

# THE Archive



## The Harrier Tradition

*Cork's Northside  
hosts a long and  
proud harrier  
tradition ...*

*Caroline Cronin*

In this issue of the "Archive", I would like to mention some of the Harrier clubs on the Northside who gave me great help with my project.

I called on Frank Quinlan of Fairhill Harriers, someone of wide experience in this field. Frank told me the club was founded in 1893 and is still going strong. A dual-purpose club, keeping both drag and hunting hounds, it has been one of the most



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successful in the Association due to the dedication of its members, past and present. They have won 15 All Irelands and are on top of the role of honour. Frank finished the interview by telling me that all people keeping hounds have great respect for animals; their dogs are well-fed and cared for, and that's the top priority.

My next interview was with Northern United's Denis O'Mahony. Sadly, Denis has recently passed on and I would like to convey my sympathy here to his wife and family. Founded in 1924, Northern United keep draghounds only. Originally based just off Blarney St. on Friars Ave., they now meet once a month in Horgan's pub in Blarney St. I asked Denis about his best dog and he said "A little bitch called 'Croft Victor' who won the All Ireland and the International in the same year, 1981". He regards that era as his "glory years". He also described how the club won the first All Ireland that was ever put up - The Beamish Cup, and again in 1929, '30 and '31. The three dogs, Tippling, Rambler and Tar Barrel are buried in the old club grounds on Friars Ave. Denis will be sadly missed by all his friends in the Harrier clubs.

Subsequently I spoke to Michael John Buckley of Clogheen Harrier Club. Michael John is very dedicated to the sport and has been involved all his life. He explained how the club was established as a breakaway from Northern Utd. They used to be sited at the end of Bakers Rd., but now get together monthly in St. Vincent's Hurling and Football club. They are a dual-purpose club and have won many drags down the years. Michael John hopes the club and he himself will go on for many years and I wish him the best of luck in that.

Onwards to Mr Gary O'Sullivan, secretary of Northern Hunt. This club was set up by members whose families are still involved today. They gather once a month in Johnnie's in Wolfe Tone St. Gary told me the drag is definitely a family sport with sons, daughters and grandchildren taking part. Over the last 40 years the club has run in Fairhill. He said women are much more involved nowadays and that the Call Finish has had a great influence in bringing the crowds back. Gary also gave me some superb photographs which I copied and stored in the Archive Room at the Sunbeam Centre. He would like to see a lot more publicity for the clubs because they work so hard and don't get the recognition they deserve. He has high hopes for the future of the sport and I wish him every success.

The next interview was a group one with Gerry Murray (Master of Northern Harriers, Blackpool), Tony Deenihan and Ted Scannell. A long-established club, (inaugurated 1822) they have a fine kennel in Blackpool. Gerry tells me they enjoy great support from the local people and they much appreciate this. It is solely a hunting club and he patiently explained to me what happens on a day's hunt, making it sound very exciting. They breed their own hounds, with maybe a few brought down from Cavan. Gerry feels that some people are totally misguided about hunting and invites any of them to come out on a Sunday for a good day's sport in the country.

Finally to Christy Keating of Kerry Pike Harriers. Going right back to 1823, it is one of the oldest (if not the oldest), clubs in the country. Like the other clubs they hold monthly

meetings. About 30 members of a wide variety of ages gather in Tower Hall. Another dual-club, the drag and hunting interests are equally strong. Christy tells me that they are breeding their own hounds a lot more nowadays because its more economical and they are just as good, if not better, than ones brought in from outside. The club has won many All Irelands and Internationals, and when I asked him if there was any rivalry between the clubs, he said there might be a bit of friendly competition at the start of a drag, but when its over they're all friends and all go back to the pub for a few pints and a chat about the dogs. He was very much in favour of bringing in the Call Finish and thinks it's great to see the crowd getting involved and cheering the dogs on - it all makes for a grand family day out. One of his hopes for the future is that every club will have more dogs so that there will be more competition, which is what it's all about. My thanks to all the clubs for speaking to me.

*Caroline Cronin has worked as a researcher for the Northside Folklore Project since September 1996, specialising in sports, pastimes and life histories.*

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## ***A Danish Visitor***

*In March this year the Northside Folklore Project hosted a visitor from Copenhagen, Denmark. Mr. John Christoffersen spent a total of six weeks in Ireland, one of a party of 20 Danish people on a study trip organised under the auspices of FÁS and it's equivalent Danish body. I had the pleasure of working for a few days with John on the early stages of the lay-out of this issue of "The Archive".*

*John had been employed in the banking industry for over 20 years, attaining the post of a branch manager in Copenhagen, when he was made redundant in March 1997. He was told of this decision the same day that he was required to quit his office! He went on a scheme with the Danish Ministry of Works last January, enabling him to pursue a long-time interest in computers and related software. John has used Microsoft to produce a magazine for a social/cultural group in his home country. The FÁS course here concentrated on program-testing and creating websites. He thinks this area has great potential for development and an exciting future. John's visit was a valuable learning process for both hosts and guests and we look forward to more such contacts with our European partners. - Editor*

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## ***Letters to "The Archive"***

*"The Archive" welcomes correspondence from readers. Your memory may be jogged by an item; you may wish to correct or add to something, or have other material that is of folkloric value. Don't be shy, drop us a line, or alternatively telephone us. Contact details on back cover. Letters should be short and may be edited. At present we are seeking information relating to nicknames for places; suburbs, streets, buildings and so on, e.g. "The Wilton Hilton" - Cork University Hospital.*

# The Eucharistic Procession

By Michael Hennessy

*Each year thousands of onlookers line the route of the Corpus Christi procession, an event that has a special place in the public's affections ...*

The Eucharistic Procession is organised by the people of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cork every year to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi, the "Body of Christ". On either the last Sunday of May or the first one of June, the Saviour's body in the form of the Eucharistic Host is carried through the streets of Cork at the head of a procession that is both solemn and joyous. The event has taken place every year since 1926, and has become established as an important fixture in Cork's cultural and religious calendar.

