



Autumn-Winter 2021

*Retired Staff Association, Maynooth University and  
St Patrick's College Maynooth (RSA)*

*Cumann na mBall Foirne ar Scor, Ollscoil Mhá Nuad  
agus Coláiste Phádraig Má Nuad (CBFS)*



*'Freedom' Sculpture on North Campus  
Photo courtesy of Jim Walsh*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Jim Walsh, Chair, Retired Staff Association*

It is a great pleasure to welcome the publication of the fourth issue of the RSA Newsletter. Much has happened in the wider world and in our own personal worlds since the last Newsletter. Over the summer we admired the extraordinary performances of some of our athletes at both the Olympic and Paralympic games which compensated for the disappointment shared by some members from Mayo, Kerry and Dublin in relation to the GAA football championship. Former Maynooth graduate Geraldine Nason Byrne is providing a stellar performance as Ireland's ambassador to the UN, especially when Ireland has a seat on the UN Security Council. She took a leading international role in highlighting the plight of women in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August. The retired staff of Maynooth can take great pride in the highly principled and ethical stance adopted by our former undergraduate who is also the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Literature from MU. A milestone in the history of Maynooth was reached with the appointment of Professor Eeva Leinonen as the first female President of the University. She succeeds Professor Philip Nolan following the completion of his term of office during which he led many lasting changes in Maynooth. However, there also have been disappointments, none more so than the continuation of the COVID 19 pandemic despite the trojan efforts of the vast majority of the population to avoid contracting the virus. Before the summer we had hoped that it would be possible to resume in-person meetings in the autumn. That has not been possible, we can only hope now that sufficient progress in providing booster vaccines along with continued adherence to the basic preventative measures will enable the RSA to resume some form of in-person meetings early in 2022. In the meantime, a socially distanced Christmas lunch has been organised for members in early December. While it has not been possible to hold the regular monthly meetings, a small group has been working on updating and redesigning the RSA webpages. We hope to have this project completed before Christmas.

I want to thank all the contributors to this Newsletter, especially all the new contributors. The diverse range of topics is indicative of the broad range of interests among the members. Special thanks are due to our Editor, Séamas Ó Síocháin, and to the editorial team. Finally, by the time you get to read this Newsletter it will be a lot closer to Christmas. Therefore, may I wish all our members a joyous and safe Christmas and the hope that 2022 will be much better.

## EDITORIAL NOTE – RSA NEWSLETTER, AUTUMN-WINTER 2021

The Editorial Team are delighted to bring you another number of our newsletter. In it you can fly high, gliding with Peter Denman, or look to more earthly things with Marie-Therese's recipes. Thanks to Jim Walsh, we have a profile of the new President of Maynooth University and photos of the striking new sculpture on the North Campus. Several articles give us insight into aspects of the physical history of Maynooth college (Pat Watson and Jeanne Walsh), while others look at the history of surrounding areas (Dan O'Shea, Paddy Duffy and Brendan Cullen). We have, too, some regular items: Rose Malone on our natural surroundings and Siobhán Ní Fhoghlú on a book to while away the hours. And Jackie Hill presents a strong argument for having a permanent RSA common room.

Séamas Ó Síocháin for the Editorial Team

*Editorial Team:* Breeda Behan, Séamas Ó Síocháin, Marie-Thérèse Power, Mary Weld

## President Eeva Leinonen



*Photo courtesy of Maynooth University Communications Office*

Professor Eeva Leinonen became the first female President of Maynooth University on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Prior to taking up her Maynooth appointment she was Vice-Chancellor of Murdoch University in Perth, Australia since 2016, having previously been Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia. Originally from Finland, Professor Leinonen engages with researchers in Finland and Italy in ongoing research into language development in children and contextual processing deficits of children and young adults with autistic spectrum disorders. President Leinonen has said she is honoured to have the opportunity to lead Maynooth University in the next stage of its development and that the University can play a significant role in preparing for next-generation Ireland. We wish her every success in her endeavours over the coming years.

We take this opportunity to thank Professor Philip Nolan for the leadership and stewardship he provided over the past decade of expansion and transformation of the University. We extend our best wishes to him in the next stage of his career as Director General of Science Foundation Ireland, the State agency responsible for investment in research in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

*Jim Walsh, adapted from MU website*

## RETIRED STAFF COMMON ROOM?

*Jackie Hill (Formerly of the History Department)*

For those of us who have retired from working in the college, we have been extremely fortunate to have spent even part of our working lives here. Not only is there a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere – more so than in certain other colleges – but the campus itself, whatever the season, is remarkably attractive. It's also open to members of the public, which again isn't the case with all the other colleges in Ireland. In February/March, one thinks of the wonderful display of spring bulbs in the Junior Garden; the swallows swooping over the college park in summer; the goodly crop of windfall cooking apples in autumn, and – whenever there may be snow – the magical appearance of St Joseph's Square, and Stoyte House, in winter. Then there are features that seem likely to be unique to Maynooth. For instance, there's the college cat (or should that be the library cat???) – which, it would appear, has more followers on Twitter than the college president ... All these aspects mean that for any of the retired staff who are fortunate enough to have easy access to the college, the prospect of visiting can be most attractive.

Hitherto, the college authorities have been good enough to allow the Retired Staff Association to hold its meetings from time to time in St Joseph's Hall on the South Campus, while the RSA records are stored in a filing cabinet in Rhetoric House, also on the south campus. For those meetings, refreshments can be ordered in to make the occasion a more social and convivial one. This leads on to the reflection – is there any chance that the authorities might see their way, or be persuaded, to provide a permanent Retired Staff Common Room, such as is the case (for instance) in UCD?

What grounds would there be for making such a case? The first one that springs to mind, of course, is that year on year the numbers of retired staff are increasing (given that we're tending to live longer and maintain healthier lives nowadays). If the college wishes to consolidate its ties with the retired staff, then providing such a permanent venue

would be an obvious route to take. From time to time, the college encourages former students to join the Alumni Association, and if former alumni are urged to maintain ties, then clearly there's much to be said for thinking of new incentives for the retired staff.

Providing a permanent venue for the retired staff wouldn't necessarily mean that the room couldn't occasionally be shared with other groups/organisations, but the understanding would be that the RSA would be the designated occupiers and users of the room. Whether it were to be located on the north or south campus, again, is not particularly important – wherever a suitable room might be found. Such a step would go a long way to consolidating the links between the college and the retired staff, and who knows what additional benefits that might bring both to the staff and the college?

