

Poems of Cashel & distant places

by Pakie Keating



Compiled by Seamus J. King

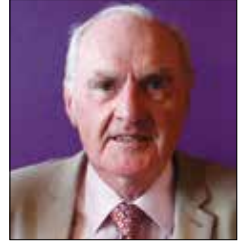


Pakie's father, Martin, on the occasion of his nineteenth birthday in 1990, with sons, Donny and Pakie

Foreword

by Seamus J. King

During a conversation with Albert Carrie some time ago I heard that Pakie Keating was a poet and had written some notable poems. Before I could make a comment on the information, Albert launched into a recitation of **Hard Times** and didn't stop until he finished it. He put special emphasis on some of the lines. I remember in particular: *A gentle nun would open the door/ Her pinnie white as snow,/She'd take the canvas bag out of my hand/And disappear through the door.* He spoke the following lines with particular feeling: *And then I would head for the Green,/Where there stood the old National School,/And my favourite teacher, Miss Egan,/So gentle, kind-hearted and true.*



Albert was full of praise for Pakie's efforts and mentioned some of his other productions. Probably the most famous has to be **Cashel My Home Town**, which Pakie wrote in December 1986. It has become famous as a Cashel anthem and particularly because of the late Denis Heffernan's passionate rendition of it.

It appears that Denis used to break into song with it in the basement bar of the Palace Hotel. One night Sean Feery and Billy Bob O'Dwyer convinced Denis to record it and they did it on September 11, 2010. This gave it greater popularity and it was eventually brought out as a CD. Any time I read the words I hear the quiver that used to come into Denis's voice when he sang the last verse:

*Come back home to Cashel,/The town I loved so well, The Golden Road where we went to school/
And the tall tales we would tell,/Brother Nolan's Band, it sounded so grand/As we marched up and
down,/I'm proud to say, I'm home today/In Cashel my Home Town.*

Unfortunately Denis is no longer with us having passed away on July 9, 2019

What makes Pakie's poems so appealing is the range of their interest and subject. The social life of Cashel, the family, which features in three of the poems, Aunty Ellie, his father in **To Rest Upon the Rock** and his mother in **Christina's Christmas Wish**, the local area with poems about Rosegreen, Holycross, Lovely Boscabel, Nutcrue near Castlelake Cross, Tobar Iosa in Cahir, and outside the local with Australia, where he spent nine years of his life, Sligo and Baltinglass. And there is plenty of romantic love in **The Tart, My Sligo Lass** and **The Baltinglass Lass**.

I want to thank Pakie and his wife, Deirdre, for their complete co-operation with this production. I want to acknowledge Denis Vahey's permission to use one of his photographs, the National Library of Ireland for permission to use the photograph of the Rock of Cashel from the Lawrence Collection and a particular thanks to Vinny Flynn for taking a special drone picture of the town of Cashel for the cover of this publication.

The Story of My Life

by Pakie Keating

I was born in 28 Cathal Brugha Street, Cashel on August 12, 1939, the son of Martin and Christina Keating and the oldest of three children. My sister, Kathleen, died from meningitis at the age of seventeen months and my brother, Dinny, died in August 2006.

My father worked as a cattle drover and later in Bord na Móna. My mother worked for Timmy Hyde's mother in Camas Park for ten years.

I went to the national school on The Green and later to the Christian Brothers on the Tipperary road. My teachers in the national school were John Rodgers, Frank Egan and Miss Mai Egan.

I was a very wild young lad, not bad really but always getting into mischief. One day Brother Nolan hung me up by the collar in the cloakroom and left me there for some time. There was a fish pond in the school and we all used to skate on it but at one break time I



Pakie Keating's parents, Martin and Christina. Martin was a cattle drover and Christina worked for Timmy Hyde's mother in Camas.



Pakie Keating's First Communion Day, when children were gifted flowers and candles rather than money.

went and jumped on the ice, which was already broken. I got fairly wet. Kathleen Costello, who looked after all the children, took care of me and helped me to dry my clothes. On another day we were on an outing to Tramore and we stopped on the River Suir near the Miloko chocolate factory outside Carrick-on-Suir for lemonade and sandwiches. When I was finished I threw my bottle into the river and Brother Ryan gave me a clip across the ear. I was always fighting with John Murphy (The Merryman), who was later a journalist with the *Cork Examiner*, and Frankie Gannon. We became great friends later. One of the highlights of my school days was going to a matinee on Sundays in John Del's cinema in Ladyswell. The cost was fourpence for a place in the pit! I loved all the cowboy pictures.



Pakie and his first wife, Nora, with children, Marguerite and Martin, in London in 1960

First Jobs

I left school at fourteen and went working for a farmer for a while. I went working with my father in Bord na Móna for the summers. In 1959 when I was twenty I left Cashel for work in London. I got a job in the Red Lion pub and restaurant on the Mall in the West End, cooking and training to be a chef. I was there for six years.

While I was there my brother, Dinny, came to work with me. He was the barman there. Around this time I met my future wife, Nora, from County Mayo at a dance in Kilburn. We got married in 1962 in Ballina and went to Galway for our honeymoon. We then returned to London. We were to have three children, Marguerite, Martin and Brendan.

In 1965, I changed my job and went to work in the Tate & Lyle sugar factory. I was there for five years with my old friend, Paddy O'Neill from Cashel, who was my son Brendan's godfather. We used to go to soccer matches together.



Pakie Keating with his late wife, Nora, and one of their ten grandchildren, all girls.

Australia

In 1970, Nora and I and the three children emigrated to Australia and settled in Adelaide. I got a job in Holden's car factory in Elizabeth, Adelaide, manufacturing car parts. We became friends with two wonderful families, We had good times together and our children went to school with theirs. In my spare time I went fishing with my sons in the lakes around Adelaide. In the summer time the whole family went camping in the bush outside Sydney. It was beautiful there and the kids loved it. After five years I left my job in the car factory and went working on an oil rig in the Simpson Desert, Queensland as a chef. I only got home once a month.

In 1979 we decided to return to Ireland and it was sad leaving all our friends. We all stayed with Dinny and his family until we got a house in Woodview, Cahir. I got a job working in the ABP meat factory for a few months. I then got a job as a labourer with the Council in Cahir and Nora got a job as a domestic in the boys' school in Cahir. I loved working on the Council and got on well with all the lads at break time. I used to have all the lads in stitches with my stories and jokes. One morning I went to work with a pink trousers on me. I was after putting it in the wash with a red jumper and it came out pink. My foreman said to me: 'Katin', you're not going out on the road with that on you. Go home and change it!' I was always up for the crack and the lads loved it.

