



### Upper Ballinora/Waterfall Heritage Trail

A few thoughts before we begin our walk:

I have been asked several times, why heritage? What good is there in knowing all about the past. All I could do was quote Cicero "to die not knowing what happened before you were born, is to remain perpetually a child" I believe there is a connection between happiness and heritage. If you learn from the past, and appreciate where you are living now, where you have put down roots now, you create well-being within yourself. It doesn't have to be where you were born.

If you reminisce with laudable pride, not egotistical pride, about your own life's journey, you will buy into the concept that part of the past is always alive. You almost get in touch with unknown people who lived and died, and felt all the same emotions and feelings as yourself - be it going to Church, singing in the choir, tending your garden, playing for the local GAA team of your day, or any team of any sports code, or laughing with friends, or minding your cat or dog, or grandchildren.

When you stand at the front door of the church after mass, and gaze for a moment down towards the Mass Rock in the forest by the stream, or lean over the gate and gaze at the ruins of Ballymacadane Abbey out in the field over from Old Abbey bridge, your head would shake, and you would ask the question, WHY? Man's inhumanity to man. Likewise, at the monument of Leo Murphy in Waterfall village, you could weep along with sighing, when you think of what the Black and Tans did to him. After they shot him, they tied him to the back of their lorry and dragged him along as they sped off to their

Barracks in Ballincollig. The raw material of life is in our heritage. Living in the presence of tangible parts of our heritage, can enable us to overcome our mortal anxieties. Our heritage makes sense of our brief existence upon this earth.

Our heritage can make us acutely aware that “we belong - we know who we are “

#### CHURCH - 1

A good place to start our journey is at the front door of our recently refurbished church. Imagine our parish priest Fr. Declan Mansfield standing there with you. It is Sunday just after midday, he is still dressed in his full Mass attire, chatting with members of his congregation, who are making their way home for Sunday dinner, just like all our ancestors who equally made their way home for Sunday dinner in those years following 1821 when the church was built. (This Church replaced one built on a ledge half way down the steep hill known as “Boithrin an tSeipeil - church road). It has magnificent glass paintings on the windows behind the altar, all done around 1860 for the Glory of God. On the left is the last supper in great detail. On the right is the Immaculate conception, and directly behind the altar, up high, is a wonderful painting of the garden called Gethsemane, where his disciples fell asleep, and where Judas the traitor betrayed Jesus. That same message faces us today, as it faced the congregations away back, 155 years ago, as it will face the people who will attend 155 years to come. A rather unique feature is the Stations of the Cross. They are oil paintings, projecting a dark mood, showing us the horrendous sufferings of Jesus Christ, but a little light is there in every one, to keep our hope alive, until we get to the 15<sup>th</sup> station, where he is recognised at the breaking of bread, even though HE had been explaining everything as he walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Another amazing feature is the grave of Fr. Michael Prior who died suddenly in the churchyard in 1847, with the famine raging. He had been attending an old lady who lived in a hut opposite the church. Railings are around his grave to this day. Equally amazing and wonderful to have is the tablet of marble in memory of Rev. Canon Mc Carthy who was parish priest from 1889 to September 1901. It states clearly, he had a noble character, distinguished ability, an untiring zeal, and his love of the poor won the admiration of his parishioners. The people of Ballinora and Ballincollig placed this tablet of marble in his honour, above the side door on the left as you walk up the church. That speaks volumes for the people of Ballinora and Ballincollig. In 1986 Ballinora was decreed a parish in its own right and the is now known as the Church of St James. In 2010 it was refurbished and re- dedicated by Bishop John Buckley.

#### SCOIL BHAIENORA, THE SCHOOL. - 2

Next door to the church is the school, built and opened in 1962. It is presently being extended to cope with the increasing numbers - over 300 pupils and 16 teachers. It is a state of the art building, with all the modern conveniences. The current principal's name is MICHEAL O DRAIGHNEAIN, a man with team spirit and huge commitment along with his staff, to educate and develop the skills of all the pupils under their care.

But the school prior to that was built beside it in 1848, famine times to put it mildly. The facilities were primitive, even when I attended between 1951 and 1958, but with the arrival of the 1960s and more government expenditure conditions improved dramatically. We played hurling out on the road, that had no tarmac. Imagine the stones and dust rising, because the hurleys we had were weapons of mass destruction compared to the refined camans of today. It was a two story building and you were upstairs until you got your first Holy Communion, then you went down stairs with the big boys and girls until you got your Confirmation and did the primary school Certificate. There was a big open fire downstairs,

often used to dry the coats in winter time. That was our central heating system. Big long desks about two feet apart filled the floors upstairs and downstairs. Each desk had inkwells, and we had pens with nibs at the top to dip into the inkwell, so that we could learn to write, and it worked. Donal O Scannail who was principal during my time, gave us a love of hurling and a love for our native language IRISH. He was President of the most famous organisation in the parish, Ballinora GAA, from 1950 until he died in August 1987. The school is the cradle for our National Games, and has been since away back in 1848. The very anthem of Ballinora GAA - "The Boys of Ballinora " - was composed by a previous principal, Jimmy Long, another principal that I knew was Vincent Cronin, who was equally steeped in Gaelic games, and he had played in Croke Park as a minor, no need to say anymore. Vincent was present for the celebrations associated with the new school coming of age in May 1984.

