

Cummin Clancy

THE AMERICAN CONNECTION (CONTINUED)

Villanova University in Pennsylvania has been home to many athletes over the years, among them Ronnie Delaney and Sonia O'Sullivan. One of the first of those students was Cummin Clancy, a champion discus-thrower from Glann, Oughterard, Co. Galway. Cummin is the youngest son of Matt, grandson of William, better known as Billie. He was brought up on the farm where Matthias Clancy — the fear amháin — lived, the first Clancy who settled in Glann.

Cummin attended the local school in Glann where he was taught by Miss Hession and his father's cousin, Joe Morrissey. He joined the Garda Síochána in 1943 with his cousin, Furse Clancy from Clifden. Previous to that he had his first taste of sporting activities. Ned Tobin, who was a local Garda in Oughterard and who happened to be the Irish Weight Throwing champion, needed someone with whom to train. He took on Bill Clancy and his younger brother, Cummin. It was soon discovered that Cummin was the one who had the major talent. He was only 17



Home of Cummin and Maureen Clancy and family, Stewart Ave., Garden City, Long Island.



The Clancy family, Garden City, Long Island, U.S.A.

years of age, 6 foot, 4 inches tall, well built, non-smoker, non-drinker. He fitted the bill nicely.

After his training in the Garda Depot, Phoenix Park, Dublin, Cummin was assigned to the Dublin Metropolitan Gardai. The tallest men were always sent to that unit. While there, Cummin did street duty in O'Connell Street and other parts of inner city Dublin.

In 1948 Cummin won the All-Ireland discus championship having broken the Irish record that had been held by his trainer Garda, Ned Tobin. He won the British Amateur Athletic Association in 1948 and came second in the British Championship in 1949. Weight throwing was not his only success in sport. He was a capped at inter-provincial rugby and competed in Connacht Olympics in 1948. Cummen was also a huge success in the boxing ring but he never followed up on that sport.

In 1948 after he broke the Irish record, a series of spectacular performances followed, earning young Clancy a spot on the Irish Olympic

team that went to London in 1948. While Cummin did not take home a gold, silver or bronze medal, he did take home a qualifying medal which remains a treasured memento in his home in Gardan City, Long Island to this day.

More importantly Cummin met a recruiter from Villanova University who offered him an athletic scholarship to the college. Cummin accepted, making an important turning point in his life. As a member of the Gardai he studied at Trinity College and gained his matriculation certificate. He left the Gardai Siochana and set off for the United States.

While at Villanova, Cummin became known as the 'Galway Giant'. He enjoyed a distinguished career there. He was the Captain of Villanova University Track Team. He held the record in Villanova for twelve years. Cummin was a member of the Irish Olympic team who were chosen to go to Helsinki in 1952, but as there was not sponsorship available they never got there. He graduated from Villanova in 1953 with a Bachelor of Science and Economics. While in Villanova he met his future wife, Maureen O'Grady who was attending Rosemont College at the time. Rosemount is a sister college of Villanova. They were married in 1956.



Cummin and Maureen Clancy, New York.



Their grandchildren, Conor, Cole and Columbia Clancy, Florida.

When Cummin graduated from Villanova he worked with General Motors Institutue in Michigan. He was assigned to the Insurance Division.

In 1956 after their marriage, Cummin and Maureen established their own family insurance business in Garden City, Long Island. Their insurance agency is known as 'Clancy and Clancy'. They still operate it to the present day. They purchased their first home in 1960 and in 1967 they purchased their present magnificent home at 400 Stewart Avenue, Garden City.

They have five children, Seán, Maura, Brian, Brendan and Sheila. All the family were involved in running the family business. Their eldest daughter, Maura is now running the operation.

Seán, their eldest son, attended Amherst College in Massachussetts. He was captain of his college team of American Football. Seán was selected with the National Football League's Miami Dolphins. He played a few years with them and then joined the St. Louis Cardinals for two seasons. Brendan and Brian (twins) also played College Football. Maura and Sheila were basketball players. Sheila was captain of the College basketball team. Seán has gone into the business world now. He is a stock broker, principal share holder, senior vice-president of A.F. Best Securities, in Florida, New York and California.



Paddy Clancy (Matt) with his nephew Sean Clancy, Ball Harbour, Florida. (Oughterard 1996).

Cummin continues to follow Gaelic sports. Both himself and his wife, Maureen, are active in a number of professional, community and church organisations. Cummin is a member of the Irish-American Society of Long Island. The Clancys visit Ireland regularly. They have a beautiful holiday home in Glann, Oughterard, overlooking Lough Corrib where life began for the young Cummin Clancy.

PICTURESQUE

is the word for Clancy



THE FIRST "MILLIONAIRE" of The Travelers office at Hempstead, Long Island is extremely likely to be a picturesque young Irishman who during his first three years as an insurance man has built a multiple-line account surpassing that of many a veteran underwriter.

Applying the word "picturesque," to Cummin M. Clancy is quickly justified by a brief summary of his thirty-seven years.

He was born in Galway, Ireland as the youngest of five children of a cattle buyer. After his graduation

from the public school at Glann, he applied for membership on the Irish Free State police force, passed his examinations, and after training at the police academy, was assigned to the technical bureau of police headquarters in Dublin.

A STRAPPING YOUTH (he stands taller than six feet, three inches; and weighs some fifteen stone), he became a prominent contestant in athletic events. He was one of Ireland's leading rugby players, but achieved his greatest renown as a discus thrower. He became discus-throwing champion of Ireland, progressing to the British Open championship and to participation in the Olympics held in London in 1948.

An American witnessing the Olympics games was so impressed by Cummin's performances that he offered him a scholarship at Villanova College in the States. Cummin accepted, resigned from the police force, and came to America. He arrived here with \$28.35.

At Villanova he piled up scores for that institution in 1951 by winning both the International American Amateur Athletic Association track meet and the Penn Relays.

Contribution to the United Nations Peace Keeping Force



Since the early 'sixties Ireland has sent some of its security forces on a peace keeping missions to the Congo, Cyprus, the Lebanon, Iran, Bosnia, Cambodia and other countries. Liam Clancy, Athlone, son of Liam, grandson of Willie (Clifden) is a member of the Irish Defence Forces. As a young Lieutenant in November, 1979, he went to on United Nations duty to the Lebanon.

Liam was among others responsible for keeping the peace in a village of 3,000 people. This involved patrolling, manning checkpoints and providing humanitarian assistance around the clock. Liam had specific

responsibility for assisting operators of Tibnin Orphanage in whatever way was possible. He was also in charge of a platoon of 30 men in this volatile and unpredictable environment. He also negotiated with armed groups in his area of responsibility. He was in the Lebanon until May, 1980.

Nine years after, in November, 1989, Liam joined the United Nations peacekeeping observers in the Iranian capital, Teheran. Captain Clancy was in charge of a group of seven Irish troops, deployed to the region to assist in the supervision of a ceasefire following ten years of war between Iran and Iraq. His group was responsible for the security of United Nations buildings and installations located in Teheran. An additional task for Liam involved spending one month as personal assistant to the Chief Military Observer, General Slavko Yovic from (the then) Yugoslavia. He was in Iran until June, 1990.

In April, 1994 he set off again for the Lebanon. His role was Military Information Officer, United Nations Interim Force, Nagoura, South

Lebanon. During that period he was responsible for continually assessing the conflict in South Lebanon through the examination of operational events, attending meetings with various warring parties, media monitoring and extensive travelling to witness significant developments first hand. He was also responsible for the compilation of analysis papers for the Force Commander, UNIFIL and for the UN Headquarters in New York. These papers provide a detailed examination of ongoing events. They are an important part of the organisation planning process as they attempt to assess the likely future direction of events. Liam returned to Ireland in May, 1995.

In August, 1996, he went to Bosnia-Herzegovina where he was part of an Irish group who volunteered to go there to monitor the elections in September, 1996.

FOOTNOTE: As this book goes to press Commandant Liam Clancy has retired from the Irish army after twenty years service. He is now with Lloyd's Register, London, working with the United Nations as in Mission' in Turkey.

