

## TONY BARRY – IN MY FATHER’S TIME

By Mike Barry

The following is a slice of the life of 93-year-old Tony Barry, the oldest man in the Grange locality. The story is compiled from the recollections of the Barry family members and from a little digging and unearthing from the memory of the man himself, a memory that remains sharp to the present day. And so the story begins.



Joseph and Kathy Barry with children Michael, Maud, Joe and Tony at Gortacloona, Knockainey circa 1930.

### *In The Beginning*

The story begins with Tony’s birth on 13th June 1922. The Irish Free State had not yet formally come into being. That would happen six months later. Tony was born in an old farmhouse beside an older bridge on the Camogue River. The location was Gortacloona, Knockainey. Thirty-six years later Tony would move to Grange, to another old farmhouse beside another older bridge on the Camogue River.

Tony was one of five children born to Joseph Barry and Kathleen (nee Coffey of Birdhill). Tony’s siblings were Michael, Joe and Maud (twins) and Mary. Michael, who is one year older than Tony, still resides at the original family home and farm at Gortacloona. Mary and Joe lived their married lives in Dundrum and Cashel respectively, in County Tipperary. Maud (Quinlan) remained in Knockainey, living and farming just over the bridge from the village on the Hospital ‘low road’. Mary, Joe and Maud have passed away in recent years.

The family farm at Gortacloona was some 180 statute acres in size, and Joseph and Kathy Barry, Tony’s parents, farmed dairy cows and beef cattle.

### School

Tony attended Knockainey National School where his teachers included Pat Slattery, Miss McNamara and Miss Guerin. Slattery was a great friend of the Barry family and visited Gortacloona many Friday evenings to play bridge and other card games with the family. *He taught us every card game under the sun*, said Tony during his recent inquisition for this piece, *and also taught us how to play chess*. Chess-playing was a skill Tony passed on to his own children many years later. And of course, the game of bridge would occupy much of Tony's leisure time in later life. Slattery would also regularly call to Barry's house for dinner on Saturdays, following the previous night card sessions.

Although Tony was born left handed, he writes to this day with his right hand. This results from the educational thinking at the time when it was considered preferable that all children were taught to write with their right hand, regardless of their left-handed nature in cases such as Tony's. The school at Knockainey was no different, and hence, to this day, Tony has a less than artistic right handed style.

School classmates in those days included Francis Byrnes and the O'Callaghan brothers amongst others. The O'Callaghan family were the harness makers of Knockainey and were friendly with the Barry family long after school years. Mavis O'Callaghan, who lives in England, was a great friend of Tony's sister, Maud, right up to her passing away in 2013.

From Knockainey School, Tony passed on to the Christian Brothers secondary school in Hospital which would later be taken over by the De La Salle order. One aspect of the new school that Tony found difficult to get to grip with was the fact that all subjects were taught in the Irish language. Tony, being more mathematically inclined, decided he was more suited to 'The Tech' and moved on to Hospital's alternative secondary school. Some time later his decision was vindicated when he won a scholarship to Clonakilty Agricultural College where he spent one year studying the subject matter of his family's profession. And so started Tony's farming adventures.

### *The Dealer and the Drover*

Tony, being the second-oldest son and as is the custom, was not going to inherit the family farm. But he nevertheless knew that farming was the road he would take on life's journey and started buying and selling calves and "an odd bullock or two" from the time he finished in Clonakilty. Tony and his brothers would walk cattle to fairs in Kilmallock, Bruff, Hospital and Knocklong and as far away as Emly. If they were selling, then their father would collect them at the fair, after the sale, in the family car. If they were buying, he would drop them to the fair, and they would act as their own drovers to bring the cattle home.

In time, enough money was made to buy a small van, which made the calf trading a little easier. The van widened the geographical circle of business, and trades were now done much further afield. The van also doubled up as Tony's mode of

transport to visit his future wife in Dooradoyle. A *dirty auld red van with hay sticking out the back door* was a recent description of Tony's pride and joy! One cannot help but imagine Tony heading out on a Saturday night, when the Parisian scent of *Eau De Cologne* would mix and fuse with the more vibrant aroma of *Knockainey Calf*.

Cattle and calf trading was eventually being carried out in the province of Leinster as far north as Dublin and in parts of Munster. *Cows or cattle bought at the Dublin sales were transported on a cattle train down to Limerick in those days*, Tony recently informed family members.

