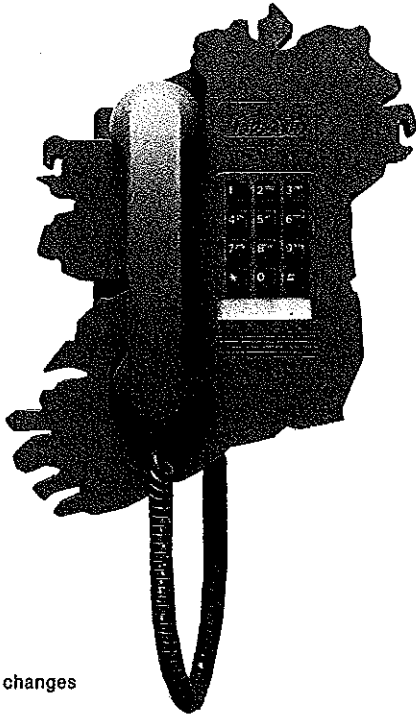


## THE GREENING OF AMERICA

It all began with a series of television advertisements by Telecom Eireann in which telephones turned into kangaroos and hopped off into the middle distance, into teapots which poured a consoling cuppa . . . and into a green map of Ireland with strong exile-appeal. Now the 'Ireland Dial' (sadly, the happier name 'Emerald Dial' had to be replaced for copyright reasons) has assumed tangible shape and is being marketed to the ethnic Irish-American population of some 45 million. The project is a joint venture between Northern Telecom (Ireland), a subsidiary of Northern Telecom of Canada, and The Blarney Group, one of the largest retailers and promoters of craft products in Ireland and internationally. The initial production run contains electronics suitable only for the US telephone network, but its adaptation for other markets — including Ireland itself — is under consideration. You can hang your communicative Irish contours on the wall or mount them on your desk, and the promoters are convinced that 'Ireland Dial' will put the country memorably on the map in homes and offices throughout the American-Irish community to the tune of some 250,000 units in the first year . . .



Ringling the changes

## ONE OFF

In 1895 Philip Somerville-Large, a Corkman who had worked on the Indian State Railways, was obliged to retire through ill-health. He settled near Kilcullen on the banks of the Liffey in Co Kildare and developed a fascination for the new fangled sport of motoring. By 1906 he owned a four-cylinder De Dietrich, but became convinced that he could build a better car himself. He imported a Gnome engine and a chassis from France, a body from England and with these components — and a set of Irish headlamps — built a five-seater open tourer which he named Silver Stream. It ran until its owner's death in 1929 bearing the first Co Kildare registration 10 1- and was then laid up for some years until bought and lovingly restored by Denis Lucey, who now accords it pride of place in his National Museum of Irish Transport in Killarney. Silver Stream is fascinating (Somerville-Large's plan to produce the car in quantity came to nothing) as are many of the exhibits in this unique display. They include the first petrol car to travel Irish roads; the 1898 Benz Velo; the first Co Leitrim-registered car (1T 1); and some more recent specimens such as 1934 Fords and Austins and a 1935 three-wheel Morgan of which more venerable visitors to the Museum will cherish personal recollections.



Marog O'Brien in her Farm Gate restaurant

## HOME FARM

It isn't just the spacioussness and marvelous light inside this unique establishment in the centre of Midleton; nor is it simply that this restaurant/shop/art gallery/music club has both the best local produce stand and the best from overseas. In its warmth and charm, the Farm Gate is something more. It feels like the home of a good friend, because even if you've never met Marog O'Brien before, she'll greet you with the deepest concern about which of the farmhouse cheeses is at its best today — or whose farm the green beans or British Queens come from. Marog will also explain the range of desserts just out of the oven, with chocolate and kiwis and other ingredients reminding you that this place is in its way as urbane as it is small-town.

Those desserts might appear at the shop in the front

or the restaurant in the back — which is also where the changing selection of pictures hang. That back room is a dream of a place, with its whitewashed walls, stone floors, and array of handsome country pine chairs and table.

The menu changes, the art changes, and so does the music. It could be traditional, classical, or folk. But it all has the same direct quality as the wooden candle holders Marog has had specially turned for her by a local carpenter whose work she admires. On multiple levels, the Farm Gate is a reminder that utmost honesty — of line and form and flavour as well as in one's companions — is the greatest charm of them all.

**Nicholas Fox Weber.**  
*Further information: The Farm Gate, Midleton, Co. Cork, Tel: 021-63771.*