I began my research at the Cathedral of Saint Mary and Saint Anne, popularly known as the North Cathedral. Father Liam O'Driscoll there informed me that the first procession of 1926 was initiated by Bishop Callahan, R. I. P. It attracted an impressive 50,000 walkers, leaving the Cathedral at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The Bishop didn't leave the church until 5 o'clock, returning at nine o'clock in the evening. The route has changed somewhat down the years, with the first one going something like this: From the North Cathedral down Roman St., over Bridge St., through McCurtain St. (then recently renamed from King St.) down Lower Glanmire Rd., over the Railway Bridges, up Penrose Quay, across Brian Boru Bridge and on into the Middle Parish (inner city) through Patrick's St. and down as far as the National Monument on the Grand Parade. Bishop Callahan performed the ceremony of Benediction. The consecrated host was then returned to the Cathedral, many of the walkers accompanying it. The Bishop was a dedicated walker, continuing to take part in the event until his death at the age of ninety.

One of my most rewarding interviews was with Mr. J. K.

Hurley who at the age of eight or nine witnessed the procession with his mother and grandmother, his father having died the previous year. He remembers walking through Blackpool around Bleasbys St. (next to Hickeys) seeing altars and candles lit everywhere. His uncle was a tinsmith in Liberty St. and prior to the procession there was a brisk trade in candle holders that were called "scroes". Mr. Hurley has participated in every procession bar two, when other commitments made this impossible.

He also mentioned that the Scouts have taken part in the procession since 1930. In fact, the Scouts of the city have usually led the walk. Their customary assembly-place was by the Butter Exchange on Shandon Hill. As a rule the formation of the march follows in this sequence: In the front are the flag-bearers of the two organisations, Catholic Scouts of Ireland and Catholic Guides of Ireland. They carry the troop flags, National flags and Papal flags. They are followed by the Scouts and Guides, the Army Band of the Southern Command, the parishes of the city, the F. C. A., the



**St. Vincent's Choir, Sunday's Well - Eucharistic Procession 1941**

G a r d a Siochana, the Suil Maire, the B u t t e r E x c h a n g e B a n d, the Carrigaline Pipe Band, the members of t h e Corporation in their robes, then flower boys who strew the ground with flowers to prepare the public for the Eucharistic Host, and finally the Bishop and clergy.

Traditionally, only men and youths who had made their Confirmation actually walked in the procession, with women and children more in the role of observers. A few years ago Bishop Murphy wisely decided that all members of the community should be able to take part, creating more of a family atmosphere. I first walked in 1980, with my father (who has since passed away) as part of the contingent from Gurrabraher's Ascension Parish. I was aged twelve at the time. In 1981 I walked as a scout with the 10th Cork Unit, based in the North Cathedral. To this day I still walk, either with my family, my parish or my scout troop, St. Peter and Pauls, which is one of the oldest scout formations in the city. One of my great moments in the Scouts was when I was asked to carry the troop flag in the procession.

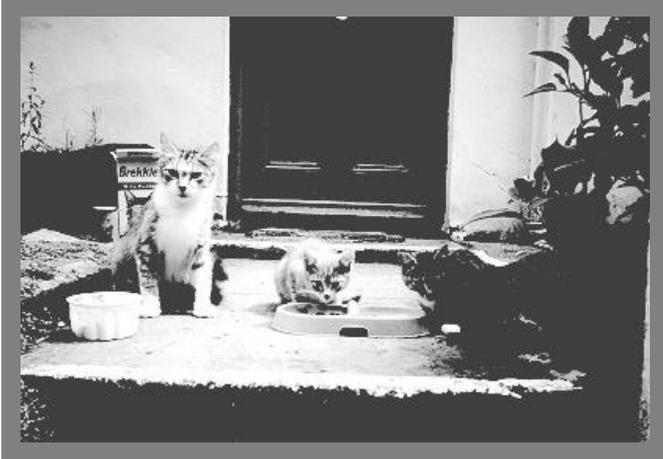
Numbers taking part in the event do seem to be decreasing slowly year-by-year. Whether this trend continues remains to be seen. But each year thousands of people still line the route and the procession remains a stirring spectacle, one that holds a special place in the public's affections.

# Feline Lore

By Maria Moss

*Cats feature frequently in folklore, they say a cat has nine lives, and people will argue whether it is good or bad luck for a black cat to cross your path ...*

I have always loved animals and it has been a wonderful experience for me to venture out into Cork and further afield to collect folklore from people who care for and respect



them. All animals share in a sacredness and spirituality that is a natural component of the animal kingdom and can enrich and transform lives. Sharing a home with them is therapeutic and can be beneficial to human health. Friendly physical contact with cats can reduce stress in their human companions - research has actually found that our body-systems become much calmer when we are stroking cats. A pet can also form a bond by providing unconditional love, which sadly can be lacking in all too many relationships. Feline Therapy and other forms of animal therapy are now being widely used in such diverse areas as psychiatry, rehabilitative treatment of criminals and guide dogs for the blind. Hopefully more of these enlightened concepts will be introduced into Ireland.

Many ancient societies revered animals as living relations of the same creation, sharing the same earth. They were totems, familiars and healers long before they were domesticated. The Book of Genesis contains explicit instructions, enjoining people to "dress and to keep" all of God's creation in reverential respect - something we should do when we see one of our fellow-creatures in distress.

I have fond memories from my first arrival in Cork of an elderly lady feeding feral cats at the former St. Peter's Church building (C. of I.) on North Main Street. She still gets a taxi into the city every Monday afternoon from a rest home on the Southside in order to feed another colony of cats. These animals only survive by scavenging and continuing their age-old function of rodent control. This is a sad state of affairs, but mild compared to some of the persecution cats have endured down the centuries.

I interviewed a 17 year-old Northside girl, a vegetarian with a love of cats. She likes Siamese, but her favourites are strays because to her they have an aura of mystery. This

dedicated animal-lover feeds a few of the "wild cats" as they are called on the Northside. She and a growing number of people would like to see a "Cats Protection League" in Cork. At present those feeding the cats are struggling financially and a proper neutering program needs to be introduced.

Cats have inspired artists such as W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) who wrote about "Minnaloushe" in the poem "The Cat and the Moon". Possibly the earliest record in European literature of someone writing of a pet cat is a short poem by an Irish monk residing at the Abbey of Saint Paul at Reichenau Carinthia, in central Europe. It dates from about the 8th Century A.D. and was set down in the margin of an illuminated manuscript. The monk shared a study with "Pangur Bán", Gaelic for "Little White Cat".

