



Words quoted from a critique
By Kieran Keohane, PhD

ghosts of
the faithful
departed.

Personal

Work

– get fresh with your camera!

featuring **DAVID CREEDON**

It has been estimated that between 1949 and 1989 over 800,000 people were forced to leave Ireland. Something in the order of half of this outflow occurred during the 1950s. The peak was reached in 1955 when 55,000 young people left our shores. In a census taken in 1956 the population of the country fell to 2.8 million the lowest ever recorded and led one author to question, "Are we becoming the Vanishing Irish and would we survive as a race if something wasn't done to stem the outflow?"

Those who stayed had to suffer continued hardships, isolation & social exclusion. The rural communities were decimated by the impact of emigration. Many of those who stayed in this decade did so in silence as they watched family members and friends leave. Now in a new millennium these people have passed on

and their homes stand as a monument to a bygone age. While visiting these unoccupied houses I felt like an intruder disturbing the spirits that still haunt every room. In some homes it looked as if the last activity was the waking of the dead, the closing of the door and the abandonment of the house. Non-existent or faraway relatives simply left the house to the ravages of time. It was possible to date the last occupancy through observation of a calendar for example.

While looking at the scenes about me I felt I was awakening ghosts from my childhood past and there were times that the hair literally stood on the back of my neck. Spurred by dusty damp newspaper articles or mouldy-framed images memories came flooding back.

Wallpaper took me back to a holiday home my parents owned forty years ago. An old valve radio reminded me of the thrill of selecting on the illuminated dial distant cities like – London, Luxembourg, Prague. I can still hear Radio Eireann playing 'If you feel like singing, do sing an Irish song! Isolated inhabitants were very dependent on the radio for news of what was happening at home and abroad.

I decided at an early stage to shoot in colour as against black and white because this allowed me to capture the unique rich colours within the houses which were in contrast to the poverty of the times. I have strived at all times not to move or arrange items but to photograph as found.

