

# A GREAT DAY OUT IN MY SCHOOL YEARS

*John James Moran*

MY PARENTS, Patrick and Kathleen Moran, reared four of us. Three boys and one girl on the family farm in the townland of Currawn, in the parish of Mohill. I attended Aduon national school from September 1945 until June 1954. The school was situated in the parish of Cloone. We walked the two and a half miles to and from each day. Master Charles Flynn, who was principal and taught the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh standards while Mrs Madge Mulligan taught infants, first and second standards. Master Flynn was father of the great Leitrim footballer Cathal Flynn of the 1950's era. Towards the end of August each year a group of the senior boys used to draw home the turf for the master, from Gorravagh bog, one mile from his house. I had the privilege of taking part on a few occasions.

On the appointed day I was up early in the morning to harness the ass and attach him to the cart. I headed off on the two and a half mile journey to the bog. I arrived at 9am. Within ten to fifteen minutes most of the lads had turned up. The Master was there before us, arriving on his bicycle to plan and organise our days work. Four of the boys stayed on the bog to help load the carts as they came in. When the cart was

filled I headed off down the main road to the Master's house. Once there another group of boys and Packy Fitzpatrick who was an adult took the ass out of the cart, pushed the cart into the turf shed and tipped it up. By now the master had come back to the house on his bicycle. He brought us into the kitchen where we were welcomed by Mrs Flynn and other members of the family. We sat down to a lovely breakfast. When I returned to the turf shed the four other carts were in, plus the lads that were on the bog. They all went in and had breakfast. After that no time was lost. The turn around on the bog and in the turf shed was quick. A bit of devilment went on in the bog as there were no adults there, but it was all good fun. Rivalry developed among the drivers on the road to see who had the best ass, and who would bring in the most loads. We trotted the asses, but a problem soon arose. With the iron shoeing on the cart wheels, and the hard surface of the road, the carts were hopping throwing clods of turf on the road.

At around one o'clock we were all invited in to the house for our dinner, where the delicious meal was enjoyed by all. The asses were rested and fed water and hay. During our break a member

of the public came into see the master and complained about the state of the road with the clods of turf. The master did not know that we were trotting the asses as he was kept busy around the house.

After dinner we were all sent to clean the road which was the main road between Mohill and Ballinamore. That was the end of the rivalry and trotting the asses. We worked into the late evening to complete the task. We were invited in once again for our evening tea. We took our places around the long tables where we enjoyed a lovely meal, which included sections of honey taken fresh from the masters bee hives in the garden. There was great banter and craic around the tables. After the memorable and enjoyable day and with the night drawing in, it was time to tackle the ass and cart, and head for home. The Master paid for our school books for the following school year and it was a help to our families. Happy memories of my school days.

*Sadly some of the people are no longer with us, and have gone to their eternal reward, R.I.P. To those others here today, may they have a long happy retirement.*