

NEWS — from the — PEWS

A Rector's Diary (Excerpt from an entry made on January 27th)

Out of the dusk at roosting time loomed the friendly figure of a neighbour who had come to collect the surplus of cockerels from our Yard. His presence startled me as I was unprepared for the visit originally planned for the following day, but he assured me that he could pop in and take the birds now and came well equipped with a cage in the back of his van.



I watched with no small degree of incredulity, at the gentle speed and efficiency with which each cockerel was captured. The hunt began with Guinness (named after his initial appearance as the only chick with a black body and golden head). Guinness had become most protective of the back garden and the hens within his care. He hadn't a hope of mating with a hen because he was far

too small and he had been badly hen-pecked by his peers, being the smallest bantam in the flock, yet within him dwelt the heart of a lion that matched his attitude perfectly. It was Guinness who would perch on the kitchen windowsill at 4pm every day either asking for the evening feed or 'giving me the eye' in a threatening fashion. We had had several standoffs he and I including the swift flail of a nightdress from the washing line on one occasion as tiny spurs sought my shins with deft accuracy.

My heart was saddened to see them captured in the dusk from high perch and henhouse and yet the hand that held all five of them together worked

with kindness and matched the heart within the captor. This was no cruel and merciless act but, in many ways, a merciful thing as the cockerels had begun to spar and damage each other and the hens had become very stressed at their presence and antics at a whiff of approaching Spring. I had called many sources such as the DSPCA and even the Zoo, placing pictures on Facebook and other sites but nothing had come back as few want a cockerel, let alone at a time when Avian Flu is about.

My kind neighbour headed off to his van with a clutch of now silent cockerels. He would come back for the last remaining one. “What if?” I asked, trundling along behind him at a reasonable distance ‘What if I kept the one remaining cockerel? That wouldn’t be too bad would it?”

He cast me a knowing glance; “I’m only up the road if you need me” he said wisely, closing the van doors on a cage full of disgruntled cluckings.

So ‘Seamus’ survived. Perching high beneath the shade of the Wisteria which had wound itself across the top chicken wire ceiling above him. He was a random choice; his existence a matter of pure luck and his duties now as protector of the flock increased five-fold!

This morning the yard is quiet. I could feed the hens without the nightdress weapon or standing down small spurs and, looking closer at my hens, I can see that they are showing signs of exhaustion. Now their days will be calmer, as will the yard. The young cockerel will have to learn his own way without his peers and I will miss Guinness on the windowsill vying for the fight.

I call us ‘City Mice’ our family. Not too far from Dundrum but now living within a world of difference. We are becoming accustomed to village life and, in many cases such as this, the farming way. We are astounded at the difference this brings; the kindness and support and the closeness of community and the wonderful, almost palpable energy of Wicklow itself.

