

Muckross Diary

Annual General Meeting: The annual general meeting of the Trustees of Muckross House Killarney Ltd. was held on April 4. People who are members of the company and subscribe an annual or a life membership subscription were invited to this meeting. We are often told that people are not aware that they can become members of the company and we have been asked to make special mention of it in this issue of ROS. Generally, anybody who subscribes a minimum of £2 per year and wishes to become a member, will be accepted. As in all such cases the company, of course, has the right to refuse but this has not happened so far.

The advantages of becoming a member of the Company are numerous, but the main ones are: (a) You get a family season admission ticket to Muckross House which means that the holder of the ticket and his/her family can visit the House any number of times during the year; (b) They are entitled to receive ROS free—this would apply to any other information sheet that the Trustees might be issuing; (c) Members are entitled to attend the annual general meeting and to vote there and, of course, to seek and, if elected, become Directors. The stronger the membership of the Company is, needless to say, the stronger the Company, so we hope that this appeal will induce you to apply for membership.

Crafts

Our three Craft Workshops have been developing quite a lot in the past year and our Craft Shop in Muckross has now become quite a popular place for shopping for gifts for all sorts of occasions. Indeed, in some of our Crafts, people are actually making collections so they are always looking around to find a new piece which they have not already seen and this normally is not very difficult because new pieces are always being produced.

We had a very fine display on the window of the Tourist Office in Killarney, from before Christmas, and Maura Brosnan, who is in charge of

our shop, has been highly complimented on her display there.

We have also been asked by the Pan Celtic Committee, who are organising an Inter-Celtic Fashion Show during Pan Celtic week, to provide a number of garments made from our tweed for the show. This idea stemmed from the show we had at the RDS last August—reported in the Christmas issue of ROS—and we are happy to say that Catriona O'Connor's partner, in making the garments for that show, Annie Hildesley, will again be making the ladies' garments. We have also produced hats, caps and ties from our tweed, so that there is an increasing range of products which one can buy. The same applies to the forge, where we have a nice range now of fire-iron sets, teapot stands, candle-holders, flower pot stands, and garden furniture. As far as the Pottery is concerned, I am afraid, our main problem is to be able to produce enough. It is very popular.

Staff

In future issues of ROS we hope to tell you more about the staff working in Muckross House but for this one we want to mention just a few people. In the first place we would like to wish Breeda Tagney, who was Secretary in the House for a number of years, all the best in her new life of being wife of Jim Cott. We also wish Maureen Guerin, who left us during the year, the best and we welcome

ROS

Journal of Kerry Folk Life Vol. 8 No. 1

Willie Burke from Castlelough, who is apprenticed to Tim Crowley, who does all the technical work of repairing and looking after the exhibits in Muckross House as well as many another job. Margaret Healy from Muckross, who looks after our records and who is currently preparing a catalogue of all the exhibits, is doing a number of short-term courses in the Folklore Department of UCD.

St. Brigid's Day

The article on St. Brigid's Day has been prepared by Miss Bernie Halpin who is on the Co-Operative Education Scheme with us from NIHE in Limerick. She has extensively used the *Schools Notebooks* as material, which has not necessarily been utilised previously, in this type of article. On the same subject, there is a very interesting booklet published by Clodhanna Teo., 6 Sráid Fhearchair, Baile Átha Cliath 2, and written by Seán C. Ó Suilleabháin, who is a native of Fossa Parish, Killarney, and who works as Assistant Keeper in the Department of Folklife in the National Museum of Ireland. The title of the book is *Lá Fhéile Bríde*, and it sells for 25p.

Kerry Craftsmen's Association

We, in Muckross House, are glad to see that this Association is continuing and we would like to congratulate one of its members, Mr. Louis Mulcahy of An Clochar, who has been recently elected as Chairman of the Crafts Council of Ireland. We hope, during this summer, to experiment with an idea where the Association will organise produce made by its members in a section in our Craft Shop at Muckross.

OUR A.G.M.

Conservation, research and presentation of the information were the three aims put forward by Very Rev. Canon D. K. Earl, Chairman of Muckross House Committee, when he addressed the twelfth annual general meeting of the Trustees, at the Castlerosse Hotel last week.

Canon Earl pointed out that conservation could entail the safeguarding of man-made features of landscape of Kerry and of craft-workers' skills. He said that a lot of work has been done by the Folklore Commission, now the Department of Folklore, UCD, and the first problem for Muckross House would be to index material relevant to Kerry wherever it is. We do not yet have the resources to do as much research as we would like to, but already we have had a couple of worthwhile studies done.

Presentation of information will now hopefully take on a new dimension, that of publication on specific subjects. Referring to the agreement with the Office of Public Works, he said it is hoped to soon see re-decorated those rooms in the house not already done. It is hoped, too, to see this done in the style and fashion of the hey-day of the house.

"We learn with pleasure that furnishings, etc., suitable for the main rooms in the house will be acquired by the Office of Public Works," he announced.

He said he had the pleasure of welcoming to the House recently, the President of Ireland, Dr. P. Hillery and his wife. Other recent visitors were: Mr. Piers Wyse, TD, Minister of State responsible for the OPW; Mr. John O'Leary, TD, Minister of State, Department of the Environment, and Mr. John McCarthy, Chairman of the Commissioners of Public Works.