On a final comment, the old school which had been opened in 1848 had a robbery in 1849. Patrick Cushion and Michael Doody stole seventy books out of Ballinora National School. They were sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment and hard labour. The heading in the Cork Examiner on 26th of September 1849 relating to the incident appeared as "SACRILEGE ". Interviews for vacancies the school were held at the Mechanics Library, Cook Street, Cork back then, and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1874 the Very Rev. Cannon Maguire returns his very sincere thanks in the local press to John Dunlea esq. of Carrigrohane Mills for his Annual generous present of 5 tons of Coal for the Ballincollig and Ballinora National Schools.

### THE MASS ROCK - 3

From the church gates, gaze down the glen opposite, or the forest as it is called today, where we know the mass rock is situated deep in that glen. It is where two streams meet, on a ledge high up, dangerous enough in many ways. It stands for a time in our history, when Roman Catholics existed only to be punished. Men, women and children gathered here in secret, in all kinds of weather to attend Holy Mass. It represents a deep rooted faith in God, and also a period of butchery and slaughter. Priests lived in the hills, often eating and sleeping in holes in the ground. Here is a sample of what the Penal Laws enacted, any history book will give you these and more.

Irish Catholics were forbidden the exercise of their religion, forbidden to receive education, forbidden to enter a profession, forbidden to hold public office, forbidden to own a horse worth more than 5 pounds, forbidden to purchase land, to lease land, or accept a mortgage on land in security of a loan. They were forbidden to vote, receive a gift of land, or inherit land from a Protestant. They were compelled by law to attend Protestant worship and could not attend Catholic worship. They could not educate their children themselves, send them to a catholic teacher, nor employ a catholic teacher to come to their homes. Priests were banned and hunted with bloodhounds – as were the school masters.

No wonder Hedge schools and Mass Rocks flourished. The Mass Rock down there in the glen says to us today "Part of the past is always alive ". We give thanks today to all those who risked their lives, to keep the faith alive.

*Leaving Ballinora Village behind, we proceed towards Waterfall, passing over the Curraheen river until we reach the top of the hill at the T junction. This is known as the hall hill.*

### GAA HALL - 4

The hall has long since been demolished, concrete posts surround today where once the GAA hall stood. Not long after Ballinora GAA club was founded in 1924, it was decided to build a hall to cater for all the needs of the parish. It was a community hall in many ways, catering for Irish dancing, GAA meetings, adult education provided by the Cork County VEC, dramatic productions etc. It cost about 115 euro by today's money, around 90 pounds in 1927 in old money. The Gaelic League took off and there were strong attempts to revive the language and Irish dancing. Old Time Waltzing was banned for years. From a GAA point of view the club was formed to promote our games and encourage more to become active members of the club, which it did. Momentum for the building of a hall gathered when Ballinora defeated the enemy back then, Ballincollig, in the junior hurling championship on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1926. Ballinora people believed they had proven a point against those who had objected to Ballinora ever having a club of their own. That was the day "playing second fiddle ended" was the proud saying at the time. The existence of the hall in 1928 got a further note of approval, in the way it was contributing to a strong and focused community, Ballinora hurlers for the first time won the Mid Cork Junior title. There was dancing in the new hall well into the dawn, while bonfires burned down the glen. Glory of the little parish. The hall got a further boost in 1932 when the hurlers won the County Intermediate title and the Mid Cork Senior title. For nights like that and for many more down the years the hall was the place to be in Ballinora. Many a heart was broken there and many a marriage made. Bicycles lined the ditches on both sides for hundreds of metres as locals played the banjo and accordion inside. From a safety point of view, by today's standards it left a lot to be desired. It had a timber inside, tongue and groove, and a corrugated iron roof and side walls. It had one small door to go in and out, and to create slip and slide for a dance, paraffin oil and crystals were scattered across the timber floor, while young men smoked and laughed at the door. Praise the Lord, nobody was ever burned alive in it.

*Going left at the T junction the next stop is at the railway bridge with Waterfall station beyond the bridge on the left – now a private house.*

#### WATERFALL STATION - 5

The discovery of the power of steam, ushered in a whole new lifestyle. The railway network began a new age. Waterfall station opened in 1851, not long after the worst of the famine, but still very hungry times for many Irish people, and it closed in 1961. To get on the train at Waterfall and travel to the seaside in Courtmacsherry was a whole new exciting experience for the people of Ballinora, and why not. Farmers too were delighted. They could now go to the fair at their leisure, to Bandon, Clonakilty, and as far away as Skibbereen. They could now fill the wagons with beet as well, and get it transported to Mallow Sugar factory. Unfortunately, in every rose there is a thorn. A fireman, James O Leary from Spring Lane in Cork City fell from the railway bridge nearby in 1949 and died in the Mercy Hospital from a fractured skull. He didn't realise there was such a high embankment apparently and the train had moved beyond the platform.