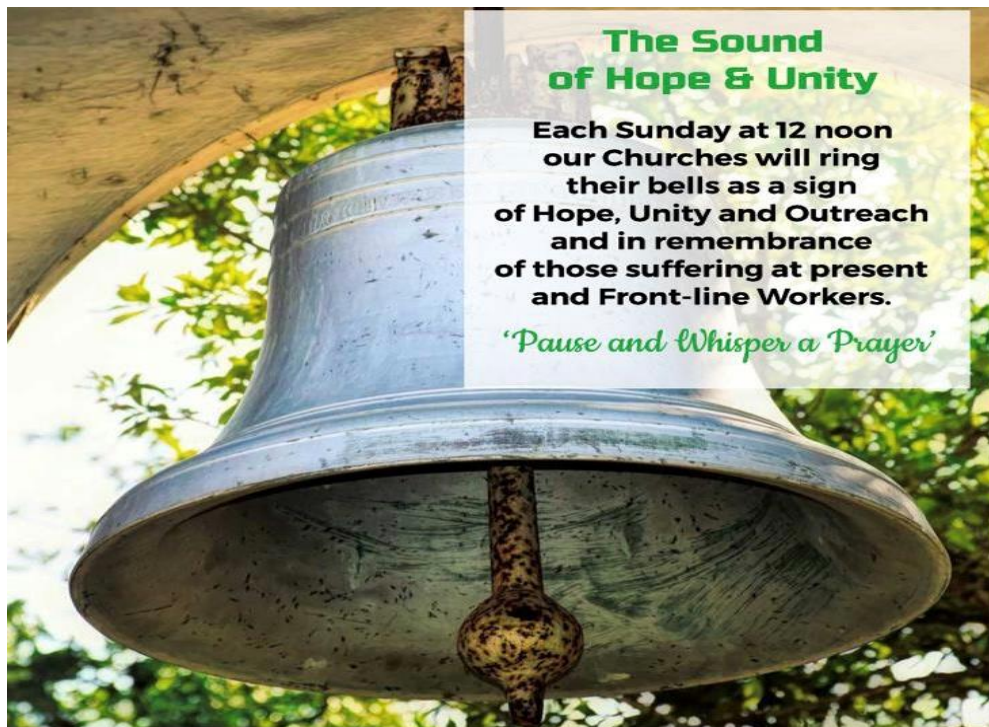
It is an energy of life and life that we have witnessed full circle as close to home as our back yard in this past year. Seven chicks hatched and six cockerels from them (plus one little bantam hen). The marvel of a sitting hen who goes to little but bone at the end of her hatching because she will only leave her brood once, if that, per day in order to eat or clean herself; The joy of watching the two mother hens tending their chicks and teaching them, walking them proudly around the yard with eyes ever-cast heavenward. We have witnessed the cruelty of nature too in the sparring and relentless fighting for position in the flock and, of course, the final outcome of this.

One cockerel is enough for any yard yet these creatures have brought me such joy in observation. I speak often about the silence and presence of being with God, speaking too of his fingerprints visible in all living things. My hens have brought my attention back home again to these things; the precision of roosting time which has focused me on the ever-shortening or lengthening light; the order of their day as they visit certain parts of the garden to hunt for food; to sit and preen in the sunniest spot and the wonderful chase for a slice of bread flung into their midst.

In these quieter days, I pray for that same diligence of observation of the simpler and most beautiful things around us; an observation that slows us down and makes us watch, and in watching be recipients of the type of peace that falls slowly and softly upon us.

*‘And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight’s all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet’s wings.’*

The Lake Isle of Innisfree



The Sound of Hope & Unity

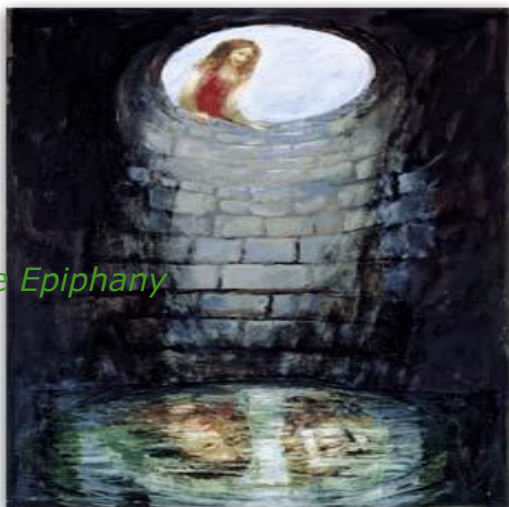
**Each Sunday at 12 noon
our Churches will ring
their bells as a sign
of Hope, Unity and Outreach
and in remembrance
of those suffering at present
and Front-line Workers.**

'Pause and Whisper a Prayer'

GOD'S WORD FOR THIS WEEK

Sunday 31st January 2021

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany



“Hope” is the thing with feathers

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -

And sore must be the storm -

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -

And on the strangest Sea -

Yet - never - in Extremity,

It asked a crumb - of me.