UNTAC in Cambodia

Members of the Garda Síochána (Irish Police Force) also did terms of duty on a peace keeping mission with the United Nations. Among them was Inspector Catherine Clancy — daughter of Furse Clancy, granddaughter of Willie (Clifden). On the 19th January, 1993, Catherine became a member of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. They went to Cambodia to pave the way for free and fair elections. It was up to this peace keeping force to create a neutral atmosphere in order to allow the elections to go ahead.

Civ Pol as the police force were known (that is the United Nations Police Force) were there to monitor the local police, to train and educate them in basic law and to develop a legal process. Heretofore, if someone committed a crime, they were shot or put in prison without trial. They could be there for years. The Gardai were also involved in training traffic police.



There are no traffic rules there as we know them.

Catherine informs me that despite all their trials and tribulations that the Cambodian people are full of hope for the future. They are a very happy, gentle people who are prospering because of the presence of UNTAC. The United Nations contract with the Cambodian Government ended in July, 1993. The elections were over and our Irish Peace Keeping Force returned to Ireland.

The members of the Clancy family are indeed very proud of the contribution made by Liam and Catherine to the United Nations peace keeping forces in South Lebanon, Iran, Cambodia and Bosnia.

*Blessed are those who work for peace
God will call them his children*

(Matt. 5, Verse 9, Sermon on the Mount)



Colonel Liam Clancy, Renmore Barracks, Galway. (1982).



Sgt. Padraic Clancy, 22nd Batt. McKee Barracks, Dublin. (1942).



Lieut. Liam Clancy, Military College, The Curragh, receives his Commission from Oscar Traynor, Minister for Defence, 1943.



Constable Pete Clancy R.I.C., Limerick. (1908).

GARDA SIOCHANA



Top left: Padraic Clancy, Carragart, Co. Donegal. 1944.



Top right: Garda Fursey, Dungloe, Co. Donegal. 1943.



Garda Catherine Clancy, Pearse Street, Dublin, 1979.



Bottom right: Garda Cummin Clancy, Dublin Metropolitan Gardai. 1943.

The New Generation of Clancys

From our family story it is quite evident that all our ancestors were farmers. We are descended from those of our family who survived the Great Famine. They worked hard and survived on the land. Their farms were small and some of the land was poor. In later years most of them moved away from the land. Some emigrated and they and their families got on very well in the country of their adoption—be it the United States or England. Some stayed in Ireland and made their fortunes in the business world. The Clancys who moved to Clifden from Oughterard were all business people, even although Pat Clancy had land as well as running a thriving business in Main Street. The Oughterard Clancys both in Glann and Maughera stayed on the land and are successful farmers to the present day. As happened to most Irish families, the small farm could only accommodate one family member. The family home and farm usually passed on to the eldest son, and if there was no son it went to the eldest daughter.



The Cowley family, Newcastle, Galway. Back row: Bernie, Rossa, Jerry, Angela, Noreen; front row: Monica, Joan, Kevin (father), Bride (mother), Mairéad and Matthias. (31-12-1971) — husband and family of Bride Clancy.



Pat Guy's premises, Main St., Clifden. (Home of his grandfather Pat Clancy).

Other members of the family moved into different trades and professions. My father was a business man but he was also a member of the Irish Volunteers. The military tradition was passed on to the next generation. My brother Liam started his military career in the Army Cadet School in the Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare. He retired as a Colonel in the eighties. His son Liam followed in his father's footsteps and is at present a serving Commandant in McKee Barracks in Dublin. My brothers Padraic and Fursey also served in the Irish Army during the Emergency (1939-1945).

As already stated, my Uncle Pete was a member of the R.I.C. My brothers Padraic and Fursey also served in the Irish police force. They were both sergeants in the Garda Síochána. Fursey's daughter Catherine is at present a serving Garda Superintendent in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. My sister Mary married a Garda Sergeant, Tony D'Arcy. My cousin Cummin Clancy from Glann was also a member of the Garda Síochána, but went to the United States after serving some years in the force. Fursey's daughter Mary married an army officer too, Commandant Joe Butler. The army and Garda connection was very strong in my family.



Corla Mansfield, Deputy Personnel Manager, Southern Region, Ulster Bank, 10 November, 1993.



Conor and Lorna Clancy. (Bundoran, 1996).



Maynooth 1994: Back row: Sr. Phyl Clancy, Joe Butler, Gráinne Clancy, Liam Clancy, Mrs. Kitty Clancy, Mary Butler, Fr. Stephen Ludden, Catherine Clancy. Front row: Karen, Brian and John Butler, Rebel.

Other branches of the family went into the caring professions. Bridie Clancy Cowley (Matthias' daughter) has six member of her family in the medical and social professions. We remember with pride all her son Dr. Jerry Cowley achieved for the hospital in Castlebar, and also all he has done to make Mulrany a better place for young and old. Other member of the Clancy family followed the teaching profession both at Primary and Secondary level schools.

Other members of the family went into the banking and finance business both in Ireland and the United States. Others have taken up the hotel and catering business in Ireland, the United States and Germany.

Bernadette Clancy Page also went into the business world, as did her family both in Bundoran and in Spain. One of the greatest business achievements of our family is Clancy and Clancy Insurance business in Garden City, Long Island—a family business owned by Cummin Clancy, his wife Maureen and family.

Jim Joe Clancy of Maugheramore, Oughterard stayed on the land owned by his father, and extended his farm buying a lot of land in his neighbourhood. Some of his family followed the trades of plumbing, plastering and of course farming.



Fursey Clancy, Lucan, receives his certificate for catering at the Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin. (First place 1970).



Gráinne Clancy, Maynooth, Assistant Manager with A.I.B. Dublin.



Srs. Consilio Clancy and Dominic O'Shaughnessy. (1980).



Mary Catherine Clancy (Magheramore, Oughterard). 1945.

I have come across a small number who followed the religious life. Sr. Dominic O'Shaughnessy whose mother was a Clancy from Rusheeney entered the Sisters of Mercy in Swinford, Co. Mayo. Srs. Damian and Anne Sullivan entered the Convent of Mercy in Galway. They are granddaughters of Maria Clancy, my father's eldest sister. They are daughters of John Andrew Sullivan of Loughannon. Sr. Fintan Connolly from Magheramore, Oughterard entered the Sisters of Mercy in Australia. Her mother, Baby D'Arcy, was related to the Clancy family. Then came myself. I entered the Sisters of Mercy, in Swinford, Co. Mayo on 1st April, 1949. The only priest I can remember who was part of our family tree is Fr. Colman King from Glann, Oughterard.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

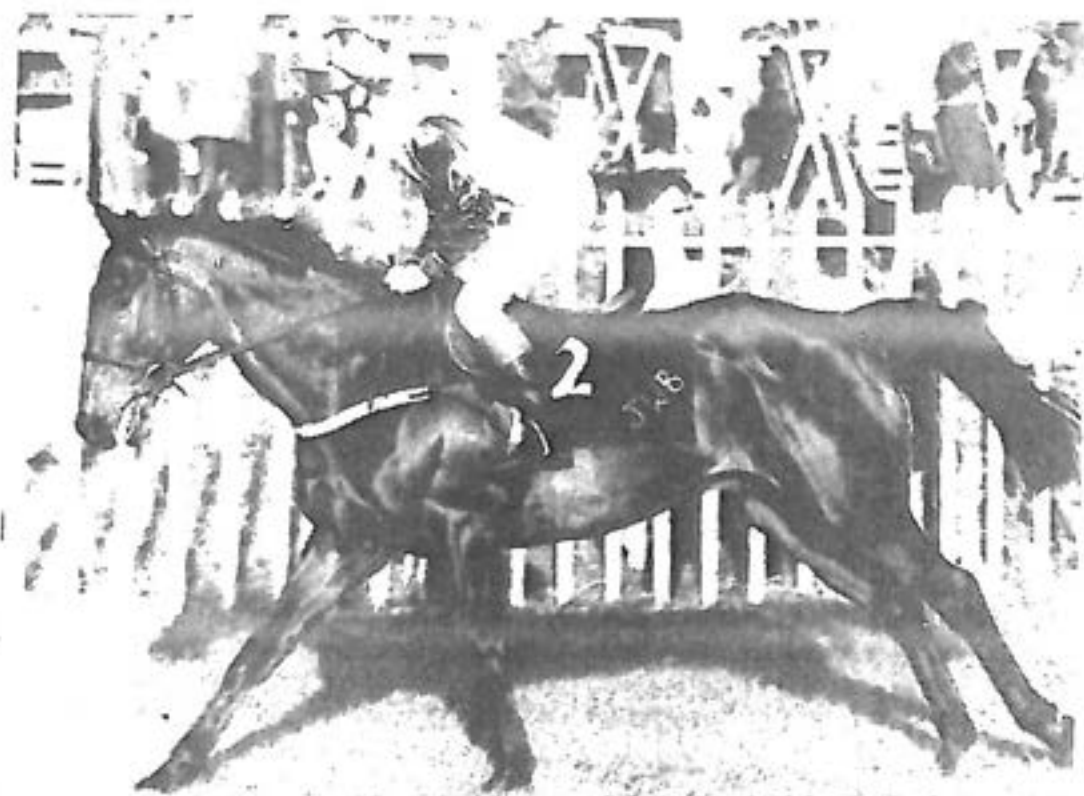
All down through the years, the Clancys were noted for their involvement in sport. This is evident to the present day. Two of our greatest sportsmen were Bill Clancy and his brother Cummin from Glann. Oughterard. Both were champion weight and discus throwers and they won many trophies for the same while they were being trained by Garda Ned Tobin.

