

January 1960

Opening:

Radio Eireann. We now bring you the third in the series of feature programmes on the Islands of Munster, written by Dr. Daphne Pochin Mould. The programme which follows is about Bere Island in Bantry Bay.

Over.

Closing:

That was a further programme in the series 'Islands of Munster' which we are presenting each Tuesday evening from the Cork studios. The script was by Dr. Daphne Pochin Mould; the historical extracts were read by Donal O Donnabhain and the series was devised and presented by Sile Ni Bhriain. Next Tuesday evening, the programme will be about the islands of Whiddy and Dursey.

Note (March 2, 2023): This script was re-created by Séamus Hanley in 2022 from material supplied to him by the UCD archives (see Annex)

IN BANTRY BAY

BEAR ISLAND

Oilean Bhearra in Inbhear na inBárc : Bear Island in Bantry Bay. At the head of that long sea inlet, green Oilean Faoide (Whiddy Island) and Glengarriff amongst the woods. West from Glengarriff the long peninsula, with its backbone of high and rocky mountains, ending in windswept Dursey Island, Na Dorasaí'. The road from Glengarriff snakes between mountain and sea, past little lakes with white waterlilies, past the turn up the Healy Pass, past the craggy face of Hungry Hill with its thin silvery cascade falling the mountain's height. And finally, 21 miles from Glengarriff there are woods again by the road, and the little market town of Castletownberehaven. And Berehaven itself, a broad expanse of sea, sheltered and landlocked between the mainland and Oilean Bhearra.

Memories and history are here. It may be that the name Beara is a pre-Celtic one; tradition makes it the name of a mythical princess. Once D'Driscoll territory, it later passed to the O'Sullivans and for most of us, Beara recalls only O Sullivan Bear and the siege of Dunboy Castle -- which is close to Castletown on the mainland. Then there was 1796 and the fiasco of the arrival and departure of the French Fleet in Bantry Bay. But the Government, "locking the stable door after the horse was stolen", took alarm: the Martello towers sprang up along the Irish coasts: Bear Island and its sheltered anchorage was henceforth seen as a vital military and naval base. Tuckey's Remembrances records the fact:

November 2, 1804. "The works upon Bear Island were carried on, upon a more considerable scale than had been at first intended. The battery was circular, with four Martello towers at proper intervals"

Father Hanley, parish priest of Allihies, who comes from Bear Island, continued the story for us: --

Cut 1. Fr. Hanley says 1000 engaged in fishing at beginning 1800. The military installations provided employment on land and ended the fishing. The British remained on the island. until 1938; the Irish Army were there till 1946. When the latter left, there was a general exodus from the island.

Its only 7 minutes across to Bear Island from Castletown in a fast boat, but we didn't go that way. We went from a point on the roadside east of Castletown. It's called Waterfall because of the small cascading stream there. Down a grassy path to the shore, pulling ripe blackberries as we went, and then clambering off the rocks into Mr. John Hanley's small boat. Behind us was Hungry Hill, Cnoc Daod, 2251 feet, the great mountain that dominates all Berehaven; ahead the three heathery hills of Bear Island, the green of the fields on the low ground, the groups of houses. The tide was far out, showing yellow seaweed on the seashore rocks, as we headed into the good harbour at the east end of the island.

This harbour's called Rerrin or Lawrence Cove, and when we landed there and walked up from the quay to the street of houses behind it, there was nobody to be seen. We wondered why, forgetting that it was Sunday September 6th and that everybody was indoors listening to the hurling final, Kilkenny and Waterford.

But some buildings were really shut up and empty. This east end of the island was the military and naval base. Mr. Hanley who is carpenter-in-charge and caretaker told us about it:

Cut 40. Mr. Hanley tells the history of the fortifications; how he is civilian foreman looking after them. The rifle range used by the FCA. Military barracks and married quarters "the best in the country".

Mr. Hanley as well as looking after the camp has a farm : --

Cut. Mr. Hanley says he has a small bit of land etc.

On Sherkin Island we'd heard something about boat building on the islands and coastal trading. Up to the 1860's, there were three or four families on Bear Island who owned their own sloops, of 40 - 45 tons. These little boats made the trip to Cork, loaded up with provisions and then brought them west, delivering to all Berehaven and on as far as Sneem and Cahirciveen. The railway coming to Bantry seems to have ended this coastal trade. Mr. Hanley's family was one of those engaged in it, and in fact he himself had built the boat in which he brought us across to the island. So we asked him about it : --

Cut. Mr. Hanley tells about the boat building ... "it's a question I never enquired into".

