

# The Corran Herald

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# The Corran Herald

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Compiled and Published by Ballymote Heritage Group

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Issue No 52 2019/2020

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*The Corran Herald* wishes to sincerely thank all those who have written articles or contributed photographys or other material for this issue



# 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Ballymote Heritage Weekend

*Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August - Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019*

Organised by Ballymote Heritage Group,  
Ballymote, County Sligo [www.ballymotcheritage.com](http://www.ballymotcheritage.com)

## Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

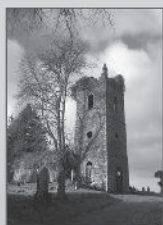
8.30 p.m. **Official Opening and Lecture:**  
  
*Irish Legal History at the turn of the century with a focus on County Sligo.*

*Speaker: Judge Keenan Johnson*

## Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

8.30 p.m. **Lecture:** "Sligo's archaeology, history and folklore as revealed through caves."

*Speaker: Marion Dowd, Lecturer in prehistoric Archaeology in School of Science, Sligo IT.*



*Emlaghfad Old Church of Ireland*



*Irish Petty Sessions Court*



*Caves of Keash, Co Sligo*

## Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August

11.30 a.m. **The Fr. Anton McDonagh chalice is the only memorial left today, whose association with the Franciscan Friary at Ballymote is stamped on it.**

*The inscription on the base of the Chalice in abbreviated Latin translates, "For the Convent of the Friars Minor of Ballymote: Friar Anton McDonagh had it made: September 1688".*

*This precious vessel will be making a return visit to the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Ballymote at the 11.30 am Mass on Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup> courtesy of Bishop Kevin Doran, Sligo.*

2.00 p.m. **Outing: Walking Tour of Ballymote**

*Guides: Neal Farry, Derek Davey and Dermot Henry*

*Starts at Emlaghfad old Church and finishes at Coach House Hotel at 4.30 p.m.*

*Refreshments can be purchased at the Coach House Hotel. There is no charge for this walking tour.*

8.30 p.m. **Lecture: The Illumination of the "Book of Ballymote".**

*Speaker: Dr. Karen Ralph - New York University, Paris.*

## Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August

9 a.m. **Outing: Birr Castle**

*Guided tour of the Castle and Self guided tour of the Gardens and Science Centre. Lunch in Courtyard Cafe on Castle Grounds.*

*(Tickets €50 (including coach, entrance fee, morning tea/coffee and lunch) can be purchased in advance from Casey's Pharmacy, Ballymote or on the day).*

8.30 p.m. **Lecture: "Sligo 1919 with a particular focus on South Sligo"**

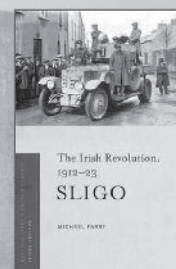
*Speaker: Dr. Michael Farry Writer, Historian*



*Birr Castle*



*The Book of Ballymote*



*The Irish Revolution 1912-23 Sligo*

Lectures at The Teagasc Centre: €10.  
Coach for Outings departs from the Catholic Church.  
Further Information 086 3542905

*Ballymote Castle*

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# STEPHEN FLANAGAN

## EDITOR OF *THE CORRAN HERALD* 2012– 2018

By Neal Farry - Chairman of Ballymote Heritage Group

Last year we celebrated 33 years and 50 Issues of Corran Herald. From its launch in 1985 until his death in 2012, James Flanagan was Editor of the Corran Herald. He was also a devoted member of the Ballymote Heritage Group and PRO. He was totally dedicated, skilled and thorough in his work in compiling and editing the Corran Herald over a long number of years.

The death of James left a huge void in the Ballymote Heritage Group, but the editorial role was filled at short notice and with grace by his

son Stephen. For the past six years Stephen has maintained and enhanced the role of Editor and the Corran Herald has continued to be published to a high standard and on time under his guidance. Stephen, who achieved all of this while working fulltime in Dublin with Microsoft, has now moved to Seattle in the USA as part of his job. He managed to get the Corran Herald published and to standard by volunteering long hours of his free time and for this we are very appreciative. Stephen has never been less than courteous and helpful even

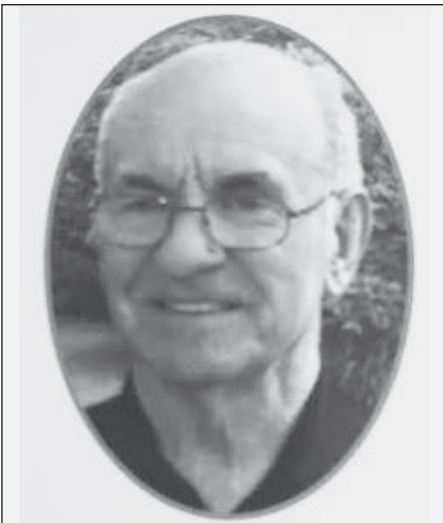
now when he is no longer Editor and is living outside of the country.

We are deeply grateful to Stephen for all his work on the Corran Herald and we wish him and Katie his wife all the best for the future.

We welcome Fiona Dunleavy as the new Editor of the Corran Herald. She has a hard act to follow in the steps of the Flanagan gentlemen, but we are more than confident that Fiona will enable us to continue the tradition of publishing the Corran Herald at the end of July each year.

## Remembering Padraig Mc Dermott

By John Mc Donagh & Padraig Duddy



It is with a great sense of loss that we mourn the death of Padraig, who died on Jan 18th 2019. Padraig was a frequent and valued contributor to the Corran Herald.

A native of Roadstown, Bunninadden Padraig attended Bunninadden national school and Ballymote Vocational school. After his school days he worked as a Postman around Bunninadden and the surrounding areas, he also worked for the E.S.B at the time of the rural electrification after which he moved to Dublin.

In Dublin he worked mainly at the carpentry trade and eventually was employed as "Clerk of Works" by Fingal County Council.

Padraig was a dedicated and really enthusiastic historian and researcher and had a photographic memory for names places and dates. He was a frequent user of the services of the Records Office in Bishop's street.

It was part of the service that if any piece of the historical jigsaw was missing. One only had to ring Padraig to get the required information.

He will be missed

## The Four Leaf Shamrock

By Joe Langan

I know a spot  
Where the sun shines like gold  
And the cherry blooms burst like snow  
And underneath  
Is the loveliest spot  
Where the four leafed shamrock  
grows.

One is for faith  
And one is for hope  
And one is for love you know  
And God put another one in for luck  
If you search you will find where it  
grows.

You must have faith  
And you must have hope  
If you search and you wait  
You will find the spot  
Where your four leaf shamrock grows.



# Remembering Margaret Foley and Katie Davey

By Kathryn Foley



**Margaret Foley**

My mother Margaret Foley died on the 9th of January this year at Ballymote Community Nursing Home where she was cared for during the last 10 months of her life. She was born on March 23rd 1919 at Rathdooney, Ballymote, where she continued to live for almost all of her life. Her parents Andrew and Kate Fox had three daughters. Molly the oldest girl died young in her early thirties having contracted a flu virus on a trip to Dublin. This was in the early 50's before the introduction of flu vaccinations. Molly was considered delicate having been born with scoliosis. At an early age she won a Scholarship to the Marist Convent in Tubbercurry. However, due to health problems she had to return home before completing her education. My aunt Kitty (Katie) qualified as a nurse in England – she often said she was homesick from the

time she left Ballymote to the time she returned. However, she persevered and later completed here midwifery in Holles Street Hospital, Dublin. Her nursing career presented her with amazing opportunities and later she returned to England to work with The Arts Education Trust in Hertfordshire – the boarding school of The Royal Ballet. This allowed her to travel back frequently to Ballymote as she enjoyed the school calendar.

My mother the youngest of the three was the only one left to take over the farm. With ageing parents and Molly who was experiencing failing health, she felt duty bound to care for them all. However, it was not all doom and gloom. All three of the Fox family members were outgoing and enjoyed life. They all loved fashion and style – something that stayed with them right up to the end. They frequently travelled by train to Sligo and also to Dublin on occasion. The old steam trains went so slowly, they would drop their parcels out the window as they passed the house. They'd then walk home from Ballymote train station without the added burden of parcels.

Soon after the death of Molly, my mother met Peter Foley from Highwood, Kilmastranny and on the 8th February 1953 they married. They had two children – my brother

Vincent and myself. My aunt Kitty continued to come home from England for long Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays. We would eagerly await the telegram, telling us what train she would be arriving on. However, as fate would have it she met Frank Davey from Lissananny and they wed in 1970. No more need to be homesick, she was home to stay.

Throughout a life that spanned almost 100 years there were many happenings. As a child, my mother recalled shots being fired over their sheds as the Black & Tans drove up the road into Ballymote. In the course of her life she lost her sister Molly, both her parents and later, Peter, her husband. Katie also lost her husband Frank and then to the delight of us all she came back to live in Rathdooney where she was born. Katie died in 2015 at the age of 97 years.

Both Margaret and Katie were great supporters of The Ballymote Heritage weekend. Every year they attended all of the lectures and frequently went on the heritage trips. They enjoyed the social aspect of meeting the people who came to Ballymote on an annual basis as well as the local people who attended.

The photo was taken at Sligo Races in 2012. They were then 92 and 93 years of age.



**L-R Katie Davey and Margaret Foley**

# The Philosophy of Pat Gallagher

Submitted by Michael Farry

Any country that wishes to have  
liberty must be up and doing.  
Nothing short of full Home Rule  
measure will satisfy the  
people of Ireland.

The coming year will be a very eventful  
one in the history of this country.

We await the future with the utmost calm,  
because we feel that no amount of cajoling will break up  
the splendid organisation of our people.

We intend to fight the battle until victory crowns our  
efforts, and give all the assistance that in our power lies to  
our representatives fighting our battle  
in the British House of Commons.

The League, should be supported, as well as the Irish  
Parliamentary Party, who have brought peace, plentiness,  
and Home Rule to the threshold of their doors.

Each man must pledge himself to do a man's part.  
The people must be prepared for any sacrifice, even life,  
any time their privileges and  
liberties are being tampered with.

Any member absenting himself without a satisfactory  
explanation will be struck off and  
a new member put in his place.

We will not readily let down a man who is a consistent  
Nationalist, and his father before him.

He was a loving son and a faithful comrade,  
as was shown on last Sunday when sixty-four  
young men wearing white sashes carried  
his remains to the grave

The day for landlordism is passed.

Never will there be contentment until every evicted tenant  
is put back in his or her home.

We are ready and willing to purchase our farms under the  
Act of 1903 if they are offered to us on reasonable terms.

We have plenty of waste land, with the poor people  
huddled on the bleak mountain side.

We hope to have grazing ranches torn up and divided  
amongst the landless people, which shall be the means  
of making our rising generation a happy and prosperous  
people.

The branch expressed its sympathy with John Hunt and  
his wife on being thrown out of their home on a bleak  
October morning.

Now is not the time for creating dissension in our ranks.

Some people nowadays have a convenient trick of  
coming into the field at the eleventh hour. That might do  
right enough in spiritual matters, but it will hardly do in  
the work of fighting Irish landlordism.

We now know the true Nationalists in the parish from the  
base-born slaves who are sunk in  
serfdom to-day, as if Michael Davitt never appeared in  
Irish politics.

He made a humble apology and promised that he would  
never again violate the principles or the  
orders of the League.

As this was his first offence, the committee accepted his  
money and allowed him to become a member again.

---

Pat Gallagher (1864-1959) of Creevane, Coolaney was secretary of Killoran parish United Irish League club from 1901 until the club faded away because of the Great War and the postponement of Home Rule around late 1914 or early 1915. The United Irish League was the parochial organisation which supported William Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party. Pat later supported Sinn Féin and spent a short period in Sligo Jail in 1920 having been arrested on suspicion of involvement in a raid for arms on Cultibar House, Coolaney. He hadn't been involved in the raid but his son,

Martin Dan, who was also arrested, had taken part.

The poem is a "found poem" in that the text is not original but is selected from the reports of Killoran United Irish League meetings, presumably written by Pat Gallagher as secretary, published in the Sligo Champion 1901-1914.

Pat Gallagher was my great grandfather.

**Pat Gallagher (1864-1959)**



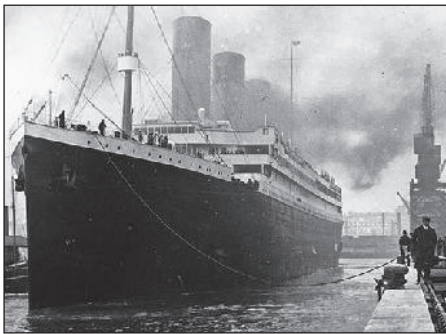


# Three Titanic Girls

By Kev Murray

On 15th April 1912 three young women, Miss Catherine Hargadon, Miss Mary Delia Burns and Miss Margaret Devaney, all friends, from Co. Sligo, boarded the Titanic at Queenstown, Co. Cork, to emigrate to the United States of America. Only one survived.

Miss Catherine (Kate) Hargadon aged 17, from Carnamadda, Carraroe, Ballysadare, County Sligo, boarded as a third class passenger (ticket number AQ/3. 30631, costing £7 14s 8d). Kate died in the sinking and her body, if recovered was never identified.



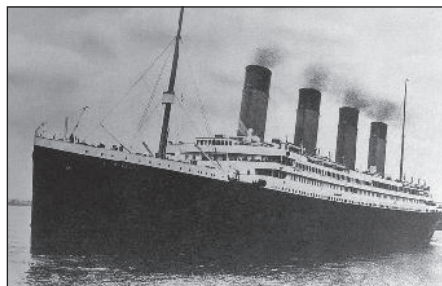
Miss Mary Delia Burns, aged 15 or 18, from Knocknahun, Kilmacowen, Ballysadare County Sligo boarded as a third class passenger (ticket number 330963, costing £7 17s 7d). Delia was emigrating to America where she hoped to get employment as a housemaid for a well-to-do family. She too died in the sinking and her body if recovered, was never identified.

Miss Margaret Devaney aged 20, was born 2nd June 1891. She was leaving her home in Kilmacowen, County Sligo, to settle in New York where her brothers, Patrick and Michael, and her sister Mary lived. Her parents were John Devaney and Margaret Devaney (nee Gunning). She boarded as a third class passenger (ticket number 330958, costing £7 17s 7d).

A contemporary account reads:

*“Morning dawned and her mother Margaret waved goodbye from the*

*door of the cottage, too emotional to accompany yet another child to the train at Ballysadare, the main departure point from County Sligo to the rest of Ireland, and from there the world. So off Margaret went in the horse-drawn jaunting-car with her father, John, and two neighbouring farm girls, Mary Delia Burns and Kate Hargadon, also booked on the Titanic.”*



In a 1973 interview, Margaret said the three girls were alerted to the disaster by an older male friend from their homeland. After a brief investigation of the Aft deck, the three girls went to retrieve their lifejackets from their cabin during which time they lost track of their older friend. Margaret said that after encountering locked gates to Second Class, the three climbed a ladder from the Aft Well deck to one of the decks on Second Class. One of her friends began suffering from seasickness and had to stop. The other friend stayed with her while Margaret proceeded on, intending to return for them when she would have located the life boat. But she found herself caught up in the crowd around Collapsible C and was pushed in. She said that as the boat was lowered it got caught on the ship's rivets; the crew had trouble loosening the falls to free the boat. One of them begged the passengers for help in cutting them. Margaret discovered she had a pocketknife on her, which was sold by Barton Smith's in Sligo, and gave it to the crew by which they were able to cut the collapsible free.

After Margaret's rescue, she lived

in New York. In 1919 she married John Joseph O'Neill. They relocated to Jersey City, New Jersey where they became the parents of six children, two of whom died in childhood. Her son Matthew O'Neill was born March 15, 1922 and died in Flemington, New Jersey in February of 1982. Her son John J. O'Neill was born December 11, 1927 and died in Cresskill, New Jersey on April 2, 1996. Both daughters survive. Helen Landsberg still resides in Clifton, New Jersey.

As Margaret Devaney O'Neill, frequently gave interviews about the *Titanic*, she spoke to many civic and school groups and was among the dozen or so survivors who attended the New York premiere of the film, 'A Night to Remember'.

After her husband died, Margaret O'Neill moved to Clifton, New Jersey. She passed away on June 12, 1974, at the age of 82. She is buried in Holy Name Cemetery, New Jersey.

Mrs O'Neill had saved three mementos from the *Titanic* and these relics are still treasured by her descendants. The first was her third class ticket (which she had in her sweater pocket when she left the *Titanic*). The second is the actual knife that the crewman used to cut the ropes that tied the oars together. The third is a lifeboat iron emblem flag that was removed from the lifeboat and given to Margaret while on the *Carthage*. The man who gave the flag to Margaret was in charge of the lifeboat. He told her that she was responsible for the lifeboat escaping the *Titanic* by having the knife. As a token of his appreciation, he presented her with the iron emblem.

Margaret Devaney herself never knew her birthday and later adopted the same date of her husband. She later said that growing up in the poor and rural areas of Ireland, one didn't celebrate birthdays, so it wasn't unnatural to not know one's birthday.



# Lord Palmerston's Ballymote Estate: A Place of Memorable Change

By John Mc Keon

On the 3rd April 1847 residents on the small Ballymote estate owned by Lord Palmerston bid farewell to the members of seventeen local families. They were leaving their homes, walking to Sligo Port and boarding a ship, the Carrick of Whitehaven. This ship was to sail with these one hundred and seventeen men, women and children to Quebec, Canada, carrying them to what they hoped would be better lives in the New World. Tragically, within a month, most of those who left on that fateful April morning were dead, victims of the deadliest shipping calamity to befall Famine emigrants in Black '47. When the Carrick hit rocks and sank off Cap des Rosiers, Canada, on 28th April, only sketchy details of the tragedy and of those lost were heard back in Ballymote. It was over a century and a half later, with the memory of the tragedy greatly faded, that four descendants of survivors were invited and returned to visit their ancestral home in the townland of Cross. In 2013, Rose Marie and Terry Stanley together with Frances and Joan Kilbride were the first visitors with links to the Carrick tragedy to return to their ancestral roots and make contact with their distant relatives in Ireland. Later, these first visitors established contact with other branches of their Canadian family, and some members of these other branches have visited the old home site in Cross since. And from 2013, descendants of five other survivors of the tragedy have been traced. Some of these also plan to visit their ancestral homes in Ballymote in coming years.

Decades before the Famine, in 1802, the 3rd Viscount Palmerston, later Lord Palmerston and British Prime



**The Cross Homestead prior to their Famine Walk**

Minister, inherited the eight townlands which comprised his Ballymote estate. These were classed as 'settled' lands and were part of a larger estate he held in Co. Sligo. Palmerston, like his predecessors, was an absentee landlord and his succession brought major changes which deeply affected the lives of those living on the estate. He was their landlord for over six decades, from 1802 to 1865. His era began as fallout from the 1798 Rebellion continued and as the impact of the Act of Union became a reality. By the 1830s Catholic Emancipation was delivered, while the 1840s brought the momentous and terrible events of the Great Famine. During his time, education was spread to the rural masses, most middlemen were removed, estate holdings were restructured and tenants were required to build houses on their new holdings. He oversaw changes to the infrastructure on the estate including a much expanded road network and the start of new railway and postal services. These changes had both positive and negative outcomes for residents, with the Great Famine having the most tragic impact.

Almost two centuries prior to Palmerston's time, these Ballymote lands were part of the O'Connor Sligo properties. Then in 1636, the O'Connor Sligo era ended heralding the arrival of absentee landlords, middlemen, limited tenure and rental conflict. In the years between 1636 and 1700, the Ballymote lands passed through a number of owners, each bringing their own challenges for residents. These ownership shifts are summarised in Figure I. Initially the O'Connor Sligo lands were taken over by the Earl of Strafford and his relative, Sir George Radcliffe, using questionable means. Their ownership was, in turn, rescinded by Cromwellian forces, and was only partially restored to their heirs in 1661. Near the end of that century, these heirs passed on the mortgages on a portion of the properties, including other properties in Dublin and Yorkshire, to Sir John Temple. He was a member of the Irish Parliament and great grandfather to Lord Palmerston. Sir John's estate included properties in counties outside Sligo, and his extensive properties in that county included lands in all of its six baronies, with most located in

Year	Ownership Changes
1636	Takeover of part of the O'Connor Sligo lands by the Earl of Strafford and Sir George Radcliffe
1641 - 1700	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1641- Balance of O'Connor Sligo lands forfeited and given to Strafford &amp; Radcliffe.</li> <li>1652 to 1659 - Lands removed from Strafford's &amp; Radcliffe's families and parts parcelled out to families linked to Cromwellian forces.</li> <li>1661- Lands of Sir George Radcliffe restored to Thomas Radcliffe, his son and heir.</li> <li>1680 - Thomas Radcliffe wills his estate to his aunt Margaret Trapps and Joshua Wilson.</li> <li>1685 - Margaret Trapps mortgages her estate to Sir John Temple and Dr John Lesley. Dr Lesley's mortgage subsequently transferred back.</li> </ul>
1701 - 1802	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1701 - Margaret Trapps and Joshua Wilson will their estates in Sligo, Dublin and Yorkshire to Sir John Temple.</li> <li>These estates later inherited by Sir John Temple's son, the 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Palmerston, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Palmerston. Many ownership and boundary disputes among Sligo landlords during this century.</li> </ul>
1802 - 1868	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1802 - The 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Palmerston, later Lord Palmerston, inherited the family estates in Sligo, Dublin and Yorkshire. By this time the Sligo estate is much reduced from that taken over by Sir John Temple. In 1802 the lands on the Ballymote estate were deemed settled, and by 1865 all of its middlemen were gone.</li> <li>1865 - All estate lands pass to Lady Palmerston on the death of Lord Palmerston and by 1868 the Ballymote lands were no longer part of the estate.</li> </ul>

**Fig. 1: Main Ownership Changes of Ballymote Estate Lands, 1630 – 1870**

the baronies of Carbury, Tirerril and Corran. In contrast, the western estate Lord Palmerston inherited was far smaller; it was confined to Co. Sligo and mostly to the barony of Carbury, with smaller properties in Tirerril and Corran.

### Palmerston's Tenant and Lease Changes, 1813 to 1865.

Extensive tenant and lease changes took place on the Ballymote estate in Palmerston's time. These are summarised in Tables 1 to 3. On inheritance, he identified overpopulation and landlessness as the main problems across the entire Sligo estate. To address these he focused on removing middlemen, improving the quality of lands, bringing waste grounds into production, upgrading husbandry practices, and providing new sources of employment on the impoverished estate. Table 1, sets out the tenant structures he inherited when virtually all of the Ballymote lands were controlled by middlemen, while Table 3 shows the scale of restructuring he achieved by 1865.

In 1813, the properties on five of the eight Ballymote townlands were controlled by middlemen, each with long-term tenure, while a sixth, the townland of Knocknafusoge, had one head-tenant, Christopher Taaffe. Mathew Baker had long term tenure

on the townlands of Mullaghcurrows and Knockrower. Similarly Robert Duke had long term tenure in Cross and Cloonagh, Henry Irwin in Drumharnought and Richard Phibbs in west Knocknaskeagh, while Michael Cryan had annual tenure over east Knocknaskeagh. Only one townland, Tunnagh, had four individual tenants who held direct annual leases with Palmerston. At the time eleven direct leases existed across the eight townlands; six were annual 'at will' leases, while five were long term and for three lives each. Three other estate leases also existed. All three were either for very small pieces of property or for structures

and each cost less than 10 shillings rent annually.

By 1829, the position had changed considerably with forty-one direct leases operating, an increase of thirty over 1813, Table 2. Middlemen were removed from Knocknaskeagh and Drumharnought, and replaced by twenty five individual and direct annual leases. Knocknafusoge had two tenants with the Taaffe family losing part of its holdings there. And by 1865, following the completion of land squaring across the entire Sligo estate, between 1837 and 1852, middlemen were removed from the Ballymote estate and forty eight individual leases replaced the eleven which existed in 1813, Table 3.

Removing all middlemen was a major aim of tenant farmers at this time and Palmerston delivered this on all his Sligo lands by the 1860s. But, while this was of great benefit to many tenants, removing middlemen was not a complete panacea, as over thirty of the new holdings created in Ballymote were small. Even by the impoverished standards of that time these small holdings were not viable farm units. A similar picture occurred in Ahamlish, the North Sligo estate, where virtually all middlemen were also removed. Again, this created many more tenancies, but several of these were small and not viable farm units.

Townland*	Lessee	Tenant	Tenure	Yearly Rent		
				£	S	D
Tunnagh		Mich Scanlon	At Will	26	11	11
		Terence O'Connor	" "	24	11	11
		James Healy	" "	24	11	11
		M Wood	" "	26	11	11
Mullaghcurrows	Mathew Baker	Mathew Baker	30 May 1776	46	4	-
Knocknafusoge		C Taaffe	At Will	75	-	-
Cross & Cloonagh	Robert Duke	Robert Duke	11 May 1776, for 3 lives	84	-	-
Drumharnought	Henry Irwin	Henry Irwin	11 Oct. 1771, for 3 lives	44	12	6
Knockrower	Mathew Baker	Mathew Baker	30 May 1776, for 3 lives	39	18	11
East Knocknaskeagh		Mich. Cryan	At Will	180	-	-
West Knocknaskeagh	Rich. Phibbs		2 Sep 1784, for 3 lives (21 yrs)	31	10	-
Carrigins/a Chief Rent		Robert Jones	For Ever	10	-	
Cooldrumaneighter/a Chief Rent		Colonel Parke	For Ever	6	8	
Shannon/a Chief Rent		Colonel Parke	For Ever	6	8	

**Table 1: List of Tenants & Rents on Palmerston's Ballymote Estate, 1813. (\* Note: All townland names and spellings are as presented in the estate's annual accounts).**



**Carrick Bell and Monument at Cap des Rosiers, Canada**

### Land Squaring and Other Changes:

As removing middlemen proved insufficient, on its own, at increasing the size of many holdings, Palmerston was reluctantly convinced to commence a programme of land squaring in 1837. This policy was designed to further reduce the number of middlemen and give tenants larger single-plot holdings. Such larger single-plot holdings contrasted with the position prior to squaring when small holdings of 3 to 5 acres were often split into fifteen, or more, discrete sub-plots. Land squaring was strongly resisted by tenants on the Ballymote lands, as it was elsewhere. This was for many reasons including the uncertainty and dislocation it created for all. It required a great leap of faith by tenants who had to give up their existing plots without knowing what, or where, they may get a new holding. Across the entire Sligo estate, squaring continued during the Famine years, and this aggravated the problems facing tenants. In October 1845, as Famine signs emerged, Palmerston, while visiting Ballymote, assured tenants that none of them would lose their homes or lands due to squaring. Despite this assurance, and the fact that many families held non-viable holdings, strong resistance to squaring remained. New holdings

were allocated by lottery and once given, tenants were required to fence them off and, with help, build new homes on them for their families. No further subdivision of newly squared lands was permitted, under pain of ejection. This meant an end to a way of life for the many cottiers in all townlands. By 1846, however, the problems of land squaring were totally overtaken by the onset of a greater threat, the arrival of the Great Famine. That crisis meant residents faced a stark choice – accept Palmerston's offer of assisted emigration, which he introduced in 1837, or stay and risk the consequences of hunger, or worse, on top of the problems of land squaring.

In addition to assisted emigration, other Famine reliefs were provided on Palmerston's Sligo estate. These included public and estate works -

mostly building local road networks and draining lands - together with soup kitchens and food rations. These other reliefs helped ease the pressures for some residents but not for all. However, during the Famine's most acute and difficult time, from March to October 1847, assisted emigration became a major focus of relief for residents. Pre- Famine, Palmerston consistently wrote that no tenants were to be forced from their properties. Then in 1848, he modified his position noting that any ejections ought to be done without cruelty but that some were required to improve social conditions in Ireland. His agents insisted that all emigrants assisted off their lands in 1847 went voluntarily. But, it is likely that at least some residents were 'persuaded', or effectively forced, to leave.

From the early 1820's, Palmerston

Townland	Tenant	Annual Rent to May 1829		
Tunnagh	Charles & John Scanlon	£	S	D
	Charles Scanlon	14	15	4
	Terence O'Connor	9	4	8
	Denis O'Connor	9	4	8
	John O'Connor	9	4	8
	Thady Heally	6	18	6
	Michael Kerrikin	13	17	0
	Carroll & Bartly Heally	6	18	6
	Patrick & Thomas Ward	9	17	0
	Charles Roycroft Sen.	9	17	0
	Charles Roycroft Jun.	9	17	0
	Reps. Mathew Baker	42	12	11
Mullaghcurrows	James & Christopher Taaffe	46	3	1
Knocknafushoge	William Reynolds & Owen McDonough	23	1	6
Cross and Cloonagh	Robert King Duke	77	10	9
Drumharnaght	James Keerin	6	1	4
	Dennis Keerin	3	0	8
	Bryan Mahon	3	0	8
	Patrick Finney & Bart. Heally	8	10	9
	Mathew Brogan & Thos. Brennan	4	7	8
	Thomas Brennan	4	8	10
	Patrick Heally	4	1	10
	Owen Heally	6	2	4
	Martin Keerin	2	19	8
	George Grier	39	6	6
Knockrower	Reps. Mathew Baker	36	16	8
East Knocknaskeagh	Michael Boland	15	12	4
	Patrick Boland	5	4	10
	Mathew Hannon	10	9	8
	Michael Cryan	10	9	8
	John Cryan	10	9	8
	Cormack Brennan	3	4	10
	John Filane	5	4	10
	John Hines	10	9	8
	Patrick Boyle	5	4	10
	Robert Dunne	5	4	10
	Cormack Higgins	10	9	8
	Patrick Higgins	10	9	8
	John Leyden	10	9	8
	Michael & James Kelly	10	9	8
Carrigins a Chief Rent	Reps. Richard Phibbs	29	1	6
	Sir Robert Booth Bart.	9	4	
Cooldrumaneigher	Colonel William Parke	6	2	
Shannon	Colonel William Parke	6	2	

**Table 2: Tenants & Rents on Palmerston's Ballymote Estate, 1829**



Townland	Tenant	Half Year's Rent to Nov. '65		
		£	S	D
Tunnagh	William Gaddes	15	15	0
	Luke Scanlon	6	0	0
	W <sup>o</sup> of Chas Roycroft	7	15	0
	Richard Roycroft	1	0	0
	John Mulvanny	4	12	0
	W <sup>o</sup> Marget O'Connor	1	0	0
	Thomas Ward	1	10	0
	W <sup>m</sup> M Lougherry	7	10	0
	Ter <sup>o</sup> O'Connor	3	15	0
	Thady Heally	4	15	0
Mullaghcurrows	Mich <sup>o</sup> Murriceane	3	18	6
	J Roycroft late A Carty	6	0	0
	Edward Tighe	34	9	0
	Mich <sup>o</sup> Scanlon	8	13	0
Knocknafushoge	John Mc Cann	8	0	0
	Cath. Taaffe	34	12	3
	Mich <sup>o</sup> Benson	10	1	3
	Andrew Hannon	9	3	9
Cross	James Kaveney	6	10	0
	Mich <sup>o</sup> Hannon & Co.			
	W & Mary O'Connor	6	5	0
	Rev. Dom <sup>o</sup> O'Grady	4	0	0
Cloonagh	W & Ellen Devins	8	10	0
	Henry McDonough	2	16	3
	William Phibbs			6
	Bryan Mc Dermott	2	17	6
Passage	Michael Hannon	17	11	0
	Mich <sup>o</sup> Cunnane	4	3	3
	Andrew Grier	26	15	8
	Mich <sup>o</sup> Kerrins	5	13	3
Drumharnaght	Patt Brennan	3	19	4
	Tho <sup>s</sup> & Martin Murray	13	14	6
	Thomas Murray	10	4	2
	Do	10	4	2
East Knocknaskeagh	Mich <sup>o</sup> Boland	9	16	9
	W <sup>o</sup> Darby Henry	7	0	9
	James Leydon Jun.		7	6
	Patt Cryan	8	19	2
West Knocknaskeagh	Mich <sup>o</sup> Cryan	5	1	1
	John Hynes	3	18	4
	Frank Devins	5	4	10
	Patt Higgins	8	4	9
	Rep <sup>s</sup> Leydon by James Dowd	5	17	0
	James Kelly	5	2	11
	Michael Marren	6	0	0
	Mich <sup>o</sup> Boland	6	0	0
	Ed. Hynes by Patt	4	2	6
	W <sup>o</sup> Mary Coleman	5	5	0
	Turbary Rents of Settled Est's	11	5	0

**Table 3: Tenants and Rents on Palmerston's Ballymote Estate, 1865**

promoted the education of Catholics on the Ballymote lands, providing financial support towards teacher's salaries and land for new schools. In 1844, a local priest wrote asking him for land and a subsidy towards a new school in Tunnagh, adding that this school was urgently needed. He wanted the subsidy already paid towards the local dispensary to be transferred to the school, writing that the dispensary was not needed as the people were in good health. Also in 1844, the Rev Hore sought a subscription from Palmerston for a school at Achonry, writing that it was near Drumharnaght. Also from the early 1820s, Palmerston subsidised two dispensaries on the south Sligo estate, one at Riverstown and the other in Ballymote.

### Rents on the Ballymote Lands:

In the fifty years from 1813 to 1865,

estate accounts show that the yearly rents on the Ballymote lands rose from £602 to £770, an increase of 28 percent. Average rents per holding rose from £14 to £16, figures twice the average levels on the North Sligo, or Ahamlish, estate. This suggests that the size of holdings on the Ballymote estate was larger, and possibly of better quality, than those in Ahamlish.

With the economic collapse at the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1816, many tenants on the Sligo estate were unable to pay their rent on the due date. As a result the normal practice of paying rents one year in arrears increasingly switched to rents being paid two or three years in arrears. By the 1840s, this problem became so

severe that numerous tenants faced arrears of up to three times their annual rent. In 1829, total rent arrears on the Ballymote lands stood at £980, a figure that was almost twice the rent due that year. After 1840, Palmerston sought to end this practice, a policy which added further to the burdens facing tenants when Famine hit. And by the 1860s, rent arrears were greatly reduced on the entire Sligo estate.

One middleman on the Ballymote lands, Mathew Baker, refused to allow rent arrears on his properties and was in regular dispute with under-tenants over rent levels. From 1813, he complained that some of his under-tenants refused to pay their rents, while his failure to allow rent arrears increased tensions with under-tenants. In 1841, these under-tenants wrote to Palmerston seeking his support in having their rents reduced. Under-tenants, from Mullaghcurrows, added their concerns at Baker's 'oppressive behaviour'. By 1843, these under-tenants again wrote to Palmerston saying that Baker had threatened to eject many of them from their lands. Then in 1847, several under-tenants from Knockrower left on the Carrick for Canada. Meanwhile, tenants in Knocknaskeagh also wrote to Palmerston, in 1841, reporting a bizarre event in which they claimed, a Mr Thrustout had entered their lands and threatened to eject them all. And, addressing a very different aspect of the rents issue, in December 1845 Fr Henry, Drumharnaght, wrote to Palmerston stating his concern that the potato failure may lead 'lay and clerical agitators' getting poor tenants to stop paying any rents.

### Assisted Emigration from the Ballymote Estate, 1847

If the upheaval wrought by land squaring and the pressures of paying annual and rent arrears were not

	1813	1829	1865
Annual Rents	£602	£560	£770
Rent Arrears	-	£980	£175
Total Rents Due	£602	£1540	£945

**Fig. 2: Annual Rent & Rent Arrears on the Ballymote Estate**



**Photo of the four generations of Kavanaghs : Sarah and Patrick's son Dominick, grandson Arthur, great granddaughter Malvina, Kavanagh Riffou, and great great granddaughter, Rolande Riffou**

challenging enough, the onset of the Great Famine in 1845 dramatically worsened conditions on the Sligo estate. It was mid-1846 when conditions seriously deteriorated there, but later that year and into 1847 many residents faced the desperate reality of starvation and possible death. Potato failure meant food supplies were scarce, and the prices of the limited amounts available increased dramatically. Many more residents than expected concluded that assisted emigration was their most viable option and that there was no future for them if they remained on their Ballymote or North Sligo lands. From early 1847 through to 1852, large scale emigration took place from both locations.

This emigration, however, was not classified in estate records as arising from ejections. Rather, it was recorded as residents wanting to leave and pleased with the assistance provided which enabled them go. But some emigrants saw it as ejection, and remaining residents' feared further ejections throughout 1847. Tensions flared up that November, especially in Knocknaskeagh and Tunnagh, with

agents anticipating trouble in bringing tenants back 'into order'. Residents knew of the Carrick tragedy from early summer, and this combined with the other pressures they faced, magnified their fears. Yet, Palmerston's agents saw ejections as expensive and ineffective and preferred 'agreements' in terminating leases. And, pre Famine, Palmerston ordered that no tenants were to be forced from their holdings. So estate records show far less ejections than popular folklore suggests. This was because many removals and relocations were not classed as ejections. Those assisted to emigrate, were recorded as having 'volunteered' to go; those forced from their plots prior to getting new holdings during land squaring, were classed as being relocated; and those moved due to building roads or other structures, received compensation. Landless cottiers and middlemen, forced out by squaring, were not listed as ejected since the former had no lands and the leases of the latter had expired. Yet, all tenants and cottiers removed or relocated for any of these reasons probably felt that they were, in effect, ejected.

It was long believed that the names of all those who left had not been recorded at the time. But this was not the case for all. In 2012, the names of some of those who left the Sligo estate were revealed. Then the Mullaghmore and Cliffoney Historical Society unearthed lists of the emigrants who

left from the Sligo estate in 1847. These lists recorded all names on five of the nine ships carrying Palmerston's Sligo emigrants to Canada that year together with partial lists of those on two of the other ships. As the Carrick was the first ship to leave Sligo port with Palmerston emigrants that spring, the names of all seventeen families who left the Ballymote estate in April 1847 were revealed, Figure 3. For each family, the name of the head member was given, as was the townland they came from and the numbers in each household.

A total of 180 passengers departed from Sligo Port aboard the Carrick on April 4th, 1847. With the Ballymote families were others from Innishmurray Island, and from the Ahamlish estate in North Sligo. Tragically, all but 48 were drowned three weeks later when the ship sank off Cap des Rosiers on April 28th. Of those who survived, twelve stayed on in the Gaspé Province, the coastal province in eastern Canada where the tragedy occurred. Thirty-six others left the area within months and travelled on to Quebec and other destinations. In 2012, Mullaghmore & Cliffoney Historical Society set itself the task of trying to trace the descendants of some of the twelve survivors who built a life for themselves and their families in the Gaspé Province.

Initially this work focused on a family living in the Gaspé with the surname Kavanagh. That family

Ship	Townland	Family	No. in Family
Carrick	Drumharnaght	John Furey & Family	5 For Quebec
		Sally Brennan & Family	8 " "
		John Heally & Family	8 " "
		Owen Heally & Family	10 " "
		John Keerin & Family	6 " "
		Nancy Keerin & Family	7 " "
	Knockrower	James Heally	4 " "
		Widow Murray & Family	7 " "
		Thomas Murray & Family	6 " "
		Widow Cawley & Family	9 " "
		Widow Pilkington & Family	8 " "
		Bartley Heally & Family	5 " "
	Tunnagh	Widow Biddy O'Connor & Family	5 " "
		John Filan & Family	8 " "
		Widow Winefred Kelly & Family	8 " "
		Pat Hines & Family	5 " "
		Pat Kaveney & Family	8 " "
		John Hannon & Family	9 To New Brunswick
Eliza Liddell	Cross		

**Fig. 3: List of Emigrants from the Ballymote Estate to Canada, March – June, 1847.**

claimed to be descendants of Carrick survivors. Research raised the possibility that the family may indeed have descended from the Kaveney family who left from Cross. Subsequently, it was confirmed that the Kavanagh family of Jersey Cove, the Gaspe, were indeed the direct descendants of Patrick and Sarah Kaveney, who departed with their six children from Cross on April 3rd 1847. Only three members of that family survived the sinking. They were Patrick, his wife Sarah and their son Martin. Their five daughters were drowned and the family name was changed from Kaveney to Kavanagh on arrival in Canada. It was members of the fourth and fifth generation of descendants of Patrick and Sarah who returned to revisit the site of the old homestead in 2013. And others from the fifth and sixth generation of this family have visited there since.

After 2013, Mullaghmore & Cliffoney Historical Society continued its work and has traced the lineage of five more survivors, and possibly seven, all of whom came from the Ballymote estate. These included four members of the Crummy-Healy family from Drumharnaght who also settled in the Gaspe region. Owen Healy and his wife, together with their daughter Bridget, her husband Patrick Crummy and their children, were on the ill-fated Carrick. (Patrick was probably a member of one of the three Crummy families, listed in the Tithe Applotment books 1833, as living in the nearby townland of Emlagh). Only the daughter, Bridget, together with three of her children, survived the tragedy while the other six members of the family drowned. She subsequently remarried and two of her surviving children went on to marry years afterwards. A number of their offspring grew up in the Gaspe region. A few of their present-day descendants, who now live in Canada and the United States, have connected with this project in recent times and a number had planned to visit the Gaspe in May 2019, for a commemoration

ceremony near the site of the tragedy. Some of them also hope to visit Ireland and the place of their ancestral home in the future.

Another survivor from Drumharnaght, was Bridget Keerin. She was a daughter of one of the two Keerin families on board, and may have been related to Bridget Crummy Healy. Both these women married into an Adams family in the Gaspe, and both had large families whose descendants are now spread across Canada and the United States.

According to the folklore of yet another family, two brothers, Cornelius and Owen O'Boyle, also survived the wreck. They were among the survivors who left the Gaspe within months of the tragedy. Both brothers apparently travelled onwards to New York. Remarkably they and their descendants maintained contact with the Kavanagh family of the Gaspe for the next hundred years. Alas, like the Crummy family, no mention of the name O'Boyle or Boyle was listed on the Carrick. But it is possible that Cornelius and Owen may have been the grandchildren of one of the Ballymote families on the ship. (A Patrick O'Boyle was recorded in Tithe Applotment books of the 1830s, while a Patrick Boyle was listed as a tenant in Knocknaskeagh in 1829 and in 1841).

The story of the seventeen families, who left on the Carrick in 1847, is not the only story of emigrants from the Ballymote estate in those years. Other families emigrated and assisted emigration continued from the estate right through until 1865, when Palmerston died. In July 1847, John Hannon and his family of nine left Cross for New Brunswick, aboard the Eliza Liddell. All members of this family arrived safely. Intriguingly, while several families with the surname Hannon live in New Brunswick to-day, no connections have yet been made to the Hannon's who left from Cross all those years ago.

Within a couple of years of

Palmerston's death in 1865 the Ballymote lands passed out of his family estate. He had invested heavily on estate projects from the 1810s and at the time of his death the Sligo estate was in serious debt and ran sizeable annual deficits. After his death his successors disposed of parts of both the Sligo and Dublin estates to ease their financial burdens. But the events from his era, including the tragedies of the Great Famine and the ensuing programme of assisted emigration, left an indelible imprint on his Ballymote lands and on the lives of those families who went out in Black '47. Their descendants, particularly those of the survivors of the Carrick tragedy, hold a very special place in the story of the Great Famine and that of the Ballymote estate. This story, much of which has yet to be uncovered, extends to the lives many of these emigrants built for themselves in the New World.



**Cap des Rosiers Lighthouse, where the Carrick tragedy occurred.**

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# What Came in the Boat?

By Lynda Hart

At around five thousand eight hundred years ago, a new era was about to begin on the island of Ireland. It was a revolution that had swept up from the Near East ten thousand years ago and had followed two distinct routes. One, which followed the river Danube. The second the Mediterranean route. This revolution was agriculture and it was brought here to County Sligo by the Neolithic peoples.

Maugheraboy causewayed enclosure and the Carrowmore complex give dates showing that this is where these first farmers came and settled.

In the past ten to fifteen years scientific techniques have driven forward with an intense momentum, which has given us a new and unparalleled insight to our Neolithic ancestors.

We have many Neolithic genomes from here in the north west. The unique DNA sequence that can tell us so much. Skin and eye colour. Diet and disease. Other tests can determine the distinct area where an individual spent their formative years.

So where did our Neolithic ancestors come from.....?

Before DNA sequencing we would look at cultural similarities. Pottery and weapons for instance. Now using this new science we can say that these ancestors came from what is now North Western France, the Brittany area and down to the west towards the Basque regions. Their origins like all Neolithic people are from the Near East, modern day Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria and these ancestors who came to Ireland followed the Mediterranean route, which would have been through Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and into France and onward to Ireland.

What did they look like...?

The Island of Ireland was inhabited after the end of the last Ice Age, approximately ten thousand years

ago by Mesolithic Hunter Gatherers. Before the Neolithic period every human had been a Hunter Gatherer. Recent DNA and facial reconstruction has been carried out on a skeleton from the UK called Cheddar Man {His skeleton was found in the Cheddar Caves in Somerset, and he lived there about ten thousand years ago.} The results showed that he was a Northern Hunter Gatherer and they were dark skinned with black hair and blue eyes. They were tall and strongly built. In contrast the DNA from Neolithic people in Ireland show there are smaller, more of a wiry build. They have paler skin, brown hair and brown eyes.



**A traditional currach which would have been used on lakes, rivers and shallow coastal waters.**

How did they get here....?

They came in boats. Hunter Gatherers were very adept seamen and from bones found in Mesolithic context we know them to have been deep sea fisherman. These techniques could have been learnt or traded by Neolithic peoples and used to get them to Ireland. Although no sea going vessels from the Neolithic period have been found in Ireland, Claidhbh O Gíbhne a traditional currach boatbuilder (Boyne currach heritage centre) has been experimenting with building larger sea going boats using only materials that would have been available at the time. He hopes the boat he is constructing will be similar

to the one used nearly six thousand years ago. Recently a Neolithic boat was found on the River Boyne, near Bru Na Boinne. It was a longboat probably hollowed from a single tree, dated to around five thousand years ago, but would not have been ocean going. It would have been used on the rivers much in the same way we use cars on roads today. The boats that would have brought the Neolithic peoples here would have to have been a good size and stable to be able to carry all that they brought with them.



**Monument building. Beliefs. Orientation.**

What came in the boat...?

Firstly, of course the Neolithic farmers and their families. The first wave of people might have been mainly young men, needed to secure land for clearing and setting of crops and building of enclosures and houses. So they were bringing with them the technology needed to clear woodlands, to till and fertilize, to weed and to sow and reap.