A Man of Energy

In our spare time Nora and I took up ballroom dancing lessons with May and Dinnie Murphy from Cahir and we went all over the country dancing with them. I took up running from 1983-1993. I ran five full marathons, including London in 1991. I also ran cross-country in my bare feet. I was in the Cashel running club with Noel Dowling and then I joined the Clonmel Club. In 1995, I joined the Karate Club in Clonmel and I got my Black Belt in 2006 in Kilkenny. I finished it in 2012.

In the 1980s I started writing poetry. I started with *Cashel My Home Town*. After a while I put my own air to it and turned it into a song. The late Denis Heffernan asked me could he use it for a charity fundraiser, the sudden heart deaths in young people.

In 1998 my wife, Nora, died. We had a wonderful thirty-six years together. The Council gave me two months compassionate leave. I went to Australia for four weeks, visiting all my friends. Then I went to New Zealand to my son and his family. I went fishing and backpacking down the South Island and the Franz Josef Glacier. I had a lovely holiday with my family and friends.

On returning home and settling back to work I felt the house very lonely on my own. I went back fishing on the River Suir and on Sunday and Wednesday nights, I went dancing in the Castle Arms Hotel in Durrow. I made a lot of friends there. One Sunday night in 2005

I met a lovely lady from Kilkenny named Deirdre. We hit it off straight away. I was lucky to find love a second time. We went dancing around the country and to the Matchmakers Dance in Lisdoonvarna in September.

Second Marriage

In August that year I retired from the Council after twenty-six years. There was a lovely retirement party for me in Cahir House Hotel with all my family and workmates. After I retired I moved to Kilkenny to live with Deirdre. I went fishing in the lake in Garry Hill, Co. Carlow. I went swimming and exercising in the Watershed in Kilkenny.

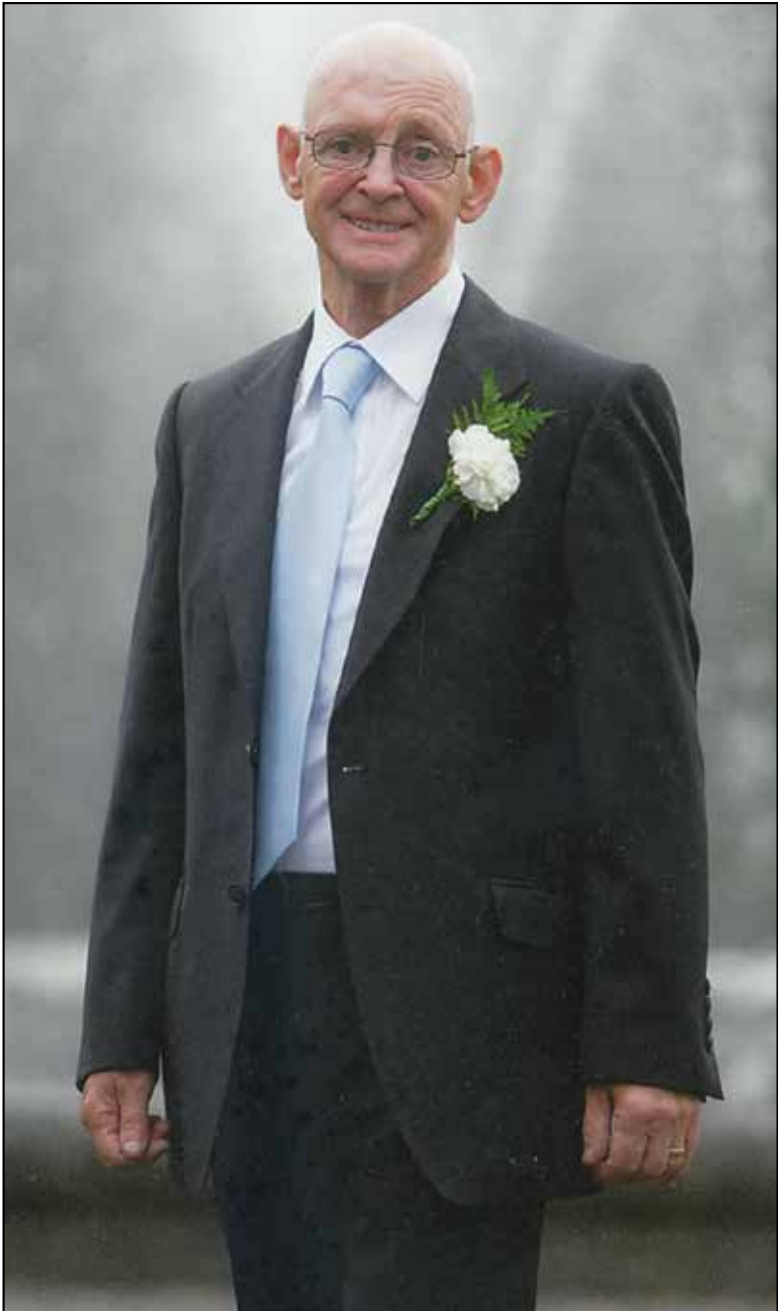
After four years Deirdre and I decided to tie the knot. We got married in St. John's Church on August 10, 2009 and we had the reception in Langton's Hotel with our families and friends, and one of my best friends, Joe Gorman from America. We went on a coach tour to Austria and the surrounding countries for our honeymoon.

We both enjoy dancing. We have been to Orlando, Florida, Spain and Portugal on dancing holidays. We met two lovely couples in Portugal, Margaret and Tim, and Kathleen and Pat, and we became good friends. We still keep in touch. We go to a club in the parish once a week to play bingo, and we go to a tea dance once a month, where we meet all our friends.

I'm living in Kilkenny for sixteen years now and I love it. I have made a lot of friends and we have wonderful kind and helpful neighbours. My wife and I can't wait for the country to get back to normal so we can visit our families and friends again, go dancing and take holidays.



Some of the numerous medals won by Pakie in cross-country running.



Pakie Keating on his wedding day, August 10th 2009.



A big family gathering for Pokie's 80th birthday, including Deirdre, his sons, wives and families.

