

Drama in Peterswell

By Michael Coleman

The first dramatic society to be formed in Peterswell was in the mid forties. Fr Eaton was curate in the parish at the time and spotting some talent around he got them together and set drama in motion. You must remember there was no electric light then and it must have been difficult to rehearse in a cold badly lit hall. The school was the venue and the first Sunday in Lent was always the first performance. There were not many motor cars around in those days, just about five in the whole parish. So everyone went to the play on a bicycle or else walked. The best known play from those years was *Mrs. Mulligans Millions*. Those taking part were Paddy Keely, Tomo Fallon, Mick Hassett, May Kate Kelly, May O'Donnell. After two or three years Fr. Eaton was changed to another parish and drama came to an end for that era.

In 1954 Fr. James Larkin got drama moving again. One of the actors for the forties, Paddy Keely was brought on board. Rehearsals were held in the old school where the Cooley Hall now stands. We practised two nights a week for 8 to 10 weeks. The first year there were two one act plays performed; one in English and one in Irish. You might wonder why one in Irish but there was an Irish class in the hall for the winter period and the teacher suggested we do one in Irish. Then the following year the players moved up a gear to a 3-act play which meant extra learning and rehearsing. The hall was always packed on the first Sunday night in Lent for the local show. There were supporting acts such as dancing, singing and the local ceilí band. The play was performed in Labane Hall on the second Sunday in Lent and was also held in Clarenbridge and Ballinakill as well. Those acting over the four years were Tom Healy, Teresa Healy, Teesie Burke, Paddy Keely, Kathleen Collins Christy Larkin, Mernie Cunningham, John Cunningham, Michael Cunningham, Babe Keane, Paddy Joe Larkin, Frank Larkin, Benny Mulkerinas, Michael Coleman, Eamonn Skehill, Criss Kelly. Fr Larkin our producer was invited to the Drama Festival in New Inn with the play "*The Winning Maid*." That was 1957. The following is a copy of the programme:



PETERSWELL DRAMATIC SOCIETY PRESENT

THE WINNING MAID

A Play in 3 Acts by John F. Fintan

Characters:

Aloysisu Brophy/Former Farmer now in Business through the efforts of
an ambitions wife: Christy Larkin

Fredrick Brophy (Son) – Michael Cunningham
Kitty Brophy (Daughter) – Kathleen Collins
Matty Moriarty (gardener) – Michael Coleman
Maggie McGee (Maid) – Mernie Cunningham
Lord Eaisfall (President local horse show) – Eamonn Skehill
Paddy Nally (friend of Kitty's) John Cunningham

Act 1: Sitting Room in Brophy's House
Act 2 & Act 3: Excellent Comedy of Rural Life

Adjudicator: Gerry Darcy:

The adjudicator at New Inn pointed out a lot of faults in our production, which meant were weren't as good as we thought. During Lent of 1957 the play "*Seán Mór*" was put on and that was the last production in Peterswell. Plays put on in the fifties included: *The Bell of Boolougue*, *The Green Linnet*, *The Journeys of Joshua*, *The Winning Maid*, *Out of his Senses*, *Seán Mor* and *Roadside*.

All those who took part in the entertainment, acting, singing and dancing got great enjoyment from same. Those who played music were Josie Cooney (accordion), Tom Healy (piano/accordion), Johnny Keane

(accordion), Kathleen Collins (accordion) John Maloney (fiddle) and Jack Cooley (bodhrán).

1957 ended drama in Peterswell but hopefully it will be revived sometime in the future.

PETERSWELL DAZZLED BY CONTINENTAL JOURNEY

*Extract from Connacht Tribune, supplied by **Pauline Connaire***

Peterswell has been electrified by the presentation of the colourful pantomime, “Continental Journey”, at the Parochial Hall. The cast composed mainly of children from the schools, but also included adults, acquitted themselves with great success on the four nights of the production. Patronage was not confined to the parish and, in fact, people came from many parts of South Galway to see the fine show.