*Continue to the T Junction and take a left at O Shea's pub.*

#### Tobar an Iarla (Earls' Well) - 6

As you leave the pub behind you, on your way towards Ballymah GAA new development grounds, you come across a well with small railings around it on the right hand side. In days long since gone, at a time

when life was slower, the Earls of Bandon in their “coach and four” would stop and water their horses, on their way to and from Cork City. Roll back the years further, back to 1602 after the battle of Kinsale, Hugh O'Neill came to visit the Rochford family. The Rochfords were Anglo Norman settlers, who were in possession of all the surrounding lands from Castlewhite to Ballymah and more. While Hugh O'Neill was on his way to visit them, his weary horses stopped and drank from this well. Ever since the area has been known as Tobar an Iarla.

*Continue your journey, passing Heatherfield on your right until you come to the entrance to the GAA pitch on the left.*

Ballinora GAA pitch Number 8 bridge and Chetwynd Viaduct - 7

The new development at number 8 Bridge in Ballymah is a state of the art facility, compared to what existed away back before the GAA came into being in 1884. In 1864 Kinsale arrived by train to play a return game against Ballinora. It was November, and the August game in Farrangalway, Kinsale had no conclusive result. Kinsale arrived to teach the Ballinora boys a lesson in hurling, because their pride had been wounded. Kinsale had been undisputed champions of the region until they met Ballinora. Word must have got out. The Kinsale baggage had been returned to the train station close by before the contest began. After the ball was thrown in, the game only lasted two minutes and fifty-five seconds. 2,000 people came to see the game, very many from Cork city itself. Apparently, the Kinsale team and some of their supporters threw themselves down on the ball, unable to cope with Ballinora. They took off for the railway station as fast as they could, and claimed they were attacked by a crowd close to 2,000. The result still remains unsatisfactory, and I am here now suggesting a replay should be arranged, to finally settle the score, before I shed this mortal coil, because the story was told to me as a boy by my grandfather, whose father was at the game. That is real heritage.

The red and green jersey today, worn by the young men of Ballinora still stands for pride of place, as it did back then in 1864. The game of hurling and football is still being played, in every vale and highland, in every field and lawn, in dear old Ballinora - rings the clash of the ash caman, and the bounce of the big football.

The railway line is all covered in today. It ran under the road, under number 8 bridge, deep down, with high embankments on either side. It was the steam you would see more than the train, as it struggled its way uphill from the mighty viaduct at Chetwynd.

The viaduct at Chetwynd is a superstructure, even to this day, as it spans across the valley. The magnificent pillars supported 1,000 tons of cast and wrought iron, and it took 20 men 4 hours to fix each span into position with special machines. It is 450 feet long and 90 feet high. Work started in 1850, and the first crossing was in late 1851. In 1955, the legendary bowl player, the greatest of them all, Mick Barry, lofted a sixteen-ounce bowl over it - the only person ever to do it. It was a performance in power, strength and technique, the likes of which we will probably never see again.

*Retrace your steps to Waterfall village and after passing the pub on your left you come to the Leo Murphy Monument*

The Leo Murphy Monument

He was shot dead on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1921. Leo was a leader and an active member of the Republican movement. He was in Waterfall public house when the Crown forces arrived. Tradition has it that when

Leo went to make his escape out the back door, it was locked. This forced him to make his escape out the front door, and sneak along down by the ditch. He decided to cross the road, was spotted, a bullet rang out and brave Leo Murphy fell. To this day a monument stands where Leo died.

*After the monument, heading west take the first left and proceed to Inniskenny Graveyard.*

Inniskenny Graveyard– 8

This pre-Norman site was first documented in 1152. Aerial photography of the graveyard shows an earlier enclosure - probably monastic in origin. Two large 17th century family vaults can be seen. A church was in ruins here by 1615 and a new one built by the Church of Ireland in 1805. It was rebuilt in 1865 and closed in 1940. Catholics and Protestants alike are buried here, including Thomas Dooley in 1903, President Cork GAA Board, aged 84 and Private D O'Leary (3/5492), Royal Munster Fusiliers in 1920, aged 21. This graveyard has recently been cleaned up. The graves are numbered and the history of many long since gone to their eternal reward may be told. It is owned by the Church of Ireland community, and the Protestant Church that was inside the iron gates is now partly demolished and more or less nonexistent. At a personal level, I have a horrific memory of Inniskenny graveyard. My grandfather Paddy Callaghan is buried there. He was a bit of a hero to me when I was around ten years of age. Then he died, and back then the gravediggers shoveled the earth down on top of the coffin as the priest continued to say the prayers. I got hysterical at the thought of all them stones and shovels of earth banging down on top of my grandad. I can still hear the stones banging against the lid of the coffin, and that's not far off 60 years ago. Today they place plastic grass nailed on to timber over the grave, the priest says a decade of the rosary, and when the crowd has moved away they cover in the grave - much more humane and more sensitive.