To Aunty Ellie's

(24/08/2008)

On Sundays after the dinner when the pig's head was ate,
My mother, me and my brother would leave for the Lowergate,
And into Aunt Ellie's house, this was the thing to do,
The black cat in the corner and the smoke around the old dresser too.

Aunty Ellie would say to mother: 'Is Crotty¹, the Rover, back?
Is the fair in Callan over now? Did he bring any money back?
She sent us out to the backyard, where there was a ten-foot wall.
You could see the Rock of Cashel, if you were ten foot tall.

There was nothing to see only the white-washed wall,
An nothing there to play with, not even a rubber ball.
Dinny and I would start to fight and mother would start to call,
And Ellie's temper would start, and then it was free-for-all.

Mother would say to us then: 'Come in and put on your coats'.
Ellie would give us sixpence each, now it felt like a ten pound note.
Just before we left her house, one terrible thing to do,
Kiss Aunt Ellie on the lips, brown snuff and bad breath too.

Aunt Ellie is to God now, and so is our poor mother too,
Dinny is forty-nine now and I'm nearly fifty-two,
And still those lovely days come back, and Sunday's dreams come true,
I pray for mother each morning and Aunty Ellie too.

¹ *Crotty was the nickname Aunty Ellie had for Pakie's father, who was a cattle drover.*

The Queen of Sweet Rosegreen

'Twas a fine and summer's morning, when I¹ left Clonmel behind,
And sitting in my old black car with my old grey always kind,
The pots and pans were jingling like a grand old sewing machine
And to my right I first saw sight the Queen of Sweet Rosegreen.

Her lovely red, long curly hair ran softly down her side,
Her lovely soft white calico dress and her smile looked three miles wide.
The cows she drove across the road into a field so green,
And my heart fell hopelessly in love with the Queen of Sweet Rosegreen.

'Buongiorno', said I, 'Good morning to you! You may not understand.'
'My name is Charles, I'd like you to know, and I'm from a foreign land.'
'I live outside of Naples, where the olive groves are green.'
I would like to wed and enrich my life, the Queen of Sweet Rosegreen.'

I would like you to know with you I can't go, but thank you all the same.
I'm sure Naples is a lovely place, but so is Tullamain.
I have pledged my life to be a wife to farmer Paddy Breen.
'Will stay at home and never roam', said the Queen of Sweet Rosegreen.

¹ *Pakie imagines Charles Bianconi, an Italian who came to Clonmel in the nineteenth century and who travelled around the country selling pictures and bric-a-brac, who fell in love with a lovely girl as he travelled through Rosegreen. Paddy Breen is another imagined character*



Watching a presentation, left to right, Joe Moloney, who was chairman of Cashel King Cormac's for nine years, Pearse Bonnar, and Dinny Keating.

The Man from Holycross

(January 1998)

1.

I'll sing you a verse or two about a gentleman,
The praises of Bill Flanagan¹ is my enormous plan.
He was born and reared in Galbertstown, just by the Yellow Lough.
A voice so rare, so rich and fair, the Man from Holycross.

(Chorus)

A fond farewell to Galbertstown and likewise Yellow Lough,
Moycarkey, Gail, sweet Sinone and the limes around Killough.
Flow on our lovely River Suir, where the waters splash the moss,
His memory will be cherished, the Man from Holycross

(Chorus)

2.

God rest you Dear Bill Flanagan, and heaven be your will,
Down in Listowel at the old Fleadh Ceol, thousands you did thrill.
You sang in Templetuohy, Puckane and Sweet Birdhill,
I would stand amazed to hear you phrase, the Rose of Keeper's Hill.

(Chorus)

3.

In summertime, when the sun would shine on Cashel's famous town,
We'd gather round the old Bothán², contented we'd sit down
And silence bring, when Bill would sing, a pin drop on the floor,
From start to end, the cottage with the rose round the door.

(Chorus)

4.

His friends will surely miss him, the Bob, Eloy and Bow³,
And poor old Paddy Lawler⁴ also is lying low.
His friends up in the Commons, likewise in old Rearcross,
They're chanting out his praises, the Man from Holycross.

(Chorus)

¹ Bill Flanagan was one of Ireland's best known folk singers.

² The Bothán Scoir is a small, thatched 17th century cottage on the Clonmel Road, Cashel. It is reputed to date back to 1621.

³ Martin O'Dwyer (Bob), Sean Eloy and Bow's second name is forgotten.

⁴ Paddy Lawler was an Irish singer from Tipperary Town. Pakie sang with him and Bill Flanagan at the Fleadh Ceol.

Lovely Boscabel

1.

How grand to walk from Stafford's Cross,
And on to Mockler's Hill,
And the back road to Dualla,
And up that big, steep hill,
To gaze across the Furry Hill,
The wild flowers you could smell
And the crab apple blossoms bloom,
Around Lovely Boscabell

2.

In winter time when the snow came down
And the weather looked so mild,
Our little cottage in the field,
Where I spent happy childhood times,
Enough to eat and warm heat,
And my mother's love as well,
Oh, Harry Moore¹, you were such a fool,
For leaving Boscabel.

3.

My first shave at eighteen years,
It was time for me to go,
Bound for Australia's Gold Coast²,
And little did I know.
I hugged my father, kissed my mother,
Said goodbye to friends as well,
One last look on the wild blauseens³
That grow round Boscabel.

4.

I put my foot down in Tooumba Town⁴,
And to work in the sugar cane fields.
The machete knife was sharp and light,
And the sweat ran down my feet.
One Saturday night in a drunken fight
My temper went to hell,
The next ten years in Bogga Road⁵ jail
Far from lovely Boscabel

5.

At last I'm free and thanks to ye,
Your letters kept me well.
Oh, Harry Moore, you've been a fool,
You've lived in your own hell.
I knew ye always loved me,
And wanted me home as well,
To pick the wild blauseens that grow
Around lovely Boscabel.

¹ Harry Moore was a friend of Pakie's in Australia.

² Pakie went to Australia with his wife and three children in 1970 and remained there until 1979

³ Wild plums.

⁴ In Little Mulgrave, near Cairns, North Queensland.

⁵ Bogga Road is a jail in Brisbane and was the main jail in Queensland from 1880-1980.

The Convent Boy or Hard Times

(Pakie Keating 1994)

1.

I loved my dear father and mother
Just like any son would
And when I was going to school,
Believe me it wasn't all that good.
My father, a hard-working man,
Got work wherever he could
In the bog, on the roads driving cattle in droves
An reared us the best way he could.

