

# KERRY'S TRADITIONAL MUSIC

**DURING** the Summer of 1980 and for the next couple of Summers it is hoped that a very comprehensive and professional collection of the traditional Songs, Music and Dances of Kerry will be carried out. This project has been initiated by the Trustees of Muckross House, together with Siamsa Tire and the Kerry Co. Board of Comhaltas Ceolteoiri Éireann.

These organisations will be providing major input of finance, introductions and general guidance. They will be supported and helped by UCC by way of technical equipment and expertise and by the involvement of Mr. Michael Ó Suilleabháin, the well known traditional musician and lecturer in the Music Department of UCC. The field workers, two of whom will be operating in Kerry this year, have been chosen through the good offices of Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin and with the help of Mr. Tom Munnely, who is a full-time collector for the Department of Irish Folklore, UCD. The Professor of Irish Folklore at UCD, Bo. Almqvist, is well known in the Kerry Gaeltacht and is giving his full support to this project. Indeed Tom Munnely, who is now living in Clare, should be well known in some parts of Kerry where he has been collecting songs particularly. Tom will train and guide the collectors in the early stages.

This collection is the first major recording/research project which the Trustees have co-ordinated and they will be looking for the help and co-operation of many people throughout the County. The master tapes will be located in Muckross House where people doing research into the song, music and dance of Kerry will have access to them.



Johnny O'Leary of Sliabh Luachra, traditional 'Box' player. John has appeared on a number of occasions in Pan Celtic and has appeared in Aberystwyth, in Wales, at a Celtic Festival there.

While in some pockets of Kerry a good deal of recording has previously been done, it is accepted by the three organisations sponsoring this project that it is now timely to do a properly comprehensive and professional collection. Otherwise it is felt that much of the traditions of the County will have disappeared. It is already accepted that many of the set dances, etc. have been very heavily influenced by outside traditions in recent years.

The *modus operandi* as planned will be that a collector will operate in the County for ten to twelve consecutive weeks each year. For 1980 finances will permit the use of only two collectors but the sponsoring organisations are hoping that once the project gets off the ground they may be able to organise sponsorship or additional Finance which

would enable more collectors to be operating.

## Killorglin History and Folklore Society

The Killorglin History and Folklore Society was set up two years ago with the object of fostering an interest in what remains of our history, traditions and folklore. Despite the name, the Society is not confined to the town of Killorglin but draws its membership from a wide area in mid-Kerry. The main aims of the Society are:

\*To provide a meeting place where those interested can come together regularly for lectures, discussion and outings to places of historical interest.

\*To collect information on folklore and traditions which are dying out and which could be lost. Mr. Denis Doyle has agreed to act as Recorder for this information.

\*To make people more aware of the value of items of historical interest and in this way to encourage the preservation of objects—not necessarily very old—which are now becoming rare. If possible these items should be preserved in their original setting—old farm equipment on the farm, old weighing scales etc. in the shop where they served former generations.

\*To arrange for the preservation of items where the owner is not prepared to look after them and to take them into care in the hope of having a museum at some future time. Mrs. Kathleen Prendiville is our Curator and she will store objects in the expectation of a Killorglin Museum.

To make people more aware of the Society and its aims an Exhibition and Seminar was organised for the weekend of 11th—13th April, 1980. The local schools were asked to submit projects and the pupils were encouraged to collect information from the older generation on life in former times. There was a good response and entries were of a high standard. Three lectures were given over the weekend—Mr. Denis Doyle spoke on the history and traditions of Killorglin, Mr. Donnchadh Ó Corrain spoke on Killorglin in early times and Mr. Kieron Foley dealt with the period just before the Famine. We are indebted to our speakers for all the work they put into their papers and to the schools who helped to make the weekend such a success.

The officers of the Society are Tom Foley, Anglont (Chairman); Eibhlín Ní Dhubhain (Secretary); Brian McCarthy (Treasurer); Mrs. K. Prendiville (Curator) and Mr. Denis Doyle (Recorder).

# ROS

JOURNAL OF KERRY FOLK LIFE.

Volume 10, No. 1.

## MAURICE WALSH

### NOVELIST, 1879-1964

**TO** commemorate the birth of Maurice Walsh the noted Novelist and Short Story writer from North Kerry, we had hoped to have an in depth article on his life and works in this issue of ROS. However, this failed to materialise and with a bit of luck we found a message from Maurice Walsh to the late Frank Sheehy, one time Chairman of the Kerry County Board of the G.A.A., in the Clar Cuimhne produced on the occasion of the opening *Pairc na h-Imeartha, Lios Tuathail, 15u Bealtaine, 1960* and we think that the reproduction of this message together with the personal note at the bottom will perhaps be a fitting commemoration for this man.

