

being produced with a great night of nostalgia in the original "Ballroom of Romance". The DVD and CD can be purchased locally and online – see www.rainbowballroomofromance.ie

In 2012 the group were successful with an application to Leitrim Development Company under the LEADER programme to complete the project. The group received a grant of 485,349.37 Euro. This along with our own funds and a loan that we secured from Western Development Commission means that approximately 700,000.00 Euro will be spent on finishing off the Rainbow Project.

The people of Glenfarne are very proud of the Rainbow Ballroom of Romance, as it is the only genuine and original Ballroom of Romance, not only in Ireland, but also in the world. 2014 sees The Rainbow reach The Big 80!

Phil Hogan officially opened the newly-refurbished ballroom on Saturday 9th November 2013.

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Memories of the Glenfarne Fife and Drum Band 1930 – 1948

By Thomas Clancy and Charlie Cullen - Leitrim Observer

This story is dedicated to all the members of the Fife & Drum Band and their families and also to the late John P Clancy who recalled the days of the band and his son Thomas Clancy recorded his memories.

Marching Bands are loved by all, they add excitement, colour, entertainments and music to any occasion. In the early part of the last century Glenfarne had its own fife and drum band with twenty four members. The all male band were trained to read and play music by note, to march in formation and observe a strict code of discipline.

For the 18 years of their time together they trained one night a week as a group and had to have their pieces learned for the following week. They performed at religious, sporting and commemorative celebrations throughout the year. Their territory was from Cavan to Sligo, taking part in and winning several marching band competitions.

The Band trainers were Michael McGuire (Mick Matthew John) and Tommy McGuire. Their home can still be seen from the road between the village and the Rainbow. Mike as he was

known, was an ex Irish Army Band Master, a talented and gifted musician. He read, wrote and taught music by note. This type of musical ability is rare today, but in Glenfarne all those years ago, it was indeed remarkable.

Initially Mick and Tommy McGuire set about forming a Marching Band and raising money to equip it. They ran raffles and county house and barn loft dances to raise funds to purchase instruments. One of the places they ran such dances was in Bernie Keaveney's Barn-loft in Loughross, the building is still in existence.

They purchased drums, flutes, fifes, flageolets cymbals triangles, music sheets, notes and note holders. They recruited twenty four band members and commenced training. The rest of the band members joined over the years as they became of age or took the place of siblings who were already in the band. All the music was arranged and movements choreographed by the two McGuires.

The band members were trained to march in formation of four abreast and to file into two abreast when the odd motorcar approached, and then regroup into their original formation while

still playing music.

They took part in several outings per year. One annual outing was to Tobernault on the last Sunday of July. This was a religious festival to a holy well near Sligo. They travelled by train from Glenfarne to Sligo, a special train from Enniskillen to carry the hundreds of pilgrims who travelled ear year. Early booking was essential; such was the demand for seats to go to the holy well at Tobernault. The Glenfarne Fife and Drum Band marched and played from the Train Station at Sligo to a location to the Holy Well and back to the Station.

They took part in the celebrations in Kiltyclogher when the memorial to Sean MacDiarmada was unveiled in 1936. Another annual event was the commemorative march for the Manchester Martyrs, Allan Larkin and O'Brien on the 23rd of November. They marched from the Rainbow to the Blackrock and back to the village, accompanied by a torch bearings vanguard. These torches were homemade from pieces of sacking tightly bound to an iron bar by wire and soaked in paraffin oil for a number of days, then the excess oil was squeezed from the sacking to prevent premature burn out. When the torches were lit they lasted for the duration of the march.

Having over 100 tunes in their repertoire they did not have to repeat a tune no matter how long the march, something today's bands would marvel at. There was a similar outing each St Patrick's Day when the people of the district came to watch and listen to the music.

The Band's training venue was the still existing gatehouse to Glenfarne Wood at St Mary's Church, which was owned by the Sheehan family at that time. All the instruments were stored in the bandleader's house.

The original band lasted from 1930 to 1942 when the McGuire family discontinued its leadership. It was reformed shortly afterwards under the leadership of Thomas Keaney (Tommy Terry) but only lasted a short time due to the haemorrhage of young men to emigration to Britain and America and the onset of the Second World War (The Emergency).

For a number of years after the Band ceased regular training or taking part in outings, the

remaining members and some new recruits came together for the annual St. Patrick's day parade from St. Mary's Church to the village. The last day they played was Saint Patrick's Day 1948.

During the time Tommy Terry led the Band. The instruments were stored under the stage of the Rainbow Ballroom. The Rainbow was at the time only recently opened in 1934. Though the instruments were housed there, the Rainbow was not used as a rehearsal or practise venue. Over its eighteen-year lifetime, the Band won several competitions in Cavan, Sligo and Manorhamilton.