The replica of a 600 BC-vintage Crannog at Craggaunowen is one of the big attractions for the 23,000-plus people who visited the museum project last year.

OLD KILLARNEY

In the Christmas edition of ROS, I had a full-page article on Old Killarney. I have got such a response on the article that it has given me as much information again. As this takes so much time to get together, it was impossible for me to finalise all the information before this edition went to print. This further information will be submitted in a future edition of ROS.

I would like to thank all the people who have come forward and given me so much help with the research; especially: Mrs. Kelly, St. Brendan's Terrace; Nora Casey, St. Brendan's Terrace; Mrs. Sheila O'Connor, Bohercaol; Mr. John O'Grady, Bohercaol; Mr. Tadhg O'Sullivan, Woodlawn; Mr. Pat O'Kelliher, Glebe Place; Mrs. Jerry Brosnan, 77 New Street; Mrs. Michael Looney, Ross Road, and Julia Murphy, c/o Presbytery, New Street.

To all who helped, however little, sincere thanks in forming this record.

—John Joe Murphy.

ST. BRIGID'S DAY

prepared by:

Miss Bernie Halpin,

NIHE Student working in Muckross

To a greater or lesser extent St. Brigid's Day has been celebrated for centuries by people from all parts of Ireland. Falling on the first of February, it is traditionally acknowledged as the first day of spring. Long ago there were many customs and beliefs practised by the people on that day, but most of these have died out with the coming of a more 'sophisticated' society. Brigid's Cross, Brat Bríde and 'The Biddy' do not mean as much to the modern Irish as they once did to other generations.

The origins of the feastday and its celebrations are lost in time but one explanation is this: "Is é an fáth go dtugtar Lá le Bhrigid air nó bhí bean ins an séipeál uair agus bhí leanbh óg aici. Do bhí náire uirthi dul suas leis an leanbh i measc na ndaoine, ach bhí Naomh Bhrigid na teannta, agus dubhairt sí go mbearfadh sí féin suas an leanbh agus do dhein. Dubhairt an bhean go dtubharfadh sí lá le Brigid ar an lá ó shin." (*Baile na nGall*, 420/386).¹

Brigid's Cross

Perhaps the tradition which has survived best in our time is that of having a St. Brigid's Cross in the home. This is indeed an ancient tradition, thought by many as having originated in pagan times but it was christianised by Brigid. One legendary explanation of the Cross was told to a schoolgirl in *Baile na nGall*: "Saint Brigid was living in this particular house. One night she heard a man was dying, she asked where he was and they told her. She went out and made the cross. The man had no religion and she asked him to kiss the cross and he did. He died and she said he went to heaven. That was when Saint Brigid's Cross was made first." (426/497).²

The size, shape, intricacy of design and material used varied greatly from area to area. In Kerry reeds or straw were most commonly used and the plain interwoven diamond, or 'swastika' type (as in the RTE symbol) were the most popular shapes chosen for the crosses. When collecting the material silence was kept, and the collectors prayed. In Killorglin "wheaten straw or reed were first got and shaped into a cross. On St. Brigid's the youngest child in every house went to the door and said: 'Open the door and leave Saint Brigid in.' Then all the people of the house knelt down and said the Rosary" (434/145).³ Procedure differed slightly depending on the area. For example, in Farranfore, a member of the family carried the crosses around the house twelve times while the others prayed to St. Brigid. The cross or crosses were kept in the roof until the following St. Brigid's Day and often not even taken down then. In many areas you could tell how long the family had lived in a house by the number of crosses hanging in the roof.

St. Brigid was said to have been very fond of animals. "On St. Brigid's

night a cross is hung in the stall to bring good luck to the cattle." (*Árd Fhearta*, 414/44).⁴ It is said that when she makes her annual trip through Ireland on her special night, she is accompanied by her favourite white cow.

