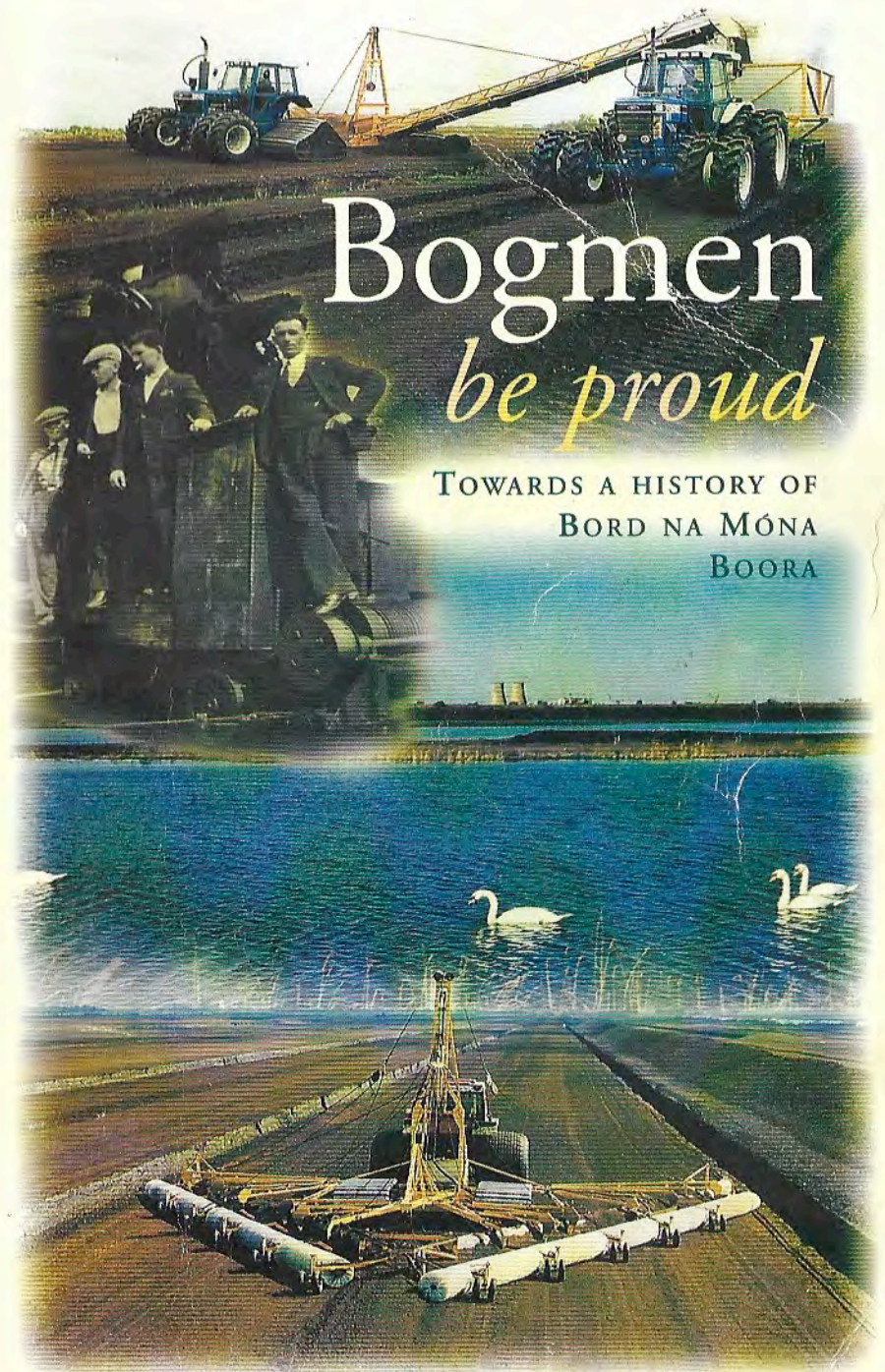


BOGMEN BE PROUD TOWARDS A HISTORY OF BORD NA MÓNA BOORA



# Bogmen *be proud*

TOWARDS A HISTORY OF  
BORD NA MÓNA  
BOORA

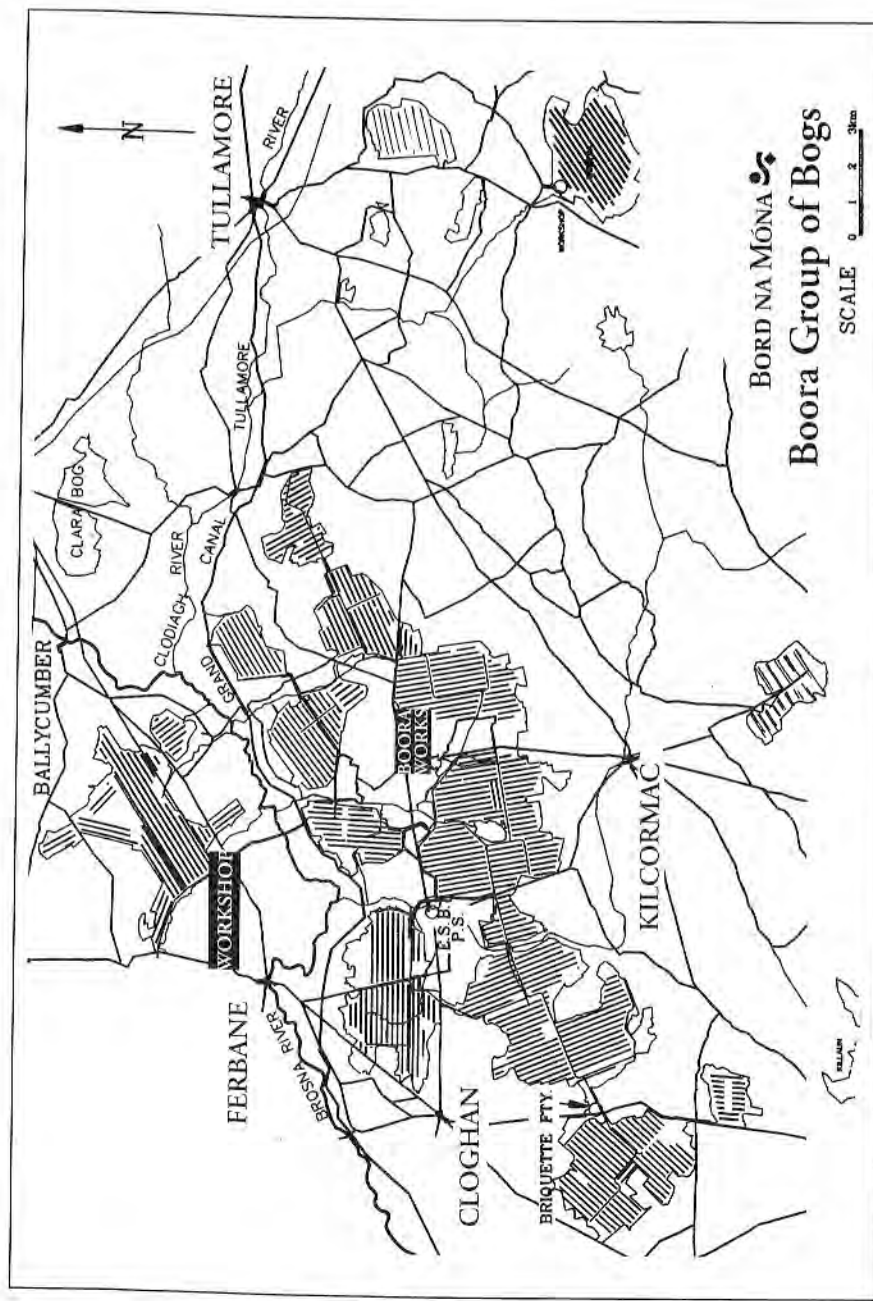
# Bogmen

*be proud*

Towards a history of  
Bord na Móna, Boora

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## Foreword

That great patriot C.S. (Todd) Andrews was enormously proud of Bord na Móna. In "Men of No Property" he recalls his visit to Turraun as a "kind of epiphany" and notes: "I saw there *in parvo* what Bord na Móna was to become in time".

This short history is intended to place on record the achievements of those who laboured in Boora. It is not possible to chronicle the story of Boora without tracing the history of Turraun and Lemonaghan. I am indebted to Paul Riordan, General Manager, Boora for affording me the opportunity to edit this history and to my colleagues Tom Feighery and Tom Egan for their support and assistance. This book would not have been possible without the generosity of so many Bord na Móna workers, retired workers and their families.

To all who opened their family albums and unlocked treasured memories I extend sincere thanks. For information on the pioneering days at Turraun and Boora I am particularly indebted to Kieran and Nancy Egan (Ferbane), Martin Doolin (Glynn), John McNamara (Pullough), Paddy Higgins (Ferbane), Tommy Lee and Der Power (Dublin), Jimmy Cooney (Ferbane), Peter Usher (Boora), Jack Lally (RIP) Derrycarney, Malachy Rosney (Cloghan), Michael Coughlan (Gallen), Bernie Jennings (Cloghan), John Cook (Newbridge). No less generous were those closely associated with Boora in more recent times: Sean Ganly (Boora), Con Stokes (Birr), Rita Bennett (Cloghan), Frank Kearns (Ferbane) and Helen Conneely (Ballinahown).

Bord na Móna enjoy a special relationship with the Office of Public Works and special thanks is due to Conor McDermott of the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit from the O.P.W for his contribution.

Lack of records hampered our research but many of the difficulties were overcome with the assistance of Maura O'Rourke - Ferbane Library, Mary Butler, Tullamore Library, Tony McKenna - Newbridge Library



Eamon Dooley.

and Louis Rhatigan.

I have where possible acknowledged the source of photographs. The contemporary photographs were provided by Don O'Boyle (Kilcormac) and they provide a valuable record of Boora today. I would also like to thank Des Sweeney (Kilcormac), Paddy Doyle (Cloghan), Seamus Buckley (Oughter) and Sister Oliver Wrafter (Killina). All of these helped in different ways in the preparation of this project.

Many thanks to Bernie Quigley for her assistance, patience and endurance in preparing this manuscript, and to Tom Murtagh former Bord na Móna Accountant and a talented writer, who cast a caring but critical eye over the end product. A special word of thanks to Seamus Dooley, whose editorial advice and expertise proved invaluable.

Returning to Todd Andrews. In "Men of No Property", Dr. Andrews admits that many of his friends and colleagues looked on the bogs and those who lived around them with a jaundiced eye. Todd Andrews thought the term bogman a badge of honour. From him I have taken the title of this modest salute to the men and women of Boora Bog.

## A Record of Achievement

*By Paul Riordan, General Manager, Boora*

**A**s General Manager I welcome this short history of Bord na Móna, Boora. The history of Boora is one of endeavour and achievement, and the workforce past and present, can be very proud of its special place in the story of Bord na Móna. From the building of the camps in the 1940s and the workshops in the 1950s to the development and exploitation of thousands of acres of desolate boglands, Boora has



*Paul Riordan.*

led the way in all aspects of work systems and technology and has contributed greatly to the success of Bord na Móna.

Indeed it could be said that the history of Boora is the history of Bord na Móna in microcosm. The works have drawn together talented and hard working people from the four corners of Ireland. These people have made a significant contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of the midlands. On behalf of Bord na Móna I would like to thank all our employees, past and present, for their contribution to the success of Boora over the past 50 years. We salute those who have gone to their eternal reward. Their achievements have not been forgotten. In celebrating the spirit of Boora we look forward to the challenging times ahead, confident that the qualities which contributed so richly to our history will serve us well in the future.

I would like to thank Eamon Dooley for his perseverance and hard work in getting this book researched and published. The quality and comprehensiveness of the publication is a reflection of his interest and determination.

## Birth of a Revolution

It is impossible to talk about the development of Bord na Móna in Boora without first taking a step back in time to the early years of turf development in Turraun. The story of Turraun is the story of Bord na Móna "writ small" and owes much to the vision of the early pioneers of peat who laid the foundations for the modern industry. It was these men who began the process of realising the full economic potential of the Bog of Allen.

Following the passing of a Bill in 1716 entitled "An Act to Encourage the Drainage of Unprofitable Bogs" various attempts had been made by bog owners to utilise the vast areas of virtual wasteland but with limited success. At first the solution was thought to lie in drainage and reclamation for agricultural purposes. It was not until the latter half of the last century that any real progress was made in relation to the drainage of the bogs in the midlands.

Two men, Kieran Farrelly of Turraun and David Sherlock of Rahan were among the first entrepreneurs to realise the commercial potential of the bogs as a source of fuel. Farrelly and Sherlock had been involved both in the moss peat industry and hand-won sod turf production, but it was not until around 1890 that the mechanisation of these operations was considered as a realistic option.

Sherlock was already a major supplier of turf in the area, as is obvious from a Midland Tribune report of a meeting of Birr N1 Board of Guardians (29/3/1890): "The Guardians took a contract for 3,000 boxes of turf at £4.10s per 100 boxes. Mr David Sherlock of Rahan Lodge obtained a contract for 1,000 boxes of the supply, several guardians stating that he gives larger employment at turf making than any other". (1 Ton = 8 boxes).

At this meeting members were also informed that "all that practical men can do is being done by the Irish Industrial League to start and foster many factories in Ireland". "The latest scheme to reclaim wet bog and manufacture the material excavated into peat has been intelligently put forth to them by Mr. E. Clarke of Montreal. A scow, the invention of Mr. Hodges of Canada is used to cut canals twenty feet wide and from four to six feet deep. This drains the bog, and for every 3,000 feet

advanced there is an output of 550 tons of peat". Mr. Sherlock had already remarked on the invention and its use, saying that "it would be of enormous advantage in this country".

However a footnote to this article by the reporter, shows the pessimism with regards to the peat industry at the time. "Like Mr. Sherlock we have read and heard much about patent peat process, not forgetting Messrs. Hogan and Thornburns between Banagher and Cloghan, eventuating in the old Irish Story - failure! Hence we are a bit sceptical". "The only means of experimenting with such a machine would be for experts to go to Canada and see it in operation, the cost of testing it in this country being far too great, the scow alone costing £800". Time was to prove the sceptics wrong.

## Men of Vision

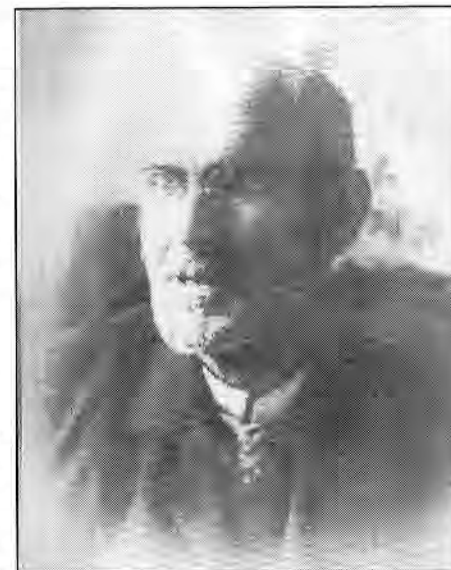
*David Sherlock (1850 - 1935)*

**D**avid Sherlock of Rahan Lodge is a significant figure in the development of mechanical peat production. Sherlock, a barrister and the son of a Kings County M.P. was clearly a man of vision and in an article entitled "The Possible Fortunes from Peat and its Allied Trades" written at the beginning of the century he set out his ideas: "The vast potential of Irish boglands, the train of industries that would follow in their wake, reminds one of the words of a speaker at the Cork Exhibition Industrial Conference, who said: 'Whether you regard the bog as a sleeping giant, with strength unused and energies not called to action, or whether you consider it as a mine from which Ireland may yet draw wealth, work and wonders, one thing is certain that no substance is so peculiar or so universal in its use'".

In this article also, Sherlock advocated the purchase, by the Government, of a Dolbey Machine (built by Herr Dolbey of Rostock, North Germany) for the manufacture of "ordinary air dried peat briquettes". At the conclusion of this article, Mr. Sherlock talked of the possible uses of peat and cutaway bogs. He spoke of how valuable the bog oak could be, how the watercress beds would suit many streams near towns and how in China they had grown the Sri Bean on reclaimed bogs and extracted the oil from the bean. Rahan historian the late Denis Kelly recalled Sherlock attempting to extract iodine from white flowers on the bog and collecting moss which he dressed and sent to the troops in France during World War 1 for dressing wounds. Sherlock even made a suit from peat fibres, a costly and highly impractical proposition. Moss peat production proved to be a more viable undertaking.

*Kieran Farrelly - Turraun (1835 - 1909)*

**I**n an era before incentive schemes and Forbairt grants Kieran Farrelly was a young entrepreneur with considerable energy and imagination. Kieran was son of Peter Farrelly, who came from Cavan/Meath area and married Catherine Keenaghan from Endrim in 1815. They farmed a nine acres holding at Turraun which was water-locked between the canal and the Boora River. They reared a family of four girls and one boy.



*Kieran Farrelly.*

Kieran was born in 1835. Much of Kieran's early years were spent helping his father strip the moss

peat from the bog surface, which when dried was used for bedding of livestock. As was the tradition in the area, the fuel peat, which was beneath the moss peat, could then be cut by wing sléan. It was used to heat the family home and any surplus could be sold in the neighbouring towns. The bedding was used in racing stables and garrison towns, such as Birr, by cavalry and artillery units of the British army.

The demand for peat stable litter rose sharply with the return of numerous troops of horses from the Crimean war. Kieran Farrelly set out to meet this demand by organising winter employment for his neighbours in draining the edges of the bog, cutting and spreading the heavy moss sods which women and children footed and heaped. Farrelly made access roads for the horse-drawn drays which took the produce to the railway stations at Ferbane and Birr, both now closed.

Librarian John Cooke noted in 1975 that it is difficult to date accurately the beginning of Farrelly's enterprises. His farm holding had increased to 149 acres by 1876, but he invested his farm profits in the commercial venture. Things went well, he had sale for his moss peat, he supplied

brick clay to the local brickyards, and the Dublin Gas Company purchased "mather" (bog iron ore) from him, which they used for purifying gas. Farrelly's entrepreneurial spirit was aroused and he set about developing a moss peat industry at Turraun. By the year 1890 Farrelly's holding had increased to 240 acres. But, finding that his process of producing moss peat was too slow, he decided to build a factory for this purpose and install a grinder and bailing press and also to erect storage sheds.

However, he was not financially in a position to undertake this venture alone and so he set up a company called "West and Amon" with an ex army officer, Colonel James Henry Dopping. Dopping loaned him £650, and the plant was built. The business went well for a while, although Farrelly was having to pay £40pa interest to Dopping. They had a good share of the market and were satisfied enough. Then in 1903, after heavy rains all winter, the canal breached its banks and the extensive flooding of Farrelly's lands swept away his stocks and his plant. He took an action for damages against the Canal Company, and his creditor, Col. Dopping insisted it should not be for less than £600. On the day of the court hearing, Farrelly was offered £250 to settle out of court, but Dopping would not allow him accept. He subsequently lost the case in court and was left with nothing. On Dopping's advice, fearing he would be destroyed if the costs were charged against him, Farrelly signed all his property over to Dopping.

For a time after this Farrelly and his family worked for Dopping. But in April 1905 Dopping discovered the Farrelly family were able to make £2 a day on commission. This, he told Kieran, was "monstrous" and said £1 a week should be sufficient for himself and his family. In October 1905, on Dopping's instruction, the sheriff seized on Farrelly's lands. And so, Kieran Farrelly now 70-years-old, his wife Jane (nee O'Neill, Eglis, Birt) and their ten children were evicted from the family home.

By this stage Farrelly was vice-president of Birt Board of Guardians and he told a board meeting on the day after the eviction of his plight. "Dopping told me 'You'll be destroyed for your costs, you must make all over to me'. I did so, I'm ashamed to say, I did a foolish act. He had me caught the same as a bird in a crib", Farrelly explained. At this meeting, on the proposal of Mr. Michael Reddy MP a testimonial was organised for Kieran Farrelly in recognition of his long and faithful service to the

community. In February 1906 Mr. P. Garahy made a presentation to Kieran Farrelly, thanking all who had contributed to the collection. Shortly afterwards the Farrelly family emigrated to Providence Rhode Island, USA.

His family settled in well, and indeed later prospered there, but Kieran and his wife returned to Ireland two years later in 1908. Having fought the good fight, Kieran died after a short illness, on August 2nd, 1909 and is buried in Lemonaghan, not far from his beloved Turraun.

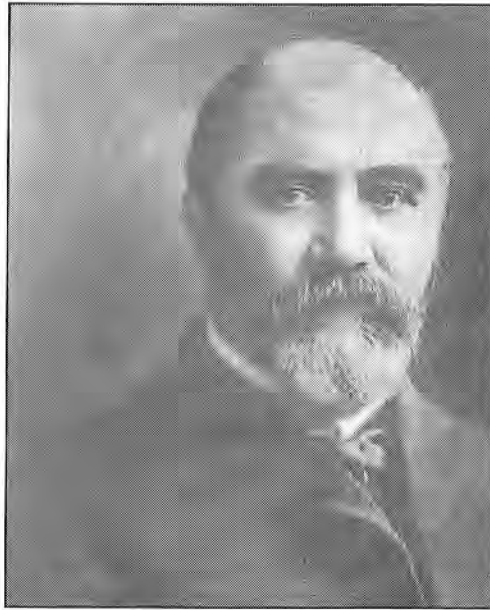
Colonel Dopping, a Longford man and a descendant of an infamous hangman Major Hempenstall Dopping, continued the operations of moss peat production at Turraun. In December 1908 he bought a vast quantity of machinery from the Agricultural Board which originally had been imported from Germany for a peat works at Castleconnel, Co. Limerick. He set up this machinery in Turraun and the project was relatively successful.

The eviction of Farrelly, a popular neighbour and respected employer, had however left a bitter residue. Because of the manner in which he acquired the property, Dopping found it impossible to carry on at Turraun and in November 1910 sold the concern to Sir John Purser Griffith. It was an important milestone in the history of the peat industry in Ireland.



## Sir John Purser Griffith (1848 - 1938)

While Farrelly and Sherlock made an enormous contribution to the development of mechanical peat production there can be little doubt that it was a Welshman, Sir John Purser Griffith who elevated Turraun to a project of national significance. Sir John was born in Holyhead. He came to Ireland to study at Trinity College Dublin when the Irish Engineering School was founded, and lived the rest of his long and extremely active life here. He purchased the Turraun Peat Co. in 1910, reflecting his belief in the need to develop peat as a primary source of energy in Ireland.



*Purser Griffith.*

It was after much pressure from Sir John that the British Government agreed to set up a committee, under his chairmanship, to investigate the possible uses of peat. The Irish Peat Commission was set up in 1917 and reported in 1918, strongly endorsing Griffith's view on the viability of peat production.

Although their recommendations were rejected, this did not discourage Griffith. Being a very wealthy man and already having acquired Turraun Bog, Sir John set about making his dream of producing good quality sod peat a reality. Having drained Turraun Bog and built a peat operated power station on site, he brought from Germany a Wielandt Excavator in 1924. This first electrically operated "Bagger" produced 4,000 tons of top quality sod turf per annum. Against great odds Griffith forged ahead.



