




## Stories from The Schools Collection, 1937-1939

BKA: Baile na Cille - Oide: Donncha Ó Loingaigh  
LC-B: Cóbh Labhráis (Buachaillí) - Oide: Domhnall Ó Súilleabháin  
LC-C: Cobh Labhráis (Cailíní), Oide: Áine, Bean Uí Shúilleabháin

Extracted\* from this link: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4811617?Route=volumes>

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[Page numbers are shown in black]

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## 1 The Wreck of the Joseph Howe

*Patrick Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

The Joseph Howe was wrecked in the southern side of the Island on the eighteenth of February in the year 1876. She was coming from Minnitiplis in south America with a cargo of mahogany. She had a crew of five. The skipper's name was William Templeton the bosun's name was the same, the steward's name was Peter Seymour the other was Harry Grant. The night was wild and foggy and they were going into harbour. The night was so dark and foggy that it was into "Faill na dTadg". Four of them were saved but one was lost. They were putting him into a boat from the ship capsized and he was drowned. The people that came to rescue them were from the Island. One of the rescuers named Denis Harrington from Greenane made a poem about it which I am now going to relate:-

It was on the fifteenth of February,

Just at the break of day

As I arose,

Put on my clothes

And to the seaside made my way.

On coming to the seashore The Wreck of the Joseph Howe I spied an awful scene

For dashing against the rocks below

Was a large brigantine.

(II)

I was struck with amazement looking at the wreck,

The ship was loudly creaking

With three men on her deck,

Another to the bow-line

Was swinging from the boom,

To reach the shore his object was

Or death would be his doom.

(III)

The Joseph Howe I beg to state  
Was the name in which she sailed,  
She came from Minnitiplis  
From London town she hailed  
With a cargo of Mahogany  
To Cork by orders bound  
But Faill na dTadg Bere Island side  
Her destiny she found.

(IV)

The four brave mariners  
I now intend to name  
The captain was William Templeton  
The boswains was the same, The Wreck of the Joseph Howe The chief mates  
was Peter Simon  
A kind good natured man  
The other was a seaman  
And his name was Harry Gran.  
Above written by  
Patrick Sullivan  
Ballinakilla

## **2 There are several different versions of the wreck of the Joseph Howe in Bere Island.**

*Finbarr Murphy, Derrycreveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

There are several different versions of the wreck of the Joseph Howe in Bere Island. Here is one which I heard from my father.

On the eighteenth of last February,



Just by the break of day,  
As I arose and put on my clothes,  
To the sea I made my way.  
When coming to a seaside cliff  
I spied an awful scene  
Dashing on the rocks below  
Lay a large brigantine

II

With little hesitation There are several different versions of the wreck of the  
Joseph Howe in Bere Island. Another man and I  
Decended this great precipice  
Which was both steep and high  
The bo'sn swung a lifeling  
Which we risked our lives to take  
As the Atlantic waves rolled furiously  
And upon the rocks did break

(III)

With the help of the lifeline  
We saved four lives that  
Who, but for our exertions  
Would have been washed away  
Another on the bowline  
Lay clinging to the boom  
To reach the shore his destiny  
But death would be his doom

(IV)

They launched out the longboat

Not thinking of their fate

The boat capsized

Four men were drowned

On that unlucky date

(V)

The four surviving mariners

I now intend to name

The Captain's , William Templeton

The b'sn's was the same There are several different versions of the wreck of the Joseph Howe in Bere Island. The steward's Peter Leymour

A kind good-natured man,

The other was a seaman,

And his name was Harry Grant

(VI)

The Joseph Howe I beg to state

Was the ship in which they sailed

She came from Minnititlin

And from London town she hailed

With a cargo of mahogany

To Cork for orders bound

And on Fail na dTadhg, Bere Island side

Her destiny she found.

### **3 Local Place Names**

*Mary C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Páirc na Sgoile, got its name because there was an old school there long ago. This school is situated in the old High-Road. This is the oldest road in Berehaven. This school is the first school built in Bere Island by the Board of

Education. It was the only school in the island until the schools at Lawrence Cove and at Ballinakilla were built. It was a one-storeyed, slated, and mixed school. It had two play grounds, one for the boys and a smaller one for the girls which are still to be seen.

Jeremiah O'Shea was the name of the teacher there. He was the last teacher in this school. The school was closed and he was transferred to Lawrence Cove school when it was built in the year 1857. It was along this road, the High-Road, Carew brought his guns and troops. He landed in Lonehort and came down as far as the Presbytery.

Páircín na Ceardhchan got its name because there was a forge there long ago. A man built a forge there and he was a black-smith and a nailer. In those days all nails were made by hand.

Tráigh Chiaráin got its name because Saint Ciarán visited the island long ago and it was in that strand he landed. The strand Local Place Names is situated in the north side of the island.

Graiffín got its name because the people used to spread manure in the field and they used to make ridges. Then they used to graff it and set turnips. The next year they used to set potatoes in the same field.

Liab got its name because anything used not grow in it because the soil in it is wet and heavy.

Above written by

Mary C. Sullivan

Ballinakilla

#### **4 Pairc oir, The field of gold.**

*Chris Lowney, Derrycreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

Chris Lowney, Derrycreeveen

Pairc oir

The field of gold. My grand-father used say that gold was found there long ago but I suppose it is not true.

Pairc Curly Og

Long ago poor people used live in a field and every year they used till that field. A man by the name of Curly Og lived in this field.

Pairc Mháire Fhada

Long ago Máire Fhada was Pairc oir, The field of gold. living there.

Pairc Dubh

The black field is so called because the soil is very black and turfy.

Páirc Caolín,

The long narrow field.

Sliabh

so called because it is very rough and course

Pairc Bhán

the white field because it is full of daisies

Pairc na Golán

the field of the golan because there is a golán in that field.

Páirc na h-Abhann

the field of the river because a river is flowing down to the sea in that field

Cnocán a loc,

so called because there is a big lake there.

Faill na Gabair

the cliff of the goat

Faill Bhriste

the broken cliffs

Cill Bhán

is so called, because there was a church there

Manntán

because it is a wet Marshy field

Cuimín Leitreach

The slat of the names because there are a lot of names wrighting on it. A slat is a flat stone or rock.

**5 Buaille, is so called because the people were confirmed there in the Penal days, as there was not enough room in the Church at that time.**

*Sile Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA) [Back To Top]*

Buaile is so called because the people were confirmed there in the Penal days, as there was not enough room in the Church at that time. The Bishop did not come only once in the twenty years.

Pairc na Scoile, is so called because the ruins of an old school are still to be seen there. It is situated in the old high-road about a quarter of a mile east from Ard na Gaoithe". There is a man still living who went to that school named Jerry Hanley in Greenane. He is a very old man. It was the first school that was built by the Board of Education, and it was also the first school that was built in Bere Island. But it was not like the schools we have at the present day. They had not any desk or seats. They had not any copies to write on, they wrote on slates with chalk. They had a fireplace built with stones and there was no chimney but the smoke managed to get out some way through the door and windows. There was a very small attendance at that time; some of the scholars would not go to school because there were no guards. There was a teacher named Jeremiah O Shea.

Pairc na Clohane, is so called because there is a big stone standing in the centre of the big field and at the other side of the stone there are four or five big holes. It was said that they were used as hiding places in the Penal days and it was said that some people died there of starvation at the time of the Danes and for that reason they were never closed since.

Pairch a Buaille, is so called because the people were confirmed there in the Penal days, as there was not enough room in the Church at that time. Páirc a Chiarraighe

is so called because there was a cow bought in Kerry and she died in that field, and since then the people called it Pairch a Ciarraige

Páirch na Teóramh

so called it is the field of the boundary

## 6 Here are the names of some of our fields.

*Finbarr Murphy, Derrycreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

Here are the names of some of our fields.

Cúilín Droighin is the first. It is called after the Blackthorns that grow on the lower side of the field and also in the middle of the field.

Then there is Gairraidhe Doimhin, Gairraidhe Com, and Bun na Gairraidhe Com. Gairraidhe Doimhin because it is a deep field, Gairraidhe Com because it is a level field, and Bun na Gairraidhe Com because it is the field below Gairraidhe Com.

There is another field called Páircín Nellie Kane. It is the story that everybody used to have a field of their own long ago and that this field was owned by Nellie Kane.

Poll na Muc is a small field near the boundary. It is a very wet swampy field and the pigs used to be rolling and rooting there in the hot days in the Summer.

I will now tell some names of the places Here are the names of some of our fields. Clais, Baile Amhlaoibh, Doire Craoibhín and Baile na Cille.

Clais because there is a deep glen there and the ground rises again below near the sea.

Baile Amhlaoibh because there was a man there long ago called Amhlaoibh.

Doire Craoibhín because there are a lot of blackthorns[?] growing there.

## 7 Trades and Occupations

*Finbarr Murphy, Derrycreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

There are a lot of old trades in the island. One of them is basket-making. Most of the men are able to make baskets but some can better than others so the men that can make best make them for the rest. The way to make a basket is this:-

First some Sally rods are got. These rods should have been seasoning for about a month in water. The time to cut the rods is at the dark moon in November which is called "Doras na Slat". Sixteen strong rods are stuck in

the ground in a circle each two being about three inches apart. Then the weaker rods are woven in and out between the strong rods which are called standards. It is the top of the basket that is stuck in the ground. When the basket is about two feet from the ground the remaining halves of the standards are folded in and the bottom is made. About halfway up the basket there is a space left without any rods except the bare standards and spaces between the standards are called windows. Then the basket is complete.

Another trade is candle-making. This was done by pouring melted fat into a long thin mould and sticking a cord down Trades and Occupations the liquid. When it was cold it was taken out of the mould and was used as a candle. Another way of making candles was to soak[?] a peeled rush in melted fat and light it. According as it burned it was pushed out farther over the edge of scallop shell on which it was resting. Sometimes oil was used instead of fat. This oil was got out of fishes.

Another trade was spinning. First the wool was washed. Next it was carded:- This was done by making rolls of the wool between two wire brushes. Next it was put on the spinning wheel which was on a three-legged stool. The wheel was spun around, twisting the wool and making thick thread out of it.

## **8 Food in Olden Times**

*(BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Long ago the people ate three meals a day. In the morning they ate griddle cakes, butter, milk and honey, and for their dinner they ate fish, and milk, and potatoes, and they ate the same for supper. The people went fishing, or digging potatoes, or saving the hay and other things like that before their breakfast until the breakfast was ready. They drank fresh milk if they had any with their potatoes, or else, skim-milk, or sour- milk, or butter - milk.

They had wheaten bread and oat bread, and meal bread, and meal-and-flour bread, and all of them mixed together and they made bread out of it, and they had stampy and potato cakes. The usual meat they used to eat was veal and mutton when it was available. The people used never sell the calves only kill them and eat them. The people had the same vegetables as we have now. At Christmas they ate fowl, and at Easter they ate eggs. Noggins were the

names of the vessels they used before cups came common. The first knives were made out to flint.

After the famine when the people were poor they had to give a certain amount *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal* Food in Olden Times of grain to the landlords, and then the landlords shipped eggs and cheese and oatenmeal and wheat to foreign lands. While ships were coming in with shiploads of Indian meal, to the starving people of Ireland. Out of this meal the people made stirabout, and at that time the principal food all over the country was stirabout. This is a thin gruel of yellow meal and oatenmeal mixed. The people used be beating each other for the scrapings of the pot. This is mentioned in story and song such as in one song:-

”Cheer boys cheer, for the stirabout is boiling,  
Cheer boys cheer, for the scrapings of the pot.”

They used to put the grain over the fire to dry and harden it. Then they used to grind in with a quern. This is how they roasted the meat. They made a hole in the ground and got some middle-sized stones, and put them into the fire to get red, and when they were red hot, they used to put them into the hole, and put the meat down on them. Then they covered it with nice clean moss, and put some earth down on top of the moss. Then they left it there until it was cooked. When it was Food in Olden Times cooked they took it out and covered up the hole again.

## 9 Food

*Joseph Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

In olden times things were not the way as they are at present. The people used have two meals a day one in the morning about ten o'clock and dinner about five or six o'clock. These meals used consist of gruel for breakfast. The way that it was made is they used get a bowl of meal into a pot and put water into it and it used thicken very well and they used eat it with milk. They used eat potatoes for supper with butter milk. The men usually worked over two hours before breakfast.

They used grind their own barley and oats with a quern. That flour used not be like the flour we have now when it was baked it used to be black.



Some people used grind a lot of it and sell it to people that used not have it for themselves. Sometimes they used to make flour out of rye and this flour was very black in colour. The cake that was made out of rye was very black too. They used to make cakes out of potatoes too this cake was called "Stampaide". It was made in this way. First about a half dozen big potatoes were got and washed very clean. Then they used to get a box and take out the bottom and open the tin and put holes in it with a nail. Then got a dish and put this grater over it and then got a potato and started grating and as fast as you would grate it would fall into the dish. Then when they had all the potatoes grated it was put into a cloth and squeezed to take the water out of it. Then a grain of flour was shaken into it then it was mixed up with a grain of salt and then it was baked.

## 10 How We Spend Christmas

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Christmas Day is always celebrated on the 25th of December. On the night of Christmas eve everybody lights a Christmas candle in the window of the kitchen and other common candles on the other windows. Everybody hangs strings of holly up on the wall and decoration papers on the loft.

Everybody of the family has to be at home before supper time and then the whole family eat supper together. All the children hang their stockings up, near the fire and then everybody goes to bed.

On St Stephen's Day all the boys from about eight years to eighteen go around the parish with a holly bush singing the wren. They have masks and all sorts of coloured papers on them. Every crowd tries to get the wren a couple of days before and hang him on the bush. This is the song they sing:-

I

The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,  
St. Stephen's Day he was caught in the furze  
Although he is little,  
His family is great,  
So rise up our landlady,

And give our boys a treat. Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal How We Spend  
Christmas II

And if the treat be rather small,  
It won't agree with our boys at all,  
But if the treat be, all the best  
I hope in Heaven your soul will rest.

Chorus

Ti-ree-raw-raw

Ti-ree-raw-row

III

The wren, the wren, that you can see,  
Hanging from our holly tree,  
With a bunch of ribbons by our side,  
And the Bere Island boys to be our guide

ti-ree-raw-raw,

ti-ree-raw-raw

IV

As I went up to Brandy Hall  
I met a wren upon the wall  
Up with my stick and I gave him a fall  
And I brought him here to visit ye all.

ti-ree-raw-raw,

ti-ree-raw-raw

When evening comes they all go into some shop and get sweets and  
lemonade. Then they go home.

## 11 Place Names on the Shore

*Joseph Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Every stream, rock, harbour and Island has a name of its own. Mostly all the names are in Irish. That shows us that it was Irish was spoken at that time. Mostly all the names came from the shape of the rock or the harbour itself or from something that happened there. Some are hard to explain because with the passing of time the first names and reasons for the names are now lost.

Oileán na gCaorach, is situated in Derrycreeveen. Long ago, the sheep used stay there all the time. There is a road running straight down to it and there is a slip near it and the tide does not cover it because it is a big island.

Another island is Oileán na Yard that is also situated in Derrycreeveen at the west end, it is very near to the lighthouse and it is a very high island. Tráig Gallda is situated in Ballinakilla, there is a slip there too. Some say that long ago the French, others say that the English landed there on their way to bomb Dunboy. Tráig Chiaráin is situated in Ballinakilla also, long ago St Place Names on the Shore Ciarán landed there and ever since it is called Tráigh Ciarán. Another is Traigh na na Ceardchan that is is also situated in Ballinakilla. There is a river running down near it and there is a road on the east side of it. Traigh Cocale is situated in Ballinakilla. It is east side of Traga Gallda it is all shells and it is covered with cocels.

## 12 Tráig na Cocal got its name because when the water is low there are a lot of small shells on the strand.

*Mary C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Tráigh na Cocal got its name because when the water is low there are a lot of small shells on the strand.

Tráigh Gallda got its name because there is an old stone slip near a river and the foreigners used to land there long ago for water. It is from this strand the post-boat goes out to the main-land every morning.

Tráigh Chiaráin got its name Tráig na Cocal got its name because when the water is low there are a lot of small shells on the strand. because St. Kieran landed on that strand. It is situated below the presbytery. St Kieran was a native of Capeclear and he founded a monastery in Kilkenny and on his way

to Kilkenny he landed in this strand.

Trí-Cosa-Chorcáinín is situated almost straight outside Tráigh Chiaráin. It got its name because there are three small rocks standing up straight like three legs of a pot.

Browra is situated a little while to the west of Trí-Cosa-Chorcáinín. It is a long narrow rock.

Rinn na h-Eorna is situated to the west of the village. It is a point out in the sea and long ago there was barley growing there and that is why it got its name - Rinn na h-Eorna. Eorna is the Irish word for Barley.

Rinn na nGolán, is situated in Derricreeven. It got its name because there is a big stone standing in the middle of it. It is an island and the people put cattle out there. There is a road going out to it.

Cé na bPoll is situated at the bottom of a road to the east of the school.

Tráig na Cocal got its name because when the water is low there are a lot of small shells on the strand. Bac Lághach is situated straight below the school. There is a road leading to that also.

Tráigh na gCeardchan is situated near where the river that separates Ballinakilla from Derrivcreveen goes into the sea.

Deire na Luinge is the name of a rock west near the light-house. It is like the stern of a ship and that is how it got its name.

Here are the names of some cliffs:-

Faill na Bó is situated to west of the island.

Faill na Gabhar is west near the light-house.

Faill Briste is situated to the south of the island.

Faill na dTadhg is situated to the south side of island also. It got its name probably because there was a man whose name was Tadhg living near the cliff.

Oileán na gCaorach is situated outside a slip in Derricreeven. It is a little green island and sometimes the people put sheep out in it. That is why it got its name.

Oileán na Yard is situated west near the light-house. According to Tomás Ó

Criomhthan in the Blasket islands, there is a place near an old light-house and it is called Oileán Bun an(?) Yard, and that is probably why this place Tráig na Cocal got its name because when the water is low there are a lot of small shells on the strand. got its name.

### 13 Páirc na golán.

*Patrick Sullivan, Ballymakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

#### Páirc na Golán

Because there is a stone or a golán standing in the middle of that field.

#### Pairc na dTig

Because in it are houses under the ground. Those houses were seen when the people were turning Bánn in it they took up some of the flags that were covering it and it is said that priests used stay in those houses during the penal days.

#### Páirc na Scoile

Long ago the old school the people were going to was in this field. It was an old thatched shed without any desks or chimney. It was situated east on the high road. The people who were going to it used have to sit on stones for desks.

#### Pairc na dTobar

Because in Páirc na golán. that field there is a spring well.

#### Bealach an Sidhe

This got its name because long ago a man was coming from the hill it was getting and he was passing through a valley when he saw a crowd of fairies passing him by and from that time it is called Bealach an Sidhe or the way of the fairies.

#### Pairc Dhúbh

Because in that field the soil is very black.

#### Coimín Leitreach

There is a flat rock in the south side of the Island and every person who is able to climb up this rock cuts his name into the rock and lots of names are

able to be seen there yet.

## Racks

There is a certain rock in the hill the shape of a rock and it is said that when the people used to be cutting turf anywhere around it they used come to eat their dinner on it. There is an other rock near in the shape of a table. People who are drawing turf or doing any thing the sits in this rack for it is a very comfortable seat. Páirc na golán. to sit on. Every house has a rack. The rack that are in the house a long board with four legs under it and a back in it like a chair but it is not like that.