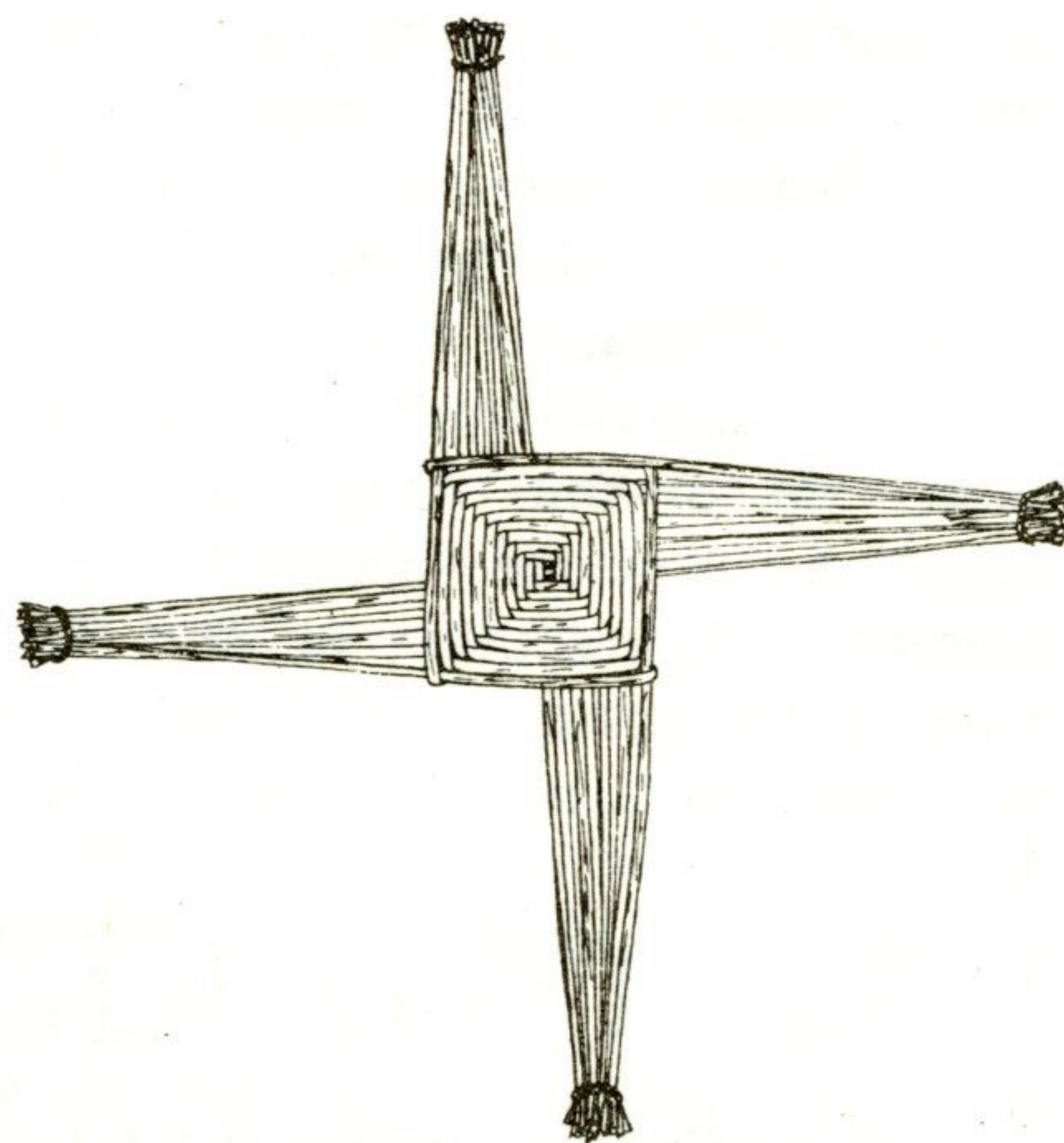
The cross is said to protect the house from fire and storms. *The Irish Hudibras*, published in 1728, puts it nicely:

*And where no chimney was erected,
Where sparks and flames might be directed,*

*St. Brigid's Cross hung over door,
Which did the house from fire secure,
As Gillo thought O powerful charm
To keep a house from taking harm:
And tho' the dogs and servants slept
By Brigid's care the house was kept.*

No Turning Allowed

"Lá fhéile Bríde na shaoire ar chusaoibh. Ní raibh cead ag éinne sníomh ná cniotáil ar Lá Fhéile Bríde." The turning of wheels on this day was especially avoided in Co. Kerry where men walked rather than cycled, sewing machines were not operated and ploughing and smithwork were not allowed. In Killarney, "On Saint Brigid's Day, people do not plough their land, for people say it is not right to turn horses on the headland on that day," (456/178).⁵ In Sneem, "women won't spin, weave or card on that day and men wouldn't dream of twisting a sugan if there was the greatest necessity for it." (468/55).⁶



'SWASTIKA'-TYPE

This type is second in popularity to the 'diamond' crosses, though probably better known today because it is used as the RTE symbol. It has four projecting arms made from interlocked strands of straw or rushes, the latter being more often used in the case of large crosses. In Co. Kerry it was the small crosses of this type that were popular.

Brat Bríde

Bríd is a brat

Muire is a mac,

Micheál is a sciath

Eadrainn agus cach olc.

"In Killarney it was the custom to put out on a little bush near the house something belonging to every member of the family, such as a handkerchief or a tie or cap, on Saint Brigid's Night that she might bless them." (455/251).⁷ These pieces of clothing were known as Brat Bríde, and were believed to have curative and protective powers. The Brat Bríde was, in some areas, worn by the person most often in danger, for example, a fisherman. It was also laid on sick humans or animals. "Dheireadh na sean-mhná rud go dtugtaí Brat Bhrigide air. Bhíleigheas ansan." (*Dún Chaoin*, 418/60).⁸ In Listowel, "people used hang out a scrap of cloth in honour of St. Brigid and it was a popular belief that she passed in spirit over Ireland, touching the pieces of cloth. These cloths had then the power of curing," (405/380).⁹ Sometimes the Brat was measured before and after being outside and if it had stretched it was believed the coming year would be prosperous. Some mothers sewed little pieces of the Brat into their children's clothes to save them being abducted by the fairies. Nuns in Kilshenane made badges and scapulars from their Brat Bríde.