*Pictured on their visit to Turraun in 1917, the Irish Peat Enquiry Committee left to right Hugh Ryan, George Fletcher, Sydney Young, Sir John Purser - Griffith and Pierce Purcell. Picture courtesy of Val Todd.*

As D C Lawlor, then MD of Bord na Móna, wrote in 1959 in a special edition of Administration: "Until the advent of native government the exploitation of our natural resources, and particularly of peat, was so opposed at important levels by ignorance, indifference or active hostility as to be virtually impossible". The breakthrough came in 1933 when Dr C S (Todd) Andrews was given the task of overseeing turf development. He worked initially within the Department of Industry and Commerce, then as MD of the Turf Development Board, the forerunner of Bord na Móna. In 1934, on becoming Managing Director of the Turf Development Board, Andrews visited Turraun to meet Sir John. In his autobiography "Man of No Property" Andrews says of his visit to Turraun: "My first visit to Turraun was a kind of epiphany to me. I saw there *in parvo* what Bord na Móna was to become in time. The developed section of Turraun bog seemed to me at the time to be vast; the network of overhead electric cables, the automatic cutting machines



*A first at Turraun: The original Wielandt "bagger" at Turraun was a major attraction and local people flocked to the bog to see the new arrival at work. Included on one such outing in the thirties are:- left to right Charlie Brazil, Junior Brazil and Joe Byrne. The first drivers of this machine in 1924 were brothers Bill and Jim Taylor (RIP) and Martin Dunican (RIP) father of Tom Dunican Shannonbridge. Picture courtesy J. Spollen, Ballylin, Ferbane.*

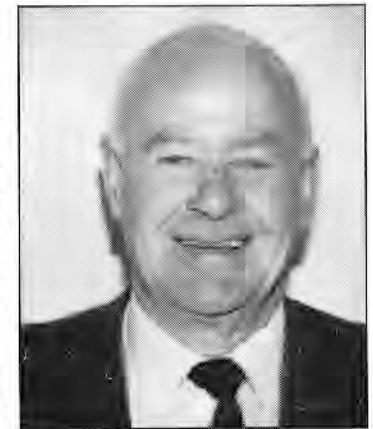
and the peat moss plant driven by electricity inspired me with great hopes for the future".

Shortly after this visit Sir John sought another meeting with Andrews to discuss the future of Turraun Peat Co. Having spent vast sums of his own money on the operation he offered to hand over the complete work, including the peat moss factory, the site at Harcourt Terrace and the Canal Barge used to transport his produce, to the Turf Development Board for the estimated value of stocks, which was £6,500.

After Government approval, The Turf Development Board, officially took over the operations in Turraun, at the end of 1936. Two years later in 1938 at the age of 90 Sir John Purser Griffith died. In paying tribute to him in 1957 Todd Andrews said, "Although Sir John Purser Griffith had lived only into the very early years of large scale peat development, his advice and support were always at the disposal of the "New Men" and those who are now working in Bord na Móna are deeply aware of the debt they owe him in the development of this great industry".

## In Time of War

During the early years at Turraun huge sacrifices were demanded of the workforce. The outbreak of World War Two placed particular demands on the workforce at Turraun, which played a pivotal role in meeting the nation's energy requirements during the Emergency. Martin Doolin of Glynn, Cloghan, remembers his first job at Turraun in 1939, when, at eighteen years of age he started work as a "nipper". The "nipper", Martin says, would be the "go for" of today. In addition to taking charge of stores supplies, he also had to deliver oil and grease and shear pins etc. to the turf cutting machines.



*Martin Doolin.*

Although he had the use of a small "Singer" loco he could have to walk anything in the regions on 1½ to 2 miles to the trench, where the machine was cutting sod turf. The early years at Turraun were tough but good, according to Martin, and the friendships made in difficult times played no small part in building up the team spirit which came to characterise Boora works in later years. The Dolberg machine, which was semi-automatic and which was hand fed, was scrapped a few years before Martin started in Turraun, but he can recall the men who worked this machine, praising this great invention.

The Wielandt Bagger had been operating in Turraun since 1924. The Turf Development Board had inherited these machines from Griffith, together with the peat operated power station, with its 110HP Garret Engine and Steam Boiler, (Babcock and Wilcox) generating 2,500 volts for the first electrically operated baggers in Ireland. In addition they also inherited the Machine Sod Peat fired gas producer which operated a 50HP gas engine to run the Peat Moss Factory.

With the outbreak of the Second World War essential supplies became increasingly difficult to obtain. Coal supplies remained more or less



*The Dolberg ... this semi-automatic turf cutting machine was the first machine used on Turraun Bog.*

normal up until the spring of 1941. The Government appointed Hugo Flinn, parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Finance to take charge of "The Fuel Emergency". Flinn initiated a programme known as the County Production Scheme (C.P.S.), which began in 1941. Because of the influx of workers to the midlands, mostly from the West, the provision of accommodation was essential. Fourteen residential camps were erected throughout the midlands by the Office of Public Works, the first of which was sited at Turraun.

Martin Doolin recalls that there was a strong social dimension to the Turraun war operation, with card games, sports and dances organised by the workers.

With the continuing shortage of fuel for road transport, it was decided to erect an experimental charcoal plant at Turraun. This plant was erected in August 1941 and operated for almost two years. The charcoal plant had its own fully-staffed laboratory. Many of the lorries used this fuel as a substitute for petrol, which of course was rationed during the war.

During the fuel emergency the County Production Schemes made a contribution of over three million tons of sod peat to the war time fuel



*Monument to the past: all that remains on the site of the charcoal plant at Turraun today are the support walls, pictured above.*



*Have a Break . . . Pictured above taking a rest from footing the turf at Turraun are Mary Rosney (nee Dunican), Dermagun, Sean Bell, Ferbane, now living in Portlaoise, and the late "Doll" Coughlan, Gallen. Picture courtesy M. Rosney, Dermagun.*

supply. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of Turraun during the Emergency. Turraun was a way of life for hundreds of people, including many who settled in the West Offaly area and today many of the children and grandchildren of these workers are employed by Bord na Móna and the ESB throughout the Midlands.

The development of Turraun bog provided a welcome boost to the local economy. During the summer months entire families from Ferbane, Pullough, Turraun and Rahan were employed footing turf on a piece-rate basis.

Sadly the official records for Turraun employees are incomplete. From memory Martin Doolin has provided the following list of Turraun workers which he stresses may not be complete.

<b>Managers:</b>	M. Finnegan, P. Barry and P. Hogan.
<b>Assistant Manager:</b>	Dan (Blondie) Coughlan
<b>Engineer:</b>	Mr. Horgan
<b>Workshop Foreman:</b>	Martin Coughlan.
<b>Workshop Personnel:</b>	Eddie Joe Dooley Christy Kelly Jack Convey Paddy Hickey John E. Doyle Joe Coffey Joe Daly
<b>Office Personnel:</b>	Bridget Cloonan Mannix Boyle
<b>Bog Personnel:</b>	
<b>Foremen:</b>	Jim Henry, P.J. Healy and Jim Ryan.
<b>Supervisors:</b>	Mick Doyle and Tom Kavanagh
<b>Chargehand:</b>	Jody Bracken
<b>General Operatives:</b>	Eugene Nugent Bill Delaney Paddy Guinan John Collins Dinnie (Bog Count) Delaney Dinnie (Kazer) Delaney Bennett Loonam

**General Operatives Cont.:**

Jim Buckley  
Tom Bracken  
Terry Heffernan  
Pat Heffernan  
Mick Donlon  
John Maher  
Joe Maher  
P.J. Guinan  
Christy Delaney  
Matt Delaney  
Pat (The Deary) Buckley  
Matt Walsh  
Jack Walsh  
Matt Loonam  
Pat Tooher  
Denis Rosney  
Martin Rosney  
Tommy Joe Reams  
Ger Kelly  
Martin (Cox) Rosney  
James (Slater) Kenny  
Tom Molloy  
Mick Molloy  
Dinnie (Derrica) Delaney  
Frank (Boxer) Loonam  
Joe Loonam  
Frank McLoughlin  
Martin McLoughlin

Joe Poland  
Tom Murray  
Peter Mahon  
Jim Dunican  
Joe Rowan  
John Tierney  
Kieran Delaney  
Ned Dunican  
Jack Kelly  
Paddy Kidney  
Sean Loonam  
Martin Doolin  
Tom Dunican  
Christy Wynne  
Arthur Reams  
Mick Devery  
Jim Rosney  
Sean Convey  
George Broad  
Barney Conroy  
Seamus McCormack  
Ned Dunican  
Jack Minnock  
Mick Molloy  
Peter Kearns  
Ciaran Corcoran  
Davy Murray  
Peter Bracken  
Mick Coffey

# Turraun Camp

John McNamara left the townland of Caherconlish, Co. Limerick early in 1944 for Turraun camps. In his early twenties he had read an advertisement placed in the Limerick Leader by the Turf Development Board, looking for workers for the midland bogs, and decided "to give it a go". John recalls that when he arrived, the camp which had been opened in 1941, was in full swing. His first observation, he remembers, was the number of different accents, men from Dublin, Kildare, Donegal, Connemara and Mayo and of course the flat tones of the midlanders!

The number of local papers which arrived each week from all over Ireland amazed John, and he says the best of the lot at the time was the "Cork Weekly Examiner".

With no public house in Pullough and only a "dry canteen" at the camp, all roads lead to Ferbane on pay evening. The journey began with a walk along the canal banks to Hennessy's of the Derries. The main road at Hennessys was always a welcome sight. John says that Murrhys was a particular home from home for the large West of Ireland contingent at Turraun, not least because the barmaid was Maureen Coen from Galway. He remained in the camps until its closure in 1948, when he moved to the hostel at Boora.

John worked for a number of years at Turraun, and now lives in Derryneavy, a short distance from Turraun. The barmaid John referred to stayed in Ferbane and married Peter Doyle (RIP), St. Cynoc's Tce. Incidentally Mrs. Doyle's nephew Seamus Coen, who served his apprenticeship in Boora, played with the Galway Senior Hurling Team. Mrs. Kathleen Dunican (nee Mahon), Shannonbridge worked at Turraun Camp. She remembers well the dance on Thursday night, "the 4 penny hop", which was free to workers. Music was provided by Jimmy Hennessy (RIP) Ferbane, Michael Doorley, Gallen and Syl Donlon (RIP) Gallen. Sometimes they would bring along a young fellow to play with them - Mick Coughlan (Gallen). The late Charlie Ward, Ferbane, sold refreshments. On Sunday nights a band from Clara or Tullamore would provide the music and admission on that night was 1/-!



*Turf was loaded onto a canal barge and brought for sale to Dublin.*

Life at the camp was tough but those who stayed at Turraun recall those days with affection.



*Dining in ... the "infamous" Turraun canteen, which also served as the social venue for workers. Pictured above outside the dining hall are Betty Byrne (nee Kidney) Oughter, left and Lizzie Buckley (nee Rosney), the Back Road, Pullough. Accommodation at Turraun consisted of four billets each of which housed twenty five workers.*

John McNamara recalls the following canteen staff. The list, from memory, may not be complete:

**Camp Superintendents:** Pierce McGuinness (Donegal)  
Paddy McNamara (Ennis)  
Tony Myles (Listowel)  
Michael O'Sullivan (Dingle)  
Jim Breslin (Glenties)

**Head Cook:** Jimmy Mills (Kildare)

**Assistant Cooks:** Jimmy (The Grease King) Willis  
Arthur Murphy (Cork)  
Paddy Meleady (Moate)

Incidentally Arthur Murphy won an All-Ireland Senior Hurling medal with Dublin in 1938.

Tony Myles, who was a playwright of some note, had his play 'The Right Rose Tree' staged at Turraun Camp and Ferbane. He later worked as a journalist with The Sunday Press.

## The Birth of Boora

The proposal to use sod turf for power generation had been approved by the Government in 1936, but because of The Emergency, had been put on the back burner. In 1943, with the ending of World War Two in sight, the Government sought from The Turf Development Board, its "Post War Turf Development Programme". This plan, later to become known as The First Development Programme, was submitted to the Government in 1944.

The White Paper provided for the erection of sod turf power generating stations at Allenwood and Portarlinton, and stated that all future power stations should use sod turf. The entire programme was formally sanctioned in the Turf Development Act in 1946, which established Bord na Móna.

And so in 1945 Boora bog was identified as one of a number of bogs suitable for sod peat production for power generation.

Clareman Dan O'Sullivan, Civil Works Engineering Inspector, was in charge of initial investigations. Jimmy Cooney, Athlone Road, Ferbane and Tommy Lee, Dublin, had responsibility for preparation of drainage plans and the location of possible outlets for the drainage of the individual areas.

A native of Co. Cavan, Jimmy Cooney, having worked for a year on Ballydermot bog, started in Boora in January 1946. He recalls that the first person employed at Boora to help in setting out the network of bog drains required to reduce the water was Jimmy O'Connor (RIP), Ferbane.

The Canal Co. used "The Boora river" for their water supply at Turraun and Bord na Móna had to erect a water gauge at Gurteen Bridge, Leabeg. Jimmy remembers that a young local man, Kieran Egan, had agreed to take the readings for 10/- a week.

Kieran Egan, who now resides at Ballyvora, Ferbane, was later to become General Foreman at Boora bog.



*Jimmy Cooney ... designer of the drainage plan for Boora.*

Because they had no office accommodation, they approached Mrs. Kieran Hennessy, Bunn in the spring of 1946, and she agreed to rent them a room for office use. From this "headquarters" operations were directed. When a fleet of graduate engineers on the mobile survey crew had the drains marked out, it was then time to recruit men to dig the drains. The bog was intended for sod turf and the drains would eventually have to be 6 feet in depth. A person with experience of bog drainage was required to supervise the operation and, as luck would have it, a local man John Joe Dooley was already a "ganger" on the hand won turf scheme in Kildare. When approached he was delighted to come back home to Boora.

The digging of trenches was done by hand and by piece rate, it was difficult to recruit workers. However most people in the Pullough area



*End of an era: Boora colleagues pictured at a function to mark the retirement of John Joe Dooley in 1969, the first retirement from Boora. Left to right: Noel McIntyre, Hubert Collins, Michael Gorman, John Joe Dooley (RIP), Kieran Egan, Michael Doyle (RIP), Maurice Keane (RIP), Michael Dempsey (RIP), Jimmy Byrne and Jim Ryan (RIP).*

had good experience of bog work and they were the first people in the locality to avail of the work. Two lorries were used to transport the workers from Pullough to Boora. Mick Coughlan, Gallen, recalls hearing about Paddy Neary making "big money" digging for "piece rate" at Boora bog during the Summer of 1946. He was twenty years old at that time, and working for the County Council. After a chat with John Joe Dooley he started digging trenches with Paddy Neary at 12A, Lough Boora. At 3 pence a metre he could earn four pounds ten shillings per week, "good money" at that time.

By the Autumn of 1946 the site for both the offices and workshops had been selected. After some difficulty, the site for the roadway was acquired by a compulsory acquisition order and an entrance opened on the main Blueball - Cloghan Road. At this stage a second "ganger" was appointed. Tim McMahon from Turraun Camp. He was in charge of constructing the road. The rock, from Broughal quarry, which was used for the road foundation, was blasted using explosives. The rock was then transported by lorry to Boora.



In the Spring of 1947 the first machine arrived on the bog, a 10RB drag line from the Board of Works. This machine cleaned and widened the Boora river to allow for the water to

*Mick Coughlan, who retired as machine driving instructor in 1988.*

discharge from the outfalls. There were two drivers for this machine Tommy Murphy (Limerick) and Mick Moynihan (Limerick), who worked shifts.

With the roadway completed in the Summer of 1947, it was time to construct office accommodation. A wooden building consisting of three offices was erected and a telephone installed, Telephone No. Blueball 2. The manager in charge of operations at this time was the late Frank Murphy (Mayo) who was later to become Roscommon County Engineer.



*Frank Murphy, (left) the first Boora Manager, who later served with Offaly and Roscommon County Councils.*

*Under his management and the supervision of Kieran Kenny (RIP), Banagher, the erection of the hostels commenced, by direct labour. (Picture courtesy of his daughter, Cathy Gillen, Sligo.*

## Boora Hostel

By May 1946 Boora Bog had been partially "set out" for drainage, and so, like Allenwood and Clonsast, provision had to be made for the expected influx of workers. An order dated 21st May 1946 was placed with the Nissen Buildings Ltd., Rye House, Hoddesdon, Herts, for the provision of twenty two sleeping huts at a cost of £367 each. The total amount for the huts, and extras such as stoves, ventilators and the payment of "War Risk Insurance" was £10,204. When in October 1947 Frank Murphy moved to Head Office on promotion he was replaced by Dermot Power. The hostel was completed under his management with John Odlum (RIP) Banagher as supervisor. It was officially opened in 1949.

In addition to sleeping accommodation for 480 workers a recreation hall was also provided, including a projection room, dining room, hall and



*The Late Dean James Earley, P.P. Ferbane, chatting with Todd Andrews, Managing Director, at the opening of the Boora Hostel in 1949. Looking on are DC Lawlor, General Manager, left and Boora Manager Dermot (Der) Power. Picture courtesy D. Power.*



kitchen. There was also a “dry” and “wet” canteen, the difference being that the “wet canteen” featured a bar. During the initial drainage of the bog the hostel would have housed up to 400 workers. There was an attempt to develop a social life around the hostel. Jimmy Byrne (Bog Foreman) is the only remaining worker in Boora today to have availed of accommodation at the hostel. Jimmy recalls the dance on most Saturday nights and a film show each week. Mass was celebrated each Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation in the recreation hall. He stayed in the hostel for two years until its closure in October 1957.

We read from an Offaly Independent report dated April 1954 “There are now about 130 men resident in the camp, at work on the bog. These



*Sonny Monaghan, Raham, who helped dig the foundation for the hostel. Sonny is currently a loco driver at Boora, and commenced work there on 30th August 1948. Of the present work force Sonny is the longest serving member.*

men are from many parts of Ireland and the average wage is from £4.10s.0d to £5 per week from which is deducted the cost of board and lodgings, which amounts to 37/- a week”.

A combination of the change from sod peat to milled peat, the mechanisation of work and the provision of houses at Kilcormac made the closure of the hostel inevitable. Workers who had drained Boora Bog with German shovels, in bad conditions, began to realise there



*View from above ... An aerial view of Boora Works, circa 1955. Each of the twenty billets shown had accommodation for twenty four workers in addition to washing facilities.*

would be a longer term future in this area. Around this time plans were made for the development of the Bord na Móna “village” at Kilcormac. By the time the hostel closed in 1957 most of the workers staying at Boora were Germans, who had come to Ireland to erect the Power Station at Lumcloon.

Only five of the billets remain in Boora today, the rest having been sold by auction in 1961. The five that remain are used to store concrete pipes and spare parts for machinery.

Mass continued to be celebrated in the recreation hall until 1976 when The Church of St. Oliver Plunkett was opened at Leabeg, Boora. Bord na Móna’s support for the church and its surrounds emphasises the importance of the link between the Board and Ferbane Parish.

The dining hall which unlike the billets was a concrete structure, continued in use as a store for spare parts. In 1989 with the rationalisation of Bord

na Móna, the Peat Energy Division moved to Boora. The old dining hall was renovated to become a modern office complex. The hall where once weary workers from the Midlands and the West dined after back breaking drainage work, is now the hub of Bord na Móna's Peat Energy Division. The wheel has come full circle.



*Energetic Crew . . . Staff at the Peat Energy Division pictured at the new office, once the site of the Boora Hostel. Left to right: Joe Slevin, Renagh McDermott, Sean Craven, Rosie Talbot, Sean Ganly and Joan Spain.*

No staff records exists for the hostel staff. However, from memory, Paddy Kennelly (Lanesboro) and Jimmy Byrne (Kilcormac) have provided the following list.

**Hostel Superintendents:** Ned Devitt (Tipperary); Paddy (P.B.) O'Sullivan (Kerry); Paddy Fitzpatrick; Paddy Kennelly; Paddy Clancy.

**Head Orderly:** John Carroll; Tom Conway; W. Doyle.

**Assistant Orderlys:** Dusty McGrath (Waterford); Pat Gallagher (Donegal).

**Cook:** Joe Beehan (Tullamore).

**Assistant Cook:** Tom Scanlon.

## Swinging into action

With Tumduff bog now sufficiently drained to allow a machine to operate there, the first "ditcher" was brought from Lullymore to Boora Bog. As the development of the bog continued, so also did the construction of the sewerage and water schemes, the ongoing office and workshop accommodation.

The Desmithske machines were introduced in 1950. This turf cutting machine was used to open the trenches for the 16 baggers, which by now were ordered for Boora. The turf cut by the Desmithske machine, when ready was loaded by hand into a 8cu ft. wagon, brought to Boora yard and sold from a temporary tip head where the oil tanks are located. When Peter Usher arrived as Head Foreman at Boora in July 1951 from Clonsast, the main frames of five baggers were assembled under the supervision of Mr. Alex Man, Mechanical Engineer. Three of the sod turf loaders had also arrived, as had some of the sod peat wagons. Peter, who lives at Boora, remained as General Workshop Foreman until 1968, when he replaced the then Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Andy Brown, as Mechanical Superintendent. He held this position until his retirement in February 1983.



*A fond farewell . . . An important group in keeping the wheels turning at Boora Workshop are the workshop foremen. Long serving member of the workshop staff Peter Usher is pictured above with colleagues at his retirement function in 1983. Others associated with the workshop operation include foremen: Bernie Jennings, Andy Freer, Martin Coughlan, Bob Boland, Vincent McDonnell, Tommy Cannon, Eamon Fleming, Willie Craven, Cormac Carroll, Eamon Dooley, Liam Fox, Peter Nolan, Stephen Ryan, Seamus Buckley and Brian Colohan. Mechanical Engineers: Andy Brown, John McKiernan and John McNiff.*

## From Sod Peat to Milled Peat

At the World Power Conference held in London in 1950, Bord na Móna engineers received information on the use of milled peat for power generation. This method was being used on an increasingly large scale by the Russians. Armed with this information and some of the technical data about this system, Bord na Móna recommended to both the E.S.B. and to the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Sean Lemass, that any future development of bogs for electricity generating stations should be based on milled peat. That conference was to have a major impact on the future of Boora.

At this time Portarlinton sod peat station was already in operation and work on Allenwood station was at an advanced stage. Bord na Móna felt that although the Boora group of bogs were being developed for sod peat, that if they could get an agreement from the E.S.B. and Government approval, the proposed sod peat station for Ferbane could

be designed to burn milled peat. They had argued that milled peat would be more economical, and after lengthy discussions between

### *Linking the past ...*

*The Dunican Family have a proud association with Bord na Móna. Ned (RIP) is pictured at the now defunct milled peat loader machine in 1973. His late father, Jim, had the distinction of working at Turraun until he was 73. Ned's son Monsie works as a tippler operator at Boora.*



the E.S.B. and the Department of Industry and Commerce, it was agreed to allow an independent team of American Engineers to examine the whole area of sod peat and milled peat production and its utilisation. When this group of engineers from the Battelle Memorial Institute, Ohio submitted their findings they supported Bord na Móna's view that milled peat should be used for all future peat generating stations.

In February 1952 the decision was made to proceed with the design and construction of Ferbane Station based on milled peat. The work of removing the power lines and poles at Tumduff was put in train. The baggers which were partially assembled were dismantled as was the remainder of the sod peat machinery. Mick Coughlan recalls Mr. Alex Maine, the Mechanical Engineer, jokingly saying that it shouldn't be too difficult to dismantle the machines as they weren't assembled too well to start with! These sod peat machines were transferred to the other sod peat bogs in Clonsast and Ballydermot. Thus began an important chapter in the history of Boora and Bord na Móna.

With the change to milled peat, the Boora bog was now set out to suit this system. Many more drains needed to be ditched for the milled peat



*Loading up ... Eddie Callaghan, Derrygreenagh Works, collects pipes at the Pipe Factory. Boora now supplies pipes to all Bord na Móna works.*

fields, but the depth had only to be four feet. Because of the number of concrete pipes required it was decided to erect a Pipe Factory at Boora, which would also service future needs in other works. This factory went into production in February 1954. We read from an article in the Midland Tribune at that time: "Bord na Móna is making concrete pipes at an all in cost of 3/7 each as compared to 10/- the cost of a similar pipe delivered on the site". This Pipe Factory is still in operation today, producing an average of 24,000 concrete pipes annually. Since it first went into production in 1954 well in excess of 1 million pipes have been produced at Boora Pipe Factory.



