

Compo for victim of attack outside disco

THE victim of a serious assault was awarded €15,000 in compensation at Athenry District Court after evidence was heard how he had been set upon outside a nightclub in Monivea.

Phillip Lally of Glenaveal, Ballyglunin, Tuam pleaded guilty to assaulting Niall Keady causing him injury outside a nightclub in Monivea on December 27, 2008.

Mr Keady told the Court that he had never met Lally before that night and had no issues with him but that he was knocked to the ground with one punch and then further assaulted while he was down.

Garda Michael Deane confirmed that apparently there had been no problem between the two young men before that night and nothing had provoked the assault.

A medical report produced in Court showed that Mr Keady had suffered a fractured cheek bone and bruising to an eye and that he had to go for regular neck massages to an Occupational Therapist to alleviate headaches and his Post Traumatic Stress. That treatment had cost €1,280 and there were also medical bills from Beaumont Hospital in Dublin.

Lally, who has no previous convictions, had since apologised to him, the Court heard

through his defending solicitor, Mark Shields, and had offered to pay compensation of €15,000 as well as the medical bills.

Mr Keady told the Court he had recovered well and had shook hands before the Court hearing on Tuesday but that it had affected him for a while.

Asked by Judge Joseph Mangnan if he had any inkling as to what caused the incident, Mr Keady said "drink, the two of us had been drinking".

Lally, said Mr Shields, hadn't realised the injuries he had inflicted were so serious and the only explanation he could offer was that his client had mixed alcohol with medication, prescribed for depression, which he had suffered following an accident, in which he broke his back. This had led to his unemployment but he had now recently secured a new job and he was borrowing the money from his parents to pay for the compensation.

The Court was told that €10,000 was being paid to the injured party immediately and that the balance would be paid within weeks. The medical costs would also be met by Lally.

Judge Mangnan said he would reserve judgement in the matter until April 13 to see if full compensation and medical costs had been paid.

New book reveals extraordinary story of Galway woman's pioneering adventures in Czarist Russia

BY JUDY MURPHY

SOME things in life have the hand of fate stamped on them. A new book about the extraordinary life of Kathleen french definitely comes under that category, as though it were destined to be written - specifically by Jean Lombard.

An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia was launched on Sunday last in Monivea, the ancestral home of the french family and the final resting place of Kathleen whose extraordinary life took her all over the world, from Belgium to Russia, from Galway to Outer Mongolia and, eventually to Manchuria in China, where she died in 1938.

Yet, her biographer never knew of Kathleen's existence until 22 years ago and the where fate intervened. Dublin born Jean and her husband John were on their way to Moscow to set up Australia's ABC's news bureau in the then USSR. John was to be the network's journalist, Jean the administrator.

Before leaving they visited John's mother, Rosamund Blake in Tipperary and that was where she first learned of Kathleen, 'the Russian cousin', whose life spanned some of the most tumultuous events in history, including World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

Jean's husband's great-grandmother was Kathleen french's great aunt. Their common ancestor was Adelaide french who had married a Blake.

"My mother-in-law had been tidying shelves and had found letters Kathleen had written to my husband's grandfather and her [other] cousins, the de Stacpooles, telling about her experiences in prison during the Russian Revolution."

"It was a chance on my part that we were going to Russia and that my mother-in-law was tidying. We never even knew there was a Russian cousin."

That was the beginning of an adventure that led Jean in the footsteps of this amazing woman, a member of the Russian gentry, who had such strong links with Galway, where her father owned Monivea Castle and demesne. Kathleen's parents met at a function in Moscow, Her father, Robert Percy french, a diplomat was about 32 at the time, her Russian mother some years younger. Robert was born in Monivea and had been sent to school in England as a boy. His mother died when he was ten and after school, he joined the British Foreign Service. His younger brother, Acheson stayed in Galway and looked after Monivea Castle and estate.

Kathleen was born in Brussels when her father was a diplomat there. When her parents separated some years later she went to Russia with her mother and grandparents. The family owned seven estates in the Simbirsk area, 600km east of Moscow.

"She spent more of her life in Russia than anywhere else, but she loved Ireland and had a wonderful relationship with her father, despite the huge distance between them," says Jean. "As soon as she was old enough he insisted that she was brought to see him wherever he was in Europe."

Kathleen was 15 when she



Author Jean Lombard, pictured at the french Mausoleum in Monivea Wood, where the remains of Robert Percy french and his daughter Kathleen are housed.

Man admits stealing ex-wife's bank card

A MAN who visited his estranged wife couldn't resist taking her bank card because he was facing eviction and needed money to pay the rent, Athenry District Court heard on Tuesday.

Michael Francis of Park, Athenry pleaded guilty to handling a stolen bank card and to handling stolen property, €700 cash at Joyces Supermarket in Athenry on January 16 of last year. His partner, Fionneala Headley of the same address also pleaded guilty to handling the stolen bank card and to the theft of €700, the property of Bernadette Nolan on the same day.

Inspector Sean Collieran said he was withdrawing the handling of the stolen bank card in Headley's case. Garda John Keating said that the theft of the bank card had been spotted by the owner almost immediately who reported it and that the couple had been caught on CCTV footage.

Defending solicitor,

Angela Dempsey said that Headley had nothing to do with the theft and had been asked by her partner to use the card to withdraw money. Full compensation has been paid since.

