

'A RAMBLE BY
THE NORE'



A Collection of Verse
By

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WOODSTOCK HERITAGE MUSEUM

A memento of your visit to Inistioge,
Co. Kilkenny

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Inistioge

Inistioge, like a precious jewel
Is set beneath the hill
On the pleasant banks of the River Nore.
At high tide, like a lake so still.
Across the graceful ten arch bridge
Is the village green so fair
With pathways, flowers and fountain
And lawns so green and bare.

Go on around the corner then,
And up the village street
There on the right a lovely square
Enclosed with chains, so neat.
Two churches stand across the way
In close proximity
St. Mary's and St. Colmcille's
In perfect harmony.

Woodstock, a house of history,
Is high upon the hill,
A place of peace and beauty now,
Its ruins are standing still.
Mount Sandford in the wood close by,
Portrays a vista grand,
A tapestry of hill and dale
Woven by 'The Master's Hand'.

Now stroll along the Ladies Walk
Beneath the trees so tall
And listen to the symphony
Of every woodland call.
Then back again to the village green
To while some time away,
And watch the Nore flow slowly by,
Thanks be to God for a perfect day.

The Lady's Walk

I love to tread the Lady's Walk,
As the gentry did of yore,
And step into that sylvan glade,
Across the threshold of the door,
I picture ladies wandering there,
Beneath the trees, so tall,
And think of how they rested,
In Mount Sandford's majestic hall.

There they viewed the ten arch bridge
Set in that glorious scene,
The churches and the castles
Amidst the hills so green.
And the silver Nore, so far below
Down by the Lady's Quay
Where boats sailed often to New Ross
In that far off, bygone day.

Now may this place always remain
As it was in days of yore,
Untouched, unspoiled by progress,
To be enjoyed forever more.
By all who wish to wander there,
To experience nature at its best,
And view with joy that glorious scene
From Mount Sandford's lofty crest.

St. Colmcill's Well

Above the Combe, there is a well
In a quiet secluded glade
Dedicated to St. Colmcille
In a far off, by gone age.

Pilgrims came there long ago
On hands and knees to pray,
Along the rocky hillside
mid stones and shale and clay.

An image of the Saint is there,
Engraved upon the wall.
The people came to cure their ills.
And drank the water, one and all.

The scene has changed a lot since then,
How lovely now the place,
With plants and flowers everywhere,
The Altar Stone to grace.

On Pattern Day, the 9th of June.
We gather there for mass
And hymns are sung and prayers are said,
While kneeling on the grass.

Oh, Keep this ancient custom on.
In ages yet to come.
And God will bless our village homes,
Beside the lovely Combe.

Clodiagh Church 2000

Clodiagh Church, a place of peace,
Is in a quiet glade,
Beside the rippling, singing stream,
Beneath the tall trees shade.

In the seventeenth century it was built,
Below the rock it stood.
The roofree had a crown of thatch
The floor, well trodden mud.

In Penal Days, so long ago,
When Holy Mass was banned,
For safety when danger came,
A dugout for the priest was planned.

Yeoman on their tour of pillage,
Passed this small church by,
It was so completely hidden
From their wicked evil eyes.

In eighteen hundred it was rebuilt
There in that lovely dell,
The hills and valleys all around
Re-echo its chiming bell.

Three hundred years have now passed by
Since worship first began,
In that little church, a gem serene
Set in that shady glen.

Now in this new Millennium
May we still continue on
To praise our God in that shrine of peace,
For centuries yet to come.

The Red House

The Red House by the River Nore
Bathed in the summer sun,
Was a special place in bygone days,
For dancing, sport and fun.

On 'Boating Sunday' long ago
Such crowds all gathered there,
With flowing tide, boatloads arrived,
A picnic to prepare.

Coaches from Kilkenny came,
Along the Poyntz Road way
Then song and dance for many hours
Echoed around the Quay.

What stories this old house could tell
Of those happy days of yore
Where vows were made, by friends so true,
Beside the lovely Nore.

At the ebb of tide 'twas time to go
They tidied up the dross
Farewell was said to friends again
And the boats sailed back to Ross.