*Mass Gathering ... A feature of the production season at Boora was the Mass for workers, followed by the blessing of the machines. The first Mass was celebrated on 1st May 1960 by Very Rev. James Canon Earley, P.P. Fermagh, pictured above with the Boora workforce. Picture courtesy Jack Gilligan, Lunclon.*

## Keeping the Machines in Order

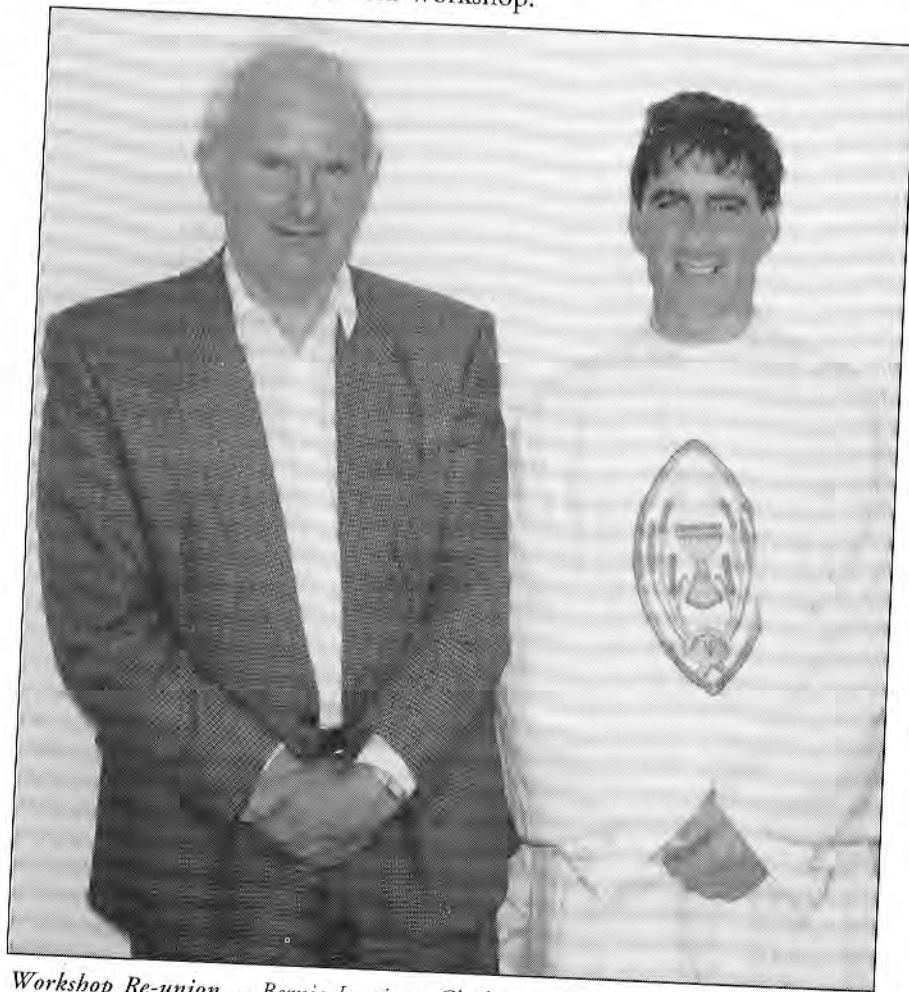
The workshops at Boora occupy a special place in the history of Bord na Móna. Bernie Jennings (Roscommon) now retired and living in Cloghan, recalls that when he started as a fitter in Boora in February 1951, the main workshop was under construction. Over the next couple of years the construction of the stores and machine shop was completed. With the decision in 1952 to proceed with milled peat production at Boora, orders were placed for the machinery required for this operation. Extra workshop space was required for the annual overhaul of vast numbers of machines. We read from a report from the Offaly Independent dated May 1954. "The new workshops at Boora, when completed, will be the largest in Ireland apart from the G.N.R. workshops at Dundalk".

The fact that the jobs available in the workshops at Boora were so highly sought after is evident from an Irish Times report dated 15th April 1954. Michael Smith (Cloghan) recalled how he had returned from



*Jubilee Boys ... Boora Fitters, Seamus Cabill (left) and Seamus Gorman, both born in 1946, the year Bord na Móna was established.*

Manchester two years previously. He had always wanted to return to Ireland but never thought he would find a place of work as good as Boora. He said the factories of Manchester bore no resemblance to the excellent conditions at Boora Workshop.



*Workshop Re-union ... Bernie Jennings, Cloghan, who served as General Workshop Foreman at Boora pictured with Rev. P.J. Hughes, former Boora Fitter. P.J. celebrated Mass at Boora works following his ordination in 1995. Picture courtesy Rita Bennett, Boora Works.*

## Making an Impact

*By Tom Feighery*

It would be virtually impossible to overstate the economic and social impact of Bord na Móna on the life of the Midlands. The influence of the Boora group can best be measured by looking at the towns and villages of West Offaly, the communities touched in so many ways by Bord na Móna's operations in the area. The group is located west of Tullamore and north east of Birr. It is cradled between Pullough and Ballycumber to the north, Kilcormac to the south. Ferbane and Cloghan to the west.



*Tom Feighery.*

When the Turf Development Board took over the operations of Sir John Purser Griffith in 1936, few could have imagined that what was happening in Turraun was the beginning of a complete transformation of the region. Those early years saw the population of West Offaly rise dramatically, since the small pool of workers available locally was insufficient to meet the demands of the labour intensive operation at Turraun. The hostels at Boora and Turraun - already referred to in earlier chapters - were mini villages.

It can be seen from the census for the townlands of Turraun, Pullough, Oughter, Leamore, Leabeg and Bun, in the District Electoral Division of Lea that the population grew by an astonishing 80% or 300 people in the period 1936 to 1956. The population of this area today is lower than it was in 1936, showing the very transient nature of the population. Hostel records show that almost 2,000 people passed through Boora hostel in its short period of existence. Many of these workers only stayed for weeks, some for the season, while only a minority settled. As the bogs developed and mechanisation crept in, the work became more attractive for the local rural workers, small farmers and their families.

The towns of Kilcormac and Ferbane, the villages of Cloghan and

Ballycumber and their environs have grown significantly with the towns and villages more than doubling their size from 1936 to 1991.

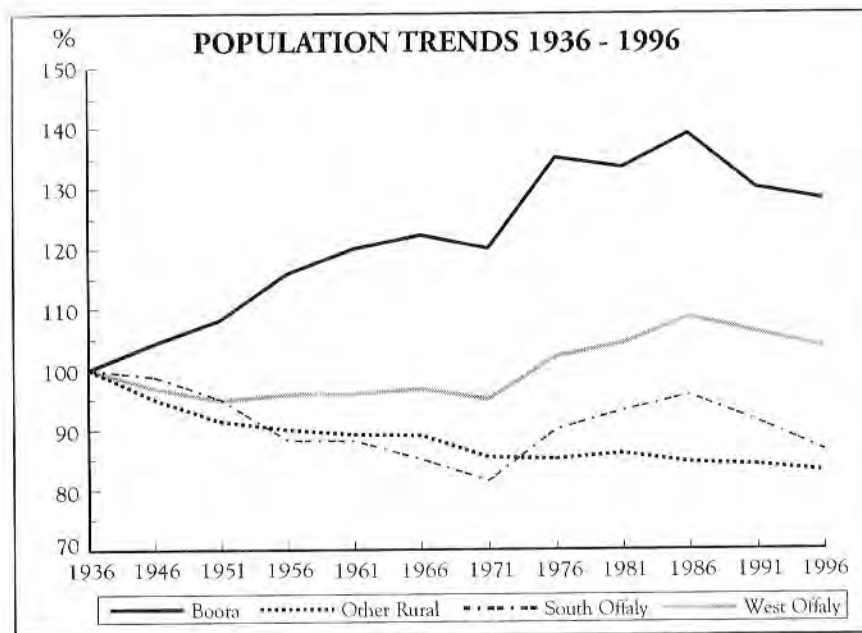
	1936	1946	1956	1966	1979	1986	1991
Kilcormac	448	445	776	1024	1089	1118	973
Ferbane	301	312	619	1072	1064	1374	1285
Cloghan	188	172	270	321	404	480	453
Ballycumber	107	124	163	171	N/A	235	248

The real impact can be seen by examining the population trends in the District Electoral Divisions: Kilcormac, Broughal, Cloghan, Gallen, Ferbane, Lea (Pullough, Oughter, Leabeg), Ballycumber, Shrah (Lemonaghan), within which most of the area lies. (Appendix 7). The population statistics for these areas taking 1936 as a base show a steady growth in the population to 1966, then a levelling off to 1971; there was rapid growth between '71 and '79 which reflected a trend both within the county and nationally; it has fluctuated from '79 to '86 and shows a steady decline since the peak of '86 to the present time, where it is 27% higher than in 1936.

An examination of the population statistics for six West Offaly rural District Electoral Divisions, namely Derrinboy, Killooly, Moyclare, Derrycooley, Drumcullen and Derryadd which adjoin or are quite close to the core area, shows a drop in population of 19% over the same period. The population of the whole of West Offaly (Birr Rural District) in which almost all of the area is located, showed a decline from 1936 to 1971 and expanded rapidly from 1971 to 1979, reflecting the trend in Ferbane and Kilcormac, and has remained steady since.

South Offaly, excluding Birr town which has thirteen District Electoral Divisions of a very rural nature and is not significantly affected by Bord na Móna operations, shows a population decline of 13% in the same period. The assumption can be made that West Offaly would be somewhat similar only for Bord na Móna. The graph on the following page shows the picture more clearly.

It is difficult to measure in precise economic terms the impact of Bord na Móna and E.S.B. in West Offaly. There are many indications of the influence of Bord na Móna which might be used. A useful exercise might be to imagine the towns and villages in the area without the



employment provided by Bord na Móna. In addition to the full-time employment, the company provided seasonal work for farmers operating small holdings which were clearly not sustainable. In passing it is worth noting that the drainage operations necessitated by the bog development had a major impact on farming in West Offaly.

All of this proves that Bord na Móna operations have had a considerable effect on the social life of the communities in which it exists and that it has stemmed emigration within the area. (Appendix 8 and 9). The point is best illustrated by a brief look at the development of the main population centres since 1936.

### KILCORMAC

In 1936 Kilcormac was a village with a population of 448 persons. The economy of the area was based on mixed farming and the only employment was for farm labourers, shop boys and labourers in three local corn stores. One of these corn stores was owned by P. & H. Egan, the other two by D.E. Williams. There were four general merchants, Williams, Egan's, Scully's and Feighery's, seven public houses, Williams, Egan's,

Chapman's, Gath's, Feighery's, Dooley's and the Cosy Bar, Butler's drapers, Galvin and Craven butchers and Martyn's chemist shop. There were two blacksmiths, Maher's and Sutherland's and two carpenters, Coulihan's and Reamsbottom's, Fogarty's bakery, Troy's tailors and the post office was owned by McRedmond's. Life revolved around the Fair Day and Market Day, held on the 28th day of each month.

In the early 50's Bord na Móna decided that it needed a hard core of full-time permanent employees who, unlike many local workers, were not small farmers and liable to be absent at critical periods. The Board's operations at Boora were now concentrated on Milled Peat production and the production season coincided with the hay making period for farmers.

In 1954 Bord na Móna decided to construct a new village consisting of 104 houses in Kilcormac, one of eight such villages. Kilcormac was the second largest scheme, the largest being in Timahoe, Co. Kildare. The decision to build in Kilcormac was taken because it was the nearest village to a bog rail pick up point for workers and there was a good site and services available.

The development of St. Cormac's Park led to a building boom in Kilcormac from 1954 to 1957. The place was transformed from a village of 507 in 1951 to a town with a population of 1,018 in 1961. A new sewage scheme and treatment works was also built in the late 50's.

In 1940 there were four national schools; the Convent, the Boys, Ballyboy and Broughal, and they had a school going population of 278. This peaked to 407 in 1970 but present day numbers for the four schools have dropped to 244. A big disadvantage was the absence of a second-level school. This problem was partly addressed in the late 50's and 60's by the provision of what was called a secondary top (junior cycle only) by the Sisters of Mercy at the Convent National School. In 1971 Offaly Vocational Education Committee decided to construct a Vocational School in the town. In September 1971 the new school, incorporating the existing secondary school, commenced with 142 students accommodated in prefabricated classrooms on a site on the Tullamore road. Today there are over 350 children in second level education in the town.

Unfortunately this development did not come early enough and a significant number of families moved to other towns, in particular to Ferbane, which had better education facilities at the time. Another

critical factor was the lack of private building sites on the perimeter of the town due to the reluctance of landowners to sell suitable parcels. Today only 22 of the occupants of St. Cormac's Park earn their livelihood in Bord na Móna. Most of the workers who witnessed the transformation of Kilcormac have retired. Younger families turn to Tullamore and Birr for a livelihood. Primary school numbers today are down to the same level as 1940, reflecting an aging population. Bord na Móna operations made Kilcormac what it is today. The town must now look in different directions to the factories and businesses of the bigger urban centres for its future.

### **FERBANE**

In 1936 Ferbane was a village of a mere 301 people, much of its early development having been linked to the King estate at Ballylin. Today it boasts a population of 1,285 people, four times its original size. While Ferbane did not benefit from a housing programme such as that which led to the expansion of Kilcormac - it developed on a more gradual basis. Offaly County Council developed a new estate of 26 houses at St. Cynoc's Terrace in the early 50's. Bord na Móna built seven houses on the Athlone road for its management team. Meanwhile the new power station was under construction at Lumcloon, and to coincide with this scheme the E.S.B. built an estate of 30 houses for its employees at Delvin Park.

In its early years Ferbane was just a small market town like Kilcormac depending on its rural community and the commerce from this for survival. There were five large general merchants; Hiney's, Hamill's, Madden's, Claffey's and P. & H. Egan's; several pubs, smaller shops and a chemist. In addition to these Ferbane boasted three bakeries; Fanning's, Kenny's and Chapman's. There were two tailors; Johnny Gorman and Joe Rooney and two blacksmiths; Jim Egan and Jim Claffey. The cobbler was Patsy Currans who had his workshop in the Fair Green, where James Dee now lives. Up to 1962 the town enjoyed the benefits of a rail link. The long established Ferbane branch of the Ulster Bank served the town and a wide hinterland. Fair days were held on the third Tuesday of each month with a market day on every second Thursday.

Ferbane's main strength lay in its educational facilities which were ahead

of many towns of its size at the time. In 1936 St. Joseph's secondary day school for girls was opened in part of the Convent buildings in the town and in 1938 a new Vocational School catering for boys and girls to junior cycle was opened.

A secondary school for boys, St. Saran's, was opened in 1958 and in 1972 the girls and boys were amalgamated under the title of St. Joseph's and St. Saran's Secondary School. Today Ferbane has two second-level schools, both giving full second level education and catering for 590 students.

At primary level a new school was built on the Athlone Road in 1958 to cater for all children in this sector. Today's enrolments stand at 251 children compared with a peak of 399 in 1980 and 178 in 1940.

Sites for housing development were readily available on the approach roads to the town. You can see that today from the ribbon development along the Athlone, Ballycumber and Ballyclare roads. And in fact, Ferbane almost joins the nearby village of Belmont. This fact, together with its advantage in educational facilities, gave Ferbane the edge on neighbouring towns. Today however it is feeling the affect of the rationalisation of Bord na Móna activities and there has been a decline in population since 1980.

### **CLOGHAN**

Because of the geographical location of Cloghan the village might have been expected to benefit to a greater extent from the development of Bord na Móna. Cloghan has grown by two and a half times its original size from 188 in 1936 to 453 in 1991. Its central location, between Ferbane, Banagher and Kilcormac militated against Cloghan. Workers given a choice, chose the bigger areas with more services. In those early years it had general merchants, Garahy's and Doorly's; five pubs, McGrane's, Clarke's (Lionel), Clarke's, Garahy's, Whelan's; a forge (Mulhare's), bakeries (Clarke's and Garahy's); two tailors, (Grogan's); a carpenter (Reddin's), a butcher and a harness maker. Fair Days were held on January 1st, March 14th, May 15th and August 15th with Pig Markets every Thursday.

During the late 70's and early 80's it had a thriving engineering works manufacturing farm machinery but this has since closed down.

Today there are two modern national schools, one in the village, the

other at Lumcloon, catering for 200 children compared with 316 in 1970 and 189 in 1940, when there were also schools at Gallen and Bunn.

### **BALLYCUMBER**

Ballycumber is the centre of a large rural Parish and, in its early days, it depended totally on the business generated by the rural community. It had a population of 107 in 1936 and this has risen to 248 in 1991.

The villages' commercial life centred around three general merchants (Mangan's, D.E. Williams and P. & H. Egan's) and five public houses (Healy's, Egan's, Williams, Qualters and Flynn's). It had fair days on the 2nd day of May and the 1st day of December with market days for pigs on Mondays.

The National Schools in 1940 were at Boher and Lemonaghan and had an enrolment of 140. Today there is one new school only at Boher with 149 students. The highest student numbers were 190 in 1990.

The village owes its growth in population to the development of local authority housing in the village and stand alone dwellings in the countryside.

The population of the village and surrounding countryside has continued to grow since 1980 whereas all the other areas have shown a decline over the same period. This is most likely due to its proximity to Clara and Tullamore.

### **PULLOUGH**

The noted Jesuit photographer, Fr. Browne, once described Pullough as "A Lost Island of the Bog". Pullough was for many years virtually inaccessible. The development of the Grand Canal marked a significant turning point for Pullough, which is not defined as a town or village!

It is however impossible to talk about the social impact of Bord na Móna in West Offaly without reference to Pullough. The development of Turraun Works saw a huge influx into the area and as already noted the Turraun Camps increased the population dramatically for a period.

Inadequate infrastructure has militated against Pullough and younger generations have tended to drift towards adjoining towns and villages. The Brosna Drainage Scheme made a major impact in the area. Until the scheme access to the area was at times only possible by boat. Houses were poor due to the low lying nature of the area. Today Pullough boasts



many new houses and Offaly County Council has developed a large number of new houses in the area. In the early days Pullough had two shops, Devery's and Dolan's.

Pullough is unusual in that it straddles two parishes, Ballinahown and Ferbane. In 1940 there were 83 children attending the national school, today there are 96, while in 1960 there were 157 children on the role. Today Turraun is silent and visitors can scarcely imagine the industrial revolution which began there. It still plays an important role in the life of Bord na Móna and the evolving Turraun Nature Reserve forms part of Bord na Móna for the future.



**King of the Rail** . . . Martin Kelly from Glenamaddy, Co. Galway served as Manager at Boora Works but is perhaps best remembered for his work as Civil Engineer during the formative years of the Boora operation. His great legacy is the design of the Boora rail network. Others associated with the smooth operation of the work on the bog include foremen: Jim Kelly, Hubert Collins, Kieran Egan, Dan Davy, Christy Doolan, Frank Condron, Michael Gorman, Noel McIntyre, Tom Doolan, Michael Doyle, Patsy Guinan, Jimmy Byrne, Willie Egan and Pat Craven. **Production Managers:** Donal Wynne, Pat Ring & Seamus Guinan.

## Meeting the challenge at Lumcloon

When the E.S.B. agreed to proceed with a sod peat generation station at Ferbane in the mid 40s, a site at Coole was selected. It was referred to then by the E.S.B. as the Brosna Station. The volume of water from the Brosna would mean that cooling towers would not be required. However Bord na Móna argued that this location would mean enormous transport cost for the company so the present site at Lumcloon was selected. Work commenced in May 1953 with the excavating of the foundations for the two cooling towers. Steady progress was made with contractors working seven days a week on the project.

Not everyone agreed with Sunday work at the time as we read from a report in the Offaly Independent. Fr. Kearney told the congregation at Sunday Masses in Ferbane that "he would continue to protest against this act of public blasphemy, and he would see to it that his protests reached the highest authorities".

The site attracted large numbers of visitors from all over the country and despite the clerical protest the project continued at full steam. By mid '55 there were over 300 workers employed on site at Lumcloon. Earlier that year the first of the cooling towers was completed. The late Mick Lonergan, St. Cynoc's Terrace, Ferbane was accorded the honour of hoisting the National Flag at the top of this 266½ feet tower. Mick had worked on the construction of the tower from the ground to the summit. Accommodation was at a premium in Ferbane, Cloghan and Kilcormac because of the influx of workers, both from Ireland and abroad. The optimism generated by the economic boom in the area, can be best summed up from an article written in July 1955 in the Offaly Independent: The reporter stated that "The well known slogan 'The Kings County: poor and proud' was not now to be heard, and it can safely be assured that it will never be heard again".

In August 1955 the first sod was turned on the site at Delvin Park, Ferbane, where the E.S.B. housing scheme got under way. Bord na

Móna originally planned to build 50 houses at Ferbane, but that plan was altered. Instead it was decided to extend the proposed Kilcormac scheme to 104 houses and to build just 7 houses at Athlone Road, Ferbane. By the Summer of 1956 the E.S.B. and Bord na Móna housing schemes at Ferbane were well under way, as was a new national school - also at Athlone Road - to cater for the expected increase in population. The Power Station was nearing completion but the start up target of September 1956 was not met. When eventually the first rake of milled peat crossed the silver river bridge at Lumcloon on 21st February 1957 the wastelands of West Offaly had been transformed into a rich energy resource, which would provide for the economic and social development of the area for decades to come.



**History in the making ...** The first delivery of milled peat to Ferbane Power Station in 1957 was an historic occasion. On hand to witness the event were D.C. Lawlor, General Manager and C.S. (Todd) Andrews, Managing Director. Behind are key Boora personnel Hubert Collins, Bog Foreman; Tom Quinn, Civil Engineer and Christy Doolin, Transport Foreman.



**A Unique Team ...** Boora maintained a Fire Fighting Team drawing from workers living at St. Cormac's Park, Kilcormac.

Pictured above from the Mid 60s are: **Front Row left to right:** Peter Nolan, Mick Connor, Jimmy Byrne, Gerry Coyne, Joe Murphy, John Doyle (RIP), and Tommy Cannon. **Back Row left to right:** Johnny Murphy, Ned Lynam, Paddy Healy and Joe Lowry.

By Summer 1954 both Tumduff and East Boora bogs had been sufficiently drained to allow production machines to move in. With none of the modern day methods of field preparation available, it was left to machines such as the offset miller, single miller and single ridger to have the bogs ready for production the following year. The production of milled peat at Boora commenced in April 1955, but due to bad weather conditions, production was slow. By late August and into September conditions had improved and the target of 193,000 tonnes was achieved. Production targets for 1956 were also reached and indeed with Noggus and Drinagh bogs now developed, 1957's figures of over half a million tonnes of milled peat were well above target.

The E.S.B. had originally expressed concern about Bord na Móna's ability to give them a "secure supply" of peat because of Bord na Móna's dependence on the weather.