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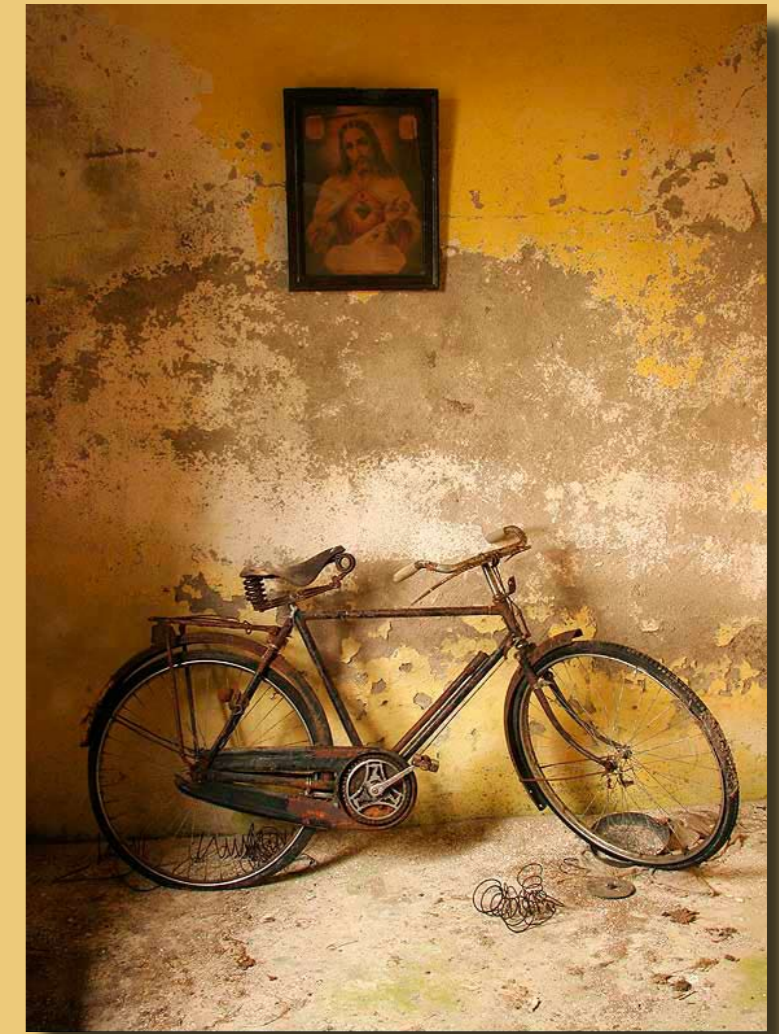
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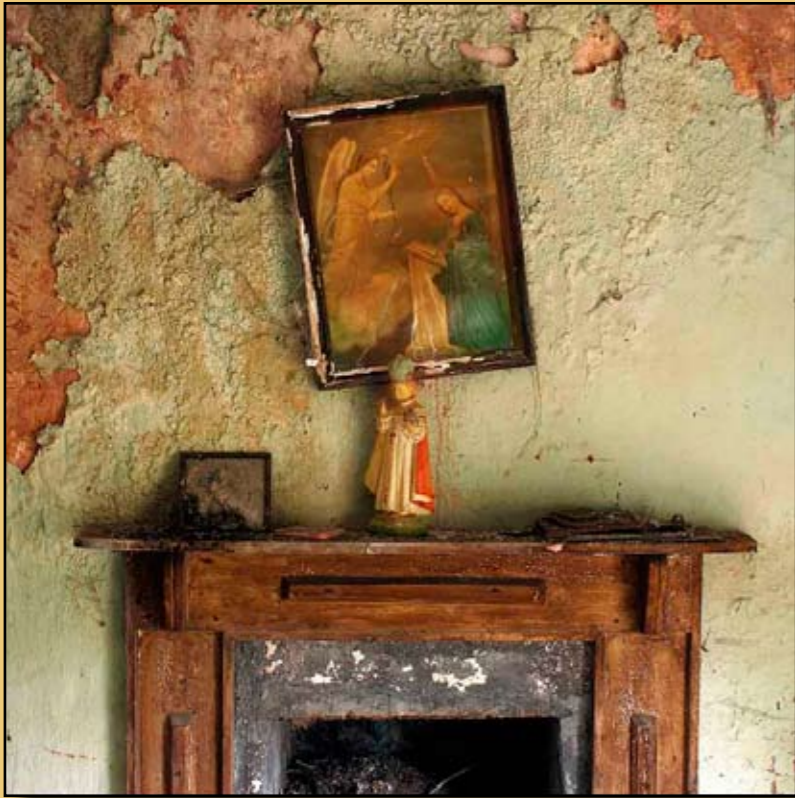


"...and just as important, the other opiates of ordinary people: lotto and sweepstakes tickets, the tea cups and bottles of whiskey..."

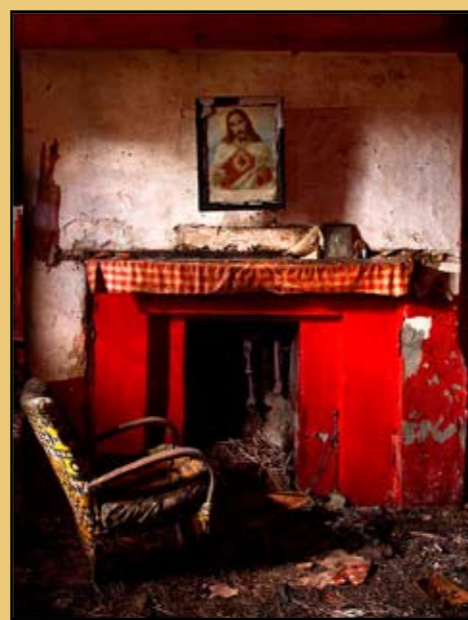
"...we can read the story of the life of our households and our individual and collective biographies..."



ghosts of the faithful departed.



"...the little pieces of elegance, beauty, delight and whimsy - the glorious red, blue, green, of the rooms; the elegant pram, the lovely teapot, the fancy car, the piano, the wireless, the pretty frocks in the wardrobe; the comfortable beds..."



Ghosts of the Faithful Departed will be exhibited at the Photofusion Gallery in London, opening on January 16th 2009, and will then be exhibited at a few select galleries in the UK. Note that this coincides with the 2009 Convention so you can go to both! Ed.