

The Road around Ballymacegan and Redwood

By Seamus J. King



Whitehall House

Growing up in Ballymacegan, I became aware of my immediate neighbours from an early age. Initially they were the people who lived in the nearby houses but gradually my acquaintance expanded as I started school in Redwood National School about 1942 and used to travel there by car with my mother, who was one of the teachers, via Grange and Ballincor Cross. Later, when I was older, I used to accompany my father to Redwood bog and learned the names of the people along the road through Killycross and Redwood. There came a time when I could name all the people in all the houses in the full circle. The memory of these people is still vivid today and in order to ensure that I am correct I consulted the Electoral Registers in the National Archive.

These are fascinating documents, which list

the people entitled to vote in Local and National Elections. I have consulted the registers for 1948, 1952 and 1958. I have also got help from members of my family and from near neighbour, John Donoghue, as well as Elizabeth Fogarty, Pat Hough, Dermot Corcoran and Martin Hough.

Before arriving at Grange Cross, the last house on the left hand side of the Birr/Portumna road before turning into the Ballymacegan road was once owned by a Mrs Ryan. Her house was auctioned in 1949 and bought by Sylvester King, whose sister, Kitty, ran a shop there until the early 1960s after which the property changed hands on a couple of occasions.

The first house on the left side of the Ballymacegan road was owned by the Costellos, and Mrs. Costello and her son John or Sean, more often referred to as Junior, lived there. Mrs Costello, who was a Daly from the Borrisokane area, had tried to emigrate to the USA with her husband and children in the 1940s, but was refused entry at Ellis Island due, it is said, to a birthmark. She returned home and lived on the small holding with her son and her daughter Rosemary. Both her son and daughter later emigrated to England. The next house was owned by the Duncans who had originated in Co Mayo. Living there were James and Charles, and their sister Annie known locally as Nan. Annie appears on the 1952 register but is not listed in 1958. She married Adam Dagge, Belle Isle. On the top of the hill, before coming to Fogarty's, was a ruined house, where Stephen Sullivan used to live before he got the Land Commission place further along the road. Fogarty's was the home of John (Jack) and his wife, Helena (nee King). They had two children, Elizabeth and William. Opposite their entrance gate, lived the Maddens, Peter and Joan. Before them the house was occupied by a Miss Treacy, who had a cure for burns. The ointment she made up for her cure was very effective and ensured that the burn left no scar. Joan Madden's maiden name was Marriott and she hailed from Surrey, England. She and Peter met while working at the Belle Isle hotel, later owned by the Dagge family, near Portumna Bridge. Continuing along the road one came to the home of the Sullivans. Stephen, the head of the household, lived there with their three children, Timothy, Patrick and Delia. Their sisters, Margaret and Mary Jane, had moved to the USA and Dublin respectively.

Further along the road was a bad bend, called Seanie's Gate. Who Sean was, I never heard. One morning my mother and Canon Moloney had a minor collision on the bend. There were so few cars on the road at the time that you seldom expected to meet one round a bend. The Canon was of that opinion because he said to my mother: 'What are you doing out at this hour of the morning?' The same Canon had a detestation of lipstick, and used to refer to it as 'rat's blood!' In through the gate on the left at the bend was the ruin of a house, which was formerly occupied by Tim O'Neill. Some years back it was purchased by a Dutch couple, Jan & Monique Boons, who have a successful goat milking enterprise. The other gate facing one from the

Grange direction, which seems to have disappeared over the years, was the main entrance to Ballymacegan House, which was the ruined structure beside Tom Dowd's house on Wellington's land. At some stage the entrance was moved a mile down the road to the situation it was in the fifties, which was much closer to Ballymacegan House.

Further along the road on the left hand side lived Bridget - known as 'Baby' O'Brien. She kept a lodger, Joe Kennedy. Joe could swim and I recall one Sunday he came down to our house and he took my father down to the Shannon to teach him how to swim. It mustn't have been a successful lesson as I never heard my father talking of swimming afterwards. A memory I have of the occasion is of the swimsuit my father wore. He must have got it off Joe. It was a faded navy blue affair with a front on it like a boiler suit. Was that the fashion for men at the time! Baby O'Brien did odd jobs for farmers. She was skilled at cutting seed potatoes for sowing, and I remember her sitting on a heap of hay and cutting away in our hayshed.