My dear Frank,

Seamus Wilmot; whom God assoil, tells me that you are opening your Listowel Sportsfield in May, that you are producing a Brochure, and that you would like some of us Kerry men to write a word or two. "Orders is Orders!" I could say a lot, only a broken-down wrist forbids it. Still, I must write a little.

I believe ye have done marvellous work on that sloping bit of ground; that it is now almost spirit-level, with a good underlayer and surface, good drainage and a very fine grass. Moreover, it is very nicely situated, for, sure, in case of any untoward accidents, you have the graveyard just over the wall.

Mind you, I can go back in memory a good seventy years. Listowel had no sportsfield then. We boys of St. Michael's used play football against your Church Street in the field you have re-shaped so well, but the games were mostly mayhem. Yes, I got some of my education (or lack thereof) at St. Michael's about 1890-'92. I never got further than *amo-amavi*; but I found that conjugation of some use in afterdays.

But Listowel did have quite a decent field later on in the nineties, with a quarter-mile grass circuit for cycling and running, a straight hundred yards and a jumping pit. Listen, now! At one sports-meeting I saw three men clear six feet in the high-jump, and the winner did six-three; I saw three do twenty-four feet in the long-jump. And one man put the sixteen pound short forty-eight feet. And Tom Walsh of Tullamore (later Asdee)—Jack Walsh's father—jumped twenty-one feet without taking off his boots or jacket! Them were the days; the days of the Leahys, Newburn, O'Connor and Horgan—and others.

You had some smart cyclists in those days, too. Jim Hanrahan of Ballylongford (who married my cousin Nell O'Connor), Courtney, who came from Killarney, and Shannon of the R.I.C. were first-class in any company.

It was about that time that Kerry football began to lift a head, and it hasn't lowered it ever since. Hurling was our game, as schoolboys, with home-cut whitethorn for hurleys and a slitter of sewn thread and cork. But our side of the river Feale could never touch the Mahera side where Ballyduff was of championship class and did win the All-Ireland against Wexford in 1892 after playing extra time. They played the extra time barefooted.

Listowel had a clever football team developed by Tom O'Sullivan, the able journalist, but not quite as good as Abbeyfeale founded by the great Father Casey. There was your Tom Somers, a notable player with an Achilles heel. When he got close home to the opponents' goal, an opponent-supporter yelled at him, and Tom dropped everything and invited the vociferous one "to have his block knocked off!"

I mind Tom telling me of a remarkable feat he performed one summer early-morning. "I was out hunting rabbits for me breakfast," said Tom, "with a pair of maggie sticks. I fired one stick at a rabbit out of a furze bush and missed him. And then", said Tom, "I let him have the second stick and I hit him in the same place". "You had no rabbit for breakfast, Tom", I remarked. "No", said Tom, "I sold him to Minnie O'Connor for the price of two pints". I still wonder how that rabbit died.

The country teams round Listowel were good and could give Listowel a game at any time. They still can.

# Local Government In Kerry In The 19th Century

**THIS** is the subject of a newly set-up exhibition at Muckross House and is the result of research work done by Mr. Brian Donnelly, Limerick who worked in Muckross as a Co-op Student from the NIHE. The Exhibition has been designed and set-up by Miss Mary McSweeney, Commercial Artist, 7 Ashe Street, Tralee.

The principal content of this exhibition is dealing with the 19th century but having done this it was felt that we should indicate how local Government had developed in the 20th century and we are very grateful to Mr. Tony Fitzmaurice, Training Officer, Kerry County Council for adding to our information on the development of Local Government in Kerry. This 20th century part of the Exhibition will be added later.

In 1811 an English visitor to Kerry, Edward Wakefield, observed that while the ordinary people had nothing against the Government, they had a very imperfect idea of what it was. Just 87 years later, Local Government in County Kerry was in the hands of the ordinary people. Such was the enormous change that had taken place in that area throughout the 19th century.

For much of the century the Local Administration of the County was in the hands of the landed classes. At the beginning of the century the Grand Juries and Municipal Corporations were the only organs of Local Government in County Kerry. The Grand Juries were non-elected bodies composed of landowners and magistrates who met twice a year to administer the affairs of the County by overseeing the construction and repair of roads, bridges, public buildings, etc. This system was paid for by a tax called the Grand Jury Cess which was for the most part levied off the ordinary people of the County.

The Municipal Corporations on the other-hand which had operated in Tralee, Dingle and Ardfert had become almost defuncted in the early 19th century and were eventually abolished about 1840.

