

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SEAMUS O CINNEIDE

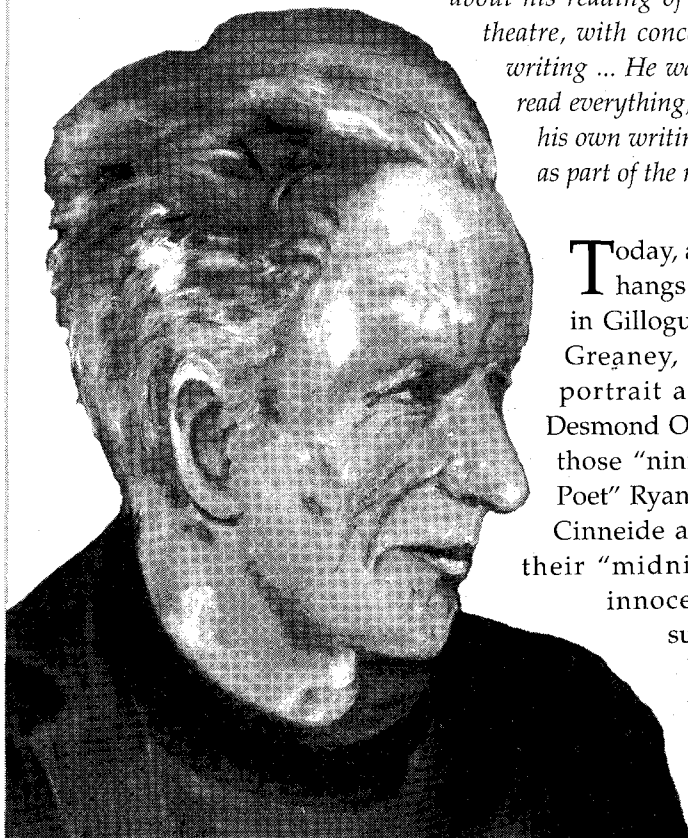
Since the publication of our last *Journal*, Seamus O Cinneide has died. His passing evoked widespread sorrow in Limerick and among his friends in many parts of the country.

For more than fifty years, since he was a young man, his lean and sprightly figure was a familiar sight at most cultural events in the city. There were few people more steeped in the lore and literature of Limerick than Seamus O Cinneide. For decades, he wrote about the poetry, politics and history of the place in various publications. He was a genuine Gaelic scholar and spoke and wrote the Irish language with a prolific fluency.

Plassey was his favourite spot. He liked to walk along the banks of the Shannon, usually with a book in hand, to savour the delights of the riverside. He also liked to sip a few drinks with fishermen and local patrons at Walsh's bar in Gillogue. He was invariably to be found in the midst of picnics, fishing competitions and regattas in Plassey and Corbally. He had a special affection for Co. Clare and wrote widely about its folklore, music and customs.

His friend and Limerick City's premier poet, Desmond O'Grady, paid this tribute to his memory:

Whenever I returned on a visit to Limerick, Seamus was one of the first people I would look up. He wasn't difficult to find, because he was a prominent cultural figure in Limerick for as long as I can remember ... Seamus would expound his endless knowledge of Limerick's history, ancient and modern, with enthusiastic gesticulations as we progressed, with healthy pub stops for refreshments, the while pausing to parley briefly with the countless citizens he knew about something or other. He knew and loved the city more than any other Limerick person I ever met. Seamus didn't walk, he strode purposefully. I had to push myself to keep up with his stride and his story ... he would take giddy gallavants about his reading of international modern poetry, painting and theatre, with concerned advice on what I should do about my writing ... He was blessed with prodigious creative energy. He read everything, knew everybody ... I hope that what he left of his own writing will be conscientiously edited and published as part of the record of Limerick's cultural history.



Today, a portrait of Seamus O Cinneide by Jim Brinn hangs attentively in Tom Walsh's (Lame Duck) bar in Gillogue, alongside paintings by C.M. Doran, Tom Greaney, Michael Collins and Walter Verling. The portrait and its location evoke fond memories of Desmond O'Grady's poem "Kitty Bredin" and echoes of those "ninny nights in Gillogue". Here, Gerard "The Poet" Ryan, Kitty Bredin, Desmond O'Grady, Seamus O Cinneide and a host of literary fellow-travellers held their "midnight" courts of poetry, music, song and innocent, carefree mirth-making in those long summer evenings in Plassey long ago.

Though he could be controversial and mischievous at times, the contribution of Seamus O Cinneide should not be forgotten in his native city.