Peter's Hill

Continuing down Peter's Hill (Who was Peter?) the Hough family lived in an avenue on the right side, in a house called Whitehall. James and Eileen Hough lived there, as well as a brother of Jim, Dinny. The latter was a frequenter of Milne's Pub and could be seen at evening time cycling down the road. My memory is of him cycling very slowly. The origin of the name, Whitehall, is interesting. Whitehall House was the original name of the house on Cahalan's land in Ballymacegan. This was purchased in the nineteenth century by Jim Hough's ancestor. When the family sold out some years later and purchased their present abode, which was called Castle View, they brought the name, Whitehall, with them. About 1900 Jim Hough's father built another house further in the fields and he lived there until the 1920's, when he moved out to Whitehall. The other house, which we used to refer to crossing the fields to school, as Hough's old house, became the residence of John Grogan for some years before he got a Land Commission place in the divide of the Trench estate. The last resident of Hough's old house was Jack Ruttledge. The laneway that one travelled along to Hough's old house continued on to another house, which was owned by Bidy Mannion. She had a farm and lived with her brother Michael, who died in the early part of the century. She put the land up for sale about 1920 and sold it to Jimmy Glennon. On the night of the sale or soon after, she was robbed of the sale money. The robbers broke into the house by removing a window and, having taken the money, set the house on fire, killing Bidy Mannion. That it was robbery, rather than an accidental fire, was proved by the fact that the displaced window was found against the gable end of the house. Nobody was ever arrested for the murder. One other memory of this area. In the fifties Grange hill, overlooking Hough's farm, was cleared of timber. It was part of the Trench estate which was divided into farms for John Grogan, Paddy Madden, Joe Corcoran, Danny Bugler and Ned Waters. Ned Waters had a couple of kilns on his land for the making of charcoal. I remember the gradual clearance of the trees and the smoke rising from the kilns.

Next door to Hough's, on the same side of the road, lived Michael Corcoran. He had a brother, Dermot, who was a priest in England and a great supporter of the Lorrha hurling team. He gave them a set of jerseys on one occasion. Fr. Corcoran (1911-1979) studied for the priesthood in St. Kieran's College, Killkenny and was ordained in 1937 for the English Mission. After serving as a curate in a number of parishes, he became P.P. of Stechford and served there until he retired in 1977 and returned to live with his brother, Michael, in Ballymacegan. Also living in the house was Christina Reynolds, a sister of the Corcorans, and a widow. She was married to Sergeant Reynolds, who hailed from Leitrim and was stationed in Lorrha. When they married he was transferred to Corofin, Co. Galway, where he died at a young age. After his death, Mrs. Reynolds came to live in Corcoran's with her daughter, who was born posthumously.

One was now in Ballymacegan and there were four families side by side. In the fields in Wellington's land Tom Dowd lived with his son, Sean, who worked for us. Sean used to be paid the agricultural wage of £2 - 5s - 0 a week, plus his dinner. If he worked late in the evening he got his tea. When rabbits became a cash crop around 1950, Sean got a ferret and went ferreting on weekends. An average catch would be 50 rabbits which, at one shilling each amounted to £2 - 10 - 0, more than his weekly wage! Tom Dowd used to visit our house most nights, arriving about 8.30 and sitting for about an hour and a half. It was a good example of the curdiaocht, when the day's news and the parish happenings were discussed. Tom was the herdsman and there were two other workmen on the 500 acre farm, Timmy Sullivan and Paddy Hough. The owner, Malcolm Willington, always referred to and addressed as Mr. Willington, used to pay a visit a couple of times a week. At one stage he bought a new car, a Vauxhall with the registration number, FI 3735. It was green in colour and an object of curiosity for some time, as it was bigger than most cars and the green colour was a

