

FR. MICHAEL CARNEY

By BREANDÁN Ó CEALLAIGH

FR. MICHAEL CARNEY left Gort recently at the beginning of his thirteenth year in Our Lady's College, and took up his appointment as first Parish Priest of the new Parish of the Sacred Heart, Séamus Quirke Road, Galway. Fr. Carney is a native of Co. Mayo, born in the town of Kiltimagh in 1928, the ninth and youngest child of Michael Carney and Catherine O'Connell. His family own a general drapery business in the town.

In 1941, he went to boarding school in St. Mary's College, Galway. Kiltimagh is in the Diocese of Achonry and in those years, there was quite a tradition of boys from that town going to secondary school in St. Mary's College. (Mr. Dudley Solan, the present Manager of the Bank of Ireland here in Gort, is another Kiltimagh man who followed in that tradition some years after Fr. Carney) Fr. Carney was in St. Mary's in hungry times — the War years, but he has no complaints about what were for him happy days.

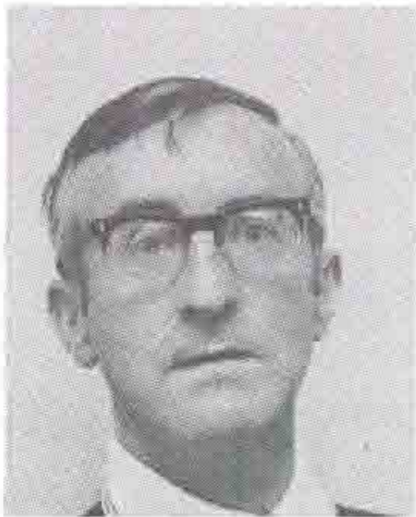
After Leaving Cert. in 1946, Fr. Michael went on to Maynooth College to study for the priesthood for the Galway Diocese, and spent the next seven years in that famous Seminary. He was accompanied there from St. Mary's by Fr. Tom Kyne, the present Parish Priest of Spiddal. Being a Mayoman, Fr. Carney's first sport was football, but in St. Mary's, and later in Maynooth, as part of the process of becoming a true Galwayman, no doubt — he took up hurling with great enthusiasm, and became quite an effective and speedy half-forward in the game, which has remained his first love. He was at that time also a very capable sprinter, helping the relay teams in St. Mary's and beating all-comers in Maynooth.

After Ordination in 1953, Fr. Carney was appointed to St. Mary's College. He remained there on the teaching staff until 1957, when he was appointed to assist Fr. Christy Burke, who had founded Our Lady's College the previous year. Here he remained for over 29 years, the first twenty as Fr. Burke's assistant and great friend, and the last nine years as Second President of the College. Twenty nine years is exactly half Fr. Carney's lifetime so far. It is a long period to give in dedicated and constant service.

As a teacher, Fr. Carney turned his hand to many different subjects, especially in the early years. History

and Geography however were his main subjects, and it is especially as a Geography teacher that he is remembered — in later years at any rate. In the Leaving Cert. in Our Lady's College everybody takes Geography and ninety per cent take it at honours level, because under Fr. Carney's guidance, it became the safest of subjects for students who wanted a good result.

However, it is for the extra-curricular activities, the long hours spent with students outside the classroom that many will remember Fr. Carney most fondly. In the early years when numbers were small and it was hard to even field a team at all, Fr. Carney nurtured the game of hurling in Our Lady's. Day after day, year after year, his evenings were given over to hurling training and then to ferrying home the players in his car to the various parishes of South Galway and North Clare. He was not alone in his effort, for all the teachers and priests were involved, but he was the one who led in the building up of the great hurling tradition of the college, a tradition which only in later years bore the fruit of victory in many Connacht Championships.



Fr. Michael Carney, Our Lady's College, 1957-1986.

One past pupil from the 'sixties describes Fr. Carney as having "a consuming interest in the lads". It is a fine and well deserved compliment. To Fr. Michael, educating the young involved much more than the merely academic and classroom work. He will be forever associated with the Christmas Play in the college, and the five year cycle of comedies that he set

in motion almost from the start of his days in Gort. Fr. Carney is no showman. He is quiet and retiring by nature. Yet without the annual event of the Christmas play people in the town who had no connection with the college, would hardly have come to know of him at all! This brings me to the comment of another past pupil: "I remember him as a very quiet presence, very much a background man; quiet but effective; a doer not a talker", I think this is a description Fr. Carney himself would approve of!

In the latter years as President of the College, Fr. Carney had to adopt a more front line role, and those of us who worked along with him learned to appreciate very much his low-key and supportive style of leadership. He is a man who has a great capacity to withdraw in order to allow and encourage others to let their light shine. He was and is above all else a man for whom prayer and the things of God are the first priority. In school, his first concern was for the weak, the unsure, the student in trouble. We miss him Our Lady's College. His departure marks the end of an era. In a very real sense he was the last of the "founding fathers" of the College. He saw the College grow from a very small beginning in 1957 to its present position of 260 pupils and fifteen teaching staff — the highest numbers ever. Much of the credit for this growth must go to his single-minded dedication over almost thirty years.

