Tribute t



Paddy Downey, retired 1974; taught in Kilcoosey N.S., Ballintogher N.S., Drumlease N.S.



Frances Gilmartin, retired 1967; taught in Killea N.S., Corracloona N.S., Loughross N.S., Kiltyclogher N.S.

MEMORY sometimes has mercy on us. When I think back to my primary school days I find that the harsher side has faded away, only the positive and the more gentle images are left. Besides all my primary teachers are dead now, and I myself was also a teacher. People in glasshouses should not throw stones.

I first went to school in 1933 to a little school in Aughawillan. It was a one-roomed affair built under and into a steep hill beside Mahon's shop, over the deep railway cutting and near the bridge over that beloved narrow gauge railway.

It might have been a hedge-school; maybe it was taken over by the Board of Education in the 1850s. It was thatched and the thatch eaves at the back stuck into the hill. There was a fire at the senior end where Master McTiernan taught. Mrs. Tierney gathered us little ones around her on forms at the other end. We were let up in relays to the fire to warm ourselves. The turf was stacked behind the entrance door. It was an impossible situation for teachers.

The new school on top of the steep hill opened in 1934 — with two rooms! Annie Prior (later Mrs. Holland) taught the junior classes, she who was so kind to small children. She used to dandle Peter Dolan on her knee, and that made us jealous, but then, he was always smiling. I can remember the excitement of collecting the folklore in those years, and Master McTiernan solemnly criticising our 'compositions' and declaiminng Shakespeare. He took the part of Macbeth, we did the other parts. It was the massacre of the famed blank verse.

Master McTiernan died in 1938. We were sent home on the day of his death, delighted at the prospect of three free days, God forgive us. There were the usual jibes at the school gates, we at those who were turning left for the harsher lands such as Lislaughey and Stradrinan. We turned right for the lowlands, along the bog road, past Charlie Morrow's quaint little house called 'the Inkbottle', through 'The Dark Place' (there always seemed to be a cross sow



Mairéad McMorrow, retired 1982; taught in Kiltyclogher Girls School, Castlemile N.S., Brackerybeg, Largy N.S.



James Wrynn, retired 1973, taught in Cavan, Fenagh N.S.



Maura Wrynn, retired 1975, taught in Glostermin N.S., Fenagh N.S.



Retired N.T. s

— ONE MAN'S TRIBUTE

lurking there), over Penrose's field for a shortcut. We hadn't to be taught that the hypotenuse is shorter than the sum of the other two sides. Then there was the parting of the ways at the Mill Avenue.

I changed to Kilmore school in Upper Drumreilly in 1939, to Mrs. McGovern and Miss Keaveney. It was a long walk, it took us over 'Paddy Gilronan's Mountain'. We heard the shout 'Up Mullahoran' every morning as he clanged his blacksmith's hammer on the anvil. Everyone was supposed to bring a stick or a turf each morning for the 'heating'. Many a farmer, especially those near the school must have cursed us as they saw their gaps empty. But the pyre in the school yard grew higher and higher; it was like bringing a stone to throw on the heap at a Holy Well.

Mrs. McGovern was a very good teacher, gay or grave. The girls used to judge her humour in the morning as she walked through us to her desk. If the join at the back of her skirt was centred, all was clear, if it was to one side, then be on your best behaviour. Those were the days before work to rule, so she took extra time after hours to help those of us who were aspiring to higher education. But for her I would probably not be penning these lines. Like so many of the others I might be lost in that horde who had to leave an Ireland which was supposed to be 'free'. The puzzle for them was why they were not free to stay in their homeland.

At least no blame to my teachers. I now realise that they loved us and would have wished opportunities for us all. We weren't really a lovely lot in those years of dry toilets, of bare dirty feet, in shabby clothes, with our satchels manufactured from sack bags, eating our lunches out of **The Leitrim Observer** and drinking our milk from the cleaned out Yorkshire Relish sauce bottles with their tightly rolled paper 'corks'.

Yes, even the occasional cane stripe on the hands helped many towards a stripe on the shoulder later on.



Jim Mulhern, retired 1980, 1938-1971 Drummien N.S. (Gortletteragh), 1971-1980 Gortletteragh Central N.S.