There were seven scenes in the whole “Journey”. In the first scene, entitled “Shannon Airport”, these were the characters: Flight Captain (Peter Fahy), First Officer (J.J.O’Leary), Navigator (Peter Caulfield), Air Hostess (May O’Shaughnessy), Ground Hostess (Mairead Moran), Lord Mayor (Sean Leahy), R.T.E. Reporter (Francis Lynskey), Camera (Noel Healy), Connacht Tribune Photographer (Kieran Connors) and Aircraft Mechanics (Pakie Caulfield and Liam Caulfield). The Travellers were Anthony Cunningham, Oliver Walshe, John Gardiner and Kitty Callanan. First stop was the delightful Paris Street Café. The characters here were: Leader of French (James Fahy), French Boys (Matthew Cunningham, Raphael Counihan, Michael Finn, and Francis Walsh), Newspaper Boy (Oliver Fitzgerald), Jolie Jacqueline (Fiona Mulcair), French Girl (Mary T. Dooley), French Husband and Wife (Anthony Hansberry and Helena Connors), Gendarmes (Pakie Carew and Bridget Carew), French Waiter (Michael Fitzgerald) and French Waitress (Ann Kelly).

The Travellers then went to Lourdes. Here the characters were French Priest (Gerard Moloney), Bernadette (Geraldine Hennessy), Marie (Ann Healy), Celine (Christina Fitzgerald), Tionette (Marilyn Quinn), Angels (Roisin Farrell, Ann Finn, Shelly Carey and Vicky Carey) and the Blessed Virgin (Imelda Farrell).

Fancy took the travellers to the Fairy Forest. In this exotic scene the characters were: Guide (Catherine Connaire), Maypole Dancers (Eilis Healy, Siobhan O’Donnell, Pauline Connaire, Mary Fahy, Patricia Gardiner, Rita O’Leary, Mary T. Fahy and Patricia Connors). Fairy Quinn (Ethna Collins), Fairies (Grace Cunningham, Martina Healy, Martina Brady, Mary Fahy, Bernadette Fitzgerald, Dolores Larkin, Joanna Quinn, Catherine Fahy and Angela Hansberry).

Then came the lovely tale, “Little Red Riding Hood”. The characters were Little Red Riding Hood (Olive Mulcair), Granny (Tom Carty), Wolf (Michael Coleman), Leprechaun (Brendan Mulcair), Friends of little Red

Riding Hood (Gertrude Cooney, Josephine Connaire, Mary Brady, Nuala Healy, Eilis Healy, Caroline Lally and Sarah Fahy).

The transition to the scene of Bethlehem took less than flying time. Here the characters were: Innkeeper (Sean O'Donnell), Rebecca (Maria O'Donnell), David (Vincent Collins), Shieks (Pakie Caulfield, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Pat Farrell), Saint Joseph (John Walsh), Blessed Virgin Mary (Imelda Farrell), and Singer (Kevin Collins). Finally, the travellers returned to Shannon Airport.

No trouble was spared in making the pantomime the big success it turned out to be. Costumes were designed locally and some were got from Dublin, Mercy Convent, Gort, supplied lighting and special lighting effects were brought down from Dublin. Martha Bawn choreographed. Some of the scenery was designed by Ms. A. Coen, Gort, while the rest came from in Loughrea. Martin Tuohy of Galway was responsible for music and the sound effects were sourced from Dublin.

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choreography. Some of the scenery was designed by Miss A. Coen, Gort, while the rest was got in Loughrea, Martin Tuohy of Galway was responsible for music and the sound effects were got in Dublin.

The entire production was enjoyed immensely by all who attended. This was the first pantomime ever undertaken in Peterswell and there is every reason to look forward to further productions under the assured guidance of Very Rev. E. Kelly, Parish Priest.

SIGNS OF TIMES

The only external signs of Christmas cheer in the streets of Gort were the Christmas tree at Glynn's Hotel, the crib at the Statue of Christ The King, and the adorned windows. Candles for January 6th were non-existent—a break with tradition.

LABANE L.C.A.

The four members of Labane L.C.A. who attended the Federation meeting in Galway were Mrs. B. Conole, Mrs. M. Forde, Mrs. J. Helly and Mrs. A. Cunningham. Members of the Guild also served teas at the recent parish social held in the Loughname and Quinn Memorial Hall, Labane. New members will be enrolled at the annual general meeting to be held in the Hall on Monday night, when a programme for the year will be drawn up.

QUIZ KIDS

Three Ballindereen youngsters, Mary Sweeney, Maura Lane and Martin Larkin, will be in the Hyde Centre, Roscommon, on Sunday, contesting the Connacht finals of the G.A.A. Under-16 Talent Competition in the Question Time section. On Saturday last they had a remarkable win over Oughterard in the County Galway final at Kilconnell. They missed only one question in all.

HOLIDAY MAKERS

Generally, it is reported, there were more people home on holidays this Christmas than in the last few years. From December 18

Gort and South Galway

the four nights of the production. Patronage was not confined to the parish and, in fact, people came from many parts of South Galway to see the fine show.

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