Indeed that period paved the way for the very significant changes which were to take place later in the century in that the way was made clear for the setting up of Town Commissions in Tralee, Killarney and Listowel and for the setting up of the Board of Guardians which were to take over many of the functions of the Grand Juries but particularly were set-up to operate the Poor Law Unions in the County.

These Boards were to be representative of the tenant farmers and others and were now to be the subject of elections even though there were still ex-officio selected members. The Poor Rate with which the Irish Poor Law Unions supported themselves was essentially a rate levied on the land owners as well as on the tenant farmers.

The partly elected Poor Law Boards of Guardians acted as a stepping stone from the totally non-elected Grand Juries to the totally elected County Councils. So by 1898 with the Local Government Act, Urban District Councils, Rural District Councils and the County Council took over most of the functions of the Boards of Guardians and the Grand Juries, the later two which ceased in the 1920's.

## THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

There is great activity in the National Museum these days and under the fairly recently appointed Director, Mr. Brendan O'Riordain, we find a greater readiness to advise and help with our numerous problems and in addition we are being kept well informed of staff and other developments there.

The Keepers responsible for the different divisions in the Museum are as follows:

Mr. John Teahan, Art and Industry; Mr. Colum O'Riordain, Natural History; Mr. Michael Ryan, Antiquities; Mr. John C. O'Sullivan, Folklife. The newly appointed Education Officer is Miss Felicity Devlin.

The Museum has had a great deal of publicity in recent times with the acquisition of the chalice and other items from Derrynaflan. These finds are being regarded as at least equivalent in beauty and workmanship with the Ardagh Chalice. Huge numbers of people have gone to see them in the Museum.

It is expected that the Treasures of Ireland Exhibition which so successfully toured the United States over the past couple of years will be opened in the National Museum within the next few weeks. That will certainly be worth a visit.

We were very happy to be able to co-operate recently with the Folklife Division of the National Museum when they set-up a wonderful Exhibition on Coopering at the Bank of Ireland, Baggot Street, as part of the Dublin Arts Festival.

## DUN CHIARAIN THUATH

Gráig na Gréine	Neidín	Anna Ní Shiocharadha
Gort na Scairbhe	Cnocán	Seán Ó Cobhthaigh
Both Iseal	Gleann Cárthaigh	Séamus Ua Conchubhair
Seana-Caiseal	Gleann Cárthaigh	Máire Bean Uí Fhoghludha
Braighde	An Tuath	Máire C. Ní Chonchubhair
Cuilleannach	An Tuath	Brid, Bean Uí Chochláin
Cuilleannach (B)	An Tuath	Peadar Ó Cochláin
Gorth Buidhe	Lios an Phuca	Gilbert Mac Gearailt
Kilgobnet (C)	Cnocán	Eibhlín, Bean Uí Fhoghludha
Gleann Cotáin	Cill Orglan	Liam De Longphort

As promised in the last issue of ROS, Volume 9 No. 1, we complete the list of schools that participated in the 1937/38 Schools Folklore Collection which we have on micro-film at Muckross House.

## MAURICE WALSH CONTINUED

Finuge was good. So was Tullamore (Gael). Ballylongford hadn't flowered then, but an outlying townland, Ballyline, had a fine team of seventeen or twenty-one six-footers. Ballydonoghue was always handy, as it still is: but the hardest, most indestructible team of all was Ballyconry. A combination of Ballydonoghue-and-Ballyconry was hard to beat.

I mind, as a mere lad, playing in a famous game at Kiltan, in a five-acre field of Maurice Woulfe's. Our side of the river—the Galey—the combination above-mentioned—played the other side, including Finuge. The side-lines were the hedges: the goalposts piles of jackets and, of

MESSRS. Gwynne and Co., in 1851, obtained a patent for peat research. Already it was known that 100 tons of dried peat produced 1 ton of sulphate of ammonia, 14 cwt. of acetate of lime, 52 gallons of wood oil, 300 lbs. of paraffin, 100 gallons of naphtha and 100 gallons of heavy oil. Messrs. Gwynne and Co. found that highly dried peat ground to powder and pressed into bricks, withstood the heat of the furnace equal to coal. Moreover, its freedom from sulphur rendered it most valuable for smelting, reducing and refining metals. A ton of charcoal could be produced from four tons of dried peat.

These experiments were conducted on a property near Valentia. From *The Ancient and Modern History of the Maritime Ports of Ireland* by Anthony Marmion, London, 1855.