Food

Food played a fairly important part in the customs of February the first. In Killarney, "some people thought that by throwing a loaf of bread outside the door on St. Brigid's Night that they would never be hungry during the coming year", (456/175).¹⁰ Many families left food outside for Brigid (and sometimes for her cow too). In the morning this food was either shared among the family or given to the first poor person or tramp who came along.

Even the poorest household had a special festive meal on St. Brigid's Eve of which fresh butter was an essential ingredient though milk was scarce at that season. Bairín-Breac, apple-cake, dumplings and colcannon were among the treats which were served up. The better off families always helped their poorer neighbours by giving them gifts of butter and meat to ensure that everyone could celebrate the feastday in style. "Ins an Daingean fadó deintí im agus clúdaíghtí é go dtí an céad lá le Bríde eile. Ní bhíodh aon tsalann air. Deirtí go mbíodh leigheas ann do thinneas cinn nó d'fhuil shróin," (413/315).¹¹

'The Biddy'

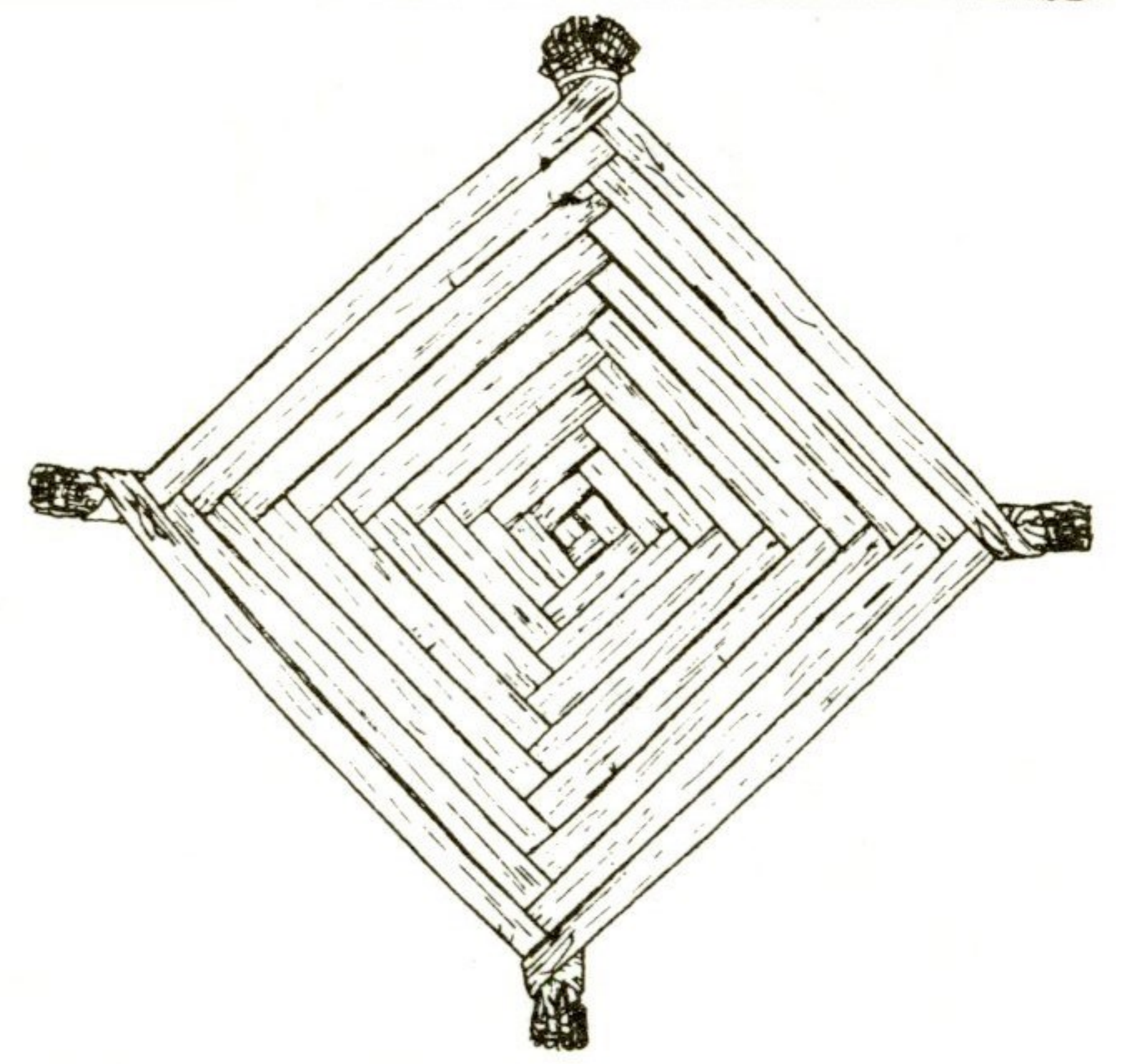
Something for poor Biddy

Her clothes are torn

Her shoes are worn

Something for poor Biddy

In south County Kerry the response to this verse would be a welcome of "Dé bheathasa a Bhrídeog". The verse (of which there are many versions) announced the arrival of the



SINGLE DIAMOND-TYPE

The most popular cross-type country-wide is the simple plaited quadrangle or diamond. Usually made of straw, though sometimes found made of rushes or a combination of both. The foundation is made generally of two crossed slips of wood. Very common in County Kerry.