## 14 Here are some names along the shore:-

*Finbarr Murphy, Derrycreeveen (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Here are some names along the shore:-

Sidhe and Sidhe Criche[?]

are two high heads jutting out into the sea in the south of the island. There is very green grass growing there and it is said that fairies live under the ground there and that is what makes the grass so green.

Cuas na Mona

is a cave near these heads. It is said that the people used to bring their turf down to this cave and draw it around to the north side of the island in boats.

Cuas na Mungó

in another cave in the west side of the island. Mungó means a Merman. It is said that a Merman used to be seen in this cave.

Oileán na Yard Here are some names along the shore:- is a high island west near the lighthouse. It is said that it was joined on to the island once and was part of the yard of the lighthouse but with the breaking of the waves the land between this island and the land fell into the tide and this part of the yard of the lighthouse was left an island. There are landslides there every year.

There is a head in the west side of the island called Deire na Luinge. It is so called because of its likeness to the stern of a ship.

Another name is is Fail na Gabhar in the west side of Bere Island also. All

the goats used to live on this cliff long ago. It is a slanting cliff and there is very green grass down there.

Another Cliff is Faill na Bó.

Rínn Dubh is a point near this cliff. It is so called because the rock of this point is black.

Tráighnín is a strand in the west end. It is so called because it is a small sheltered strand.

Árd na Cinna[?]) is a height on which there is a battery.

Lacht is a place between a rock and the land. It is so called because only a small drop of water stays in it when the tide goes out.

The Strúile[?] is a narrow strait between Oileán na gCaorach and the Island.

Oileán na gCaorac is an island north side of the Island. The sheep go out there in low tide and there is very rough dry land on this island.

Carraig Fhada[?] Here are some names along the shore:- is a rock west side of Oileán na gCaorac. When the tide is high it stretches a long way under the water.

Carraigín na h-Eórna is a rock north side of the Island. It is said that a ship was wrecked long ago and was blown in on this rock with a cargo of barley. The barley was washed up on this rock and on the point of land near it which is called Rínn na h-Eórna.

Rínn na Golán is an island north-side of the Island. It was a head once but the sea washed away the soft turf between it and the Island and now it is an island. There was a big Golán standing in the middle of it about twenty feet high, but the gales knocked off pieces of it and these pieces are standing or thrown east side of it.

Bac Laghac is a strand east side of this island, and Carraig Liath is a grey rock near Bac Lághac

Tráigh na Ceárdchan is a strand east side of this rock. It is said that there was a forge there once.

## 15 Cures

*Margaret C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

The people of olden times had a lot of cures for diseases and they were alot different that the cures we have now.

They used to rub herbs and plants to sores and boil them with milk or water for a sick person to drink. They had no ointment or liniments like we have now. Some of those cures are.

To rub a dock-leaf to a nettle sting would stop the pain. A cobweb would stop the blood if any cut was bleeding.

If you had boils to get some meacan an táthabha from a bog and to rub it to them. This is white like a parsnip. If you had chilblains to grate a carrot and mix it with dripping, to boil it over the fire, and then to rub it to the chilblains. To leave a dog lick a sore they say would cure it. If you cut your hand or foot the cure is. to boil brown sugar and soap, and put it on the sore. This is what they used for poultice. If you had a sore throat to put potatoes into a cloth and put them up to your throat. When they had the whooping cough, They got sliced turnips and sprinkled them with Cures sugar and left them over night, then they drank the juice. When they had the measles they got sheep's droppings and boiled them with water and then they drank the water. If they had toothache they put seagull's droppings into their tooth to stop the pain.

## 16 Cures

*Joseph Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

A cure for a burn is boil an egg and get the white of the egg and put it against the burn or the minute you get burn rub bread soda to it and it will not blister or a grated potato will heal a burn. A cure for a sore throat is get some camomile and put it into a basin and put hot water over it and put your head over it and inhale the steam that rises from it. A cure for a sore chest is get black unwashed wool and heat the wool and rub fresh butter to it and put it up against your chest. Another cure for a sore chest is get sugar candy and black sweets and Cures some penny leaves and mix the three together and put them into something and put a drop of water around them



and boil them well and drink a spoon of it and that is very good cure. A cure for a sore eye is wash the eye with cold tea. A cure for a sting of a nettle is get a dock-leaf or cupóg; at the bottom of the leaf there is a small leaf with sticky stuff around it rub that to where the burn is and that will heal it.

**17 When a person had the whooping cough they used give milk to a ferret and what the ferret would let after him they used give that to the sick person for a cure.**

*Chris Lowney, Derryreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

When a person had the whooping cough they used give milk to a ferret and what the ferret would let after him they used give that to the sick person for a cure. When rash came on person they used get a black cat and cut a little bit off of his ear and put the blood that When a person had the whooping cough they used give milk to a ferret and what the ferret would let after him they used give that to the sick person for a cure. came from it on the sore. When a person was bleeding they used put a Cobweb up to the cut to stop the bleeding. When a person got a sting of a nettle they used put a cupóg up to it to stop the sting. If a rusty nail went through

**18 There are a lot of local cures for various diseases.**

*Margaret P. Sullivan, Derryreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

There are a lot of local cures for various diseases. The people in olden times never bought any cures. It is said that a dock leaf cures the sting of a nettle. The whites of eggs and turpentine and sugar of lead mixed will cure rheumatism. If you soaked seaweeds in water and keep it airtight after a while the water will be like iodine and it will cure sores. The meacan an táthabha that is found growing in the ground if boiled would cure boils. Boiled carrigeen moss is very good for a person who would have the flu. Long ago the people used pick the yellow flowers off the furze and put them in a bottle with about a teaspoonful of whiskey and kept them airtight and then gave them to the people when they would have pneumonia. The cure for a burn is to rub bread-soda to it and also soap.

Long ago the people used gather sheeps droppings and boil them with milk and then give the milk to people who would have the measles.

## 19 The old people have a lot of old cures.

*Finbarr Murphy, Derrycreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

The old people have a lot of old cures. Most of these are herbs. Here are some of them:- Slánbas, which in English is Ribleaf is a cure for a sore. It used to be put up against the sore and it used to draw out any poison that was in it.

There is a very smooth leaf which is a cure for a burn. It is put on the burn the same way as the Slánsas. This leaf is a kind of fern and grows along near ditches.

The juice was squeezed out of penny-leaves and used as medicine for children. Cobwebs were used to stop bleeding. Camomile was used as a cure for nervous people. It used to be put in a cup and boiling water poured on it and it used to be left drawing like tea. then it was drank. Yarrow was a cure for Rheumatism. It used to be put in a cup and boiling water poured on it and it used to be left drawing. Then like Camomile it used to be drank. Briar leaves used to be left near the fire until they got hard and ripe. Then they used to be ground up and powder made out of it. This powder was used for tender skin. Cupóg or Doc-leaf was used to stop the pain of a sting of a nettle. A sort of thick liquid is found near the bottom of the stem and this was rubbed on to the sting.

## 20 Long ago the people had many cures for different diseases and sores.

*Patrick Sullivan, Derrycreeveen (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

Long ago the people had many cures for different diseases and sores. Here are some of them: - They used a cob web for stopping blood. If anyone used get nettled they used get a dock-leaf and they used take out the stuff that was in the roots and rub it to the nettled part and it used put away the sting. Another was if anyone sprained their ankle they used put it under a steady drop of cold water for a time and it used relieve it. They used salt water for corns and other things. Another one was the water out of raw potatoes. The used grate some potatoes and put them into a piece of cloth and squeeze the water out of the and rub the water to the burned part and it was very good for a burn. Another one was when a person had a toothache he

used put a piece of tobacco on top of it and it used put the pain away. The grease of a goose was another one of their cures they used get the grease and rub it to stiff joints and rheumatism by rubbing the sore parts hard for a while it would go away. Soap Long ago the people had many cures for different diseases and sores. and sugar was used for cut and sores. They used get a piece of soap and cut it up and boil it with sugar and water and bathe the cut and sores with it that was the kind of ointment they had for them.

## **21 There are a lot of Irish words and phrases used yet, even though Irish is not spoken here.**

*Mary C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

There are a lot of Irish words and phrases used yet, even though Irish is not spoken here. Here are some:-

People still call the shed where cattle are kept a CRÓ. SCABHAC is an old path or a very rough road leading to a house, or the sea, or the hill. It breaks off the main road, usually. A place where a big lot of briars grow together is called a SCAIRT. Raithneach is withered ferns. MO LÉIR is a phrase used very often by people. GAISCE - when a person does anything great, they would say oh he did a great gaisce. SAOTHAR when a person is running very quickly they say there is a great saothar on him. MÍ-ÁDH when a person is annoying another person they say you're a mí-ádh. CUMAR is a big deep drain. SCAMALL is used if a person tries to do anything and does not succeed, and should be able to do it they say he is a great scamall. A level field near the sea is called an Ínnse. A big high stone in the middle of a field is called a GOLÁN. The word golán is used also for the usual small stones. They say he threw a golán at me. The baskets that people bring turf from the hill are called CISEÁNS. They have other baskets for drawing manure and they call them CLIATHÓG. The tool that they cut the turf with is called a SLEAGHAN.

GOÍLÍN is a narrow strand and a CUAS is the same. When a person says that he does not like anything, they say I have no "MEAS" on it. LÓCHAR is a name that people call to coarse grass, and a CURRACH is called to a coarse field.

## 22 There are a lot of Irish words and phrases used in this place.

*Patrick Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

There are a lot of Irish words and phrases used in this place. Although there is not any Irish spoken those phrases are used. Here are some of those Irish phrases:

### CRÓ

This is used to explain to any-one the shed where cattle are kept.

### SCABAT

This is the name for an old road or a path.

### SCAIRT

This is said for a clump of briars.

### MEAS

This is said when a person do not like another person - he says "I have no MEAS on him.

### SAOTHAR

When a person is blowing after running it is said there is a SAOTHAR on him.

### MÍ-ADH

Is a person who is always doing some mischief and the way they say it is "You are a MÍ-ADH"

### GOLÁN

Golán is used for a big stone standing up straight in a field.

### BUIRCÍN (1)

Is a piece of timber in a tying for a calf that is put into the loop when tying him.

### BUIRCÍN (2)

is also used for the piece of timber that projects up over the gunwale in the bow of a boat in front of the breast hook.

### THAWFT

The There are a lot of Irish words and phrases used in this place. seat in a boat is called a THAWFT

SGOLA

Is the piece of bann left between each ridge when turning bann.

SGANNRAD (pronounced SGANNAMH)

Is a person who is always working they say "there is a fright in him for work" or there is a SGANNRAMH in him for work.

## 23 There is a lot of Irish words and Phrases there yet.

*Gráinne Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

There is a lot of Irish words and Phrases there yet. Such as Boithirín, it is an old road that was there long ago. A sgairth is a big bunch of briars.

Raithneach is withered ferns that the farmer cuts for the cattle. A gollán is a very big stone. When a person is running very quickly they say there is saothar on him. A level field near the sea is called innse. A criothán is a small potato. A mi adh means if a person does a thing and not to do it right they say he is a mí adh. A scamall means if a person tried to do a thing over and over and he could not they say there's some scamall on him.

A There is a lot of Irish words and Phrases there yet. single stone standing up in a field is called a gollán and it is also called a charraigh. A narrow long strand is called a cuas or a góilín. Lóthar is rushes and grass that the farmer cut for the cattle. A scout is used for an old narrow road that was made long ago leading from the main road to a field.

## 24 trades and Occupations

*Margaret P. Sullivan, Derrycreeveen (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

In olden times there were a lot of different kinds of trades and and occupations. Allmost every-one was able to make every thing he wanted, and the most common of these trades now is basket-making. There are two kinds of baskets ciseáns and clítheógs. The ciseans are used mostly for drawing turf, and the clítheógs are used mostly for drawing manure or seaweeds. For basket-making first of all the rods are cut and put seasoning in a river or a

stream and this is to be done in the dark moon in November. The next thing they do is that they stand about a dozen strong rods in a circle which are called standers, and then the weaker rods are weaved in and out through them until it becomes wavy in the outside and each wave is called a buinne.

There was a mould kept in every house and the people used melt tallow and they used put a cord into the mould with a nail at each end to keep it straight in the middle. Then they used pour in the melted tallow and leave it get hard, and then they used take off the nails and leave the candle fall out. trades and Occupations Long ago there were no lamps but they used get the oil out of the pallock and put it in a scallop shell with the white part of the rush for a wick and that was the kind of lamp they had. Every woman had a spinning wheel of her own of which they made all their own thread. These spinning wheels were like stools with a little stand and a big wheel on top of it. Then they used twist the wheel and the wool used come off it in a big ball of thread and then they used knit it and make stockings and other clothes with it.

There was no trade of nail making but there was a black-smith who had a forge of his own and he used make nails out of a piece of iron and then he used sell them to the people as they wanted them.

There was a weaver in Beare Island and his name was Mr MacCarthy. He lived in Ardagh and he used make all the clothes for the people but they used bring him their own wool. He had two frames in which he used work up and down through each other and then he used tighten it until it became into a coarse surface and was like the flannel that is used now only a lot more uneven.

## **25 In olden times a lot of trades were carried on in this island.**

*Margaret E. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [[Back To Top](#)]

In olden times a lot of trades were carried on in this island. The people made nearly all the things they wanted. The most common of these is basket making. Nearly every farmer in this island makes his own baskets, but there are some who are able to make them better than others, and those are the real basket-makers. There are two kinds of baskets, ciseáns and clithéogs, ciseáns are closed in, in the bottom, and they are mostly used for drawing

turf. Clitheogs are the same but the bottom is made of wood, there is a hinge in one side and the other side is open and a string is tied on to it, and then it is tied to a standard, and the string is left down when they want to empty it. They are used for drawing weeds or manure.

November is the right time for cutting rods during the dark moon. They put them seasoning in a river, and when they want them they take them out. They get 10 strong ones and put them standing two at a time in the ground, these are called standards, then they get the weak ones and weave them in and out through the standards until In olden times a lot of trades were carried on in this island. they are up to the top. They bring them across it and that is how they put the bottom in it.

There were thatchers in the island as well and they thatched the houses for the people as it was all thatched roofs they had on the houses at that time.

Another trade that was carried on in the island was candle making nearly everybody made their own candles. how they made them was they put the oil out of fish into an escallops shell and they peeled of the green skin of the rush and put the inside part into the oil and lit it When the first candles came out they got a piece of tin the shape of a candle and put a string through it and poured melted fat into it and when it was hard they took it out and they had a candle then.

There were nailers in the island as well; one was living in the hill above the Hotel and the other was living in Paircín

## 26 St Michael's Well

*Mary C Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

St Michael's well is situated straight above The Central Hotel. That is situated in the centre of Bere Island near a mountain. The place where the well is situated is between two mountains and it is called the pattern. The well is very small and there is not much water in it. It goes dry in the Summer. It is almost covered with heath. There are two circles of white stones around the well. The outer circle of stones are big, but the circle near the well are small stones.

The well is called St Michael's Well because St. Michael is the patron saint

of the parish. Every person says different prayers but the most of them say at the outer circle of stones, The Creed, and five Our Fathers; five Hail-Mary's; and five Gloria's. Then they go up to the circle of stones near the well and they say the Rosary and at every Gloria they pick up a stone and drop it down again, with their right hand. When St Michael's Well they are coming home, they always leave something after them. Some people let a button after them, they throw up the button and if it comes down with the right side side turned up, the person will have good luck but if it comes down with the wrong side turned up, the person will have bad luck. They also bring a bottle of water with them. Some people keep it in the house like they keep holy-water, more people give it to the sick and more people drink it. The people drink it because they say that any sick person gets better if he would drink it. A person which has sore eyes would be cured if he rubbed the water on them.

Long ago on Michaelmas Day everybody turned towards the holy-well, like a fair day or a day at a Regatta at Present. The people used to put up stalls and used to sell oranges and apples and wine, whiskey and porter and they used to be wrestling. They used to have concerts, and dances, and plays near the well.

## 27 The Old School

*Mary C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

The schools at present are different to the schools that were there long ago. Before Ballinakilla School was built there was an old school on the high-road. It was situated to the east side of Árd na Ghaoithe on the north side of the road. It was built by the Board of Education. There were no desks there, but the scholars used to sit around the walls on stones, and there was no fire-place only a hole in the wall and there was no chimney there. It was out through another hole in the wall the smoke came. There were two play-grounds there one for the girls and one for the boys. There was also a garden to the west side of it in which apples and gooseberries were growing. In the year 1857 there were two national schools built, one at Lawrence Cove and another at Ballinakilla. Then the school on the high-road was closed and the teacher went to teach in Lawrence Cove school. The school was knocked



down and the stones were taken away. But the ruins are left to be seen.

## 28 Games I Play

*Mary C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

There are special games played in the different times of the year. The boys and the girls have different games. There are a lot of different games there. There is sheep, that is, a ring of girls catch each other's hands then one girl goes into the middle of the ring and she says to any girl she likes, "did you see my sheep" the other girl says "no what colour is she dressed", and the first girl will say the colour of any other girl's dress and then that girl hunts the other one. When she catches her she goes into the middle of the ring and starts again. There is skipping, the girls that play that game. They get a rope sometimes a skipping rope with a handle on each end. Then two girls hold the rope and the rest jump in, in turn. When the girl inside misses another girl jumps in. When the rope is up high they run in under it and when it comes down near their feet they jump up and let it pass away again and so on. If they miss tis they Games I Play jump on top of the rope. This is another game. Oranges and Lemons. Two girls catch each other's two hands then all the other girls stoop in under them and keep going round like that. The other two girls are saying the whole time, "Oranges and Lemons, the bells of St. Clemon's I owe you five farthings the bells of obey. When shall I pay you to-day or to-morrow, here comes the candle to light you to bed here comes the chopper to chop of your head." The girl that is under when you say to "chop off you head" they catch her and bring her away, then one girl says which would you rather gold or silver and whatever the girl says she goes to the side of the girl that has that colour. There is "Broken Bridges" That game is my favourite. It is almost the same as Oranges and Lemons. The two girls catch each other hands and the other girls go around them. But they say this, - Broken Bridges falling down, falling down, falling down, broken bridges falling down my fair Lady. What will it take to set her free, set her free, set her free, what will is take to set her free my fair lady. A guinea gold ring to set her free, set her free, set her free a guinea Games I Play gold ring to set her free my fair lady. A guinea gold ring we have not got, have not got, have not got, a guinea gold ring we have not got my fair lady. Then off to prison she must go she must go, she must go. Then off to

prison she must go my fair lady. The two sides will pull and which ever side will win will get the fair lady. This is another game colours all the girls stand in a line and one girl gives all the rest different colours. Then two girls stand opposite the rest of the girls, and start guessing the colours. Which-ever girl guesses a colour that girl goes out near her side. They keep guessing until every one is guessed. Then they pull and the side that falls are beaten.

Another game is hide and go seek one go and get a special stone and stoop down there. Then the rest go away a hide then when they are ready they say hide. Then the other one hunts her and tries to reach the stone. The person that is caught must stoop the next time and the person that reaches Games I Play the stone must have one, two, three den, said before the other person catches her.

## **29 There are special games for different parts of the year.**

*(BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

There are special games for different parts of the year. Playing Marbles is a game which is played by boys in winter at first you draw a line and then you make a hole a good bit from the line then you make two more holes, the line and the three holes must be the same length apart. Two and Three boys can play together. Before they start they pitch to the middle for first shot, then who ever is the nearest to the middle hole pitches first. Then they start playing, when they have the game finished the person who hits the other two boy's marbles with his own has the game.