One unintended consequence of these trips was that Tony started to follow League of Ireland soccer farther afield than the Markets Field, which he had begun to frequent some years earlier, often cycling by bicycle from Knockainey to the Limerick home venue. Drumcondra and Glenmalure Park and Milltown as the home of Shamrock Rovers was better known, were amongst those he attended in the 1950s and 1960s when he would travel to Dublin for the cow sales. If Limerick were playing in the capital, then that was an added bonus. Addie remembers to this day having to call to Milltown on their way home from the honeymoon before they later caught the train back to Limerick!

### *The Move to Grange*

The farm at Bridge House, Grange was in the ownership of one Gerald Barry, a first cousin of Tony's father, Joseph. He had decided to sell up in 1958 and the relations from Gortacloona put in a bid. A deal was finally done, and Tony Barry was now the proud owner of a farm of 186 statute acres. The farmhouse and land sit on the banks of the Camogue River, only a few miles downstream from Tony's place of birth, with the house being over 100 years old at the time of purchase.

The farm back then was not the farm it is today. Almost every field was badly waterlogged with no underground drainage of any sort. Thus began many years of digging and forming underground stone drains throughout the length and breadth of the farm, which joined to the main ditches or dykes, which separated field from field. The stone drainage system eventually solved all the problem locations, which were numerous back in the early days. The additional use of an outside contractor with tractor and mole plough every five or six years turned the farm into one of the finest in the locality. *1958 was the wettest year I ever saw. I think we had twelve months rain*, said Tony, of his first calendar year at Grange. *I was afraid to go out on occasion as the water was so deep in the fields*, Tony explained, with a little exaggeration thrown in for good measure, as is his way.

Tony married Patricia Galligan in September 1960. Patricia ('Addie') worked in Barrington's Hospital and lived up to the time of her wedding on the Galligan farm at Dooradoyle, a small village a few miles outside Limerick City in those days. The Galligan farm was part of the land on which today sits Fr Russell Road. The honeymoon was in Jersey, and the marriage produced four children: Michael, Gerald, Karen and Niamh in the years 1961, '62, '64 and '67.

Over the years, the livestock was built up to some forty milking cows in addition to seventy to eighty beef cattle of varying ages. Some of the field names on the farm were well-known locally, as many older men of the locality helped save the hay on the farm during the summer months, especially in Tony's early days at Grange before the later arrival of two sons to help with the work. Or some might have occasionally worked for Gerald Barry before Tony's arrival. The "14 Acres" was the largest field on the farm, "The Abbey" has the ruins of an old religious abbey to this day and "The Lodge" was opposite the entrance to Croker's Estate across the road. All were and are amongst many other field names still alive in the memory of the family today and the memories of older members of the Grange community.

The milk was taken each day with a tractor and trailer to the creamery at Skule, Fedamore, about two miles distant. Sunday mornings required an earlier effort than normal, as all milking, delivery to the creamery and cleaning of the milk tankards had to be finished in time to attend Grange Mass at 10 am. The cows were found (somehow) in the fields well before sunrise. Cloudy mornings made the task particularly difficult in the extreme darkness. Tony (and his sons in later years) could only listen for the sounds of the cows on the darkest mornings, rather than see their silhouettes or outlines as might happen in the lesser darkness of brighter mornings.

A local man named Paddy Sheehan worked for many years with Tony at Grange. He lived on the main Limerick Road, in a cottage about a half mile on the Grange side of what is presently Martin Scanlon's Food Store and Petrol Station. Paddy was a traditional man who smoked far too many "Players" cigarettes on a daily basis but was an incredible worker with a great knowledge of farming and the land. Paddy was moreover a lovely kind man who was like a second father to the Barry children, and a picture of him hangs to this day in the Barry kitchen.

Another man who worked on the farm in the mid-1960s was local Grange man, PJ Burke, whose many relations still live locally. PJ moved to England many years ago and stayed at Bridge House as a guest during a subsequent visit home, many years later. Tom Corrigan, who was born just over the river next to the forge, also worked on the farm with Tony for a few years and lives today in West Limerick.

Tony's great neighbour in all things farming in the early days was Jack Barry, no relation of Tony. Tony and Jack often bought pieces of equipment on a shared basis to keep farming costs down. They helped each other save the hay during the summer, so the hay season covered the entire months of June, July and August for Tony, Jack and Paddy, given the extent of the acreage to be cut, the vagaries of Irish weather and the traditional method of saving the hay by hand in those days, before the eventual arrival of the baling machine.

