

# The Corran Herald

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY BALLYMOTE HERITAGE GROUP  
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS 1984 - 2024

ISSUE NO. 57

2024/2025

PRICE €12.00



# The Corran Herald

Annual Publication of Ballymote Heritage Group

Compiled and published by Ballymote Heritage Group

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Design, Typesetting and Printing: Orbicon Print, Collooney

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Issue No 57 2024/2025

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

The views and interpretations expressed in *The Corran Herald* are those of the respective authors and should not necessarily be considered to reflect those of the Editor or The Ballymote Heritage Group

# 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ballymote Heritage Weekend

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 – Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024  
and Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Lectures at the Teagasc Centre, Tubbercurry Road, Ballymote, Co Sligo. Admission fee €10  
(Immediately on the right over the railway bridge on the Tubbercurry Road) (Cash Only)

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

8 pm

### Official opening and Lecture



**"From Lines in Scully's Field to Lines in the Sand"**

**Speaker:** Lt. General James Sreenan (former Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces) will officially open the Heritage Weekend. James is a native of Ballymote and received his education in the local Ballymote schools.

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

8 pm

### "From Ballymote to Bohemia. The Taaffe family's contribution to Austrian History"

**Speaker:** Dr. Declan Downey, University College Dublin.



Professor Downey lectures in History at University College Dublin. His extensive publications focus particularly on the Irish "Wild Geese" in Austria and Spain.

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

8 pm

### "The Life of Brother Walfrid (Andrew Kerins of Cartron Phibbs, Ballymote)"

**Speaker:** Alison Healy, journalist with the Irish Times and great grandniece of Brother Walfrid.



Brother Walfrid was the founder of the Celtic Football Club, European Cup Champions in 1967 and holders of 94 Scottish titles since their foundation in Glasgow in 1887. Alison Healy, a native of Derroon, Ballymote, has written a biography of Walfrid for children namely *The Boy who Started Celtic*.

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

3 pm

### Guided Tour: Boyle Abbey

A Cistercian monastery founded in the twelfth century by monks from Mellifont Abbey under the patronage of the local ruling family, the McDermotts. Admission €4.



## Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August

### National Heritage Week Event

**Townlands Revisited: The Keash/Culfadda Townland Project**  
"Connecting people with their Ancestral Homeplace".

**Speaker:** Noel Costello

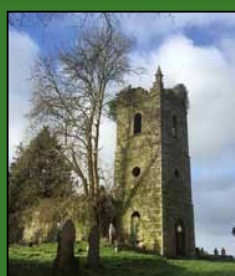
**Ballymote Library**  
11am to 12 noon

There is no admission fee for this event, which is being hosted by Ballymote Heritage Group.

Ballymote Heritage Group would like to acknowledge financial support approved by Sligo County Council under the Community and Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme 2024.



Ballymote Castle



Emlaghfad Church



The Ruined Franciscan Friary, Ballymote



Brother Walfrid Memorial

Organised by Ballymote Heritage Group, Ballymote, County Sligo.

[www.ballymoteheritage.com](http://www.ballymoteheritage.com)  
Further Information 086 3542905

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# Forty Years of the Ballymote Heritage Group

By Ursula Gilhawley

The inaugural meeting of the Ballymote Heritage Group took place on 30 May 1984, just over forty years ago in the Castle Hotel (now The Coach House Hotel), Ballymote. The first officers of the Group were:

President	Thomas Tighe
Vice President	Yvonne Perceval
Chairman	Tom McGettrick
Secretary	Eileen Tighe
Treasurer	Michael McDonnell
PRO	Una Preston

Members:

Mary O'Donnell, Gerard O'Donnell, Nuala Dockry, Betty Conlon, Gary Conlon, Nellie Tansey, Elizabeth Murray, Carmel Rogers, May Donnellan, Gladys Hannon, John Perry, Mary Rose Cryan, Anne Mulhern and Anne Henry.

It was agreed at that first meeting, that the aim of the group would be to raise awareness of and respect for all that is of historical, archaeological and

cultural interest in the area. You can read a full account of the setting up of the Ballymote Heritage Group in an article written by Eileen Tighe, President of the Group, which can be found in Corran Herald Issue 47, 2014/2015 page 4, *Ballymote Heritage Group: How it all began*.

The first edition of the Corran Herald was launched on 25 October 1985 by Ted Nealon TD, who was then Minister for Arts and Culture, and we will publish the 57<sup>th</sup> edition of the Herald this year. Neal Farry has written about the Corran Herald, *33 Years and 50 Issues of the Corran Herald* in Issue 51, 2018/2019, pages 5 to 9.

The first Heritage Weekend was held in August 1990, with the 33<sup>rd</sup> Heritage weekend of events taking place in August 2024. A series of lectures and outings have been held each August holiday weekend, attracting a wide audience and appealing to both an academic and non-academic

audiences. Unfortunately, we have had to almost cease outings due to cost considerations.

Ballymote Heritage Group now has a website ([www.ballymoteheritage.com](http://www.ballymoteheritage.com)). All past issues of the Corran Herald can be viewed online on the website which also has a search facility. This is a great addition to the Heritage Group, giving easy and quick access to all articles and associated photos.

We are indebted to all the writers, speakers, sponsors, members (past and present) and our loyal supporters who have contributed to the growth and success of the Ballymote Heritage Group over the past 40 years. We also wish to acknowledge financial support, under the Community and Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme operated by Sligo County Council, for helping to keep the Ballymote Heritage Group viable and hopefully active for another 40 years.



**Ballymote Heritage Group 2023**

L/R Neal Farry, Fiona Doherty, Annette Caffrey, Ursula Gilhawley, Marian Foley, Mary Black, Eileen Tighe, Anne Henry, Tom Lavin and Derek Davey.

# Remembering Corran Herald Writers

By Ursula Gilhawley

Ballymote Heritage Group was saddened to learn of the death of three of our writers and one speaker this year.

## John McDonagh

John McDonagh of Spurtown, Ballymote, Co Sligo died on 2 January 2024. He was a prolific writer of stories and poems. Ballymote Heritage Group was honoured to publish twelve articles and seven poems by John between 2010 and 2023. John had a great knowledge of local history and folklore, and we are grateful that he allowed us to record some of that knowledge and folklore in the Corran Herald. John's contributions to the Corran Herald will be sorely missed by the Heritage Group and all our readers.

To Colette, Anne Marie, Patricia, Thomas and extended family, we extend our deepest sympathy.

## Maureen Murphy

Maureen Murphy of Killasser, Swinford, Co Mayo, died on 28 January 2024. Maureen published two articles in the Corran Herald. In her article in 2022/2023 (Issue 55), Gaeilge í gContae Shligigh, Maureen covered the topic of *breac*

*ghaeltaichtí* in Sligo in a well-researched and very interesting article.

Maureen and her husband Micheál Murphy were regular attendees at the Ballymote Heritage Group lectures and Micheál has contributed many articles to the Corran Herald over the years.

To Micheál and the extended Murphy and McNeela families, we extend our deepest sympathy.

## Michael J Meehan

Michael J Meehan of Dromahair, Co Leitrim, generally known as Joe Meehan, died on 19 April 2024. Joe contributed eight articles to the Corran Herald between 2016/2017 and 2022/2023, two of which told of the development of the drama scene in Sligo over the years. Joe was a founder member of the Hawk's Well Theatre and a member of the first Board of Directors.

Deepest sympathy to Joe's extended family.

## Tommie Gorman

Tommie Gorman of Lisheen, Strandhill, Co Sligo, died on 25 June 2024. Tommie officially opened the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ballymote Heritage Weekend on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

He spoke on the topic of "Ireland: where are we going?".

Tommie, a well-known RTE Reporter, latterly as Europe Editor in Brussels and as Northern Editor at Stormont, published his autobiography "*Never Better: My Life in Our Times*" in 2023.

Tommie's talk at the Ballymote Heritage Weekend had a capacity audience and was very well received. After the talk, he took time to engage with many members of the audience on a personal basis. Ballymote Heritage Group is very appreciative of the fact that Tommie had gone to great trouble to honour his commitment to talk at the Heritage weekend.

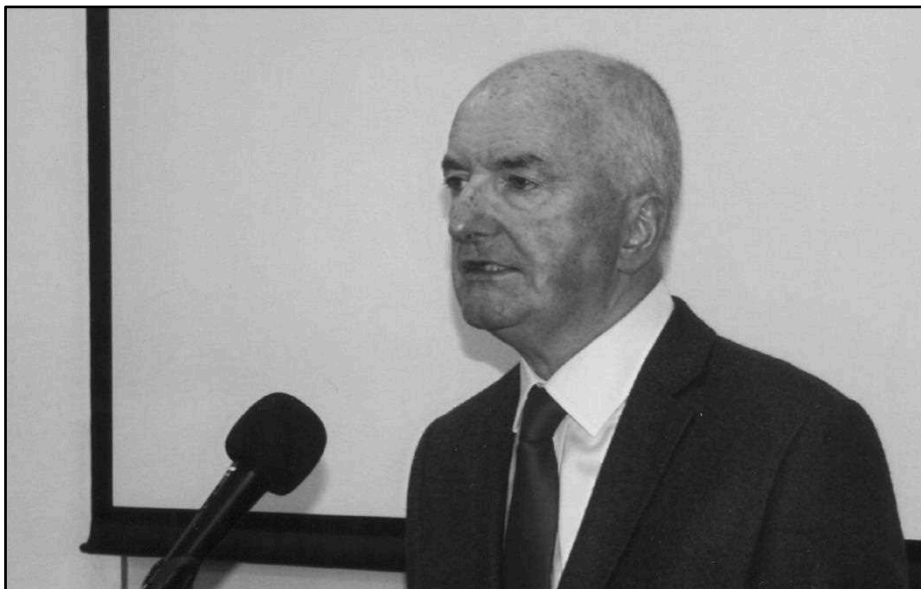
Michael Gorman, Tommie's brother, has also generously contributed poems to the Corran Herald on several occasions.

To Ceara, Moya, Joe, Mary, Michael and extended family, we extend our deepest sympathy.

## Toni McGowan

Extending sympathy to Joe McGowan and family, a longstanding contributor to the Corran Herald over many years. Joe's wife Toni died in December 2023.

*Go maire siad in ár gcuimhne go deo.*



## Tommie Gorman

The late Tommie Gorman speaking at the Ballymote Heritage Weekend on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

# The Jigs and the Reels

By Joan Gleeson

The names of traditional Irish dance tunes reflected the lifestyles of the people and the rural surroundings of the Ireland of their time.

Up with the *lark in the morning* I'm heading down *the limestone rock boreen*. *Come west along the road* with me where I might meet somebody to talk and chat about old times and get the latest news of *the Connaught man's rambles*. On my way I see *the kid on the mountain* but I'll carefully avoid *the battering ram*. There's a man rounding up *the geese in the bog* including Michael Coleman's wily *old grey goose*. Who'll join me for a *trip to the cottage* at the end of the boreen, the one with the *pigeon on the gate*? I wonder if *drowsy Maggie* is up yet, she might be trying to *trim the velvet*. What a beautiful day to see *the flax in bloom* and *the strawberry blossom* along the south facing ditch. Right now the blackbird is singing his heart out on the top of the old sycamore tree. He gave us the name of that stage-crashing heavy-shoe step dance tune, none other than *the blackbird*.

The cuckoo didn't let him get away with it, she gave her name to a favourite dance, *the cuckoo hornpipe*; there's weight in a hornpipe! Our beloved Irish saint was not forgotten in another set dance called *St. Patrick's day*. *The swallow's tail* is high in the sky frantically soaring and swooping to get his ration of flies and midges. There's a hard working neighbour heading up the road, wearing *the mason's apron* with *the high level* in his tool box. He's wondering if I've heard Fred and Peter play *the boys of the lough* or *Miss McLeod's reel* lately.

Well, I've been wandering around here all day and I never noticed the sun going down. This is the time of day for the ramblers and musicians to meet at the cottages. Get *Jenny's chickens* back to the coop away from the half door. Here they come, headed by *the Duke of Leinster* and *Lord Gordon* who are never late for a session. *The boys of Ballisodare* crammed in by the back door just to play for an hour you know. *Roarin' Mary* was wondering if Seamus Tansey is free to come. He said *tell her I am!* Can't have a good session without a bodhran, will someone call for Sonny Davey - the Killavils have just arrived!

The jigs and the reels and the hornpipes are already having every foot tapping. They're all giddy with rousing compositions by local musicians such as Dick Brennan, PJ McDermott, Michael Coleman, John Joe Gardiner, Joe O'Dowd, Willie Coleman and many, many others. It is said that Gardiner, as a young lad, took a bus from Ballymote to Enniskillen to learn a certain tune; there's dedication for ya! News from New York from a returned yank, Michael Coleman can't be here tonight as he is flat out making records and doing The Irish Hour on the radio in the Bronx New York. A flute player has taken a break to *boil the breakfast early* for a warm feed of boxty swimming in Achonry creamery butter. Slow the tempo down with *the Coulin*, *the lark in the clear air* and *Mrs. Kenny's waltz*. The session goes on through the night and into the early hours of the morning. On leaving the cottage one such morning, the sun was coming up and Peter Horan remarked, "isn't there a great stretch in the evenings". Hold on

everyone, Fr. James Eddie O'Hara has pulled up with Sonny McDonagh and Martin Wynne. He wants to meet the musicians to book a few of them for his ceili house dance. No bother, they'll all be there.

These sessions were not only confined to this cottage but entertained happy and some not-so-happy occasions in many a country kitchen. The unhappy gatherings were American wakes for someone going *off to California in the morning*. Happy occasions were weddings. After *haste to the wedding* the groom rushed off to *kiss the bride in bed*. With all this music and joviality there's not a hand's turn done on the farm. What about the *job of journey work* and who is going to bring *the harvest home* or lend a hand with *the haymaker's jig*? There's rain on the way, you know. All good things come to an end and we'll have to hit the road: some folks to put a bet on Lad O'Beirne's *King of the fairies* at *the races of Castlebar*; others to milk the few cows. Farewell to old timers whose legacy is still enriching generations to come throughout Europe, America, the Far East and at home of course. These are only a handful of the tunes of the greats of Sligo traditional musicians.

Life is not always a *harvest time jig* but as the old Bard famously said, "if music be the food of love, play on", the few jobs will still be there.

# Arms Raid at Ballyglass

By Richard Brett

In this article I want to look at some aspects of a Report of the Proceedings under a Special Commission of December 1806 (footnote 1) under which Thomas Brennan was prosecuted for an attack on the house of George Brett of Ballyglass near Tubbercurry. The raid had taken place on the 15th of November when a group of men described as Threshers assembled at the Brett homestead demanding arms and ammunition.

First, one should remember the historical context. The violence of 1798 had terminated whatever optimism had existed in the period of “Grattan’s Parliament” and ushered in the Act of Union. Union, however, was not a silver bullet to create security and many parts of the country continued to experience disturbance and lawlessness. The baronial constabulary brought into being by legislation of the Dublin Parliament in 1787 and 1792 was generally ineffective and Peel’s Peace Preservation Act would not be passed until 1814. At the time of this raid the task of maintaining public order belonged to the gentry (as in England) but increasingly to the army.

The Threshers in Connaught in 1806 were a threat to law and order but neither political nor proto-nationalist. The issues that agitated them were wages, land prices, tithes, and the fees demanded by Roman Catholic clerics. Otherwise, many of them emphasized their loyalty by ending the administration of their oaths with the cry “God save the King!” Whatever their intentions, the reports of disturbance had a disastrous impact on the Irish economy, discouraging investment at a crucial stage in the Industrial Revolution.

One interesting aspect of this case was that two of the witnesses, Martin Sweeney and Rose Brennan, gave

their evidence in Gaelic and interpreters were sworn in. All the other witnesses were more than competent in English. Everything points to a considerable degree of bilingualism in the area. The monoglot Martin Sweeney does not seem to have had any difficulty making himself understood in the Sligo markets.

George Brett (footnote 2) did not appear in Court being then old and infirm; nor can it have helped that his forehead had been grazed by a ball from one of the attackers’ guns.

His sons who were examined, George (footnote 3), William and Christopher, were described as “persons of decent and orderly character and in consequence of their distinguished loyalty upon all occasions they had been entrusted with arms for the protection of their persons and property”. When the assailants fired into the house and attempted in vain to gain entrance, they returned fire but seem not to have hit anyone. However, they surrendered when the threat of burning the house became imminent: two guns and a powder horn were handed over. A third gun was later found in the barn and a pistol belonging to Patrick Brett (a fourth brother, not then at home) was also taken (footnote 4).

It is amusing to try to envision this early 19th century farmhouse from the clues provided in the trial report: a thatched building; windows glazed but also having shutters; an adjoining barn under the one roof in which a bedroom had been created for the younger George, suggesting that the original house was not overly commodious; a kitchen separate from the other living area.

This trial report also provides insights into the local economy and living conditions. One of the witnesses, John

Hart, had been to market day in Sligo to sell a hide which he carried there on his mare. As he had to share the riding, he had walked most of the way and had to return in the same manner that same day. Questioned as to where he had dined in Sligo, he replied “At the widow Brennan’s”, but it was only alcohol he purchased: “Q. Did anyone dine with you? A. It is all the dining was a piece of bread out of my pocket, and some drink.” Martin Sweeney had also been to Sligo market: he seems to have acted on behalf of many of his neighbours in bringing necessities from the town. “Q. Did you stop anywhere until you got home? A. I stopped at my sisters to smoke a pipe and I had a great number of things for the village and some tobacco and salt for my sister.” He had made the journey on horseback and probably frequently distributed items from the Sligo shops. This enterprising individual had found his niche. (It is likely that the salt was for butter-making, a useful way to supplement a family’s income).

At eleven o’clock, the hour of the night raid, the doors were not yet locked. The young men may have been unusually industrious, but they were also perhaps foolhardy: George’s words “We were surprised, this being a second attack” suggest that experience had not taught its lesson.

Although this was an attack on a member of the Established Church, no element of sectarian intent emerges from the report of the trial proceedings. Indeed, the ire of the Threshers was in large part directed against the clergy of their own denomination. The attack being on Saturday, the witness Martin Sweeney was asked whether he had been to Mass the following day: “I was not

there: I heard the Priest would not be let in.” (footnote 5).

It was a serious matter to let arms fall into the possession of such a group. Yet it appears that the incident was not immediately reported. Not until summoned by Major Bridgham did George act the following Tuesday. This is a further example of the way policing was falling to the remit of the army: “I was afraid to go voluntarily”. While failure to report would have placed the brothers in serious trouble with the law, it is important to examine the source of their countervailing fear. Although sectarianism does not raise its head at the trial, the burning of Valentine’s church and the horror of Carrowcardin had occurred only eight years before. Fear was an ever-present element (footnote 6).

Although there were several members of the gang, only one man was charged: the others could not be identified as they wore handkerchiefs over their faces. The verdict on Thomas Brennan was “Guilty” but the sentence is not recorded. However, a similar arms raid on the house of Robert Armstrong at Oghill led to

seven years transportation (footnote 7).

Eight years later the Peace Preservation Act allowed the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim a district as being in a state of disturbance and to send in a force of special constables. This was unpopular as the cost fell on the proclaimed district or at least on its ratepayers. The creation of the Irish (later, Royal Irish) Constabulary was still a long time off.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. A Report of the Proceedings under Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery for the counties of Sligo, Mayo, Leitrim, Longford and Cavan, by author - Wm. Ridgeway, Dublin 1807.
2. George was the ancestor of a numerous Brett family in Achonry. They are a distinct family from the Bretts of Templeboy who are descendants of a different but nearly contemporary George Brett 1742-1797.
3. George (junior) who later married Jane Jackson was 21 at the time.

4. A fifth brother, Jasper is not mentioned in the report: he was 16 at the time and away from home.

5. It is unclear whether it was a matter of the Threshers not letting the Priest enter or of the Priest closing the Chapel in protest. The following exchange is certainly puzzling: “Q. was it after the Bretts’ house was attacked the chapel was shut up? A. It was. Q. Why then did you go there? A. Because I was obliged to go there as well as others. Q. What obliged you. A. We were obliged to pretend to go to Mass.”

6. At Carrowcardin, between Inishcrone and Cottlestown, the supporters of the French invasion rounded up the local Protestants to serve as a human shield against advancing Government forces, who continued undeterred. Memory of such recent events shaped the mentality of the family at Ballyglass.

7. Now that the American colonies were no longer available the destination of transported convicts had become New South Wales: the first of such arrivals sent directly from Ireland reached Australia in 1791.



## Photo of a Crannóg

*Submitted by Derek Davey*

An aerial view of a Crannóg (lake dwelling) and submerged causeway in Cloonacleigha Lake (southwest of Templehouse Lake). Access to the Crannóg was by the winding causeway from the shore, measuring over 100 m. The construction of the causeway alone, involved the deposition of hundreds of tons of stone which was readily available around the shore. The ditch of a rectilinear enclosure, possibly a moated site, can be seen top right of photo. Both sides are on the Northern shore of the lake.

# Ballymote Livestock Mart and its Beginnings

By Owen M. Duffy



**Ballymote fair day circa 1958. Typical scene along Emmet Street on the monthly fair day, with Regans Hardware and the Methodist Church in the background. (Photo courtesy Doreen Lavin)**

Ballymote Livestock Mart, now owned by Aurivo Cooperative, can boast of a yearly throughput of 15,835 cattle and 20,433 sheep (2023 figures) with a gross turnover of more than 23 million euro and making it one of the most successful Marts in the west of Ireland. However, it suffered several hiccups and setbacks in its formative years.

The cattle mart was built on the site of the Town Fair Green back in 1959. Prior to its development an active committee of farmers and business people formed and a shareholder drive was carried out with the aim of establishing a shareholder compliment of 1,000 farmers. Shares were collected from farmers whose holdings ranged from £10 to £100 valuation and with a minimum



**Attending the first sale at Ballymote Livestock Mart in 1959**

share value of £5. By early 1958, the proposed mart development which was sponsored by Northwest Regional Co-operative, reached its shareholder compliment of approximately 1,000 farmers and development got under way.

The newly developed cattle mart held its first sale on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 1959. The first manager appointed to oversee the running of the mart was Mr P.J Aherne from Middleton and a few permanent staff were appointed. An interesting feature of this new mart was that farmers would be paid for the cattle sold on the day of the sale, thus having the distinction of being the second mart in Ireland to adopt this procedure. The mart days were initially planned fortnightly and accommodation land was also provided adjoining the fair green and mart for long distance purchasers.



**A section of farmers attending the first sale at Ballymote Mart in 1959**

Prior to 1959 cattle fairs on the streets of Ballymote town had been held on the first Wednesday of each month. Opposition to the removal of fairs from the streets of the town was instigated in several quarters. Several cattle dealers refused to trade with the mart. Also, resistance grew to the prospect of paying auctioneers fees in the newly developed mart. Various poems were also composed in opposition to the mart and the payment of an auctioneer's fees. The following is an extract from one such poem.

*The doctor and the dentist and  
the boy from Skibbereen,*

*Are going to build a cattle mart  
up in the Old Fair Green.*

*They are out to cod the farmers  
by making them pay more,*

*Just to keep the bullocks away  
from their hall door.*

The initial mart was very well attended but as opposition to the mart developed, attendances fell off with some cattle dealers refusing to support the new venture.

The mart was effectively boycotted resulting in its closure in 1962. Despite the proactive involvement of the National Farmers' Association (N.F.A), the wider body of farmers and cattle buyers never warmed to the new modernised facility. Ballymote returned to the monthly fairs on the streets of the town with the haggling between vendors and buyers, with the habitual "go-between" homing in to clinch the deal and the passing of a "sweetener" followed by the final spit on the palm and the 'handclasp' to close the deal.

The Cattle Mart remained closed until 1967 when Tim O Mahony decided to acquire it on the basis that it made no sense to leave such a fine facility idle and closed. Tim, who had caused significant development at Achonry co-operative, took on the task of

getting Ballymote livestock mart up and running and success ensued. However, the mart system in the west of Ireland was very disorganised in the 1980s with some NCF (North Connacht Farmers Co-operative Society) marts going on until the early hours of the morning. On one occasion a cattle sale in Ballymote continued until 3.00 am. However, a gradual streamlining of operations over the past 50 years by management and staff, under the NCF/Aurivo umbrella has ensured a first-class facility of which Ballymote and its catchment area can be justly proud.

References consulted:  
Fields of Gold. A history of Aurivo Co-operative and farming in the west of Ireland. Mr James Laffey.  
Sales and returns for 2023. Mr David Faughnan, Manager, Ballymote Livestock Mart.