Playing Quoits in another game which is played by boys in summer. This is the way they are played. First they get two big stones, these *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal* There are special games for different parts of the year. are called the bobs, two boys stand at each bob, then two of the boys get two nice stones each. Then they throw the stones at the bob. If the Quoit stands against the bob that is a stander and it counts two. If the stone goes on top of the bob that is called a ringer and it counts four. The first person that has twenty one has the game.

Four Corner fool is another game which is played by boys or girls. First four boys go in corners on stones and one boy stands in the middle. The boy that is standing in the middle is called the fool. Then they all run around from

stone to stone and the fool tries to get into one of their stones. Then if the fool gets one of their stones the boy that has no stone is the fool.

### **30 The Golán is situated in the centre of Bere Island.**

*Margaret C. Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

The Golán is situated in the centre of Bere Island. There are several stories of this stone and its meanings.

Some say it was trown by a giant from Muinntirvara at the Caileac Béarra. She was fishing with a hair of her head for a fishing line off the Cloughland Cliffs and he claimed the sole right to fish in Cuan Baoí. It is a great pity we have not a few like him in the country now to keep out the foreign trawlers.

Others say it marks the place where a chief or leader was killed in Battle.

And others still say it is the spot where the all Clear Signal was given to the people who had hidden in the lisses when the raiders departed, which is likely as there are about twenty lisses to be seen from this part of the Island. These are big holes in the ground and there are holes going from on to the other if there are The Golán is situated in the centre of Bere Island. two or three near one another.

### **31 Once upon a time there was a girl named Princess Bere.**

*Gráinne Sullivan, Ballynakilla (BKA)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Once upon a time there was a girl named Princess Bere. A man fell in love with her and he wanted to marry. But she would not give her consent. The man had friends in Carbery and one of them was a giant. The man told the giant that the Princess would not marry him. Then the Giant wrote a letter to the Princess and told the girl to marry the man. The girl would not marry the man because he was a little small farmer and he was not very rich. The girl wrote a letter to the Giant telling him that she would not marry the man. When the giant heard this he went mad and he caught the nearest Golán and fired it at the Princesses house. But it slipped when he was throwing it and it stuck a couple of miles from the Princesses house. More people say that two giants were walking along the road. One said that he could throw Once upon a time there was a girl named Princess Bere. a stone

farther than the other. Then one of them caught up a Golán and threw it away. It landed on the top of a hill. When the other fellow threw his, it stuck back of the other one.

### **32 My Home District - Bank**

*Seán Ó Súilleabáin, Rerrin (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Micheál Ó Súilleabain, Parent, Age 55, Rerrin*

I reside in the townland of Bank, in the parish of Beare Island and in the Barony of Beare.

There are at present eight families and approximately twenty three people living in the townland. The name which most of the people bear is O'Sullivan. There were in former times various types of houses mostly one storeyed and thatched but now owing to Government grants these are gradually disappearing to be replaced by slated houses.

The townland's name was derived from French fishermen who in previous years used fish in Bantry Bay and reside in the north side of the east end of Beare Island and then called "Palmer's Bank" after them (the fishermen's name was Palmer) afterwards shortened to Bank. There is a little inlet in townland which was previously called "Palmer's Cove", but now the name has been changed to "Cuaseen" meaning the little inlet or harbour, also called after these men. It seems to have been a very long time since these fishermen were living in the island because there are rocks in the east end called "Palmer's Rocks" and we get the idea that they must have full sway over the East End. At present which is very regrettable there is no old person in "Bank" able to tell stories in Irish or speak but very little Irish. My Home District - Bank The land is very rough and boggy and because of this many of the people emigrated to America and the Argentine and a lesser number joined as sailors in the Shipping Service. Although the houses were smaller they were more numerous. The ruins of two of these are still visible. Near the ruins of one of these there was a well and one day a woman was drowned in it and for a long time afterwards everybody who passed had to throw a stone into the well and in that way the well was filled up as high as the ground again.

### 33 My Home District - Ardagh

*Séumas Ó Ceallacháin, Ardagh (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Pádraig Ó Ceallacáin, Parent, Age 50, Ardagh*

The name of the townland in which I live is Ardagh and the name of the parish is Beare Island and the barony is Beare. There are twenty-one families living in the townland. The family name most common is "O'Sullivan". The most of the houses are slated nowadays but long ago nearly all the houses were thatched.

The meaning of Ardagh is "the high place". The land is very hilly and rough and the farms are small and poor. There is a hill in the middle of the townland and there is a tower situated on the top of the hill. These towers were built in the seventeenth century. There are little streams flowing from the hill to the sea.

There were more houses in the townland long ago than are there now. There are about six ruins of houses to be seen now and they are not occupied. At the time of the famine some of the people emigrated to America. Some also went to Australia. The old people do not know Irish. There are no lakes in the townland.

### 34 My Home District - Greenane

*Sean Ó hAractáin, Greenane (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Conubhar Ó hAractáin, Age 70, Greenane*

Greenane is the name of the townland in which I am living in, it is in the Parish of Beare Island and in the Barony of Beare. At the present day there are fourteen families living in it and seventy-seven people. The most common name in the townland is "Harrington". There are twelve slated houses in it. The most of them were thatched long ago. Greenane got its name from the place of its situation. Irish is not there at present but there are people there still that can speak it at present.

Long ago the people did emigrate to America and to Australia also. The houses were more numerous long ago than they are now. The ruins of five of them are still to be seen. There are no lakes in Greenane but a lake is bounding it on one side.

Greenane is situated on the south side of the Island. There are four rivers leading to the sea from it. The highest hill in the Island is sheltering it on one My Home District - Greenane side and it is called Greenane Hill.

### **35 St Michael's Well**

*Conchubar Ó h-Aractáin, Greenane (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Conchubar Ó h-Aractáin, Parent, Age 60, Greenane*

There is a holy well situated on the north side of Baile na Cille hill and it is called St Michael's Well. The people who still visit the well do certain prayers. There are white pebbles to be found in front of the well and those people who visit that well take ten of those pebbles and at every round they drop a pebble.

The prayers they say are one decade of the rosary at every round. The people do not drink the water or use it otherwise. There is a small bush beside the well and the visitors leave some relic beside it.

The well is said to have been founded by a certain sailor who was blind and he had a vision shown to him by St Michael. He was told in the dream about a well which is now called St Michael's Well.

The sailor believed that if he visited this well he would be cured by saying certain prayers. Shortly after St Michael's Well this his ship came into Bantry Bay and the sailor was very glad to get the opportunity, and he was led to the place shown to him in his vision, and when he arrived to the place he said some prayers at the well. It is believed that the sailor's sight was restored to him and since that it is visited by the inhabitants of Bere Island.

### **36 My Home District - Baile na Cille**

*Leon Ó Súilleabháin, Ballynakilla (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Florence O Sullivan, Age 63, Ballynakilla*

I live in the parish of Bere Island in the townland of Ballinakilla. Bere Island is in the barony of Beare. There are twenty-four families in the townland and one hundred people. The family name most common is O'Sullivan. Practically all the houses are slated but twenty years ago a lot of them were thatched. There is only one Church on Bere Island and it is in the townland

of Ballinakilla. The Church is on the middle of the island and it is because the Church is in the townland of Ballinakilla that the townland is called "Baile na Cille" which in English means the town of the Church.

Any of the people do not know Irish except a few words. Houses were more numerous in the townland formerly than they are now. There are at least twelve houses now in ruins. Many people left the townland at the time of the famine and went to America and also some people went to Australia.

### **37 The Local Roads**

*Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Bank (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Miceál Ó Súilleabháin, Parent, Age 55, Bank*

The road which leads from Rerrin Village to the West End of the Island is known as the Main Road. Other branch roads are known by various names but some of these are no longer used such as:- Ardra road which branches off at the Village and forms the road for the people living in the south of the East End and along the seaboard to Lonehert Battery.

The Main Road was made about ninety-five years ago as a relief work for people who were very badly off and it was through the intercession of the Paris Priest it was gained. The men had to work from dawn until dark and in return got twopence and fourpence a day while a skilled labourer got a shilling.

Previous to this the road led to the cross roads and up an old rocky path called the "High Road" but in 1848 the Board of Works took the situation to heart and made the road from the Cross Roads to the Parish Church. The road which leads from the Church to the Presbytery was also made lately.

About forty years ago the British Government made a moat in the East End and the earth and stones were carted to the village and formed into a road which has undergone various improvements The Local Roads and now it is one of the best roads in the Barony. Long ago the people of the Village owned land in the East End and a road called the "New Line" was made on which to drive their cows. Now however the land has passed into other people's hands and this road is scarcely used. This road was also made about 40 years ago.



## 38 The Wreck of the Joseph Howe

*Conchubhar Ó h-Aractáin, Greenane (LC-B)* [[Back To Top](#)]

In the year 1876 on the 18th day of February a large sailing-ship named the Joseph Howe was wrecked at the south of Bere Island at a place called Fail-na-dTag. When she came to Bantry Bay a storm arose and the Captain made up his mind to come into Cork Harbour for shelter, but when he saw the Inlet near Fail-na-dTag he thought it was the Harbour's mouth, but before he discovered where he was going he was too near the rocks, and he could not return from the Inlet because he was too return against the wind and he could not because it was too strong.

The storm was then at's worst and it threw her up against the rocks. In the morning there was a man walking along the shore looking for wreck when he saw the ship beneath the cliff and she was wedged between two large rocks. The man got help and by means of tying a rope from the ship to the land and in that way they took the crew ashore.

There was one man The Wreck of the Joseph Howe sick on board at the time and they lowered a boat from the deck to the sea and put the sick man into her and he and another man set out for Castletown Hospital, but before she had gone very far the large waves swept into her and sank her, and both men were lost.

"It is said she sailed from Liverpool Town to Cork Harbour for orders bound, but on Fial-na Drag by Bere Island's side her destiny she found." She had a cargo of mahogany on board, but when she got broken up the cargo was scattered. Anyone that would bring a large bit of timber that she had on board to Castletown would get a pound of finding it.

A short time after a man from the Island composed a song about her, the following is the first verse:-

As I awoke put on my clothes  
To the sea I made my way,  
On coming towards the seashore cliff  
I spied an awful scene  
Far on the rocks beneath



Lay a large Brigatine

I was struck with amazement The Wreck of the Joseph Howe On looking on  
the wreck

The ship was slowly sinking,  
With three men on her deck,  
Another hanging to her boom,  
To reach the shore his object,  
Or death would be his doom,  
Four surviving mariners

I now intend to name.

The captain's name was Timpleton

The boatsman was the same

The steward's name was Peter Seamer,

A kind good natured man

The other was a seaman

Whose name was Harry Grant

She hailed from Minnie Fitleton

From Liverpool town she sailed,

With a cargo of mahogany

For Cork harbour she was bound

But at Fail-na-Diag by Bere Island's side

Her Destiny she found

### **39 The Towers**

*Sean Ó Súilleabháin, Rerrin (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Miceál Ó Súilleabháin, Age 55, Rerrin*

One hundred and forty two years ago Wolfe Tone went to France and  
obtained a fleet which was to come to Ireland to assist him in gaining for her

independence. The fleet left Brest in December 1796, under General Hoche, for Ireland. When some time at sea a gale of fierce velocity arose and the fleet was scattered some of the ships being driven into Bantry Bay. The English were taken unawares and so to secure their future safety started building the following year five Towers on Beare Island.

These towers were built on the ... of five hills:- two in the East End, one on Cloughland's hill, one on Ardagh's hill and one in the West End. The towers were built by Englishmen who were sent specially for that purpose. The complete placement of stones etc. were sent from England dressed and ready for building. A pier was also built in Lawrence's Cove probably for the purpose of landing these stones.

The towers were then built and also watch-houses as quarters for the watchmen. In the tower there is a well which was to supply the soldiers in case of their being besieged. The soldiers lived in these towers for a few years but they were never used in warfare as batteries. The towers were numbered 1 and The Towers and 2 as the numbers for the two in the East End and three, four and five for the other three respectively.

As time grew on the towers became out of date and when the English bought some land in Beare Island the first work they undertook was to knock three of these towers beginning at No. 1. This was in the year 1897. The workmen were very badly treated by the gangers who were always hurrying them up. A verse composed by a local "poet" with regards the work runs as follows:-

"Three pence an hour

At number one tower

And you hurry up"

so that gives an idea of the wages at the time. The name number one still sticks to the place to the present day. The other two towers numbers 2 and 5 were knocked shortly afterwards but 3 and four are still sound and look capable of lasting another few hundred years.

## 40 Place Names

*Concubar Ó h-Aractáin, Greenane (LC-B)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Conchubhar Ó h-Aractáin, Age 60, Greenane*

The district in which I live abounds with place-names of fields and cliffs and rocks, and the most of them are Irish. The names are very hard to convert into English language, because as time went on the words were changed.

This follows with a list of fields

Gort na Ceárdhna,

Leac Amháin,

Páirc na Scoile

Páirc na Loca

Páirc an Tíge

Páirc na Claise

Gort Caol

Árd na Gaoithe

Páirc ó (?)

Páirc Garbh

Páirc Caol

Gort an Tobair

Cnucán (?) Dóighthe

Cnucán Reamhar

Cár na Caoirig

Páirc Núa(?)

Páirc Árd

Túirín Ciaráin

Dún Beag

Páirc an Tigh(?)

The following is a list of coastal names

Carraigléa

Bun Naun (?) Locán

Illaunathough

Carraig an Éisc

Faill na gCaorach

Carraig an Éisc

Faill na dTaidg

Many of those places and names are to be found in many places through-out the Island such as "Tuirín Ciaráin". There is a strand called "Tráigh Ciaráin" and is still known by the same name and we conclude from that, that St. Kieran must have landed on the strand once upon a time. It is also known that St. Kieran was in the Country many Place Names years before St Patrick, and we conclude that Tuirín Ciaráin has some connection with St Cieran. There are many more names of the same kind.

## 41 Place Names

*Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Rerrin (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, Age 55, Rerrin*

Beare Island like many other places on the west coast of Ireland abounds with place-names mostly Irish. With the dying out of the Irish language however these names became dissipated and many changes have occurred in the pronunciation since their origination. Therefore the derivation is complicated and very often we err in the simplification of the words. The townland in which I reside is enriched with those names here are some of them:-

The name "Baoi" is very prevalent in the South-West coast of Ireland the Irish for Bantry Bay being Bádhdh Baoi and for the Dursey Island being Inis Baoí. There is a rock on the north side of the Island called Carraig Baoi so we presume that some chieftain name Baoi was resident in Beara in olden times and that those bays and islands must have been called after him - Carraig Baoi meaning the rock of Baoi.

Turk Island:- this is called after the Turks who died of a highly contagious and who are buried there. There are also some mounds there probably to mark their burial places.

Bank Strand: regarded as the finest strand in Bank contains four smaller strands. Hence it's name. At the mouth of the strand there are rocks called

the "Palmer's Rocks" after the men who used fish in that part long ago and after whom the townland is named. There is also a shady strand called also Palmer's Cove but it is now called "Cuasín" the little Coos. Place Names Traighín:- the little strand.

Gealtraigh:- the white strand because of its great stretches of sand and gravel.

Ceann Oileáin = the head of the Island. The east end of the island has always been called Ceann Oileáin.

Carraig a' Mhadra = The Dog Rock or the Perch. This rock has been the finishing place of many ships.

Carraig na Madraí = small dangerous breakers near the Dog Rock

The South Coast has many names for its strands and points like:-

Traigh na Leach:-

the strand of the Flag Stones because the strand is full of these fine flag-stones.

Cuas na dTarbh

many farm animals were lost off this cliff and that is the reason for its name

Cairrgín

the little rock

## 42 Place Names

*Leon Ó Súilleabháin, Ballynakilla (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Conchubhar Ó Súilleabháin, Age 60, Ballynakilla*

Bere Island like many other places in Ireland has many place names. The townland in which I live is called Ballinakilla which comes from the Irish Baile na Cille. Nearly every field has an Irish name. There is Gorta Garbh which means the rough field and Gorta Gearra which means the short field.

There are many common names such as Pairc na Scoile, Páirc Foghanta, Gorta Buidhe and Sleibhín Báidhte. The meaning of Pairc na Scoile is the field of the school and the meaning of Gorta Buidhe is the yellow field and it is so called because it is all rocks and very little grass grows on it. There are

also many names of places in the hill such as:- Fail na dTadhg, Fail Briste, Dún Beag and Láirtheach. There is also a small hill called Cnocáinín Seanín Ó Murcadha.

Ballinakilla is divided into small townlands called Cill Bán, Gorta Móra, and Clocán na gCat. There is a very long deep valley which is called Cumar. There are also various names of strands in Ballinakilla, some of which are Tráigh Ciaráin, Tráigh Galla, Cé na bPoll and Gallín. It is said that St Kieran landed at Tráigh Ciaráin before St. Patrick came to Ireland. Gallín is so called because Place Names there are two long rocks going down into the sea from it and it is like a fork.

### 43 Place Names

*Seamus O Ceallacáin, Ardagh (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Padruig Ó Ceallacáin, Age 50, Ardagh*

Beare Island abounds in place names, and most of these are Irish names. Nearly all the fields have names and the meaning of these words are very obvious in some cases, but others are not easily explained. Most of the headlands have Irish names too. The name of the townland in which I live is Ardagh which means the "High Place".

There are four headlands running out parallel with one another and the names of these are Rinn na h-Eorna(?), Rinn na Curraig, Rinn na nGall, and Donovan's Point.

There is a field near the hill which is called Connacán Árd. It is higher than any other field around. There is another field called Gardín Doimhin which means "the deep garden". There are high rocks around it and it is situated in between these rocks. There is a place near the road called Sean-Tighe. There was an old house built there long ago, but now there are only part of the walls to be seen.

There is another field called Scoil and the people say that there Place Names was a school there long ago. There is another place near the road called Áth na Maidí. It is part of an old quarry.

## 44 Weather-Lore

*Pádrúig Ó Ceallacain, Ardagh (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Pádrúig Ó Ceallacain, Age 50, Ardagh*

There are many ways by which the change of the weather is observed. There are many signs and beliefs about the weather. People can tell whether the weather will change from good to bad or otherwise. Many sayings and signs are handed down to us from our forefathers. The sky is the most common way for observing the change.

”A red sky at night is a sheperd’s delight and a red sky in the morning is a sheperd’s warning” is one of the sayings. Another is ”a rainbow in the morning is a sailor’s warning.” When there is a ring around the moon it is a sign of rain. The movements of the birds is another way of telling the change of the weather. The movements of rooks[?] are [?] by some farmers.

If the rooks are settling noisily on the trees and flying hither and thither instead of going straight away a wet day is probable. If the swallow flies high it is a sign of fine weather, but when it is near the ground rain is to be expected. When the cormorant flies out to sea it is a sign of fine weather, but when it comes inland it is a sign of wet weather.

Animals are also very sensitive Weather-Lore to the change of the weather. When a cat sits with her back to the fire or washes over her ears it is a sign of wet weather. Cats also become restless and wander about the house when a thunderstorm is approaching. The braying of a donkey is said to be a sign of coming rain. Sheep in mountainous districts will change their feeding ground to the lee side of the lee side of the hills before the arrival of severe gales and rain.

## 45 Weather-Lore

*Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Rerrin (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, Age 55, Rerrin*

There are lots of local customs and beliefs with regards the weather. The forefathers of the people kept them and knew them and passed them on to their children who also passed them on and so on. The old people very proudly tell them when asked about the weather. What are the commonest

of them?