## MUCKROSS HOUSE LOCAL STUDIES WORKSHOP

"MY place at the Turn of the Century" was the theme of a Local Studies Workshop circulated in County Kerry by the Trustees of Muckross House Folk Museum, as a facility for schools in the County, during the seven weeks prior to the Christmas school holidays. Dr. Kevin McNamara, Bishop of Kerry, officially launched the Workshop at a reception in the Siamsa Tire Theatre, Tralee, on Monday, November 5, 1979.

## TEILEASCÓIP STAIRIUIL DON MHUSAEM

Déardaoin na Seachtaine Móire 1916 bhí "Aud" Mhic Asmáint faoi raon an teileascóip ó stáisiún Gharda an Chósta i mBaile Thaidhg, Co. Chiarraí.

Ceithre bhliain níos deanaí ar 23 Bealtaine 1920 ghlac aonad d'Arm na Poblachta seilbh ar an stáisiún ait as ar ardaigh siad an teileascóp leo sul ma chur siad an fhoirgneamh tré thine.

Bhí an colún a d'ionsaigh an stáisiún de ruathar reatha faoi cheannas Mhichil Mhic Piarais agus bhí Liam Ó Laidhin Rís ina leas-cheannasaí.

Bhronn Mícheál Mac Piarais an teileascóp ar an Ardmhusaem áit a bhfuil sé ar a thaispeáint, cur síos ar na heachtraí sin greanuta air ag Eibhlín Ní Chonaill as Trá Lí.

Chomh maith leis an teileascóp bhronn an t-Uasal Mac Piarais cloigead an chornail Crosbie as an musaem—cloigead milisteach a tógadh as caisleán Bhaile Thaidhg sul má dódh é go talamh freisin.

The material in the Workshop was provided by the Education Officer of the National Library and consisted of a range of documentary sources, selected from the rich historical archives of the National Library. (1) Census of Population and Housing, 1901; (2) List of Primary Schools 1901; (3) Set of 6 Inch Ordnance Survey Maps (c. 1890-1920); (4) Set of five foot Ordnance Survey Town Plans; (5) MacDonald's Irish Directory 1903; (6) Set of Lawrence photographs for Kerry towns and villages; (7) Names of all owners of land in Kerry in 1876; (8) Tables of crops grown in Kerry in 1901 and 1975; (9) Tables of farm livestock in Kerry in 1901 and 1975; (10) Pages from the first issue of *The Kerryman*; (11) Map of Kerry railways, 1906. These were suitable for analysis by Post-Primary and Senior Primary pupils and covered social conditions and life in County Kerry between 1880—1920. Groups of children spent about one and a half hours each at the Workshop doing some on-the-spot research assignments and receiving suggestions for follow-up projects at school.

A total of 1,682 children participated during the pre-arranged formal visits, which were directed by Mr. Seán O'Luanaigh of Muckross House staff. In addition, about 2,300 adults and children saw the exhibition in Tralee, Listowel, Dingle, Caherciveen, Kenmare and Castleisland. The venues for the Workshop were the Foyer of the Siamsa Tire Theatre, Tralee and the Branches of County Library in all the other centres. The County Library generously agreed to transport the exhibition from venue to venue and co-operated in every way with the Museum.

**Maurice Walsh**, Retired Officer of Customs and Excise. Born Ballydonoghue, Co. Kerry, May 2nd, 1879. Son of John Walsh, farmer and Land-Leaguer. Educated Lisselton, Ballybunion, St. Michael's College. Entered British Civil Service 1901: transferred to Irish service 1923. President Comhaltas Cána, 1929-30. President P.E.N. Club, 1938. Author of numerous novels, the best known of which are: *The Small Dark Man*, *And No Quarter*, *The Key Above the Door*, *Blackcock's Feather*, the *Thomasheen James* stories, *The Quiet Man*, a short story which was made into a world-famous film.

Recreations—Fishing, shooting golfing, gardening.

Yours, aye,  
MAURICE WALSH.

# Just Forty One Years Ago

by WALTER McGRATH

LAST Summer I spent some very enjoyable days holidaying in Castlegregory, and the highlight was a nostalgic exploration of the remains of its derelict railway station, from which the last train had steamed away just forty years before.

Surely it is an anniversary worth recording. While the fascinating Lartigue monorail between Listowel and Ballybunion had closed as early as 1924, the Castlegregory narrow gauge (three feet) branch line was the first section of orthodox railway to be abandoned anywhere in Co. Kerry. That melancholy event in 1939 was the first of a long litany of closures, continuing to our own day.

When the Tralee and Dingle Light Railway, surveyed and planned throughout the 1880's, finally opened to public service in April, 1891, it included a six-miles branch line from Castlegregory Junction at Lower Camp, through Deelis and Aughasla, to the pleasant village and resort of Castlegregory. For reasons of engineering difficulties, the terminus was situated half a mile short of the village.

