

Old Galway

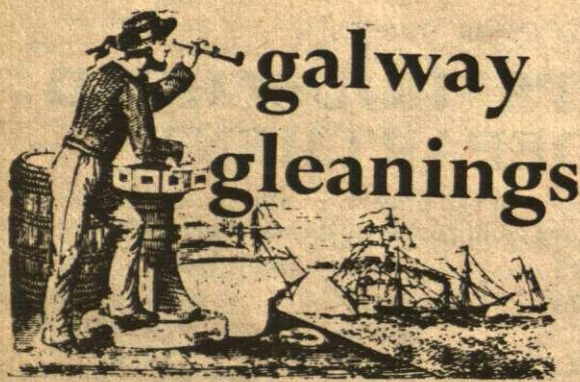
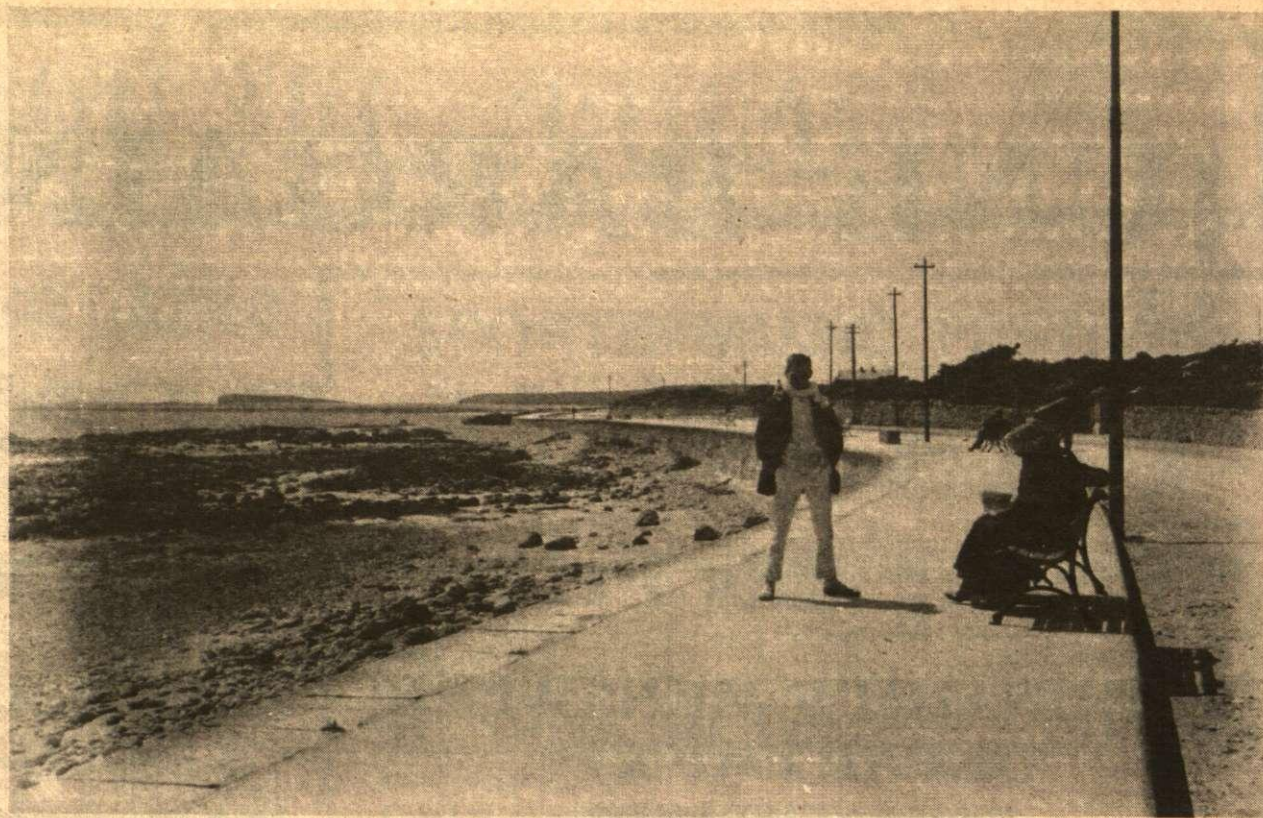
This is a photograph of the promenade from the Eason collection in the National Library taken about 1915-1920.

There is virtually no beach—just rocks and shingle and seaweed. The beach seems to have come later when the piers and breakwaters were built. The road looks very rough and has not been tarred. The prom was crooked then and was narrower. The rocks and boulders which now strengthen the prom were not there nor were the shelters. The seats look attractive and elegant though some were just concrete blocks. No black rock tower. The poles dominate the scene. The

house in the distance was Glenorney. There was a Wesleyan Chapel on the site in 1872. There was no house behind it then, as "Moyveela" is today, but there was a quarry about 100 yards behind it.

The building where the Salthill Hotel is now was called Barfield on Westland Avenue. The next building (coming towards us) was "Revagh," where the Redingtons, and subsequently the Andersons lived. Next was "Belmore" where the McDonaghs lived. Then there was "Brinkwater" where Col. Maurice de Courcey-Dodd lived and finally Dr. Bartley O'Beirne's house "Maritimo" known as "The Red House." The name on the shore opposite Seamount was "Carrigwautia" (the drowned rock) and the little beach between the pools and the old corrugated iron shelter was known as "Cooneen."

—T.K.



galway gleanings

It is impossible to say what the final outcome of the Vincent Browne series in *Magill* is likely to be. What must be stressed however is that Mr. Browne has made a very good case, in the editorial of this month's edition, for a radical overhaul of our libel laws. It is quite incredible that such a wide area of controversy as the events in the Irish Government during the years 1969-70, should have remained so closed to critical analysis for so long, and that so much of what Browne is now highlighting should have remained undiscussed all along. The belief that nearly everybody did not want to know, can only be confirmed by the deafening silence in so many quarters, which continues.

