

## **Micheal O’Cianain The Shercock Piper**

The death of Micheal O’Cianain, Glassleck, Kilann, Shercock, will be mourned by lovers of traditional Irish music everywhere. Aged 82, he was in good health up to a short time ago, his last public appearance being at the end of last year at the Cavan Trades Fair where his musical display attracted a great deal of interest. He entered St. Felin's Hospital shortly afterwards and he remained there until his death on Holy Thursday. He was a life-long member of the Pioneer Association. His home in the remote hills around Shercock was a focal point for traditional music lovers, young and old, from far and Near. He welcomed all visitors and enjoyed nothing more than to play his pipes and discuss his music with them.

A leading member of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, in his younger days, he travelled the length and breadth of the country participating at Feiseanna and Fleadhanna. He made his first set of uilleann pipes in the 1920's because, he said at one time, he could not afford to buy a set. Over the years as his reputation as a pipemaker grew, he had no shortage of orders to keep him going. He made bagpipes for people throughout Europe and America and one of the last sets he made was for a customer in Hong Kong.

Micheal O’Cianain was a meticulous craftsman. Using raw materials of African Blackwood, German silver or brass, ivory and Irish leather, he took more than a year to complete a set of uilleann pipes. He was always anxious to ensure the continuance of the craft and being a bachelor, he had no children to whom he could pass on his skills. He was the last of the family. In 1975, however, after many years of campaigning and with the help of the County Development team he succeeded in getting his first apprentice - a German medical student, Christian Tschirch, who stayed with him for twelve months and appeared in concerts with him.

He participated in his first Feis in 1907 and often recalled with pride that he played the pipes at the head of Arthur Griffith's election parade through Cavan in 1918. He was also a member of the Killann Pipers' Band which took part in the parade in Dublin to commemorate the centenary of Catholic Emancipation in 1929. IN the 1930's he lead the O'Raghlaigh Ceilidh Band which was popular in local halls.

He was a collector of old antiquities and his most treasured possessions

including the Flag carrying the slogan "Saoirse Creidimh 1829-1928" which he designed himself and was carried in the 1929 parade. He also possessed the flag carried at the head of the Cavan team parading around Croke Park on their first appearance in a senior All-Ireland final in 1928. His most treasured and valuable possession was an original Edison phonograph with a collection of 450 cylinder type records, all in perfect working order. Evidence of the high esteem with which he was held was reflected in the large attendance at the funeral from St. Patrick's Church, Shercock, on Saturday, which included many prominent members of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann. Rev. Joseph Young, C.C., officiated. Included in the large attendance at the funeral were pipers from all over Ireland.

Two pipers from the Corduff Pipe Band P. Finnegan and J. Walsh piped a lament as the coffin was borne to the cemetery.