The hay was cut and turned a few times until dry enough to make small hay-cocks or wynds. A week or so later the hay at the perimeter of the wynd adjacent

to the ground was pulled by hand and placed on the top of the wynd by two men using pitchforks; one man on the ground and the other balancing like a circus acrobat on the top. The entire structure was then tied down by chord or in older days by thick ropes made from twisted hay, which were referred to as “sugáns”. The processes involved was referred to as “pulling the butts” and “topping” the wynds, and if the hay happened to have a lot of thistles in it, then a man or boy could spend many of the following days or weeks removing thistle thorns from his fingers and palms, as did the Barry boys on numerous occasions. The hay was then drawn into the hay barn with a tractor and ‘buckrake’ where it was stacked, again by men with pitchforks, until all was safely under cover and protected from the elements.

Both Barry sons remember many years of hinting and suggesting (and fighting!) to convince Jack and Tony to move away from wynds and switch to ‘bales’. Both men did not have any faith in hay bales when the technology first arrived and it took a few years of trial by other local farmers (farming guinea pigs!) before the two men would concede that maybe these bales were a good idea after all. Paddy Sheehan and the two Barry sons almost wept for joy at the decision!

The ‘to bale or not to bale’ debates at the time caused Paddy Sheehan to remember a story he had heard from older men during his childhood days. The story concerned the first horse-drawn mowing machine to arrive in Knockainey village and also related to new farming technology.

Many Knockainey men earned much of their annual income by cutting hay for local farmers using traditional scythes. They were obviously fearful, correctly so, that the new mowing machinery would take much of their work and income away. The first machine to arrive in Knockainey district was accosted by a group of ‘scythe men’ at a small bridge on the Camogue River in the village (where John Byrnes now resides, son of Tony’s school classmate, Francis). The men duly lifted the machine and threw it from the bridge into the river!

A few pigs were also kept on the Barry farm in the earlier days, more for family consumption of bacon than for any great commercial venture. The killing of the pigs was carried out by neighbour-from-over-the-bridge, Tommy Bulfin. Tommy performed the same task for all in the Lower Grange locality, cutting a small cross on the throat of the pig before the more serious business ensued. Families who used Tommy’s services would deliver some of the resultant home-made black pudding to the Bulfin house a few days later, in thanks, and also deliver a little to other close neighbours or friends.

Around 1967, Tony and Addie decided to open a farm guesthouse which Bord Failte were pushing at the time, and a “Bridge House – Farm Guesthouse” sign was duly erected. Over the years, hundreds and hundreds of people from numerous nations stayed at Bridge House and got to know the farm, the Grange area and Grange community. Many, of course, were only passing through on their way to Kerry with all its

natural beauty or elsewhere, but many others who stayed a little longer got to know The Hamlet and Reardon's Pubs or even got to know some of the local characters.

The guesthouse finally closed in 2007 after some forty years of trading. A number of old regulars are still given special passes, though, and Addie's Irish breakfasts continue to receive rave reviews far and wide.

Numerous friendships with people from many different countries were made during that time, and one that holds a special place in the Barry family memory is that made with the Van Damme family from a small town called Zottegem near Ghent in Belgium; particularly that with their mom, Lea, now deceased. *The Belgians*, as they became known, returned time and time again with extended family members and friends and did so for some fifteen to twenty years after the initial stay. The Barry family also made many visits to Zottegem in return. Son Bruno, now a family man in his forties, learned to play pool in Reardon's Bar as a seven-year-old and was introduced to greyhound racing and betting on the dogs at the Markets Field. Numerous additional and related family ties were also made back then that last to this day, and it probably won't be long before grandchildren meet grandchildren, whether in Ireland or Belgium.

Another great memory that lasts to this day was the stay of the Special Olympics Team from Turkmenistan at Bridge House in 2003.

Great credit and thanks are due to local Grange ladies, Biddy Fitzgerald (nee Madden) and Moira Dillon, who worked at Bridge House over many, many years, and without whose great help and assistance the guesthouse would not have been so successful. Biddy was present in the early years and Moira in the years that followed until recent times. Their Trojan efforts are not forgotten.

