GUARDIANS PAST

To celebrate the Millenium edition, the committee to review the first 20 issues. Most of them got to us before we went to print

Leitrim Guardian 1969

The Leitrim Guardian was first published as a weekly penny newspaper in 1908 and did not continue for very long.

Sixty years later the visionary Michael Fox of Amorset, Manorhamilton named his first annual county magazine The Leitrim Guardian. Published at Christmas 1968, it cost five shillings or one dollar in USA and Canada. The heading over the Editorial read 'Devoted to Leitrim and its people - The Leitrim Guardian–Leitrim's Christmas Magazine' the stated aim 'to enlighten the people of Ireland on the beauty and glory of our county'. The Editorial enumerated many of Leitrim's needs and encouraged all to co-operate, make themselves important and heard, and use their courage, intelligence and talent to bring about all round improvement.

Awards were announced - Leitrim's Tidiest Town award to Kinlough and Rosemary Tiernan from Tooman won The Leitrim Guardian Essay competition.

Leitrim so Lovely was the title for text and pictures of a tour of the county's scenery from page five to page fourteen.

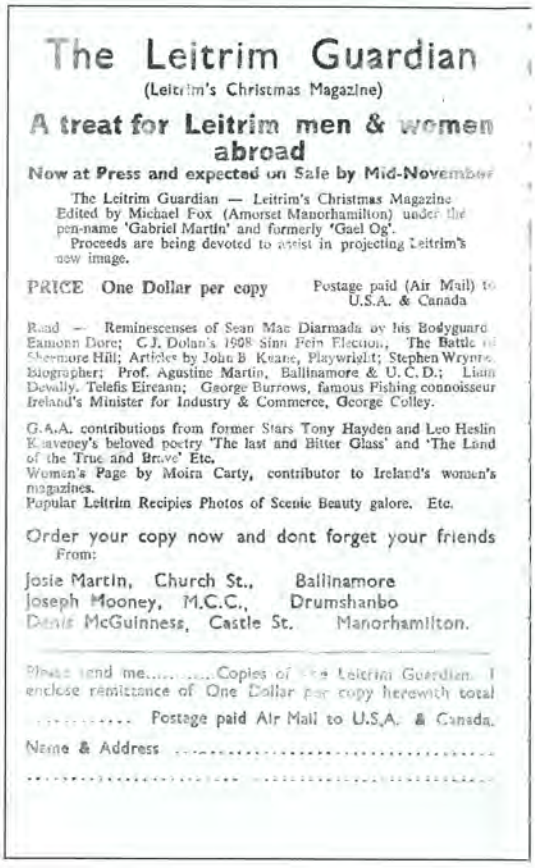
The North Leitrim Election of 1908 is detailed by the Editor himself; Father Dan Gallogly is the author of 'The Sheemore Ambush of 1921'; Eamon Dore gives him 'Reminiscence of Sean MacDiarmada'; Michael Whelan writes of 'Thomas Clarke's Leitrim Background'.

The merits of the Small Industries Programme to help the economic viability of the county are espoused in articles by Jude Flynn and by George Coley, TD, then Minister for Industry and Commerce. The Self Help answer as espoused in The Credit Union philosophy is also a very relevant contribution. The Credit Union was very new in Leitrim in 1968 - Ballinamore had the first in the county in 1963. Today every part of Leitrim is served by a Credit Union.

Views of Leitrim and its people by others came from John B Keane in his contribution entitled 'A Lovely Leitrim Man' and from Stephen Rynne taking 'A Critical Look at Leitrim–its people and its failings'. The recipes for boxty, gruel and wheaten bread are also included. There was plenty of nostalgia and a Christmas tone in the articles written by a number of Leitrim authors.

There is very full synopsis of GAA activities throughout the county.

The Leitrim Guardian has been published every year since Christmas 1968. Michael Fox would be very excited that the millennium edition has been printed had the good Lord spared his life on earth–it may be that he continues to serve as Angel Guardian to the Leitrim Guardian.



The Leitrim Guardian

(Leitrim's Christmas Magazine)

A treat for Leitrim men & women abroad

Now at Press and expected on Sale by Mid-November

The Leitrim Guardian — Leitrim's Christmas Magazine Edited by Michael Fox (Amorset Manorhamilton) under the pen-name 'Gabriel Martin' and formerly 'Gael Og'. Proceeds are being devoted to assist in projecting Leitrim's new image.

PRICE One Dollar per copy Postage paid (Air Mail) to U.S.A. & Canada

Read — Reminescenses of Sean Mac Diarmada by his Bodyguard Eamonn Dore; C.J. Dolan's 1908 Sinn Fein Election; The Battle of Sheemore Hill; Articles by John B Keane, Playwright; Stephen Wynne, Biographer; Prof. Agustine Martin, Ballinamore & U.C.D.; Liam Devally, Telefis Eireann; George Burrows, famous Fishing connoisseur Ireland's Minister for Industry & Commerce, George Colley.

G.A.A. contributions from former Stars Tony Hayden and Leo Heslin Kaveney's beloved poetry 'The last and Bitter Glass' and 'The Land of the True and Brave' Etc.
Women's Page by Moira Carty, contributor to Ireland's women's magazines.
Popular Leitrim Recipies Photos of Scenic Beauty galore. Etc.