A RARER BIRD

And while we are not in a position to pass judgement one way or the other on the total impact of Browne's research, it is difficult to accept that he made up any of what now emerges as new. Certainly the *Magill* account of events, with a fascinating insight into the mind and workings of some of our senior Civil Servants, is something which will be pondered upon for a long time to come. Even if one could have accepted that the late Peter Berry, former Secretary of the Department of Justice, had some part in launching Mr. Haughey on his Ministerial career, who would have imagined, for example, that the Justice Parliamentary Secretaryship had been offered to Mayo's Sean Flanagan who, apparently, refused it, and that two others whose names had

been put forward had been Galway's Michael Carty—who later became a Parliamentary Secretary—and Honor Crowley, who would, if appointed, have been an even rarer bird at that time than Maire Geoghegan-Quinn was to become in the mid-1970s.

A STRAIGHT ROAD?

There is a popular rumour in Galway folklore that one of the late Michael Carty's greatest political achievements, in his own view, was the upgrading of the road from Galway to Dublin through Loughrea, as the main national primary route, at a time of very hot competition from rival Athenry. Perhaps there is no foundation in the suggestion, or perhaps there were strong engineering and all other sorts of reasons why the southern route was finally decided upon. But the personal intervention of a determined local representative has been known to achieve some results in Irish life. If you cannot move the mountain, at least, it seems, efforts can be made to determine the route around it to the other side. What record of such efforts, if any, remains on Departmental files is always a big question, and we are not aware that any person with the same passion for making careful notes operated in the Custom House as did in the Department of Justice. But after the *Magill* insight into the Berry career, almost anything is possible. Where, for example, are those papers which it seems were put together on the I.R.A. and Communist-orientated groups in the 1930s? As contemporary insights into

the mind of the establishment at the time, they would be priceless for historians of the period.

DO NOT WANT TO KNOW

One of the things to emerge from the whole affair is the degree to which people at all levels, it seems, do not want to know, when it appears that not knowing can lead to a greater flexibility of attitudes and even of policy later on. It has been suggested, and indeed still seems to be the case, that it is much easier for most of us to remain ignorant or at least vague about the realities of life in Northern Ireland rather than face the problem in all its complexity and brutality. One group in the North who have constantly urged southern concern is the S.D.L.P. They have insisted that there is no solution in a Six-County context only, though they are less than happy when southern observers come up with analyses and suggestions for a solution which do not correspond to their own.

CATHOLIC VOICE

To take a simple example. The S.D.L.P. insists that, ideologically, it is part of the international Socialist movement, and is less than happy if some outsiders see it as basically the voice of the Northern Irish Catholic/Nationalist community not very different from the old Nationalist Party. The S.D.L.P. has many friends in the South and it appears, relies on Southern support groups for most of its funding. Indeed a press statement on the background to the public meeting being called by the Galway S.D.L.P. Support Group at 8.30 p.m. on Friday, 20th June in the Salthill Hotel, goes so far as to suggest that "The work of the S.D.L.P. Galway Group complements the activities of the S.D.L.P. Dublin Group, without whose fund-raising activities over the years, there simply would be no S.D.L.P."

GROWING SUPPORT
Flattering? Perhaps. But

it also raises that difficult question about the degree of support which the party enjoys even within the anti-Unionist population of the Six Counties, a significant segment of which cannot really be said to have any real political voice in Northern affairs within the structures which prevail there, and with which there is such basic disagreement. And there is also reason to suspect that a growing number of anti-Unionists who may have supported the S.D.L.P. in a general way in the early 1970s, have various reservations about policies and performance since then. Of the two non-Unionist voices at Westminster, for example, Gerry Fitt is no longer leader of the party, and represents West Belfast as an Independent, while that other large Fermanagh/South Tyrone constituency with an anti-Unionist voice, re-elected Mr. Frank McGuire last year even though the S.D.L.P.'s Austin Currie broke ranks and thus increased the risk of a Unionist voice from the constituency. In spite of this, Mr. Currie was back at John Hume's side when the talks with Mr. Atkins got under way.

The Chairperson of the S.D.L.P., Mrs. Brid Rodgers, is coming to speak at the Galway meeting, and to outline what she sees as a solution to the Northern Ireland problem. A broad and difficult brief, no doubt, which should be of interest to anyone who wants to add to their understanding of the situation. The officers of the Galway S.D.L.P. Group, who are organising the meeting, are

Trustees: Dr. D. D. Coyle, Professor Eamon Dwyer.

Executive Committee: Cyril Bowman, Gerald Colgan, John Coyle, Micheal de Hal, Eamon Hanna, Jack Mahon, Liam M. O'Brien, Dr. Aodhagan Roddy, Mrs. Breda Ryan.

MAGILL AND DALLAS
A final flashback to

Magill and to what one expectant reader is quoted as having said to one of the magazine's sales staff as the first issue dealing with the Arms Crisis went on sale: "Unless you can prove that Charlie Haughey bought the gun that Sue Ellen shot J.R. with, then we'll all be disappointed!"

Which seems to take it for granted that it was Sue Ellen who fired the shot—an assumption too big to

make the way things are going at present. At least, we can rest assured that R.T.E. will bring us all the latest from *Dallas* as soon as they can. Unlike events on the home front, they brought us the low-down on J.R.'s nasty accident well in advance of the B.B.C. Oh! The joys of an independent Irish television service.

Compiled by
Nollaig O Gadhra

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