They also brought a belief system, possibly linked very closely to the elements, the land and to their ancestors. They probably brought the bones of their ancestors with them. They certainly brought the passage tomb tradition. The knowledge of construction, stone seasonality and orientation.

Pottery and tools. Pots tempered with quartz and bones have been found in passage tomb context. Tools for everyday tasks, and weapons for protection but also for ceremonial use are found.

They would have brought cereals. An ancient form of wheat and barley. Pollen analysis from lake cores taken from near the Carrowmore complex, Co. Sligo, shows that very early in the Neolithic period crops were being grown here. These first farmers would have had a small plot growing their cereals and would have spent considerable time and energy weeding, tending and fertilizing their land. The cereals might have harboured some unwanted guests. Spores of disease, bugs and insects and possibly voles, mice and shrews.

On the Orkney Islands lives a vole whose DNA is vastly different from the voles living on mainland UK. The DNA of this small rodent is closest to a vole found only in coastal regions of Belgium, which may offer some insight to the origins of the Neolithic peoples who lived upon the Orkneys.

The boats also may have had stowaways, in the form of small sea creatures that either fixed themselves onto the underside of the boat or crawled inside.

Seeds from native species of trees and flowers. The Strawberry tree is only found as a native tree in Portugal, Spain and very specifically in parts of Kerry and around Lough Gill in Co Sligo.

The question of how these ancient people transported their domesticated livestock is a perplexing one. How do you transport cattle, sheep and goats at this time? Was it a Neolithic 'Noah's Ark' with two of each animal? It's hard to say but bringing only two would have been taking a huge risk of death, through sickness, the loss of the boats or terminal injury, so perhaps three or four young of each animal would be brought, tightly bound to avoid injury to themselves and the people. We don't know how many boats sailed at any given time, tens or

hundreds? Not all would reach these shores, so it would be logical that each boat would need to be a small self-sustaining unit able to provide and produce both crops and more animals.

An intriguing mystery concerns the red deer. The red deer plays an intricate part in the lives and beliefs of the Neolithic passage monument people. Antler pins are found in great quantities in all the passage monuments in the form of worked pins usually with a mushroom shaped head. The red deer becomes extinct in Ireland during the Late Glacial Period (approx. 12,000 to 14,000 years ago) There are no C14 dates then until the Neolithic, where again we find the oldest dates from the monuments at the Carrowmore complex.

So the question is.. Did our Neolithic ancestors not only introduce domesticated animals to Ireland, but did they also re-introduce the red deer, which would appear to be a sacred animal to them?

They would have also brought their oral traditions. Their stories and legends. Their beliefs. Stories of the witch are found in all the areas where we find strong Neolithic roots. Scotland, Ireland, Northern Spain, Portugal and France. These legends tell of the witch creating the world, of making mountains and valleys, building passage tombs, but also of deer and domestication of animals, weaving and spinning and controlling the weather and the seasons. Maybe the witch was the creation story for people who had only the spoken word to pass on their knowledge.

Today it is reasonably inexpensive and easy to have ones DNA tested.

The results are to some extent predictable. We nearly all have some small percentage of Hunter Gatherer DNA, some will have

older Neanderthal traces. But we will all have Neolithic DNA. The first farmers soon became the over-riding population, and they were the founders of the way we live today.

And finally... Why did they come here?

Ancient people would have been very knowledgeable about the seasons, the movement of the sun, moon and the stars. They would have known about clouds and tides. They would have noted migrating birds. This knowledge along with man's desire to always want to know 'what is around the corner' or 'what is over the horizon' would have told them that there were other lands awaiting them.

The climate in Ireland six thousand years ago was better than today. It would have been slightly warmer but probably much drier and sunnier, thus being able to grow cereals this far North. It is not until around five thousand five hundred years ago that we see a downturn in the weather and some very wet periods in the following millennia.

We don't know if there was pressure exerted on these people to find new lands. If so it could have been economic, political or religious. This is a question we may never know the answer to.

It is perhaps a struggle to comprehend in this time of unbelievably fast paced technology that some of these first Neolithic farmers were the Bill Gates and Steve Jobs of their time. They may have been treated as superstars, royalty or even gods, but their knowledge and techniques were as forward thinking and sometimes probably as controversial as some of the great minds of the 20th and 21st Centuries. The lives we live today were shaped by our Neolithic ancestors of six thousand years ago.

## Dark Brown or Black

By Kathleen Quinn

Medieval in the mist  
Curst by scribes  
Women in beggar skin shoes,

Doctor and Politicians await their miracle cure,  
Quills that pierce the heart  
Vellum and parchment very translucent.

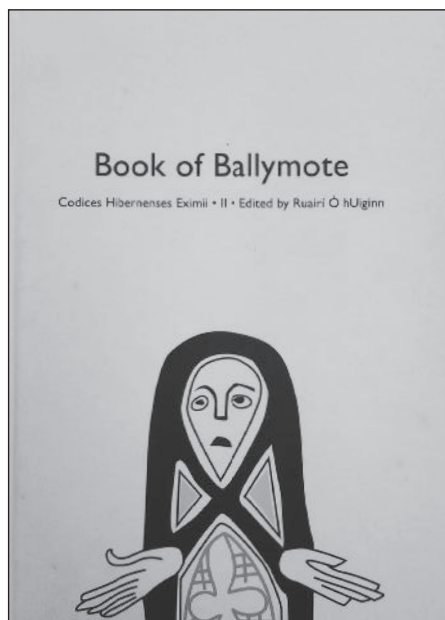
# The Book of Ballymote: Codices Hibernenses Eximii -II- Edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn

*An Appreciation by Neal Farry*

The volume displayed here is the second in the Royal Irish Academy's Codices Hibernenses series. It features the published proceedings of a conference on the 'Book of Ballymote' (BB) that was held on the 5th & 6th February 2015. Twelve distinguished modern academics have each contributed a unique, novel and nuanced scrutiny of BB, which the editor informs us is one of the most extensive and most lavishly illuminated Irish manuscripts from the Late Middle Ages. BB has 251 surviving folios with 59 prose and verse texts in Irish and a small amount of material in Latin.

In his introduction **Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn** of Maynooth University enlightens us with a brief yet comprehensive account of the political and intellectual milieu that led to the compilation of BB in Ballymote and Cappaghtratin, Co. Tipperary, during the final decade of the 1300's. A marginal note by one of the scribes of BB assures us that this manuscript was compiled in Tomaltagh Mac Donnchaidh's (TMcD) Ballymote home, perhaps the castle, between 1384 and 1397 when Toirdhealbhach Óg Ó Conchobhair was King of Connacht (1384 – 1406). TMcD was Chief of Corran & Tirerrill from 1383 until his death in battle in 1397.

Tomaltagh's Clann Donnchaidh (McDonagh) was a junior branch of the Mac Diarmada (McDermott) lordship until 1384 when the Ó Conchobhair (O'Connor Kings of Connacht) Lordship split into the Donn and the Ruadh factions. TMcD of Ballymote supported the Ó Conchobhair Donn while his former overlords, the MacDiarmada, joined the Ruadh alliance. A long war commenced in Connacht and this allowed TMcD to



**'The Book of Ballymote – Codices Hibernenses Eximii – Edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn, may be ordered via bookshops or via the Academy website <https://www.ria.ie/publications/new-publications> The rrp is €55.**

assert himself militarily on a wider scale. He suffered some defeats but his clan eventually subjugated MacDiarmada's stronghold in Moylurg (Lough Key, Boyle) and in 1392 the Ó Conchobhair Ruadh himself submitted to Tomaltagh in south Connacht. In the annals preserved in MS Rawlinson, TMcD is described as 'the greatest benefactor of his time, being pre-eminent in Europe for sheltering the poor, widows, churches and the infirm'. Tomaltagh died at the Battle of Cenn Éitigh (Kinnitty, Co. Offaly) in 1397. An tOllamh Ó hUiginn believes that it is noteworthy that one of the highest points in Mac Donnchaidh history is marked not in bardic verse, but by the production of this remarkable Book of Ballymote.

Ruairí draws our attention to the

margin colophon written by Maghnus Ó Duibhgeannáin (MÓD Duignan)) as he was transcribing Togáil Troí (Troy) near the end of BB. At that time Maghnus was lodging in the house of Domhnall, a brother of his tutor, Giolla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin (GMcA-Egan), in Ceapach Rúitín, Tipperary. MÓD pays tribute to his tutor GMcA and to both Mac Aodhagáin homes. Ruairí makes a plausible suggestion that MÓD was a teenage scribe, who was perfecting his art in the Tipperary school of GMcA. It is believed that Maghnus died in 1452. The final translations of the BB classical Latin and Greek sagas were transcribed in Cappaghtratin. Solamh Ó Droma's (SÓD) signature was added to the book here to verify that he also transcribed part of BB in Cappaghtratin. Robeartus Mac Sithigh (RMcS) was the third scribe. In her essay here below Máire Ní Mhaonaigh stresses that the MÓD's tutor, Giolla na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin, was an acknowledged Brehon law expert. Máire is positive that legal learning formed part of the training of Maghnus and of his fellow scribe Solamh.

Our editor furnishes the identities of many people who possessed the Book of Ballymote until it found a permanent home in the R.I.A in 19 Dawson St., Dublin. Ruairí and a number of other contributors outline the itinerary of BB from Ballymote to 19 Dawson St. BB was in the possession of the Mac Donnchaidh clan leaders in Ballymote until 1522 when Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill (O'Donnell) purchased it from Ruaidhrí Mac Donnchaidh for 140 milch cows 'co ced da cloinn' (with his family's permission). How long BB remained in Donegal is unknown but in 1639 Archbishop



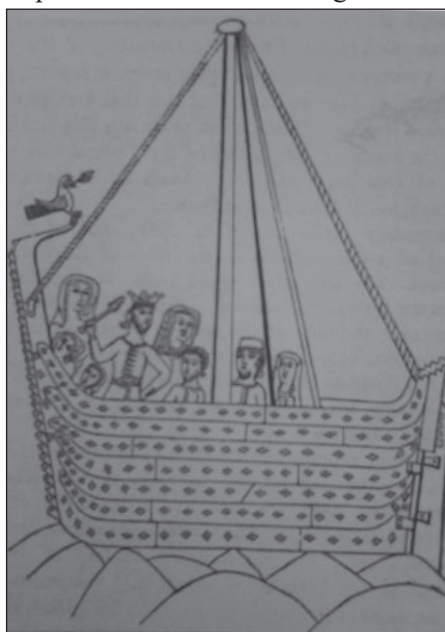


Front cover of 'Book of Ballymote - Edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn' (Reproduced by the kind permission of the Royal Irish Academy).

James Ussher, Trinity College Dublin, had access to Liber Ballimotensis. In 1666 Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh, the Kilglass-Enniscrone antiquarian, noted that Leabhar Bhaile an Mhúta an Chorrainn was one of the great manuscript authorities to be found in Dublin at that time. In 1686 BB was in the library of TCD, possibly having been deposited there with the rest of Ussher's manuscripts. In 1719 BB was borrowed from Trinity by Anthony Raymond, a scholar of Irish language and literature. Although Raymond was a fellow of the college, BB was never to return to Trinity again. In 1730 Richard Tipper transcribed material from BB. Tadhg Ó Neachtáin did likewise in 1752. BB may have stayed in Ó Neachtáin's MS collection after Raymond's death in 1752. During the following two decades material from BB was circulating among scribes and learned circles in Carraig na bhFear, Co. Cork, probably having been transcribed in Dublin or Cork by Mícheál Mac Peadar Ó Longáin. By 1769 BB was in the possession of Tomás Ó Doirnín in Droghada. Tomás had been a corn miller's clerk in Crumlin, Co. Antrim. Within a year or two BB was owned by a weaver, John Finglass of Drogheda. BB was bought by Chevelier O'Gorman of

Auxerre in 1774 from a millwright's widow in Drogheda for £20. On the establishment of the Royal Irish Academy in 1785, O'Gorman presented the Ballymote MS to its library, where it has since remained. In 1887 Robert Atkinson published a facsimile of BB with an introduction, an index and a contents analysis. 200 copies were printed and distributed widely. Finally, the digitisation of BB as part of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies' Irish Script on Screen Initiative, has made high resolution images of Leabhar Bhaile an Mhúta widely available to readers internationally.

Prof. Ó hUiginn's article is entitled 'The Book of Ballymote: Scholars, Sources and Patrons'. At various stages in BB the scribes divulge the sources of earlier manuscripts they copied while transcribing. These



Drawing based on the front cover above of the 'Book of Ballymote'. Is this Noah and his ark, Tomaltagh Mac Donnchadh in his 1392 hour of glory, or Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill celebrating his acquisition of BB in 1522?

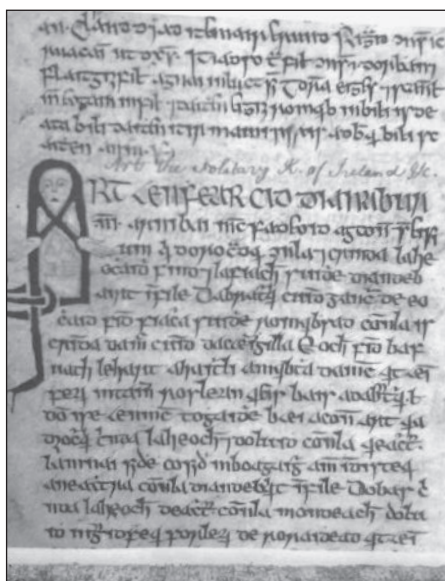
were; Leabar Gearr Uí Cheallaig, Saltair Cormaic i Caisiul, Leabhar Duin Da Leathghas, Leabhar Oilein Indsí Duine, Leabhar Droma Saileach, Cin Dromna Snechta, Leabhar Lothra Ruadhan & Libar Glinni Dá Locha. Ruairí further informs us that variant versions of these texts were available

among scholars, and manuscripts with historical and genealogical core belonged in the curriculum of bardic schools, and were essential to the practice of a court poet's function. These digests of history and learning used by the BB compilers, were twelfth century reworkings of material like the Banshenchas (Lore of Women) and the Dindshenchas (Lore of Places).

Nollaig Ó Muraíle, NUIG, compares the structure and contents of the two celebrated Co. Sligo manuscripts i.e. the **Book of Ballymote (BB)** and the **Book of Lecan, (B.Lec)**. Dr. Ó Muraíle considers that BB was compiled after 1395 by its editor MÓD from Ballyfarnon, assisted by SÓD of Fermanagh and RMcS, and that B.Lec was compiled in Kilglass between circa-1397 and post-1432 by editor Giolla Íosa Mac Fhir Bhisigh, assisted by Murchadh Ó Cuinnlis, Ádhamh Ó Cuirnín and an anonymous scribe. Both volumes are similar in format, structure and content. BB comprises 251 folios, each 15.25 ins. long by 9.75 ins. wide, while B.Lec contains 311 folios, each 11.875 ins. long by 8.375 ins. wide. The total vellum area of BB is 37,321 sq. ins., while the vellum area of B.Lec totals 30,930 sq. ins. Kathleen Mulchrone's skeletal list-form of B.Lec shows 82 separate items. Although just 59 texts were chronicled in the case of BB, the MacDonagh manuscript is the repository of more textual material. There is a striking similarity between the two Sligo volumes, BB & B.Lec, and it is clear that the compilers had access to the same type of sources. Nevertheless, the genealogical material in BB and B.Lec display significant differences, while the texts in both manuscripts of Cóir Anmann (Names), Lebor na Cert (Rights) and Dindshenchas (Places) are based on different exemplars. Ó Muraíle is confident that no text in B.Lec was copied directly from BB.

Using Kathleen Mulchrone's skeletal list-form (circa 1938), Nollaig itemizes the **59 Ballymote texts** as follows: **1: Sex Aetates Mundi** (The

Six Ages of the World) and an appendix poem by Donn Cuachmuighi entitled 'Reidhigh damh, a De do nimh' (Relate for me, heavenly God). **2:** A chronological tract on the Five Ages of the World. **3:** Tract on the place-names in Asia. **4:** The Pedigree of St. Joseph. **5:** The Ages of the World in Latin. **6:** Poem, 'Sé bliadhna caogat maille' (56 Years together). **7:** Leabhar Comhaimsireachda (Book of synchronisms) of Flainn Mainistreach). **8:** An anonymous poem 'Nin mac Bel roga na rígh,' (Ninius the son of Bell, best of the kings). **9:** Measurements of Time & Space; Tre gort crann, tre crann cu. (Through a forest, a hound past a tree nf). **10:** The Tower of Babel. **11:** Description of Christ & his Apostles. **12:** The Development of the Ceremonies of the Mass. **13:** Lebor Gabála Éirenn– Book of Invasions of Ireland: Version C. Poem by Gilla MoDhubhda, 'Éri ógh, inis na naemh' (Arise, perfect island of saints nf). **14:** List of the Christian kings of Ulster, with some pedigrees. Poem: 'Cland Ollaman Uaisle Emna' (Ollaman's clan, the nobility of Emna nf). **15:** List of the Christian kings of Leinster with their pedigrees. Poem by Ó Duinn, 'Cóicedh Laigen na Lecht Rígh' (The Province of Leinster of the royal tombs nf). **16:** List of the Christian kings of Connacht, with pedigrees. Poem by Ó Duinn, 'Cruacha Condacht raith co rath' (The peaks of Connacht with bountiful current nf). **17:** List of the Christian kings of Munster, with pedigrees. Poem by Seaán Ó Dubhagáin, 'Caiseal cathair Chland Modha' (Cashel the city of the clan of Modh nf). **18:** Tecosca Chormaic – Cormac Mac Airt's instructions to a king. **19:** Briathra Fíthail – Sayings of Fíthail. **20:** Gnomie Sayings or Maxims – Maith dan eagnaí (Good poem of prudence nf). **21:** Trecheng Breth Féni – Triads of Ireland. **22:** Senior Genealogies of the Dominant Septs: Uí Néill, Uí Briúin Chonnachta, Uí Fhiachrach, Airghialla, Laigin, Múscraige, Fir Alban, Síl Ír, Síl Éibir, Dál Cais, Síl Luigdech meic Ítha. **23:** Lebor Bretnach – Historia Britonum



**Anthropomorphic wire initial by Maghnus Ó Duibhgeannáin, Book of Ballymote MS 23 P 12, f. 137r. (Reproduced by permission of the RIA).**

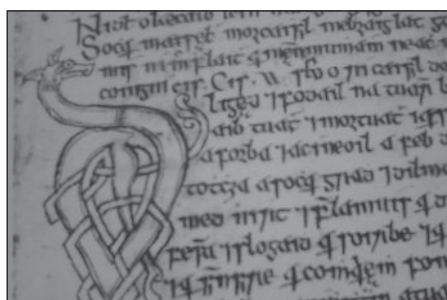
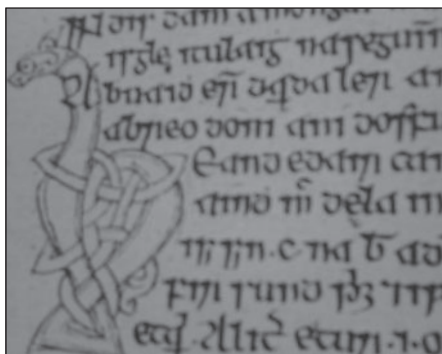
of Nennius (A History of the Britons). **24:** Senchas Naomh Érend. Poem: Naemsenchas Naem Insí Fáil (Genealogies of the Saints of Ireland). **25:** The History of the Hebrews. **26:** The Palace of Emain Macha, 'Ba mór a n-ordún du Conchobar' (It was a great invincible fortress for Conor Mac Neasa nf). **27:** Oididh Daithi – Death of Nath Í. **28:** Cóir Anmann – The Fitness of Names. **29:** Treatise on the aithechthuatha (The subject tribes of Éire nf). **30:** Poem, 'Is ór glan is neam im gréin' (Golden & pure is the heavenly sun nf). **31:** Do ingantaib Éirenn – To the Wonders of Ireland. **32:** Tochmarc Luaine agus Aided Athairne – Wooing of Luaine and killing of Athairne. **33:** Compert (The Conception) of Conchubair meic Nessa. **34:** Geineamain (the Birth) of Cormac Uí Cuind i.e. King Cormac. **35:** Echtra Cormaic i Tír Tarrngire agus ceart claidim Cormaic (Cormac's expedition in Tír Tarrngire and his appeal to arms nf). **36:** Aidid Crimthaind meic Fidaid & Trí meic Eathach Muigmeadoin i.e. Brian, Ailill, Fiacra (The violent deaths of Crimthaind & the three sons of Eathach nf). **37:** Eachtra mac Echach Muigmeadoin (The expedition of the son of Echach nf). **38:** Imtheachta Moighi Ruith (The Wanderings of

Moighi nf). **39:** Seats of Learning frequented by Tuatha Dé Danann. **40:** Bailí findachta rígh Condacht (The prosperity of the kindreds of the King of Connacht nf). **41:** De urgartaib rígh Érend - The prohibitions of the kings of Ireland. **42:** Poem by Cúán Ó Lóthcháin, 'A fhir áin iadas in teach (O man who desires the confines of a house nf). **43:** Lebor na Cert – The Book of Rights. **44:** Banshenchas – Lore of Famous Women. **45:** Treatise on Irish prosody. **46:** Leabhar Ollaman – The Book of Ollam. **47:** The Book of Oghams. **48:** Auraicept na nÉces – The Poets' Primer & Lebur (Book) Ferchertne. **49:** Poem, Tré fhocla tacrait filid (With words poets compete or assemble nf). **50:** Poem, 'Do dligegaibh dunta na nduan'. Dunta for nduan decid lib (To the rules for the closing of poems nf). **51:** Poem, Da cuincead neach a ndliger, (The rules for the full liberty of persons nf). **52:** Note on the loss of BB by Ruaidhrí Mac Donnchadha to Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill in 1522 AD. **53:** Uraicecht Becc – The Little Primer (On the Privileges & Rights of Various Classes). **54:** Dindshenchas Érend – The Lore of Famous Irish Places. **55:** Togáil Troí – The Destruction of Troy. **56:** Merugud Uilixis – The Wanderings of Ulysses. **57:** Imthechta Aeniasa – The Aeneid. **58:** The History of Philip & Alexander of Macedonia. **59:** Epistil Alaxandair – The Epistle of Alexander to Aristotle.

In many cases above no translations were provided. I have indicated my own translations with my initials nf.

The same commentator believes that the relationship by marriage between TMcD, Chief of Corran and Tirerrill and patron of BB, and Giolla Íosa Mac Fhir Bhisigh, chief compiler of B.Lec could be significant. Giolla Íosa was married to Caithirfhíona Nic Dhonnchaidh, a second cousin to Tomaltagh. According to Nollaig the Lecan scribes may well have been striving to rival the work of TMcD's scribes. In a marginal note in B.Lec, Mac Fhir Bhisigh has written that he was compiling B.Lec for himself and





**Zoomorphic ribbon initials, from the 'Book of Ballymote'.**

his son after him in 1397, the winter after the death in battle of TMcD.

The late **Prof. Donnchadh Ó Corráin** UCC, while discussing '**The Book of Ballymote: A Genealogical Treasure**', was concerned with the organisation of genealogies, their relationship to late antique records, and the light they throw on survival and reproduction in medieval populations. He notes that early Irish medieval scholars modelled their legal tracts on Old Testament stories where polygamy and concubinage practiced by religious leaders are recorded in the 'genealogies'. In medieval Irish records the property rights of wives, secondary wives and concubines are acknowledged. He tells us that access to land and the products of the labours of others, and the sexual access to many women, enabled the Irish elite to multiply with astonishing rapidity. The frequent births of offspring and an inclusive law of legitimacy provided the Gaelic aristocracy with a large crop of fighting men who were kin, but also rival heirs at the same time. Donnchadh tells us that between 600 and 800 A.D. the genealogical records list over 200 aithechthúatha or rent-paying small communities throughout the country. These aithechthúatha represented dynasties that had failed

in the struggle for survival. Ó Corráin believes that the ample church estates became sanctuaries where such small kindreds and families of the church could maintain themselves. The church demanded monogamy on its lands. Donnchadh is grateful that BB contains an invaluable collection of medieval genealogical tracts that have yet to be appreciated by many kinds of modern historians.

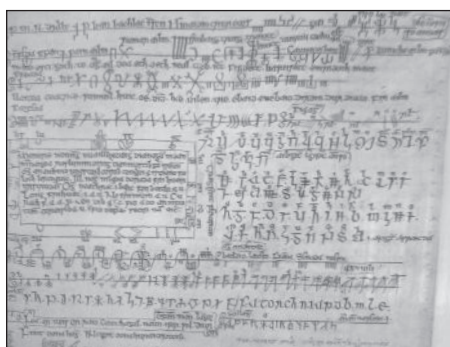
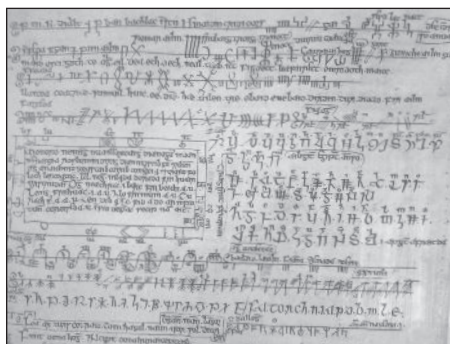
The contribution of **Máire Ni Mhaonaigh**, Cambridge University, '**Universal History & the Book of Ballymote**', surveys for us history of all hues – local, national and global. Máire demonstrates the coherent, comprehensive organisation and sequencing of the documents in BB. The first entry is *Sex Aetates Mundi* by Dares Phrygius (The Six Ages of The World), and the final chronicle is an Irish translation of the Epistle by Alexander of Macedonia to Aristotle. Furthermore, we are asked to note a detailed linear, world history of universal time, biblical, classical and Gaelic. The Ballymote scribes were following a consciously conceived plan. The fall of the Tower of Babel is said to account for the origin of all national languages, a fact that is recounted in *Auraicept na nÉces* (The Poets' Primer), a document preserved in BB. The six world ages are the Assyrians, the Medes, the Chaldaeans, the Persians, the Macedonian-Greeks and finally the Romans, who became Christian. Medieval authors considered Alexander of Macedonia both a classical and a biblical figure because he is encountered once in the Book of Maccabees. Máire informs us that the poem about King Ninus son of Bel in BB synchronises the reigns of the Assyrian kings with the invented Irish prehistory of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (Invasions of Ireland) i.e. Partolón, Nemed, Fir Bolg, Tuatha Dé Danann and the Gaelic invaders under Mil. The Jewish Patriarch Abraham is juxtaposed with Ninus in the poem. The text in BB beckons particular attention to the synchronisation between Alexander's defeat of the Assyrians and his

occupation of Egypt, from where Mil and his Gaelic people supposedly departed to invade Ireland. The aim of our scribes was to write a classical, biblically influenced account of world, national and Christian history where Ireland's multifaceted story, as told in BB, is made to shine.

**Prof. Elizabeth Boyle** of Maynooth University continues the study of '**Biblical History in the Book of Ballymote**', where she tells us that such history created the fundamental chronological framework within which all medieval Irish historiography was conceived. The bible stories were believed to be literally true. Ideas of kingship, invasion, ancestry, language and geography were rooted in awareness of the Bible. The prehistoric Irish invaders, concluding with Mil's Gaeil, who were recorded in *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (Invasions), conterminous with biblical and classical empires, are included in BB. The compilers of BB are concerned with Ireland's place in the world's narrative, and God's intervention in history to bring salvation to their native isle. The Appendix affixed by Prof. Boyle with a poem of 21 stanzas in Middle Irish and English, and which is preserved in BB treating of 'Assyrian Kings and Irish Prehistory', substantially clarifies the intentions of the BB scribes.

**Deborah Hayden** of Maynooth University, following her essay '**The Book of Ballymote & the Grammar of Irish**', has furnished a remarkably informative Appendix of 27 items containing a catalogue of grammar and prosody in BB. The version of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* (Invasions of Ireland) preserved in BB exhibits a list of 72 languages that the 'Irish scholar, Féníus Farsaid' supposedly collected at the Tower of Babel. Féníus is credited with creating his native Gaelic tongue from parts of all those languages. A prose-verse passage in this part of The Book of Invasions articulates an educational curriculum consisting of four distinct branches; A: canoin 'canonical texts or law books, B: stair or history, C:





Samples of scripts from 'The Book of Ballymote'. (Courtesy of the Coach House Hotel, Ballymote).

rim or metrics and D: gramadach or grammar. Entries 45 to 53 of the BB list of contents illustrate the medieval Irish scholars' approach to education. These are as follows: 45: Treatise on Prosody; 46: The Book of Ollam (the highest grade of poet); 47: The Book of Oghams; 48: Auraicept na nÉces – The poets' Primer; 49, 50 & 51 are Poems; 52 is not relevant; 53: Uraicecht Becc – The Little Primer (a status text on the grades of various individuals). This presentation by Deborah focuses on a section of BB that is concerned with the education, status and function of the filí, or secular learned men of medieval Ireland.

**Prof. Uaitéar Mac Gearailt**, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, expounds for us '**Translations of Latin Works in the Book of Ballymote**'. Approximately one-sixth of the BB manuscript is devoted to the following four Middle Irish texts with classical themes: (a) The Fall of Troy, (b) The Wandering of Ulysses, (c) The Adventures of Aeneas and (d) The Story of Alexander of Macedonia. Our writer in particular examines the language and style of each text

and their relationship to further texts of the works in other manuscripts. The text of (a) Togáil Troí is based on the 6th century *Historia de Excidio Troiae* by Dares Phrygius and comprises about 30,000 words. The text of (b) *Merugud Uilixis* is 2,700 words long and is written in a simple, straightforward Middle Irish style using indirect speech. The BB text of (c) *Imtheachta Aeniasa* has occasioned debate among at least four modern international scholars. George Calder (Glasgow University) believed that the Irish translation was written about 1300. D. Poli (Bologna) disagrees and argues in favour of a translation between 1080 and 1120. Erich Poppe (Marburg, Germany) contends that this story was a historical narrative rather than an epic of mere entertainment. Prof. Mac Gearailt himself is confident that (d) *Scéla Alaxandair* was translated about 950 A.D. He asserts that the *Scéla* is an impressive achievement, but few scholars have accorded it the attention it deserves.

A veritable mine of practical information concerning the physical structure of BB is contained in **Pádraig Ó Macháin's** (U.C.C.) article '**The Book of Ballymote & the Irish Book**'. This 'noble volume', to quote Eugene O'Curry, appears to be preserved by contemporary front and back boards enclosing a relatively loose collection of folio gatherings. Pádraig has presented the collation or data management of the BB MS, in a clear numbered list, where the vellum folio gatherings and the name of each scribe who transcribed on them, can be perused. There are 17 gatherings of 10 folios, 5 gatherings of 8 folios and a number of singletons in BB. This writer discloses that the antiquarian Eugene Ó Curry believed that Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill may never have paid the 140 cows to Ruaidhrí Mac Donnchaidh in 1522, and that the Ballymote man may have surrendered BB to his overlord to secure his own liberty or protection. Our Cork Professor quotes the comment in the margin of f.224r that is commonly

interpreted as being written by Ruaidhrí Mac Donnchaidh himself regarding the surrender of BB to Aodh Ó Domhnaill: 'Is beg an dith leam o domhnaill do buain an leabairsi dim or is clu feamachuis do chúaidh air mur leaphor'. The celebrated Ballymote historian, Christopher McDonagh, has translated Ruaidhrí's comment in the following terms: 'Small is the loss to me in O'Donnell having forced the book from me, for it is a fame of silliness that has come over it'. Prof. Ó Macháin also surmises that the Christian names of the BB scribes Solamh (Solomon) Ó Droma and Robeartus Mac Síthigh could indicate that these men were clerics. He agrees with Prof. Brian Ó Cuimh that collaboration between religious and secular scribes was commonplace.

**Bernadette Cunningham**, a Royal Irish Academy librarian and **Raymond Gillespie** MRIA, Maynooth University, have penned a joint contribution to examine '**The Owners & Users: The Changing Contexts of the Book of Ballymote, 1500 – 1750**'. Our contributors affirm that BB was not simply a miscellany but a carefully structured compilation, displaying a logical ordering of texts to reflect a view of how a society should be ordered. Bernadette & Raymond have observed that the original BB scholars adapted and modified existing written texts during transcription to make them relevant and useful. From 1397 to 1522 the beneficiaries of the Mac Donnchaidh family's manuscript were of the learned class. A 'genealogy of the saints' created by the BB scribe Mac Síthigh, became the exemplar of the same text from the 1590's, which is now in the portion of British Library Add. MS 30512. After Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill obtained Ballymote's erudite volume in 1522, his main interest was to allow his principal learned family, the Ó Cléirigh, access to its contents. In the 1630's the Gaelic historian Geoffrey Keating acknowledged BB to be one of the most important sources of Irish history. In 1619 James Ussher of TCD owned both BB and B.Lec. Ussher

merely selected individual pieces to bolster his ecclesiastical arguments, rather than using BB as a whole to view the social logic of the late 14th century Gaelic society. By the early 18th century the tale *Echtra Cormaic & ceart claidim Cormaic* (call to arms) was important since it contains an explanation of the origins of the elusive 'Psalter of Tara', allegedly an historical source book that many contemporary scholars claimed was included within BB. In 1777 the antiquarian Charles O'Connor of Bellanagare stated the Book of Ballymote was 'a book full of truth and poetic fable'.

**Dr. Elizabeth Duncan PhD** (Research in Aberdeen) has investigated 'A Reappraisal of the Hand Formerly Attributed to Magnus Ó Duibhgeannáin (MÓD) in the Book of Ballymote'.

This writer concentrates a detailed study of the script in BB attributed to MÓD. Inconsistencies in the 1981 paleographical study of BB by Tomás Ó Concheanainn are highlighted. The script of MÓD and the entries penned by all the principal hands in the BB MS are written in Gaelic National Miniscule, a quill-craft that first appeared about 1000 AD. The writing of MÓD is examined in consummate detail, employing remarkable forensic skill. Fifteen pictures of the relevant BB script are displayed to demonstrate the results of Dr. Duncan's study. Elizabeth supplies an easily decipherable Appendix to prove conclusively that eight different scribes participated in the sections of BB previously attributed to MÓD. The folio numbers, the texts and the extent of transcription performed by each scribe, are shown under the sigla MÓD 1 to MÓD 8. This evidence of collaboration by relief scribes is also cited in the body of Dr. Duncan's written essay.

The final essay in 'Book of Ballymote, edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn', is presented by Art Historian **Karen Ralph** of the American University in Paris, and bears the title 'A Manuscript for a

**Lord: Reading the Illumination in the Book of Ballymote**'. Karen specifies that the illumination in BB is based on the Insular Scriptorium where the dominant feature has two forms, the ribbon initial and the wire initial. Pictures reproduced here from BB can be categorised as follows: two ribbon initials, two wire initials, seven zoomorphic initials with a cat, a fish and a dragon included, ten anthropomorphic (humanoid) initials portraying various gestures, one geometric initial, four 'turn in the path' drawings to guide the reader, a peeping head sketch, one close relationship initial between text and image and some initials from other manuscripts. BB contains a total of 429 individual artistic illustrations. Ms. Ralph does not believe that the BB frontispiece, displaying a kingly figure with seven other people

wearing medieval dress and standing in a boat that is sitting on dry land, is Noah and his ark. She postulates that the king in question could represent Tomaltagh Mac Donnchaidh in his 1392 hour of glory or Aodh Dubh Ó Domhnaill after his purchase in 1522 of Ballymote's prize possession.

In his 1936 'History of Ballymote and the Parish of Emlaghfad' Christopher McDonagh considered it appropriate to quote the observations of the English Victorian poet and cultural critic, Matthew Arnold, concerning the Book of Ballymote and similar Irish manuscripts: 'These tomes could not have not been written by fools or for any foolish purpose, that is, I am convinced, a true presentment to have in one's mind when one looks at Irish documents like the **Book of Ballymote**'.



**Group at the launch of 'Book of Ballymote – Codices Hibernenses Eximii. Edited by Ruairí Ó hUiginn' on the 1st. November 2018 in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin :**

(L to R) Mr. Martin Timoney (*Sligo Field Club*), Mr. Leo Leyden (*Sligo Field Club*), Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn MRIA, Director DIAS, School of Celtic Studies, Ms. Siobhán Fitzpatrick, Librarian Royal Irish Academy, Prof. Liam Breathnach MRIA, DIAS, School of Celtic Studies, Prof. Peter Kennedy, President of the Royal Irish Academy, Mrs. Mary Timoney (*Sligo Field Club*), Mr. Neal Farry (*Chairperson Ballymote Heritage Group*), Mrs. Grace Farry (*Ballymote*), Mr. David Casey (*Ballymote Heritage Group*), Mr. John Coleman (*Ballymote Heritage Group*).



# The Vogage of Patrick

*THE STORY OF THE VOYAGE OF PATRICK BURNS*

*AND MARGARET BURNS TO AMERICA*

*— AS PENNED BY PATRICK BURNS FEBRUARY 12th, 1900, WATERTOWN, NY*

*Submitted by Paul Burns*

My sister Margaret and myself sailed from Sligo on the 27th of May 1847 and after a very troublesome and turbulent voyage landed in Quebec, on the 11th day of July, 1847. Ships name was Ellen and was commanded by Capt. Thomas Hood an englishman and a very efficient and good man.

Shortly after leaving Sligo with about three hundred and fifty passengers the deadly "ship fever" a violent form of typhus fever raged among the passengers and fully one third of the passengers died of this dread disease. The disease was of generally short duration in most cases. Sometimes a person would be alright in the evening and would be taken sick at night and be dead by day break.

The method of burying was the wrapping of the body in sail cloth and placing it on a plank on the rail of the ship, then weighing it down with sand or stones and cast into the water. As there was no clergyman on board I read the De Profundis over each before the body was cast into the sea and such heartrending scenes I have never before or since witnessed.

At arriving at Quarantine outside of Quebec a great many of the passengers affected with the fever were detained there. But Margaret and myself with many others were allowed to proceed to Quebec. We stayed there about two weeks in Quebec at a street or locality called Diamond Harbour, and visited with a friend and neighbour, a man by the name of Anthony Connolly, who lived in the same townland with me in Ireland.

We sailed up the river to Montreal in steam boat called the "John Munn" and stayed in Montreal about three

weeks, I working about two week on the La Chene Cannal Bason lock. My sister Margaret was stopping at a lodging house. We then went up the La Chene Canal to Ottawa then called Bytown. We only stayed a few hours. We then went down toward Kempville and were accompanied by Catherine McGill an Emigrant girl whom we met in Montreal who was on the way to her friends in Kempville.

Before arriving in Kempville the boat became disabled at a place called Beckwith Landing, and Margaret and Miss McGill becoming sick with the fever we were obliged to leave the boat at that place and took refuge at the house of one Patrick Mullin a very kind and good man who contracted the disease from us and died of it.

After leaving Mullins we went to Kempville where I rented some rooms, but in a short time after sister Margaret got a relapse of the Typhus fever, and after doctor's care and my attendance she recovered well. At the same time I got a job on building of Mr. Jones M.P., at Kempville on his new site. My first part of the job was on trial, I had to build some Eliptic Arches over the front entrance and sides, but after some time I was taken sick with the Typhus fever and by this time sister Margaret was recovering so she could attend to my wants and in about three weeks I was able to sit up alone in a chair.

I gained strength fast, and I being anxious to go to work, my next job was to build a cellar for a black smith by the name of Foster, of whom later cheated me out of a large portion of my pay! But when I was about putting on the last finishing touches,

there came a heavy rain storm that gave me a severe drenching. I was scarcely able to go home but when I did, I lay down with a relapse and racking pains and aches, that almost killed me, never standing on green grass again. My eyesight became so weak and effected that when I approached an object, it appeared in double vision. But during that winter I remained in a place called Irishtown about three miles from Kempville, building fireplaces and chimneys and odd jobs such as I could get. My sister Margaret stayed with a family close by in the neighborhood.

On February 9th 1848 I came to Prescott and crossed the St Lawrence to United States, but in crossing there was some difficulty, it being a cold night. I hired a skiff to take me over. There was a woman passenger along with us and I think she weighed approx. 250lbs, and she sat in the stern of the boat which afterwards became a very useful balance. As the ice was perhaps ½ inch to 1 ½ inch thick, the bow of the boat sat on the ice like a sleigh runner, and the stern in the water. A long gaff used by the man in the bow of the boat worked together with the man in the center of the boat who paddled with his oar with all his might to shove the boat ahead.

During this time the corpulent woman kept a rocking in the stern too and froe in order to keep the bows in the water and break the ice at the stern, but after some time and difficulty we landed in Ogdensburg.

Next morning I started in search of a job and I wandered into a marble shop kept by a man of the name Whitney, which was about hiring me and gave



orders to draw out by pinnacle, the portrait of St Patrick, which I did as I was well versed on that subject. I made a very good attempt. He was called away on some business and told me to remain in the shop until his return, but as my purse being light and night approaching, I did not wait for his return, and went to the suburbs of the city where I happened on a job that lasted a few weeks.

I was sent on an errand and happened to meet a team going to Ogdensburg for coal, and asked me to ride. He went into a tavern to get refreshed and water his horses and on arrival, there were several persons in the bar room, and amongst them were two contractors of different sections of the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain R. Road. These happened to have a letter written by some Civil Engineer and all in the room was puzzled to read

it, but I have been glancing over their shoulders and had a good idea of the words and contents and corrected them several times. They handed me the letter which I read to the satisfaction of all in the room, and after asking me had I a trade I said I was a mason, and both men offered me a job as both of them had two large bridges to build. And I remained there for the summer and fall of 1848.

After I got settled in work I went back to Canada for my sister Margaret, and started back toward Potsdam again where I was working on a bridge that crosses the Racquette River and secured a place for my sister with a family by the name of Daniel Bellis about four miles from Potsdam, and sometime after went to work for Attorney Knowles, where she remained until she came to Watertown with her parents, brothers and sisters

on corner of Washington and Healy Street, Watertown, N. York.

On this above named bridge the contractor went broke and owed some money, but after going through a process of law only a small portion remained to my share. My father and mother and family came then from Ireland May 13th 1849 to Potsdam and came to Watertown where the remained on Gotham Street where they both died, Mother passed in Sept 26 1867 and Father passed away on Oct 13 1867 at the house of their son Patrick Burns 35 Gotham St Watertown N.Y., where he was buried in Calvary cemetery Watertown with a monument erected 22 feet high by their children and carved and lettered by their sons John and Patrick. May they rest in peace.

## A Letter from Bridget Burns Benson to her parents Thomas and Mary Burns in America

*Submitted by Paul Burns*

Bridget was one of the two daughters of Thomas Burns and Mary Flynn of Easkey who remained in Ireland. In 1840, she had married George Benson who kept a store in Ballysadare and clerked for Mr. Culbertson, a mill owner. According to this letter, Bridget saw the family off from Sligo when the family sailed in late March or early April 1849 on an immigrant ship bound for Quebec. The sailing was unseasonably early, as reflected by reports that the ship had become icebound.

The family arrived in Quebec May 13, 1849, and on May 18 it crossed into the USA where two of Bridget's siblings, Patrick and Margaret, were waiting. These two, apparently an advance party, had made the journey to America two years earlier, and after eight months in Canada they had crossed the border to New York State. Soon after entering the United States, the family settled in Watertown, New York, where other families from the

Easkey area--Gilgan, McManus, Goulding among others--had preceded them.

Many of the people mentioned in Bridget's letter are of course relatives. Others appear to have been former friends in Easkey or people in Ballysadare.

This letter was written in late July 1849, approximately four months after Bridget's family sailed from Sligo. The average crossing by sailing ship from Sligo to Quebec was 48 days, so four months was as soon as a letter could be sent and an answer received.

Hopefully, the family sent the locks of hair that Bridget requested, because she never saw any of them again. Bridget died in 1855 leaving eight orphaned children, most of whom migrated to America as they reached adulthood.

Balisodare

July 23rd, 1849

Ever Dear and Most Affectionate

Parents:

I rec'd your kind and most welcome letter which afforded me the greatest pleasure in the perusal of it to hear that ye arived all safe from the danger ye went through, thank God for it. I cried more when I received your letter than I did in parting ye in Sligo. I went down the next day to see ye, when I came in sight of the vessel, could not go any farther. I was scarce able to go home. There was great storm shortly after ye sailed, which left me double worse. I went several time to Sligo to hear from the vessel and herd that she was in ice. I had a letter wrote when I rec'd yours. I felt so uneasy I got 2 phajes read as Mick told me. My Aunt laments very much after My dear Father. She is discontent.

(page 2)

I send a ring to Margrett and the other to Anne. A link of Janes hair as my deer Mother requested. She still spakes of the whole family and espesily Thomas and Anne. When

ever she gets a book she tape down the whole family. I fret when ever I see her. She is in my Fatherinlaw and a fine child. John Wiliamses family are in good health. Mary anne is the same way. My uncle's people are in good health. The(y) read your letter. Bridgt Hawk is gone to England. her and John Thomas. John sent for her. My Aunt Catrine is well. Thomas Gehen is gone to England also. The black cow is sick, I think she is getting better. We sold the yellow cow at 35 s. Cows never was so chape and butter also at 4 d the lb to 3 ½ d. There is a fine prospect of the potatoe crop. There is no apearance of a rot thank God. Patt Gilroy shent the check after ye

(page 3)

on the \_\_\_\_\_. We should get his hous and lands if we could pay our rent again. My Deer Parents let me know if that contry agrees with ye as well as Ireland, or what trade are ye going to send Thomas and John to. Do you follow any business or did the Priest come back yet. How many miles is Montrail (Montreal) from ye. My mother in law desires to send her blessing to ye, and her sone James.