Francis had previous convictions for assault and theft, the Court heard. Ms Dempsey said that her client was in poor circumstances and had been in ill health which meant he couldn't work. At the time of the theft, he was being threatened with eviction and he didn't want to be homeless. His work prospects were not good, she added as he was still on benefit. Judge Joseph Mangnan gave Headley the Probation Act and ordered that Francis carry out 80 hours of community service work in lieu of one month in prison. He also fined him €200. He also ordered that a community services report be carried out on Francis, whom he ordered back before the Court for April 18.

Man stole Garda caps

A MAN who stole a Garda fluorescent jacket, as well as two Garda hats and a pair of Garda gloves from a patrol car, was given a one month suspended jail sentence at Ballinasloe court last week.

Judge Geoffrey Browne told Patrick Ward (20), 34 St. Grelan's Terrace, that his patronage on the night in question was "very brazen". He imposed fines totalling €350 on him and suspended the jail

sentence on condition that he was of good behaviour for two years.

Solicitor Geroid Geraghty said it was the defendant's first time in court and he had paid over €200 compensation.

The Court heard how the items of clothing were stolen from the Garda car on December 3 as Garda were dealing with a call out at St Grelan's Terrace. All the items, bar the jacket, had been recovered.



Mary J. Murphy and Gerard Glynn, Belclare, with their sons Gerard and Mason, at the launch of "An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia", a biography about the life and times of Kathleen french, at the Father Sammon Hall in Monivea.



Author Jean Lombard signs a copy of her book, "An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia", a biography about the life and times of Kathleen french, for Mary Murphy, Bushypark, at the Father Sammon Hall in Monivea.

first visited Monivea and loved it - at one point saying that "I could quite happily spend my life in Russia than anywhere else, but she loved Ireland and had a wonderful relationship with her father, despite the huge distance between them," says Jean. "As soon as she was old enough he insisted that she was brought to see him wherever he was in Europe."

Kathleen was 15 when she

paper was scarce, the pages would have been written on twine," says Jean. In addition, "when people are writing letters to people they know, they use a kind of shorthand, because there would be familiarity between them. So, it was a real detective chase".

Often after pages and pages of trivia she'd find one sentence "that was a gem and would lead you on and give you the incentive to keep going, because there were times when I felt like giving up".

She stated by translating every letter and ordering them chronologically. Then she discussed the format with various editors, who told her that the book needed an author's voice and couldn't just be a series of letters.

She chose excerpts that told something significant about the day to day life of the people and the social history. Kathleen had trained as a medic and was involved in setting up Red Cross hospitals for wounded soldiers, both during World War I, and before that, when Russia was at war with Japan.

Her heroism meant nothing when the Russian Revolution began. Kathleen's lands were confiscated and her houses burned down. But some of her possessions, including valuable furniture survived and are exhibited in Simbirsk as part of a collection belonging to the aristocratic families who were ousted during this time.

Given the violence of the Bolshevik Revolution, Kathleen could have been killed.



Patrick and Maebh Kelly, Monivea, pictured at the launch of "An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia", a biography about the life and times of Kathleen french, at the Father Sammon Hall in Monivea.

Left: Valerie Blake, Kilkenny, with Mary and Carmel Nally, Ballyglunin, at the launch of "An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia", a biography about the life and times of Kathleen french, at the Father Sammon Hall in Monivea.

Amazingly, she wasn't. She had a British passport which helped, but wouldn't necessarily have saved her, as other British citizens were executed, says Jean.

However, she spent three months in prison in Simbirsk, which was grim. Ever the survivor, she got a job cleaning out the slops for the prison cook which gave her a couple of hours fresh air every day. This was followed by imprisonment in Moscow, which she described as worse than Simbirsk.

But there she heard a guard speaking English and told him there was no reason for her to be in prison. She was released without a kopeck in her pocket but met some of the Red Cross nurses she had known previously, who gave her food and a bath.

She came to Ireland in 1920, coming from one revolution to another and received a bad reception locally, which upset her. However, it wasn't entirely by a surprise, says Jean.

During the war when Kathleen was working in the Red Cross, she didn't have much contact with Monivea. So when she arrived, seeking refuge, her cousin Rosamund (daughter of Acheson, who had managed the estate for his brother) was less than friendly.

"Rossie didn't realise the extraordinary things Kathleen had been doing. Communications were difficult during the war and people didn't know what she was doing. Instead they felt she was being neglectful," says Jean, who feels sympathy for both women.

Kathleen left Galway almost

straight away, on a cargo boat, ending up in the Chinese province of Manchuria.

She never married, but had one great love affair when she was in her forties with a widowed captain from the Tsar's army. Their letters, sometimes exchanged daily, are "a treasure trove" says Jean. "Because she was exposing herself personally in these letters, you get a sense of who she was."

Her captain, who was under threat from the Bolsheviks, had an opportunity to escape while she was in prison, but didn't want to leave Kathleen. However, she made him take the train east. Years later she looked for him in Mongolia, but never found him.

She died in 1938 and was buried in China, but when her will was read, she had stated she wanted to be buried in Galway. Her body was returned to Monivea and was buried alongside her father in the mausoleum in Monivea.

Jean, who describes her as "a bit of an enigma, a bit of a riddle" took many years to write the book and she and John were initially busy setting up the ABC bureau in Moscow. However, she is delighted to have it completed, feeling "Kathleen wanted her story to be told".

Her only regret that the book was not published before her own mother-in-law, Rosamund, who initiated the project, died. But you can't help feeling that she would have approved.

An Irish Woman in Czarist Russia by Jean Lombard (Ashfield Press) is on sale now.

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