Order your copy now and dont forget your friends From:

Josie Martin, Church St., Ballinamore
Joseph Mooney, M.C.C., Drumshanbo
Denis McGuinness, Castle St. Manorhamilton.

Please send me.....Copies of The Leitrim Guardian. I enclose remittance of One Dollar per copy herewith total ..... Postage paid Air Mail to U.S.A. & Canada.

Name & Address .....

.....

1970 Leitrim Guardian

The Committee made the major decision last year to launch the Leitrim Guardian. We can measure its success with popular reaction to it in the 1970 issue. No lesser men than President Eamon DeValera and General Tom Barry praised this literary effort. It must have been a first for any county or these distinguished gentlemen wouldn't have noticed.

Letters to the editor give a good indication of how the magazine was received. A lady in Baltimore writes congratulating the magazine on a masterful editorial with the stirring words, 'my heart beat fast with pride and confidence. Leitrim has at last found a champion who together with your associates will and can arouse new interest in the lives of Leitrim people'.

In 1970 it seems that the organising committee was way ahead of its time. It had a founding editor and also a 'Woman's Editor'. Peggy Sheehy put together a very impressive Woman's Section with pieces on the workings of the ICA, hobbies etc. The Leitrim woman had by now really woke from her slumber and had secured equality in this new venture. We were moving rapidly from the three-legged stool and Grace O'Shaughnessy in an article was discussing the 'Four Ages of Beauty'. Another article with the heading Leitrim Woman in Harness showed women moving into the business sector.

This new Leitrim Annual reflected the times and was seen as a first step in saving our lovely county. Even back thirty years ago there was a surplus of doomsday fortune tellers who would have us believe that Leitrim, even the West of Ireland, was no longer capable of survival.

As I gleaned through the pages of this Leitrim Guardian I was amazed that here we had an energetic committee who were willing to give of their time and talents in

order to start lifting their people to a higher plain.

Much of what was written concerned our immigrants and there was no scarcity of them. It speaks of 'how wonderfully well our children have dropped their pearls of virtue in oceans of the great nation and how they had emerged from ghettos to integrate into American Society bringing in it an elevation it dearly needed'. I'm sure that in heaping such praise on those immigrants brought a tear to the writer's eye, as he would much prefer to be ecstatic over achievements in Leitrim.

But hope springs eternal with very positive articles on rural and urban rejuvenation, with new group water schemes coming on stream in Gortletteragh and Corrawallen. Indeed the wheel has come full circle with several major water schemes now in progress in the same areas. The Leitrim Guardian initiated a Progressive Town competition and the £100 prize was sponsored by Leitrim Entrepeneur Pat Quinn. Ballinamore won the award and the judges declared that 'the town can be regarded as a pioneer of a new spirit of revival now catching hold of the county only a few years after the demise of the Narrow Gauge. The overall picture of Ballinamore was one of co-operation and commercial goodwill. Imagine they even had free golfing for the tourists.

The 1916 Rising and its aftermath was fresh in the memory of the people and articles of Selton Hill and Sean MacDiarmada and the Irish language made for good reading. There was also much reference to the state of the small farm and its chances of survival. Further on the agricultural scene was a lovely story by Augustine Martin titled 'Adventures with an Ass'. On the sports scene the question is asked, 'What future does the GAA hold for Leitrim and for itself'. As I progressed further through its pages, the sight of the old Prefect and Morris Minor cars brought back sweet memories of my childhood.

In his editorial Gabriel Martin said that to the fundamental purpose of the Leitrim Guardian was to restore to the people of the county their pride in themselves. He states 'when our growing pains have been overcome the fruits of our endeavours will create a foundation from which to assist and reward others who share the same dream. Thirty years on and what of the dreams? The Arigna Power Station which adorns the front cover of the magazine and the six shillings used to buy it may be gone, but we still have much to crow about as many of the dreams are being realised.

Leitrim, with a population of 25,000, has its own M.E.P. in the European Parliament, which is no mean achievement. The population has shown an increase for the first time since the Great Famine. The word 'immigration' is no longer part of our vocabulary. The old telephone number Manorhamilton 75, seen in the advertisement, is no more and is now replaced by a state of the art telephone system. In the 1990's Leitrim have won Connacht Senior, Under21 and Minor championships and such is the hope in the county that people are now openly talking of winning Sam Maguire. Most of our young men and women are now in universities around the country and it is not expected that any will have to bid farewell to their native shore to seek employment. Indeed it is envisaged that they will take over the mantle of leaders in the community. The founding fathers of the Leitrim Guardian can take a bow as their mission is nearing completion.

1971 Leitrim Guardian

The over-all impression from the 1971 Leitrim Guardian was that Leitrim was emerging from the horrible depression of the emigration of its people in the previous decades. A new confidence among the people was spearheaded by men like Joe Mooney and Pat Quinn. A new pride in the County expressed by communities coming together and working to improve their local surroundings and organising festivals and social gatherings. A real effort was being made to sell Leitrim as a tourist attraction and to have its emigrants back at least for a visit.

There is one interesting full page photograph on page 72 of the Leitrim Co Secretary GAA with his wife and family. He must have been the best known person in Leitrim when they didn't think it necessary to give his surname. I wonder who was he?