Brídeoga or 'Biddies' on St. Brigid's Eve. Originally, this tradition consisted of a group of young women (or men) calling to every house in the neighbourhood with a doll representing St. Brigid, asking the family to pray with them to their beloved saint. Each householder would give the Brídeoga a pin or some food as a token. Anything received was given to charity. As time passed it became more usual for men to dress up in women's clothes (wearing elaborate straw hats to disguise themselves) to form the Brídeoga. The disguise was to avoid hurting the pride of the poor people who were given the charity. Music and singing were introduced into the Biddies repertoire and eventually almost all religious significance was lost. Money replaced the food tokens and it became more popular to spend the money on entertainment than charity as the more materialistic generations came along. This was not always looked on with favour by older folk. One person in Killorglin felt rather strongly about it, saying: "—As time went by, the sanctity of this old custom on the eve of St. Brigid's Day died away and what was once a devout custom is now utilised for greed and very often for a base purpose—", (472/18).¹² In Blackwater, it is reported: "Girls from this locality accompanied the boys this year, i.e. 1936. They were the sisters of the boys and were anxious for a dance here and there and employed this subterfuge to get it," (465/175).¹³

"Sheinnidís dreas ceoil agus dheinidís rinne i ngach tig do dtéighidís isteach ann. Ní bhíodh aon oidhche ól ná ithe aca an am sin mar nár geibhidís an t-airgead chun é bheith aca," (*Cill Orglan*, 435/387).¹⁴

The doll representing St. Brigid was, more often than not, anything but flattering to the saint. It was made from a churnstaff and a turnip dressed in straw and white robes. A description of the carrying out of this tradition in Killorglin in the 1930s is given below:

"There are men who go around dressed as women with figures of

Continued on page 3

Kerry's Polar Explorer

TOM CREAN

by FINBARR SLATTERY

PROBE any parish in Kerry, and it is a good bet that you'll find some distinguished 'son' in the place somewhere along the line. In Ballylongford you have The O'Rahilly; in Lisselton, Maurice Walsh; in Rathmore, Owen Rua O'Sullivan, and in Aunascaul you have Tom Crean.

Tom Crean was born one hundred years ago this year, on 16 July 1877, one of a large family born to Patrick and Catherine Crean, in the parish of Aunascaul, and he was educated at the local National School.

None of this made Tom unusual, but it was his activities in later years, which included three expeditions to the Antarctic, almost making it to the South Pole on one occasion with Scott, that causes him to be remembered as one of the most unusual Kerry men ever.

When only fifteen, Tom joined the British Navy, like many an Irishman before him. He wasn't too enthralled with navy life, finding the going tough, but the natural durability of the man, that was to serve him so well in later years, made him stick it out. He was a 'fine cut of a man', and while still in the navy, he volunteered for an expedition to the South Pole. He must have had all the right ingredients for this hazardous trip because he was one of a small number of about three dozen selected by Robert Falcon Scott for this trip. The expedition that he joined was the first to undertake land exploration of that vast area, about one and a half times the size of Europe. It was known as the British National Antarctic Expedition.

A special ship, *Discovery*, was built for the voyage. It left England in August 1901, with a party of thirty-eight, made up of twelve officers and scientists and twenty-six men. Only two of those on board had previously been to the polar regions.

Scott's first voyage to the Antarctic could be regarded as a probing expedition. It wasn't intended as such, but that's the way it turned out. From it Scott gained a lot of information about this huge ice-covered continent. It was two years after *Discovery* anchored in the Antarctic before the ship set sail again for England. And on his return to Britain Scott began immediately planning for a return expedition with the ultimate goal of reaching the South Pole, something that up to then had not been achieved.

Tom Crean was one of those chosen for the second voyage. Scott's plan for the mighty assault to the South Pole was that teams of men would carry supplies to various outposts along the way and return to base, which was the ship they had travelled in, and wait. Crean was one of the party selected to travel to the last outpost nearest the South Pole. From there Scott and his four companions set out for the Pole, while Crean and his two companions set off on their homeward trek.



Tom Crean, equipped for one of his voyages to the Antarctic.

Scott reached the South Pole only to find that a Norwegian had beaten him to it. Scott didn't make it back to the ship. He nearly did, and was almost within sight of home when he and his men were caught in a blizzard and died. Tom Crean made it after a really gruelling experience, running into blizzards along the way.

One of the two with Crean, Lieut. Edward Evans, was taken ill, and when he could walk no more, his two companions, Crean and Lashly, tied him on a sledge and pulled him over one hundred miles. There were still thirty-five miles to go when a blizzard came and made it impossible to drag the sledge any further. They put up a tent for shelter and Tom Crean set out on his own to cover this last thirty-five miles to get help. He made it in eighteen hours, and just made it before another blizzard struck, that made travelling impossible.