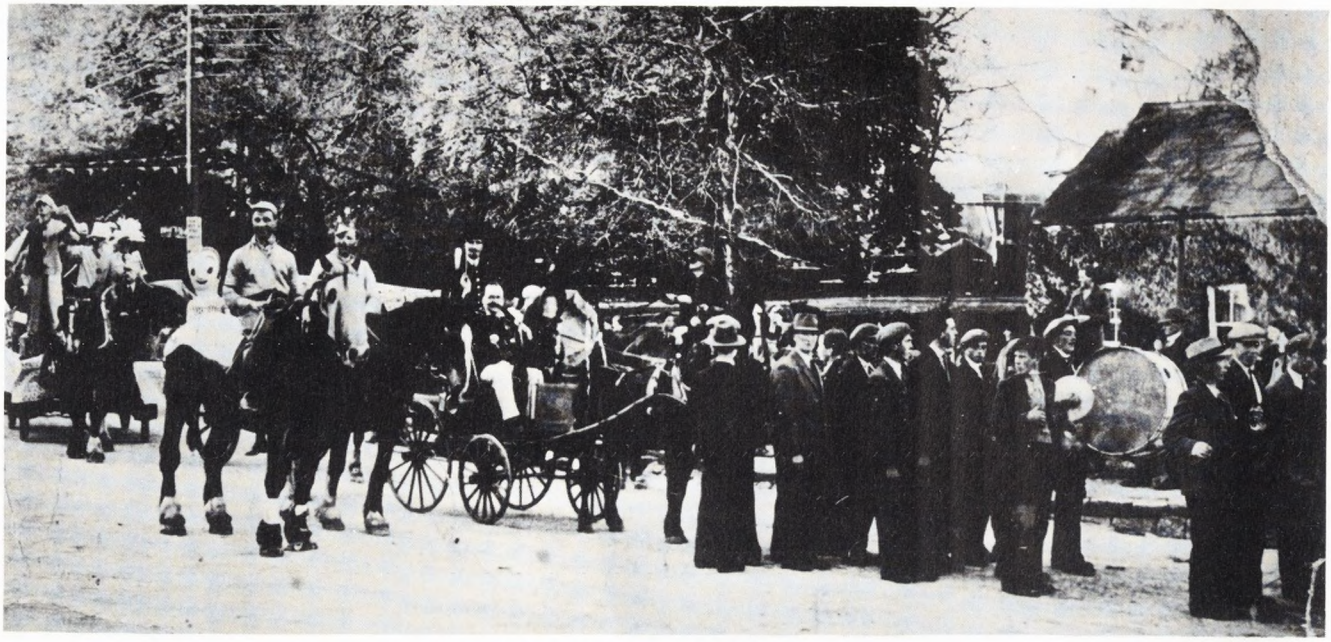
Philip F. McGuinness, Mohill, retired 1972, Finiskill N.S. 1931-1934 and Eslin N.S. 1934-'72.



MRS. JOHNSTON
Retired 1977. Taught in Bailieborough, Mohill and Newtowngore.



Children at Aughawillan School in 1936. The author of this article, Gus Leaden, is in the second row from the front, second from left.