The contents are listed in alphabetical order of the name of the ‘denomination of lands’ which is generally a townland name. Note that the townland name may not be spelled in the currently accepted form. There is also a column for ‘observations’ but these purely relate to comments on changes in rent amounts. In other rentals this column can contain useful comments on the tenant’s circumstances or capacity to pay, but these are rare in this document.

An extract from one page of the ledger, showing all of the columns of information, is shown in Fig 1. The acreage of each holding is not given, but the extent of the holding can be generally indicated by the rent charged. The rents due suggest a wide range of holding size. The highest rent is £43. 12s. 6d while the lowest is 3s 3d. Note that several of the tenants’ names are followed by ‘& partners’. This indicates that this tenant is a nominee for a consortium of other tenants, all of whom are occupants of

the land. This was a common practice in tenancy arrangements. Dealing with one person rather than a group of small tenants was convenient for the landlord; while it also suited groups of tenants (e.g. families) to have some flexibility in internal distribution of the land-holding. There are also partnerships between two tenants in the list.

Note also that several tenants are listed as ‘Esq.’ meaning Esquire. This was historically used as a title of respect to men of higher social rank, e.g. the landed gentry above the rank of gentleman. These would generally be associated with higher rent values. The most numerous family names among the tenants are Armstrong, Anderson, Black, Davis, Ferguson, Irwin, Ormsby, Simpson and Tyler. These are names common among the Scottish and English settlers brought to Ireland as part of the Ulster Plantation. Of the top twenty family names in the county in Griffith Valuation<sup>(v)</sup> only six (in 15 holdings)

occur among the 216 tenants. However, there are approximately 56 other tenants whose names are Gaelic or Norman in origin. In so far as it is possible to assess by name analysis, under half of the tenants appear to have names of Gaelic or Norman origin.

The tenants and their holdings are listed below in alphabetical order. It is a potentially useful list of the residents of the Baronies of Leyny and Corran at a period when there are few other records available.<sup>(vi)</sup> Note that the townland name shown may not be spelled in the currently accepted way. Most tenants had ‘part of’ a townland as most of these townlands are large. For example, Rathbarran (spelled Rathbarren) contains over 400 acres, while Rathosey (Rathosy) contains over 1,000 acres.

Tenant Name	Holding (Townland)
Allen, James	Rathbarren, part of
Allen, Thomas	Rathnarrow, part of
Anderson, John	Carrowmacarrick, part of
Anderson, Reps. of John	Cloonacurrow, part of
Armstrong, David and John	Coolany, part of two plots
Armstrong, Henry	Rathosy, part of
Armstrong, James	Rathosy, part of
Armstrong, John	Rathosy, part of
Armstrong, Reps. of Thomas	Coolany, part of (Greenville)
Barber, James	Rathosy, part of
Barber, Robert	Rathosy, part of
Barke, Charles	Carrownaleck (Chief Rent) <sup>vii</sup>
Black, Charles	Lugavarry, part of
Black, Edward	Coolany, part of,
Black, James	Cultyliney, part of
Black, Reps. of Charles	Cloonacurrow, part of
Blakely, James	Rathosy, part of
Boey, Hugh	Carrowgaunine, part of
Boey, Michael	Carrowgaunine, part of
Brennan, William	Cloondilarow, part of
Brett, Michael	Killoran, part of
Brett, Pat	Ardcree Mill, part of Cloonacurra
Brie, James	Carrownacligh, part of
Brie, Samuel	Rathbarren, part of
Brinkman, Peter	Carrowanleam, part of
Burk, Stephen	Carrowanleam, part of
Burke, Charles	Lugavarry, part of
Burrows, John	Lisduff, part of

Tenant Name	Holding (Townland)
Chambers, Moses	Rathgran, part of
Church, John	Rathosy, part of & plot in Coolany
Church, Thomas	Carrownacligh, part of
Church, Thomas	Coolany part of two plots
Church, Thomas	Sevenis, part of (Seevness)
Clifford, Thomas	Sevenis, part of
Clovane, Patrick & partners	Cloondilarow, part of
Colovan? Darby & partners	Anaghbeg
Connell, Michael	Ranaghanmore, part of
Correstine, Bryan	Rathnarrow, part of (two divisions)
Cregg, Moses	Cultyliney, part of
Culkeen, Con	Shanquogh, part of (Shancough)
Cunningham, William	Carrownacligh, part of
Darran, William & John	Claragh, part of
Davey, Patrick	Carrowmacarrick, part of
Davis, Reps. Joe	Rathbarren, part of
Davis, Thomas	Rathosy, part of & plot in Coolany
Davis, Widow of John	Rathbarren, part of
Davis, William	Carrownacligh, part of
Davis, William	Rathbarren, part of
Derrig (& Michael O’Donnell)	Rathnarrow, part of
Dogherty, Widow	Coolany part of one plot
Dowd, James & Gibbons	Shanquogh, part of (Shancough)
Duke, Rood? Alexander	Cultyliney, part of
Durkan, Michael	Gortakiron, part of
Dyra, Richd. & James O’Connor	Cultyliney, part of
Early, Terence & partners	Rathosy, part of

Tenant Name	Holding (Townland)
Ferguson, Mathias	Cloonacurrow, part of
Ferguson, Messrs.	Cultyliney, part of
Ferrall, William Esq	Carrownagaragh, part of
Finley, James	Sevenis, part of
Flanagan, McGowan etc.	Carrownacligh, part of
Forbus, James	Rathnarrow, part of
Forbus, Luke & Partners	Rathnarrow, part of
Francis, Geo. & John Lewis	Carrownagaragh, part of
Gallagher, Hugh	Carrowanleam, part of
Gibson, Daniel	Carrownacligh, part of
Gilgan, Mathew	Rathosy, part of
Gilmor, James & Saml. Lockhart	Carrownagaragh, part of
Glinny?, James	Rathosy, part of & plot in Coolany
Golden, Peter	Gortadrasa, part of
Graham, Patrick	Rathgran, part of
Gray, Mrs.	Half quarter of Doomore (Chief Rent) <sup>(vii)</sup>
Grier, Robert	Killoran, part of
Grimes, James & Matw. Taylor	Carrownagaragh, part of
Haran, James & Son	Glan, part of
Haran, Terence	Carrownacligh, part of
Haran, Terence	Carrowgaunine, part of
Harloe Phibbs, Wm. Esq.	Mullane (Chief Rent) <sup>viii</sup>
Henderson, Robert	Rathgran, part of
Henderson, William	Rathgran, part of
Henry ?, James	Coolany part of one plot
Henry, Reprs. John	Shanquogh, part of (Shancough)
Henry, Edward & partners	Cloondilarow, part of
Henry, Michael & partners	Cloondilarow, part of
Henry, Patrick	Carrowmacarrick, part of
Henry, Reprs. of Tom	Cloondilarow, part of
Henry, Walter & partners	Laughil, West
Hern, Revd. W.	Rathgran, part of
Hernan, James	Shanquogh, part of (Shancough)
Higgins, W. Andrew	Larga?
Hillas, George	Cloonbaniff
Hyland, Michael	Cloonacurrow, part of
Irwin, John Esq.	Cultyliney, part of
Irwin, Henry Esq.	Carrowmares
Irwin, John Esq.	Carrowanloghane (Chief Rent)
Jackson, James	Claragh, part of
Jackson, John	Rathnarrow, part of
Jennings, Thomas & partner	Rathnarrow, part of
Johnston, James	Rathgran, part of
Kelly, Francis	Carrownacligh, part of
Keogh, Reprs. John	Kinlough, part of
Kerrigan, Hugh	Carrownacligh, part of
Kerrigan, John	Carrownacligh, part of
Kilbride, James & partners	Killoran, part of
Kilduff, James & partners	Sevenis, part of
Kilmartin, Chas & Domk. Looby	Rathnarrow, part of
Knox, Francis Esq.	Bullagh & Cloonarara (Chief Rent) <sup>vii</sup>

Tenant Name	Holding (Townland)
Lahey, Thomas	Carrownacligh, part of
Lally, Edward	Cultyliney, part of
Lewis, John & Geo. Francis	Carrownagaragh, part of
Lindsay, John	Cultyliney, part of
Lloyd, John	Lugnaduffy
Lockhart, Saml. & Gilmor, James	Carrownagaragh, part of
Looby, Domk. & Chas. Kilmartin	Rathnarrow, part of
Lowry & Jackson	Rathbarren, part of
Lynshegan, Patrick & partners	Shanquogh, part of (Shancough)
Mackey, Thomas	Rathnarrow, part of
Mansfield, Robt. Esq.	Claragh, part of
Marques, Hugh	Carrowanleam, part of
Martin, Edward	Gortadrasa, part of
Martin, William	Rathgran, part of
Martin, William	Rathgran, part of
Masterson, Thomas	Coolany part of, one plot
Masterson, Thomas	Rathnarrow, part of
Masterson, Thomas	Rathosy, part of
Masterson, William	Rathgran, part of
McBryan, Farrell & partners	Killoran, part of
McCarrick, Bryan	Rathbarren, part of
McCarrick, Reprs. Bryan	Rathbarren, part of
McCawly, John	Coolany part of one plot
McCormick, Michael	Rathnarrow, part of
McCormick, Peter	Rathosy, part of
McCormick, Peter	Carrowanleam, part of
McCormick, Widow & son	Coolany part of & acres in Carrow...
McFaden, Richard & partners	Sevenis, part of
McGettrick, Manis	Cloonacurrow, part of
McGloughlin, John	Anaghbeg, part of
McHugh, Laughlin	Gortakiron, part of
McKim?, Philip & Robert	Killoran, part of
McKim, Mr. Joe	Carrowmacarrick, part of
McKone, Darby	Rathnarrow, part of
McManus, John	Gortakiron, part of
McNeese, Anthony	Lisduff, part of
McNeese, Anthony	Lugavarry, part of
McNolty, John	Carrownacligh, part of
Meredith, Jos. Esq.	Ardcree, part of Killascer
Meredith, Joseph Esq.	Sessucommon etc. (Chief Rent) <sup>viii</sup>
Meredith, Thomas	Claragh, part of
Meredith, Thomas	Gortadrasa, part of
Mitchell, Messrs.	Cultyliney, part of
Morrison, John	Lugavarry, part of
Morrison, Mathew	Lugavarry, part of
Mulhern, John	Glan, part of
Mulligan, Thomas	Sevenis, part of
Murdagh, Joseph	Coolany part of, one plot
Muredagh?, John	Coolany, part of Fair park customs
Murren, Connell	Carrowgaunine, part of
Murren, James	Carrownacligh, part of
Murren, John	Carrowgaunine, part of
Murrin, Phelim	Coolany part of, two plots
Nangle, Patrick	Rathnarrow, part of

Tenant Name	Holding (Townland)
Nealon, James & partners	Laughil East
Nicholson, Arthur	Glan, part of
James O'Connor (& Dyra, Richd)	Cultyliney, part of
O'Connor, John	Warren, part of
O'Connor, Patrick	Warren, part of
O'Donnell, Michael & Derrig	Rathnarrow, part of
O'Hara, Reprs. Cormick	Shanquogh, part of (Shancough)
O'Hara, Reprs. of Cormick	Carrownacligh, part of
O'Hara, Oliver	Cultyliney, part of
O'Hara, W. Dan	Carrowanleam, part of
Ormsby, Owen Esq.	Carrownavorane (Chief Rent) <sup>vii</sup>
Ormsby, William Esq.	Carrownacligh, part of
Ormsby, William Esq.	Mullaghanarry (Chief Rent) <sup>vii</sup>
Pettypiece, Thomas	Cloonacurrow, part of
Pettypiece, Anthony	Cloonacurrow, part of
Pettypiece, Reprs. of John	Cloonacurrow, part of
Pettypiece, William	Cloonacurrow, part of
Powell, Isaac	Gortadrasa, part of
Powell, James	Claragh, part of
Powell, John & James	Gortadrasa, part of
Powell, Reprs. John	Glan, part of
Quigly, Owen	Killoran, part of
Quigly, Patrick & Charles	Rathnarrow, part of
Quin, Maurice and partners	Cloonacurrow, part of
Ruttledge, Reprs. Thomas Esq.	Kinlough, part of
Savage, Robert Esq.	Knockadoes (Chief Rent) <sup>vii</sup>

Tenant Name	Holding (Townland)
Simpson, James	Rathosy, part of
Simpson, James	Carrowmacarrick, part of
Simpson, James	Rathosy, part of, Tullaghan, Plots etc
Simpson, John	Lugavarry, part of
Starling, Terence	Carrownacligh, part of
Stokes, Geo.	Cloonacurrow, part of
Stokes, Joseph	Curraghaniron
Stokes, Joseph	Ardcree, part of Cloonacurra
Tahany, Peter	Rathnarrow, part of
Taylor, Matw. & James Grimes	Carrownagaragh, part of
Taylor, Thos. & David Lockhart	Carrownagaragh, part of
Thompson, David	Killoran, part of
Thompson, James	Carrowanleam, part of
Thompson, Thomas	Claragh, part of
Tighe, Thomas	Rathgran, part of
Tonyclift, Daniel	Cultyliney, part of
Trumble, Roger Esq.	Creevane
Tyler, James Junr.	Claragh, part of
Tyler, James Senr.	Claragh, part of
Tyler, James	Belnagh ?
Tymon, Andrew	Ranaghanmore, part of
Walker, James	Carane & Carthron (Chief Rent) <sup>vii</sup>
Wallis, Mr. Bartly	Carrowmacarrick, part of
Williams, Essey?	Lisduff, part of
Wotheraile, Mrs. Anne	Coolany part of,
Young, John Esq.	Cloonmacool

REFERENCES:

- <sup>(i)</sup>Bartlett, Thomas. “The O’Haras of Annaghmore c. 1600—c. 1800: Survival and Revival.” *Irish Economic and Social History*, vol. 9, 1982, pp. 34–52. It is available on *JSTOR*.
- <sup>(ii)</sup>National Library of Ireland Collection List 66. O’Hara Papers. [www.nli.ie/sites/default/files/2022-12/066\\_ohara.pdf](http://www.nli.ie/sites/default/files/2022-12/066_ohara.pdf)
- <sup>(iii)</sup>A rental of Chas. O’Hara Esq’s Estate in

the county of Sligo for the half-year ended 1st November 1796’. NLI Ms. 36,318

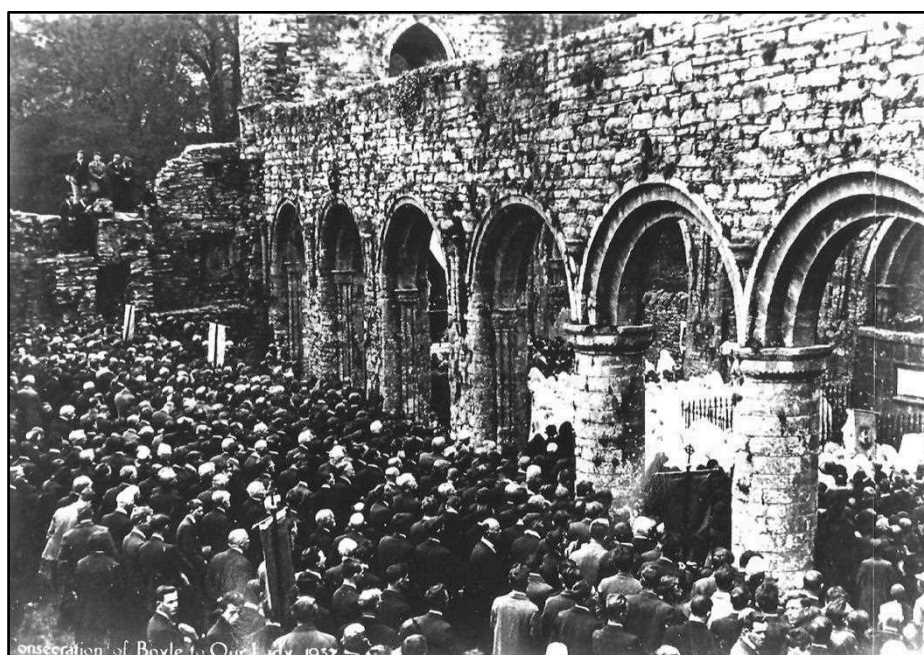
<sup>(iv)</sup>Quit rent is more akin to a tax than a rent. Historically it was payment made by landholders to ensure that feudal landlords did not impose some of their rights to demand services of the landholder, or to hunt over the land.

<sup>(v)</sup>A valuation conducted in 1858 (in Sligo) to establish a basis for a land tax. It lists all

occupiers of land.

<sup>(vi)</sup>Tracing your Sligo Ancestors. James G Ryan. Flyleaf Press (2019) ISBN 9781907990359

<sup>(vii)</sup>A Chief Rent is identical to a Ground Rent or Rent charge. It is a small fee payable by the leaseholder to the original freeholder. See: [www.landregistryservices.com/online/rent-charges-and-ground-rent-ownership.asp](http://www.landregistryservices.com/online/rent-charges-and-ground-rent-ownership.asp)



## Boyle Abbey

A crowd in Boyle Abbey (founded 1161) to mark the consecration of the town of Boyle to Our Lady in 1932, part of celebrations commemorating St Patrick's arrival in Ireland in 432 and the centenary of Catholic emancipation in 1829. To avoid any unseemly crush, the men assembled in the cloister garth while the women and first communicants took pride of place near the altar in the abbey church. The setting was particularly appropriate as all Cistercian Abbeys were dedicated to the Virgin Mary who was a particular subject of devotion by the so-called 'second founder' of the Cistercian order, St. Bernard of Clairveaux (1090-1153). **Contributed by John Coleman, courtesy of Taylors (Richard McGee), The Jewellers, Boyle**

# Irish Potato Varieties and the Food Security in Africa

By Garreth Byrne

In Africa farmers cultivate yellow coloured sweet potatoes in suitable soils. When baked they have a sweet appealing taste. Round-shaped tubers, pale in colour, imported from Europe from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards are called Irish Potatoes to distinguish them from the red-skinned oval-shaped sweet potatoes. Many people around Africa think that round tubers come originally from Ireland. They are mistaken, although not entirely so. Seed potatoes from Donegal and Carlow have been exported by aid agencies to hilly areas of Africa; and quantities of the harvested crops have been set aside for sprouting as new seed potatoes for the next growing season.

But let me remind readers of what imaginative and practical initiatives were taken in Ireland in response to the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1984-85.

In 1984 a great famine hit Ethiopia. An amateur 16mm film made by a director of Concern – I think it was Fr. Jack Finucane C.S.Sp - was shown on the Late Late Show and clips of it featured on television news reports worldwide. Fundraising swept across Ireland. In England, rock star Bob Geldof and fellow stars cut a disc **Do they know it's Christmas?** and followed it up in 1985 with the amazing Live Aid concert held in England and the USA that raised millions of dollars and prompted governments to boost it with official funding.

Concern, now known as Concern Worldwide, bought seed potatoes from a reputable company in Donegal and shipped them in refrigerated containers via the Suez Canal and Red Sea to the Ethiopian highlands.

Months later another aid agency Self Help Africa, based in Carlow, secured 2,000 tons of potato seed in County Donegal and these were distributed among Ethiopian farmers.

In a factory in Tallaght workers and managers freely spent over half a day one Saturday baking special biscuit cakes with added vitamins for Concern's medical volunteers in Ethiopian refugee camps. These biscuits supplemented other food for thousands of desperate people who had fled from famine and secessionist war in Tigray Province.

## First Potato Seeds in Africa

Irish Potato seeds arrived late in Africa, around the turn of the 20th century. They were introduced sporadically by colonial settlers, departments of agriculture and missionaries. It depended on the terrain, the soil types and the rainfall patterns. In recent decades, production has continually expanded, rising from 2 million tonnes in 1960 to over 30 million tonnes in 2013.

Potato growth is better in hilly, cool terrain. Alternating rainfall and sunshine benefit development.

Production of Irish potatoes is growing rapidly in some regions of Africa.

Algeria has increased potato production remarkably and seems to have overtaken Egypt, which was formerly the top producer in Africa, according to FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN) statistics.

Tiny tea-producing Rwanda has dramatically increased its potato production too.

These are Africa's Top Potato Producing Countries by Share per tonnes according to FAOSTAT: FAO is the Food & Agricultural Organisation of the UN.

Algeria:	4,928,028
Egypt:	4,800,000
Malawi:	4,535,955
South Africa:	2,252,000
Rwanda:	2,240,715
Kenya:	2,192,885

In Ireland itself the Irish Potato Federation has published statistics on the main potato varieties cultivated, namely: 60% Rooster, 5% Kerr's Pink, 5% Golden Wonder, 5% Salad & Baby Potatoes, 10% Maris Piper, and 10% other varieties. In appropriate locations some of these varieties can be cultivated by African farmers.

Potatoes, like other vegetables and cereal crops, are badly affected by pests and diseases. Agricultural scientists monitor and seek technical solutions for problems. Scientific research in Europe and America is copious and powerfully financed by corporations and foundations. Africa-centered research and field experimentation has been increasing and deserves much more support.

An interesting example from Uganda will illuminate. In December 2021 researchers from the National Agricultural Research Organisation in Uganda and the International Potato Center developed a new variety of potato which is resistant to late blight.

Using new molecular techniques, they transferred late-blight resistance genes into the popular East African potato variety Victoria. The new variety, known as 3R Victoria, is almost identical to the variety farmers

now plant in Uganda, with one crucial difference. It contains three genes from a potato relative that provide it with complete resistance to the late blight pathogen.

Irish Potatoes are an important staple crop in the region and this new variety is intended to multiply yields while reducing fungicide use.

In Uganda, where about 300,000 smallholder households grow potatoes for subsistence and income, the disease can destroy as much as 60 percent of a farmer's potato crop, which amounts to annual losses of approximately \$129 million.

Kenya and the D.R. Congo, both countries beset by climatic and ethnic disturbances, are trying to increase cultivation of Irish Potatoes. An example of agricultural research by institutes in both countries is summarized in a scientific article that appeared in Africa Journal of Food Science, 10-19 January 2021. Entitled "Physico-chemical properties of selected Irish potato varieties grown in Kenya", it was authored by academics from: 1. Department of Food Science and Technology, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, P.O. Box 62000-00200, Nairobi, Kenya. And: 2

Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Science, Université Évangélique en Afrique, P.O. Box 3323 Bukavu, Sud-Kivu, RD Congo.

### Irish Government Support for Potato Production

The Irish Government through its development co-operation programme called **Irish Aid** in 2013 embarked on supporting **Vita**, a non-government organization (NGO) in its efforts to enhance Irish potato production, including the generation of suitable seed potatoes. A conference discussed a co-operative project to turn Irish potatoes into a key crop in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique.

Irish newspapers reported:

*"Thomas Caffrey Osvold of Vita says that farmers in some of the poorest regions in the world can benefit from the crops. The goal is to provide a nutritious crop that can be used across Africa.*

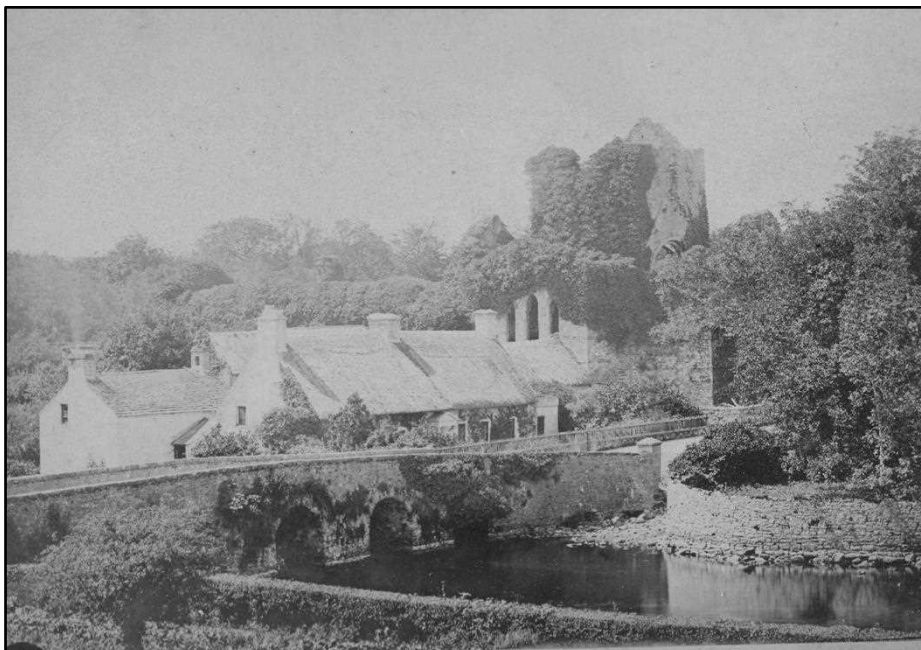
*In Ethiopia, they use the same seed over and over again. There is a possibility of genetic depletion and liability to disease."*

Genetic depletion and liability to disease require science intervention. It is interesting to know that in 2017

Irish Aid funded the visit by an Ethiopian agriculturalist to a Donegal seed potato company to gain first-hand knowledge about the technology involved in seed potato production and preservation. Aid agencies and agricultural Ministries in Africa are being provided with scientific research data that will help to treat or eliminate tuber diseases. The imaginative application of agricultural science is vital for food security.