2.

Every morning at half-past seven
Whatever the weather would bring:
'Run down the hill to the convent
And give the hall door a ring.'
A gentle nun would open the door,
Her pinnie¹ white as snow,
She'd take the canvas bag out of my hand
And disappear through the door.

3.

I would sit on a bench and dangle my legs
And look at the ceiling so bright:
'Will Billy Frush² beat me up in school today?'
'Oh, dear God, she's back, she gave me a fright!'
'Now, take this home to you mother, son,
There's brown bread, bacon and lard,
Take your time going out of the convent,
You don't want to slip in the yard.'

4.

And when I arrive in the house
Mother would have the kettle boiled.
She would take the bag out of my hand
And say: 'There's a good little child.'
And then I would head for the Green,
Where there stood the old National School,
And my favourite teacher, Miss Egan³,
So gentle, kind-hearted and true.

5.

Now I have travelled the whole world over,
To places far distant and grand
From the Shamrock shores to Sydney,
Sumatra and the Orient land
And now I've come up in the world,
No handouts for me today,
So now I can scoff because I'm well off,
No convent door for me today.

¹ A small apron.

² Billy Frush was born in the Convent Home and went to the National School on the Green with Pakie.

³ Miss Mai Egan, N. T., lived in John Street and taught with John Rodgers and Frank Egan in the National School on the Green. She was the best teacher Pakie ever had. She died in 1997. Her father was a monumental sculptor and many of his headstones can be seen in Casbel cemeteries.

Farewell to Tipperary

(Pakie Keating, October 15th, 2006)

1.

Farewell to Tipperary, a young soldier did say.
The war in Deu Baisi was raging all day long.
For King and Country, he enlisted for the crown.
From his home in Tipperary, his young life lay down.

2.

‘Timmy, my wild boy’, his mother would say,
‘Our love will be with you, when you’re far away,
Each night by the fireside, when we kneel and pray,
That the ‘telegram boy’ will stay far away.’

3.

He rambled the road still not quite a man.
He fell in love with a lady in a blue caravan.
For peak cap and putties and a shilling a day,
Save a thought for his mother in Tipperary far away.

4.

In a graveyard in Belgium, his dear body lies,
Far away from his kin and those blue Irish skies.
The guns of Deu Baisi are silent, long gone,
But brave uncle Timmy¹, his memory lives on.

5.

His medal² is draped on the Royal Union Jack,
In his home by the Rock, where he never came back.
The poppy fields are blooming round Deu Baisi today.
Say a prayer for brave Timmy if you pass the way.

6.

In ninety long years, since that horrible time,
When brave Irish men in the trenches lay dying.
The Battle of Givinchy³ and Lord Haig are long gone,
But brave uncle Timmy, his memory lives on.

¹ *Timmy Cullagh, who was his mother’s brother. He served in the Durham Light Infantry, 19th Battalion*

² *Timmy’s mother got his service medal after his death.*

³ *The Battle of Givinchy was fought in French Flanders in December 1914 with disastrous results for the British, who lost 4,000 men, many of whom suffered from frostbite and trench foot before the battle.*

The Flower of Sweet Nutcrue¹

(Pakie Keating – November 1996)

I was born and reared near Castlelake
In that lovely month of May,
In Ballinamona's fertile land
That I did hunt and play
And walked with Mary by the Suir
To Keating's island view²
And roamed around Shine's Castle
With the Flower of Sweet Nutcrue.

Chorus

Come back to Faranamanagh, Grawn
and dear Rathgowan,
Templenoë, Shanbally
and lovely Golden town,
From Mantlehill to Donaskeigh
and Ballinahinch in view,
Will you come back to these fair lands
my Flower of Sweet Nutcrue.

Mary graced the Golden Road,
From Cashel to Nutcrue.
The sunlit breeze shone through the trees
As she came tripping through.
She sang just like an angel
And gentle like the dew.
She is far away from me today
The Flower of Sweet Nutcrue.

The night before she parted
From the station at Gouldscross³,
The farewell party at Butler Lowe's⁴,
When Fibbey⁵ played the box.
We danced around the kitchen
Till nearly half-past two.
She is far away from me today,
My Flower of Sweet Nutcrue

The Boston sights and the Brooklyn lights
Have broken my heart in two
And Fylineen's Fashion Basement Store⁶
And Quincy Market too.
Just a farmer's boy,
No lands to offer you
But all my love from God above
For the Flower of Sweet Nutcrue.

¹ Nutcrue is the name of a wood near Castlelake Cross on the Tipperary Road.

² Castlelake was called Keating's Island. Shines owned the castle near the River Suir and Pakie and his friends used to swim there as children.

³ The train from Cashel travelled to Gouldscross where passengers caught the mainline train to Dublin or Cork.

⁴ Butler Lowe's is located near Racecourse Cross.

⁵ Fibbey lived just above Cathal Brugha Street and was a noted box player.

⁶ Fylineen's Fashion Basement Store and Quincy Market are in Boston.

The Tart That Broke Me Heart

(Pakie Keating, 5/2/91)

Come all ye sweet handsome men, wherever you may be,
Sit down here for a while and listen to me
And in case you plan to fall in love and before you make a start,
Let me tell you the story of the tart that broke me heart.

It was down in Ballymacarbery on a cold October day,
And to the local bakery shop 'twas there I made my way.
My tummy it was rumbling and the hunger pangs did start,
And there behind the counter was the tart that stole me heart.

Her seed cakes and her soda bread and her dumplings came on strong.
She devoured me like a dinner, as I looked an honest John.
There's always one old fool around and I fill the bill for that,
She led me up the garden path, the tart who sole me heart.

She was gorgeous, she was pretty, and as sweet as apple pie,
And like an old ass at a thistle, she looked so very shy.
And my 'honey' she was after and soon I found out that.
I dropped her like a hot cake, the tart who broke me heart.

Come all ye sweet handsome men, wherever you may be,
Before you enter matrimony, get in touch with me.
You may think your bread is buttered, and on both sides at that,
But remember Ballymacarbery and the tart who broke me heart.



Scottish fiends Margaret and Irvine Walker

Tobar Iosa¹

(Pakie Keating, 23/11/90)

1.