A red sky in the morning and a grey sky in the evening are signs of rain. When the sun sets in an apparent red hole rain will follow. If however the red rises up from the sun and the sun sets in a clear place we have a sure guarantee of fine weather. When "Moses" [?] Horns rise up from the sun we will have wind and rain but if the "Horns" come down from the sun we will have a calm. A fiery red sun is a sign of easterly wind. A halo around the sun is a sign of bad weather.

"When the moon is on its back

Fine weather there is no lack."

is one of their sayings. When the new moon is seen carrying the old moon in its arm rain is sure to follow. When a star is close behind the moon it is of a storm but when the star is in front we will have fine weather. When a star falls in a certain direction it indicates that the wind will come from that direction. It is also said that when a star falls it is a sign of a soul going to Heaven from Purgatory. Rainbows in the morning are sign of wind and on Saturday is sign of rain for the following. A halo around the moon may Weather-Lore pass away soon. A Saturday moon comes seven years too soon. Clouds racing across the sky indicate wind as also black clouds passing over sun and moon. Clouds like mackerel scales and mares' tails indicate wind and rain.

"Mares' tails and mackerel scales

Make lofty ships carry low sails."

Dark blue clouds indicate thunder and green coloured clouds wind. When swallows fly low rain will follow. Sea-gulls inland and crying mournfully are rain indicators. When the jack-snipe or "Gabhairín Reodha" is heard at night we will have fine weather but if heard in the day bad weather.

When the cat washes his face near the fire or when he lays with his back to the fire rain will follow as also dogs crying out in their sleep. When the hills appear to be near rain will follow. When the rocks shine it is a sign of rain. Ants resting on the ground are indicators of fine weather but when flying about rain.



## 46 Crafts

*Seán Ó Súilleabháin, Rerrin (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, Age 55, Rerrin*

The old people were very industrious who made their own candles etc. Of course it was necessary for them to make them inasmuch as they were not available in the shops in those days. The principal of those were candle-making, rope making, spinning and weaving and of course basket-making which is still carried on.

The candle-making was a very important because it supplied the people with light. Previous to this they had the rush-lights but that was a very poor means of illumination. It was made of the white part of the rush and whale-oil held in a scallop-shell. Then the people thought of making the candles. The essentials for the making of candles were tallow, a mould and a wick which was made of cotton thread. The mould was a little tin vessel about nine inches in length and about half an inch in diameter and tapered in the top like an ordinary candle. This was turned upside down and the wick held in place by two nails by which the wick was twisted up. When the wick was a certain tightness the hot tallow was poured in and allowed to get hard. The nails were cut off and the candle was made.

The making of baskets was very common in this part of the country long ago and everybody who owned a donkey was able to make baskets. There were various kinds of baskets:- the large basket with "windows" called a "ciseán", a lobster pot which was fairly Crafts large and which was very hard to make. At first eighteen rods were stood upright and it was around those that the basket was made. A strange thing about the basket is that it is the top of the basket that is first made.

Rope-making was very common in olden days and everybody made their own rope called "soogans". The sheaves of straw were held in an instrument called a "cruaicin" and were twisted up very hard. Those were very good ropes because they used give and take with the weather.

## 47 Crafts

*Conchubhar Ó h-Aractáin, Greenane (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Conchubar Ó h-Aractáin, Age 60, Greenane*

Long ago the people used to make a great many things for their own use and that was a great thing. Because they did not have to buy them as we have to do now. Candle-making was one of the commonest of these things they used to make. The candles were made as follows:-

They used a mould for making the candles, the fat of a cow was first melted and the mould which was narrow at one end, and through the mould was the wick and at the narrow end of the mould there was a knot in the wick. The fat was then thrown in through the broad end and the end of the wick was attached to the middle of a nail to keep it straight.

When the fat was again hard the mould was heated a little and then the candle would fall out. It was said that the candles should be made for a year before using, if it was used before then it would burn too quickly.

Spinning another common cork which was carried on in this part of the country and in that way they used to make a sufficient amount of cloth for themselves. The most of the used keep sheep at that time and from those they used get the wool was first carded into rolls Crafts similar to a scythe-stone. It was then spun into thread and it was similar to the thread you would buy in the shops for knitting. The thread was then woven into cloth.

Basket-making was also carried on in this part of the country, but it was not as common as the other ones I mentioned. Baskets are are aslo made on the Island, and they are made with rods at first a number of rods are placed standing on the ground and which formed a circle and these were called "standards" The standards differed in accordance with the size of the basket Then the rods were plaited into the standards.

## 48 Local Customs

*Leon Ó Súilleabháin, Ballynakilla (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Conchubhar Ó Súilleabháin, Age 60, Ballynakilla*

In the peninsula of Beara many of the old customs are still observed. In other places all the old customs are not carried on at all now. Some of the old customs are :-

The spilling of salt is a sign of a quarrel. To put an article of clothing on

inside out is considered a sign of good luck. Three candles lighting together are regarded as a sign of a wedding or a wake. To sing at one's meals is a sign of disappointment. A dog crying in the night is a prophesy of death.

No important work is started on Monday or any journey is not started. Before a new dwelling is inhabited sheep must be housed there first. Anyone never dips a milky vessel into a well or milky water is never trown into a stream but on dry ground. The afterbirth when a cow calves must be placed on a nearby hedge. A cat with his back to the fire or seagulls inland is a sign of broken weather. It is lucky to come across a pin in the morning or a four-holed object like a button.

Bonfires are lit in the Local Customs fields on St. John's Eve and the farm stock are supposed to receive a blessing if the fire is brought amongst them.

Each night before the family retires a wet sod of turf is placed under the glowing embers which will form the nucleus of the fire next morning.

## 49 The Old School

*Séamas Ó Ceallacain, Ardagh (LC-B) [\[Back To Top\]](#)*

*Informant: Pádrúig Ó Ceallacain, Age 50, Ardagh*

### The Old School

Before this present school was made there was a small school at the west of Ardagh's Hill in the townland of Greenane. This school was a small thatched house. The entrance was by a door at one end and there were no windows, only a hole at the west end. The stones were used afterward to make fences.

There were about thirty pupils going to the school and they had two or three books. There were two teachers attending, a Principal teacher and an Assistant teacher.

It was eighteen feet long, nine feet broad, and eight feet high. It was closed in the year eighteen fifty six and then this present school was opened. It was the pupils that used to pay the teachers in those days and each pupil used to pay a half a crown for a quarter of a year.

## 50 Local Cures

*Julia Harrington, Greenane (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: John Harrington, Greenane*

In olden times the people suffered from many diseases just as we do to - day, but in those days medical men were almost unknown. therefore people had to treat themselves or depend on their neighbours who may possibly be more skilled than themselves.

The practice, being traditional, the people, thoroughly relied on its application for the recovery of a patient. Some of those cures were good and had a measure of success but others were nonsensical and originated from superstition and charms. Many diseases were cured by herbs found in the fields and Local Cures many of the older generation would pick those herbs to - day and show how they could be used.

The following diseases and their cures are known to us being handed down from our ancestors: -

For toothache they used the liquid that remained in the stem of a smoked pipe. It was put into the tooth which gave instant relief.

Extraction:- A string was tied around the tooth and being held by a second person who also held a lighted candle which he pushed against the face of the afflicted person who suddenly jerked his head away to find the tooth drawn.

Ring-worm. was treated with the blood of a black cat.

Rheumatism. Sea water in which a herb called "button grass" was boiled and was applied to the affected parts.

Measles. A medicine made from the root of a weed called "Lismore" and a quantity of old whiskey.

Thrush. Honey rubbed down the child throat with a feather. Charm - to hold a goose so that its breath entered the child's mouth.

Fever. Drinks made from boiled wheat to which a little whey was added and a quantity Local Cures of blood was taken from the person by a skilled man called a "quack" presumable to reduce the temperature.

Whooping Cough. As much donkey's milk as could be procured.

Abscess or boils were cured by a poultice made from a poisonous plant the

root of which was boiled bruised into pulp and applied. This plant was known as the "river parsnip"

Cuts and bruises. A plant called rib-leaf was chewed in the mouth and placed on the wound. Cobweb was used to stop the flow of blood.

Persons who died suddenly were supposed to be carried away the good people and others who suffered from prolonged diseases or decline were supposed to be taken away and replaced by a witch or wizard or the ghost of the original person.

This ghost or witch the people often tried to expel from their houses in a most crude and cruel fashion such as throwing fire on them, pouring paraffin oil, and burning them over a fire made of brushwood. We know of course that our medicines to-day have originated from the herbs used by our forefathers.

## 51 Local Cures

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Toothache - The cure for toothache was to put whiskey and salt into the tooth.

Ringworm - the cure was to kill a black cat and rub the blood to the ringworm.

Rheumatism - The cure long ago was to get salt water and weeds boiled together and bathe the sore part.

Fever - They used whey - the people would boil buttermilk and newmilk together and give it to the sick person.

Wildsage was a cure a cough. They used to boil it and drink the juice of it.

Camomile was used for a cold. It was drawn like tea and then they used to drink it.

Sorethroat - They used to put boiled hot potatoes in a woollen cloth and make a poultice of it. If you had a sore hand or a cut in it they would use a plant called ribleaf, they used to call it in Irish "Slánlus"

## 52 Famine Times

(LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

There is not a man or woman in Bere-Island over fifty years who has not a good many stories about the great famine of 1846 and 1847, as it was all told to them in their youth by their parents who I suppose had a good experience of those days. The chief cause of the famine of those years was the failure of the potatoe crop they being their only support for every meal, blackened those two years in the ground and then the poor people were left without any food.

The people were so hungry that they use to eat horses, rats, rotten turnips, and pick the eyes *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal Famine Times ar lean* out of the blackened potatoes and keep them for seed. They died in such great numbers that they were never put in coffins but carried to the church in baskets and thrown into some holes. Even some people were buried around their own homes and their graves are still to be seen in some places.

At that time there lived a man and his wife and family in the townland of Ballinakilla just a few yards from where I live now. These poor people had not a bite to eat from morning to night nor had they a penny to buy food. One day he and his wife went down to the sea to gather some weeds, and the first hook he pulled up he noticed a strange stone attached to the weeds.

He brought it home and showed it to his neighbours, who told him that there was some mineral in it. At that time there lived an agent in Milcove called Mr. Patrick Sullivan and he bought the stone from the man and gave him a few shillings, but Patrick himself got a good few pounds for it, as it was known afterwards that there was gold in the stone. From that time on the place where he found the gold is called "Cóisín Órlaigh".

It is easily known nowadays that Bere- *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal Famine Times ar lean* Island in the olden days was very thickly populated there being over 600 rate-payers and now there are only 163, and what made the hunger still worse the English Government bought all the grain of the country for a very small price. Then it was brought back to Ireland again after it was ground, and was sold for a high-price, but the people were not able to buy it. They also had another diet called coarse-meal but it was of the worst quality, so bad that it killed some of the people.

O how the poor, starving, people of that period would long to have a piece of bread like we have at present.

This district was very thickly populated before that because there were three times as many people on the island as there are now. When the blight came on one stalk it ran through the whole field but there was not any sign of a potatoe under the stalks. They were sown during the following year just like the people sow them nowadays because they got some of the seed from England and Scotland. During the years of '46-'47 the people had to eat nettles grass and everything they could get and it was *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal* Famine Times that which gave them the sickness.

They died in great numbers and if one person died their friends carried them to the graveyard in baskets where they were all buried in one grave without coffins. Once there was a girl bringing her brother to the graveyard and with the weight of her brother she fell dead, and where she there was a heap of stones, and ever since anyone who passed that place had to throw a stone on the heap and say a prayer. This place is still to be seen to the west of Mr. Michael Murphy's house in Ardragh.

Cholera was the name of the disease which killed the people. The English government gave the people a little relief but this did not help them very much because nothing was even sold at that time. Some few people escaped it because when they were digging the potatoes they always left a few in the ground and then when they needed them badly they always had some to eat.

## 53 Shipwrecks

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John Harrington, Greenane*

On the night of the 17th February in the year 1876 a vessel named "The Joseph Howe" was wrecked in the of Bantry Bay and convenient to the entrance to Beare-haven harbour. She was a vessel of about 400 tons burden and was of the Brigantine class, carrying a cargo of mahogany from South America and bound to the port of Cork for orders to where she was to deliver her cargo.

Being several months at sea on such a long voyage some of the crew fell sick owing to lack of fresh food and for want of medical attendance two of the

men died and were buried at sea. When nearing Bantry Bay coming from the west the Captain decided to put into Beare-haven harbour having still two sick men on board but in his way to the entrance a thick fog made visibility very bad and at mid-night he found the ship was being driven ashore on a dangerous reef in a place known the bight of "Fiall na Diag". The captain knew his ship was doomed and his first thought was of the sick men he decided to lower a Shipwrecks boat and placing these men on board he began to lower away but the boat was smashed against the ship's side by a heavy sea and both men were drowned. Soon they were driven on the rocks where they remained until daylight. Two men arrived and at once descended the cliff to render help and save the lives of the men still clinging to the rigging of the ship.

These men whose names were Michael Shanahan and Denis Harrington were brave and fearless men and descended this precipice which was about 300 feet high at a great risk and by their direction the crew got a rope ashore to the end of which they tied a barrel which carried the rope to where the rescuers stood. They then secured the end to a large stone the other end on board was taken to the winch and hove tight, and by means of both rescuers got on board the ship and by the same means the crew were taken ashore and hauled up the cliff and taken to the homes of Shanahan and Harrington and cared for until the report of the wreck reached the owners and provision made to carry the seamen home.

The ship now a total wreck her Shipwrecks valuable cargo floating about, was picked up by numerous small boats and conveyed to Castletownbere. The crew of the "Joseph Howe" consisted of ten all told when leaving port for homeward voyage - two died of sickness, two were drowned, the night of the disaster. The six remaining were of different nationalities, one Austrian, one Dane, two Irish, one English and one Portuguese.

## 54 Funny Story

*Mary Quinlan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

One night two people were coming with a horse and car. When they were coming along the road it was late at night and they saw a person up against



the fence. The horse put his mouth down on the person's head and the person put up her hand to save herself from the horse. The horse got frightened and the person disappeared. One night a party of fishermen were fishing along the shore, a man spoke to them from the land and one of the men in the boat began joking him.

Then the man came again and tried to catch the person who spoke. The rest of the men carried him home. The man followed them until they reached the house. When they got inside the door he turned and left an awful groan.

## 55 Composition

*Margaret Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

In the olden days big steam-ships were rarely seen, but sailing ships always came into the harbour for shelter if there was bad weather out at sea. It happened one evening in the month of February 1842 that there was a French ship with a cargo of wines, making for the harbour, but owing to the great gale that blew from the south-east she was unable to beat her way up the bay. The people in the townland of Greenane at that time could not possibly go to pilot her in.

As night came on the gale blew stronger and stronger, and she dropped her anchor south-east of "Faoc" rock in a lee shore. Her anchor dragged and she hit in the east end of "Carraig Gríanáin" and was lost with all hands. The people of Greenane watched all night on the shore but could not go to the rescue. When day dawned the bodies of the crew were found dashed against the rocks. They were gathered up and buried in a nice plot at a place called "Bun-Abha" in the townland of Greenane, and their graves are still to be seen, called the "French men's graves." This ship's name was the "León" and it is said that anyone who was born the year Composition of the "León" had never any luck.

## 56 Shipwreck - Reggio

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Michael O' Neill, Rerrin*

In former years there were many ship-wrecks around the coast of Beare Island because they had no knowledge of where rocks or breakers were and therefore they were unprepared for the danger. There was a big boat went on the Dog Rock off the Island's point in the month of October 1908. She was known as the "Reggio" a coal collier and was coming from England with a cargo of three or four thousand tons to supply the British fleet which lay at anchor in the harbour.

There was a heavy fog the night she was coming and as the crew did not know the course to take, and she ran on the Perch or dog rock. It was a sad disaster but they had life-boats on board and they all came ashore, but the ship was a total wreck and she remained there until the storm and wind washed the wreck away. Some of the cargo was taken by the people of Beare Island, Carbery, and the mainland, and the British fleet had some tons of it also.

When she went on the rock she stood straight just as if she were anchored and she remained in the same position for eighteen Shipwreck - Reggio months or so, until the cargo was discharged. She was one of the biggest boats ever lost on that rock. Another boat which went there was the "Bessie Young," she was a three masted schooner and had a small supply of coal. She remained on the rock also until she was wrecked to bits.

Brigid Neill, Lawrencecove, from

Michael O'Neill, Ardragh.

## 57 Shipwreck

*Mary Callaghan, Ardagh (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Patrick Callaghan, Age 57, Ardagh*

About forty-five years ago there was a rowing boat coming from Castletown, three men were on board it and they were drowned, namely: Mortimer Downey, John Orpen, and Jim Callaghan. Another drowning occurred some years before that. At that time the people used carry their butter to the market in Bantry. Three men and two women were on board and the boat overturned as the day was bad and rough. One of the men who was drowned was my grand uncle John Hurley. All the bodies were recovered and buried.

A three masted schooner named "The Fox of Runcorn" was lost in the "dog rock" Shipwreck She had a cargo of slate on board and was coming from Penarth. Another schooner called "Lowangsaga" was coming from Cardiff with a cargo of coal and the wind drove her ashore and smashed her.

## 58 Shipwrecks

*Sheila Sidley (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Tim Sidley, Age 55, Rerrin*

Lots of tragedies happened years ago around Beare Island shores and also shipwrecks. The people long ago used to go through great hardships and danger. There were no shops or flour stores in Beare Island and the poor people had to go in small boats to Castletown for all their provisions and they used to bring their fish to Bantry in small boats about eighty years ago. A very sad event happened to five people coming from Bantry, two women and three men were drowned. The boat was loaded with provision and the night was so dark that they never saw the rock which is called the Galla rock just to the east of Reon Carraig light house and to the west of it the rock is call the perch.

Five ships went to the bottom but there were no lives lost, and to the north of it is called the dog rock where eight young men were lost about fifty years ago. They were going Shipwrecks ar lean with their nets to fish all night and one man was late for to go with them and they were not long gone from the shore when they were struck up on the rock. Another ship was wrecked to the South of Beare Island and the name of her was the "Joseph Howe". She was loaded with mahogany to Cork for orders bound. "In Fiall-na Diag Beare Island side her destiny she found." There is a very nice song composed about it. All the crew were saved only the little cabin boy was lost. They were saved by throwing ropes from the shore. This happened about sixty four years ago. Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal

## 59 My Home District

*Julia Harrington, Greenane (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

The name of the town-land is Greenane, Parish of Killocan - aonac and the

Barony of Beare. It derives its name - Greenane from its situation being in the southern side of the island and facing the sun. There are fourteen families resident there consisting of seventy eight persons all told but in former years a much greater number resided there as is shown by the number of ruins which are to be seen here and there.

Of these there are seven which can still be identified as dwelling place in days gone by. The families having emigrated to America. The houses are well built with slated roofs and the family name most common is Harrington. There a few old people none of whom can converse in Irish although they could probably understand My Home District it when spoken to them. All can relate stories very intelligently. The town-land of Greenane might be described as a rocky and stony valley surrounded on the north and west by hills, to the south and east by lesser hills thus forming a saucer shaped valley.