## Early Libraries in St Patrick's

*Pat Watson*

The *raison d'être* of a university is to stimulate thinking by imparting knowledge. A prerequisite of this process is the provision of literature in the form of manuscripts, documents, pamphlets and books. In this, Maynooth College was no exception and from its origin in 1795 a valuable collection of material including some rare 15<sup>th</sup> century printed books or incunabula, medieval manuscripts, mainly in Latin, Gaelic manuscripts and a Bible collection had been gathered largely from individual donors including Edmund Burke and Bartholomew Crotty, College President 1813–31 and later Bishop of Cloyne. By 1818 over 5,000 books and other items were being stored in a large hall. The problem now was where to establish a library to suitably house them.

The Bishop of Cork, John Butler, unwittingly provided the answer. Having unexpectedly inherited the title of 12<sup>th</sup> Baron Dunboyne in 1785 and feeling duty bound to continue the blood line, he found himself at odds with the long-standing clerical rules on celibacy and so, rather reluctantly, was forced to quit his clerical life and bishopric in favour of married life and the duties of peer of the realm. In 1800 and nearly in his 70<sup>th</sup> year, the

Baron, or Lord Dunboyne as he was known, lay dying and realising that all hope of producing an heir was gone, he made a profound and heartfelt appeal to be received back into the Church. He begged forgiveness from both the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Troy, and the Pope, strengthening his case with the offer of a portion of his landed wealth in return. This may indeed have tipped the balance and the 'quality of mercy' dropped 'as the gentle rain' on the Baron as he died. His substantial legacy was greatly welcomed by the Trustees who used it for the creation of the Dunboyne Estate.

Dunboyne House was built on the south side of St Joseph's Square to accommodate students specially selected for post-graduate study based on their outstanding merit. Nicholas Callan was such a candidate. Each student had his own room and, as a special privilege, an open fire to aid and abet study. There were approximately 14 students and, thus, 14 fires mostly burning night and day in the damp climate of Maynooth. Fourteen chimneys took the flames, smoke, heat and gases up to the rooftop and all was well. Along the top floor was a long, unbroken corridor that was unused; it was this corridor that the Trustees now deemed to be the ideal spot for a library to house all the incunabula and irreplaceable manuscripts along with the more recently-collected additions, including some rare Ordnance Survey maps. The library moved into Dunboyne House in 1823 and was open four days a week for four hours only. Books couldn't be removed, indeed one of the first librarians promised immediate excommunication for anyone taking a book without permission. The perils of fire from the 14 fireplaces below seemed an inconsequential matter!

The library remained at risk until 1861 when, with what must have been a great sigh, the contents were finally and carefully moved to their new home in the great Pugin building and what is today called the Russell Library. It was a beautifully lofty, Gothic style, room with timbered roof and ornately decorated walls with stencilled borders, befitting the valuable literary collection of the College.

Little could anyone have foreseen the fire of 1878.

Known as the 'Big Fire' it began on the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> November 1878 outside St. Mary's building, the present oratory. It was first reported at 8.30am and help was summoned. This soon came from Carton House but wasn't adequate to stop the spread of the fire. Flames caught the main building and began to engulf the roof. The Dublin fire engine was then summoned but the telegram from Maynooth failed and valuable time was lost as Celbridge had to be contacted to put the alert call through. At last a special train was despatched to take the fire engine to Maynooth where it arrived speedily and by 11am was finally in position to fight the fire. Meanwhile, and to the great relief of all, volunteers had succeeded in moving all the priceless manuscripts, books and documents in time. These now included all Pugin's original plans and drawings for the College. Much of the Pugin building was badly damaged as the fire had spread to the central section. The highly ornate timber roof of the Russell Library was largely spared and its valuable contents, thankfully, saved.

If the Bishop of Cork played a large part in the Library's development, so also did Michael Loftus. A civil servant from Bournemouth, he bequeathed a legacy of £30,000 to the College, which from 1932 onwards allowed the much-needed cataloguing of the library. The Loftus Bequest also provided extra library space, and the three theology class halls immediately below the library were fitted with shelving and quickly filled. The evicted theology students were provided with a new building the following year. It was called Loftus Hall in honour of the man who made it all possible.

The needs and value of the library were finally recognised and prioritised, a far cry from the days of Dunboyne House. Today the Russell Library collection is safely stored, efficiently catalogued and available for individual study and general exhibition. A thing of beauty and a joy forever!

**“This great architect was in every respect, a wonderful man”: Pugin and Maynooth College**

*Jeanne Meldon (Walsh)*

‘Under the gloom of the great death [of the Duke of Wellington] which now overshadows the land, less notice than otherwise would have been the case has been taken of the demise of ... Welby Pugin. This great architect was, in every respect, a wonderful man: his too brief course of life marked with consummate energy and ability’. Thus begins the obituary of Augustus Welby Pugin, carried in the *Illustrated London News* of 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1852.

Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin was born in London in 1812, the only child of Catherine Welby and Auguste Charles Pugin. His father was an accomplished draughtsman and illustrator. The Pugin family visited Paris and Normandy as well as many parts of England and Wales sketching Gothic buildings for the elder Pugin’s publications. It was this environment that shaped the young Augustus, giving him an early introduction to drawing skills. These experiences instilled a passion for Gothic architecture manifested at the early age of nine when he drew his first design for a Gothic church. At the age of only 15 Pugin received his first commissions: to design Gothic furniture for Windsor Castle.



It was probably through the theatre that Pugin met his first wife, Anne Garnet, whom he married when he was only 19. But two years later, aged only 21, Pugin found himself a young widower with a daughter. Anne died following childbirth in 1832, the deaths of his parents following within a year. Later that year of 1833 he married his second wife, Louisa Burton, with whom he had two sons and three daughters. She died in 1844 and four years later Pugin married his third wife, Jane Knill, with whom he had two further children.

Pugin was deeply influenced by his contacts with the High Church Oxford Movement; however, his obsession with Gothic art and architecture became increasingly bound up with the Roman church and he converted to Catholicism in 1835, while still in his twenties. Many senior clerics of the Catholic church found his approach to church music, vestments and to rood screens too extreme and John Henry Newman considered him a bigot.

Many others, though, were to exert a significant positive influence on his life and career, perhaps none more so than John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, Waterford and Wexford. The earl became an important patron and it was through him that many of Pugin’s commissions flowed, including his work in Ireland and his commission for Maynooth.