contrast, as most cars were black at the time. Willington fought in World War 1 and was awarded the Military Cross for his 'exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy.' He suffered a gunshot wound to his left shoulder and this inhibited his use of a gun in later life. He was a keen fowler. At the time of the landing in Dunkirk in 1944, he was talking to my father outside our gate one day, and I had some injury to my face from a fall. He said to my father: 'Is he back from Dunkirk?' Beside the entrance into Wellingtons/Dowds was a stile. It was part of a pedestrian way that led from Redwood all the way to Portumna. Boundary fences along the way of the path had well-constructed styles like this one to facilitate passage. Further in from Dowds, a good mile from the road, lived Paddy Hough and his wife Elizabeth. They had seven children. Their house was a two-room home and conditions today would be regarded as extremely primitive. In order to get to the house one had to traverse a number of fields and go through three gates. The passage was okay during the summer but extremely wet and muddy during the winter. Paddy had a bicycle and he used to carry two buckets of milk on the handlebars from the field in Cahalans, where he had grass for his cow. He needed to wheel the bicycle very steadily to prevent the milk from spilling over the top of the bucket. He was a very steady man as another practice of his illustrates. Smoking was one of his few pleasures but he did so in a peculiar way. Having lit a cigarette, he never took it out of his mouth but let it burn, giving it the occasional pull. The result was that the ash grew as the cigarette burned and he had such a steady head that it never fell off. Sometimes the full length of the burnt cigarette stuck out of his mouth. Paddy was also a great judge of the weather and people referred to him for his opinion. We used to judge what the day ahead would bring by observing Paddy passing on his bicycle to see if his had his coat on the carrier.

In Cahalan's land lived the Hogans, Paddy and his wife Elizabeth, as well as five children. They all emigrated to England in the early sixties. There were about 300 acres in Cahalan's and the farm, together with Wellington's, were taken over by the Land Commission in the sixties and divided into seven farms. On the bend on the road lived the Kings, Joe and Annie, Annie used to teach in Ballincor school but got a job in Redwood in 1941, when a position became vacant. They had four children, Maura, Seamus, Marjorie and Liam. Maura suffered severe burns from hot water on one occasion and was left without a scar as a result of using Miss Treacy's special ointment. From Killycross, heading down the road the Donohues lived on the right side. Bill Donoghue, who came from Aglish about 1938 to live in Ballymacegan, and his wife Anna Mary (Browne), had six children, John, Pauline, P. J., Liam and the twins. Also living in the house was an aunt of Bill's, Anne Walsh, who had lived for years in the U.S. She lived in a room at the end of the house and always wore a shawl. She used to keep a great fire during the winter and the turf would be piled around it. One night it caught fire and as kids we watched in fascination from our house as the flames leaped through the chimney into the clear night sky. Miss Walsh, as we all addressed her, used to visit our house regularly and we were slightly scared of her. She would sit in the kitchen and didn't have much to say. She died in 1949 and was buried in Bonohum, in the ancestral grave of the Walshs. Also living in the house was a workman, Paddy White, and army man, who came to work for Pat Browne before coming to Donohue's. He was a tasty man with a moustache and was buried in Portumna.

On the way to Redwood, one passed through Killycross. The first house belonged to Kennedys but it was sold early in about 1946 and Kevin Guinan bought it. Beside him lived the Corcorans, John and Kathleen, and they had four children. Their house was a fine two-storey edifice, it had been owned by the Walshs, was originally a thatched house, but was refurbished to a two storey. The new roof was taken from an abandoned house down the field, which had never been completed. Further on, on the right side there was a lane that led to Mick Hough's and Hogan's. Mick Hough had a substantial house and he married Lil Clarke, they had no children. Mick had two brothers, Paddy and Fr. Tom, as well as two sisters, Mrs. Eddie Whyte and Mrs. Billy Martin. Further in the lane lived the Hogans. There were three siblings in the house and their condition was primitive in the extreme. As far as I remember they had a small garden and little else. One of them used to dig gardens for people and a long memory of mine was watching Jim Hogan going up the road, dragging the fork after him rather than carrying it on his shoulder! There was also a sister.

A little further along the road was another very narrow lane leading down towards the Shannon. Continuing down the road was another lane that faced one on a bend. There were two houses on the lane. The first was owned by the Loughnanes, sometimes called the Loughmanes. There were at least four siblings there, Michael, Denis, Bridget, and Mary, who died early in the fifties. They used to buy hay from my father and they used a threepronged fork at a time when most forks were either two- or four-pronged. Dinny Byrne inherited the farm. One had to go through their yard to get to the next house, Mannions, which was originally owned by Loughnanes, cousins of the neighbouring family. There lived Michael and Moira Mannion and

they had no children. My mother was some way related to them and we used visit them a bit. Moira was in bad health and was mostly ill. A brother of Moira's, Jerome Donnelly, lived with them for some time. Nurse Murtagh used to nurse Moira, and Dr. Keane-Royston from Portumna used to call on her regularly.