Cummin represented Ireland in the Olympic Games in White City, in England in 1948. Cummin was also a champion boxer but gave it up in his early life. John Andrew Sullivan (Maria Clancy's son) was also a noted sportsman.

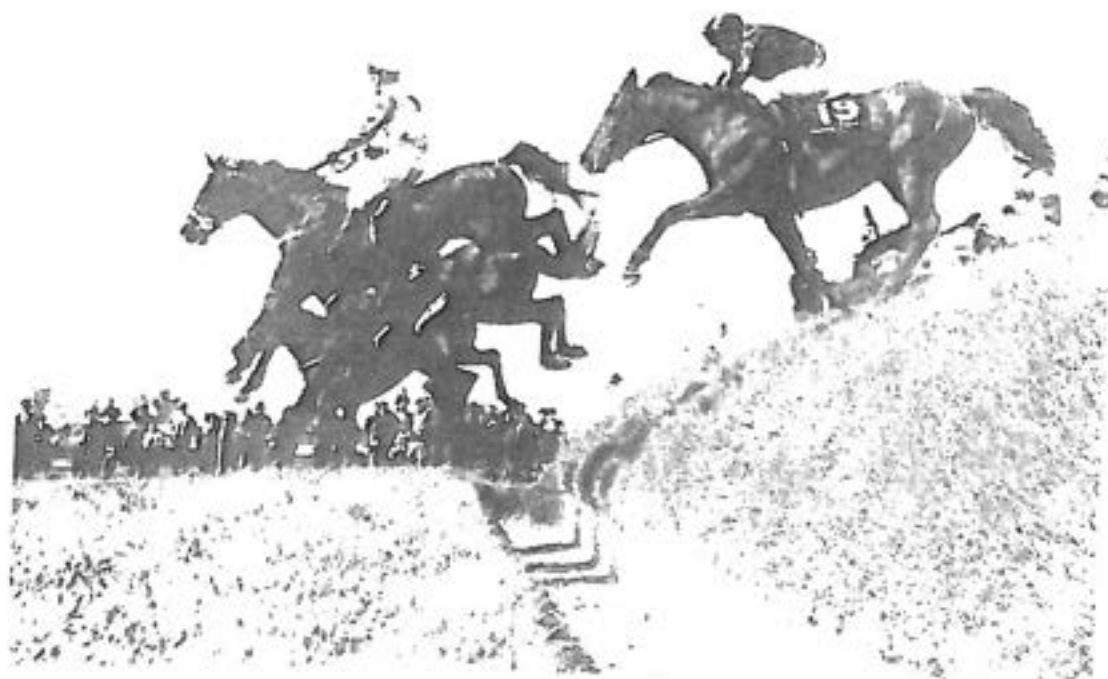
My brothers Padraic and Liam excelled at gaelic football and hurling. Padraic also won many trophies for the high jump. He also excelled at water sport. He was an excellent swimmer and often swam across Clifden Bay. Liam had a great love for fishing and grouse and pheasant shooting. In later years he excelled at golf and won many trophies. Liam's son Liam is a mountain climber and hill walker, also a lover of cycling.

Jim Joe Clancy's family from Magheramore also achieved high standards in sport. His son Gerard who died in early manhood was a champion boxer. That gift has been passed on to his son Gearóid and other members of the family. The other members of Jim Joe's family, both male and female, excelled in sporting activities.

Cummin Clancy's son Seán played baseball and American football. Fursey's son Liam followed horse riding as his sporting activity. His two race horses "Old Court" and "Handy Fella" brought him success at many race meetings. He is also a keen huntsman and is a member of the "Galway Blazers". His son Alan has now taken up the sport. Fursey's youngest daughter Gráinne was a member of the Irish cricket team who traveled to Australia and other countries. She is also an excellent hockey player and has won many trophies at golf. While in her teens she won all-Ireland medals for throwing the javélin, having obtained first place in Ireland. Paddy Matt's son Kevin excelled at gaelic football. Paddy himself in the greatest fisherman of the whole clan. He knows every inch and island of Lough Corrib. I am sure there are many more winners at sport across the family. I have mentioned but a few. I know there are very promising sports people coming up in the next generation.



Old Court ridden by L. Clancy



*Handyfellow on way to winning Ladies Cup at Punchestown Festival, April 1995.
(Owner, Liam Clancy).*



Liam Clancy, Master of the Galway Blazers. Ladies Cup Punchestown, April 1995.



Gráinne Clancy training for Celtic International Games (javelin) 1977.



Gráinne Clancy (getting ready to bat), Ireland versus Holland, cricket 1984.



Alan Clancy, Bundoran, representing Clongowes Wood College at Cross-Country (1997).



GOLF: Murphy's Irish Open at Druid's Glen: Gerald and Clodagh Kean (Kean Dream team), Dave Harvey and Inspector Catherine Clancy (Crimelime team). (1995).



BOXING: Thomas Lee, All-Ireland 1995, Marvin Lee, All-Ireland 1994, Gearoid Clancy, best home boxer at Oughterard tournament.

Eoin Kelly and Gearóid Clancy with trophies won in Dundalk.

Art, Music and Drama

I am not sure if the Clancys are noted for art, music and drama. My sister Mary was an excellent hand painter. She did many pictures both in oils and water colours. She painted quite a lot of the scenery for Clifden Town Hall. She also did beautiful altar falls in oil painting. Liam's daughter Corla is also very good at hand painting. She has done many hand paintings for her own home, and has had some art exhibitions.

The Clancys had a great gift of composing songs and poetry. I inherited this gift from them. Sometime I will publish all my ballads and poetry. They brought a lot of joy to people as they were composed for special events.

I have a great love for music. I passed on that gift to my pupils in Collooney, Co. Sligo when I started "Thre Collooney Girls Band" in 1959. The band won many medals and trophies at county, provincial and all-Ireland level. They appeared many times on television and in parades and fleadhanna throughout the country, including the City of Dublin.

The Clancys were great lovers of Drama. My sister Mary and my brothers Liam and Fursey were members of the Clifden Dramatic Society and played leading roles in many plays in the thirties and forties. The Clancys are also great lovers of animals. There is a pet dog in every household.



Collooney Girls Band 1976 with Canon Hunt P.P. and Sr. Consilio Clancy (band leader).



Mary Clancy, Glenties, First Communion, 1957.

Phyl Clancy, Clifden and "Spot" Confirmation, 1939.



Rebel—Maynooth (Grainne's lassie collie). 1990.

Childhood memories of Clifden

Travelling due west from Galway through Moycullen, Ross, Oughterard, Maam Cross, Recess, Ballinahinch, the traveller finds himself in Clifden — the last stop before Boston. This little town, known as the 'Capital of Connemara', nestles among the twelve pins — Na Beanna Beola.

Today Clifden and Oughterard are the main tourist attractions of Galway West. When I was brought up in Clifden in the 'thirties and 'forties it was a far cry from being a Mecca for money spending tourists. In the 'thirties the inhabitants were just getting their lives together after the burning of Clifden by the Black and Tans and the aftermath of the Civil War. The 'forties were no better as we tried to cope with the Emergency, the rations and the unemployment during World War II.