On the morning of Thursday, September 25 last at 12 noon, a little over one hour after he had announced very simply to the staff that he was leaving Fr. Carney slipped quietly away from Our Lady's College. A couple of weeks later, everybody knew he was now the first Parish Priest of the new Sacred Heart Parish in Galway. It is a very big change, and a big challenge — but Fr. Carney has taken it up with a certain excitement which even he could not always hide. A new chapter has begun for him. The debt of gratitude owed to him by Our Lady's College and all who have been associated with it is not easily expressed in words. We remember his dedication, his friendship, his sure and quiet presence, but most of all we remember his deep faith in God and man, a faith expressed in action more than word. Because of this faith, we trust and know he will be happy and successful in his new work.

Our grateful prayers go with him. Ad Multos Annos.

ALL-IRELAND HURLING FINAL OF 1886

By FR. MARTIN COEN

THIS year we celebrate the centenary of the part played by Gort in the All-Ireland hurling competition of 1886. The finalists were South Galway and North Tipperary.

The Galway representatives were captained by Ned Treston, the Gort saddler. The final was played in February 1886 in the Phoenix Park. When the two teams met in the Clarence Hotel, Dublin, on the morning of the match, a dispute arose over the size of the sliotar as the Tipp ball was larger than the Galway ball. As the discussion continued, Ned

Treston left the group and went to a saddler's shop, and made a ball acceptable in size to the South Galway team.

On his return to the hotel, the sides agreed to play the Tipperary ball for one half and the Galway one for the second half. On their way to the park, they were stopped and questioned by the police who thought they were part of some political agitation. The teams were 21 aside and there were four goalposts — as today in Australian football. Ned Treston's brother was included in the Galway team.

The Galway team wore corduroy knee-breeches. The jersey was blue and white. Ned who died in October

1949 was the last survivor of the team. On their return to Gort they were met by the local brass band. Only some of them arrived, the rest got lost by taking the wrong train home. Tipperary won the match but the Galway team received fine All-Ireland medals.

The Galway team opposing North Tipperary were: M. Markham, P. Farrell, J. Keehan, E. Treston, R. Grealish, E. Healy, R. Rock, M. Lyskey, J. Fitzgerald, M. Quinn, P. Nestor, M. O'Connor, J. Treston, F. Helebert, T. Kearns, M. Linnane, J. Sexton, F. Healy, M. Halloran, T. Morgan and E. Gourahan.

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EDITORIAL — 22nd ISSUE

Guaire is a community-based magazine and depends on community support and involvement.

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Letters and comments will be greatly appreciated. We thank all our advertisers for their support, without this help Guaire would not exist.

Another issue of Guaire has been produced. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to bring out each new issue. It will be necessary to increase the involvement of the community in the magazine, if it is to continue to appear in future.

When you see the notice in the Parish Newsletter, announcing the next Guaire meeting, please come along. Everybody is welcome! You will have an opportunity to air your constructive criticisms of the magazine or put forward new ideas and suggestions for future issues.

We urge you — write the article you have been thinking about; interview an interesting person in your locality; sort through your photographs, old and new; write a poem or a short story.

If writing is not your forte, come and help out with all the tasks that have to be done, in putting together each issue of Guaire.

We wish all our readers a Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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THAT SPECIAL LINK

By SEAN LEAHY

LIVING in Ireland, we seem to take for granted, the beauty that surrounds us. Beautiful scenery, lively conversation, historical buildings, even the bad weather. Suppose on the other hand, we had great weather, earthquakes, tropical diseases, hurricanes, volcano eruptions, etc., etc., which country would you prefer?

I know we all love to go overseas for our holidays, to places where you are shunted from one good spot to the next, beaches where the locals tend on you, as if you were the King of Siam, food served to perfection, sunshine, night clubs, etc. They never show you the backstreets, the beggars, places where people barely make a paltry living, where slavery still exists, along with misfortunes, and filth. You, the tourist are their bread and butter, well, bread anyway.

If ever you were away from home, in one of those far-away countries, (I mean away for years), how you would yearn for news of home, news of your County, or news of Ireland, it's then and only then you would appreciate your land.

I remember once in Singapore, we had just come back, after a three month tour of duty in the Malayan jungle, protecting the Dutch and English plantation owners and tin mine millionaires from the terrorists. I



The Link . . . Gort Railway Station, departure point for many of our emigrants.

was in a Singapore hospital, which was routine, to be de-loused, de-leached and built up again for another spell in that hell house. My mail had been delivered to me from the Straits of Malacca. I had fifteen letters from Ireland and England and one copy (three months old) of "The Clare Champion". How eagerly I read through those letters, over and over again, then that glorious feeling of unwrapping that newspaper. Page after page I read, letting every word of every sentence sink in, and having read it, I read it all over, again. How

glad I was, how happy I felt, how pride swelled up inside me!

That "Clare Champion" was my one link with home, and all that I felt and longed for. When I was discharged, and was enjoying myself for two weeks in Singapore, I still carried my newspaper. Just think how happy you could make someone abroad by sending them a copy of "Guaire", wrapped up in the "Connacht Tribune". They may be overseas for different reasons than I was, but they are still our emigrants, and are lonely, especially at Christmas time.

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