If one continued past their house and crossed a number of fields, one came to Brownes. The main entrance to the house was by a laneway from Redwood Castle. The passage from Mannion's was to be made into a proper road during the fifties but the money was never made available for it. Back on to the road the next house was Lil Clark's. She came from Kilimor and bought Bill Sammon's place. Bill was from Portland and he was drowned accidentally in the canal near the bridge of Portumna. She lived alone and, at some stage, married Mick Hough. There was a hurling match played in one of her fields on one occasion against Tiernascragh, who came across the Shannon for the match. The lads decided to have a few drinks in nearby Tony's pub before the game. After their fill they went out to play the game against Redwood. During the match one of the Tiernascragh players hit Michael O'Meara from Curraghera, who was studying for the priesthood, and had lined out for Redwood. This was taken very badly by the Redwood players, a bit of a row developed and the incident put an end to Galway teams coming across to play against the local opposition. The pub next door to Clark's was at different times named Tony's, Sommerville's and Milne's. It got its licence in 1885 following an application by the local landlord, Trench. The latter used to shoot in the neighbourhood and decided that an outlet for alcohol nearby was necessary to entertain his guests after a hard day following game. It was a godsend for the locals as the nearest pub before that was over four miles away in Lorrha. In 1950 the pub was run by Tony Milne and his wife Eileen Cousin. Tony came from Crinkle and inherited the pub from his uncle, Tony Sommerville. They reared a family of seven children.

Continuing along the road one came to another lane, which went down to the Shannon. There was one house there, Crean's. Ned Crean and his wife, Bridget, lived there and they had one son, Paddy. The latter was very involved with the Redwood team during the nineteen-forties. I remember him in the late forties cycling up the road to our gate, where he joined up with Sean Dowd to go dancing in Portumna or further afield. To a young land they represented mystery and the desirable life of adults. There is one good story told about the duo. Sean Dowd wore a new suit to a dance in Portumna one night. When they came out after the dance, it was flogging rain. Sean concluded that his trousers would be ruined if he cycled home in the rain, These were the days before trousers had permanent press. So, he took off the trousers, put it under his arm, cycled home in the rain and preserved the fragile creases!. Crean's house was known as Fort Alice. It

was originally a hunting lodge of Trench's. The story goes that Trench christened the house Fort Alice, after the name of the mistress he kept there. Tommy Tierney lived there after buying the place in 1948. When the Creans sold out, they bought The Dublin Bar in Birr. Paddy became an usher in the Dáil.



Fr. Michael Guinan (1927-2015), Redwood, who served all his priestly life in Montana, U.S., was ordained in St. Patrick's College, Thurles in 1952. He completed his secondary education in St. Flannan's College, Ennis. In this picture he is with his cousin, Fr. Doran.

Back out on the road the next house on the left side was Bill Moran's. He lived there with his wife, who was a Madden from Galway and they had two children, a boy and a girl. Gussie was one of the few young people in the area, who went to secondary school. He was a boarder in St. Flannan's College, Ennis.. When Mrs. Moran died, Bill married Eileen Hogan from Birr and they had about six children. Continuing along the road one came to Meara's. This was originally Moran's. John and Catherine Moran reared a family of seven girls and one boy. It appears one of the girls died young and the boy lived only to the age of twenty-one years. There were two sets of twins, Masie and Katie, and Ellie and Freddy. Also Teresa and Eilis, who married Richard Bracken, the principal in Rathcabbin School. Mikey Meara from Terryglass married Masie. They had no children. The Mearas owned the bog, where many people in the area got their turf, though the bog was coming to the end of its use by the early fifties and Redwood bog, further along the road was being developed. They had a workman, Bill Slattery. Bill was from Galway and a great talker. He used to go back to Galway occasionally and, when he had returned, he usually had a rake of stories. Nobody could explain how he heard the stories since he never stopped talking! Quite close to O'Meara's was

another house, also owned by a family of Morans. Different Morans again and they appear to have disappeared altogether. The thought strikes me that whereas the O'Meara's all tended to have some kind of nicknames, the Morans didn't.

