

Peggy's Memories of Dripsey

I was born close to Dripsey Cross. Two pubs have always been there. In the early 1900's the Griffin Family ran the pub which is now the Weigh Inn. The Sisk Family came after Griffins followed by The Riordan Family and now The Feeney Family. Dripsey is made up of Dripsey Cross, Lower Dripsey and the Model Village on the north end. It is the town land of Agharinagh in the parish of Inniscarra. There was/is a second pub across the road from the Weigh Inn and years ago it was owned by Jack Sisk a brother to Willie Sisk who at one time owned what is now the Weigh Inn Pub. I knew it as the Dripsey Bar but now it is the Lee Valley Inn. The Dripsey Bar/Lee Valley Inn is now closed. (2017)

When I was young most everything centered around Dripsey Woollen Mills. It provided employment to several hundred families who mostly lived close by. Several cottages in the Model Village belonged to workers at the Mill. Staff also came from Dripsey Cross, Lower Dripsey as well as a few people from miles around.

The Mill Hooter echoed down the valley early in

the morning to alert staff to start work, again twice at lunch time to go and return from lunch and then again to end the work day. Some people walked to work, others rode bicycles and in much later years a few people had cars. Staff could purchase clothing material, wool blankets or knitting wool and could pay by instalments from each pay check.

Two friends were waiting for the bus at Dripsey Cross (1950's) when one of the Mill Designers came by and admired their suits. They were the same colour (beige) but had different patterns. "You are modelling our tweeds and they are looking great" he said

Princess Diana was photographed wearing a suit of Dripsey Tweed. Eat your heart out Charles! Staff at the Mill went dancing during the the Big Show Band era at local and distant halls. Liam P. held ceili dances in the old Inniscarra Hall east of Barrys Service Station across the road from the Inniscarra Bar. Bus loads came from the city and around the country. Some girls from the city married local men and lived happily ever after. Honestly!

(LDF local defence force or FCA fórsa cosanta áitiúil)

The FCA was *another activity enjoyed by many young men*. To an extent the FCA was something of a social movement, enabling young Irishmen to make friends from greatly different backgrounds and to learn useful skills such as first aid and automotive skills. Most acquired discipline and self-confidence, while some were able to avail of leadership training. The FCA provided an outlet for many unemployed people who were able to devote their talents and energies to a public body. In its early days the force enjoyed a high public profile, participating in annual parades on Easter Monday and St Patrick's Day, and providing frequent guards of honour for dignitaries. Many were happy to get a good winter coat and boots

The Dripsey Pipe Band



The Dripsey Pipe Band had not all but mostly Mill workers playing in it. They were eagerly awaited each year at the Dripsey Ambush Memorial Parade. They could be heard marching down the Mill Road long before they were seen by the crowd waiting at Dripsey Cross.

Young men dressed in tartan kilts, knee socks and a beret looked dapper and handsome. They twirled their batons, banged on the drums and blew into the bag pipes. We were so excited to see and hear them as they played marching songs and the sweet sound of the bag pipes drifted across the valley and community. Then the crowd lined up behind the band and walked quietly behind them as they went down and over Dripsey Bridge, past Shandy Hall, by Godfreys Cross and on to the Ambush Cross. As they walked the band played on. brum, brum-brum!

Dripsey School was built in 1939. It had water, toilets, hand basins and high windows. It was a very modern school at that time but like the rest of the community it did not have electricity in the early days.

Students also attended Irish classes once a week with Micháel O'Murchu leading the group. It was the Gaelic League and one year the group presented a play in Coachford hall and won a cup. The Lee Valley Cup. We were proud of our native language.