#### *Hobbies and Interests*

Tony was and is known to the present day as a decent card player. Obviously, playing cards at home from the earliest age gave him a good schooling, which was to stand him in good stead in later card life. Sunday nights saw games of '45' at Reardon's Pub in Holycross. Tony's sons still remember being taken out for the Sunday night bottle of red lemonade to watch Tony and friends do battle. The 'game of nine' card school was usually made up of Paddy Sheehan, Jack Barry, the Flavins and Gleesons from Grange and Fedamore and the Carrolls from Lough Gur. One was as good a player as the next and the money went full circle over a few months play, more often than not.

Another regular player in those days was Englishman, Reginald Dibstall, who was a retired colonel from the British army. "Reggie", as he was affectionately known locally, lived where the De Bossinger family presently reside on the Lough Gur Road and had never before encountered '45' until his arrival at Reardon's Pub. The locals showed him how to play, and he soon fell into the regular Sunday night

school. Reggie stated a few years later that he considered '45' at Reardon's the best card game in the entire world. High praise indeed from a well-travelled man.

In more recent times, Tony was and still is a regular bridge player at Bruff and Bulgaden clubs. Up to mid-2014, he was also a regular at the Sunday night 'Progressive 45 Drives' at Knockainey Community Hall. A very tough opponent, according to most, and an even tougher partner according to many more who had the 'honour'!

As already mentioned, Tony was a Limerick soccer supporter even before the move to Grange. In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, the Saturday night visit to the Markets Field dog track was followed by a Sunday afternoon trip to the same venue for Limerick soccer matches. The Markets Field was the Barry Sunday 'Mecca', and the form of Kevin Fitzpatrick, Al Finucane, Joe O'Mahony, Brendan Storan, Johnny Walsh, Ger Duggan, Des Kennedy and many others was studied and analysed



Tony Barry on the farm at Grange, June 2013.

week in week out. Tim O'Donnell was another Grange 'soccer head' that the Barry's would encounter each week at the games. Tim did not confine his support to home games, attending many away games also each season – unlike the Barry's, who were 'Markets Field only' men. Pat Clancy and Paddy Wallace were other Grangemen one might occasionally encounter. In time, Eoin Hand would arrive, win the League and Cup double, and crowds of up to 5,000 or more would attend matches. The atmosphere was utterly electric. Irish rugby international, Tony Ward, played for Limerick a little in that season also and could obviously have gone places soccer wise, had soccer been his first sporting love, such was his skill and speed on the ball.

The Barry sons reached late teenage years, and Holycross AFC became the new Sunday 'must-go' venue. Very soon, Tony was a regular attender and almost never missed a game. Only events like a cow calving or a greyhound bitch having a litter of pups would be reason enough to miss a match. The club had a great run of success in those days and Tony, together with a friend and fellow Grangeman, Seamus Byrne, became a bit of an institution on the sideline.

On one occasion, a visiting manager with a Limerick City side made the near-fatal mistake of coaching his team from the 'Holycross' sideline. His constant shouting started to annoy the ears of many. Tony and Seamus somehow managed to upend him head-over-heels or, maybe, heels-over-head (they tripped him as he reversed along the line!). With pride severely dented, he arose rapidly ready for revenge, only to be faced by the two Grange 'John Waynes' with fists clenched. Before anything more serious could ensue, some younger Holycross supporters jumped in to rescue the misfortunate manager lest he came to some serious harm. Realising his mistake (and now realising his place) he sheepishly walked to the correct side of the field to continue his managerial tasks.

Show jumping and horses were a feature of Tony's weekends in the 1970s. The Barry daughters found an interest in showjumping, and the Barry parents found themselves meeting new people in new venues. Buying and selling ponies and horses was a natural progression. On one such occasion, Tony was with his great friends from those days, Dr Costello from Bruff and Alfie McMahon from Athlaca, whose son Brian would later become European Junior Showjumping Champion. They had travelled to Clonmel to see an unbroken young horse that someone had mentioned they should see. Tony liked the look of him, but Alfie and 'The Doc' declined to take a share. Tony ended up buying him alone. Two years later, Tony sold him at the Dublin Horse Show for a great price. The horse was now called Impulse, and a short while later Impulse was a regular on the Irish national showjumping team. As the Barrys watched the showjumping from the Dublin Horse Show on one occasion, the RTÉ reporter announced Impulse's arrival into the arena stating that he was bred by Tony Barry from Grange, to the great delight of the watching Barry family. "Bred" was not exactly true of course, but Tony was happy to take the plaudits anyway!