*Tea time ... Mick Leonard Blueball (RIP), one of the best known loco drivers at Boora. Picture courtesy S. Buckley, Oughter.*

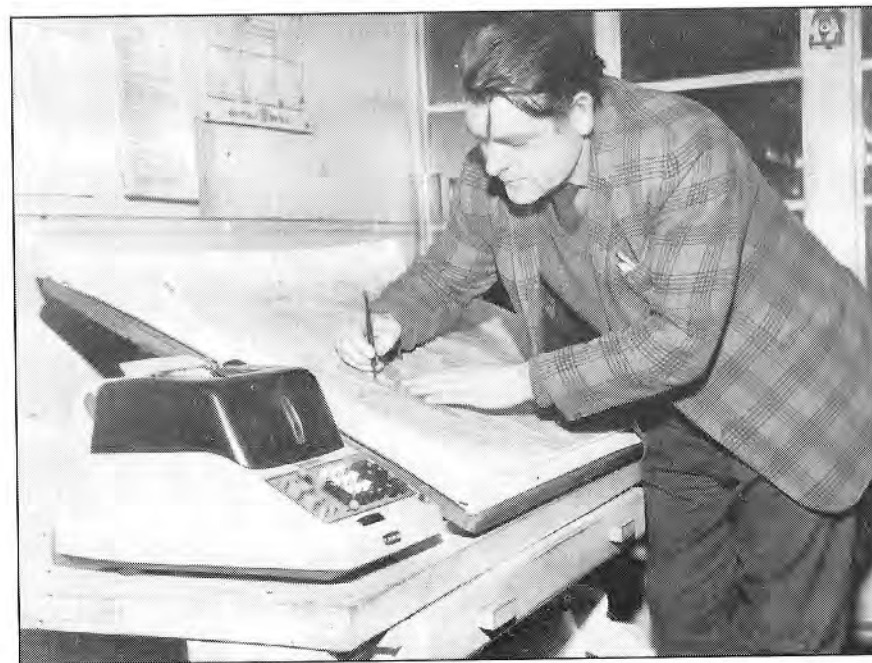
The disastrous Summer of 1958 confirmed that the E.S.B.'s fears were well founded. Production at Boora that year was 152,000 tonnes, the worst production figure to date. Luckily the following summer was one of the better ones, and for the first time production at Boora exceeded 1 million tonnes. A "secure supply" of peat was now in place. When in March 1958 Ferbane Station had completed its first year of power generation, it had the lowest cost per unit of all thermal stations in Ireland.

The "bad summers" that followed in the early sixties, meant that peat stocks had a very high moisture content. This, coupled with low density peat, prompted Bord na Móna to appoint Quality Controllers. Pat Higgins a native of Leitrim was appointed to Boora while Paddy Hughes, now Managing Director, took up the post at Derrygreenagh.



*Left: Boora Trio ... The late Mick Egan, Boora, left, pictured with Joe Tierney, Cloghan, seated in loco, and Seamus Buckley, Pullough. Picture courtesy S. Buckley.*

*Below: In Control ... Paddy Higgins keeps an eye on quality.*



In 1961 Hurricane Debbie caused huge losses of peat from the stock piles. Subsequently stockpiles were covered with polythene, which not only protected them from future storms, but also helped to keep high levels of moisture content to a minimum. In 1965 more changes came at Boora.

Not since 1959 had production targets been met at Boora, so it was decided to introduce a small type of sod peat to supplement dwindling peat stocks. The Foidín machine, which produced it, went into production at Boora in 1966 and operated for four seasons. Ferbane Station however was designed only for milled peat and this experiment was eventually scrapped.

At the time of the oil crisis in 1956, when oil prices soared, E.S.B. were able to maintain output with moderate price increases, because peat provided an alternative fuel source. Again in '67/'68 during and after the Six Days War, milled peat came into its own. For the first time since



*Foidín ... The impressive Foidín machine which was found to be unsuitable.*

1959 Boora produced above target in 1968 and this trend continued into the early seventies. But with oil prices relatively low at this time, the demand for peat from the E.S.B. decreased. With the embargo on oil supplies during the Yom Kipper War in 1973, milled peat stations for the third time in their short existence came to the fore again.



*Harrowing Times ... Before the advent of Autonomous Units, production machines were brought to the workshop for overhaul, but a crew of fitters would, in early Spring, overhaul the harrows in each area. Pictured above in the early 70s is one such crew. **Front row: Left to right:** Pat Cahill, Mick Stanley, P.J. Fanning and Des Sweeney. **Back row:** Ollie Larkin, Seamus Cahill, Joe Duffly, Larry Carroll, ??, Joe Quinn (RIP), Derry Grogan and Peter Nolan.*

By now oil prices had reached an all time high, and by Government directive Bord na Móna brought forward its 3rd Development Programme in February 1974. This programme planned for a £20 million expansion of peat production with the development of a further 40,000 acres of bog to boost production by 37%. Under this programme bogs such as Monettia, Killaun and Derrinboy were developed as part of the

Boora Group of bogs. The decision by the Arab oil producing states to increase prices focused attention on these type of bogs, which heretofore were not considered viable.

The oil crisis of the 1970's gave Boora its highest sales to date, 958,422 tonnes of peat to E.S.B. Ferbane in 1976. The largest production of milled peat to date at Boora 1.728 million tonnes was achieved the previous year. Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's demand for peat, both for power generation and peat briquettes, continued to increase.

In the mid 1980's the E.S.B. policy of diversity of fuel sources such as coal and gas, together with ageing plant at Ferbane, meant that demand for Boora's peat was reduced. With falling sales and the production cost per tonne of peat rising, it became evident that a change of direction was needed.

## Changing Times

By Paul Riordan

A new chapter in the story of Boora began with the change in payment from time based systems to output based systems. In 1989 Bord na Móna introduced the Enterprise system. At the same time the trade union proposed Autonomous Work Group Systems were set up in Boora; West Drinagh and East Drinagh. In 1989 this represented 23% of Boora production. The following year saw the introduction of a compromise system known as the Autonomous Enterprise System. Production Groups were established in East Boora, West Boora and Pullough. 50% of Boora production was now on a Payment By Result system (P.B.R.). The formation of the Oughter Group took place in 1991 followed by Noggus, Lemonaghan and Clongawney Groups in the subsequent 3 years.

Over this 5 year period the introduction of these self managed work groups allied to the introduction of new production technology doubled productivity in Boora. While this process was taking place on the bog a silent revolution was taking place in the workshops. The need to produce new machines at a competitive price to outside suppliers brought about the introduction of payment by results systems in the workshop. Boora was to the forefront of PBR systems in fabrication, loco and wagon overhaul and maintenance and machine shop work. PBR systems were also introduced on road peat haulage, rail laying and maintenance, piping, ditching etc.

The old Boora Pipe Factory now pays its operators on a "payment per pipe" basis.

The modern fleet of production and transport machinery was designed and built at Boora. New trailed harvesters were introduced in the mid eighties. The Flexi and new offset attachment miller replaced the old rigid miller. Trailed ridger and more recently the trailed brush ridger have replaced the dedicated double ridger. The trailed and paddle ditcher have greatly increased output and reliability. The new rail layer, hydrostatic locos, wagon re-railers have greatly increased output, safety and driver comfort. All of this new technology was built in Boora workshop at



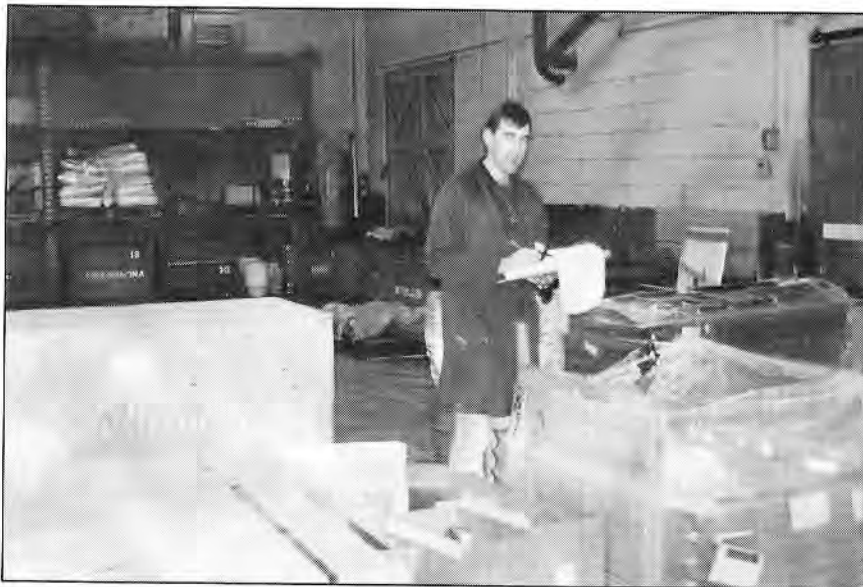
**Above: Driving forces ...** Paddy Monaghan (left), Derrycooley and Joe Cornally, Ballycumber, both of whom served as loader drivers for many years. Paddy is still working in Boora while Joe has retired. Picture courtesy of S. Buckley.

**Left: Ger Bryan, Pullough, (RIP),** long associated with Turraun and Boora. Picture courtesy of S. Buckley.

competitive prices to a high quality standard.

Boora has produced a record tonnage of 36.5 million tonnes of milled peat since commencing in 1955 (See Appendix 4). Between 1971 and 1983 Lemonaghan Bog produced 227,000 tonnes of sod peat and Turraun Bog produced 540,000 tonnes of sod peat between 1946 and 1970. Both of these bogs were subsequently incorporated into the milled peat system. Ferbane Power Station has burned 23,000,000 tonnes of milled peat since 1957 and Derrinlough has used 11,000,000 tonnes of peat to produce briquettes. (See appendix 5).

Today Boora employs 200 permanent and 80 seasonal workers contributing £4.8m annually to the local economy.



*In the store ... Boora has now assumed responsibility for Central Stores, previously located at Newbridge. Kevin Brazil, Ferbane (pictured above) is the person who keeps the stocks maintained.*

Boora has made a significant contribution to new business ventures set up by the company. We have provided fabrication, installation and maintenance personnel for Móna Engineering and raw materials and premises for Celtic Roots Bog Sculptures Studios at Lemonaghan. Boora is also to the forefront of environmental protection and



*Keeping the wagons rolling ... Wagon repairs at Boora are now carried out by a group of workers paid under the P.B.R. system. Pictured, left to right: Pat Cahill, Tommy Flaherty, Mick Mahon, John Hyland and Jimmy Screoney.*



*Body builders ... one of the major innovations at Boora has been the introduction of a new practice of building machines instead of buying from outside suppliers. Pictured in the harvester bay are left to right, Tommy Cushen, Liam Fox, Hughie Bracken, Kevin Harte, John Gilligan, Marty Coughlan and Seamus Black.*

conservation. One of the major events to take place during the European Year of the Environment in 1987, was the handing over by Bord na Móna of 1,100 acres of bogland to the wildlife service for conservation as a nature reserve. The bog which was part of the Boora group of bogs known then as Lough Roe Bog and now more commonly referred to as Clara Bog, is of international scientific importance. Its well developed 'soak' system is regarded as the best in Western Europe. But, even without its soak system, Clara bog would be of national importance, because it possesses the full range of physical features and species associated with normal raised bogs. These include bog pools, complexes of hummock and hallows, moss lawns and along the northern margin, relatively undisturbed transitions to mineral soils. Since Bord na Móna handed over this potentially productive bog in 1987, Clara bog has attracted hundreds of visitors including many from abroad.

The Lough Boora Parklands Project has received national and international recognition for its contribution to the preservation and reinstatement of the Natural Peatland Heritage. It won the Ford Irish Conservation Award for 1996 and represented Ireland at the European Finals in Hungary. The project has also received a National Heritage Award from An Taisce.

The Works handed over a 70 acre peatland site at Killaun Bog to St. Brendan's Community School, Birr. This was developed into an important Peatland Education Reserve by the school, and Miss Jane Feehan, Irish and European Young Scientist of the Year, undertook her project work on insect life on the site. A similar reserve is planned with the second level schools in Ferbane.



*The Famous Five . . . Two autonomous work groups were established at Boora in 1989, East Drinagh and West Drinagh. Pictured above are the East Drinagh group: L to R: Johnny Spollen, Patsy Lynch, Tom Molloy, Eamon Rosney and Ger Kenny. (Courtesy of V. Trodd).*

## A Chapter Closes

As with all new bogs in milled peat production the density of peat is inevitably low. To supplement the peat at Boora, it was decided in 1956 to investigate the possibility of milled peat production on shallow sections of bog at Turraun and also the cutaway sections in this area. After a detailed survey the bog at Turraun was deemed suitable. The trenches were levelled and the bog prepared for the production of milled peat. And so in 1958 Turraun bog, where the Farrelly family, Sir Purser Griffith and The Turf Development Board had operated moss peat and sod peat since the middle of the last century, now produced the first milled peat on cutaway bog.

Although Bord na Móna still produced sod peat at Turraun, the amount of bog suitable for this operation was beginning to diminish. In 1959 it was decided to develop Lemonaghan bog for sod peat production. Turraun continued to produce and sell sod peat on a small scale until 1969.

The workforce had the option of moving to Boora, which some of them did, or staying with the operation they knew best and therefore moving to Lemonaghan which was now in full production of sod peat. A skeleton staff remained at Turraun until 1971 when the last of the remaining stocks was sold. Production of sod peat commenced at Lemonaghan in 1960 and produced an average of 18,000 tonnes per annum. With only one bagger operating now, (Turraun bagger having been transferred to Clonsast) it was important that the overhaul was completed in time for the start of the production season.

Turf Cutting usually commenced in mid - March and finished in mid - July. With only a limited amount of workshop space most of the bagger overhaul was completed outdoors. Regardless of this Pat Hogan (RIP), Manager, Lemonaghan, would say, "Come hell or high water she'll have to be out for Paddy's Day"! Sod peat production continued at Lemonaghan, but by the late seventies the demand for turf was falling. In 1980 the decision was made to cease production of sod peat at Lemonaghan.

Just as Turraun, a decade previously, had come under the wing of its giant neighbour Boora, Lemonaghan also was to become part of the

milled peat bogs of Boora. Sales of the stock of sod peat at Lemonaghan continued while the bog was being developed for milled peat production. A new workshop, office and stores which had been built for the overhaul of sod peat production machines would now cater for the light miller, trailed harvesters and trailed ridgers. The old workshop was renovated and today is used as The Celtic Roots Studio.



*The last load of turf from Turraun works was collected by driver Bertie Baker, Ferbane, now living in Newbridge on 5th May 1971.*

***Pictured left to right:*** Paddy Fitzpatrick (RIP), Eddie Joe Dooley (RIP), Paddy Hogan (RIP), Michael Doyle (RIP) and Bertie Baker.

Bertie Baker was a well known figure in Boora and Turraun. One of his first tasks was to drive workers from Turraun camp to Boora works. The late Paddy Hogan, a native of Clonmel, was one of the most colourful characters associated with Turraun and Lemonaghan. He was Manager of what he liked to call the "Independent Republic of Turraun" and brought to the post a unique sense of humour, coupled with the loudest and strongest voice in the Board. Even unparliamentary



*Many machines operated at Turraun including the German Sod Turf bagger devised by Mr. H. Schnittger, Edenderry. Pictured on the machine are Angela Horan (nee Delaney) Pullough, left and Sr. Pascal Murray, Derryneavy. Picture courtesy M. Rosney.*

expressions tripped lightly off Paddy's tongue.

The late Paddy Fitzpatrick, Kilcormac was associated with the hostels at Turraun and Boora and later became a pivotal figure in the personnel office at Boora. He is especially remembered for his work with N.I.S.O., promoting safety at work.

The late Eddie Joe Dooley, a native of Leabeg, worked with the Turf Development Board at Turraun and served for over forty years at Turraun and Lemonaghan as Mechanical Foreman. He was founder-secretary of the Bord na Móna Staff Foremens Association and served as a member of Offaly County Council for over forty years.

The late Mick Doyle, Ferbane, also worked at Turraun and Boora. He served as supervisor in the early days of Turraun works and later became bog foreman at Boora works. He was also prominent at national level in N.I.S.O.



## Forging New Links

With Lemonaghan bogs almost ready for milled peat production, the task of installing a rail line to Boora was set in train. This involved the construction of a bridge over the River Brosna and also a swing bridge over the Grand Canal. Both these bridges were constructed by Coffey Construction Company Galway. An underpass was also required at Lemonaghan which was constructed by Bord na Móna. The first rake of milled peat from Lemonaghan to Ferbane Station crossed over the Grand Canal in April 1986.

The swing bridge at Turraun is the only bridge of its type over the Grand Canal. As stocks at Blackwater works were unable to meet the demand at Shannonbridge Power Station, it was decided to construct an underpass on the N62 at Renaun, Ferbane to allow a rail link to Blackwater Bog. This was also constructed by Coffey Construction Company Galway. The first rake of milled peat went from Lemonaghan to Shannonbridge Power Station in March 1994.



*East meets West ... There to witness the first rake of peat from Lemonaghan to Blackwater works using the new underpass on 8th September 1995 were left to right: Sean Horan, Tom Higgins, Ciaran Ryan, Ray Carroll, Paul Riordan, Seamus Guinan, Michael Kavanagh, Noel McIntyre, Jimmy Byrne, John McNiff, Tom Rigney, Sean Molloy and Tom Lucas.*

## Training the workers

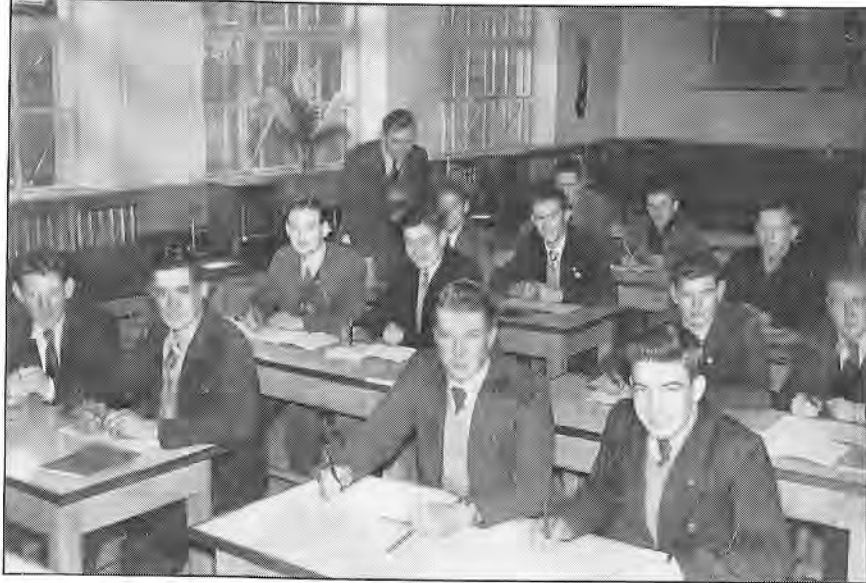
Bord na Móna is extremely proud of the apprenticeship schemes operated by the company at Boora. The scheme was introduced here in 1952 to meet the demand for trained, skilled workers. Since then generations of young men (and the crafts at Boora have always been male dominated) have trained as fitters and electricians. More than 400 apprentices have trained at Boora. At a time when access to third-level education was extremely restricted the apprenticeship provided a valuable alternative avenue to vocational training.

Bord na Móna has maintained a close relationship with the state training agencies - ANCO and FÁS, the Regional Technical Colleges and perhaps most significantly, the VEC's in the midlands. The apprenticeship scheme has fulfilled the original mandate of providing a pool of qualified craft workers and many of the early apprentices have remained with Bord na Móna. Indeed the first apprentice at Boora was Patsy Hughes, Tullamore who joined in February 1952. Patsy, a cousin of current Managing Director, Paddy Hughes, is still employed as a fitter at Boora. Out of a total of 41 craft workers at Boora today 22 served their apprenticeship here, while three out of the five current workshop foremen served their apprenticeship at either Boora or Derrinlough.

Many apprentices served their time in Boora and having worked for a time with Bord na Móna, decided to use their expertise in other fields. Many Bord na Móna workers such as Tommy Coughlan (Coughlan Engineering, Tullamore), Johnny McDonald (McDonald International Tullamore) and Johnny Condron (Killeigh) went into private industry, while others, such as Denis Buckley found a niche as lecturer at Athlone R.T.C. A Boora "past pupils union" would make a diverse group and even include a successful hotelier - J.J. Claffey, the Grand Hotel, Moate.

**The FÁS Connection:** Many former Bord na Móna staff have joined the ranks of FÁS as instructors. They include an impressive number of former Boora workers: Tom Nolan (Scraggan), Kevin Lowry (Tinnymuck), Tom Nolan (Tullamore), Joe Ivors (Clara), Larry Mooney (Rahan), Frank Monaghan (Rahan), Sean Halligan (Lemonaghan), Christy Todd (Ballycommon), Brendan Scully (Rahan), Mick Neville (Rahan), Paddy Callaghan (Tullamore), Johnny Murray (Tubber), Gerry

Ryan (Tipperary), Willie Kennedy (Roscommon) and Ray Ryan (Tullamore).



*Back to School ... Tullamore Vocational School was the venue for the first block release course for Bord na Móna Boora apprentices in 1955. Pictured under the watchful eye of teacher Mr. M. Moore (standing) are - **Front Row: Left to right:** Jack Tierney, Eddie Farrell, Seamus Kavanagh and Eddie Murray. **Second Row:** William Craven, Patsy Lynch, E. Pender and S. Curran. **Third Row:** Seamus McCormack (RIP), Patsy Hughes and Mick Devery. **Fourth Row:** Kevin O'Dowd, Mick Kenny and Gay Claffey.*

## Wasteland to Farmland, to Lough Boora Parklands

*By Tom Egan*

**B**y the early 70's a large area of cutaway land had emerged after peat harvesting at Behanamuck or Spains Island on each side of the cycle path road from Boora Works to Kilcormac. This area was levelled and perimeter drains installed. It was subsequently deep ploughed with a Rhome plough pulled by a D6 dozer. This ploughing mixed the underlying subsoil with the remaining peat and also pulled out fossilized bog oak trees to the surface for removal. It also shattered the iron pan layer between the peat and subsoil which improved ground drainage.



*Tom Egan.*

All of the fossilized timber was removed, the ploughed land was levelled, limed and fertilized and it was decided to sow the area under cereal crops of both spring wheat and barley. This procedure was carried on for a number of years and the area was extended to over 100 acres of cereals. Also a large area at Turraun was prepared for cereals but this area differed from Spains Island in that it had a blue clay base subsoil as distinct from a boulder till subsoil at Spains. It was not deep ploughed due to this. Cereals were also sown there from the mid to late seventies, again spring wheat and barley. The cereal crops grew satisfactorily but were difficult to manage due to ground conditions and minor element deficiency problems. The crops tended to be very variable and difficult to harvest particularly in bad weather autumns. Also crop yields were disappointing due particularly to small grain size.

The crop range was extended to include winter wheat and barley, oilseed rape, sugar beet and fodder beet.

In the early 80's it was decided to convert these tillage growing areas to grasslands and over a period of time all the lands were grassed down with ryegrass/clover mixes. They were all fenced with electric fences and water supplies were laid on.

The first livestock to graze these lands were heifers from another Bord na Móna farm at Clonsast. Subsequently the area was stocked with sheep and a sheep house was erected at Spains Island along with handling facilities. Eventually up to 1500 ewes were lambed here each spring for a number of years. A mixed grazing programme was devised and up to 3 ewes and their lambs and one 9 cwt. bullock were carried/acre. This stocking rate was continued for a number of years and bulls replaced bullocks in the grazing mix.

The area at Turraun too was grassed and heifers and sheep were stocked there. This project was continued up to the late eighties and employed a farm manager and two full time employees along with a number of seasonal workers. A number of trials was carried out in conjunction with An Foras Taluntais on both livestock performance, drainage methods and various other procedures. This project developed very well and excellent stock thrive along with intensive stocking rates were achieved.

In the late eighties Bord na Móna decided to stop farming and instead sell the land on to local farmers. In this way the land development team would be able to concentrate on developing further areas into grassland. It was decided that grassland was the best option for agricultural development of cutaway bogs.