The branch line lasted for 48 years, operated first by the private T. and D. Company, then by a Committee of Management of the Kerry County Council, and finally (from 1925) by the Great Southern Railways. When the latter company closed it in '39, they also terminated passenger services on the "main" Tralee and Dingle line, but this survived precariously for a further 14 years, with intermittent freight services, its last eight years being under the aegis of C.I.E. The Dingle Peninsula saw its very last train in 1953.

The eminent engineer Robert Worthington was the contractor who built both the Dingle and Castlegregory lines. The latter was relatively easy to construct, the only major engineering work along its length being a fairly high bridge over the Finglas river at Bunowa, Lower Camp. This has now been demolished but the approach piers are still here. The line was fairly level, except for a steep decline towards Castlegregory from beyond Aughasla. Most of the way the track ran along the northern side of the public road but, strangely, it crossed briefly to the southern side for the two intermediate halts at Deelis and Aughasla.

While the line was being constructed in the winter of 1890, there was a freak accident when some wagons heavily laden with ballast ran down a short sloping section of the permanent way at Deelis, became derailed and crashed into a small house, partly demolishing it. Fortunately nobody was injured.

Co. Kerry's most alarming railway disaster, which occurred on Whit Monday, May 22nd, 1893, when a "special" laden with pigs from Dingle fair crashed over Curraduff viaduct, Camp, having gone out of control while descending the long bank from Gleann na nGealt, took place not far from the Castlegregory branch. When the grim news of the calamity became known at Castlegregory Junction the branch train was propelled (engine at rear) up the main line to the fatal bridge. It then became an ambulance train, conveying dead, dying and injured into Tralee, whence they were brought to hospital. The three men on the engine of the doomed train all died. Several pig-buyers, travelling in a coach behind the wagons, were injured.

Last year I had the pleasure of collaborating with an English railway historian, David G. Rowlands (an expert on the Tralee and Dingle), in compiling a detailed survey of the part which the railway played in the life, lore and literature of the barony of Corca Dhuibhne. It is to be found in Journal No. 11 of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society.

Too late for inclusion in that work were many interesting snippets of information about the Castlegregory line. For instance, the late Pat O'Shea (known in football parlance as "Aeroplane" O'Shea from his high-fielding abilities on the Kerry inter-county teams of the 1910-15 era) remembers the railway for most of its existence. He recalls the exciting day when his father imported by sea and rail a "Spanish ass"—a specially prolific continental donkey of noted breeding propensities—and it seemed that the whole village and surrounding countryside had turned up at Castlegregory station to see it arrive!

Pat O'Shea taught for some years in Derryquay school, between Tralee and Camp, doing the return rail journey from his home in Castle-



THE LAST DAY — Station and Branch Line Staff, and some of their wives, crowd around the engine before the last train leaves Castlegregory, April 19, 1939.

gregory every day, and he utilised those enforced periods of "commuting" (to lapse into modern jargon) to get a sound grasp of Irish language grammar and literature. He thanks the Castlegregory train for his knowledge of Irish!