*Leaving the Graveyard, retrace your steps to the main road and take a left for Ballumacadane Abbey, we come across the most historic and visible part of our heritage. Although now a ruin out in a field all alone, with cows grazing around it, but what it still stands for says a lot about us as a people.*

BALLYMACADANE ABBEY - 9

It is close to old abbey railway bridge itself, in fact a holy water font from the Abbey is still present as part of the structure of Old Abbey bridge. It is down very low on the left side of the bridge as you travel from waterfall pub towards Warner's cross or Bandon. It is carved out in the shape of a heart, small, easy to miss, but remember, some man somewhere in the past walked over to Ballymacadane Abbey in the field beyond, and hauled this big stone with the holy water font carved out in it, and placed it as part of the structure of the bridge, named after the Abbey. We can only say to him now, whoever he was - Fair play to him for such a nice touch.

The first thing that will hit you about the Abbey is the creeping ivy, smothering the remains of what is left of it. Cromwell's men under Colonel Phair destroyed it in 1650, and ever since it has been battered by the elements. It was built around 1450. It existed as a residence for nuns and for a period also as a holy place for the Franciscan Third Order. Tradition has it that it was built by CORMAC LAIDIR MAC CARTHAIG for his daughter Nora, hence Bailenora – the townland of Nora. Sounds very plausible. Nora wanted to follow the contemplative life, so her father built her Ballymacadane Abbey.

During those 200 years, and for centuries previous, the Celtic psyche was steeped in a tribe mentality. At one stage you had nearly 200 truths or territories in Ireland. All of the lands in each TERRITORY or tuath belonged to all the tribe. Within the tribe you had a leading family, out of which came the CHIEF. The

Feudal system of LORD and SERF and dukes etc. which was all over Europe, was not known in Ireland. It was alien to the Irish Psyche as such. When the English finally got dominance in Ireland, they brought with them, the feudal system of Lord and serf. Ireland had developed along the lines of big strong family names that held huge tracts of land and property. The Mac Carthys, O Connors, Desmonds, Barry, O Neills, O Donnells, and many more. The English were there too in the 1500 hundreds, battling for supremacy in Ireland. It is easy to understand how Cormac Laidir mac Carthaig and the rest of the mac Carthy clan could decide to build an Abbey in Ballymacadane. The Mac Carthys had land apparently that stretched from Youghal to parts of today's Cork City, and practically the whole of Muskerry. But it wasn't until the Reign of King Henry 8th, that Ireland finally became a crushed people. His Reign began in 1515. Every move he made had only one objective, to destroy everything Irish and make them part of the superior English race. The Introduction of Protestant Reformation ideals justified every kind of execution and slaughter. The destruction of the Monasteries, churches and schools. Poets and historians were to be killed, and all their books destroyed, so that nobody would ever know who their grandparents were. However, the clans and the chiefs held on to their Catholic Faith, as did many others, including the Irish Norman Nobles, the Desmonds, the Fitzgeralds, (the Geraldines)

I write this to try and paint a picture of the vicious troubled times Ballymacadane Abbey experienced right here in Ballinora parish, and what plunder and pillage took place before the Abbey was finally destroyed by men, who must have been ferociously full of hatred for the Catholic Pope and what he stood for. The powerful Cannon Ball knocked everything it hit. No building could last, whole cities and towns were destroyed, before Cromwell finally set sail from Youghal for England. In 8 months Cromwell destroyed any Irish resistance, subdued the whole country, and left the Irish at the mercy of the English Parliament. Ballymacadane Abbey was but a small part of his fearful work. I can only shake my head now when I think of all the Holy nuns who lived there, praying and praising God night and day, the same God that Cromwell's men worshipped, and who believed in some perverted way that they were doing God's work by trying to exterminate those who believed in the Catholic faith.

It is very hard for us today, to imagine how thoughts and thinking have changed so much, over the centuries. Today's orthodoxy becomes tomorrows antiquity. Back in 1649, one year before Ballymacadane Abbey was destroyed, on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, the English Parliament appointed a National thanksgiving day in celebration of the slaughter of Drogheda in Co Louth, by Oliver Cromwell. Throughout the lifetime of Ballymacadane Abbey England tried every scheme, plot and pillage to annihilate the Irish race. Reading and studying the history of Ireland during the 14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is tear jerking stuff, hard to believe, but when one thinks what Hitler and his believers did to the Jews, one can only sigh a deep sigh, and say, "Man's inhumanity to man."