In a lifetime that spanned but forty years Pugin produced a very considerable body of work, with numerous churches, from the early church at Derby (1837–9), to his own church of St Augustine’s in 1850 at Ramsgate, adjoining his house. An engraving of 1843 illustrates 25 of his favourite churches, which included Gorey, County Wexford, and the cathedral at Killarney. Many of Pugin’s churches were highly decorated with altar rails, rood screens and other details all of his own design, including vestments and altar cloths, chalices and candle holders. The church of St Giles at Cheadle in Staffordshire, built under the patronage of Shrewsbury, shows the culmination of this unified artistic approach to ecclesiastical building.

Pugin’s ecclesiastical buildings were only one part of his output. He designed two

houses for himself and his growing family, the first at St Marie's Grange in Salisbury when he was only 23. The Grange, at Ramsgate in Kent, finished in 1844, with the adjoining church of St Augustine coming later, was much more successful. Aspects of both houses were to become part of the lexicon of domestic architecture in later decades, foreshadowing the work of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement.

On the night of 16th October 1834 fire had broken out in the Houses of Parliament and they were burnt to the ground. It was this unforeseen event that led to Pugin's most iconic work and that for which he is now probably best known. A decade after the fire, Pugin was commissioned to design the interior of the Houses of Parliament and it is this work, together with the clock tower (Big Ben), that was to become his enduring legacy.

### **Pugin in Ireland**

While engaged with Westminster, Pugin had been travelling back and forth to Ireland between the years of 1838 and 1850 and leaving behind a significant legacy of buildings, including some of his finest work. These include the cathedrals of Killarney and Enniscorthy, the chapels at St Peter's College Wexford and Loreto Abbey in Dublin, and designs for the banqueting hall in Lismore Castle.

Arguably, Pugin's most important work in Ireland, and certainly his largest, was at Maynooth, where he designed new seminary buildings at the west end of St Joseph's Square. While Maynooth was funded through an Act of Parliament and was to be implemented through the Board of Works in Ireland, in fact the choice of Pugin as architect was through the patronage of Lord Shrewsbury who recommended Pugin directly to the Archbishop of Dublin. The budget for the works was insufficient to allow the implementation of Pugin's original design – £50,000, vs £30,000. He resigned and that was to be the end of it. After all he was at the time busily engaged on his work for the interiors of the Houses of Parliament. However, the Maynooth clerics were displeased, believing that Pugin was the only architect who could accomplish a fitting

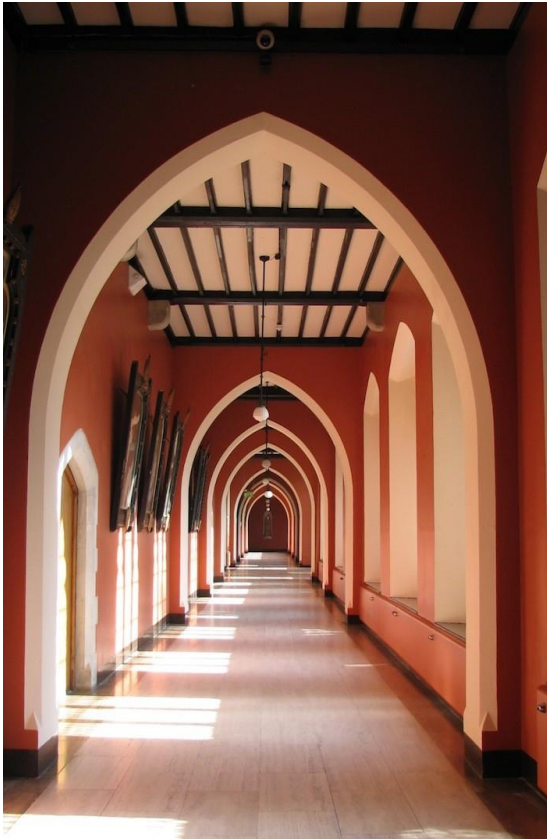
addition to the college, and demanded that he be asked to reconsider. Revised plans were drawn up in 1846, the chapel and Aula Max which were to form the north side of the quadrangle, were omitted and work at Maynooth commenced. The substantial building work was eventually completed in 1852 though still unfit for occupation with no heating, and it was not until the 1860s that the Russell library was fully fitted out.

In the words of the Rev. John Healy, who wrote the centenary history of the college, the new buildings at Maynooth not only provided an aesthetic improvement; they “contributed to elevate the whole *moral tone* (sic) of the Institution”. The buildings included a spacious and beautiful corridor – the cloisters – “for recreation in wet or inclement weather”. Together with the cloisters, the professor's dining room, the library and refectory, all still in use, bear lasting testament to Pugin's architectural and design skills; while not all the present-day decorative elements are the work of Pugin, they were much influenced by him and thus are part of his legacy.

Pugin himself seemed quite pleased with the result: in a letter dated May 1849 to his wife, Jane, following a visit to Maynooth he wrote:

*The buildings at Maynooth look very grand. It is an immense building with some splendid rooms in it. They seem very much pleased with it indeed & it is wonderfully cheap.*

The Russell library contains a number of works by Pugin – this architect, artist, designer was also a prolific writer. His works setting out his architectural principles, *Contrasts* (published in 1836 with a second, revised, edition in 1841) and *The True Principles of Pointed Christian Architecture* (1841) were well known and in their time highly influential though remarkable for their dogmatic tone and their fanaticism.



His illustrated *Dublin Review* articles on *The revival of Church architecture in the Catholic communion in England* were profusely adorned with engravings of his work. The *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume*, published in 1844, and ‘*Floriated Ornament*’ in 1849, were two of his most beautiful books. The rich illustrations of these works are reflected time and again in Pugin’s buildings and designs, thus bringing together theory and practice. Copies of both of these beautiful books are among those held in the Russell Library.

The years of exhausting work and constant travel, together with recurrent bouts of illness, took their toll. Pugin died at home on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1852 at the age of forty.

*Editor’s Note: Jeanne Meldon is a direct descendant of Augustus Pugin.*

## ‘FREEDOM’ SCULPTURE

*Jim Walsh*

In early September the Maynooth campus was adorned by one of the most ambitious large-scale exterior sculptures in Ireland. The abstract free-flowing stainless steel ‘Freedom’ sculpture by the internationally renowned artist Alexandra Wejchert (1921–1995) has been installed at a pivotal location on the North Campus. Freedom is a particularly apt theme for current times when the meaning and application of the concept are frequently questioned and threatened. It is especially appropriate in a university context where the core value of academic freedom is cherished in Maynooth, but regrettably this is no longer the case in many universities in other countries. This inspirational sculpture is a constant reminder for all staff and students of the values and ethical responsibilities shared by the community of scholars that comprises Maynooth University. ‘Freedom’ has been relocated from the former AIB headquarters in Ballsbridge under a long-term loan agreement between the Bank and the University.