The Mountain family sends their respects to ye all and so does Jane We. and James Benson family. James Noland (or Boland) Senr died. Miss Gouden did also-- in a short time both of them. Mr. Cuberson (Culbertson) got married. I have nothing new to mention. I know by your letter that you did not get the letter I sent to Patt. Post paid it in Sligo. I shant pay for this lest their should be a mistak. Miss Burly said I should not postpay any letter for that country. George sends his love and best respects to ye and of cours so do I and all the family. I send my love to Mick, Patt, Margrett and Anne, Thomas and John. I hope that ye will send me part of all your hair, and don't forget my dear Father and Mother. When I die I should like to have it in the coffin. No more at present but remains your fond and affectionate sone and daughter

(written along edge of page--)  
George and Bridget Benson forever yours

(page 4)

I hope that you will write to me quarterly as it woud give us the greatest consolation to hear from you often and mention to me about

the postage and I will be the better judge\_\_\_\_\_next.. No more at Present but George request of ye to write of(ten) as it is the greatest greatest comfort I have. P.S. Although the Oacion (ocean) does between us roar and distant be our lot, my prayer be always in your head whatever be thy lot. May heavenly angels their soft wings display and guide ye safe from Every dangerous way. The path of Pleasure may ye ever tread pursued by fotune and by virtue lead, Wherever thou goest still happy may though be and when far distant sometimes think of me. I can scarsly write this with tears. This is the 4th time for me to finish it and perhaps I migh die with ye yet and live. Let me know if Margrett is as fat as at home or Patt. Or what dresses is most fashionable. I must end it. Let no person seest but ye.

(Written upside down on the bottom of the last page)

I return a thousand thanks for the offer that you made me in sending me a present in your reeset letter.

(Written on margin of first page) We would hold the money and burn the letter.

## Extracts from the Sligo Journal

*Submitted by Pdraig Duddy*

### **Tuesday October 8th, 1793**

To be let for two lives from the 1st day of November next, the lands of Emlaughton which lie within one mile of Ballymote, 12 miles of Sligo, 11 miles of Boyle, containing about 122 acres of arable and pasture ground and about 190 acres of bog, two thirds of which is reclaimable and would be easily made good pasture of. It is useless to run any encomium on the lands so well known.

Proposals in writing only (post-paid) to be received by Matthew Fleming Esq, Bracca Castle, near Kilbeggan.

### **August 5th, 1793**

### **Tuesday March 25th, 1794**

To be Let: from the 1st day of May next for three lives or 31 years; the house and demesne of Roadstown,

containing between 90 and 100 acres of choice land, well enclosed with stone walls and eight feet double quicked ditches; the garden orchard and shrubbery partly enclosed with a seven foot high wall and partly with a large quick fence. The orchard is well furnished with best peach, apricot and other trees in full bearing.

Proposals in writing only will be received by James Fleming Esq, Newtown, Kilcock who will close with a good tenant when value is offered.

### **October 6th, 1790**

At a Vestry held in the Cathedral Church of Achonry in the county of Sligo on Wednesday October 6th, 1790.

We the Protestant Parishioners in

Vestry assembled having this day received with the utmost regret the resignation of our worthy Curate the Rev J.J. Harrison (by whom the duties of this parish were in exemplary manner discharged) having unanimously come to the following resolution Resolved that a Silver Cup be presented to the Rev J. J. Harrison in testimony of the advantages derived to their parish from his uncommon pains and attention.

Adam Powell } Church Wardens  
Henry Meredith }  
Gentlemen — please accept my warmest thanks for this very polite and singular mark of your favour.

I am with respect your humble servant  
J.J. Harrison (Rev)

# Nace O'Dowd: A Magnificent Footballer

By Tommy Kilcoyne



**Ben Wilkinson (Chairman) presenting Nace O'Dowd (Captain) a silver Jubilee presentation 1983**

Nace O'Dowd was one of Sligo's greatest footballers. Born in Carrowrile in the parish of Achonry/Mullinabreena on 1st August, 1931 to Tom and Jane O'Dowd (nee Brennan) he was baptised John Joseph Ignatius O'Dowd in the local Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart. He attended Carrowrile National School and later Tubbercurry Vocational School. After leaving school he worked in Galway, Castlebar and Tubbercurry before emigrating to the United States in 1959.

A decade later in December, 1969 he returned from America and later purchased the Sancta Maria Hotel in Strandhill. With his wife Bridgie (nee Healy), a native of Pontoon, Co. Mayo, he established a thriving business and the hotel hosted functions of all varieties, especially for sporting organisations.

It is as a footballer, however, that Nace will be best remembered. He carved a special place for himself in the history of Sligo GAA and is widely regarded as one of the greatest players ever produced by the county.

He won a county championship

medal at Minor level with Ballinacarrow in 1947, a team he captained, and two years later was captain of the first Sligo Minor team to win the Connacht Championship, beating Roscommon in the final. That team was subsequently beaten by Armagh in the All-Ireland semi-final at Lurgan.

Nace was the youngest ever player to don the Sligo Senior county jersey and enjoyed a brilliant career. He led Sligo to two Connacht Finals, both of which were lost to Galway in 1954 and 1956. The 1954 defeat was heartbreakingly narrow while the 1956 defeat was comprehensive. Galway went on to win the All-Ireland Final that year. Nace became a legend in his own lifetime playing ten times for Connacht and helping to bring the much-coveted interprovincial Railway Cup to the west on three occasions, in 1951, 1957 and 1958. He is the only Sligo player to win three Railway Cup medals. He produced a sublime display in the 1955 semi-final against Munster in Castlebar. In direct opposition to the great John Dowling, who later that year went on

to lift the Sam Maguire Cup for Kerry, Nace took control of the midfield area and retained it right throughout the match. The famed GAA writer Mick Dunne headlined his match report in the following morning's Irish Press with the caption 'O'Dowd was Magnificent'. In the year 2000 Nace was chosen at midfield on the Connacht Team of the Millennium.

The highlight of his playing career was being selected on the Ireland team in 1954 and 1955 to play the Combined Universities in representative games at Croke Park.

At club level Nace won three Sligo Senior county championships with Tubbercurry in 1950, 1951 and 1955 and a Mayo Senior county championship with Castlebar Mitchells in 1953.

In 1957 Nace played with Ballymote and then joined his native Mullinabreena whom he captained to a famous Sligo Senior championship success in 1958, the year before he emigrated.

He continued his playing career in New York and graced the playing fields of America with the same style and dedication he had shown in Ireland. He was a tremendously powerful man whose influence and ability tended to get the best out of his colleagues at all times.

At administrative level, he represented Sligo on the Connacht Council and was also a staunch member of the Coolera/Strandhill GAA Club. He managed the county Senior and Under-21 football teams in the late 1970's, the Under-21 team being rather unlucky to lose the 1979 Connacht Final to Galway.

Nace was a first cousin of other great Sligo footballers, the Christie brothers Paddy and Mick from Tourlestrane and Mick Snee from Tubbercurry. Their mothers were sisters, being daughters of Michael and Catherine





Sligo - Connacht Senior Football Championship v Mayo at Ballymote, 1951

Back (Left to Right) — Jim McTiernan and T. 'Click' Brennan (Officials), T. McVann, E. Durkin, J. Masterson, M. Gaffney, P. Kennedy, N. O'Dowd, F. Gaffney, B. Oates, M. Cuniffe.  
Front (Left to Right) — Martin Sweeney (Official), F. White, M. Christie, P. Brennan, F. Quigley, P. McGovern and T. Dunleavy.

### Sligo Team 1951

Brennan of Moylough, Tubbercurry.

The esteem in which Nace O'Dowd is held in his native place was emphasised when the local GAA club decided to name its club grounds in his honour. The Nace O'Dowd GAA Park was officially opened by County Board Chairman Tommy Carroll in May 1994. In the intervening quarter of a century the park has been

developed to a high standard. As well as being the home venue for the Coolaney/Mullinabreena GAA Club it is also a real focal point for the local community.

Nace O'Dowd's death at Sligo General Hospital on 16th May, 1987 came as a great shock not only to his family, but also to his many friends and admirers throughout the country.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.  
*Tommy Kilcoyne.*

Sources:

Tributes to a Football Immortal: Nace O'Dowd (Sligo) Editors: Joe Masterson and James McGuinn. 1989.

Sligo GAA 125 History: 1884-2009.

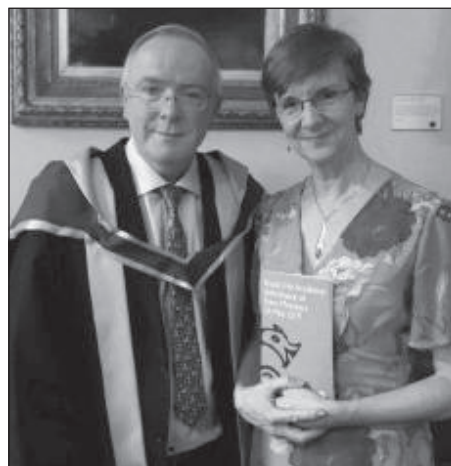
## Professor Ivan Perry

By Neal Farry

Congratulations to Professor Ivan Perry, a native of Ballymote, who was admitted recently into the Royal Irish Academy in recognition of his achievements in science.

Ivan is a son of the late Jack and Margaret Perry nee Benson, of Ballymote. He received his education in the Convent of Mercy Infant School, Ballymote, Ballymote Boys' National School, Coláiste Mhuire, Ballymote and University College Galway. Ivan is an epidemiologist in public health nutrition and enjoys an international profile. For the last twelve years Prof. Perry has been the leading investigator on the Health Research Board's Centre for Health and Diet Research, which

is one of Europe's leading Centre's of Excellence for interdisciplinary public health nutrition. He is also Dean of the School of Public Health at University College Cork. There are 606 elected Members of the Royal Academy who are entitled to use the designation 'MRIA' after their name. Professor Ivan Perry now joins this august group who includes the novelist Maria Edgeworth, Mary E. Daly, historian and Commissioner, Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation, Nobel laureates W.B. Yeats, Ernest Walton, Belfast born atomic scientist, the poet Seamus Heaney and Austrian physicist and developer of quantum theory, Erwin Schrödinger.



Professor Ivan Perry and his wife Mary Cahill at the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin

# The Life and Times of an Old Barn

By Joan Gleeson

Today, I'm watching the arrival at my door of a huge monstrosity of a red, shiny, noisy machine. I hear them call it 'a tractor'. The little boy said, "Daddy! The very big size of it!". I know this is the end of the good old days for me.

Memories come flooding back. How well I remember the frenetic activities that went on here over the past century's turning seasons. I recall the plucking of the goose for Christmas and the children's laughter as the fluffy down settled on their hair and clothes. The early spring had the annual ritual of the splitting of the potatoes to be dropped in the drills for next year's dinner. I can't forget the rows and ructions at the kid's card games on the lid of an old trunk. Snap, Old Maid or Twenty-five.

"Snap!", he shouted.

"No, I said it first".

"No I did. I'll tell Mammy you're cheating".

That old trunk has her own story having crossed the Atlantic in the nineteen-twenties. New steps on the hornpipe practiced to the tunes of the wind-up gramophone records. They were danced with gusto on my concrete floor sending particles of dust flying and playing in a shaft of sunlight from my little window.

There was constant in and out for this tool and that. A rake, a scythe, a spraying machine, a horse to be shod, asses hooves to be paired, a plough to be fixed; I had all the tools. I was never lonely. I was needed. Times changed. The children grew up and moved away to make their own memories, tell their own story to live a life of new ideas with new fangled devices. By the time they are half my age these inventions will be old hat. However, men and women on the shoulders of these giants will continue to make

new discoveries. The next generation takes over.

Weather and social events have played a big part in my life. How can I ever forget the year of 1947? It was the one hundredth anniversary of the cruel famine. Weeping and wailing and great American wakes were the order of the day in the Forties especially as thousands were forced to emigrate for a better life. Fiddles, flutes, melodians and quarter barrels of porter were the last memories of many emigrants. Tears and laughter, hopes and sometimes disaster, but they never forgot their families back home. I witnessed the arrival of the postman with the American parcel on the front of the bike and the Christmas cards and dollars in the airmail envelopes.

Another never to be forgotten memory was the blizzard of that same year or the big snow, as it was called. The temperatures dropped and the snow fell thick and fast overnight, driven by a strong wind. The wind drifted the snow in huge mounds against windows, doors, gates and ditches, wiping out roads and fields and leaving the entire map of Ireland as one huge iced and frosted cake. Myself, I looked like the perfect Christmas card with only my chimney protruding above my rooftop of heavily covered snow. It didn't thaw for weeks and left a late spring doing catch-up for crops planting and sowing.

You can't let a little thing like a blizzard dampen the spirits of the GAA. The entire GAA fraternity got to work on organising the All Ireland football match for that September for none other venue than the Polo Grounds, Bronx, New York. I know it was a mad idea but they pulled it off. Irish air travel was in its infancy and to make assurance doubly sure, some

of the team went by air with the rest going by sea.

I have to tell you why the excitement was so high around my barn door. You see two Sligo men were secretary and chairman respectively of the Connaught county board. Tom Kilcoyne from Ougham up the road, was the secretary and Jack Brennan from Cloonacool held the Connaught chair at that time. Both men travelled with the teams. The Cavan and Kerry teams played to thousands of Irish spectators with the Cavan team winning the Sam Maguire cup. At home, men gathered in the houses of people who had radios to hear Micheal O'Hehir's commentary on Raidió Éireann. I could hear cheers and roars on the prevailing wind with every point and goal scored. On arrival back in Dublin the teams was received at Áras an Uachtaráin by President Seán T O'Kelly. Celebrations went on for days. There wasn't a sheaf of oats cut or hay or turf brought home only talking about the match. I heard it all!

Well that was a long time ago but I'm still here. I have the sun on my back warming my old stones and I see the moon at night over Grehan's hill reflected in the little river gurgling through 'the bottoms' on its way to the Owenmore. The robin sings its heart out at break of day from the old hawthorn tree. The swallows repair their nests under my eaves every spring but I haven't heard a cuckoo or corncrake or curlew for years now. Makes me sad. New eras dawn with the same farm work to be done, only the tools have changed. I welcome the changes, but God be with the good old days. Start up that tractor Noel and never mind the reminiscences of an old barn. There could be life in this old barn yet.



# World War II Aircraft Crashes in the Easkey Area

By Sam Moore

During World War II many people from Easkey area witnessed a number of foreign military aircraft crashes. Ireland's policy was officially "neutral", and the country did not publicly declare its support for any particular side during the war. Even though Ireland remained neutral there were just over 200 recorded crashes or forced landings in Ireland over the 1939-45 period. Pilots of the German air force, the Luftwaffe, who crash-landed in Ireland along with German sailors who came ashore were all interned in detention camps. At the start of the war, Allied crews, mainly British and Commonwealth airmen, were interned in some cases, but many were sent to the Northern Ireland border where they returned to their squadrons. This was most prevalent during 1940 and 1941. As the war progressed, and in particular with the entry of America into the war, it became clear that if Ireland interned any serving United States personnel it would cause great embarrassment to the Irish government. From 1942 onwards, a process was followed whereby only those airmen flying operational missions would be interned, but even this was not strictly followed as no members of the RAF's Coastal Command patrol aircraft were interned during this later period of the war. Respective embassies had to pay for their keep, but towards the end of the war, the German embassy was unable to pay, so German internees worked on local farms.

Many aircraft were being ferried across the North Atlantic and were flown by a mix of experienced and fresh aircrew members along with civilian employees of Ferry Command. This was the aircraft ferry service that delivered over 10,000 aircraft across the Atlantic Ocean mainly from bases in Newfoundland, Canada, at a time when long range navigation was in its infancy. Over 500 aircrew died during

these operations. Allied aircraft were allowed to overfly County Donegal to bases such as the Flying Boat base at Castle Archdale, County Fermanagh and the main Allied Airbase at Nutt's Corner near Aldergrove, Co. Antrim, and this was known as the Donegal Corridor. The bodies of the dead Allied airmen found along the Irish coast or those that died in crash landings were handed over at the border and were accompanied by an Irish Army Guard of Honour, and some were buried in graves now maintained by the War Graves Commission. A considerable number of crashes occurred either side of the Donegal Corridor, the best known being that of Boeing B-17G-15-BO Flying Fortress under call sign 'Gaza King' of the US American Air Force crashed into the side of Tievebaun Mountain in north Co. Sligo on December 9 1943. It was one of 40 aircraft being flown as a 'ferry' flight from Goose Bay in north Canada to Prestwick, Scotland. Another example US Airforce Flying Fortress with the call sign of the 'Devil Himself' was on a training mission, lost its course, ran out of fuel and force landed onto Mullaghmore Beach December 5 1942. British and American repair crews travelled from Northern Ireland each day to try and fix the plane's engine, while the crew were accommodated in the Beach Hotel in Mullaghmore and later brought to Finner Army Camp where they were housed for 17 days until their plane was ready to fly again. And it took off from Mullaghmore Beach. Strict wartime press censorship had the effect of controlling any reaction to the war's unfolding events but many people from around the Easkey area remember a number of the aircraft that crashed in the vicinity. Details below are of the recorded incidents focusing on the region around Easkey and are listed by date.

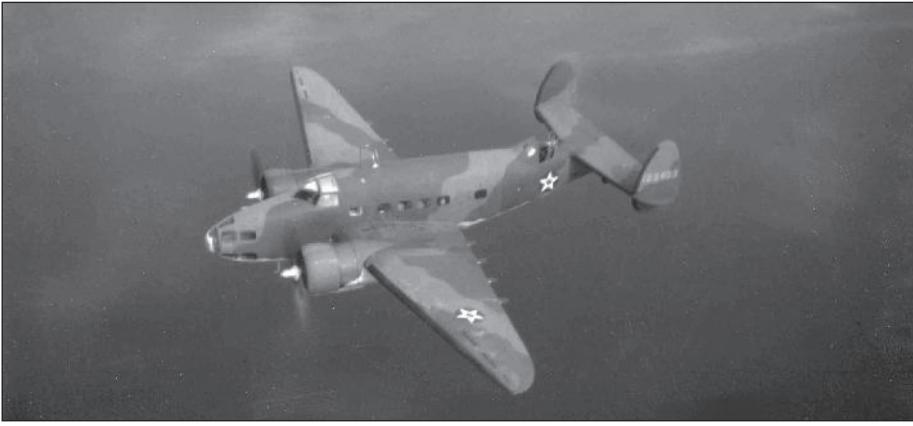
## June 23 1940

A Hawker Henley aircraft from RAF Armaments Training Station Unit (probably from Aldergrove) landed at Easkey with two crew. This particular aircraft was used as a target tug; an aircraft which towed targets for the purposes of gun or missile practice. The names of pilots were not recorded as the crew only spoke briefly with locals and it was only on the ground for a few minutes before they took off again.

## January 24 1941

A Lockheed Hudson aircraft from RAF 233 Squadron, Aldergrove, Co. Antrim made a forced landing around 5.00pm in the townland of Derk Beg, Skreen, having run low on fuel. The Lockheed Hudson was an American-built light bomber and coastal reconnaissance aircraft primarily operated by the RAF. None of the four crew were injured. RAF 233 squadron was a coastal command patrol aircraft and it had an encounter over the Atlantic with a Luftwaffe Flying Boat. It suffered some damage but the encounter caused the aircraft to lose its bearings leading to low-fuel levels. It landed in a field belonging to Patrick Kilcullin and he, along with Peter Barrett a neighbour, were the first on the scene. They were joined shortly after by Patrick McTernan, a Local Defence Force man. They, along with a number of others, including the men of the Irish Coast Watch Service at Aughris Look Out Post (LOP) no 67 and Rosskeragh LOP 68 had all seen the aircraft circling over Sligo Bay. LOPs were constructed around the entire Irish coastline, from Co. Louth to Malin Head in Co. Donegal, for use by the Coast Watching Service. A total of 83 of these continually-manned observation stations were built, each with a mission to relay all maritime and aerial activity to Irish Military Intelligence, called





**Lockheed Hudson (National Museum of the US Airforce, Public Domain)**

G2. There were four LOPs in County Sligo: LOP 66 Lenadoon (Rathlee), Aughris; Rosskeragh and LOP 69 Mullaghmore. The bomber had dropped four bombs out at sea, two miles south of Raghly Harbour, before making its landing. The crew asked Peter Barrett where were they, as they thought they had crashed in Scotland. After discovering they were in the Free State three of them, leaving one crewman at the aircraft, went to Pat Scott's pub and then on to Skreen Garda station. While at Scott's pub, a local story says that there was a row between two drunken customers. One of the crew reportedly said he hoped he can re-join the war as it was safer than the pub! Shortly after they returned to their aircraft along with Garda Sergeant Peter Byrne from Skreen. Two members of Irish Military Intelligence, G2, arrived from Athlone, searched the aircraft and confiscated the logbooks and the two carrier pigeons that each aircraft had. A local un-named Volunteer from Aughris LOP accidentally let off the emergency dingy and blocked the door escape, briefly trapping the G2 men inside.

On landing it had managed to stop after 20 metres but two of its propellers had been bent and the undercarriage was down. An Irish Air Corps salvage team dug trenches into which the undercarriage was lowered and they managed to repair the aircraft. An Aer Lingus pilot then arrived and flew the plane from Kilcullin's field to Baldonnell Aerodrome, Co. Kildare. It became Irish Air Corps No. 91 and

was used as a VIP transport aircraft, often by the Taoiseach Eamon de Valera. The original four crew were interned in the Curragh Camp in Co. Kildare and would have regularly seen their old plane fly over them from Baldonnell in the new Irish Air Corps colours. Three of the crew managed to escape from the Curragh. John William Shaw was later killed in action in June 1944 and Denys Welply was shot down in November 1944. Neither body was recovered. Roderick Cowper was taken Prisoner of War in September 1941, having escaped from Ireland in July 1941.

#### **May 23 1942**

The aircraft involved in this particular crash was another Lockheed Hudson III patrol bomber, one of a batch of Hudson delivered between April and July 1942. It had departed from Newfoundland and the crew consisted of Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, James Constabaris, age 27; Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve navigator, Kenneth Dyer, age 21 and Royal Canadian Air Force Radio Operator, Donald Engemoen, age 19. Witnesses saw the aircraft circle the area between Dromore West and Easkey twice before reporting that it headed towards the sea and landed in water around Carrownabinna Point, just west of Easkey. The plane remained on the surface for about 10mins, and then sank, 2 miles off Carrownabinna Point. The times of these sightings were recorded to have been around 11:30 in the morning when it landed and then sank before noon. Garda

Laurence Rooney of Easkey reported that at 11.50am he went from Easkey with Garda Sergeant David Dempsey by bicycle to Killenduff. They went into John Maguire's field at the back of the Seafiel Hotel and saw it floating on the surface. He, and members of the Local Defence Force, searched the shoreline for survivors, to no avail.

The Irish Military advised the British Authorities in Northern Ireland and at 3.05pm the British rescue boat, the Robert Hastie travelled from Killybegs to the scene of the reports and searched until 12.35am but nothing was found. The Robert Hastie was a British manned vessel which was permitted to be stationed in the harbour of Killybegs in Co. Donegal. The body of Royal Canadian Air Force pilot Flight Lieutenant James Constataris was discovered near Drumbannon Point on the north coast of Donegal Bay, near to the harbour of Killybegs six days later on Friday, 29 May 1942. His mess bill for \$4.45 from the base as Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Province, Canada was found in his pocket and provided his identity. The British Authorities in Northern Ireland and the Canadian consulate in Dublin were informed and James Constabaris' remains were transferred across the border at Pettigo on May 31, 1942.

#### **September 4, 1944**

One story that is remembered well, in the area around Easkey and Aughris, is that of the forced landing of a Fairey Swordfish III from 811 Squadron, which had been temporarily based at the RAF Coastal Command at Limavady, Co. Derry. The Fairey Swordfish was a torpedo bomber biplane that began life in the 1930s, but remained in front-line service until the end of the war primarily as an anti-submarine aircraft. This Swordfish, with its two-man crew, Alan Arcus and Dennis Pender, had lost its bearings in bad weather while engaged in air-sea rescue work. The aircraft was seen over Downpatrick LOP at 7.10pm before it crash-landed at 9.00pm. It landed in Foley's Field

in Carrowcaslan near Skreen and had slammed into Stephan Foley's hen house killing 30 chickens as well as damaging half an acre of cabbage. Mr Foley was at a funeral of his son at the time who tragically drowned with five others in Ballysadare. The plane crash report, including the fact Mr Foley was at his son's funeral, was to appear in the Irish Times the following day but was censored. The henhouse was valued at £5 and the chickens at 7 shillings 6 pence each. All bills were sent to the British Department of Defence. The aircraft was dismantled and moved to Finner Camp, Co. Donegal before it was handed over the border to the RAF Northern Ireland at Strabane on 10 September 1944. The crew members, Arcus and Pender, had been handed over to British authorities at Belleek on 5 September 1944.



Fairey Swordfish (Tony Hisgett, Creative Commons)

#### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Carmel Gordon of Easkey, Sergeant Kelly of the Irish Military Archives and a special thanks to Dennis Burke, originally from Cloonacool, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, whose excellent website <http://www.ww2irishaviation.com/> and thorough knowledge of WWII air crashes in Ireland were essential to this article.

#### Further Reading

Burke, D. 2011-14 [www.csn.ul.ie/~dan/war/crashes.htm](http://www.csn.ul.ie/~dan/war/crashes.htm). Accessed 23 June 2014 Irish Military Archives Aircraft Crashes Sligo G2/X/0645; 0806; 1013; 1098; 1107; 1338; 1366; 1373. MacCarron, D. 2003 Landfall Ireland: the story of Allied and German Aircraft which came down in Éire in World War Two. Colourpoint Books, Newtownards.

## Sr Bridget Tighe

*Submitted by Bernard Tansey*

Ballindoon Co Sligo Irish missionary, Sr Bridget Tighe is unique in being the recipient of two prestigious public recognition awards from her home country in 2018.

Sr Bridget was honoured with Trócaire's inaugural Romero International Award at a ceremony in August 2018, in recognition of her humanitarian work in Gaza and the Middle East. The award commemorates the inspiring work of Blessed Oscar Romero, the late Archbishop of San Salvador, who fought against poverty and repression in his native El Salvador.

Sr Bridget was also presented with a Presidential Distinguished Service Award by President Michael D Higgins in December 2018. The award is a recognition of her 40 years of ministry and service to the poor and vulnerable in the Middle East.

By way of background, when she was 17, Bridget Tighe emigrated to



England to study nursing at Whipp's Cross Hospital in East London. She entered the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood at Ladywell on 25 June 1965 and after being professed she served Palestinian refugees in Jordan as a nurse and Midwife. She studied theology at Cambridge University and specialised in health economics at the London

School of Economics. She launched the prestigious Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology in Cambridge in 1993 and served as vice rector of Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem.

Sr Bridget has served almost 40 years in the Middle East and is now General Director with Caritas Jerusalem. She has been working with the beleaguered Palestinian communities in Gaza and Jerusalem and has led the Caritas Jerusalem medical centre in Gaza where the population has suffered from repeated attacks by the Israeli military.

Based in the Holy Land, Caritas Jerusalem is a humanitarian and development organisation that represents the socio-pastoral service of the Catholic Church in Jerusalem. It was founded in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, to respond to the overwhelming needs of the Palestinian refugees.

# Townlands Revisited: The Keash/Culfadda Townland Project

by Steve Lemken

*To remember. To be remembered. To not forget. To not be forgotten. To pass on communal knowledge. A welcome base of information to old and new friends and neighbors.*

The above thoughts are the guiding principle of a project taken on by a small group of residents, all volunteers in the South Co. Sligo townlands roughly corresponding with the villages of Keash and Culfadda. The project builds upon the work done by The Keash-Culfadda Local History Committee published in their 2001 book, “Keash and Culfadda: A Local History.” [Out of print.]

The project’s seed was planted near 30 years ago when one local resident with deep roots in the area, Pat Ward, a former shopkeeper and publican, saw the forestry plantings in the area starting to overtake the old house sites and holdings of residents long gone and/or going.

“I got to thinking that no one would remember where those sites would be, or who lived in them, as the forests started covering sites,” said Ward, who has a broad wealth of local knowledge stored in his memory about the area’s people and relationships. “I wasn’t sure how to begin but I did start writing down the information in bits and pieces.”

Others were thinking along those lines as more and more people, family seekers “from away” mostly, came round the area seeking their roots and any possible relations. “The late Jim McGill, a local historian who had a powerful knowledge of the area, and I, found ourselves sending the visitors to each other when they were looking for information,” Ward said. Eventually, this activity and the feeling to get down some of the local history stirred enough local residents and academicians to come together



**From left: Noel Costello, Pat Lynch, Tom Dyer, John Cryan, Sean Connelly, Eddie Harte, Pat Ward, Joe Cullen**

and write the Keash/Culfadda history book.

“They covered a good deal of the local and social history, archaeology, topography, oral histories and myths of the area and more,” Ward said. “And before that book, there was the Knockbrack and Templevanny graveyard inventory projects, done by local students, listing the inscriptions on the stones that could be read.”

But spurring on this current project was the thinking that some of the collective past wasn’t being passed on like in days not so long gone by. Namely, the names and interconnections of families down the years and the small local names given to townland fields, hills, etc. “Ah sure we had a powerful lot of information to share about history and myths,” said Ward. “But we were forgetting the relations, tales and names of people going back from the 1901 and 1911 Census and back beyond and those local names that give a townland its’ own feeling.”

“The current project took up in earnest about three years ago when another local committee came together to put an event and a publication for the 1916 commemorations being encouraged round the country,” said

Noel Costello, another long time local farmer and retired surveyor/architect. “Our event was a recreation of the mass meeting of the 1914 volunteers in a local field. Folks from each townland gathered on the site and then marched to the Keash GAA field on Garland Sunday 2016. The committee gathered up stories and photos for a commemorative booklet sold to cover costs. The event was successful and several volunteers, wanting to do more, got excited with the idea for this information gathering project. Our first meeting was at Keash Hall. We shifted to Pat’s house for weekly meetings with no overhead to worry about.

“We started with mapping out some tasks and looking at what print, online and people resources we could consult about the past,” Costello said. “Each volunteer joining has particular knowledge of their townlands and neighbors or other skills giving shape to the project’s needs, goals and eventual product. Most of the volunteers are gathering information from their neighbors about land and other named features in a townland, like wells, fields, springs, house sites - be they current dwellings, ruins or knocked houses. We especially





**From left: Steve Lemken, Joe Cullen, Pat Ward, Eddie Harter, Noel Costello, Pat Lynch, Kevin Cryan, Tom Dyer, John Cryan**

speak with residents who can make family connections across a number of generations. Other committee members are scouring data sites on the Internet and published print resources, typing up information and gathering or taking photographs.”

The work is ambitious and specific. “To guide us, we are using a map of the parish of Keash & Culfadda showing the older civil parishes of Drumrat, Toomour and part of Kilshalvy,” said Costello. The map is based on the Ordnance Survey 1 inch townland index map and included in the Keash/Culfadda history book on page 87. A copy of the map, drawn by Fr. Thomas Connolly, hangs in the Fox’s Den in Keash. “We use a number of other local OSI maps I had from my working days”

A townland information sheet outline, with a map of the specific townland, was designed so that the information could be typed in under specific heading.

“We’ll include every person and family we can find in the 80 plus townlands as far back as possible up to the 1911 Census and a bit beyond,” Costello said. “Various sites on the Internet are the first sources. We’re copying names from the Tithe Applotments [records of renters taxed to pay Church of Ireland fees in the late 1820’s into the 1830s], the renters and landlords listed in the 1850s Griffith’s valuation recordings, all individuals listed in the 1901 and 1911 Ireland Census for those townlands, people in parish sources from Diocese of Achonry from the 1840s on up, and old estate records. We included owners listed in the 1656-58 Down Survey maps. We’ll look at the Hearth

Tax records and other sources.”

This information is just the beginning. The committee is still working to get this first rendition up on an Internet site later this year or early next year. Web site and print references will be included for users to follow up.

Next, the online listings of births, marriages and deaths [BMD] are also being recorded, starting with the earliest recordings from the 1860s. “This part is a slow process,” Costello said, “because the scanned handwritten online records can be hard to read. In addition, the localities often give just old, now unused local place names. We’ll capture as many as possible with the old and new place names and add to the first information sheets.”

“These records are also where we will make the family inter-connections from at least the Griffith Valuations names to the 1901 and 1911 Census records,” Ward said. Of great assistance to sorting those connections are the very good memories of the committee members of the nick-names of families and individuals. The committee spend many a meeting just sussing out each of the same named families.

Ward said, “That’s part of the process and the many bits and pieces each committee member gets by talking with people in their homes, alongside the road or at the local pubs is a help. There is a lot of knowledge not noted in the records and only relations or neighbours know where say - a child - was reared or who else was living in a home and not recorded between the record keeping. The same for names of the wee spots long

forgotten by most. All we can get and verify we’ll set down.”

Another problem with the records, Costello explained, “is that most of the maiden names of the married women named in the Census records are not included.

“Hence, by going back to the BMD sources, we are able to make a more accurate connections and compilations of families,” he said. “Fathers and mothers and witnesses are often on the BMD records. And, with the knowledge gained from interviews with older residents, we round the circle.

“Will we be 100 percent accurate?” Costello mused. “Maybe not, but we then will count on the users to help us correct the record through their own knowledge and research. On the whole, we believe we’ll come close to being able to tell where folks lived. Now, those who’ve moved out of the area will not be tracked, but if they moved within it, you should find them.” Users will be encouraged to explore the original records online to get the full picture of their ancestor’s family.

In addition, the information held by the Valuation Office in Dublin, not available online, is now being looked at and this will be another resource to tell genealogists, historians and other researchers what land their ancestors worked and lived on.

Carrying on, the committee is also reviewing the Ordnance maps to pin point each family home site named in the Griffith’s and Census records.

“We’ve all been making frequent trips around the townlands, visiting sites to get a better idea of the current



**John Cryan Pat Lynch Joe Cullen**



**Kevin Cryan and Tom Dyer**

lay of the land,” Costello said. “At a later stage we should be able to include the names of those people living at each ‘home place’ over many years and put a GPS coordinate on the site so visitors can ‘find’ their ancestral home or land.”

“The point is to get the history of people and places of the Keash and Culfadda townlands from as many people and other sources as possible, now, before people pass on,” said Ward, “and to make familiar to current locals, visiting family genealogists, historians and others to this local history. We see the project as ongoing, to be added to over the years, long after we are gone, so that the history remains a living part of being here and talked about.”

The committee invites anyone with local townland knowledge to contact them. They also request anyone with old photographs of by-gone sites and places to lend them for copying and inclusion for the eventual website. Any written records or tales people may hold that can be viewed and shared are also welcome. New members are also very welcome.

#### **Members of the Keash/Culfadda Townland Project Committee:**

Sean Connelly	Seafin
Noel Costello	Greenan
John Cryan	Tonaponra
Kevin Cryan	Derragolagh
Joe Cullen	Toomour
Tom Dyer	Drumnaganshy
Eddie Harte	Sraigh
Michael Higgins	Derragolagh
Steve Lemken	Rooskey Beg
Pat Lynch	Brougher
Pat Ward Sr.	Knockoconnor

All members are volunteers, with time and labor donated. Funding or further donated labour will be sought

for work outside of their expertise, primarily in work involving web site development and other tasks as determined.

Interested? We would love to have you and your knowledge to assist this project. Please contact:

Noel Costello: Mob. 086 161 3456

Email. [ngcostello@eircom.net](mailto:ngcostello@eircom.net)

or Pat Ward: Mob. 087 909 3453

Additional - resources for readers used by the Keash/Culfadda Townland Project committee.

#### **Online Web Sites**

The following resources sites have been used in the Keash/Culfadda Townland Information Sheet development. More will be added in the online work as they are accessed.

The National Archives has developed a Genealogy website to facilitate access to digitised collections that are useful to family and local history research. Access to these records is free of charge. All of these collections have been indexed and are searchable by name and location.

<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/genealogy/our-genealogy-website/>  
Many other useful links <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/useful-links>

The Down Survey of Ireland <http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/index.html>

Taken in the years 1656-1658, this is the first ever detailed land survey on a national scale anywhere in the world. The survey measured land to be forfeited by the Catholic Irish to facilitate redistribution to Merchant Adventurers and English soldiers.

Tithe Applotment Books

<http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/search/tab/home.jsp>

These are a vital source for genealogical research for the pre-Famine period, given the loss of the 1821-51 Census records. Compiled between 1823 and 1837 to determine the amount which occupiers of land over one acre should pay in tithes to the Church of Ireland.

#### **Civil Records**

<https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/civil-search.jsp>

The Civil Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths are Ireland's official records. Note dates covered on the Website.

#### **Church records**

<https://registers.nli.ie>

<https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/> Roman Catholic

Original parochial registers (i.e. baptisms, marriages and burials) of the Roman Catholic Church remain with the relevant parishes. Microfilm copies of original parochial registers are available at the National Library of Ireland (NLI) for most Roman Catholic parishes in Ireland for the years up to 1880. Some cases up to 1900. These microfilms are digitised and available to view online for free on the NLI's Catholic Parish Register website.

<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/records-birth-marriage-death/>

#### **Church of Ireland**

A list of all Church of Ireland parish registers, indicating whether they survive and where they are held, is available in the National Archives and also on the website of the RCB Library. The names and addresses of the clergy are given in the annual Church of Ireland Directory.

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/search?query=Parish+records+births+death+marriages>

<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/COIPARISHREGISTERS.pdf>  
Griffith's Valuation and related source sites

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml> <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/>

These records provide names of renters and land owners, acreage and more. Published between 1847 and 1864. One of the most important of Ireland's genealogical resources. See who lived in your townland in the mid-19th Century.

#### **Ordnance Survey**

The committee makes extensive use



**Noel Costello and Pat Lynch**

of the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI), which has evolved from the Ordnance Survey Office established in 1824. OSI continues its public service function of creating and maintaining the definitive mapping records of the State and much more. [https:// www.osi.ie](https://www.osi.ie)

We've made extensive use. Explore the Geohive site within the OSI site. You can use the tools to see a map your townland and house sites.

The committee has OSI permission for use of the maps. <http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html>

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)  
[www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk)  
Site for Northern Ireland records, including landlord Co. Sligo estate records [i.e. Gore-Booth]

Ancient monuments in townlands  
County Sligo is long inhabited, and the folks who lived here left many



**Steve Lemken and Pat Ward**

reminders. Learn of the monuments in your area via the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. Go to [https:// www.archaeology.ie](https://www.archaeology.ie) and look for the Historic Environment Viewer .

### Valuations

Looking for more about properties? See the Valuation's Office web site at <http://www.valoff.ie/en/archive-research/genealogy/>

Ireland Placename Database Project Information

The Place Names Database of Ireland is a comprehensive management system for data, archival records and place names research conducted by the State.  
[logainm.ie](http://logainm.ie)

### The Schools' Collection

Approximately 740,000 pages (288,000 pages in the pupils' original exercise books; 451,000 pages in bound volumes) of folklore and local

tradition were compiled by pupils from 5,000 primary schools in the Irish Free State between 1937 and 1939.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/info>  
<https://www.irelandsown.ie/the-old-age-pension-scam/>

Ireland Reaching Out site

For making connections in the county or parish your ancestor lived in - or where you think he/she lived, go on and sign up at Ireland Reaching Out - this site leads to a community of folks working to connect all Irish people with their place of origin.

<https://www.irelandxo.com>

### Recommended book:

Tracing Your Irish Ancestors: The Complete Guide 5th Edition by John Grenham See description on Amazon.

One explanation about ages in the Census

One last site: About the Act passed in 1908 to help people get a pension. It helps to explain some of the discrepancies in ages between the 1901 and 1911 Census.

<https://www.irelandsown.ie/the-old-age-pension-scam/-30->

# The Circle of Life

By Bernie Gilbride

Smiling as I remember the scene before me in the old photo album. A small boy about three years old in a wheel barrow. The small face beaming, very mucky, he is being pushed to shelter from the sudden squally shower.

The wheel barrow, cement encrusted from years of use on building sites. The lad - wellies, raincoat and hat, much the worse for wear, showing lots of mud from the path being laid around the house.

We have just moved in and lots of site works are still ongoing. Gardens being dug, plants ready for planting, a big bundle of fair sized trees ready

for planting for shelter. It took a few years before we realised too many had been planted!!!

The apple trees five in all, two eaters, two cookers and a desert apple were what I was most interested in, having spent my own youth playing under five such trees, and now anticipating the pleasure of seeing them in blossom, watching the fruit develop from tiny bud to full blown apple.

Where have all the years gone?  
A lovely brand new house, bare walls, bare rooms, just the absolute essentials, even curtained windows in

only the rooms in use.

As I look around me now - it has become the home of my dreams - a bit old fashioned no doubt - in its furniture, carpets, and heavy velvet curtains, walls papered (should be painted the family tell me) but I like wallpapered rooms, warmer, more colourful, interesting, even cosy.

The boy, a man, a father, a grandfather - still smiling, often beaming as of long ago, as he recounts the foibles of his grandchildren. The wheel has come full circle.



# Sligo Oysters Flown to Asia

By Garreth Byrne

If you go on holiday or business trips to Hong Kong, Shanghai or Guangzhou, you might like to treat yourself to a traditional expensive seafood dish like shark fin soup, or vitamin-rich seaweed soup, or stir-fried giant prawns with noodles. But there is something salty you are more familiar with if the other dishes sound too exotic for your delicate palate. I refer to fresh Sligo oysters, marketed under the brand name *Wild Atlantic Oysters*, carefully packaged and airfreighted from Ireland. In a Hong Kong or Shanghai hotel restaurant you may pay a steep price for a plate of Wild Atlantic Oysters, but along with many of the newly rich citizens who have benefited from modern China's economic boom, you will be enhancing a niche aspect of Irish marine food exports.

*Sligeach* is the Gaelic name for Sligo, sometimes translated as the Shelly River. Shellfish of various species have been abundant since ancient times along the banks of the River Garavogue and the extensive estuary that extends out into the Atlantic Ocean. Fishing has always been done along the winding coastline, helped by natural bays and harbours like Raughly, Sligo Bay, Streedagh and beautifully situated Mullaghmore.

Oyster farming is a niche marine industry in suitable parts of the undulating Sligo, Mayo and Donegal coastlines. Licensed oyster beds are found today in Ballisodare Bay, in Sligo estuary and in Drumcliffe among other locations along the Wild Atlantic Way. A company with a packaging plant in Lissadell, an estate associated with the Gore-Booth family and W.B. Yeats, now exports live Wild Atlantic Oysters to France and Hong Kong.

Lissadell Oyster farming dates back to the 1860s when the Gore-Booth family of Countess Markievicz created a huge sub-tidal bed, growing native oysters in Drumcliffe Bay. When

Sligo was a thriving sea port sailing ships brought Lissadell oysters in special brine containers to London for gourmet consumption in fashionable restaurants.

Business declined in the 1930s but in 1986 Gigas oysters (scientific name **Crassostrea gigas**) were introduced to the bay by the current producers. The Gore-Booths have left Lissadell and *Wild Atlantic Oysters* are now supplied by several entrepreneurial families based in County Sligo. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and Bord Bia (the food export authority) play key roles in quality control, environmental monitoring, the provision of scientific and financial supports, and the identification of export markets. The scientific input into the revival of oyster cultivation in Sligo Bay owes much to enlightened research and collaboration in the early 1970s between the Shellfish Research Programme at University College Galway and the U.K. Ministry of Fisheries. Oyster stock was sourced from British Columbia, where marine conditions were similar to the Atlantic coast of Ireland.

The oysters cultivated in this area are sourced from a local oyster hatchery run by Kevin O'Kelly in Drumcliffe Bay. It is one of only a few hatcheries in Ireland. Tiny live shells are transferred gingerly to wire mesh nets on sunken metal trestles slightly offshore, where daily tidal ebb and flow cover, nourish and expose the maturing oysters to salty wind and sunshine.

One of the founding members of Wild Atlantic Oysters, Charlie Kelly from just outside of Sligo town, started farming clams and oysters in 1986 in Lissadell. He spent childhood family holidays in Mullaghmore, and during student holidays tried lobster fishing and recreational inshore fishing. After training as a teacher he went into fish merchandising instead of the

classroom. Then he began seriously growing oysters.

## Ballisodare Oysters

The oyster industry in Ballisodare Bay has a colourful history and began quite by accident. Noelle Middleton who died aged 89 in 2016, was a successful Irish actress and BBC presenter in London in the 1950s. Born in Ballisodare in 1926, she was the only daughter of Wilbur Middleton, a wealthy mill owner with family links to the Yeatses. (W.B. Yeats spent childhood holidays in Sligo on account of these connections, with profoundly poetic results in later life.) After obtaining her degree from Trinity College Noelle Middleton became involved in the theatre and played at the Gate when Micheál MacLiammóir was a key figure, before going to London. In London she acted and became a radio presenter for the BBC. But news about a stormy Force 12 gale in Sligo called her back to check on a family boathouse overshadowed by Knocknarea. The boathouse was wrecked but Noelle decided to stay. She purchased 30,000 seed oysters from a hatchery in Wales and set up her oyster farm in Ballisodare Bay. The business thrived and she never returned to London theatre or radio.

Historically several other coastal areas of Ireland have shellfish farming and harvesting traditions.

Clew Bay was an ideal part of Mayo for oyster development in the early 19th century. A species called **Ostrea Edulis**, also widespread in other coastal parts of Europe, found sheltered bays and estuaries in Ireland hospitable. Oyster dredging in the 1830s provided gainful employment to many and in the late 19th century six million native oysters a year were exported by ship and train to the British market.

In 1595 Poolbeg in Dublin was prepared by the Dublin Corporation

for the planting of junior oysters. In 1838 the oyster beds at Clontarf were carefully stocked with oysters from the USA and France. This brief information on Dublin oyster cultivation puts the West of Ireland situation in a national historical context.

Traditional continental markets for

Irish oysters include France, Italy and Spain. In recent years Asia has started to emerge as a growing market.

Science and environmental monitoring will continue to play a vital role in maintaining the Irish oyster industry in which Sligo, Mayo and Donegal have played an important role. Over harvesting

poses a problem. Workers who brave wet windy weather to keep the industry going need protection and remuneration.

*Garreth Byrne lives in retirement in Dromahair, where he is a member of Dromahair Heritage Group. He taught English in 5 cities of mainland China, but never ate oysters there.*

## Newspaper Articles 1881

Submitted by Pdraig Doddy

This article is taken from The Champion and Sligo News (The Sligo Champion) August 13th, 1881.

### Ballymote Petty Sessions

Thursday

(Before Captain J.O. Gage, R.M.) in chair. G.A. Molony,, R.M.; R.A. Duke, and A. Perceval, J.P.)

There were over forty cases entered for hearing, but the majority were of minor importance.