Africa has many problems, some caused by external factors and many others by internal conflicts. Corporate and geo-political cynicism thwarts rational development. Bad news is being reported about the continent. At times it seems that international media are not interested in reporting hopeful things. The Irish Potato production story is one ray of optimism. Globally Irish Potatoes are now the fourth largest food crop after rice, wheat and maize. In Africa the labourers are many and the potential harvest is great.

*Garreth Byrne spent more than twelve years in Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi. In Zambia and Tanzania he promoted school agriculture and rural development.*



## Boyle Abbey

*Submitted by John Coleman*

A picturesque cottage beside the medieval bridge at Boyle Abbey (Dean Burke Collection/ OPW). The cottage also features in an engraving in the National Library of 1791 and was demolished in the 19th century to make way for the present house with Tudor Style features.

# The Beating Heart of a 1950s GAA Club or “much ado about nothing in Ballymagash”

By Neal Farry

A report of an Extraordinary General Meeting of Ballymote GAA Club that was held on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1950 makes interesting reading. It seems likely that the club members were notified of the Club Convention of January 3<sup>rd</sup> by the Acting Secretary using written notes or by word of mouth. Telephones were a rarity in Ballymote in 1950 and the practice of using the Sligo Champion to announce meetings had not yet been established by the club. This gave rise to a problem which was discussed at a subsequent meeting later in the month. The club correspondent made meticulous notes of the debate at the meeting of January 17<sup>th</sup> where the exchanges were direct, robust and uninhibited. The remarks were occasionally written in reported speech and on other occasions were drafted in direct verbatim dialogue. It appears that the club correspondent was adept at shorthand, a skill that was readily available at the evening commercial courses for adults in Ballymote Vocational School. The proceedings were published in the Sligo Champion on January 27<sup>th</sup> and the public airing of the heated discourse appears to have been accepted as natural and normal at that time.

In 1950 the profile of Ballymote GAA Club was highly esteemed in the community. The newly developed Corran Park was the club's home ground since 1949. Ballymote had been County Senior Champions in 1948 and County Minor Champions in 1949. Three members of the local minor team, Gerry Hannan, Fonso Farry and Paddy Mullen had helped Sligo Minors annex the Connacht Minor Trophy for the first time in 1949. An impressive cohort of young

men from Ballymote were preparing diligently to represent Sligo at Senior level in the early fifties. These were Pdraig Dockry, Paddy Mullen, Seamus Keevans, Gerry Hannan, Joe Flannery and Paddy McGuinness. Teddy Cassidy, Pdraig Barnes, Vincent Begley, John Hogge and Tom Hannan also represented Sligo at Minor level. During the previous decade John Kivlehan, Thomas Morrison, John Joe Lavin, Andy Rogers and Aidan Tighe distinguished themselves as Sligo Senior players. Tim Daly, John McMyler, Paddy Mullen and Joe Flannery helped Sligo win the 1954 Connacht Four-County Hurling Championship. Playing Gaelic games for Ballymote, Derroon, Emlaghfad or Sligo at all levels were deeply ingrained ambitions firmly espoused by many young Ballymote men at that time.

The calm and composed Chairman of the meeting was none other than Michael Hannon, the handball supremo who subsequently led the development of Ballymote Handball Club and inspired the reconstruction of the Ballymote handball alley a decade later. The business of the Ballymote GAA Club was undoubtedly of profound local interest.

The identities of the committee members in the following contentious debate are here denoted by fictitious names. The identities of the officers have not been revealed, with the exception of the Chairman, Michael Hannon, who controlled the meeting and did not participate in the discussions. Mr. John A. Barnes N.T. was Vice-Chairman and was also not involved in the discussions and his identity is not being concealed. The newspaper report was communicated

in the following fashion:

At the outset, **Mr. Ahern** (Secretary) said he wished to apologise to certain Ballymote Gaels whom he had not notified of the holding of the Club Convention on January 3<sup>rd</sup> last. This omission, he explained, was due to an oversight on his part. He contended, however, that the Convention was constitutional and in order since he himself had been acting as club Secretary during the latter part of last year (1949).

**Mr. Beirne** submitted that the Annual Meeting held on January 3<sup>rd</sup> was not in order as sufficient or timely notice was not accorded to the general public. As he (the speaker) had no axe to grind with anybody present, he was, nevertheless, of the opinion that the newly elected officers were illegally constituted. And he suggested that the only course open to the new committee was to resign and then the meeting could proceed with a new election. **Mr. Ahern** (Secretary) said that the club was started only three years ago. “At the end of the first twelve months we held our Annual General Meeting, and was there any insertion in the local papers that it was being held? There was not. Were the minutes of the first meeting read at the second meeting? They were not”. He held, therefore that the meeting of January 3<sup>rd</sup> was properly convened and that nothing irregular had been done.

**Mr. Callaghan** (The Secretary in 1949) said that he got a great shock when he read in the Sligo Champion that the officers for the present year i.e., 1950, had been elected at a meeting about which he, as the 1949 Secretary of the club, knew nothing. Continuing, he said he had done his part for the G.A.A. and he thought it

strange that he had not been notified about the previous meeting. **Mr. Beirne:** “Had you resigned as Secretary?” **Mr. Callaghan:** “No! During my absence for a fortnight in Dublin last September **Mr. Ahern** acted as Secretary”. Continuing, **Mr. Callaghan** said that he had intended to resign at this year’s Annual General Meeting (1950) because he felt that the Secretary of any G.A.A. club should be able to read and write Irish. He regretted that he himself did not know a great deal of Irish, and expressed the hope that only a person who had a thorough knowledge of the language would be appointed Secretary in future.

Having stated that the election of officers for the present year was illegal, **Mr. Callaghan** went on to say “I hope that when the 1951 meeting is held we will all be united and better friends”.

**Mr. Ahern** said that **Mr. Callaghan** went to Dublin at a very vital time in the history of the club. During **Mr. Callaghan’s** absence he (**Mr. Ahern**) had, at a meeting of the club, been appointed to deal with all correspondence, and **Mr. Dunne**, another member of the club, had notified the County Secretary, Mr. Tom Kilcoyne, to that effect. That notification, he said had been acknowledged by Mr. Kilcoyne.

**Mr. Ahern** continuing, held that they had a more representative gathering at the meeting on January 3rd than they had at any previous meeting of the club, and he asked the members present for a vote of confidence in the officers already elected.

**Mr. Evans:** “What is the idea of this meeting tonight?” **Mr. Ahern:** “It has been called to create unity”. **Mr. Evans:** “There was a meeting on Sunday last and none of you came to it”. **Mr. Ahern:** “That meeting was not in order”. **Mr. Callaghan:** “Excuse me. It was”. **Mr. Ahern:** “If you want unity this is not the way to go about it”. **Mr. Fallon:** “Mr. Secretary, you have asked for a vote of confidence”. **Mr. Ahern:** “Yes, and if we don’t get that I will ask every officer to resign”. **Mr. Fallon:**

“Asking for a vote of confidence may not be a wise procedure. Give the meeting an opportunity of expressing whether or not the last meeting was in order. If then, the members feel that the procedure adopted was not in order let there be a new election and the same officers appointed if the members present so wish”. Replying to **Mr. Gallen**, **Mr. Ahern** said it was not necessary for **Mr. Callaghan** to hand in his resignation. **Mr. Callaghan:** “I think it was very necessary”. Following heated exchanges between **Messrs. Callaghan, Ahern** and **Harte** **Mr. Beirne** asked if there was any objection to **Mr. Fallon’s** proposal being put to the meeting. **Mr. Ahern:** “It is the same as a vote of confidence anyhow”. **Mr. Fallon:** “That is not so. I personally will not take hand, act or part in a vote of confidence”.

**Mr. Harte** at this stage objected strongly to **Mr. Beirne**, having at the outset, singled out one or two members as being very bad boys. **Mr. Beirne:** “I am exercising my democratic right to come in here and say what I wish at a General Meeting. Furthermore, I did not specify you”.

**Mr. Harte:** “You said there were a few disreputable characters in the club”. **Mr. Beirne:** “I said no such thing and I ask the members present to state if I used the words “disreputable characters”. A number of members shouted “No, no”. **Mr. Harte:** “If you did not use those words, you struck a very ugly note and all the talk here is about unity”. **Mr. Beirne:** “A man can be a very good character and still not be a good Gael. When I made a certain remark, I had a very good reason for doing so”. **Mr. Harte:** “I think you should withdraw that remark”. **Mr. Kinsella:** “Settle the matter regarding the irregularity of the last meeting and that is the best thing to do”.

**Mr. Callaghan** proposed and **Mr. Joyce** seconded that the election of officers be held again. **Mr. Ahern:** “As Secretary I will not accept a vote of no confidence in myself. If, however, there is a vote of no confidence in all the officers, I, for

one, will certainly resign”. **Mr. Fallon:** “The question of confidence does not arise. You are only a fortnight in office and nothing has been done during that time to warrant a vote of no confidence”.

**Mr. Beirne** said the present chairman, Mr. Michael Hannon (non-fictitious), had proved himself to be a great Gael and was a fit chairman for any club in Ireland. Both **Mr. Ahern** and **Mr. Harte**, he added, had also a great Gaelic tradition behind them, having worn with distinction, the Ballymote colours, the black and amber, as far back as 1926. **Mr. Kinsella:** “I wore them too, but I seem to be forgotten by a lot of people”.

On **Mr. Joyce’s** suggestion the Chairman and all the other officers resigned. The meeting then proceeded to elect the officers for the ensuing year and meanwhile Mr. J.A. Barnes N.T. (non-fictitious Vice-Chairman), on the proposition of **Mr. Beirne**, seconded by **Mr. Joyce**, acted as temporary chairman. Mr. Barnes had taken no part in the preceding deliberations.

The report of the General Meeting of January 17<sup>th</sup> 1950 using fictitious names is now concluded. The names listed here below are the real names of the members who attended that meeting.

The officers who had been elected at the Club Convention on January 3rd were then re-elected. The members of the working committee were as follows: Messrs Michael Hannon (Chairman), Mr. John A Barnes, P. Carey, P. Burke, T. Daly, B. A. Farry, V. McGuinness, J. O’Hara, P. Mullen, L. Flannery, J. Hoey and J. Benson. Delegates to the County Convention: Messrs J. A. Barnes, V. McGuinness, J. Flannery, F. Farry, P. Mullen and S. Hannan. Delegates to the County Board: Messrs P. Dwyer and J. Benson. The Chairman and Secretary suitably returned thanks for their election.

On the proposition of Mr. J O’Hara, seconded by Mr. P. Mullen, sympathy was extended to Mr. J. Benson on the death of his father, to Mr. M. J. Cassidy N.T. on the death of his father

and to Mr. A. Banks on the death of his mother.

A vote of thanks to the local Press correspondent for the very impartial manner in which he had reported all their G.A.A fixtures was proposed by Mr. Benson and seconded by Mr. Farry. The Chairman and Mr. P. Dwyer associated themselves with the resolution. Having settled the procedural disagreement to the satisfaction of all, the members departed amicably.

Source: Sligo County Library, Local History & Archives, Bridge Street, Sligo.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Paul Deering, Editor, who has granted permission for the use of extracts from the Sligo Champion issues of 1950. (NF).

**CORRAN PARK DEBT**

The following report was published in the Sligo Champion in January 1950: “The people of Ballymote need have no fear in the world about clearing off the debt on their local football stadium, because they have behind them the greatest organisation in the country – the G.A.A., which, if called upon to give a helping hand, will not be found wanting. Already the Corran Park Committee has received from the Central Council of the G.A.A. a very substantial Christmas box and they can feel assured that in the future the G.A.A will continue to be behind them”.

So said Mr. M. Jennings, Chairman of Sligo County Board G.A.A. at a meeting of the East Sligo Divisional Board G.A.A. held in Ballymote on Sunday. Mr. Jennings was replying to Mr. J.A. Barnes N.T. Ballymote, who had appealed to the delegates present to cooperate with the members of Corran Park Committee in their

efforts to clear off the heavy debt incurred in the development of Corran Park.

**DERROON G.A.A CLUB**

Although Ballymote G.A.A. Club was very prominent in local and county Sligo sporting circles in 1950, the other G.A.A. Club in the Parish of Ballymote, Derroon, which had been in existence since the second decade of the 20th century still entered a Junior team in East Division and Sligo competitions. A report of the AGM of the Derroon club appeared in the Sligo Champion on 21st January 1950 in the following terms: “Derroon G.A.A. Club, at a meeting on Friday night, appointed the following officers for the coming year: - Chairman, Mr. P. Quigley, vice-chairman, Mr. T. Brennan, treasurer, Mr. J. Coleman, joint hon. secs, Messrs E. Kearns and G. Gallagher, delegates to the County Convention, Messrs P. Scanlon, S. Muldoon and T. Morrison.”



**Group Photo circa 1959, Ballymote**

**Front row L to R**  
Joseph McGettrick, Robert Brady, Johnny Pettipiece, Patricia Brady, Jimmy Glavin.

**2<sup>nd</sup> row L to R**  
Patricia McGettrick, John Shorthouse

**3<sup>rd</sup> row L to R**  
Francis Flannery, Ivan Pettipiece, Adrian Benton

**Back row L to R**  
Michael Healy, Derek Davey, Patrick Chambers, Derek Droughton

# The Book of the O'Lees

By Karin Holzschneider

The *Book of the O'Lees* contains “a translation from Latin into Irish of a highly organised medical treatise, with 44 tables outlining details of diseases, each divided into 99 compartments, across, aslant, and vertical. These are coloured red and black, and comprise descriptions of different diseases, showing name, prognosis, stage, symptoms, cures, etc., of the disease in question. There are rough decorative drawings at the top left margin of many pages.”<sup>(1)</sup> It was translated by the family of the O'Lees and possibly dating from 1434 and is based on the Latin version *Tacuini aegritudinum* translated by the Jewish physician Faraj Ibn Salim in Sicily in 1281. It was originally written by the Arab physician Ibn Jazlah in Baghdad in the eleventh century under the name *Taqwīm al-Abdān* (Dhonnchadha 2009, 82-83).

In the eight and ninth centuries, the knowledge of Islamic-Arabic medicine was mainly based on Greek, Indian, Persian, Coptic, and Syriac works which were translated into Arabic through support from caliphs and rulers (Graziani 1980, vi). During this timeframe, an institution called *House of Wisdom* was founded by the caliph al-Ma'mūn in Baghdad for the “translation and commentary on Syriac and Greek scientific writings for promotion of medical education and practice” (Graziani 1980, 2).

Especially new phraseology and dictionaries became available which supported the circulation of new words and terminology while at the same time accurate procedures and regulations regarding teaching and practicing of the learned physicians were introduced (Graziani 1980, 2). Many physicians were able to read Greek and wrote their own medical books to which they added “new ideas, techniques, observations, and procedures of their own” (Graziani 1980, 2).

Regarding new ideas and techniques, Lev (2014, 201) mentioned that Ibn

Jazlah copied and developed further Ibn Buṭlān's<sup>(2)</sup> tabular form in his *Taqwīm al-Abdān*, thereby developing “the synoptic method of writing.”<sup>(3)</sup> Ibn Jazlah was also responsible for reducing the original fifteen vertical sections in the tables to eleven and for clarifying terms and adding “more selective prescriptions and therapy”, thus making it easier for practitioners and laymen to use the manuscript (Lev 2014, 1991-192). In addition, Graziani (1980, 147) noticed that Ibn Jazlah added new remedies to the book which, in its translated versions, are still being used today in the East and the West.

During Ibn Jazlah's time, a school of translation was founded in Baghdad, together with a library, where the following languages were translated: Persian, Greek and Syriac (Graziani 1980, 14). Books translated there, became “reference books as well as medical texts for medical students [and] enriched the Arabic language and phraseology with a wealth of

medical and technical terms” (Graziani 1980, 14). There also existed three kinds of medical centres in Baghdad: state-sponsored hospitals which were founded by caliphs, hospitals supported by physicians or religious organisations and military hospitals (Graziani 1980, 11). All three types of hospitals were also used as medical schools where, in addition to studying medicine, medical books were studied and mainly translated from Greek into Arabic by physicians (Graziani 1980, 12-13). Before becoming a medical practitioner, students had to be trained at hospitals, sit examinations and obtain a licence (Graziani 1980, 12).

In Sicily, the process was similar: the *Schola Medica Salernitana*, established in the ninth century and initially run by monks, had changed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when it was led by scientists and researchers including non-Christians (E. de Divitiis, Cappabianca, and O. de Divitiis 2004, 725). Medical

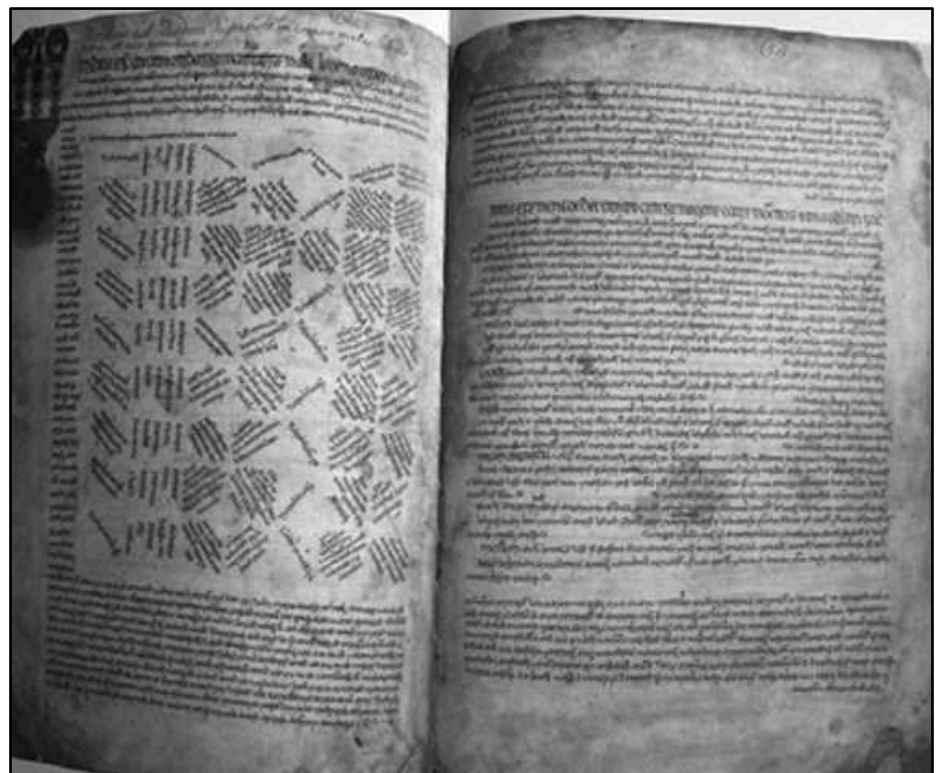


Figure 1: Table 1 of the Irish translation of the *Tacuini Aegritudinum* (Dhonnchadha 2009, 84-85)

knowledge was spread through codices and the school was the place where medical professionals met and discussed theories on how to cure patients (E. de Divitiis, Cappabianca, and O. de Divitiis 2004, 726). By the middle of the twelfth century, medicine was approached from a scientific view by studying and commenting on previous works and by the end of the twelfth century the curriculum in the school was based on anatomic demonstrations and on commentaries of authoritative texts and standard textbooks, including those translated from Arabic into Latin (E. de Divitiis, Cappabianca, and O. de Divitiis 2004, 726, 728). Translating into Latin was not always straightforward: one way translators dealt with translation issues when there was an Arabic word for which there was no equivalent in the Latin language, was to take the Arabic word verbatim and latinise it as can be seen with the Arabic word *SudaA'* translated into *soda* in Latin, *al'inbiyq* into *alembic* in Latin (Haddad 2002, 55).

Something similar happened in Ireland: From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, many medical manuscripts in Ireland were written in Irish, usually by learned medical families who passed on their occupation on a hereditary basis (Dhonnchadha 2000, 217). The *Book of the O'Lees* descended from such hereditary physicians in West Connacht (Dhonnchadha 2009, 82). According to Dhonnchadha, physician families were not only “responsible for the organisation and running of medical schools” in Ireland, but also for “the practical training of students, and the translation, composition and transmission of medical texts” (Dhonnchadha 2000, 217). Using these books as *authoritative* texts to teach students through systematic analysis and by commenting on an authoritative text, a new genre of text was established which became known as commentaries (Dhonnchadha 2000, 219).

As with schools of translations in Baghdad and Sicily, *authoritative* manuscripts were used to teach

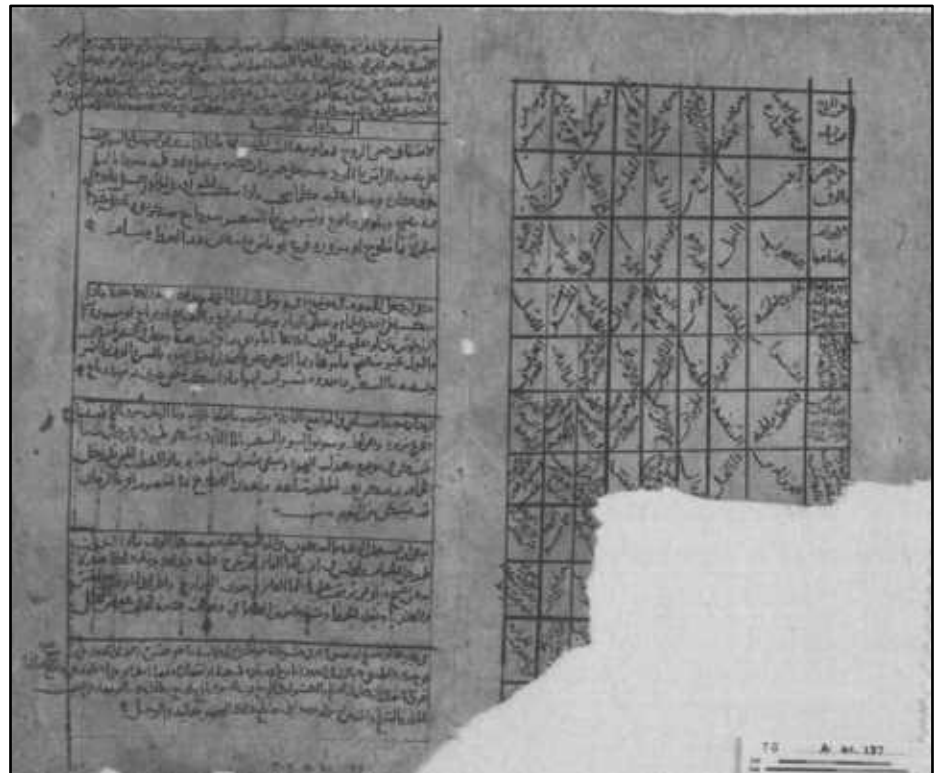


Figure 2: Early draft fragment of Ibn Jazlah’s Tabulated Manual *Taqwīm al-Abdān* (Lev 2014, 193).

students. Also, the practice of adding commentaries to texts occurred at such schools in Ireland. However, the main difference between Ireland, Baghdad and Sicily regarding the transfer of medical knowledge is that in Ireland this knowledge was forwarded on a hereditary basis. It looks like this was not the case during Ibn Jazlah’s or Faraj Ibn Salim’s time.

However, as with translating words from Arabic in to Latin, there were also issues when translating manuscripts into the Irish language, as Irish did not always have a direct translation for a Latin or English word; therefore, such words were often written as literal descriptions.

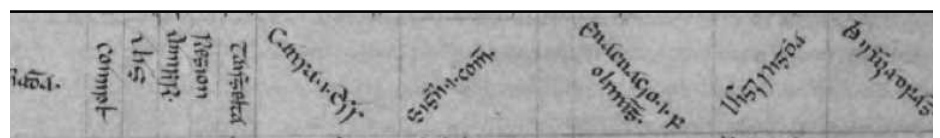


Figure 3: Headers from page 10 of the Book of the O’Lees (RIA).