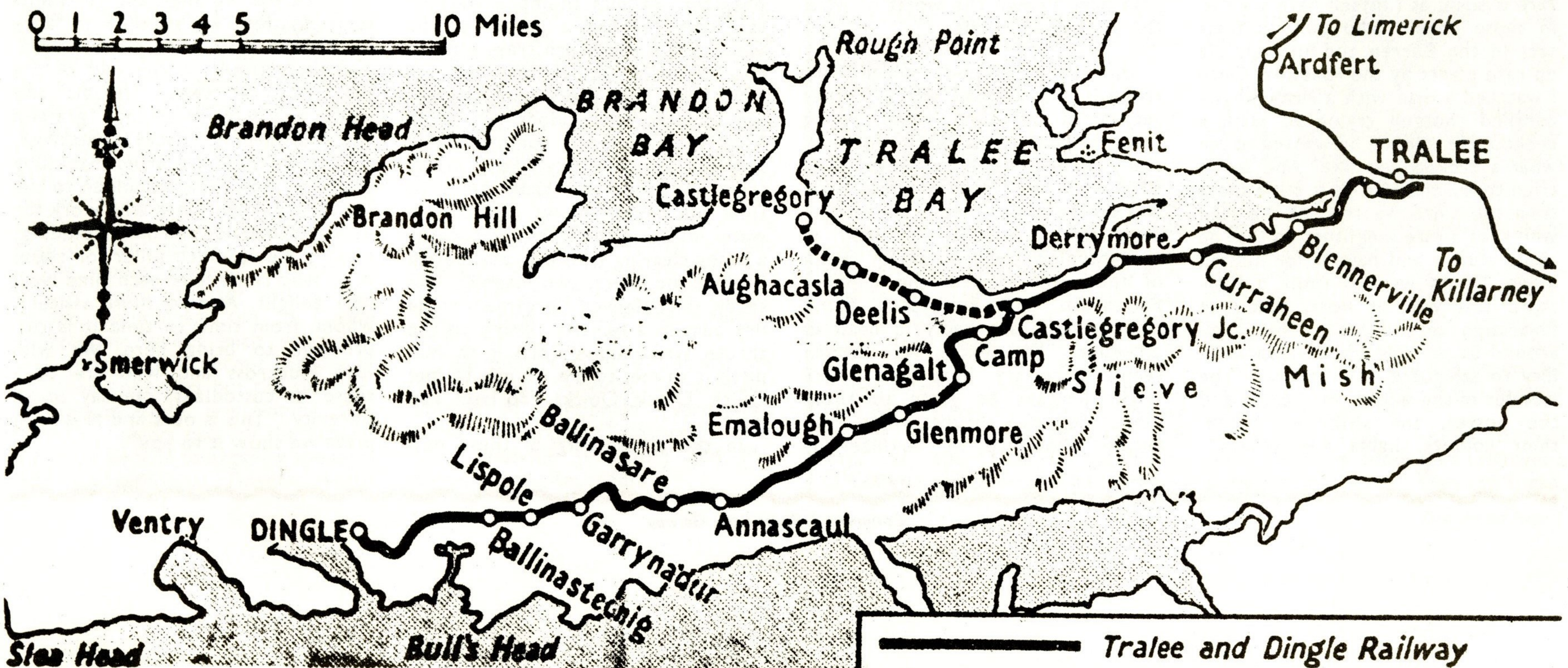
In G.S.R. days, one of the branch engine drivers was a Corkman named O'Farrell whose son Frank was destined to become a famous soccer trainer in Britain and abroad. I wrote to him last year at his home in Torquay inquiring whether he had any special memories of the period when his father was based in Castlegregory. His courteous reply contained some interesting social reflections on the great financial difficulties of railwaymen in the 1920's and '30's who were based far from home and had to pay their lodgings as well as send money home to their wife and, in the O'Farrells case, a large family. Frank's memory of the time when his father drove the Castlegregory train is of absolute thrift in the home, and their father telling them that he "made a razor blade last for several weeks". But he used to tell them, too, of his very kind and generous landlady in the guesthouse where he stayed. Many years later and long after his father's death, Frank O'Farrell visited Castlegregory and had that house pointed out to him.

On May 19th, 1932, an unusual visitor arrived by rail at Castlegregory and stayed overnight in a hotel in the village. He was Thomas R. Perkins, then aged 60, a pharmaceutical chemist from Henley, near Birmingham. What singled him from other tourists was that his visit was part of a gigantic life's ambition—to be the first man to travel over every mile of the tens of thousands of miles of railway track then open in

England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Castlegregory was one of the more remote outposts of his marathon itinerary, which took him over thirty years to complete. He was a prolific diarist, and all the annals of his travels are preserved. He tells us that his departure from Tralee was delayed because the incoming train was held up by floods at Ballyard near Blennerville (a constant hazard to T. & D. trains). When he finally reached the Junction he changed into the branch train, and he records that the guard courteously insisted that he move to the first class portion of the coach although his ticket was only third class. On the journey back to the Junction next morning the train had to stop near Aughasla while the driver and fireman left their engine to shoo off a flock of guinea fowl which were blocking the track. (Animal casualties were very numerous on the branch). Perkins was not always kindly in his descriptions of Irish hotels, but he records that the one (unnamed) in Castlegregory was most comfortable.

Still well remembered in Castlegregory is the late Kate Breen, woman County Councillor, sister of the P.P., ardent member of Fianna Fáil and reputedly a good friend of Mr. de Valera. It was rumoured (no doubt with exaggeration) that every time the G.S.R. threatened to close the Castlegregory branch, Kate pulled some strings with her friend in high places—and the line was reprieved. Be that as it may, Miss Breen eventually passed on after years of public service—and there were no further reprieves for the branch! The last train left Castlegregory on April 19th, 1939. It is ironic that, forty years later, the last surviving building in the old railway station still bears a faded slogan—"Up Dev".

Map of Dingle Peninsula showing the route of the Tralee/Dingle line with branch line to Castlegregory.