*L-R, Colin Hunt, Chief Executive Officer of AIB, Prof Philp Nolan, President of Maynooth University, and Dr Alison Fitzgerald, Maynooth University.*

*Photo Courtesy of Maynooth University Communications Office*

The biography of the artist is also a wonderful testimony to the cultural and artistic enrichment of our society by the many immigrants over several decades. Alexandra Wejchert was born in Poland in 1921 and had first-hand experience of life under restricted freedom. Having trained as both an architect and artist and become disillusioned with the social realism of Soviet architecture, she came to Ireland in 1965 following her brother Andrej who had won the international architectural competition to prepare the Masterplan for the new UCD campus at Belfield. She quickly focussed on sculpture producing many works that became emblems of the new Ireland in the 1970s. She became an Irish citizen in 1979 and a member of Aosdána in 1981.

*Jim Walsh, adapted from MU website*

## **ON THE FLY!**

*Peter Denman*

Every September I join other members of the Dublin Gliding Club to fly around and over some of the hills and coastal cliffs of west Kerry. While I still worked in the college, it was a matter of snatching a few days down there as orientation week and the start of term moved to ever earlier dates, but since retirement I've been able to go for the full two weeks. The club has been doing this for fifty years now; the most recent 2021 expedition offered some days of good flying around and over Brandon and the Connor Pass as well as soaring along Dingle Bay from Slieve Mish to Dingle. (There were also some rained-out days, but that's not unusual!)

Our base for the fortnight is the little town of Annascaul, nestling in the hills of the Dingle peninsula on the road between Tralee and Dingle. Parked in a lay-by or up the side roads are our long covered trailers which have been towed there from various parts of the country. Inside each trailer is a glider, or sailplane, ready to be assembled, launched, and piloted through the Kerry air that blows over the slopes and shorelines of that most magnificent coast.

The beaches – Inch to the south or Brandon Bay to the north – are generally quiet in late autumn, so there is ample space to rig and launch the aircraft. First, out comes the fuselage, with a snug cockpit enclosed under perspex for the pilot. The fuselage is held upright while the long tapering wings are attached and the controls connected. The glider, when assembled, is bigger but lighter than the average private aeroplane.

The gliders are launched into the air by car tow along the beach, on the firm sand below the high water mark. The aircraft climbs steeply like a kite to 1400 feet or so, then it's time to release the cable and the pilot and aircraft are on their own. Below us is the long sandy sweep of Inch beach and dunes, fronted by a broad spread of waves and foam making towards the shore. East is a view stretching inland across the low valley of the Maine to the hills of Glen Flesk. And out to the west is a seascape framed by Corca Dhuibhne on one side and the mountains of Iveragh on the other, each an arm of coastline reaching towards islands in the distance – the rounded Blaskets matched to the south by the jagged severities of the Skelligs. And between them the Atlantic opens out towards the sky and a constantly changing show of light, cloud and colour.

But the glider will not stay airborne unless the pilot becomes part of and uses the air. So I now turn to fly in towards the hills above the shore, as the glider slowly but steadily loses height. Without an engine, a glider is always descending through the air. But as the air is rarely motionless, the trick is to find where the air is rising, and to gain height by flying in that area of lift. In a southerly wind I head to the south-facing hills above Inch. Our altimeter winds down: 900 feet, 800 feet, 700 feet. We can see the ground getting closer, and the hills are very near. A few hundred yards inland, and although still 600 feet above the beach level, the glider is now no more than fifty or sixty feet from the rising ground. It seems close – it is close – but there is always a possibility to glide out and away from it towards the landing area. And, getting in close, the magic begins. A delicate surge in the aircraft tells us we are in lift. In alongside the hill, where the wind meets the

slopes, it is diverted upwards. Now I can fly to and fro along the face of the hill, following the landscape as the line of flight moves into the bowls and out around the shoulders of rock and heather. As the climb continues, suddenly the crest of the hill is below and a whole new landscape comes into view, showing the valley inland. Now, with the height gained – 1800 feet, 2000 feet or more – it is possible to leave the ‘home’ slope and to set off to explore some other parts of the local mountains range.

A flight can last four or five hours or even longer, but it all depends on the conditions. And some days we don’t fly at all. There are several factors to take into account: weather, wind strength and direction, the tide times (we need a wide beach to get launched), and the number of other people on the beach – Inch especially is very popular at weekends, but we use the more distant reaches of that fine strand. People are very cooperative in allowing us space to operate and are intrigued by this unique form of flying.



The flying in Kerry is for experienced solo pilots, and is rather different from the more conventional gliding that happens during the rest of the year. Usually the gliders are towed

into the air by an aeroplane taking off from our base, a greenfield grass strip at Gowran Grange near Punchestown. And while flying and training goes on throughout the year, the winter months are largely taken up with maintenance and ‘ground schooling’ for trainees. But if you wish to try a short ‘air experience’ flight in a two-seater glider with one of the club instructors, I suggest keeping it in mind for next spring – or if not keen to fly yourself why not get a gift voucher as a Christmas present for someone else. The website is [dublinglidingclub.ie](http://dublinglidingclub.ie), or call (087) 235 5807 (and say I sent you!).

## FOOTPRINTS

*Rose Malone*

The opportunity to be out in nature has been one of the most important and enduring consolations of the COVID 19 lockdowns. It is widely acknowledged that the benefits of encounters with the natural world go beyond the physical and have been vital for our mental and spiritual health. By raising awareness of nature, outdoor activities have encouraged people’s interest in and knowledge about living creatures and have spurred many to become involved in learning more and in promoting conservation and biodiversity. But the involvement (lasting, one hopes) of many more people in nature-based, environmental activities also has an impact on that same environment.

In every public park we can see physical reminders of the impact of walkers, runners and cyclists on the grassed areas. Alongside every paved path, brown scars of extra paths have developed. These become muddy and slippery in wet weather, causing people to create further paths outside these again. So, without maintenance, the environment would become degraded and unusable. It is testament to the work of county councils that parks remain open for our use and enjoyment.