*"I and Pangur Bán my cat,  
'tis a little task we're at,  
Hunting mice is his delight,  
Hunting words I sit all night."*

This verse later inspired a book recounting the adventures of Pangur Bán, who finally ended his travels at Cashel Castle, an ancient capital of Munster. He was greatly loved and kept the castle rodent-free.

An old folkloric tale explains how rodents escaped when a curious woman upturned a tub in which St. Martin of Tours had salted bacon. In a desperate attempt to prevent the creatures becoming a plague on humanity, he flung his glove after them. His glove miraculously turned into a cat - hence the very first feline!

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## Christenings

By Lorraine Cahalane

*Not so long ago it was considered inappropriate for a mother to attend her baby's Christening until she had been "churched" ...*

Nowadays a Christening is a big family occasion. You could almost compare it to a small wedding. Not only are the parents, Godparents, grandparents, nieces and nephews present but also neighbours and relatives. Hats, flowers and even camcorders are now to be seen at these events.

The traditional white cotton and lace Christening gown which was usually "handed down", or which was made from the mother's wedding dress or Communion dress, has been replaced by satin gowns with matching bloomers, bonnet and booties, bought new in baby boutiques such as Mother Care.

For every Christening there is a Christening candle, sometimes the candle may be passed on through generations, but most parents buy new ones because the candle will also be used for Holy Communion and Confirmation. The candle comes in a decorated box with gilded spaces on the outside for the child's name, date of Baptism, date of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. One of the father's tasks at the Christening ceremony is to light this candle.

The religious aspect is sometimes retired to the background and transformed into a social occasion known as “wetting the baby's head”. The venue for the celebration is normally booked before the baby is born. Here on the Northside the Commons Bar, Commons Rd. is a very popular spot for the festivities.

The smallest tier of the wedding cake was normally kept for the Christening, but now a Christening cake is either bought or made especially for the event. Presents are brought to the Christening reception; silver is always given to the baby as a symbol of good luck. Traditionally a Christening mug was bought by the Godmother and was sometimes used to pour the holy water over the baby's head. The Godfather usually gave a silver spoon for luck, which gave to the rise of the old saying “born with a silver spoon in your mouth”. This usually denoted prosperity in later life. Other gifts are clothes, gold or silver bangles for girls, cuddly toys and money. Sometimes bank accounts are opened for the baby. In the last few years silver picture frames engraved with the baby's name, date and time of birth, weight at birth and other particulars, have become very popular and have tended to take the place of the Christening mug.

Up until the 1970's, Christenings were very different. The mother of the baby was not allowed to attend the ceremony. It was widely regarded by the clergy as a sin for the mother to enter the church without being “churched”. When the infant was about three days old, the Godparents came to the hospital or house. The Godmother then dressed the baby in the handed-down Christening gown and crochet shawl. The father usually went with them to the church. After the Christening the baby was brought back to the mother and undressed and then the “wetting of the baby's head” began. It was unheard of for the mother to leave the house, except for necessary trips to the local shops etc., until she was churched. So as soon as possible she went alone to be blessed by the priest and receive absolution through Confession. It was believed that this observance cleansed the soul after childbirth. At the time women believed it beneficial to their own well-being and that of the child.

In some cases the churching took place before the



**Baptismal Font, North Cathedral**

service. Today it is no longer considered necessary due to the progressive changes wrought by the Second Vatican Council the late 1960s.

Christenings are celebrated rather differently in the Church of



**Baptismal Font, St. Anne's**

would be plain candles and would bear little resemblance to the ornate ones of Catholic usage. There is no traditional dress – it's up to the parents what the baby wears during the day. The “wetting of the baby's head” also happens after the ceremony, but it is an event for the whole parish. Churching in the Church of Ireland was regarded as a joyous and thankful celebration of the delivery of a baby.

*Lorraine Cahalane has worked as a researcher for the Northside Folklore Project since September 1996, specialising in material culture, pastimes and calendar lore.*

## A Scottish Folklorist

*By Dr. Marie-Annick Desplanques, U.C.C.*

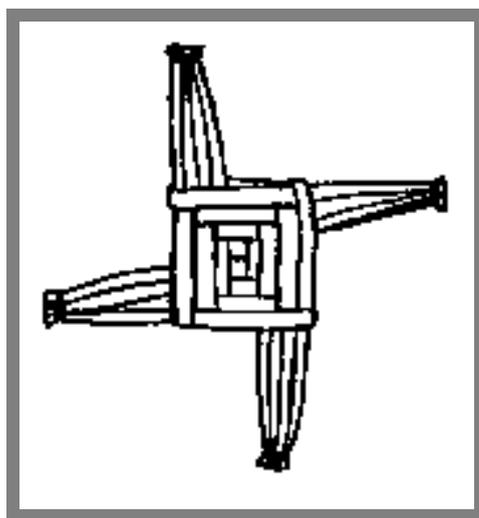
In February 1998, Gary West, the Urban Ethnology Specialist at the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh, visited the Folklore Project as part of a staff exchange between Folklore and Ethnology at U.C.C. and the School of Scottish Studies. His visit included a talk on the activities of the School and was part of an exploratory programme funded by SOCRATES. The general aim is to establish links between European institutions and more specifically, to introduce the activities of pilot schemes such as the Folklore Project. Gary West was very impressed by the project's perspective, it's activities, research results and the archive. There are no comparable projects in Scotland and he reported learning a great deal from his visit to Cork. He is eager to set up similar links between the School of Scottish Studies and community groups in Edinburgh which would foster the development of urban folklore research and resources. Gary said that the Northside Folklore Project is the kind of model which he would like to reproduce.

A great compliment indeed to all involved!

