

A Further Selection of Relevant Publications

From the Editor's Desk

Leitrim's Republican Story 1900-2000

Cormac Ó Súilleabháin

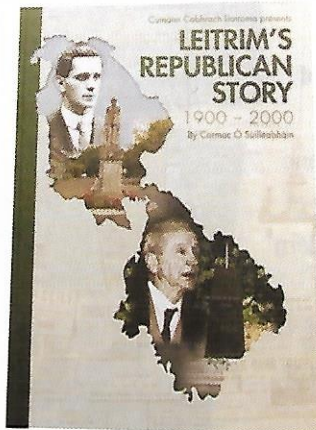
"Leitrim's Republican Story 1900-2000" is undoubtedly the biggest and, probably, the most significant book ever to come out of Leitrim. The book was published by Cumann Cabhrach Liatroma and launched at three venues in Leitrim in September. Both the author and publishers were taken by surprise when the book sold out in just three weeks. At the time of writing, a limited reprint of the book is being organised and it should be available in the shops before Christmas.

A major part of the book is taken up with the War of Independence and the historic ambushes that took place at Sheemore and Selton Hill. While readers will have heard about the main events in the War of Independence and Civil War before now, most people will be amazed at the events which took place after the Civil War period. Some of the enthralling episodes recalled in this period are: The plot to assassinate De Valera in Ballinamore; The Shooting of Paddy Reynolds TD in Fenagh and the Blueshirts raid on a bank in Ballinamore

The author indicated at the book launches that the period that intrigued him most was the period of World War II when thirty-three Leitrim IRA men were interned in the Curragh. Here were men who spent a total of 102 years in jail for no reason under the sun other than to confirm Ireland's neutrality in the war. They were never tried or charged with anything, suffered under appalling prison conditions, and never even had a visitor while in jail. There were no protests about their detention and no celebrations when they got out. They were the forgotten men of Republican Leitrim. Sadly, all of the thirty-three are now dead but the memory of their sacrifices is rekindled with biographies and pictures of all of them.

Other men who are given recognition for the first time are Mick Ferguson from Ballinamore and Leo Duignan from Aghacashel, both of whom received ten year jail sentences for their part in the Bombing Campaign in England in 1939. Leo Duignan went through the trauma of both his father and mother dying while he was in prison in England and he could not be present for either of their funerals.

While the book touches on the lives of literally



hundreds of people, the two most significant players are undoubtedly Seán Mac Diarmada and John Joe McGirl and, appropriately, it is their pictures which adorn the cover. The life of John Joe McGirl is told in detail. His pivotal role in the Border Campaign of the 1950s and, later, during the Troubles is recounted. The Border Campaign itself, and the part played by Aughavas man, Pat McGirl, is covered as well as is the controversial killing by the RUC of another Aughavas man, James Crossan. The biggest chapter in the book is that covering the impact of the Troubles on Leitrim from 1968 to the ceasefires of the 1990s.

The book is remarkable also in its comprehensive and balanced coverage of events.

There are biographies of Leitrim-born RIC men who died in the War of Independence elsewhere in Ireland. There are also biographies of Leitrim men who took part in the Spanish Civil War. There are sections on the impact of the War of Independence on the Protestant population of Leitrim. There is a section, with photographs, about the history of the Orange Order in Leitrim and also a section on Leitrim Protestants who were in the IRA.

The book is a groundbreaking and iconic publication that is a virtual encyclopaedia of Leitrim in the 20th century. It runs to almost 500 pages with 500 Photographs and a comprehensive index with over 3,000 references to people and places.