Irish	Latin	English
na hanmanna	[nomina]	names
Coimpléx	[complexio]	complexion
Aois	[aeras]	age
Aimsear	[tempus]	season
Réighiún	[regio]	region
Taisgéalta	[salus, ueltis]	prognosis
Cúis	Causa	cause
Comhartha	Signum	symptom
Folmhughadh	Evacuatio	evacuation
leigheas ríoghda	cura regalis	royal remedy
leigheas is urasa d’fhaghbháil	cura levis inventionis	easily found remedy

Table 1: Translation of the headers on page 10 in the Book of the O’Lees (Dhonnchadha 2009, 83)

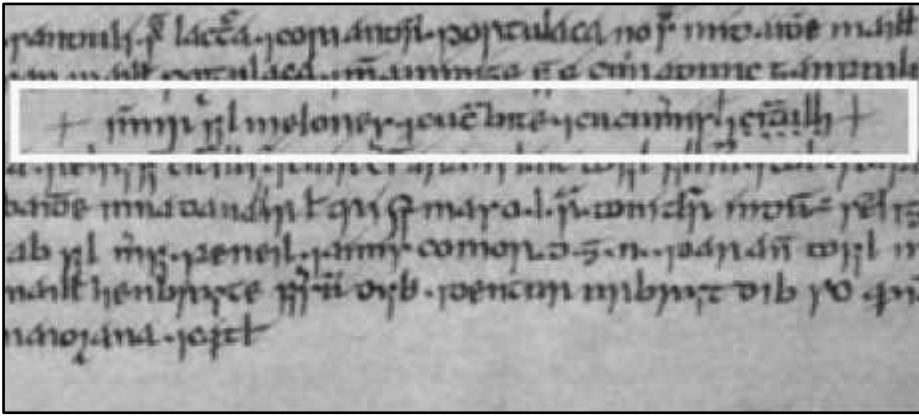


Figure 4: Book of the O'Lees (RIA, 83).

The translation technique to achieve a lexical equivalence between the source and the target text was achieved by using transcribed words to “find a cultural equivalent in the target language” (O’Brien 2011, 63). In Ireland, an alternative translation technique was used to translate the *Tacuin ae-gritudinum* into the *Book of the O'Lees* – via direct translation. Have a look at the book (Fig. 1, page 20): the tables list the diseases on the left-hand side, while details regarding each disease are presented on the right-hand side.

For example, looking at the headers of those tables, you can see that they were indeed translated word-by-word from Latin into Irish (Fig. 3 & Table 1, page 21).

As mentioned earlier, adding commentaries was one of the main translation methods at all three locations. The extract from page 83 of *the Book of the O'Lees* shows an example of such an added comment (Fig. 4).

Several medical texts in Irish provided “detailed, informative and comprehensive discussions of medical doctrine” and sometimes such comments provided clues regarding “the translation and transmission of texts” (Dhonnchadha 2000, 219).

The introduction of a tabular form seems to have left a lasting impression, as subsequent scholars continued to use tables in their medical treatises in a similar way as can be seen in the manuscript from the fifteenth century (Fig. 5).

The original manuscript of Ibn Jazlah’s *Taqwīm al-Abdān* had been translated by physicians from other countries and circulated in the East and the West (Lev 2014, 191). In the East, the *Taqwīm al-Abdān* was used until 1930 (Graziani 1980, 3-4) and in the West, apart from having been translated into Latin and Irish, it was also translated into German and published in Switzerland in 1533 (Haddad 2002, 56).



Figure 5: Detail of one page from a 15th-century copy of Avicenna’s five-volume *Canon of Medicine*<sup>(4)</sup> (Arráez-Aybar, Bueno-López, Raio 2015, 198)

Even though Greek and Latin medicine provided the basis for anatomical terminology, it appears that those technical terms were different from their colloquial words and had changed constantly over the centuries (Kachlik et al. 2008, 460). In an attempt to standardise medical terminology, the first anatomy book was published in 1543 in Switzerland by Andreas van Wesel, in which, aided by a qualitative commentary, the Greek and Arabic terms were replaced with Latin ones by using terms from previous authors (Kachlik et al. 2008, 460). In doing so, van Wesel invented the Latin specialist language and based it on “Latin translations of ancient medical books done by Johannes Winter (Guenther) von Andernach” (Kachlik et al. 2008, 460). It should be remembered that dictionaries of medical terminology were already known in the Arab region at the end of the ninth century as mentioned earlier.

I hope you enjoyed learning not only about *The Book of the O’Lees* but also about past translation techniques which were not only carried out using word-by-word translations or by transcribing words, but also by using commentaries obtained through observation, new ideas and techniques, new procedures and dictionaries. In addition, new ideas of writing, such as introducing the tabular form into a manuscript were proven to have been helpful not only to contemporary scholars and laymen, but also for those who studied medical manuscripts centuries after Ibn Jazlah. Even today, the studying of medicine is influenced by these first medical books.

If I got you interested in the *Book of the O’Lees*, you might like to know that you can have a look at it online at the Royal Irish Society: <https://www.ria.ie/library/catalogues/special-collections/medieval-and-early-modern-manuscripts/book-olees-book-hy>.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. <https://www.ria.ie/library/catalogues/special-collections/medieval-and-early-modern-manuscripts/book-olees-book-hy>

2. Graziani (1980, 29) and Haddad (2002, 53) are both of the opinion that Ibn Buṭlān was the first to introduce the tabular form in a medical manuscript (written in 1050).

3. According to Graziani (1980, 51), the synoptic method refers to “the systems used by astronomers in formulating their astronomical tables”.

4. The illustration describes several internal organs, as well as the skull and bones.

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# Mother's And Father's People

Extract from *Crazy Dreams*, by Paul Brady, Merrion Press, 2022

*Chapter 3 ("Mother's and Father's People") from the autobiography Crazy Dreams by Paul Brady is reproduced below. Paul's grandmother, Oonagh Bohan Brady and half grandaunts, Doty and Baby Bohan grew up in Ballymote.*

My mother Mollie McElholm's people originated in County Donegal. Family oral history talks of J.J. McElholm, a blacksmith from Ardara at the turn of the nineteenth century. He married a woman from Lettermacaward and they had twelve children. He also ran one of the many illegal hedge schools throughout the country where he taught Catholics to read and write. For this he was arrested and sentenced to six months hard labour in Sligo Gaol but was released on foot of Catholic emancipation, namely the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829.

Three of their children went to America. Two came to County Tyrone early in the nineteenth century, one to Drumbinnion, which is our direct line. The other seven died during the Great Famine in the mid-1840s, as did J.J. and his wife. The Drumbinnion son was a shoemaker and had a great reputation for making shoes for clubfeet. His son, John James, was my great-grandfather and, in 1869, was the first Catholic to be *paid* for teaching. He taught in the townland of Feglish in County Tyrone for the princely sum of £8 per annum.

Next in line, my grandfather James Joseph McElholm, known as Josie, trained as a teacher in De La Salle College, Waterford, as did his brothers: Dan, Willie, Alfie and Sam, and as my father did.

Teaching was in the bloodline, on both sides of the family. Given how poor and disadvantaged these families were, how were my forbears able to afford this training, not to mention the accommodation and living expenses that went with it? I found out that in the mid-nineteenth century there was such a shortage of primary level teachers throughout the United Kingdom of

Britain and Ireland (as it was then), that a scholarship scheme was launched called the Queen's (later the King's) scholarship.

Gifted pupils from the age of thirteen onwards could be apprenticed to a teacher and known as monitors. If they showed promise they were offered the chance to take up official teacher training at one of a half-dozen venues in Ireland. Their training, accommodation and living expenses were paid for by the state. The course would last maybe one or two years, and no doubt the living conditions were basic. But this is what seems to have enabled my family forebears, and in turn my parents, to get onto the education high road.

Josie married Brigid Colton in 1911 and they rented rooms in a townland called Kinine (from the Irish *ceann eadhneán*, ivy-clad hillock) in a farmhouse of the same name owned by a local bank manager. Over time came nine children with my mother Mollie (Mary Ellen) the firstborn in 1912. The banker and his family moved out at some point leaving Josie and Brigid to rent Kinine and the attached 30 acres themselves. Josie, however, had his heart set on *buying* the house and farm. He finally achieved his dream for £105. There was fierce jealousy amongst some locals over this. Josie was Catholic; the bankers who sold the house were Protestant. In football parlance it was 'against the run of play'. Mollie told us that Josie and Brigid never used the water from the well on the farm as it was said to have been poisoned by embittered neighbours! Despite this, Josie seems to have been popular and well-loved in the locality. He had a great reputation for helping out neighbours in difficulty and was called 'the Master' (schoolmaster) by all, a sign of respect. My mother and father both being teachers meant education was not only valued but worth putting above other dreams, perhaps. My parents' teaching careers enabled us kids to have a comfortable childhood – there was little spare money around, but neither were we poor or considered so.

On my father's side, the Bradys, there was in fact a connection to Lifford and Strabane back the line. Although my great-grandfather John Brady was from the midlands (born in 1836 in Clonbroney, County Longford) when he came of age, he joined the army, as many young Irishmen of the time did. This was the British Army at the time since Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom.

John was initially posted in the Curragh Camp, County Kildare – one of the biggest garrisons in the south-east of the country. There he met Mary McNally, a young woman from the nearby town of Naas, and they married in November 1873. John was soon transferred to the garrison at Lifford, County Donegal. John and Mary Brady had three children born and baptised in Lifford.

The eldest was Edward Hugh who emigrated to Australia. Next was Mary, and finally my grandmother, Oonagh Brady (b. 1879). Sadly, John died in the 1880s and Mary Brady (née McNally) re-married Pat Bohan, a shopkeeper from Ballymote, County Sligo; she moved there and practiced as a midwife. This ended the family's Lifford connection for now.

Mary and Pat Bohan had four children of their own: Kathleen (who drowned on nearby Strandhill beach), Mary Agnes or 'Doty' as she was called, Sarah and Elizabeth, known as 'Baby'. These were Granny Oonagh's half-sisters – my half grandaunts.

In the late 1950s and 1960s, twice a year, we journeyed to Ballymote to visit Doty and Baby, by then getting on in years. The first sights of the Ox Mountains in South County Sligo gave me the feeling I was now in a different and magical part of Ireland. The Bohan sisters were in themselves quite mysterious. There was a fascinating history surrounding them that we children knew little about at the time. It was to do with the relatively undocumented involvement of women in the Irish Rising, the following War of Independence and the ensuing Irish Civil

War. Even in the 1970s, when I visited them with my wife Mary and our infant daughter Sarah, I never thought to ask them directly about their interesting pasts. I regret not having asked.

To put it in context, the first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a hugely dramatic time in Ireland, politically, culturally and socially. The Bohan girls and their half-sister Oonagh (my grandmother) were very close and they grew into their teens surrounded by agitation and excitement of all kinds. The demands for Home Rule, the serious urban labour unrest of 1913, the First World War, in which thousands of young Irishmen of all persuasions fought and died, and the existence and increasing militancy of hard-line republican organisations like the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and James Connolly's Irish Citizen's Army (ICA) all ratcheted up the emotional mood in the country.

The 1916 Rising brought things to a head. A 'glorious failure', it was savagely put down by British forces. The leaders of the Rising were condemned to death by firing squad.

After the executions the mood of Ireland, initially confused, ambivalent, indeed in many instances hostile towards the revolution, changed. Sinn Féin, a previously ineffective republican party, took centre stage with seventy-five of its members elected to the British parliament on an abstentionist ticket in the general election of 1918. Abstentionist meant that although you were officially elected as a Member of Parliament, you refused to take your seat in protest at the political status quo.

One of the abstentionists was Eamon de Valera who now became president of Sinn Féin. Another was Countess Markievicz, one of the most interesting of the active participants in the fighting. Born into an aristocratic Anglo-Irish landed family – the Gore-Booths, whose family seat was at Lissadell in County Sligo – after a life of privilege she rejected her class and threw her lot in with the Irish revolutionaries. She fought in the Easter Rising of 1916 and only avoided execution on account of her gender.

My grand-aunt, Baby Bohan, developed



Figure 1: Irishman not wanted poster.

a friendship with Markievicz based on the women's shared politics and possibly too that they were both natives of County Sligo.

The Irish guerilla War of Independence (1919–21) and the Civil War (1922–3) that followed were heady times. Baby Bohan, like Markievicz, was a member of Cumann na mBan (the Irishwomen's Council, a paramilitary organisation in favour of armed rebellion). Baby was politically a radicalised young woman. Her association with Markievicz continued throughout the War of Independence. Although she never talked about those times when we visited as kids, a fascinating document, handwritten by Baby, was found by my

sister Anne in papers she left behind.

Baby took the anti-treaty side in the subsequent Irish Civil War. Cumann na mBan was outlawed by the new Irish government and Baby's continued involvement in the organisation led to her arrest in 1923 on foot of a warrant signed by the new Irish Free State's defence minister, Richard Mulcahy. This in turn led to her and several other women going on hunger strike for thirty days in the North Dublin Union where she was imprisoned.

Markievicz was later arrested because of disturbances caused when she had been speaking publicly on behalf of the prisoners. She too joined the hunger strike towards the latter end of it. Baby

was close to death when the hunger strike was called off. She was nursed back to health by Markievicz herself.

The immediate years after the Civil War were a nightmare for the losing side. There was discrimination if not brutal exclusion of those who fought against the treaty. You could say goodbye to a career in public service if your name was on one of the blacklists at the time.

The last straw for the anti-treaty side, however, came in 1926 when de Valera decided that ‘abstentionism’ as a Sinn Féin political tool was self-defeating. He left the abstentionists to form a new party, Fianna Fáil and took the ‘oath of allegiance’ to the British Crown.

To the Bohan girls and Oonagh it was like the Civil War had been fought in vain, as if the loss of life and disruption of society was a waste. Worse was the fact that family members disagreed with each other about de Valera’s decision, and families were pitted against each other for generations. Some never got over the new status quo and spent a life in quiet (or sometimes not so quiet) rejection of it. Some left Ireland for good.

The scars ran so deep in the Bohan side of the family that in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when pensions were being given to those who took part in the War of Independence by de Valera’s government, Baby and Doty refused to accept theirs.

So little is talked about all that now. So little was said about Baby and Doty’s involvement in the pivotal events that shaped present-day Ireland. Even my father Sean, their nephew, didn’t talk about those times. The politics of Ireland to this day is still influenced by the legacy of the Civil War.

My father’s own immediate family had their ups and downs too. His mother Oonagh married Mick Brady, coincidentally with the same surname. They had four surviving children: Kathleen (known as Teaco), Mary Therese (known as Máirín), Sean (my father born in 1914) and Colm.

Grandad Mick had a business in Sligo with his brother JP selling bicycles built from scratch, cars, motorcycles, radios and the first cylinder record players.

They were well-off for a while. They had a shop in the centre of Sligo town and an outlet in Dublin. The two girls were sent to boarding school in Eccles Street Convent, Dublin, one of the most prestigious girls’ schools in the country. The youngest boy, Colm, went as a boarder to Blackrock College, again one of Ireland’s top boys’ schools. There was a governess at home to educate and look after the children when they were young. Mick was the hands-on practical guy; JP was the business head and salesman of the business.

There was some disagreement between the brothers. JP opened his own shop in nearby Castlebar. He moved to Dublin, ending up in Clonmel in County Tipperary where over the next few decades his business thrived. Profiting from the petrol rationing during the Second World War, he anticipated a rise in demand for bicycles and motorcycles. He made a lot of money. He was also at the forefront of the sales drive of domestic radio sets with an ad campaign slogan ‘Brady-O for Radio’ that was known all over the south of Ireland.

My grandfather Mick was not as successful. He was less of a businessman, more of a gifted mechanic. He moved the family around to Birr, County Offaly, then to Limerick and later to Ballina in County Mayo. During the War of Independence his business suffered at the hands of the British military offshoot, the Black and Tans, who in 1919 ‘requisitioned’ his cars – a Clyno, an Overland Tourer, a Model T Ford and a Calthorpe – with no compensation. This was a major financial setback and caused him to circularise a printed protest to try and rectify the situation, to no avail.

The brothers tried to stay in touch it seems, though by the time I came along, the two families had drifted apart. As kids we never heard of the JP side of the family’s existence. Only in my generation was there a reconciliation. My sister Anne and I met the Clonmel Bradys. JP’s daughter Mona had married Des Hanafin, a prominent local political figure and their daughter Mary, my newly discovered second cousin, was for a time deputy head of the Fianna Fáil political party and, among other senior

positions, Minister of Education in the Irish government.

Despite my grandfather Mick’s cars being requisitioned by the Black and Tans, finances improved throughout the 1920s. By the turn of the decade the family had around £2,000 in the bank (approximately £100,000 in today’s money). But Mick’s health deteriorated, leading to an early death in 1934 from spinal meningitis. The business collapsed, and this drastically affected the circumstances of the family.

I never knew my grandfather Mick, but I can picture the family set-up, my dad in the workshop watching his dad working miracles with engines. Stories passed down tell of Sean learning to drive as soon as his feet could reach the pedals. When Mick was about to leave Sligo for Dublin for business one day, the starting handle of the Model T Ford sprang back breaking his hand. Sean, aged twelve, drove to Dublin instead. He drove the entire 120 miles with his father Mick in the passenger seat.

Maybe we make it all fit in retrospect, that we inherit what we love from our ancestors; certainly, there was love of education on both sides of the family, a strong revolutionary pulse on the female Brady line – but music was there too.

As a young woman in her twenties and thirties Grandmother Oonagh Brady was, in fact, a celebrated singer in the Sligo locality. A participant in many Feiseanna Ceoil (music festivals) she was mentioned in local newspapers and periodicals. She even formed part of the opening act on a John McCormack concert in Sligo town. It was a love of music and more tellingly perhaps *performance* she passed on to her own son, Sean, my father. Either way Granny Oonagh was musical well into her late seventies – we children knew her as a jolly old lady who entertained us singing big dramatic patriotic Irish songs like ‘The West’s Awake’ and ‘Follow Me up to Carlow’ whenever we visited her.

This extract has been reproduced from *Crazy Dreams*, by Paul Brady, Merrion Press, 2022

# The Apostle of Kerry – Charles Graham (1750 – 1823)

By Stan McWilliams

It's the early 1800s. Imagine an elderly Irishman travelling the country's rough roads, his horse and saddlebags, like himself under his broad-brimmed hat, wet through from the constant rain, each heavy step of his horse taking him closer to market day, where he expected violent opposition to his fiery evangelical preaching, delivered in Irish and from horseback; if he was lucky, a few converts at the end of the day.

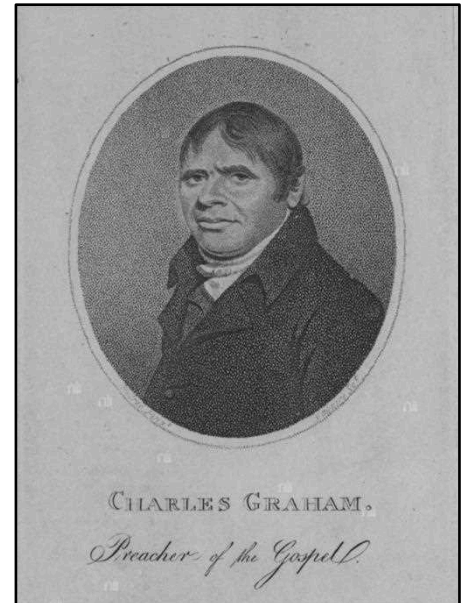
Such was the life of Charles Graham. He was born near Sligo town in 1750. As a young lad, he laboured with his father on their small farm. Though he had no great education, he could read and write and spoke the languages of the day, Irish and English. During his teenage years he 'ran with the Sligo bucks' carousing and causing general mischief. When he was twenty, he was converted, or 'restored', when a Methodist friend and preacher challenged his sinful ways. Charles liked the simplicity of the Methodists, with their three rules of 'no curling of the hair, no gold and no gay clothes'. He said his heart was filled with a 'holy fire' and he appeared to have been set on the path of evangelism.

After preaching around Sligo for many years, and at the age of forty, the Methodist Church asked Charles to embark on a wider mission that would take him away from his home for the rest of his life. As a fluent Irish speaker, he had been sought out to further the Methodist's mission. And so, with his wife's encouragement, he embarked on an itinerant evangelical journey. He often worked alone and was challenged to build new religious communities among a population that was deeply suspicious of his intent. He was drawn by a crowd, on the street or outside churches, where he

proclaimed his hellfire message. Success was measured in new converts; the blacker the sinner the sweeter the victory, he believed.

In 1790, he took up his Church's request to go to Kerry, which they believed to be a wild and lawless place. His wife and two children travelled with him as far as Limerick while Charles rode on across the mountains into Kerry. He took lodgings in a small hotel in Tralee but word soon reached the local priest of the evangelist's arrival. The priest, together with a crowd, forced him out, proclaiming him as a 'false prophet'. Charles found safety in the house of a Protestant farmer outside the town. He spent two years travelling around the county meeting considerable hostility. The Methodists said that his 'defiance to Romanish opposition was tested in Kerry' earning him the title of the 'Apostle of Kerry'. Charles was moved to Fermanagh, Birr, then Longford, Leitrim, South Ulster, Wexford, and finally to Offaly and Westmeath, settling with his family in Athlone.

In 1821, at the age of 71 Charles was still preaching, most of it in the open air. Despite the inclement weather, he seemed to enjoy the atmosphere and challenge of markets and fairs. At the large Enniscorthy pre-Christmas market that year, his hellfire preaching, embellished with many bible quotes, enflamed the crowd who pelted him with anything that came to hand. His journal says that there was uproar and that the town Mayor finally managed to stop the violence. The 'Romanist incident', as it was reported, had a positive impact 'in stirring up ignorant Protestants, lukewarm Methodists and backsliding sinners.' After his sojourn in Wexford, and in failing



**Charles Graham, attributed to Patrick Maguire, (fl. 1783-1820), after an original painting by James Petrie, (1750-1819), held at National Library of Ireland, Dublin.**

health, he moved to Athlone to be with his family, and it was there that he died in 1823 at the age 74.

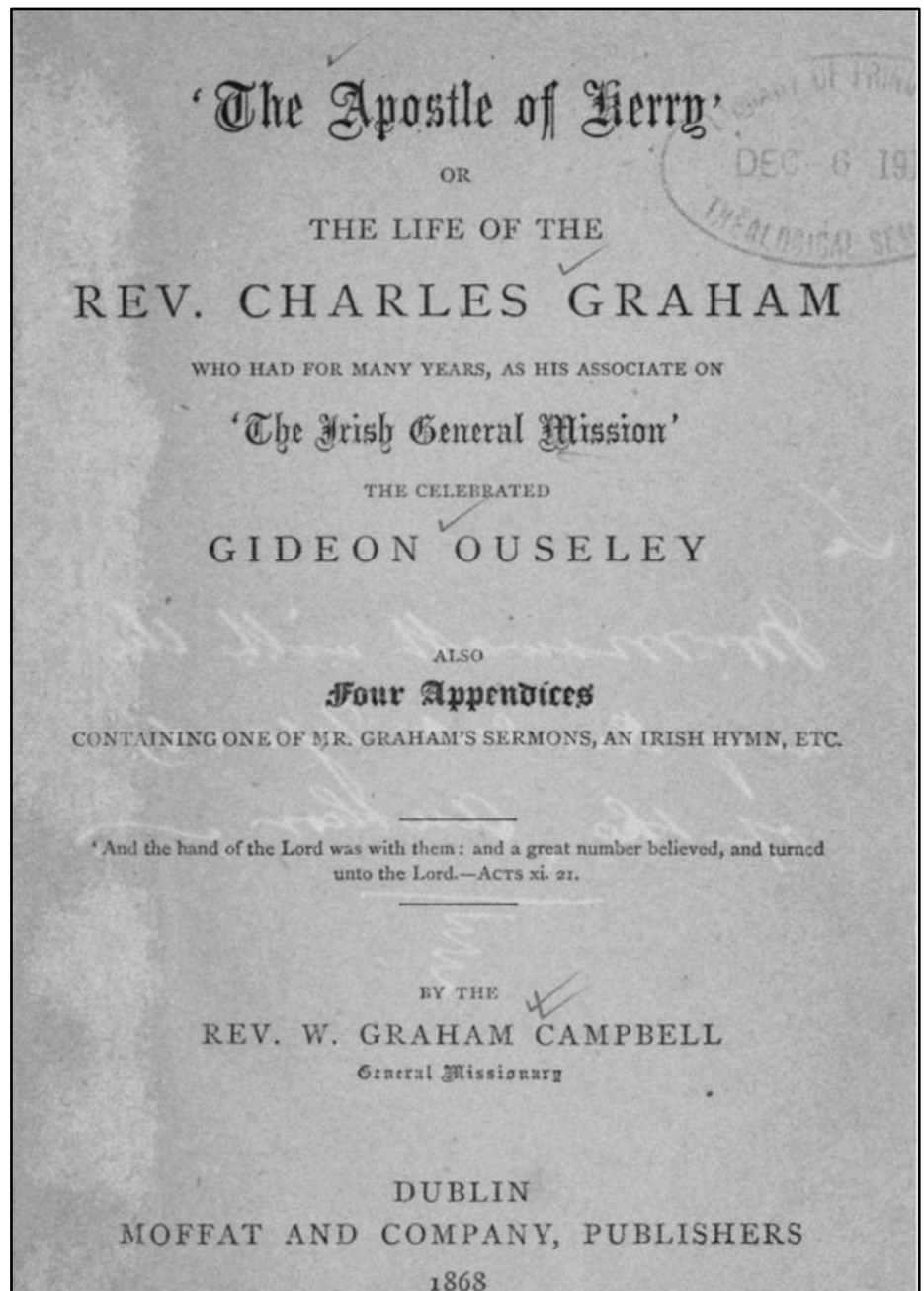
This story is gleaned from 'The Apostle of Kerry, the life of the Rev. Charles Graham' written by his relative William Graham Campbell and published in 1868. The book is evangelical in sentiment and intention and is still available today from religious publishers. The era was one of waves of revivalist movements that swept the Protestant communities across the New and Old World from 1730 onwards. And the Methodist evangelizing in Ireland, initially led by John Wesley, was part of this phenomenon. The most notable in Ireland was the Ulster Revival in the 1850s, still a touchstone for modern-day evangelicals; it brought many converts to the Presbyterian church, particularly in east Ulster. (See previous blog, 'The Ulster Revival'.)