## 60 My Home District

*Brigid Neill, Ardagh (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Ardagh*

My house is situated in the townland of Ardragh which was once called No 1 and in the barony of Beare. The population of the townland is about one hundred and ten and Sullivan is the most common name there. The majority of the houses have slated roofs except one thatched and about six zinc roofed houses.

There are not very many old people in the townland only two who are over seventy years. They can speak a little Irish for example "Conus taoi? ""Dia is Muire dhuit" etc. They could tell many stories in English but they do not know any in Irish because they did not learn but the English language.

We know that the houses were more My Home District plentiful long ago because there are ruins of many in the townland in which people were living about sixty or seventy years ago. There is one still to be seen to the west of Lonehort Battery where a man and his sister lived about fifty years ago. There is a fire place and settle still there, but the roof was taken off a year ago. Two others are a little bit further west and now used as cow-houses or hay sheds. Nearly every family had some members who emigrated to America because they had to seek employment and some of them used go

away in ships and never return home again.

There are small heights here and there in the townland and a good part of the land is marshy but there are only four or five bogs in it. Ardragh which means High Fort takes its name from a high fort which the English built to keep a watch for any ships which would be coming to help the Irish.

## 61 My Home District

*Margaret Sullivan, Ardagh (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

There are many townlands in Beare-Island namely Greenane, Clougland, Ardragh, Rerrin etc., but the one in which I live is called Ardagh so called My Home District from its situation near a hill. There are twenty-one houses in Ardagh most of which are slated, two or three thatched, and a few zinced. The population of the townland is one hundred and five persons.

At the south-side of the townland there stands a mountain about 580 ft high with a martello tower on the very summit of it, built by the English in the year 1798. The land is flat and fertile in most places with only two streams as they are called running through it-, one dividing Ardagh from Ballinakilla and the other entering the sea at a place called "Góléen."

There is only one very old man in the townland, infact he is the oldest man in Beare-Island. He is eighty-eight years of age and is able to go about the fields every day. His name is Mr Jeremiah Hanly and he lives in a place called the Point. This man is not able to tell many old stories, as he has most of them forgotten now. Sullivan is the most common name in Ardagh. There is not a field in the townland without having a ruin of an old house.

## 62 My Home District

*Lizzie Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Philip Sullivan, Rerrin*

The townland that I am living in is called Cloughland which means rocky land. There are twenty families living in it and twenty houses - seven of which are slate, seven zinc and six thatch. The names most common in this townland are Sullivans. The houses were much more numerous than they are

now and they are all close together. Most of the people emigrated to foreign countries in former years. They went to America and Australia when they were very young.

The land around here is very hilly and there is a lot of marsh land stretching along it also which is good feeding land for cattle. There are no rivers but two lakes one situated in the west of the Cloughland and the other in the middle of Cloughland and there is a stream leading from the one in the West to the sea which never dries and the other lake supplies the British Military with water. One old woman lives in the townland whose name is Mrs Sidley.

### **63 The Holy Well**

*Margaret Sullivan, Ardagh (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

At this well "rounds" are performed and decades of the Rosary and prayers are said. There is a story told that a ship came into the harbour and there was a blind sailor on board. As he slept that night he had a dream that if he went to this well which was in the mountain that he would be cured. Guided by another in the morning he went ashore and found the well and at that moment his sight was restored. The Holy Well were used for Mass purposes so some of the old people tell us.

It stands to reason, because history tells us that there was a church to be built a few hundred yards away from the well about seven hundred years ago. The stones were collected and are still to be seen in a place well known to everybody as "Lathar Séipeal". This well and church must be very ancient as it would be very likely that it was from this well our church long ago derived its name St Michael's Church.

### **64 Christmas Customs**

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Long ago Christmas was thought more of than at the present time as money was not so plentiful as it is now when the Christmas cake and puddings and whiskey was bought, and it was thought a lot of because some of the houses

could not have it only at that time. Some houses used to kill a cow and others a pig or a sheep and they used to give pieces around to the houses and the rest used to be salted down. Long ago the Christmas Customs people of all the houses used to go to confession and communion on Christmas day. Long ago the people used to have a better Christmas than they have now as things were not so plentiful as they are now they used to save up and have a great feast.

## **65 Christmas Customs**

*Margaret Sullivan, Ardagh (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Christmas was celebrated in a much different way in the olden days to it's celebration now. Nowadays a great supper is held in every house Christmas Eve night of every kind of sweet cakes, and on Christmas day we have a great dinner of roast turkey, and pudding etc.

Long ago on Christmas night they use to have a large pot of potatoes and an amount of beef as a cow was always, the day before the feast. After the dinner whiskey and rum was drunk for the rest of the night. As a preperation for the feast, every shelf, window, dresser and all that were in the house were covered with shelf-paper and tissue paper and not a chimney was left without being brushed with a brush. Very few clocks were in the parish Christmas Customs at that time, and therefore the people had no idea of the time during the night and they all use to get up in the middle of the night and go to the church to take their seats early as the priest was always in very early from Castletown to say Mass.

## **66 Christmas Customs**

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

Christmas long ago was held with great demonstration. The first sign of the approach of the festival - the women went to Castletown with the fowl and then brought home the Christmas goods. The members of the family were very proud because they knew they had some luxuries in the house which were unknown during the year.

The next sign was the school-boys with big sticks going out to catch the wren and the wren bush was prepared with brightly coloured papers and the wren was placed on the topmost bough. The dressing of the shop-windows was the next excitement the children crowding at them in admiration. When darkness fell on Christmas Eve the candle was lighted reverently by the father of the family Christmas Customs while the rest stood round and made the Sign of the Cross.

Christmas morning dawned. Breakfast was celebrated by the cutting of the currant cake. The dinner was held soon after Mass. One house would kill a cow, and give a piece of her to the neighbours. When night fell the fireplace was heaped with logs of wood, and punch was handed round.

On St Stephen's day the people visited each other and carried whiskey, because it was very cheap. The children used to rush to see the crib. The joy of Christmas in olden times was greater than now. Amusements are common nowadays all the year round and therefore they are not wished for at Christmas. The hard-working mothers used to have their own day on "Little Christmas Day."

## 67 Christmas Customs

*Brigid Neill, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Michael O' Neill, Age 58, Ardagh*

A candle was kept lighting all during the night just like we have nowadays but they used not have as many novelties. They went to Mass in the middle of the night because they had no time and people often met ghost and spirits on their journey to the Christmas Customs church but people do not see these things now.

## 68 St Stephen's Day

*Lillie Cotter (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John Mullins, Age 60, Bear Island*

St. Stephen's day every person longs to listen to the "Wren boys. Great is the joy when they come because they are covered with masks and sheep skins and other things and they use to go around in great batches to every house



singing the sing which runs thus. -

”The wren, the wren the king of all birds.

St Stephen’s day he was caught in the furze.

Although he is little his family’s great.

I pray you, good lady, give us a treat.

My box would speak if it had but a tongue.

And a penny or two would do it no wrong.

Sing holly, sing ivy, sing ivy sing holly. St Stephen’s Day A drop just to drink would drown melancholy

And if you draw it of the best

I hope in heaven your soul may rest.

But if you draw it of the small

It won’t agree with the Wren boys at all.”

They keep going around all day and when the night comes they divide the money between them and sometimes they have a fight between themselves.

## 69 The Care of the Feet

*Julia Harrington, Rerrin (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr John Harrington, Greenane*

In former times people reached the age of men and women before they wore shoes or boots and then only occasionally. During the Summer months the farming was done without boots and as the bad weather approached boots were worn. At present boots and shoes are repaired by a handy man in Rerrin Village but a few years ago a shoe-maker was living in the centre of the Island. He used to make working boots for men and repair other shoes.

When old women used to go to Castle-town they used to put their boots in a basket and walk bare-foot to the pier and then put them on. Sometimes clogs are worn at present but our fore-father wore them as we do the leather shoes to-day. There were times when people wore shoes with leather uppers and soles called ”gutta perca.” As long as can be remembered leather was never made in the district. The children at present go to The Care of the

Feet school bare-foot but only in very fine weather in Summer.

## 70 Tailored Clothes

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Michael O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

There is usually a tailor in every district and Beare Island is no exception. Two work in the district - one in a tailor's shop at Rerrin, and the other works at home. They do not stock any cloth but when a person gets anything made he usually buys it in the shops and brings it to the tailor. The people wear more tailored clothes than ready made because they can get them made to their measure.

Formerly the tailors used go from house to house to make clothes for the people but now they work in a tailor's shop. The implements he uses are a foot machine, tapes, a big scissors, a thimble which has no bottom to it, needles - large and small, and spools of thread and in strong cloth he uses housewife thread. People do not make any shirts nowadays but they knit socks, jumpers, caps, gloves, and pullovers. They Tailored Clothes buy the thread in the shops because they do not spin it at home. In the olden times there was a spinning wheel in every house but there is not one in the district now. There are special clothes worn on certain occasions such as on the feast of Corpus Christi the children wear white and red but the elderly people wear the ordinary clothes. When a relative dies the people of the house wear black for a year or so and at weddings white is usually worn.

## 71 Local Monuments

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J Harrington, Greenane*

In Beare Island marking out the centre of the Island stands a huge stone. A legend tells us that a giant in Carbury used it as a hurly stick to strike another stone which fell on a field in Mr Patrick Greene's farm in Ardagh. When the giant hit the other stone he left the hurly fly and it landed in the centre of the Island. It is known as the "gullán".

In Greenane down by the sea in a place called "bun abha" three stones stand

erect marking the graves of three Frenchmen who were shipwrecked. In our cemetery are still to be seen the common stones which were placed over the dead with carvings. If these head-stones were cleaned to-day you could see the person's name. In Ardragh there is a monument called the "Druids' altar" made of huge but on account of its being so ancient some of the Local Monuments stones are knocked down. It is in this monument sacrifice was offered by the druids in olden times.

## 72 Local Monuments

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

There are ancient crosses and standing stones in the parish - the crosses are chiefly in the churchyard but there are standing stones around the parish. One stone stands in one of the fields of our farm and a number of big slabs stand about a quarter of a mile from Rerrin which is called the "Druids Altar." It is situated in the corner of a field by the roadside and has four stones, one on each side and one in the middle while the sixth stands and supports the others.

Ornamented stones and stones with carved letters are in the churchyard. It is mostly all Beare Island people who are buried there except a few military who are buried in one portion of the churchyard. The stones were erected to the memory of those who are dead, and also, so that their friends would be buried beside them. There are not any stones with peculiar markings, or strokes, or hollows found in the parish. Monuments are not to be found in any part of the Island except in the churchyard where they are differently erected - some with crosses on the top and the Local Monuments names of the deceased carved out and others with no crosses.

## 73 Local Monuments

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Florence Sullivan, Ardagh*

There are only two standing stones in the district that I know of - one situated in the townland of Greenane and the other in Ballinakilla. The one in Greenane is very large and an ancient one. Its height overground is about

ten feet and some people say that it was placed there to mark the centre of the Island but that is not so. Some more learned people say that it was a great battle was fought and won there, and this stone was put standing there in honour of their victory, whether this is so or not we do not know as we have no history to tell us about it.

The stone in Ballinakilla is a much smaller one and we do not know anything about it but the place around it is called "Rínne-Golláin." I know of two stones in the townland of Ardagh with writing called Ogham which was their method of writing in olden times. One is to be seen by the roadside near Mr. J. Sullivan's house, and the other is at the entrance of a "lios" in Mr E. Mc Carthy's farm. There are Local Monuments four standing stones placed there as grave marks, situated a few yards from the near Mr John Sullivan's house, and there are several of the same grave-marks in Turk Island.

There is a stone-circle to be seen in Greenane mountain, and history tells that it was a place of pagan Worship. Now in the centre of this circle there is a stone standing which was their altar. There is but one "Druids Altar" to be seen in Beare Island and that is in Ardragh. There are four big stones standing from the ground and three across the top.

## 74 Marriage Customs

*Crissy Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mrs Margaret Sullivan, Age 85, Rerrin*

Marriges frequently take place here during Shrove. The unlucky days for marriages are Moday, Wednesday and Friday. When the people are coming home after being married the other people always light bon-fires for them. Easter is also an unlucky time for marriages. On the wedding-day there is usually a great feast held in the bride's home and a big ball in the night. All the friends of the district are invited to it. The friends always give presents - the girls give presents to the bride and the men to the bridegroom. Sometimes there are matches made this district and money is given as dowry. If they are unable to give money they give goods, stock and lands. In this district at every marriage there is a Nuptial Mass and a Nuptial blessing. The people Marriage Customs are very careful not to break any delph on the wedding-day as it would bring bad luck to the bride or bridegroom.

## 75 Marriage Customs

*Margaret Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Florence Sullivan, Ardagh*

Marriages were celebrated in a much different manner in the olden times than nowadays. The people were married at the very young age of seventeen, and the women were dressed in a beautiful, dear, red or blue hooded cloak descending to the knees and tightened with a belt. The men wore suits as they wear now. Potatoes, plenty of meat and whiskey were the order of the day, while the house was packed until the break of day.

The newly married people never went on a honey-moon but celebrated the week at home, or going on invitations to their neighbours' houses. Marriage Customs The boy and girl never went to the church together, but one went before the other. If delph was broken at the feast that would be a sign of bad luck for the newly-married persons.

## 76 Old Houses

*Julia Harrington, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

As far as I can ascertain the houses of this district were as a rule thatched in former times. A slated or zink roofed house was sometimes found but thatched roofed houses were more common. Oaten straw, reed and rushes were used as thatched. A bed was place near the fire in the kitchen and the eldest member of the family or a sick member slept in it.

The fire-place was in the gable-wall and the front of the chimney was made of stones and mortar. The old people still tell stories of houses having no chimney but they placed a bottomless basket on the opening in the gable-wall and bound it around with straw.

The people in former times had very little glass for windows and those who had none Old Houses used fill a bag of hay and close the opening with it. In every old house there was an earthen floor and when it began to wear it was repaired with a new coat of earth. Half-doors were common long ago but to-day there are two or three to be seen in the district. Bog-turf was plentiful long ago and wood also and that was used for fire. The fir that was found in

the bog was used for fire and a piece of it was used for light. Another way of showing light was the rushlight - the rush was peeled and soaked in fat. Candles were made locally and the tallow was got by the sea when some ship was wrecked.

## 77 Old Houses

*Margaret Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

In former times mostly all the houses in the district were thatched mostly with straw and about a dozen slates and they were tied down with súgáns twisted with a "crócín" made from straw. There were a few slated with slate got near "Fiall-na-Diag" in Beare Island and more slate was got from "Snámh" near Bantry. Most of the old houses used have a bed in one side of the fire called "Réidh-Leabhaidh". The fire-place was always kept in Old Houses the gable wall. All the houses in the district as far as can be remembered were made of clay and mortar, with an exception of two or three which the front of the chimney's used to be made with rods and bags to leave the smoke pass up, and there was never a house without some kind of a chimney. Over a hundred years ago there was never a pane of glass in the windows only bags were put up when the wind would blow. The doors were made of rods with a cord on either side and they all bound together very tightly these were called "curiógs". Half-doors were very common in the district in former days but now there are only two or three.

## 78 Old Houses

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Michael O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

The old floors were made of earth, but now they are either cemented or boarded. Half-doors were common in the parish formerly every farm-house had one to keep out the fowl. There fuel was mainly turf and wood, and very little coal was used in those days. Splinters of fir and rushes which were in a shell of fish-oil were used as night lights and also candles which they made at home with tallow and wick. Old Houses [-]

## 79 Marriage Customs

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

It is usually from Christmas to the end of Shrove that marriages take place in Beare Island, and also during Summer. There are not any months or days thought unlucky for marrying except Lent and Advent, but Shrove is the principal period. In former times matches were made in the district but there were not any made recently. There is a dowry given in most occasions especially if the property is big. Stock is rarely given nowadays like former times when cows, sheep etc. were given but goods are given as presents.

Marriages never took place in the house, it is always performed in the church and a wedding takes place in the house. During the wedding feast friends and neighbours are invited to the house where they sing and dance and amuse themselves in every way especially during the night and very often the reception carries on after midnight. Straw boys do not visit the house in Beare Island neither do they have wedding processions except those who are in the wedding and it is by motor car or trap they go when the journey is long. Marriage Customs [-]

## 80 Marriage Customs

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

In my district Friday is thought to be an unlucky day and also the month of May. It is the custom nowadays that the bride wears a veil. People who are of a marriageable age and who do not get married during Shrove are supposed to be shipped off to the "Skelligs" an island off the west coast of Kerry, early on Shrove Tuesday and end their days there. On the wedding-day care must be taken than any delph will not be smashed as this would be a sign of bad luck for the newly married pair. A very nice custom that is in Beare-Island is a marriage is always celebrated with Nuptial Mass and blessing.

## 81 Local Fairs

*Julia Harrington, Greenane (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

The advantages of Beare Island are many and disadvantages are few and one of these is having to cross the sea to a fair. Fairs are generally held in town or adjacent to towns in enclosures called a fair green. Occasionally buyers travel through the country and buy numbers of cattle which they collect and ship them off to the towns. In towns without a fair green or a town square the animals are sold in the street.

It is customary to pay toll when going into market but this does not apply everywhere. The amount paid is two or three pence per head of cattle the money to the corporation in town where one exists. When the animals are exposed for sale the buyers come along and price them after which a lot of arguing is entered into by the seller and buyer, the seller endeavouring to drive the best bargain he can and after a lot of stick welding and hand striking the bargain is made. The money is then paid over to the Local Fairs seller and the buyer claims back money at the rate of two or three shillings per head at which there is a lot more arguing and stick welding.

The markings of the cattle when sold are done in various ways - all buyers having different marks some used blue chalk others red and also a scissors is used and markings are made in different parts of the body - some clip the tail others the right or left flanks. Animals' fetters are always removed by the seller when sold. Locally the pig fair precedes the cattle fair. In this district there are fourteen fairs held every year the principal ones are June, July, August, and September.

## 82 Local Fairs

*Brigid Neill, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Michael O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

Sometimes the buyers come to the farmer's houses when buying cattle but they never transact business at cross-roads. The fair at Castle-town is always held in the square. Toll is never paid on the cattle they sell but "luck money" is always given to the man who buys the animal. When a bargain is made the parties agree by Local Fairs striking hands and split the difference.



When the animals are sold the buyer puts a mark on the side. Halters and ropes are never given away with the cattle except if it were short or of no use. A fair is held monthly at Castletown but the fairs of June, July, and August are the most important. Special fairs are never held for sheep or pigs, or horses, all the cattle are bought and sold at the monthly fair and the pigs are sold the day preceding the cow fair.

### 83 Fairy Forts

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Michael O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

In Beare Island there are four or five "fairy forts" which we call lisses, but in other places they are called rinn or rath. One is in the townland of Greenane, another not far from the church while the third is situated in the west end of the Island. Some lisses are encircled by stones but in this district trees do not surround them. They are circular in shape but owing to rocks, stones, and mounds of earth it is difficult to explore them.

One was explored by people who went in through a hole at one end and went out the opposite side, but these lisses are very small and shallow. These lisses are supposed to be belonging to the fairies or lepracauns but there were not any Danes ever built them. Stories of cats and of other animals have never been heard in the vicinity of these lisses. The owners of the land where these lisses are never interfere with them when planting crops as it is thought Fairy Forts unlucky and that any of their crops would not grow. Lights or music or other sounds have never been heard in the lisses locally but in raths and forts throughout the country strange noises and sounds of churning are often heard.