### ALLEGED ASSAULT

Luke McDermott v. Mrs. Gaffney

The complainant and defendant in this case are father and daughter and hail from Bunninadden. Plaintiff charged his daughter with assaulting him on the 20th of July, and the daughter had a cross case against

him for a similar offence. From the evidence of Mrs. Gaffney and her mother, Mrs. McDermott (nee Doddy), it appears that on the date mentioned her father was in an excited state, and on coming into the house he demanded stimulants, which were refused. He then got so excited that he upset the shop and kitchen furniture. A general melee then ensued, resulting in the rejection of Luke from the premises. After a long hearing, their worships dismissed both cases.

### ANOTHER ASSAULT

Mrs. Culligan summoned Mrs. Sharkey for assaulting her on the 8th June. Mrs. Sharkey had a cross case against Mrs. Culligan for a similar offence. Both parties are neighbours and reside at Newtown.

From the evidence of Mrs. Culligan, Mrs. Sharkey and Mrs. Morrison, it appeared that on the date in question Mrs. Sharkey was in her own garden and Mrs. Culligan in her mother's (Mrs. Morrison's) garden. Mrs. Sharkey was in the act of doing something to Mrs. Morrison's cabbage when she was seen by Mrs. Culligan. Then the tongues were let loose on both sides, and several names of a nasty character were called on all sides. However, according to evidence, there was no assault proved. Captain Gage, addressing the defendants, said he would adjourn the cases for three months. In the meantime, if any other case cropped up he would send them all to prison.

## John Taaffe

Submitted by Pdraig Doddy

John Taaffe (i) of Ballinaglough, Ballymote living 1774.

His wife was Mary Irwin, Clan of Jones-Irwin

Their son John Taaffe (ii), described as a kinsman of Francis Taaffe – who had 2 sisters

Hannah married Henry Irwin

Joan married Reverend Charles West John Taaffe (ii) appears to have died in Sligo Town, 1840

John Taaffe (iii) of Drumraine (parish of Cloonoghill, near Ballymote and of Glenesk, Lough Talt (Near Tubbercurry). 1845 Married Julia Trafford of Staffordshire

John Taaffe (iv) S.P of Glenesk born c.1817. Married and a son was born 1856.

His estates of Drumraine and Glenesk for sale In Londid Estates Court in 1856/1857

John Taaffe Obituary, Sandymount, Co. Dublin, 1878

In 1912/1915 Irish land Commission acquired Drumraine (205 acres) and other Taaffe properties from Dr. John Frederick Taaffe – presumably a descendent of John Taaffe.

The last landlord that lived in Ballinaglough was John West Esq.,

died on 8 th July 1853. His only daughter Charlotte married Edward Pollock (Solicitor) in 1841.

John West's tenants in 1844 were

Michael Davey

Thomas Hannon

Michael Redican

Pat Grey

Henry Doddy

There was a School in Ballinaglough under the patronage of John West in which there are 110 children. There was also a Hedge School of about 50 children

Source: Bethams Genealogical Abstracts

# The Rise and the Demise of the Thatched Cottage

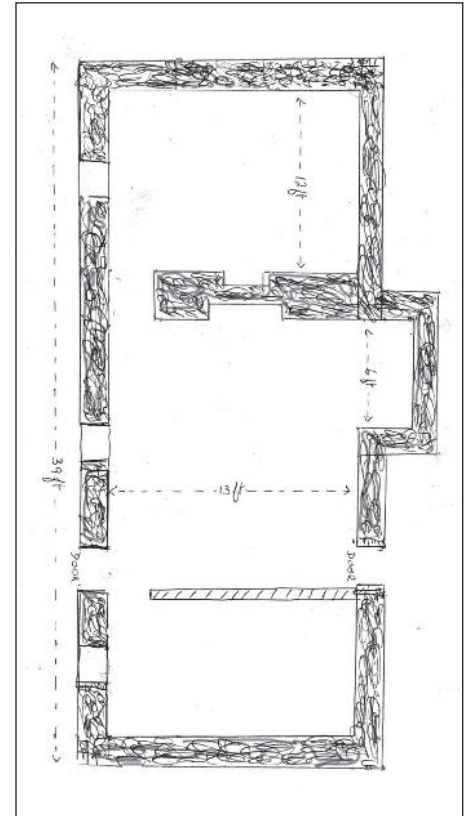
by Micheál Murphy

Up until the middle of the 19th century, rural dwellings in the west were little more than hovels. Tenant farmers had no security of tenure and improvements to their dwellings invariably resulted in an increase in the rent demanded by the landlord. The Land Acts of the 1880s granted farmers more security, and a general improvement in the standard of living accommodation followed. Many new thatched cottages were constructed and in west Sligo and Mayo practically all followed the same design. Each consisted of just two rooms. The principal room which served as the kitchen and living area had a large open fireplace and a bed alcove, known as the *outshot* or the *hag*, built into the rear wall near the fireplace. The bed in this kitchen alcove was generally reserved for the grandparents. The second room, which had a fireplace backing up to the kitchen fire, was the family bed room. Up until the turn of the 20th century, the lower end of the living room also housed the few cattle that the farmer owned. These valued possessions of the family were tied to

the gable wall and provided some heat for the occupants in winter.

All materials for the construction of these houses were sourced locally. Stone for the walls was collected from a local quarry or from field clearance gathered over many years. Sometimes existing buildings were demolished to provide raw material. A kiln of limestone was burned to supply the lime to make mortar. The purest of the resulting quick-lime was slaked by soaking it in a pit where it became hydrated to make a sticky product, calcium hydroxide. This was mixed with sand to make a lime mortar which gives greater flexibility to stone joints than modern cement. The durability of such lime mortars has been well proven. They were used in the construction of 10th century round towers and abbeys and even in the pyramids of Egypt, some of which have stood for more than four thousand years.

The choice of site for a new cottage was mainly determined by its proximity to a water supply such as a well, a river or a stream. That settled,



**Rough plan of typical 19th Century Cottage.**

permission had to be obtained not from the local authority but from the fairies! Superstition or *pisreogaí* decreed that four stones had to be placed and left in position overnight at the site of the four corners of the house. Any discommoded fairies would express their displeasure by moving the stones away and nobody would risk their wrath by blocking their pathway. Stories abound of such stones being displaced by local pranksters too but the would-be builder had no option but to select a new site.

## Construction

In general, traditional thatched cottages in the west were built to roughly standard dimensions, with internal measurements of 36 feet in length by 12 feet in width. The



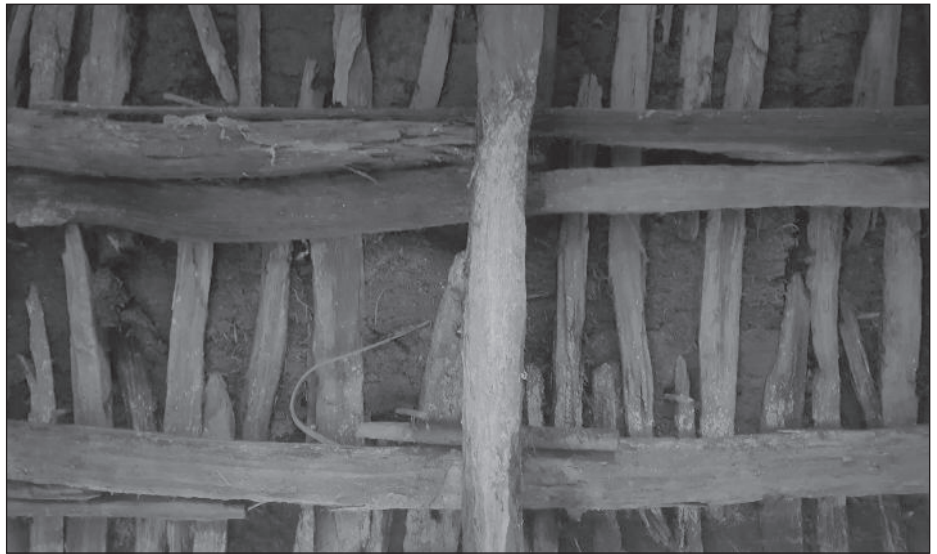
**Cottage at Hennigan's Heritage, Killasser, Co. Mayo.**



external walls were 18 inches thick. (Note: 1 foot = 12 inches = 30.48cm). A much thicker wall was built about 12 feet from one gable and it divided the cottage into a main bedroom and a larger living-room cum kitchen. It also accommodated back to back fire-places, a large one fitted with a crane for hanging cooking pots in the kitchen and a smaller one in the family bedroom. The annex or outshot in the kitchen extended out about 4 feet and was 6 feet long.

Once the foundation trench was dug, it was filled with stone and mortar to ground level. Then the stone mason built up the walls to a height of about 8 feet with layers of stone and mortar, strengthening the structure with specially dressed quoins on the corners. When the two gables reached a height of about 8 feet and the chimney was built up, roofing began. Bog oak or ash was the preferred timber for the rafters or *couples*. When cutting turf, beams of bog oak might be discovered under the blanket of bog. These are extremely durable and were carefully extracted and stored for construction purposes. (The location of hidden bog deal and bog oak is sometimes indicated in places in a bog where frost or ice melts quickly). The rafters, placed about 3 feet apart were overlaid with lighter timbers which were secured with wooden pegs.

The next step was the covering of the rafters with *scraws* or heath covered sods cut from the surface of the bog. These were stitched in place with home-made straw ropes (*súgáin*) or sometimes with ropes twisted from strips of bog deal. The thatching process began with an under layer of straw or sometimes rushes. The upper layer of thatch was usually rye straw, because rye was stronger and grew taller than oats or barley. The rye was harvested with a scythe and the grain removed by scutching or hitting the seed heads of the sheaves against a stone so as not to damage the straw. I have seen the sheaves of rye to be used for thatching being carefully inserted into a thresher and removed quickly before the straw was damaged in the

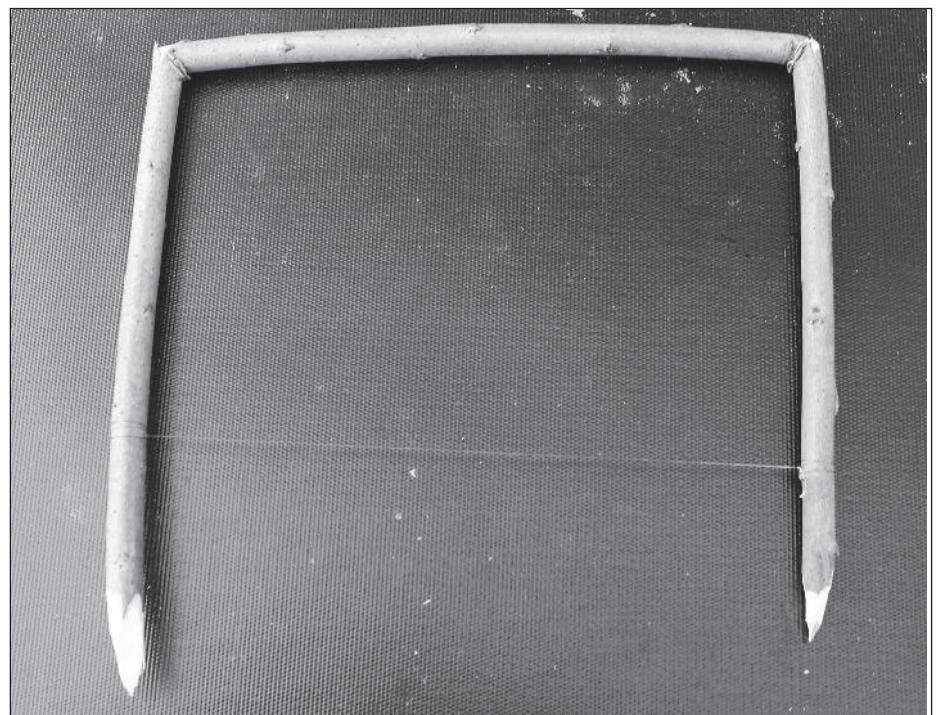


**View of the roof construction from below with rafter, rough cross beams and the scraws supported by short pieces of bog timbers.**

machine. It was advisable also to treat straw intended for thatching with bluestone solution which protected it against moulds or even maggots that attract jackdaws and other vermin. The thatch was held in place with *scollops*<sup>1</sup> or rods of willow or sallow, locally known as *sally*, cut in 3 foot lengths and pointed at each end.

The thatcher bent them in U-shapes before thrusting them down to secure the straw in place. Most families grew *sallys* in the garden for thatching and basket making. *Sallys* have the ability to regenerate themselves every year.

Once the roof was completed, the rooms were each fitted with a small window and the kitchen/living room had two doors sited directly opposite each other. Sometimes the front door was divided so it could be closed as a half door. This had the benefit of allowing more light and ventilation but also kept poultry and small farm animals out. The living room floor was paved with flag-stones while the bedroom usually had a mortar floor. Finally the walls were smoothed off with lime mortar and whitewashed internally and externally.



**Scollop cut, pared and bent ready for securing the thatch.**

## The Congested Districts Board (CDB)

Up to the middle of the 20th century such thatched cottages were common throughout the west. Large families, with division and subdivision of small holdings, demanded that many cottages had to be built to house new families. These were clustered in little villages or *clachans* where each household shared close kinship with its neighbours and many shared the same family name. It was not unusual for each of these families to have more than 10 children all reared in a tiny 2 room cottage. Family size, together with rack rents and over-reliance on the potato as a food source contributed to conditions of severe poverty.

In 1891 the Congested Districts Board (CDB) was set up which had among its objectives the improvement of the living conditions of tenant farmers. The CDB provided grants to farmers to improve their holdings without fear of incurring penalties in the form of increased rent. A Parish Committee Scheme was established in 1897 consisting of the clergy and 6 residents of the parish to be elected by landholders. A tenant who wished to improve his holding could apply to the committee for a grant which would only be given on

condition that he build an outhouse so his cattle could be removed from the dwelling and also to have the manure pit moved to a safe distance from the house. Once the cattle were rehoused, a wall or a wooden partition was erected to section off the lower end of the living room thus providing a second bedroom. Sometimes a loft was built over this room which could be accessed by ladder. This provided extra storage capacity and bed space too for the older children.

From 1912 onwards grants and loans were awarded for the erection of houses with a thatched or corrugated iron roof and at least 2 bedrooms and a kitchen. The maximum grant for this was £5. Later grants were given for 3-room slated houses. The basic type cost £ 82 assuming that the farmer provided the unskilled labour, while a 2-storey, 3-room house cost £186.

The success of the CDB can be summed up by a statement from the Board itself: "A spirit of rivalry in cleanliness, in agriculture, and domestic progress is being stirred up in localities which have been almost impossible to get at in anyway hitherto attempted. Where a grant of £1 or £1-10-0 will induce a man to move his cows out of the dwelling house, build a byre, move the manure heap from in

front of the door and substitute a neat yard or garden surrounded by a well-built wall, then it seems to me that the £1 repays itself times without number, outside the money value, in the social education of the man and his family".

The CDB continued with its good work of promoting "self-help" among the poor tenants of the west until the Irish Free State was formed in 1922. After that, its duties were distributed among various government departments, chiefly the Land Commission. It can be argued that no other government agency did as much to lift the living standards of people of the west and raise them from the plagues of famine, poverty and disease as did the Congested Districts Board in its thirty years of existence.

*1Scollop* from the Irish, *scolb*, a thatching rod, as in the well known *seanfhocail: Ní hé lá na gaoithe lá na scolb* i.e. the windy day is not the day for thatching.

### Sources used for Congested Districts Board

Mansion House Relief Fund, Dublin City Library, Pearse St., Dublin

*Congested Districts Board for Ireland* by William L. Micks, in Mayo County Library, Castlebar

"Self help among the Western Congests", essay by Sir Henry Doran, in *The Voice of Ireland* (1922)

# An Historical Tale

By Bernie Gilbride

As she climbs the stairs in Parkes Castle she thought of all the people that had climbed similar stairs over the centuries in the old castles.

Before Roger Parke had been given the land, the old Tower House of the Irish Chieftain O'Rourke of Breiffne, had stood here for centuries.

In the 12th century Dervorgilla, wife of the then Chieftain--Tiernan O'Rourke, had eloped with Dermot McMurrough, High King of Leinster, who invited the Normans to come to Ireland to help him regain his kingdom.

It had been seized by O'Rourke and the other Irish Chieftains in reprisal for the elopement. Thus starting the invasion of Ireland by the Normans.

Centuries later, in 1591, Brian O'Rourke, who had been knighted by the English Monarchy, was captured and brought to London. Tried and hanged for treason for sheltering Captain De Cuellar of the Spanish Armada, who had been shipwrecked off the Sligo coast at Streedagh, during the Spanish Armada attempted invasion of England.

The O'Rourke estate had been given to Sir Roger Parke, an English planter, in 1610 as part of the plantation of Leitrim. It was he who built the Castle using the stones from the O'Rourke Tower House in that process. By 1628 the Castle was completed. So this estate has played a large part in the history of Ireland. Dervorgilla was first recorded to have fled the Tower House in approx. 1167.

Standing in what she assumed would have been the main bedroom, overlooking the lake, on the first floor



of the castle, on that brilliant summer day, a shiver ran down her spine, as she thought of the bravery of that lady all those centuries ago when such events were unheard of and women seldom left their homes. Travelling was then a major event. Bad roads, no motorised transport (then a mote in God's eye) centuries into the future. She tries to visualise Dervorgilla

History has not given a description of her or of her husband Tiernan O'Rourke.

Standing in the sunlight, she tries to recall the history she had learned of that period. She sees, in her mind's eye, a young woman, elegant, beautiful, with long nut brown hair, living in this lovely place overlooking Lough Gill, miles from anywhere.

Perhaps married to a much older man, chosen by her father as was the custom in those days and with whom she had nothing in common. Time was passing and she must have felt life was passing her by. Enter Dermot McMurrough, King of Leinster, a faraway province. Their attraction is mutual. They fall in love, and after an affair lasting two years she decides to leave her husband and elope with Dermot, to a new life. The consequences of her leaving did not matter to her. She could not know O'Rourke would decide to wage war and try to bring her back.

This is what he actually did and the only help McMurrough could get was from across the Irish Sea. That help came readily from King Henry II of England. He had been waiting for an appropriate time to invade Ireland and McMurrough's request offered him a wonderful opportunity. Not being free to go himself he sent Strongbow, to whom McMurrough promised his eldest daughter Aoife in marriage and the right to succession of the kingdom of Leinster on his own death.

Strongbow landed in Waterford in 1169 and so began the Norman occupation of Ireland which was to continue for over 700 years, with many wars and much hardship for the

Irish people. Down all those years they never surrendered, though losing their lands and homes, and being forced into a kind of slavery over all those centuries.

A boat distracts her thoughts as it approaches the slipway beside the castle and she decides to go down stairs to explore the courtyard, battlements, and gardens. Also to see the 'sauna' she had heard so much about, situated on the lake shore, directly under the castle, and used by the occupants of the castle down the centuries, with a swim afterwards in the icy cold water of the lake, their answer to our 'shower'

For over two centuries, the Castle had lain in ruins. Following on the death by drowning of two young grandchildren –Robert and Magie –of Roger Parke, while out boating, in 1677, the remaining girl Ann married Sir Francis Gore of Sligo. Thus leaving the castle to fall into disrepair after the death of her parents.

Recently restored, by the Office of Public Works in 1970, using Irish oak, and old methods of workmanship as in the original Tower House, she delights in the feeling of space, the thickness of the walls, the lovely oak stairs and the magnificent views over the lake. With its fortifications it must have been a comfortable, safe house to live in.

She felt sure the Parke family enjoyed boating on the lake, and swimming in its waters. Its level lawn was ideal for all sorts of games, with its high walls providing shelter, warmth and protection. This same lawn would have seen many family gatherings on Summer evenings down the centuries, weddings, christenings, all sorts of celebrations

Where did they Honeymoon in those days, she wondered?

She really must look up the social history of that time. She knew they did not travel too far for holidays. Even the Continental Royals, usually had summer houses within reasonable distances, so perhaps the nearest

seaside Strandhill, Bundoran, or even Streedagh had held their holiday home.

Going outside to the enclosed court yard to walk the battlements, she stood remembering she had been told that part of the original foundations of the old O'Rourke Tower House had been discovered while laying that yard --giving her an eerie feeling that such things could be brought to light after so long.

The battlements lived up to all her hopes and expectations. The security they afforded the family in those turbulent times was remarkable from them could be seen anyone or anything approaching the Castle by land or water. The views were magnificent surrounded by mountains: O'Rourke table mountain, Ben Bulbin in all its glory and the southern aspect protected by Lough Gill.

The gardens were large, with leafy walks, a haven of nature, where she could hear the birds singing and gentle waves washing on the rocky shore.

She thought again of Dervorgilla, and wondered if in her later years, she remembered the beauty of this tranquil place and perhaps even missed it. Realising her thoughts had come full circle, she made her way to the waiting coach, vowing to research as much as possible of the O'Rourke Chieftains' history, the social living of era 1169. Also Dervorgilla's family and her background.

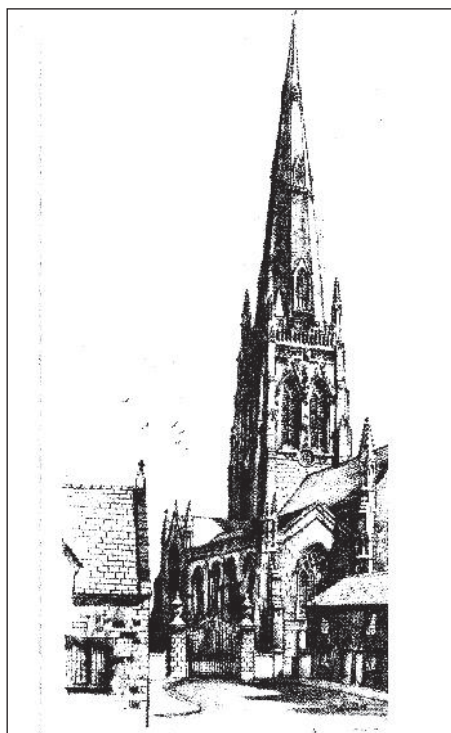
Realising how uninterested she had been about this history, in her own backyard, while busy exploring Grecian and Roman culture of faraway places all over Europe, she chided herself for her neglect.

Sligo Library, with its collection of ancient Sligo history, would be her first stop. Then Google her next source of information. Modern technology with its invaluable knowledge of ancient histories and cultures, at the flick of a switch, would surely help reveal all, she hoped.



# Elphin: An Enigmatic Saint

By Padraic Feehily



**St Elphin's Church, Warrington**

The story of the diocese of Elphin begins with the arrival of Saint Patrick in the fifth century, when tradition tells us he made his historic crossing of the Shannon into Connacht and began the process of evangelisation.

Ail-Finn or Oil-Find and in Latin elphinum, Elphinium. Ail Finna Elphinensis and Saxum Lucid I fontis (the rock of the clear spring) are variants of the early usage of the name: Elphin.

The beginnings of Irish Christianity are surrounded by all those questions which relate to a society emerging from prehistory, having only come into contact with literate civilization beyond its borders; the early Irish church has proved a rich quarry. References continue to be made to the Age of Saints. This notion was given added life by the writings of Fr John Ryan, a Jesuit scholar with encyclopaedic knowledge of the hagiography of the early church. Not even here is there any evidence or speculative reference to a Saint Elphin.

A cursory reference in an English journal to a girls' school near Manchester called Saint Elphin's called upon the writer to make contact with a former governor of the school, a gentleman - it transpired with a special interest in Saint Elphin: the Reverend Cannon J.O. Colling former Dean of Warrington.

According to Cannon Colling "Warrington Parish Church, as far as I know, is the only parish church in the world dedicated to Saint Elphin. The only other place of worship dedicated to Saint Elphin is the chapel at Saint Elphin's School, Darley Dale Derbyshire, but this derives from Warrington where the school was founded for clergy daughters' in 1844. Built originally next to Warrington Parish Church, the school moved to Derbyshire in 1904."

Who was this Saint Elphin?

"His name does appear in the new Oxford Dictionary of the Saints published in 1979. It would seem Saint Elphin was one of those Reverenced locally by the Christian community. There are many such saints in the history of the church especially in the old Celtic churches of the West of England, Wales and Ireland."

What other evidence exists about Saint Elphin, and in so far as it has survived, has been discovered according to Canon Colling. According to him "There is only one reference to Saint Elphin of Warrington in the ancient sources and that is in Domesday Book of 1086. This entry in Domesday Book tells us that there was a well-established church in Warrington in 1086 and that it was dedicated to Saint Elphin. It is only with the Victorian revival of interest in medievalism that Saint Elphin re-appears as the patron of Warrington."

One leading Warrington historian Dr James Kendrick wrote a paper entitled "Saint Elphin who was he".

He came to the conclusion he was Elfwin (Aelfwine) a nephew of King Oswald of Northumbria from 633 to 642.

The second reason for the predominance of this theory that Saint Elphin was a Saxon Saint was a more general one. The Victorians were very much pro-Anglo-Saxon and did not attach much importance to the Celts believing that the Anglo-Saxons when they arrived, destroyed the old Roman-British communities altogether. Recent work by historian Nora Chadwick has shown this was not the case. The Victorians were prejudiced against the Celtic church, a prejudice going back to the historian: Venerable Bede and a prejudice existed in favour of the Church of England which was planted by Saint Augustine and his successors.

So it was that Victorian historians identified Saint Elphin with Elfwin nephew of Saint Oswald King of Northumbria.

In the inaugural lecture of the Warrington church history society in 1980 Dr Ian Sellars lecturer in history of the North Cheshire College, boldly states that in his opinion "Elphin was without any doubt ...a Saint of the old Celtic church". He drew attention to recent work of scholars.... which has given us a much clearer picture of the ancient Romano – British Church and shows that the old Celtic Kingdoms stretching from Cornwall, through Wales, across the North and up into Scotland were more Christian and stable than we had imagined them to be. Dr Sellars pointing to the number of Celtic place names surviving in the area, is convinced that Saint Elphin was a missionary from the old Celtic Missionary Centre at Bangor-on-Dee. This Missionary Centre flourished from about 600AD onwards and missionaries were sent from here to support the faith of the Romano-British and also to convert the heathen

Anglo-Saxons.

Dr Sellars is sure that Saint Elphin of Warrington was a Celtic missionary saint who converted this area to Christianity or who supported Romano-British Christians and Romano-Christians in their faith in days of extreme difficulty and danger for the Christian Church. He refers to a recently discovered old Welsh manuscript which turned

up in Cardiganshire called “Borodd Gwŷry Gogtedd” which means “The Descent of the man of the North”. It describes how Elphin made his way from somewhere in the Carlisle region down to this area, fighting and at the same time spreading the word of God, ending up eventually in Cardiganshire. He points out the evidence is indisputable to Saint Elphin being a man rather than a

woman and a Celtic Saint of the early 7th Century.

Perhaps the last word should be left to Sir Niklaus Pevsner at the beginning of his description of Warrington parish Church in “The Buildings of England”. “This is a very rare dedication and no one knows who Saint Elphin was” Elphin, a name that traversed two countries.

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## My Name is Matty Brennan

*By Joe Langan*

My name is Matty Brennan  
A politician of renown  
I was born and reared in Cloonacool  
Not far from Tubber Town.  
One of my greatest thrills  
Since I was a boy  
Was to take a walk with a dog and stick  
Down by the River Moy.

I'm proud to be where I am today  
With men that have no fears,  
De Valera's heroes, Lemass' Fusilliers,  
Jack Lynch's men of Destiny  
And Haughey's volunteers.

The tale of history repeats itself,  
Now I know that this is true,  
My uncle blazed his glorious trail in 1932.  
Once again the Brennan name echoes  
through the Dáil  
To meet some friends  
Both old and new  
And vote for Fianna Fáil.

In Brennan's bar as he drank a jar  
An old man said to me  
“Congrats Matt  
But just you listen to me”.  
As he drank another sip  
“Be nice to Garrett on his way down  
You might meet him coming up”.

I woke next morning  
Peaceful and serene.  
Was this a big thing  
Or was it just a dream?  
And then I saw a spider  
Weaving patterns through the air,  
She was doing it very busily  
She was doing it for me.  
Then I got the message  
In gold majestic letters  
Matt Brennan TD.

Now a TD's life can be full of strife  
And for help he'd need a fairy,  
But I have one  
And her Christian name is Mary.

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## Ballymote County Sligo

*Submitted By Carmel Mullen*

The grass grows green on Keash-  
Corran's hills,  
And sweet shamrocks overflow  
The fields around this enchanting spot,  
Ballymote, County Sligo.

A wild goose flight 'cross a young  
spring moon,  
Silver salmon streams below,  
Fond memories of sweet yesteryears  
In Ballymote, County Sligo.

Merry those dances in the glen,  
At five crossroads, when day was o'er,  
The fiddle tunes, I remember still,  
From Ballymote, County Sligo.

'Twas there I met this winsome lass,  
A vision to behold,

We fell in love for evermore,  
In Ballymote, County Sligo.

Last night I had a pleasant dream,  
And I was back once more,  
Old friends, old songs, old tales again,  
Dad and mother's house below,  
It seemed that I had never left  
Ballymote, County Sligo.

The grass was still green on Keash  
Corran's hills,  
And sweet shamrocks overflowed  
The fields around this enchanting spot,  
Ballymote, County Sligo.

I shall ne'er forget the day I left,  
'47 in the snow,  
Broke my old Dad's heart and

Mother's too,  
In Ballymote, County Sligo.

My brother sleeps by Carrownanty's  
hill,  
The Good Lord called him to go,  
A true blue of old Ireland,  
From Ballymote, County Sligo.

The grass grows green on Keash  
Corran's hills,  
And sweet shamrocks overflow  
The fields around this enchanting spot,  
Ballymote, County Sligo.

*Written by Jack Mullen, late of Florida,  
USA and formerly of Teeling Street,  
Ballymote.*

# Catholic Practice in the mid-18th century Parish of Kilross

By Pat O' Brien

No masse heard this great day, no  
matins sung last night,  
No bells to call to pray, no lamps, no  
taper lights,  
No chalice, no rich robes, no  
Church, no Chapple drest,  
No vestments precious Coapes, no  
holy water blest <sup>1</sup>.

## Kilross Civil Parish

Kilross names a townland and a civil parish in the eastern Sligo barony of Tirerrill. It consists of fifteen townlands, containing 3931.7 acres and bounded on the north by Sliabh Da Éan and St John's parish, by the parish of Killery in the diocese of Ardagh to the east, the parishes of Ballysumaghan, Ballynakill, Kilmacallan and Drumcolumb to the south and by the Unshin River and Ballysadare parish to the west. It is situated in the Roman Catholic parish of Riverstown, Sooeey and Gleann and in the Church of Ireland parish of Taunagh, both in the diocese of Elphin.

Kilross has had many ecclesiastical connections through history. In its northwest there is the early Christian church site of Killeran with its multi-curvilinear field system, its bishop's standing stone, Cloch an Easpaig, an infant cillín and a holy well, Toberdoney or Sunday's Well. Other

than Canon O'Rourke's record that a pattern was celebrated at the well on the feast of Ss. Peter & Paul, Killeran has no known history. Not far away to the southeast is Killeenduffe, the little black church, that originally had a suspiciously similar field system which might denote an early church settlement. Within the townland of Castledargan is a legal sub-denomination, Priestown, Baile an tSagairt, a name about which there is one only record and no known history. The name may have denoted an association with or the ownership of some land by a priest at any time from a late medieval period onwards. The Elphin Census of 1749 records the townland of Lugnenerunagh, Log an Oirchinnigh, the hollow of the erenach, a guardianship associated with an early church site but, for which there is also no other known history. Neighbouring Ballysumaghan, Ballynakill and Drumcolumb all had early Christian and medieval churches

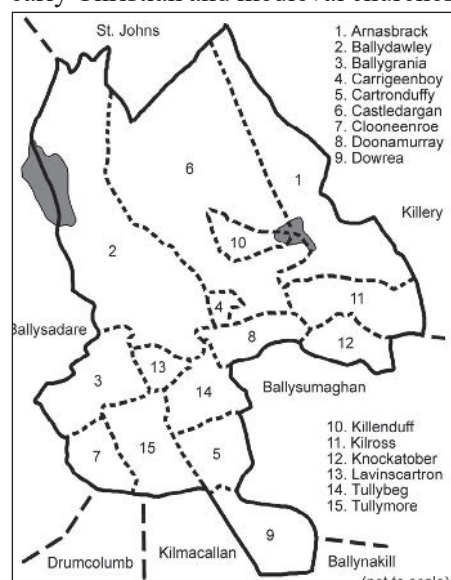
As its name suggests the townland of Kilross and the civil parish which adopted the name was the Church of the Wood, Cill Rois. Long and exclusively seen as the location of a Premonstratensian cell of the abbey of that order on Trinity Island in Loch Cé and founded in 1233 by Clarus Mac Mailin, archdeacon of Elphin diocese, its name, in fact, recalled a church of an earlier Christian period. Along with its name, the retrieval of quern stones in Kilross graveyard and the recent discovery of the decorated base of an early medieval pillar or cross in a nearby field all confirm the presence of a church site of greater antiquity.

## Religious Suppression

The dissolution of monasteries took place in Ireland in the years following 1536, the cell of Kilross on a date not known. Not long afterwards the impact of the Reformation was evident in 1544, two years after the appointment of Bernard O'Higgins as Bishop of Elphin, when as he said, he was obliged to transfer the temporalities of the diocese into the hands of the "schismatical nominee of Henry VIII", after which he had "to seek for safety by flight". This transfer was physically evident in 1631 when the Vicar General of the diocese, James Fallon, reported to Rome that "the cathedral still stands, but all its altars, chapels and images have been destroyed, and a protestant altar erected in the centre of the edifice in protestant fashion ... while the lawful bishop has not where to lay his head". Oppression continued in Sligo as Fallon further reported that a minister with authority from the crown to punish offenders, "is very severe on Catholics and supporters of the clergy ... whom he arrests and imprisons on the charge of usurping ecclesiastical



Barones of Sligo & Kilross Parish



Townlands of Kilross

and frequently shared a joint parochial administration with Kilross at varying times.



authority". Such oppression waxed and waned according to the levels of military and social turmoil or perceptions of them.

### Base of the tower of the "ruined church" of Kilross

In August 1594 the church of Kilross, by then "another ruined church", was granted by the Crown as, "a parcel of the possessions of the late house of Canons of the Holy Trinity in Loghkey", to Robert Harrison of Dublin, together with "... with lands belonging". These possessions of the Canons of Lough Key together with extensive church properties countrywide were payment toward a debt of £411. 17. 0. for military supplies 'in the time of the Earl of Essex'. In 1618, the ruined church of Kilross and associated lands were granted by James I to William Crofton, an Elizabethan official. By c.1633 the Strafford Survey of Sligo recorded that Kilross, Knocktober and Tullybeg, all part of the possessions of Trinity Abbey on Lough Key, had been granted to William Crofton. Mr. John Fargus was presented with the parsonage of the parish while Kilross and Knocktober were set to John Johnson; both clerks of the reformed church. These lands were ultimately possessed by the Perceval family when in 1665 George Perceval (1635-1675) married Mary, daughter and heir of a later William Crofton. According to the Books of Survey & Distribution the parish of Kilross had become a totally Protestant owned land by 1670.

By 1700 the transfer of lands had been practically total in Co. Sligo. According to Rev. W. Henry's account of Sligo in 1739, Sligo was a Protestant-owned land, so extensively that it was claimed that "not one Catholic has a freehold in the county except Baron Taaffe, that valiant German officer who is a native of this county"; the Rev. Henry having forgotten or not knowing of the Catholic heirs of Terence MacDonagh holding lands in Creevagh, in Tirerrill. Apart from the land ownership, Catholics were excluded from leases of more than

thirty-one years until 1778 (2 Anne, c. 6; 17 and 18 George III, c. 44). The new landowners consolidated their possessions and with the Penal Laws, the threat of a Gaelic resurgence and subsequent repossession was receding. The occasional threats of Stuart pretenders collapsed in 1745 with the defeat of Prince Charles at Culloden. It was time to review the strength of the Protestant community.

### Census of Elphin Diocese 1749

In 1749 Dr. Edward Synge, bishop of Elphin, ordered a census of the diocese, listing the parishes, townlands; professions or trade, religious denomination<sup>2</sup>, and numbers of children and servants of each householder. A man of moderate opinion by this time, he was critical "of those parts of the penal laws which had been passed to preserve the security of the state, but whose effect had been to invade Roman Catholics' liberty of conscience".

The religious affiliation of the household was recorded as an additional entry under the head of household entry. Fourteen of the 3,448 heads of household in Sligo<sup>3</sup> did not record their religious denomination but none were withheld in Kilross. With the exception of William Cooper Esq., of Tanzyfort (Coopershill), all had names of Gaelic origin and followed a mixture of occupations or in the case of some widows, none. Of the other thirteen none had a profession that stood to benefit from religious denomination. Catholics had been excluded from Parliament, public offices and the professions since shortly after the Treaty of Limerick.

There was an additional manuscript entry "and wife" recorded in the Carbury returns but not in Tirerrill. Spouses of a different religious denomination were recorded separately. In the parishes of Tirerrill the children of four Protestant houses were Catholic and two Catholic households had Protestant children. Such results must suggest that in the Tirerrill parishes, mixed unions occurred and that children of these

unions followed the religion of one parent, the mother, Protestant or Catholic. No such mixed unions occurred in Kilross.

Kilross was the most Protestant parish in Tirerrill with 24.3% of households being Protestant. Tirerrill had a table of 13.7%, ranging from a low 5.2% in Kilmactranny in the south of the barony to a 24.3% high representation in Kilross in the north. This general trend would suggest a lower representation of Protestants at the further remove from Sligo town, which was 48% Protestant. The 14.7% Protestant representation in the rural parts of St. John's parish (St. John's included Sligo town), Calry, Killaspugbrone and Kilmacowen, would question this supposition (see Table). No distinction was made between the different Protestant denominations in the census.

Area	Cath.	Prot't	Not given	Total	% Prot't
Kilross	88	28		116	24.3
Tirerrill	1113	179	10	1302	13.7
Rural St John's	517	86	*3	606	14.7
Sligo Town	356	312	*11	679	45.9

### Religious denomination by district in 1749 (\*mixed denomination)

An influence on the higher proportion of Protestants in Kilross may have been its proximity to the parish of Ballysadare, which included the villages of Ballysadare and Collooney. The Cooper family of Markree Castle, who owned much of the land about Collooney, also owned much of Kilross by 1749. In the 1660s, though not definitive of religious denomination, 42.7% of those who qualified to pay Hearth Money in the parish of Ballysadare bore British surnames and thus were probably Protestant.

### Penal Laws & Religious Practice

When the census of Elphin was taken in 1749 the Penal Laws affecting Catholic religious practices had been operating for over fifty years. In 1697, Catholics exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction and all regular clergy had been banished and those that remained after 1 May 1698 were to be imprisoned and 'transported beyond seas'; with return being treasonable

and the harbouring of clerics leading to fines and the confiscation of property (9, William III, c. I). In a discussion of the "Catholic Question in the Eighteenth Century", the historian Thomas Bartlett stated that with "the concurrent denial to Catholics of social and political power" these laws regarding property-owning, public office and the professions, had the primary purpose of ensuring that "Catholic power would be forever forlorn". In similar vein J. G. Simms stated that "Protestants ... enjoyed a complete monopoly of political and administrative power".

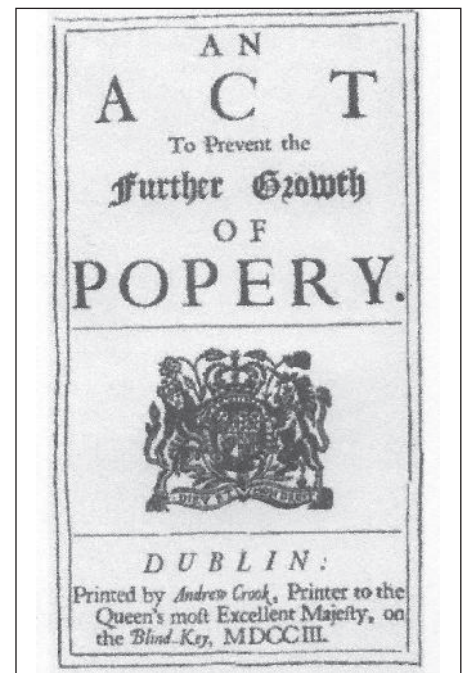
An early impact of these laws was the departure of many bishops such that by 1703 three bishops alone remained in Ireland, those of Cashel, Dromore, and Ferns. Bishop Dominic Burke, O.P. of Elphin (1671-1704) departed for Louvain in 1701, having ordained fifty-four priests between 1671 and 1701. Such endeavour cannot have been achieved without much courage and risk in a period of religious suppression and social turmoil. Sometimes in hiding, his successor Bishop Ambrose Mac Dermott of Elphin (1707-1717) described his circumstances in 1709 as being "withdrawn into a mountain, God knows to a hovel ... Milk is available, but no beer ... A little light beer would be a gift ... I am too old to travel on foot and I have not sufficient money left to buy a horse nor am I able to keep a servant". To what extent the earlier bishops were successful in hiding from the authorities cannot have been great. In 1712, witnesses at a Sligo inquisition attested to the presence "of one McDermott in the County of Roscommon who is titular Bishop of Elphin and one Rourke who is Bishop of Killala and ... the said bishops doe ordayne severall young priests", the act of ordaining young priests defeating the purpose of the penal legislation. In a later inquisition of 1743, Ambrose Gilligan "a reputed friar of the Abbey of Sligoe" gave evidence that Patrick French was the bishop of Elphin and named his Vicar General and Dean.

Prior to the 1704 registration

few records of priests ministering in Kilross survive, a single priest serving some or all of the several adjacent parishes of Ballynakill, Ballysumaghan, Drumcolumb and Kilross. Cornelius O'Sumaghan was pastor of all four in 1668<sup>4</sup>. In 1683, when the clergy of the diocese of Elphin were communicating their concern regarding the behaviour of a priest of Elphin, Daniel Muldune, to the Internuncio in Brussels, among the fifty-four priests signing the petition were Cornelius Brehane, pastor of Ballynakill and Henry Haert, pastor of Ballysumaghan and Kilross. Despite the difficulties of the time, such as the Titus Oates Plot in 1678 and the execution of Oliver Plunkett in 1681, the administration of the Elphin diocese was evidenced by the roles of several other signatories, Donatus (Donnchadh) Dermott, pastor of Kilmactranny and Vicar Forane of Tirerrill and Felix (Feidhlim?) MacDonnagh, pastor of Kilmacallan and Canon of Elphin.

#### **Act of 1703 by which priests were required to register**

Following the requirement of the act to "Prevent the further Growth of Popery" in 1703 that all priests register at the Quarter Sessions by the feast of St. John the Baptist, 24th June, 1704, forty-eight year old Bryan Higgin of Ballysumaghan and seventy-five year old Laughlen Brehune of Ballynakill complied. Higgin had been ordained in 1685 and Brehune in Dublin in 1699 by Patrick Plunkett of the diocese of Meath, with Brehune's ordination having extraordinarily taken place within two years of the passing of the act excluding bishops. Six priests had registered in Tirerrill with a mixture of Irish and English sureties. Among those providing securities, William Burke of Doonamurray and Brian MacDonagh of Behy, with MacDonagh being almost certainly from one of the former leading McDonagh families of Tirerrill. The sureties were guarantors that the named priest would be of peaceable behaviour and remain within the parish for which they registered.



#### **1703 Act registration of priests**

In 1712, Bryan Higgin was still ministering when William Burke testified that he heard him say Mass in the parish of Kilross and that he lived in Danmer in the parish of Ballysumaghan (almost certainly Doonamurray). He also saw an itinerant friar, named Gallagher, and Thomas Rutledge celebrate Mass at Lurgan in the parish of Ballysumaghan. Mass was celebrated widely by secular and regular clergy in a "Mass-house near Sligo", in private houses and according to one witness in a field. Despite the information received, the issue of warrants and a request for soldiers to apprehend the priests (which was refused), "no priest is yet brought in".

In 1731 no secular priests were recorded in either Kilross or Ballysumaghan, though three were recorded further south in Tirerrill, where huts rather than Mass-houses were being used for worship. It was not until the late 1700s that a thatched roof church may have been built by Fr. Patrick Duffy (1746-1831) beside the "old road" at Sooey in the civil parish of Ballynakill and replaced finally by Fr. Luke Cullinan in 1837 with a church at Carrowkeel in the same parish.

The attention of the authorities grew and waned with the politics of the times. Among the priests identified

in the 1743 inquisition was James Banaghan, parish priest of Kilross and Ballysumaghan. However, no James Banaghan, priest, was recorded in the 1749 Elphin Census though most likely he was the James Banaghan, labourer of Coopershill, in the nearby parish of Drumcolumb. Although twelve priests were identified in Elphin Sligo in 1743, a very reduced number of three were surprisingly recorded just six years later in 1749 with all residing in Tirerrill, and none in Sligo town or Carbury. Among the three, was James Pheeny, priest, of Rossmore in Ballynakill. In Elphin diocese as a whole, twenty priests were recorded on the census whereas c.100 were otherwise recorded. This reduced priest number possibly reflected the fear of exposure or a repetition of events reported in a contemporary newspaper in April 1734 when an unregistered priest had obviously been taken by the authorities and was rescued by "Irish Kerns" while being taken to Sligo jail by a military escort. Priest-catchers were active in Sligo and later in 1750 one of them, Harrison, was involved in an incident in Ballysadare.

The "Act to prevent the further growth of popery" passed in 1703 made it obligatory on converts from Catholicism to Protestantism to prove conformity. Conversion to Protestantism and providing proof of being enrolled as a Protestant restored all rights, property and otherwise, to the convert. It was a method by which Catholic landowners could escape the machinations of "discoverers" who might by law "discover" lands held by Catholics and have them confiscated for their own benefit. Likewise, the landowner was not obliged to provide for the division of the estate by gavelkind among all the heirs. Many did have a "conversion of convenience". Despite the virtual exclusion of Catholics from land ownership and the professions, only approx. 0.8% of the 5,797 converts countrywide were recorded in County Sligo, fifteen only by 1750; none in Kilross. By 1750 no priest in Sligo had converted, although in 1769 Charles

Rogers, a Dominican friar of Sligo did succumb. By the mid eighteenth century, much of the Protestant landlord class, reflecting a growing laxity about the religious penal laws, came to loath priest-hunting and discovering.