# Around Muckross

by REDMOND O'HANLON

**NEAR Muckross House there is a magnolia tree and one at Denis Cottage. Every year I make a pilgrimage to these trees in bloom and as I leave them for another year I feel somehow as if the world were, for a time at least, a better place.**

Yet, I find myself often wondering as I wander through the woods and gardens of Muckross why the beauty of nature has such a sad immediacy for some of us. It is as if one sensed the shortness of the time that is left to enjoy the beauty of the world. A. E. Housman, when only twenty years of age, reflected in his poem, *The Cherry Tree*—and his theme goes far beyond the beauty of nature—that he might perhaps hope for fifty more years in which to look and listen:

*"And since to look at things in bloom  
Fifty springs are little room,  
About the woodlands I will go  
And see the cherry hung with snow".*

Each spring we are grateful that we have lived to hear the shout of the cuckoo once again; and his call today is so much more than in the years when an endless succession of springs stretched before us: Or so it seemed; nor did we even dream we'd yet be old.

To me Muckross is Killarney; a microcosm of history and scenic beauty. It is in Muckross too, alas, that we have a hint, perhaps, of the truth that we tend unconsciously to destroy what we love. In its solitude and freedom lies much of the appeal of our favourite scenery. And so we return to it again and again with all the wonder and delight of children, for always in Muckross, and especially in its woodlands, much is to be found that is strange and new. But all too soon, though, happily not yet in Muckross, it happens that such places become over-run and shabby. Litter is thrown around; shrubs and wildflowers are trampled and even dug up; people come in with their transistor radios and the animals and birds that once delighted us gradually disappear. In our eagerness to grasp what delights the eye we destroy that beauty itself, and the memory of the crumpled butterfly in our hand is all that remains of its appeal.

This selfish urge to grab for ourselves alone what is beautiful or rare is seen, as I myself have seen it, in those people who pull up their cars in the Burren and furtively dig up rare plants by the roadside. Once I watched a man with a rusty single-barrelled shotgun trying to stalk a cuckoo. He told me he wanted to see what a cuckoo was like! And so he tried to kill the bird! It is but a short time too since we read of the man who shot a rare kingfisher so that he could stuff it and have it for himself alone. Could we not think a little more this year at least, Bliain an Phiarsaigh, of the beauty that is all around us still and of our responsibility to safeguard wild nature—"the wonder of the world, the beauty and the power, the shape of things, their colours, lights and shades?"

The widening of public interest in Muckross, especially in late years, is encouraging. But the increased pressure on the House itself and the gardens close by poses special problems. The development of a wider area around the house would now seem to be a matter of urgency. Here a word of praise is due to the workmen engaged in the landscaping of new territory. One cannot but note the careful clearance of scrub and brushwood accompanied by the planting of daffodils and narcissi beneath the mature trees. A director sensitive to nature would seem to be at work here; someone aware of the need to preserve the essential ruggedness of unspoiled woodland.

There are areas around Muckross left untouched, deliberately, it would seem, for over a hundred years. This is as it should be. There are few opportunities these days to see the "primeval forest". Here and there gigantic trees lie mouldering in the undergrowth, providing humus for nature's cycle of renewal and affording shelter yet a while longer to their successors. Here too one is conscious of indefinable smell of the forest, of growing things. Listen for a moment to the ringing silence! In this remoteness and quiet one finds it hard to believe that one is standing in the middle of a district which draws thousands of tourists yearly from all over the world. Only the movement of birds and small animals is heard, backgrounded by the sad whisper of the wind in the age-old pines. They stand, a long double line of these trees, awesome in their massiveness and dignity. One feels grateful for the privilege of lingering in the shade of such venerable trees; grateful too for the foresight of those who refused to allow them to be felled. I find myself visiting these trees again and again. Each one seems to have a personality of its own. The joint effect is one of brooding reserve. These old trees overshadow their younger fellows with all the tolerance of greybeards who have known the worst of what the years have to offer.

On rising ground, which falls towards the by-road and a further section of the older wood, young trees, notably Silver Birch, but with many exotic varieties, have been sited with care. Many of these trees and shrubs unfortunately are leaning away and are badly in need of straightening and re-staking. Some of the rarer shrubs, the Chinese Paintbrush and Eucalyptus Gunii among them, are badly in need of attention. The extra care which seems necessary here and there might perhaps be given to these more delicate shrubs when the annual allowance of fertilizer is

## CEIST?

Last year the Trustees sponsored a research project to find as much information as possible from written sources on traditional housing, fishing, trades and occupations in Co. Kerry.

We are now indexing the material which we got for this project and we find that a sizeable amount of it was recorded by Seosamh Ó Dálaigh and the late Tadhg Ó Murchadha acting as collectors for the Irish Folklore Commission.