Brigid Neill. Laurenacecove G.S. Beare Island

From - Mr Michael O'Neill, Ardagh, Beare Island

### 84 Fairy Forts

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

The existence of fairies nowadays is thought to be nonsensical but in olden

times they were the common belief of the people. In my district there are five "fairy forts" known as lisses. Three of them are straight opposite each other and the remaining two are in different farms. There is hardly any sign of these lisses to be observed today as the land has been tilled.

Usually there is only one entrance now existing in these lisses. Sometimes the entrance is difficult and sometimes it is easy and it is through this hole the people entered and explored the interior. The inside is supposed to be dreary and desolate with icicles hanging from the top and water dripping down the walls. It is said that the Danes built these lisses and lived under the ground and called themselves the fairies. Fairy Forts In one of these forts the owner never knew it existed in his land until when ploughing, his horse put its leg far down into the soil. In this liss there are three chambers and a long passage leading away to other smaller caverns.

## 85 Fairy Forts

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

I know a good of forts and "Lioses" in the district, but there is one in Mr J. Harrington's field in Ballinakilla which was supposed to be full of dangerous fairies long ago. They use to come out as soon as the darkness would come, and travel long journeys during the night. There are three of these "Lioses" in Ballinakilla and one is supposed to have been used by the Danes as a hiding-place.

There are four in Greenane, and one in Ardagh and the fairies are supposed to have dwelt in the one in Mr C. Harrington's and Mr J. Sullivan's farms. Some of these "Lioses" are circular in shape but others are square, and there are a good number of passages going through them. People never interfere with these forts now but a few years ago a man in Ballinakilla was ploughing his land and his horse's leg went Fairy Forts down into a hole, and he found there was a "Lios" underneath.

Lights were often near the fairy ones and wild cats were seen in the vicinity of them. Music was heard in the fairy forts and sounds like churning were heard also. It was very dangerous to be passing these places late at night as the fairies would attack mortals.

## 86 Fairy Forts

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

There are five lisses in this district. The five lisses are in the townland of Greenane and all are with in view of each other. There is a fence of stones and earth around them. In some of the lisses there are three openings. Long-ago some of the people used to go into the lisses and inside some of the lisses there are stones as well. The people said the lisses were belonging to the Danes. They were built to defend themselves from ships coming in the bay. Lisses never were tilled by anyone because they said it was not right to do so. There Fairy Forts is a liss above my house and there are stones and earth around it. In the liss there are three openings.

## 87 The Local Roads

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

The main road in Beare Island was made ninety years ago. It runs from the east-end to the west-end of the Island. There was an old road before that. It was started from the height of Golleen right up the fields and up the high road. The remains of the old road are still to be seen. There is another road running from Ardragh. It was made forty-three years ago and it brings us right into the main road. There are many paths and side-ways in Beare Island.

When we are in a hurry we go up Locha thats what the old people call it. There are three roads running from the main road to the sea. They are called "Rinn na Coórna", "Trágha Galla", and "Cé na ball". The oldest road The Local Roads in Beare Island is the road going up to Cloughland tower.

## 88 The Local Roads

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Florence Sullivan, Ardagh*

About three-hundred years ago the first road was made in Beare-Island from the east-end to the west-end and part of it is still to be seen running into

Ballinakilla mountain and coming out joining the main road now at Mr James Murphy's. The old road is running to the extreme west-end of the island. A few years after there was a passage made through the townland of Greenane, but it was not repaired until forty five years ago. The main road at present was made eighty-eight years ago as relief work after the famine.

There was another one made through the townland of Ardagh running to the sea at a place called "Rí na h-Eorna". The Local Roads and also another two in the west-end at places called "Oileán na gCaorach" and "Breach-a-lach" these three roads were made eighty years ago. There is also a road leading to the sea at "Tráigh Galla" not far from the church, and one leading to the presbytery and to "Tráigh Cíaráin" also. Both these roads were made by Fr Enright seventy-six years ago. The path used by people from the east-end, and Cloughland going to Mass was beginning at Ardagh Cross, passing up Mr Mac Carthy's, going along the side of Ardagh mountain, and coming out meeting the public-road at present near my house. They also used to go up the high-road and pass down by Mr Jim Harrington's house. This path is used up to the present day. A road known as "Locán Road" was made in Greenane seventy-six years ago.

## 89 The Local Roads

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

There are no local records to show when or by whom the old roads of this district were made. The road The Local Roads by which we travel through the Island, might be called the main or central road only portions of this could be called old. From the east end to Ardagh Cross and from the west-end to Ballinakilla Church, would appear to be the commencement of road-making in this district.

Continuing from Ardagh Cross into the town-land of Greenane and leading on to the mountain was made about the same period. These roads must be between 150 and 200 years old. That portion which connects the first two mentioned roads was known and is still referred to as the "newline". That was made about the year 1856. All the above were made by the Board of Works. The high-road so called on account of its high position, connects the

townlands of Greenane and Ardagh and it is said to be made as a relief work immediately following the famine period, the others are arms or arterial roads and were made:- some by the Landlord agreeing with The Local Roads the tenantry whose land it went through and with whom he made an allowance in rent or some other concession of payment.

This agreement the people readily agreed to as in many cases these roads led to the sea-shore and provided a great convenience to procure sea-weed and sand for manure. A number of roads are of recent dates. Wages paid by the Board of Works was, eight-pence per day and to handy or skilled men one shilling. Working hours whether Summer or Winter were so long as it was light.

## 90 The Local Roads

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

The main roads are Rerrin road going to the east end of the Island. From Rerrin it would lead you to Cloughland and the town-land of Greenane. The road to Ardagh leads you to the Church then to the west-end of the Island. The roads are very old and the people who were The Local Roads working on them used get fourpence and sixpence a day. Most of the roads are still used. Some roads were made by relief and others were made by volunteer labour.

You can see a path of an old road going through Mr Murphy and Mr Sullivan's field and that was the way they used to go to school before the present road was made. There is a road in Greenane that leads down to the sea. This was made some time ago. There is another road going to the mountain and it is called "lochmán". There is another one and it is called Ballinakilla road going to the mountain.

There is another road in Greenane and it is called "The Rock of Ages" that was the road by which they used to go to Mass in olden times and then they made a shortcut by going down near Mr Sullivan's to Mass.

## 91 The Local Roads

(LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

The main roads lead from the east end of the Island to the church, then there is a cross road one goes to Ballinakilla pier and the other to the west end. The main road was made sixty years ago, and the people who made it were Harrington's grandfather and his people. The high road is an old road and is still used and there is a print of a road in Mr Murphy's field, which was the main road. The short cut that passes Mr Callaghan's is old and still used. The Local Roads townland being good for growing barley. There is a high road going along through the townland of Greenane and this was made long before any other roads because it is known as the "Rock of Ages" with many years and the rocks were never levelled.

There were roads made here as relief work during the famine period but the pay was very small. Sometimes the workmen only got sixpence or a shilling a day and that was the most they could afford in those days. The road that is going to the Ballinakilla pier is called "Tráigh Ciaraín" because it was there where Saint Kieran landed and ever since it is called that name.

Another road branching from the main road and going down to the sea to the east of Ballinakilla National School is known as "Caon na Ball".

## 92 The Local Roads

*Lizzie Sullivan, Rerrin* (LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr P. Sullivan, Rerrin*

There were many lanes and boreens long ago, which we know very little of now only a few. There is a very old road leading up to Cloughland's tower and also one to Ardagh's tower. The one leading up to Cloughland's tower is still in use. It is very old as they were The Local Roads made soon after the French came into Bantry Bay. They made roads and drains here as relief work during the famine period. The conditions of work were very severe as they had to work ten hours a day or more and the rate of pay was very small as they got only 8d a day. Most of the villages worked at the roads that are now dead and gone. The main road to the church was made about one hundred years ago.

## 93 Forges

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

There was a smith long-ago living on the Island and his forge below the present hotel. His name was Silve Harrington. As he was the only smith he had a lot of work to do. If a farmer wanted shoes made for his horse he would have to bring him the iron, then the smith would make the shoes for him for two shillings. He also made pot hangers, thongs, cranes and many other articles. Long-ago it was an old house they had for a forge. He used to have a big turf-fire to heat the irons. He had a large bellows and an anvil in the forge. It was a block of iron they used as an anvil. The Forges man who had his forge in Ardagh shifted to Rerrin as he was not making much money in Ardagh.

## 94 Forges

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Over a hundred and fifty years ago there was a smith in Ardagh who made spades and nails. The foundation of this forge is still to be seen. That is still the oldest forge that can be remembered nowadays. Some time after that another smith started a forge in the townland of Greenane, heaps of stones and earth are to be seen still in a splendid centre bounding Greenane mountain with Mr O'Brien's farm. After a time this man saw that his business was slackening, and resolved to shift his forge to another centre. So he shifted east to a place called the "Cold Slat" where he remembered he could make fairly good trade and he remained there for six years. Sixty years ago Forges there was a man named Sylvester Harrington opening a forge near where the present hotel is situated. He was a great smith and was very skilled in making spades and nails. In those days the smiths had no iron of their own, and therefore they had to be supplied with old iron stakes and other things, by the people. Two shilling or a half-crown for a set of horse-shoes in the olden days, and that was on account of the scarcity of the iron at that time.

## 95 Forges

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

In years gone by there were four or five forges or blacksmiths' shops in this Island at each of the following townlands, Derricreeveen, Greenane, Ardagh and Rerrin Village. The work of the smith was very different to what it is to-day. The work was chiefly making spades, shovels, sleáns, nails, Forges mattocks, pickaxes and various other articles of this kind, all which are made in the factory by a special machine nowadays. Although the forge and smith are still existing all over the country. There is a mechanical advancement in that trade and the use of small machines in his shop and many up-to-date conveniences have made the smith perfect in his trade. In olden times the smith had first the fire with a self-made bellows, a hammer, tongs and a block of iron to serve as an anvil. The work done was only an imitation of the article intended as without the proper anvil no curves or angles could be made. The trade was generally a thing that passed from father to son. A person who wanted horse-shoes made, procured the smith with the iron.

## 96 Forges

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

Many changes have taken place since the days of our ancestors, and one of these was a forge which was a great advantage to the Island people. This is not on Beare Island nowadays but there is one in Castletown and when the people want implements made they only give the measure of the horse-shoe or whatever it may be.

The forge which was in Beare Island was in the centre, owned by Mr Harrington and horse-shoes were made more than any other implements because in those days every farmer owned a horse. On that occasion numerous horse-shoes were made but each man would bring the iron for his implements and on a certain day of the week all the horses were shod. Mattocks cranes, racks etc. were also made in this forge but they were not so nicely shaped as those which are made now. The furnace was composed chiefly of turf in those days because coal was never burnt. Two or three



shillings they charged for each set of horse-shoes and the nails were not as long as those made nowadays.

## 97 Buying and Selling

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What a great disadvantage it was to our ancestors in olden times. People had to purchase their goods at Castletown which was the nearest town to Beare Island because there was only one shop in this district. Very little business was carried on after Mass because it was a custom in those times to purchase double the quantity Saturday evening for Sunday. It is still practised very little, and groceries are the chief articles sold. Money was not always given for goods - sometimes tea and sugar used be exchanged for eggs, vegetables etc. When people were buying and selling many phrases were used as "book it" when they had *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal* Buying and Selling not money or "I'll tick it". Business was transacted all days of the week except on Sundays when it was forbidden to sell all day. Castletown-Beare was the principal market town for this district and it is there fairs are still held. Dealers in feathers and rags never visited this district but it is thought that hucksters were selling small articles once in the district but they never come nowadays. All the coins are referred different names - half-penny, penny, three penny piece, sixpence or a tanner, shilling or a bob and sometimes a half crown is half a dollar. All these are still in use but crowns, farthings and sovereigns are rarely seen nowadays.

## 98 Buying and Selling

*Margaret Sullivan* (LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Shops were very few and small in this locality in the olden days, the number being never more than four. The people had, as a rule, to go to Castletown for most of their purchases. Buying and Buying and Selling selling were never practised in this district after Mass. In some cases such as when the people would not have the money to pay for their goods home spun flannel or ground oat-meal would be given in exchange for their groceries. In those days also labour was given in exchange for goods, and that custom was very

commonly practised. The word "booth" was often connected with buying and selling in former days. Supposing if two articles were bought and the person had not enough money to pay for one of them as it was dearer they would have to give "booth" to make up the prices so as the two of them gave an even price. When the person would not have the money for the article when being bought they would give a time to pay that was called "ticking" and it is still practised.

Monday was always considered an unlucky day for buying, as it was reckoned if money was given out on Monday that it would be going out for the rest of the week. Markets were never held in the district but people from other parts of the country used to visit this place peddling Buying and Selling old rags and feathers and these people were called "Peddlers". Another crowd of people used to come from the inland parts of the country in old cars and waggons to buy all the cured fish especially cured herring. These people were called "Joulsters".

## 99 Buying and Selling

*Mary Callaghan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr Patrick Callaghan, Age 57, Ardagh*

Long ago there were not many shops in the district. There was a small shop in Ardagh in a place that is now called the "Shanty". Mrs Sullivan owned the shop and she used not sell after Mass on Sunday. Some of the people used go to Castletown in a small boat and buy enough of goods to last for a week. It was considered unlucky to transact business on Sunday. Markets were not held in this locality in former years but the nearest place was Castletown to which nearly all the Buying and Selling people used go. As money was not plentiful the people gave eggs, or butter or small apples in exchange and sometimes labour was given. Sometimes the people used go to Bantry or Cork with their butter and eggs. The sugar and tea in olden times were very cheap - the price of the sugar was only 2d a pound. The ragmen used go gathering rags and horses' hair and they used weigh it with stillers and give the people 1 1/2d per lb. Another woman named Miss Mc Carthy used sell tobacco and other small articles. Some of the poor people used only get 1/2 oz of tea and sugar as they could not afford any more. The goods in olden times were much cheaper than they are nowadays.

## 100 Buying and Selling

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

In olden times there were only a few shops in Beare Island and these were very few. The inhabitants of the island used go to Castletown to purchase their goods, as the only goods sold in the small shops were tobacco, candles and other small articles. These shops were called "shebeen". People purchased goods after Mass on Sundays as it did not make much difference in a country place. In former times poor people who wanted goods and as money was scarce gave their labour instead of the goods. Other people exchanged a cow for a horse and a sheep for a pig and so on or in other words exchanging raw material.

Men used visit the island in former times gathering feathers, rags, and jam pots and other thing that we render useless. A person who got goods without money were said to get goods on "tick". The money owned by our fore-fathers was the same as ours but a few of the coins have gone out of use.

## 101 Food in Olden Times

*Crissy Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mrs Margaret Sullivan, Age 85, Rerrin*

In olden times the people used have three meals - breakfast, dinner and supper. They used to work first before having their food. Potatoes they used to eat for their breakfast and dinner and milk for their supper as tea was unknown at that time. They used to sit round the table in the centre of the floor when at their meals. The tables were hung up against the wall when not in use. Meat was eaten very seldom at that time but sometimes they used have a piece of salt meat. They had the same vegetables as we have now. They ate fish very often, especially at night-time. Before cups became Food in Olden Times common the people had tin mugs and wooden bowls. They had cakes made of meal and flour and mixed with milk and water but they had no such thing as baker's bread. They used to eat potatoes, yellow-meal and porridge.

## 102 Food in Olden Times

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Long-ago some of the people used to have three meals and others had only two. They used to have potatoes and plenty of fresh fish. Long-ago the people used to work before their breakfast. Most of the people used to have potatoes for every meal. They used to drink sour milk. The people used to have the table near the rack and some of the people used to hang up the tables. They had meal cakes and oaten meals cakes. Some of the people used to kill a cow or Food in Olden Times a sheep for Christmas and that would do them for a year. Long-ago the people on Easter Sunday used to have a great feast and another time they used to have a great feast was on Christmas day. They used to drink the tea without sugar or milk and the cake should not be made with milk during Lent. Before cups became common in the district they used to have basins or saucepans. Long-ago if the people were leaving home to go working they used to bring small bags of meal with them and get some milk and mix the meal with the milk.

## 103 Food in Olden Times

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Most of the people in the olden days lived on two meals a day which were - potatoes milk and fish in the morning at 10.a.m. and in the evening oatmeal porridge and boiled yellow Food in Olden Times meal, called stirabout and perhaps potatoes in the evening also. The people used to have most of their work done before breakfast. The table was usually placed near a seat along side of the wall and in some houses the table was hung up against the wall when not in use.

Bread which was made from home-ground oatmeal placed to bake near the fire in a griddle, was chiefly eaten Long ago meat was rarely eaten, except Christmas time and then it was a great luxury, but fish was eaten everyday and perhaps at every meal and it was the fish that made the people so healthy. The last meal was taken about 10 p.m. The night which we call "pancake night" was called "Stampi night" long ago as they used to grind up

potatoes with a piece of tin nailed on to a piece of wood called a grater. and then squeeze the juice out of them and bake them. Then eat them with butter and this was called "stampi cake" which was a great treat. It is only about a hundred years ago since tea was first used, and about Food in Olden Times eighty since cups were first used in the district.

## 104 Weather-Lore

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

There are certain signs by which the old people can tell breaks in the weather such as - when gulls are seen in the land it is a sign of bad weather, also swallows when they are flying near the ground. Certain rocks around the coast make a great noise before the rain. If the smoke from the chimney goes up straight in the sky good weather is ahead, but if it turns down that is a bad sign. When a bird called the "góirín ró" is heard in the night the next day is sure to be fine. When the sun goes down red is another good sign. When rain is near, the young people feel sleepy and the old people have pains in their bones. If a dog is seen making a feast of grass and bones rain is expected very soon. When distant hills seem near it is a great sign of bad weather. Birds named Weather-Lore stormy petrels are seen in some fields before a storm.

## 105 Weather-Lore

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

There are many ways of foretelling inclement weather such as, when an evening is dark and cloudy. When the moon is surrounded by a ring or if it were gloomy it is a sure sign of wet weather. South westerly winds are always followed by rain and storms, and often when the shores are high and noisy severe weather follows. It is not a good sign to see dust rising off the road, or when a dog eats grass, bad weather comes after. A sky which appears red in the morning is followed by a wet or cold evening. If the horizon is not clear rain and wind continue for many bad days. Thunder-storms are preceded by dark warm days and without any wind. South and south westerly winds are

the surest signs of bad weather because the wind blows over the Atlantic ocean and brings with it moisture which falls as rain. When hens pick their feathers is also a sign of rain and when animals gad on a day which is not warm. Weather-Lore ar lean [-] Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal

## 106 Weather-Lore

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There are various signs well known to the people which tell us if we are going to have good or bad weather - when a storm is coming the shores are very high. If we are going to have rain the sky becomes very dark and cloudy and gnats and flies are seen flying around very plentifully. The swallows fly high when good weather is coming and they fly low when bad weather is approaching. It is said that when the "Norry The Bogs" comes inland the bad weather also comes. When the shores are calm it is a sign of good weather. Another sign of good weather is when the sky is blue and a shade of red in it. When the cows are gadding and the rocks are shining are signs of rain. Some people say that we going to have rain when they feel pains in their hands or legs. The people also say "Isn't Carbery Near" we are going Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal Weather-Lore to have rain or a storm.

## 107 Old Schools

*Margaret Sullivan* (LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Florence Sullivan, Ardagh*

It is a great blessing to the children nowadays to have such fine National schools compared with the schools their forefathers were taught in. In disused houses which we call "Cowlais" the children got their education in former days, except in the Summer when school was held in the open-air. Some local men who taught in those schools, or perhaps strangers who were considered very clever.

