team shocked Clare in the provincial decider.

Jack's five children all followed in their father's footsteps on the hurling field. Séamus was a stalwart of the Feohanagh club until he emigrated to Australia. John went on to represent his county at minor and under 21 levels while Pat also served as a member of the Limerick under-21 hurling panel. Noreen also represented her county and local club in Feoghanagh.

The Quaid family moved to Feohanagh when Tommy was just a few years old. He was educated at the local national school before later attending secondary school in Newcastle West. Tommy trained as a fitter with the local Golden Vale company and later set up his own engineering business in Milford.

In retirement from inter-county hurling he built up his business, and gave employment to many people.

He also became involved in the coaching and management side of hurling. In 1998 he guided the Limerick intermediate hurlers to a Munster title defeating Tipperary 2-11 to 0-15.

His side later qualified for the All-Ireland final, with Kilkenny providing the opposition.

While working on the Credit Union building in Charleville, on October 6, he fell 20 feet from some scaffolding and landed on his back, hitting his head in the process. He was immediately rushed to hospital, however, he died from his injuries several days later on October 10 1998 aged 41.

It was the same day as the All Ireland final and his emotion-filled Limerick team went on to win the game by 4-16 to 2-17.

Many excellent tributes were paid to Tommy at the time, and the one that struck a chord with many was the Lament for Tommy Quaid written by the late Garry Mc Mahon.

The apples in the orchard are ripe for picking now

Brown gold and red, the leaves are shed from bare and drooping bough

The chestnuts too are falling, lying scattered through the glade

But a hurler's eyes won't see them- Feohanagh's Tommy Quaid.