It would be a crying shame if Ballymacadane Abbey was left to go to ruin entirely - if the once Holy Place fell into such a ruin that some bulldozer comes along and levels it to the ground. Ballymacadane Abbey is centre stage in the Heritage of Ballinora. Ruin though it is now, and it need not be so, it still stands for God, for triumph, for endurance, perseverance, and as a people that have prevailed.

*After the railway bridge take a right and walk to Jimmy the Tailor's cross. Jimmy was a very popular tailor and tradition has it that he worked outside his front door whenever the weather allowed it. He was a very kind man and not a butterfly would pass up or down the road without he knowing it. At the cross you turn left and walk towards Corbally, taking the first left until you come to the famine graveyard on your right.*

CORBALLY FAMINE GRAVEYARD – 10

This church appears in diocesan records between 1302 and 1591 but was in disuse by 1615, though the parish still existed. The ruins of the church are no longer visible and are completely overgrown. In 1841, prior to the famine, over 8 million people lived in Ireland. By 1849 when the famine had reached its most fearful and appalling stage, the uncoffined dead had to be buried in trenches. Little mounds exist, covered by grass, with no names or age or gender. That was when you had walking skeletons, and hollow eyed children struggling before collapse, dying on the roadside and in the fields and bogs from hunger, disease and malnutrition. How many are in this graveyard? Who knows - and to think, all the while the ships laden with foodstuffs sailed out of Irish ports and harbours. Say a prayer

*Head back to Jimmy's Cross and go down under the trees, towards a stream, a small bridge and a large Alder Grove covering the road on both sides. To the right Greybrook Tucking mill once stood.*

#### GREYBROOK LINEN MILL - 11

One has to exercise the imagination here, because the actual Mill (known originally as Greybrook Tuck Mill) - like Perrott's shovel Mill in Curraheen - is no longer in existence. Tuck mills were used in the woolen industry for centuries to improve the quality of the woven fabric by repeatedly combing it (tucking), producing a warm worsted fabric. This mill and 6 acres was offered to be let or sold by Francis Hennis in 1879. It was once owned by the Dineen family, and in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before the 1916 rising, it washed blankets and clothing mainly for the military barracks in Kinsale, Cobh, Ballincollig and Cork. The Mill employed around 20 men, known locally as "the Mallow lane men" because they came from that street in Cork City. The stream is still there, same stream but different water flowing today. The stream was used for washing and scrubbing, and a huge wheel kept turning and turning until all the clothes were dry.

*Continue to the old hall hill and return to Ballinora Village*

Some thoughts as we finish our walk:

Do not ask, why bother with the past, or say I don't care where I have put down roots. It is sad to die not knowing anything about what happened before you were born.

Take a sip from the glass of our heritage, and you will find you would like to take another. That feeling of "I belong" "I am attached" will arrive and you will be transformed, because part of the past is always alive. The unknown becomes real. You feel enriched. The very stars above in the night's sky, the very ground you walk upon, have been there for millions of years. People like us have gazed and walked the very same roads and fields and pathways, and then were heard no more. And what is more, those same stars, that same ground will be there centuries to come, when nobody knows who we were.

Yet, in an extraordinary way, when we know all about where we are planted, we can grow and bloom, and fill that empty space, that says "the heart is a lonely hunter". A kind of lasting friendship can be created with our surroundings. You discover the awe and wonder of your existence upon this planet that keeps on revolving round and round in the big black emptiness of space.

No need to strive for status, significance or affirmation, because you now stand side by side with all those fellow human beings, that have lived and loved in centuries gone by, and centuries yet to come. You are filled with a new hope, you feel the eternal presence all around, in the hills and valleys, in the

streams and rivers flowing. You have come to realise “you belong “, Name it and claim it. Take possession of your heritage. It is your right to own.

Michael O Connor.

#### Lower Ballinora/Waterfall Heritage Trail

A few thoughts before we begin our walk:

I have been asked several times, why heritage? What good is there in knowing all about the past. All I could do was quote Cicero “to die not knowing what happened before you were born, is to remain perpetually a child “I believe there is a connection between happiness and heritage. If you learn from the past, and appreciate where you are living now, where you have put down roots now, you create well-being within yourself. It doesn’t have to be where you were born.

If you reminisce with laudable pride, not egotistical pride, about your own life’s journey, you will buy into the concept that part of the past is always alive. You almost get in touch with unknown people who lived and died, and felt all the same emotions and feelings as yourself - be it going to Church, singing in the choir, tending your garden, playing for the local GAA team of your day, or any team of any sports code, or laughing with friends, or minding your cat or dog, or grandchildren.

