

TELEVISION MEMORIES

Seamus Hanney

I'M LOOKING AT television. No sound, but who cares. I got down quickly from evening devotions to get a good viewing point. The big people are gathering behind me but I'm right up to the window of Pat Geraghty's shop. And I have a choice because Pat has not one but two televisions in the window. I scan from one to the other. Same pictures but one is less snowy than the other. Magical pictures—I can see cowboys and Indians. I can hear the sounds and excitement of their battles in my head. I've seen them before in the Gaiety cinema but now it looks like you can have a small cinema at home. Out in

St Patrick's Park the Carthy's are ahead of the posse. They have a television, the only one in the Park. They have a bakery and that was one message I didn't mind doing for my mother, going down for a batch loaf. If Mrs Carthy was busy serving customers, the more time I had to check out what was going on in their television. And it got better because they not only had Telefis Eireann but BBC and UTV. Isn't that David Jacobs

presenting *Juke Box Jury*...? I know his voice from BBC radio. Soon, Dunne's Television van was seen in the Park and we gathered to see massive aerials being hooked on to fragile chimneys. And run back home to announce that the Martins were getting a television, to be followed shortly by Mrs Smith. The question was, when are we...we'll see. In the meantime forays were made to Smiths and Martins to watch *Stagecoach*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, *Highway Patrol*, *Wrestling* on Saturday afternoons, and the portly Michael Miles presenting *Take*

Your Pick. Down to Francie Carr's house to watch Roscommon play Kerry in the All Ireland football final, with a half time treat of 2d wafers from Johnny Earley's, courtesy of Mrs Carr. Then there was a dilemma: five-a-side soccer on the square or football as seen on TV? Cowboys and Indians as played under the cover of garden hedges and the cries of 'bang bang you're dead, I see you hiding behind Carthy's van' or the television version. And what about the Rosary every evening? How would the arrival of new technology affect that long honoured tradition? Questions, confusion, and a great deal of excitement in young minds during the early years of the 1960s.