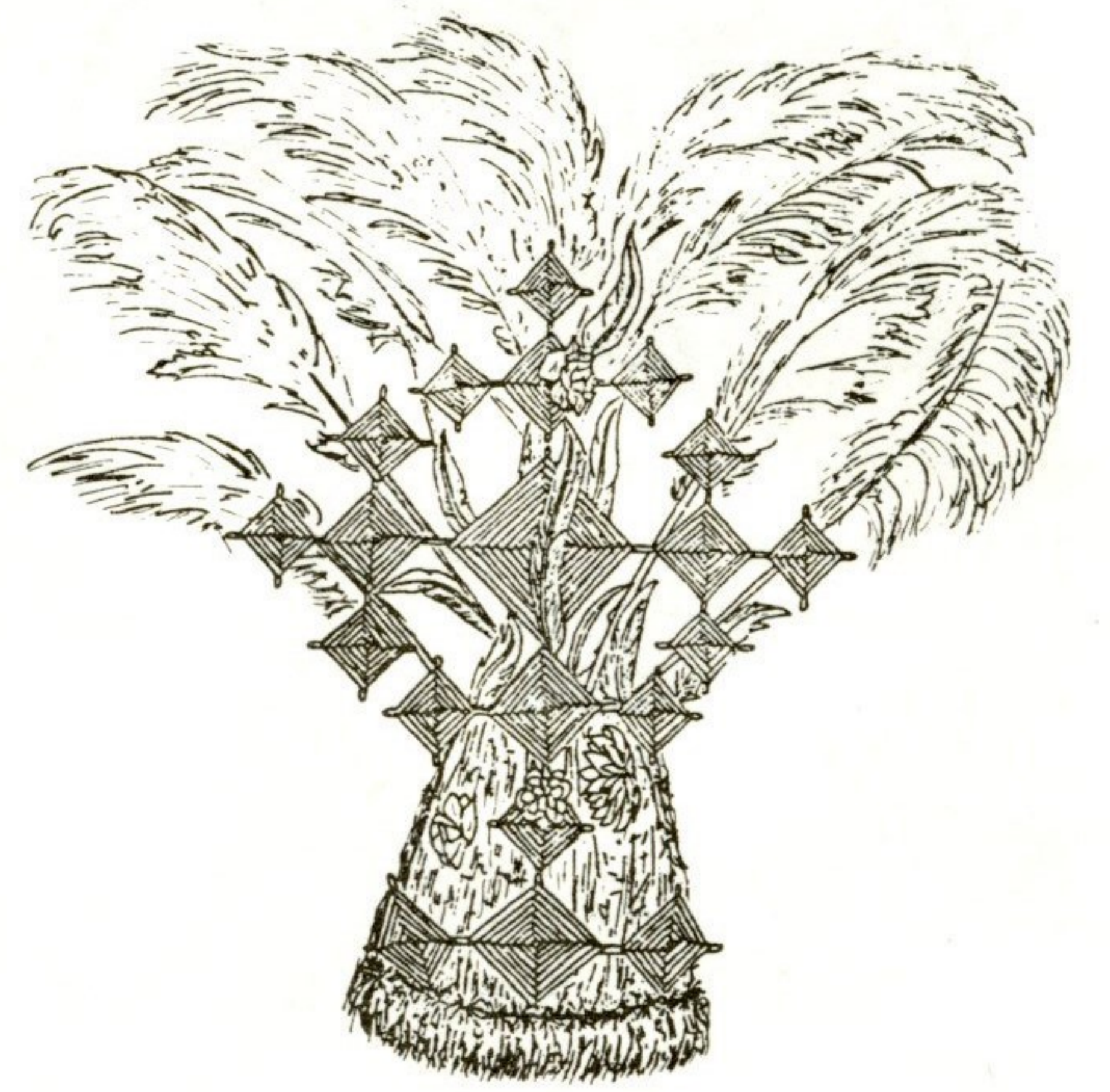
The survivors of Scott's last expedition to the South Pole arrived back in England in June 1913. Crean and Lashly were each awarded the Albert Medal for having saved lives. Evans became an Admiral and kept in touch with his two comrades. He dedicated his book, *South with Scott*, to them.

You would think such a gruelling experience would have been enough for anyone, but not for Tom Crean. He joined Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition, which left England in a ship called *Endurance*, in August 1914. Crean was second officer. And he again had some hair-raising experiences—at one stage he fell through a break in the ice when one massive iceberg separated. He was just pulled out in time before the two pieces of ice came together again—he would have been crushed to pulp in a matter of seconds only for being pulled out so quickly.

After getting back to England, Crean returned once more to the navy, this time as Warrant Officer and he saw out the end of World War I. In 1917, he married Ellen Herlihy and they had three children.

With enough adventure behind him to satisfy anyone, Tom Crean returned and settled in his native Aunascaul in 1920. There, he opened the South Pole Inn to spend out the rest of his days amongst his own people. There he could be seen smoking his pipe and chatting with his neighbours until death finally called him on 27 July 1938.

His two surviving daughters, both Mrs. O'Briens, live beside each other in Tralee. They have loving recollections of a great father, a man they are justly proud of. In his own quiet way he packed in a full life, a life of breathtaking adventure that will forever be recalled.



Maireann níos na Brídeoige fós in áiteanna i gCo. Chiarraí agus is rudaí anghalánta roinnt de na hataí tuí a chaitear ann. Cé go gcaitheann na daoine óga atá sna bhrídeoiga hataí atá deartha go simplí, tá hataí na ndaoine fásta an-ornáideach ar fad.