# Bride's Sacred Waters

By Stephen Hunter

*The Ballycannon Bride and its tributaries are slender threads linking Blackpool to a vanishing past ...*



With £2.2m soon to be spent on a flood-mitigation scheme in the Blackpool area, it seems an apposite time to look at the system involved, the Ballycannon Bride, and some history and folklore associated with it. This small

river (seldom wider than 12 feet or deeper than four, except when in spate) and its tributaries drain 45 sq. kilometres of Cork's urban Northside and rural hinterland. Often unlovely in the Blackpool stretch - for it has been abused and neglected - a closer examination reveals the stream to be a living link with an almost forgotten past. Nothing is more basic to life than water, on both physical and spiritual planes. The district owes its very name, "An Linne Dubh", to the dark waters of the channels and pools in the valley bottom. I took the names applied to the watercourses, their origins and meanings, as central reference points for this investigation.

The appellation "Bride" and associated words are seemingly as ancient as the Celtic peoples themselves. To the pre-English Britons, close cousins of the Irish, "brigantia" meant variously "sacred waters" and "falling ground" and was identified with a potent female water deity, who could also be a tribal goddess. The most powerful of British tribes, the Brigantes (or "High Ones"), ruled a broad swathe of northern Britain at the time of the Roman Conquest (1st Century A.D.). A West London tributary of the Thames has been Anglicised into the River Brent, while the Braint flows through North Wales. There are at least three other Bride rivers in Co. Cork alone. The word survives in place-names and inscriptions on the Continent. And an early map of Ireland by the Egyptian geographer Ptolemy (2nd Century A.D.) also shows "Brigantes" as a tribal name in the south of this country.

The goddess Brigit has been described as a daughter of the "supreme" Celtic being, Dagda, ("the Good God") and the Morrigan, a shape-shifting war goddess. Brigit was particularly associated with fertility and healing. Going yet further back, to the Celts' remote Indo-European forbears,

etymologists tell us that Brigit is synonymous with the Sanskrit "Brhati", or "Exalted One". In early Christian times the identity of Brigit became merged into that of Saint Brigid, Ireland's second patron. (There are 15 Irish Saint Brigid's listed; we are concerned here with the 5th Century Abbess, Brigid of Kildare, often known as "Mary of the Gaels".) Brigid possesses similar connections with nurturing, animal husbandry (especially cattle) and the end of winter. The Celtic festival of Imbolc and the Saint's feast were assigned the same date, February 1st.

Brigid's Feast would have been celebrated all over the country, the distinctive "Crios Bríde" being placed on homesteads and cow-byres to ensure protection and fertility during the coming year. Holy wells identified with Brigid are widespread and still visited. Rivers and streams already cognate with her name would have been attractive places to collect rushes for crosses and "Brídeóg" - effigies of the saint - and to dip material in the current, take water away for votive purposes and so on. Popular belief had it that the spring tide occurring closest to the saint's day would be the highest tide of the year. With seawater coming deep into the Bride's valley in those pre-reclamation days, the spectacle of brimming streams and pools around this holy day would have added to the general ambience of power and new life.

Despite lacking records for the area during the Early Christian and Medieval eras, we can make guesses about its character. I have a feeling that the Bride Valley would have retained in the minds of local people a strong aura of something even more ancient than Christianity. A wild place of wood and water, willow and hazel growing on boggy ground, oak on the better-drained slopes. A place where cattle might be watered before coming into Cork township, but subject to violent floods, the abode of unpredictable and mysterious forces, both life-giving and destructive. Many "piseógs" or superstitions would relate to the locality. Perhaps a zone where a "wise woman" might repair to collect herbs, prepare cures and commune with the unseen.

Mills harnessing the Bride and the Glen to turn waterwheels are recorded in the Civil Lists of the 17th Century. The earliest ones ground grains into flour and may well have existed in Medieval times. During the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, enterprises like Millfield's Sunbeam Mills utilised the waters heavily, both for power and manufacturing processes. Structures on Watercourse Road known as Archdeacon's Mills are described as still having their milling gear intact as late as 1930.

Churchfield writer and local historian Denis P. Long, at age 83 a marvel of energy and good humour, was the source of some fascinating material. He identified "Murphy's Rock" a spot by the Glenamought River, about two miles out into the countryside from Millfield. It was for many years a favourite picnic ground for Blackpool people. The Glenamought ("Glen of the Poor") rises at Whitechurch and joins the Bride in Lower Killeens, not far from Kilnap House. The Bride's source is in the townland of Ballycannon. Some people knew the two streams as the Greater and Lesser Bride. Pools in the rural reaches of both provided swimming-places for generations of children. On the Commons Rd. we examined the site of Jerome O'Donovan's homemade electricity plant. He was a National School teacher (died 1981) who made use of the river adjoining his property to

power his own generator during the 1930s. In the days before the E. S. B. grid reached the area this was both a novelty and a luxury.

A number of brooks join the Bride on the Commonage Field. This large open area of mixed bog and firmer ground is bounded by the Commons and Mallow Roads. In recent years it hosted the E.S.B. Polefield, in older days the Twig Yard; a reference to wicker work once carried on there. An alternative name for this stretch of the Bride is the Comain; this could be a Gaelicisation of "Commons". Other names used in this locality are the Bridge and Killard Streams. The first is self-explanatory. "Killard" would suggest a church (or a wood) on a height in the proximity. All this serves to highlight a problem which can be quite bewildering for the researcher: the same stream bearing several different names, sometimes for the same stretch; and the "official" name of a stream being transferred to another watercourse in the area. This is complicated by a paucity of early records and by man-made changes effected down the years

The apostle of Methodism, John Wesley, preached from Blackpool Bridge in 1748, his zeal matched only by a singular lack of success in winning converts. This area has seen some disastrous flooding, being inundated on Christmas Eve, 1895, after days of torrential rain, with the loss of three lives. Another famous denching occurred about 1935. In this instance there were no fatalities, but Denis remembered a tale about a fellow-pupil at Blackpool Boys National School, a boy known as "Bootsie", the proud possessor of a fine pair of footwear. An accomplished violinist, he was accompanied everywhere, at charity functions and so on, by his mother, who played piano. People watching the water swirling at a depth of several feet through the streets were amazed to see Bootsie, sound asleep on the family sofa, being borne along on the flood. Even more extraordinary was the sight of his mother nearby clinging to a floating piano, inseparable from her offspring as always. Or so the story goes.