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Our heritage can make us acutely aware that "we belong - we know who we are "

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But the school prior to that was built beside it in 1848, famine times to put it mildly. The facilities were primitive, even when I attended between 1951 and 1958, but with the arrival of the 1960s and more government expenditure conditions improved dramatically. We played hurling out on the road, that had

no tarmacadam. Imagine the stones and dust rising, because the hurleys we had were weapons of mass destruction compared to the refined camans of today. It was a two story building and you were upstairs until you got your first Holy Communion, then you went down stairs with the big boys and girls until you got your Confirmation and did the primary school Certificate. There was a big open fire downstairs, often used to dry the coats in winter time. That was our central heating system. Big long desks about two feet apart filled the floors upstairs and downstairs. Each desk had inkwells, and we had pens with nibs at the top to dip into the inkwell, so that we could learn to write, and it worked. Donal O Scannail who was principal during my time, gave us a love of hurling and a love for our native language IRISH. He was President of the most famous organisation in the parish, Ballinora GAA, from 1950 until he died in August 1987. The school is the cradle for our National Games, and has been since away back in 1848. The very anthem of Ballinora GAA - "The Boys of Ballinora "- was composed by a previous principal, Jimmy Long, another principal that I knew was Vincent Cronin, who was equally steeped in Gaelic games, and he had played in Croke Park as a minor, no need to say anymore. Vincent was present for the celebrations associated with the new school coming of age in May 1984.

On a final comment, the old school which had been opened in 1848 had a robbery in 1849. Patrick Cushion and Michael Doody stole seventy books out of Ballinora National School. They were sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment and hard labour. The heading in the Cork Examiner on 26th of September 1849 relating to the incident appeared as "SACRILEGE ". Interviews for vacancies the school were held at the Mechanics Library, Cook Street, Cork back then, and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1874 the Very Rev. Cannon Maguire returns his very sincere thanks in the local press to John Dunlea esq. of Carrigrohane Mills for his Annual generous present of 5 tons of Coal for the Ballincollig and Ballinora National Schools.

### THE MASS ROCK - 3

From the church gates, gaze down the glen opposite, or the forest as it is called today, where we know the mass rock is situated deep in that glen. It is where two streams meet, on a ledge high up, dangerous enough in many ways. It stands for a time in our history, when Roman Catholics existed only to be punished. Men, women and children gathered here in secret, in all kinds of weather to attend Holy Mass. It represents a deep rooted faith in God, and also a period of butchery and slaughter. Priests lived in the hills, often eating and sleeping in holes in the ground. Here is a sample of what the Penal Laws enacted, any history book will give you these and more.

Irish Catholics were forbidden the exercise of their religion, forbidden to receive education, forbidden to enter a profession, forbidden to hold public office, forbidden to own a horse worth more than 5 pounds, forbidden to purchase land, to lease land, or accept a mortgage on land in security of a loan. They were forbidden to vote, receive a gift of land, or inherit land from a Protestant. They were compelled by law to attend Protestant worship and could not attend Catholic worship. They could not educate their children themselves, send them to a catholic teacher, nor employ a catholic teacher to come to their homes. Priests were banned and hunted with bloodhounds – as were the school masters.

No wonder Hedge schools and Mass Rocks flourished. The Mass Rock down there in the glen says to us today "Part of the past is always alive ". We give thanks today to all those who risked their lives, to keep the faith alive.

*Walk towards Ballynora Cross, also known as Jerry Forde's Cross, where you will see a standing stone on your left.*

#### STANDING STONES, FUALACHT FIA AND RING FORTS - 12

These are scattered everywhere all over the parish, and it stands to reason why there should be so many of them. Standing Stones (2800 to 1800 BC) are mysterious. Are they markers along pre-historic track ways, memorials or burial plots? A Fualacht Fia was an ancient cooking pit, and groups of people would assemble to eat the wild boar, cooked in a water hole, made warm by hot stones. Anywhere you had a Fualacht Fia, you had a Ring Fort close by. Where people lived, they ate nearby. A case in point is the Ring fort or fairy fort, or earthen mound across the road from Johnny Billy Murphy's entrance. It is in Noel Cantillons land. The cooking pit or Fualacht Fia is in the slope of the field in Johnny Billy's land below Ballynora Cross, across the road from where Pat and Imelda O Connor live. You have to picture the slope of the land, like a theatre or an opera house, descending down to the stage by the stream, where all the cooking took place. Shelter and water were as important back then as they are today. Four Fualacht Fias once existed behind Tobar an Iarla, four more close to Old Abbey bridge, three at the back of Inniskenny graveyard. They are all linked to PRE CELTIC people, the Tuatha de Danann and the Fir Bolg, thousands of years ago, yet they are part of who we are. By knowing they existed, all in our own little parish, all those years ago, with the same streams still running today, and the same hills and valleys still in existence, enhances our status and dignity as human beings, and fills our hearts with awe and wonder.

*Taking a right at Ballynora Cross, head down to the Grotto.*

#### THE GROTTA - 13

Timmy Dineen, the last man to shoe a horse in the forge, was returning from Garretstown seaside this particular Sunday, and he happened to say to his wife as he looked at the platform, where dancing prevailed by the riverside, on those long warm summer evenings of long ago.

