

A Hedge Schoolmaster

**Told by Mr. James Ganley, (Aged 65)
Cartron, Attymass, Ballina, Co. Mayo**

**Told to JohnHennigan, Cartron, Attymass,
Ballina, Co. Mayo**

About seventy years ago there was an old schoolmaster called Devaney and this man lived in Graffy.

There was an old school in Currower at the same time and in Summer the children of Graffy would go to that school but in Winter it was too far and they went to a barn in Graffy where Devaney taught them. Each child brought him a penny and two sods of turf in the week. Some person in the village gave him lodgings and he got milk from the neighbours also.

There were no seats in this barn and the pupils sat on big stones. Their pens were made from geeses feathers and sometimes when they ran short of ink they made some from soot and water. He was supposed to come from Ballisodare. He could work miracles.

One dark night as he was going to a neighbour's house for milk he met two young men. One of them hit the coal which he had, in his face with a slap of his hand. Off ran the boys and he after them. When he failed to catch them he said; "If he is the devil out of hell himself I will have him here before an hour". He then went home, got the coulter of a plough and an egg. He put the coulter in the fire, the egg in the ashes, took out his book and began to read. The boy who hit him got no rest from now on so he went to Devaney and apologized to him. Devaney then said; "If you were not a neighbour you would not be alive now."

He used to fish in a boat made from rushes. When going out he would say: "In the name of the devil".

One time he beat Tom Ganley and the boy was unable to attend school next day. He came into the house for milk and on being told what was wrong with him he said he would cure him. He took a string from his pocket and measured it three times from his elbow to the top of his finger. This string he put round the invalids head and he was instantly cured from the headache.

Devaney did numerous other queer things.