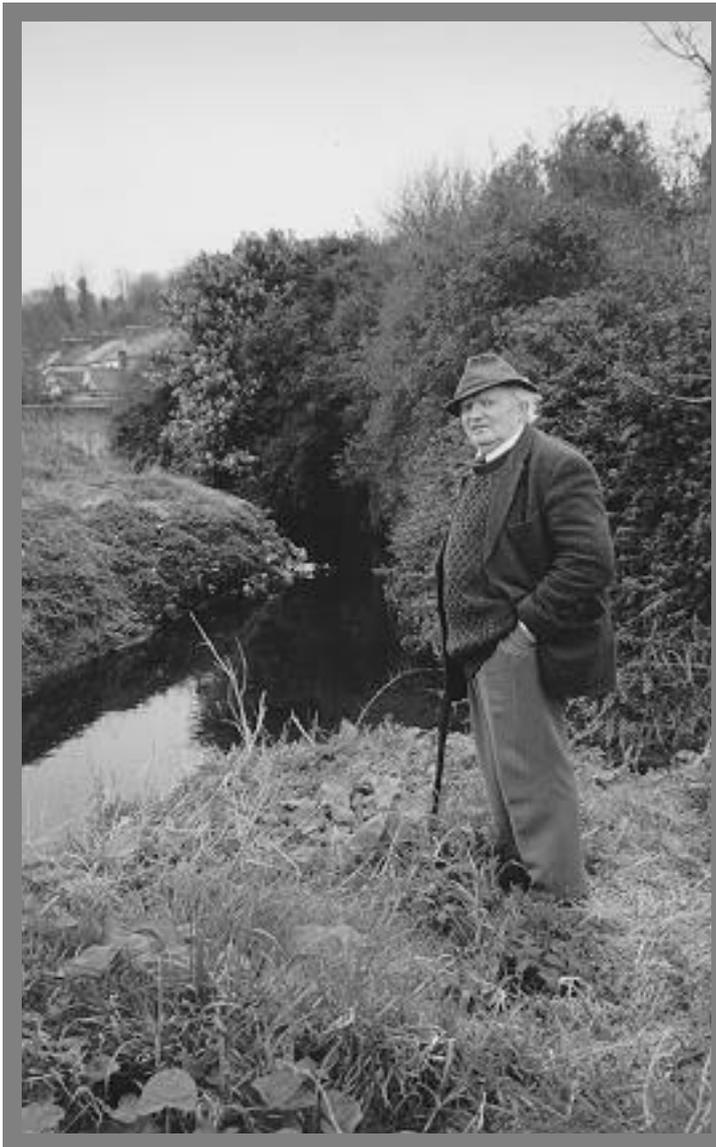
At no great distance the Glen (or Trabeg, implying "little beach, small strand") comes down from the Glen Valley, having risen near Mayfield Cross. Above the Glenties Flats

complex this stream divides at "the Hatch", a device for diverting the flow into either of two channels. Some people still recall a spot nearby dubbed "Micka's Harbour". In the 1930s one Michael Carroll, "Micka the Dog Robber" lived there in a kind of shanty he had constructed by the water's edge. His specialty was taking home stray dogs, grooming them to look as good as possible, then selling them on to farmers and others. When the time came for slum clearances in the area he proved a difficult character to shift, despite having no legal claim to the land. Eventually he moved after being offered some payment by way of compensation.

One of these forks of the Glen meets the Bride on the Commons. A vanished row of cottages abutting it below the Hatch bore the title Bird's Quay (perhaps named ironically; it could hardly have been a landing place). The other veers left down a kind of mill-race that may be essentially two hundred or more years old, known as the Backwatercourse, and sometimes locally called the Bank or Rats River. This proceeds to Assumption Road, skirting the Assumptionist Convent, at one time it turned 90 degrees, disappearing underground. The street name Corkeran's Quay is a reminder that once open water ran along its line. The culvert then emerges into a short open section of the Bride by Tanto Bridge, opposite the Church of the Annunciation.

Another fast-flowing tributary descends the slopes of the opposite, western side of the valley. It is now piped under Seminary Road ("late Water Lane"), but within living memory good-quality water was drawn from it for domestic use.

Poultreddy Harbour, near the recently demolished Shandon View Cottages and the end of Watercourse Rd., ultimately receives all these streams. A high banked finger of land extends like an isthmus between the Bride and backwatercourse. These are then piped together and join the estuarine Kiln River. The Kiln travels on beneath Leitrim St., with the historic site of Our Lady's Well on its eastern flank. Occasionally visible below Murphy's Brewery, it passes under the former Carroll's Bridge (built 1782) to enter the North Branch of the River Lee at Camden Quay.



**Denis P. Long by the River Bride**

Hard by Poulreddy stand the ruins of mills and associated works. Fragments may survive of Water's Mills, buildings that the Duke of Marlborough's soldiers took shelter in during the siege of Cork in 1690. James II's Jacobites pounded them with cannon from the nearby hill of Shandon in a vain attempt to dislodge them. Some see "Poll Raide" as another humorous designation. The antiquarian scholar C. J. F. MacCarthy (to whose work I am much indebted) suggests that the name embodies folk memories of a time when small boats could come up to this point on a high tide, and I have no doubt that this is so. Indeed, there are records of boat-building near Leitrim Street and the title Sand Quay was applied to part of the west bank of the Kiln River a little downstream. Archaeologist Colin Rinn thinks that Poulreddy may have held 4-6 foot of water at high tides in the days before drainage works began.

I have watched a blue heron at its intent work where one of the channels narrows, repeating behaviour that its ancestors may have performed at the same spot millennia ago. "Molly the Bog" they are termed in popular parlance. Barry, a local man, told me that he had noticed the birds returning in the last few years, a welcome sign of improving water-quality. He is the owner of a curious construction, a corrugated-iron storeroom suspended on steel girders over the stream, some feet above the flow. It was erected by his father and will be obliterated soon, along with the older historic remnants, making way for the new Blackpool By-Pass. It appears that Poulreddy itself will be covered in, with hopefully a small park being established on the site as some recompense for its loss.