“Wouldn't it be nice if a grotto to the mother of God was put there “

Enthusiastic encouragement was given, a simple idea was born, and look at the beauty of it today. What began in the summer of 1959 was blessed and opened by Rev Fr. Cronin in October 1960. But long before it had been a platform for open air dancing, it had been the dwelling place of Timmy Dineen's grandfather (1858-1918). He lived in a timber house, or maybe it might have been more of a hut than a house, who knows. Today, many people from the parish and beyond come to this holy patch of ground to pray and admire the flowers and shrubs and small low hedges. Tees line the river bank, and mountain ash provide a backdrop of calm and prayerful solitude, Hydrangeas, Montbresias, Trumpet Lilies, Hypericums, Potentillas, Roses of every colour and scent fill the air with innocent delight, as the seasons blend from one to another. Who maintains all this on a daily basis year after year? None other than Timmy Dineen's two sons. Gerard and Tom. The cross, the forge, the grotto, one could assert belongs to them. The big hope now is, that the next generation will light the candles, as the evening shadows fall, and all those who come to kneel and pray to the Mother of God will see the wonder of creation all around them, and they will give thanks and feel good as they go about their daily lives.

*From around 1850 to the 1960s Curraheen was a hive of commercial activity. We can think of famine times at one level, an Ireland almost broken in spirit, the arrival of the Fenian Movement, the Land League, evictions, the first World War, the revolution of 1916, the formation of an Ireland free, the civil*

war, the republic with 26 counties, the first signs of a new Ireland propelled by government borrowing, that started the real industrialisation of our country. Ireland away out there in the western shores of Europe was about to take its place amongst the Nations of the world. The 1960s had arrived.

But the little part of Ireland, down at the lower end of our parish - from a heritage point of view - captures the age of the horse, the plough, the grinding mill wheel, the parish pump with the bucket swinging, the country shop with the timber counter, the big sweet jars, the primus and methylated spirits, paraffin oil in gallons, meal for the hens and chickens and coupons for rationing during the second world war.

#### THE FORGE - 14

Since 1858, four generations of the Dineen family have worked there. The horse was the source of all power back then, even today we still use the term horse power. Horses had to have their hooves paired and shod with iron shoes. The last man to shoe a horse was Timmy Dineen in the late 1960's. I knew him. I can still hear the hammer hopping on his anvil, with the rhythm of a master craftsman. His father was known as Master Tom. To me Timmy was Master Tim. Picture Timmy in his leather apron, the red hot iron shoe, being moulded into size around the pointed side to his anvil, the plunge of hot iron into his water tank nearby, the steam rising as it hissed, and all the while the horse stood there in the forge watching, just like me, a boy staring at the wonder of it all. How the horse would present his leg up on the leather apron, while Timmy kept up a talking relationship with the horse as he filed and fitted the shoe and drove the nails into the hoof, gave a quick twist with his pincers to the nails sticking out, a little more filing, job done, no pain whatever to the horse. The same procedure for all four legs. As a boy watching, with mouth open, I thought back then, as I do now, of that amazing understanding between horse and man. In my view, not every blacksmith had that unique rapport with the horse, but Timmy Dineen had it. Shoeing horses was only part of his craft. Putting a band of iron on the wheel of a butt or horse cart, or a fancy trap pulled by a pony was well within his reach. Horse shoes can be seen on the right hand side of the front door and at the back to this day, and Tom his son has a workshop at the back of the forge.

Perrott's Mill was located across the river from the grotto

#### Perrott's mill - 15

Alas nothing of the mill remain, but 4 houses, workmen's houses attached to that mill still remain. They are on the right as you cross over the bridge on your way to Wilton or Cork City. Once upon a time, in the field behind them, across the river from the Grotto, there was a shovel Mill. A stream ran along under the present day forest into a mill pond to turn the big Timber Mill Wheel, that set in motion the factories machines, and again the Dineen family of the forge feature in this Mill story, tragically in this case. The Great Grandfather of Gerard and Tom had a son who frequented the Mill on a regular basis, and in 1859 he got caught in the machinery and died a horrible death. Neighbours came and buried him, but without a coroner's final legal judgement, he had to be exhumed and buried a second time with an official legal coroner's judgement of death by accident and misadventure. The mill itself when it had to close down due to the arrival of tractors and mechanical machinery, fell into disuse, and became a hen house for Mr. Reid, who lived in the first house at the bridge. I can still see in my mind's eye, the Watergate in the S bend of the river about 1 km upstream from the mill, where the river would be diverted to keep the mill pond full at all times to turn the big wheel. The only evidence of a mill being in Curraheen now is to see the name Perrott on manhole covers around Cork City. They were all

manufactured in the Mill. It closed in 1898, but the forge still was in full production, and the village pump for fresh water came shortly after, a huge leap forward in economic terms. It was built below the four Mill houses in Pat Donovan's property, owned now by his son Danny. My own opinion about that parish pump is this. Often I cursed it, because every day, as soon as I arrived in from Scoil Bhailenora, a bucket was put in to my hand, and I was told, "off with you now boy, fill that bucket and bring it home to me, we are running short of water "God Bless my mother, is all I can say now. those were the days before the River Lee Dam was built in Inniscarra. Flush toilets were the privilege of city folk, tap water was not spoken of, the primus and methylated spirits were in huge demand.