Reading, Writing and Arithmetic were the subjects most frequently taught there. The writing was done with a pencil or local slate, and on paper it was performed with a goose's quill. Very few attended those schools, and the teacher's pay was very small - a few shillings or so in the end of the month and it was wealthy children who went to them also. Old Schools In some

schools Irish was taught, but the children learned their catechism and prayers in Irish all the time, and the master and pupil use to converse in Irish. Later on both English and Irish were taught. Irish books were used also. The children when taught were seated on sods of turf arranged on an earthen floor. They had chalk and a black-board in the olden schools. They use to shift from townland to townland now and again. One was held in a field called "leabaidh a bháid" in the top of Ballinakilla for a good term.

These schools existed up until 1834 when National schools started. Mr Sullivan (Sear) was a teacher in one of them for a good while. He was a local man.

## 108 Old Schools

(LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

Oh what a great change is in the world nowadays to the days of our ancestors when modes of travelling and many other inventions were unknown. Even schools like we have were not made but hedge schools and very often they were taught in the open air. In Beare Island there was only one hedge school to which the scholars from all over the Island attended. It was in the townland of Greenane and situated at the side of a hill, and a road passing right along and joining the main road.

Very seldom they were taught in the school except when the weather was inclement but they usually worked outside the school especially in the Summer. The teacher was a native of Beare Island and every evening he used go home even though the distance was far, there were no lodgings to be procured. They did not get paid as the teachers do nowadays but the children used bring something to the teacher but very little money was given. The subjects taught were - reading, writing, Arithmetic, grammar and it was all Irish was spoken by master and pupil. In these schools hardly any books were used or even pencils, and pens were never handled when writing, but a big slate or slab on which they did sums and writing of all description. Desks or seats were not *Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal* Old Schools used but the children were standing for every subject during the day.



## 109 Old Schools

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Yes, hedge schools were in our district and the local name was free schools because no inspector ever came to the school. On the side of the road one of the hedge schools was, and another on the top of Greenane. They were taught indoors. Big people used to go to school as well as young people. A Mr O'Shea and a Mr Mortan were teaching at Greenane school. Mr O'Shea was from Rossmacowen and Mr Mortan was from Queenstown. They were taught Writing, Reading, Catechism, Sums and other things. They were taught English and Irish. Writing was done with pencil and pen.

## 110 Bird-Lore

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

There are several wild birds to be found in my district in Summer but as the cold weather of Winter approaches they migrate to warmer countries. The Robin Redbreast is the only bird which remains with us during the Winter.

A tradition tells us how the robin has a red breast. It is said that he tried to free our Lords Sacred hands and feet from the cross and in the attempt his breast was stained with blood. The swallows are well-known Summer friends through they do not rank high as songsters. In the still evening you would hear their shrill call as they swoop to and from the eaves of the houses where their nests are.

The swallows when flying low are said to be a sign of bad weather also if the sea-gulls fly inland. A loud strange noise is heard all through the Summer Bird-Lore nights from the meadows - it is the corn-crake. We may notice the cuckoo which is always pursued by a small bird. This is the bird that hatched the young cuckoo out.

Before the swallows migrate they sit on the telegraph wires and seem to ask one another where they will go. The wren the "king of the birds" builds its nest on the gable walls of old houses and sits on the eggs for a period of three weeks.



The linnet's nest is to be found in a furze bush or in a tuft of grass. His plumage in Winter is grey but in Summer it changes to a bright reddish brown. Near a hedge a blackbird or thrush may be found. When the blackbird is startled she flies out with a loud alarm call which she repeats several times.

## 111 Bird-Lore

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

The wild birds found in this district are the magpie, hawk, snipe, wood-cock, curlew and a lot of others. The starling, hawk, cuckoo, snipe, wild duck and a lot of others migrate. At the fall of the year when the starlings arrive it shows that Winter is finished and they go to a colder climate. When we hear the cuckoo in April that is a sign of Summer. When we see the swallows that also is a sign of Summer. From the month of March onwards they build their nests. They build their nests on fences, holes in walls and under eaves shoots and several other places. The nest is made of twigs, moss, hay, mud and feathers. The bird's eggs are different colours. The bird sits on the eggs twenty one days. When the swallows are flying high that is a sign of fine weather also when they are singing. When no sea gulls are about that is a sign of good weather because the gulls are out to sea. When the sea gulls are very noisy and coming in to the land that is a sign that the weather is breaking. Bird-Lore [-]

## 112 Bird-Lore

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr. M. Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

It is interesting to know the different birds of the district and the song of each one. The most common birds of the district are the crows gulls, and the robins. They do not go to other countries but remain around the British Isles during the whole year. Each bird builds her own nest in the first of Spring, some make it in the bushes and others on the fences. Blackbirds usually build their on the trees and robins in the fences. The crows always build their on the tops of the highest trees they can find and gulls' nest are usually

build on the side of a cliff or cave. The blackbirds make theirs of sticks and hay and line them with moss and the eggs are spotted blue. The gulls' eggs are similar to the hen eggs and robin's are small white spotted eggs. Birds are hatched in less than three weeks and about a week after when their feathers are on they fly away and provide food for themselves.

People often foretell bad weather by the way Bird-Lore birds act, such as, when the gulls make a loud cry or when they fly in circles and cry at the same time. It is not right to kill a robin willfully because the red breast signifies the blood which dropped on his breast when Our Lord was on the cross.

### 113 Games I Play

*Crissy Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mrs M. Sullivan, Age 85, Rerrin*

Nowadays the children play a lot of games for example - hide-seek, skipping, see-saw, swinging and others. They were fond of making rag dolls and of shoe-boxes they made prams. The games are something similar to those which they played in olden times. To play "hide and seek" the players stand in a ring and the eldest child says, "Hide and seek all the week, sheeps head upon Sunday, half a crown on Saturday morning and the deuce of a min on Monday." The child on which the last word lies, runs out and they repeat the same words until one child remains. That person stoops her head and closes her eyes while the others go a hide, and when they are ready they say "cook." The other child comes in search of them and when she succeeds in finding them all they restart the same thing. For skipping each Games I Play child has a piece of rope and turns it over her head. As it touches their feet they jump and they continue the same thing until they miss. When skipping they say "Early in the morning at six o'clock you can hear the postman's knock postman postman drop your letter, lady lady pick it up." As they come to the words "Postman postman drop your letter" they drop a pebble and that the words "lady lady pick it up" they pick up the pebble and skip at the same time. For swinging they tie a piece of rope to a tree - each end a little distance apart. One child sits on it and the other pushes it to and fro.

## 114 Games I Play

*Margaret Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Children nowadays amuse themselves by playing with dolls mostly and by making dresses and hats for them. They also have a great delight Games I Play in making dolls of rags. Some children like to sit in a cosy corner of a field and make daisy chains for their dolls. They might also play school if they had a good number of dolls. More children pass their leisure hours by playing shop with china ware and gathering earth for tea and sugar. They also pick the hairs off the cows and make nice soft balls to play with.

Another great past-time is playing on a sea-saw, which was more common in former days than at present.

Swings are great past-time in the Summer evenings. Some children have swings tied on to trees. We often make necklaces out of the "scioraí" berries which grow on the wild rose-bush and which are very nice.

## 115 Games I Play

*Mary Callaghan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mrs Callaghan, Ardagh*

Long ago the children going to school had different games and toys but they are different nowadays. Most of them used to make dolls of stones and rags and make daisy-chains and put them around the dolls neck. They used make necklaces and bangles for themselves out of daisies and butter-cups. Some of them used make dolls' cots out of match-boxes. After school they used make shops out of broken china and bottles and gather earth for sugar. Others used get a big deal and put it on a high fence. One used sit on each side and they used go up and down and it was great fun. Some of them make bubbles with a pipe and soapy water. Others got the stem of straw and cut a hole in it and used it for a whistle. Skipping was a great game long ago and it was a great past-time.

## 116 Homemade Toys

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Home made toys

Long ago the people had to make their own toys because they had no money to buy them. They used to make rag dolls, hats made from rushes and several other things. Any wet day I would make clothes for my doll when I would be at home from school. We used to make necklaces from daises and belts for the dolls. We used to gather the used matches and make houses for our dolls and used to cut girls out of paper and say they were the doll's photo. For their cradles we used to get cardboard boxes. For a ball we used to get cow's hair and used to make a ball of it with water.

## 117 Homemade Toys

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Long ago the children use to make their own toys. They used to make popguns out of the alder tree. It is how they used to cut the branches in lengths about one foot long. Then they got a ramrod which was made of wood and make balls of any sort of waste and put one on each side and pushed the rod and then the shot went off.

To make a bow and arrow they used to get a twig and make a bow of it. Then tie both-ends with a cord and get the arrow and place it in the centre and draw the cord and then shoot at whatever they would want. They made a kind of a ball by pulling the hair off the cows' backs and making a nice round ball of it. To play a game called "Cap-of-the ball," they used to put all the boys' caps in a row and try to put the ball in one of the caps and whoever would fail to put it in, the other boys would beat him.

## 118 Homemade Toys

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

In olden times people seldom used their money in buying toys for their

children as is done to-day. The children made their own toys such as -, rag dolls, "pipereen play", bugles, water pistols and whistles.

The "pipereen play" was made from the stem of the oats and a little verse was said through it.

"Pipereen play" if you do not play

I will chew you up and throw you away into the deep, deep sea."

The water pistols were made by two sticks fitted into one another and when the water was sucked in it was shot out by pressing one stick into the other.

Hand-balls were made from the cow's hair by wetting it so as to make it stick together. In Summer the girls made daisy-chains and hung them around their necks, while the boys made snares for rabbits or cribs for birds.

The boys in olden times used blow bubbles with clay pipes and soap, and cutting shapes of men, women and animals out of paper. The school-boys played a game called "cap of the ball" it was played by standing a cap upright so as to throw the ball into it. This was often very Homemade Toys dangerous because stones were used instead of balls.

## 119 Churning

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

We have a barrel churn at home and its height is three feet. The sides of it are round. It is seven years old. The various parts are - the stand, handle, cover and the plug. In the side of the churn there are two arms to fit on the stand. The butter is made three times a week in Summer and twice a week in Winter. The woman of the house does the churning. When churning if a person comes to the house they must give a hand at making the butter as the old saying is if not she will take the butter away with her. A half an hour it takes to do the churning. The churning is done by hand with a rolling motion.

Hot water is put into the churn when the weather is cold. They take the butter out with butter spades and wash the butter with water to take the milk out of it. The butter milk is used for making cakes or for drinking . In Greenane there was one churn different to the others. It was like this. The

churn stood on the kitchen floor. The churn staff in it Churning and the handle was a leather strap made fast to a wooden pole. The pole was put through a hole in the beam of the kitchen ceiling.

The worker would pull the wooden pole down and this would lift the churn staff and that was how the butter was made.

Long ago the people said it was not right to give a coal of fire away when churning as it was a great custom at that time when the men would be working they would come to the house for a coal of fire to light the pipe, and also they said it was not right to give away a churn staff. They used to say it was not right to give milk away on May Eve.

## 120 Churning

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Ever since the history of Ireland began the Irish women were very proud of their churning and firkins of butter. In the very olden times people churned by means of a plunge-churn. They had a pole going along the beams of the house with a hole in the middle of it. Then they tied a strap of Churning leather on to the dasher of the churn and put it through the hole on the beams, and by pulling the strap up and down this caused the dasher to churn the cream in to butter. This work could be done sitting down.

Most of the people nowadays have a barrel-churn resting on stands and turned by a handle, this churn twists around and they know when the butter is made by looking through a glass in the side. More churns are done with a beater in the middle and a big stick going through the cover.

## 121 Riddles

*Sheila Sidley (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr Tim Sidley, Age 55, Rerrin*

As I went up a slippery slat I met my Aunty Mary she had an iron nose and silver toes, I tipped her in the middle and away she goes - a gun.

As I went up a rocky hill I met two men hanging, I sucked their blood and left their bones hanging - Blackberries.

Ninny coat Nanny coat she wears a white petticoat the longer she stands the shorter she grows - a Candle.

Riddley, raddley, rideo, my father gave me seed to sow the seed was black and the ground was white. You can riddle me that till to-morrow night. - Black ink and white paper.

White bird featherless flew from Paradise over high walls Landlord Landless took it up mouthless rode away horseless. - Snow.

It is broad in the bottom and narrow in the top and a stick in the middle playing hoppeddy, hop. - A Churn. Riddles Aunty Mary behind the ditch if you go near her she will give you the itch - A nettle.

An iron bar and a woolly tail - A darning needle and thread.

What makes a pair of shoes, - Two shoes.

Its under the fire and over the fire but it never touches the fire -. A cake in a bastable.

As round as a saucer as deep as a cup all en in the world could not fill it up - A Strainer.

Jack's father was Paddy's brother what call had Jack to Paddy's mother. - Grandmother.

How many sides in a bucket -, Two, inside and outside.

The man who made it never wore it, but the man who wore it never saw it, - A Coffin.

If a man was going along the road with a patch in his coat, what time would it be -, Time to get a new one.

## 122 Riddles

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Rollie, Bollie against the wall, rollie, bollie got a great fall, three score men and three score more could not put rollie, bollie together again - An egg.

A little messenger between two houses. It is out by night and never goes in, - A path between two houses.

## 123 The Landlord

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

In the year of 1836 Lord Bantry was the landlord of this district. People tell us now that he was a very harsh man, that he used to seize their cattle and pound them, and also seize their butter which used to be in firkins and sell it at the end of the year and keep the rent out of it and give back the rest. We never heard of him evicting anybody. One time his agent Patrick Sullivan who lived in Milcove made an attempt to come to Beare Island to seize two stacks of barley which was owned by a tenant but he didn't succeed. Nearly all the people of Beare Island, men and women collected together in a strand called "Traigh Ciarán" and stoned him, and his men, and didn't allow them to come ashore.

Some of the Island men were sent to prison for a good term after. Over eighty-five The Landlord years ago Lord Bantry sold the estate to Mr Clinton, who never seized any cattle or evicted anyone. But his agent Mr Wright was a very severe man and used to take out decrees against the tenants for nonpayment of rents and he used also put them to a lot of expense which the people were unable to pay. About eighty years ago Mr Clinton came over to Beare Island, and gave his tenants a great party and dance at Lawrencecove so he was not a bad man. There is a grave in our churchyard to be seen still in which Patrick Sullivan was buried.

## 124 The Landlord

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

As far back as we can remember there was no landlord in Beare Island, but it is said that they were in the surrounding parishes thirty or fifty years ago. There was one in Bantry and he was called "Lord Bantry" and another landlord was in Kenmare. These used send agents around to collect the rents. Sometimes they would be hard on the tenants especially if the people refused to pay or if they owed a big sum of money and did not intend to pay it. In olden times evictions The Landlord took place in the district when they were unable to pay the rent and they were often found on the side of



the road or some of them would go to America in search of work and others were in the workhouse.

The owners of big estates were made landlords and they would need wealth to become an educated landlord. All the land was divided into farms some larger than others. Many punishments were inflicted on the tenants, as they were bound without payment to have fences around every dangerous field. Tithes were collected to pay for the land and if the farmers could not afford money they would take cattle or something of the kind to pay for it.

## 125 The Landlord

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr John Harrington, Greenane*

The local landlord was named Lord Charles Pelham Clinton who had temporary residence in Cork city - his real home being in England. The duties of his estate were carried out by his agent who received rents and settled any grievances between the tenants and landlord. The Landlord at least This agent would be changed and replaced by another from time to time. Lord Clinton was considered a good landlord. He did not carry out evictions to the extent other landlords did but his agents and others employed in connection with the collection of rents were harsh tyrants.

There was a re-allotment of the land about sixty years ago by a land engineer named Mr. Gilman who created new boundaries which made the farms more compact. There was always trouble between the landlord and tenant, the rents being high, almost three times greater than they are to-day and being beyond the power of payment by the tenant. Tithes were collected annually the landlord sending a gang of men to collect them. Potatoes and oats were generally taken by the gang and brought away, regardless of whether the farmer could spare it or not. Had he put up any resistance he would be evicted on the spot. Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal

## 126 The Landlord

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

The local landlord was Lord Bantry and he had an agent named Wright. The landlord was all right to the people as he did not mix amongst them. The agent Mr Wright was not so good as he had to collect the rent for Lord Bantry and if the people did not pay the rent he would have them evicted from the lands. Evictions were carried out in all the townlands of Beare Island. The people evicted had no place to live and they had to go to the work house or if they could get a passage on a ship to America they would go. Land was given to the landlord by some English nobleman or prince as a reward for service rendered long ago in taking country walls from Irish chieftains. The land was divided into small farms and was given to people whom the agent thought were suitable. When the people could not pay the rent they could take the cattle from them.

## 127 Bread

*Margaret Sullivan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

Most of the people in the olden days lived on two meals a day which were - potatoes, milk and fish in the morning at 10 a.m. and in the evening oatmeal porridge and boiled yellow-meal called stirabout, and perhaps potatoes in the evening also.

The people used to have most of their work done before breakfast. The table was usually placed near a seat along side of the wall and in some houses the table was hung up against the wall when not in use.

Bread which was made from the home-ground oatmeal placed to bake near the fire in a griddle, was chiefly eaten. Long ago meat was rarely eaten except Christmas time and then it was a great luxury, but fish was eaten everyday and perhaps at every meal and it was said that it was the fish made the people so healthy. The last meal was taken about 10 p.m.

The night which we call "pancake night" now, was called "Stampi night" long ago, as they used to grind up potatoes with a piece of tin nailed on to a piece of wood called a grater and then squeeze the juice out of them, and bake them. Then eat them with butter, and this Bread ar lean was called 'Stampi cake' which was a great treat.

It is only about a hundred years ago since tea was first used, and about eighty

since cups were first used in the district. Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal

## 128 Bread

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They made oaten bread by drying the oats in a pot, then by sieving it, then by grinding it with a quern and they made a cake of it, and baked it in a griddle - a kind of a thing with three legs under it.

For most meals they ate potatoes. Every house used fish for itself and these fish they salted for the Winter. They roasted them on the tongs for their dinner. They also made potato cakes called "stampy" which was very indigestible, very thin, and stiff. On "Hallow's Eve" they used to have "stampy". Sometimes for a change they used to put wheat into a pot over a slow fire and they used to keep stirring it all the time until it was soft. They used to put a Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal Bread little sugar into the pot with milk and they called it "gráinseacán".

## 129 Old Graveyards

*Margaret Sullivan* (LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

There is but one public graveyard in Beare- Island, and its not more than a century old. It contains only two tombs, and a very ancient grave with a cairn on it. There are some very high monkey-trees and other trees growing in it. It is not a level yard, but there is an incline in it sloping to the north-east. There are some wooden crosses in it but none of them are very old.

Before this graveyard the people used to be buried in any field in the district. Very few people nowadays can remember any of the old graves, but a few are to be seen in certain places in the district. In a small island called Turk Island a few yards from the shore, are to be seen a great number of graves and along by the shore at a place called Bank there is a little patch of land Old Graveyards called a "Cilleanach" where non-baptised persons were buried. There are stones standing straight in a field owned by Mr J. Sullivan Ardagh and there are supposed to be several graves in that field.

There is a "Cilleanach" in the west-end of the Island also. There are five graves to be seen in the west-end of Cloughland near the shore in which five French-men were buried who were lost out of the "León".

### 130 Old Graveyards

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

In Beare Island there is one grave-yard near the church in which the people of the parish are buried. There are places in which children who are not baptised are buried the places are called "Killeenock".