Review of 1973 Guardian

The Editorial by Gabriel Martin (the late Michael Fox) is in three parts, all relevant and important and of the same importance to-day. Firstly the electoral division at that time of Leitrim into three parts, with Donegal, Sligo and Roscommon, and the Leitrim Guardian aligned itself with other groups to have Leitrim established as one unit. Secondly, Ireland was within days of becoming a member of the EEC and I quote from the Editorial '.....if we sit back for Brussels to lead us out of the 'desert' we will learn too late that is for us Brussels is nothing but a European mirage'. 25 years later with the handouts from Brussels our financial status seems to have improved, but are we losing our identity? Thirdly, the trouble in the country and peace.

Dromod won the Quinnsworth Award with a prize fund of £200.00. Fr Harry Bohan, one of the adjudicators in this competition heads his article 'Leitrim on the Move'. How far has Leitrim moved since?

Ann Mulvey, Brendan Barry, Terrie Gray, Paddy Higgins, Joe Herron, Margaret Heron, Kevin Mulvey & Michael Gray eager to catch up on Leitrim news.

Mae (Reynolds) Malone, by ballot through the Leitrim Observer, was elected Personality of the Year, and the names of the five runners up were also given.

Gus Martin remembers the Narrow Gauge Railway.

Manorhamilton Comprehensive School was then new.

Ads all over the place.

The first year for the M J McManus Literary Award, judged by Des Fennelly, noted writer and T.V. presenter, judging being based on the content of the first four issues of the Leitrim Guardian and the winner was Gus Martin, with a prize of £25.00 the second prize of £15 and third of £10 were awarded jointly to Michael Whelan, Padraig White and Jude Flynn.

The election of Bishop Francis J McKiernan as Bishop of Kilmore, with a full page colour picture and a covering article. All colour pictures excellent, and the middle spread of the GAA Captains at all levels indicate the mode of the times with the long hair. A lot of coverage on Tourism. Rambles in Leitrim by the Editor Gabriel Martin gives an excellent coverage of the entireccounty. Drama in the County was very much alive at that time, with Groups in Carrigallen, Manorhamilton, Carrick-on-Shannon, Drumreilly and Drumkeerin.

Review of the 1974 Leitrim Guardian

Reading through the 1974 issue of the Leitrim Guardian made us wonder at the price of progress (or is it progress). Some of the well known names of that time are no longer household names. Mitchell's, Manorhamilton, Whelan's, Chemists, Longford, Quinn Bros., Mohill, J BCampbell's, Carrick-on-Shannon, Western Meats, Dromod are just a few.

But the entrepreneur of the 20th Century in Leitrim had to be Caleb Shera Laird from Drumshanbo. Introducing the first Motor Car in the county in 1899 just one hundred years ago, he provided much needed employment in the area through a list of developments, starting with a Saw Mill, Corn Mill, one of the first hydro generating stations, wholesale outlet, jam factory, and one of the finest equipped motor garages in the country.

All the above projects were developed without state assistance of any kind and one wonders what more benefits would come from this prolific mind had he been around to seek support from the EU European Regional Policy which Garret Fitzgerald espoused in his article in the same 1974 issue with community policy favouring the less well off regions particularly the West and North West.

What more good would Caleb S. Laird bring to the area, considering his workers did not work on Church Holydays, wages and salaries were competitive at the time and light and heat provided f.o.c to the local convent.

His likes are so badly needed today with vision to capitalise on the various funds for Ireland to utilise the native resources, expand employment and keep rural Ireland's towns and villages alive.

1975 Edition–A Random Search

In the 1975 edition of the magazine, the first article is by the Chairman, Rev J A Young. It's 'In Praise of Michael Fox'. Fr Young had known him in Mitchell's in Manorhamilton. I had known him as a delegate to Leitrim GAA County Board. When he visited Leitrim organising material for the early editions of the Guardian, I gave him the use of a small garden chalet. We held ad hoc meetings in Father Young's kitchen, many of which were loud. Needless to say who occupied the chair. Meetings were not always smooth but could not be missed. They were always a pleasure.

The opposite page features Leitrim people in Dublin. I regret to say that many of them have gone to their eternal reward including Mrs L Dolphin, Caillin Conefrey, John 'Nipper' Shanley–may they all rest in peace. Maisie Bouchier, Jack Fitzpatrick, John Reynolds and others in the group are still with us.

The theme in the editorial was *Reconciliation and Renewal*. The advice given by the Editor was 'send a copy to your friends, they will bless you for it'.

At the first meeting of the year it was learned, with regret, that the founder and first Editor was unable to carry on. The Committee took the courageous decision at this meeting to carry on.

The 1975 Edition features many famous people like Canon Slator, Michael Fox, Gus Martin, Patricia Quinn, Phyllis Glancy, Frank Murray, Pat Quinn, Joe McCartin, Seamus Fox, Aidan Canning, Gerry and Peg Sheehan and many others. They all, in their own way, contributed to the success of the Leitrim Guardian and indeed County Leitrim.

Canon Slater was 'Man of the Year'.

A photograph features Patricia Quinn winning the 400 Metres at the Goodwill meeting in Santry, and another features Eddie Leddy being presented with the Carlsberg Trophy. He was the first Irishman to finish in

the International Cross Country Championship in Milan.

Michael Fox of Fenagh has been for many years president of The Leitrim Peoples Association in London and has made a very significant contribution to economic and general welfare of Leitrim people living in London.

Gus Martin, RIP described cutting turf with a breast spade during the war years.