I discovered yet more names here: the Millstream and "Abhainn na háite seo" – "The River of This Place", which seems appropriate. Whatever restructuring is done, I hope that the authorities will make a determined effort to remove the shopping trolleys and other rubbish from the river, enforce environmental laws and encourage people to take care of their waterways. A plaque or interpretative board relating to the streams in any future park would be a nice touch. A host of bridges have either vanished or been incorporated into roadways and other modern developments. In the urban section alone Blackpool, Tanto, the Roaring Bridge, Pope's Rd., St. John's, Leitrim St., Punch's, and Carroll's bridges are only some of them. They also deserve to be better recorded and commemorated.

But I will leave the final word to Denis Long. He supplied the following lines, the work of an anonymous balladeer of the 1920s. They describe a mythical voyage from Blackpool down to the Lee. The vessel involved begins life as a schooner, but undergoes metamorphosis into a submarine.

***"The Cruise of the Mary Jane"***

*She was a three-masted schooner*

*and she carried a Maxim Gun,  
And she carried a crew of a hundred  
and two and a cargo of horses' dung,*

*She sailed away from Corkeran's Quay  
the weather was not so fine,  
And next she went to Punch's Bridge  
where two couldn't pass at a time,*

*And sailing under the North Gate Bridge  
this big tremendous boat,  
The captain got out at Jones's Pawn  
where he got ninepence on his coat,*

*Then sailing past the Coal Quay boys,  
the skipper he gave a shout,  
"Boys", says he, "'Tis half-past three  
me bob has gone up the spout!"*

*He jumped for the water with a terrible laugh,  
he never was seen again,  
And the chaplain was made the captain  
of the U-Boat "Mary Jane".*

*Stephen Hunter started with the Northside Folklore Project in November 1996, and has edited the Archive since its inception. He has published articles and poetry both here and in the U.K.*

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# ***Easter Memories***

*By Billy McCarthy*

*Easter eggs, the Easter bunny and greeting cards had an entirely different meaning in the first half of the 20th Century. Easter eggs were of the organic type produced by the farmyard fowl, boiled and placed in a large bowl at the centre of the table on Easter Sunday morning. The Easter bunny provided the meat for the Easter Sunday dinner, and greeting cards were unknown ...*

Easter, it would seem, has always been the most popular feast in the Catholic Church calendar; this despite the religious and commercial hype associated with Christmas. Yet when we study the subject we realise that our minds focus on the one day - Easter Sunday, the day when our Lenten observances – obligatory and self-imposed – come to an end. The Easter holiday was also generally perceived as our first introduction to summertime.

As a child of the post-World War II years of the 1940s and '50s I grew up in the shadow of an accepted religious austerity imposed by parents who never questioned the authority of our spiritual leaders, regardless of their teachings. From age seven, when one was considered to have attained the "use of reason", one was expected to respect all of the Lenten sacrifices as laid down by the

Church authorities.

Apart from observing the statutory Church regulations, it was normal procedure for whole families – parents and school-going children – to attend daily morning Mass throughout the forty-day period. Many families followed this custom faithfully, regardless of weather conditions and without the benefit of motorised transport. For the first few days of Lent it was of course a big adventure for the younger family members who had never been out of home at such an early hour. But in a short time, like their older siblings, they began to look forward to Saturday and Sunday when they could attend a later Mass.

At that time (pre- Vatican II) the 10 o'clock Sunday Mass was the latest at which one could receive Holy Communion, so the three-hour weekend respite was your limit. To receive Communion on any day of the week one was required to fast from all food and drink from the previous midnight. This rule applied at all times, not just Lent.



**Decorative Egg Roche Stores 1998**

parents turned a blind eye to our furtive indulgences in previously forbidden goodies.

The Lenten Retreat was a major event in the Church year when adults, (one week for the men followed by a week for the women) attended special devotions consisting of Rosary, Sermon and Benediction. The ceremonies were conducted by visiting priests who were possessed of a unique talent for preaching and a skilled public relations manner. At this time particular emphasis was laid on the Sacrament of Penance and every opportunity was given to penitents to go to Confession at some stage during the course of the Retreat.

For the adults and grownup children late dancing and merrymaking were forbidden during Lent and no marriages took place during that period.

Easter really got underway during Holy Week when we prepared in earnest for the great feast. On Holy Thursday we attended evening devotions as well as our morning Mass. Mass was not celebrated on Good Friday, but the Stations of

the Cross were a must for all the family. As is the custom to this day, Stations were held 12.00 noon and at 3.00 p.m., leaving little excuse for non-attendance. On Easter Saturday night Confessions were heard late into the night to enable mothers of large families and men working long hours to make a proper spiritual preparation for Easter. Great emphasis was laid on the performance of one's Easter duties, which entailed the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Blessed Eucharist within the Easter period, beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding on Trinity Sunday.

Easter Sunday itself was always memorable. It was customary for the whole family to go to early Mass together and return to the first real breakfast they'd had in what seemed like an eternity.

*Now the days are passing quietly  
and you long for Patrick's Day,  
When abstainers will be granted a reprieve  
From the agony they've suffered  
when a brightly shining ray,  
Will accompany the respite they receive.  
And when the blessed day arrives  
and goodwill shrouds the land,  
And love and joyous wishes are provoked,  
You greet your neighbour kindly  
with friendly outstretched hand,  
And you've guessed it;  
you forget you ever smoked.*

*Billy McCarthy grew up in the Capwell area on the Southside. Married with four grown-up children, a passion for writing short stories and verse brought about an interest in folklore. Much of his time is occupied in research and documentation on behalf of the Northside Folklore Project.*

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## Sunbeam Long 'go

*By Catherine Fray*

*Sunbeam is now a silent shadow  
of what it used to be ...*

Sunbeam, Millfield, was owned by the late William Dwyer who has been classed as one of the best and fairest employers Cork has ever seen. He treated his employees with respect and consideration and they in turn liked and respected him. In all my interviews with former employees to date I have heard nothing but kind words and happy memories of their days in the Sunbeam.

Around 1972-73, the school-leaving age was raised to 16. During the '60s you could leave school at the ripe old age of 14 provided you attended a vocational school, better known as "the one day week". This was the equivalent to First Year in a Technical School. There you were taught basics such as

Irish, English and Mathematics. Boys were taught carpentry while the girls were taught domestic science. The other four weekdays you went to work. If you were from the Northside, there was a good chance that this would be in Sunbeam, probably Cork's most famous factory. Sunbeam employed thousands of Cork's young people in its heyday and you would find armies of Northsiders marching down Spangle Hill, more familiar today as Farranree.