When the sun shines down
on the town of Cahir,
And the Castle by the Suir,
Where the swans rest and stray
on a summer's day
And the lillies are fair and pure,
And our humble abode
on the old Mountain Road²,
Where I first saw the light of day,
And I still see the smile
of my mother's blue eyes,
Although she is cold in the clay.

2.

I have travelled wide on land and tide,
Fair cities have I seen,
Australia's snowy mountain,
And the Donga Wonga scene.³
In the still of night when resting light,
And my memory excels,
My childhood days in the Galtee haze
Around Tobar Iosa's Holy Well

3.

My first and only tender love,
That lovely lass called May,
And Sunday after Holy Mass
Through the Galtee's haze we'd stray.
Her hand in mine, we would sing and rhyme
Along the lanes she knew so well,
We would rest and pray and pass the day
Around Tobar Iosa's Holy Well.

4.

Our love to the test, and God knew best,
And our love was not to be.
That winter's day, when the snow came down,
She passed away from me.
No more will I see her lovely smile,
That I knew so very well,
Or to walk on Sundays after Mass
To Tobar Iosa's Holy Well.

5.

My memory misses the Cottage called Swiss⁴,
And the golf links by the Suir,
Wild flowers and Rhododendrons
And buttercups so pure.
From this fair land, one day I'll go,
If the good Lord saves me well,
To roam once more the Galtee roads,
Around Tobar Iosa's Holy Well.

¹ *Tobar Iosa is a holy well in Cahir.*

² *The Mountain Road is on the outskirts of Cahir, near Upper Cahir Abbey.*

³ *Donga is a transportable building with single rooms, and Wonga is slang for money.*

⁴ *Swiss Cottage is a cottage orne from the 19th century, located at Kilcommon, Cahir and a major tourist attraction*

The City of the Kings

(Pakie Keating, 14/02/90)

1.

The bus drove out the Dublin Road
The Rock faded in my mind.
For ten long years on the Moomba¹ fields,
I left my love behind.
Her homely letters came each month
And the loneliness they'd bring,
And how I longed for Cashel,
The City of the Kings.

2.

The desert sands and the blistering hands
From laying pipes all day,
And the lonely nights and the Sidney lights,
They looked so far away.
My faith in God, like a horse well shod,
And brother Kings voice would ring,
Take me back to Cashel, the City of the Kings.

3.

The sun shines down on my blistering skin,
As I think of Burke and Wills²,
And right across the Coopers Creek³,
The wild fowl wildly sing.
Back home in Cathal Brugha Street,
My mother bakes and sings,
Take me back to Cashel,
The City of the Kings.

4.

Wednesday now is Commanche⁴ Day,
The plane comes in at two.
Bill Fones will have his dinner first
Before he waves us through.
The plane has left Sydney now,
And the happiness it brings,
I am heading home to Cashel,
The City of the Kings.

5.

The train pulls in to the Junction now,
And the rain it softly falls,
And right across the white wash fence
The race course I well recall.
I can see my only brother, Din,
And the welcome smile he brings,
As I come home to Cashel,
The City of the Kings.

¹ Moomba is in South Australia about 800 kilometres north of Adelaide where natural gas is processed.

² Two fellow Irishmen.

³ An important river in east-central Australia

⁴ Commanche was the name of the plane that struck the oil rig and Bill Fones was the pilot.

My Sligo Lass

1

The savage seas and the western breeze took you away from me today,
From your little home in Easky, where the sunshine it is free.
And when the weather's cloudy and my heart is upside down
Because you're ov'r in Corpus Christi, in that big Texas town.

2

The land of milk and honey in the Lone Star state.
The longer that you're out there, the harder is my wait.
Some men got their anger and others hide inside,
Just like Ben Bulben, I stand alone with pride.

3

Come back home to Sligo, the lovely land of Yeats,
Where your mother and your father are waiting by the gate.
'Peggy! How I do love you. My worldly goods are few,
But my heart is big, it's big enough to build a home for two.'

4

The post came this morning with a letter from the States,
And oh! My sudden anger, when I read the lines in haste.
The tears ran down my manful cheeks that would surely fill a pail.
I gave up all my courage then, when I read you took the veil.

5

The moon shines bright as I walk tonight on the shores of Enniscrone,
And now I know my sweet Peggy, you won't be coming home.
It will not change, the way I feel, I always will love you.
I know that one day in heaven above God will be good to you.

To Rest Upon the Rock

(Pakie Keating, 28/04/91)

1.

I¹ was ninety-one in mid last May
And my memory is till as sharp,
When on my way to the old school yard,
On my father's ass and cart.
Today my pals are all dead and gone.
Thank God in my heart they still live on.
From Blind Street and Lady's Well,
Were my brothers Mick and John.²

2.

The happy days I spent
in Cashel as a boy,
The blazing bonfires on the Rock
That reached up to the sky,
Brian Boru and ancient Kings,
My head was full of that,
A polish tin on an elder stick,
And a dustbin lid and hat.

3.

How nice to sit upon the Rock
Of Cashel's famous old stone,
On a summer evening after tea
And your thoughts are all your own.
On the Hore Abbey³ ground as I gaze down,
Where my kin folk gently lie,
To look out on the Devil's Bit,
And the sun's goodbye to the sky.

4.

It's well I remember Twenty-nine,
When the Count sang on the Rock⁴,
That lovely sunny, summer's day,
And the crowd began to flock.
They came from miles and miles around,
From Ballagh and Drombane,
From Laffansbridge and Newbirmingham,
And historic Boherlahan.

5.

It comes to mind one sad day
I never will forget,
They came from all over Ireland,
They gathered in the wet.
The rain came down on St. Cormac's ground,
As the cortege passed through,
In the Wicklow hills he gave his life,
The captain brave and true⁵.

6.

Today I sit upon the Rock
And gaze down on Brú Boru.
The Ballycommon and Cashel sets,
The music echoes through.
When the time comes for me to go
To the good God I have served well,
To rest my bones upon the Rock,
And gaze down on Lady's well.

¹ Pakie's father, Martin, who died at the age of 93 years.

² Mick & John were his father's brothers.

³ Pakie's grandfather and his sister, Kathleen, are buried in Hore Abbey, Cashel.

⁴ Count John McCormack sang on the Rock of Cashel in 1929 during the celebrations in connection with the centenary of Catholic Emancipation. Pathe News filmed the event and it is available on Youtube.