Times have changed a lot since then
They gather there no more,
And 'Boating Sunday' is but a dream
Upon the River Nore.

Now again the scene has changed
In that lovely place, serene,
The tidal Nore reflects the house
Rebuilt and renewed, pristine.

The fishermen, with nets adrift,
Catch salmon by the score,
The Galley sails up from New Ross
Through the valley of the Nore.

The Mass Rock 20/7/99

On a breezy July evening
We went to Ballygub
Transport by tractor was provided,
Through rocky road and mud.
The children all in colours gay,
Were like a rainbow on the hill,
As we made our way through stone and fern,
Down to the rippling rill.

We gathered 'round the Mass Rock,
There in that shady glen,
And thought of people long ago,
Who came by hill and fen,
To celebrate the Holy Mass
There in that secret glade
Far removed from prying eyes
Beneath the tall trees' shade.

Alas one day, the "Lookout" cried
"The Redcoats are on their way"
He quickly donned the vestments then
While the priest in heather lay
The soldiers gathered round him
They hanged him from a tree
A martyr true, was he that day
He gave his life, the priest to free.

Now we recall those far off days
When God to worship, was a crime
Still the people kept the faith
Despite the laws of Penal times.
May we too, in time to come,
Still be true to God on high
And remember how He died for us
That we may be with Him, when we die.

Ghosts of Other Days

Have you ever been to the waterfall?
Above the Red House Bridge,
Where the Brownsford stream comes tumbling down
Along the rocky ridge,
You can sit and rest by 'Poll na Minne'
To watch it foaming o'er
And listen to its boisterous song
As it goes on to join the Nore.

Then on you go and climb the hill
To the Swiss Cottage, once so grand,
It's perched upon the cliff so steep,
Now be careful where you stand.
Then think about the days long gone,
When the Woodstock folk and friends,
Came there to sketch the picnic,
Their leisure time to spend.

I love to sit and ponder there,
On times so long ago,
When comely maidens in dainty gowns,
Watched the stream so swiftly flow.
Did they meet their sweethearts there
To whisper words of love,
And 'plight their troth' beneath the trees
As the birds sang high above.

Those Woodstock folk are now all gone
The 'Big House' is just a ruin,
Lawns and gardens once so grand,
Lie desolate beneath the moon,
At last, at last there's plans afoot,
It's beauty to restore,
Perhaps the ghosts of those far off days,
Will wander there once more.

A ramble by the Nore

From the square in Inistioge,
Go through the river gate,
And stroll along the Point Road
'Tis part of the Woodstock Estate.

On the left The Sally Meadow,
Beside the rippling Nore,
And on the right against the sky
The graceful pine trees soar.

Ramble on to the ladies Quay,
Where off' in days of yore,
Boats went sailing to New Ross,
On the bosom of the Nore.

Now on the right a monument,
Its story brings a shiver,
Four young Dublin students
Drove straight into the river.

Across the pond on the other side,
The boat slip and picnic place,
There in the lovely Summer days
The children dive and race.

Now on again beneath the trees,
The road winds around the rocks,
Down just below the island,
Are moored the fishing cots.

Across the road is the Ice House,
Where food and ice were stored.
Now there you'll see Daubenton's bats,
They have made it their abode.

Teddington a lovely house,
Is close to the waters edge,
On the opposite side the Old Court Stream,
Comes thundering o'er the ledge.

Now as you ramble on your way,
You'll enjoy the woodlands sound,
And see the ducks and swans below,
And squirrels and rabbits all around.

Then step it out along the road,
Above the Nore so grand,
Until you reach the Red House,
A piece of fairyland.

Down in the glade an old stone bridge,
You can rest there on the wall.
Before you climb along the hill,
To reach the waterfall.

Then farther up the hill again,
The old Swiss Cottage stands,
A picnic place in days gone by,
For the Woodstock folk so grand.

Now as you head for home again,
A different view you'll see,
Of the lovely village of Inistioge,
Where you can enjoy a cup of tea.