Boats mean fishing. An account of 1837, says of the harbour of Lawrence Cove (where we'd landed on Bear Island) "affords protection to 16 hookers of 12 tons and 90 yawls of 3 or 4 tons each belonging to the island and employing about 1000 persons exclusively in the fishing". A hundred years later, in 1956, there were only 36 fishermen in the whole Castletown rural district. But today, some of the Bear Island men still go fishing, living in the trawlers which are such a common sight along the south coast.

Cut. Mr. Hanley says some Bear Island men still live exclusively by fishing. This takes them away from the island for fairly long periods but it remains their home. They fish all round the coast ... not leaving the island."

A small car parked outside one of the houses at Lawrence Gove marked the home of the island's nurse, Miss Mullins. We found her listening to the hurling final, and after we'd satisfied our own curiosity about its progress, she switched it off to talk to us. Then with only the clock ticking in the background, Nurse Mullins, who is a native of Bere Island, told us about her work on the island.

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells she was born on Bear Island, trained on the mainland in Cork, came back as island nurse in 1935* The doctor is in Castletown.

We asked how she got about the island to her patients

Cut. Nurse Mullins says by car now, prior to 3 yrs ago by cycle, and the car can't be got to all the island homes ... "lots of places you can only get on shank's mare".

And of course running a car on Bear Island is a bit different from running one on the mainland. There are no petrol pumps and petrol is brought in in drums. And repairs or greasing that you, or a neighbour can't manage, means shipping the car across to a garage in Castletown. The nurse and her small car, but some houses only to be reached on foot. What happens to an emergency case?

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells what they do, improvise a stretcher and get the patient across to Castletown.

Nurse Mullins gave up the rest of the evening to driving us in her car the length of the island. As we headed up and down the narrow, hilly island road, she told us about one particular

emergency case; -- a day of storm and wind, when the crossing to the mainland and hospital seemed nearly impossible. Nurse Mullins travelled westward along the island looking for a boat crew to take the risk; eventually four picked rowers were found and with nurse and patient crouching in the bottom of the boat they set out. The dangerous journey ended with a safe landing and the patient's recovery after hospital treatment.

We stopped at the Post Office, and there Mr and Mrs O'Sullivan and Nurse Mullins told us about emigration from Bear Island and its effects

Cut. Nurse Mullins, "Social life is nil". Tells what it used to be like, now the people are gone there are not enough to make their amusements for themselves.

We asked was'nt Bear Island still fairly well populated ?

Cut. Nurse Mullins "not now". Down to 380 and the teenage group have all left.

Then Mr. Pat O'Sullivan described how the people on Bear used to make their own fun.

Cut. Pat O'Sullivan tells about amusements in the past, finally says he thinks some would like to come back and settle down on the island "lots of 'em would like to, I'd say".

"When we were young we used to get up amusements for ourselves ... but its "all tinned music for them now".

Mrs O'Sullivan took up the story, how they used to get up plays

Cut. Mrs O'Sullivan tells how they got up plays and what they used to do with the money they raised -- seats for the gallery in the church etc.

A call on the teacher, Mr. Harrington, further on along the road, carried on the discussion about modern emigration from the islands. We asked Mrs Harrington about the I.C.A. on Bear.

Cut. Mrs Harrington tells about the I.C.A., very few young people, average age 40 - 60. Then she goes on to say why she thinks the island girls leave, and that island men should seek wives on the mainland.

We asked Mrs Harrington if any mainland girls had married into the island.

Cut. Mrs Harrington says she herself is one such.

Bear Island has its church, at the western end of the island, and its parish priest; its nurse and its school. But secondary school means crossing to the mainland, as Mrs Hanley explained :

Cut. Mrs Hanley says she has 5 children and secondary schooling means going to Castletown, and the difficulty of crossing in rough weather.

Bear Island people do still get together and work together. We saw the magnificent Holy Year Cross they'd erected on one of the heights of the island, commanding a great view right up Bantry Bay, and we said a prayer at their Marian Year grotto. That's at the west end of the island, looking across toward Castletown. And at night, the grotto is lit up so as to give a guiding light to island boats coming back in the dark from Castletownbere.

Nurse Mullins' kindness in driving us in her car showed us the whole of Bear Island. Its heather clad heights, rising to the ruined signal tower that a very modern tradition has turned into Princess Beara's Castle. Its white washed houses set in green fields; the outlook across the water to the grey roofs of Castletown, and Spanish trawlers anchored in the Bay. The pines and the blue sea beside the parish priests house. And always Hungry Hill , the cloud rising and falling on its crest, the mountain on the mainland that looks down upon all Berehaven.