We have come across some words and phrases in Irish the precise meaning of which is not clear to us. A number of these are given below and we probably will give others in future issues of ROS in the hope that some of our readers may help to give us further information.

## WORD/PHRASE

Tarrach sléibhe (used as thatch)  
Búrlach (leis an simné)  
Saluídí  
Baighreán  
Nialfartaigh(e) (for tanning)  
Birdeóg spléir  
Bóiricín  
Ar céulacan  
"Stakeman"  
Bruinnleog  
Ana umard  
Beaifití (seolta)  
Anafláig (iasc)  
Fréic  
Cochall (for poaching)  
Sgiathán (for poaching)  
Cailleach an iascaigh (ghost?)  
go treamhaidmhear  
Goushnáith (snáith lín)  
Drom-taoide (a tide)  
Tréasleán (ar scolb giúise), poaching salmon  
Culucs (a fish)  
Graidhp (under boat)  
Taoscán an Fhiléara (de chlocaibh)  
Poll duibh (dyeing)  
Núig na n-iasc  
An giorráinín spágach  
Lútharnach (a herb used for dyeing?)  
Umanothar (some time in future)  
Leath éasáid  
Leaca (appearance of cloth)  
Cró-fhranncach (a kind of seaweed)  
Raimh (for dyeing, grew in lake)  
Dagha (tanning)  
Dínnc

## RECORDED / YEAR

Caherdaniel, 1941  
Dromod, 1941  
Dromod, 1941  
Na tuaithe, 1940  
Prior, 1935  
Dunquin, 1938  
Dunquin, 1938  
Dunquin, 1938  
Dunquin, 1938  
An Lóthar, 1946  
Prior, 1952  
Caherdaniel, 1949  
Caherdaniel, 1949  
Prior, 1949  
Dromod, 1939  
Dromod, 1939  
Caherdaniel, 1939  
Caherdaniel, 1945  
Prior, 1942  
Prior, 1947  
Dromod 1939  
Corca Dhuibhne, 1942  
Dunquin, 1940  
Bord Ó nDúinn, 1944  
Valentia 1942  
Prior 1947  
Prior 1947  
Valentia, 1942  
Prior 1946  
Prior 1946  
Valentia, 1942  
Caherdaniel, 1944  
Múrach, Corca Dhuibhne, 1948  
Múrach, Corca Dhuibhne, 1949  
Prior 1949

being applied or the grass being controlled around them. It is disappointing too that many of these trees and shrubs have lost their name tags though enough of them remain for one to wonder at the hybridization, grafting and budding, that goes on in nurseries—*Tilia Contorta*, *Betula Utilis*, the exquisite *Arizonica Bonito* and *Fraxinus Eureka*, for instance, to name but four of those I noted for further enquiry. Close by Azaleas were in bloom although there was snow on the higher slopes of the Reeks.

From the coverts in the wood comes the startling crow of a cock pheasant. Rabbits thump a warning as I come around a corner of the wood. From the beech trees pigeons coo drowsily. Somewhere near at hand I can hear the sound of water for streams are seldom far off in Killarney. It is a companionable murmur this, broken by minor trills and chuckles. From time to time the breeze blows gaps in the water music. In the trees overlooking a sunny clearing where an abandoned beehive moulders, two magpies, like seedy, shirt-sleeved clergymen, rattle dry peas in a canister. Listen to the thrush strike up—"Pitch it to me; pitch it to me; to me, to me, to me! Quick, Quick, Quick! Too late! Too late!"

In the landscaping of these new

areas beyond the Gardens planning has ensured that these spaces shall not be over-manicured. The stilted primness of town parks with shaven lawns and pranked flower beds has been avoided here. Nature by our civilised standards, is unkempt, wind-blown, careless in her profusion; splashing her colours with the abandon of a child. All the birds, rooks and jays no less than thrushes, finches and blackbirds, are welcome in nature's informal orchestra, for here there is no score to be followed; the wind is the conductor and performers are free to come and go.

As we wander through the woods of Muckross we shed the restraints of civilisation; we scamper in fancy as children again. And we are tired, pleasantly tired, at the end of the day, "full of sweet dreams and health and quiet breathing"; grateful that there are such places as Muckross. And so we leave Muckross thankfully until the next time, beholden to the men and women there who work for us with dedication and understanding; making life so much fuller for those of us who come here each time with new delight. And to those visitors, whom, from time to time it is our privilege to bring here, we who love Muckross and who are in a sense its custodians, can say in all sincerity. "This is ours and it is with pride we show it to you".