



Matt Le Blanc with his cousin Gerry Flanagan

sunny October day was one of the highlights of our trip. The county can boast of exquisite scenery; no wonder it is referred to as Lovely Leitrim. We were glad to spend some time visiting the graves of Bridie Moran and her parents John and Mary McGovern, all of whom rest comfortably in Ballinamore.

But we shall return, by the grace of God! *Slainte!*



Emily Morgan, Chase Wagner and Jimena Ceballos Gonzalez



Photo: Willie Willie Donnellan

Killargue village today is largely defined by the church, the pub, the post office and shop, all situated in the centre of the village. However, in earlier years, Killargue could boast two churches, the barracks, two shops, two pubs, two national schools, and a post office, all of which were scattered within a mile of the village as we know it now.

Killargue Post Office opened between 1852 and 1857, according to postmark research. It was situated in the townland of Cornamarve almost a mile in distance from the village. One could speculate that this location was influenced by the local landlord, Hugh Lyons Montgomery, whose residence was nearby.

The Liddy family were associated with the office for many generations. In the 1901 census a Thomas Liddy of Cornamarve townland, age 26 years, gives his occupation as Rural Auxiliary Postman. His daughter Mary Louise, aged one year old in that census, was later to become Postmistress in Cornamarve and his son Mick served as the postman for several decades. Mary Louise continued in that role when she and her husband

Michael McGowan moved from Cornamarve to live in the old RIC /Gárda Barracks in the centre of the village in 1956. Her husband Michael became Postmaster after her death until he retired in 1985. Thus ended the Liddy connection with Killargue Post Office. That same year, 1985, Patricia Reynolds was appointed Post Mistress and the Post Office continued to operate from the old barracks in the village. The last shop in the village merged with the Post Office in 1995.

The Post Office and shop was the hub of every village. If you wanted a dog licence, a television licence, to buy stamps, register your letter, post a parcel, collect a Social Welfare payment, deposit money in a savings scheme, and, at the same time, buy a newspaper, magazine, and your groceries, then this was the "one stop shop". You could also meet the neighbours, catch up on farming news, and discuss the weather.

The postal service was the main form of communication between families at home and abroad. The arrival of a letter with the Killargue postmark bringing news of home meant a great deal to emigrants. At home,



Weighing scales and date stamper from Killargue Post Office



Cill Fheargha postmark

parents watched for the postman bringing news of sons and daughters and were glad of 'the few dollars/pounds' sent home.

Parcels from America were a source of great excitement, some bringing bright clothes never before seen in fifties Ireland. At Christmas, the parcel trade sending turkeys and cakes to England and Scotland was particularly brisk, especially in the sixties.

In very recent times the advent of computerisation meant services expanded to include banking and electronic payments. As the mobile phone and email became the mode of choice for communication, this led to a reduction in letter writing. Government policy increasingly encouraged people to opt for direct payments of social welfare into their bank accounts. The writing was on the wall for small rural Post Offices.

The 31st August 2018 marked the end of an era for the village of Killargue. The door closed on the local Post Office, a focal feature in the area for over 150 years and with its closure, the last local shop also ceased trading.