Greyhound racing was a huge part of Tony Barry's life and a very successful part at that. He trained over sixty winners at the Markets Field track, winning numerous sweepstakes and also winning the prestigious Bass Ale Stakes. He also regularly topped the sales at Shelbourne Park in Dublin throughout the 1970s with young dogs that were showing promise. Most were bred from a great long distance racing bitch of Tony's called Dresden Doll, who herself won many races over 700 yards in her earlier racing days.

The Bass Ale Sweepstake victory was achieved with a dog called Rostemple Lad who later retired to stud and produced many litters. Sadly, he died as a result of an accident a year or two after his retirement.

Another 'big win' occasion was had when Tony was asked by great friend and fellow 'doggie man' Billy O'Connor, now deceased, from Bruree, to train a dog that Billy owned. The dog was actually in Billy's training for the first round of the Kentucky Fried Chicken Sweepstake sponsored by Limerick businessman, Pat Grace, who owned the fast food takeaway of the same name in the city. The dog was called Poker Dice and had such speed and potential that Billy thought it might be in his greater interest to get Tony Barry to train the dog for the remainder of the competition.

Tony duly accepted the challenge, and the dog was dropped to Bridge House for the remaining rounds. Neither Tony nor Billy broadcast the new arrangement, and the Barry boys were sworn to secrecy as Tony's reputation as a trainer might have shortened the odds with the bookies, had they known. Poker Dice progressed easily through the following rounds, and the night of the final arrived. A number of close 'doggie' associates were by now fully in the know about the Tony/Billy arrangement, and all intended to have one final 'touch' at the bookies to complement the large winner's cheque that Billy would hopefully collect. The money went down as the hare rounded the final bend, and the traps opened. There was never a doubt. Poker Dice broke from the traps like a rocket and skated home.

The greyhound stories that Tony and family could tell are legion and could take an entire book, or even two, in themselves. As already mentioned, Billy O'Connor (known to all as "Billy the Breadman", as he drove a bread van for Kiely's bakery of Tipperary) was a major 'partner-in-doggy-crime'. Billy would gather all the doggy information on his bread round and would call six days per week to Tony with a few loaves of bread for the Barry family, but more importantly to discuss the next plan or coup with their own dogs or how they might use the information they had gleaned on the dogs of others for their benefit. They were the proverbial *Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid* of the local doggy world. A few trusted lieutenants were also allowed into the inner sanctum. They included Tony's son Ger, who had a great interest in the game and Ger's fellow Holycross soccer player and greyhound enthusiast, Paul Normoyle from Crecora.

The bookies in those days were very careful if Tony Barry had a dog in a race. All were razor sharp in all things dog and all things gambling. The battle of wits with them on a weekly basis saw many casualties, but Tony Barry and associates had more than their fair share of luck, due in large part to Tony's ability as a trainer.

One ploy used on occasion to put the bookies on the wrong foot involved Ger Barry walking casually to a major bookie, a few minutes before the off, and

placing a small bet on an entirely different dog. The bookies would then deduce that Tony Barry's dog had no chance. If he had, Ger Barry would not be betting on a greyhound owned by somebody else.

With twenty or thirty seconds to go before the traps opened, the real gamble would take place, when a synchronised line of 'the trusted' would attack the entire line of bookies in a manoeuvre of military-like precision. As the traps opened, the bookies would be refusing to accept any more bets on Barry's dog from those who were too slow in the initial assault (there were always a few!). More often than not and with over sixty winners to Tony's name, such planned occasions resulted in a reasonably high level of success.

Approximately one week before race day, a dog might be taken to Knocklong for a 'trial'. This gave an indication of performance and improvement. If you had a really good dog, however, the fear of going to Knocklong was that you just might bump into Mable Hogan from Manister, Johnny Gallagher or The Gike Sullivan from Hospital or other doggy characters. They would easily spot a 'good one' and the chances of pulling off a coup at decent odds after that were then greatly diminished, as too many people became aware of the dog's potential. You couldn't even lie to such people about the time of your dog's trial. They had the dual advantage of each having their own milli-second clocks for timing the trials and they also, to a man or woman, seemed to possess some inner brain atomic doggy-clock that could give you the time of your dog over 525 yards to the nearest quarter second with frightening regularity and accuracy, just from personal observation.

