

New book recalls life in Ballina in the 1950s

A Ballina native who carved out a distinguished career in Silicon Valley has penned a fascinating new memoir.

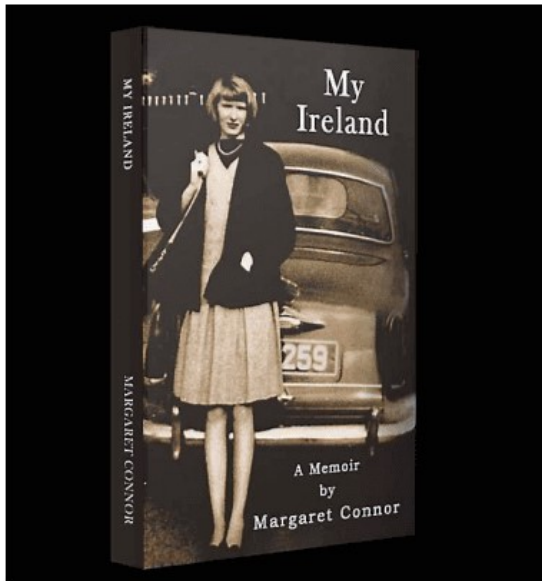
My Ireland by Margaret Connor presents a factual and descriptive account of Ireland in the 1950s from the perspective of the author looking back on her early life in the country of her birth.

Margaret's captivating and charming story renders a nostalgic picture of Ireland independent of the inequalities and poverty that existed at that time. Her story concentrates, instead, on rural life with its wonderful sense of community meitheal.

To a lesser extent, the author addresses the deep cultural divide of class and money as experienced in religion, education and professional opportunities.

The book is structured chronologically, from Margaret's childhood to adolescence and from leaving home for Dublin and later to emigration.

Beginning with family, the description of her



The front cover of the fascinating new book by Ballina native Margaret Connor.

father's passing is written from a child's viewpoint. This leads to a narrative on her mother, a unique and forthright woman for her day. The story increases in momentum as Margaret goes to work in Dublin.

The newness and wonders of the city take her on an exploratory journey through theatres, shops and the banter of the street traders. Throughout the book are special moments in nature and

traditional Irish song and verse.

My Ireland is a historical and cultural walk down memory lane. It is more than a memoir. Rather, it is a loving and earnest conversation with Ireland's rural past and its people.

Margaret Connor grew up on a small farm near Ballina. She left home as a teenager to work in Dublin in the hotel business. From there, she immigrated to the United States where she earned a BA from Harvard University followed by an MBA from the University of Chicago. This led to a career in Silicon Valley as a finance officer in the technology industry.

Margaret currently lives in Greenwich, Connecticut, with close proximity to New York City for her cultural interests. She remains involved in her profession by consulting with early-stage ventures. Her curiosity about travels to distant lands continues.

My Ireland is available in local bookshops and online.

Defendant with lump hammer was 'going to fight a big man'

A man who was found with a lump hammer in a Ballina car park told gardai he was 'going to fight a big man'.

Marius Abel Rebeca, of 7 Ferran Terrace, Ballina, pleaded guilty at the local district court to public intoxication and possessing a hammer contrary to the Firearms and Offensive Weapons Act.

The court heard that gardai were dealing with an incident involving an intoxicated driver at Diamond's Car Park in Ballina on March 26 last when

Rebeca approached and pushed an officer. He was ordered to leave the area but before he left he made sexual and insulting gestures and comments in the direction of a female garda.

Officers returned to the car park sometime later and found Rebeca pacing around and saying he was 'going to fight'. Gardai observed a large object protruding from his pocket and when they searched him they found a lump hammer. The defendant said he was 'going to fight a big man'.

Solicitor Peter Loftus said his client had consumed too much alcohol on the night in question. Rebeca, who is a native of Romania, has no previous convictions and has not come to the attention of gardai since the incident.

Adjourning the matter to April 25 next for sentencing, Judge Fiona Lydon condemned Rebeca's attitude towards the female garda and ordered him to undergo the Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) programme before the next hearing.

Man is ordered to apologise to gardai

A Ballina man has been ordered to apologise to gardai for public order breaches.

Declan Ryan, 84 Lord Edward Street, Ballina, pleaded guilty at the local district court to two counts of using threatening or abusive language and one count of public intoxication.

The court heard that Gda Chris Barrett observed Ryan in Diamond's Car Park in Ballina at 12.05am on August 8, 2021. He had his shirt

open and was shouting at passing vehicles. He refused to lower his voice and then asked Gda Barrett and a colleague to get out of the patrol car. While being arrested, he remained abusive and told the gardai they would be 'sorry' for their actions.

Ryan was again arrested at 3.35am on July 13 last after he was reported to Gda Adrian Flannery for verbally abusing taxi drivers at Tolan Street in Ballina.

The court heard the defendant has a number of previous convictions.

Solicitor Morgan Coleman said his client is unemployed but works occasionally as a singer. Ryan now realises he has to respect the gardai.

Adjourning the case to February 22 next, Judge Fiona Lydon ordered that Ryan be assessed for community service. She also instructed the defendant to apologise to the gardai for his behaviour.