Bob Richardson, RIP. of Newtowngore won The National Championship at Strokestown Show with his Hereford Bull Calf 'Esker Rinda'.

Mrs Mae Malone was Leitrim's Personality of the year. She is seen presenting the perpetual trophy to the next winner, Pat Quinn.

We learn that Dublin's 'Ha'penny Bridge' was constructed with metal from Creevelea Iron foundry.

Captain Seamus Fox is seen discussing the Annals of the Four Masters with Ernan Morris and Seamus McGovern at Rosfriar point on the shores of Lough Melvin.

Aidan Canning, RIP., Ballinamore 'a man and his music' writes about his early introduction to music.

The death of Sr de Lourdes, RIP., is recorded. She is described as the former Headmistress of Meanscoil Fatima, Ballinamore.

Vincent Layden, RIP, Managing Director, Arigna Collieries Ltd. describes coal mining at Arigna.

Lily Moffat wrote about the RED. Wrenboys and on the opposite page Fr Dermod McCarthy is seen talking to a New Guinea tribesman.

There is a very interesting two-page spread of 'people in the news'.

Joe Mooney, RIP, Drumshanbo, is seen talking to Mr Peter Barry TD, Minister for Transport and Power and Mr D J Bernon, General Manager, United Dominions Trust at a function and presentation of UDT endeavour awards for Tourism. Joe won the award for the North Western Region. Below this group is The Leitrim GAA Captains of the late Fifties.

The first use of Gunpowder in Irish History is related in an article written by Seamus Fox. It was used in an attack on the castle at Castlecar about four miles from Manorhamilton on the Sligo road.

No longer a feature in the current issues of the Leitrim Guardian are the advertisements. There are many in the 1975 edition.

1977 Leitrim Guardian

Leitrim Guardian 1977 was launched late in 1976. There was a beautiful summer, which is reflected in the photographs. The violence in Northern Ireland was at its most brutal. The economic promise of the late 60's and early 70's had been blighted by the huge rise in the price of oil in 1974. This was the beginning of the slide into near bankruptcy, which was halted only in 1989. The gloom was reflected in a number of articles - too few working people keeping too many who had no opportunity to work.It is good that most of the articles were either by Leitrim people or about Leitrim people.

Articles of note were Vera McCarty's 'The Bookwoman', 'Fr. Traver's Lyrics', 'The Lights on the Mountain' etc.The achievement of note of 1976 must be the Manorhamilton group winning the Tops of the Town in Kinlough and in Killeshandra.The Mawry report was launched by Minister Tom O'Donnell, T.D., with much talk of developing the West. 25 years later we're still waiting.

As always there is the nostalgia. The back piece reflects this, photos of Peter Oates stacking oats, the lady feeding hens, the lady churning, the man bringing home the turf with hiss ass and cart. The final photo on that page is a gem, three donkeys are hiding from the heat haze under a tree. Terry McCabe's coup. He assures me it is no reflection on us, Leitrim People.

Guardian 1978

The 1978 Leitrim Guardian was a very good read. There were 37 articles in it with the usual wide and varied spread of fact and fiction and a large selection of photographs, mostly in black and white with just a few in colour. After much perusing and the usual curious and excited examination of the photographs it has to be said that the Guardian of 1978 was no different to any other edition, it reflected truly and honestly the many and varied aspects of the lives of Leitrim people at that time.

'Unity and Community' was the theme of the editorial. The editor pointed out that the areas of the county with poorer community spirit have less to report than the better organised. 'The Guardian', he said, "held a mirror up to Leitrim life, not trying to paint a picture. That year', he said, "the mirror showed pockets of outstanding progress and many other areas trying to get the vital lift off". Not unlike 1999 would you say?

McCartin's Tiger roared in the Leitrim of 1978. 'The rise and rise of the McCartin brothers' told the story of the family who then, as now, were household names throughout the county and a source of great pride for all Leitrim people. Tommy McCartin was 1978 Leitrim "Man of the year" with the following introduction– Entrepreneur, Actor, Community Worker, Family Man, Christian, what a wonderful combination of qualities.

The 'Well known Leitrim characters" slot in 1978 was taken by 2 very fine articles. "The long and the short of it' tells the story of the Rooney brothers, Barbers of Manorhamilton Benny and James Rooney attended to the tonsorial needs of as many as 5 generations of the one family. In 'A Handshake for all Seasons' Eugene McGloin writes with great sadness of the loss of the Dail seat of Joe McLoughlin TD–"the knell had sounded the end of an epoch in Irish Politics".

The 2 fiction pieces in 1978 were two very fine short stories–John McGahern's "A Slip Up" told the poignant story of an old Leitrim couple in London while Noel Flynns "Tale of a Bird" was all about Triona "an unusual turkey".

Ah! but I bet the first article everyone read in the 1978 edition was Tommy Moran's "Th Oul Chapel". Tommy, in his own inimitable way, regales us with tales from the old Ballinamore Church in Chapel Lane, which trived, says Tommy, on miraculous medals , scapulars, Latin missals ..... and fasting from midnight. In fact the reader might be persuaded to search their archives for the 1978

Guardian if only for this article, which is full of the usual hilarious reminiscences of life in old Ballinamore. The town was peopled with a litany of people–Pee and Mrs Maloney, Mr and Mrs O'Neill from the bank, Dennis McNiffe and Little Maisie who sprang to life off the pages. And the servers version of 'Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa'–Me a cowboy, me a cowboy, me a Mexican cowboy' cannot fail to amuse!