The situation is perhaps more acute in rural and wilderness areas. Canal towpaths and riverbank walks provide wonderful amenities and opportunities for encounters

with plant life, birds and insects, over and above anything to be found in local parks. But these paths and tracks can become almost impassable in the winter. In some areas, controversies have developed about the extent of artificial surface to be used and the impact of this on the wild environment.

It is in hill and mountain areas that the dilemma becomes acute. Owing to our wet climate, the treeline in Ireland is exceptionally low and even comparatively low hills are covered by mountain blanket bog. This is a fragile environment: the black, peaty soil holds huge amounts of water and is held together precariously by the roots of heather. Marked trails provide access to the hills and give us opportunities to experience nature in ways that seem almost magical. Mountain hares and red deer might jump up at our feet. We might hear the larks unreeling their song, just a few miles from the centre of Dublin. We might glimpse a green hairstreak butterfly, like a tiny jewel.



*Protecting vulnerable landscape: boardwalk in Wicklow Mountains*

But because the mountain soil is so fragile this access comes at a cost. Pressure of feet and bicycle tyres quickly wears away this soil so it can become a slippery, impassable mess. On many trails, boardwalks provide protection. On higher mountains, weather and human traffic combine to erode the vegetation to peat hags – small ‘islands’ of heathery vegetation in a black ‘sea’ of stripped bog. These make access challenging for all except those fit or long-legged enough to step or leap from hag to hag. The work of local authorities and voluntary groups, such as Mountain

*Meitheal*, is vital in balancing the provision of access with the preservation of the environment.



*Sign of erosion: peat-hag in Wicklow Mountains*

We used to be told ‘Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints’, but we need to be increasingly mindful about the impact of those footprints as we enjoy the hills and open areas.

## **CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE**

*Brendan Cullen, Clane Local History Group*



*The front of the Clongowes castle as it was when the Jesuits acquired it in 1814*

The year 2014 marked the Bicentenary of Clongowes Wood College. Originally called Castlebrowne, it was the family home of the Wogan Browne family. Thomas Wogan Browne, the last member of the family to live in Castlebrowne, died in 1812. His brother,

General Michael Wogan Browne, finding the Estate heavily in debt, sold the castle and 219 acres to Fr Peter Kenney S.J. in March 1814. Fr Kenney changed the name back to the original Irish of Clongowes Wood.

On May 18<sup>th</sup> 1814 the first pupil was admitted to the new Clongowes Wood College. The annual fee was 50 guineas and the students spent 11 months in the school with the annual holidays confined to the month of August. The first three Rectors were: Fr Peter Kenney 1814–17; Fr Charles Aylmer 1817–20; and Fr Bartholomew Esmonde 1820–21. The reputation of the college spread rapidly and by 1815 there were 110 pupils enrolled. This figure arose alarmingly in 1816 to 201. It is difficult to ascertain where such a large number were accommodated. Various suggestions include in the castle itself and in the castle yard where the Wogan Brownes' stables, outhouses and offices were located. One thing was certain; the school was overcrowded and that overcrowding combined with a poor-quality water supply led to a major outbreak of typhus in the college in 1819. Fr Aylmer, reacting to medical advice and to the concerns of the parents, closed the school and sent the students home for six months. This hiatus enabled him to embark on an extensive building programme which was to transform the campus dramatically. The year 1819–20 saw the construction of the Lower Line (Junior) Building and the Higher Line (Senior) Building along with a third building which was converted into a chapel for the boys in August 1822. This latter building is now the People's Church which has always been and still is an integral part of the religious life of Clongowes and the surrounding locality since the first Mass was celebrated here in 1822.

Why did Fr Kenney open a school at Clane? Why did he choose the castle at Clongowes rather than an estate elsewhere? To open a school nearer the city of Dublin or in the city would have attracted the unwelcome attention of the Protestant Establishment; if it was too far away from Dublin, especially before the coming of the railway, it mightn't have attracted the sons of wealthy middle-class Catholics whom Fr

Kenney wished to attract. Daniel O'Connell acted as adviser to Fr Kenney and he encouraged him to purchase a confiscated property because with such a property one could prove title. Richard Reynell, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas under Cromwell, was granted the castle and surrounding lands in 1667. The estate was confirmed to him by letters patent of Charles II. These documents provided proof of title, thereby eliminating the possibility of any future dispute. However, Fr Kenney encountered an unforeseen problem. He needed a licence to teach. According to the law he had to obtain it from the Protestant Bishop of Kildare. The licence was not forthcoming but Kenney went ahead and opened the college anyway in May 1814. Although this was technically illegal the authorities turned a blind eye.

On July 21<sup>st</sup> 1864 Clongowes celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its foundation. Hundreds of parents, past-pupils, and dignitaries from all walks of life were invited to the college to celebrate this great occasion. The special train reserved for the invited guests left Kingsbridge station at 9.30 am and on arrival at Sallins station was met by numerous jaunting cars and carriages which conveyed the visitors to the college. The celebrations continued throughout the day and into the evening. The conclusion of the festivities signalled not only the end of another successful academic year but also the completion of fifty years of extraordinary educational achievement. The *Freeman's Journal* of July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1864 published a laudatory article on the college which illustrated the esteem and admiration in which Clongowes was held at the time of the Golden Jubilee.

The year 1886 was the most traumatic year in the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century Clongowes because of two major events. The first occurred on April 9th 1886 when the study hall and the refectory underneath were destroyed by fire. The fire started in the roof and had a secure hold by the time it was noticed two days later. Both study hall and refectory were rebuilt in 1887. The second major event of 1886 took place in September when the Jesuit Boarding School at Tullabeg,

near Tullamore, was amalgamated with Clongowes. Tullabeg, founded in 1818, achieved a very high academic reputation but because of debt and lack of personnel it was decided to close it in 1886 and amalgamate it with Clongowes. When Clongowes broke up for the summer holidays there were 140 boys in the school. In September, after the holidays this number had increased to 250.

Over 600 past-pupils participated in the First World War; 95 lost their lives – their names appear on a brass plaque on the wall outside the Boys' Chapel. Among them was Thomas Kettle who was a student in the college between 1894 and 1897, and was killed at Ginchy on the Western Front on September 9<sup>th</sup> 1916. Since the inception of the Victoria Cross in 1856, past-pupils of the college were recipients of this prestigious award on four occasions: Captain Thomas Esmonde from the Crimean War; Thomas Crean from the Boer War; John Vincent Holland from the First World War; and Lieut. Commander Eugene Esmonde, who was posthumously awarded the V.C. for heroism in the Battle of Dover Strait in 1942. Their portrait photographs hang in the Serpentine Gallery in the college alongside those of Jeremiah 'Ginger' O'Connell, 'Rory' O'Connor, Kevin O'Higgins, and 'The O'Rahilly' all of whom participated in the struggle for independence between 1916 and 1922.