Teaching by Catholics, except that of children in their own home, was forbidden by law since 1695 and was not legalised until 1781/1782 (7 William III, c.4; 23 George III, c.62), consequently little formal education was available to the children of Catholic peasants. While calling the penal laws "that mass of wickedness and folly", Lord Cloncurry in 1849 judged that "there was, perhaps, no item so wicked or so foolish as the denial of education to the Roman Catholic youth of Ireland" which he called "this cruel and most impolitic restriction". Reflecting a possible consequence, only one Catholic teacher was recorded in Elphin Sligo in 1749, Patrick McDonough of Culoughtra, Kilmactranny in south Tirerrill. More teachers may have existed but may have preferred obscurity. In 1731 it had been reported that there were four Catholic schools in the combined parishes of Tirerrill but no further details were reported. As the Mass-houses of the time were no more than huts, the schools cannot have been any better. Of these teachers of the mid eighteenth century Cloncurry believed that "several masters of the hedge schools in the south of Ireland at this period enjoyed considerable local reputation as classical and mathematical scholars".

By 1749, the parish of Kilross, with its ancient religious history, had no Catholic landowners and had the second highest population, after Sligo town, of Protestant households. Little is known of its religious practices and its priests through the post-Reformation times. Penal Law registration of priests and several inquisitions by authorities the primary records of Catholic survival. Ordinations of priests continued despite the laws and mass was celebrated in houses, huts and in the open fields in several surrounding parishes by diocesan and

regular priests, some of whom found it necessary to live under assumed identities. No Catholics or priests of Kilross converted to the Anglican Church. The Penal Laws succeeded in their primary objective, "the complete monopoly of political and administrative power" in the hands of the Protestant community.

A' raibh tú ar an gcarraig?

Nó a' bhfaca tú féin mo ghrá?

Nó a' bhfaca tú gile agus finne

Agus scéimh na mná? <sup>5</sup>

My thanks to the staff of Co. Sligo Library Local History Archive for their assistance and patience during my research.

#### Further reading:

Beirne, Francis (ed.), 2000: The Diocese of Elphin, People, Places and Pilgrimage, Dublin.

Burke, W.P., 1914: The Irish priests in the Penal Times, 1660 – 1760, Waterford.

Census of the Diocese of Elphin, NAI, M2466 (microfilm in Co. Sligo Local History Archive)

Wall, Maureen, 1976: The Penal Laws, 1691-1760, Dublin Historical Association.

*1 A verse from the most unusual Wexford carol, This is our Christmas Day, more fully known as On Christmas Day, the Yeare 1678, when the Clergie were Banish'd in the time of the Plot; "The Plot" being the Popish Plot, concocted by Titus Oates resulting in an anti-Catholic hysteria and the execution of Oliver Plunkett among many others.*

*2 This study will use the term Catholic rather than the 'papist' denomination used in the census.*

*3 Unless otherwise stated reference to Sligo will describe those parts of Co. Sligo that lie in the diocese of Elphin i.e. the baronies of Tirerrill (less the civil parish of Ballysadare) and Carbury.*

*4 The O'Sumaghan family had been fosterers of Ballysumaghan in earlier times.*

*5 "Were you on the rock?/Or did you yourself see my love?/Or did you see the brightness, the fairness,/Or the beauty of the woman?". This 17th century allegorical love song is said to commemorate the celebration of Mass in Penal times; Mass being celebrated ar an gcarraig; mo ghrá and gile agus finne agus scéimh na mná possibly referring to Mass and the Eucharist.*



# Rite of Passage for a New Theatre

By Michael J Meehan

## ONCE I HAD A DREAM.....

Sligo is covered in snow and ice; a massive storm has cut off power. There is an eerie silence in the blackout, human activity suspended.

I struggle along Castle Street through deep snow, crunching through shards of glass and ice at the foot of Market Street, where a truck is buried in a shop front. The Lady Erin monument is submerged in a snow drift, her defiant upright hand only visible. On a glacial Harmony Hill, people are huddled together, transfixed by something on the hillside. Curious and with foreboding, I climb the icy hill and join the subdued watchers.

An enormous horse straddles the roadway, trapped in the snow and ice. The animal lies still, frozen into the snow, like a Trojan Horse sheeted in ice. The crowd look on impassively, as if stunned by this ice spectacular. I try to rally people into organising the rescue of the horse, but they are indifferent and start to disperse. Then I berate them and demand we look for shovels and pickaxes and get to work on clearing the ice and snow. But no equipment can be found.

I then see a solution to the problem, restore the street lighting and the heat of the lamps will thaw the snow and release the horse. First, mobilise the crowd to march on the E.S.B. offices at Castle Street to demand that street lighting is restored at Harmony Hill. By the time we reach the Office, we are more like a rabble, now joined by animal lovers waving placards and chanting "Save the Horse". I lead them into the Office, harassing the staff to produce the General Manager, they refuse and begin to close the Office, which quickly stirs up the protest to a frenzy. I start to lead a charge over the Reception counter

and ...and...there the dream ended, I woke with a jolt, exhausted, confused and trying to find my bearings. This dream or nightmare had been so real, I even got up to look out the window. There was no snow, only rain. All this happened in early December 1981.

Over the years my dreams are always forgotten in the morning, ever the waking amnesic, but this one I could recall in detail, as though I had lived through it. But there was something else different about the dream, it was to foretell future events!

## ON TO THE FUTURE.....

On 12th January 1982, the Hawk's Well Theatre in Sligo was officially opened by the President of Ireland, Dr Patrick Hillary. At the time, I was a member of the management board of the new theatre.

Early January that year brought heavy snowfalls along the west coast, that then froze over. West of the Shannon became isolated, roads were impassable and travel had virtually come to a halt. The gateway to the North West, over the Curlews, was blocked.

A special Presidential train had to be assembled to take Dr Hillary to Sligo. Preparations for the opening of the theatre and the first night production by the Druid Company, came under severe pressure. A special dinner for the President at Ballinac House Hotel had to be abandoned after the starter course to enable the Presidential party to get to the Theatre for the Official Opening ceremony. Despite the near arctic weather, there was a full house for the long-awaited event; an enthusiastic audience acclaimed its new theatre and the first production. A memorable night ended with an "after show" party at the Southern

Hotel.

Ironically, the Druid play that night was Shakespeare's "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING". Ten weeks later there was much ado about something else at the Hawk's Well Theatre.

## THE PLOT DEVELOPS.....

In March, the Cork Opera House brought a production of Peter Shaffer's internationally acclaimed play "Equus" to Sligo's new theatre for a week. This 20-year-old play was eagerly awaited by many, a jewel in the crown of the first programme of events.

Two days after the opening, "all hell" broke out. The first intimation I got of any difficulty came on the Wednesday morning when two representatives from the local branch of a religious lay society, came to my workplace. They demanded the play be taken off the stage at once, for they felt duty-bound to protect the people of Sligo from this obscene play.

In defence, I pointed to the long run of 'Equus' in Dublin and the current national tour of the play, all of which caused no offence; that the theatre management had a contractual obligation with the Cork Opera House. An offer of two seats for the Friday night, to make an objective judgement, was declined.

The play is a psychological thriller, a study on the passion of wordship and its absence from modern life. In the play a stable boy blinds the horses with a hoof-pick. On stage, the horses (Equus) are performed by brown clad youths with silver cages for heads, they prance and paw with heavy silver hooves.

All the commotion was not, of course, about the horses! A press

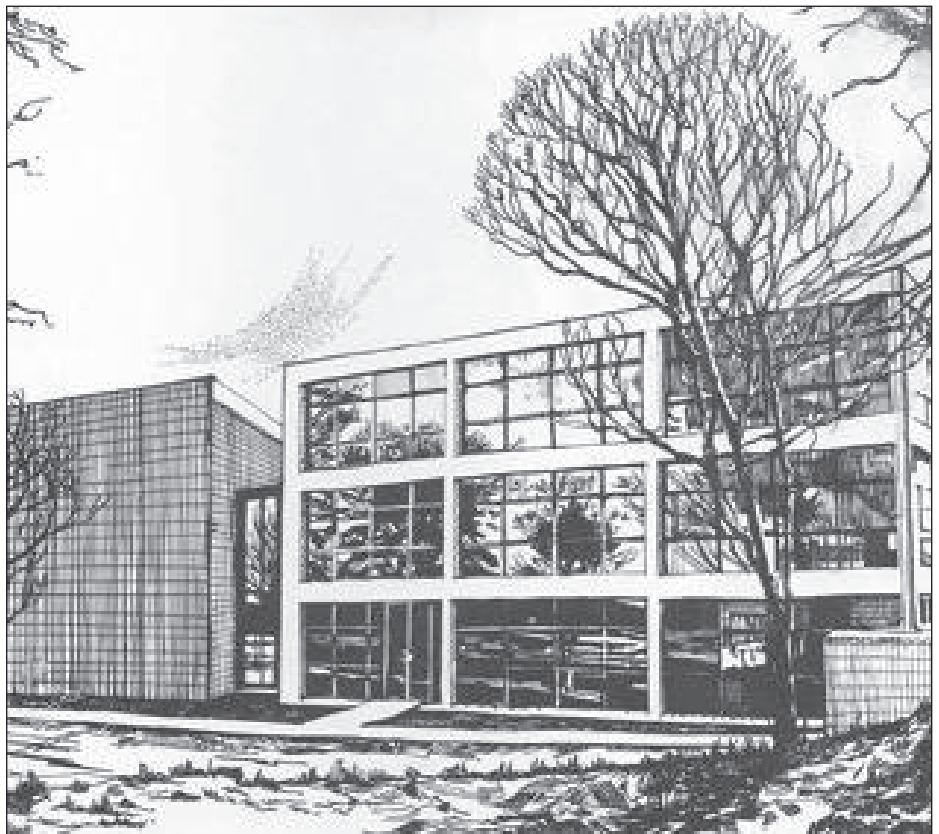
release for the play said, “it had a seduction scene between a boy and a girl, an Eve to the boy’s Adam, in which a brief nude scene develops, where nudity becomes a small truth, chaste as a Durer Painting”.

St Patrick’s Day was celebrated that week and the Parish Priest of a local Church delivered a sermon (in Irish) that condemned the play as pagan and foreign to our culture and that the new theatre should have had a traditional Irish Concert instead. The good Father had not seen the play himself but had heard about it from a parishioner.

The sermon made front page headlines in the local Press – “PAGAN PLAY AT THE NEW THEATRE”. The paper also printed a letter from a “concerned citizen” with the usual anonymity of name and address with the editor. The local Board members at the theatre were firmly in the sights of “concerned citizen”, “they should be ashamed of themselves” and threateningly “put on notice that any further pornographic productions, then the People of Sligo will ensure the life of the theatre will be short-lived”. The Press had sought a statement from the Bishop that said, “he had made known his protest”.

Back at the theatre, box office business flourished, no walkouts or protests, only a rush for remaining tickets. The “mobs” of my dream never materialised. In the next editions of the local Press, the town rallied to the support of the play and the Hawk’s Well.

Correspondence to the newspapers – “A true analysis of the play “Equus” could be of real benefit to our society; the problems in the play are very real in our culture today” – “nothing but praise for an excellent production, the final applause was just short of a standing ovation”. A methodist minister wrote – “A powerful piece of psychological drama, the whole thing can surely not be dismissed as pornographic. This play was about the



**Hawk’s Well Theatre**

very opposite, to replace the abnormal and destructive with something normal and positive”. “Concerned Citizen” was castigated as “typical of the self-righteous bigotry that has tried to stifle free expression in this country for decades” and “that the small mindedness and arrogance of self-styled judges of public morals, will be short-lived”.

That ended the dispute, which was what proved to be “short-lived”. It firmly established the new theatre in Sligo and the North West but was the ghost of Shakespeare still hanging around from the opening night! For ‘Equus’ played in Sligo the week of Friday 15 March and some should have remembered their ‘Julius Caesar’, ‘Beware the Ides of March’.

(Newspaper quotes courtesy of Local Newspaper Archive at Sligo County Library).

#### LOOKING BACK.....

All that happened over thirty years ago; was it all just a huge publicity stunt? No, not quite (but it would be

hard to buy it) for it did stir up a lot of passion and is that not what theatre is all about!

As I now read the Press cuttings from the time, I have a sense someone was out there ‘stirring the pot’. Was it a ‘Last Hurrah’ from the old guard or a previous connection of the town to the play? Some years previously a young Sligo actress, who had once been a teacher in a local school, had starred in the play at the Dublin Gate Theatre. It was said many travelled to see it.

One letter revealed something else of that time, it told the Parish Priest “to go and organise a concert if he wanted one and not lecture others to do it”. Was the ground already shifting under the old parochial Ireland and we did not hear or feel the tremors. (Note – ‘Equus’ by Peter Shaffer at the Dublin Gate Theatre May and December 1977, Edward Mac Liammoir production. 1982 Cork Opera House production).

# Sligo Protestants and the Sligo Borough Election of January 1919

by Padraig Deignan

One hundred years ago the people of Sligo, both Protestant and Catholic, came together to pioneer the use of a system of voting that has at times been the only policy that the various disparate groups could agree upon. This article examines the significance of the Sligo borough election of January 1919 for the Protestant and unionist community. It was an election that saw the first use of Proportional Representation (P.R.) in Britain and Ireland. Protestant unionists were enthusiastically involved in the Sligo borough election and the election proved to be very important in allowing them to become actively involved in local government after the end of the First World War. Why and how did Protestants and unionists become so involved in the Sligo borough election and did the use of P.R. facilitate their participation?

The background to the use of P.R. in the Sligo borough election of January 1919 lay in the poor financial condition of Sligo Corporation. The financial deprivations caused by the First World War had proved to be a significant catalyst for accelerating the already unhealthy financial situation of the corporation. However, the finances of Sligo Borough appeared to have been in a bad state before the First World War and the war simply compounded the situation. During the war the local newspapers in Sligo criticised the depressing financial administration of Sligo Borough.<sup>1</sup> In January 1915 Councillor Dudley Hanley, and Councillors Sam Tarrant and John Roche, both U.I.L. members, who had defeated Edward Harte and William Gibbons both of Labour/I.T.G.W.U. in the January 1915 corporation election, launched an attack on the mayor, John Jinks, blaming him for the poor state of the

corporation's finances.<sup>2</sup> It was hardly Jinks's fault alone, and expansion of the town, increased demand for services such as cleaning, lighting, providing water and sanitary facilities all put a drain on municipal resources. Also property in the borough needed to be re-evaluated as some property owners were paying too much and others were not paying enough.<sup>3</sup>

When J.M. Wilson, a leading unionist, who was travelling around Ireland sounding out the opinions of unionists on various issues, visited Sligo in June and July 1917, he was keen to comment that Sligo was 'a bankrupt borough at best, owing to the disgracefully bad administration of the corporation'.<sup>4</sup> In August 1917 James Drury, a Local Government Board Inspector, conducted an official inquiry into the corporation's financial affairs. The inquiry blamed the poor financial situation of the corporation on 'the neglect of proper administrative procedures'.<sup>5</sup> Drury suggested that the corporation should take legal steps to curb financial spending. He recommended the repeal of the Sligo Borough Improvement Act of 1869, which was severely limiting the corporation's ability to raise enough revenue, as it limited the corporation's power to strike and levy a borough rate not exceeding 4s 6d in the £.<sup>6</sup> This act restricted the corporation's ability to levy rates for municipal purposes and raise sufficient funds to cover the rising costs of providing more services in the town with the result that the corporation was falling further into debt each year.

Criticism of conditions in Sligo town also came from the press in Britain and in late 1917 the *Daily Mail* printed an article on Sligo, maintaining that the streets of the

town were the dirtiest in any part of the world.<sup>7</sup> The *Daily Mail* criticised local councillors in Sligo, blaming the financial crisis of the borough on 'the utter lack of business instinct'.<sup>8</sup> What could be done to remedy the finances of Sligo Borough? The answer came from the group who were contributing the most towards the upkeep of the town, the top ratepayers, who were largely Protestants.

The ratepayers believed that they must achieve political representation on the corporation in order to address the financial problem of Sligo Borough. At the end of 1917 many of the more prominent ratepayers, including the Protestants and unionists such as James Campbell, a merchant, the businessman Arthur Jackson, Hal R. Wood-Martin, land and property owner, James Hamilton, shop owner, P.C. Kerr, shipping agent and merchant, Harper Campbell-Perry, flour merchant, James Nelson, shop owner, Hugh Sinclair, grocer, Young Warren, tea merchant and the Catholic businessmen John Noone, T.J. Begley, Thomas Flanagan, James Connolly, John Finan, Edward J. Tighe, Thomas Mahon, Bernard McDonagh and William Conmey, refused to pay charges, and they publicly registered their dissatisfaction with corporation maladministration.<sup>9</sup> The ratepayers also decided to take their protest further and make an organised effort to remedy the finances of the borough. In November 1917 they, along with some leading citizens in Sligo town, formed the Sligo Ratepayers Association (S.R.A.). The organisation was largely composed of businessmen, including many Protestants and unionists, and proved to be an important step in reviving the interest of the Sligo Protestant community in local government



affairs.

This was not the first incarnation of the Sligo Ratepayers' Association and in early 1911 Protestant businessmen, including James Campbell, Arthur Jackson, Col. Wood-Martin, James Hamilton, P.C. Kerr, and Harper Campbell Perry, had formed a similar organisation and secured a local plebiscite to get a parliamentary bill to restructure the corporation's finances.<sup>10</sup> However, the effort got caught up in the nationalist-unionist politics of the time and the plebiscite was defeated by 744 votes to 433<sup>11</sup>. Shortly before the plebiscite alderman John Jinks condemned the Ratepayers' Association and publicly thanked God that Sligo had a 'Catholic corporation' and asked 'are the Tories in this town to walk upon the Catholics of Sligo?'<sup>12</sup> Later in May 1911 Thomas Scanlon, M.P. called the Ratepayers' Association 'a gang of slum landlords' and John O'Dowd, M.P. dubbed them 'a gang of narrow Orange bigots'.<sup>13</sup>

However, by 1917 the attitude of nationalists in Sligo had changed, and with corporation finances in a bad way, the S.R.A. were able to win the support of all sections of Sligo society. In order to have general appeal and win the support of the nationalist majority in the town, the members of the S.R.A. could do with the support of the Catholic hierarchy. The S.R.A. were lucky in this regard and at the first meeting of the S.R.A. a well respected member of the Catholic clergy, Canon P.A. Butler, who had long been involved in various political organisations in Sligo, including the United Irish League (U.I.L.), (the principal organising force for the I.P.P. in the various Irish constituencies) and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.), (an organisation set up to protect and defend the rights of Irish Catholics), supported the organisation arguing that 'political sympathies and religious differences are happily cast aside in a common effort and whole hearted desire to render whatever help we can to those who are charged with the destinies of this grand old town, and of safeguarding the destinies of its citizens'.<sup>14</sup>

With the support of the Catholic Church, the well-known Protestant and unionist businessman, Arthur Jackson was elected as chairman of the S.R.A. and eight others, including Canon P.A. Butler, were elected to the S.R.A.'s committee. At the first meeting the committee decided that it could achieve more by putting pressure on the corporation rather than challenging it directly. The committee passed a resolution stating 'that the Association was formed not for the purpose of crushing the present corporation in any way. On the contrary, it was formed for the purpose of rendering them assistance and to help them by every means in their power to get out of the awful financial difficulty in which the corporation was placed at the present time'.<sup>15</sup> On 10 November 1917 the Sligo Independent editorial appealed to the citizens of Sligo 'irrespective of creed, class, or politics, to lend their enthusiastic support and hearty co-operation to the newly formed Ratepayers Association'.<sup>16</sup> The question now was would the sitting councillors of Sligo Corporation listen to the advice of the S.R.A. or would they sit tight and hope that the organisation melted away? It seemed that at first the corporation agreed to work with the S.R.A. However, they refused to make any alterations to the rates.<sup>17</sup>

Ultimately the corporation had to accept that some kind of action was necessary and in January 1918, after much discussion, the corporation and the S.R.A. came to an agreement. With the help of the Local Government Board (L.G.B.) they arranged to have a parliamentary bill drafted and submitted to the House of Commons which would increase the powers of the corporation and a new system of election to Sligo Corporation would also be introduced. The new system of election agreed upon was P.R. with Single Transferable Voting (S.T.V.) and quota counting.<sup>18</sup>

The birth of P.R. had occurred in 1821 when Thomas Wright Hill, a school teacher, worked out an electoral system based on the Single

Transferable Vote. It happened as in the case of many breakthroughs, by accident, when he asked pupils to elect a students' committee by standing beside a boy they liked best. At first this produced a number of unequal groups, but soon those in the largest group realised that not all of them were actually necessary for the election of their favourites so they moved on to help other candidates.

Thirty four years after Hill's experiment a Danish statesman Carl Andrae invented a system by which the STV could be adopted to the secret ballot and two years later Thomas Hare introduced it to Britain. John Stuart Mill, the philosopher and economist, warmly supported the system and efforts by 200 MPs and the members of the PR Society campaigned to have it introduced into England and Wales in the mid-1880s. However, the Liberal leader Gladstone and his Conservative counterpart Lord Salisbury came to an agreement to establish one member constituencies based on equality of population with no real change in the voting system.

The idea was briefly revived in 1905 but did not result in any electoral change. Within the British Empire P.R. had been partially introduced into the Tasmanian House of Assembly in 1896 and was completed by 1907. South Africa had also introduced the system into the Senate and provincial councils in 1909. New Zealand had the system as optional for legislative and municipal councils in 1914 and some provinces of Canada introduced optional P.R. during the First World War. In 1915 some U.S. cities also introduced it.

Irish interest in P.R. was sparked by the publication of a letter from Lord Leonard Courtney who had been Financial Secretary to the Treasury in Gladstone's government, to former Sligo M.P. Thomas Sexton in the Freeman's Journal on 14 January 1911. The letter advocated the introduction of P.R. into Irish elections and on 20 April 1911 the Proportional Representation Society of Ireland was established. Before the outbreak of war in August

1914 its members campaigned for the introduction of P.R.<sup>19</sup> Tadhg Kilgannon, a photographer and a nationalist member of Sligo Corporation, was a strong supporter of P.R. Kilgannon argued that P.R. was a much fairer method of election for the representation of minorities than the 'first-past-the-post' system and in late 1917 he submitted numerous articles to the *Sligo Champion* explaining P.R. and advocating its introduction.<sup>20</sup>

The 'first-past-the-post' system used in the December 1918 general election was a simple majority voting system where a candidate is deemed elected if they secure more than half the votes.<sup>21</sup> If two candidates ran for election in a particular constituency, and one candidate received fifty-one per cent of the vote, then he would be deemed elected and the forty-nine per cent who voted for the second candidate would receive no representation at all. When there are more than two candidates, the individual who receives the highest number of votes is deemed elected, which means that they have secured a relative majority rather than absolute majority. The disadvantages of the first-past-the-post system are that the votes cast for the unsuccessful candidates are lost and the first-past-the-post system does not encourage the representation of minorities.<sup>22</sup> This meant that Protestants, most of whose sympathies lay with Protestant/unionist candidates, and who amounted to around fifteen per cent of the population of Sligo Borough, found it very difficult to obtain representation on the corporation.

Sligo Borough was divided into three separate wards and eight councillors represented each ward, although only two councillors in each ward had to offer themselves for election each January. They were usually only opposed by two other candidates and it was a straight vote to decide the winners in each ward. The two candidates who received the highest and second highest number of votes would be deemed elected, while the section of the electorate who voted for the other two candidates would receive no representation. P.R. would

mean that all eight councillors in each ward would have to go forward for election and many candidates could oppose them. A Single Transferable Vote (S.T.V.) would allow the voter to indicate their preferences on the ballot paper, marking a one for the first preference, a two for their second and so on as to complete the list on the ballot paper. Once a candidate was elected and achieved the quota, their surplus votes could be transferred to second preferences on the ballot paper and this would allow minority groups greater representation.<sup>23</sup>

At a meeting on 13 February 1918 the members of Sligo Corporation agreed to the drafting of a parliamentary bill to use P.R. in corporation elections and also to amend the Sligo Borough Improvement Act of 1869. The amendment to the act would allow the corporation much more freedom to adjust rates as they saw fit. On 25 February members of S.R.A. met at the Temperance Hall, Sligo, and voted in support of P.R. and the proposed amendments to the 1869 Act. On 28 February a meeting of the citizens of Sligo took place and also voted in favour of the new parliamentary bill. Thomas Scanlon, M.P. for North Sligo, was also present at this meeting and he gave his support to the proposed changes. In early July 1918 Scanlon introduced the bill to the House of Commons and on 30 July 1918 it received the Royal Assent and the Sligo Corporation Act of 1918 came into operation allowing the use of P.R. in Sligo Borough elections.<sup>24</sup>

Elections for Sligo Corporation were scheduled to take place on 15 January 1919 and in early December 1918 the members of the S.R.A. who were eager to participate in the election selected eighteen candidates, eleven Protestant unionists and seven Catholic nationalists.<sup>25</sup> The S.R.A. would pose a threat to the other parties in the election and it was with this in mind that at the end of 1918 the mayor, D.M. Hanley, who had been unanimously elected as the town's first Sinn Féin mayor in January 1917, made a point of publicly attacking S.R.A. calling it an 'overwhelmingly

unionist' organisation.<sup>26</sup> However, this did not seem to be the case as sixty-three nationalists and fifty unionists were registered members of S.R.A.<sup>27</sup> This indicated that the organisation appealed to both political groups and both political traditions were almost equally represented.

In the weeks before the election the *Sligo Independent's* sympathies lay firmly with S.R.A. and the paper called on its readers to vote for the S.R.A. candidates.<sup>28</sup> As Sligo town was the first municipality in the United Kingdom to employ P.R. as an electoral system, the election drew great interest from all over Britain and Ireland.<sup>29</sup> There were a total of twenty-four seats on the corporation and forty-eight candidates put their names forward. The S.R.A. fielded eighteen candidates. Sinn Féin put forward thirteen candidates, Labour also put forward thirteen candidates and four independents sought election. The U.I.L./I.P.P. did not take part in the election. However, John Jinks, a supporter of the U.I.L., went forward as an independent candidate.<sup>30</sup>

At this stage Sinn Féin had largely superseded the U.I.L. and in effect the I.P.P. was no longer the main voice of Irish nationalism in the county. The only alternative to Sinn Féin, S.R.A. or the independents, was the Labour Party. Labour was well established in Sligo and had a strong electoral pool to draw on. It which consisted of unemployed ex-serviceman, who had just returned to Sligo at the end of the war and a considerable number of semi-employed dockworkers from Sligo port, which at its height before the war had employed hundreds of men on a fulltime and part-time basis. However, a large number of these voters may have also been inclined towards Sinn Féin. The Sligo labour movement had a strong leaning towards republicanism, which had stretched back to the strike which had affected Sligo and particularly the port in 1913 and some of the I.T.G.W.U./Labour Party councillors on Sligo Corporation had expressed strong republican views since the 1916 Rising.<sup>31</sup> It also seemed that while

the Labour Party in Sligo wished to maintain its own separate identity, the party members agreed with the Sinn Féin policy of Irish self-determination.

In the West Ward sixteen candidates, six S.R.A., five Sinn Féin, three Labour and two independents, contested the eight seats. A total of 940 votes were cast in the West Ward and 106 was the declared quota. The S.R.A. gained 506 first preference votes, Sinn Féin got 233, Labour gained 165, while the independents did poorly and only got thirty-six first preference votes. Harper Campbell Perry, the S.R.A. candidate topped the poll with 169 and was elected after the first count. Over two-thirds of his transfers went to his fellow S.R.A. members, Percy Campbell Kerr, helping him get elected on the second count, and Edward J. Tighe, who was elected on the seventh count. The fourth candidate to reach the quota was Henry Depew of the Labour Party and the fifth candidate was James Connolly for the S.R.A. Transfers from Sinn Féin and Labour candidates helped to get Sinn Féin and Labour candidates elected. Patrick J. Flanagan of Sinn Féin was sixth candidate elected followed by William Hande of Labour. The final candidate

Name	Party	First preference votes	Result
D.M. Hanley	Sinn Féin	160	Elected
Luke Gilligan	Sinn Féin	87	Elected
Thomas Fitzpatrick	Sinn Féin	73	Elected
P.N. White	Independent	71	Elected
Michael Nevin	Labour	56	Elected
Gray, James	Independent	53	Elected
Young Warren	S.R.A.	51	Elected
James J. Nelson	S.R.A.	41	Not Elected
Bernard McDonagh	S.R.A.	35	Elected
Henry Reilly	Labour	25	Eliminated
Henry Monson	Labour	23	Not Elected
Costello	Labour	18	Eliminated
Hugh R. Sinclair	S.R.A.	16	Eliminated
William Connemey	S.R.A.	8	Eliminated
Thomas Mahon	S.R.A.	5	Eliminated
O'Riordian	Sinn Féin	4	Eliminated

**January 1919 Sligo Borough Election, East Ward**  
**8 seats; valid poll: 726; quota: 81.**  
**Source: S.C., 25 Jan. 1919.**

elected was William J. Feeney of Sinn Féin. Both of the Labour candidates elected were recognised to have a strong association with Sinn Féin. The voters of the West Ward had elected four S.R.A., two Labour and two Sinn Féin councillors. The S.R.A. won half of the available seats in the West Ward and this reflected the

strong middle class electorate in this area of Sligo town.

In the East Ward sixteen candidates, six S.R.A., four Sinn Féin, four Labour and two independents competed for the eight available seats. In total 726 votes were cast and the quota was eighty-one. Sinn Féin received 343 first preference votes, which was by far the highest number in this ward, followed by 124 for the two independent candidates. The S.R.A. got 105 and Labour gained 103 first preference votes. The mayor, Sinn Féin's D.M. Hanley, got 160 first preference votes which was almost twice the number of the quota. Luke Gilligan was next elected for Sinn Féin and Hanley's transfers helped his fellow Sinn Féin Party member Thomas Fitzpatrick, to get elected. An independent candidate White was next elected followed by Michael Nevin for Labour. Young Warren and Bernard McDonagh, two S.R.A. candidates, were next elected and an independent candidate James Gray was the last to be elected. In the East Ward Sinn Féin won three seats, the S.R.A. won two, the independents got two and Labour secured one seat. This distribution of seats reflected the split working class/middle class electorate

Name	Party	First preference votes	Result
Harper Campbell Perry	S.R.A.	169	Elected
Henry Depew	Labour	94	Elected
James Connolly	S.R.A.	91	Elected
Percy Campbell Kerr	S.R.A.	82	Elected
Edward John Tighe	S.R.A.	79	Elected
William Hande	Labour	56	Elected
John Hughes	Sinn Féin	56	Eliminated
William Joseph Feeney	Sinn Féin	55	Elected
James Hamilton	S.R.A.	51	Not Elected
Patrick J. Flanagan	Sinn Féin	44	Elected
Jordan H. Roche	Labour	40	Eliminated
Samuel Tarrant	Sinn Féin	38	Eliminated
John Finan	S.R.A.	34	Eliminated
John Lambert	Independent	18	Eliminated
Thomas Daniel Howley	Sinn Féin	18	Eliminated
Andrew Thompson	Independent	15	Eliminated

**January 1919 Sligo Borough Election, West Ward**  
**8 seats; valid poll: 940; quota: 106.**  
**Source: S.C., 25 Jan. 1919.**



in this part of Sligo town.

In the North Ward sixteen candidates, six S.R.A., four Sinn Féin, four Labour and two independents campaigned for eight seats. A total of 542 votes were cast and the quota was sixty-one. The six S.R.A. candidates gained 161 first preference votes between them, followed by 154 votes for the two independents. Labour got 128 first preference votes and Sinn Féin gained ninety-eight first preference votes. The large number of independent first preference votes was accounted for by the high number cast for John Jinks who gained 123 first preference votes and put him sixty-two votes over the quota. The other independent, James Devins, was associated with Sinn Féin although he was not an official Sinn Féin Party candidate. Labour's John Lynch, with seventy-two votes had also exceeded the quota and was elected on the first count. Arthur Jackson and Hal R. Wood-Martin, both members of the S.R.A. were the next two to reach the quota. Nally, Sinn Féin, was the fifth to be elected after picking up transfers from many candidates especially from Sinn Féin and Labour candidates. James Devins was next elected after picking up transfers from Jinks and picking up votes from eliminated Sinn Féin and Labour candidates. A Labour candidate, Heraghty, was

declared elected without reaching the quota; he had received transfers from Sinn Féin and Labour candidates. The final candidate declared to be elected without reaching the quota was Costello for Sinn Féin. The North Ward was largely a working class area of Sligo and this is reflected in the distribution of seats. The Labour Party won two seats, Sinn Féin got two, independent Sinn Féin secured one, the independent, John Jinks, got a seat and the S.R.A. got two.

The elections passed off very peacefully and there was an absence of any trouble in the lead up to the election or on polling day. As a result of the media hype, the turnout for the election had been very high. A total of 2,208 of the 2,750 who were entitled to vote in the three wards went to the polls, which represented eighty percent of the electorate.<sup>32</sup> The S.R.A. had done very well at the polls and had received 823 first preference votes in all three wards, gaining eight seats for the party. Sinn Féin gained 674 first preference votes and got seven seats. Labour got 432 first preference votes and five seats while the independents got 279 first preference votes and gained four seats.<sup>33</sup>

The voting patterns indicate that voters who chose a S.R.A. candidate for their first preference largely picked another S.R.A. candidate

for their second or third preference, while there were many transfers between the Sinn Féin and Labour candidates. The seven Sinn Féin councillors could count on the support of the five Labour councillors, many of whom identified themselves with republicanism and James Devins, an independent councillor, was closely associated with Sinn Féin. This gave Sinn Féin and Labour thirteen seats on the new corporation, while the S.R.A. and the other independents had eleven seats between them.

The S.R.A. had secured thirty-seven percent of the vote and eight successful candidates, five Protestants and three Catholics, were elected for the party. The successful candidates were the Protestant unionists, Harper Campbell Perry, Percy Campbell Kerr, Young Warren, Arthur Jackson, and Hal R. Wood-Martin, and the Catholics, Edward J. Tighe, a merchant; James Connolly, a merchant and an agent for a shipping company, and Bernard McDonagh, a draper.<sup>34</sup> The results of the election proved to be very positive for the Protestants and unionists in Sligo and offered hope for continued Protestant involvement in local government affairs in Sligo.

The Sligo Corporation elections were the first to use P.R. in Britain or Ireland and the election results attracted plenty of interest. The P.R. Society of Ireland praised the results as a triumph and the Sligo Independent saluted Mr Humphreys, the secretary of the P.R. Society of Ireland, maintaining that the 'success of the system was largely due to the enthusiasm and energy of Mr Humphreys'.<sup>35</sup> Humphreys had visited Sligo before the election and explained in full the details of P.R. S.T.V.<sup>36</sup>

The Dublin and Sligo newspapers of all shades and opinions were quick to applaud the success of the new electoral system. The *Sligo Champion* declared that 'the system has justified its adoption. We saw it work; we saw its simplicity; we saw its unerring honesty to the voter all through; and we saw the result in the final count; and we join in the general expression

Name	Party	First preference votes	Result
John Jinks	Independent	123	Elected
John Lynch	Labour	72	Elected
Arthur Jackson	S.R.A.	55	Elected
Hal R. Wood-Martin	S.R.A.	53	Elected
Nally	Sinn Féin	43	Elected
James Devins	Independent Sinn Féin	32	Elected
J. Costello	Sinn Féin	31	Elected
James Campbell	S.R.A.	30	Not Elected
Heraghty	Labour	22	Elected
J. Kelly	Labour	19	Eliminated
Derrig	Labour	15	Eliminated
Feeney	Sinn Féin	12	Eliminated
W.J. Kelly	Sinn Féin	12	Eliminated
T.J. Begley	S.R.A.	9	Eliminated
Thomas Flanagan	S.R.A.	7	Eliminated
John Noone	S.R.A.	7	Eliminated

**January 1919 Sligo Borough Election, North Ward  
8 seats; valid poll: 542; quota: 61.  
Source: S.C., 25 Jan. 1919.**

of those who followed it with an intelligent interest. It is as easy as the old way; it is a big improvement and it is absolutely fair'. *The Sligo Independent* proudly stated that 'Sligo has the honour of being the first municipality in Ireland to adopt the principle, and everyone agrees that it was a great success'.<sup>38</sup>

The Dublin based newspapers were equally impressed and the *Irish Times* argued that the election 'has established beyond dispute two big things in favour of proportional representation. The first is that it is a thoroughly workable system ... The other big thing - and it is really big - is the proof that in proportional representation we have the Magna Carta of political and municipal minorities'.<sup>39</sup> *The Freeman's Journal* praised the fairness of the new system saying that 'the first elections, on the principle of proportional representation by the single transferable vote, have resulted in the fair representation of all parties',<sup>40</sup> while the *Irish Independent* called for P.R. to be introduced countrywide, arguing that 'proportional representation has given Sligo a model council. There is no reason why it should not be equally successful in Dublin and other cities and towns in Ireland'.<sup>41</sup>

The extraordinary success of the Sligo election was quickly followed by the adoption of P.R. at national level under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1919, which extended the principle to the election of 126 town and urban district councils and 200 other local authorities, including county councils and rural district councils.<sup>42</sup>

The first use of P.R. for the Sligo borough election of January 1919 was

a significant milestone for democracy in Ireland. The successful introduction of P.R. in the Sligo election paved the way for the employment of P.R. in local and later national elections throughout the country. However, importantly for Sligo the use of P.R. and the crisis created by the poor financial condition of the borough provided an ideal opportunity for Protestant and Catholic businessmen to come together outside the divisive politics of unionism and nationalism, form the S.R.A., and commit themselves to a common cause. Local and immediate financial concerns took precedence over national political ideology and in a difficult and uncertain period for Protestant unionists in Sligo it provided a perfect opportunity for unionists to pragmatically accept the end of the unionist cause locally and allowed them to focus their time and energy into alternative political activity.

**Padraig Deignan** is a PhD graduate of NUI Maynooth. He also has a BA, MA and a Higher Diploma in Education from NUI Galway and was awarded a fellowship of the National University of Ireland. In 2010 he published *The Protestant Community in Sligo, 1914-49* and in 2015 the *Land and People in Nineteenth Century Sligo: from Union to Local Government*. Both books are available in local bookshops.

1 S.C., 23 Jan 1915; S.I., 15 Jan 1916; S.C., 24 June 1916; S.I., 19 May 1917; S.C., 18 Aug 1917.

2 Ibid., 23 Jan. 1915.

3 Ibid., 1 Sept. 1917.

4 J.M. Wilson's tour of Ireland, Co. Sligo, 28 June 1917-18 July 1917 (P.R.O.N.I., J.M. Wilson's papers, D/989A/9/7).

5 S.I., 1 Sept. 1917.

6 Ibid.

7 *Sligo Champion sesquicentenary supplement, 1836-1986* (Sligo, 1986), p.

57; *Daily Mail*, 14 Dec. 1917.

8 Ibid.

9 S.I., 17 Nov. 1917; 24 Nov. 1917; 1 Dec. 1917.

10 Ibid., 18 Mar. 1911.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 S.C., 13 May 1911.

14 S.I., 10 Nov. 1917.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 17 Nov. 1917; 24 Nov. 1917; 1 Dec. 1917.

18 John C. McTernan, *Olde Sligoe* (Dublin, 1995), p. 528.

19 Cornelius O'Leary, *Irish elections, 1918-77: parties, voters and proportional representation* (Dublin, 1979), pp 5-6.

20 John C. McTernan, *Olde Sligoe* (Dublin, 1995), p. 528.

21 John Coakley & Michael Gallagher (eds), *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (2nd ed., Dublin, 1993), p. 67.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., pp 67-9.

24 An act to amend the provisions for the local management of the borough of Sligo 1918 (*Sligo Corporation Act*) (8 & 9 Geo. V, c.xxiii (30 July 1918)).

25 S.I., 7 Dec. 1918, *ibid.*, 28 Dec. 1918; *Manuscript census returns for Co. Sligo, 1911* (N.A.I., 1911 Census: Microfilm, S.C.L., M.F./R. 35-45).

26 S.I., 14 Dec. 1918.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 4 Jan. 1919; 11 Jan. 1919.

29 S.C., 25 Jan. 1919.

30 Ibid.

31 *Sligo Champion sesquicentenary supplement, 1836-1986* (Sligo, 1986), p. 41.

32 S.C., 25 Jan. 1919.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.; *Manuscript census returns for Co. Sligo, 1911* (N.A.I., 1911 Census: Microfilm, S.C.L., M.F./R. 35-45).

35 S.I., 18 Jan. 1919.

36 Ibid.

37 S.C., 18 Jan. 1919.

38 S.I., 18 Jan. 1919.

39 *Irish Times*, 18 Jan. 1919.

40 *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan. 1919.

41 *Irish Independent*, 20 Jan. 1919.

42 An act for amending local government in Ireland (*Local Government (Ireland) Act 1919*) (9 & 10 Geo. V) c. 19 (3 June 1919)).



## A Ballymote Bookseller?

Submitted by John Coleman

Stamp of Bernard Kelly, merchant of O'Connell Street in the early 20th century, on a copy of 'Sketches by "Boz"' by Charles Dickens.

[Book given to John Coleman, current occupant of the premises, by Mrs Cassie Finn]



# The Amazing Tale of Dr. William P. Tonry

By John Mc Donagh

In the last issue of the Corran Herald, John C. Mc Ternan wrote an interesting historical article about the tracking down and shooting of Abraham Lincoln's assassin John Wilkes Booth, by a group of Union soldiers led by Captain Edward Doherty, whose father hailed from Sligo. However, it has emerged that in the aftermath of the assassination there was another more obscure and totally unrelated connection between the conspirators and Sligo.

Although John Wilkes Booth gained world-wide notoriety as the actual killer, he was just one of a number of Confederate conspirators who had planned to kidnap and perhaps kill President Lincoln, together with Secretary of State William Seward and other members of his cabinet. Because the assassination was held to be part of the civil war, the conspirators, when arrested, were tried by a military tribunal. In all, eight people were charged and after a highly controversial judgement, four were executed, three got life imprisonment and one got six years hard labour. The four executed were George Atzerodt, Lewis Powell, David Herold and Mary Surratt, the first woman to be hanged in America by the Federal Government.

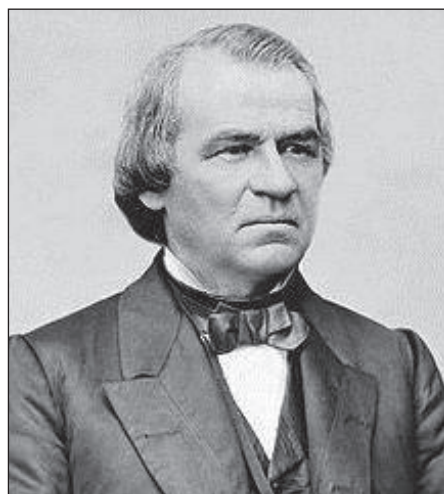
Mary, a widow, was the boarding house-keeper in downtown Washington where Booth resided and allegedly conspired with the others and where the plot was hatched, or as President Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor, declared, "She kept the nest that hatched the rotten egg." It is abundantly clear that the Surratt family (former slave holders) were sympathetic and committed to the Confederate struggle. One of Mary's sons, John, was engaged in espionage and intelligence gathering for the Confederate South from his home in Washington, while her other son Isaac was fighting with General Lee's



**Mary Surratt**

army. After the assassination Mary's only daughter Eugenia Susanna (Anna) was interrogated at length by Northern investigators but they could not find sufficient evidence to charge her and she was released after six weeks in captivity. Anna's brother John fled, first to Canada and then to France. When he eventually returned to Baltimore in 1867 he was charged with conspiracy and put on trial but this time, with the war over it was the civil authorities that tried him, the jury failed to reach a verdict and John was acquitted.

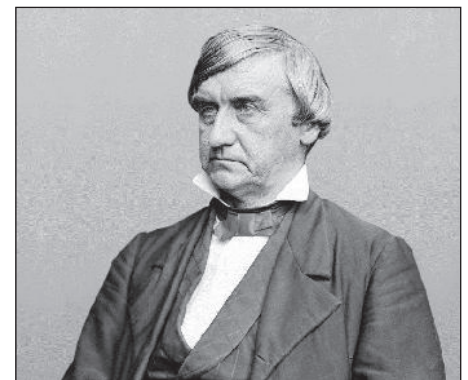
Anna Surratt pleaded incessantly with Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt and President Johnson to reprieve her mother but both refused clemency



**President Andrew Johnson**

and Mary was publicly "hanged by the neck" on July 7th 1865 together with the other three condemned prisoners.

After the execution Anna was ostracised by society in general and for a while she lived in poverty. The boarding house along with six acres of land was sold on June 10th 1869 and Anna married Professor William P. Tonry, a chemist working for the Surgeon General's office, on June 17th. By a strange quirk of fate, he had been working in an office at Ford's Theatre, (the assassination site) which had been converted into government offices shortly after the assassination. But the honeymoon was short-lived. Four days after the marriage was made public, in a blatant, spiteful act of bigotry and petty discrimination, Tonry was fired from his job by the War Office, specifically as a consequence of his marriage to Anna Surratt.



**General Joseph Holt**

A report from The Baltimore Sun dated June 17th 1869:

"Miss Anne Surratt was married today at St Patrick's Church to Mr. Wm. P. Tonry, a chemist employed in the Surgeon General's office. The ceremony, which was very private, was conducted by Rev. Father Walter assisted by Rev. J.J. Keane. The happy couple started immediately on a bridal tour north. The bride appeared in better health than she has enjoyed for years. It was the desire of the parties that the marriage should be kept



strictly private and for that reason the usual publication of the banns was dispensed with by Archbishop Spalding. There were no bridesmaids or groomsmen and only a few intimate acquaintances of the bride to witness the nuptial ceremony.”



Anna Surratt

William P. Tonry MD PhD. Was born somewhere in the Riverstown area of Sligo on 16th April 1840. He was the oldest child of William and Catherine (Brennan) Tonry. William Sr. is described as a “last maker”\* who immigrated to New Brunswick sometime in the early 1840s where he continued his trade until 1848 when he moved to Boston.

Professor Tonry attended Saint John’s Public School, Boston and passed through the Grammar School in the said city. At the age of sixteen, his parents sent him to Maryland to commence his college studies in St. Charles College, in Howard County. After completing the usual curriculum he entered the Georgetown College for the purpose of pursuing a post graduate course in moral philosophy and natural science. He completed his course in the usual four years and was immediately appointed adjunct Professor of Chemistry in the same college.