It's difficult to know what Charles was like from this religiously focused book. His son, friends and colleagues spoke kindly of him. After his death, as you would expect, there was much praise from the Irish and the wider Methodist community for his resolute religious conviction and unstinting missionary work. St Patrick's mission is mentioned as if a Methodist one. Charles's son, also Charles, wrote of his father's great meekness, and examples of him turning the other cheek when physically attacked were recalled. And there was praise for his preaching in the Gaelic language with 'commanding sweetness and fluency with which he spoke the Irish language to his benighted countrymen'.

However, my lasting image of Charles Graham is of a man fired by a singular vision of life, death and salvation. A man riding Ireland's lonely roads for some fifty years, towards another town where opposition awaited, suffering the vagaries of the weather, until finally, he could neither travel nor preach any more.

The book is a hard read in the modern era, imbued as it is with a sense of colonial entitlement and condescension, the latter towards the oft-repeated, 'benighted country' - the majority of the Roman Catholic population and other sinners. It is based on Charles's journals and his many letters, yet it offers no commentary or opinion on Ireland at that time. There is no mention of the harsh Penal Laws which cemented the hegemony of the Protestant Ascendancy nor of the widespread dire poverty alongside agricultural exports from the Irish estates to England; nor the resulting terrible famines of the early 1740s and the 1840s which bookend the period of the story.

The 1798 rebellion gets scant mention other than the account of a



Title page of 'The Apostle of Kerry'

Methodist minister being imprisoned and shortly afterwards released in Wexford as 'a good man'; and the difficult and dangerous travelling conditions during the rebellion and its repression. The Methodists were a Dissenting religion, and this lack of sympathetic comment is surprising given their tacit support of the aims of the rebellion.

When a reader highlighted the book to me, my initial interest was drawn to the likely influence that the book had on a younger Charles Graham born

one hundred years later in Knockalass in County Sligo. He was featured in a recent blog, 'The side saddle and other clues', and had an unfulfilled ambition to be a preacher, though he did become a political campaigner. The two men are believed to have been related. However, as I browsed the book for this story, it was the character of 'The Apostle of Kerry' that rode out from between the lines.

*This and other stories maybe found at the [www.thecurlewscall.com](http://www.thecurlewscall.com)*

# Piscina and Aumbry, Church Hill, near Achonry, Co. Sligo

By Martin A. Timoney

To the east of a quiet backroad 2.6 km southeast of the Achonry cathedrals are the ruins of a rectangular church within an ecclesiastical enclosure. It is Recorded Monument and Places No. SL32-195. To the south is a souterrain of at least two chambers and two creeps; there is a bullaun stone at the church.

The ruinous church, 19 m long by almost 7 m wide, is High Medieval, 15<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup>, but a single voussoir in the south wall has Romanesque motifs, including beading, is indicative of an earlier church, the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This church may not have been on this site, and one wonders if was taken as a token of sanctity from Achonry where there is a suggestion of a Romanesque church predating the High Medieval cathedral there. There may have been graves at Church Hill but there are no grave markers to be seen today.

The purpose of this note is not to disentangle the features of this complex ecclesiastical site but to publish my photo of a short section of masonry of the east end of the south wall that would have been near and to the right of the altar. I photographed it in the 1970s and it was still standing until at least 1992 but it had fallen by 2000.

This short length of masonry had a piscina, for washing sacred vessels after mass – it had a drain hole for the washings to flow down into the wall, and an aumbry, a cupboard in the thickness of the wall, presumably for storing sacred vessels. The stones of these two features are still there. The section of masonry lacked support and may have collapsed under its own weight.

In 1988 and 1989 the Sites and Monuments Record for Co. Sligo was compiled by Mick Gibbons, Tom Condit, Olive Alcock and Mary Tunney with considerable input by Martin A. and Mary B. Timoney, including records from Sligo Field Club members of an earlier generation. At that stage there was no



Church Hill

historical record of Church Hill to be found. In the build-up to publishing the *Inventory* of the four Baronies of Co. Sligo south of the Ox Mts., Leyney, Corran, Tirerrill and Coolavin, nothing to help came to light. For me, Gwynne and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland*, Irish Academic Press, 1970, is a first port of call on ecclesiastical sites. I cross-checked it from the index and all entries are clearly identifiable as being elsewhere – none can refer to Church Hill. An Dr Conchubhar Ó Cruaíaoich, Chief Placename Officer, confirmed that Church Hill (par. Cloonoghil) was called Cnoc an Teampaill, and also Cluain Eochaille, *i.e.*, Cloonoghil. Why is that isolated church so elusive? Maybe in those times communication was from Cloonacleigha Lough, 1 km to the

east; from Cloonacleigha the Owenmore flows through Templehouse Lake and on through Collooney to the sea at Ballisodare. Maybe we should think more often of communication by river!

For more detail see Egan, U., Byrne, E., and Sleeman, M., with Ronan, S., and Murphy, C., 2005: *Archaeological Inventory of County Sligo, Volume I: South Sligo, Comprising the Baronies of Corran, Coolavin, Leyny and Tirerrill*, Dublin, Stationery Office, page 321, #2041, and page 406, 2625. Extracts are to be found on [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie). It is most regrettable that the *Inventories* for the baronies of Tireragh and Carbury, *i.e.*, that part of the county north of the Ox Mts., have not been published, though some Tireragh and Carbury sites are described on [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie).

# German Words in English

By Garreth Byrne

German nouns begin with a capital letter, but when used in English normally begin in lower case. Geiger counter and Bunsen burner, used in science, have the names of their inventors in capitals.

Angst, aspirin, bildungsroman (a coming-of-age-novel, such as *A Portrait of the Artist as a young Man*, by James Joyce), diesel, ersatz (artificial), frankfurter, hamburger (shortened to burger), hinterland, kindergarten (literally children's garden), kitsch, semester, lager (drink), diktat, realpolitik, weltanschauung (world view), weltenschmerz (world weariness), Fahrenheit, knapsack, rucksack, abseil, zeitgeist (spirit of the times) and wanderlust.

Many German ideas have been translated into English. Social democracy, social market economy and Marxism are examples. In philosophy Existentialismus has been translated as existentialism. Warfare words like U-boat, blitz, blitzkrieg, panzer and strafe (from the verb strafen, to punish) came into English use sadly, along with Gestapo, nazi, Gleichschaltung, stalag and the ominous phrase bei Nacht und Nebel.

For many other German influences on English cf. *The Revision of European History*, by Desmond Fennell, Athol Books 2002, p.p. 71-73.

Years ago I glanced at a Yiddish/English dictionary and learned that this Jewish vernacular language originating from Central and Eastern Europe obtains about 70

per cent of its vocabulary from German, with some modifications of spelling and pronunciation. Yiddish has contributed some of these German-derived words to American, especially New York English i.e. schmalz (literally fat) meaning too sentimental, and schlock, meaning rubbish in a figurative sense. Incidentally, Lithuanian Jewish refugees arriving in late nineteenth century after fleeing Tsarist persecution introduced into Dublin working class jargon the expression 'the whole shemozzle' (the whole shebang) and Hibernicised it to 'the whole shermozzle', sometimes heard in parts of Dublin. Clanbrassil Street and South Circular Road had thriving artisan and lower middle class Jewish communities until the second half of the twentieth century. German-Yiddish kinds of food were available in shops.

There has been some speculation about German influences on Irish Gaelic. The two languages are different in structure and belong to different linguistic families, so the search for influences will be difficult.

Oskar is a common German personal name. Oscar was the grandson of Fionn Mac Cumhail, one of the great warriors of Gaelic mythology. Fionn's name is embedded in Wien. (Ösgur is also a Turkish name.) Bregenz (formerly Brigantium) was the capital of a tribe which venerated Brigid, Mother of the three Gods of Craftsmanship. She is linked to place-names from Portugal to the

Ukraine. Brigid is still a 'Rhein', or 'Rih' in Schwytzert ütsch (Baden), means the 'flowing' (rith). That other great river, the 'Donau' (Danube) means the 'deep/dark river' (domhain-abha in Gaelic). And 'die Alpen' means the 'high mountains' (ailp in Gaelic).

Finally a few German proverbs to ponder.

## **Andere Länder, andere Sitten.**

Translation: Other countries, other customs.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

## **Auch der kleinste Feind ist nicht zu verachten.**

Translation: Even the tiniest enemy is not to be despised.

English equivalent: There is no little enemy.

## **Die Ochsen hinter dem Wagen spannen.**

Translation: To tighten the ox behind the cart.

Don't put the cart before the horse.

## **Die beste Verteidigung ist der Angriff.**

Translation: Attack is the best form of defense.

## **Der Stärkere hat immer Recht.**

Translation: The stronger is always right. Might is right.

## **Besser laufen, als faulen.**

Translation: Better to run than to rot.

Gaelic: Is fear rith maith ná droch sheasamh.

# Fullerton - Once a Schoolmaster

By Richard Brett

*Now I feel a little better,  
What a treat to hear Thy word,  
Where the bones of leading statesmen  
Have so often been interr'd.*

I was slightly distracted trying to recall the earlier stanzas of Betjeman's satiric poem as I wandered among the memorials of Kings in Westminster Abbey some decades ago. Then my eye fell on two recumbent alabaster forms, a knight and his wife, and a name I recognized but had not expected to see in such exalted company. The inscription reads:

*'Here lyes ye remnant of Sr James Fullerton, Knight, First Gentleman of ye Bedchamber to King Charles ye First, Prince and King. A gracious rewarder of all virtue, a severe reprover of all vice; a profest renouncer of all vanitie; he was a firme pillar of the Common Wealth, a faithful patron of the Catholique Church: a faire patterne of the British Court. He lived to the welfare of his country, to the honour of his Prince, to the Glory of his God. He dyed fuller of faith than of feares, fuller of resolucion than of paienes; fuller of honour than of dayes'.*

The modern reader, accustomed to the more restricted usage of the term, may be surprised by the appearance of the word Catholic. It is always interesting to see what is expressed on such monuments and what is passed over in silence. There is no mention of James Fullerton's service to Charles's father, James I and VI. That earlier part of his career has been the subject of much speculation.

As the sixteenth century ended it was probable that the succession to the aged Elizabeth would be the Scottish King. As things turned out the transition in 1603 went remarkably smoothly: but that was not inevitable. An anxious James maintained agents

and spies in London and Dublin. Of these Fullerton was one.

This Scottish graduate had a perfect cover story. In the 1580s he was Master of the Dublin Free School in Ship Street. When Trinity College was founded, he was admitted in 1593 as one of the first Fellows. Also admitted was his Schoolmaster colleague James Hamilton, while their pupil James Ussher (who later decided that History began in 4004 BC) became one of the first Scholars. Not much is known about Fullerton's time at Trinity. His Scottish Presbyterianism would have fitted in well with the advanced Calvinist views of the first Provost, Walter Travers, whose teaching produced a generation of Church of Ireland priests ill-suited to the needs of a religiously conservative country. It would take half a century before the Laudian reforms would begin to reverse the effects of the Puritanism created by Fullerton and his colleagues in the first batch of Fellows.

The early Seventeenth century is not a period one associates with upward social mobility. Nonetheless the Register of Trinity College provides details of the subsequent careers of these two Schoolmasters that are worth quoting:

1. Hamilton, James, 1st son of Hans Hamilton; Dunlop, Scotland. Fellow 1593, MA 1595. [MP Co. Down 1613-1614. Knighted. Created Viscount Claneboy May 4, 1622; died 1643].

2. Fullerton, James, Fellow 1593. MA 1595. [Master of the Free School, Dublin 1588-1594; Knighted between Aug 29 1603 and June 25 1604. Muster General and clerk of the Cheque Aug 29 1603: PC(I), Commissioner for the Plantation of Ulster 1607; died 1631].

Whereas the Hamilton entry provides parentage and place of birth, this is

not the case with Fullerton. Alan Ford in his biography of Ussher asserts that he was a close friend of the principal of Glasgow University, the Scottish Presbyterian leader, Andrew Melville. At this point the reader of the Corran Herald might reasonably ask "What has this to do with Ballymote Heritage?". Quite a lot. For shortly after his accession James I and VI granted Ballymote Castle and estate to James Fullerton. This was the way courtiers were paid.

The reason that Ballymote was in the King's hands at that time can be found in Mary O'Dowd's excellent history 'Power, Politics and Land.' Fullerton did not hold Ballymote for long, but it was his decision to sell to William Taaffe which allowed the consolidation of the Taaffe landholdings that made that family one of the dominant social forces in Corran for the next century and a half. Had Fullerton lived eighteen years more he might have witnessed a strange encounter between the King he had served and the boy that he had brought to Trinity from the Free School. Charles was at that stage imprisoned on the Isle of Wight. The Parliament men seem to have had some hope that he might change his principles and to that end gave Archbishop Ussher leave to visit him. They were to be disappointed for Ussher took the opportunity to deliver before the King a sermon that asserted in full the divine source of Royal authority. Regicide followed.

Fortunately Fullerton did not live to witness this. One might imagine that a person honoured with a tomb in Westminster Abbey would have an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography: not so in this case. Nor has he an entry in the Dictionary of Irish Biography. He remained elusive for a long time.

However, in recent years David Edwards has uncovered much about

Fullerton's contribution to the establishment of the Stuart dynasty in Ireland and England. In May 1595 he was in Glasgow ostensibly on leave from Trinity to engage in fund-raising for the nascent University. There he was in communication with George Nicholson, an English agent in Scotland, over plans to cut the supply of arms and soldiers from mainland Scotland and the Isles to the O'Neill, now in revolt. It seems that Fullerton through his contacts in Ayrshire was successful in organising a patrol of five vessels in the North Channel for this purpose and that this was remarkably effective.

Because of what happened after the union of the English and Scottish crowns, it is sometimes overlooked that for hundreds of years up to that point, it had been a constant part of policy in London and Dublin to keep the Scots out of Ireland. This was as true as ever at the start of the Nine Years War.

An important effect of this interception of Scottish supplies was

that it swayed Cecil, the most important of Elizabeth's ministers, towards an acceptance of James VI claim to the succession. Previously he had considered other options: but James had now shown himself reliable.

Fullerton seems to have withdrawn from Trinity in 1599 and from then until 1603 to have lived mainly in Scotland maintaining contact with Cecil who was, of course, constrained in what he might communicate back to the Scottish King. The Queen still refused to designate her successor and the statute of 1581 was still in force against those who "not only wished her Majesty's death, but also by divers means practiced and sought to know how long her Highness should live, and who would reign after her decease." Fullerton and Cecil needed all the delicacy of diplomats.

In August 1603, five months after James's accession, Fullerton appeared again in Ireland as Muster Master General. His mission was to reduce the Irish military establishment.

Demobilization had brought numbers down from 12,000 foot and 1,000 horse to 3,000 foot and 400 horse. While this was primarily an economic measure, it also involved neutralizing elements within the army who were potential allies of those discontented plotters in England whose operations show that the arrival of James I and VI was not universally welcomed: the Bye Plot, the Main Plot, the Gunpowder Plot.

Back in London, in 1605 Fullerton obtained the court appointments which are mentioned near the start of this essay, but the image of a mere court flunkey would be mistaken. In Professor Edwards's words "the great positions he attained - groom of the privy stool to Charles and first gentleman of the bedchamber - were security postings first and foremost, ceremonial postings second". Much about Fullerton remains in the shadows but David Edwards has uncovered a great deal about this onetime owner of Ballymote.

## Review of Micheal Connolly's Book: Walfrid

By Alison Healy



**Brother Walfrid**

Sometimes, outsiders can tell our stories better than we can. Scottish man Michael Connolly does exactly that in his biography of Ballymote man Andrew Kerins. He spent five years investigating the origins of the man who is better known as Brother Walfrid, the founding father of Glasgow Celtic.

Brother Walfrid has been immortalised in statues, memorials and portraits but no one had ever written the definitive version of his life story. That changed when Michael Connolly chose Brother Walfrid as his PhD thesis topic, in 2017. The author is from Coatbridge, sometimes referred to as "Little Ireland", a town near Glasgow, and is a Celtic supporter all his life. He properly became aware of Brother Walfrid when his statue was erected outside the stadium in 2006.

Dr Connolly's thesis grew into a book, *Walfrid: A Life of Faith, Community and Football* which was published in 2022 and released in paperback earlier this year. As Andrew Kerins' great grandniece, I had a special interest in his work and hoped it would fill in the many gaps in our knowledge. He was the younger brother of my mother Mary Kerins'

grandfather Peter, but because he emigrated to Scotland at such a young age, we knew very little about his life. Dr Connolly contacted our family when he began his research, but he already knew more about our relative than we did. Happily, he got better help from other people in Ballymote,



**Michael Connolly, author of Walfrid**

and his book acknowledges the guidance of Ballymote Heritage Group and people such as Neal Farry, Carmel Wims, Michael Mooney and John McGettrick.

His five years of research tells a story of a man of strong faith who overcame adversity and dedicated his life to helping others, while leaving a lasting legacy in Scottish culture. We knew of course that Andrew was one of two children born to John and Elisabeth Kerins on a small farm in Cartron Phibbs, two miles from Ballymote, in 1840. They were tenant farmers, leasing the land from the Phibbs family. We didn't know that Andrew's father was also renting a house and offices on Ballymote's Main Street, from Sir Robert Gore-Booth. Dr Connolly also found references to a John Kerins being jailed for debts in 1848, at the height of the Famine, and says it is entirely possible that this was Andrew's father. But despite the Famine, the Kerins family was able to keep their farm and the records show that John was still renting property from Gore-Booth on Main Street, Ballymote in 1858.

The book gives a valuable insight into how wealthy families were insulated from the Famine and its grim aftermath. Dr Connolly reprints a report from The Dublin Evening Post in 1852, which detailed a ball at Lissadell House, attended by the Phibbs family. The ball, hosted by Sir Robert and Lady Gore Booth, attracted "the elite of the county of Sligo and the adjoining counties. Nothing could surpass the excellence of the arrangements in every department".

Dr Connolly notes that Ballymote parish priests Father Bernard O'Kane and his predecessor, Ballymote-born Father Denis Tighe, would have been early spiritual influences on Andrew Kerins and says it's likely he would have attended a hedge school run by the local clergy, like many children at that time.

The book highlights Father Tighe's work in advocating for his parishioners and in raising awareness of the impact of the Famine. Before he arrived in Ballymote, he wrote to *The Freeman's Journal* in 1847, describing "the awful distress now prevailing" and told how at least 26 people in his Mayo parish had starved to death. Writing from

Ballymote in 1849 for the Catholic publication, *The Tablet*, he rejected claims that the Famine was over and said it was committing havoc on an unprecedented level. "When I add to this that the cholera has broken out in the workhouse, and that our poor are rather determined to die of hunger at home sooner than go there, you may easily imagine their sad condition".

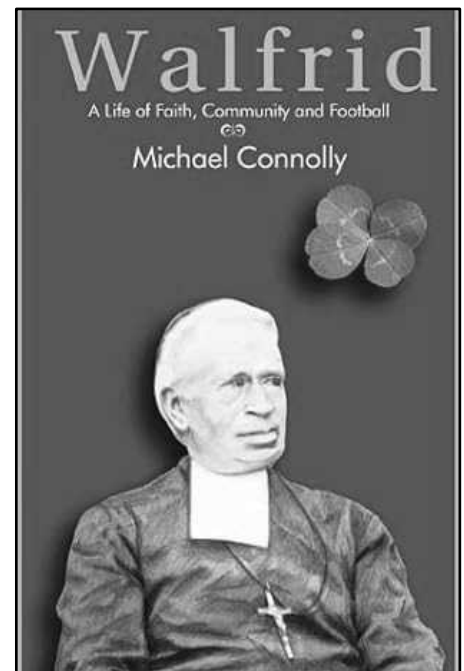
The Kerins family was lucky to survive the Famine but the book shows how the devastating aftermath had robbed young people of any opportunities in rural Ireland. As the family farm would be taken over by his brother Peter, Andrew must have felt he had no option but to emigrate.

He was only 15 when he and his friend Bart McGettrick from Cluid sold a calf at Ballymote fair and used the few shillings to fund their passage on a cattle and coal boat from Sligo to Glasgow. According to Dr Connolly, they were among an estimated 100,000 Irish refugees who arrived in Scotland during and immediately after the Famine years.

It's difficult to imagine the trauma the Ballymote boys must have felt when they arrived at the brutal conditions of Glasgow, which was struggling to cope with the numbers of Irish people seeking refuge. Before they emigrated, visiting Sligo town would have been a big excursion but now they were in a place where they ran the risk of being kidnapped for child labour, and where crime and violence were commonplace. They also had to contend with anti-Irish sentiment in some quarters where the mantra of "No Catholics or Irish need apply" was still heard, and would continue to be well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The book tells how, in 1923, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland approved a report from one of its committees, titled "The Menace of the Irish Race to our Scottish Nationality" which talked about the alarm and anxiety caused by the "incursion" of Irish Catholics. It warned that when Scottish people realised the Irish were "a menace to their own racial supremacy in their native land", there would be race antagonism "with disastrous consequences".

It claimed that Irish Catholics were, generally speaking, "poor,



**Walfrid book cover**

partly through intemperance and improvidence and they show little inclination to raise themselves in the social scale". And it suggested that deportation was one possible solution to protect the "destruction of the unity and homogeneity of the Scottish population" and to "preserve Scotland for the Scottish race".

Doesn't that sound familiar, a century later, when now those words are being said by some Irish people about migrants coming to these shores. In 2002, the Church of Scotland apologised for endorsing the report, saying it was time to consign bigotry to the history books. Despite the claim that Irish Catholics showed little inclination to improve their lot, both Andrew and Bart found employment at the railway works and they studied by night to better themselves. Andrew found his vocation with the Marist Brothers, the Catholic religious order that focuses on education. He studied at the Marist Brothers novitiate in Beaucamps, France in 1864 and took the name Brother Walfrid, after Saint Galfrido of Pisa, in Italy.

Dr Connolly's research shows how as teacher and later school principal, his primary focus was on helping to lift children and their families out of poverty. Glasgow Celtic fans will know the rest of the story but in case they don't, the book traces in great detail how the club began. Charity, of course, was at the centre of its origins.

Working in the poorest areas of Glasgow, Brother Walfrid and his colleague Brother Dorotheus not only devoted a lot of time to helping impoverished families through education, but they also fed the children in school. They received support from St Vincent de Paul society but also ran charity soccer matches to raise funds for the hot meals scheme. Slowly the idea of starting a soccer club formed to ensure there would be a constant stream of funds.

These efforts culminated in the founding of Glasgow Celtic FC in November 1887 and the rewards for charity were instant — the Celtic FC committee provided £400, worth about £50,000 today — to the St Vincent de Paul Society through match ticket sales during the 1888/89 season. While Brother Walfrid's Poor Children's Dinner Table scheme was prioritised for funding, a diverse range of causes benefited, such as a disaster fund for the families of 29 women who died when a carpet factory collapsed.