You were given the opportunity to become to a machinist of some sort, with more choices for women as there was a greater variety of machines for them to train on, such as overlockers, lockstitchers and welters. Some on the other hand trained as examiners, pressers and packers, and let's not forget the very reliable runner, whose job it was to liaise between different departments. The men would go to work on the knitting-floors or would learn the skills of sewing machine mechanics and fabric-cutters. No matter what you did in Sunbeam, there was money to be made and fun to be had and a lot of happy memories for a lot of people who were very sad to see the closure of the much-loved old complex.

When a person started work in a big factory like Sunbeam there was always an element of "blackguarding". This teasing could involve sending the young and very innocent victim for such things as a bucket of steam, a glass hammer, a long stand and the like. It was basically a little harmless fun, but if you were a runner in the underwear division there was more to fear as you might be confronted by the Foxy Lady there. This story apparently arises from the days last century when the premises housed flax mills. Some unfortunate girl had her long red hair caught in a spinning machine, resulting in her untimely and horrific death. Since then it has been said that her ghost haunts the factory. Some people claim to have seen this apparition, while others are totally sceptical of the tale. A folkloric invention, or did she really exist?

When a girl was leaving Sunbeam to get married she was traditionally subjected to a series of pranks before she became Mrs ... The horseplay could leave the girl near tears; not always tears of joy. One of her friends would distract her while another got hold of her coat or jacket. It would be stitched up so that it was impossible to get on. Often there

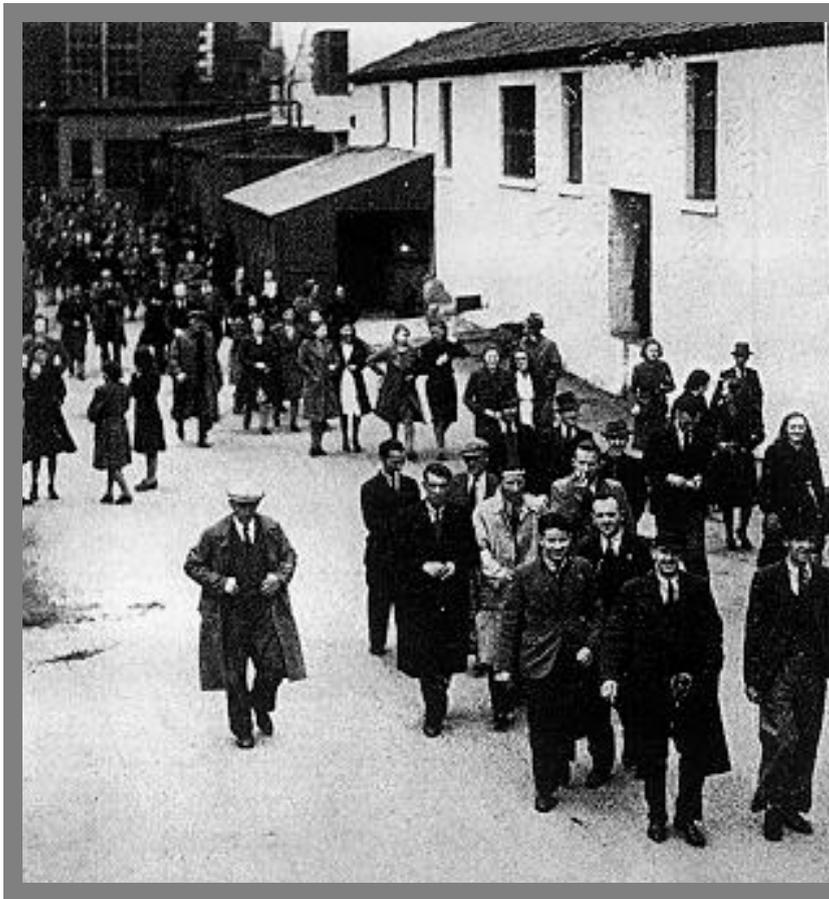
would be bits of fabric attached to the garment – then the sleeves would be opened and she would be made to wear it like a clown. Next, to add insult to injury, she would be put in a big work-trolley (this resembled a very large cage) piles of work would be thrown in on top of her and she would be wheeled around the factory. To complete her ordeal she would be beaten with eggs and flour. Then the workers would sit around and sing songs of farewell to the girl, by now reduced to an awful state. At 4.30 she would be marched off to the local pub, where the craic sometimes continued until closing time. The festivities ended with the march home, everyone singing to their heart's content.

Many will also recall the work outings where bus loads of young people went to the seaside, or on what was known in those days as a "mystery tour", where you could end up anywhere in Munster. There were some amazing characters; at least one in every department, and all of us who worked there will remember them fondly. Time changes everything, nothing

stays the same, but all these memories remain precious; right from the days of our childhood, socking apples in the orchards and being chased up the hill with our crab apples rolling back down to our dismay; to the times when the local people fought in vain to keep Sunbeam open. The day when we were told the enterprise was closing was a black one for Cork's Northside.

I still work in the grounds of Sunbeam today and often recollect that era, when the steam from the pressers would hiss and the knitting machines would click, mingled with the sounds of the girls singing to their favourite songs on the radio. Like the ghost of the Foxy Lady, it is all still now for another while, but no matter who takes it over there will never be quite the same feeling about the Sunbeam. It was a place where many young people learned about life, while still being protected by the warmth and humour of Cork's Northsiders, who have often been described as the salt of the earth.