Aged twenty six, he was offered and accepted the position of assistant chemist in the laboratory of the Surgeon General of the United States

Army in Washington, “which position he filled with great ability until he was discharged by special order four days after his marriage to Anna Surratt.” This order came directly from General Ulysses S. Grant, Commanding Officer of the U.S. army.

Tonry used his dismissal as an opportunity to travel through the Western states with a view to getting his career going again in one of their growing cities. However, he desisted and returned to Baltimore where he established a laboratory and achieved great success working as an analytical and consulting chemist and chemical expert, winning for himself an enviable reputation as one of the most eminent scientists in the United States.

In 1871, aged 31 Professor Tonry accepted the chair of Analytical and Applied Chemistry, a position which he filled with great ability receiving in due course the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Dr Tonry was engaged by the state as chemical expert in many law suits which made worldwide headlines. He was the first forensic scientist in the U.S. with enough expertise and credibility to secure many airtight convictions, using his knowledge and ability to successfully prove the prosecution’s case.

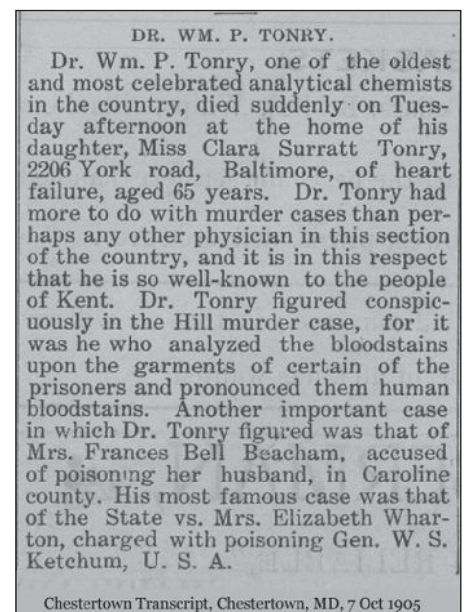
Dr and Anna Tonry had four children William, Albert, Reginald and Clara. In later life it was a matter of great pride to him that two of his sons volunteered and fought in the United States army and” served their country with distinction in the Spanish-American war of 1898”, a remarkable achievement for grandchildren of executed Confederate conspirator Mary Surratt.

Sadly the strain of the assassination and her mother’s execution at which she was present, left poor Anna Surratt Tonry mentally disturbed. Her hair turned white and she became subject to panic attacks and bouts of depression. “To this day there are members of the White House staff who claim that Anna’s ghost returns to the White House every July 6th

banging on the front door to plead for her mother’s life”\*\*

I first learned of William Tonry and Anna Surratt when a cousin showed me a family tree that had been compiled by a distant American cousin of hers. Amazingly, it showed another link on a different level between a member from her family and a descendant from the Tonry- Surratt marriage.

As somebody very interested in history, the name Surratt immediately resonated with me. I was well aware of the tragic story of Mary Surratt but I was totally unaware of the Sligo connection. Because the name Tonry and Riverstown feature so much in our family, I set about trying to establish a connection. Although I failed in this (records from the period prior to 1840 are scarce, sketchy and unreliable) I unearthed a remarkable historical story pertaining to a Riverstown native. It is also worthy of note that Professor Tonry’s siblings have Christian names identical to our



Dr. William P. Tonry , Chestertown Transcript MD , 7 Oct 1905

family names, so I can feel confident that Professor Tonry belonged to an early branch of our Tonrys.

\* Last- making was a skilled profession essential to the production of hand-made footwear

\*\*The sad ghost of Anna Surratt-- Washington Oddities and other interesting stuff

# Fred Conlon and his Sligo Sculptures

By Jack Harte



**Fred Conlon**

Fred Conlon was born in the townland of Killeenduff, near Easkey, in 1943 and he died in his family home in Strandhill in 2005. Conlon was widely recognised as one of the finest artists of his time; the appreciation of his work is widespread; it is featured in public parks and private collections all over Ireland and as far away as India and Japan. Yet, no matter how far he and his work travelled, he was never far from the source of his inspiration, Co Sligo.

I cannot claim to be an impartial commentator on Fred and his work. Fred was a cousin of mine. We were born next door to one another and just a few months apart, and we remained close friends while he lived. Subsequently I wrote a book on his life and work, *Unravelling the Spiral*.

Fred was from a standard rural family of the 1940's, ten children of which he was the third youngest. His older siblings were emigrating as soon as they came of age – mid teens in those days. He might have left too, had not a local enterprising shopkeeper, Eileen Mary Harte, spotted his talent and engaged him to



**1916 -1923 CO SLIGO MEMORIAL**

make tourist souvenirs from plaster. When he left the Vocational School she successfully lobbied Co Sligo VEC to create a scholarship for him so that he could attend the National College of Art in Dublin. His five years there studying art and especially sculpture turned him into an artist of the highest quality.

He qualified with the College Diploma, but also with its Teaching Diploma. He recognised the need to earn his living and teaching was his preferred option. At the first opportunity he returned to Sligo and took a post in the newly established Regional College, now Sligo IT. Fred took all responsibilities seriously and gave them priority over his art. So the following years were spent enthusiastically establishing and building up the Art Department in the College, and nurturing the talent of all the students who came within his remit. He is remembered as an inspiring teacher and mentor by the many artists who studied under him and proceeded to the very highest achievement in their own artistic careers.

Much as he loved teaching, and despite the enormous inspiration he was to his students, there was a serious

problem about those years: Fred was managing to do very little of his own work. So, in 1989 an opportunity arose to retire from teaching, and he took it. That was when he began to develop his own sculpture and produce work on a prolific scale. Until his death in 2005 Fred was highly productive and got some major commissions, like the bronze statue of Parnell for Rathdrum, or the stone sculpture outside Bunratty Castle – the largest stone sculpture executed in Ireland in over a century.

But it was the commissions he got for pieces in Co Sligo that gave him the greatest satisfaction. Recognition by your own is sweeter than accolades from afar, no matter how prestigious. Fred was steeped in the traditions of the County - folk life, history, Neolithic landscapes, etc, and he drew on these regardless of where the sculpture was going to be located. When a piece was for a local site, then there was a happy coming together of inspiration and purpose. It was appropriate that the final large commission he completed before he died of a brain tumour in 2005 was sited in Rosses Point. I am listing some of the pieces that are on view around the county, but there are more in neighbouring counties, Roscommon, Mayo, and Leitrim.



### 1916-1923 CO SLIGO MEMORIAL

Located on Kennedy Parade, Sligo Town Centre, this monument was erected to the memory of the people who died during that troubled period of our history from 1916 to 1923. It is laden with symbolic narrative. The table-top represents Ireland divided by the inlaid sword, but united by the handshake of reconciliation. The four supporting columns are the four provinces, while the six seats represent the six baronies of County Sligo.

### FAOIN SCEACH (Under the Thorn Bush)

When the Famine Graveyard, adjacent to the old Workhouse on the outskirts of Sligo town was being re-landscaped, Fred was commissioned to do this bronze sculpture to commemorate the victims of this Great Famine of the 1840's who were buried there. He chose the image of the 'sceach' or lone thorn bush, familiar but haunting, to signify the awful fate of the nameless dead. The 'sceach' in Irish folk culture was sacred to the people of the underworld, the dead and the sidhe, and could not be disturbed.



**FAOIN SCEACH (Under the Thorn Bush)**

### CASADH NA GEALAÍ (The turning of the Moon)

This piece was formerly sited in a private garden in Rosses Point but is currently located beside Fred's house in Strandhill. He has commented that the work is based on responses to the seascapes and landscapes of his native Co. Sligo. Although abstract, it is founded on that which is familiar.



### CASADH NA GEALAÍ (The turning of the Moon)

It relates to the soft curved forms of glacial boulders (like the Split Rock in Killeenduff), the horizon separating land from sky and ocean from mountain, the dishing of valleys, the roll and swell of the tide.

### RÉ NA MARA (Star of the Sea)

This was Fred's last sculpture. Commissioned for a private garden in Rosses Point, it is oriented to focus



### RÉ NA MARA (Star of the Sea)

on Queen Maeve's cairn on top of Knocknarea across Sligo Bay. This significant alignment is in keeping with the Neolithic monuments of the Sligo landscape, many of which are aligned to the heavenly bodies at specific and significant moments. Knocknarea itself, 'the mountain of the moon', was Sligo's holiest mountain in the pre-Christian era. By strange and happy coincidence Fred's own home and studio in Strandhill are within the same direct alignment.

### MORRISON MEMORIAL

Fred designed this roadside shrine at Drumfin to the memory of the great local traditional musician, James Morrison. He incorporated the actual 'Milestone' that inspired Morrison's most famous composition.



**MORRISON MEMORIAL**



# Or Even Turn North

By Martin A. Timoney

No sooner than the 2018 edition of *The Corran Herald* was released than people were asking for a similar summary of the archaeology, history and landscape of the north of Co. Sligo. Combing the titles “Why not Turn South, or West” and “or Even Turn North”, we get “Why not Turn South, or West, or Even Turn North”. Last year’s article should be taken in conjunction with this one.

This article addresses those requests but the point of the 2018 article must not be missed. We have a county, full of heritage, so even informed by the content of this article let the whole county be recognised for what it has, perhaps sufficient in total for it to be designated a World Heritage Area, a landscape with monuments.

In assembling this second part it constantly struck me how different the range of monuments in the north of the county is as compared with what is in the south. Carbury is the barony of Co. Sligo that from Belladrihid to the Bridge of Bunduff on the Leitrim border. This barony has some monuments of international significance and the counts of monuments are very high, the highest in the country for some types. Some of this is a reflection of the Knocknarea-Carrowmore-Cairns Hill passage tombs. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland website, [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie), is the most convenient way of getting the flavour of these riches. The Inventory for this Barony, like that for Tireragh, has not been published, though the fieldwork has been done.

This then is a look at the major monuments in Carbury, period by period, of those who lived, worked, prayed and died through time, a period stretching back to the Mesolithic. The sites mentioned are not necessarily the visually best, but I have attempted

to get a good spread across the Barony. Location details can be got on [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie), Geohive and the Discovery series 1:50,000 maps.

## Mesolithic

Evidence for the Mesolithic, 8,000 BC to 4,000 BC, is very hard to recognise and essentially is confined to small tools of stone – their dwelling and burial places continue to prove elusive. We now believe that people were present on this island as early as 8,000 BC. Mesolithic people, our first settlers, hunted, fished and gathered their food but their physical presence is not easy to detect.

## Neolithic

The Neolithic, 4,100 BC to 2,200 BC, a period that saw the arrival of farming, pottery and megalithic burial monuments, is represented by portal tombs, court tombs and passage tombs and associated settlement and ritual monuments.

The Maugheraboy causewayed enclosure, just south of the Summerhill roundabout, has dates floating around 4,000 BC. The megalithic structure at Primrose Grange, dating to about 4,000 BC, is not far from Maugheraboy, either in date or indeed in space.

The Portal tomb at Cloghcor stands on a ridge. Some of the best court tombs in the country are here. Creeveykeel was restored after excavation in 1935 showing the essentials of a full-court tomb – it has a two-chamber gallery within a long cairn. Deerpark has a central court, twin galleries at one end and a single gallery at the other. Other court tombs are at Cloghboley, Doonshaskin, Moneylahan, Gortnaleck, Killaspugbrone and Ardnaglass.

The outstanding Western European

passage tomb complex is on the Knocknarea peninsula. Here

Carrowmore has a variety of passage tombs, at least fifty, in a variety of states of preservation, and there is a Visitor Centre to inform you of what is open to public access. Current dating is 3,700 to 3,200 BC. Knocknarea is crowned by Miosgán Meadhbha, an enormous cairn that could well cover, not just one, but, two passage tombs. It is visible from long distances, making it one of the most visible monuments in the country. Would Maeve get planning permission today! But please do not climb on to it and do not take stones off it or away from it. There is a satellite cemetery at Barnasrahy. The recent reclassification of a tomb at Ardnaglass unexpectedly extends the distribution of passage tombs to the north side of Benbulbin. The megalithic complex at Wardhouse is just outside the county near Tullaghan.

On the south east side of Sligo town there are passage tomb cairns on Belvoir and Cairns Hill. By the Garvoge, in a housing estate, the Abbeyquarter passage tomb has a 1954 Calvary group, a Crucifixion and two statues.

The pairing of megalithic tombs was recognised by Kitchin and Cahalane, members of Sligo Field Club, though with such high numbers this should not be surprising. The cross-breeding between the types of megalithic tombs in Co. Sligo deserves detailed publication. At Cloverhill there is an orphan monument – some see the artwork as Neolithic, others as Iron Age and some wonder is the structure a 19th century arrangement of genuine stones from elsewhere.

The county at large is wonderfully endowed with some of the best of all four types of megalithic tombs – the total for the county is about 240, not

the 5,000 stated in one official county publication on the county.

So much for the glorious places of the dead – the places of the living, dwellings, ritual, industrial, are much more elusive. Among these are the chert working hut sites on Knocknarea, itself ringed on the east side by a series of banks of Neolithic age. Some of the lowest layers of the shell middens, mainly of oyster, along the shores of the three Sligo bays may go back this far in time. Some at Culleenamore have been excavated showing them to be prehistoric; there are others, such as at Streedagh and Drumcliffe Bay, that could be of all or any period. The massive henge at Lisnalgur is of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date.

From towards the end of the Neolithic and into the Early Bronze Age we have wedge tombs. There are examples at Coolbeg, Drum, Drumkillsellagh, Deerpark and Formoyle. That at Streedagh is within a ring cairn and there is another ring cairn on the sand flats at Edenreagh. There is a four poster at Bunduff.

### **Bronze Age and Iron Age**

These many Neolithic monuments are indicative of a sizeable population. The visible follow-on into the Early Bronze Age, and again in the Early Iron Age, comes in the form of earthen barrows and cairns. The monuments of the Bronze Age, 2,500 BC to about 600 BC, and the Iron Age, from 700 BC to 500 AD, are mounds, barrows and cairns. There are several in and near the Carrowmore Passage Tomb cemetery - Culleenamore, Tobernaveen, Barnasrahy, Graigue, Breeoge Cummeen and Carrowmore itself. There are some, even large ones, in Breaghwy, Moneygold, Lisadell, Gortarowey, Mount Edward and across the Maugherow Peninsula. In Carbury there is a wide range of types of barrows, only one of which has been excavated in modern times. The Bronze Age is best seen in

museums for the output of pottery and bronze and gold objects. These two periods produced a great wealth of ornaments, tools and weapons, many on display in our National Museum of Ireland, a few are in Sligo Museum.

There is no hillfort so far recognised in Carbury. Promontory forts are to be seen on Mullaghmore Head but that at Knocklane really does show the format at its best. Fullacht Fiadha, cooking places, are at Lislarry, Rahelly, Barnaribbon and Srarevagh.

Peat seen at several locations along the Sligo coastline indicates great changes from distant millennia. Bronze Age activity has been recorded in the foreshore peat at Staad.

### **Early Christian Religious**

The introduction of Christianity in the late 4th century AD heralded a new era. The Early Christian period, from St. Patrick to the Normans, is named by some as the Early Medieval, with the High Medieval being from the Normans onwards to the 17th century. Churches initially were of timber and were replaced, some more than once, some with stone, and some sites continue from the Early Christian into the Medieval proper.

Inishmurray, with many decorated cross slabs and churches within a cashel, and Drumcliff, with a cross slab, a round tower and all or parts of three high crosses, are of International status. The location of the Battle of the Books is in Culdrumman north of Drumcliffe. Kilmacannon has one cross pillar, Keelty had a cross slab, which is now in National Museum of Ireland after an authorised trip to Germany, Ballinphull has a small cross pillar with a Christian swastika – the design has been replicated in recent years on a roadside pillar on the way into Mullaghmore; the ogham on it is also modern. Derryleehan has the foundations of an early oratory within a ruinous cashel. Ballintemple is undatable, but the name suggests an early site. The Vikings paid our

county a few visits, some for raiding (Inishmurray), others for trading (Killaspugbrone).

### **Early Christian Settlement**

Turning to the places of the living there are many ringforts (Rathedmond, Ballymuldoory, Tully, Rathcarrick, Lecarrow, Breeoge, Carrowcrinn, Cleveragh Demesne), and cashels (Castlegal, Cashelgarran, Deerpark). The only crannógs are at the west end of Glencar Lake; this part of county Sligo lacks an abundance of lakes and no crannóg has been recognised in the boglands here.

### **Medieval Religious**

The next major change began in the 12th century and lasted to the 16th century. Major monastic orders built abbeys and friaries. For Carbury the only such foundation is that by the Dominicans in 1252 at the east side of Sligo town. It has a Visitor Centre where one can learn of the features of the building, the great east window, the slender lights on the south side, the decorated altar, the O'Connor Sligo Butler chantry chapel, the cloisters and the domestic buildings. The O'Crian altar tomb, the O'Connor Sligo Butler monument above the high altar and many sculptured memorials are also worthy of your time. There are simpler churches at Staad, Ballintemple, Killaspugbrone and Keeloges but as with most church buildings of the early centuries they get altered, added to and even subtracted from over the centuries. Dating church buildings can be hazardous.

### **Medieval settlement**

Moated sites, rectilinear semi-defended farmsteads, a new form in the High Medieval period and very frequently seen through Leinster and Munster, are now being considered to be an adoption by the Irish of an Anglo-Norman introduction. There are examples at Kilmacannon, Drumcliffe South, Clonderry and Glackbawn; that

at Glen Upper is beside the crannog at the west end of Glencar Lake, most likely to be High Medieval, a pattern seen also at Cloonacleigha Lake south of Templehouse Lake. Ringforts, cashels and crannógs continued in use through the High Medieval period and maybe later. There may have been early corn mills on Dernish Island and Inishmurray.

### Medieval Castles

Carbury lacks surviving good early castles. The enormous castle of Sligo, built by Richard de Burgh in 1310, is only to be seen in Thomas Phillips' *Prospect of Sligo* from 1685. Some remains of it were found beside the Town Hall. The castle at Grange RC church suffered from an explosion in 1689. Castletown is no more than a ruinous pile. The late castle at Dunfore is wrapped up in bushes and ivy. There are seventeenth century castles at Ardtarmon (restored, not open to the public) and Ballincarr.

### Post-Medieval

Three Spanish Armada ships were wrecked at Streedagh in 1588. A replica prow of a ship in stone at the entrance to Streedagh commemorates that event as do recent visits by the Spanish Navy. Some still believe that twelve Spaniards were hung from the windows of Staad Abbey. It is much more likely that there was a medieval church at Ahamlish prior to the present Church of Ireland church and that is where the Spaniards met their end. An Armada visitor facility is developing at Grange.

There are four 17th century bastioned forts known in Carbury. There are 360° views of much of north Sligo from the Green Fort on Connaught Road on the north side of Sligo town. The Stone Fort succeeded Sligo Castle and preceded the Town Hall. There are newly recognised bastioned forts on Coney Island and near the shore in Doonfore.

Despite what some would have

us believe, Catholics still used parts of the abbeys and friaries and also simple churches were built through the 17th and 18th centuries, long before Catholic Emancipation in 1829. In the early decades of the 19th century, the Board of First Fruits endowed many churches and glebe houses. St. John's Cathedral in Sligo town is multiperiod, Richard Cassels was involved in its present format, and it has monuments and memorials inside and outside.

Some of our Sligo graveyards, Drumcliffe, Sligo Abbey, St. John's, Kilmacowen and Clogher More, have memorials noteworthy for their decoration more than for their inscriptions. Holy wells, as at Ballinphull, Urlaur, Scarden and Tobernalt, have been places of devotion for centuries, with some having their origin in pagan times. There are sweat houses at Ardnaglass Upper, Barnadearg, Gortnaleck, Barnaribbon, Cooldrumman Upper and Moneylaghan.

### 17th to 19th centuries

There were Napoleonic lookout towers at Knocklane and Streedagh, the foundations of which are just recognisable. The route to Coney Island is marked by pillars, and opposite Rosses Point the Metal Man points the way. There are remnants of a salt industry at Coolbeg, Milk Harbour and Mullaghmore.

Lissadell has Gore-Booth and Yeats connections. Hazelwood for Wynne, by Cassels 1730, is major Irish Georgian building. Classiebawn is a nineteenth century castle by Rawson Carroll, formerly of Palmerston and Mountbatten.

Those from an antiquarian background deserving of a wall plaque would include Rev. William Henry on John St., Henry McCarrick in Dominick St., Andrew Maiben near the Town Hall, Owen Wynne in the Market Yard and at Hazelwood, Elinor Butler in her chantry chapel at

Sligo Abbey, Thomas Phillips in Quay St. for his *Prospect of Sligo* in 1685, Henry Luttrell for his boundary of the town in 1689, George Gabriel Stokes the mathematician, William Higgins the initiator of the Periodic Table of Elements, Sir John Benson and St. Ledger for Hyde Bridge.

For Sligo town one should consult Fiona Gallagher's *Streets of Sligo* and Gallagher and Marie-Louise Legge's *Irish Historical Towns Atlas of Sligo*. John McTernan has published widely on the county.

### Scenery

We Sligo people are so used to seeing the landscape of our county that most of us only appreciate it when seen in different light or when a visitor asks us about it. Lough Gill has Church Island, Cottage Island and Inishfree, and there are great views from the Green Road. Glencar is in a deep glacial valley, with spectacular cliffs, waterfall – there is a viewing space on the main road on the south side. Set out with trees on northern slopes is a triquetra, the Trinity Knot. The spectacular shape of Benbulbin, flat top, steep cliffs, looking like the prow of a ship, gets much exposure, to the exclusion of some of the other dramatic landscapes of Carbury. One wonders why Knocknarea gets so little used in promoting Sligo. The circuit near the base of the mountain, near Rathcarrick, St. Anne's and Culleenamore, gives one set of views. From farther out, from Raghly, Lissadell, from within Sligo town itself, and from Tireragh, the view can be totally different. The shape of the mountain changes, with Maeve not always visible. Mullaghmore Head, Streedagh, Ballyconnell and Knocklane, and the coastal villages of Mullaghmore, Rosses Point and Strandhill are all worthy of a long visit.

'You cannot live on scenery', so the saying goes, even if endowed with monuments, but the county could live



better off the combination of scenery with monuments, all good reason to come, to stay, to stay longer, and bring memories that entice you to come back, again and again. The Wild Atlantic Way is one of the great tourist successes, but as can be implied in these two articles, why are there not spur routes deep into the many other places of heritage in the country!

Over the years media attention to the archaeological and historical heritage of Co Sligo has been seen as a means of increasing our tourist numbers, more so than for its own value. Walsh in *Dedicated to Sligo* (2013) totals well over 6,000 monuments for all the county. In combination with later buildings these monuments reflect 10,000 years of settlement in the county, itself naturally endowed with wonderful geology, botany, flora and fauna. The words of James Fergusson, architect and antiquarian, from 1872 and Wendy Lyons, a conservation architect, from 2017 in *Sligo Field Club Journal*, Vol. 3, iv, ought to be embedded in our daily

way of thinking.

Most monuments are on the private property of farmers, so do ask for permission for access. Some monuments are state-owned National Monuments, others are in the ownership or care of Sligo County Council. As always, you should respect the property as well as taking care of yourself – the surface of our monuments, and particularly our graveyards, are, by their nature, uneven, so you are advised, if needs be! There are many walking routes being developed across the county: in Carbury there is the Queen Maeve Trail, Killaspugbrone, Slish Wood, Dooney Rock, Historic Walking Tour of Sligo, Garvogue River Walk, Carns Hill, Rosses Point Coastal Way, Hazelwood, Deer Park, Sruth in Aghaidh an Aird, Benbulbin Forest Walk, and Mullaghmore Head Walk. Adjacent monuments, as everywhere, can be identified from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland's Discovery Series maps.

The ending of last year's article encouraged all who have interaction with visitors to Sligo to know what is in their area, be able to talk a little about the heritage of this county and where one can learn more about it and get access to it. Those thoughts equally apply to anybody meeting and greeting those they deal with, not just in this barony of Carbury, but anywhere on this Island of ours.

There is a mantra in the tourist business:

*Heads on Beds,  
Bums on Seats,  
Feet on Streets,  
but dare I add some reasons*

*Eyes on Sights,  
Memories that Last,  
Eyes on Sites,  
Pictures to take,  
A Longing to Stay,  
If not, to Return, Soon.*



**Lord Edward Street Ballymote during Big Snow 1947**

*Submitted By Oliver Farry*

# William Rowan Hamilton: Ireland's Greatest Ever Scientist

By Nial Friel

## A eureka moment

Arguably, the greatest scientific breakthrough by an Irish scientist occurred on an Autumn morning in October 1843, as William Rowan Hamilton walked along the Royal Canal with his wife Helen on route to the Royal Irish Academy. On that morning Hamilton's mind was concentrated on a mathematical theory which he had been struggling with for some time. In a moment of inspiration Hamilton suddenly made a breakthrough. So excited was Hamilton that he immediately carved his discovery, a key equation, onto Broom Bridge, in Cabra. This discovery has led to countless applications in diverse contexts from the Apollo space mission to 3-D computer graphics. He can surely lay claim to be one of the greatest Irish scientists of all time.



**William Rowan Hamilton**

## Early life: a child prodigy

William Rowan Hamilton was born in Dublin on August 4th, 1805. At the age of three, William was sent to live with his Uncle, James Hamilton, who ran a school in Talbot's Castle in Trim, Co. Meath. A child prodigy and polymath, it is reported that William mastered several languages by the age of thirteen. These included European and classical languages, but remarkably also Persian, Arabic among others. William also had an incredible aptitude for Mathematics.

At the age of eighteen he entered Trinity College to study Mathematics and Classics, both of which he excelled in. In fact, he was appointed Professor Astronomy prior to his graduation! A unique achievement surely. He subsequently took up residency at the Dunsink Observatory where he remained for the rest of his life.

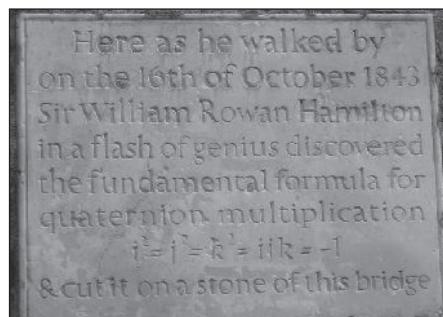
## The discovery of quaternions

So what was vexing Hamilton's mind as he walked along the Royal Canal? For some time Hamilton was working on a complex mathematical theory and was frustrated by his lack of progress. He was particularly interested in the link between so-called complex numbers and geometry. Complex numbers can be described by two dimensions. Yet, these weren't sufficient for his theory. He attempted to work on an extension of complex number to three dimension, but this too proved unsuccessful. However on that fateful morning on October 16th, while walking with his wife along the Royal Canal, Hamilton suddenly had what could be described as a 'Eureka' moment. Hamilton would later describe this moment as "a spark flashed forth". His insight was to realise that extending complex numbers to four dimensions was the breakthrough that was needed and so

the theory of quaternions was born. Hamilton's etching on Broom Bridge did not survive the passage of time. However, a plaque was later unveiled by An Taoiseach Éamon de Valera on 13 November 1958. It is interesting to note that de Valera was himself a mathematician and also student of quaternions. A picture of this plaque is shown below.

## 3-D geometry in the digital age: from sat navs to space missions.

So why was Hamilton's discovery important? To answer this, we need to give some background to algebra! We are all familiar with the idea that the order in which real numbers are multiplied doesn't matter. Multiplying two by three yields the same results as when one multiplies three by two. However order often matters in every day life. Putting on a pair of shoes before a pair of socks is quite a different result to first putting on a pair of socks and then shoes! It turns out that the order of multiplication also matters for Hamilton's system of quaternions and this was the essential element of his theory. (Quaternion because this number system has four components.) This was quite a departure from what was understood and accepted at that time. Hamilton showed that his new number system had incredible application for 3-D geometry, especially the theory for the rotation of objects. The theory of Quaternions has found wide and unanticipated use throughout the sciences. In fact, it is interesting to appreciate that applications of his discovery was not fully realised until the digital age in which we now live. Hamilton could surely have never predicted just how impactful his walk on the fateful morning in 1843 would be!



**Plaque commemorating Hamilton's discovery: Broom Bridge, Royal Canal, Cabra, Co. Dublin**

# Dobharchú: Hound of the Deep

By Joe Mc Gowan

Do fearsome creatures of incredible strength inhabit the deep waters of our lakes and seas? Sightings of a water monster swimming in Loch Ness in north central Scotland were recorded as far back as the 15th century. Investigators today display photographic evidence to prove the claim while others maintain the pictures are fake. Sonar probes of the lake have proven inconclusive. Controversy raging around the claim generates a tourism windfall of five million pounds a year for the Scottish treasury from hopefuls, binoculars and cameras in hand, wishful of a sighting.

In the great mysterious depths of the ocean, right now, a creature with eyes the size of dinner plates patiently awaits its next meal in the Stygian black, unseen by human eyes. It fears no creature. The flesh on its vast bullet-shaped body spasmodically changes colour, flushing in multi-coloured pulses. Framing its beak-like jaws are eight muscular tentacles as thick as tree trunks; they are lined with powerful suckers ready to lash out and seize a victim. Here, the sun's light never penetrates and the water above presses down with a mass of several metric tons.

Seamen's stories that tell of such voracious monsters rising from the abyss to pluck humans from the decks are numerous. Ancient woodcuts show these giant squid, huge pulpy creatures with ten radiating arms, rising from the water to grasp a luckless ship, a screaming human held aloft by a curling tentacle. They are no figment of the imagination. The largest such creature on record, *Architeuthis Longimanus*, measuring 57 feet in length, was disgorged from the deep and washed ashore in the Cook Strait in New Zealand in 1887. The largest specimen recorded in these islands measured an impressive 25 feet.

These stories are not just old wives tales of long ago: A report in the Irish Times of August 30th 2000 related that workers filleting fish for market found a human head inside a 5.2 foot codfish in Queensland, Australia. Following the discovery, a search for a lost trawler fisherman, who had gone missing from his boat in unexplained circumstances, was called off. 'On preparing the fish they observed the remains inside and contacted police,' Det. Sgt. David Miles told reporters.

Did water monsters large enough to threaten life exist at one time in Glenade Lake, Co. Leitrim? Do they still reside in its depths? The story, which had its gruesome finale in the shadow of Benbulbin mountain, tells of a horrific encounter that happened along its shores many years ago ago, still puzzles and fascinates. Inspiring discussion and speculation, the question as to what really happened then or what secrets may still lie hidden under the placid waters of this Leitrim lake has never been fully answered. The story tells of a fierce struggle to the death between the Mc Loughlin brothers of Glenade and 'that fierce brute the whistling *Dobharchú*' :

*'The rocks and dells rang with its yells, the eagles screamed in dread;  
The ploughman left his horses alone,  
the fishes too 'tis said,  
Away from the mountain streams  
though far, went rushing to the sea.  
Nature's laws did almost pause for  
death or victory.'*

Sea and lake monsters have always inspired fear. One of the earliest and best known accounts, written between AD 700 and 1000, is the Anglo-Saxon tale of the Norse hero Beowulf's struggle with the lake monster Grendel. Seamus Heaney published a modern translation of the epic.

Beowulf was a warrior and nephew of Hygelac, king of what is now

southern Sweden. He was sent to the neighbouring kingdom of Denmark where a blood-crazed monster was terrorising the countryside, butchering and gorging itself on King Hrothgar's subjects. The bodies he couldn't eat he kept in a pouch which he carried with him. Beowulf vanquished the brute tearing off his arm and shoulder in the process. Victory celebrations were cut short when Grendel's equally monstrous mother arrived to wreak vengeance. It killed a royal counsellor and dragged his body, as well as the hewn-off limb of her son, to her underwater lair. Beowulf, a strong swimmer, pursued the creature, cut the head from the body and returned to Hrothgar's court in triumph.

There are many records of human encounters with beings of the deep, some benevolent, some evil. In the Rosses of Donegal the *Dobharchú* (otter) killed and ate Sheila, the sister of Sean O'Donnell at a place called Ros na mBallán. When Sean went there to meet her all he found was a bag of bones. Vowing to kill the beast he laid a trap by arranging a pile of stones and placing Sheila's red cloak on top. He waited in hiding nearby. The *Dobharchú* came in from the sea at nightfall and seeing the cloak, made for it. Sean Ruadh, as he was known, waited until the brute was almost above him, took aim and killed the animal.<sup>1</sup>

John Baxter's late 16th century map records the sighting by the armies of Clan O'Donnell of 'two water horses of a huge bigness' near their encampment on the shores of Glencar Lake.

A creature resembling a 'big black boar' inhabited the depths of Urlaur lake in the parish of Kilmovee in Co. Sligo. The prior in the nearby Dominican Abbey sprinkled it with holy water in the belief it was the devil. When the monster retaliated by spitting out a litter of banbhs at them



they realised this was a formidable beast and sent for the bishop. The bishop attempted to banish the fiend, who was now joined by a companion. To his astonishment, the creature informed the cleric that he was once his pet hound fed on meat he refused to the poor people, 'who were weak with hunger'. The two unrepentant demons then set up a hideous screeching and kept at it until the friars went stone deaf.

The holy men were on the point of leaving the monastery for good when it was revealed to them in a dream that Donagh O' Grady, a piper from Tavraun, could help them. When, after a long search, they eventually found their saviour drunk in a shebeen they must have thought the dream more of a nightmare than a revelation. O'Grady, equally unimpressed with the importance of his holy visitors or their dilemma, flatly refused to go anywhere until he had another few drinks.

In his own good time he made his way to Lake Urlaur. Tuning the pipes he took up position on the shore and commenced to play. The wild notes that floated out across the water attracted the two monsters closer and closer. When they came close to the enchanted piper a bolt of lightning from a clear sky struck them dead, thus bringing to an end their persecution of the priests, and haunting of Urlaur lake<sup>2</sup>

Not all creatures that came from the water were so fearsome, but persons encountering them needed to be wary. Thirteen miles on the Sligo side of Dromore West there is a lake called Loch an Chroi. From ancient times it had the reputation of being spellbound.

A farmer who had a sizeable tract of mountain and bog in that area fell into bad luck. Cattle died on him; when he replaced them they too expired. Spring came around and he didn't have even a horse to plough the land. One evening as he walked his property deep in thought, wondering how things could go so wrong, he noticed a black mare grazing along

the lake shore. Knowing she didn't belong to any local farmer he decided to stable her until an owner came along.

As he fed and looked after her he became extremely fond of the mare as she had a very gentle nature. Time went on and as no one showed up to make a claim he worked her with plough and cart. Gradually his luck improved, his stock of cattle increased and each year the mare had a foal for which he got a good price. He had good reason to be satisfied with his newly found fortune and traced it all to the lucky day when he found the strange horse. During all the years she was with him he was kind to her, never having cause to strike her a blow.

One day, when riding her to the lake, preoccupied with his thoughts and impatient to get on with the day's work, he struck her with the bridle. She screamed and leaped in the air. Instantly all the foals she ever reared came around her. The mare with the man on her back, followed by all the foals, dashed headlong into the lake. Next day the farmers heart was seen floating on the surface of the water. From then on it was named Loch an Chroi, (Lake of the Heart).

Few are aware of a similar incident in neighbouring Glenaniff that took the life of a young man of the Padraig Ruadh branch of the Meguinney or Mc Guinness family. It happened in the year 1700.

Patrick Tohall of Knappaghmore, Sligo researched the incident in 1944. According to his findings, young Padraig went out on an early spring morning to the plateau overlooking the lake to bring down his own mare for the day's work. He found her grazing on the shores of the little lake on the boundaries of Gortnachurry and Carrowrevagh and was surprised to see a shining black stallion accompanying her. The strange horse was a powerful looking animal so on an instant's impulse Padraig decided to take the black steed instead of the white. His work finished for the day, he left home in the evening to return

the animal to where he found him.

Next morning when Padraig still had not returned from the lake his neighbours went out to look for him. Searching all over the countryside they eventually found his body, 'all gory and mangled lying in the waters of the Lochaun, called from that day Loch Padraig Ruadh'. The black horse that, 'shone like a crow' was never seen again. Was the mysterious animal the Dobharchú in a different guise or was Padraig set upon by another monster of the lake on his way home? Vague tales are told of a water horse which gives its name to Loch an Chapail (Lake of the Horse) on the same ridge. The details of the incident are unclear to this day and there has never been a logical explanation for the murder of Padraig Ruadh Meguinney.

The legend of the Dobharchú (Water hound) stems from the bestial murder of Grainne Ni Conalai at Glenade Lake on September 24th 1722. The details were well known one time and the ballad sung at fairs on the streets of Kinlough. Some say she went to the lake to wash clothes; the ballad tells she went to bathe. It is no matter. When she failed to return, her husband Traolach Mac Lochlainn went to look for her. He was aghast when he found her body lying by the lake with the 'beast lying asleep on her mangled breast'!

This and the chase that ensued would have little credibility today if it were not for the tombstone marking the grave of Grace Connolly. Although worn smooth now, it can still be seen at the old cemetery of Conwell near Kinlough. A carving on the stone clearly shows a strange beast being stabbed by a dagger. Tohall claims a similar monument existed at one time not so far away in Kilroosk cemetery. Broken and lost around 1922 it may have been the inspiration for the Conwell memorial, or indeed evidence of yet another monster!

According to Patrick Doherty, of Glenade, local lore records that the chase, which started at Frank Mc Sharry's, faltered at Caiseal-bán stone fort when Mac Lochlainn was forced

to stop with the blacksmith there to replace a lost horseshoe. When the enraged monster caught up with them the horses were hurriedly drawn across the entrance to form a barrier. Giving the terrified man a sword the blacksmith advised him, 'When the creature charges the horse he'll put his head right out through him. As soon as he does this you be quick and cut his head off.'

Patrick insists the story's credibility is proven by the carved image of a hand and arm holding a sword engraved on Grace Connolly's tombstone in Conwell cemetery. Cashelgarron



**Dobharchu: the gravestone of Grace Connolly depicting the Dobharchú © Joe Mc Gowan**

stone fort, near where the chase ended and the Dobharchú met its gory end, still stands today nestled on a height under the sheltering prow of bare Benbulbin's head. Both monster and



**Cashelgarron Fort: where the Dobharchu was killed © Joe Mc Gowan**



**Glenade Lake. © Joe Mc Gowan**

horse are said to lie buried nearby.

The words of the following poem reinforce Patrick's assertions. They form part of the legend surrounding an event which excites discussion and controversy to the present day. The words of the ballad, skilfully put together by a hedge schoolmaster of the time, bring the story vividly to life. The scribe's name is lost to us, and the circumstances of his existence, but his voice speaks eloquently across the centuries as clearly as if the words were penned yesterday. They are an articulate and enduring tribute to the event and to his genius:

#### The Legend of The Dabharchú

The year was seventeen twenty two  
When first appeared the Dabharchú  
From Glenade Lake, a Devil from Hell

And at the spot, poor Grace she fell.  
While washing clothes,  
She was surprised  
And the Dabharchú  
Caused her demise.

Her husband came in search of Grace

What he there found made his heart  
race

For Traolach spied his wife prostrate  
Because the beast had ate and ate  
And like all beasts he went to rest  
And lay there on  
His victim's breast.

McLoughlin hurried to his home  
For his wife's death he must atone,  
His anger cleansed him of all fear  
As he reached down to grab his spear  
And to the lake he made great haste  
For now the beast he planned to waste  
And creeping up he stabbed and  
lunged  
into the beast  
his spear he plunged.

But as the beast near death did screech  
The sound into the lake did reach  
And there awakened in the mire  
Another like the one expired.  
From forty feet he made his way  
And landed where his species lay  
To get McLoughlin  
was his aim  
The chase began  
'Twould end in pain.

McLoughlin on his horse had fled  
His brother by his side tis said  
They travelled hard but could not  
shake  
The Dabharchú from Glenade Lake,



And so the legend does report  
At a place called Cashelgarren Fort  
the brothers in their hour of need  
closed off the entrance with their  
steed.

The Dabharchú was closing in,  
The horses would not bother him,  
He ran beneath their bodies spent,  
McLoughlin's sword from scabbard  
rent  
As through the air the beast he flew  
McLoughlin's sword the monster  
slew.

And so the Dobharchu was slain,  
He died in agony and pain,  
The beast was buried where he fell  
Beneath Ben Bulbens famous pell.  
Grace lies buried in Conwal,  
A marked slab placed on top recalls,  
The beast.

Now a caveat please take from me,  
Remember Grace who once lived free  
For in the evening while its still,  
Listen for a cry so shrill  
And do not venture near the lake  
For a Dobharchu your life could take

© Michael O'Connor 2008

1 *The Story of the Rosses, Ben O'Donnell, p18-22. Sean O'Donnell or 'Sean Mac Mhanuis Óig Ó'Donnell', as he was known, was married to a sister of Brian O'Rourke of Breffni. The Annals of the Four Masters record that he killed Manus O'Donnell, a cousin of Red Hugh O'Donnell's, in 1589.*

2 *Adapted from Legends of Saints and Sinners, Douglas Hyde, pp127-35*

## Taaffe Sun Dial

Submitted by John Coleman

**17th century slate sun dial from Ballymote inscribed with the name of Francis Taaffe.**

**The Taaffe Family, Barons of Ballymote and Viscounts of Corran, owned Ballymote in the 17th and early 18th century.**





# Moth Records from a Ballymote Garden

By Michael Bell

This article will summarize moth records from my back garden on the edge of Ballymote that have been made since 2009. Moths, along with butterflies, make up the insect order Lepidoptera. The division of moths and butterflies is a somewhat arbitrary one with little basis in science. Butterflies, due to their diurnal habits and often bright colours, are generally better known, though many moth species can be observed flying by day also. There are about 180,000 described species of butterflies and moths worldwide with over 160,000 of those being moths. In Ireland 45 species of butterfly have been recorded to date with 34 considered to be either resident or regular migrants. For many people it is a surprise to learn that 1,435 species of moths have been recorded in this country.

Just as butterflies and moths have been separated largely as a matter of convenience, moths have been further divided into macro-moths and micro-moths (or simply macros and micros) with even less scientific justification. In general, the micros consist of the relatively more primitive moth families and tend to be small, though there are many exceptions to this rule. As might be expected, the macros were better studied by early lepidopterists and as such have been given vernacular or common names, whereas the lesser studied micros are mostly only known by their scientific names. To make matters even more confusing, some of the most primitive moth families consist of relatively large moths and have become 'honorary' macros!

I first began recording moths in 2009 after acquiring a moth trap. The trap is basically a container with a special light bulb on top which attracts

moths that are then funnelled into the container where they remain until morning when they can be examined and released unharmed. The light source is a mercury vapour bulb which emits a relatively high proportion of light as ultra violet making it more attractive to moths. There are various reasons put forward as to why moths and some other insects fly towards light, none of which are satisfactory to my mind, so I will leave that question unanswered here except to say it is probably more accurate to state that bright lights 'confuse' rather than 'attract' such insects.

With the large number of moth species it can be quite a challenge to identify a catch in the morning and as it is not uncommon to catch several hundred moths during warm summer nights it can be quite time consuming going through the contents the next day. Fortunately there are excellent guides available with the most popular and best general guide being Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland (Waring et al. 2009). This guide just covers the macro-moths but is wonderfully illustrated with lots of information on range, flight season, life-cycle etc. Up until recently it was prohibitively expensive for many to acquire identification guides to cover all of the micro-moths as they are much more of a specialist subject with most guides being costly and at best only covering one or two families. However, in 2012 the Field Guide to the Micro-moths of Great Britain and Ireland (Sterling et al. 2012) was published. Over 1,000 species are illustrated in superb detail and this guide has greatly increased the interest in micro-moths among amateur lepidopterists. That being said, many micros (and quite a few macros) are

difficult or impossible to identify even if viewed under a magnifying glass. Some species require dissection under a microscope to be determined. Identification can also be made more difficult by variation within a species and the fact that moths, like butterflies, lose their markings and colour over time as wing-scales are easily worn off.

To date I have recorded 297 species of moths in my back garden, comprising 216 macro-moths and 81 micro-moths. It is worth noting, by comparison, that only 11 species of butterfly have been recorded in the same garden. The garden is rather unremarkable, being small and in an estate on the edge of town. This illustrates the great diversity of moth species that are to be found in almost any habitat. The garden does benefit from having a mature hedge comprising mostly Hawthorn but also including elder, ivy and bramble which undoubtedly supports an abundance of moths as they are important food plants for the caterpillars of many species. A few birch, willow and a rowan tree have also been planted within the last 10 to 12 years. As my wife will attest, I am not an overly keen gardener and the resulting slightly unkempt garden is certainly of benefit to insect life.

All my moth records are sent to MothsIreland ([www.mothsireland.com](http://www.mothsireland.com)), who gather records from lepidopterists and the general public from across Ireland. The collated data has been used to create maps showing the distribution of all species across Ireland on a 10 km grid with the Ballymote square now being the best represented hectad in Co Sligo. Most of the records from the garden are of well-recorded species though there have been a few rarities found

including several first records for Co Sligo.

Perhaps many moth recorders first become interested in their subject after a chance encounter with some of the more spectacular species. The hawk-moths (Sphingidae) are a family containing several large stunning species. My own favourite is the Elephant Hawk-moth (Deilephila elpenor)



**Elephant Hawk-moth** - a total of six recorded on one night which is adorned with exquisite pink stripes that look like they must have been painted by an artist's brush. Finding one in my moth trap is always a pleasure though on one occasion I had nine individuals! Another striking moth is the Garden Tiger (Arctia caja)

As mentioned earlier the micro-moths tend to be smaller and less studied, though as my interest in moths has expanded I have taken an increasing interest in recording them. Some, such as the Small Magpie (Eurrhynx hortulata)



**Garden Tiger** with bold black and white cryptic markings on its forewings. When disturbed they reveal bright red underwings that warn of their toxicity to potential predators. Many moths, such as the Buff-tip (Phalera bucephala)

Others are best appreciated under a magnifying glass when intricate markings are revealed. Paying more



**Buff-tip** - resembles a broken birch twig and the Red Sword-grass (Xylota vetusta) also have amazing camouflage. It is often difficult to convince someone seeing these species for the first time that they are in fact looking at an insect and not a piece of dead wood. Another peculiarity, the Chinese Character (Cilix glaucata)



**Chinese Character** - one of the smaller macro-moths has evolved to mimic a bird dropping and in doing so has become much smaller than other closely related species in the same family.



