

JUST DOWN THE ROAD

By James Collins.

Before World War II, the only way to travel to Ireland was by ocean liner. It was a 10-day trip each way. A few years after the war, it became possible to fly by air transport. My trip was on an Electra four engines prop driven aircraft, which took 13 hours going over and 14 hours coming back. In 1959, I took my mother back to Ireland, where she had left 30 years earlier. Ireland was still extremely rural and it was as if going back to America in the early 1900s. There was no car rental agency in those days but each of the small villages had a single car whose owner was the driver. When you hired the car, you hired the driver and you had to feed him and include him in most of your visits.

On this trip, my mother wanted to meet all the relatives and socialize. I, on the other hand, wanted to range the countryside and hunt foxes and rabbits. My relatives, acquiesced to my desires, got me shotgun, rifle and a local farmer as a guide, and turned me loose on the gorgeous green fields of Ireland.

The Irish are a very sociable lot. As I wandered the small hills and valleys around the town where my mother was born, many of the farmers vigorously waved me in. They all knew my mother and referred to me as 'the Yank'. You cannot enter an Irish house without being fed. At each house, I was offered a boiled egg, a cup of tea and a piece of toast to go with the conversation, which centered about my family and how we were doing in America. By the sixth farmhouse, I had had it with the eggs. These were the Casey's, friends of my mother from childhood and the woman of the house was lovely. After all the normal pleasantries, Mrs. Casey asked me, "Do you know my son, Danny? He lives just outside of New York. "

"Danny Casey from Kiskeam? No, not that I can remember, and I take special note of anybody I meet who comes from Kiskeam."

"But surely you must meet him at all the dances in New York."

"Well New York is kind of big and sometimes you don't get to meet everybody. However, I will ask around and see if I can find Dan Casey. Where does he live exactly? The boroughs of New York are big but I get to all of them on a regular basis"

"Oh he just lives down the road from New York itself."

"Do you have an address with that so I can find him?"

"Oh, here it is. He lives in the borough of Chicago."

THE END