*Aerial view of Clongowes college as it was in its bicentenary year of 2014*

The latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed the completion of three major building schemes in 1966, 1976 and 1999. 2010 saw the opening of the Science, Art and Technology Building. This was followed in 2011 by the opening of the new Sports Hall. The latest addition to the campus is the 25 metre Swimming Pool, built to replace the old 'Bath' of 1887.

Possessing such superb educational and sporting facilities Clongowes can look forward to the future with confidence and optimism and to continuing the great tradition of Jesuit education in Co. Kildare.

## **CELBRIDGE: HOUSES OF DISTINCTION**

*Dan O'Shea*

### **Oakley Park**

Built in 1724 for Dr Arthur Price who later became Archbishop of Cashel (the Father of Arthur Guinness worked for Price and used this connection to christen his son Arthur). The Connollys acquired this property and Lady Louisa passed it on to her sister Lady Sarah Napier. Sarah had eight children. Two of her sons were knighted for service in the British army. William served under Wellington and Charles served in India and later became commander-in-chief in India. In 1952 the Brothers of St John of God purchased the buildings.

### **Celbridge Abbey**

Built in 1697 by Bartholomew Van Homrigh, Lord Mayor of Dublin. The building had association with Dean Swift who visited Esther Van Homrigh (his Vanessa). When Esther died the site passed on to Thomas Marley whose daughter gave birth to Henry Grattan.

### **Castletown**

The house was built in 1722 for William Connolly, the speaker of the Irish House of Commons (now the Bank of Ireland, College Green). Maynooth University operates the 'Archive and Research Centre' from the house. By the time of his death Connolly

owned 150,000 acres. The land was forfeited after the Williamite wars; the purchase price was often less than £1 per acre. Connolly resorted to foul means on occasion. It was claimed that he used forged documents and attempted to arrange a false funeral, only to be discovered; this to fraudulently claim for a mortgage of £12,000. Grave robbers had removed the coffin only to find it full of stones. An attempt to 'acquire' another corpse also failed. William was succeeded by Tom – an MP who voted for the Act of Union, the original turkey voting for Christmas. Wolfe Tone commented on him: 'Connolly is a strange rambling fool' and 'shocking to think that such an ass should have influence anywhere'. It was under Tom's reign that the Devil was supposed to appear in the house. The old Dublin road ran by the river and has remained a 'right of way' ever since; Lady Louisa failed to deny this right of way.

#### **St Wolstan's Priory**

Strongbow granted the lands in the Celbridge area to Adam de Hereford, a Norman knight. This priory was founded in 1202 and in 1536 the priory and lands were seized by King Henry VIII, the first monastery in Ireland to be seized. The tower is visible from the north side of the Liffey, below Castletown house.

#### **Donaghcomper**

Donaghcomper Church may have been a Christian site as early as the 5th century. The earliest part of the church was built c1150–60. The church was suppressed in the Reformation and the lands acquired by John Alen. A Tudor revival house was built in 1835. More recently this became the home to Ivone Kirkpatrick (1897–1964). Ivone was British ambassador in Berlin in the 1930s and would have interrogated Rudolf Hess at the Nuremberg Trials. The house is visible from Castletown Demesne.

#### **Springfield**

Built from 1763. In 1801 it was leased to James Langrishe and his heirs. In relatively recent times it was home to Aidan Higgins whose novel *Langrishe, Go Down* was later adapted by the BBC via Harold Pinter. His

novel *Balcony of Europe* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1972.

#### **Killadoon House**

Home to the descendants of Robert Clement, who co-founded the frontier settlement of Haverhill in Massachusetts. His daughter was arrested for witchcraft during the Salem Witch trials. Hugh Clements was the father of the 3rd Earl of Leitrim, assassinated and buried in St. Michans. The church has preservative qualities and contains the body of a Crusader, whose head was recently stolen, then recovered and thankfully restored. The 800-year-old body was that of a very tall Crusader – his legs had to be broken in order to fit the coffin.

#### **Setanta House**

This was formerly the Celbridge Charter School and then the Collegiate School; it was planned by Speaker Connolly. This charity school eventually closed in 1973 with the girls going to Kilkenny College. It was re-opened in 1980 as the Setanta House Hotel and has changed hands a number of times.

#### **Pickering Forest**

A three-storey Georgian house built in 1724. Home to Marina Guinness.

*Credits:* Tony Doohan, Fifi Smith, Lucy Monaghan, Patrick Walsh, Finola O'Kane

### **ROCQUE'S MAP OF THE MANOR OF MAYNOOTH 1757**

*Patrick Duffy*

In the last issue Jim Walsh looked at maps of Ireland as part of British plans to complete the conquest of the country (which had been designated the Kingdom of Ireland by Henry VIII in 1542). William Petty's *Down Survey* and accompanying *Civil Survey* accompanying the Cromwellian settlement in the 1650s mapped the land and enumerated the population, land ownership, and buildings of the country. This was the last of these big surveys before the Ordnance Survey national mapping programme in the 1830s. During

