



Canon Charles Meissner, Mohill, looks forward to the restoration of Fenagh Church.



FENAGH CHURCH OF IRELAND WITH THE "ANCIENT ABBEY WALLS"
IN THE BACKGROUND

Padraig Leyden TELLS WHY THE CHURCH SHOULD BE RESTORED

When faced with two daunting propositions, one invariably chooses the lesser of the two evils. This is just the position in which the Church of Ireland community in the parish of Fenagh find themselves. As of now their church in the Glebe townland on the outskirts of the village is on the verge of collapsing. A first option was to allow nature to take its toll and gradually witness this eighteenth century building collapse. This indeed would have been the easier choice — the soft option.

Local opinion was that the "mortal remains" would indeed be an eyesore in the shadow of the nearby celebrated abbey — three roofless churches in the same field would be too much!

The second — and much more difficult — option was to repair the church. This indeed is an intimidating prospect and a monumental financial burden which falls on the shoulders of a community of a mere two families within the parish, and some three or four other families on the

periphery of the parish who regularly attended Service in the church prior to its closure. However it is hoped that in Fenagh, like so many other parishes in Ireland where a church has been at risk, this is an issue which will transcend religious barriers.

The original building was erected sometime between 1792 and 1802. Since then minor alterations have been made with the addition of at least one window and a vestry. From Preachers Books which have survived it can be seen that a typical congregation on a Sunday in 1860, numbered about forty persons. At this time the community was served by two clergymen, Rector, Rev. George Beresford and Curate, Rev. T. Roe. In 1872 there were two Sunday Services with a total of ninety people in attendance.

The parish continued as a separate and viable entity until about the mid 1920s when it was amalgamated with Oughteragh (Ballinamore). Today it is part of the amalgamated parishes of

Mohill, Farnaught, Aughavas, Oughteragh, Drumreilly, Kiltubrid and Fenagh. Regular services continued to be held until the mid 1960s, with Harvest Thanksgiving Service continuing for a few more years after this. Since the late sixties therefore, the church itself has lain idle, although of course its precincts continue to be in use as a burial ground. This indeed is the bottom line for all of us.

The biggest obstacle to be overcome in the proposed reconstruction is of course finance and while some offers of financial aid have already come from emigrants and others with family connections within the parish, much remains to be done on this task of preserving such a vital part of the heritage of the parish. With this in mind a committee has been set up to organise the reconstruction and will in the near future be organizing a number of fund raising ventures. Donations can be forwarded to either **Sean Gilhooly** or **Willie Booth**, Tully, Foxfield, Carrick-on-Shannon.

OLD BARREL STORE ARTS AND CRAFTS CO-OP



The front view of the Old Barrel Store, Arts & Crafts Centre; on the Quays, beside the bridge in Carrick-on-Shannon. (Photo: David Knight).

In the Leitrim, Sligo area there exists a wealth of artistic talent. The Leitrim Library Exhibitions, Boyle Arts Festivals, Ballinamore Writers Week, Drama Festivals and Music Festivals are all sufficient evidence of this.

In 1986 a group of 30 individuals came together to form a co-operative to establish a centre where the arts and crafts could be displayed and performed. They approached Leitrim County Council and after negotiations the Council agreed to let the **Old Barrel Store** on the Quays in Carrick-on-Shannon for use as an arts and crafts centre.

The co-operative secured a feasibility study grant from the Youth Employment Agency and raised share capital to carry out the renovation work, which was done by the members.

A craft display area was built downstairs and an art gallery was established in the upstairs room. A performance and workshop area has recently opened up downstairs.

An Arts Festival Weekend launched the Centre last May, where it was officially opened by Mr. Adrian Munnelly, Director, Arts Council of Ireland.

Since opening, the centre has achieved all the aims of the members and many thousands of visitors have passed through its doors.

All work on display is locally produced by the co-op members and shows a very high standard of workmanship.

Exhibitions are being held each month with a large show being mounted for Christmas and workshops are available throughout the winter months.

*David Knight,
P.R.O.*



Pictured at the Official Opening of the Old Barrel Store: Patrick Doyle (Leitrim Co. Manager), Frankie Gavin (Dé Danaan), Colm Beggan (Chairman, Co-Op), Leo Regan (Arts Officer, Leitrim-Sligo).

(Photo - David Knight).