Yes the 1978 Leitrim Guardian is just the same as every other edition. "Everything changes still everything stays the same.

The 1979 edition of the Leitrim Guardian

This edition had a beautiful colour picture of Glenade Lake and countryside on a 120 page edition priced at £1.00. The 1979 Leitrim Man of the Year was Mr Raymond Laird who manufactured Bo Peep and Lairds Jams and Marmalades, Drumshanbo. The company employed over 100 people. A full page 3 report was dedicated to Mr Laird and had a photograph of his family. The Editor was Fr Gus Leaden, Kinlough, and Assistant Editor Mr Eamon Daly. There was an account of the 1978 launching which took place in the Melvin Hotel, Kinlough, celebrating 10 years of The Leitrim Guardian.

The first Literary Award was granted to Mr David Walsh for his article 'Leitrim from the outside'. David, a journalist with the Leitrim Observer since 1976, is a Kilkenny man. The second Literary Award was awarded to Mr Joe Gallogly for his account of The Cavan & Leitrim Railway. Joe worked on the railway until it closed in 1959 so his account was backed with accurate information. There was a very interesting article by Sister Felix McKenna about Graymoor, New York, where many young Leitrim girls joined the Postulate of the Sisters of Atonement as young novices.

The Community of Kiltyclogher were struggling to get funding from successive Ministers for to a secure an Adult Education Centre following the bombing in 1973 of the Vocational School and Community Hall. In an interview with some students who had just sat the Leaving Cert, some were concerned that a pass Leaving Cert wasn't worth a lot. A lovely tribute was paid to the late Michael Casey, written by Eugene McSlevin, on a very athletic theme.

A lovely Edition as usual.

The 1980 edition of the Leitrim Guardian

Is decaire a chreidiucort nach bhfuil fagthach ach thart ar cupla mi go dti go mbeidh an bhlian 2000 buailte linn. Tamid ag druidim le deireadh an cheid agus anois feathanis siar ar na blianta ata cait go h-airaithe na seachfoidi agus na n-ochtoidi. An bhfuil alan difriochtai, an bhfuil rudai fos mar an gceanna? Bhuel–fan go feicfimis!

The beginning of the last decade, like all new beginnings saw many changes in the face of Irish life and society, not least in the ever changing political scene.

The first article of the 1980 Leitrim Guardian marks the significance of the change witnessed in that years political structure in its opening sentence. "The news at nine on this night as I write tells of the resignation of the Taoiseach, Mr Jack Lynch..." "...He was recognised as a man of integrity and a man of modernisation?' This very statement which described the then sensational news headlines all around the country, gave way to the re-organisation of the Irish political structure of 20 years.

The commonplace occurrence of major political domination of the Irish social life was experienced during this period of 1979-80. The local elections of 1979 were to assist in the signalling of a new era for politics nation-wide, not least in Leitrim. However, in comparing these with the recent elections of June1999, there are surprisingly few differences or advances between the two. As with those of the past year, the elections of 1979 witnessed the return of 8 new County Councillors and surprisingly enough in this so called egalitarian society of modern Ireland, women have yet to make a sharp impact on the political scene of Leitrim. For in 1979 we saw the election of the first two new female councillors, no doubt we all thought that there would be an increase of more than one, 20 years later.

We see this political theme continues to dominate with pictures of a young fresh-faced Joe McCartin on his first trip to Strasburg in 1979. Little difference in European politics also, as this year saw Joe return on his fifth journey back to the EU Parliament.

On a lighter, but equally important note, I could not but mention the article entitled "Bilberry Sunday in Leitrim", by the late Father Dan Gallogly. This fascinating account recalls the many traditions associated with this time of year; i.e. 'faction fighting' and "Finding a wife a Sheehaun", this no doubt brings back vivid memories to many of this exciting and unforgettable annual occasion. It also records the origins of the feast in this brief but informative description of the above.

Originally Bilberry Sunday was a feast in honour of Lugh, the God whose name still survives in the word Lunasa or August, the month on Lugh. It also survives in the word Leprechaun, meaning Little Lugh. At some time he was ousted by Crom Cruaich and the feast became the feast of Crom Dubh. Why this should have happened I can not say. Perhaps they were both aspects of the same God?

As I read through this article I can not but express my sadness on learning of the untimely death of Fr Dan Gallogly. May he rest in peace as he is fondly remembered by many.

Looking forward with much anticipation to the new millennium, we see how far we have come as a country in forging new links as a border county with the north of Ireland. In the 1980 Guardian, ironically enough, I came across an article written by Capt Seamus Fox recounting the abolition of Sligo Leitrim & Great Northern Railway in 1857, enveloping in great detail its historic opening in 1879.

'The line opened in five sections, Enniskillen to Belcoo in February 1879, to Glenfarne in January 1880, to Manorhamilton in December 1880, to Collooney in September 1881 and by existing line to Sligo on November 7 1882. There had been previous plans to connect Enniskillen with Sligo via Bundoran and run a line direct from

Enniskillen to Sligo via Manorhamilton with a branch from the latter to Creevelea Iron Works. The seal of the company showed two locomotives in collision–one remaining on the rails, representing the fruition of the Manorhamilton route and another derailed indicative of the failure of the Bundoran–Sligo proposal.'

and its eventual closure 78 years later in 1957:-

'On Monday, Sept 30 1957, the last passenger train, the 'Evening Down' from Enniskillen to Sligo ran amid scenes of sadness and sentimentality, mixed with animated cheering and the sound of exploding fog signals. She was hauled by 'The Lough Melvin.'