⁵ This is a reference to the funeral of Captain William Ryan, who was killed in a plane crash in Wicklow during the second World War. He was from Cashel, where his family owned Ryan's hotel, which was burned down in 1958.

John Del's¹ Cinema

(*Pakie Keating, 10-10-2006*)

1.

John Del had a cinema, a stone's throw from the Rock.
Sundays after din, to the matinee we would flock,
With Cleaves toffee in the pocket and Tom Mix in the head,
Christina said: 'Don't gallivant, come home straight for bed.'

Chorus

My head would start to roam, when Lassie would come home,
And John Wayne goes riding across the plain.
Durante was the King and Nelson Eddy sings,
While Judy Garland goes singing down the lane.

2.

Mary's² in the ticket box, she has a lovely smile,
She'd take the four pence from my hand and escort me down the aisle.
The Man of Aran³ on the door had a face like a sheet of lead:
'Keatin'! If you don't behave yourself, you'll be thrown out on your head.'

3.

If you met Patsy⁴ in the street, you'd notice his fast feet.
He's heading for the flicks in Ladyswell.
The box was his domain, his pride and his fame,
And everyone spoke highly of his name.

4.

Courting boys you'd see up in the one and three,
Their hands upon the ladies' knees.
Michael shines the lamp, the hands are put aside,
'I should have brought her up to the balcony'.

5.

Today the flicks are gone, and Patsy and old John.
Still, my boyhood dreams are here to stay,
And the skies are still blue around my own Cathal Brugha,
Sunday was the light of another day.

¹ *John Delahunty owned the cinema.*

² *Mary Devitt, who lived in the old schoolyard.*

³ *The Man of Aran was Dan O'Sullivan, a school teacher, who was from the Aran Islands.*

⁴ *Patsy Lacey, who lived in Boherclough.*

The Baltinglass Lass

(Pakie Keating, 10/06/1990)

1

It was in the town of Baltinglass I courted long and strong.
The girl was fair and I declare her name was Mary Long.
Last week she got a letter and I heard the neighbours say,
Her passage is paid and I'm afraid she's off to America.

2

I courted lovely Mary for twenty years or more,
And every night in hail or snow I came knocking on her door.
Now when I walk through Baltinglass, I can hear the boys all say,
There's poor old Johnny Madden and she's out in America.

3

One day said she 'tis married we'll be and I said will I buy the ring.
'Oh no', said she, 'give the money to me and it's all the same thing.'
Twenty pound I put in her hand and 'My love,' said she, 'Good day.'
And what a fright I got that night, when I heard she'd sailed away.

4

'Oh you, my cheating Mary, how could you be so cruel?'
'It wasn't the money I cared about but the way I was taken in!'
Now every night when I go out, I can hear the boys all say,
There's poor old Johnny Madden and she's out in America.



Pakie & Deirdre visiting friends Jean Caherty, Bill and Candace Ryan in the USA

Christina's Christmas Wish

(Pakie Keating, 01-02-2007)

1

Will you be coming home for Christmas?
Who knows we might have snow.
Is it warm now in Australia?
Our mother wants to know.¹
She took the lights out last July
To make sure they're working fine.
She ordered the pudding from Josie Brien's,
And the cake from Alice Ryan's.

2

She still goes next door to Ellie's
For a cup of tea and a chat.
Father would be away at the fair,
And God knows when he'd be back.
What's his name across the road,
Your mother said he'd passed away.
Are you coming home for Christmas?
It would really make her day.

3

She walks up and down the street,
And God knows she has bad feet,
Waiting for the postman every day.
For a letter to know you'll be here.
You know it's ten years now,
Since you left dear Cashel Town.
Are you coming home for Christmas?
It would really make her day.

4

Do you remember
When we hunted the 'wran'?
Up with the kettle
And down with the pan.
The Christmas cake band around the hat,
A nice few bob we'd be bringing back.
Are you coming home for Christmas?
She will always be asking that.

¹ Pakie was in Australia for nine years.



Deirdre, right, with Australian friends Eileen and Kee van Balen.



Pakie's niece, Tina, who won the Cashel Lions Club Youth Award in 1987, with her father, Dinny.



Pakie's brother, Dinny, with Mick Corcoran, at work in Leahy Park.



Pakie's brother Dinny, who was an outstanding clubman in the Cashel King Cormac's, with another outstanding clubman, Paddy Greaney.



Pakie Keating with his three children, Martin, Marguerite and Brendan.



Pakie Keating at brother Dinny's fiftieth birthday party in Gleeson's pub.



Pakie Keating holding two fish caught off Kelvick Head, Waterford, while on a fishing trip with son, Brendan.



Pakie's nephew, Denis Keating, right, who won the Young Player of the Year award from the Cashel King Cormac's in 1991, with Joe Minogue, who was Clubman of the Year.



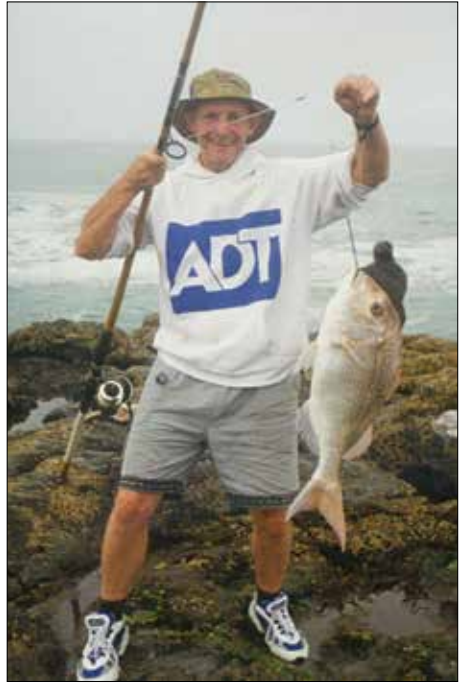
Martin Keating with, from left, Maggie McCarthy, Essie Marshall and Winifred Cashin, in the late 1980s on a Cashel Lions Club senior citizens holiday.



Pakie Keating with his best friend, Albert Carrie.



Pakie Keating relaxing on August 19, 2019 the day after Tipperary defeated Kilkenny by 3-25 to 0-20. Pakie attended the match with his son, Brendan.



Pakie fishing in New Zealand in 1998



In 2017 Pakie Keating and Deirdre went to Scotland to visit some friends. They visited the grave and monument of Jimmy Shand, who died on December 23, 2000, aged 92 years, at Auchtermuchty Cemetery, Fife, Scotland.



