Hunting memories.

By Brian Quinn. (Crockban)

I remember one day my brother Anthony and myself borrowed Paddy Daniel`s (McBride) gun and went down to Owenreagh to hunt for rabbits. We had ferrets to chase the rabbits out of their holes and everything was going well until all of a sudden a policeman appeared on the road below us. We immediately recognised him as being constable Rooney from Draperstown barracks. Now this fellow had a reputation for ruthlessly hunting down ``poochers`` and bringing them to court. Anthony dived headlong into a sheugh and managed to disappear but Rooney started after me as I made for the high ground. The cuts in Owenreagh and Tullybrick are very narrow and so as I crossed over in the direction of home I had to jump each march wire fence. As I jumped each fence I could see Rooney jumping the last one which I had crossed, in hot pursuit. He was determined to catch me. However, after a long chase, youth won out and he gave up as I headed across towards Tullybrick and back to Paddy with his gun. It was said that the next day constable Rooney returned to the spot with an Alsatian dog in the hope of catching us ``pooching`` and that he got into trouble because his Alsatian dog killed a couple of sheep belonging to a farmer.

 Tracking hares and rabbits in the snow.

 In the winter time we used to love the snowfalls because we could go tracking hares and rabbits. We would cover big stretches of mountain terrain as we followed the footprints of the hares. The hare was a very crafty animal and could backtrack on his footsteps so that it could bring its tracks to a dead end and frustrate its hunters.