The lands at Spain's Island and Turraun were sold at agreed prices to a local farmer group after prolonged negotiations. This was a brave step for local farmers, and it allowed Bord na Móna to start a major development plan of land reclamation. Adjoining cutaway lands at Spain's Island were developed to grassland, and a large new area at Tumduff was also grassed. Subsequently this development was extended all across Tumduff to Finnermores.

To date over 1,000 acres of grasslands have been sold onto local farmers. It has been a very important development for the Boora area and now, across Spain's Island, East Boora, Tumduff and Turraun local farmers are farming these lands in an excellent way and they are a tremendous benefit to them and the local economy.

In conjunction with the grassland development a major afforestation

programme was undertaken on cutaway lands around Boora. Grounds suitable for coniferous afforestation were selected and leased to Coillte who subsequently planted them with Sitka Spruce, Lodgepole Pine and also some hardwoods. To date over 2,000 acres are planted with such trees. However results have been somewhat disappointing due mainly to frost damage in late Spring and weed competition from rushes. These plantings have been followed on by new trials for the growing of hardwood species such as Oak, Sycamore, Birch etc. and are very successful to date.

In the early 90's it was recognised that not all areas of cutaway are suitable for grassland or commercial afforestation. There is a large percentage of the land that is difficult to drain, or is unsuitably located etc. for these purposes. Bord na Móna undertook trials at developing wetland and lakes in such areas, and at allowing natural colonization to proceed as was happening at Turraun. From these initial trials, it was found that this type of development was very beneficial to wildlife and to birds in particular. Vast numbers of winter migrating species of swans and ducks have returned to the areas that are flooded.

In 1994 a group of employees from Boora produced an integrated land use plan for 5,000 acres of cutaway bog under the title of "Lough Boora Parklands". This was a very impressive publication and development plan, and it subsequently won widespread approval from Government and public agencies and from the general public. The purpose of the plan is to leave the cutaway lands as productive as possible for the surrounding local communities. It involves developing the area into grasslands 20 - 30%, coniferous and hardwood forestry 40 - 50%, and wildlife and amenity developments 20 - 40%. This has resulted in funding for wetland creation at Turraun, Spain's Island and Noggus, and for fishing lakes at Spain's Island, Turraun and Finnermores. It also allows for walkway development on naturally recolonized areas at East Boora, Spain's Island, Tumduff, Noggus and Turraun. All these areas will have suitable amenities such as car parks and public facilities.

Under the guidance of this plan the total area of 5,000 acres of cutaway and more will be developed to its full production potential and will be environmentally pleasant. It will also help the local community through rural tourism developments. This plan has won for Bord na Móna the Ford Irish Conservation Award for '95 - '96 and has also been honoured

by An Taisce by a special award on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. A happy coincidence given the Golden Jubilee of Bord na Móna. This is a brief outline of the story of cutaway development at Boora to date and it certainly appears that Boora and Bord na Móna are planning the development of cutaway bogs along the right path for the future good of the area.



*Feed the birds ... Mick Melia feeds the swans at Boora Lake.*



*Improving access: The Boora parklands is expected to become a major tourist attraction in the future. A feature of the plan is the emphasis of access for disabled visitors. Pictured above are left to right Rodge Deegan, Tom Egan and Aidan O'Hora.*



*Winning Team ... Ford Conservation Winners 1996. Bord na Móna Parklands Group. Front Row: Left to right: Padraig Flynn (MEP), Tom Egan and Eddie Nolan (MD Forés Ltd.). Back Row: Tom Feighery, Paul Riordan, Eamon Fleming, Kevin Healy, Don O'Boyle, Seamus Barron, Aidan O'Hora and Gerry McNally.*

# The Archaeology of Boora Bog

Over the years peat production at Boora Bog has uncovered a number of archaeological sites and finds. In 1977 with Lough Boora now completely drained and the bed of the lake being excavated for milled peat, one of the most important archaeological sites ever in Ireland was uncovered. When Joe Craven (Kilcormac), Supervisor, discovered what he thought was "some sort of roadway", little did he know that he had in fact discovered one of the earliest Mesolithic sites in Ireland.

The National Museum were notified of the find and under the control of Dr. Michael Ryan the site was excavated. A series of hearths or fire sites were discovered around which five hundred or so artifacts made of chert, a hard siliceous stone like flint were found. Most of these were small blades but included pointed stones used as spears. A number of bones from wild pigs, hares, small fish and birds was also found, and when carbon-dated, the occupation of the site was put at 7,000 B.C. There was no evidence found of any structures which suggests that the site at Lough Boora was an encampment for hunters. Before this find the only previous evidence of human activity in Ireland for this period was discovered in the north eastern part of the country.

In August of that same year (1977) Ciaran Corcoran (Lemonaghan), while operating the bagger turf cutting machine at Lemonaghan, spotted what he considered an interesting object.

*Right: 11th century crozier found at Lemonaghan bog.*



Believing this find to be of importance, Ciaran asked his father in law, local historian the late Denis Kelly (Rahan) to have it investigated. After Dr. Michael Ryan, who was still excavating Lough Boora, took the object to the National Museum it was discovered to be an 11th Century Crozier. Dr. Joseph Rafferty, Director of the National Museum, said at the time, "the Crozier found at Lemonaghan recently is one of the most important archaeological finds of the century" (Irish Weekly Examiner September 1977).



*Discovering the past ... Joe Craven, who uncovered the historic Boora site.*

# Tracing the Past at Lemonaghan Bog

By *Conor McDermott*

## *Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit*

**B**ord na Móna own approximately 1,300 hectares of bog in Lemonaghan but this is only part of a larger area of wetlands. To understand the reason for the large number of archaeological sites recently identified in the area it is important to first look at the landscape.

The focus for the area is Lemonaghan 'Island' which has an early church site and holy well. This the central part of a large townland of 916 hectares which is completely encircled by wetlands. The eastern, northern and western sides are surrounded by peatland while the southern side is flanked by the alluvium flood plain of the River Brosna. Much of the land to the south is now reclaimed for agriculture. The Ordnance Survey maps show "liable to floods" marked across the area indicating callows. In addition, the level of this land is almost 50 feet (15m) below the dryland to the north.

Lemonaghan Island is surrounded by Curragalassa, Lemonaghan and Derrynagun Bogs. Running off this area there are a number of spurs of bog which cut into the surrounding dryland. To the west Corrhill Bog runs under the Ferbane-Athlone road and leads towards Ballaghurt Bog in the Blackwater Group. North of the main Lemonaghan Bog there is another smaller dryland island which straddles the boundary between Tumbeagh and Lemonaghan townlands. Going northwards again from here Tumbeagh Bog joins Kilnagarnagh Bog which runs up to a steep-sided esker. This esker separates Kilnagarnagh from Bellair Bog.

Castletown Bog (Area C) lies to the east of the Tumbeagh island and continues as far as the junction of the old Clara-Ferbane railway and the road in Cornafurris and Corrabeg townlands.

Bogs started developing after the last glaciation around 8,000 years ago eventually covering one third of Co. Offaly, and in places reaching almost 40 Ft (12m) in depth. From the Medieval period onwards the

bogs began to be reclaimed for agriculture and modern roads had begun to be built across them. Therefore the extent of open bogland in the Lemonaghan area was much greater than it appears today where many acres of farmland are reclaimed peat land. From the start of the Mesolithic Period in Co. Offaly (c.7,000 BC at Lough Boora; Ryan 1984) up until relatively recent times people living in or crossing this county would have had a very different view of the landscape. To them the bogs would have been part of their every day lives and at times represented a barrier, a resource or a sacred place. Settlement sites, like Clonfinlough in Blackwater Bog (c.900 BC; I.A.W.U. 1993), show that people occasionally lived in bogs. The many hundreds of other archaeological sites which have been found tell us that they also frequently crossed them.

Some of the recent discoveries from Lemonaghan are outlined below. The I.A.W.U. started fieldwork in Bord na Móna's Lemonaghan Bogs in 1993 and surveyed the area to the north of the island. Further work was carried out in 1994 in Derrynagun and in 1996 the remaining areas were completed.

The numbers of sites from each area are: Lemonaghan 155, Derrynagun 111, Curragalassa 150+, Kilnagarnagh 19 and Corrhill 175+. This gives a total for Lemonaghan Bogs of 610+. When added to the Blackwater (I.A.W.U. 1995) and Bellair surveys, the number of sites known from northwest Offaly increases to over 760.

There is a considerable variety in the types of sites which have been discovered. Some are small deposits of wood used to cross very wet patches on the bog surface. Others are stake and post rows, sometimes several hundred metres long, for which no definite function has yet been identified. Many of the remaining sites are toghers and they vary considerably in construction. Most are made of brushwood and/or roundwoods and can sometimes be traced for long distances. Others are longitudinal plank walkways secured by pegs and supported beneath by cross timbers or roundwoods. The two least common types are made from flagstones/gravel or of hurdles (woven panels). Both types are known from Lemonaghan Bogs.

As yet very few of these sites have been dated and they may indicate only some of the periods of activity on the bogs. It is difficult to say just how many of the sites were built in the same general period. However, some

patterns and results can already be seen and more will emerge as work continues.

The earliest evidence identified so far for human presence in Lemonaghan bogs, comes from artefacts which have been discovered. In 1996 Mr. Joe Egan of Lisdermot found a polished stone axehead in Straduff townland which probably dates to the Neolithic period (3,500-2,400 BC). A little to the west of this, in Corrhill Bog the I.A.W.U. found a flint side scraper from the same period. As yet no Neolithic archaeological sites are known from the area. These have been found in other areas such as Co. Longford where six toghers are known (Raftery 1990 and forthcoming).

Bord na Móna workings in the Lemonaghan bogs have not reached these lower levels. The first dated structures in this area are two tracks from the 16th century BC. Both are constructed from longitudinal oak planks with supports. The first is from the northern end of Derrynagun Bog. This was an area of cutover bog before it was purchased by Bord na Móna, and as a result, the site was identified on the field surface. The second is from Kilnagarnagh Bog which survives in almost perfect condition. Where it is visible in the drain faces, morticed planks can be seen secured to the old bog surface with pegs.

The next dated period of construction is around 900 BC when sites were built across Corrhill and Lemonaghan Bogs. These dates closely match the construction of the settlement at Clonfinlough and whether

or not they are related is one of the many questions yet to be addressed about the sites. There does appear to be a national pattern of building sites in wet areas in this general period (Baillie 1995, 68). If so, the Lemonaghan material may reflect trends on a much wider scale.

Dated sites from Castletown, Derrynagun and Curragalassa indicate there was considerable activity around the late sixth and seventh centuries AD in the early Christian period. Curragalassa Bog in

*Tracing the axeman ... Joe Egan, machine driver, who found the axehead at Straduff.*



particular has many toghers dating from this time. Since this bog has never been milled, these, and all later sites still survive. In Derrynagun bog the lowest construction levels of a large togher, which runs across the bog towards Lemonaghan island, are broadly contemporary with the foundation of the monastery by St. Manchan on the island in 645 AD. The togher continued to be used into the thirteenth century AD by which time the upper stone flags and gravel layers, which are visible today, had been laid down.

Surviving fragments of Romanesque architecture at Lemonaghan Church show that building work there was also carried out around this time. The Shrine of St. Manchan, now kept in Boher Church, originated from the former monastery at Lemonaghan. This shrine and the Lemonaghan Crozier recently discovered by Bord na Móna show the importance of the 'island' and the surrounding bog.

The recent surveys carried out by the I.A.W.U. have produced a variety of artefacts. A beautifully made leather shoe and fragments of another were retrieved from Curragalassa. One of the shoes dates from the Post-Medieval period and the other is Medieval. Wooden finds from this bog include the lid and base of a stave-built wooden vessel and a number of perforated and dowelled shafts. In Corrhill Bog two more leather shoes, additional perforated shafts and parts of an exquisitely turned wooden bowl were found. The bowl was made from ash and was recovered from the same site as one of the shoes. These may be post-medieval or earlier.

The large number of sites identified is impressive. However, when we consider how much they can tell us about the area in the past their importance is increased. Scientific analysis of the sites and the peats they were built on can help us construct a picture of the changing environment of the area in the past. Changes in the amount of tree cover, the amount of grass or arable land, climate change and periods of human colonisation, are just some of the questions that wetlands can help to answer.

In addition, the preservative qualities of bogs mean that the sites survive in excellent condition. This allows us to study wood working and artefacts from many periods in the past. Archaeological sites on the dryland do not always survive or may not yet have been found. In the wetlands we can see a fuller picture of the exploitation of the landscape over time. We can also use the sites in the bog to help us look at the

nearby dryland for settlements or other sites which otherwise might go unnoticed.

Lemonaghan Bog has a wealth of archaeological sites and finds. With the continued work of Bord na Móna new sites will continue to be uncovered. It is hoped that the I.A.W.U. will be able to return to this and other areas to record them. After all, the lower you go, the older they get!

**Note:** The Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit is interested in any information about sites or finds from bogs. Please write to- I.A.W.U., Department of Archaeology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4.

**Acknowledgements:** The work of the I.A.W.U. would not have been possible without the support of many local people and the many dedicated archaeologists who worked with us during the summer months. We would like to thank in particular the Heavin, Teehan and Hiney families and Peg McSweeney for their kindness and hospitality. As always, the help and information received from the Peat Energy Division of Bord na Móna are both invaluable and greatly appreciated.

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## Boora Graduates

**B**oora has been the launching pad for many careers in Bord na Móna and in the private sector. Perhaps the two outstanding examples are Louis Rhatigan and Paddy Hughes.



Louis and Eithne Rhatigan at their home in Dalkey.

Former Managing Director Louis Rhatigan served as Manager at Boora from 1949 until his appointment as Assistant Chief Engineer in 1958. A native of Co. Longford, Louis graduated from UCD as a Civil Engineer in 1940 and joined Bord na Móna in 1946 - a significant year for Mr. Rhatigan since he also married Eithne McCrann from Strokestown in January 1946. He spent a short time on the Kildare Hand Won Scheme before his appointment as Manager of Coolnagun Works in 1947.



In Coolnagun he first encountered Hubert Collins, bog foreman, who was later to serve alongside him in Boora. Looking back on his Boora days Louis recalls some of the great characters of the time. He paints a vivid picture of the late Christy Kelly, Lemonaghan, repairing machines in swamp-like conditions during the draining of Boora. Christy later transferred to Lemonaghan works where he worked as a fitter until his retirement.

Of the many people who worked in Boora, Louis Rhatigan remembers with particular respect and appreciation Peter Usher (Leabeg), Kieran Egan (Ferbane), Mick Doyle RIP, (Ferbane), and his colleague from Coolnagun, Hubert Collins (Tullamore). Louis served as Assistant Chief Engineer from 1958 to 1971, when he was appointed Chief Engineer. He served as Managing Director from 1973 to 1983 and since his retirement has pursued his interest in art. He served as Chairman of the Heritage Trust, bringing to bear on that post his wide range of management experience. In a crowded life he looks on his time in Boora as the most challenging and the most rewarding.

He describes as monumental the development of the new milled peat operation, like watching the building of a cathedral. Nobody, he confesses believed the transfer from sod peat to milled peat was going to be a success until soil samples were taken for the foundation of the new power station.

Louis Rhatigan says that the key to Boora's success was the existence of a good team working together. Teamwork was the essential ingredient, he emphasises, drawing a parallel with his own personal life. Eithne has always been supportive of his role in Bord na Móna and tolerated the challenges of those early days in Coolnagun and Boora.

#### **PADDY HUGHES AT THE HELM**

August 1st, 1996 marked the appointment of Paddy Hughes as Managing Director of Bord na Móna.

His appointment, following a turbulent



*Paddy Hughes.*

period for the Board, is a fitting tribute to the role played by Boora personnel in Bord na Móna at every level.

Paddy, a native of Kilcavan, Co. Laois, having completed his education at Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick, began his career as a clerk at Boora in 1959. After 18 months at Boora he transferred to Croghan Briquette Factory where he worked as a Laboratory Assistant. He then moved to Derrygreenagh as Quality Controller, later becoming Production Manager. In 1974 he was appointed Assistant Manager to Timahoe, gaining experience of the sod peat operations before moving, in 1979 to Kilberry. As General Manager at Kilberry, Paddy gained an insight into the horticultural business.

In 1981 Paddy Hughes was appointed General Manager at Blackwater, where he served for five years before his appointment as Group Manager, Milled Peat. This was at a time when Blackwater was experiencing rapid development and growth in preparation for the coming onstream of the new 45 M.W. set in Shannonbridge.

1987 saw the establishment of a restructuring task force chaired by Paddy Hughes. It was this taskforce which proposed the establishing of a divisionalised and decentralised structure for the company, a proposal which was accepted and implemented by the Board.

Paddy Hughes was appointed Chief Executive of the new Peat Energy Division. As Chief Executive he led the major change in work systems resulting in the autonomous enterprise teams in production. This change in work systems accompanied by improved technology resulted in a doubling of output during his period as Chief Executive. In November 1995 he was appointed Group Chief Operations Officer.

Paddy says that his period in Boora was very short, however he has fond memories of working with such colleagues as Peter Moore, Finn Campbell, Jim O'Boyle and Eamon Bell. He recalls that 1959 was a brilliant summer and has clear memories of a daily visit to the ten "Bonus Office" to hear from Jack Darcy R.I.P., how the production tonnage was growing. He remembers how Jack, while using a calculator would always do his own mental check to see that the answer was correct. In these computerised times he still recalls the marvellous charts and records maintained by Jack and Sean Lenihan.

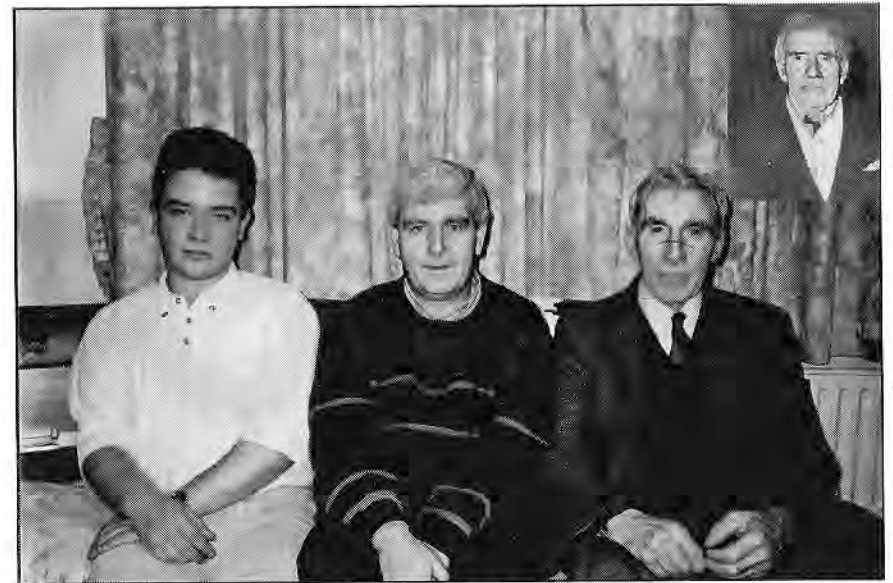
Looking at the future, Paddy sees the recent decision to refurbish the 30 M.W. set in Ferbane as giving Boora a welcome new lease of life. He

expects that Paul Riordan and all the staff in Boora will continue to lead the changes and innovations necessary to ensure a prosperous future for Bord na Móna.

Paddy, married to Sadie (nee O'Connor, Mountrath), has four in family, Majella, Conor and Padraig (twins) and Cahal, and resides at Arden Road, Tullamore. Keenly interested in management, training and development, he is a member of the Irish Management Institute and in 1997 completes a four year term as Chairman of the midland branch. A strong supporter of the G.A.A., he was a member of the Kilcavan team, winners of the 1960 Laois Junior Football Championship.

## Four Hundred Years of Service

**B**ord na Móna has been part of the fabric of West Offaly and has been a constant source of employment for the people. For generations of many local families, Bord na Móna has been a way of life. Few families can equal the service of that given to Bord na Móna, Boora by the Rosney's, Leabeg, Boora. When the late Kieran Rosney married Elizabeth Delaney in 1912, he was working at Turraun for the Turraun Peat Co. He continued to work for the Turf Development Board when they acquired Turraun. Later when Bord na Móna was established in 1946, Kieran remained at Turraun before transferring to Boora. Elizabeth and Kieran had a family of sixteen, and all ten sons followed in their late father's footsteps. The ten Rosney's, who at some time or another, worked on Boora bog were Dinnie (RIP), Martin, Kieran, Mick (RIP), Bill, Des, Jim, Malachy, Ambrose and Frank. When Kieran Junior's son Lar started work at Boora he became the third generation of the family to work on Boora Bog.



*A Family Affair ... Pictured above left to right, Apprentice Jim Rosney, his father Lar, his grandfather Kieran. Insert shows his late great grandfather Martin.*

With the rationalisation of Bord na Móna in the late eighties it was difficult to imagine another generation of the Rosney family working there, but with the re-introduction of the apprenticeship scheme, Lar's son Jim, became the fourth generation of the family to work at Boora when he commenced his apprenticeship in 1993. A great number of the third generation of the Rosney family have worked for Bord na Móna and in total, the Rosney's have given in excess of 400 years of service to the Board. The Rosney's are just one of a number of families associated with Bord na Móna, but what makes them so unique is that all four generations have worked exclusively at Boora.

## Whatever the Weather .....

**L**ike the farmer saving the hay, Bord na Móna's operation of saving milled peat depends largely on favourable weather conditions. With present day machinery such as light millers, trailed ridgers and trailed harvester the process has been speeded up considerably. Nevertheless the weather is just as important for peat production today as it was in the formative years of the Boora operation. "The weather man" at Boora over the years has been a friend to many callers, the fishermen, the farmer, and even to workers arranging holidays!

The weather station at Boora which was installed in 1951, was operated for many years by Jim O'Boyle (Kilcormac) and Eamon Bell (Cloghan). A quick look through the records shows 1954 to have had the heaviest rainfall, with 482.8mm of rain from May to September, and 1054.30mm of rain for the full year. If we compare this year to 1994 for the same period it shows the rainfall for the same period May to September at 335.5mm with the total rainfall for the year at 979.70mm. (See Appendix 3).



*For whom the Bell tolls ... Eamon Bell, Cloghan, who has just retired from his post at Boora.*

## Representing the Workers

In the early days, Bord na Móna, like many other employers at that time, treated the trade union movement with a degree of caution. The formation of unions at Boora, although disjointed at first, was made easier by the fact that workers at Turraun had been members of the Federation of Rural Workers (F.R.W.). Most general operatives became members of this union. Organising workers at Boora proved difficult because of the size of the bog and the fact that shop stewards were requested to collect union dues directly. Boora operatives inevitably decided to form their own association known as the Turf Workers Association.

The Association worked well for a short time but the organisational difficulties which the F.R.W. had encountered proved to be no less a problem for them. In 1953 the Workers Union of Ireland (WUI) set up a branch of the union at Boora. Malachy Rosney (Cloghan) became its first Chairman, while Paddy (Spud) Maher (Ferbane) was appointed secretary with Tom (Mouse) Wynne (Pullough) as Shop Steward. John Holland was the full time official for the district. From this point onwards workers became more organised. Malachy Rosney explained "that the agreement by Bord na Móna to have the weekly contribution deducted from the employees wages, was the difference between success and failure for the union". Progress was made on improving the pay and conditions of workers.



*Worker Directors ... The three worker directors elected from Boora, left to right, Jack Molloy, Harry Lee and Pat Daly.*

In 1954 The Offaly Independent reported that Bord na Móna workers were satisfied with the progress being made by their union. Malachy Rosney, Chairman told a meeting of members that a new scheme for "unworkable hours" was being put in place by Bord na Móna. These unworkable hours, from 3rd December 1954 to 21 June 1955 were to be paid at the rate of 1s 9d. per hour.