Pakie Keating got his First Dan & Diploma in Martial Art, Shotokn Karate, at Clonmel in 2006.



Pakie Keating and his wife, Deirdre, at the afternoon tea dance in the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool in September 2014



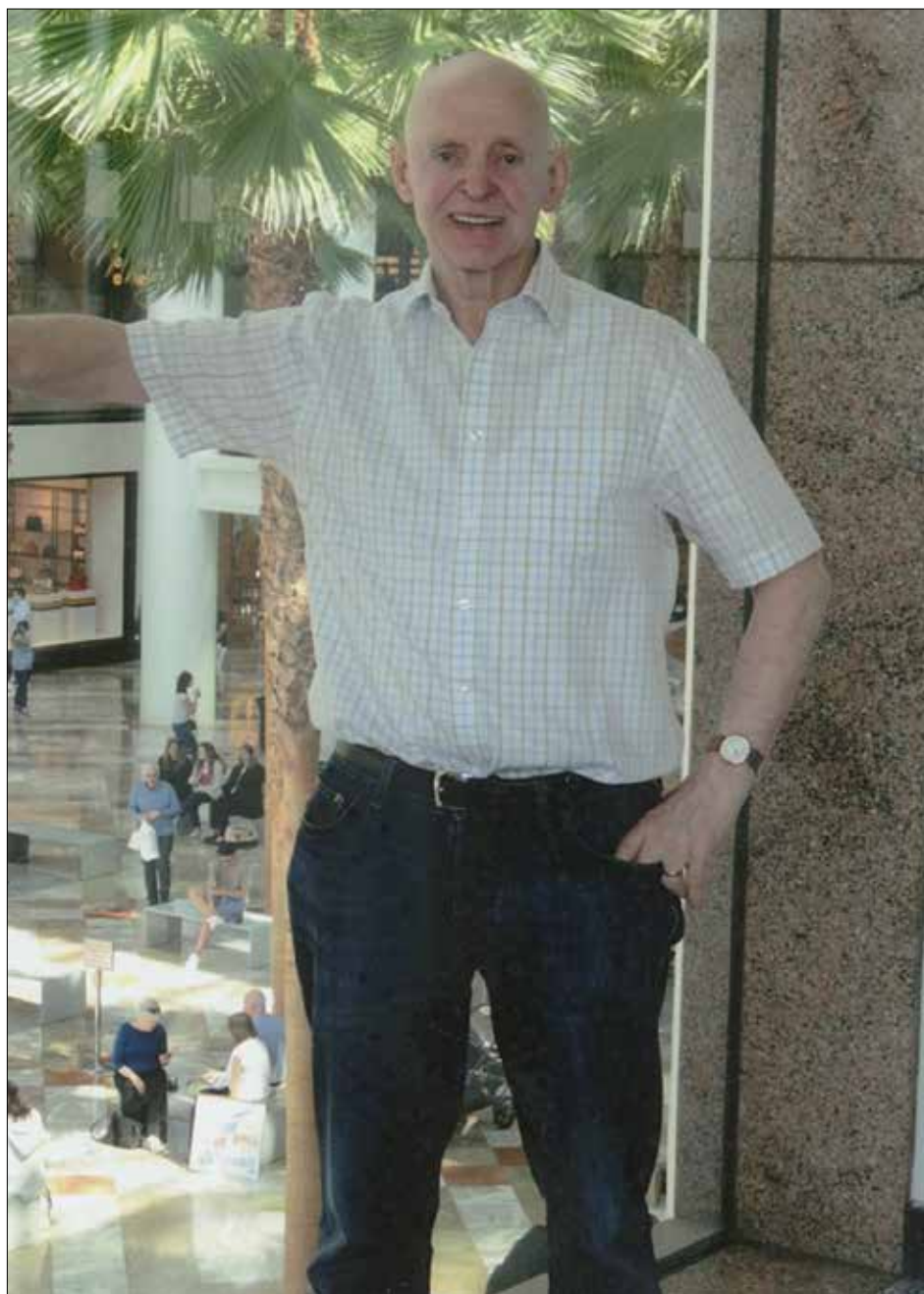
Pakie with friends Hilda and Alan in London.



Pakie's granddaughter, Coco, and her mum, Kerstin in London.



Pakie and Deirdre with Florida friends Barbara and Joe Gorman.



Pakie Keating at the 9/11 Memorial Museum, New York in 2018.

Sean Feery recalls the recording of *Cashel My Home Town*

The recording of *Cashel My Home Town* came about seven or eight years ago. Myself and Billy Bob used to get together every now and again just to play a few songs so we arranged to meet up in the Palace Hotel bar mid-week when it would be quiet for a session.

On this occasion our great friend, Denis Heffernan, was on duty behind the bar. During the course of the evening we would ask Denis to give us a song and he would only love to step up and sing for us. After we had finished playing I asked Denis had he ever recorded any of his songs and he said he would have liked to but never got the opportunity. So with that I asked him to come out to my house and we'll put something down. I was playing with our friend, Fran Curry, at the time so I asked him would he play the piano for Denis and he agreed to do it.

Denis arrived out about a week later to record the song, I recall he was very nervous so I gave him two cans of Guinness and he relaxed a bit and we put down a few songs that night, *Cashel My Home Town*, *Wonderful World*, *Them Bones* and *The Hills of Donegal*. There may have been one more but I can't think of it now. I mixed it and gave Denis a copy of it about a week later.

At some stage the words of *Cashel My Home Town* were imposed on an existing melody which is not at all uncommon. In this case it's the melody of the verse of *Noreen Bawn*. Not sure who did it the first day.

If I remember correctly I think he used the CD to raise funds for the charity Sudden Death Syndrome in memory of his niece. I think we put on a small concert in the Palace Hotel after with Billy Bob and myself.

As regards the original air of *Cashel My Home Town* I never heard. Fran or Billy may know more about that?

P.S.: I often met Denis down the town in Cashel after he retired and he used to thank me for the recording and that it was one of his lifelong ambitions. We were talking about him doing more recordings but unfortunately we never did.