The New Millennium

On New Year's Eve at 4pm
As the sunset hour drew nigh
We gathered in the Parish Church
And raised our candles high
To salute the new millennium
2000 years since Jesus' birth
When angles sang in Bethlehem
Goodwill to men and peace on earth.

We thanked the Lord for the many blessings
Bestowed on us all through the years,
And asked Him for his help and care
In times of trial and bitter tears,
We prayed for those throughout the world
Victims of strife and war,
Now forced to flee their native homes
And seek refuge in lands afar.

We raised our voices with the choir
Singing carols new and old,
To praise the Infant King of all,
Born in a stable poor and cold.
We went up to the alter then
Our candles shining bright,
And passed beneath the Millennium Arch
As we went our way into the night.

Now the New Millennium is here
With hope in our hearts we journey on,
God grant us peace in our dear land,
May trouble and strife at last be gone.
Let us learn to live in harmony
With our neighbours one and all
And with our thoughts fixed on Eternity
Prepare to answer that Final Call.

Tranquillity

I sat beside the waterfall,
The sun shone on its spray,
And it tumbled o'er the glistening rocks,
And went gaily on its way.

The old Swiss Cottage on the hill,
Still guards the cliff so steep,
A secret place where long ago
Old sweethearts came to meet.

Lennox Bower was also there,
A rustic building quaint,
'twas there the Woodstock ladies came,
their picture's fair to paint.

The bridge so high that spans the stream,
Is dangerous now to cross,
The timbers almost rotted through,
Are covered o'er with moss.

The Brownsford stream goes rolling on,
To the stone bridge in the shade.
All glory to God above
Who blessed this lovely glade.

I wander back along the wood,
To my home upon the hill,
Through many years since I first came here,
Oh Lord I love it still.

My Home By the Nore

Inistioge, that gem of Kilkenny,
By the swift flowing Nore is set,
Though I have travelled around this fair country,
Your equal I have never seen yet

I have been to the Kingdom of Kerry,
And journeyed right 'round the ring,
Then I went to the great house of Muckross,
That place which is fit for a King.

The city of Cork I have visited, Down the Mardyke,
On the banks of the Lee,
Back by Lismore and Mount Mellory,
And returned to Clonmel by the Vee.

All 'round Co. Wexford, I've wandered,
From Hook Head to Vinegar Hill,
And on to the garden of Ireland,
Glendalough fills my memory still.

A week I have spent out in Galway,
And stayed in a house in Salthill,
I then saw the jewel of Connemara,
Kylemore Abbey by the lakeside so still.

I have been up to Knock in Mayo,
To our Lady's Shrine, at the gable wall,
And drove on North West through Sligo,
To Killybegs in far Donegal.

But Inistioge, my heart's always with you,
Though I roam this fair country o'er,
Wherever I go, all roads lead me back,
To my own home, on the banks of the Nore.

The Dolphin '99

On the 14th of June in that valley so fair,
The warm sun shone down on a crowd gathered there,
All viewing the Dolphin, as she frolicked and played,
There in the Nore, 'neath the trees' leafy shade.

How she came up stream, is a mystery unsolved,
To get her back home, many men were involved,
Padraig of Wildlife, on advice from U.C.C.,
Helped P.J. & Co., turn her back to the sea.

Sue Nunn, Kilkenny Radio, kept us informed,
As they travelled downstream, through Lothian,
On by the Poll Mor, Puconna, Coolmuck,
Then on the Kerryhole the Dolphin got stuck.

There they finally loaded her, into a boat
Then off to New Ross, they quickly did float
The Bridge there provided, a grandstand for the crowd
Overlooking the boat, as to the slipway it ploughed.

A pickup was there, all ready to go,
The last leg of the journey, with that precious load,
Gardai provide an escort all the way.
As they hurried along to Dunmore East Bay.

Sinead Gerrity gave chase, with no time to lose
And reported the scene, on the 10 o' clock news.
The Dolphin was leaping about in the Bay
So happy at home, after that adventurous day.

Now we will remember that day in Inistioge,
When we all gathered 'round, the Dolphin to see,
And far in the future, may the children recall,
That great silver creature, that held us enthralled.