According to Dr Connolly, Brother Walfrid, at 47, was the eldest of a group of Irish Catholics identified as playing a key role in establishing Celtic FC. And he notes that the Ballymote man had taught the five founding fathers most closely associated with the foundation of the club. They were Joseph Nelis, Michael Cairns, Joseph McGroary, John McCreadie and Dr John Conway.

Willie Maley, one of the original Celtic players who became the club's first manager described Brother Walfrid and the club's first chairman John Glass, as being central to the club's very existence for the first three years.

And while there was some hostility towards this club set up by Irish Catholics, Willie's brother Tom recalled how it was "good, dear old Bro. Walfrid" who "woo'd and won" the sports journalist and Glasgow Rangers' supporter JW Mackay to secure positive press for the new club.

The rest is history and today Glasgow Celtic has more than nine million supporters in over 30 countries. While its charitable focus wavered after Brother Walfrid's departure, it later returned to its roots. Today, the Celtic

FC Foundation has raised more than £30 million (almost €34 million) for worthwhile causes and continues to support a diversity of causes.

The book follows Brother Walfrid's move to London, and later Kent, before he retired to Dumfries, having spent 51 years as a teaching Marist Brother. He retained his interest in Celtic and received the results of the matches by telegram every Saturday until his death, on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1915. As fate would have it, Dr Connolly notes that Celtic won the Scottish League Championship on the day its founder died.

The author made some fascinating discoveries during his research and answered a question that we, as Andrew Kerins' relatives always wondered about: what was he really like? Dr Connolly discovered several letters written by Brother Walfrid and says they give an insight into his character. "Concern for the spiritual and physical welfare of children is one consistent feature of the surviving letters written by Walfrid," he writes.

"Whether appealing for the assistance of those in the upper echelons of society, such as the Marquess of Bute, or in simple notes to his Marist colleagues, the welfare of the 'poor children' remains at the forefront of Brother Walfrid's mind." He also heard reminiscences from some former pupils and contemporaries who recalled a "sometime-brusque, quick-tempered and resolute individual who prized discipline in the classroom".

Overall, he writes that the picture which emerges of Brother Walfrid "is one of a warm, kind and idiosyncratic character who maintained an active sense of humour until the end... Walfrid, above all, was a man of practicality and action".

Dr Connolly's research also inadvertently led to a second book about the Ballymote emigrant. As he was embarking on his work, and we talked about Andrew Kerins' journey to Scotland, I realised that it would make a lovely children's book, and so I wrote *The Boy Who Started Celtic*, which was published last year. It was a great joy to hold the Irish launch in Liber bookshop in Sligo and to meet Celtic

supporters and the Ballymote people who had championed the preservation of his memory. It also led to me travelling to Scotland to share my ancestor's story with hundreds of Glasgow schoolchildren. He is remembered at Celtic's anniversary mass in Glasgow every November, where his portrait stands beside the altar in St Mary's church.

Of course, my visit included a trip to Celtic Park where Brother Walfrid's statue looks onto the city that became his home after he left these shores. In the museum, I saw one of those letters unearthed by Dr Connolly's research. Dated 1906, his handwritten note details money spent on a children's trip to the country. It apologises for spending money on clothes but explains that "the poor children were so poorly clad that we could not do it for less".

Dr Connolly's book has brought Brother Walfrid's story to a whole new audience and will ensure that his legacy is never forgotten. Former president Mary McAleese agrees. "History has for too long overlooked the seminal role in Celtic's narrative of Brother Walfrid, a humble Irish monk whose life was one of utterly unselfish but visionary service far from home," she writes, in the paperback version of the book. "Michael Connolly, in this beautifully told biography, makes Brother Walfrid visible again as he deserves to be."

This is a must read for anyone with an interest in the foundation of Glasgow Celtic FC, but it is also a fascinating account of how one boy from Ballymote grew up to improve the lives of countless people and become a leader in his adopted home.

His departure may have been Ballymote's loss, but it was also Scotland's gain.

*\*Walfrid: A Life of Faith, Community and Football* by Michael Connolly, and *The Boy Who Started Celtic* by Alison Healy are both published by Scottish publisher Thirsty Books and are available from Henry's Service Station in Ballymote, Liber bookshop in Sligo (liber.ie), thirstybooks.com and the usual online sources.

# The Riot of Altagowlan: A Scene of Land League Days

Submitted by Mary Kelly-White

'Twas in the Glen of Arigna in days  
that's long gone by

The thing I'm going to tell about took  
place before my eyes,

The boys around old Geevagh and the  
fellows from the Glen

Encountered some 400 of the landlords'  
armed men.

'Twas the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of January of 1908

The sturdy tenant farmers rose and did  
not hesitate

To fly the good old Banner and let the  
landlords know

They were going to teach a lesson to  
Hewitson Knox and Keogh.

When they called upon the agent they  
asked would he consent

To sell through the Land Commission,  
but he told them 'Pay the Rent'.

He ignored the clauses of the Act that  
promised them a chance,

To purchase out their holdings and  
divide the bullock's ranch.

The Law was on the landlord's side  
'twas plain to every son

They'd have to try the same old means  
that worked in '81.

The Agent sent a sheriff first to execute  
decrees,

But a crowd did soon assemble and they  
stopped him with all ease.

'Twas in a few days after a process  
server came;

The chased him like a wild goose 'till he  
hid his head in shame.

So then the cunning Agent devised  
another route,

And in registered letters, got the  
processes sent out.

The first batch came to Geevagh, but the  
people blocked the roads:

The postmen then refused to take or  
carry landlords' loads.

They came to old Arigna, then where  
there was fun galore

For crowds appeared to meet them the  
likes ne'er was seen before

With all that came along to help the  
fellows in the Glen,

You'd really think it was the French that  
landed back again.

Then o're the rugged mountain road the  
swarming police run,

Their bayonets guns and helmets  
gleamed all with the rising sun.

Then on to the Post Office they quickly  
marched along

And ordered out the Postboy saying  
business must go on.

The Postboy was a gallant youth and  
pure in mind and soul,

He disobeyed their orders and wouldn't  
take their gold.

The police quickly moved away as the  
crowd prepared to fight;

When a thousand more young Geevagh  
men did swarm o're the heights,

Then with reinforcements the attack  
they did renew,

And o're the snowclad mountains, the  
police they did pursue.

Going down at Greaghnageera, I can  
ne'er forget the fun,

How their marching terminated and they  
started on the run.

In Ballyfarnon Barracks the police a  
refuge found,

And the people cheered us wildly as we  
came into the town.

We then marched on to Geevagh, where  
we rested for a while,

And partook of some refreshments and  
came home in splendid style.

The line of battle for to watch extended  
seven miles;

From Geevagh to Altagowlan, through  
woods and mountains wild.

For fifteen days and weary nights we  
watched successively;

To cope with any plans adopted by the  
enemy.

They waited for a month or so, as was  
their common rule,

Until they'd be unnoticed when  
everything would cool.

So in the darkness of the night, when  
calmness did prevail,

They caught some twenty Geevagh boys  
and brought them off to jail.

They then set out to Arigna to try to  
apprehend

The hardy band of heroes that were

living in the Glen.

The Miners, who were from 'neath the  
earth to Altagowlan came

And chased the police from the place  
and made them look so tame.

There were but few men taken, but our  
mere contempt we showed

When all appeared in Keadue where  
coercion overflowed.

They brought us down to Sligo and they  
tried us by the law,

And then to old Roscommon but we  
clipped the lion's paw;

The police were outwitted and they tried  
in every word

To say such things that fitted and to tell  
of what occurred;

They were sadly disappointed with their  
prosecutions made.

Roscommon jurors didn't believe a  
word of what they said,

The news soon spread to far and near,  
that we were all set free;

The people came in numbers great to  
greet our victory.

They shivered Knox and Hewitson and  
likewise landlord Keogh,

And also Agent Robinson, they left his  
spirits low.

Sure in dear old Ballyfarnon the fifes  
and drums did play

All through the night and morning until  
the following day.

I think I see James Nangle yet, upon the  
big stone wall,

His voice so rich and eloquent,  
admonishing us all.

He was an old time Fenian that was  
often on the run,

And fought against the Landlords since  
the days of '81.

Those were the famed old Land League  
days, but now they're long gone by,

And Erin is free from sea to sea, her flag  
is floating high;

Thank God that gave her those brave  
boys, the young Sinn Féiners grand,

That fought so well through shot and  
shell for Dear Old Ireland.

[www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie)

# The Ulster Bank: A Chequered History

By Padraic Feehily



Ulster Bank Sligo

Established in 1836 as a conservative lender by a group of Belfast merchants, Ulster Bank's linen trade customers continued to thrive even as the country was ravaged by famine. Within a decade the directors went on to set up two further offices on the island of Ireland, one of which was in the expanding port town of Sligo in 1860. This was not surprising as Sligo already had important business links with Belfast.

John Quin was a manager of the Bank from 1889 to 1926 and has left some record of his affairs and his business methods. Under his management motto of "*never leave yourself in another's power*", the bank built up a number of successful traders, some from rock bottom within the borough and outside. However, one fair day in 1910, he prepared with his junior clerk to travel out to the bank agency in

Collooney. After the cash box was chained and fastened to the sidecar, he later decided to take a further £500 pounds in large denominations and put the parcel of money in his coat pocket. Seated on one side of the car with his junior, on the other he entered into an animated conversation with the driver on the various farms they passed along the way not noticing the parcel making its way out of his pocket. But the loss

was noticed when they reached their destination.

Here the manager gave smart instructions to his junior to trace back the road in search of the money. The junior remembered passing a tinker's cart along the way but when questioning him, the tinker said "yes" that he had come upon a paper bundle but had kicked it into the ditch!

A reward of £20 pounds was offered but without result. The amount was increased to £50 when a suspicious but very well-dressed man presented himself at the bank. The gentleman appeared to have been aware of Mr Quin's business principle of "*never leaving yourself in another's power*" as he deducted the £50 reward money before handing over the remainder.

The most remarkable event during Mr Quin's tenure took place in 1922. Part of the bank building being suitably situated on the Victoria Line, was occupied by Free State soldiers for the enforcement of motor and cycle permit regulations. In a general way the business of the bank was not disturbed even though there was intermittent firing, both day and night, between the troops within and the irregulars without.

One night a number of irregulars gained access to the bank through a bathroom window and set a landmine inside the side door. Exploding, it caused much damage, practically destroying every window and door in the vicinity. Fortunately, owing to the strength of the structure no lives or injuries were sustained. Immediately following the explosion, the irregulars opened with a machine gun and sprayed the front door. They then entered the building where the manager, his staff and the Free State soldiers were attempting to disentangle themselves from the thick dust and falling plaster which covered them from head to toe. After disarming the soldiers, the irregulars hurried from the building leaving the Free State soldiers back in charge of the bank. Poor manager Quin was so badly shaken that he had to remove to Rosses Point to recuperate leaving two juniors to sleep in the bank house.



19<sup>th</sup> Century Bank Interior

One evening when the juniors were cleaning up in the kitchen, a young army officer, when cleaning his rifle, accidentally discharged a bullet that rebounded from the tiled floor and became embedded in the wall beside the head of one Mr Glynn, one of the juniors. The splinters hit him in the face destroying the sight of his left eye.

Various sums of money were said to be removed from the bank by irregulars during the troubles. No doubt, when the bank assessors did their homework, somebody would have to foot the bill and pay the piper!

Early in 1923 a ceasefire was declared, and Mr Quin could enjoy his last three years of stewardship, retiring in 1926.

The closure of the Ulster Bank marked an end to Northern Ireland's role in financing the Irish economy, irrespective of borders or religious differences. As the last of the Belfast banks operating in the Republic of Ireland, its closure marked a retreat from the Anglo-Irish economic relationship that was central to Irish affairs.

Even after Independence and with an openly pro-union ethos, the bank continued to operate successfully south of the border. Not even the so-called "*Belfast Boycott*" organised by republicans between 1920 – 22 permanently damaged their business. Nor did the policy they adopted during WWII, where staff members who joined, the British Armed Forces

could return to their jobs at war's end but those who chose to join the Irish Army had to find alternative employment.

Notwithstanding the establishment of the Border, the bank continued to run its northern and southern operations as a unified business until at least the 1950s. However, it was the consolidation of the Irish banking industry in the 1960s that set the scene for the banks detachment from the Republic. The creation of the modern Bank of Ireland (absorbing the National and Hibernian Banks) altered the approach to risk and undermined basic banking principles. What arose was a banking market fuelled by Irish bankers with delusions of grandeur. Gone was the time-honoured approach of caution. Even the Ulster Bank, a conservative old Belfast lender that survived war and intimidation got caught in the hype and consequently led to the erosion of old time and tested methods.

Banking was just one of Ulster's important legacies to our shared island over the past nearly two hundred years. Perhaps, at the end of the day, what allowed it to survive in an atmosphere of conflicting interests, was, to quote a well-known Sligo businessman "*it's not the Crown that's important, it's the half-crown.*"

*Padraic Feehily is a Sligo Historian; his books are available in Sligo Bookshops*

# St. Patrick's Day Customs and St Patrick's Wells

By Joe McGowan



Half awake and half asleep the rhythmic pound of a big bass drum filters into my consciousness. Away in the distance a donkey brays. A cock crows. Am I dreaming? I look at the clock. It is 6.00 a.m. Dawn has not yet broken. Realisation filters slowly through the mists of slumber: I am on Achill Island. The beat is that of the big drum of the Dooagh Pipe Band sounding the reveille for a day of celebration. This is March 17th, St. Patrick's Day, and I am being nudged awake by this ghostly sentinel of the dawn calling the pipes and drums to action.

My favourite places to be on the Saint's festival are either on this remote western island or doing the rounds at the St Patrick's wells on the border of Sligo and Leitrim.

Achill is one of the rare places where a glimpse of the old Ireland can still be found. Where tradition is concerned, the islanders do not follow fashion. Unchanged for generations, here is an Ireland hidden except to the adventurer, or those lucky enough to stumble upon it.

I climb sleepily out of bed to join a trickle of island residents and a few

visitors making their way on quiet roads to the distant sound of the drums. The trickle becomes a stream. A soft rain is falling, no one cares. Dawn breaks to the skirl of the pipes and the rat-a-tat-tat of the drums in an open field adjacent to 'Molly's' cottage. Forming up and moving out, they parade past knots of bystanders tumbled from their beds. They have come to join an early-morning ancient tradition unique to this picturesque Mayo Island. Many generations of Achill's people have emigrated throughout the world. On this special day the emigrants return to their island homes to participate in the ceremonies.

Dooagh Pipe band is joined by the Pollagh and Keel bands as they parade to Mass 'as Gaeilge' in Pollagh Church. This Gaelic speaking island has five pipe bands, one in each village: Dooagh, Pollagh, Keel, Dookinella and Tonragee. After Mass, outside the chapel, in turn, they play a selection of tunes before marching on to Dookinella Church at the other end of the island. Mass in Irish is celebrated here again after which Junior bands join the Seniors in

a massed bands spectacle. My rib cage resonates to the primeval beat of the drum, my heart surges to the stirring sound of the pipes. It swells and echoes from the walls of the church and re-echoes from the slopes of nearby *Sliabh Mór* mountain. Small boys and girls look on, tap on drums bigger than themselves, or blow on tin whistles. They gaze admiringly at the colour, pageantry and swagger of the senior pipes and drums.

Following a massed musical extravaganza by all the bands outside Dookinella church, pipes and drums move out and off down the road to parade and march from village to village, all day long. Old men and women come out from their homes to greet and encourage the musicians. I look on and wonder if perhaps in their youth it was, they who played and marched.

The bands began as Fife and Drum groups during Land League days and the Gaelic revival of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is no public funding. Equipment and uniforms are purchased with monies generated by outings, fundraising and donations from the people of Achill, both at home and abroad.

The future of this unique celebration of St. Patrick's Day and New Year's is assured by the admiration shining



## Tobair na Bheartha agus Tobair Phadhraig

Far away from the razamataz and the ballyhoo, the leprechaun hats and the plastic shamrocks of the big city and town parades, there are still some who celebrate the feast of St. Patrick in the old way. One such place is a quiet field in Bunduff, a few hundred metres from the Duff River on the Sligo-Leitrim border. This, we are told, was one of the saint's favourite places to be.

There are two wells there, one called *Tobair Phadhraig* (Patrick's Well) near the road, and the other *Tobair na Bheartha* (Well of the Shaving) close to the sea. Local tradition has it that St. Patrick and his companions shaved at *Tobar na Bheartha* and prayed at *Tobar Phadhraig*.

Many cures have been performed here. An account written in 1938 says that: 'For a cure for sore eyes the water is rubbed on, for a cure for a sick animal it is given to the beast to drink. Numerous cures have been reported. People have been cured of sore eyes, sore throat, toothaches, headaches and many other ailments. Cattle have been cured of murrain, redwater, milk fever, spine disease. Elf-shot cows have been cured and cows with chill or fever. Horses have been cured by applying the water to the affected part.'

Pilgrims begin the ritual on the east side of the well at the statue of St. Patrick. Here they say 5 Our Fathers, 5 Hail Mary's, 5 Glories and the Creed. They then go clockwise and on reaching the cairn on the south side say 3 Hail Marys and cast a small stone on the heap. They then proceed to the well on the west side where they kneel and say 3 Hail Marys and cast another stone on the cairn. On again to the north where they say the same and again cast up another stone. This is done 3 times casting up 9 stones in all.

Once, on a visit to the wells, the saint passed over the nearby River Duff on



from the eyes of the children as they look at the splendidly attired seniors and await impatiently the day when they too can take their place among the massed saffron and green, the pomp and swagger, the wild call of the pipes.

Although not an islander, I am proud to be here, proud to be Irish and proud of the men and women of Achill who keep the old traditions alive and hold to the ancient faiths and tongue.

the Sligo-Leitrim border. Seeing men fishing there for salmon he asked them if he could have some. 'They're scarce today,' was the reply from the tight-fisted Leitrim men. 'May they always be so,' replied the disgruntled holy man.

That finished the fishing there for a long time. Leitrim has a very short shoreline, so continuing northward St. Patrick and his followers came to the river Drowes that separates Co. Donegal from Co. Leitrim. The Cassidy family and their helpers were fishing for salmon there. Still hungry, Patrick begged them for a fish, which they immediately gave him. Perhaps they had heard about the bit of bother up the road. It doesn't matter, Patrick had his dinner, and he was grateful. Blessing the river he said:

'May the Drowes never be without a salmon nor a Cassidy to catch them.' 'And,' says the 'Tripartite life of St. Patrick', 'even little boys take fish there still, and a salmon of the Drowes is the finest of Ireland's salmon.'

I join a steady trickle of people and we walk down the narrow road and across a green pasture-field. Very little has changed here since the time of Patrick himself. As we walk, we look across magnificent views of the Dartry Mountains on our left, and a majestic panorama of ocean, hill and sky, right around to Sliabh League in Co. Donegal, on our right.

The parish priest of Kinlough, Fr. Keogan, joins us and after saying a few words on the significance of the well, leads the group in prayer. Round and round the well we go.

The numbers of people coming to the well wax and wane. Still, if anything surprises us it must be that anyone at all comes here fifteen hundred years after Patrick's mission. Further back in time we can be sure these wells were sacred places to the Druids of the Old Religions long before St. Patrick came to Ireland with his new doctrine. What is astonishing is to think that this spot has, more than likely, been a place of veneration, not



just for hundreds, but for thousands of years!

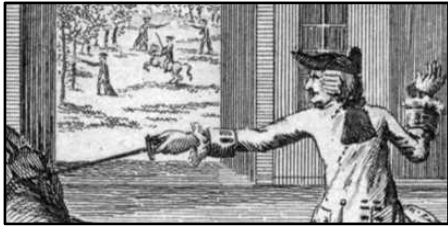
There are not many places in the western world that can claim such antiquity of worship. In times gone by the wells gave succour and consolation to the impoverished and the dispossessed. Masses were said in such places in Penal times when the price on the head of a priest was the same as that on a wolf. In attending the wells, we show our respect for the past and admire the people who survived in such difficult times.

Achill or Bunduff; *Tobar na Bheartha* agus *Tobar Phadhraig*: As we leave the celebrations we chat to neighbours, exchange the old greeting: *Go mbeirimid beo, agus sláintiúil, ar an am seo arís*. Like the blades of grass in the fields we walk through, we will some day pass on to return to the earth from whence we came. Our fervent wish is that generations yet unborn will continue to perpetuate these ancient traditions, tread the paths that we tread where so many countless thousands have walked and prayed before us.

# Sligo ‘Fire-eaters’

## Duelling in the Eighteenth & Nineteenth Centuries

By Pádraig Deignan



### Introduction

Duelling was endemic in Ireland in the eighteenth century. Although trials of combat occurred in the country during the medieval era, the origins of duelling and its associated ‘code of honour’ can be traced back to Italian and French ideas surrounding law, ethics and trial by combat. In the seventeenth century it was the practice to conduct duels with seconds whose duty it was to oversee fair practice without becoming involved. The practice of duelling became popular in Ireland from the 1660s on the return of many Catholic Old English who had been in the service of the Stuarts on the continent. However, following the defeat of the Jacobite forces in the 1690s, many of the Catholic Irish officers and gentry left once again for the Catholic kingdoms of Europe and under the Penal Laws, Catholics were forbidden from bearing arms. Thereafter, for a period of time until the repeal of the law, Catholics were unable to defend their honour through firearms.