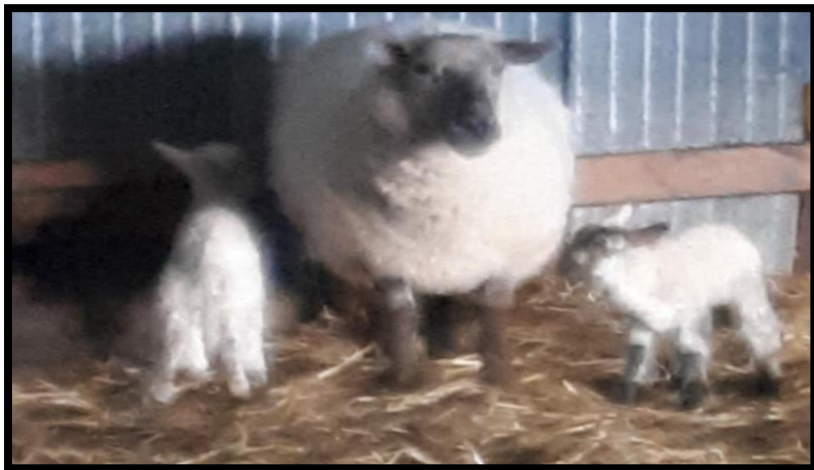
By Emily Dickenson



Spring has arrived in Ballybrew

Last Sunday morning was a beautiful, crisp and cold morning. The fields were white with a dusting of snow and what a lovely surprise I got when I went down the fields to see that the first lambs of the season had arrived. A lovely healthy set of twins.

We don't normally start lambing this high up in Ballybrew until St. Patrick's Day when the weather is a bit warmer and the sheep can lamb outside in the fields which is much healthier and safer for them. There was plenty of room in the shed for this mother and her twins to be brought in for shelter.



Farming work is very hard but rewarding, and having the fields to walk in, the animals to look after and watching nature take place all around me has helped me over the last difficult months. The signs of Spring with the new lambs, daffodils appearing from the ground and buds growing on the trees, these are all such wonderful and positive sights to see, It reminds me of how lucky I am to have this beauty all around me.

'Spring has arrived in Ballybrew' By Harry Williams

The Shepherd

How sweet is the Shepherd's sweet lot
From the morn to the evening he strays
He shall follow his sheep all the day,
And his tongue shall be filled with praise.

For he hears the lamb's innocent call'
And he hears the ewes' tender reply,
He is watchful while they are in peace,
For they know when their shepherd is nigh.

From Songs of Innocence, William Blake

Are you in need help with your Garden?

This time of year can be overwhelming with the late winter clean up. However, we have received a wonderful gift of help to any parishioner who might be struggling to get garden jobs done. Whether it is chopping wood, clearing leaves, weeding, branch trimming or whatever is needed. This really is a very kind offer from an experienced professional who is very generously donating time to the parish.



If you would like to take up the offer, please give me a call in the office on 2863862. Office hours are 8.15 -12.15 daily, otherwise you could send me an email on Powerscourtparish@gmail.com.

Poetry.

Last Wednesday as I sat watching the Inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States of America “*a black skinny girl descended from slaves and raised by a single mother*” stepped up to the podium to recite her beautiful profound poem for the President and the rest of the world. Her name was Amanda Gorman and the title of her poem “The Hill We Climb”. Dressed in a vibrant yellow coat and wearing a red hairband in her jet black hair, she shone like a beacon of light into the world. There is something about poetry that can cross continents, tear down obstacles, build bridges and touch the mind body and soul at a deep level. We can be rightly proud when we hear our own Irish poets quoted by some of the most powerful people in the world. Joe Biden quoted our own great Seamus Heaney’s poem The Cure at Troy when he accepted the nomination to run for President... he said this is the moment for America “*to make hope and history rhyme*” ...

I have always loved poetry and when John and I got married we included the following poem by Janet Mills in our Wedding Booklet.....