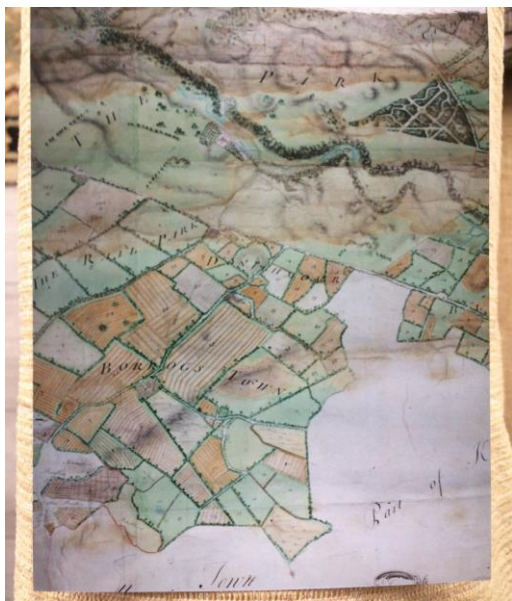
what historians have referred to as the ‘long eighteenth century’ (1660s–1830s) mapping surveys concentrated on the *internal* details of the island – maps and plans of ports, towns and cities, but especially the landed estates which had resulted from the Cromwellian settlement. Much of this mapping was the result of private enterprise as opposed to state-sponsored surveys. Individuals and their descendants – mainly British, such as Sir William Petty, ancestor of Lord Lansdowne – who had obtained landed properties in Ireland by confiscation, plantation grant or purchase – were the landlords who were interested in improving and developing their estates. As a result there was a demand for surveyors to measure and value their lands in efforts to increase agricultural productivity. Maps of properties were especially important in this regard – most of them were strictly functional documents showing the variations in land quality (e.g. arable, pasture, bogland and mountain), outlining boundaries, fields, roads and houses to assist the business of estate management by owners and their agents. Some estate maps were also aesthetic representations of the landscape of the estate, designed as ostentatious displays of the wealth and status of the landlords – in the same way as the mansion houses, demesnes and parklands were symbols of their power and wealth. Some of the mapping surveys matched the picturesque views painted by the artists, and the elaborate stately homes and estate buildings created by important architects who were also commissioned by the class-conscious landowners. Rocque’s Map of the Manor of Maynooth which hangs in Rhetoric House is an excellent example of one such cartographic achievement.

John Rocque (c1705–1762) was a French Huguenot (Protestants who had fled persecution by the French crown in the seventeenth century) who lived and worked in London. He had successfully mapped a number of European capital cities and was invited to Ireland to survey Dublin by members of the Irish nobility in the Irish parliament in College Green. He completed Dublin in 1756 – and it remains an important record of Georgian Dublin (which featured on the old £10 note). While undertaking his map

of Dublin he was commissioned by a number of Irish gentry to map their estates. The 20<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare (later 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Leinster) was one of the premier landlords in Ireland who owned 68,000 acres of some of the best land in Ireland: the establishment of the Royal College of St Patrick in Maynooth in 1795 was a mark of his position in Irish society. He had married the daughter of the Duke of Richmond in England whose estates had earlier been surveyed by Rocque, so Rocque’s engagement by the Duke of Leinster was no coincidence.

Rocque’s Map of Maynooth is a good example of his cartographic and artistic achievement. He made maps of the eight manors in Lord Leinster’s estate and presented them as bound atlases of each manor. They would have been proudly displayed in Carton. They were subsequently sold and ended up in various locations – Trinity College, National Library, the British Library, and the Maynooth volume is in Cambridge Library. The Map of the Manor of Maynooth discussed here was probably made in 1757 by Rocque as a wall map to hang in the estate office in Stoyte House, or in Carton. It is in the main a summary replica of the individual townland maps in the bound volumes. It depicts a birds-eye view of the landscape as it was c1757 – showing the demesne or Carton Park, the town of Maynooth, the townlands and their individual fields with their acreages and in some cases fieldnames, the farmhouses, other buildings and tenant names. Rocque also used cartouches or ornamental frames enclosing map titles which contain miniature scenes of landscape and views drawn by distinguished artists Matthew Wren or Hugh Douglas Hamilton who were employed as assistants by Rocque. One unique feature of Rocque’s map is the manner in which the fields are colour-coded to show their land-uses – tillage fields have brownish shading representing ridges, pasture land is coloured green, hedges and trees are detailed, hills are shown with separate shading (hachuring); some farmyards contain haystacks. Carton and some of the bigger country farmhouses have associated ornamental gardens laid out in geometric detail which was the baroque landscape

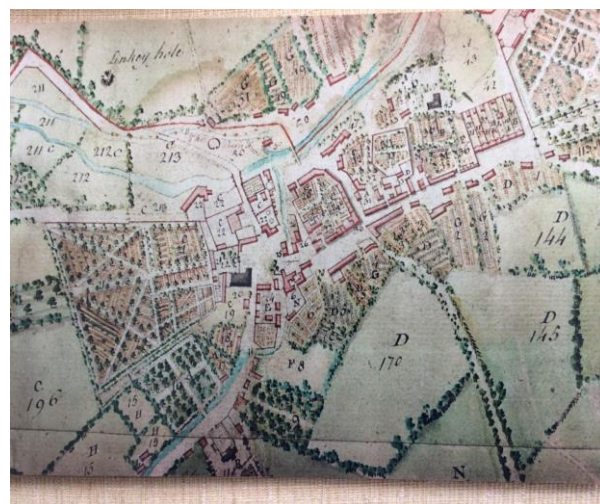
fashion at the time. The gardens on the site of the later St Patrick's College (established 1795) reflect this ornamental layout.



Springs, mills, quarries, forges, pigeon houses, and pre-historic forts are also shown on the map. Carton House and its suite of ancillary buildings is shown in plan form. The lake is absent from the map, awaiting the damming of the Rye Water stream in the 1760s. The town of Maynooth is shown at a significant stage in its development as a showpiece estate town for the landlord. The old disorderly later medieval settlement is in the process of giving way to its modern planned layout, with the new main street aligned with the avenue to Carton.

The extraordinary value of Rocque's artistic depiction of the Maynooth landscape in 1757 is that it coincides with a 1753 painting of Lord and Lady Kildare (later Duke of Leinster) seated and supervising their plans for the development of Carton (complete with maps and drawings in hand). A series of superb paintings of the Carton landscape by Thomas Roberts was also commissioned by the Duke in the 1770s, some of which can be seen in the National Gallery and in Carton today.

John Rocque's maps are landmark records of the Irish landscape on the cusp of great changes into the nineteenth century. We are lucky to have an original example in Rhetoric House. The Rocque Cartography Lab in Rhetoric was named in his honour in the 1990s.



## AN UPLIFTING READ

*Siobhán Ní Fhoghlú*

Many people feel that we are certainly not living in the best of times. As we worry about buffoons and rogues gaining positions of power, environmental doomsday scenarios, and versatile viruses that lay bare our helplessness, we may long for reading matter that would leave us feeling hopeful and consoled, writing that presents us with a positive picture of human nature and of the consequences of human action and interaction.