Throughout the years the general operatives at Boora have been well served by their unions: the F.R.W., the W.U.I. and the I.T.G.W.U. The amalgamation of W.U.I. and the I.T.G.W.U. in 1990 was the emergence of S.I.P.T.U., now the largest union in the group. The current Chairman of the S.I.P.T.U. general workers union is Paudge Bennett. Previous chairmen have included: Malachy Rosney, Joe Daly, Mick Connor (RIP), Mick Troy, Jack Molloy (RIP), Mick Larkin, Pat Daly and Paddy Molloy (RIP).

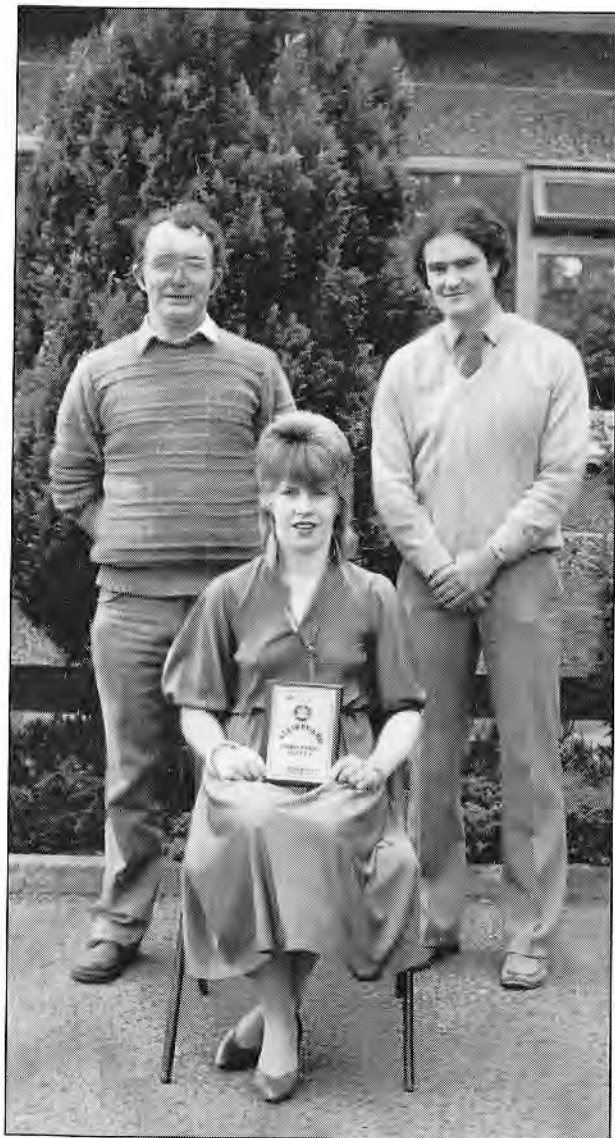


*Paudge Bennett ... Present Chairman of the Boora Branch of S.I.P.T.U.*

In 1976 the Government decided to give workers a voice on the board of semi-state companies. Among the first four elected was Jack Molloy of Boora. Pat Daly replaced Jack in 1985 and continued as a Worker Director until his retirement in 1995.

The majority of craft workers at Boora are now represented by the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (A.E.E.U.). The fore runner of this union was the Amalgamated Engineering Union (A.E.U.) whose first branch was formed in Kilcormac in late 1959, following a strike earlier that year at Boora. Some of the founder members of that union at Boora were Paddy Healy, John Doyle (RIP), Bill Kinsella (RIP), Tom Lesley, Al McKenizy and Eamon Daly.

Their meeting was held in the late Jack McCann's premises and was



*Quiz Time ... Pictured left to right are the Runners-Up of the 1985 All Ireland N.I.S.O. Quiz Competition, Brendan Marsh, Joan Spain and Colm Byrne.*

## Sporting Times

From the early days of “the camps” at Turraun and later Boora, the annual Sportsday was the highlight of the social calendar. From this event competitors were selected to represent their respective works at the Bord na Móna All-Ireland sportsday held in Timahoe. Events included track and field, high jump, long jump, weight throwing, tug-o-war, pillow fighting and sack races. Ambrose Rosney (Ferbane) recalls the Boora team of 1955 being short only two points for the winning place in that years competition. Although they won both the pillow fight and sack race competitions there were no points awarded for either of them, and so they had to settle for second place!



*Boora's Best ... This picture shows the Boora participants of the 1955 Sports Competition, Back Row: left to right: Paddy Fitzpatrick (RIP), Tim Kennedy, S. Dolan, Christy King, Ambrose Rosney, Michael Madden, ??, J. McGill and Bertie Baker. Front Row: Lynch, Lynch, Dolan, Costello, Morrissey and Lynch. Picture courtesy of Ambrose Rosney.*

It has not been possible to identify all of Boora's Olympians! Indeed few records exist regarding our sporting achievements, a situation which hopefully will be rectified in time for our centenary celebrations.

## Gaelic Games

Few counties have had so much success in both hurling and football as Offaly over the past few decades. Since winning their first ever All-Ireland Minor Football title in 1964, with a team captained by Sean Grogan now Chief Executive of Peat Energy Division, Offaly has remained a force to be reckoned with on the G.A.A. field. It is no coincidence that it wasn't until 1960, with Bord na Móna up and running, that Offaly contested their first Senior All-Ireland Football Final. Boora can claim a fair share of the credit.

Club teams also benefited from the existence of Bord na Móna. Walsh Island won their first senior football title since 1943 in 1978 and went on to win six in a row (1978 - 1983), while Ferbane, who had not won the title since 1914, won only their second title in 1971. Ferbane have since won nine senior titles, and inevitably the winning teams have featured many Bord na Móna employees.

With the decision in 1958 that Bord na Móna Works could no longer take part in the "factories league" it was decided to organise an inter works competition. Boora had been beaten in the factory league final and would have remained a strong force but it was deemed that semi-state employees were really not factory workers! The first year of the inter works competition, 1959, produced some outstanding games, with Boora and Derrygreenagh reaching the final.

When we look at some of the names included on both teams it is clear that Boora and Derrygreenagh Works proved a magnet for inter-county players! Boora fielded players of the calibre of Greg Hughes, Patsy Hughes, Johnny Egan, Eamon Fleming, Frank Starken, Seamus Kavanagh (Offaly), Ted Delaney (Laois) and Sean Lenihan (Longford) while Derrygreenagh boasted players such as Paddy McCormack, Jackie Byrne RIP and Tommy Greene (Offaly); Kevin McNamee (Meath) and Dinger Brewer (Westmeath). After a hard fought match played at the Mill Field Portarlington, Boora became the first team to win the Bord na Móna Football Championship. Eamon Fleming (Workshop Foreman at Boora) recalls a great night of celebrations afterwards at Clonsast which was enjoyed by all, including the team management from Boora, Big John Daly (Pullough), Kieran Egan (Ferbane) and Paddy Casey (RIP) Rahan.

The Boora Team for this match was Joe Daly (Kilcormac), Peter Foley (Ferbane), Greg Hughes (Cloghan), Johnny Egan (Doon), Joe Rafferty (Cloghan), Ted Delaney (Laois), Sean Hanniffy (Doon), Frank Starken (Athlone), Patsy Hughes (Cloghan), Dan Ravenhill (Durrow), Seamus Kavanagh (Ferbane), Kay Bell (Ferbane), Vincent Clarke (Cloghan), Sean Lenihan (Longford) and Eamon Fleming (Clara). The competition went from strength to strength and attracted a large following right throughout the midlands. Boora Works again won the All-Ireland in 1968, the same year in which Ballycumber won their first Offaly Senior Football Title.



**Boora Stars ...** The Boora team winners of the 1968 Final. **Back Row: Left to right:** Paddy Casey (RIP), Patsy Reamsbottom, Seamus Buckley, Pat McGarry, Louis Moore, Eamon Fleming, Tom Lucas, Sonny Daly, Peter Moore, Paddy Devery and Eamon Bell. **Front Row:** P.J. Mooney, Joe Daly, Mick O'Rourke, Peter Guinan, Sean Kilroy, Frank Monaghan, J.J. Conroy, Paddy Byrne, Billy Mitchell and J. Hanarberry.

By 1974 Offaly had contested 4 All-Ireland Senior Football Finals, winning 2 and interest in the Bord na Móna championship was increased. In that year's final played in Mullingar, Boora overcame a strong challenge from Mountdillon to win their third title.



*Those were the days ... Martin Kelly, Boora Manager pictured with the youthful Bord na Móna team of 1974 following their All-Ireland victory. **Front Row: Left to right:** Dinnie Wynne, Paddy Cunniffe, Joe Connor, Eamon Dooley, Kieran Claffey. **Middle Row:** Ollie Larkin, Seamus Guinan, Gerry Bell, P.J. Lowry, Frank Monaghan (Capt.), Martin Kelly (Manager) and Kenneth Corcoran. **Back Row:** Tom Doolin, Ollie Minnock, Jimmy Screeney, Gerry Doolan, Pat Nugent, Seamus Barron, Kevin Cassidy, John Seery and Mick Kelly.*

Over the years Mountdillon and Boora had some strong clashes, and none more so than the final in 1976 played at Athlone. When county player and full back Ollie Minnock was sent off ten minutes before half time, the signs were ominous for Boora. But after a "reshuffle" of the team at half time Boora went on to win a famous victory and collect their fourth All-Ireland title. Man of the Match that day was Ambrose Healy (Gallen).

The team that year was Dinny Wynne (Cloghan), John Seery (Lemonaghan), Ollie Minnock (Clara), Joe Lowry (Rahan), M. Delaney Capt. (Ferbane), O. Larkin (Daingean), Mick Kelly (Kilcormac), Frank Monaghan (Rahan), Ambrose Healy (Gallen), Jimmy Screeney (Kilcormac), Eamon Dooley (Ferbane), Gerry Doolin (Ballycumber), M. O'Shea, Paudge Bennett (Kilcormac) and Kevin Cassidy

(Kilcormac). Chief supporter was the late Bill Coughlan RIP (Cloghan) and the game is still remembered for robust verbal exchanges - on and off the pitch.

Despite qualifying for a number of finals it was not until 1987 that Boora took another title. The winning team that year is pictured below.



***Back Row: L to R:** Kevin Healy, Jimmy Kidney, Michael Guinan, John Rigney, Kevin Kiehy, Paddy Buckley, John O'Brien, Fintan Kelly, Paschal Healy, John Salmon, Tommy Cannon. **Front Row:** Michael Kenny, Séamóg Buckley, Kevin O'Rourke, Tommy Cushin, Eamon Doyle, Sean Monaghan, Sean Buckley, Joe Buckley, Johnny Farrell, Seamus Lynam, Paul Monaghan.*

With the rationalisation programme in the late eighties, together with an ageing workforce, the end of this great competition was inevitable. Throughout the years many friendships were made, there were some great social occasions also, and many fond memories linger. When Offaly won their first All-Ireland Senior Hurling Title in 1981, a keen interest developed in the game throughout the county. Workers from Boora and Derrinlough organised a tournament, which for a few years produced some fine games, but sadly this too suffered the same fate as the football competition. Perhaps the real significance of Bord na Móna in the development of gaelic games lies in the fact that the company, directly and indirectly, provided employment in Co. Offaly, thereby preventing widescale emigration and the loss of talented sportsmen.

## Soccer

**B**oora boasts a soccer team with a history dating back to 1973. Originally the team was called Burach/Kilcormac and emerged to take part in the Paddy Stanley Memorial Cup in 1973. The team won the inaugural competition and were also runners-up in the Clara Town League in that year. The team members were: C. Todd, P. Byrne, A. Flynn, J. Troy, J. Screeney, J. Eivers, J. Cooney, D. Keane, C. Hand, D. Hogan, R. Hogan, M. Kelly and N. Byrne.

The Boora soccer team participated in a number of local tournaments over the years with varied success. The late Joe Quinn (Boora Works) organised an inter-works competition in 1988. Boora won this competition on two occasions 1991 and 1992. In recognition of Joe's outstanding work in promoting soccer it was decided to name the cup in his honour. Joe has the distinction of seeing a cup named in his honour presented in his lifetime. Despite his untimely death his work for the sport is not forgotten and his memory is perpetuated in the tournament. The cup was won by Blackwater in 1996 having beaten a spirited Boora team.



*Boora's Finest ... Pictured above the Boora Soccer Team Winners in 1991 of the inter-works competition. **Back Row: Left to right:** Joe Daly, Jimmy Kidney, Kevin Healy, Michael Guinan, Johnny Sammon, Kevin Brazil, Gerry Johnson, John McNiff and the late Joe Quinn. **Front Row:** Paul Riordan, Michael Coughlan, Peter Fuchs, Jimmy Screeney, David O'Brien and Tony Flynn.*



*Winner All Right ... Tony Flynn Captain receives the Joe Quinn Cup from Brendan Walsh after beating Blackwater in the 1992 Final.*



## Not All Work

**B**oora has always been noted for the very special spirit of friendship which prevails among the workforce. Retirements were traditionally marked with collections and presentation nights, always eventful occasions. On 23rd March 1982 Boora/Lemonaghan Social Club was set up at a meeting in Cliffords, High St., Tullamore, chaired by Peter Moore. The following officers were elected Chairman: Sean Horan (RIP); Vice Chairman: Noel McIntyre; Secretary: Teresa O'Sullivan; Joint Treasurers: Joe Daly and Peter Moore.

A retirement fund was established. Initially members paid £5 per year but today members pay 20p per week.

The Social Clubs annual dinner was always a memorable evening. All staff have memories of the dances which invariably featured retirement presentations.



**A Boora Retirement:** 1977 marked the retirement of Bill Robinson (RIP) Belmont. Pictured at the retirement function in his honour are: **Seated left to right:** Jack Molloy (RIP), Mike Pardy (RIP), John Troy (RIP), Bill Robinson (RIP), Mrs. Bill Robinson (RIP), J. Sweeney, Bill Porter (RIP) and Tony Butler. **Standing:** Mrs. J. Sweeney, Paddy Monaghan, Vincent Tooher, Mike Doyle (RIP), Noel McIntyre, Johnny Doorley, Mickey Carroll (RIP), Johnny Mitchell, Paddy Horan (RIP), Sean Horan (RIP), Kieran Flynn, Mrs. S. Horan, Paddy Mannion, Roddy Carroll, Tom Griffin (RIP), Johnny Carroll, Tom Ryan, M. O'Meara, Mrs. M. O'Meara, Brian Doorley and Dinnie Rosney (RIP).



The late 80s saw a large number of retirements, placing huge pressure on the fund. Fashions change, and with the decline in the popularity of dinner dances, the Boora dance was abandoned. The retirement fund remains, and departing members now receive a presentation at a less formal event.

**Going Strong ...** Ned Claffey (Belmont) who retired on the Silver Jubilee of Bord na Móna in 1971 and who celebrated his 90th Birthday in May 1996.



**Party Time ...** Eamon Fleming (Left) with Liam Shanahan and Margaret Fleming at the 1963 Boora Dinner Dance held in the Prince of Wales, Athlone.



*Pictured above are the present Social Club Committee: Standing left to right: Jim Corcoran, Noel McIntyre and Peter McDonald. Seated: Ciaran Corcoran, Rita Bennett, Joe Daly and Patsy Guinan. Missing from photograph are Kevin O'Rourke and Sean Dunne.*



Boora lies in the heart of a region rich in music and culture. Many Bord na Móna workers have distinguished themselves in the arts, notably in dance and music, and indeed many current staff carry on the tradition with local bands.

*The Voice Squad ... Two of Offaly's best known traditional singers have Boora connections. Peter (P) Nolan, Banagher is nationally recognised as a ballad singer of exceptional talent and is a former All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil winner. Peter retired as a workshop foreman from Boora in 1995. Rita Bennett, wages clerk at Boora, has a long association with C.C.E.*



*The above picture was taken in the Marian Hall, Birr in the late 60s and features members of the Banagher Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann branch who won the County Scoraiocht competition. Significantly only Teresa Hough, Joe Cashin, Frank Cassidy and Tom Flynn were not employed at Boora. Pictured are **Front Row: Left to right: Teresa Hough, Mickey Doorley, Syl Donlon (RIP), Joe Cashin and Tom Nolan. Middle Row: Frank Cassidy, Seamus Egan and Paddy (Ace) O'Brien. Back Row: Dan Coughlan and Tom Flynn.** (Picture courtesy Rita Bennett).*

## Booravision 1988

While sport has been the dominant communal past-time Boora has also gained a reputation in other fields. Forget Riverdance at the Point, in Boora they still talk about Buckley at the Blueball. Booravision was born, like the best ideas, out of a chance discussion during lunchtime and finalised over countless pints. Among those who organised the event down the years were Timmy Molloy, Seamus Barron, Pat Coyne, Seamus Gorman, Don O'Boyle, Jack Mooney, Peter Bracken, Declan Egan, Sean Dunne, Con Stokes and Rita Bennett. The first talent competition was held in 1986 in the Blueball and was won by Seamus (McGlynn) Buckley, Oughter with his heart tugging rendition of the Veil of White Lace. Seamus's son Seam Óg later went on to capture the Booravision crown. Other winners have included: Joe Coughlan, Dinnie Brickland, John Joe Rosney, Jim Wynne and Joe Joe Bracken. Like the Eurovision, Booravision goes on tour and has been held in The Thatch (Rahan), Dooley's (Kilcormac), Gracelands (Kilcormac) and The Blueball.



*Star Time ... Séamóg Buckley, King of Booravision 1988 singing Fiddlers Green.*

This competition has not been held for the past couple of years, but it is hoped to revive it in the latter part of 1997.

## Back to the Future

Those involved in the mechanical production of peat in Bord na Móna frequently cursed bog woods. For machine drivers bog wood had only a nuisance value capable of causing considerable damage to machinery. Today the story is different, and bog wood is now recognised for its artistic and commercial value.

The antiseptic action of the bog causes the texture of the woods, which have been buried for over 5,000 years, to undergo a unique transformation. The oak becomes a fine black self-lubricating wood, the yew, a rich auburn, and the pine takes on a golden hue. Longford Sculptor Michael Casey, has for a long time used bogwoods in his work. Since 1990 Michael has been involved in Celtic Roots, a joint venture with Bord na Móna based at the former Lemonaghan Works.

Using oak and yew taken from the bog, Michael and the young artists, craft masterpieces inspired by nature. Celtic Roots creations have been presented to a number of distinguished visitors to this country including President Bill Clinton, Yasser Arafat and President Nelson Mandela. Other proud owners of bog oak include the Presidents and Prime Ministers of Germany, Sweden, France and Malaysia. President Mary Robinson and former Taoiseach Albert Reynolds are among the most enthusiastic supporters of the Celtic Roots venture and have brought bog oak and bog yew to many corners of the world.

Helen Conneely, General Manager, is proud of the success of Celtic Roots. Since 1996 the Celtic Roots Gallery at Parliament Street, Dublin, has attracted a large number of visitors and is fast becoming a popular artistic showpiece in the capital.

The union of Michael Casey and Bord na Móna might be described as a marriage of convenience, Bord na Móna supplies the necessary raw materials for Michael Casey and his young artists. Significantly Celtic Roots has followed in the tradition of Bord na Móna, and talented local sculptors have learned their craft at Lemonaghan, including Liam Clancy, Stephen Moore, Eugene Egan, Andrew Carroll, Damien Foley, Darlene Delaney and Anthony Seery.

The evolution of Celtic Roots forms part of a diversification programme by Bord na Móna. However Celtic Roots follow in a long tradition.

Records show that bogwood has been used in Ireland for many centuries. Bogwoods were an essential resource for the tenant farmer, and for the landless and near landless, since the landlord retained to himself and his household exclusively the felling and use of 'standing timber'. And as the forests were stripped and sold, the bogs partly provided an answer to the question: cad a dheanfaimid feasta gan adhmaid? For bogwoods could, when properly dried and seasoned provide an excellent fuel. At Christmas, bloc mor na Nollaig, the Yule log, was commonly of giuis or bog fir. The Saor Adhmaid could fashion a roof of bog-timber, or a chair, or a table, or a loom or a boat. Churns and milk-pails and butterboards were all made of bogwood, as were ropes for various purposes ... on the farm, in the boatyard, even for thatching.

Domestic lighting, and lights for fishing (legal and otherwise) were improvised from bogwood torches and 'candles' - geatairi giuise. As to the illumination provided by bogwood tapers, the journal, Bealoideas, records a Kerrywoman reading a whole series of Dickens' novels by their light!

For some reason as yet unexplained, bogwood can be divined in the morning by probing in a patch where dew has not settled or has cleared. Once located by an iron bior or spit, it is lifted with careful skill.

What might be called the industrialisation of bogwood dates from the early nineteenth century. It flourished in Victorian times, after which it went into a slow decline and was almost non-existent by the Second World War. In its heyday those engaged in the industry produced a vast array of work - furniture, sanctuary pieces, domestic bric-a-brac and a wide range of items of personal adornment, including brooches, bracelets and other forms of jewellery. (Indeed several emigrant Jewish jewellers worked in bogwood).

Many of the 'Irish' artefacts were either of the wolfhound/Round Tower variety, or else celebrated a drunken Paddy (with shillelagh and pig), but there were also models of castles and abbeys, 'Tara' brooches and - one very popular item - the Brian Boru Harp.

Celtic Roots it may be said, in a real sense belongs to a great artistic tradition. Locally the most striking example of Celtic Roots work may be seen at the Roman Catholic Church at Pullough. Last year a specially commissioned bog oak chalice from Celtic Roots was used by Pope John Paul II at the Mass marking the beatification of Edmund Ignatius Rice.



*Pictured above is Brother Joseph Bell with Pope John Paul II at the celebration in Rome in 1996 of the beatification of Edmund Ignatius Rice. Bro. Joseph, who is Secretary General of the Presentation Christian Brothers, is a brother of Eamon Bell.*

# Bring It All Back Home

By Tom Egan

**T**oday the Turraun Bog area is once again restored to nature and wildlife. A vast area from which peat has been harvested for over a century is now a wildlife reserve, comprising of wetlands and naturally recolonised dry land areas. It is a very important and unique site for birds, animals, plants and fish.

This area totals close to 400 acres and comprises of over 150 acres of wetlands, plus a fifteen acre fishing lake and over 200 acres of lands which are naturally recolonizing into mosaic type patterns of woodlands, reedbeds, open wild grasslands, heather areas, and rush and moss covered lands. In fact one could say that the landscape of the area has been returned to a similar state as left after the Ice Age some 8,000 years ago.

The drainage systems have been closed off thus allowing the lower land areas to flood to an average of 3 feet of water. Growth had occurred on this area for a number of years before flooding, and so there is a lot of willow growing in the water. It provides tremendous cover for ducks especially, and hundreds of mallards, wigeon, teal and other duck species are found there. It is also a very popular roosting area for whooper and bewick swans in winter nights and over 300 of these swans can be seen there. The area is preserved in co-operation with the local Pullough gun club and to date over 100 species of birds have been recorded on the site. A bird hide has been erected near to the old Pullough tip head and from here one can view the birds on the water. It is very appropriate that this area is again such an important site for birds.

Some years ago Dr. David Bellamy in his book "The Wild Boglands - Bellamy's Ireland" described walking across the area after a frosty January night thus: "across the steaming bog we saw a sight of great beauty and rarity - skein upon skein of Greenland White Fronted Geese rose up from the bog where they had spent the night in safety and made their way down to the callows to graze". Bellamy also described the bog as "swelling hummocks of bog moss, brown deep red, ochre, pink, applique with the flowers of cranberry and crowned with cross leaved heath and ling. Separating the hummocks were damper lawns of green,

orange and gold punctuated by tufts of bog cotton and asphodel. The insect traps of the sundews crowded around pools that were almost choked with the yellow of feathering bog moss".