And now the little car took us eastward right to the eastmost tip of the island, to Lonehort Fort.¹ During the trouble time, there was an internment camp on the island in which many prominent men were imprisoned. We heard some of the exciting escape stories that are still vividly remembered. Now we headed out through the deserted and shut up buildings of the camp and fort . A keen wind blew over the island as Nurse Mullins pointed out where the prisoners had made a dancing platform : -

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells about the platform. Then goes on to speak about tourist possibilities on Bear Island.

Then as we stood by the massive defences of Lonehort over r t and looked over the glittering sea to the head of Bantry Bay, a squally shower, with dark cloud, passed over the Sugar

¹A pencilled in "change": "At the eastern tip of the island stands Lonehort Fort -- a reminder, if needed, of the Island's history."

Loaf mountain, Sliabh na Gaibhle, above Glengarriff. The wind was still freshening and the sea showed white flecks on the wave crests. Back at Mr Hanley's home we began to be more aware of being on an island, there were shaken heads at the sea and suggestions we would be wise to wait a little before making the return crossing. When we did leave, things were much more lively than when we came. Wind and waves were against the boat but the outboard motor made good progress in the choppy sea. Soon enough we were running into smoother water and then clambering ashore at Waterfall from which we had set out.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

BEAR ISLAND

CAREW: 1602

"Berehaven is an excellent harbour, a narrow entry, slack tides, good anchorage, plages (beaches) fit to ground ships, in deep and evermore smooth waters, 5 fathoms deep at low water ... of capacitie sufficient to contain all the ships of Europe ... the coast yields such abundance of fish as few places in Christiandom do the like"

At this time the fishing dues brought O'Sullivan 500 pounds a year

Bishop DIVE DOWNES visitation of his diocese, 1699-1702

"We landed at Dead O Huologhan. In a small wood at the bottom of the hill on the south side we saw above a hundred of the arbutus tree. O Sullivan Beare lives in a cabin at the foot of the hill"

"There was a chappel in Bearehaven Island called Ballinikilly, its walls are standing uncovered, on the north side of the island. We saw it as we passed by it in the bay. 2 English families and near 30 Irish families in this island. About 10 Irish families in the Dorses. No English. There was a chapel in the Island of Dorses called Kilmichil, some of the walls are standing."

"A Popish schoolmaster, Major Carthy, teaches Latin in this parish. No Protestant school nearer than Bantry". "No Divine Service nearer than Bantry".

"We saw several eagles upon the lands of Bearhaven. There are many wolves there".

RICHARD POCOCK (1704 - 1765) travelled widely in Ireland, Scotland and England as well as on the Continent, where he was the first to realise the beauties of Chamonix. Bishop of Ossory in 1756, translated to Meath shortly before his death in 1765. Writes to his sister from Bantry : -

30 July 1758. Dear Madam: -

"We were most agreeably surpris'd by the finest sight of the kind I ever saw in my life. The bay, as far as we could see it, lock'd by the land, appear'd like a long lake, with beautiful Islands in its fine small bays, which they call coves, and well cultivated heads of land making into it, and within them, small hills under corn and all bounded by very high rocky mountains at a proper distance, altogether making the most pleasing and with that the most awful sight that can imagined. The chief support of the town (Bantry) is fish and a clandestine import of French rum and brandy".

TUCKEY'S REMEMBRANCER

May 3 1767

"A complaint was made in one of the Cork Newspapers, of 50 French vessels fishing for mackeral on the coast near Bantry Bay without interruption from the revenue-cruizers"

On a handwritten page

And so Bere Island's big problem today is a flight of its young people to the mainland. Time was, as Nurse Mullins said, when Beare bristled with life and activity, when its population was a sizeable one. But as nurse Mullins says that's all changed now.

That was Mrs Pat Harrington. Her solution to this all-important problem is not just theory. Mainland girls have been known to marry into Beare Island.

On another handwritten page

A reminder of the ever-present problem of further education which of course has to be obtained in the mainland. A problem island parents (...) all the time.

On another handwritten page

Bere Island today – for all that its young people are leaving, it does have possibilities

That was Mrs P H. Her solution to the problem is not just theory, as we found out when we asked if there were any city wives in Beare.

And here we have reminder of a problem which constantly faces island parents – further education for the children has to be got on the mainland.

The little car took us up through the now deserted camp. Beside what looks to us like a tennis (hard?) court, we stop and Miss Mullins told us its story.

For a brief moment, up there on the top of the hill, the picture came alive – the internees and the audience of islanders on the other side of the wire.

On Sherkin we already heard something of the little coastal vessels that once traded in these waters and how they were built on the islands. Father Hanley told about the Bere Island part of the story.

Cut 2. Father Hanley tells how 3 or 4 families on Bear owned sloops and how one family built boats.

