



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Martin Mulvihill has lived in Asdee, north Kerry, all his life. When he retired from farming, his daughter Breda gave him a gift of a computer with the instruction to write down the stories that he had first heard his early childhood. Martin had to start from scratch, learning how to type and to use a computer. He persevered, with constant encouragement from his family. The result is his first book, *The Stepping Match and Other Stories from Rural Kerry*. Martin has previously written a one-act play, *Congo Bound*, which was produced by the Asdee Drama Group of which

he was a founder member. The drama group won an All-Ireland Rural Drama Competition with the play *The Latter Days are Cold*, written by another Asdee man, the late Fr Neillie O'Keeffe. As a result, Martin is the proud holder of an All-Ireland drama medal. He was a regular contributor over a number of years to *Thought for the Day* on Radio Kerry.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Stepping Match and Other Stories from Rural Kerry recalls life in late nineteenth and early twentieth century north county Kerry through the lives of those in the fictional village of Ballymachad. The events described, though fictional, are based on real stories which were handed down orally through the generations. The author heard many stories from neighbours and family friends throughout his childhood and youth. The character of the people in these stories struck Martin and he has long admired their resilience and ability to celebrate life in the face of its many challenges.

He felt that their stories should be written down and, eventually, it fell to him to do the honours in recalling a people who managed to keep faith with life, with their culture, with their religion and their sense of community in spite of the harshness of their existence. In *The Stepping Match and Other Stories from Rural Kerry*, the humour, mischievousness, loyalty and kind-heartedness of the people of rural north Kerry shine through as, indeed, does their strong sense of community. These are salutary stories of lives well-lived in trying times.

Cover painting 'The Blacksmith' by Jane Hilliard

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