Clifden 1933: Back row: Bridget Flaherty, Mrs. Nora Clancy, Mrs. Mulcaire. Front row: Fursey Clancy, Johanna Mulcaire, Phyl Clancy and Anna Mulcaire.



Pat Melady, Bride Clancy and Phyl Clancy, 1933.



Fursey Clancy, Phyl Clancy, Tom McInerney, 1932.

Food and clothing were rationed but so also money. There was not the cash flow in Clifden then as there is today. Money is not everything. I believe that the greatest things in life are free, and we youngsters really enjoyed the freedom of Clifden and all it had to offer to penniless kids. It was a great little town in which to spend one's childhood. I suppose I could describe it as an insular town — a place where everybody knew everyone else and suspected the stranger.

Today parents are very concerned for the safety of their children and rightly so. Our parents had no fear for our safety. It was a great place to live and bring up a family. We roamed the streets, played on the beach, climbed the mountains, swam in the sea, walked and cycled the roads and the by-roads, and formed friendships that lasted for life.

The big event of the day was the arrival of the big red railway bus from Galway driven by Martin McEvady with his conductor Gabriel Burke. We met every bus, counted how many alighted — watched where they went, found out their business in the town and watched to see who hired Festy King's car, Marty Mannion's or John Payne's. People who came home on holidays were welcomed, strangers were eyed with suspicion and the great news of the day was the arrival of the school

inspector. We went straight to the Convent, told the nuns and informed every teacher in the town that 'the cigre' was on the bus. Everyone was in time for school the next day and all books and copies were in order. We sat up that night, revised all our spellings, tables and poetry. 'The Cigre' had no privacy of movement due to the petrol shortage during the war. Public transport was the order of the day.

Clifden in those days was full of characters — those unique Irish personalities who bring colour, humour and wit to every little town and village in Ireland. Clifden had a good quota of them.

There was Pat Melady, the butcher in Main Street known as 'Pat Ma' — the 'Ma' came from the sound of his sheep. My father died when I was only fourteen months, so 'Pat Ma' was the daddy-figure in my life. Pat wore an old tattered cap, a greasy waistcoat, and a trousers that saw better days. He had a fund of stories. He taught me how to play twenty-five, workhouse, snap and old-maid. He cooked lambs' tails for me on his open fire. He bought bags of bulls' eyes for me and fed me with porridge from his tin plate. Pat was an old-age pensioner which entitled him to ten shillings every week. Every Friday he took me by the hand and brought me to the post office to collect his pension. The local



Padraic, Liam and Fuesey Clancy on route to the Convent National School, Clifden. 1929.

assistant Martha Ladley handed Pat nine shillings and eleven pence and gave me a bright new penny. That made up the modest sum of ten shillings. Friday was our big day — Pat got his pension and I got mine. Every month he went on the train to a fair in Galway. He always brought me back a stick of Galway Rock. This was a pink sugar stick with Galway written all through it.

Pat Ma was my guardian, my hero and my friend. I remember when they laid him to rest. I was about ten years then. P.K. Joyce brought me in Payne's car to Teamplandearg graveyard to see the last of Pat Ma. I cried for days after his burial.

Next door to Pat lived Mike Flaherty, known as 'Spike', because of the time he spent working in the Workhouse. Spike had a little sweet shop. He sold us toffees covered with chocolates called 'Nobbies'. When we placed our order for a penny worth of sweets he would always remark 'Sure yis nobbies'. He too told us stories about his time in America and his adventures at the building of Brooklyn Bridge. He used to sit outside his shop door playing the flute. His favourite tunes were 'The Blackbird' and 'The Stack of Barley'.

A few doors down from Spike lived 'Auld King'. He had a long white beard and we kids were terrified of him. He was known locally as 'Coney Island', because of the many years he spent there while in America. Not many doors from him lived an old lady who also put the fear of God in us. She always dressed in black and used to threaten us with her stick. We called her 'Maggie Mick'. We used to shout in the door at her:

'Maggie Mick, Mick, Mick,
With your stick, stick, stick,
We're not afraid of you,
Or your dirty black shoe.

Another favourite haunt of ours in Main Street was John William Lacey's shop. There we bought a supply of stink bombs and set them off in Sr. Peter's class in the National School. All the perfumes of Arabia would not sweeten that class room after our explosion of stink bombs.

My Uncle Pat, known as 'The Flogger' was very fond of children. Half of the kids of the town gathered around his shop fire as he related story after story to us. We roasted sausages and bacon on the open fire in the bar. Every Sunday we trailed after him, buring fir bushes, picking cockles and mussels, roasting eggs on an open fire, counting cattle and many other things. Every Sunday during the summer he brought us on



Mrs. Grace Clancy, Clifden with daughter Phyl (Clifden 1948).

some mystery tour in the pony and trap. Ballinlame was always the favourite spot, the home of his brother-in-law, John Edward Coneys. The first stop was in Derrygymla where we got bags of can sweets in Annie Cottinghams. Then we got lemonade and Kerry Cream biscuits in Tommie O'Flaherty's in Ballyconneely. I have very happy memories of my Uncle Pat.

Another favourite character of my childhood was Peter Downey. Peter had a big dray horse and a float. He delivered goods from the Railway Station to all the business people around the town. We all got our turns having a spin on the float. We waited until all the goods were delivered. Then we crowded into the empty float and got a spin around the town and back to the Railway Station. Peter was high on the list of our favourite people.

Another man we always teased and annoyed was Pat O'Connor. He did not give us sweets so he was condemned immediately. We shouted in his door at regular intervals:

'Pateen Skinner, Pateen Skinner,
Skin a flea for a halfpenny'.

We bought sweets from his neighbour Miss Bourke. Then we would rob the roses from her garden and bring them up to the nuns for the altar. From Miss Bourke's garden we crossed into Willie Lavelles and stole the apples from his apple trees.

Another great character in Clifden was Johnnie Jennings. Johnny was the local handyman. He seemed to be an authority on everything. He could paint houses, clean eve runs, replace slates after a storm, Johnnie seemed to be able to do everything. In my home he was even the family barber. On a Saturday night we lined up in the kitchen as Johnnie cut our hair. Newspaper was tucked inside our clothes as Johnnie cut away with a big sharp scissors. He too had a fund of stories, tricks and riddles. He performed all kinds of magic for us. Many a time he sent me around the town looking for the loan of the round square or the glass hammer.

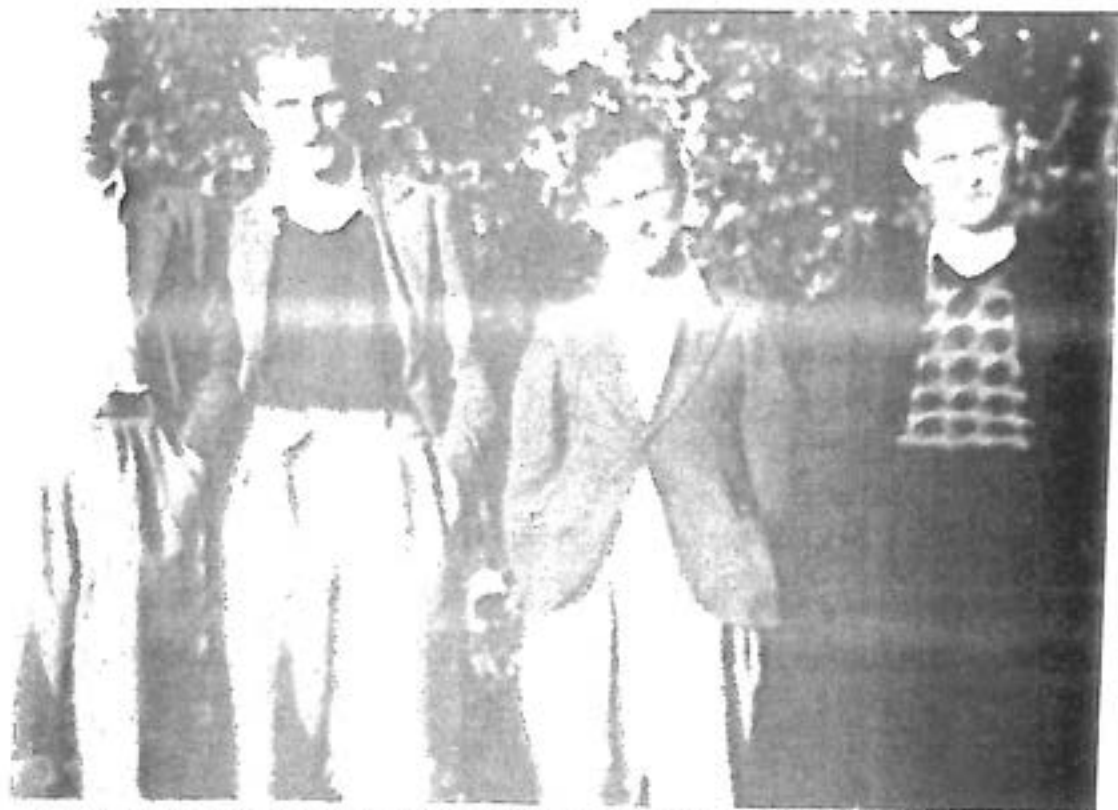
Other characters that come to mind are Victor McDowell who walked on his heels and delivered papers for Bernard Ludden. Then there was Pep, Danny Hawkins, Mickileen the Weaver, Hector McDonagh who used to weigh us at the Crane on the Square, Sweetie Lydon who sold us rainbow sweets at ten a penny, her brother, 'Twopence', the blacksmith and many more. All those colourful characters who brought so much happiness are gone to their final resting place.