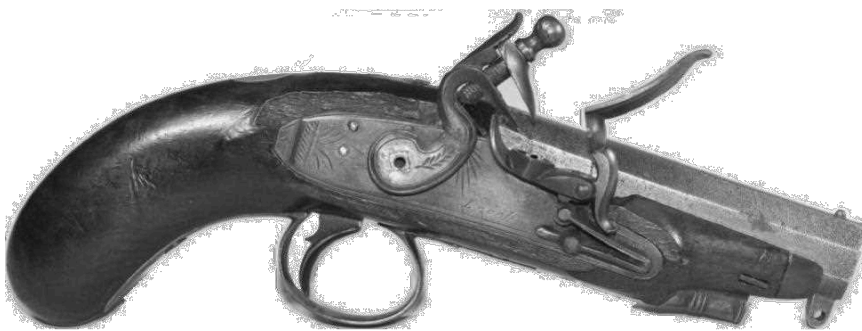


**O’Connell/D’Esterre Duel**

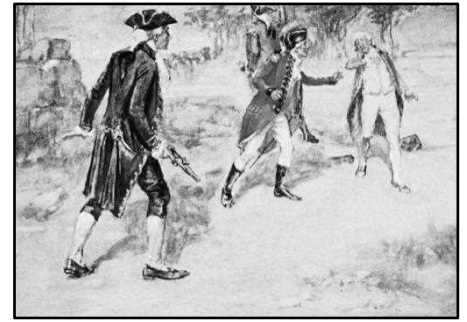
The abstract concept of ‘honour’ was held in high regard by Irish gentlemen from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries and the most popular response to any insult until well into the 1830s was to challenge the offender to a duel. The aristocracy, gentry and middle classes felt duty bound to defend their reputation and family name to the death. In 1815, even Daniel O’Connell, had to accept a challenge by Robert Peel, the future Prime Minister and Irish Chief Secretary at the time. The duel was arranged to take place in Belgium. However, O’Connell was arrested on

his way there. Peel accused O’Connell of engineering his own arrest to avoid the confrontation while O’Connell made the same claim against Peel arguing that Peel had him arrested as an honourable way out.<sup>1</sup>

Earlier in the year, in February 1815, O’Connell had taken part in a duel with John D’Esterre, a unionist member of Dublin Corporation. D’Esterre died because of the encounter. The O’Gorman Mahon, O’Connell’s chief supporter in the 1828 Clare election, was himself an inveterate duellist having fought dozens.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Russell, who had dismissed duelling as ‘a shameful vice of the rich’, still maintained that it was his ‘duty’ to fight when involved in a distasteful incident with Lord Cole in 1793 while organising the Society of United Irishmen in Enniskillen.<sup>3</sup> In Sligo, by the early nineteenth century duelling had become one of the most popular pursuits. Wood-Martin notes that ‘in short, all classes appeared to be devoted to this mode of settling differences. Gentlemen who had been intimate acquaintances often so met without any sufficient cause but on what would be a point



**A Henry Leech Duelling Pistol**



that touched their honour. Amongst the peasantry there was nothing so thoroughly appreciated as a public duel'.<sup>4</sup> In the period from 1820 to 1830 Henry Leech, an already well established ironmonger and gunsmith, of 9 & 32 Castle Street, was advertising 'Duelling pistols and double and single barrel guns for sale'.<sup>5</sup>

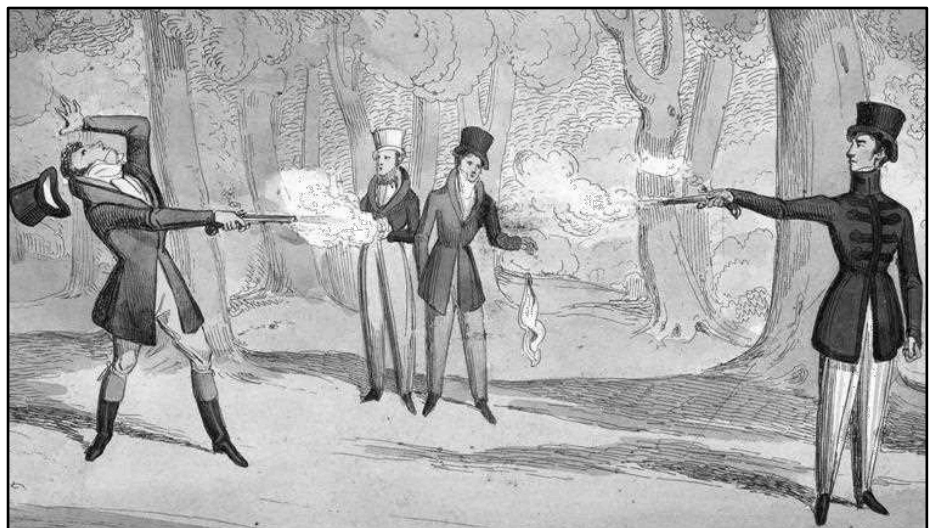
The pistol, when it had become available was the preferred weapon of choice in Co. Sligo while in other counties such as Galway, gentlemen on occasion favoured the sword. However, generally by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'affairs of honour' were commonly settled by the use of firearms. Those unskilled in the use of stabbing weapons stood a better chance of victory and avoiding injury with pistols. Although Sligo duellists were known for their skill with the pistol, on one occasion on a visit to Ballyshannon, a quarrel between a Sligo gentleman and an officer took place. The officer, in uniform, drew his sword, the former unarmed at the time insisted on using the sword at the appointed duel. The officer's second refused as he knew

the Sligo man was a celebrated swordsman. Shots were exchanged and the officer was shot through the heart; unfortunately for him the Sligoman happened to be a crack shot as well.<sup>6</sup>

Duelling was most popular among younger men as a test of honour and courage. In 1777 'fire-eating' had such a widespread reputation in Ireland that 'no young fellow could finish his education till he exchanged shots with some of his friends or

acquaintances'.<sup>7</sup> The counties of Tipperary and Galway were described as 'the ablest schools of the duelling science' while 'Roscommon and Sligo had many professors of the art and a high reputation in the leaden branch'. A common question of the time posed in Sligo when inquiring about a young gentleman was 'What family is he of?' and 'Did he ever blaze?'.<sup>8</sup>

By 1777 duelling had become so common among young men in the country that a number of delegates from Sligo, Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Tipperary all gathered at the Clonmel Summer Assizes, drafted and passed a code of laws and regulation for 'The Practice of Duelling and the Points of Honour' with the desire that these laws of honour would be adopted throughout the whole country. These laws gave dignity 'and a species of legality to the proceedings of duellists'.<sup>9</sup> Under this 'code duello' fatalities increased as the use of pistols was much more dangerous than the accepted 'first blood' with encounters of the blade. In addition, the code also discouraged the practice of firing into the air or ground to avoid injuring an opponent.





The duelling fatality rate in Ireland was one in every four encounters while in England it was one in every fourteen engagements.<sup>10</sup>

In early May 1739, a duel was fought in Sligo between Quarter Master Graham and Quarter Master Douglas in which the latter was killed.<sup>11</sup> In August 1759, a duel involving pistols in the backyard of a public house in Sligo town between two gentlemen concluded when one man received a ball in the leg.<sup>(12)</sup> The severity of some of the injuries inflicted during the duel and the lack of medical knowledge at the time could result in an individual dying a number of years after the

incident as in the case of a Mr Cooper of Tanzyford, Sligo, who died in March 1766 from injuries received in a duel in 1764.<sup>13</sup>

However, not all ended fatally or with an injury. In September 1779, a duel was fought between Joshua Cooper and Charles O'Hara, both men discharged their pistols and were happily prevented from proceeding further by the interposition of the seconds, with honour seemingly satisfied.<sup>14</sup> A similar incident had taken place in early June 1788 when a duel was fought on Sir Tigue O'Regan's Fort in Sligo. Both combatants discharged their pistols

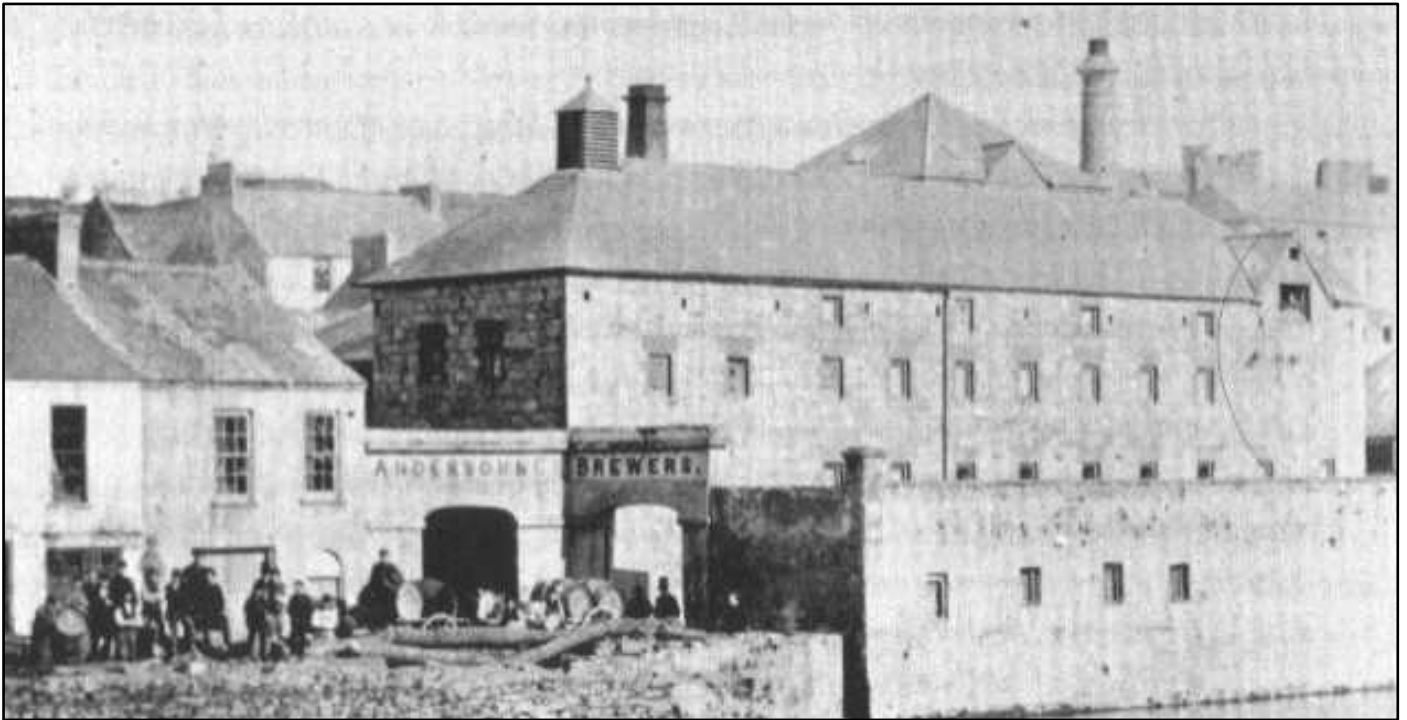
with no effect and the men were happy to leave it at that following the interposing of their seconds.<sup>15</sup> Another duel that ended without injury took place on 22 May 1798 between an officer in the militia and the solicitor Thomas Fenton; two shots were fired without any effect, both men 'were afterwards reconciled'.<sup>16</sup>

Members of the military featured in many of the early duels in the county as Sligo was a well garrisoned district and it was inevitable that armed officers, with little else to occupy them, took to the art of duelling. In one incident, an unnamed Sligo officer, quarrelled with a fellow officer of the same rank. There was a strict rule within the military that in the interests of discipline, only officers of the same rank were permitted to duel. The meeting between the two was arranged for sunset the same day. Following mess, the colonel of the regiment challenged the officer to a game of chess. In the middle of the game the officer requested permission to leave, saying he would return in a few minutes, which he did, after severely wounding his antagonist. He then continued with the game of chess as if nothing had happened.<sup>17</sup>

Dr William Urwick, Congregational Minister in Sligo, had the reputation of averting several of the 'affairs of honour'. On one occasion a soldier, veteran of the peninsular campaign and a hero of the storming of Badajoz, was challenged. Although the man was determined to duel, the minister convinced him not to and succeeded in preventing it.<sup>18</sup>



For many, duelling was a form of adventure sport for gentlemen and in particular aristocrats and the gentry. In late August or early September 1779, one of the most infamous duels took place in Co. Sligo. Hyacinth 'Centy' O'Rorke was a cocky, reckless and short tempered member of the minor gentry in Sligo who 'was accustomed to take his walks abroad with a pistol in one hand and a horsewhip in the other'. He fought a duel with Philip 'Caoch' Perceval of Templehouse, a magistrate.<sup>19</sup> Perceval took proceedings against O'Rorke



**The Green House – later Anderson’s Brewery**

on behalf of a June O’Neill, a storeowner. O’Neill had asked O’Rorke to repay his debts and had been hit by O’Rorke with the whip across her back when she requested payment. O’Rorke challenged Perceval to a duel on the steps of Sligo Courthouse by flicking his riding whip across Perceval’s shoulders. The duel was arranged for Achonry on the following day.

When Perceval arrived at the spot, the place was thronged with O’Rorke supporters. He exclaimed “it seems to be murder you want and not a fight!”

This annoyed O’Rorke and he drew his pistol swearing that he would “blow the brains of anyone, except the seconds who attempted to follow him.” The men, followed by their seconds rode to Liscat/Kilcat Fort, near Chaffpool. John Gethin of Ballymote was Perceval’s second but O’Rorke’s second could have been either of three men, a Nicolson of Primrose Grange, Attorney Weir of Castlebaldwin or a Jones of Banada.

On arriving at the designated location, Perceval, whose nickname was ‘Caoch’ or ‘Caech’, meaning ‘Purblind’, complained of facing O’Rorke with the sun in his eyes. O’Rorke immediately changed positions. O’Rorke, as was his style, got in quickly with the first shot, and missed. Perceval pleaded with him saying “Beg your life, Sir”. However, ‘Centy’ refused shouting “No, never, fire away, you blind rascal”. Perceval



**Colonel Richard Martin (1754-1834)**



took his time aiming while O'Rorke pointed to his heart yelling contemptuously, "end it here, you coward!" Perceval let fire and hit O'Rorke in the forehead. It was said that Perceval had intended to shoot over 'Centy's' head. However, O'Rorke tried an old tactic of his which had thrown former opponents off their aim, and jumped into the air the moment his opponent pulled the trigger.<sup>20</sup>

There were a number of duelling encounters between gentlemen in Sligo in the first part of the nineteenth century. One such duel took place on 21 October 1823 between J\_n Mt\_ and J\_s McD\_h. The parties exchanged shots without injuring each other.<sup>21</sup> In another duelling encounter during the 1820s, a duellist who was shot near the heart at first fire and believed killed, in fact was not hit at all, his life saved by a knife manufactured by Barton Smith which was in his waistcoat at the time. The knife and flattened bullet were kept by the family.<sup>22</sup> Members of the clergy were also known to embrace duelling and a Rev Duke and Mr Holmes took part in a duel at Doorla, near Lackagh; friends intervened and both survived the encounter.<sup>23</sup>

As duelling was against the law, the newspapers of the time, when

reporting on encounters, frequently did not print the full names of the combatants making it difficult to ascertain if it was the same man participating in several duels but most likely it was. In the case of a duel on 23 July 1822 between Edward McDermott and Denis O'Connor, the first fire was ineffectual. The seconds provided the men with second pistols and on that discharge both men were severely wounded. Dr Hughes attended both men at the scene.<sup>24</sup> At about the same time another duel took place featuring a Mr Flanagan and a Mr MacDermott at Rosses Point;<sup>25</sup> possibly the same Mac/McDermott.

In many cases it can be confirmed that it was the same individual and he was a regular duellist. Some were even known to take part in two duels on the same day as in the case of James Gillmor. Gillmor and Captain Irwin fought a duel near the Mall, Sligo. Irwin was shot but the bullet passed through his body. Gillmor was shot in the hip. However, both men lived well into old age. This was the second encounter that Gillmor had on the same day. Irwin had been the second of his first opponent and was accused by Gillmor of having fermented the original quarrel.<sup>26</sup> Harlow Phibbs, another regular duellist and of whom the public house 'Harloes' in Maugheraboy was named, fought a

duel with Rev Gethin close to where the public house is located.<sup>27</sup> Phibbs also fought another recorded duel with a Mr Cross at Cartron Hill.<sup>28</sup> A notorious duellist and popular eccentric favourite of the 'humbler classes', John 'Jack' Taaffe of Kingsfort, sometimes took his duelling beyond the Sligo borders and was involved in a duel in the grounds of a hotel in Boyle, Co. Roscommon with a Major James Bridgeham, Carrowcawley, following a court case in 1818. Two shots were exchanged, and the matter was 'happily terminated' by seconds and friends.<sup>29</sup>

### Duelling Clubs

The lethal sport was so attractive in Sligo that duellist clubs were formed among the younger sons of respectable protestant gentry in the county. A notorious group of these 'gentlemen' were called 'The Bucks of Sligo' and their most infamous sayings included 'sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die'.<sup>30</sup> O'Rorke mentions that they infested 'the town of Sligo and the neighbourhood in the closing years of the last century and the early years of the present'.<sup>31</sup> He describes them as the 'degenerate descendants of Cromwell's officers and soldiers' who had been awarded property and land in the county following the Cromwellian Settlement.<sup>32</sup> Many of them were heavily in debt but made little effort to pursue occupations of note and come to terms with their creditors. They spent most nights gambling, drinking and singing profane songs in one of their clubhouses around the county.

The Bucks met up for their nocturnal pursuits in at least three locations, one was in Bridge Street and called the Green House as ivy covered the establishment. The other two places



were located in the county, a house that stood over the Curragh, in the townland of Carrowgobadagh and a third called the Club-House at Ardnaglass, in Tireragh.<sup>33</sup> The debauched parties lasted all night long and into the morning when they would stagger forth and assault any unsuspecting early risers that they came across. They would force people to engage in mock duels with pistols loaded with fake shot and horsewhip individuals who made any attempt to sue them for non-payment of bills.<sup>34</sup>

On one occasion, the Bucks got their comeuppance. One night the Bucks of Sligo, or ‘the Knights of the Green House’ as some had named them, abducted a poor girl and dragged her back to their den in Bridge Street. They had done this with ‘the view of creating a ferment through the town’ and they were quickly satisfied in this regard. A few people who had seen this happening went to Father John Flynn, P.P. of Sligo, with the news. He assembled a group of men, mostly butchers who resided in Shambles Street, close to Bridge Street. The men confronted the Bucks and freed the girl.<sup>35</sup> This began a cold war between Fr John and the Bucks with the Bucks taking an extreme dislike to the local priest. They made a call to his house pretending to be sick and when let in by the priest’s housekeeper, three of them pounced on Fr John. Flynn was a large man, and he overpowered all three throwing them to the bottom of the stairs in a matter of minutes. The Bucks made further attempts to assault the priest but were unsuccessful due to the efforts of the butchers.<sup>36</sup>

On one notable evening, a stranger called into the Green House and ordered some food. However, the only meal offered to him was some cold meat. He noticed that some fine grouse was about to be served up and when he asked the waiter for one, he was told they were for the gentlemen, the Bucks, upstairs. The waiter warned him of trouble if he crossed the Bucks. However, the stranger insisted on having one of the grouse saying the gentlemen upstairs can do as they wish. On hearing of the cheek



and audacity of this stranger the Bucks were determined to punish the stranger for his boldness and told the waiter to present the stranger with one of their watches with compliments and ask him “what O’Clock was it?”<sup>37</sup> The stranger pocketed the watch and directed the waiter to present his card to the Bucks. The name on the card shocked them, as it was none other than Colonel Richard Martin from Galway, one of the most famous duellists in Connacht. After finishing his meal Martin enquired who the owner of the watch was and on receiving no reply he presented it to the waiter as a present and called on one of the Bucks to give him ‘satisfaction’ for the insult. A Mr. Barrett volunteered and a duel took place by torchlight in the yard of the Green House. Martin fired first and lodged a shot in Barrett’s shoulder as a reminder of the evening’s events!<sup>38</sup>

#### **Courtroom and electioneering duelling**

Duelling was, of course, against the law. However, some of the greatest practitioners of the sport were members of the legal profession at the time who were favourable towards duelling. John Scott ‘Copperfaced Jack’, 1st Earl of Clonmel, Irish Attorney General, Solicitor General and Lord Chief Justice, 1777-98 was himself a duellist, fighting in four

encounters and defended the practice: ‘There are cases where it may be, and when it is prudent for a man to fight a duel – cases in which the law does not afford him redress – cases of preserving malignity, cases of injured honour, cases of a wounded spirit; and a wounded spirit who can bear? In cases of this complexion the courts will never interfere with its discretionary authority against a man’.<sup>39</sup>

On a few occasions participants would appear before the courts charged with murder or grievous bodily harm as in the case of Daniel Feely, a Sligo attorney, who was tried by jury in August 1770 and acquitted of killing a man in a duel.<sup>40</sup> Another court case involving two Sligo duellists appeared in March 1816. The duel had occurred the previous year when Thomas Fenton and Major John Hillas met over a dispute concerning the wreck of a vessel off the Tireragh coast. Remarks made by Major Hillas offended Fenton. Hillas went to Kilmacowen, the ground selected for the duel, in a full morning suit, after declaring himself a “doomed man” following a dream he had shortly before. Both shot at the same time but Hillas fell dead. However, on 21 March 1816, Sligo Crown Court acquitted Fenton. The trial was merely a matter of form and it was accepted that if the judge and jury

were satisfied that everything had been conducted according to the rules of honour, the matter was closed.<sup>41</sup> The registration of voters in the courthouse resulted in heated debates and hostile encounters. On one occasion the presiding barrister adjourned the meeting for an hour to 'allow the parties' to have a consultation. The parties with the assistance of their seconds settled the matter with pistols, neither wounded, animosity removed, the court resumed.<sup>42</sup> On another occasion, on 7 January 1837, barristers while enrolling voters took their vindictive feelings beyond the law courts. Counsellors Baker and Casserly began a duel which was stopped by the police, but the parties arranged to meet the following day at Five Mile Bourne, shots were exchanged in the presence of a large crowd. The police arrived and broke up the meeting. The crowd stoned one of the duellists as he escaped on horseback. Both duellists were later arrested.<sup>43</sup> On 14 January 1837 two other barristers, Walker and Ramsay, resorted to duelling to settle their differences. They met at Bomore, where three shots were fired with neither man incurring injury. The disagreement had occurred over Ramsey scribbling abuses concerning Walker and passing them to him.<sup>44</sup>

Election candidates were also known to try and settle their policy differences, not trusting in the electorate to do so on polling day. In October 1832, John Martin, candidate for election to Sligo borough met Counsellor James Wynne at Cleveragh, the nephew of Owen Wynne, 'in consequence of electioneering politics'.<sup>45</sup> Wynne was attended by his second, Robert Christian and Martin by Captain Vernon. After an exchange of shots, John Martin's ball passed through the left whisker of his opponent. Seconds intervened and both parties, despite some objections from Wynne, shook hands. Thomas Martin, the sub-sheriff,<sup>46</sup> intervened and declared both parties under arrest.<sup>47</sup>

On 23 June 1836 at Camphill Bleach Green, near Collooney, Captain H. Fawcett and John Patrick Somers met in the 'presence of a large number of the peasantry'.<sup>48</sup> Somers was drinking

all night and could hardly stand up and when shot shouted 'another pistol'. However, the Captain was taken away by a friend who said "we must not fight a wounded man". The crowd were supportive of Somers and Fawcett and company had to flee the scene with great haste. Somers was later elected Independent Liberal M.P. for Sligo borough. He was a regular duellist and pugilist. In November 1838, Somers went to Paris to demand 'satisfaction' from Wentworth Beaumont, M.P. for Northumberland. Before pistols were even drawn, Somers beat Beaumont with a whip. Somers fled to London while the French authorities sentenced him to two years imprisonment and 500 Franc fine.<sup>49</sup>

### Journalistic duelling

Members of the press wholeheartedly embraced the idea of duelling and in April 1825 following a word war between the editor of the *Sligo Journal* and the editor of the *Western Luminary*, a challenge to a mortal combat was laid down. However, ultimately only ink and not blood was shed.<sup>50</sup> On 17 May 1836 Edward Verdon, proprietor of the *Sligo Champion* and Philip Beatty, Attorney, The Mall, Sligo met at Cummin, where the men exchanged three shots each which pierced clothing but no wounds inflicted. Andrew Kelly, of Camphill, Verdon's second removed him from the hill. The duel occurred following an argument between the parties in a public room.<sup>51</sup> Later Verdon was involved in another duel with Charles Sedley at Maugheraboy.<sup>52</sup> Murphy, editor of the *Sligo Champion* exchanged shots with an attorney named Moffett following a quarrel over something Murphy had written about him.<sup>53</sup> Even members of the medical profession, who were present in their professional roles at many duels, fought one another and when Doctors Coyne and Carter met with pistols at Fivemilebourne, Coyne came off worse when wounded in the knee.<sup>54</sup>

### The authorities had enough!

The police did their best to intervene and stop duelling. However, in the first half of the nineteenth century

they intensified their efforts to put a stop to the fatal sport. Following a duel between a Mr Kelly of Sligo and Mr Plunkett of Roscommon at the Black Field of Doorla in the Parish of Kilmorgan, the two men were hunted for miles by the police before they were caught. Kelly had been shot in the shoulder and unfortunately Plunkett later died of his wounds.<sup>55</sup> On 29 January 1829 a hostile meeting between J.G. J\_\_ and I. B\_\_K. took place. In effort to elude the authorities the parties reached the appointed ground an hour before, but the police were fast moving in on the site. Mr J\_\_ got away but Mr. B\_\_k was arrested later in Sligo town.<sup>56</sup> On 31 July 1837, following a misunderstanding between Mr R\_\_ of Achonry and Mr W\_\_ of Ballymote, a meeting was arranged at the crossroads of Templehouse. Mr R\_\_ was in attendance with his friend Mr A\_\_ K\_\_ of Camphill and both were promptly arrested by the police who were waiting on them. Neither Mr W\_\_ nor his friend appeared.<sup>57</sup>

Sometimes the duellists conspired with success to elude the authorities. On 19 August 1837 Henry Griffith of Ballytivnan and Kelly from Roscommon met first at Doocastle, where a large crowd had assembled. On seeing this they agreed to meet near Tubbercurry, where unfortunately another large crowd had assembled. Not wishing to waste the day, they then retired to Streamstown where the duel was fought between the two determined men with both men ultimately retiring uninjured, but no doubt exhausted from all the running around the county.<sup>58</sup>

By the 1840s the police were on high alert to intercept duellists. On 4 August 1840, an arranged duel in Sligo was prevented from occurring by the police, who dispersed the crowd before the duellists arrived.<sup>59</sup> However, inveterate duellists were willing to go to great extremes to settle their differences far away from the local authorities. In October 1842, Pierce Simpson of Clooncarriiff Castle and J. Griffiths of Sligo, both magistrates, proceeded to Calais, attended by their friends to settle an affair of honour, having been

previously prevented doing so at home by the Leitrim police.<sup>60</sup> On 25 October 1842, six gentlemen from the west of Ireland landed in Calais from Dover, where at an unknown location near the port they exchanged two shots. Following the first fire Simpson was slightly grazed on the right leg. After the second fire, Mr Griffith was withdrawn by friends.<sup>61</sup> As late as 1869 Robert Fausett of Union lodge, Collooney, a Harbour Commissioner and Justice of the peace was removed from both positions. He had invited his opponent to a duel at a public meeting.<sup>62</sup>

### Conclusion – the demise of duelling

Duelling had been an accepted way of resolving conflicts between gentlemen. However, there was an increase in opposition to it in the late 1780s and 1790s. Although, not enough to discourage the practice and a recourse to weapons was frequently the first call of an insulted gentleman. The repeal of the Penal Laws which had forbidden Catholics from bearing arms had injected new blood into duelling and Catholic gentlemen could now enthusiastically defend their honour with powder and shot. The courts tended to favour the duellists less and less in the early part of the nineteenth century and the authorities began to crack down in earnest on duellists. Although the lethal sport continued to be pursued by several hardened enthusiasts, in the 1820s and '30s the pursuit declined with the 'great moral change' in Irish society at the time. Evangelical Protestants had founded the short lived 'Association for the Suppression of Duelling' in 1830. The death of Standish Stamer O'Grady in Dublin in 1830 also hastened the end of duelling. It continued to be practised in Connacht and Munster thereafter but the Royal Irish Constabulary were now more energetic in stopping the practice. The rule of law had triumphed over the old traditions and the state now became the arbiter of disputes between gentlemen.