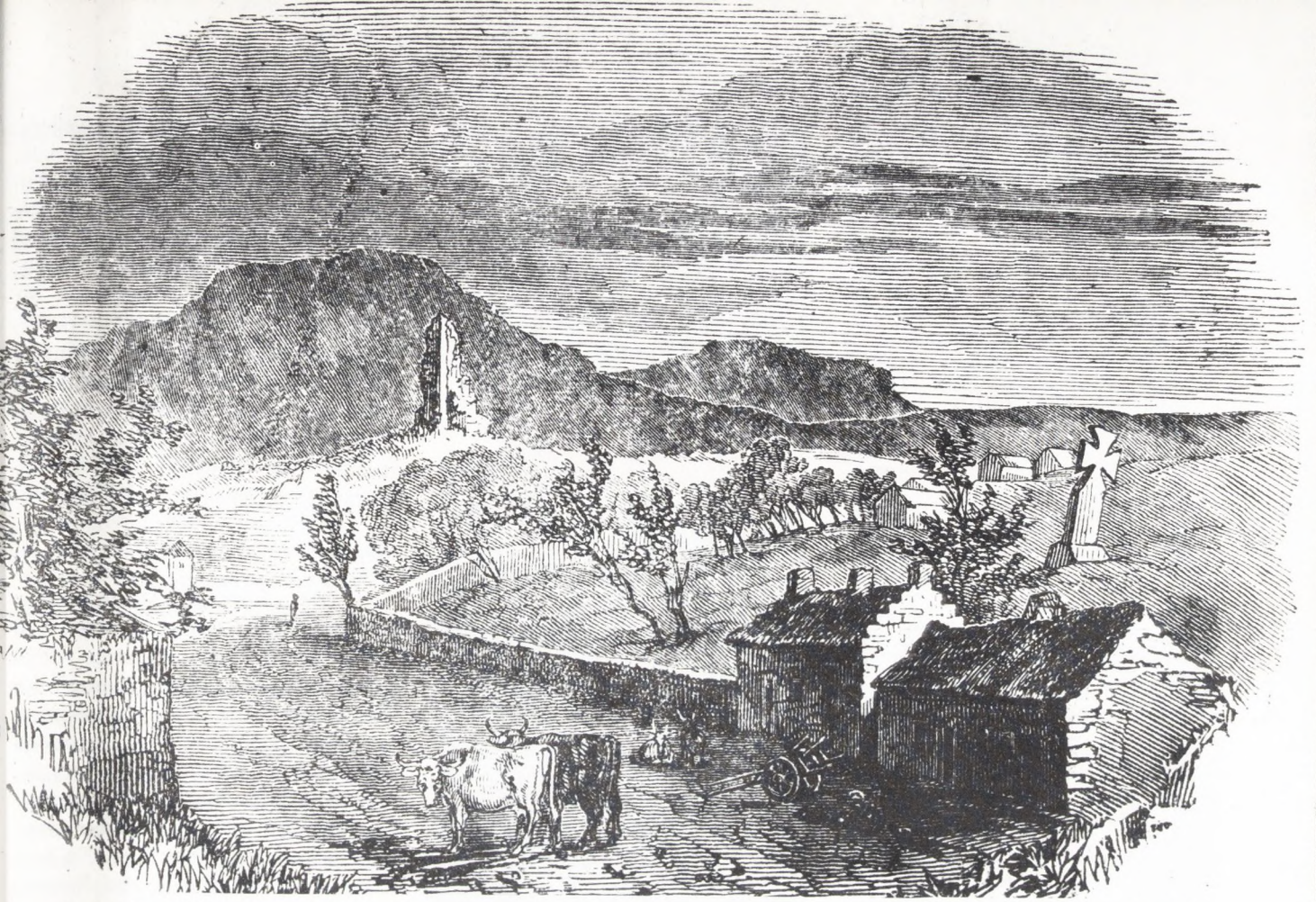
Carnival Time in Mohill - 1939

Carnival parade passing through Castle St., headed by the Eslin Fife and Drum Band. Among those of the band whom we recognise are Joe McCaffrrey (drummer), Mike Joe Hagan, P. Bohan, Michael McLoughlin (youth), Tom Reynolds (big drum), Eddie Reynolds, Jimmy Joe Murphy, Mike Wynne, John Mulligan, Mick Beirne, Johnny Mulligan. Others in the parade whom we recognise: George Barrett (on horseback), Tom McGovern ('Lord Mayor') and J. F. O'Sullivan ('Lady Mayoress') — both seated in the mayoral carriage driven by Tommy McKeon. On the railway cart driven by Tommy Canning we recognise Sean Meehan. Looking on opposite Miss Kirkpatrick's house (now Harry McGowan's) we recognise Alex Bradshaw, Redhills. Photo courtesy Willie Moran, Drumrahill, Mohill.

Photos: Gerry Canning, Mohill.



This is a very fine print of Drumsna House, otherwise known as Belmont House, by Maurice Collis, C.E., of 3 North Great Georges St., Dublin, taken from **Incumbered Estates Rental 1850-1860.** *The house was owned by the Attorney McKeon family and was burned to the ground in the early twenties during the Troubles. The original may be seen in the National Library.*



A view in woodcut vignette by Branston of the ruins of Dun-garby Castle, Tullaghan, as they were in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. The original may be seen in the National Library.

Cloonturk N.S. 1929

A happy picture of the 50 pupils of Cloonturk N.S., Dromod, in 1926. The teachers with them were their Principal Mr. Alfie O'Brien, N.T., and his Assistant, Miss McCarthy (Maloney), N.T. The photo was produced by Scholastic Souvenir Co. Ltd., Blackpool. How many of the young faces do you recognise? We are grateful to Marcella Mulligan, S.R.N., Keelagh, Mohill, for this photo.