**Small Magpie** - one of the large and more familiar micro-moths are relatively large with distinctive markings and are instantly recognisable.

attention to easily over-looked moths has led to several new county records such as *Incurvaria mascolella* which has a forewing length of a mere 6-8 mm.

Moth recording can become quite an addiction with new discoveries waiting at every turn. It provides a window into an often over-looked and under-appreciated facet of biodiversity that surrounds us everyday. Hopefully the records from my garden go a small way to helping better understand moth distribution in the country.



**Robinson Moth Trap**

Sterling, P., Parsons, M. and Lewington, R. (2012) Field guide to the micro-moths of Great Britain and Ireland. Gillingham: British Wildlife Publishing.

Waring, P., Townsend, M. and Lewington, R. (2009) Field guide to the moths of Great Britain and Ireland. Dorset: British Wildlife Publishing.



**Diurnea fagella** - a common micro-moth(2) Greyscale



# Did The Punishment Fit The Crime?

By John C. Mc Ternan

In the aftermath of the Famine many large estates found themselves in serious financial trouble. Some managed to survive while others became so encumbered that they had to be sold off to clear accumulated debts. In the case of the Perceval family and the Templehouse estate the problems created by the heavy expenditure incurred by Colonel Alexander Perceval in successive county election campaigns between 1822 and 1841 were further exasperated by a sharp decline in income from estate rentals in the late Forties and succeeding years.



**Colonel Alexander Perceval , M.P. of Templehouse © Sligo Champion**

By the early 'fifties the Templehouse holding was so heavily encumbered that the owner Philip Perceval, son of Colonel Alexander M.P. had no option but to offer the estate for sale in the Incumbered Estates Court in 1855.

Robert Welsey Hall-Dare, a resident landed proprietor in Essex expressed an interest in the property. He visited Templehouse and was shown over the estate by Christopher L'Estrange, Agent for the Percevals. By 1857 negotiations had reached a conclusion and in April 1858, the purchase money of £80,000 was lodged in the Court. The conveyance was quickly executed by the Commissioners and in May of that year Hall-Dare became the new owner of Templehouse along with its demesne of 568 acres and

tenanted lands in excess of 2,000.

## Mutual Hostility

Soon after Hall-Dare took possession relations between himself and Christopher L'Estrange became somewhat strained. A dispute arose as to the ownership of a quantity of turf, valued at £17-6-6, which the latter had saved on the Templehouse bog for his own use but which Hall-Dare had taken possession of. Legal action followed, and the case was heard at Ballymote Quarter Sessions in October, 1858. This was the beginning of a mutual hostility towards each other which, in due course, played a not significant role in the eventful return of the Percevals to Templehouse.

In the succeeding months the relationship between Hall-Dare and his tenants rapidly deteriorated when he deprived them of the free turbary rights they had enjoyed under the Percevals. In addition, court orders were obtained for the eviction of a number of tenants for arrears of rent. This litigation aroused much ill-feeling locally, and in the autumn of 1859 threatening notices, addressed to Hall – Dare, were posted on his hall door and other vantage points on the demesne. The opening lines of the script went as follows:

*Hall – Dare, I dare to address you with these few lines, As I think you are let run long enough with your Tyranny. What the poor tenants were not accustom to So I strongly recommend you to quit Templehouse ...*

## Reward offered

When news of the sinister development became known to his fellow Magistrates throughout the county, they rallied behind him and offered a reward of £150 for intelligence leading to the apprehension and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the notices. Despite this tempting offer no information was forthcoming from any source and nobody was ever

apprehended. Hall-Dare in a letter to the local Press, stated that he had “no reason to think that any of them (i.e. his tenants) had a hand in it. “It is my wish to live at Templehouse in peace and friendship with my neighbours”, he wrote “and my tenants are aware that in any matter which affects them I am always ready to attend to ...”.

In the autumn of 1859 Hall-Dare took into his employment a game keeper called Thomas Montague who had a young wife, Elizabeth. They were both English and took up their abode in a cottage on the estate. Shortly after their arrival the proprietor of Templehouse had occasion to severely reprimand Montague about his general behaviour, particularly his addiction to drink. The relationship between landlord and game keeper had further deteriorated by the following spring and this was the background to an episode that had serious repercussions for the proprietor of Templehouse.

On the afternoon of March 8th 1860, Hall-Dare entered the game keeper's cottage. Thomas Montague was absent but his wife, Elizabeth was there attending to the household duties. After an exchange of information concerning the whereabouts of her husband Hall-Dare advanced towards Mrs. Montague, caught hold of her and allegedly took “improper liberties with her person” against her will and consent. On her husband's return she confided the happening to him but said nothing of the incident to the other employees on the estate. Two days later the Montagues went to Coolaney and called on the Clerk of the Petty Sessions Court. In his presence she made a sworn statement of what had occurred and paid him one shilling, six pence to cover the cost of the stamp on the summons and the remainder to cover the usual delivery charge.

On the morning of the following Tuesday the Montagues went to Sligo where they retained the services of Michael Gethin, Solicitor. That afternoon Gethin proceeded to



Coolaney only to discover that no summons had been served on Hall-Dare. At the subsequent trial it was revealed that the summons had not been served because St. George Jones Martin of Cultibar House, himself a Magistrate, had refused to sign it, as required by law, he being of the opinion that the case should be postponed on account of the shortness of the interval which would elapse between serving the summons and the hearing.

Coolaney Petty Sessions took place as scheduled on the following morning, Wednesday, March 15th. As the Montagues were setting out on their way to the court, they were accosted by a policeman near the Templehouse gate who advised them not to go any further as the case would not be heard. He then handed them one shilling, presumably a refund of what they had paid for the summons on the previous Saturday.

#### Not represented

The Montagues ignored the policeman's advice and proceeded to Coolaney where they found the Court in session, presided over by Christopher L'Estrange, J.P.. After an exchange of views between the justice and Gethin, Solicitor for the Montagues, it was decided to proceed with the taking of information from Elizabeth Montague – this despite the fact that the person against whom the charge was being made was neither present, nor represented. When Montague's desposition was duly read and signed, the Court directed that Hall-Dare be returned for trial at Ballymote Quarter Sessions on March 30th 1860. On the following day L'Estrange sent a message to Hall-Dare, through Richard Opherts, J.P., informing him of the charge and the impending proceedings.

When the news of the accusations made against the proprietor of Templehouse leaked out, the already widespread hostility against him in the Ballymote area was inflamed still further. Aware of the growing local prejudice Hall-Dare petitioned the Consolidated Court in Dublin to have the impending trial switched

to the court of Queens Bench on the grounds that he was most unlikely to obtain a fair hearing in Ballymote. In his affidavit, heard by Judge Hayes on March 27th, he also complained that the charge against him had been heard at the Petty Sessions without him been summoned to attend and had he been present, would be able to show that there was no case against him.

He further stated that by purchasing the Templehouse estate he had incurred the wrath of parties in the neighbourhood and as a result, he would not be given "a fair and impartial trial" from the persons who normally act as jurors at Ballymote.

He further believed that Christopher L'Estrange, who had been Colonel Perceval's Agent and who had taken the information against him, was "a personal enemy of his". Judge Hayes turned down the petition for a change of trial as a sufficient case had not been made to satisfy him that there would not be a fair hearing. The Quarter Sessions which opened in the Courthouse in Ballymote on Friday March 31st, were presided over by Hartstronge Robinson, Barrister and Chairman of the County. He was accompanied on the bench by the following Magistrates: St. George Jones Martin, Cultibar House; Charles Wm Cooper, M.P., Coopershill; George Armstrong, Chaffpool and John H. Wynne, Sligo. A jury of twelve, consisting of both Catholic and Protestant jurors, were duly sworn.

#### Court Crowded

The Court was crowded to capacity long before proceedings commenced. The charge, that of an alleged assault of an indecent nature on the person of Elizabeth Montague, a married woman, having been read, Hall-Dare pleaded 'Not Guilty'. After the plaintiff's solicitor had declined to make the usual opening statement, the prosecutrix, Elizabeth Montague, was the first to be called to give evidence.

She was examined and cross-examined at length by both the opposing solicitor and by members from the Bench, and remained firm as to the truth and accuracy of her

original deposition. In the words of one commentator, she gave her evidence "with the utmost concern". Her husband was then sworn and he corroborated his wife's evidence. William Alexander of Somerton, who was an employee of Christopher L'Estrange, was also examined.

Edward Pollock, solicitor for the Defence, in a long and sometimes passionate address to the jury, stated that the charge against Hall-Dare – "a man of position and character, a Justice of the Peace and a Grand Juror of County Sligo" – was nothing more than a fabrication and a gross conspiracy. "Those who were associated with making this ridiculous charge behind his back concocting this information at the Petty Sessions, would make any sane man laugh. They got their malice gratified and they sent the man for trial behind his back", he said. A number of witnesses for the defence, all employees of Hall – Dare, were then examined. They all testified, that although they had been working beside or in close proximity to Montague's cottage on the afternoon in question, they neither saw nor heard anything unusual. Furthermore, the plaintiff never mentioned the incident to any of her neighbours on the estate.

Hall-Dare was not called to the witness box, but at the conclusion of the examination of witnesses for the defence, an application to accept as evidence a statement made by the accused was refused on the grounds that it had been lodged in the lower Court.

In the course of his charge to the Jury, presiding Barrister Robinson said "... I can give very little assistances ... It is entirely one for your consideration, and it will depend upon credit whether you believe Elizabeth Montague – whether you believe she is telling the truth. If you believe that Mr Hall-Dare committed the alleged assault upon her you should convict him; but if you have a reasonable doubt, you should give him the benefit and acquit him".

After an absence of one and a half hours, the Jury reached their verdict. They found Robert Welsey Hall-Dare 'Guilty of a common assault'.

In pronouncing the sentence the presiding barrister addressed the accused as follows:

“Mr Hall-Dare, a very painful duty develops upon me but it is one which I cannot shrink from discharging. I and my brother Magistrates, have consulted, and though we are very unwilling to deal heavily on you, we find it our duty to impose a punishment which will mark our disapprobation, and show to the people that, no matter how high the position of a person unfortunately guilty of such an offence, still he is amenable to the law, and that the law must take its course with regard to him. After the best consideration we have been able to give the case, and taking all the circumstances into account, we feel it our duty to pass this sentence on you – that you be imprisoned in the County Gaol for one calendar month – that you pay a fine of £5 to the Queen and £10 for expenses incurred by the prosecutrix”.

#### Followed by mob

After the court had risen Deputy Sheriff Cogan escorted Hall-Dare to Doyle's Hotel. On the way they were followed by a mob shouting abuse and denunciation against the convicted landed proprietor. Later that evening the prisoner was conveyed to Sligo and placed behind bars in Cranmore as it was commonly called.

The conviction of Robert W. Hall-Dare, and more especially his sentence to a term of imprisonment, was the subject of much adverse criticism in the local press – the Champion excluded.

“There are few who have read the

evidence who have not expressed surprise at the severity of the sentence which it was thought fit to pass upon this unfortunate gentleman”, commented the ‘Independent’.

“In this instance we are not certain that would have been passed over at worst, as an impudent jest, had the offender been a man of humble station, has been turned into a criminal offence, simply because Hall-Dare was a man of high position, a Justice of the Peace, and not a very popular landed proprietor in a county which he is a comparative stranger ... We are of the opinion- one shared by other Magistrates that have the imposition of a fine would have been ample punishment for the mild description of the assault committed”.

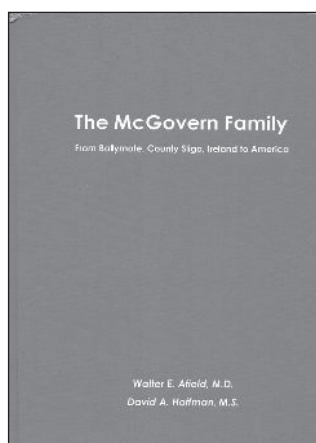
The Editor of the ‘Chronicle’ shared this view point: “Upon a review of the whole case, there appears to be abundant grounds for coming to the conclusion that the verdict of the Jury was not warranted by the evidence, and that great injustice has been done to Mr Hall- Dare ... the story of the prosecutrix is improbable. Her conduct and that of her husband subsequent to the date of the alleged occurrence, was not that of a person desirous of obtaining redress for an inquiry, but is capable of a very different explanation...”

The ‘Sligo Champion’ on the other hand took a different stance. It was satisfied that justice had been done and seen to be done in the case. It based its conclusion on the following facts: There was no evidence of conspiracy against Hall-Dare; the Magistrates were all Protestants and the Jury was ‘mixed’.

Richard Olipherts J.P., Carrowmore, Ballisodare, alone publicly championed the cause of the imprisoned Hall-Dare. In the weeks following the conviction he wrote long letters to both the local and national Press seeking ‘justice’ for his fellow Magistrate. However his pleas fell on deaf ears and Hall-Dare was left to complete his sentence in Sligo Gaol.

While these events were taking place a scion of the Percevals, namely Alexander the third son of Colonel Perceval, M.P., was engaging himself with much success in the tea trade in far – off China where he had gone some years earlier with the intention of earning sufficient money to redeem the ancestral home. His venture was most successful and by 1860 he had realised a small fortune.

In January 1861, the “Champion”, quoting a Dublin contemporary, broke the news that the former estate of the late Colonel Perceval had been re-purchased by a member of the family – Alexander Perceval of the house of Jardine Matheson & Co. of Hong Kong. Two months later, March 25th, Alexander Perceval through his agent Christopher L'Estrange, took possession of the Templehouse estate from the late owner, Robert W. Hall-Dare. The occasion was marked by much popular feeling and rejoicement as large crowds assembled on the Fairgreen at Templehouse to celebrate the departure of Hall-Dare and welcome the return of the Percevals to Templehouse.



## The McGovern Family of Ballymote

Submitted by John Coleman

**The McGovern Family carried out a business in Market Street until the early 20th century and a history of the family has recently been deposited in Ballymote Library, Sligo Library and the National Library in Dublin.**

# The Rover Returns....unexpectedly

By Mary Kelly White

Tom sat at one end of the kitchen table and watched his father pour the stew into two massive bowls. It smelled good.

"Get that inside you lad" Eddie said. "It will carry you for the night. There will be plenty of sandwiches and cakes and tea down there, but I like to go prepared. I'm not gone on the sweet stuff."

Tom watched his father sadly; his worn knuckled hands, and the cockeyed way that he held the spoon. Arthritis I suppose, he thought; no hair but he had his teeth; agile enough for his age, but what age was he 60? 70? Tom didn't know.

From this position Tom could see all around the kitchen; the big Aga cooker with the tea-towels on the rail, the grandfather clock still ticking away over the Mantle; The May Altar with the same old statues – The Blessed Virgin, the Child of Prague or was it Christ the King? Black Martin, and the little red lamp, only it wasn't a lamp any more. It was a tiny red cross in a glass dome. More progress, Tom thought. The window was different, bigger, and brighter and instead of the lace curtains that his mother used to spend so much time washing, ironing, and settling into place, there was an off-white Venetian blind. There was bareness about the kitchen. When he was around there were clothes on every chair. His mother was never done giving out about the clothes, ordering them to hang their jackets in the press and to put their laundry into the basket especially the socks. But they passed no heed to her and she would gather them up herself, threaten to put the lot on the fire then put them away herself. At least Tom had saved her that while he was away.

There was a small pile of shoes in the corner, kid's shoes and kid's wellingtons, pink wellingtons. So his brother John had a girl, Tom thought. He was longing to ask his father about John; who did he marry? How many

children he had? Where he lived? But he bit his lip and instead asked him about the Re-union.

"Will there be a big crowd down there tonight?"

"Well it was well advertised anyway. It was in the local newspaper, and in the Church bulletin, and I don't know how many letters were mailed from the Roll Books. They have been preparing for this for the past twelve months.

"And what kind of programme will they have?" Tom asked.

"Well the Mass will be celebrated in the Hall like a Station Mass, and then when the Mass is over I suppose they will make a few presentations, and then the supper. It will be good I'm sure. If herself was here I'd know more about it but she's not".

Tom got a lump in his throat listening to his own father talking about his own mother as if Tom was a stranger, but he held his breath. Eddie lifted the two bowls and put them into the sink. He took a Delph teapot from the back of the cooker, rinsed it out with water from the boiling kettle, put two teaspoons of dry tea into the pot, and then filled it well full with the boiling water. That was the first time that Tom had seen dry tea since the last time that Tom had eaten at home. He wondered if people still read the leaves but he did not ask. He was tempted to wash the few dishes in return for the meal but Eddie said they could wait until after the tea. He lifted his big yellow mug and placed it on the stove, and then he pulled out a tin box with a pipe and tobacco in it. If he cracks the match on the sole of his shoe I think I'll burst, Tom thought.

Eddie slouched into the big leather easy chair, cracked the match on his shoe and between the first few puffs he fired a list of questions at Tom;

How did he get there, he didn't hear a car? How did he hear about the Reunion? Where did he come from? Had he relatives in Glenabhann? What

kind of music did he play and was he part of a Band?

Tom answered the last question first telling Eddie that he was a sole guitarist, that he did not belong to a Band and that he played all sorts of music, American Country, a bit of Rock.

"Where are you from?" Eddie asked. "Originally from Ireland, my parents are Irish, but I grew up in America." "And where are you staying?" Eddie asked.

"Nowhere yet, I just got here today. Is there a Hotel or Guest House around, or Bed and Breakfast would be all right. I got a seat on from the village on the School Bus."

"I was thinking I recognised you". Eddie said. "So you just got a lift from the Village but you are not living in the village?"

"No" Tom said. "I am just passing through. I saw posters all over the place for the Reunion and an invitation for musicians so here I am."

"Isn't it well for you" Eddie said, "Foot loose and fancy free, sling a guitar over your shoulder and off you go."

Tom wanted to use the bathroom but he did not want to make a bee-line to it just like that.

"Can I use your facilities?" He asked.

"Sure you can second on the left."

Imagine that. Tom thought! The second on the left in his own house. The first on the left had been the boy's room, him and John. Their two names on the door, the little brass name plates that they had purchased on their first school tour. Tom hesitated for a few seconds before going into the toilet.

"You don't smoke! Do you take a drink?" Eddie asked.

"No" Tom answered.

"No bad habits." Eddie said.

"None that show." Tom laughed.

The bathroom was the same except for the Shower over the old bath. A plastic curtain looking like lace hung around the bath and a matching curtain



hung on the window. Same wired glass in the window as if anyone would try breaking and entering through such a tiny window. But it is not the safety thing, he thought, it is all about modesty. Heaven forbid that a peeping Tom should see what goes on in a bathroom, and now with the shower the possibility of an all naked body. Eternal damnation! But it is my own parents I am thinking about. It is, God forgive me for such thoughts.

"If you have nowhere to stay sure you might as well stay here." Eddie said when Tom returned. "I'm here on my own and there is plenty of room. That's settled."

Tom was well pleased. He wanted more than anything else to go through the house again but he was determined to be patient.

"You're travelling light." Eddie said.

"Passing through." Tom answered.

"What do you go under, are you a singer that we should know?" Eddie persisted.

"I am more an artist than a singer. The Guitar is useful in company. A

musician is always welcome in any sort of group" Tom said.

"I see" Eddie said, hanging the tea-cloth on the stove rail. He had emptied the sink while Tom was in the bathroom.

"It's time for me to throw a shape on myself, if you come out here after me I'll show you where you can sleep" Eddie said.

It was the first room on the left, his very own room where he had spent the first fifteen years of his life. He closed the door behind him and he stood there with his back against the door while he took it all in. The two iron beds with the modern duvets; no Foxford blankets no patchwork quilts. Scooby Doo and Mini Mouse in the beds instead of John and him. Tom walked to the window and there he saw a children's swing and a small bike. He could see a dolls-house and even a tree-house at the end of the garden. No vegetables, scallions, or rhubarb, just close mown green, green grass on the lawn. It was clear that his dad was now a grandad and

was playing the role to perfection just as he had done as a dad. There is definitely one girl Tom thought. I bet my dad is spoiling her rotten. Back in the room Tom opened the two doors of the big wardrobe as wide as possible. Kid's stuff here too, Tom thought. He admired the shoe section at the bottom of the press and he wondered whose bright idea that was? When he closed the wardrobe doors he was right beside the room door and in the evening light he spotted the two brass name-plates high up on the door. Tom and John he traced the names with his slender white fingers while tears filled his eyes. He couldn't believe that his parents had gone to the trouble of removing them from the outside and replacing them the inside of the door. It was as if they did not wish to let go of them. Tom lay on the bed facing the ceiling. His whole life passed across his mind; from the fun on the farm, to school through the fields, the boarding colleges. He blamed that, for his being stranded in America.

## Mercy Sisters

*Submitted by Pauline Brett*



**(Left-Right): Sister Teresa, Sister Albeus & Sister Patrick all of whom taught in the old St. Mary's Secondary School and later in Coláiste Mhuire.**

# INISHMURRAY

By Bernie Gilbride

The postcard picture of a stone wall, called to mind my first and only visit to Inishmurray Island, famous for its stone structures, churches and dwellings, dating back to the 6th century. Founded by Saint Molaise, as a monastic settlement, it was inhabited up to 1948.

On the morning in question we were told to be on Mullaghmore quay side at 9.30 am and then, weather, tide, and sea swell being favourable, we would be taken across to the island. Picnics had been prepared, raincoats, hats, heavy shoes, and warm jackets stowed just in case, even though it was June.

The morning was overcast, but not raining. On the quay side we waited as the incoming tide lifted our boat, then climbed aboard. As we left the harbour the sun came out, much to our delight forecasting a warm sunny day. Turning left at the pier head we passed to the rear of Classiebawn Castle looking so magnificent, with the Benbulbin Mountain Range as its background. Then headed straight for the island.

I was not prepared for how different the land and coastline looked from a boat. The mountains looked much higher and seemed to form a semi-circle around Donegal and Sligo Bays. Sliabh League, Dartry, Ben Weskin, Truskmore, Benbulbin, Knocknarea, and the Ox Mountains, seemed to continue in one unbroken line all the way from Killybegs to Aughris Head. As we left the lea of the land and cut through the water, spray arose on all sides and in our wake a white road appeared, ever widening as we chugged along until it became once again part of the ocean.

An hour later we were approaching the island, a lovely sight, sitting in the calm sea, with the sun shining and gentle waves breaking on its rocky shore. There is no landing pier on Inishmurray so the captain



drew the boat alongside a rocky ledge onto which we stepped ashore. Clambering up the rocks, we reached the only 'street' on the island, now a grassy road with cottages in a sheltered position facing the mainland. Some of which were in a remarkably good condition, others had gradually fallen into disrepair. Walking through the village I couldn't help thinking of the people who had lived there until 1948 when the island was vacated. Had they felt very isolated I wondered? Or had it instilled in them a sense of security, belonging and safety among their very own people.

Four of our passengers had been born and reared on the island. Some of them had just returned from America on holiday. One had a small can of red paint with him as he intended writing his newest grand child's name on the porch of his old home, where all other names had been recorded since leaving the island.

At the end of the village street stood the old school, now a museum, housing many old headstones together with desks and forms from the school itself.

Artifacts bearing ancient carvings had been stolen from the Island graveyard and sold abroad in the past. Those remaining are now safely preserved and are accessible to visitors and other interested parties.

Having lunched in glorious sunshine, we proceeded to the monastic settlement 'The Cashel' as

its called. Within the massive stone walls -- four metres high and three metres wide - we found it contained about one-third of an acre, divided by smaller walls, contained three churches, three beehive structures and three stations. The latter station included the famous 'cursing stones' comprising about 50 cross inscribed round stones and two upright ones. History relates that these stones were once used to put a curse on an enemy but care had to be taken in cursing someone because, if the curse was not merited, it came back on the perpetrator. I was almost afraid to even touch the stones, let alone turn or examine them so I viewed them as others lifted and examined them.

There was also 'The House of Fire' with its flagstone hearth which is reputed to spontaneously ignite a sod of turf or log if required or should all fires on the Island be extinguished for any reason. This had been tested by a man who disbelieved the story and throwing something to test it had clothing burned when it ignited instantly.

There were cells in the walls where the monks sometimes slept should they so wish. Outside the wall was a sweat house where water from an nearby spring was heated by means of hot stones, the monk's equivalent of our modern sauna with the sea as their shower.

Of the many wells on the island,

one is said to have the power to calm the sea in an emergency by some of its water being thrown over the waves or swell, should it be necessary to launch a boat in a storm perhaps, or to bring a sick islander to hospital. Listening to such stories on a beautiful sunny day was enthralling, but to think of them being enacted on a dark winter night with gale force winds howling while trying to launch a boat -- a very different matter, very frightening indeed.

For me, an outstanding memory of our trip was the peace and tranquillity of the whole island. Standing in

silence, I could imagine I could hear the chant of the monks at matins or vespers and even visualise them coming towards me in their open-toed sandals, wide sleeves, hands clasped in prayer. I could see them in their cells or in the beehive structures, writing and illustrating manuscripts, using dyes they had made from the heathers and lichens of the island, each letter and illustration perfectly formed, or painted, as can be seen in manuscripts that have survived.

Seeing our boat returning to the rocky ledge to collect us, we knew it was time to clamber down the rocks

again to embark on our homeward journey. The sinking sun cast a golden pathway over a calm sea. Sensing our reluctance to leave this tranquil, sacred place, the captain guided his boat slowly along the rocky shoreline to allow a few last photographs to be taken of the island.

For me, these are treasured memories of an exceptional experience. For our American companions, those last photographs, must surely be poignant souvenirs of a journey to their old homesteads on that magical island, just seven miles off the coast of Sligo, in the north Atlantic ocean.

## Remembering the Gate Lodge at Earlsfield House and Davey's of "The Flash"

By Owen Duffy

Having read with interest, the wonderful article written by Sr Nell Chambers in last year's issue of *The Corran Herald* concerning the history of Earlsfield House, memories came flooding back of the time spent in the Convent Secondary School and of the high regard which all pupils had for the Gate lodge and its occupants in the 1960's. Residents of the Gate Lodge then were Paddy Golden, originally from Templevanney and his wife Kathleen. Paddy was employed as a farm hand on the Convent farm. He also tended the walled in garden where the supply of fruit and vegetables for Convent use were produced.

Paddy and Kathleen always welcomed students into their house, maybe for 'a heat' of their roaring fire on cold Winter's day or for a treat of hot soda bread or a 'Beauty of Bath' apple. Their kindness will not be forgotten.

In September of last year a lady from Devon, England named Teresa Neely contacted Ballymote Heritage Group with the purpose of attempting

to locate information concerning her great grandfather who resided in Ballymote in the 1890's. His name was James Davis. After initial investigation it was established that James who was born in North Sligo in 1856, trained as a Gardener (probably in the Gore Booth gardens on Lissadell estate) He later emigrated to Scotland

and married Maria Hatrick from Co Donegal. In 1895 James, Maria and their two young sons returned from Scotland and James took up the position of gardener at Earlsfield House, having been appointed by Francis Gethin, son of Captain Richard Gethin. James Davis and his family took up residence in the Gate



**25 inch map of Earlsfield showing the gate lodge, and Hugh Davey's house as part of Earlsfield townland.**



Lodge in 1895 and lived there until the taking over of Earlsfield House by Rev Canon Loftus in 1902. At this stage the Davis family moved down to Branchfield where James Davis worked as a farmhand on Ann Dennedy's farm.

When the Sisters of Mercy took up residence in Earlsfield House they soon appointed Paddy Killoran as "Gardener" and in the early years Paddy and his family lived in the gate lodge (1911 census).

We were delighted to be able to shed some light on the origins of Teresa Neely's ancestors and we look forward to welcoming her to Ballymote during 2019.

### Davey's of Earlsfield

As can be seen from the 25 inch Ordinance Survey map, the only other house that existed in the Townland of Earlsfield or Carrowcauly was the house occupied by Hugh and Kate Davey and their large family in the 1890's.

Hugh Davey and his wife Kate raised a large family in this house that became known locally as "Davey's of the Flash" for obvious reasons from the photograph. In the earlier part of the last century the locals referred to the location of Daveys house as being in the townland of "Cummeen", which locals referred to as being the smallest townland in Ireland. Maybe the reason for that was that they were not allowed to use the address of "Earlsfield" which was reserved for the landlord's residence.

The Davis family of The Gate Lodge and the Davey family of Cummeen or "The Flash" formed a very close friendship prior to the Davis family moving down to Branchfield in 1902. Sometime in the 1920's the Davis family emigrated to England but continued to return on vacation to Ballymote. Derek Davey of Ballymote Heritage remembers some members of a Davis family visiting from England and holidaying with the Brennan's of Marren Park when he was a young



Picture of the Gate lodge at Earlsfield House taken in the 1960s

boy. Mrs Annie Mary Brennan was in fact a daughter of Hugh & Kate Davey of "The Flash"

The last of the Davey family members to live in that very pretty thatched cottage at "The Flash" was Michael Davey son of Hugh and Kate. Michael died on the 1st December 1966. Of interest is the fact that

his address was finally recorded as "Earlsfield, Ballymote" on his Civil death record.

Just like Earlsfield House Gate Lodge which was demolished in the 1980s, the pretty thatched cottage that belonged to the Davey family of the Flash was demolished shortly after Michael Davey's death.



Hugh Davey's house in Earlsfield townland (photo courtesy Tommy Breheny)

# Ballymote Sports Report from the Sligo Champion August 3rd 1901

Submitted by David Casey

## UNDER ICA AND IAAA RULES

The above sports were brought about on Wednesday last, under most auspicious circumstances. Though the weather had been unfavourable for the two days previous- and Thursday was wet also- the clerk of the weather was on his best behaviour on Wednesday. The result was that there was a very big attendance, the grand stand being crowded with the youth and beauty of the district, while the nicely laid out track the whole way round was lined with people. Sport all through was good, the track was in excellent order and some very fine finishes were witnessed. The committee and secretary are to be congratulated on the perfection with which they carried out all the arrangements. The Ballaghaderreen brass band played a nice selection of music at intervals during the day.

## CYCLING EVENTS

Half-Mile Bicycle Race (open) Handicap –Prizes – 1st, salad bowl; 2nd, fish knife and fork; 3rd, cigarette and match box – J Reid, Mullinabreena, 90 yds., 1st; P J Gaynor, Riverstown, 100 yds., 2nd ; George A Anderson, Sligo, 80 yds., 3rd. Seven started. Gaynor led for one lap when Reid came to the front, and riding very strongly, won by several lengths; third close up. Time – 1 minute -20 1/2 seconds.

One Mile Bicycle Handicap (open)-Prizes- 1st, spirit lamp and kettle ; 2nd, biscuit barrel ; 3rd, brief bag – P J Gaynor, Riverstown, 200 yds, 1st ; W H Anderson, Alfresco, 180 yds, 2 ; G Anderson, Sligo, 80 yds, 3. Gaynor, who got an excellent start, led from the first, but after completing three-quarters of a mile, W Anderson drew up and a splendid race ensued, Gaynor winning by 5 yards. Time- 2 minutes

39 4/5th seconds. Eight started.

Two Miles Bicycle Handicap (Open) – Prizes—1st, kettle and spirit lamp; 2nd, cruet stand; 3rd, field glass. G Anderson, 120 yds, 1st; W H Anderson, Alfresco, 300 yds, 2nd ; P J Gaynor, 300 yds, 3rd. Seven started. Gaynor led for half the distance, when W H Anderson took up the running, but was caught at a lap to go by G Anderson, who won a fine race by two lengths. Time 5 minutes 43 seconds.

Two Miles Bicycle Race (confined to the Ballymote C C) – Prizes— 1st, suit of tweed; 2nd, barometer; 3rd, set of carvers. W Cregan, Ballymote, scr. 1st; P J Murphy, ditto, scr. 2nd. Murphy made all the running until the bell, when Cregan made a great sprint and won as he pleased.

3 Miles Bicycle Race Handicap (Open) – Prizes – 1st, Clock; 2nd, Teapot; 3rd, biscuit barrel; P J Gaynor, 400 yds. 1st; W A. Anderson, 400 yds. 2nd; J Reid 350 yds. 3rd. Seven started. At two laps, G Anderson fell at the corner and was unable to proceed. Shortly afterwards Reid assumed command and made a strong pace until three laps from home when Gaynor with a great sprint got in front, which position he maintained until the finish winning easily. Time – 8 minutes 40 seconds.

5 Miles Bicycle Race Handicap – 1st, prize, Tea service (Presented by J A Perry, Sligo) ; 2nd, prize – Electro-plated teapot ; 3rd, prize –case of carvers-W A Anderson, Dublin, 550 yds. 1st; -Meares, Longford, 375 yds.2nd; J T Horan, Sligo, 500 yds. 3rd. Gaynor and Anderson made pace alternately until 2 miles to go when Horan went to the front and kept there up to a mile from the finish when Anderson sprinted to the front and kept the lead he attained to the finish. Gaynor's tyre burst after the

bell, and he had a bad fall, but for which he would have been third. Mears punctured but secured another machine on which he finished second. Time-14 minutes 50 seconds.

One-Legged Cycle Race, 2 laps –Prizes-1st, suit of tweed ; 2nd, spirit flask ; 3rd , preserve dish- G Anderson, 1st ; P J Keaney, Dublin, 2nd ; T J Horan, 3rd. Won easily.

## ATHLETIC EVENTS

220 Yards. Flat Handicap (confined to boys under 16 years of age, resident in the parish)-1st, prize, watch; 2nd, watch; 3rd, watch. John Anderson, Ballymote, 1st; P J Dockery, Ballymote, 2nd; Michael Gilmartin, Ballymote, 3rd. About fifteen started. Anderson caught Dockery in the straight and won by a yard.

100 Yards Open Handicap - 1st prize, suit of tweed; 2nd, half-dozen knives and forks; 3rd, alarm clock.

First heat-P J Kelly, Dublin, 7 yards, 1st; W J Wimsey, Ballymote, 8 yards, 2nd. Second heat-R Petit, Sligo, 10 yds. 1st; H. Davitt, Boyle, 9 ½ yds. 2nd. Third heat-J J McGovern, Ballymote, 10 yds. 1st; F J Keenan, Sligo, 10 yds. 2nd. Fourth heat-T J Cunlisk, Sligo, walked over. Final heat-Petit, 1st; Kelly, 2nd; Cunlisk, 3rd. Cunlisk got away, but was caught after quarter of the journey by Petit, who was closely followed by Kelly. Petit won a good race by half a yard. Time-10.3 seconds. Some disappointment was expressed by those taking second place in the heats that they were not eligible for the final. Now this was no fault of the Executive, as it was plainly stated on the programme that winners of heats should compete in the final.

220 yards flat handicap (open). First prize, cruet stand ; 2nd , musical clock ; 3rd, butter cooler. First heat-R. Petit, Sligo, 1st; P J Kelly, Dublin, 10



yards, 2nd; H Davitt, Boyle, 16 yards, 3rd. Second heat, J J Cawley, Sligo, 16 yards, 1st; J Reynolds, Ballymote, 17 yards, 2nd; C T Henderson, Sligo, 14 yards, 3rd. Third heat-P J Cusack, Granard, 13 yards, 1st; F J Keenan, Sligo, 18 yards, and T O'Donnell, Ballymote, 17 Yards, dead heat. Final heat, Cusack, 1st; Petit, 2nd; Kelly, 3rd. Keenan led, but was caught by Petit until entering the straight, when Cusack, sprinting grandly, won by three yards. Time, 24.2 seconds.

Half-mile flat handicap (open). First prize, clock; 2nd, biscuit barrel; 3rd, clock. First heat, J J McGovern, Ballymote, 55 yards, 1st; Halloran,

Ballaghaderreen, 50 yards, 2nd; F Golden, Sligo, 50 yards, 3rd. F Golden led for quarter of the journey, McGovern drew to the front and made a popular win by 10 yards. Time, 2 minutes 10 seconds.

440 yards flat handicap (open) (confined to a radius of 12 miles.) First prize, suit of tweed; 2nd, musical clock; 3rd, alarm clock. H Davitt, Boyle, 30 yards, 1st; T O'Donnell, Mullaghroe, 20 yards, 2nd; M J Wimsey, Ballymote 30 yards, 3rd. Davitt forged to the front after 50 yards, and maintaining the lead throughout, won a grand race by six yards. Time 56 seconds.

440 yards flat handicap (open). First prize, electro-plated teapot; 2nd, prize 1 dozen. Knives and forks; 3rd, clock. J Cusack, Granard, 1st; Kelly, Dublin, 2nd; JJ McGovern, Ballymote, 3rd. Cusack after covering half the distance, jumped to the front and won by two yards. Time, 53 seconds.

Throwing 56 lb. weight (handicap) – First prize, Gladstone bag; 2nd, clock. T O'Donnell, Gurteen, 22 ft. 10 in., 1st. H O'Donnell, Gurteen, 22 ft. 6 in., 2nd. Eight competed.

Note abbreviations: ICA (Irish Cycling Association) and IAAA (Irish Amateur Athletic Association)

## Chavelier O'Gorman of Auxerre

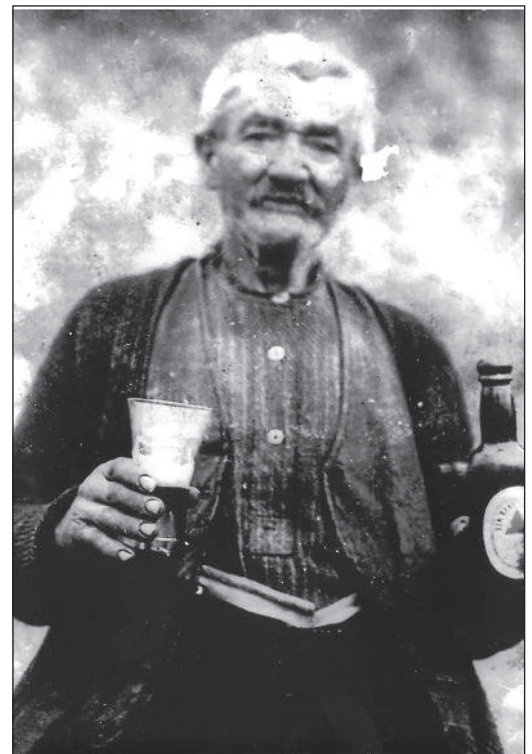
*Photo courtesy of John Perry, Ballymote.*

**This photo is of a portrait of Chavelier O'Gorman of Auxerre. In 1774 O'Gorman bought the Book of Ballymote from a millwright's widow in Drogheda for £20. He presented the manuscript to the Royal Irish Academy in 1785.**



## Tom Carroll

*Submitted by Paddy Egan.*



**Tom Carroll (pictured) lived in O'Connell Street, Ballymote across the road from the Garda Barracks. His father Andy Carroll and he worked in The Mill, Ballymote.**

**Tom's mother was Mary Boyle from Ardconnell, Ballymote.**



# The Corkrans of Corkran's Mall: An old Sligo family

By John C Mc Tiernan

The surname Corkran can be traced in Sligo to the early 18th century when they emerged as a wealthy Catholic merchant family who had extensive land holdings on the Palmerston estate. Although occasionally seen as being rather impertinent, their religion and politics did not hinder the appointment of three of the name in succession, sons of Thomas the elder, as Land Agents to the extensive Palmerston estate in north Sligo, namely, Francis 1726 – 1751; Edward 1751 – 1769 and Thomas 1770 – 1776.

Thomas senior, the patriarch of the family, died in 1731. Shortly before his death his name occurs in the records of the Provost's Court regarding the exchange of a strip of ground adjacent to the bridge in Bridge Street that subsequently facilitated the completion of a riverside promenade, known as Corkran's Mall, which he had planned but was not completed until half a century later by his son, Thomas Corkran. As the foremost Catholic merchant of his day the name of Thomas, senior, appears on several documents relating to the renewal of the Mass House lease.

The linen industry was thriving in Sligo in the early 18th century principally through the enterprise of both the Corkran and Knox families who were in the forefront as manufacturers, bleachers and exporters. In 1817 the Corkrans were operators of bleach yards, a mill and a bleach green at Rathbraughan. Although the linen industry had declined locally in the mid to late 18th century, the Corkrans were still in the forefront of the industry locally.

The local trade directories, published in the opening decades of the 18th century, listed several members of the extended Corkran family who were both prominent local merchants and to the forefront in public affairs.

Edward, who was a Palmerston Land Agent in the 1750's, was described as "both active and progressive" and one who displayed considerable knowledge in the management of a large landed estate. His brother, James, was an importer of flaxseed and in partnership with Vernon Davys & Co, brewers. He was also a Town & Harbour Commissioner and Secretary of the local branch of the London Hibernian Society. A century later Alexander Corkran, a ship owner and importer in Quay Street, was a member of a Committee appointed to uphold the good standing and character of the Sligo merchants against allegations levelled at them by Robert Holmes, the Collector of the Port. Lewis Corkran established his own business in London in the 1730's and subsequently settled in the East Indies where his son, also Lewis became a prominent member of the Bombay Borough Council in addition to being connected with the East India Company.

Thomas Corkran, jun., succeeded his brother, Edward, as Palmerston's land agent, a post he occupied for six years, 1770 – 1776. For reasons unclear, he was known as "Thomas Gallda" (Thomas the anglicized). It may be that he was born in England but most probably that he resided there for a time with members of his family who had settled in the London area. Contemporary records state that he was "wealthy, proud and pompous". He married a Fitzgerald of Turlough, Castlebar, by whom he had issue, including a son, Henry, born in April 1784, one of whose sponsors was none other than Lord Palmerston.

Following his father's death Thomas "Gallda" lost no time in bringing to fruition the ambitious developments already embarked upon by Thomas senior, namely, the building of a

riverside promenade stretching from the Abbey ruins to the bridge in Bridge Street. Although possessing considerable property of his own, by the mid-century he was experiencing financial difficulties and in November 1776 he absconded to Manchester with a mistress, taking with him in the region of £2000, comprising for the most part the rent monies he had collected in his capacity in Palmerston's Land Agent. On learning of this development he was removed from his post and only avoided arrest by surrendering the securities he had absconded with. Over the following years he gradually repaid the monies he had unlawfully closed on by selling off part of his Sligo properties.

Corkran returned to Sligo in late 1783, or early the following year, and lost no time in re-commencing the building of the riverside promenade which in his own words "had been so pleasing to John Wynne of Hazelwood and others when first mooted by my late father". In the following July there were allegations that Corkran was using stones from the fabric of the Abbey, digging up foundations and making breaches in walls. He also had closed up an old passage to the river. He was also accused of building on the Abbey grounds, an accusation he strongly denied, stating that he had stopped work temporarily as the lease on the site, which was then in the possession of his uncle in Bombay, had elapsed and he was waiting to hear from him.

At that stage he had already built some houses, others were planned and only one was ready for occupation. As he had already run out of money and was in debt to the timber merchants, it was imperative that he raised money for that purpose. This he achieved by selling off woods he had purchased from John Knox some years earlier.

On the completion of the Riverside Promenade or Corkran's Mall, as it was subsequently known, he then built a double-sided row of houses at right angles to the Mall already completed, linking Bridge Street with the Castle Street/ Abbey Street junction, which he named Thomas St. from his Christian name, or possibly that of his late father.

Despite all the problems he had encountered, Thomas 'Gallda'

Corkran established himself in local history as the builder of two fine thoroughfares, both of which he had completed by 1783. In the words of county historian, Terence O' Rorke, "he was one of the first in modern times to give an impetus to building in Sligo".

Thomas 'Gallda's' final years in Sligo appear to have been uneventful to a point, that is until he and his wife had what appears to have been

a rather trivial disagreement in public and resulted in a separation and his departure, with his two sons, to the West Indies where others of the name had already settled. As far as can be established the year was 1800 and nothing further is known as to the fate of Thomas 'Gallda' Corkran or his offspring. Their departure heralded the end of the family's long and eventful association with Sligo.

## My Australian Family

By Maree O'Dowd

One sunny summer's day about 30 years ago an Australian priest named Fr. Jim Kierce called to the home of my aunt in Boyle looking for 'his roots'. He had a lot of valuable research already completed and suddenly we found a very interesting story of an Australian family we did not even know existed.

Back in the 1880s when our country had just recovered from the Great Famine, my great grandmother's four brothers left their small holding outside Boyle on the Roscommon/ Sligo border near the parish of Killaraght and headed off to a new life (never to return) in a faraway place called Victoria in Australia. They were Owen, James, John and William Keaveny. The aforementioned Fr. Kierce is the grandson of James.

They arrived in the Southern Hemisphere with little but their youth, physical strength, staunch Catholic faith and their willingness to work hard. They settled in a rural area of Victoria called Iona where other Irish people had already established themselves. Each of them was given a plot of land provided they drained, cultivated and made it arable. This they seem to have achieved in no small measure as they were given more and more land to continue their good work of reclamation. There was neither church nor school there so they organised a priest from Melbourne to come periodically on horseback to celebrate mass in the front room of Owen's house where marriages, christenings and other rites were also conducted. They also started a small

school in William's house.

One of the brothers, John, married Ellen Maria Folwell. They had three children, Annie, Dorothy and John junior. They left Australia and went to South Africa but sadly no trace of their descendants can be found today. Hopefully someday a distant South African cousin might turn up on our doorstep looking, like Fr. Jim, for 'his/her roots'!

Owen, who died in 1934, married Catherine Featherstone. They raised four sons and gave them the family names of John, Bartholomew, James and Owen.

James, who died in 1946, married Elizabeth Delahunty and had one daughter and two sons, one of whom married a Mary O'Dowd. Their daughter Elizabeth later became the mother of Fr. Jim.

William, who died in 1940, married Catherine Furlong and together they reared two daughters, Eileen and Mary. The descendants of the original emigrants are now spread all across Australia and interestingly they include a couple of priests and nuns while the family who remained in Ireland didn't manage to beget any sons or daughters for the church.

During one memorable visit to Australia in 1997 I had the great privilege of visiting the graves of my ancestors in Iona. I also met about 40 cousins at a reunion organised by Fr. Jim at his home in Greensborough near Melbourne. Fr. Jim's mother passed away in November 1993 just 5 days short of her 100th birthday. She had never realised her life-long dream

of visiting the homeland of her father but shortly before her death she said to her son "do you think I might pass over Ireland on my way to heaven?". I like to think she did. Sadly Fr. Jim too passed to his eternal reward last year at the grand old age of 90+.