Clifden 1945: Back row: May Gorham, May O'Toole, Mary Madden, Mary Lysaght, Frances McGrath, Maureen Casey; middle row: Phil Stankard, Phyl Clancy, Cissie Coyne, May Hynes, Mary Cloonan.



Parish Church Choir, Clifden with Canon Cunningham P.P. (Kylemore Abbey 1947).



Clifden 1940: Tom McInerney, Fursey Clancy, Kevin Stanley, Padraic Clancy.



Liam Clancy, Martie Cottingham, Fursey Clancy, Phyl Clancy, Tony d'Arcy.



Convent School Concert 1944: (Back row): Walt Disney (Phyl Clancy); (front row): Leprechauns Noreen Manning, Terry Ludden, Anne Foyle.

The games we played

Each season was noted for its own special games. All the skipping ropes appeared in the springtime. Girls skipped all around the town, down by the river, out the Galway road and down the low road. The boys played with spinning tops. These were made from empty spools collected from Coyne Tailor and Tailor Malone. They were pointed at the bottom with a penknife, and a coffin nail was hammered in to make them spin quicker. Boys and girls played 'Rowley' — a great skill was needed for this game. One procured an old bicycle wheel and a stick. The wheel was hit with the stick while wheel and player went flying around the town.

The summer months were spent at the beach where we made sand castles, played ball on the strand and swam in the sea. There was no mixed bathing in Clifden. The girls went to the back of the beach and the front while the boys went under the Castle to the diving board. The boys also fished for brown trout in the little streams and lakes. Boys and girls joined together in making a camp in our back garden. There we cooked rashers and sausages on an open fire, roasted apples and learned how to smoke 'Woodbines'.

Autumn was a time for picking blackberries, nuts, collecting chestnuts, chasing badgers at Fr. Myles' Den, and playing cock-a-rooshtey and all kinds of street singing games. The boys played handball at the ball alley and football in the pitch out the Galway Road. They played pitch and toss up Market Hill with the tops of mineral bottles.

Winter was the season for story-telling, card playing, sing-songs in each other's houses, hide-and-go-seek, ghost stories and many more. Also in winter time the boys did fretwork with a small saw and timber from tea chests.



The Parish Church

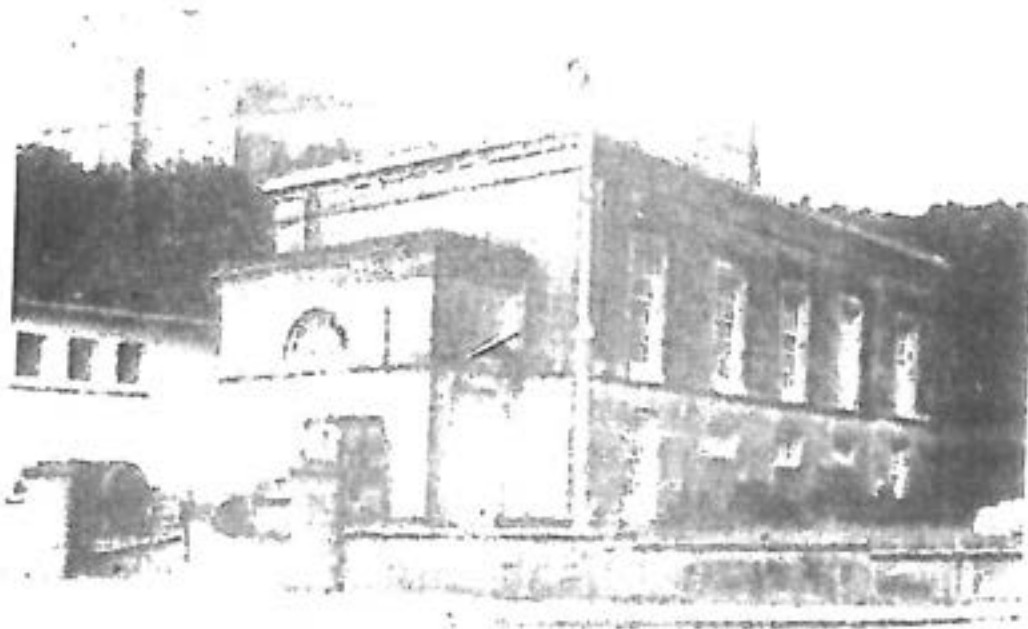
St. Joseph's Church was a 'sacred spot' for all of us. It was there we were baptised, made our First Confession, received our First Holy Communion and our Confirmation. It was there that we attended Mass, viewed every wedding, and accompanied every funeral. We gave a great service to our parish church. The boys served Mass every morning. The girls sang in the choir every Sunday and Holy Days. Every evening in Lent, May and October, we attended Benediction. It was there that we gave a Christmas Carol Recital every Advent. We girls always envied the boys who were servers. They always got money for serving at weddings and funerals. We in the choir were always forgotten. Every Lent we collected money around the town to buy flowers for the altar for Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday.

The Redemptorists' Mission was held every three years. We enjoyed that too. We bought Rosary beads, holy pictures and statues from the stalls outside the church gate. Our sex education was almost nil, so we did not understand a lot of the preaching, teaching and pulpit pounding of the Redemptorist Fathers. The lonely by-roads, dark corners and forbidden actions were lost on us.



St. Joseph's Church

The Court House



The Court House was another great haunt of ours. When Miss Reidy was caretaker we played hide-and-seek in the big flaggers between the Courthouse and the Parish Church. Miss Reidy was an old lady whom we loved to tease. In later years Mrs. McCarthy became the caretaker. We had a 'free run' around the Court House after that. Her three daughters were part of 'our gang'. We used the Court Room to practice our plays and many a sing-song we had there as we played and sang on the judge's chair.

Clifden was a wonderful spot to spend one's childhood. We were carefree and happy. Because it was a small town everyone knew everyone else. Like Phil Coulter I can surely sing:

*Those were happy days in so many many ways,
In the town that I love so well.*

—Friendships were made there that lasted for life.

The Special Feasts

Hallowe'en was our favourite feast. We played all kinds of tricks on the neighbours — tying strings to the knockers of hall doors, making ghost faces from turnips, playing snap apple, diving for nuts and apples in basins of water, playing the four saucer game, and blind man's buff.

St. Stephen's Day: The boys dressed up as wren boys, played the mouth organ, wore false faces and collected money around the town.

New Year's Night: Ringing in the New Year and Ringing out the Old with the Parish Church Bell — everyone got a swing on the bell rope. Sparklers, rockets and slap bangs were set off around the town.

Easter Sunday: Burning firs and roasting eggs on the fires — competitions for eating the most eggs.

May Day: Decorating the May Bush and waiting for the fairies to leave pennies near the bush.