Bear Island is large, about 6 miles long, and easy to reach, 7 minutes in a fast boat from Castletown. We didn't go that way, but from the roadside east of Castletown from a point called Waterfall, and we went with Mr. Hanley, in a small boat of his own making. Behind us rose the rocky Hungry Hill, Cnoc Daod, 2251 feet; the great mountain that dominates the island and all Bantry Bay : ahead of us were the three heathery hills of Bear Island, rising to nearly 1000 feet, and the green of the fields round the homesteads on the low ground by the shore. The tide was far out, and we picked a cautious way amongst rocks covered with yellow seaweed to land some of our party and then ourselves turned into the good harbour at the east end of the island, Herrin, or Lawrence Cove.

It was an island of the dead. A street of houses up from the harbour but no sign of any living thing. But we didn't go very far before we realised the truth, it was the afternoon of September 6th and everyone was listening to the commentary on the hurling final between Waterford and Kilkenny.

But some buildings were genuinely empty and shut -up; the military buildings which are concentrated at this end of the island. Mr John Hanley who'd brought us across to the island is caretaker -- carpenter-in-charge -- and told us about his work:-

Cut 3. John Hanley on the military installations and what use is now made of them.

A little car parked outside the door up from Rerrin harbour marked the house of the island nurse, Miss Mullins. We joined her in listening to the Waterford Kilkenny final, and then asked her about her work on the island.

Cut 4. Nurse Mullins tells about the work of an island nurse.

Annex

Material supplied by UCD Archives

Island of Munster No.3.

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At this time the fishing dues brought Sullivan £500 a year.

Bishop DIVE DOWNES visitation of his diocese, 1699 - 1702

"We landed at Dead O ' Huolaghan. In a small wood at the bottom ^{of} the hill on the south side we saw above a hundred of the arbutus tree. O Sullivan Beere lives in a cabin at the foot of the hill"

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"A Popish schoolmaster, Major Carthy, teaches Latin in this parish. No Protestant school nearer than Bantry". "No Divine Service nearer than Bantry".

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~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~

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Cut 4. Nurse Mullins tells about the work of an island nurse.

And so

Bere Island's big problem
today is the flight of its young people
to the mainland. ~~Time was~~

~~so much so that from 1960~~
~~they~~ Time was ^{in the 1960s} when Bere

only existed with life & activity,
~~But that is no longer the case~~

When ~~the~~ population was a sizeable
one. But as N. N. says that's
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That was Mr Paul Hampton
Pher they solution to
this all important
problem is not just theory.

Mainland fish have
been known to many to
Bere /

a reminder of the ~~ever~~ ^{which} ~~problem~~ ^{problem}
problem of father's education / ~~parents~~
to be stated with the ~~children~~ ^{children}
~~parents~~ a problem ~~island~~
parents all the time

Beaka
1st at - 2 1/2 (2 1/2 pt)

18-34 1/2
16 1/2

What he does - 1/2'

1.10 My forefather ... alkj

15" They fish all round the Coast (long way)
... fishing are not leaving ...

N N. ant 1 (43) : 1/2'

(44) 15"

(45) 20"
(46) 25"

(47) 40"

48 20"

49

at 40" ... to all times more from now.

(52) 55"

53

54 (10")

Fr. Henley - Dulseys (11)

(10.15 - "Harris + school
at the island ...
Lead on to teacher)

(Belle Cell at 2' - ①)
(getting in to Rads : a.)

(History : 5 1/2' -)
(Old Church on island
16th century)

(History -)
(in Philip ... 9' -)
(2nd ... 9.30' -)

[Here — 11' —————]

[..... phing — — — — — N7 of line]

after

✓ 11. to 12. 1/2 ... across from island]

12 1/2 onwards marked etc

13:10 onwards ... bank building ... "The"

13:30 — onwards : "The first mention"

✓ 4
before 40' 1/2

(Princess
14' use of the island
Dinner
average of 17)

after Re
✓ 14.45']

The Pilchard Fisheries

IN days gone by there were important pilchard fisheries along the south coast of Ireland. For various reasons they declined, and until recently pilchards were caught only on the rare occasions when they were taken by fishermen seeking herrings.

It was the pilchard which attracted so many nations to the Irish coasts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the historical documents relating to Ireland give us a fairly clear picture of the importance of this species in bygone days.

The pilchard is a member of the herring family. It is an oily fish which was formerly salted and sometimes smoked. It was an important item of export in the seventeenth century when, according to reliable authorities, pilchards to the value of £20,000 (a very large sum in those days, perhaps equal to £500,000 to-day) were exported from Ireland. We know that in 1641 the exports amounted to 1,263 tons.