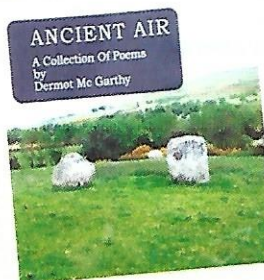
The book is on sale in shops throughout Co Leitrim but any enquiries can be directed to cumanncabhrachliatroma@eircom.net or to 087 6821566

Ancient Air *a collection of spoken word poetry*

Dermot McGarty

This collection is both an enigmatic and eventful journey. The CD contains 30 poems, choice pieces from his three previously published books "Standing Room Only" (2004) "Goldfish Logic" (2006), and Building Work (2008). The poems document a range of themes, including the ravages of nature, emigration, history, rock 'n roll, fantasy, first love, last chances and eternal truths. There are also new poems dealing with spirituality, self-discovery and the onward march of time itself. Aurally precise

and verbally engaging "Ancient Air" is worth a listen for the past, the present, and the future.

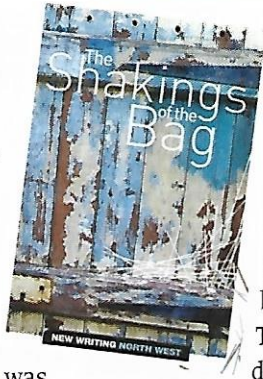


The Shakings of the Bag

Pig Executive

Reviewed by Brian Leyden

is a highly enjoyable collection of short stories and poetry by the Manorhamilton based Pig Executive. According to the preface, one of the Drumshanbo members of this assembly of writers spotted a menu on which the pork was approved by the British Pig Executive. Hence the name. And the general tone of the writing throughout is down and dirty realism. In Conor McManus's opening story two guards acquaint themselves with the goings on in a small town in the build-up to political demonstration in the 70's. The wet about the ears guard Neary and the ice-cream loving Sergeant Dunne deserve their own TV series. In Jo Holmowood's closing story three friends visit a fairground fortune-teller and one of them is unexpectedly plunged into danger. In between, poet David Cameron mentally tries out an old man's dressing gown. Ananda Callery's characters are 'rushing on sugar and grief'. While Bláithín Gallagher gives us a character whose gift for notoriety outlives even death. Orla Parkinson compresses a world of emotions into two short poems. Fiona Meehan gives us a dalliance with



skin-colour at its heart and Jeri Reilly's 'Forecast' rates high in my list of favourite poems in the book.

T N Treanor demonstrates a particular gift for dialogue and intergenerational family politics. Isobel McCowen Connolly lusciously unstitches emotional hurt, whereas Caoimhe Gleeson's heroine has a more macabre hands-on solution to a break-up. Scott Coombs catches the feeling of leaving college perfectly when he describes it as "like being shot into the air". And in Sorcha Fox's poem 'n Leitrim your character can be decided by whether you're a person of "notions or sense". The Shakings of the Bag originated in the workshops led by Dermot Healy. And this very attractively packaged product finds the members of the Pig Executive confidently writing with their own distinctive and quality assured voices.



■ Pig Executive with Dermot Healy at book launch



■ Pig Executive Authors reading at book launch

Valley Of Wonder

Dermot McGarthy

It's a long way to Valparaiso,
It's a long way from here,
From these four walls of the Iron Mountain,
To Brooklyn's Brighton Pier.

A hairless scalp denuded,
Etchings of life without the caves,
Stone ruins like ancient dolmens reveal the passage graves,
Of barefoot boys and shoeless girls,
Leading to other grey monuments in Highgate ,
Woodlawn cemetery and beyond.

From these four borders of lake, mine, upland peat, and stony river,
To the far distant corners of our earth,
Their song is the past , and,
It will be sung forever.

Memento Mori

*Francis Fitzpatrick 3rd year.
St Mogue's College, Bawnboy. Co Cavan*

The hands of existence
Moulding our creation
Painting the very essence of what we are.
Onto the infinite canvas that is everything
Defining what we are
Before we even understand the words.

Rising out of the depths and falling into space
Grasping and clawing and seeing our lives come full circle.
Before we can even begin to understand why we are here
We are Gone.

Memento Mori
A million roads all going the same way.
Never to have our suspicions confirmed
Never to understand
In the end resistance is futile.