To avoid such unfortunate chance encounters, Tony often took his best dogs to Newcastle West or even Donaskeagh in County Tipperary for trials, where the chances of meeting a local were negligible. If you did happen to meet one, then you were completely goosed, as the 'local' from home would know there was only one reason Tony Barry was in some 'foreign' field with his dog. They would then watch the dog fixtures in the daily newspapers with a magnifying glass in the days and weeks that followed to ensure they were present on the big night. Hoping, of course, to get the money down at best odds before Tony and cohorts had a chance to do the same.

Barney Curley, the famous horse trainer and gambler, once famously said: *This game would tame lions*, a phrase that sanctum member, Paul Normoyle, was also given to quoting. Tony Barry could assure readers that the same applies in equal measure to the greyhound game. The nights of the big wins were great, and you just prayed that they would outnumber those other nights when lady luck might slap you hard on the face.

One famous 'slap on the face' night happened in Walthamstow in East London. Tony's son, Mike, was now living in London with wife and son and thought it would be a nice idea to get back into the greyhound game. A quick chat was had with

Tony back in Grange, over the phone, and Tony in turn made contact with Billy O'Connor (yes – Billy again!). Billy's very promising young bitch called Lady Glory duly arrived at "The Stow" a short while later where she raced on Saturday nights.

Taking a leaf from Tony's book, Mike informed his trainer (an Irishman, originally from Cork City) that he didn't mind the monthly training fees quoted, but in return he wanted one night, just one, when the trainer would let him know that there was a very high probability of a win. And when all expenses might be recovered, with some interest on top. Some four months later the call was duly received. The trainer advised accordingly – *she will not be beaten on Saturday night*. Without further ado, an Aer Lingus ticket was booked for Tony to attend and assist with the planning, as the 'night of the big win' approached.

Tony duly informed Billy and others in the sanctum that the next coup would be on Saturday night 'down The Stow'. Members duly contributed to the 'investment fund', which Tony safely tucked away on his person. He took the train from Charleville, the plane from Cork and was collected on arrival at Stansted Airport by Mike Barry and Paul Normoyle, who was also by that stage living in London. Race night arrived. "Is she ready", the trainer was asked. "She sure is boys", replied the über confident Corkonian. "Will she win", he was asked. "There's nothing in it to touch her boys; relax; get the money down", he responded.

The bets were placed. And for some odd reason, the bookies just kept taking it. They did not drop the odds as one might normally expect. Odd, thought the experienced gang from Grange but what of it. We're on a winner! Local Walthamites also had got wind of Lady Glory's imminent 'victory parade' and were also diving into the shark-like feeding frenzy as the bookies just kept taking it and taking it. Welcome to the party, thought the Grangemen. The traps opened. Five dogs appeared at once. And what seemed like an eternity later, Lady Glory ingloriously popped her dopey dizzy head out of the traps. She was normally like a hare to the first bend. But tonight she was a tortoise. And as the race progressed she fell further and further behind, finishing a sad sorry last – her worst ever performance. This game would tame lions, as Paul Normoyle and Barney Curley once famously said!

#### *Your Health is Your Wealth*

As a young man, Tony smoked sixty cigarettes per day. But not for long. He decided one day, on the spur of the moment, that smoking was a waste of time and money and gave them up entirely without another thought. He has not smoked a single cigarette since.

At around sixty years of age, Tony received the medical news that he had developed 'type one' diabetes. He took it well. The following years have seen Tony take several blood samples per day and adjusting his insulin dose according to the



Caitlin Barry (granddaughter of Tony) with the Bass Ale Trophy at Port Fairy, Victoria, Australia, where the trophy has its permanent home with Tony's son Ger.

blood sugar readings, with huge care and input from Addie. He is one of the oldest sufferers of diabetes in the country, and his medical records were sent to the United States a few years back as part of a major international study into those who survive diabetes into older years. International Tony!

It's hard to say what Tony's longevity is based on. The 'TLC' of a saintly and caring wife has much to do with it, of course, for which the Barry children are and always will be, eternally grateful. A life of healthy work and exercise on a working farm together with much card playing to keep the brain alert and sharp would also obviously be hugely beneficial. Bacon and cabbage may also have played a large part together with the morning bowl of porridge, both of which were, and still are, on Tony's list of favourite foods.