As 1957 marked the severing of an essential infrastructural link between North and South; 1999 in its peace talks and negotiations is indicative of the newly constructed political links; signalling a new era at cross border co-operation.

These stories, although equally interesting in their own way were not however to be the highlight of the 1980 Guardian. For the year previous to this, on which many of the articles are written, witnessed the visit of Pope John Paul II, one of the greatest occasions in Irish Church history. An event remembered by all, whether a member of the massive crowds who received him at Knock or the Phoenix Park, or watched his fully televised visit or even just saw the many pictures in the newspapers which recorded the entire affair. It was undoubtedly the event of 1979 and dominated the Irish social scene for many months up to and following the visit.

'....oh this was a moment never to be forgotten to store up in the treasury of the memory and to tell about proudly to grandchildren fifty years from now.' Yes, this was truly a time to remember a time when the true strength of the Irish faith was represented by the masses. A time when young and old had their lives touched by the heart-warming smile of the then young man who for so many stood for what is good and sacred in the Catholic Church.

'May we never forget his words of love and encouragement for us. For him we wish in the words of his favourite Polish folk song ñ 'Stolat, Stolat' ñ may he live a hundred years'

I would like to pay respect with the following poem, written by the late Michael Fox, patron of the Leitrim Guardian who attributed this piece of poetry to the visit of our Pope.

Christmas in Autumn Came
Christmas in autumn came
in cloak resplendent,
yet humble,
serene.
No mistletoe, no holly bush,
No candle glow -
But love and light shone.
Christmas in autumn came
the Eucharist to explain,
the bond of Marriage to defend,
Mary's Love to spend.
Christmas in autumn came
with Peace and Hope,
Mercy too,
on bended knees
appealing
to wicked men, so few -
'Cease, Love, Be True'.
Christmas in autumn came
the sick and ill to comfort,
youth, children to behold,
Tomorrow's faith triumphant.
Christmas in autumn came
leaving gifts
spiritual,
becoming,
wrapped in Grace
the carded verse
true Gospels proclaiming.

As I take a last glance through the 1980 Guardian, I reflect on the many pages of advertisements published for the then sponsors of the Leitrim Guardian. It is with a certain sense of nostalgia I note the ads from 'Bo-Peep Jams' by Lairds of Drumshanbo; a company which no longer exists; similarly the one from 'Quinn Bros. Ltd.' Mohill. However the ad which strikes me most is that from 'Arigna Coalmines', a company which represented for many the unsuccessful era of secondary industry in Ireland. Putting this lack of success behind us we now look forward with our new territory industry of tourism, which is indicative of our new and flourishing Ireland which is our face for the new Millennium.

Anois, cad ata le ra agam? Is aoibhinn linn ag feachaint siar is fearr linn feachaint go an t-am ata romhainn. Teimis chun tosaigh lenar meabhaireacha an na blianta beaga anuas. Ag Dia fein ata a fhois ceard ata i ndan duinn! *Mary McMorrow & Hubert McMorrow*

Review of 1981 Guardian

Little work was done in Glenfarne during the 1980 Olympic Games held in Tallin, USSR. The reason for such an interest originated from the fact that Glenfarne native Thomas Clancy had 3 years earlier formed a dynamic sailing campaign in England to help Irish dingy sailors take the best advantage of the excellent British facilities. As a keen sailor himself Thomas knew that it was impossible to mount a serious Olympic campaign based in Ireland, due to being surrounded by sea and dotted with inland lakes makes sailing and a respect for the wind and sea a trait inbred in every Irishman. All of this was needed to bring his dream to fruition.

Thomas Clancy was born and reared in the townland of Laughty, Glenfarne. He is the eldest son of the late Frank and Bridget Clancy. A keen sportsman, an outstanding Gaelic footballer, he had won championship and league medals with his native Glenfarne in the sixties. He also served as secretary of Glenfarne GAA Club for a number of years. He now resides with his wife and family in Luton, although he regularly visits us in Glenfarne.

David Wilkins and Jamie Wilkinson were the two sailors picked to sail for Glenfarne and to represent Ireland in the games. In order to compete on equal terms with other international sailors, it was felt that the best equipment, sails and boat design from all over the world would have to be purchased. Three 'Flying Dutchmen' boats were purchased with masts from France and Germany, sails from Canada and England and boat fittings from America. The final choice was a boat of fibreglass construction and came from Italy.

It was essential that all involved should have international competition experience. During the 3 years David and Jamie would tow the boat to the various international regattas to be later joined by Thomas who would fly to the various venues. Thomas in a high powered inflatable support boat would monitor their performance in the various sea conditions as well as noting the other top class opposition with their various tactical expertise.

To finance this expensive operation a sponsorship campaign was set up. A wonderful response was obtained particularly among the Luton Irish based

community. Among those who gave their support were Jim Gralton and the Morrison family, Kiltoghert, Mick Brady, Pat Holahan and Kieran McIntyre, Aughavas, Joe Connolly, Kiltyclogher, Frank Brehony, Drumshanbo, Pat Gallogly, Ballinamore and Mike Joe Shanley from Drumsna.