*Catherine Fray has based this article on folklore she collected combined with her own memories – she grew up on the Northside and was employed in the Sunbeam as a machinist.*



***"Another Day Down ..."***

*Courtesy of Blackpool District Society*

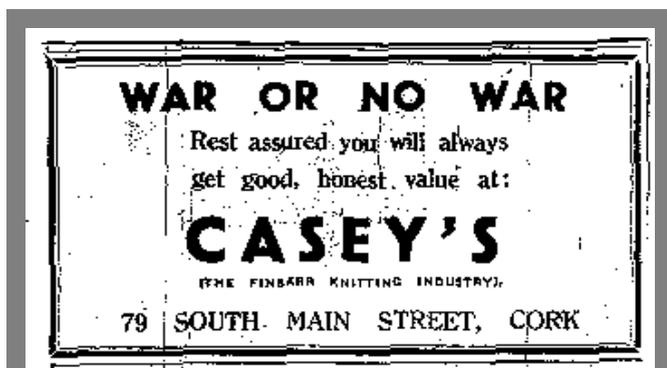
# The Emergency

By Valerie Curtin

*Bless them all, bless them all  
The long and the short and the tall  
Bless De Valera, and Seán McIntee  
Who gave us brown bread, and a half-ounce of tea  
And they rationed the cocoa and all  
And sure it needn't be rationed at all.  
They're bringing starvation, to our destination  
So cheer up, me lads, bless them all!*

So sang Corkonians, north and south of the river, during the “Emergency” period. Politicians always come under fire, and the Emergency was no exception! Chatting over afternoon tea with my good friends from the Northside has given me an insight into life during that austere time.

The 1930s will be remembered for the world-wide Great Depression. The post Civil War years were a turbulent era in Irish history. De Valera’s Fianna Fáil administration had taken over from the Cosgrave government in 1932. Ministers included Seán T O’Kelly, (nicknamed the leprechaun), Seán McIntee, Seán Lemass, Frank Aiken and Kevin Boland. Two anti-government factions, the Irish Republican Army (still



holding out for their ideal of a united thirty-two county state) and the right-wing “Blueshirts”, under Eoin O’Duffy, were dealt with rigorously. The abdication of Edward the Eighth in December 1936 afforded De Valera the opportunity to remove the Crown from the Constitution. In 1937 a new Constitution, “Bunreacht na h Éireann” was enacted. By 1938 the return of the ports of Lough Swilly, Cobh and Berehaven had been negotiated from the British.

Emigrants returned from overseas due to the widespread economic slump. There was still an exodus from rural areas. The government introduced a hair-shirt budget as part of its fiscal programme. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939, Cork was playing Kilkenny in the All Ireland Final. Britain’s declaration of war on Nazi Germany shook the airwaves and Ireland was plunged into yet another “Emergency”. De Valera made a stand for Ireland’s neutrality as a small developing country, a land already in crisis.

“ **The Rationing** ” – Excerpts from a conversation between Valerie Curtin and Margaret Farmer ( Blackpool ), Catherine McCarthy ( Blackpool ), Helen Donovan ( Inniscarra ).

## Excerpt 1

V.C: Ye have been telling me about the happenings of the Emergency, with regard to rations and coupons, and the ration books.

M.F: A half-ounce of tea. And we had brown bread. They rationed the cocoa and all.

V.C: And was it half a pound of sugar?

C. McC: Each? We never got a half-pound!

V. C: Two ounces?

C. McC: About that, yes, we were lucky if we got a pound between the lot of us.

H. D: We used to make our own white flour. We used to sieve the old brown flour we used to buy. We would put it into a nylon stocking, and hold the stocking over a bowl, as a sieve. You’d have to pass it to another one to give your hand a rest, you might be two hours shaking it. You might get half-a-dozen teeny-weeny little scones. They used to be delicious. And we used to make carrot tea! We used to grate a carrot, and fry it in the frying-pan to a lovely golden brown. We’d make a lovely cup out of that.

V. C: Carrot tea!

H. D: We thought it was tea, and we had the white scones.

V. C: I’d say people must have got very tired of the brown bread?

H. D: Oh, we couldn’t eat it, we used to get heartburn and everything.

M. F: It was more black than brown.

H. D: Brown dalt, we used to call it.

V. C: Could you get white flour on the black market?

M. F: If you had the money for it.

## Excerpt 2

M. F: The turf was a penny a sod.

V. C: And you used to bring it in a boxcar, the boxcar had one axle, two wheels and two long handles which you pushed in front of you.

M. F: And our gas was rationed and all.

V. C: Tell me about the rationing of the gas.

M. F: They allowed the gas in the morning for about two hours to get the dinner.

C. McC: And sometimes you might get a little glimmer at night, and you’d take a chance on it like, you’d get a cup of tea.

M. F: The “glimmer man” would be around, and if you were caught, you would be fined for it. One day this woman was making a bottle for her child, and he walked in and said “ what’s lighting here?” And she said, “ I couldn’t tell you, we have nothing lighting here! ”

V. C: And the electricity was rationed as well.

M. F: But we had more gas than electricity at that time.

## Excerpt 3

V. C: Sing the song you were singing for me about the Echo boys.

M. F: “ *Jimmy Nagle and Sam and O’Flaherty*

*Hired a motor car to Blarney*

*The night the goat got loose*

*Down on the Parade*  
*All the "Echo" boys in town*  
*They made a raid*  
*For they sauntered down through Pana*  
*With bunches of bananas,*  
*The night the goat broke loose*  
*Down on the Parade! "*

V. C: That's a lovely old song, Margaret.  
M.F: That did happen though, that the Echo boys rushed all the shops, and got plenty of sweets and everything.

V. C: But how would they have got into the shops?  
M. F: Sure the lights in Pana ( *Pana: Patrick Street* ) was out that time, there was no lights.

*Valerie Curtin was born in Sheare's St., in the Marsh area, 1950. She enjoys collecting folklore, and has been a researcher with the Northside Folklore Project since September 1997.*

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## Project Director's Note

*This is the second edition of The Archive. We hope you enjoyed reading it and that our articles may have set you thinking about how you have come in contact with folklore during your lifetime.*

*At present we are interviewing people about their life histories. Researchers are talking to people from all age groups and from all areas of the Northside about their memories, their life experiences and their tradition. The results make for interesting listening and will be available, once archived, at the project's base.*

*The Northside Folklore Project has been recognised for the second year running by The Heritage Council in its Community Based Grant Scheme. Last years award was towards the creation of a computerised archive facility. This year, the council has funded the compilation of an exhibition which will go on display in the autumn. More about that next issue.*

*In the meantime, should you like to participate in our life history project, do call us at the numbers listed on this page.*

***Dónal Sugrue*** *Stiúrthóir*

  
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The Northside  
Folklore Project



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