*The Farm is sold (most of it)*

In 2007, Tony decided to take things a little easier, and a decision was made to sell most of the land. The house and thirty acres were retained. Tony showed many visitors around the farm in the following weeks as the public auction approached and took great pride in explaining to all and sundry about the drains here and there, and ditches and dykes that were constructed through his personal efforts over a lifetime. The auction took place at the Woodlands House Hotel in Adare, and a large crowd gathered. After ninety minutes or so the land was sold, and another chapter of the Bridge House farm commenced.

*Memorable Moments*

*Tony Barry v Sligo Rovers* – The Barry boys were once more at the Markets Field on a sunny Sunday afternoon. They were in their usual position on the ‘Popular Side’, as the side of the grounds opposite the main stand was called. It attracted the greatest of characters, mainly the older ones who had followed the sport all their lives and who were full of soccer knowledge and wit. It was primarily the younger supporters who went to the opposite side with the big covered stand.

On this occasion, the famed Sligo Rovers were the opposition. Eamonn Sweeney, a journalist and die-hard Sligo Rovers fan, published a book about his favourite club in 1997 called *There's Only One Red Army*, and on this particular day the Red Army had a sizeable number of troops in support. It was also obvious that many of the troops had a little (or a lot) too much to drink on the journey down to Limerick. And they were in boisterous mood and more.

A large fracas developed in the main stand and slowly the Rovers ‘fans’ in question made their way to the Popular Side, shouting loudly as they walked along the dog track. They passed the section where the Barrys were standing behind the track wall and were giving abuse to all and sundry but soon passed on. A few minutes later, like an apparition in the desert, a large force of Gardai suddenly appeared on the track some fifty yards further on with battens drawn. The fearful ‘red army’ ran for dear life back in the direction they had come from. Most were running forward but with heads turned backwards looking to ensure that they were getting safely away from the chasing Gardai. Which they were not!

Without any announcement to anyone, Tony duly jumped onto the track and threw a few haymaker punches at the biggest ‘red army’ offenders that Muhammad Ali himself would have been proud of. And without further delay, Tony again quickly jumped back into the terrace, lest he be mistaken by the Guards for a Sligo fan. He then proceeded to watch in safety as the Guards finished off on the track what he had started himself. For Tony’s two watching sons – seriously memorable!

*Tony Of Arabia* – In the spring of 2011, Tony and Addie decided on a visit to Dubai, UAE, where their eldest son was then working. Tony was aged 89 at this time, but the long journey and desert heat did not deter him. During the trip he saw the wonders of the most modern city in the Middle East, and consumed in a Dubai Marina restaurant the “best bowl of mushroom soup I ever had in my life”, as he informed the Barry clan afterwards.

A tour of the magnificent Meydan horse racing stadium and some nearby training stables was booked towards the end of the visit, and Tony even got to sit in the personal seat of Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Ruler of Dubai, which overlooked the finish line from a 5-Star enclosure high up in the

grandstand. One can imagine ‘Sheikh Mo’ boasted to his royal pals the following week that he was now sitting in the seat that Tony Barry once sat on!

The tour of a nearby training stables followed, which happened to be those of the UAE champion trainer of that year, one Muhammad Al Muhairi. Tony and Mohammad got on famously, walking the horsey walk and talking the horsey talk. A great photo was captured of Tony holding the most valuable Arab horses in the yard, with the fully white-robed Muhammad standing beside. All in all, a great tour that brought a very memorable visit to a conclusion.

Tony’s son, for a bit of craic, sent the photo to the *Vale Star* newspaper back home, which they duly printed before Tony’s return to Grange. On Tony’s visit to Kilmallock Mart a few days after his arrival home, he bumped into a good Kilmallock farming friend. *I saw your photo in the Vale Star last week Tony. What in the name of the Almighty were you doing with that Arab horse trainer in Dubai*, enquired the mystified friend. Mischievous as ever, Tony replied — *That trainer was having a few problems over there, Willie. He asked me to go to Dubai to work with him for a week!*

#### Thanks

To Tony for the life we have had. To Addie for being a saint and for always giving. Thanks to the entire Barry family for the above information.

Both Tony and Addie are still going strong thank God. A sequel will sometime have to be written. Maybe one of the grandkids will write it. Until then!

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Patricia and Tony Barry.