Ireland had sent sailing teams to the prior 4 Olympic games covering a span of 16 years only to come home empty handed. Unique however to these games were that Irish sailing duo David and Jamie who were sailing a boat named nothing other than Glenfarne.

Little wonder the eyes and ears of Glenfarne were glued to every available TV and radio whilst simultaneously prayers were being said that David and Jamie would safely sail Glenfarne home to victory.

Ten past two local time on Tuesday July 29th 1980- Irish History books were to receive an insert. First time ever in the history of Irish sailing an Olympic silver medal was won. This was thanks to our two sailors David and Jamie. For the endless work and dedication of Glenfarne man Thomas Clancy we in Leitrim and all over Ireland will forever be grateful.

David Wilkins later quite unashamedly said that without the expertise management and organisation of Thomas Clancy his efforts would have been in vain. Having previously competed in 2 Olympic games without success he concluded that it was Thomas that brought out the best in everybody involved.

Francie Clancy, Thomas's father, gave thanks to God that Summer's day for allowing him to live a little longer so that he could experience that moment of triumph from his bed where he lay dying of cancer. Francie died on September 1 1980 R.I.P.

The Leitrim Guardian 1982

The Leitrim Guardian, 1982, was edited by Rev Gus Leaden, Kinlough, and Eamonn Daly, Drumshanbo. The magazine has a colourful cover depicting a group of Boy Scouts at their summer camp. It contains a wide variety of thirty-three interesting and enlightening articles and features from all over the county, except Carrick-on-Shannon. I found Mack's Lane by Tommy Moran, and Wit and Wisdom Drumshanbo Style by Eamonn Daly, hilarious and entertaining, while the feature, Sermons in Stones, was edifying. The Leitrim Guardian 'Personality of the Year' Award for 1982, was deservedly won by Michael Lyons of Dromod for his involvement in the work of the local community and as an architect of his area's progress in the previous five years. On reading the editorial at the beginning of the magazine, I thought I detected a note of despondency, which I am delighted to say was not reflected in its following interesting articles and features. Overall, a very worthwhile and interesting production.

Review of 1984 Guardian

Fr Gus Leaden bows out as Editor, after 10 years, having taken over from Gabriel Martin to edit the 1975 Edition.

A lot of coverage on industrial development.

Tommy Moran writes on Ballinamore and Football.

Women were being recognised as having a part to play in the GAA apart from making tea and washing jerseys.

There was a clean up of a graveyard in Manorhamilton under a County Council Environmental Youth Scheme–was this the same graveyard cleaned up again recently.

Lovely drawings by Jeanne Dunne of traditional shop fronts in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Mairead Costello writes on the decline of the Rynn Estate, but thankfully this is one area that has improved, and Des Braiden has excellent drawings of Wild Flowers on the Rynn Estate.

Colour photography lovely and with interesting subjects.

Ted Nealon, then Minister for State in the Department of Posts & Telegraphs writes of his plans for local radio–this has come to pass.

Picture of the oldest monumental inscription in Co Leitrim in Fenagh.

Drama then, as now, a major event in the County.

1985 Leitrim Guardian

You will remember the 1985 issue by the yellow cover with Christie Moore, the Bard of Liscarbon. Jack Fitzpatrick of Drumreilly and Dublin was the Personality of the year. The committee felt that it was a pity that only one person could have the honour, when so many were deserving. Paddy Fox, Annaduff, Michael Shanley, Kiltyclogher, Eamon McGowan, Drumshanbo, Pascal Mooney, Drumshanbo and Peter Moran, Drumsna all received special awards for their own distinctive contributions to the county. The bad publicity resulting from Don Tidey, and District Justice O'hUadaigh was noted and deprecated by the Editors Eamonn Daly and Tommy Moran. The importance of tourism for Leitrim, which was first recognised by Seamus Peyton and Josie Martin, was again emphasised by the publication of the video 'Ireland's best kept Holiday Secret' by Co Leitrim Tourism Council. Noteworthy too was the election of two ladies Kathleen Coleman and Mary Bohan as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Leitrim Co Council.

1986 Leitrim Guardian

A very attractive picture of Tullynaha, Ballinaglera on the front cover provides a pleasant introduction to the Leitrim Guardian of 1986. Seamus Peyton, The Leitrim Personality of the year, occupies pride of place on page two followed by the Leitrim Guardian merit award recipients. A concise yet thorough synopsis of the main events which happened throughout the county during 1995 is presented in the Diary. An alphabetical list of places is presented and the happenings are fully recorded. Issues such as farming, industry and services are treated in lesser detail.

Jack Fitzpatrick the recipient of the Leitrim Guardian Personality for 1985 reflects on a changing Dublin and James Creed director of An Grianan records his thoughts on Leitrim in excerpts from an interview. The Summer of '85 is recorded both in picture and in verse, apart from the poor climatic conditions, two events of historical significance are recorded, the local elections of June 20 and the indexing of some parochial records. The centre pages of the magazine present to us some of the GAA champions for the previous year while towards the latter part of the magazine accolades in the field of music, theatre, song and dance are awarded.