Carriganeal

Go up the hill from Inistioge,
And south above the vale,
Four miles along the road to Ross
Is splendid Carriganeal.

'Twas part of Woodstock long ago,
Tall oak trees graced the view,
But they all fell to the woodman's axe,
In nineteen twenty-two.

The forestry took over then,
They planted pine and larch so fair,
And on the roadway up above,
Giant Eucalyptus scent the air.

But then alas disaster struck,
In nineteen thirty-seven,
A courting couple dropped a match,
And smoke curled up to the heaven.

Now again the workers came
And planted as before,
The trees grew tall and beautiful
Above the river Nore.

In June '88 the trees were felled,
Now that was a sight to see,
Kelly's engine hauled them up the hill,
It was driven by Charlie 'D'.

The Galley sailing on the tide,
Salute the workers on the hill,
And Charlie Diamond then replied
With whistle blast, loud and shrill.

In 1930 ore was mined,
'Twas deep within the rocks,
Local men were there employed,
To ship it down to Ross.

For many years they worked the mine,
Far underneath the hill,
It is not safe to visit now,
As one false step could kill.

So when you are on holiday,
And you have time to spare,
Go visit splendid Carriganeal,
But be sure you take great care.

A stroll through the Park

The morning is fair, I was up with the lark
Tiny is frisking along by my side,
Down through the wood overlooking the Nore
Where two swans so gracefully glide.

With air like wine and fragrance all'round,
The world is my oyster as I ramble along.
Brandon Hill on my right with the sun peeping o'er,
The woodland is loud with birdsong.

Beneath the tall trees I smartly step out,
'till the ruined mansion comes into view,
What a pity that dreadful burning occurred,
It was destroyed in 1922.

Big granite steps lead to the sunken Parterre,
Through the Arboretum and Kitchen Garden beyond,
Now a walk on the Terrace, such beauty to see,
Where once stood a glass house on a circular mound.

On my right is the Dove Cote, also the Tea Rooms
As I stroll through the yews to reach the Rose Garden
Through the archways I wander, inhaling the perfume,
It's the pride of the Park, "begging nobody's pardon".

Skirting the Ha-Ha and around by the pond,
The Monkey Puzzle Walk is laid out before me.
Spellbound I gaze at this wondrous place,
My heart fills with joy, such splendour to see.

My walk is just ending as I veer to the left,
To enter the Silver Fir Avenue.
Like a marvellous Cathedral, with pillars so tall
To give glory to God, the Creator of all.

4/1/20

Now home I will go, with my little dog,
Down by the Red House and grand Waterfall,
Up the hill I will climb to the Swiss Cottage ruin
Then just the last pathway and over the wall.

My Little Bit of Heaven

I have a nice little house, at the edge of the wood,
Where I hear the 'Dawn Chorus' so sweet,
I ramble each day, to the bridge down the way,
Where the Brownsford stream and the River Nore meet.

The waterfall sings its song all day long,
As it tumbles down over the rocks,
And meanders around the moss covered stones,
To where boats are moored at the stocks.

The lovely Red House, on the plateau above,
Is reflected beneath in the river,
And sallies, so green, along either bank,
Dip their heads to each breeze, with a quiver.

I wander along the roadway above,
The river, with islands inset,
There graceful white swans glide under the trees,
While the fisherman puts out his net.

How tranquil and lovely it is in that place,
Overlooking that verdant Nore valley,
Wherever I roam, I'll always come home,
And there in that spot I will dally.

My Special Place

Down the wood at the bridge today
I sat and watched the waters flow,
Meandering around the mossy stones
Reflecting the sunlight's golden glow.

'twas peaceful there beneath the trees,
and birdsong filled the air,
a squirrel, cavorting overhead,
sat high on a bough to stare.

My two small dogs were wild with glee
As they chased about among the heather,
A startled pheasant flew overhead,
Oh, what a glorious burst of colour!

Would that this peace could always reign
In this beautiful world of ours,
Such happiness would be my lot
In 'my special place' of shady bowers.

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