I have recently read such a novel. *Still Life* by Sarah Winman was suggested by a fellow member of a book club; otherwise, I should not have discovered this novel. Firstly, I had not heard of the author, and, secondly, it is 464 pages long. Yes, this is a big book, but I enjoyed every page, every character, every conversation and encounter. I was hooked from the first sentence, and, by the time I had read a couple of pages, I was charmed by the ease of the style and the masterful use of language. The lively conversations and beautiful descriptions made me feel engaged with the characters and the situations as they occurred in the narrative. This is just as well, as the story encompasses a large cast of characters over four decades. It begins and ends in Florence, but the main characters are English, mostly from London's East End. All the characters are well drawn, individualised

by their modes of expression, their background, and the milieu in which they exist, by choice or fate.

Evelyn Skinner is an academic art expert, introduced to us in Florence in 1944 where she is involved in saving works of art that were hidden from the occupying forces. Ulysses Temper is a young British soldier with the Allied forces in Florence, as the German army retreats. Evelyn and Ulysses discover a trove of art hidden from the Nazis. Evelyn returns to England to continue her academic career. Ulysses returns to London, where he has a wife, Peg (whom he was not thinking of as ‘waiting’ for him), and friends Col and Cressie who run a pub. He has, of course, been changed by the war and his future will be determined by two encounters in his time in Florence: meeting Evelyn and saving the life of a Florentine. Peg has had a ‘GI baby’, referred to as ‘the Kid’; in time, Ulysses, Cressie and the Kid leave England and set up home in Florence. This unconventionally formed family is part of the depiction of relationships of love and alliances forged by choice rather than by the usual social determinants. Their story is interwoven with members of the community in their quarter of Florence, and with that of many characters from their home country.

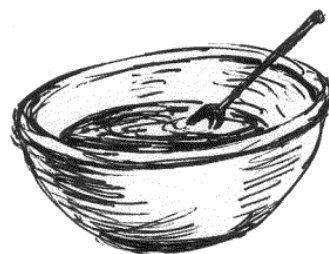
Setting a novel in Florence signals that art, literature and beauty would be important in the work, and indeed these are the touchstones throughout. As the various strands of the story are spun out for us, we see scenes bathed in golden light, we hear facts about art history and literary works, and music is a constant. The horrors of war do not dominate but are not glossed over. The disastrous 1966 flooding of the city and the horrors of the aftermath are presented realistically but the main import of that chapter is the wonderful response of the ‘mud angels’ who flocked to the city to help the people and rescue the endangered art.

Winman wraps up the stories of each of the characters in a way that satisfies the reader, as though we are reading for story. The overall impact of the novel is greater than that: we are left with a sense of the diversity and wonder of life in many senses – art, nature, love in all its forms, community and

family. It is a more than satisfying read for readers who love Italy, art, and historical novels. It is very much a feel-good read, exactly what I wanted when I took it in my hands. The story unfolds through happy coincidences and remarkable tolerance; I might find these unrealistic in other contexts, but this book has a little touch of the fable and a smidgeon of magic realism. The author has said that the book approaches life with empathy and kindness, and the difference these traits could make to contemporary life, where division and polarisation seem to increase by the day.

## What’s Cooking in the Kitchen

*with Marie-Thérèse Power*



**Spanish Pork Tenderloin** – This is going to be my dish of choice for New Year’s Eve

*Cooking time:* 6/8 hours in a Slow Cooker

*Prep time:* 15mins.

*Serves:* 6:

### **Ingredients:**

2 lbs Pork Tenderloin

1tsp ground sage

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper

1 clove garlic (minced)

½ cup water

### **Glaze:**

½ cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon of cornflour

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

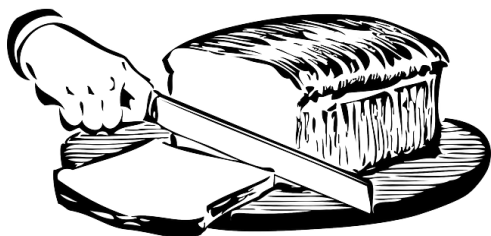
½ cup of cold water

2 tablespoons of soy sauce

**Method:** Combine the ground sage, salt, pepper and garlic. Rub the seasoning over the pork and place in the slow cooker. Pour ½ cup of water in the slow cooker taking care not to

wash off the spices from the pork. Roast in the slow cooker on low for 6 to 8 hours.

While the roast is nearing completion heat your grill. Combine the ingredients for the glaze, stirring over a medium heat until the mixture thickens, it should take about 4 minutes, watch your heat level. Line a baking tray with tin foil and spray or lightly grease with oil. Remove the roast pork from the slow cooker and place on lined baking tray. Brush the glaze generously over the pork, place under the heated grill for 1 or 2 minutes until the glaze is bubbling and caramelized, repeat two or three times until the crust is to your desired taste (**do not walk away from the grill while caramelising the pork**). Serve with creamy mashed potatoes and the remaining pork glaze on the side.



#### ***Yogurt, Honey and Nut Loaf:***

*Cooking time:* 1.5 hours approx.

*Temperature:* 300F/150C/Gas 2

#### **Ingredients:**

250gr/9oz of good quality coarse wholemeal

125gr/4oz Light Brown Sugar

75gr/3oz Butter /margarine

2 tsp cinnamon (level)

1 egg (organic if possible)

4 tsp honey (level)

150ml/ ¼ pint of good quality natural yogurt

1 tsp (level) bread soda

50g/2oz chopped hazel or walnuts

**Method:** Beat egg, sugar and yogurt together and put to one side. On a low heat melt the butter/margarine and honey. Sieve the cinnamon and bread soda together and combine with the wholemeal, add the honey to the mixture. Sprinkle in half the nuts, mix well with the egg mixture. Transfer to a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin. Level the top with a warm spoon that has been dipped in hot water, sprinkle on the remaining nuts evenly. Place in a preheated oven (see timing

and temperature above). When cooked the top should be springy to the touch. Cool in the tin before turning out.

Keep in mind that ovens differ so check your baking time accordingly.

I hope you will find one or both of these recipes to your taste.

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### **In Remembrance Of**



*Conferring Day in Maynooth. Séamas Ó Síocháin, Etaín Ó Síocháin (†2016), Raideen Buckley (†2021), Colm Buckley (†2019)*

Raideen Buckley died recently on 15 September 2021. May she rest in peace. Her husband, Colm Buckley, was Buildings Officer in Maynooth College. His colleague and RSA member, Vincent Murphy, has provided the following comments: ‘Colm was a gentleman and a great person to work with. He died on Friday 11 October 2019 and gave his body to science (UCD). It was only recently returned to be buried with his parents in Laraghbryan Graveyard. He retired in 1998, and had been in the college from 1980 until he retired.’