Clifden Races: All roads leading to Woodses — we had little interest in the horses but we had a shilling for pocket money. This was spent on the routlette, buying farthing biscuits and lemonade, Peggy's leg, and toffees. Then we all crowded around 'Cruck' as he tried to make a few bob with his black and white square on the piece of tarpaulin. 'Cruck's' chorus went like this:

'Lump, dump dump them anyway you like,
Even money on the white,
Two to one on the black,
On the line or on the grass is mine,
Off to the bank in the morning'

We always parted with a penny, that was the extent of our gambling, but we usually lost.

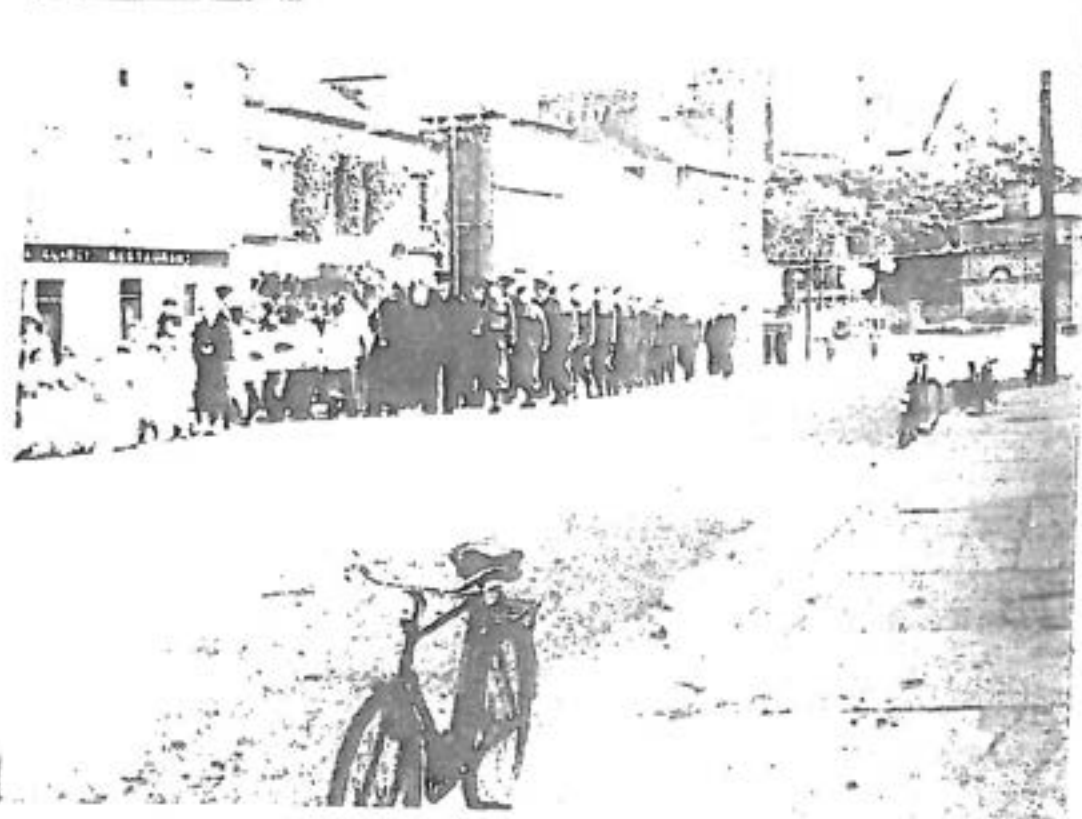
Clifden Sports Day: This was also held on the day of the Clifden Races. There was no word of 'Community Games' in those days. The sports were held between the Courthouse and the Convent Gate. That was the starting point for the field events. We ran as far as Brian Mahon's Terrace. There was also the three legged race and the sack race, and many more events.

Clifden Regatta: I always thought this was a most boring day waiting for the boats with their coloured sails to come ashore, and watching the island men pulling the oars of their currachs. There was no 'on shore' entertainment for us at the Regatta, not even a bar of music, or a stall with sweets.

Corpus Christi: Decorating the town for the procession, collecting flowers, and whitewashing barrels and old tyres.



Main Street, Clifden, Corpus Christi Procession 1919.



Main Street, Clifden, Corpus Christi Procession 1954.

The Town Hall: We spent many enjoyable nights in the Town Hall. There were many operettas and variety concerts organised by the nuns. We staged *The Wishing Cup*, *The Irish May Day*, *The Enchanted Glen* and *Paul Twining*, *Professor Tim*, *The Colleen Bán*, *Autumn Fire*. The biggest event in the town hall was The Fancy Dress Ball on the 6th January. Hops were run by the Legion of Mary. Black and White 'talkie' pictures were shown by Johnnie Glynn and Fr. Ryan.

My greatest thrill in the Town Hall was the travelling show companies. They came to town for a week, 'Alex de Gabriel and the Shannon Players', 'Louis d'Alton', 'Dickie Carrickford' and many others. It was a sheer delight for us to listen to Anthony Curran ringing his bell around the town and announcing in a loud clear voice the names of each of the plays, *Murder in the Red Barn*, *East Lynne*, *Pal of my Cradle Days*, *Sunny Boy*, and in later years, *The Song of Bernadette*. Very often they got local people to take minor parts. Maureen Casey and myself were honoured to be invited to take part in *The Song of Bernadette*. Maureen acted the part of Our Lady and I did Marie Soubirous, the sister of Bernadette. For our performance we received a free pass to every play for the week, plus a lot of booing and whistling from the local audience. Duffy's Circus was also an annual event in the town.



Clifden Dramatic Society 1940. "Professor Tim" by George Shiels. (Back row): Olive Harley, Fursey Clancy, Liam Clancy, Petie Gough, John Gough; (front row): Mickey O'Toole, Veronica Savage, Gabriel Bourke, Kathleen Daly, Thomas McInerney.

Holidays in Oughterard

Nowadays when schools close for summer vacation, Budget Travel takes over. Families follow the sun. They pack up for Majorca, Costa del Sol, Florida or the Canaries. Kids return to school in September and relate all kinds of stories about their time abroad. Sometimes they say it was brilliant, other times "I was bored, too much sun, not enough craic".

My summer holidays were always a treat. I was never bored. My mother packed my little schoolbag with a few summer dresses, a pair of new sandals and I was sent off on the bus to Oughterard—the home of my father. Uncle Matthias or Uncle Pete met me at the bus with the pony and trap. My heart leaped for joy when I saw them. They were taking me to Glann, and that for me meant sport, freedom and a real good time. My pocket money was a half crown, I also would have a Baby Power and a plug of tobacco for Uncle Pete, a brack for Uncle Matthias and Aunt Maggie and a bag of soft sweets for Aunt Bridget. I always enjoyed Glann because my uncles and aunts were not as strict as my mother. I was the youngest of my generation and they spoiled me.



A céad míle failte always awaited me in Glann. The days passed quickly there. Uncle Pete took me out in his boat on Lough Corrib. Every time he went fishing, I went down to the lake shore each evening to meet him coming off the lake. He usually had a lovely Corrib trout for my tea.



Back row: Padraic Clancy, Mary d'Arcy (Clancy), Mary Catherine Clancy. Front row: Cummin Clancy.



Bernadette Clancy, Glann. 1944.



Mrs. P. O'Shaughessy (Clancy), Sister Dominic and Pat O'Shaughessy (the local postman).

"Island View" was the name of their house. The island opposite the house was called "Dúnavilla". Uncle Pete's wife Nora had a bad heart condition and spent most of her time in bed. They had no family but they got loyal support and service from their niece Bride whom they reared and their faithful friend and cousin Bridget Flaherty. Then there was Aunt Bridget—the maiden aunt who never married. She was the disciplinarian of that household. With her toothless gums and pious tongue she laid down the rules for all of us youngsters. We were not called "teenagers" in those days. We were just young brats who had to be taught how to show respect for our elders and always do what we were told. Our nickname for Aunt Bridget was "Biddy Huttie".

Aunt Bridget had no home of her own, but she moved about from one brother's house to another. She was always welcome wherever she went. If we were misbehaving the constant threat was "I'll tell Aunt Bridget about you".