There is one in the townlands of Greenane, Ardagh, and Cloughland. There is a place called "Bunow" in which some French sailors are buried who were lost in the sailing ship "Leóne" about 1831. Old Graveyards The "Killeenocks" are not used now. None of the graveyards are round in shape. They are all square. The graveyard in Ballinakilla is surrounded with trees and is facing east. There are several old crosses over the people who are buried a hundred years or more.

It is said that monks are buried in the south-side of the church. Bones of the monks were found when digging the churchyard. The graveyard is sloping east. Around Ballinakilla church there is a stone-wall and two gates. There is a place in Mrs Harrington's field in Greenane where the druids used to offer up sacrifice long ago. There are large stones standing against each other in the shape of an altar, and the druids used to go in to it to say mass. They say it is not right to break it away. It was in the corner of the field above the road. The mass rock that was in Greenane is not there now as it was broken by the late owner and he had some of the stones to build a house.

### 131 Old Graveyards

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In my father's farm in a field called "Killíneach" under a hawthorn tree are the graves of several unbaptised children because long ago these children were not buried in consecrated ground. Placed over them are common stones with carvings on them.

## 132 Storms

(LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

About eighty seven years ago there was a great storm the worst that was ever here. It knocked a big rock in the harbour's mouth known as the "Piper's Rock". In the year of 1868 another storm arose which knocked the "Calf Rock lighthouse". At that time there was a British fleet in Bearehaven harbour and they tried to relieve the men in the lighthouse for twelve days but they failed and so a boat from the Dursey Island under a man named OShea rescued them. He was afterwards known as Captain OShea. The worst storm of all was in 1915. The wind was from the north and it did more damage to houses and trees than any other storm. Christmas night eleven years ago a great storm arose and it was the highest ever known. There was a stone in the south-side of Beare-Island over three ton weight which was never moved until that Christmas night when it was lifted a few yards away. The greatest snow-storm that was ever in this district was in the month of February in the year 1854 when the snow reached up as far as Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal Storms the door-post and remained there for a week or so. Most of the sheep in the mountain were lost and those of them that lived clustered together, and their breath thawed the snow and left the air in.

## 133 Storms

*Sheila Sidley, Rerrin* (LC-C) [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr Tim Sidley, Rerrin*

One of the greatest tragedies that ever struck the Irish people and perhaps the saddest event in all Ireland's history was the night of the big wind which struck Ireland on the night of January 6th and 7th 1839 exactly 100 years ago the 6th of January next 1939. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of January the 6th a green cloud as the old people described it no bigger than a man's hand appeared over Cork harbour. It started with a little snow. The place got in darkness and then started the big wind, Cork was the first in the path of Storms the wind as it is situated in the south west.

There was a ship near the pier called the "Brigg Henry" which was lifted clear out of the water, and a schooner called "Eliza" was put right up on a beach. All the boats in Cork harbour sank, and all the lights went out and

no one could stir out. Even the livestock in the fields was picked up like feathers and hurled along for miles. The worst of all was the fire that broke out all over Ireland's towns, and villages were all wiped out. Not a soul could venture out with the cold and darkness, this dreadful scourge Columbkille prophesied hundreds of years before that. "The child in the cradle shall be rocked without the aid of human hands, and the water of the sea shall rise up and cover the land, and all boundaries shall be swept away and no man shall know his own or his neighbour's fields." This was the scourge that struck the poor people.

### **134 Storms**

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

Storms except a few cows were killed one night while taking shelter.

### **135 The Potato-Crop**

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

Potatoes are grown in this district to a great extent considering the size of the farms, the means of tillage and the suitability. The amount land sown under potatoes is from 1/2 to 1 1/2 acres as this would depend on the size of the farm. The men folk prepare the ground by spade generally, but ploughs are used in a number of cases. Wooden ploughs were used some years ago but are not to be seen now. Spades are not made locally, nowadays, but were made years ago by the local smith now they are The Potato-Crop factory-made. People assist each other especially in turning over the ground as this job requires two men. A lone farmer must have the help of his neighbours whom he helps in turn. The ground being prepared and formed into ridges or beds, the sets are put in by both men and women, the ground being already manured. The first mounding is done about three or four weeks after planting and the second mounding when the plants are four or five inches high. Before the plants or stalks are fully grown they are treated with a solution of sulphate of copper and washing soda to protect the crop from a disease called the blight. About October the crop is lifted, picked by

women and stored in a dry cool building. There are numerous varieties of potatoes such as Arran Banner, Arran Chief, Arran Victor, Arran Concil, Arran Crest, Kerr Pink, Epicure and Duke of York.

### **136 The Care of Our Farm Animals**

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

In olden times the people used never milk the cows until after feeding in the morning as they used to say the dew in the morning was very good for making butter. Then they used to drive them home to the yard and fether them, and then sit on their stools and start milking but it was said that the cows would give a good deal of milk if the person would sing a nice song and in fact some cows needed a special song. The calls for the different animals were "Tuc tuc" for the hens "Féén féén" for the ducks "Hi gé" for the geese "bon bon" for the bonham, "Huirsc" for the pig, "Sup Sup" for the cows, "sucy suc" for the calves. "Polly pet and "Charlie" for the horse. "shón shón" for the sheep The Care of Our Farm Animals and "Bill" for the donkey etc. They also used to put a mark on the different eggs to see which hen's eggs would be the most fertile. As regards goats they used always be kept with a herd of cattle to protect them from evil. They were also kept for their milk was supposed to be very good for invalids.

### **137 The Lore of Certain Days**

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

The people in the olden times never tackled a horse on Saint Brigid's day or on Easter Monday. They had a custom also of never starting to build a house or to start living in a new house in the month of May. They thought it very unlucky to build a house across a path or across ridges in a field, or to build an addition on to the eastern side of the house. They had a great number of piseóga then, that we have not now such as-: never to throw ashes out the front door on a Monday morning nor never to give away money on a Monday. If a person was jealous of their neighbour's property he would go and skim their well with a shell on May day and that was supposed to take away their

neighbour's luck. If fishermen going to The Lore of Certain Days work met a barefoot woman they would turn back as they would have no luck that day. They also thought it very unlucky to put a new shoe on top of a table.

### 138 The Lore of Certain Days

*Brigid O' Neill, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. O' Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

Long ago our ancestors would have a certain time for doing everything. Ploughing was always done in February so that the ground would be ready for planting the crops and the potatoes were always planted before or around Saint Patrick's day. As soon as the fine days of Summer approached those who had houses to make, made them. When the house was built the owner would not live in it for some time after. They would never go into a new house in Lent or at Christmas.

"The Harvest of the Geese" was in September because at that time of the year the feathers would be falling off. They used say if you plucked seven geese, for seven years you would have a feather The Lore of Certain Days bed for seven years, you would have luck. Some used always plant oats on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and wheat on Mondays, but very few had any special days for this work, only any fine day of the week.

### 139 The Lore of Certain Days

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Long ago if a person got sick and was very bad and got a turn for the better on a Friday they would say that was a good sign of the person. If you gave money out on a Monday that was a sign you would be giving money out during the week. If a person went ploughing on St. Abigail's day they thought it not right as long ago a man and his horses were ploughing in a field on that day and they were both thrown off the cliff. Also another man in Greenane some years ago was digging on the same day and one of his neighbours asked him why he was working on that day and he said in Irish "bheidh triall agam indiu ar Ghobnait". he left the field and went The Lore of Certain Days home and a few days afterwards he sailed for America and



his family and they never heard from him or his family since. Long ago the people used to set their crops before St. Patrick's day which is the 17th March. The first three days of April are very cold and they used to call them "The Days of the Old Cow". The people would not leave the cows out on those three days because if they had any old cow she would die and then they used to say they would have no luck with the other cows.

## 140 The Lore of Certain Days

*Lizzie Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr P. Sullivan, Rerrin*

In olden times there were certain days of the week on which no remedies were applied for ailments, for instance - Friday was an unlucky day for cures. People used never plough or spin on the 1st February no matter what day it fell on they always kept it and it was also unlucky to start work on a Friday. It was a custom long ago to The Lore of Certain Days keep some of the potatoes without planting until Good Friday. It was also the custom to dig new potatoes on St. John's Eve. It was an old saying that March borrowed three days from April and if the old cows put that bad weather over them, they would live for the rest of the year.

## 141 The Lore of Certain Days

*Mary Callaghan, Rerrin (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr P. Callaghan, Age 57, Ardagh*

Some of the people never washed only on Monday and Wednesday. It was an old custom to have all the potatoes set before the eve of Patrick's day and they used say the potatoes set after Patrick's day never grew the full size, and the blight used come on them first.

April was the month for planting mangolds and turnips and they were planted late in the evening. They used say the dew would soak the seed and the birds would be gone asleep and would not eat them. The people used sell their geese and ducks in the market every August and the farmer's with the biggest geese used get a prize such as three shillings and they The Lore of Certain Days used get three and six for a goose and half a crown for a big duck and the people used get more money if the fowl was a nice colour. The

people always sold their cattle on Tuesday.

## 142 Spinning and Weaving

*Kathleen Meade (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mrs Meynell, Age 56, Rerrin*

There was only one weaving loom in Beare Island long ago which was owned by Mr P Mc Carthy who lived near our house. First of all the wool was spun and carded into thread before it went into the weaving loom. Then it was wound into a big beam and the spools were filled at the spinning wheel and they were spun in the shuttle. As the weaver weaves it comes through two or three reels to make it into cloth. He has to move both hands when working at the reels to make the cloth. The feet are also used Spinning and Weaving when working the loom. When the cloth is woven the weaver measures it with a rule called a bundle. For six bundles he used to get 4s 0d. The cloth when woven was called flannel and frieze and also sheets. The shuttle which was used when spinning the wool was shaped like this. [drawing on page] As there was only one weaving-loom in Beare Island long ago every person used to come with the thread to get flannels and other things made and also people used come from the Allihies to get things spun.

## 143 Basket-Making

*Mary Quinlan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Miss B. Regan, Age 86, Greenane*

Long ago the people used to make baskets for donkeys, for horses and baskets for their own use in which they used to carry turf, turnips, potatoes, sea weed and several others things. They used to call them "ciseáns" and they were made of twigs. This is how they used to make them. First they used to stand the twigs in the ground to make the shape of the basket and then they would get the smaller twigs to work around the standards until they got the required height of the basket. When they got the required height the ends were turned in so as to form the basket. Then the baskets were put away for a short time so as to get seasoned and light.

## 144 Fishing

*Lizzie Sullivan (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr P. Sullivan, Rerrin*

The methods by which the fish were caught in olden times were by long lines and every line had one hundred and sixty hooks. One man used to shoot them out and stretch them all in a line with buoys at each end and leave them there for two or three hours. The chief kinds of fish that were caught in this way were ling, haddock and cod. Pollock and whiting were caught by hand lines and mackerel and herrings were caught by nets. Lobster were caught by pots the same way as they are nowadays.

## 145 Fishing

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

Beare Island being surrounded by the sea has fishing as an important industry. In olden times much more fish were caught because the people spent day and night at sea. At that time they used fish off the rocks as well as in boats and would catch just as much. When fishing off the rocks a rod and line with a hook or two at the line's end were used. Those who fished in boats used go miles away and stay out for a few days without coming home. Our ancestors chiefly fished around Blackball and Pulleen because those two places were reckoned to be good fishing spots in Bantry Bay. They caught all kinds of fish - ling, hake, haddock, skate, mackerel etc and some of them were four or five feet long. They fished also by "spillers" by putting six score hooks on a line and each hook would be six feet apart. Lobsters were caught in the same way as they are nowadays by pots and bait inside in them. Whiting was got in the Bay and Harbour and Bream in places called ledges. Every morning at 5.30. the men would be Fishing out at the bream because they would not be so plentiful after sunrise and at noon they would return with a boat load of fish.

## 146 Fishing

*Sheila Sidley, Rerrin (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr T. Sidley, Rerrin*

Years ago the people had different ways of fishing which were more troublesome than now. They had lines called the "long lines" and these lines could not be fished near the shore but in deep water. The men bought 200 hooks and then made what used to be called "nasels" and tied the hooks on to each one and then they had to get bait to coax the fish. They picked barnacks and boiled them and then picked them out and put one on each hook and if they could not get those they dug up the mud near the sea and got a worm called the "lug". They dug Fishing pans of them and cut them in halves and put them on the hooks and then "shot" them in the bay. The fish they caught was, ling, haddock, and ray which is now called "skate". The people now have other means easier for catching fish. They have trap nets for pollock herring nets, and trout nets and flat fish nets and mackerel nets. They have the ways and means easier.

## 147 Candle-Making

*Julia Harrington (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr John J. Harrington, Greenane*

Candle making was practised on Beare Island up to about forty years ago. When a cow was killed its fat was rendered down and having placed a wick of cotton thread right down through the centre. The mould was stuck on a bit of soap or some such material and the melted tallow poured in. It was allowed to remain until the tallow hardened and then the mould was quickly heated and the candle dropped out. Nobody makes candles locally now.

## 148 Festival Customs

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

There are many customs carried out in Beare Island on certain days of the year.

On June 23rd which is Saint John's eve bonfires are lighted near the potato garden so that the crop would be good and the smoke must blow over the garden.

It is a custom on May Day to bring in the gorse or a bit of hawthorn

blossom. This must be brought in before sunrise and left in the house until the Summer is gone. On May Eve the people made a churn and put a portion of the butter away to keep, and if any churn would not make during the rest of the year this butter should be put into it. On this day also the children make a special little altar to honour Our Lady and Summer flowers must be put on this altar, Festival Customs during the month of May.

On Michaelmas eve people go to visit the holy well and do so many rounds around the well to give honour to Saint Michael.

On Candlemas day candles are given to the church for the altar, by the people.

## 149 Festival Customs

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

If a dark-haired woman entered another person's house on May morning she would bring bad luck into that house. Any person would not light a fire on May day until they would see smoke coming from their neighbour's chimney first, then they would have all the neighbours luck.

Another custom they had on May morning was to go and skim their neighbour's well with a shell in order to take away all their luck.

In ancient times the people Festival Customs ar lean of this locality used to visit some Fr Power's grave in Ross on St John's Eve.

On the eight of July long ago most of the people used to visit "Loch of Caoinleáin" in Kerry to cure some diseases, to say certain prayers and do some visits.

It is said that no blackberry should be eaten after St Michael's day as the "púcaís" spit on them that night. Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal

## 150 Festival Customs

*(LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

If a person went ploughing on St Abigal's day they thought it not right as long ago a man and his horses were ploughing in a field on that day and they

were both thrown off the cliff. Also another man in Greenane some years ago was digging on the same day and one of the neighbours asked him why he was digging on that day and he said in Irish "Beadh triall agam indiu ar Gobnait." He left the field and went home and a few days afterwards Tras-scríofa ag duine dár meitheal Festival Customs he sailed for America and his family and they never heard from them since.

## 151 Festival Customs

*Kathleen Meade (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. Meade, Rerrin*

If several people were taking water from a person's well, the person who owned the well got up early on May morning and had a bucket of water in before the next person came.

## 152 Herbs

*Brigid Neill (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Mr M. Neill, Age 58, Rerrin*

There are various herbs growing in every farm, some which cause no harm and others are very destructive. The farmer has to pull all these harmful herbs when cutting his crops, which indeed is a toilsome task. In summer when he is saving the hay he has to pull the copogós which grow all through the hay. Sorrel is another herb which grows chiefly in rich ground and Sun Spurge is a poisonous herb growing in marshy ground.

Thistles also grow in rich ground but these are eaten by the donkey and do not cause much harm. "Cuckoo-milk" as it is called locally grows in good land near fences and is a poisonous herb. Gaosadáns are plants which come up in July and spread all through the fields. There are yellow heads on them and are not eaten by the cattle, but they are often pulled to prevent them from impoverishing the soil. Many other smaller herbs grow on ridges such as black buttons and praiseacbuidhe also grows where mangolds and Herbs turnips are set. Other herbs used by our ancestors for medicinal purposes - wild sage, camomile, water-cress and many others. Wild sage and camomile were used for coughs, by boiling them and drawing them like tea.

Water-cress was used just as it was, and dandelion was also used for curing sleeplessness.

## 153 Herbs

*Margaret Sullivan (LC-C)* [[Back To Top](#)]

*Informant: Mr F. Sullivan, Ardagh*

In the olden times the people used herbs to cure certain diseases such as - wild sage was boiled in water and strained and that water cured any person who would have a cough. Camomile which is a green creeping plant, was an excellent cure when boiled for a sore throat, and the young girls used to wash their hair with the water in which camomile was boiled.

Mint which is a fairly tall plant, was made into mint-tea and drunk for the good of the health, water-cress was used for the same purpose. In the month of June when nettles were in bloom, the people Herbs used to cut and boil them to make nettle-soup which was supposed to be great for purifying the blood. Ribleaf was a plant used to stop blood coming from a wound. A plant called marsh-mallows was applied to a horse's or a cow's leg when cut.

There is a plant which grows in wet land called "gout" and it kills sheep. Meascain dáthabha which is a tall green plant and which grows in damp land or near a stream, is deadly poison and often kills animals and pigs. The feochadán known nowadays as the thistle is a very dirty weed but never grows anywhere but in good land. Bóchadán or as we call it the "gaos-adán" is a dirty plant and is very injurious to the ground, and only grows in good land. Another tall brown plant known as the "cupóg" is chiefly seen amongst the wheat.

A weed called the dock-leaf grows mostly around houses. It is a tall green leaf and is a good cure for nettle sting. Céacta is a thin tall plant and has a firm grip on the ground and it is supposed to be the only plant that would stop a plough Herbs There is a plant which grows on certain fields called Caisearbhán which was cut off with a knife and given to the pigs with meal. There is another plant on which "Fraocáns" grow, and these berries were also called "huckle berries".

Margaret Sullivan, Lawrence Cove G.S. from

Mr F Sullivan, Ardagh

## 154 The Wreck of the Joseph Howe

*Mr Martin O Sullivan, Castletownbere (LC-C)* [\[Back To Top\]](#)

*Informant: Denis C. Harrington*

From Mr M Martin O'Sullivan, Castletownbere, Co Cork, Age 67

Reared and spent his early manhood in Greenane and who remembers the incident even though only 4 years at the time. I have seen parchment which was presented to the composer (late) Denis Harrington who with Michael Shanahan effected the rescue. The Wreck of the Joseph Howe The Wreck of the Joseph Howe

by Denis C. Harrington

I

On the eighteenth of last February

Just by the break of day

I arose, put on my clothes

And to the sea I made my way

II

On coming to the seashore cliffs

I espied an awful scene

Dashing against the rocks

Was a large brigantine

III

I was struck with amazement

While gazing on the wreck

The ship was loudly creaking

With three men upon her deck

IV

Another from the bowline



Lay swinging from the boom  
To reach the shore his object  
But death would be his doom.

V

Another man and I  
Descended the great precipice  
Which was both steep and high  
The boatswain swung the leadline The Wreck of the Joseph Howe 252  
Which we risked our lives to save  
As the Atlantic waves rose furiously  
Upon the rocks did break  
\*\*\*\*\* (the missing line)

The Captain William Templeton  
The boat'swain was the same  
The Steward Peter Seymour  
A good kind natured man  
The other was a seaman  
His name was Harry Gran

\*\*\*\*\*

She came from Minatitalim  
With the cargo of mahogany  
To Cork for orders bound  
And in File-na-Dige Beare Island  
Her destiny she found.