Dripsey Bridge

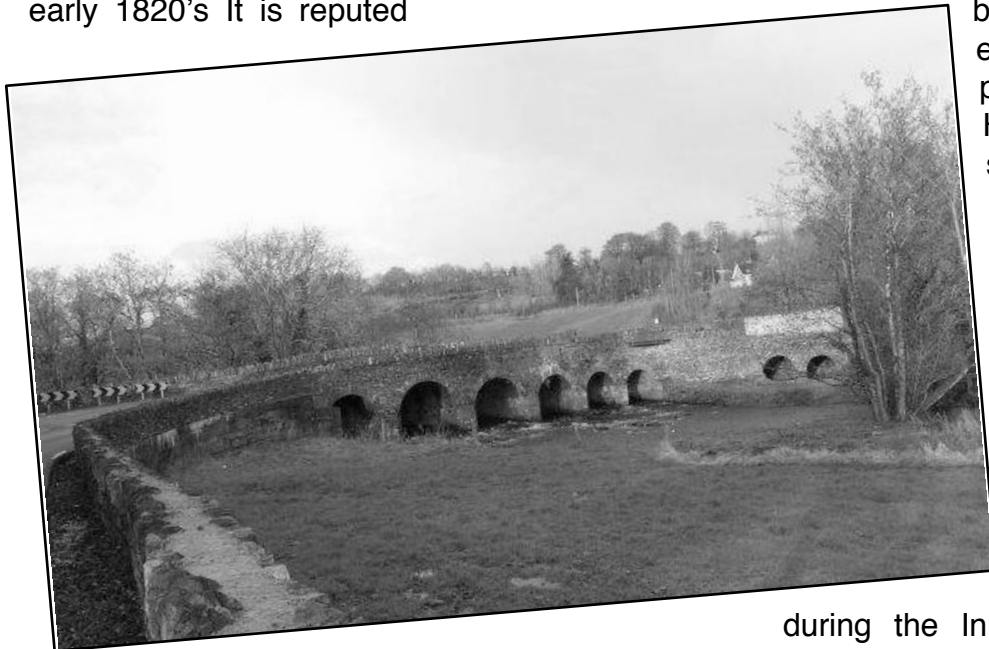


Dripsey Bridge is shown on the 1811 Grand Jury Map of the area and was initially a small stone structure. Like many other Cork bridges, it was possibly enlarged upon by local landlords and magistrates (local Grand Jury) through Westminster funding in the early 1820's. It is reputed

current bridge has six semi-circular arches with three overflow arches at the eastern end. There are corbels on some of the piers to support the centring of arches during construction. The riverbed is paved beneath the bridge.

An upright stone with a benchmark is embedded in the parapet.)

Hurlers and swimmers changed under the dry arches of the bridge and children paddled in the river during summer holidays. The three old cottages on the south/west bank of the river at the Bridge were knocked down

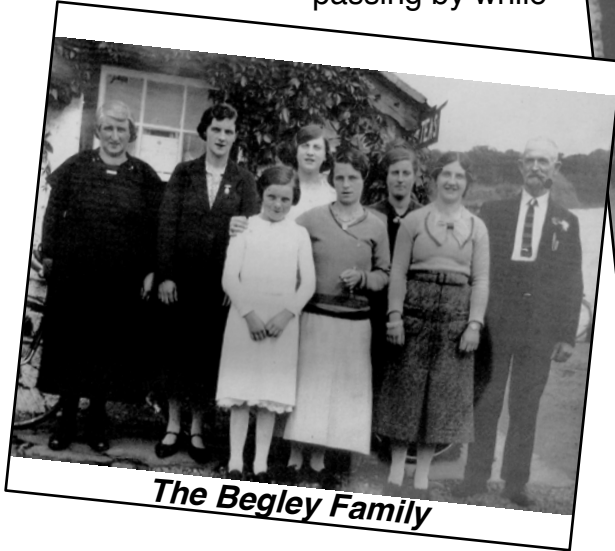


that the bridge was blown up in the early 1920's during the War of Independence and rebuilt. Exploring its architecture, one can see the evidence for reconstruction and further enlarging. The

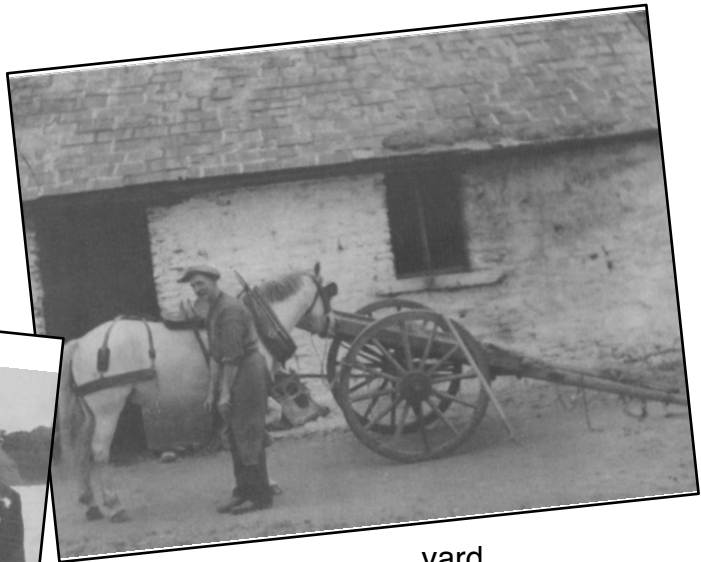
during the Inniscarra Lee Hydro Electric Dam Development. Many families coming to live in Dripsey very often lived in one of these cottages and then moved on as Cork County Council were building cottages each one with an acre of ground.

Begley's Forge

Below Dripsey Cross a beautiful old thatched cottage was home to a family and next to that Begleys had a tea room offering afternoon tea to cyclists passing by while



Jack Begley the blacksmith worked in the old stone building in the



yard.

Local farmers brought their sheep to the Dip in Sisk's yard next to the Pub. They could be heard ba, ba,ba as they bounced along the narrow country road let by a sheep dog. The smell of disinfectant lingered in the air all day following the dip to clean and kill infestation on the sheep.

Threshings are fondly remembered as a time when neighbours got together to help each other. Threshing was a procedure whereby the grain was extracted from straw..Dinner, drinks and teas were served to all present. A barrel of guinness was emptied and replaced as the day wore on. Guinness is good for you! The combined harvester is far more efficient but sad to say that community get together is now a thing of the past.