*Head west from the forge and you will come to the old shop on the left*

Shop in Curraheen - 16

My grandmother, Johanna Mary Kelleher was evicted as a child and grew up in Carriganimma. She returned to Ballinora, married and having that entrepreneurial spirit in her decided to open a grocery shop. The big Laurel hedge is still there today. It is on your left as you go west for the Ballincollig bypass, and if it could speak it would tell a fascinating story, involving a glass of water, the old IRA, my grandmother and a very narrow escape.

Back in the time of British Occupation of Our Native Land, when Ballincollig Barracks was full of Crown Forces, when the Black and Tans had full permission to do whatever they liked in relation to the Irish people, a young British soldier was on duty between the forge in Curraheen and Logan's farm, now owned by the Hobbs family. His duty was to march up and down from the forge to the farm. It was a very very hot July day. The soldier was dressed in full marching uniform, buttoned up to the neck, rifle on his shoulder and full heavy kit on his back. Up and down he had to march. Hours passed. The sweat ran down his forehead, but up and down the road he had to keep walking. Apparently he could be no more than eighteen years of age or thereabouts, maybe from London, Yorkshire, Manchester or Canterbury, and it is possible his parents or grandparents could be from Dublin or Donegal. Johanna Mary took pity on the young man as he was perspiring profusely, almost to the point of faint, as he marched up and down the road, on point duty in the heat. Her soft nature got the better of her, and she put history to one side, placed a glass of cold water into the middle of the Laurel Hedge, waited until he was passing, made a soft hissing sound, to attract his attention as he marched by. Then she waited on her own side of the Laurel Hedge. He marched up and down two more times, stopped opposite the glass of water, quickly put in his hand, grabbed the glass, and drank it down like a man dying of thirst. In those brief few seconds, wasn't he seen, and it was reported that Johanna Mary had cooperated and assisted the ENEMY. Were it not for the fact that Johanna Mary had "connections", the incident itself was regarded as trivial enough and her family background had shown great loyalty to the Land League cause, Johanna Mary would have been in deep trouble with the local Kangaroo court system in session during those dangerous troubled times. The incident itself did not affect her business The shop was old style, with timber counter and small open fire. My mother took it over when Johanna Mary died, and along came the second world war. My mother became known as Maggie the shop. The shop sold everything and anything. You name it, Maggie the shop had it - be it coal, meal for the hens, cigarettes, chocolates and sweets, and during the second world war she had a tea contract from Hosfords in the North Main Street in Cork City. People came from far and near with their coupon books to get some tea that was seriously rationed during war time. Hosford's never reneged on their contract, and everybody considered themselves very lucky and more than very happy to collect their tea at the shop. In the 1960s Bishopstown expanded, supermarkets arrived with bulk buying and Maggie the shop could no

longer compete. She knew the game was over when she found herself buying goods cheaper in DUNNES STORES than she herself could buy them at a wholesale price from her Suppliers. It closed in 1969.

*Head west and take the next left up a very sharp hill. It is known as at Bohithirin an Tseilpeal, in recognition of a small Catholic Church that was built on a ledge across the road from a gate half way up the hill. It is all overgrown now, but the whole area, all along the top of the hill, was known as ARD AINME – the high name God.*

*Continue your journey back to Ballinora Village.*

Some thoughts as we finish our walk:

Do not ask, why bother with the past, or say I don't care where I have put down roots. It is sad to die not knowing anything about what happened before you were born.

Take a sip from the glass of our heritage, and you will find you would like to take another. That feeling of "I belong ""I am attached ""will arrive and you will be transformed, because part of the past is always alive. The unknown becomes real. You feel enriched. The very stars above in the night's sky, the very ground you walk upon have been there for millions of years. People like us have gazed and walked the very same roads and fields and pathways in the past, and then were heard no more. And what is more, those same stars, that same ground will be there centuries to come, when nobody knows who we were.

Yet, in an extraordinary way, when we know all about where we are planted, we can grow and bloom, and fill that empty space that says "the heart is a lonely hunter ". A kind of lasting friendship can be created with our surroundings. You discover the awe and wonder of your existence upon this planet that keeps on revolving round and round in the big black emptiness of space.

No need to strive for status, significance or affirmation, because you now stand side by side with all those fellow human beings that have lived and loved in centuries gone by and centuries yet to come. You are filled with a new hope, you feel the eternal presence all around, in the hills and valleys, in the streams and rivers flowing. You have come to realise "you belong ", Name it and claim it. Take possession of your heritage. It is your right to own.

Michael O Connor.