Chieftain's Toll

SO important were the pilchard fisheries that the town of Bantry is said, fairly reliably, to owe its existence to them. It was also because of this fishery that certain Irish chieftains were able to exact heavy tolls on strangers fishing off their territories. The O'Driscoll, for example, levied tolls on the vessels coming to fish between Fastnet Rock, west of Cape Clear and Toe Head in County Cork, of

"money 19s. 2d. a barrel of flour, a barrel of salt, a hog-head of beer and a dish of fish three times a week from every boat, viz. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and if they dry the fish in any part of the country they are to pay thirteen shillings for the rocks. That in any boat if they do chance to take a Hollybutt (Halibut) they must give it to the Lord for a ball of butter and if they conceal it from him for 24 hours they forfeit forty shillings to the Lord."

In addition, if the "Lord," namely the O'Driscoll chieftain for the time being, wanted to buy fish he got it at a cheaper rate "than the ordinary price there is."

At many places along the south coast of Ireland pilchards were formerly taken in large quantities by what were called seines. These large nets enabled the fishermen to surround shoals of pilchards and haul them into their boats from which they were ultimately landed.

Cured And Pressed

ONCE ashore the pilchards were taken to the fish houses, usually called pallices (from the latin for a stove) and there they were cured or salted in the following way. When the pilchards were first brought in from the sea they were placed on the floor of the fish cellar and salt was scattered over them, more pilchards were added, followed by more salt, until the

DOCTOR ARTHUR E. J. WENT describes an industry which once flourished along the south coast and which may be revived in the near future.

mass was three or four feet in height. After being left in contact with the salt for 12 to 21 days, the excess salt was shaken off the fish and this was mixed with fresh salt for future use.

After the excess of salt was shaken off the fish, they were washed, dried and then packed into casks. In order to fill the cask properly, a false head, called a buckler, was placed on top of the fish inside the barrel and the fish were then squeezed by means of a long press pole and weights. More pilchards were added and the squeezing carried on until the barrel was filled.

Incidentally, the barrels always had a series of small holes in the bottom and during the pressing process pilchard oil, called train oil, was pressed out. This was collected and formed an important item of commerce.

The name pallice, pallis or palace, which is fairly common along the south coast as a local place name, usually indicates the former existence of a pilchard press. In the almost perpendicular rock face on the edge of a field near Baltimore the holes used to take the ends of the press poles are still to be seen on the site of a very old pilchard press.

Lost In The Rising,

APPARENTLY the pilchard fishing prospered in Ireland until 1641, the year of the so-

called Great Rebellion. During that "rebellion", among the property destroyed were a number of pilchard presses owned by Sir William Hull, of Leamcon, beyond Schull in County Cork. Hull, who was a distant connection by marriage of Sir Richard Boyle, the Great Earl of Cork, had been engaged with others in the pilchard fishery from 1616 until 1641, when, according to an interesting manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin, his presses were destroyed in December of that year.

In his deposition setting out his losses, Hull mentions his fish cellars at Crookhaven, Leamcon and Dunbeacon on Dunmanus Bay, and goes on to enumerate the various things necessary for the prosecution of the fishing, such as seine boats, salt, hog-heads, hand barrows, sieves, washing tubs, in fact, everything needed to turn the fresh pilchard into the final article for export.

The "rebels" according to Hull also carried away from Leamcon ten hogheads of *fumados pilchards* valued at £20. *Fumados* were pilchards which, in addition to being cured by salt, were smoked. They were a superior product, introduced at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Temporary Revival

DURING the period from 1641 until the Restoration of Charles II there is no infor-

mation as to the pilchard fishery, but afterwards at Kinsale and elsewhere the fishery was successfully revived. Amongst the people interested in the fishery was Sir William Petty, author of the Down Survey, who started a fishery in Kenmare and Ballinskelligs Bays. There is on record a full account of his fishing about that time.

Others elsewhere were also engaged in the fishery which enjoyed varying prosperity right up to the naval battle in Bantry Bay in the year 1689, which was given as the reason for the failure of the pilchard fishing in later years.

Charles Smith in his famous book, *The ancient and present state of the city and county of Cork*, published in 1750, described in detail the pilchard fishery of Bantry Bay. He claimed that Bantry's prosperity was linked up with that of the pilchard fishery.

From the middle of the eighteenth century pilchards were fished for at many places, but the fishing was never reliable nor profitable. Attempts were made about 1875 to develop a fishery for pilchards at Baltimore, but this was a failure. From then onwards pilchards were seldom sought after by the fishermen and when they were taken they seldom found a ready sale.