The Band members were trained to army band standards of music performance, discipline and behaviour. Their marching skills were legendary and their code of discipline was exemplary. The band leader brought his Irish band training to fruition with a group of young local rural lads, ranging in age from 16 – 30 years.

Many of the Band member's families live in Glenfarne, both first, second, third generations and beyond. They should feel proud to be associated with another era when entertainment was home grown and participative pastimes and sports were the order of the day.

Our local Fine Gael Councillor of many years, Charlie Cullen, who was instrumental and helpful in my writing this brief history of the band, is a son of the former band member Tommy Cullen.

John P Clancy, my father played music on a regular basis. Tunes he learned decades ago and most of the time there was no one to listen to him play but himself.

The band could never aspire to having a uniform because of the prohibitive cost, but they did wear a green sash over their right shoulder. It is not known if a photograph exists, but I would like to hear from anyone with a photograph of the Glenfarne Fife and Drum Band.

Below is a list of the members and the instruments they played. (Nicknames are included to aid recognition).

- Michael McGuire (Mike Matthew John) Flute Trainer
- Tommy Maguire, Kettle Drum. Assistant Trainer

- Bartley McMorro (Tady Mac) Band Manager
- Thomas Keaney (Tommy Terry) Bass Drum, Bandleader
- Thomas Cullen (Tommy Charlie) Kettle Drum
- Eddie Cullen (Accordion Player) Kettle Drum
- Frank McGuire Senior (The Village Glenfarne) Fife
- Frank McGuire Junior (The Village Glenfarne) Fife
- Thomas Cullen (Thomas Eoin Vicky) Fife
- John P. Clancy, Fife
- Felix Clancy, Fife
- Thomas Clancy, Fife
- Michael McMorro (Mike John Frank) Fife
- John McHugh (John Martin) Fife
- Thomas McHugh (Thomas Martin) Fife
- Peter Mawn (Ardvarney) Fife
- Philip Slevin (Garry) Fife
- Francis McPartlin (Mullan) Fife
- Paddy McGourty (Ballagh) Fife
- Paddy Gilgunn (Paddy Paddy Thomas) Fife
- Peter Gilgunn (Paddy Thomas) Fife
- Hughie Gilgunn (Minkeeragh) Fife
- James Keaney (Pat Johnnie) Fife
- Paddy Cullen (Barber) Fife
- Paddy Keaney (Laurence) Fife
- Paddy Leonard, Fife
- John Keaney (Pat Jimmy) Fife
- James Keaney (Jocus) Cymbals
- Owen Keaney (Owney Paddy) Fife
- Edward Kelly (Eddie) Stranagress, Fife
- Frank Keaney (Cottage Cooper) Fife
- John Maguire (The Village Glenfarne)
- John Cullen (Briney Anthony)

Glenfarne G.A.A. 1910 to the 1990's

St Mary's Glenfarne

Records show that Gaelic Athletic Association in North Leitrim is first mentioned in 1886 and Glenfarne was introduced to Gaelic football in or around 1910. Before long they had played their first ever recorded competitive match. The opposition was by a Killasnett side led by Owen Murphy of Killasnett Co-Op Society.

The advance of Gaelic Football activity in Glenfarne was somewhat hampered by two world wars, a long Civil War, unemployment and emigration. Details of competitions are scarce but in 1926 Glenfarne stood firm to contest the County Final against Annaduff in March 1927. Although they lost on the day, they were now in a position to make a mark on the future of GAA in Glenfarne.

In 1934 Glenfarne qualified for the North Leitrim Final and in Blacklion on October 14th defeated Ballinaglera by a single point. The Glenfarne Club flourished and had many gifted players.

In 1936 the AGM of the North Leitrim Board was held in McGivern's Hall (The Rainbow) bringing honour to Glenfarne. On the field Glenfarne defeated Drumkeeran in the North Final and they

went on to overcome Carrick-on-Shannon in the County Final played on their home ground in Glenfarne.

In 1939 a new Intermediate League was introduced and a second team called Lagoon was established. Lagoon's went on to win the First North Leitrim Intermediate League in 1939.

The 1940's witnessed a new force in North Leitrim with Blacklion dominating the Championships and the Loudon Cup for several years. Glenfarne had commenced the decade on a winning note by capturing both the Northern Championship and Loudon Cup in 1940. The County final was delayed until 30th March 1941 and was played at Glenfarne. Glenfarne emerged as winners beating Ballinmore.

The war years adversely affected the Glenfarne team, there was lack of transport and petrol shortages. But in the year of the Big Snow (1947) Glenfarne won over Gorvagh in the County Final.

The 1950's were devastating for the clubs, emigration was at it's highest and Glenfarne failed to field a team in 1952 and 1954. Blacklion was also struggling and their players with those of