Cashel My Home Town*

(Pakie Keating, December 1986)

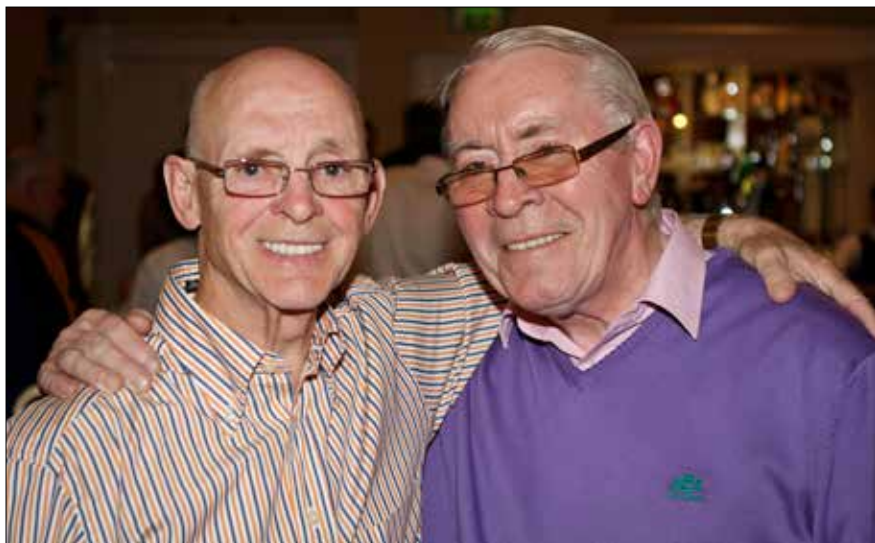
If you were born in Cashel,
Picture what you'd see,
The famous Rock, the King Cormac's sceac,
The skittles on the Green,
The dear kind friends you came to know,
That would never let you down,
I was always keen on the Red and Green
In Cashel my Home Town.

Oh, sweet Cathal Brugha my love for you,
McCann Street and Boherclough,
The Gouts, the Kiln and Gallows Hill,
And my walks around the Rock,
Old Bawnmore and Blind Street,
And John Street we strode down.
We felt content in what God sent,
In Cashel my Home Town.

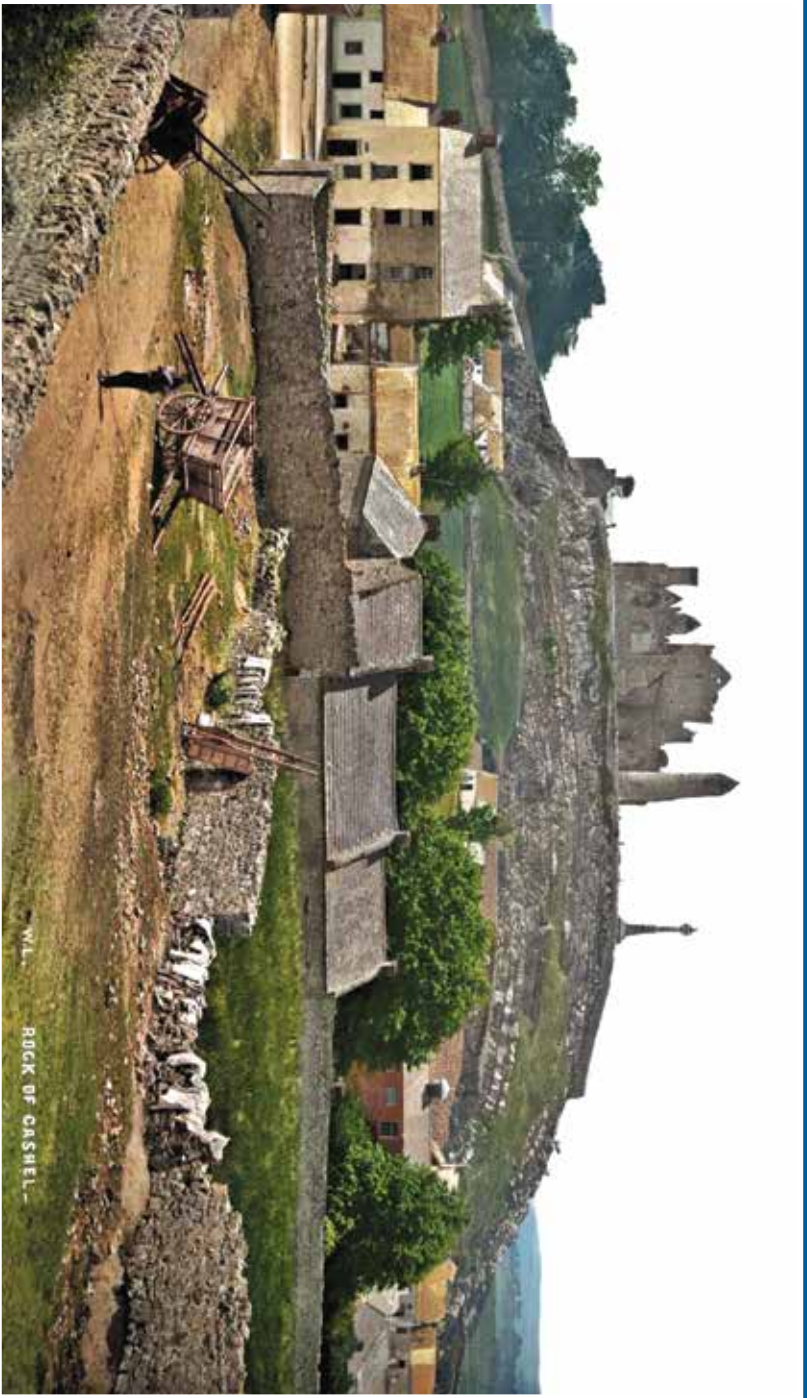
It's many the times I left you,
In foreign lands to stray,
From Shepherds Bush to Camden Town,
Sydney and I.A..
It's many the night I lay in bed
And my tears came rolling down,
As I left behind the friends I loved,
In Cashel my Home Town.

Come back home to Cashel,
The town I loved so well,
The Golden Road where we went to school
And the tall tales we would tell,
Brother Nolan's Band, it sounded so grand
As we marched up and down,
I'm proud to say, I'm home today
In Cashel my Home Town.

** This poem, sung by Denis Heffernan and music by Sean Feery and Martin 'Bob' O'Dwyer, was recorded in the Cashel Palace Hotel on September 11, 2010.*



Pakie Keating & Denis Heffernan



W.L. ROCK OF CASTELL.