This is not difficult to understand. The pilchard, because of its oily nature, was never a really popular fish in the fresh state. It is an excellent subject for canning; soon, with the demands for pilchards from newly-established canneries in Ireland, we may get a revival of an old Irish fishery.



A rock-face at Baltimore showing the holes for the press poles in a former pilchard "pallice."

IN BANTRY BAY

BEAR ISLAND

Oilean Bhearra in Inbhear na inBárc : Bear Island in Bantry Bay. At the head of that long sea inlet, green Oilean Faoidé (Whiddy Island) and Glengarriff amongst the woods. West from Glengarriff the long peninsula, with its ~~gratxix~~ backbone of high and rocky mountains, ending in windswept Dursey Island, Na Dorasaí. The road from Glengarriff snakes between mountain and sea, past little lakes with white waterlilies, past the turn up the Healy Pass, past the craggy face of Hungry Hill with its thin silvery cascade falling the mountain's height. And finally, 21 miles from Glengarriff there are woods again by the road, and the little market town of Castletownberehaven. And Berehaven itself, a broad expanse of sea, sheltered and landlocked between the mainland and Oilean Bhearra.

Memories and history are here. It may be that the name Beara is a pre-Celtic one; tradition makes it the name of a mythical ~~prize~~ princess. Once O'Driscoll territory, it later passed to the O'Sullivans and for most of us, Beara recalls only O Sullivan Bear and the siege of Dunboy Castle -- which is close to Castletown on the mainland. And then there was 179⁶ and the fiasco of the arrival and departure of the French Fleet in Bantry Bay. But the Government, ^{locking} ~~shutting~~ the stable door after the horse was stolen", took alarm : the Martello towers sprang up along the Irish coasts: ^{they were} Bear Island and its sheltered anchorage ^{henceforth} ~~was~~ seen as a vital military and naval base. *Tuckey's*

Tuckey's
Remains
Records to fact.
November 2. 1804. "The works upon Bear Island were carried on, upon a more considerable scale than had been at first intended. The battery was circular, with four Martello towers at proper intervals".

Father Hanley, ~~mx~~ parish priest of Allihies, who comes from Bear Island, continued the story for us : --

Cut 1. Fr. Hanley says 1000 engaged in fishing at beginning 1800. The military installations provided employment on land and ended the fishing. The British remained on the island until 1938; the Irish Army were there till 1946. When the latter left, there was a general exodus from the island.

Its only 7 minutes across to Bear Island from Castletown in a fast boat, but we didn't go that way. We went from a point on the roadside east of Castletown, ^{It's} called Waterfall ~~from~~ because of the small cascading stream there. Down a grassy path to the shore, ~~little~~ pulling ripe blackberries as we went, and then clambering off the rocks into Mr. John Hanley's small boat. Behind us was Hungry Hill, Onoc Daod, 2251 feet, the great mountain that dominates all Berehaven; ahead the three heathery hills of Bear Island, the green of the fields on the low ground, the groups of houses. The tide was far out, ^{showing} yellow seaweed on the seashore rocks, as we headed into the good harbour at the east end of the island.

This harbour's called Herrin or Lawrence Cove, and when we landed there and walked up from the ~~main~~ quay to the street of houses behind it, there was nobody to be seen. ^{forget it} We wondered why, then ~~realised~~ remembered that the date was September 6th and that everybody was indoors listening to the hurling final, Kilkenny and Waterford!

But some buildings were really shut up and ~~empty~~ empty. This east end of the island was the military and naval base. Mr. Hanley who is carpenter-in-charge and caretaker ^{of the place for 20 years} told us about it: --

Cut 40. Mr. Hanley tells the history of the fortifications; how he is civilian foreman looking after them. The Rifle Range used by the ~~RCA~~ Military barracks and married quarters "the best in the country".

Mr. Hanley as well as looking after the camp has a farm: --

Cut. Mr. Hanley says he has a small bit of land etc.

On Sherkin Island we'd heard ^{something} about boat building on ~~these~~ the islands and coastal trading. Up to the 1860's, there were three ~~or four~~ or four families on Bear Island who owned their own sloops, of 40 - 45 tons. These little boats made the trip to Cork, ~~loaded~~ loaded up with provisions and then brought them west, delivering to all Berehaven and on as far as Sneem and Cahirciveen. The railway coming to Bantry seems to have ended this coastal trade. Mr. Hanley's family was one of those engaged in it, and in fact he himself had built the boat in which ~~were~~ he brought us across to the island. So we asked him about it: --

Cut. Mr. Hanley tells about the boat building 'its a question I never enquired into'.