It took over a hundred years and five generations of my family for history to repeat itself but in 1997 my daughter, Fidelma O'Dowd from Keenaghan, Ballymote went "down-under" with a bunch of friends. She subsequently met and married a Sydneysider called Stephen Hunt and like her great great grand uncles a century before her, is now living her life far away from her, native shores. I like to think that the spirits of my forebears, who sleep peacefully beneath the hot antipodean sun, watch over our next generation of Australians - my granddaughter Holly Hunt, born to Fidelma and Stephen in 2001, her sister Suzie-Maree in 2003, followed by her Irish-named brothers Dermot, Aidan and Rory. My other daughter Belinda, with her husband Conor O'Dea, emigrated to Sydney in 2007 and they have since added Iseult and Ultan to our far-flung tribe. This is the story of my family but it could easily be that of tens of thousands of Irish people whose descendants can be found today in every corner of the globe. The American poet, Carl August Sandburg, who died in 1967, once wrote "when a society or a civilisation perishes, one condition can always be found - they forget where they came from". I hope my Australian descendants never forget where they came from.

# Bram Stoker in Ballymote

By Dr. Marion McGarry

Did Bram Stoker ever visit Sligo town? The Dracula author's mother was from Old Market street and her mother and brother (Bram's grandmother and uncle) are buried in the churchyard of St. John's cathedral. During his life, was Bram ever inclined to pop up, out of curiosity, to see the town where his mother grew up, and the graves of his relatives? I have found no evidence that he did – not yet – but I was delighted to discover that not only did he visit the county of Sligo, he came to our local town of Ballymote. This article explores what Ballymote was like, and where Stoker was in his life when he spent a night in the town in 1877.

## Stoker's mother and Sligo's cholera epidemic of 1832

To set the scene for the Stoker/Sligo connection we must briefly go back to 1832. It is generally accepted by Stoker scholars that his mother Charlotte's stories of Sligo's cholera epidemic were hugely influential in his horror writing. I have argued elsewhere that Count Dracula can be read as the personification of Sligo's cholera<sup>1</sup>.

Cholera was the nightmare disease of the early nineteenth century. Europe was first visited by the epidemic in 1832 and Sligo was the worst affected provincial town in all of Ireland (or Britain) in that year. In six weeks alone, the town was devastated by the disease. There is still uncertainty about the exact death toll with estimates varying from 650 to up to 1500. The wealthy and middle classes, who were usually unaffected by the many diseases and famines that occurred in the country at the time, were equally at risk from this one. Adding to its horror, the cause or cure of the disease was not fully understood, and it offered a slow and agonizing death.<sup>2</sup>

Bram's mother Charlotte was aged 14 during Sligo's epidemic and witnessed terrible things. She called

Sligo "a city of the dead"<sup>3</sup> and heard of cholera victims being buried while still alive, of one catholic priest wielding a whip to protect victims from such a fate, of people dropping dead in the street and of whole families being wiped out within hours. The courthouse was turned into an emergency coffin-making workshop. There were sickly smells from the decomposing dead. Her family were spared but she could not fail to have been traumatized.

Later, she married and moved to Dublin and had children. Bram was born in 1847, he later attended TCD and started working for Dublin Castle as a civil servant in 1865. In 1873, perhaps still haunted by her experiences, Charlotte wrote an essay "Experiences of the Cholera of Ireland" a highly regarded and credible first-hand account of Sligo's outbreak.

Having worked for many years in Dublin castle for the petty sessions courts service, Bram was promoted, and his role saw him travel the country using the new train network. His journeys took him to the west of Ireland to places that an urbane young Dubliner, even today, might would consider quite otherworldly!

## The Petty Sessions

The petty sessions are now obsolete but in the nineteenth century they were an important part of the Irish courts service. They were also the lowest courts in Ireland involving civil and criminal cases. Although presided over by a magistrate, the sessions were run by clerks who oversaw all the paperwork and ensured the session ran correctly. Typical crimes tried in these courts were indeed 'petty': they included drunkenness, straying animals, local acts of nuisance, revenue or tax issues, assault and destruction of property<sup>4</sup>.

On a regular sessions day dozens of cases might be heard. The legal profession complained about the hot,

crammed and noisy conditions in the courtrooms. If you sat in on one of these sessions "you could find yourself next to the beer-breathed man arrested for public drunkenness the night before, leaning against the wall might be a local landholder determined to have something done about the goat wandering on his land."<sup>5</sup> *The Illustrated London News* described the high drama of the mundane scene at the petty sessions day in Clonmel in 1853:

"the clerk cried: "Tymothy Nowlan against Barney Brannan".

There was a buzz of excitement in the court which subsided into a dead silence as the parties proceeded from their respective positions to the front of the judicial seat. Tim Nolan (the complainant) his head enveloped in bandages, rose slowly and, leaning on the arm of his spouse, advanced with difficulty, as if his injuries were even more serious than they appeared to be, and they were followed by Paddy Phelan, their witness an old peaceable looking farmer, who by mark of respect was accommodated with a chair"<sup>6</sup>

It was the clerk of the petty sessions, not the judge, who was firmly in charge of proceedings. This is where Stoker came in: in 1877 Stoker became an inspector of petty sessions. Between 1877 and 1878 his job was to monitor the duties of the other clerks in the system. The counties he visited were Kerry, Mayo, Sligo and Monaghan and the towns were Limerick, Wexford, Howth and Dundalk<sup>7</sup>. It was dull work but he saw all sorts of colourful characters and he got to travel, (which he loved) even if it was just around the country.

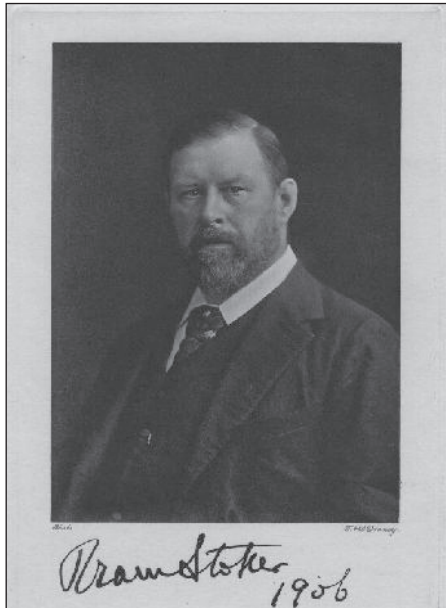
*The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland* was published in 1879 and was Stoker's first book. It served as a sort of instruction manual for clerks of these courts. It would have been a tedious undertaking and Stoker himself later described the book as "dry as dust". Stoker would



have been busily working on this in 1877, perhaps bringing drafts of the book with him on his travels.

#### **Stoker in 1877**

The most famous photograph of Bram Stoker shows him old and rather grumpy looking - it belies the fact that he was a genial man who liked a joke and had a wide circle of friends. Yet this persona did mask a more thoughtful person, who had remarked on the prettiness of girls but



**Bram Stoker**

who aged 30 hadn't yet had a serious relationship, who longed to be by the sea<sup>8</sup> and who was deeply moved by the poetry of Walt Whitman. He enjoyed the company of the Lady Wilde and her husband - both antiquarians with interests in Irish folklore. He was a voracious library researcher, too of wide-ranging topics. From 1871 he kept various journals - he wrote brief notes on unusual dreams he had, jokes he heard, descriptions of local characters, all perhaps to inspire his later creative writing<sup>9</sup>. He especially like to capture the various dialects heard during his travels around Ireland. It is in these journals we find evidence for his trip to county Sligo, to Collooney and Ballymote, as courts inspector.

#### **Ballymote: a fine market town**

Ballymote was and is a compact market town and a hub for the agricultural community located in the surrounding countryside of south



**Image of Flannery's Hotel in a Postcard**

county Sligo. It had wide streets, fine churches and it is still notable for its array of shopfronts in the traditional vernacular style. When Stoker visited in 1877 it was thriving, with new buildings and facilities.

In 1862, the arrival of the railway proved a boost for the town's status and fortunes. Today the station remains a fine example of Victorian railway architecture<sup>10</sup>. It is likely Stoker arrived at the station, a stone's throw from the town, before walking the short distance to town. He would have immediately seen the magnificent ruin of Ballymote castle (c.1300)<sup>11</sup>. He would have passed the fine Roman catholic church, recently completed in 1864, and alongside it the ruined Franciscan Friary (c.1440) before walking up Teeling street<sup>12</sup> where the courthouse was located.

It had been completed in 1860<sup>13</sup> and occupied a prominent elevated site, located up stone steps. It remains an unshowy but dignified building with a dominant hipped roof and round-headed windows.

He, like other visiting court staff, would have been booked into the best hotel in the town, which was Flannerys. The hotel closed in the early twentieth century<sup>14</sup> and is now Johnson's furniture<sup>15</sup>. Its interiors on the two upper floors remain largely preserved behind the modern additions of PVC windows. Fine wrought iron fireplaces, floral wallpaper, wainscoting, wooden window reveals and a dumb waiter are still preserved largely as Stoker would have seen it. Rooms were large, with two windows. It would have been more luxurious compared to the



**Image of Furniture Store in Modern Times**

town's other accommodation – there was a smaller and more down-market coaching inn nearby<sup>16</sup>. But Flannerys was the 'good' hotel - the one that the judges stayed in when they came to Ballymote for the courts service and it was conveniently located on Lord Edward Street around the corner from the courthouse.

He may have got to Ballymote early, did his inspection, stayed over, travelled to Collooney<sup>17</sup> next day to inspect that and then got the train home. But perhaps he stayed two evenings? And what did he do in the evening(s) he stayed?<sup>18</sup> Perhaps he dined in the hotel and returned to his room to work on his book or on his journals. In other places he stayed in he noted he characters he saw loitering outside his hotels (as in Limerick)<sup>19</sup>.

Exactly what Bram Stoker thought about Ballymote is not known, but he did have some withering comments about the neighboring town of Collooney. This he described as 'the most unbusy place in Ireland' and the sleepy local policeman looked to him like a scarecrow stuffed with straw. His notes on the town reflect his keen ear for dialect, he quoted one local referring to the political parties as going "round an' round an' round an' round, jist for all the world like a dog lookin' for the head of his bed"<sup>20</sup>. Similarly, he wrote: "in Ballymote (Co. Sligo) 1877 I heard an angry man outside the hotel say: 'the nagurs, the nagurs, the dhirty nagurs. They wouldn't give yet not so much as a biled nail for yer coffin'"<sup>21</sup>. He was tickled at local names discovered in investigation to a title of a property at Carrowkeel (near Ballymote) he "found one man who flourished about 1690-1732 called Tumultuous McDonagh"<sup>22</sup>.

After he visited Ballymote, life was soon going to change dramatically for Stoker. The following year, in quick succession - he was offered a job managing the famous Lyceum theatre in London, and he married the beautiful Florence Balcombe. This was all exciting compared to the boring job based in Dublin Castle and the middle-class future it had offered. It led to a new departure for him as an author not of dry legal tomes but of horror fiction, the most famous of which, *Dracula* (1897) ensured his fame, if not necessarily fortune.

And still we come back to the question:

did he ever visit Sligo town? There is currently no evidence to say that he did. Future historical research might change this. But he was so tantalizingly close—three stops away on the train - why wouldn't he - just a day trip perhaps? But then again, why would he? His living relatives had left the town and there was no-one but the dead left in Sligo for him to visit. Unless he was fueled by a morbid curiosity aroused from his mother's tales of Sligo's cholera. And yet, Bram did not need to go to the places that inspired his writing – he never visited Transylvania or the Carpathian Mountains to write *Dracula* – it was all based on library research. Perhaps his mother's description in *Experiences of the Cholera in Ireland* was vivid enough for Sligo's past horrors to rest uneasily in his imagination and inspire him in the future.

#### Postscript:

Sligo Dracula Society aims to highlight the historical connections between Bram Stoker, *Dracula* and Sligo's cholera epidemic of 1832. For more see: [www.sligobramstoker.weebly.com](http://www.sligobramstoker.weebly.com) or email: [sligobramstokersociety@gmail.com](mailto:sligobramstokersociety@gmail.com)  
To follow on social media see: Twitter: @SligoStoker / Facebook: @SligoBramStokerSociety / Instagram: Sligo Dracula Society

1 Marion McGarry, 'Dracula = Cholera: how Sligo's 1832 epidemic represents Stokers famous character', in *Journal of Medical Humanities*, Vol 40, Issue 3, December 2019 (forthcoming).

2 Cholera is caused by contaminated drinking water. In Sligo, like many other towns, the disease was aggravated by the Garavogue river, which was the chief source of the town's drinking water but was polluted with the town's sewage.

3 Charlotte Stoker wrote *Experiences of the Cholera in Ireland* an unpublished account, in 1873. It is an important first-hand account of Sligo's cholera epidemic.

4 Irish petty sessions court could impose a maximum of 1 year's imprisonment, and the usual punishments were fines, being bound to keep the peace for a certain period or short prison sentences. More serious, would be heard in the Quarter Sessions or in the Assizes, known in Ireland as the Commission Court.

5 Abigail Rieley, 'Complete Irish Petty Sessions Court Records Now Online', Dec 23, 2014 on Irish Central on <https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/complete-irish-petty-sessions-court-records-now-online> [14/05/2019].

6 Taken from a transcript by Irish Genealogy Toolkit at <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/support-files/a-scene-at-an-irish-petty-sessions,-1853--transcription---secure.pdf>

7 Dacre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller, *The*

*Lost Journals of Bram Stoker: the Dublin Years*, London (Robson Press 2012), p.239.

8 He was an excellent swimmer and frequently took day trips out to Bray and Greystones by train while living in Dublin.

9 Some of his journals were recently found and published by Dacre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller, *The Lost Journals of Bram Stoker: the Dublin Years*, London (Robson Press 2012).

10 For more, see: <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=images&county=SL&regno=32314002>

11 It was where the Book of Ballymote was written in the 14th century. For more on this see: <https://www.ria.ie/book-ballymote>

12 Teeling street was where Matthew Phibbs had lived and murdered three people in one night. He was hanged in 1861 in Sligo Gaol. He gained notoriety and was dubbed the 'Ballymote Slasher'.

13 For more see: <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=SL&regno=32314016>

14 More research on my part remains to be done on the hotel's operational dates and to investigate whether any records such as guest books remain.

15 The National Inventory of Irish Architecture lists this as originally being a domestic house – but local historian John Coleman (along with others) say this was the location of Flannerys. <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=SL&regno=32314025>

16 A number of buildings in the town still have coach arches to permit entry through to the rear.

17 Stoker was in Collooney perhaps for a day-trip to inspect their sessions-records. The small town is the next stop on the train towards Sligo from Ballymote.

18 More information is required here on the duties of inspectors: did they pore over documents after hours or did they just work during court time? I also need to examine train timetables to see how frequently or infrequently trains travelled on the lines.

19 It is unlikely he visited inns or pubs to drink. Stoker was not a keen consumer of alcohol.

20 Dacre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller, *The Lost Journals of Bram Stoker: the Dublin Years*, London (Robson Press 2012), p.254.

21 Dacre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller, *The Lost Journals of Bram Stoker: the Dublin Years*, London (Robson Press 2012), p.255.

22 Dacre Stoker and Elizabeth Miller, *The Lost Journals of Bram Stoker: the Dublin Years*, London (Robson Press 2012), p.100. In the actual records of the petty sessions, there is a James Tumultuous McDonagh recorded who was noted as a witness in the Ballymote records in 1880.



# Supreme Court Justice and Senior U.S. Democratic Leader Had South Sligo Roots

By Owen Duffy



**Harry Heher**

In 1932, the year of Franklin D Roosevelt's election as President of the United States, Harry Heher who was the son of a south Sligo emigrant and a Democratic State Chairman was elected Supreme Court Justice for the state of New Jersey. He served in this position until his retirement in 1959.

The Heher family of which Harry Heher was descended had its roots in the small townland in South Sligo called Sragh which lies close to the Curlew mountains and the Roscommon border. In earlier times Sragh was also known as Derrylahan (Tithe Applotments Records of 1823 – 1837). In the Tithes, Pat and John Heher farmed on a tenant farm in Sragh (1824), paying seventeen shillings and six pence tithe for same. In the Griffith Valuation of 1857, John Heher now shared the tenant farm with Peter McGlynn in Sragh.

John Heher's son named Patrick (born C1825) married Anne McGlynn in circa 1860 and so increased the possible hold on this Heher/McGlynn share farm. In addition, Thomas Drury married Patrick's sister Bridget Heher

SRAGH. (Ord. S. 41 & 45.)																
1	a	Andrew McGowan,	Bridget & Thos. Kevil,	Land and house,	1	3	14	0	10	0	0	5	0	4	15	0
2	a	Bridget Kevil,	Robert Henry Trench,	Land, house, and offices,	103	2	16	16	5	0	0	15	0	8	10	0
	b	Thomas Kevil,														
3	a	Roger Taylor,	Same,	Land, house, and offices,	27	2	26	6	10	0	0	10	0	7	0	0
4	a	James Connolly,	Same,	Land, house, and offices,	34	1	3	10	15	0	0	15	0	11	10	0
5	a	Patrick Taylor,	Same,	Land, house, and offices,	23	1	29	8	5	0	0	10	0	8	15	0
6	a	Patrick Duffy,	Same,	Land, house, & office,	36	1	29	6	5	0	0	10	0	6	15	0
7	b	Thomas McDonagh,	Same,	Land, house, & office,				6	5	0	0	10	0	6	15	0
	a	John Heher,	Same,	Land, house, & offices,	37	2	28	6	10	0	0	10	0	7	0	0
	b	Peter McGlynn,	Same,	Land, house, & offices,				6	10	0	0	10	0	7	0	0
Total,					261	3	18	67	15	0	4	15	0	72	10	0
ANNAGHMORE.																

## Griffith Valuation for Sragh 1857

on 20th February 1860 and Thomas & Bridget took over a share of this farm. The complete Heher /McGlynn farm was eventually transferred into the Heher name in 1875.

Patrick Heher and his young bride Annie started their married life in a two roomed thatched cottage on the side of the hill in Sragh close to where the Great Western railway line would shortly be built. Patrick and Annie Heher had two sons in family, namely John born in 1862 and Dominick born on 8th March 1867. (The keeping of civil birth records only commenced in 1864 in Ireland).

John Heher emigrated to the United States as a young man of 24 years in 1886. Dominick remained in Sragh and worked on the family farm with his parents. Dominick and John's mother Annie died on 20th of March 1908. Dominick married Catherine Reid from Ragwood, Gurteen on 4th February 1913. However, sadness struck when Dominick's wife Catherine died shortly after their marriage in July 1914. Further sadness was to follow with the death of his father Patrick in 1915 at 90 years of age. After his death Dominick then settled on the Reid farm in Ragwood and remarried on 25th January 1915 to Anne Knott from the neighbouring townland of Cloonlaheen. Dominick and his wife Anne raised their family of one boy

Johnny and three girls namely Annie, Mary-Kate and Bea-Agnes. All three girls emigrated. Dominick died in Spring 1949 at 82 years. Johnny never married and continued to live and farm in Ragwood. His jovial nature, hospitality and friendship are still talked about in the Gurteen area. Johnny died on the 29th November 2002 in Sligo General Hospital and was buried in Gurteen New Cemetery.

## The Legal Eagles of Sragh

The Heher family were recognised in the 1860's – 1900 period as the legal authority in the Sragh-Seefin area and regularly took on the job of writing to the landlord or his agent re Rental agreements of holdings for the locals in the area or letters re disputes over tenants' rights. They also assisted locals in the preparation of wills and various letters to emigrants etc. and so, it comes as no surprise that this expertise was handed down to Patrick and Annie Heher's eldest son John Heher and his descendants in the U.S.A.

John Heher was born in 1862 in the family home in Sragh. All that remains of the home is a heap of stones beside the spot where their house once stood. At the young age of 24, John emigrated to the United States in 1886 and after a short time in Boston, Providence and Philadelphia he settled down in Trenton, New Jersey. On 14th



July 1892 he joined Trenton police Department. John's dedicated work ethic eventually led him to becoming Lieutenant of Trenton Police Department's Detective Bureau. John had married prior to joining the police on 2nd April 1888. He married Anne Spellman who had also emigrated in 1883 from his native Gurteen to New Jersey. John and Anne's children were: Harry born on 20th March 1889, Anna born 1892, John L born 1894, Mary born 1898, Agnes born 1902 and Helen 1904. (from 1920 U.S Census details). Both Harry and John went on to become lawyers. Their father John died on 12th August 1937 age 74 years.

### Harry Heher (Born 1889)

As was the practice at the time Harry read law with a Trenton Lawyer instead of attending Law School. He was admitted to the New Jersey bar in 1911. Shortly after beginning to practice law in Trenton Harry became very active in democratic party politics and served on the Mercer County Executive Democratic Committee from 1915 to February 1922. On February 21st, 1922 Harry was unanimously elected as Chairman of the New Jersey State Democratic Committee. (Obituary, New York Times October 19th, 1932). He served more than ten years at the head of the New Jersey State Democratic organisation. In 1924 he was the district delegate to the Democratic National Convention in New York and was the New Jersey member of its famous resolutions committee. He was also the New Jersey delegate to the National Convention in Hueston, Texas in 1928 and in Chicago in 1932.

Harry was also a very close friend of Alfred (Al) Smith. Al's mother was Catherine Mulvihill (the daughter of Irish emigrants from Co Westmeath) Al grew up on the lower side of East Manhattan. Al Smith was a devout catholic. In later years he was appointed a "Papal Chamberlain of the Sword and Cape", one of the highest honours which the Papacy bestowed on a layman. Al Smith was appointed Governor of New York at the state election of 1918. He was re-elected in

1922, 1924 and 1926. In 1928 Al Smith got the Democratic nomination to run for President of the United States and received major support from Harry Heher at the Democratic Convention in Hueston, Texas. Chairing the New Jersey State Convention in May 1928, Harry Heher described Governor Al Smith as "The foe of corruption in high places, and low" and as "the vigorous champion of local self-government". (Buffalo evening news May 23rd, 1928) Al Smith was defeated in the 1928 presidential election by the republican candidate Herbert Hoover. In this election the protestant / Anglican voters feared that Smith would answer to the Pope and not to the US Constitution. Also, his anti-prohibition policy cost him dearly especially in the southern states. Following the election of Hoover, the USA went into the great depression in August 1929 with the stock market crash in October. By the end of the year 1300 banks had failed. On 11th December 1930 the Bank of the United States failed. This was the fourth largest bank in the nation. The problems were compounded by "The dust bowl drought" which hit 23 southern states most severely with farm production lost.

In 1928 Franklin D Roosevelt took over as governor of New York from Al Smith. At the 1932 democratic national convention in Chicago, Al Smith sought the presidential nomination again but was defeated by Roosevelt, his former ally and backer. Al Smith campaigned afterwards for Roosevelt. Harry Heher the New Jersey democratic state chairman and New Jersey Governor Harry Moore hosted Franklin D Roosevelt on his election campaign at Sea Girt. "This is Governor Moore's tribute to a great governor" Harry Heher said in introducing Franklin D Roosevelt to the podium. He added "New Jersey will be happy to support him, and New Jersey will be one of the states that will make his election sure". Roosevelt addressed the enormous crowds of people who had amassed to show their support. Roosevelt was elected President of the United States in the 1932 election and started the

Depression Recovery Programme in what was termed "The New Deal".

In the year 1932, during Roosevelt's presidential campaign, New Jersey Governor Harry Moore appointed Harry Heher as an Associate Justice of the New Jersey Court of Errors and Appeals which became known after 1947 as the New Jersey Supreme Court. Harry was reappointed to the bench in 1942, 1947 and 1954. Harry Heher retired as supreme court justice on 20th March 1959 having served twenty-seven years with distinction. (The Hackettstown Gazette 1959).

### Family life

Harry Heher married Anne Egan on 5th August 1925. Anne's Irish parents married in Co Tipperary and went to the United States shortly afterwards and settled in Trenton, New Jersey. Harry and Anne had three children, Harry Heher Jr born in 1921 (died 2002), John Robert Heher born in 1930 (Died 2011) and Garrett Martin Heher, born in 1935 (died in 2014) all three sons followed in their father's footsteps, studied Law and pursued very successful careers.

Retired Supreme Court Justice and noted Democratic leader Harry Heher died on 17th October 1972 in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. He was laid to rest in Saint Mary's Cemetery, Trenton, Mercer county, New Jersey, USA.

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# 30 Years of Ballymote Heritage Weekend 1990 – 2018

The first Heritage Weekend of the Ballymote Heritage Group took place in August 1990 (Friday 3 August to Monday 6 August). The Heritage Group had been founded on 30 May 1984 and the first Corran Herald was published on 25 October 1985.

This year we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Heritage Weekend. A series of lectures and outings has been held each August holiday weekend since 1990, attracting a wide audience and appealing to both an academic and non-academic audience. It has been highly recommended over the years for the quality of lectures and outings covering history, archaeology, culture and folklore. Many people, prominent in public and academic life, have officially opened and spoken at the Heritage weekend over the years.

In the 2018/2019 issue of the Corran Herald (Issue 51) Neal Farry traced the history of the 50 Issues of the Corran Herald and outlined the contributions made by writers over 33 years and 50 Issues. This year, in honour of 30 years of the Ballymote Heritage Weekend, we are including a listing of speakers at the Heritage Weekend each year since 1990. The listing demonstrates the exceptional calibre of speakers over the years and the wide range of topics covered.

We are indebted to all the speakers and the past volunteers who have allowed the Ballymote Heritage Group to continue an unbroken tradition over 30 years of a weekend of lectures at the August holiday weekend. We have all been enriched by the experience and hope that the tradition will continue for another thirty years under the guidance of the next generation of volunteers.

## 3rd – 6th August 1990

*Official Opening: Mr Eamon Barnes D.P.P.*

*Official Closing: Ted Nealon T.D.*

### Lectures:

The Road to Compostela – Frank Tivnan  
Burial Monuments of Sligo- 4,000yrs B.C. to present – Mary B. Timoney, Archaeologist.  
The Book of Ballymote and related manuscripts - Brid Dolan, Librarian  
Royal Irish Academy  
Religious History of the Diocese of Achonry – Bishop Flynn  
The Archaeological Heritage of Sligo and North West – An Overview - Michael Gibbons, Archaeologist with O.P.W.

## 2nd-5th August 1991

*Official Opening: The Hon. Desmond Guinness, President of the Georgian Society of Ireland*

### Lectures:

Our National Heritage? Cecil A. King  
Cistercian Abbey of Boyle – Frank Tivnan, Historian.  
“Ireland from St Patrick to the Reformation” or “Why we, the Irish are different”-  
Etienne Rynne, M.A., M.R.I.A., F.S.A., Professor of Archaeology, U.C.G.  
Emigration - Bishop Flynn  
The Battle of the Curlews – Col. C. Mattimoe.

“The Franciscans in Ireland” – Fr Pat Conlan O.F.M.

## 31st July to 3rd August 1992

*Official Opening: Dr Seamus Caulfield, Professor of Archaeology U.C.D.*

### Lectures:

Sligo at War 1689-1691 – Dr Harman Murtagh – M.A., M., Litt., Ph.D., Dip, E.I. Solicitor  
Ceide Fields: Its Ancient and Recent Development - Dr Seamus Caulfield, Professor of Archaeology U.C.D.  
Turlough O Carolan and his Sligo Patrons – John McTernan, Sligo Co. Librarian  
The Origin and History of Place Names - Tom McGettrick  
Irish Georgian Houses - Derry O Connell, M.R.I.A.I. and M.R.U.P., Architect  
Folklife: The National Collection – Dr Anne O’Dowd, Irish Folklife Division, National Museum of Ireland.

## 29th July to 2nd August 1993

*Official Opening: Dr Hubert McDermott, Professor of English, U.C.G.*

### Lectures:

Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland – Dr Pat Wallace, Director of the National Museum of Ireland  
Irish High Crosses – Frank Tivnan, M.A., H.D.E., Historian, St Mary’s College, Boyle.  
Irish Franciscan Medieval Architecture

– Fr Pat Conlan, OFM Franciscan Journalist and Historian, Cork

What is the quality of our Surface and Ground Waters in the Northwest? -

J.P. Timpson, B.A. Head of School of Science, R.T.C., Sligo

Irish Victorian Architecture – Frederick O’Dwyer, Architect, and Architectural Historian O.P.W.

Jack Yeats and Sligo – Bruce Arnold, Literary Editor Irish Independent and Author Biography of Jack Yeats

## 29th July – 1st August 1994

*Official Opening: Lord de Ayton of Corran, Ph.D., B.Sc., M.I.C.E.*

### Lectures:

Archaeological Treasures of the Past Six Thousand Years in Co Sligo – Martin Timoney, B.A., F.R.S.A.I.  
Earthwork Castles in Ireland – Dr Kieran O’Connor, Ph.D., M.A.  
The Siting of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Monuments in Southern Sligo – Charles Mount, M.A., M.I.A.P.A.  
What is Irish Traditional Music? – Nicholas Carolan, Director Irish Traditional Music Archive.  
Robert Boyle and his Air Pumps – Patrick Rolleston, B.A., M.A.  
The O’Connors of Connacht and Clonalis – Pyers O’Connor-Nash, B.A., B.L.  
Archaeology and Irish Nationalism – Etienne Rynne, M.A., M.R.I.A., F.S.A.,

Professor of Archaeology, University College, Galway.

#### 4th -7th August 1995

*Official Opening: Bruce Arnold, Literary Editor Irish Independent.*

#### Lectures:

Jack Yeats – On the Road to Fame – Bruce Arnold

Ballymote Norman Castle – Dr. John A. Claffey

The Medieval Town of Sligo – John Bradley, Department of Archaeology, University College, Dublin

Famine and Emigration – Sligo Experience – John McTernan, Former Sligo County Librarian

The Spanish Armada in Ireland – Laurence Flanagan, Author and Former Keeper of Antiquities, Ulster Museum.

The Relationship between our Heritage and the Environment – a Moulding Process – Professor Emer Colleran, Dept of Microbiology, University College Galway.

#### 2nd –5th August 1996

*Official Opening: Jack Gilligan, Dublin City Arts Officer*

#### Lectures:

Irish Art of the Early Medieval Period 7th-9th Centuries A.D – Michael Ryan, M.A., PhD FSA, MRIA, Director & Librarian, The Chester Beatty Library.

The Taaffes of Corran – Neal Farry, NT. “A Most Distressful Country” – Some Oral Traditions about the Famine in Co Sligo – Bairbre Ni Fhloinn, Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin.

How Domestic Ceramics are Made and Decorated – Patrick Rolleston, B.A., M.A.

Touring the Irish Highlands, 19th Century Tourism in the West of Ireland – Colleen Dube, The National Museum. Sources for Genealogy and Local History in The National Archives – Gregory O’ Connor, Archivist, National Archives.

#### 1st- 4th August 1997

*Official Opening: Malcolm Billings, B.BC. Broadcaster and Writer*

#### Lectures:

Farming for the Crusades: Templar & Hospitaller Estates Rediscovered – Malcolm Billings.

The Geology and Landscapes of the Ballymote Area – Conor MacDermott, Archaeological Survey of Ireland.

Early Monastic Sites of Co Sligo – Martin A. Timoney and Mary B. Timoney, Archaeologists.

The Story of the Franciscans in Ballymote - Tom McGettrick, Historian

Megaliths and Metals in Ireland and Western Europe – Lord Dayton, Baron of Corran.

Carrowmore Excavations – Professor Goran Burenhult, Stockholm University. Simony, Sacrilege and Perjury: Archbishop Marsh and his Library – Dr. Muriel McCarthy, Keeper Marsh’s Library.

#### 31st July- 3rd August 1998

*Official Opening: John Redmill Conservation Architect, Historic Buildings Consultant*

*Special Guest: Sile de Valera, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*

#### Lectures:

“Life in the Irish Country House” John Redmill Conservation Architect.

The Origin of Soils and Landscapes of Co Sligo – Michael Walsh, National Soil Survey of Ireland and Soil Research Officer, Teagasc.

The Last Invasion of Ireland- Events in Mayo and Sligo 1798 – John McTernan, Former County Librarian.

Fashions in 19th Century Ireland- Mairead Dunlevy, Acting Keeper Arts and Industrial Division, National Museum.

Swift in Love- Untangling the Dean and Hester Van Homrigh – Bruce Arnold, Literary Editor Independent.

#### 30th July – 2nd August 1999

*Official Opening: Raymond Keaveney, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland.*

#### Lectures:

Recent and Forthcoming Developments at the National Gallery of Ireland – Raymond Keaveney, Director of the National Gallery of Ireland.

“Not Just Old Bones”; Aspects of Early Medieval Burial Practice – Malcolm Conway, Consultant Archaeologist.

History of Fresco – Bernard McDonagh, A.N.C.A.

Early Christian Irish Art and Architecture – Dr. Peter Harbison, M.R.I.A., H.R.H.A., F.F.A. (London).

The Art of the Gaelic Revival – Etienne Rynne, M.A., M.R.I.A., F.S.A.

#### 4th- 7th August 2000

*Official Opening: Paul Doyle, Manager/ Keeper, Irish Folk Life Division, National Museum of Ireland.*

#### Lectures:

Turlough Park House and the National Museum of Ireland – Paul Doyle, National Museum of Ireland

“From the Purple Ox Mountains Right Down to the Sea” – Martin A. Timoney, B.A., FRSAI, MIAPA, Archaeologist and Mary B Timoney, B.A., Archaeologist.

Women in Ireland: 1500 to 1800 – Dr Mary O’Dowd, Queen’s University, Belfast.

Millennium Lecture: The Influence of Christianity on Society, Culture and Politics for the Last Two Thousand Years – Fr John Durkan, LSS, BD, BSc, HDE, Lecturer - The Western Theological Institute, Co Galway.

Ancestors, Passage Tombs and Mountains in Neolithic Sligo – Dr Stefan Bergh, Research Fellow, Swedish Foundation for International Research.

#### 3rd – 6th August 2001

*Official Opening: Liam Healy, Deputy Chairman Independent News and Media.*

#### Lectures:

John Synge and Irish Nationalism – Dr Bruce Arnold, Author and Journalist.

Dating the Past – Tree Rings, Carbon 14 and Ice Cores - John Dayton, BSc, PhD, Baron of Corran.

From Sligo to Valparaiso – John Maiben Gilmartin, MA.

Jane Austen’s Irish Friend – Jeffry Lefroy, Carrickglass Manor.

#### 2nd-5th August 2002

*Official Opening: Douglas Jordan, Registrar of Bórd Fáilte*



### Lectures:

Building to Amaze, Amuse and Appal - John Redmill, Conservation Architect, Historic Buildings Consultant.

Comhrá na dTonn – History of Irish Music 1691-1935, Illustrated with Fiddle and Flute – Máire Nic Domhnaill Gairbhí.

Later Medieval Settlement in Gaelic Ireland – Dr Kieran O'Connor, Dept. of Archaeology, NUI Galway.

The First Crusade - Malcolm Billings, Broadcaster and Author, Presenter of the BBC World Service Series, Heritage.

### 1st– 4th August 2003

*Official Opening:* Professor Barry Raftery. Department of Archaeology, UCD.

### Lectures:

“Problems of Celtic Ireland” – Professor Barry Raftery

“Out of the Ordinary – Vernacular Buildings in the North-West” – Bairbre Ni Fhloinn, M.A., Dept. of Irish Folklore, UCD.

“Lough Gara Through Time” – Dr. Christina Fredengren

“Dreams Long Hoarded” – The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland during the Celtic Revival – Dr Nicola Gordon Bowe, Faculty of History of Art and Design, NCAD.

### 30th July – 2nd August 2004

*Official Opening:* Malcolm Billings, Broadcaster and Author, Presenter of the BBC World Services Series “Heritage”.

### Lectures:

Herculaneum and Vesuvius – Malcolm Billings

Beannada, Skreen and Carrowmore, The Legacies of Irwin, Diamond and Walker – Martin & Mary Timoney, Research Archaeologists.

Imagining the Landscape: Sligo and the artist, a view real or imagined – Ciarán MacGonigal, Art Historian and Critic.

James Joyce and the Publication of Ulysses – Laura Weldon, National Co-Ordinator of Rejoice Dublin 2004.

### 29th July – 1st August 2005

*Official Opening:* Desmond Fitzgerald, Knight of the Glin, Author and Historian

### Lectures:

The Architecture of Irish Gardens from the Restoration to the Romantic Age – Desmond Fitzgerald.

An Introduction to Ireland’s Industrial Archaeology – Paul Duffy, BE, LLB, CEng, FIEI

Mullaghfarna, Ireland’s Largest Stone Village! – Dr Stefan Bergh, Lecturer, Dept. of Archaeology, NUI Galway.

From Ireland to Antarctica – 100 years of Shackletons visiting Antarctica – Jonathan Shackleton, Lecturer and Family Historian for the Irish Shackletons.

### 4th – 7th August 2006

*Official Opening:* Malcolm Billings, Broadcaster and Author.

### Lectures:

The History and Archaeology of the Hejaz Railway (that once carried pilgrims to Mecca – Malcolm Billings.

Rural Settlement in Anglo Norman Ireland – Dr Kieran O'Connor.

Art and Patronage in Later Medieval Ireland – Dr Rachel Moss, Lecturer in Irish Art Research Centre, Trinity College, Dublin.

“As your Lordship already has the Venus – the Lord Charlemont great collection of paintings, furniture, books and other objects” – John Redmill, Dip. Arch. FRIAI, Conservation Architect, Historic Buildings Consultant.

### 3rd – 6th August 2007

*Official Opening:* Rory Sherlock, MA MIAI, Doctoral Researcher NUIG.

### Lectures:

Moygara Castle and the Architecture of Medieval County Sligo – Rory Sherlock. Lamenting the Dead in the Irish and European Tradition – Brendán O Madagáin, formerly Professor of Irish at NUIG.

“Oh no! Not another Old Ruin” – Loughlin Kealy, Professor Architecture at UCD.

Later Medieval Wall Painting in Ireland – Karna Morton, Conservator of Archaeological Finds and Wall Paintings, Lecturer in Archaeology at Sligo IT.

### 1st – 4th August 2008

*Official Opening:* Malcolm Billings, BBC Broadcaster and Author

### Lectures:

The Heritage and Archaeology of American Patriotism – Malcolm Billings  
Archaeology of the Sligo Relief Road and Other Road Project Discoveries – Michael McDonagh MA, MIAI, Senior Archaeologist, National Roads Authority.  
Transport Improvement and the Changing Geography of Ireland 1650-1850 – Dr Arnold Horner, Lecturer in Geography, School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Policy UCD.

The Placenames of Corran – Dr Nollaig O Muraile, Senior Lecturer in the School of Irish, NUI Galway.

### 31st July – 3rd August 2009

*Official Opening:* Dr Kieran O'Connor, Department of Archaeology, NUI, Galway.

### Lectures:

The Rock of Lough Key – Dr Kieran O'Connor

Michael Davitt – The Man – Michael Comer.

Protestant Missions in Connemara 1848-1937 – Dr Miriam Moffitt, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at NUI Maynooth.

Books and Reading in Sligo in the Early 19th Century – Dr Charles Benson, Keeper of Early Printed Books, TCD.

### 30th July – 2nd August 2010

*Official Opening:* Dr Bruce Arnold, Writer and Journalist, Chief Critic with the Irish Independent.

### Lecture:

“Derek Hill: English Painter in Ireland”- Dr Bruce Arnold.

“Aspects of Ireland’s Cultural Heritage” – Michael Conroy, Soil Scientist and Agronomist.

“Selling Ballymote. Manuscripts and Society in Northwest Ireland 1500-1550”-

Professor Raymond Gillespie, History Department, NUI Maynooth.

“Landscapes of Western Ireland: The Large-Scale Influence of Climate” – Professor Peter Coxen, MRIA, FTCD,

Geography Department, TCD.

### 29th July – 1st August 2011

*Official Opening: Peta Taaffe*

#### Lectures:

A Family Called Taaffe – Peta Taaffe  
“When the Shopping was Good: Woolworths and the Irish Main Street” – Barbara Walsh PhD.

Eva Gore Booth, Champion of the Worker – Cllr Ruth Illingworth, MA, Historian.

Lawlessness Prevails Everywhere: South Sligo 1918-1921 – Michael Farry PhD.

### 3rd – 6th August 2012

*Official Opening: Dr Edward McParland, Architectural Historian (Lecturer Emeritus, Trinity College, Dublin).*

#### Lectures:

What is Classical Architecture? – Dr Edward McParland

Myths and Monuments from Moytura to Keshcorran, Co Sligo – Sam Moore, Archaeologist.

The Titanic – Stephen Cameron, Historian

Ballymote, Sligo & The Great War – Kevin Myers, Journalist, Writer and Historian.

### 1st– 5th August 2013

*Official Opening: Malcolm Billings, Journalist, Radio Producer and Author.*

#### Lectures:

Vartan of Nazareth: Missionary and Medical Pioneer in the Nineteenth Century Middle East – Malcolm Billings.

The Railways of County Sligo – Peter Bowen – Walsh, Railway Historian

Bram Stoker, Dracula and the Sligo Connection – Paul Murray, Retired Diplomat & Author of From the Shadow of Dracula: A Life of Bram Stoker.

The Sligo Port Strike of 1913 – Dr Pdraig Deignan, Author & Historian

### 31st July – 4th August 2014

*Official Opening: Mary Kenny, Author and Journalist.*

#### Lectures:

Poets and Priests of Ireland in World War

1 – Mary Kenny, Author and Journalist.

The Fadden More Psalter – John Gillis, Senior Book and Manuscript Conservator, Trinity College, Dublin.

Sligo's Hidden Bridges – Gary Salter, Conservation Engineer, Senior Executive Engineer, Sligo County Council.

Family Names in the Place-names of Sligo – Dr Conchubhar O Cruaioich

### 30th July – 3rd August 2015

*Official Opening: Dr Eamonn P Kelly, Former Keeper of Irish Antiquities, National Museum of Ireland.*

#### Lectures:

Secrets of the Bog Bodies – Dr Eamonn P Kelly, Former Keeper of Irish Antiquities, National Museum of Ireland.

The Art of Medieval North-West Ireland - Professor Rachel Moss. Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Trinity College, Dublin and Editor of Medieval Volume of Art and Architecture of Ireland published by the Royal Irish Academy/Yale University Press.

Buildings of South Ulster – Armagh, Cavan and Monaghan – Kevin Mulligan, Architectural Historian, author of South Ulster volume in The Buildings of Ireland Series.

Sligo and Home Rule, 1886-1912 – Dr Pdraig Deignan, author of Land and People in Nineteenth Century Sligo: from Union to Local Government.

### 28th July – 1st August 2016

*Official Opening: Anne Haverty, Novelist, Poet and Biographer.*

#### Lectures:

“Being Miss Gore-Booth”. Anne Haverty, Novelist, Poet and Biographer of Constance Markievicz.

The Knights Templar in Ireland and Temple House: from Templar Castle to New English Mansion – Dr Paul Naessens, Archaeologist.

“The History of the World in the Book of Ballymote” – Dr Elizabeth Boyle, Head of Department of Early Irish, NUI, Maynooth.

Recent Investigations of “La Juliana” a Spanish Armada ship wrecked off Streedagh in 1588 – Fionnbarr Moore, National Monuments Service.

### 4th – 7th August 2017

*Official Opening: Dr Patrick Wallace, former Director of the National Museum of Ireland.*

#### Lectures:

The Museum, Past, Present and Future – Dr Patrick Wallace, former Director of the National Museum of Ireland.

“Re-imagining the Classical House as a Gothic Castle – Francis Johnston at Markree Castle in the Early Nineteenth Century” – Dr Judith Hill, Architectural Historian.

“Monastic Ireland- A Gift of the Nile!” – Alf Monaghan, a long-term observer of Middle Eastern affairs, including the emergence of early Christianity there and the influence of the Eastern Mediterranean on Irish Christianity.

“Ancient pathways: The Bealach Buidhe, the Red Earl's Road and Bóthar an Chorrainn in Counties Sligo and Roscommon” – Sam Moore, Archaeologist, Institute of Technology, Sligo.

### 3rd – 6th August 2018

*Official Opening: Mary E. Daly, Professor Emerita UCD. President Royal Irish Academy 2014-2017.*

#### Lectures:

Female Suffrage and the Irish Revolution, 1912-22 – Professor Mary E. Daly, Professor Emerita UCD. President Royal Irish Academy 2014-2017.-

“A Sacred Island Before Christianity” – Alf Monaghan. Alf has worked on Economic Development in the Near East. His years there triggered a deep interest in the origins of religion and the influence of early Near Eastern religion in Ireland.

“The Clergy and the First Crusade” – Malcolm Billings, former Presenter of BBC Radio 4 current affairs programmes and Presenter/Producer of archaeological programmes on BBC World Service.

“The Last Lord Coloony (Collooney) aka Sir Charles Coote, Earl of Bellamont (1738-1800)” – John Coleman, M Litt, who is working on a biography of the Earl of Bellamont.

# First Communion 2019



## Knockminna N.S. First Holy Communion 2019

**Back (Left-Right):** Annette Caffrey(Sch Sec),Michelle Brennan (ClassTeacher) , Louise King (Principal) ,Fr. James McDonagh (P.P) , Rosemary Cloherty (Class Teacher) , Aoife Mc Donagh (Teacher).

**Middle Row(Left-Right):** Thomas Irwin, Amy Connaghan, Nicole Porter, Michaela Brehony, Cara Higgins.

**Front Row(Left-Right):** Annelies Rooney, Lauren Yvonne Golden-Gallagher, Eva Burdett, Esther Mullen, William Porter, Cian Drury,Michael Ryan, Sierra Kenny.

**Altar Servers:(Left-Right)** Tom Cassidy, Fiachra Duignan.



## Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Communion 2019

**Back (Left-Right):** Fr James McDonagh, Summer Sweeney, Peter Gannon Cohen, Saoirse Ivers Brehony, Leon Warren, Michael Meehan, Shane Waters, Julia Strechowska, Diarmaid Vahey, Shauna Donoghue, Khloe Barden,

**Teacher:** Ms. O'Gara

**Middle Row(Left-Right):** Aoibhinn Rigney, Julia Dudziak, Ciara Keenan, Sarra Davey, Dylan Cannon, Ryan Irwin, Lauren Hever, Laura Hegarty

**Front Row(Left-Right):** Isabel Mc Glinchey, Ellen Sweeney, Aidan Maxwell, Olivia Falinska, Lauren Oogan, Cora Flannery, Ryan Sweeney, Jessika Klamman, Aidan O'Brien, Katie Young.



# Ballymote Heritage Group

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