This habitat may be gone from Turraun but most significantly Turraun dryland areas are now once again beautiful habitats where trees, wild grasses, wild flowers, heathers and mosses and even the sundew are growing. During the summer months the area is aglow with colourful flowers and alive with the sound of songbirds. There are some of the most impressive displays of orchids to be found there including the very rare bee orchid and butterfly orchid.

There are vast meadows of yellow and purple flowers through which one can see the hare standing curiously, or a kestrel swooping over in search of its prey. The area is also very rich in insect life and Wayne Trodd, who has been studying them there, has the distinction of recording a particular type of midge for the first time in Ireland. Walkways have been laid through the site for anyone who wishes to stroll there. These pass through the birch and willow woodlands with abundance of wild raspberry and blackberry and they take you to Cocta Hill which is the highest point of the area. From here one can get a panoramic view of Turraun and all the surrounding countryside from the Slieve Bloom to Cloghan Hill and from Corr Hill outside Ferbane to the Hill of Bellair. From here also one can stroll back alongside the acres of high reedbeds and hear the willow warblers and skylarks in song and even catch sight of a clutch of pheasants. These walkways go from the old Turraun tiphead to Cocta Hill by three different routes, and the return trip will take a casual walker over an hour to complete at least.

Alternatively one can put ones fishing rod in the car and head for the lagoon area, which is approximately 15 acres in size and is stocked with coarse fish such as tench and rudd. These waters contain large areas of reedbeds growing in the lagoon and again this is a most peaceful and absorbing way to relax.

But perhaps the most beautiful sight at Turraun is at dusk on a frosty November evening when the noisy whooper swans fly into the area and compete with the ever present mutes. This is followed by the flights of mallard, wigeon and teal in their evening flight from the site. After a time all the wildlife will settle, and you will be left with the peacefulness of Turraun in your ears.

Or alternatively on a July evening you can take a leisurely stroll and catch sight of a butterfly or dragonfly landing on an open flower and frame it to perfection with your camera skills. Turraun has returned to beauty and peace by the Hand of Nature. Long may you enjoy it.



*The Jubilee Team . . . Pictured above are the Boora staff members of 1996. Back Row: L to R: Pat Craven, Con Stokes, Aidan O'Hora, Tom Egan, Eamon Dooley, Sean Dunne, Liam Fox, John McNiff, Christy Mahon, Seamus Guinan, Cormac Carroll, Patsy Guinan and Stephen Ryan. Front Row: Bernie Quigley, Noel McIntyre, Eamon Fleming, Paul Riordan, Jimmy Byrne, Tom Feighery, Eamon Bell and Rita Bennett.*

## Managers at the Helm



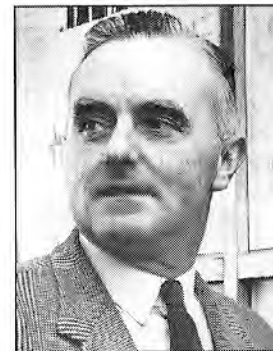
*Frank Murphy 1946-1947*



*Dermot Power 1947-1949*



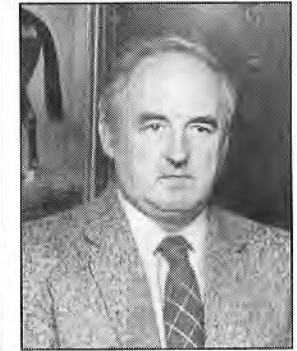
*Louis Rhatigan 1949-1954*



*Maurice Keane 1954-1972*



*Martin Kelly 1972-1983*



*Michael Maher 1983-1986*



*Brendan Walsh 1986-1991*



*Paul Riordan 1991-Present*

# Anthems of the Bog

Over the years many songs, rhymes and poems have been written in relation to Turraun and Boora. The following are a selection of some of those:

## *The Boora Railway Line*

*Written in 1950 by Michael Dolan, Cloghan, now living in London and sung to the air of "Hello Patsy Fagan".*

I have heard of good jobs going on, in England and in Wales.  
But we have one that's not so bad, its laying down the rails.  
The job is not so faulty, if the weather it keeps fine.  
But most of all the pay is small on the Boora Railway Line.

George Anderson is ganger, Pat Mullery make the teas.  
Jim Ryan is loco driver, while Jim Kelly oversees.  
Mike Egan puts the bridges down, a job he is doing fine.  
And John Joe Wynne, he straightens out the Boora Railway Line.

The Phelans, Keegan, Devery and a Lynch lad from the Huts.  
They've got long handled spanners for to tighten up the nuts.  
There's Charley Slater, and Jimmy Yeats they have no easy time.  
They are puttin' on the fish plates, on the Boora Railway Line.

There are two more yet, I can't forget, or it would be a loss.  
John Cahill from Mountbolus and John Egan from The Cross.  
It would be unfair to leave them out, since they are pals of mine.  
And all of us are working on the Boora Railway Line.

When the day is over, it's then we do relax,  
while Mullery gathers up the tools,  
The spanners, spades and hacks.  
He loads them on the Bogie, as the moon begins to shine.  
And the loco takes us homewards, down the Boora Railway Line.

## The Cast:

John Doyle	Ferbane
George Anderson	Gallen, Ferbane
Pat Mullery	Ferbane
Jim Kelly	Kilcormac
Mike Egan (Fitter)	Kilcormac and Boora
John Joe Wynne	Ferbane
Phelan's, Paddy & Tony	Doon
Eamon Keegan	Ballylin
Devery	Ferbane
Lynch	Kerry
Charley Slater	Gallen
Jimmy Yeats	Kilcormac
John Cahill	Mountbolus
John Egan	Lumcloon Cross
Jim Ryan (RIP)	Cloghan

## *Bord na Móna Pension Scheme*

*Written in 1963 by the late Sean "The Poet" Horan to mark the inauguration of the Pension Scheme.*

It was on a harvest morning as the sun shone brightly down,  
when 3 young youths going to their work, assembled at Stonestown.  
We ran into the bog as we thought that we were late,  
but as usual when we got there, it was just gone 5 to 8.

When we took up our shovels our work for to begin,  
Says Rigney to Young Kelly "I see someone coming in".  
"Keep going boys, says Porter "Its Flaherty I'd say,  
And ye know he done his living best to catch us yesterday".

"I have good news for all of ye" he said when he did arrive,  
A Pension Scheme for every man when he comes to 65.  
So he handed around these envelopes and the boys sat side by side.  
And when Jack Madden (RIP) saw the print he said you'd want McBride.

Then "Ireland's Own" stepped forward and said "Now Gentlemen",  
It'll only suit the people here with the pencil and the pen.  
If they dock the 3/6p more our cheques they will be small,  
It will keep us out of "Roseland" and many another hall.

Well I intend to join it says the man they call the Rig,  
it's only 3/6p a week and that is not too big".  
Sure anything can happen that a man could lose his life,  
When I am gone, the Pension Scheme will stand up to my wife.  
The Quaker disagreed with them and said "it's going too far",  
"Ye know I'm going to dances and paying for a car.

Zukeoff he was standing there he hadn't much to say,  
It's alright when we have the rate, around the 5th May.  
Says Porter to Young Kelly, and we all did then agree,  
There's smarter men in Pembroke St. that either you or me.

Now this storm hit the Midlands and left a trail of woe,  
And the Gangers then decided that the men would have to go.  
But when "Debbie" passed through Noggus she blew with all her might,  
And changed the situation before the close of night.

"Debbie" turned up every stockpile and filled up every drain,  
I'm sure you'd find some milled peat upon the Hill of Slane.  
The men were reinstated and called back to the fold,  
To tidy up and baton down the remainder of the gold.

The job it is a good one, it started with the sod,  
And we have the brains behind it, we call him Mr. Todd.  
And by experimenting they got it to Milled Peat,  
To get a job for those big knobs, above in Pembroke St.

There's more I'd like to mention but I haven't got the time,  
I hope that you are satisfied I have my song and rhyme.  
I see our ganger coming and our Foreman Michael Doyle,  
Our plans they maybe altered and we shifted from this pile.

Sure since the time of Cromwell, our people they did roam,  
But there's houses in Kilcormac, to keep our youths at home.  
So before you sign for this pension, make sure of how you stand,  
Because you could be drawing your pension in some far off distant land.

**Note:** The following are some of those referred to in the song:

Young Kelly	Vincent Kelly, Belmont
Porter	Bill Porter (RIP), Birr
Jack Madden	Banagher
Ireland's Own	Johnny Coughlan (RIP), Gallen
Flaherty	Jim Flaherty, Kilcormac
Quaker	Paddy Odlum, Banagher
Zukeoff	Martin Colgan, Banagher
The Rig	Hubert Rigney, Banagher

### *The Turf Man from Turraun*

*By the late Patsy Molloy, Turraun. Sung to the air of the Turfman from Ardee, this song is one of the best known Bord na Móna songs and has featured on RTE Radio 1.*

I am one Pat Molloy, sure in Turraun I do dwell.  
I am a jolly turf man the truth to you I'll tell.  
I labour hard the whole day long from early morning till dawn,  
To keep the home fires burning all over Clashawaun.  
My turf is of the very best its cut in early spring,  
I guarantee what you get from me will make the kettle sing.

In grate or range it won't make strange, it kindles like a boy,  
And when you're fire is burning bright you'll pray for Pat Molloy.  
When you put on a sod or two you'll hear the chimney roar,  
My turf is burned in every house from Birr to Tullamore.

To cope with all those orders I do the best I can,  
and if you think of rising steam remember I'm your Man,  
From Dublin down to Galway town I drive my little bus,



5 tons of turf she has on deck without the slightest fuss,  
And in every town as I pass by the children leap with joy,  
Saying ma here's the turf man, the famous Pat Molloy.

My bus is of the latest type, she travels very free,  
And if you live across the hill its all the same to me.  
She reaches top without a stop, she never seems to yawn.  
I call her Cinderella, the pride of sweet Turraun.  
So now leave in your order before the frost and snow,  
And if you live in kingdom come I'm only proud to go.  
I'll fill your shed up to head beside your house and lawn,  
For I'm the famous Pat Molloy, the turf man from Turraun.

### *The Sinking of the 163*

*Composed by Paddy Murray (RIP), Clareen and sung to air of The Northern Lights.*

Those harvest lights have seen queer sights  
But the queerest they ever did see  
was the night of the fog on Drinagh Bog  
When I sank the 163.

How she sank to the beam and did not seem  
to be able to move or stir  
Oh! Lord said I with a murmuring sigh  
I wonder where is Sir.

Well the bog was bad and I felt quite mad  
But I swore I would not give in  
I set off on foot for the yellow hut  
To report the dreadful thing.

Now Sir sat there in the gas lamp glare  
With a frown you near could smell  
When I stepped in with an innocent grin  
My story for to tell.

Oh! Dear said he as he looked at me  
He spoke with a growl and groan  
That best thing that, you now can do  
is contact young Malone.

So on I went, though my knees were bent  
And my belly was feeling slack  
Down to the bend there at the end  
Of the well known Drinagh track.

Well I felt so low I did not know  
What I would do or say  
When a glimmer of light shone through the night  
Now here comes the N.T.K.

I stopped him on the headland  
I told him of my plight  
Said he it is not the daytime  
It is the dead of night.

Now without a rope there is no hope  
On that we both agree  
So like a lark he headed for Park  
Feck you and the 163.

The two people referred to by Paddy in his song are:  
Sir Tommy Moody Former Supervisor (Cloghan)  
Young Malone Tony Malone (Banagher)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

The following are the first 100 workers employed by Bord na Móna at Boora Works.

Anderson	George	08/03/46
Baker	Albert	22/10/46
Bolger	Peter	21/08/46
Bracken	Peter	06/09/46
Brophy	William	21/06/46
Buckley	John	26/08/46
Buckley	Peter	26/08/46
Burke	Patrick	09/12/46
Campbell	James	23/08/46
Carroll	Patrick	08/03/46
Carroll	John	12/11/46
Carroll	Patrick	09/12/46
Cassidy	John	20/09/46
Claffey	Brendan	01/12/46
Coffey	Patrick	13/12/46
Cooper	Michael	05/10/46
Coughlan	James	21/06/46
Coughlan	John	21/06/46
Coughlan	Michael	07/08/46
Coughlan	James	16/08/46
Coughlan	Dan	05/10/46
Coyne	Christopher	13/08/46
Cross	Thomas	09/12/46
Crowe	William	04/11/46
Daly	Vincent	18/10/46
Daly	Thomas	14/12/46
Deasy	John	22/10/46
Delaney	William	30/08/46
Delaney	Jas.	22/11/46

Dempsey	William	02/12/46
Dolan	Michael	26/11/46
Dolan	Denis	31/12/46
Dooley	John Joe	08/03/46
Dooley	Joseph	21/10/46
Doolin	Gerard	25/03/46
Doyle	James	29/11/46
Dunican	Thomas	26/08/46
Dunican	John	27/08/46
Egan	John	19/08/46
Egan	Kieran	26/08/46
Egan	John	18/10/46
Feehan	Joe	09/10/46
Flaherty	Kieran	12/03/46
Flattery	Jas.	12/11/46
Flattery	Edward	27/11/46
Foster	Robert	12/03/46
Gloster	Michael	04/12/46
Guinan	Thomas	13/09/46
Guinan	John	05/11/46
Hannon	John	09/09/46
Heffernan	Christopher	16/08/46
Heffernan	Jos.	09/12/46
Hickey	John	21/10/46
Kelly	Jas.	30/12/46
Kidney	Jas	08/11/46
Loonam	Matthew	02/08/46
Loonam	Frank	06/09/46
Loonam	Joseph	07/09/46
Loonam	John	22/11/46
Lynam	Michael	23/08/46
Lynch	Michael	09/04/46
Mangan	Humphrey	17/12/46
McCabe	Patrick	30/08/46
McIntyre	Thomas	22/07/46
McMahon	Tim	21/10/46
Molloy	Thomas	16/09/46

Molloy	John	05/10/46
Molloy	Thomas	14/10/46
Molloy	Thomas	30/10/46
Monaghan	Thomas	22/10/46
Monaghan	Anthony	02/11/46
Moynihan	Michael	01/05/46
Murphy	Thomas	01/05/46
Murphy	John	11/10/46
Murray	David	30/08/46
Murray	Thomas	30/08/46
Murray	Edward	09/10/46
Murray	Thomas	17/12/46
Neary	Patk	27/09/46
O'Connor	Jas	13/03/46
O'Donnell	Park.	02/11/46
Peavoy	Jas	13/08/46
Rosney	Martin	23/08/46
Rosney	Edward	14/10/46
Rosney	Kieran	18/10/46
Shanley	John	02/11/46
Shaughnessy	Patk.	02/08/46
Tierney	Joseph	28/08/46
Tierney	Patk.	28/08/46
Tierney	John	30/10/46
Toran	Michael	09/12/46
Troy	Michael	01/04/46
Troy	John	24/10/46
Walsh	Patk.	01/04/46
Walsh	Jas	28/10/46
Wynne	John	23/08/46
Wynne	James	06/09/46
Wynne	Patrick	20/09/46
Wynne	Michael	22/11/46
Yeates	William	26/06/46

## Appendix 2

The following is the official record of permanent and seasonal workers employed at Boora for the 1996 Production Season.

### Permanent Employees

Seamus Barron, Kilcormac  
Eamon Bell, Cloghan  
Rita Bennett, Cloghan  
Paudge Bennett, Kilcormac  
Charlie Bergin, Clareen  
Seamus Black, Daingean  
Joe Bracken, Blueball  
Hugh Bracken, Crinkle  
Noel Bracken, Pullough  
Kevin Brazil, Ferbane  
Donie Brewer, Tullamore  
Barney Buckley, Kilcormac  
John Buckley, Pullough  
Jimmy Byrne, Kilcormac  
Pat Cahill, Tullamore  
Seamus Cahill, Sharavogue  
Brian Callaghan, Clonaslee  
Cormac Carroll, Kilcormac  
Gerry Carroll, Rahan  
Michael Carroll, Tullamore  
Paddy Carthy, Kilcormac  
Jim Cassidy, Ferbane  
Kevin Cassidy, Kilcormac  
Kieran Claffey, Belmont  
David Clancy, Clononey  
John Colfer, Ballycumber  
Mick Connolly, Rathangan  
Patrick Conroy, Clonaslee  
Sean Convey, Tullamore  
Jim Corcoran, Ballycumber

Kieran Corcoran, Lemonaghan  
Brian Corcoran, Lemonaghan  
Marty Coughlan, Leamore  
Michael Coughlan, Belmont  
Patrick Coughlan, Clareen  
Eamon Coughlan, Ferbane  
Pat Coyne, Kilcormac  
Joe Craven, Kilcormac  
Pat Craven, Kilcormac  
Ger Craven, Kilcormac  
Mick Culleton, Clonaslee  
Seamus Culleton, Kilcormac  
Sinéad C. Lowry, Kilcormac  
John Cummins, Killeigh  
Jimmy Cummins, Mountbolus  
Tommy Cushen, Clara  
Mick Daly, Ballycumber  
Joe Daly, Kilcormac  
Roger Deegan, Cadamstown  
Joe Deegan, Kilcormac  
Mick Delaney, Ferbane  
Matt Delaney, Kilcormac  
Denis Delaney, Kilcormac  
Patrick Devery, Ballinahown  
John Devery, Banagher  
P.J. Devery, Cloghan  
John Devery, Ferbane  
Frank Devery, Galway  
Patsy Digan, Kilcormac  
Paul Dolan, Moate  
Eamon Dooley, Ferbane  
Ger Duffy, Ballinahown

Joe Duffy, Ferbane  
Monaghan Dunican, Ferbane  
Sean Dunne, Clara  
Frank Dunne, Roscore  
John Egan, Ballycumber  
Tony Egan, Ferbane  
Tom Egan, Ferbane  
Joe Egan, Ferbane  
Joe Fahy, Rahan  
Johnny Farrell, Castledaly  
Pat Feery, Clonaslee  
Tom Feighery, Kilcormac  
Tommy Flaherty, Kilcormac  
Eamon Fleming, Clara  
Roy Fletcher, Ferbane  
Patrick Flynn, Clara  
Yvonne Flynn, Cloghan  
Noel Flynn, Kilcormac  
Tony Flynn, Tullamore  
Liam Fox, Kilcormac  
Con Gath, Fivealley  
John Gilligan, Cloghan  
Seamus Gorman, Blueball  
Kenneth Gorman, Blueball  
Michael Greene, Killeigh  
Patsy Guinan, Ballycumber  
Michael Guinan, Ballycumber  
Peter Guinan, Lemonaghan  
Seamus Guinan, Sharavogue  
Kevin Harté, Lawrencetown  
Kevin Healy, Belmont  
Kevin Henson, Ballycumber  
Keith Henson, Ballycumber  
Mick Hogan, Birr  
Brendan Hogan, Clara  
Sean Horan, Birr  
Patsy Hughes, Tullamore

John Hyland, Tullamore  
John Joe Carroll, Clonaslee  
Gerry Johnson, Horseleap  
Mick Kavanagh, Ferbane  
John Kavanagh, Ferbane  
Mick Kavanagh, Kilcormac  
Sean Kelly, Cloghan  
John Kelly, Ferbane  
Tom Kelly, Killeigh  
Peter Kelly, Cloghan  
Peter Kelly, Ferbane  
Francis Kelly, Pullough  
Peter Kenna, Blueball  
Noel Kenna, Ferbane  
Jimmy Kenna, Leabeg  
Jim Kenny, Blueball  
Gerard Kenny, Ferbane  
Eddie Killian, Kilcormac  
Vincent Kilmartin, Attinkee  
Leo Kirwan, Rahan  
Pat Lambe, Roscore  
Brian Leonard, Kilcormac  
Val Looby, Rahan  
Patsy Lynch, Kilcormac  
Liam Madden, Ferbane  
Michael Mahon, Blueball  
Christy Mahon, Tullamore  
Tom Malone, Banagher  
Tony Malone, Banagher  
Ned Martin, Killeigh  
Noel McCann, Clonaslee  
Peter McDonald, Tullamore  
John McGovern, Ferbane  
John McGovern, Ferbane  
Noel McIntyre, Ferbane  
John McNiff, Tullamore  
Mick Melia, Rathangan

Brendan Minnock, Ballycumber  
Billy Mitchell, Kilcormac  
Tommy Molloy, Ferbane  
John Monaghan, Screggan  
Patrick Monaghan, Rahan  
Kevin Mooney, Mountbolus  
Eamon Mooney, Mountbolus  
Rody Moore, Ferbane  
Joe Murphy, Kilcormac  
P.J. Murphy, Kilcormac  
Jim Murray, Ballycumber  
Patrick Murray, Kilcormac  
Martin Murray, Kilcormac  
Edward Nolan, Birr  
Sean Nolan, Cadamstown  
Peter Nolan, Kilcormac  
Pat Norton, Blueball  
Frank Nugent, Ferbane  
Don O'Boyle, Kilcormac  
John O'Brien, Kilcormac  
Michael O'Brien, Rahan  
Peter O'Connor, Cloghan  
Aidan O'Hora, Killeigh  
Donie O'Meara, Kilcormac  
Benny O'Meara, Rahan  
Jim O'Meara, Screggan  
Kevin O'Rourke, Clara  
Bernie Quigley, Cloghan  
Patsy Reamsbottom, Kilcormac  
Nigel Reamsbottom, Kilcormac  
Michael Rigney, Ballycumber  
Larry Rigney, Clonaslee  
Seamus Rigney, Clonaslee  
Paddy Rigney, Doon  
Tom Rigney, Lemonaghan  
Paul Riordan, Tullamore  
Kieran Rohan, Ferbane

Kieran Rosney, Ballycumber  
Frank Rosney, Blueball  
Denis Rosney, Blueball  
Michael Rosney, Blueball  
Lar Rosney, Kilcormac  
Jack Rosney, Kilcormac  
James Rosney, Kilcormac  
Eamon Rosney, Leamore  
Denis Rosney, Pullough  
Ambrose Rosney, Ferbane  
Seamus Rourke, Belmont  
Mick Ryan, Birr  
Paddy Ryan, Blueball  
Stephen Ryan, Blueball,  
Paudge Ryan, Cloghan  
Mick Saddler, Kilcormac  
Paddy Screeney, Kilcormac  
Jimmy Screeney, Kilcormac  
Pat Scully, Clareen  
John Seery, Lemonaghan  
Liam Shanahan, Blueball  
Johnny Spollen, Ferbane  
Con Stokes, Birr  
Tommy Stones, Ballycumber  
Matt Talbot, Kilcormac  
Rose Talbot, Kilcormac  
Pat Tierney, Mucklagh  
Mick Troy, Kilcormac  
Patsy Wynne, Ferbane  
Joe Young, Clonaslee

### Seasonal Workers

Joe Anderson, Ferbane  
Richard Bennett, Fivéalley  
Mick Bennett, Kilcormac  
Patrick Bracken, Screggan  
Jim Brazil, Ferbane  
P.J. Birmingham, Lemonaghan  
J.J. Buckley, Rahan  
Albie Carroll, Ferbane  
Joe Clancy, Belmont  
William Cleary, Birr  
John Cleary, Kilcormac  
Mick Collins, Pullough  
James Coughlan, Ferbane  
Joe Coughlan, Kilcormac  
John Deane, Birr  
John Deegan, Ballycumber  
Ronnie Deegan, Kilcormac  
Kieran Delaney, Pullough  
Christy Delaney, Pullough  
Paddy Devery, Ferbane  
Tom Doolan, Rahan  
John Doyle, Lemonaghan  
Sean Duincan, Kilcormac  
Joe Dunne, Clonaslee  
Noel Dunne, Blueball  
P.V. Dunne, Clonaslee  
Sean Egan, Ferbane  
Declan Egan, Ballinahown  
Kieran Egan, Ferbane  
Joe Flaherty, Cloghan  
John Flynn, Banagher  
Mick Flynn, Clonaslee  
Brian Gilligan, Ferbane  
Peter Guinan, Lemonaghan  
Patrick Guinan, Lemonaghan