Boats mean fishing. An account of 1837, says ~~of~~ the harbour of Lawrence Cove ~~where we'd landed on Bear Island~~, "affords protection to 16 hookers of 12 tons and 90 yawls of 3 or 4 tons each,

at Berehaven
Cut
RCA

✓ edit
done
H

On Sherkin we'd already heard something of the little coastal vessels that once traded in these waters and how they were built on the islands. Father Hanley told about the Bear Island part of the story.

Cut 2. Fr. Hanley tells how 3 or 4 families on Bear owned sloops and how one family built ~~thexexown~~ boats.

Bear Island is large, about 6 miles long, and easy to reach, 7 minutes in a fast boat from Castletown. We didn't go that way, but from the roadside east of Castletown from a point called Waterfall, and we went with Mr. Hanley, ~~whoxlivesonx Bearx Island~~, in a small boat of his own making. Behind us rose the rocky Hungry Hill, Cnoc Daod, 2251 feet; the great mountain that dominates the island and all Bantry Bay : ahead of us were the three heathery hills of Bear Island, rising to nearly 1000 feet, and the green of the fields round the homesteads on the ~~ixx~~ low ground by the shore. The tide was far out, and we picked a cautious way amongst rocks covered with yellow seaweed to land some of our party and then ourselves turned into the good harbour at the east end of the island, Rerrin, or Lawrence Cove.

It was an island of the dead. A street of houses up from the harbour but no sign of any living thing. But we didn't go very far before we realised the truth, ~~thex~~ it was the afternoon of September 6th and everyone was listening to the commentary on the hurling final between Waterford and Kilkenny !

But some buildings were genuinely empty and shut -up; ~~thexexhanging~~ the military buildings which are concentrated at this eastern end of the island. Mr John Hanley who'd brought us across to the island is caretaker -- carpenter - in - charge, and told us about his work : --

Cut 3. John Hanley on the military installations and what use is now made of them.

~~Bearx Islandx~~

A little car parked outside the door up from Rerrin harbour marked the house of the island nurse, Miss Mullins. We joined her in listening to the Waterford Kilkenny final, and then asked her about her work on the island.

Cut 4. Nurse Mullins tells about the work of an island nurse.

to or if
 people have
 been for it
 it was possible

That was Mr. P. H. Her solution to the problem
 is not just theory as we found out
 when we asked if there were any
~~women~~ wives in Benton.

And here we have seen
 of a problem which is ~~constant~~ ^{constant} present
 factor is ~~land~~ ^{land} and ~~the~~ ^{the}
 further education for the
 children. That has to be
 for on the mainland

~~Miss Mullin~~ The little can
 took us up through the ~~camp~~ ^{camp}. Beside
 what looked to us like a tennis
 hard - court. ~~Miss Mullin~~ ^{Miss Mullin} This Mullin
 told us its story.

for a brief moment up there on top of the hill
 the picture came alive - the intonances
 of the voices of islands on the other side
 of the water

belonging to the island and employing about 1000 persons exclusively in the fishing". A hundred years later, in 1936, there were only 36 fisherman in the whole Castletown rural district ! But some Bear Island men still go fishing *Today & the 37* *the trawlers which are such a sight about the coast*

Cut. Mr. Hanley says some Bear Island men still live exclusively by fishing. This takes them away from the island for fairly long periods but it remains their home. They fish allround the coast. ... "not leaving the island".

A small car parked outside one of the houses at Lawrence Cove marked the home of the island's nurse, Miss Mullins. We found her listening to the hurling final, and after we'd satisfied our own curiosity about its ~~progress~~ progress, she ~~took~~ switched it off. Then with only the clock ticking in the background, Nurse Mullins told us about her work on the island. *to look to us - N. M. is a native of Bear Island*

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells she was born on Bear Island, trained on the mainland in Cork, came back as island nurse in 1935. The doctor is in Castletown.

We asked how she got about the island to her patients

Cut. Nurse Mullins says by car now, prior to 3 yrs ago by cycle. And the car can't be got to all the island homes ... "lots of places you can only get on shank's mare".

And of course running a car on Bear Island is a bit different from running one on the mainland. There are no petrol pumps and petrol is brought in in drums. And repairs or greasing that you, or a neighbour can't manage, means shipping the car across to a ~~garage~~ garage in Castletown. The nurse and her small car, but ~~many~~ some houses only to reached on foot. What happens to an emergency case ?

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells what they do, improvise a stretcher and get the patient across to Castletown.

Nurse Mullins gave up the rest of the evening to driving us in her car the length of the island. As we headed up and down the narrow, hilly island road, she told us about one particular emergency case: -- a day of storm and wind, when the crossing to the mainland and hospital seemed nearly impossible. ~~Then~~ Nurse Mullins travelled westward along the island looking for a boat crew to take the risk; eventually ~~four~~ four picked rowers were found and with nurse and patient ~~xxxxx~~ crouching in the bottem of the boat they set out. The dangerous journey ended with a safe landing and the patient's recovery after hospital treatment.