We feared her but yet we loved her. She was a great character with a fund of stories. She loved her family. She was an authority on all family matters. Thanks to Aunt Bridget that I have so much information on the Clancy family. She had a very deep affection for her brothers. She gave up her life of teaching to go to Clifden to be with Uncle Pat and her brothers before they married. She always had uncanny premonitions about her brothers and always got some hidden message relating to their oncoming deaths. I experienced this myself. I was in Glann when Uncle Pat died in Clifden on the 18th March 1946. Before the telephone message arrived she told us to rise early as we all had to go to Clifden that day. She knew about Uncle Pat's forthcoming funeral before we got the official message.

The Clancys were very popular with their neighbours in Glann. They often remarked "Pete Clancy is a gentleman but he is not much of a farmer". That was indeed true. He ferried tourists around Lough Corrib and knew every island, every landing spot and every fishing haunt. He also had a racehorse called "Dúnavilla". During the winter nights he played cards in Watt McDonaghs or invited the neighbours to play in "Island View". The Rosary was recited every night in the kitchen before the card players arrived.

Uncle Matthias and Aunt Maggie lived in "Rath Hill". It was a little thatched cottage with a big kitchen and two bedrooms. From "Rath Hill" my father went to Boston. I always felt very close to my father with I walked around "Lisheen" and the fields of "Rath Hill". Uncle Matthias



*Mary Clancy (Matt), Glann, Oughterard.
1942.*



Mrs. Babbie Clancy, Wellfield.



Old Chapel, Oughterard.

and Aunt Maggie had three daughters, Mary, Bernadette and Bride, a son died at birth. Mary spent most of her younger years in England. There she married John McGloin. Bride lived in "Island View". The one whom I shared so many happy childhood days was Bernadette.

The "crack" in Rath Hill was mighty, or as we called it "Glann sport". We saved the hay with Paddy Matt, his brothers Bill and Cummin, John Clancy, his brother Peter and many other neighbours. We teased the lads and they in turn chased us around the cocks of hay. There was no silage in those days. Another big thrill for me was saving the turf in the bog in Curraduff. We brought tea to the bog in a tin can. We sat on the soft peat, drank tea and ate slices of brown bread with freshly churned butter. Bringing home the turf was another delightful chore. We each had our own donkey and basket. We rode the donkey with the empty baskets on the way to the bog and stepped side by side with him as he carried his heavy load on the homeward journey. We had competitions to see who would bring home the most loads.

When Uncle Matthias killed a pig, Aunt Maggie made lovely homemade black pudding. We fried slices of this on the big black heavy pan on the open fire. We ate this with plates of spuds, scallions and drank mugs of fresh milk. I never liked the buttermilk but some did.

My daily task was to bring the spring water from the well. I never liked this task because I was afraid of the geese and the gander that always roamed around the well field. I always armed myself with a stick for self-defence. "Sailor", the big brown and white Lassie collie, trotted after me and sent the geese running with feathers flying all over the place.

Then there was the big apple tree opposite the front door. Many a time I climbed that tree armed with a pocket full of red rosie apples. I would sit on the highest branch of the tree, chew my apples in peace and view the islands of Lough Corrib. I would also count the cocks of hay in all the meadows around me. In the evenings we would roast the apples on the open fire and make apple cakes which we baked in the pot oven.

Another task assigned to me was collecting the eggs in the hen house and roaming around the haggard to find the hen that "layed out". No hen escaped my watchful eye. On the hot summer mornings I arose early and collected cans of wild mushrooms.

Like all the Clancys Uncle Matthias was a great story teller. He loved to take us up to the field where he saw the leprechaun when he was a young boy. He described what he saw in detail and never once wavered

from that description until the day he died.

Matthias was a very saintly man. Many a time I saw him kneel down in the hayfield as he recited the Angeles. The Angeles bell was never heard in Glann. When I questioned him about this he said: "Sure don't I know it's six o'clock when I see where the sun is in the sky. The Rosary was recited every night before the fire was raked. The Rosary itself was short compared to my uncle's trimmings. There was prayers for everyone living and dead. As he became older he became very deaf. Like most people who are deaf he then began to speak very loud. Every month on a Saturday he dressed up in his good black suit and black bowler hat to go to Confession in Glann Church. The priest heard Confessions in the seats. We always crept after him and listened at the back of the church. We were curious to know what sins Uncle Matthias had to tell. When we heard all we ran home, climbed over the wall and were sitting innocently in the kitchen when he returned home.

While Bernadette was around one could be sure of a mighty holiday playing tricks on all the neighbours, sing-songs, riding horses and all the other innocent follies of youth. Sometime after she left, Bride spent more time with her parents in "Rath Hill". Bernadette's homecoming from the North during the war was always a great event. She had lovely clothes, lovely shoes and make-up. These were borrowed or stolen from her by Bride and myself. As I grew older I was allowed to join the G.G.G's. (Glann Glamour Girls) going to the dances in Sullivans Hall. I was never allowed across the lake to the dances in Curnamona. They were for the older members.

The transport to the dances in Oughterard was always a problem. We would have one bike between a few of us. One would cycle as far as the bridge, leave the bike and walk on. The next one would take up the bike, cycle another mile and leave it there for the next one, and then continue walking. We called this "spelling", I suppose because each one got a spell on the bike. The bike was safely deposited in Pat Shaughnessy's shed in Camp. We always made the dance in time, and if we were lucky enough to 'square' at the dance we might get a lift home on the bar of some fellow's bike.

The big daily event in Glann was the arrival of Pat Shaughnessy the postman. Not alone did Pat bring the letters but he also brought all the news from the town which he related in detail as he sipped a mug of tea in the kitchen.

A few days in "Wellfield" was always a treat. Aunt Babbie who was



Catherine McDonagh (Flaherty), Sr. Anne Sullivan, Paddy "Matt" Clancy, his wife Mary Clancy, Oughterard 1995.

Uncle Mike's widow lived there. They had no family but nieces and nephews always got a céad míle faillte in Wellfield. She was always a soft mark for a few bob, which helped to finance the trips to the hops in Sullivan's Hall. Auntie Babbie gave us great freedom and never carried stories about us to our parents. She always had a listening ear and we told her everything. In those days there was no scarcity of partners at the dances. There was a gang of soldiers called "The Construction Corps" working in the bogs of Shauna Feisheen and they were terrific dancers. In return for Auntie Babbie's kindness and good will we did many jobs for her. She lived to be 104 years.

Then there was always a few days spent in Magheramore. It was always a treat to visit Aunt Mary Bridget, the widow of Uncle Jamesie, also her son Jim Joe and daughter Mary Catherine. There was the lovely walk to Gortmore with Jim Joe and the bringing home of the turf from Speckeen. Then there was also the daily visits to the home of Pat Anthony D'Arcy, his wife and family who were the family of Mary Bridget and my brother-in-law Tony D'Arcy. The month of August went too quickly. Then it was goodbye to Oughterard for another year and back to Clifden to get ready for school in September.



Corla Clancy, Irish dancer, Athlone, 1969.