James Guinan, Rahan  
Eugene Gunning, Cloghan  
James Halligan, Clonfanlough  
Willie Holmes, Ferbane  
Aidan Hynes, Birr  
Patrick Keegan, Lemonaghan  
Paddy Keenaghan, Cloghan  
Fintan Kelly, Killeigh  
Ger Kenna, Pullough  
Frank Kenna, Leabeg  
John Joe Kenny, Leamore  
Philip Kenny, Ferbane  
Jimmy Kidney, Clara  
James Killane, Moun Temple  
Mick Killian, Ferbane  
Lar Lally, Cloghan  
Mick Lambe, Mountbolus  
Mick Leahy, Kinnitty  
Liam Leavy, Mountbolus  
John Loonam, Rahan  
Patrick Maher, Ferbane  
Sean McCann, Clonaslee  
P.J. McIntyre, Banagher  
Mick McIntyre, Kilcormac  
Thomas McIntyre, Ferbane  
Seamus Meleady, Cloghan  
John Molloy, Abbeyleix  
Edward Monaghan, Ferbane  
Pat Moore, Ferbane  
James Multany, Birr  
Ger Murray, Ferbane  
Ger Murray, Kilcormac  
Ger Nolan, Birr  
Edward Parkinson, Ballycumber  
Daniel Porter, Birr  
Pat Rigney, Clonaslee  
Mick Rigney, Lemonaghan

Celine Robbins, Leamore  
Tim Ryan, Birr  
Patrick Ryan, Tullamore  
Johnny Sammon, Clara  
John Seery, Ballinahown  
Joe Seery, Ferbane  
Tom Spain, Kilcormac

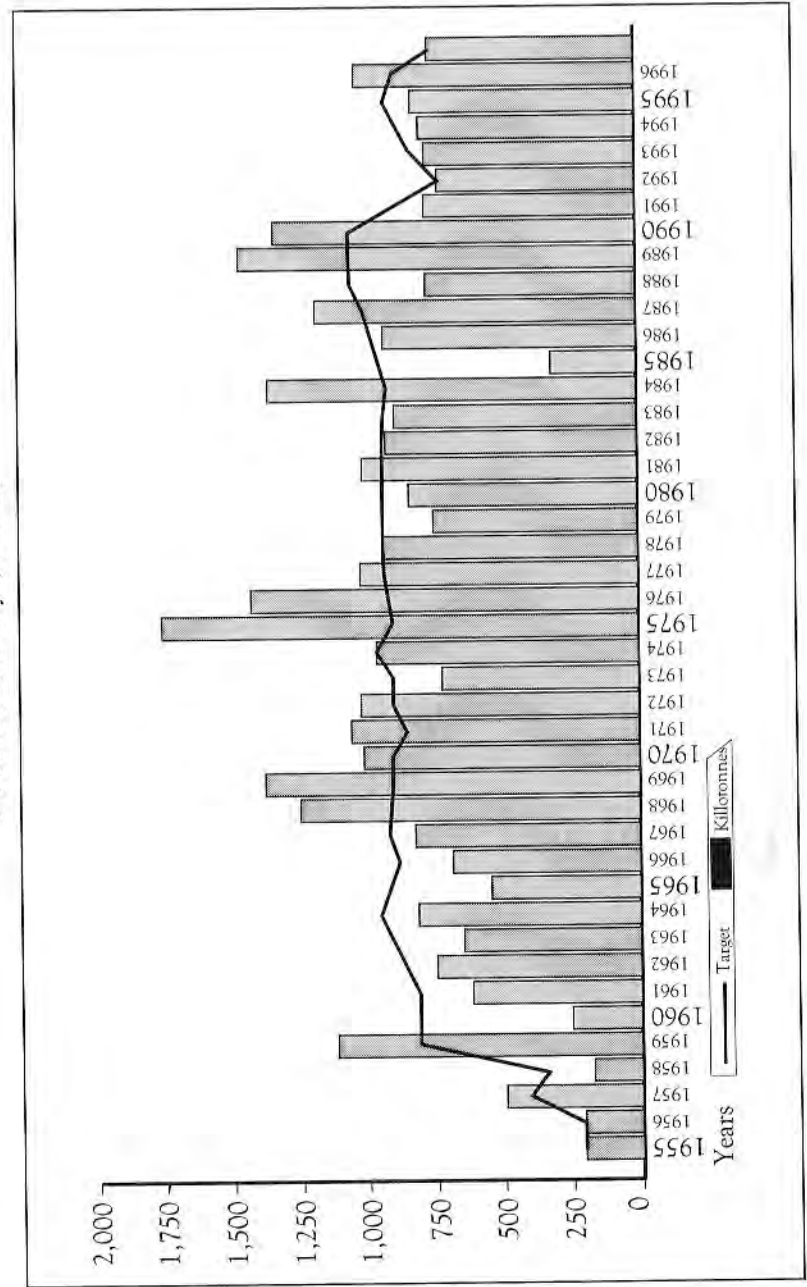
Colm Walsh, Killeigh  
Mick Walsh, Pullough  
Pat Watkins, Birr  
John Wright, Killeigh  
Pat Joe Wynne, Kilcormac  
Jim Wynne, Ballycumber  
Paddy Yeates, Clara

### Appendix 3 - RAINFALL STATISTICS

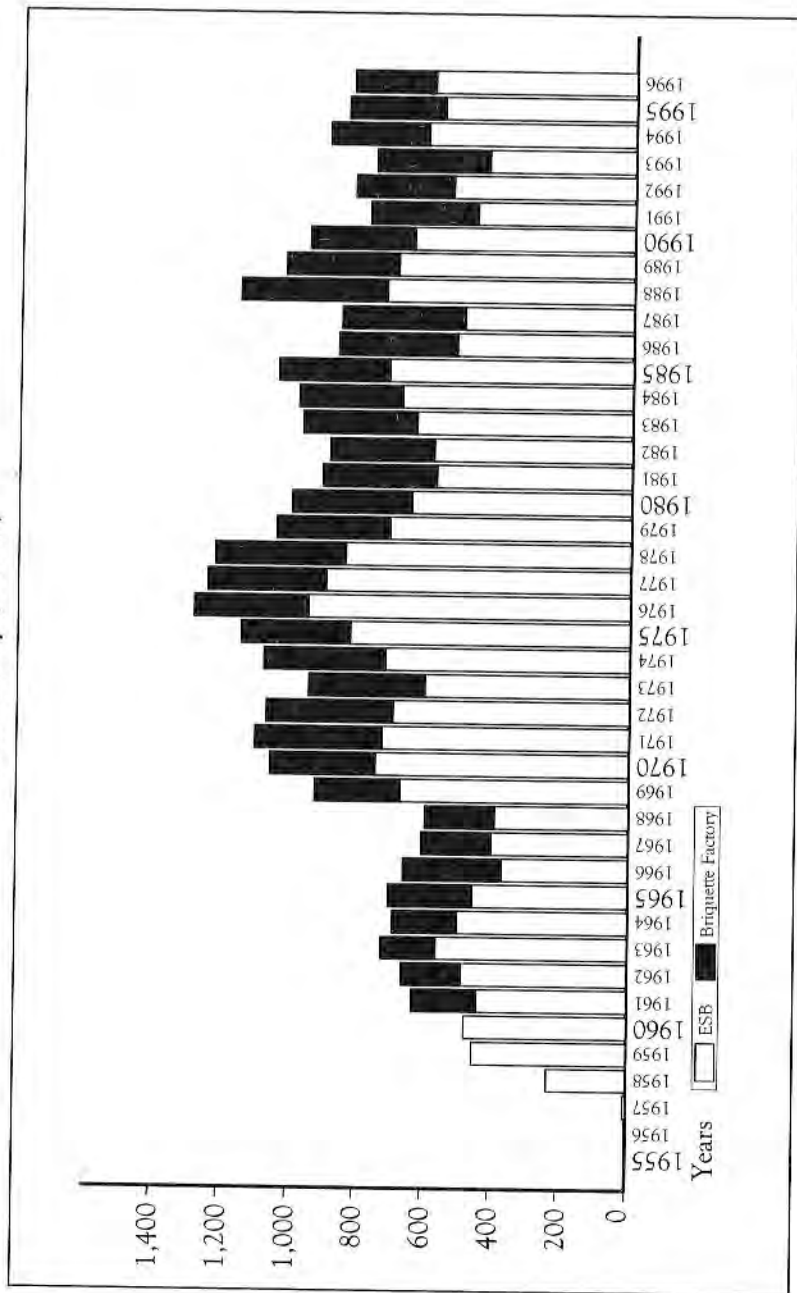
Rainfall Statistics have been collected at Boora since 1951.

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
1951	95.10	64.90	97.90	45.60	44.80	35.20	41.30	103.50	115.60	49.30	78.80	144.60	916.60
1952	112.90	21.90	28.40	49.20	96.60	56.30	40.70	73.90	53.80	131.40	51.50	74.80	791.40
1953	40.20	39.40	10.90	73.20	43.80	25.10	83.50	121.20	68.60	78.70	69.10	71.00	724.70
1954	54.80	103.70	59.70	30.40	101.50	62.10	90.50	104.40	124.30	125.90	99.70	97.30	1054.30
1955	67.60	64.50	32.00	55.50	80.50	98.30	16.00	34.50	83.30	116.10	99.60	108.00	855.90
1956	74.60	19.80	48.30	22.40	37.90	74.40	99.60	122.70	94.00	35.10	82.30	99.10	810.20
1957	91.70	66.30	84.80	31.50	38.60	26.90	106.40	54.40	84.30	129.30	15.00	57.70	786.90
1958	81.30	87.40	34.80	30.00	87.40	70.10	118.90	151.90	98.30	44.20	48.00	74.20	926.50
1959	51.60	26.90	58.70	74.20	27.70	49.00	53.30	11.40	44.50	151.10	83.10	155.20	786.70
1960	78.70	35.60	26.40	50.80	63.30	61.00	124.70	124.50	115.30	94.70	138.40	127.00	1040.40
1961	117.10	72.40	10.70	100.60	56.60	38.90	67.30	62.70	96.30	54.60	23.90	80.30	781.40
1962	96.50	40.90	62.50	46.00	60.20	36.60	52.80	119.10	126.70	35.30	54.40	89.40	820.40
1963	15.80	28.20	76.20	45.30	56.90	60.50	49.80	72.60	60.70	88.10	121.90	22.90	698.90
1964	40.80	30.90	70.60	67.90	57.50	56.90	67.50	80.70	42.20	86.50	61.50	144.00	807.00
1965	119.40	10.40	85.40	62.60	55.70	83.00	84.20	83.70	70.60	33.10	113.00	124.40	925.50
1966	63.70	113.20	52.90	89.40	72.40	117.10	49.00	70.70	82.30	143.10	40.90	72.60	967.30
1967	47.20	86.70	35.80	28.00	104.60	23.20	42.30	107.70	92.70	137.50	52.70	45.40	803.80
1968	114.50	19.50	75.10	51.40	48.90	61.40	26.80	100.80	105.90	77.30	75.00	118.80	875.40
1969	115.30	42.00	42.70	65.30	75.70	43.70	38.10	35.10	23.50	37.20	78.30	72.20	669.10
1970	61.60	88.70	35.00	104.80	19.80	44.80	71.00	46.80	80.20	87.80	132.30	37.70	810.50
1971	38.80	45.00	60.80	31.00	44.10	64.60	47.80	69.40	31.50	56.80	66.20	37.00	593.00
1972	86.40	43.10	70.80	77.20	78.30	62.80	70.90	48.20	8.60	47.50	113.10	75.70	782.60
1973	56.10	42.80	26.00	38.10	94.50	31.90	99.40	110.40	79.80	56.10	116.00	55.10	806.20
1974	133.50	60.70	18.30	35.60	57.80	40.30	110.20	80.70	111.60	41.70	73.90	71.10	835.40
1975	132.30	28.60	24.50	50.20	35.10	12.60	55.90	32.70	134.50	76.60	68.40	37.50	688.90
1976	68.80	45.80	54.70	26.30	81.40	25.30	36.50	31.80	86.90	122.20	62.40	64.60	706.70
1977	49.70	141.10	70.00	79.00	19.00	120.10	38.80	94.90	45.50	94.20	83.60	72.20	908.10
1978	79.80	55.40	78.30	31.80	10.60	39.80	61.90	69.30	52.90	41.00	105.80	148.00	774.60
1979	61.20	32.80	78.00	72.40	101.30	64.80	23.60	95.60	63.20	67.80	100.90	136.70	898.30
1980	73.80	70.30	77.20	24.50	40.40	63.00	95.40	92.40	85.80	94.80	68.10	97.10	882.80
1981	46.80	64.90	98.70	19.50	122.10	72.70	37.90	19.00	117.70	71.20	68.80	49.60	788.90
1982	57.70	62.10	89.60	25.90	69.40	94.90	15.00	94.50	62.20	119.30	123.50	111.70	925.80
1983	111.50	52.50	82.90	74.30	99.20	54.90	81.80	90.00	86.10	120.30	30.70	131.20	1015.40
1984	146.70	59.90	62.90	26.00	17.70	39.20	40.40	113.60	97.40	93.30	93.30	101.70	892.40
1985	27.90	29.40	60.90	59.10	74.40	75.00	86.40	165.80	70.00	64.00	46.20	101.20	860.30
1986	100.80	6.10	93.00	66.50	108.00	113.10	48.90	122.00	1.20	96.20	102.70	141.80	1000.30
1987	23.60	42.00	67.70	71.30	16.10	106.70	31.00	51.60	95.90	88.60	62.70	50.40	707.60
1988	134.40	70.30	113.00	18.10	65.20	45.90	125.40	101.00	47.70	86.20	38.00	47.50	892.70
1989	61.90	85.70	114.20	59.10	21.10	54.60	25.10	95.00	53.90	93.60	26.90	61.90	753.00
1990	127.00	194.30	18.90	39.10	24.20	104.70	51.40	76.50	27.40	152.20	53.50	84.60	953.80
1991	93.60	76.90	57.60	113.70	3.90	77.80	97.20	36.60	49.30	89.90	96.20	56.00	848.70
1992	75.90	48.70	85.70	81.20	40.50	42.10	76.80	111.20	94.40	46.10	95.20	52.80	850.60
1993	96.50	14.10	43.20	90.10	85.20	96.80	52.50	37.80	81.70	44.50	46.20	157.10	845.70
1994	94.80	80.10	115.40	87.40	43.60	53.30	63.90	74.90	99.80	47.20	47.70	171.60	979.70
1995	148.20	129.10	69.60	18.60	40.60	20.60	75.10	3.10	53.40	134.50	99.20	56.30	847.30
1996	68.60	90.10	98.70	71.50	49.20	25.40	47.40	90.10	30.10	134.30	103.80	36.10	845.30

### Appendix 4 - BOORA WORKS Production History (Annual)



### Appendix 5 - BOORA WORKS Sales History (Annual)



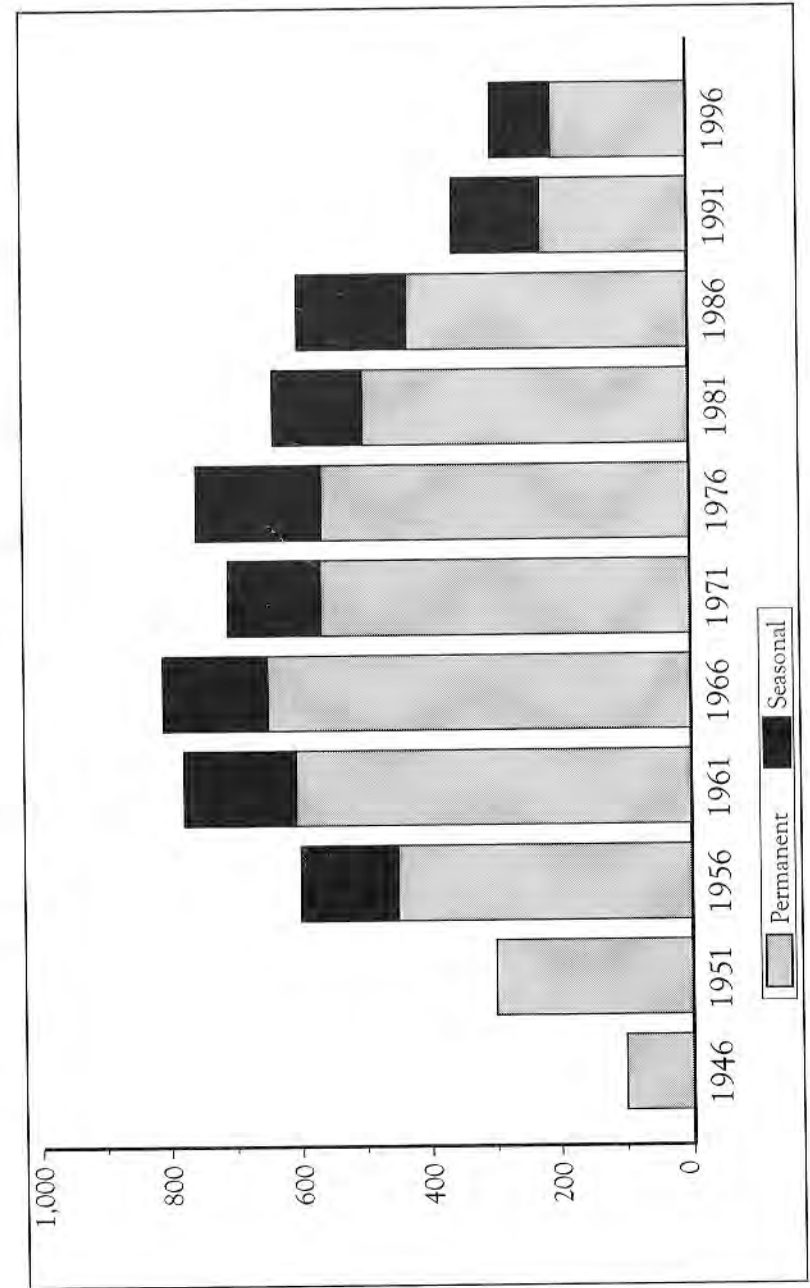
### Appendix 6 - POPULATION STATISTICS For the area covered by the Boora group and comparisons

	1936	1946	1951	1956	1961
<b>Kilcormac Town</b>	448	445	507	766	1018
Kilcormac DED	863	883	950	1038	1260
Broughal DED	192	177	169	182	165
Total	1055	1060	1119	1220	1425
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>106%</b>	<b>116%</b>	<b>135%</b>
<b>Ferbane Town</b>	301	312	272	619	767
Ferbane DED	738	854	841	1022	1143
Lea DED	377	495	678	675	450
Total	1115	1349	1519	1697	1593
	<b>100%</b>	<b>121%</b>	<b>136%</b>	<b>152%</b>	<b>143%</b>
<b>Cloghan Town</b>	188	172	186	270	303
Cloghan DED	685	662	640	645	688
Gallen DED	552	566	524	547	502
Total	1237	1228	1164	1192	1190
	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>Ballycumber Town</b>	107	124	148	163	171
Ballycumber DED	631	581	540	541	570
Shrahan DED	502	523	527	570	635
Total	1133	1104	1067	1111	1205
	<b>100%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>106%</b>
<b>Boora Areas</b>	4540	4741	4869	5220	5413
	<b>100%</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>107%</b>	<b>115%</b>	<b>119%</b>
Derrinboy DED	350	306	296	269	268
Killooly DED	307	250	244	273	257
Moyclare DED	586	577	545	530	524
Derrycooley DED	339	360	350	339	307
Drumcullen DED	304	306	300	296	336
Derryadd DED	305	267	268	256	266
	2191	2066	2003	1963	1958
<b>Other Rural Areas</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>West Offaly Rural</b>	14958	14492	14194	14344	14411
	<b>100%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>96%</b>
<b>South Offaly Rural</b>	5207	5130	4953	4538	4524
	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>87%</b>
Kilcormac	100%	100%	106%	116%	135%
Ferbane	100%	121%	136%	152%	143%
Cloghan	100%	99%	94%	96%	96%
Ballycumber Town	100%	97%	94%	98%	106%
<b>Boora Areas</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>104%</b>	<b>107%</b>	<b>115%</b>	<b>119%</b>
<b>West Offaly Rural</b>	100%	97%	95%	96%	96%
<b>Other Rural Areas</b>	100%	94%	91%	90%	89%
<b>South Offaly Rural</b>	100%	99%	95%	87%	87%

**Appendix 6 - POPULATION STATISTICS Cont.**  
For the area covered by the Boora group and comparisons

1966	1971	1979	1981	1986	1991	1996
1024	1091	1204	1166	1118	973	
1331	1390	1556	1546	1539	1380	1297
158	140	122	134	140	139	138
1489	1530	1678	1680	1679	1519	1435
<b>141%</b>	<b>145%</b>	<b>159%</b>	<b>159%</b>	<b>159%</b>	<b>144%</b>	<b>136%</b>
1072	1079	1417	1402	1374	1285	
1235	1199	1347	1302	1287	1238	1189
418	402	341	330	320	328	322
1653	1601	1688	1632	1607	1566	1511
<b>148%</b>	<b>144%</b>	<b>151%</b>	<b>146%</b>	<b>144%</b>	<b>140%</b>	<b>136%</b>
321	404	419	478	480	453	
698	736	760	777	844	799	823
490	475	721	714	737	685	640
1188	1211	1481	1491	1581	1484	1463
<b>96%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>120%</b>	<b>121%</b>	<b>128%</b>	<b>120%</b>	<b>118%</b>
?	211	234	220	235	248	0
563	526	615	624	672	684	681
634	641	672	657	745	716	698
1197	1167	1287	1281	1417	1400	1379
<b>106%</b>	<b>103%</b>	<b>114%</b>	<b>113%</b>	<b>125%</b>	<b>124%</b>	<b>122%</b>
5527	5509	6134	6084	6284	5969	5788
<b>122%</b>	<b>121%</b>	<b>135%</b>	<b>134%</b>	<b>138%</b>	<b>131%</b>	<b>127%</b>
295	270	228	230	212	218	225
256	236	227	226	208	213	203
514	498	535	563	582	539	532
305	295	245	254	233	237	240
331	314	345	341	337	324	324
248	258	256	259	255	265	249
1949	1871	1836	1873	1827	1796	1773
<b>89%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>81%</b>
14443	14087	15233	15345	15837	15460	15291
<b>97%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>103%</b>	<b>106%</b>	<b>103%</b>	<b>102%</b>
4443	4214	4756	4797	4893	4673	4506
<b>85%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>87%</b>
141%	145%	159%	159%	159%	144%	136%
148%	144%	151%	146%	144%	140%	136%
96%	98%	120%	121%	128%	120%	118%
106%	103%	114%	113%	125%	124%	122%
<b>122%</b>	<b>121%</b>	<b>135%</b>	<b>134%</b>	<b>138%</b>	<b>131%</b>	<b>127%</b>
97%	94%	102%	103%	106%	103%	102%
89%	85%	84%	85%	83%	82%	81%
85%	81%	91%	92%	94%	90%	87%

**Appendix 7 - BOORA EMPLOYMENT FIGURES 1946 - 1996**





**Appendix 8 - PRIMARY SCHOOL CENSUS**  
Kilcormac, Ballyboy, Broughal, Pullough, Boher, Cloghan