We stopped at the Post Office, and there Mr and Mrs O'Sullivan and Nurse Mullins told us about emigration from Bear Island and its effects.

Cut. Nurse Mullins, "Social life is nil". Tells what it used to be like, now the people are gone there are not enough to make their amusements for themselves.

We asked was't Bear Island still fairly well populated ?

Cut. Nurse Mullins "not now". Down to 380 and the teenage group have all left.

Then Mr. Pat O'Sullivan described how the people on Bear used to make their own fun.

Cut. Pat O'Sullivan tells about amusements in the past. Finally says he thinks some would like to come back and settle down on the island "lots of 'em would like to, I'd Say".

And Ti Chan

"When we were young we used to get up amusements for ourselves,.... but its "all tinned music for them now".

Mrs O'Sullivan took up the story, how they used to get up plays

Cut. Mrs O'Sullivan tells how they got up plays and what they used to ~~xxxxxx~~ do with the money they raised -- seats for the gallery in the church etc.

A call on the teacher, Mr. Harrington, further on along the road, carried ^{on} the discussion about modern ~~xxx~~ emigration from the islands.

We asked Mrs Harrington about the I.C.A. on ~~the~~ Bear.

Cut. Mrs Harrington tells about the ICA, *we found my there which he had not so far found in my island* very few young people, average age 40 - 60. Then she goes on to say why she thinks the island girls leave, and that island men should seek wives on the mainland ! *much 9th left*

We asked Mrs Harrington if any mainland girls had married into the island

mine after I would

Cut. Mrs Harrington says she herself is one such.

Bear Island has its church, at the western end of the island, and its parish priest ; its nurse and its school. But secondary school means crossing to the mainland, as Mrs Hanley explained : -

Cut. Mrs Hanley says she ^{has} 7/5 children and 2nd schooling means going to Castletown, and the difficulty of crossing in rough weather.

~~Yet~~ of course Bear Island people do still get together and work together. We saw the magnificent Holy Year Cross they'd erected on one of the heights of the island, commanding a great view right up Bantry Bay, and we said a prayer at their Marian Year grotto. That's at the west end of the island, looking across toward Castletown. And at night, the grotto is lit up so as to give a guiding light to island boats coming back in the dark from Castletown.

Nurse Mullins' kindness in driving us in her car showed us the whole of Bear Island. Its heather clad heights, rising to the ruined signal tower that a very modern tradition has turned into Princess Beara's Castle! Its white washed houses set in green fields; the outlook to the grey ^{across the water} ~~roofs~~ of Castle town across the bay, ~~in which were some~~ Spanish trawlers were moored. The pines and the blue sea beside the parish priests house. And always Hungry Hill, the cloud rising and falling on its crest, the mountain on the mainland that looks down upon all Berehaven.

And now the little car took us eastward, right to the eastmost tip of the island, to Lonehort Fort. During the trouble time, there was an internment camp on the island in which many prominent men were imprisoned. We heard some of the exciting escape stories that are still vividly remembered. Now we headed out through the deserted and shut up buildings of the camp and fort. A keen wind blew over the island as Nurse Mullins pointed out where the prisoners had made a dancing platform: --

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells about the platform. Then goes on to speak about tourist possibilities on Bear Island.

We stood by the massive defences of Lonehort Fort and looked ^{over} ~~up~~ the glittering sea to the head of Bantry Bay. A squally shower, with dark cloud, passed over the Sugar Loaf mountain, Sliabh na Gaibhle, above Glengarriff. The wind was still freshening and the sea showed white flecks on the wave crests. Back at Mr Hanley's home we began to be more aware of being on an island, there were shaken heads at the sea and suggestions we would be wise to wait a little before making the return crossing. When we did leave, ~~ixxxx~~ things were much more lively than when we came. Wind and waves were against the boat but the outboard motor made good progress in the choppy sea. ~~and~~ Soon enough we were running into smoother water and then clambering ashore at Waterfall from which we had set out.

up at the eastmost tip of the island stands Lonehort Fort - a reminder, if needed, of Bear Island's recent history.

Opening: Radio Eireann. We are now broadcasting

~~the~~ second of three programmes on the Islands of Munster. This evening's programme is about the islands of Whiddy and Dursey. over.

Closing: That programme on the islands of

Whiddy and Dursey was the second of three from a series on the Islands of Munster, devised and introduced by Sile "i Bhriain, with script by Dr. Daphne Pochin Mould. The

Programme was first heard on the
12th of January.