*A portion of your souls has been entwined with mine
A gentle kind of togetherness, while separately we stand,
As two trees deeply rooted in separate plots of ground,
While their topmost branches come together,
Forming a miracle of lace against the heaven.*



Six years later as we celebrated John's too short life at his funeral Mass I found this poem to be a huge comfort. When I read it now it reminds me of the wonderful time John and I were gifted together. It allows me to journey between joy and sadness but never to get stuck in either place. When I look at a headstone I notice the date of birth, the date of death and the 'dash' in between. Recently I heard someone describe this – as the life the person has lived between birth and death. What a rich powerful image. Life can be beautiful, it can be messy, it can be challenging, but there is always hope...

And did you get what you wanted from life even so?

I did.

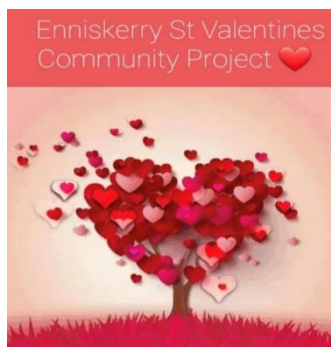
And what did you want?

To call myself beloved to feel myself beloved on the earth.

(Raymond Carver)

'Poetry' submitted Sheila Lyndsey

Love is in the air in Enniskerry this February ❤️❤️❤️



We would like to invite everyone to get involved in creating a heart made out of recycled materials.

Write a name or names of a loved one near or far away. We will display them in the Village & run a competition for 1st, 2nd & 3rd most creative entry ❤️.

You can leave your hearts at the clock tower on Saturday 6th February @ 11am or Saturday 13th February @ 11am and don't forget to leave your details so we can enter you for the competition. Best of luck everyone 🍀

The Shaking Bog Podcast By The Shaking Bog



A gentle meander through the world where art and nature meet. The Shaking Bog Festival's seasonal podcast leads us through the countryside with an interwoven tapestry of conversations, readings and reflections from some of our most treasured writers, artists and naturalists.

[Listen on:](#)

<https://anchor.fm/shakingbog/episodes/Episode-3-Winter-ep7rt7>

Winter: From *The Shaking Bog Podcast* - where
art and nature meet.

The year has turned and its deep mid-winter. Guided by the mood of the season this episode of The Shaking Bog Podcast explores memory, mythology and some of the hidden recesses of the natural world.

Presenting a blend of conversations, readings and reflections, the Winter episode features writer Kerri Ní Dochartaigh, writer, herbalist and activist Oein DeBhairduin, poet Nuala ní Dhomhnaill and artist Chanelle Walshe in conversation with herpetologist Collie Ennis.

Produced by The Shaking Bog Festival in collaboration with Coillte Nature & Mermaid Arts Centre. Written & presented by Catherine Nunes, edited by Bjorn MacGiolla, mixed by Steve McGrath with theme music composed by Ray Harmon.

Contributors to The Shaking Bog's Winter Podcast include:

Kerri ní Dochartaigh - a writer whose already widely acclaimed book *Thin Places* will be published by Canongate on 28th January 2021 - <https://canongate.co.uk/books/3224-thin-places/>

Oein DeBhairduin - a writer, herbalist, activist and passionate advocate for Irish Traveller culture. He recently published **Why The Moon Travels**, a collection of twenty tales rooted in the oral tradition of the Irish Traveller community, with illustrations by Leanne McDonagh - <https://www.skeinpress.com>

Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill - one of Ireland's most distinguished poets. Primarily writing in the Irish language, her work has been translated into English by a number of well-known Irish poets, as well as into many other languages. She has won numerous international awards for her work. She is a member of Aosdána and was Ireland Professor of Poetry (2001-2004).

Collie Ennis - a science officer with Herpetological Society of Ireland and Zoology Research Associate at Trinity College Dublin. He presents his own podcast, **The Critter Shed**, with Colette Kinsella - <https://www.podpage.com/the-critter-shed>

Chanelle Walshe - a painter who lives and works in Ireland. Her work has been exhibited at many of Ireland's finest galleries and is included in the collections of The Arts Council, Trinity College Dublin, The OPW and The Central Bank - <https://www.chanellewalshe.com>



Thomas Bland Miller

This headstone is a bit of a puzzle, and if there are any descendants out there who can increase our knowledge, we will be delighted to hear about it.

