



On Surveying the Ruins of Shanny's Pub

This is the very spot where Shanny's stood,
Here by the stream that fronts dear Plassy wood.
See the cruel nettles, dank and tall,
Entomb the door-step and the crumbling wall.
No trace of thatch or garden bright,
Nor windows to let in the light.
No clink of glasses from within,
Nor Kate's shrill voice above the din.
No voices in the evening air,
Only silence I can hardly bear.
Nothing now but this mouldering mound
To mark where fond memories gather around.

Time was when 'twas gay in this home of decay,
And the anglers would play in the heat of the day,
And the rods at the thatch and the door on the latch,
And Kate had no match in her speed to dispatch
A pint with frog's eyes on it or whiskey the size of it.

Anglers and Abbeymen stood here
To joke and chat and drink their beer.
There was Todsy, Jim Kane, John Shanny and Cockrum,
Rab Riley and Pandey, Napoleon and Bantrum,
Gakes, Taudy, The Shaun, Bore, Beaver and Bud,
Lapping up enough beer that would make a good flood,
Helped well by their friends of that ancient clan,
Dutch, Diddles and Susi and bold Paddy Tan.
But the anglers well matched them in numbers and vigour,
Conceding them little in consuming the liquor.
There was Gallagher, Fitz, Jim Lane and Pa Healy,
Pa Madden and Connell, Jim Ryan and Da Daly,
Bolstered up in the game by John Close and Mick Hannan,
Pat Morrissey, Lane, Jack Butler and Cannon.
Great lore and tradition were steeped in each sip,
And the gladness and pleasure were well worth the trip.
Though the beer was insipid and the porter was flat,
The discourse was lively and cheerful the chat.
The money was scarce and the water was deep,
But the fish were aplenty and the tackle was cheap.

I remember the night that Mike Oil gave a yell,
While the boys in the kitchen were drinking their fill.
A peeler he'd spotted upon the Grawn road,
Near the field that Dick Laffan had recently mowed.
Kate leaped on the floor with a kangaroo jump
That went well nigh straightenin' her wonderful hump.
The shock of the news nearly paralised Mary,
But Anne was as blithe and as gay as a fairy.
The boys kept on chatting and drinking their beer,
As if little they cared that the peeler was near,
And while they chatted o'er the drop

by Kevin Hannan



Shanny's Pub, from a drawing by Kevin Hannan.

Kate called Jim Ryan to clear the shop.
Bold Jim made haste to rouse the boys
With scowls and threats and barefaced lies.
But the boys went near to Kate's damnation,
To leave they had no inclination
And now the peeler hove in sight,
And Kate was nearly dead with fright.
The boys were nearly sober too,
But now it was too late to go.
The silence reigned in every corner,
The atmosphere was getting warmer,
Jim Ryan at last stepped to one side,
Before the door he opened wide.
In stepped the peeler with a "Please
Fill up a pint before I freeze."

Sure 'tis many a tale that is told of this place,
That has passed like its owners without any trace.
I can never look back but with sighs and with sorrow,
And think of the gloom that could come with to-morrow.
Ah farewell to the pleasures and joys that are gone,
And the house that cheered up and regaled everyone.
God rest all the friends that have gone on before us,
And hope they are fishing and singing a chorus,
In a pub with gold thatch by a sweet flowing stream,
And meet us again when we wake from life's dream.