St. Brigid's Day Contd.

St. Brigid which they make out of turnips. . . They make hats out of straw, and if the day were wet, they would put their own caps inside the straw hats. When they go into each house they ask for money. When they go into town, they go into publichouses and buy drink for their money. A few nights after they have a 'Biddie Dance' in a country hall or in the house of one of their own crowd. They hold this dance till morning." (435/162).¹⁵

Each neighbourhood had its own group of Biddies and sometimes the captain of the group would be asked to lift his straw hat-mask and identify the area the group were from to prevent 'poaching' from other areas. Richard Hilliard in a note in *Ulster Folklife*, 1962, gives the following account: "Before our time, the great centre for the Biddies was Muckcross House, where the Herbert family lived until 1898; indeed, all the local gentry seem to have encouraged the Biddies, and each crowd had its own territory. This led to an interesting situation, as far as we were concerned. Father moved to South Hill in 1926,



Brídeog as Chontae Chiarraí.

an estate which adjoined Flesk Castle where the late Major MacGillicuddy had gone to live in 1918. Major MacGillicuddy had joined his place to the Lisavigeen Biddy area, which was actually divided from his estate by the River Flesk. South Hill was in the Muckcross Biddy territory, but when we moved there, and mother asked the Muckcross Biddies to call with us, we found that the Major had persuaded the previous proprietors of South Hill to join his Lisavigeen group. Mother, however, would receive the Muckcross Biddies only, and hunted the others; this actually started a feud between Muckcross and Lisavigeen which persisted in sports and games for quite a long time."¹⁶

Nowadays

In January 1976, in an attempt to discover how strong, if at all, these traditions are nowadays, residents of nine areas in County Kerry were questioned. These areas were: Rathmore, Kilgarvan, Waterville/Glenmore, Valentia, Ballyferriter, Sneem, Ballyduff, Duagh and Kilgobnet. (Ref. Lib. 131.045). The tradition of the Brat Bríde was unknown except in three of the areas—Kilgarvan (where it still exists), Valentia (now extinct, brat used be hung on a nail outside the door), and Ballyduff (where an old lady gave pieces of her Brat Bríde to friends as presents).

The Biddies have not called in most of the areas for well over fifteen years though they still appear, somewhat sporadically, in Kilgobnet, Valentia, Kilgarvan, and areas three or four miles from Ballyduff. In general people remembered the Brídeoigs as having been made of straw, rags and turnips, though fifty years ago large American dolls were used to represent St. Brigid. The Biddies themselves wore 'mixed dress' with straw hats being specifically mentioned only in Sneem and Kilgobnet.

¹⁻¹⁵ Extracts from the *Schools Notebooks*, by permission from the Head of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin.

¹⁶ Danaher, Dr. Kevin: *The Year in Ireland*, page 31.

CRAGGAUNOWEN MUSEUM PROJECT

While numbers of visitors to the Shannon Development-run mediaeval castle attractions in the Shannon region achieved all time records last year, the most spectacular advances were made by the Craggaunowen Museum Project, near Quin, Co. Clare. The two years established museum project attracted over 23,000 visitors last year, an increase of over 5,000 on the previous year. The museum project, twelve miles from Shannon, includes the restored sixteenth-century Craggaunowen Castle, and replicas of a 600 BC crannog or lake dwelling and a prehistoric Ring Fort.

The ingenuity and resourcefulness of Bronze-age Irishmen of 2,000 years ago, has been brought to life by Shannon Development through the replicas of a Bronze-age lake dwelling or crannog and the Ring Fort. Jim Burke, a Shannon Development executive, who had worked his way back through history with the company—from factory construction to restoration of fifteenth-century castles and building of the cottages featured in the Rent-an-Irish-Cottage scheme—has supervised the construction, remaining as faithful as possible to the building methods used in 600 BC.

It proved to be a tall order. The crannog site selected was a marshy shore south-west of Craggaunowen. Mr. Burke probed the site with a 21-foot long steel rod to find that the ground was mainly peat plus liquid mud, far deeper than twenty-one feet, triggering immediate problems with keeping the crannog above ground. Mr. Burke turned to a 100-year-old volume of Wood Martin's *Lake Dwellings in Ireland*, the book which provided most if not all the directions for the building programme.

Wood Martin's book described how a crannog excavated at Cloneygonnell, Co. Cavan, showed that the lake-dwelling had been built on an artificial island. Ancient lake-dwellers built such islands by sinking dug-out canoes with boulders, building up the base with brush wood and placing felled trees in the shape of wheel-spokes on top.

This method was adopted for Craggaunowen. Trees were felled and stripped, and a base like a rimless spoked wheel was built. This, when covered with planks, was able to take the weight of a tractor and trailer without significant subsidence.

The next step was to build the circular palisade around the wheel structure. Because the palisade stakes could not be driven into the mud of the marsh, they were clamped to the spokes of the wheel structure—ancient man mortised these together. One hundred and fifty poles, each fifteen feet in height and four to six inches girth were used for the palisade. A further 160 tons of earth and sand were used to cover the wheel base.

Work then commenced on the dwellings . . . a circular house and an oval-shaped workshop.