The stone records three burials: Thomas Bland Miller himself, his daughter Dorothy Grace, aged three months, and his wife, Helena. The older

burial records for the church are now incarcerated in the RCB Library, where of course they are out of bounds. While appreciating that the safe keeping of such records is paramount, it is a real nuisance for parish researchers.

It would be the work of a moment to find out details of the deaths and burials of these three people, but for now we have to make do with the graveyard index, which records that there are four people buried here. There are two Thomas Bland Millers. And the dates are confusing. The first to be buried is the infant daughter, in 1892. She died in Enniskerry. Then her father, Thomas Bland Miller, died in Enniskerry on 1896. Her mother, Helena, died in 1899 in Dublin, and the other Thomas Bland Miller died in Dublin in 1897. If this Thomas is a son, then he died before his mother and his mother is either living with , or visiting him.



The only reason this is intriguing is that there is a story, and I am indebted to local historian Brian White for this information, that when the grave was opened for the burial of the son, the previous coffin was found to be empty. The family all died within a few years of each other, and there should have been remains. The gravedigger apparently was so agitated about this that he sent for one of the local church officers, one of the Buckleys, to witness that there was no trace of a body to be found. So, there is a nice little mystery. Grave Robbers? Unscrupulous undertakers selling to medical students? Who knows? I do hope Helena was never told about this.

Who was Thomas Bland Miller? In the photographs of Enniskerry in the Lawrence collection, his shop front is quite clear on the south side of the Church Hill. T.B Miller leased a house and offices from the Powerscourt estate. He may have kept a shop but may also have run a hotel there in the 1850s. Michael Seary's researches also suggest that Miller might have been the proprietor of the Powerscourt Arms at one time.

However, in 1853, Achilles Daunt, then a prize-winning student at Trinity, and who was to become a famous preacher and Dean of Cork, wrote in his diary of a day's exercise and sightseeing in our area. He sets off from Dublin, takes the "Atmospheric" train from Dun Laoghaire to Dalkey (do Google this train), walks to Bray, and takes a "car" to Enniskerry, which he describes thus: "an improving little village lying snugly in the bosom of a sunny valley.....where I refreshed the inner man at a very neat hotel, called Millers, where I had a substantial meal of mutton chop, bread and butter, porter and vegetables for which I was charged nine pence".

If this neat hotel was in the same position as Millers shop front, it may have been the precursor of what is now the Enniskerry Inn

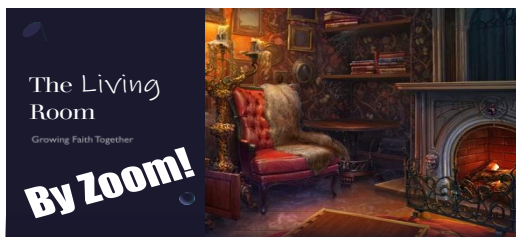
Achilles Daunt had a brother, Edward Stephen Daunt, who was the curate of Powerscourt from 1874-76, and then was appointed Rector of Greystones, where he served for 46 years. He married Gertrude, the sister of Powerscourt's next curate, the Rev Ernest Whelan, curate from 1876-83, whose diary we are so lucky to be able to read. This connection set up an excellent rapport between the two parishes, and the Rev Ernest gives a wonderful description of the Powerscourt school outing to Greystones Rectory garden in 1878

Submitted by Judy Cameron



Sometimes it's hard to find things to do with children to fill the days at home. Why not visit our Dioceses Facebook Page for ideas!

<https://www.facebook.com/Dublin-Glendalough-Kids-107738287592834>



Our Living Room will resume in the coming weeks. It has proven to be a very active group and popular.

All videos can be found on our Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Grouped-Parishes-of-Powerscourt-with-Kilbride-1514315732033467>

or on our Parishes YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOXYER9cLb4mj3tuNcYdExQ>