Yardhill was the name of a townland along this piece of road. The next house on the right was Tom Kennedy's. He and Bill Lambe were married to sisters. Tom, who died in 1953, had five daughters. Later, Pat Larkin from Galway married Julia. The next house was on the opposite side of the road and the Guinans lived there. The head of the household was Larry and he was a big man, who occasionally went by our house in a pony and trap on his way to Portumna. His wife was Mary B. Guinan and they had nine children, five boys and four girls. One of the boys, Michael (1927-2015), became a priest. Having gone to school in St. Flannan's College, he entered St. Patrick's College in Thurles and was ordained in 1953. He spent all his priestly life in Montana, U.S.A. Across the road from them lived the Morans, four siblings, John, Thomas, Willie and Winnie. John used to be a great frequenter of Tony's pub and the story went that he held the record for the greatest number of pints drunk in a day. It started on a fair day in Portumna, where he had cattle for sale. Having arrived at the fairgreen and settled the cattle, he went into the pub for his first pint at six o'clock, when the pub opened. He tumbled away all day, sold the cattle, had a few more, eventually arrived back to Tony's where he continued. By six o'clock in the morning, at the end of the 24-hour period he had consumed fifty-six pints! The story concludes that, by that stage, the day had broken and he went out next door to Clarks, which he had bought, to till for turnips. This was the time when men were men! Unfortunately the three brothers were burned to death when the house went on fire in 1974. My brother, Liam, bought the place and farmed it. He did a lot of clearing of hedges and ditches and turned it into a good cereal growing farm. One day he was spraying some corn and his foot got caught under the power take-off. He lost a toe, a lot of blood and was lucky to make it to Guinan's across the road, who called for medical help. Between Moran's and Jack the Gabán's lived John Moran, who was a brother of Bill, mentioned earlier. John had a bit of land there and lived in a caravan. His brother, Paddy owned an engine and thresher and used to travel the area for threshings. They were times of great excitement for young lads, breaking the monotony of daily routine. A caravan was towed after the engine to provide accommodation for the driver, and it eventually became a residence for John. He was known locally as 'Jack in the box'! He remained there for some years but finished out his days in O'Leary's in Moatfield, which the Morans had purchased. Frankie Guinan recalls cycling home with the daily newspaper and being stopped regularly by John for a read.

Jack Kennedy's, the Gabán lived in the next house with his mother. He had two sisters, Sadie and Annie, who worked in Dublin. Later they came home and lived in the house. Jack died in the Pike nursing home and is buried in Lorrha. The place was inherited by his nephew, P. J. Hough. The next house was Lambe's. It used to be Kennedy's but Bill Lambe must have married into it. I went to his wake, my first, after his death. I can't remember the year but I would say it was 1954 or 1955. My father took me along. It wasn't a very exciting occasion for a young lad, but I think there were a few other young people to keep me occupied.. The Lambes had a number of children, most of them grown up by the 1950s. They included John, Tom, Mick, Paddy, Sarah and Maureen. Tom was one of the hurlers on the 1948 team and he was a kind of hero in my eyes, and he gave me my first real hurley. On the way to the Shannon, beside Lambe's house was another laneway that led all the way to the Shannon. On the old maps of the area the road from Redwood Cross came as far as Lambe's only, while the road down from Grange Cross came only as far as the lane to Loughnane's house. The remainder of the route around Redwood was a track only, rather than a road. I'm not sure when the road was completed. Further along the road Pat Browne lived with his niece, Gretta. Their house was situated at the entrance to Redwood bog. He was from Borrisokane and a brother of Bill's. The Martins lived in the next house. The mother, Sarah, was a widow woman and she had three daughters, Sarah, Bridget and Kathleen. They originally lived near the Shannon, down the lane beside Lambe's, but got land and a new house in the divide of the Trench estate in 1935. Sadie married Mick Lambe.

Next along the road on the same side lived the Kennedys. The head of the house was Mick and his wife was Lena. They had nine children, six boys, Christy, Mick, Paul, Joe, Frank and Bernie, and three girls, Josie, Kitty and Maureen. Opposite their house was another lane, which led into Bill Brownes. The head of the house was Bill Browne and his wife was Mary Anne. Their children were Jimmy, Bridget, John, Gretta and Dick. On the lane into Browne's lived Tommy and Julia Costello. They came from Ferbane and had a substantial farm. Tommy died in 1949 at the age of forty-nine years. Later Julia sold the farm and thirty acres in Bredagh was purchased by Billy Dagg, while the remainder was bought by Darmody's. Beside Redwood Castle lived the Sullivan's. Tim and Margaret Sullivan had four boys and three girls. The boys were Larry, Mikie, Billy and Oliver, and the girls were Dolly, Josie and Patsy. The remains of the first primary

school to open in Redwood is located beside their house. It was situated in Redwood House and opened in 1879 and remained the school until 1926, when a new school was opened in Kilmurry, a short distance up the road. It continued as a school until 1939, when another school was built a half-mile further along the road and where the school is still located today. Another family of the Kennedys lived beside the Castle. Jack and Moira Kennedy had three children, Mary, Michael and John Joe.