Thirty-nine upright ten-foot poles

were driven into the wheel base to form the framework of the dwelling walls, with twenty-foot rafters forming the roof.

To complete the dwelling, 180 wattles were plaited around the stakes and covered with ten tons of mud, while 3,600 bales of rushes were required to thatch the dwelling.

During the construction the small direct labour force working on the project really caught the mood and used two bronze axes dating from 300 BC, during the plaiting of 6,000 wattles around the crannog's 300-foot circumference palisade.



The Ring Fort at Craggaunowen features a replica of a souterrain.

Finally, lake water was diverted around the lake dwelling. Jim Burke now intends to add a dug-out canoe—fashioned Bronze-age style by charring and digging out, while a replica of a Ring Fort is also planned for the Craggaunowen complex.

A replica of a fairly common type of ring fort has been built. It is a reasonably accurate example of a fort at about AD 200. It is thirty metres in diameter and has two dwellings. The walls of these dwellings are of dry stone construction and the roofs are of timber and thatch. As the fort is an example of a type that was in use during the early Iron age, an iron worker's hut has been erected against the inner face of the embankment. It took twelve hundred cubic yards of earth to form the banks and eight hundred trees to form the palisade. So one can well imagine the arduous task it was for these people in bygone days to build a fort with the simple tools that were available to them. At

DR. MILLER APPEAL

The following appeal has been sent to us by Dr. Miller and we think it is worth publishing in ROS. If anybody can help Dr. Miller, they can either contact him directly or they can contact us at Muckross House.

AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

Dr. Kerby A. Miller, an American Professor of History now teaching in Ireland, is trying to locate letters, diaries, journals, and memoirs which were written by Irish emigrants who went to the United States and Canada. He would also like to find any old letters which were sent from Ireland to emigrants residing in North America, and finally, he hopes to locate letters, diaries, etc., written by Irish priests and missionaries who crossed the Atlantic. Dr. Miller is very interested in all such documents, regardless of their date, but he hopes to find eighteenth and nineteenth-century documents, as well as more recent ones. As is well known, millions of Irish men and women have emigrated to North America. The tragedy that they had to leave Ireland is matched only by their enormously valuable contributions to the building of the United States and Canada. Unfortunately, however, we know far too little about who these brave men and women were, and what they actually did, and thought, and felt, as individuals. Sadly, so few of the millions of letters, diaries, journals, and memoirs which these emigrants wrote have survived the ravages of time; even fewer are deposited in Irish libraries and archives, available to scholars or to the general public.

Dr. Miller is now engaged on a nation-wide campaign in Ireland to locate as many of these valuable old documents as still exist in private hands, so that they can be studied and saved for posterity. His work is supported and endorsed by the US Ambassador to Ireland, Mr. William V. Shannon, and he is collaborating closely with the National Library of Ireland and with other Irish archives, both north and south. Thus, if the owners of these emigrants' letters, diaries, etc., give permission, photocopies of their manuscripts will be deposited forever in Irish archives for the enlightenment of all future generations.

Dr. Miller will be very grateful if any persons, possessing such Irish emigrants' letters, diaries, etc., or knowing of their whereabouts, would contact him at the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast BT7 1NJ. Any manuscripts sent to Dr. Miller will be promptly returned, and he promises to respect their owners' wishes absolutely.

Toponomia Hiberniae

A good friend of ours, Breandán Ó Cíobháin, himself a Kerryman, and Higher Placenames Officer with the Ordnance Survey, has written a book which will be published by An Foras Duibhneach, 4 Faiche na Sceach, Caisleán Cnucha, Dublin, on 7 April 1978.

It is the first volume in a series in which will be presented detailed information from oral sources, augmented by references to the original Ordnance Survey documents of c. 1840, on Irish placenames. The work has the approval of members of the Irish Placenames Commission and of authorities in the fields of Irish Language and History, and should provide a firm foundation for the study of Irish placenames, as well as being a valuable aid to the social historian and geographer, the folklorist and the dialectologist.

The area covered is Dunkerron North which stretches from the Killarney lakes westward across the mountains, and comprises some 130 square miles of that most rugged area. The sheepfarmers in their dependence on the forbidding landscape conferred on it, by means of placenames, a personality which reflects the way of life and the attitudes of the community.

The price of this book will be £13.50 but there is a pre-publication price of £11.00 for orders received by An Foras Duibhneach before April 7. Postage and packing will be a slight extra charge.

Craggaunowen it has taken nearly a year to complete the ring fort, admittedly, only two men were employed, but they had the use of modern tools and machinery. A souterrain in its simplest form has also been incorporated. Hopefully, a visit to the fort at Craggaunowen will highlight the need to preserve and examine authentic forts of which there are at least 30,000 scattered throughout the country. Indeed, not far from Shannon is a very important one—Moohane, and a visit to it on a fine day is quite rewarding. But, as I have said before, quite a lot of these relics of a bygone age are fast disappearing.

It is nothing new in Irish history to find forts in ruins, but for us to stand idly by, while wholesale destruction of our heritage takes place, will brand our generation to all enlightened countries, as given over to greed, ignorance, vandalism and lack of patriotism in a true sense.