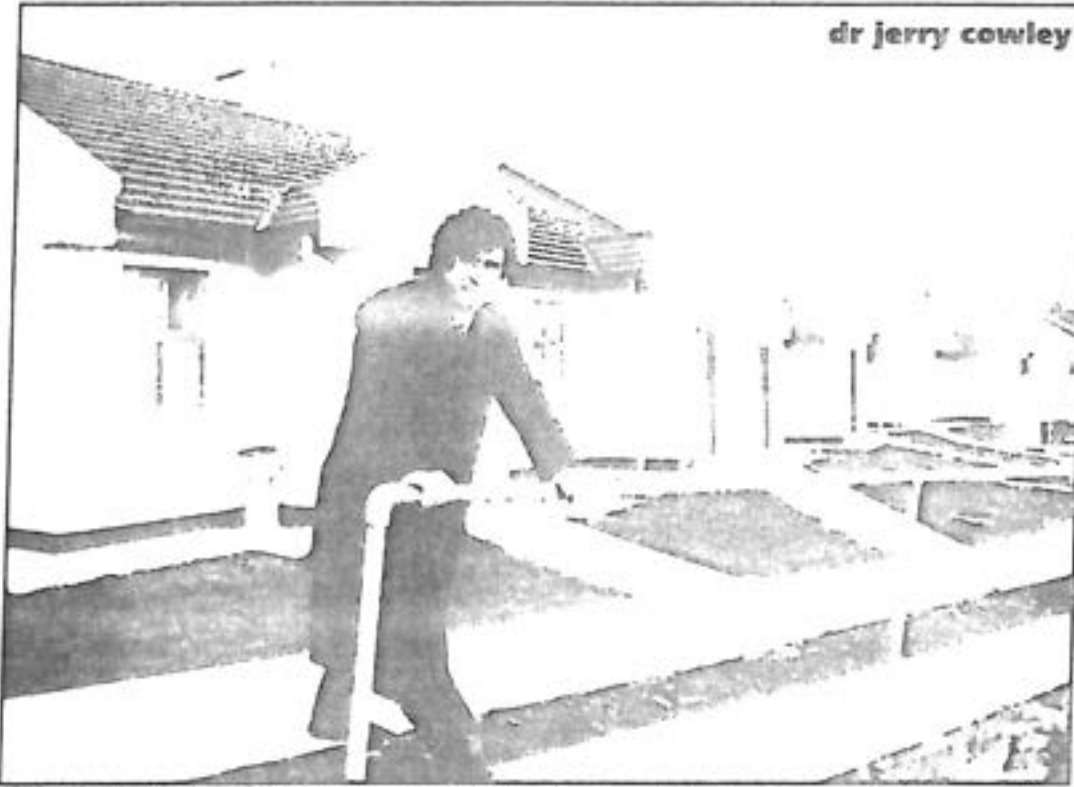
May the good Lord give the light of heaven to that generation of Clancys. They were honest, decent people whose lifestyle was indeed a simple one. They had little worldly goods, but they had something else that was far more important. They had a deep, simple faith. They loved children and children loved them. They were hard workers, just and honest people, good neighbours and sincere friends. Go ndéana Dia trocaire ar anamnacha na marbh”.

As I draw this history to a close my wish would be that the present and future generation of Clancys would read this story with interest. I hope that they will always be proud of their heritage, that they will carry the family name with pride and dignity, and be honoured to be a member of the Clancy family tree.



Mary McGloin (Clancy) and Mary Rathigan (McDonnell), Oughterard. 1994.

dr jerry cowley



Dr. Jerry Cowley, Mulraney, outside the sheltered housing estate, Mulraney, 1995.



Lornā, Alan, Sharon and Conor Clancy, Bundoran, 1992.



AT THE LAUNCHING OF "A JOURNEY OF MERCY" BY SR. PHYL CLANCY

Back row: Liam Clancy, Catherine Clancy, Bishop Thomas Flynn, Grainne Clancy. Front front: Sr. Attracta Shiels, Sr. Phyl Clancy, Mrs. Kitty Clancy. Sligo 1994.



RETIREMENT OF COLONEL LIAM CLANCY, RENMORE, GALWAY, 1984

Col. Liam A. Clancy, Mrs. Ivy Clancy, Corla Clancy, Commdt. Liam G. Clancy with military colleagues.

WEDDING BELLS



*Eamon Guy and Frances Clancy, Clifden.
1948.*



*Captain Liam Clancy and Ivy Donnelly,
Galway. 1955.*



*Sgt. Tony d'Arcy and Mary Clancy,
Dublin. 1933.*



*Garda Fursey Clancy and Kitty McDevitt,
Glenties. 1947.*

WEDDING BELLS



Cummin Clancy and Maureen O'Grady, New York. (1956).



John McGloin and Mary Clancy, London. (1949).



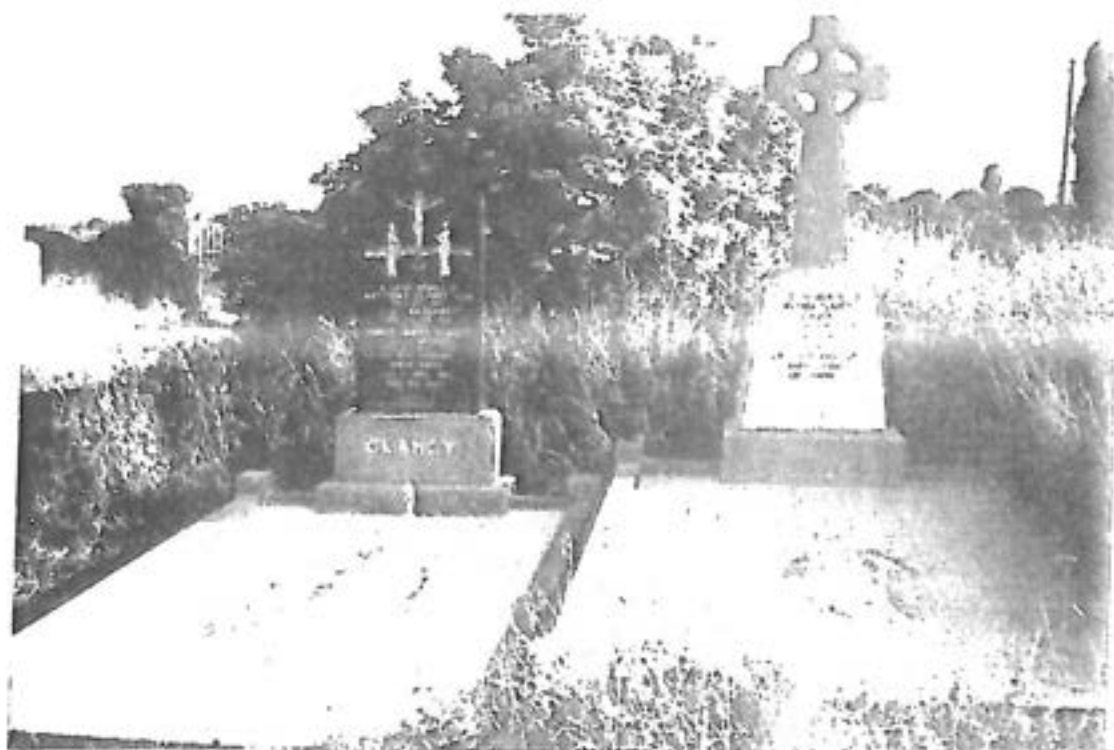
Bottom left: Garda Padraic Clancy and Emma Allen, Dublin. 1950.



Jim Joe Clancy and Delia Conneely, Oughterard (1948).



WEDDING BELLS CLIFDEN 1953
Percy Stanley (bestman), Kevin Stanley (groom), Eileen Clancy (bride) and Patricia Molloy (bridesmaid).



Kilcummin Cemetery, Oughterard, final resting place of the Clancys.

Kilcummin Cemetery, Oughterard

*In a lonely graveyard beside Loch Corrib's shore,
Rest our ancestors of many years ago,
Great men and women of simple faith and life,
Who struggled amidst famine, poverty and strife.*

*They rest beneath the heather and the sod,
No further away from us than from God.
Reaping rewards of faith and work well done,
In a land beyond the rainbow and the sun.*

*Someday perhaps I'll take my rest beside them,
And watch the Beanna Beola against the sky,
Listening to the waters of Loch Corrib,
As the fishermen and golfers pass me by.*

*You travellers who daily pass Killcummin,
As you journey from Galway to the West.
Spare an Ave for the dear souls departed
Grant Lord to them a place of peace and rest.*

Author: P. Clancy

Profile

Phyl Clancy was born in Clifden, Connemara, in 1929. Having completed her primary and post-primary education with the Sisters of Mercy in Clifden, she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy in Swinford in 1949. In 1956 she completed her training as a primary school teacher with the Sisters of Mercy, Carysfort Training College, Blackrock, Dublin.



Since then she served in the parishes of Swinford, Gurteen, Collooney, Jefferson City and Wardsville, Mo., USA. After completing a course on pastoral studies at the Jesuit Institute, Miltown Park, she retired from teaching and did a deep research into the history of her congregation. From her findings she published a book *A Journey of Mercy from Birth to Re-Birth*, in 1994. From doing research into her family history comes this book, *Meet the Clancys (1654-1996)*.

Phyl is at present a member of the Ballymote Community and is Catechetics Adviser to Primary Schools in the Diocese of Achonry.