Moving up the road towards Redwood Church was located the old school at Kilmurry, which was purchased by Margaret McCormack, who came from Athleague, Co. Roscommon in 1930 to teach in the school. In the early forties, after the school had moved to its present location, she purchased the building and converted it to a home for herself and her sister, Agnes. Margaret McCormack suffered from chronic bronchitis and retired in 1952. Just past her house and on the same side and in a laneway lived the Houghs. Danny and Kathleen reared a family of three children, Mary, Pat and Chrissie. Danny came from Cloughjordan and got a Land Commission farm. The road past his house was to be connected to another from Lordspark in the fifties, but the money was never allocated for it.

Further up the road on the opposite side and also down a lane lived Jimmy Glennon. Jimmy, who was born in 1891, was one of five children and unmarried. He had a brother, Sean, who was six years younger. As John, he fought in World War 1 in the Irish Guards and received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. On his return home he joined the IRA as Sean Glennon and was a leading participant in the Modreeny Ambush in June 1921. Later in the 1920s, he moved to Birr, opened a sweet shop and later a Cash and Carry Wholesale business. Next door lived the Gardiners. Jack Gardiner and his wife, Sarah, had two children, Mary and Sally. Jack was a brother of Mrs. Corrigan near Ballincor and of Mrs. Mason O'Meara. On the opposite side of the road lived Jim Sammon. After the War, while the cars were still off the road, the fields across which we went to school from Ballymacegan were so flooded - it must have been 1947 - we used an ass and cart to go to school. I don't know where we got the ass but he was the laziest animal that ever wore harness. At any rate it took us an age to travel the four miles and we used park the ass and cart in Sammon's during school time. My task was to leave school at 2.45 to go and saddle the ass and have him ready to bring my sisters Maura and Marjorie home at 3 o'clock. I recall stretching my leg down inside the shaft of the cart on one occasion to give the ass a couple of kicks in the belly to get him to move faster, and tearing my trousers by getting it caught in something! It must have been Jim Sammon's father, who was known as the Major. He wasn't officially a Major, but named one because of his fine physique. He was very interested in the game of hurling and getting young lads involved, and was himself the backbone of the Redwood team in the twenties.

Having passed Redwood School and Church one could see Kennys house to the right down the fields. There was an entrance just beyond the Chapel to the place, but the main one was further along the road. Living in this house was Victor Kenny and his wife Susan Olive, and their two children, Ann and Beeny. After the death of Victor in the late fifties, the farm was put up for sale and there was agitation for the division of the farm of over 300 acres by the Land Commission. The latter didn't take it over, it was said because of the big house on it. It was on the market for some years before it was purchased by Bleaheen from Galway for as little as £12,000 in 1962. He sold 58 acres of the land and eventually it was taken over by the Land Commission in 1971. Lorrha G.A.A. club got sufficient acreage to develop a sports field and the remainder was given in small lots to local farmers. Since then the house has fallen into ruin. A building with a reputed thirty chimneys, the house had been extended in the later 19th century and was over 7,000 square feet in area. The roof contained so many valleys it was prone to dampness and leakages, and today this once fine structure is just crumbling away. We travelled through Kenny's fields coming to school and they had a bamboo grove, which was a dream for a young lad. I cut many a fishing rod in the place, took it home and tied on the fishing line and hook, using it for fishing in the Shannon, an occupation that engaged us for hours on summer Sundays. The Kennys also had a glasshouse and we used to get tomatoes, and I remember eating them like apples.

Back on the road the next house was Gleasons, where Joe and Kathleen reared their family of John, Betty, Frankie, Michael, Lar and Bosco. Also living in the house was an uncle of Kathleen's, Joe Grogan, who had once been game keeper on the Trench estate. There was a picture some place of the latter's father ploughing with cattle. On the opposite side of the road lived the Quinlans. Timmy and his wife Mary Anne had three children, Mary, Thomas and Kitty.