We get a glimpse of the continuing cultural renaissance with an account of two very successful tours to England by forty musicians, singers and dancers from Drumshanbo. There are excellent short stories by Tom Lynch, John McGahern and Mary Woods, amongst others. This edition of the magazine also contains a fine selection of poetry with one beautifully crafted poem by Vincent Woods. In his poem he recalls one of the best known characters in North Leitrim, John Joe Harkin of Tarmon, who died in April 1992. He recalls that John Joe was 'Ploughman, Neighbour and Friend'.

The 1986 edition of the Guardian is an excellent magazine to dip into and has much of interest to those at home and abroad. It evokes memories, challenges accepted positions and provides a forum for achievements in the Arts and Sport and creates a focus for all those trying to encourage a positive outlook on Leitrim life

1987 Leitrim Guardian

The 1987 Leitrim Guardian was the one with a beautiful picture of Rossinver from the Barr Road (by Willie Donnellan) on the front cover. Inside the first person we met was the Leitrim Personality of the Year 1987–Mr Frank Sweeney from Ballinamore. Frank was the first farmer to receive the award. Frank had the distinction of being named the 1985 Development Farmer of the year.

There was a very interesting piece about immigration and apparently it was then at its highest level for twenty years. There was a new outflow of 31,000 in 1985-1986. At that time it was difficult to see a time when our young people would emigrate out of a sense of adventure or for better opportunities. They left because there was 'nothing here'. They sought work and a new life against a background of 18% unemployment an economic depression and a general apathy in Irish life. There was no Celtic Tiger around in 1987–instead there were endless dole queues and a depressive economic climate. Thankfully things have changed a lot for the better in the 90's in Leitrim.

There was a nice piece entitled the Anatomy of A Disc, which told how Charlie McGettigan's album, *Song of the Night*, was made.

The Leitrim Guardian Literary Award went to Vincent Woods for his story *'Far from the Dawn of Hope'*. Vincent also won the 1985 Literacy Award, he was a newsreader with RTE Radio 2 and he reviewed books for national newspapers and magazines.

The title of this article said, and still says it all - *'Matt Gaffey–a man apart'*. 'He leads by example and inspires by his dedication. Matt was well used to being on the winning side, to coaching the winning team but apparently he could accept defeat philosophically.' 'Winning isn't everything' he said.

There were four and a half pages of the views of various people on Afforestation in Leitrim. It was regarded as an enemy of all farmers.

Mary Taylor wrote a very interesting piece about Mohill Workhouse which became the Fever Hospital. Mary works there herself, and just recently won a well deserved £4,000 for the distinction of being one of Ireland's greatest Mums. Her daughter Fiona entered her for this prestigious competition–a touching tribute to Mary's lovely qualities as a person and as a mother.

Michael McCrann from Gortletteragh won the 1986 Macra na Feirme Star Young Farmer of the Year for the Connaught–Ulster region. His wife Siobhan was pictured with him and two of their children. Michael acknowledged Siobhan's contribution among others to this success story.

Michael McGovern is another young man who contributed much to the rural life of Leitrim. In 1987 he was appointed as Chairman of the Leitrim Acot Committee–Michael went on to use his experience to co-present the Macra na Feirme programme on Shannonside Radio.

There was a wonderful article written about the Big Snow of 1946 by Joe Mooney, Annie Cox and Frank Gildea. 'It started to snow at about eleven in the morning and it continued all day.'

There were some detailed sketches of some of the counties landmarks–of the Lime Kiln at Farnaught, the remnants of a Penal Altar at Drumlegga, Cloone or the Wart Stone at Carrigallen.

Gus Ward wrote an interesting piece about Carrigallen's New Theatre.

Proinn Duignan from Mullies wrote a well researched article about the

1988 Leitrim Guardian

Leitrim. I enjoyed reading again the article entitled **Narrow Gauge Centenary 1888-1988 - but the railway will miss the celebrations!** by Joe Mooney in the 1988 edition of *The Leitrim Guardian*.

The narrow gauge railway connected County Leitrim, particularly South Leitrim, in both a physical and emotional way. Public transport or the lack of it has, I believe, played a part in our population diminishing. Leitrim must have one of the worst public transport systems in the country. Every census shows a further decrease in our already tiny population.

Now often do we hear complaints of the traffic problems in Dublin and the need to improve the public transport system? One of the main reasons put forward for this need to improve the public transport is the loss of working days caused by the difficulties in getting to work. As there is such a strong correlation between transport and work then perhaps the people of Leitrim should be shouting about there own situation. The availability of a decent public transport system can be directly related to the current economic, social and cultural climate.

There are numerous benefits to restoring the line not least the potential to exploit the tourist market. In Dublin the forthcoming "Luas" system will restore the old Harcourt Line, a line that the public thought was gone forever. This demonstrates that anything is possible. In the article Joe Mooney links the economic, social and cultural effects of the narrow gauge to various aspects of Leitrim life. He also discusses the links to Cavan, Roscommon and the rest of the nation that were provided by the system.

Looking again at this article on the narrow gauge might help spark a fresh debate on Leitrim's transport system. Since the original article was printed a short piece of the old line has been restored and provides a tourist attraction. The Celtic tiger is not yet roaring in Leitrim. Reviving the discussion on the line among the public might engender some action at a political level.

Finally, although the article is written for the centenary year of the narrow gauge the information in the article itself is timeless.