Going through Redwood Cross and heading towards Ballincor, one came to O'Leary's. Mrs. O'Leary was a widow woman and had spent some time in the States. She returned with her son, Al, on the death of her husband. Al started school in Redwood in 1932. The family returned to the States in the 1950s and Mrs. O'Leary

was over one hundred years old when she died. There were three houses in a cluster as one headed for Ballincor Cross. The first, on the left, was Bergins, which was down the field a bit from the road. Joe and Kitty Bergin lived there and they had three children. The original Joe Bergin came from Camross in County Laois and was a gardener in Trench's. Across the road from their entrance was Corrigans. John and Ellen Corrigan had three children, Sonny, Bridie and Tom. John Corrigan came from Aglish. Beside them lived the O'Donoghues. Thomas and Lizzie had five daughters, Josephine, Lizzie, Kathleen, Mary Anne, Lily and Teresa.

Coming out on to the Birr-Portumna road the first house on the left was O'Donoghue's, which was originally owned by Loughnane's, James and Nellie. Lily O'Donoghue lived there. Across from it, up a laneway lived the Waters, John and May, and their daughter, Sarah Anne. Their farm was a divide of the Trench estate. Back on the road lived the Reddans. The mother Bridget and son, Michael and sister, Aoife. Further along on the same side lived Joe Corcoran with his wife, Lucy. They had seven children, Alfie, Joe, Dermot, Gerard, Ollie, Harry and Mary. Their house was originally an RIC barracks and it became their residence when they got a divide of land in the Trench estate from the Land Commission. In the field across the road was the ruin of a house in which the Palmer family lived. Palmer was some sort of manager on the Trench estate. What is interesting is that a road went from the house, across the Portumna-Birr road, over Grange hill, down by Whitehall House to Ballymacegan. The outline of the road can still be seen in places. Next to them were the Maddens, John Joe and his wife Mary. They had one son, Paddy, and five daughters, Maura, Sheila, Una, Bridgit and Nancy. John Joe Madden played hurling for Lorrha and, at the time of the shooting of Sergeant Brady in Lorrha in 1920, he was arrested for the murder. His trial was held in Dublin where he was acquitted to great rejoicing. Beside them lived the Grogans, John and Mary. They had three sons, Sean Brian and Eamon. This was John's second family. He was originally married to Mary Guinane, who was a teacher at Redwood School in Kilmurry between 1923 and 1930. She died in childbirth in the latter year. There were three children in this family, 2 boys and a girl. John was a tailor and the family left the parish during the fifties. The three sons went into the clothing business in Dublin and had a successful company and produced a range of ties under the brand name, Gilt Edge. The eldest son, Sean, served his time in O'Keeffe's grocery shop in Portumna. He played minor hurling with Galway and was a sub on the team in the early fifties.

Postscript: These are the memories I have and the stories I heard. I don't claim they are complete or that they are completely accurate. They reflect a life that has virtually disappeared and a community that was much closer and better known to one another than is the case today. It was also a time of scarcity and hardship, when living was much simpler and material comforts were extremely limited. Were we happier then? It's impossible to say. What is probably certain that the vast majority of people wouldn't want to return to the time.



The pupils and teachers at Redwood National School in 1956

Back row, left to right: Jim Keane, N.T., principal, Michael Houlihan, Bosco Gleeson, Noel Lane, John Corrigan, Lar Gleeson, Jim Lane, Patrick Fallon, Pat Kennedy, Mrs. King, N.T.

Fourth row, left to right: P. K. Gleeson, Brigid Hough, Margaret Houlihan, Kathleen Milne, Nelly Molloy, Anna May Gantly, Phyllis Hough, Mary Reynolds, Kathleen Fallon, Brigid Fallon, Tom Milne.

Third row, left to right: Maura Hough, Patricia Sherlock, Mary Kennedy, Ann Milne, Ann Blake, Mary Milne, Teresa Hough.

Second row, left to right: Geraldine Nevin, Eileen Milne, Maeve Corcoran, T. P. Sullivan, Harry Bugler, Joan Hough, Gertie Sherlock, John Kennedy, Declan Corcoran, Anthony Kennedy, Seamus Hough, Matty Bugler.

Front row, left to right: Martin Hough, Sean Kennedy, Martin Kennedy, Sean Corcoran, P. J. Nevin, Michael Corcoran, John Joe Kennedy, Seamus Houlihan, Tom Hough.