<sup>1</sup>*Caledonian Mercury*, 11 Sept. 1815.  
<sup>2</sup>*Saunders Newsletter*, 3 Feb. 1815;  
*Kentish Gazette*, 10 Feb. 1815.  
<sup>3</sup>James Kelly, 'That Damn'd' thing called honour': duelling in Ireland 1570-1860 (Cork, 1995) C.J. Woods, 'The place of Thomas Russell in the United Irish movement', in Hugh Gough & David Dickson, eds, *Ireland and the French Revolution* (Dublin, 1990), pp 83-100.  
<sup>4</sup>W.G., Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo county and town*, iii, (Dublin, 1892), p. 317.  
<sup>5</sup>Fiona Gallagher, *Streets of Sligo* (Sligo, 2008), p. 140.  
<sup>6</sup>W.G., Wood-Martin, *Sligo*, p. 319.  
<sup>7</sup>*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Vol. 34, 1851.  
<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>9</sup>T. O'Rorke, *The history of Sligo: town and county*, ii, (Dublin, 1889), p. 496.  
<sup>10</sup>Myles Dungan, Affairs of honour – Irish 'code duello', <https://mylesdungan.com/2013/06/04/affairs-of-honour-the-irish-code-duello/> [date accessed: 15 March 2024].  
<sup>11</sup>*Dublin Journal - George Faulkner's* 8 May 1739.  
<sup>12</sup>*Sleator's Gazette*, 10 Aug. 1759.  
<sup>13</sup>*Hibernian Journal*, 27 Mar. 1766.  
<sup>14</sup>*Freemans Journal*, 7 Sept. 1779.  
<sup>15</sup>*Dublin Journal - George Faulkner's*, 12 June 1788.  
<sup>16</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 317.  
<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 318.  
<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>19</sup>John C. McTernan, *Olde Sligoe* (Dublin, 1995), pp 173-6; *Saunders Newsletter*, 6 Sept. 1779.  
<sup>20</sup>McTernan, *Olde Sligoe*, p. 175.  
<sup>21</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 319  
<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>23</sup>O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, p. 501.  
<sup>24</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 319.  
<sup>25</sup>O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, p. 501.  
<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 501; Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 320.  
<sup>27</sup>O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, p. 501.  
<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>29</sup>O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, pp 501-2.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp 498-504.  
<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 489.  
<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 490.  
<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 493.  
<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 491  
<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*  
<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 492.  
<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 493.  
<sup>39</sup>'The Duel in Irish History' by James Kelly. *History Ireland*, Issue 1 (Spring 1994), Volume 2, James Kelly, 'That Damn'd' thing called honour': duelling in Ireland 1570-1860 (Cork, 1995).  
<sup>40</sup>*Dublin Mercury*, 27 Aug. 1770.  
<sup>41</sup>McTernan, *Olde Sligoe*, pp 226-36.  
<sup>42</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 320.  
<sup>43</sup>*Sligo Champion*, 14 June 1837. Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 321, O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, pp 502-3.  
<sup>44</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 320, O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, p. 503.  
<sup>45</sup>*Morning Post*, 23 Oct. 1832.  
<sup>46</sup>*Mayo Constitution*, 18 Oct. 1832.  
<sup>47</sup>*Enniskillen Chronicle & Erne Packet*, 25 Oct. 1832.  
<sup>48</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 321.  
<sup>49</sup>'The most violent MP ever elected to the House of Commons? John Patrick Somers (1800-1862) by Martin Spychal. <https://victoriancommons.wordpress.com/2023/09/27/the-most-violent-mp-ever-elected-to-the-house-of-commons-john-patrick-somers-1800-1862/> [Date accessed: 15 March 2024].  
<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 319.  
<sup>51</sup>*Galway Patriot*, 27 May 1837, S.C., 27 May 1837.  
<sup>52</sup>O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, p. 504.  
<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 503.  
<sup>54</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 320.  
<sup>55</sup>O'Rorke, *Sligo*, ii, p. 502.  
<sup>56</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 320.  
<sup>57</sup>*Sligo Champion*, 5 Aug 1837.  
<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 26 Aug. 1837.  
<sup>59</sup>Wood-Martin, *History of Sligo*, iii, p. 321.  
<sup>60</sup>*Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 22 Oct. 1842.  
<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 29 Oct. 1842.  
<sup>62</sup>*Sligo Champion*, 18 Sept. 1869.

# The Poultry Station

By Pat McCarrick



## Rhode Island Red

An almost forgotten aspect of rural life, the Poultry Station, was a hub for growth and a symbol of national recovery in the middle decades of the last century.

Like a young animal, desperate to steady itself in the hours after birth, Ireland in the aftermath of gaining independence, needed care and nourishment. The authorities at that time decided on a number of actions to affect such steadiness. They looked to the church for spiritual direction, they looked to tradition to preserve past glories and they looked to agriculture for sustenance. Within agriculture, better education, better methods and better stock were highlighted as the way forward. Better stock meant better yields and better yields meant a better fed population. Ironically, the specialised farming stock that resulted from the British Agricultural Revolution formed a basis for Ireland's recovery.

## Higher Standards

A struggling Irish farming sector was encouraged and incentivised to restock. This was an effort by government to get farmers to upgrade and strive for increased efficacy and productivity. A new Department of Agriculture took the lead in providing pedigree stock to improve cattle herds and poultry flocks.

*Developing Rural Ireland, A History*

*of the Irish Agricultural Advisory Services, an essay by Mícheál Ó Fathartaigh, gives an outline of the early years of this ambitious approach.*

*“In conjunction with this, together with the new county councils, each county in Ireland would begin to recruit advisors (or instructors, as they were then called) to work with farmers to develop their agricultural practices and consequently, develop rural Ireland more generally. Their brief was to help farmers improve their enterprises.*

*For much of the 20th century, there were three categories of advisor; the general agricultural instructor, the horticultural and beekeeping instructor and the poultry-keeping instructor. Their interactions with farmers incrementally and very tangibly bore fruit. Enjoying the most immediate success were the poultry-keeping instructors. They were exclusively female and their assistance to farming women in sourcing pedigree hens and producing good-quality eggs often made the decisive financial difference on smaller farms.”*

## Working From Home

This process filtered down to each farmer through the local poultry station. There was roughly one in each parish and each station specialised on one or maybe two breeds of hen. My grandaunt, Kathleen O'Hara, ran one such station at the foot of the Ox Mountains at Aclare in Co. Sligo. Kathleen, who came from a progressive farming background in Cloonacool, was well aware of the value of innovation and farming ambition. She embraced the new possibilities and put herself forward as a breeder and advisor. Her station,

run from her own small farm, specialised in the Rhode Island Red breed (RIR). The RIR is an American breed, developed there in the late nineteenth century, by cross-breeding birds of Oriental origin such as the Malay with brown Leghorn birds from Italy. The RIR was a dual breed that was as good for the table as it was for egg laying. It is a strong mahogany-coloured bird that now largely exist as a heritage breed kept mostly by fanciers. They should not be confused with the light-brown coloured hybrids of today, mistakenly referred to by the same name.

## Regulation

The whole process was formalised in the *Poultry Hatcheries Regulations* of 1949 by the then Minister for Agriculture, James Dillon. This was done to ensure best practice in breeding and was responsible for raising the standards of poultry rearing. Essential to the efficient workings of each poultry station was that the whole process was licenced – in the same way bulls had to be licenced. Applications for a poultry hatchery licence had to be made annually. In addition to this, records of eggs laid by pullets at every supply farm had to be strictly maintained and the hatching of eggs, as well as the distribution of hatching eggs, had to be recorded. Quality poultry and egg production was the principal business of each station.

Local farmers were grant-aided to build hen houses following a specific design – ventilated yet draft free and not too close to the dwelling house. To this day, the small holdings of the Ox Mountains are often hallmarked with one of these little sheds. They were built of precast concrete and roofed with asbestos sheeting. They had a

particular design that was quite unmistakable. I visited one recently, now a luxury garden shed, and despite its modern comforts, it is still a hen house.

Once a farmer had availed of the grant and built his or her hen house, it had to be stocked with quality approved birds. This new flock provided income from eggs and sustenance from meat. Happy was the housewife who made the trip to Aclare to pick up her dozens of day-old Rhode Island Red chicks. She chatted to my grandaunt about the best husbandry methods; the right feed and the best hygiene practices. Many is the shopping bag, full of weekly essentials, that was bartered for the eggs laid by this flock of treasured hens.

### Turning the Eggs

My grandaunt, in her later life, would recall with great fondness the various women who called to her poultry station for their annual supply of birds. She still remembered them all by name, the townland they came from and the number of children they had in their families. One of the cruel ironies of my grandaunt's life was that she never had children of her own, having lost a succession of pregnancies throughout her married life.

Kathleen always made little of her poultry breeding expertise but my mother, her niece, told me that Kathleen had one of the best reputations on the local poultry industry at that time. Hatching was undertaken back then through the use of incubators heated by paraffin oil. While a great advance on more primitive methods, the use of



**Paraffin Incubator**

such incubators was painstaking. Maintaining the ideal heat and moisture content (humidity) was vital in the process and only those with lots of patience and an eye for detail got the best result. Kathleen would get up twice each night to ensure the eggs in the incubator were turned. This essential action ensured she had a higher yield of hatched chicks than most others. Maybe it was a compensation from her lost babies, a bonus for mother.

### In Memory

Whenever I see one of those old distinctive hen houses beside a derelict mountain cottage, I think of

Kathleen. I think of her busy life on her small farm near Aclare and all the homes that she supplied with day-old chicks. I think of the farmyards where those chicks matured into adult birds. I think of those birds and how they fed generations of large families who otherwise would have had to survive on lesser rations. I hear the sound of a Rhode Island Red rooster crowing at first light; he is announcing the dawn of a new day and hope for the future.

## Lough Talt - A Deep History - A Correction

This article was ascribed to Alfie Deehan in Issue 56 of the Corran Herald last year. This was an error. The author of the article is Pat McCarrick. We wish to apologise to Pat for this error.

Alfie is the author of the extract from a song at the start of the article.

# Myths and Legends of the Northwest

By Clare Doohan

I have written this essay on the mythology of the Northwest of Ireland to show the necessity for its existence for human beings, not only in the past but also in the present and future. I will show how certain elements such as landscape, heroes, shape changing and animals, made compelling narratives which are essential in mythology, so that people would be forever engaged and remain faithful to the truth of the myths. Early humans had a great reverence for the landscape and a need to pay homage to the makers of their environment who must have had Godlike powers to have created it. Symbolism is an essential component of mythology, and I will investigate this. Placenames are a living proof of the existence of these myths, and I will discuss these.

‘Myths are the science of nature; they enlighten us of the world around us.’<sup>1</sup> Mythology’s essential purpose is to explain the creation of the landscape of Ireland and the character of the early human inhabitants who lived and ruled over the land. Myth is derived from the Greek ‘mythos’ meaning ‘word’ in its sacred form.<sup>2</sup> Irish myths offer an insight into the original nature of human dwelling on earth. The sanctification of the landscape is a fundamental function of mythology.<sup>3</sup> A five-fold Structure is basic to Irish Myth and *Cóiced*, meaning a fifth, is ‘province’ in the old Irish language. Other belief systems of the world have similar structures.<sup>4</sup>

In the beginning, myths were passed down through the generations in the oral tradition. Then the Christian monks wrote them down, though they placed a

different emphasis on the stories and importance on the characters, to suit their beliefs. The early human believed in gods which were vastly more powerful than humans. These gods held the status of heroes, who have savage battles and rejoice in life, but know that death is an inevitable part of life. Indeed, immortality was gained by dying a hero’s death.<sup>5</sup> All of these characters create compelling stories, forever remembered and passed down from one generation to the next.

Gods are described in very colourful and dramatic language. The Firbolgs or Bagmen were ‘black, loquacious, lying, tale bearing and of low grovelling mind’. The Tuatha de Danann were fair haired and skilful, but also plunderers, large and vengeful with magical powers, such as bringing to life their slain after battle.<sup>6</sup> These portrayals of our mythological creatures make wonderfully interesting characters.

The Fomorians were Gods who came from the sea, and they took many human lives. To appease them, the early inhabitants offered up sacrifices to them, showing homage to much superior beings.

Like mankind, the gods fought many savage battles with their enemies. The Firbolgs fought against the Tuatha de Danann in the second battle of Moytura in Kilmactranny, Co. Sligo, which is an area of vast mythological and archaeological importance. Balor of the Evil Eye (like the Cyclops in Greek mythology), God of the Fomorians, fighting on the Firbolgs’ side, who was of ‘gigantic size and Herculean strength’<sup>7</sup> lost his magical and

death inducing eye there, forming Lough na Súil. This lake disappears entirely, every twenty years approximately. I witnessed this in 1995. According to Grey, the reason for the battle was to shine a light on the fundamentals essential to the organisation and preservation of human society.<sup>8</sup> The battle showed how society managed itself. The common people of the Megalithic population of that time believed the Tuatha de Danann represented the earth powers like fertility of the land and water as well as science and poetry, as in the Druidic tradition.<sup>9</sup> This demonstrates the awe in which the early humans held the landscape and the gods who created it.

The landscape of the Hill of Keash in South Sligo with its caves has many famous myths connected to them. Deirdre of the Tuatha de Danann was magically changed into a wild and dangerous pig, and then after being enchanted by the music of Corran, the Tuatha De Danann’s harper, the animal was killed by the hunters. The carcass of the pig became Keash Hill. The hill is shaped very like the body of a pig, lying down.<sup>10</sup> The power of music was and is an integral part of the Irish community, so the idea that music could disarm a dangerous creature, and form the Hill of Keash would have made sense to the early inhabitants of the region. The three Noble Strains of Irish music are *Suantraí* (lullaby), *Geantraí* (song of joy) and *Goltraí* (song of lament).<sup>11</sup> The Celts believed that music could enchant one. Corran probably played a *Suantraí* tune to disable the dangerous sow. A poem was written about the deed, ending with the lines:

*“Ceis Corann, the gathering  
place of the hosts,*

*Was thenceforth the name of  
this place of mighty herds,*

*since the swine was killed there  
without mercy*

*In the lands where Corran  
lived.”<sup>12</sup>*

Placenames have a strong importance to mythology. They connect all generations of the local population to their origins. The placename of Keash Hill is Keshcorran. Kesh from Caelchéis, meaning enchanted sow and Corran, de Danann’s harper.<sup>13</sup> The three lakes in that area were given the names of three sisters, who were daughters of the sea god, Manannán Mac Lir of the Tuatha de Danann. They were Cé (Keash Hill’s magical underground lake) or Lough Key, Léib (Lough Léibe) and Carabhac (Lough Arrow).<sup>14</sup> Lough na Súil, in Co. Sligo is a placename which is a graphic reference to the Battle of Moytura and Balor of the Evil Eye.

Over Knocknarea Mountain, there is a valley, named Slí na gCailleag, another placename, after the Cailleach of Sligo, a winter witch, her time starts at Samhain (Halloween).<sup>15</sup> She is a force of nature, who is credited with bringing the granite rocks from the Ox mountains to the other side of Sligo to Carrowmore. The Cailleach could be an ice sheet during the Ice Age.<sup>16</sup> For early humans, with no knowledge of geology, this was an acceptable and dramatic tale, which explained a totally mysterious phenomenon. The Cailleach can also be considered a major hero in mythology, as in all the stories which surround her, she plays a strong and fierce character. Similar myths from other countries

tell of a witch, who controls the weather, such as La Vieya (The Old One) in Spain and Mouro in the Basque Country.<sup>17</sup> Other heroes mentioned in local mythology are Goll of the Tuatha de Danann and Balor of the Evil Eye. These dramatic and death-defying characters add a strong ingredient to the drama of local myths.

Shape changing is also a common feature of myths. It is present in the tale where Goll rescued Fionn and the Fianna by killing the Cailleach and her two sisters, who dwelt in Keshcorran caves and never emerged out in the daylight. The Cailleach and her two sisters changed into beautiful young girls to lure the hunters into the caves and then changed back into ugly old crones when the men were captured. This shows the deceitful nature of the dark forces within the caves, and it represents, in my opinion, the battle between light and darkness. The people at that time believed that the caves held unearthly dangerous elements because of their darkness and strangeness. They believed that the Cailleach and her two sisters represented evil and mystery and Goll and the Fianna, the light and goodness. Goodness triumphed. This motif of caves as places of the Otherworld is a universal theme, probably stemming from the darkness, silence, and apparent lack of life in caves.<sup>18</sup> Having visited the caves many times over the years, it is easy to believe how early humans feared and avoided them. The photos of the caves in *Dedicated to Sligo* demonstrate these thoughts.<sup>19</sup>

About 1.7 million years ago, severe icy weather changed the shape of the Keash Mountain.<sup>20</sup> This phenomenon may have been explained to the early humans through the myth about the Cailleach, being pulled by the Bó

Buí, into one of the caves and dragged through the underground passages and out at Rathcroghan in Co. Roscommon, the seat of the Chieftains.<sup>21</sup> The early Irish believed that a woman’s bodily fluid was associated with sexual capacity, life giving power and destructive power. Therefore, they connected the woman with springs, wells, and rivers.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps, using her destructive power, Mother Nature represented by the Cailleach, was responsible for the underground streams in the mountain. Joe Mc Gowan has a similar story. This time, a woman and a wild calf are the protagonists.<sup>23</sup> In Sam Moore’s article, *‘Prehistory in the Bricklieve Mountains’* the woman and calf are going in the opposite direction.<sup>24</sup> Animals play a crucial part in these myths.

In conclusion, the elements of landscape, shape changing, heroes and animals and symbolism are essential in making mythology engaging and meaningful to the common man. The concerns of myth-conservation and recurrence are present day concerns. Placenames, that have their origins in mythology, prove to me the truth of these myths. They are the greatest living expressions of our mythological history and a worthy and successful way of conserving it. The landscape like Keshcorran and its caves are visible proof of the need of myths and their inner truth. Garland Sunday in Keash is celebrated every year, in August, to continue the long-standing local traditions in the area. These customs and stories can change over time as peoples’ needs and outlook change. Mythology has helped to shape the identity of the local people and give them a basis on how to structure their lives. If we divorce ourselves from myth-conservation, we separate ourselves from nature and from fundamentally who we are.

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# Articles from the Archives: traditional music in County Sligo

Submitted by Seána Haughey

A recent online search in Irish Newspaper Archives for early references to traditional music in County Sligo led to some interesting discoveries. Here are three of them, the first related to the Oireachtas held in Dundalk from 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2015, at which a Sligo musician, Michael Gilmore from Cashel, Tubbercurry, was first prizewinner in violin and flute.

Next, a piece from 1933 when a number of musicians from Keash took the honours in the fiddle, flute and ceilidh band competitions at Ballymote Feis, held in the grounds of Ballymote Castle on July 8<sup>th</sup> of that year and last but not least, a short piece from the *Roscommon Herald* in August 1947.

Further digging led me to Hugo (Hugh) McCormack's obituary notice in *The Philadelphia Enquirer* on Oct. 15, 1992. A native of Co. Donegal, his father, also called Hugh, was stationed in Tubbercurry at the time of his son's departure for the United States in 1947. What is interesting is the discovery that Hugh's love of Irish music continued into his adult life, as outlined in this excerpt from his obituary notice: "Much to the delight of his friends and family, Mr. McCormack enjoyed playing traditional Irish music on his violin at community events, parties and family gatherings. His favourite tune was *The Hills of Donegal*."

*Sligo Champion, Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1915*

## An Appreciation of a County Sligo Musician

The *Belfast Daily Telegraph* pays the following tribute in its issue of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. to the genius of a Co. Sligo musician:

"Mr. M. J. Gilmore, of Cashel, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo, is first prizewinner at Dundalk Oireachtas, 1915, in both flute and violin solo. In flute, he scored 97 out of 100 marks, and in violin 95 marks. His performance was the best in a violin competition that Mr. Arthur Varley, no mean judge, said he had ever

listened to. Playing in the traditional style, it was of such a high level of excellence as is probably seldom heard nowadays and Mr. Gilmore was the best of a big group."

"It is a mistake to think that only beggars and old women excel in Irish traditional music. The peasantry and workers in outstanding instances have shown marked ability and intelligent interest. Large farmers and men in good positions also figure occasionally at the contests. To the last class Mr. Michael Gilmore belongs. Besides his dual accomplishment on flute – a concert Boehm – and violin, he has a large budget of manuscript music, mostly collected and arranged by himself from authentic sources. Personally he is a pleasant and unassuming man who loves to exhibit the beauties of an ancient and characteristic art to anyone who evinces interest in the subject."

"One of the memories of the 1915 Oireachtas to a little group of musical enthusiasts will be that of Mr. Gilmore in a room of a Dundalk hotel playing one evening an incomparable selection of slow airs, jigs, reels and hornpipes. One by one masterpiece, each more charming and characteristic than the preceding, and both flute and violin were used according to the peculiar adaptability of air and instrument. Those present will not readily forget that evening."

*Sligo Champion, Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1933*  
- *Keash and Culfadda Notes*:

## Talented Musicians

"We are glad to note that whatever Keash is deficient of it is second to none in music. As can be seen from the report of the Ballymote Feis, our talented young men carried away three firsts in ceilidh bands, traditional violin and traditional flute. We offer our heartiest congratulations to Mr. Peter Gallagher, Mr. Francis Harrison, Mr. Killeen, Mr. Coghlan and Mr. Taylor in winning the band competition; to Mr. Thomas Shiels on winning the violin competition, and to Mr. Thomas Gallagher, Drumnagranchy,

in the flute competition. It is hoped their good example will be followed by others in the parish in the near future."

*Roscommon Herald, Saturday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1947 - Tubbercurry Notes*:

## Departed to U.S.

"During the weekend, Mr. Hugo McCormick, son of Sergt. and Mrs. McCormick, Tubbercurry, left for America. Mr. McCormick, who is a wireless operator, served in the Mercantile Marine during the last war and visited many parts of the world. A talented musician, Mr. McCormick when he was a boy of twelve years broadcast a violin selection in Irish traditional music from Radio Eireann."

In conclusion, it was interesting during this search of the archives to discover mention of Sligo musicians who are not 'household names' but who each in their own way contributed to the traditional music scene of Co. Sligo. Perhaps someone will know more and might have information on any recordings of these musicians. That would be the icing on the cake!

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# The First Year of the Pandemic in Ireland, 2020

By Kevin McLoughlin

COVID-19 was a global outbreak of an infectious disease caused by a new severe respiratory virus (SARS-CoV-2) with the first cases detected in China in December 2019. The World Health Organisation declared a Public Health Emergency on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and called the outbreak a pandemic two months later. Early hopes it might be contained in China with the wider world escaping quickly came undone with the rising number of deaths due to the fast human-to-human transmission and reported cases of outbreaks from the virulent virus in other countries, especially northern Italy arising from people returning from China. A new level of fear was generated worldwide as the first lockdown occurred in Wuhan, accompanied by widespread testing. A wave of outbreaks soon hit New York city with the virus spreading like wildfire and reaching over one hundred countries by early March. This necessitated governments across the globe taking drastic actions as early intervention was crucial to keep ahead of new outbreaks.

By the end of January, the National Public Health Emergency Team (Nphet) was formed in Ireland and the first COVID-19 case, a student who had returned from Northern Italy, was confirmed on February 29<sup>th</sup>. Following an address to the people of Ireland on St. Patrick's night by the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, the country was placed on full lockdown on March 27<sup>th</sup>. All non-essential journeys were banned with a stay-at-home order allowing people to exercise no more than 2 km from their home. Schools, colleges, restaurants, bars and places of worship were closed with religious services quickly moving online. On March 19<sup>th</sup>, RTÉ began presenting daily mass from St Columba's

Cathedral in Letterkenny, followed by a message from representatives of Ireland's other faith communities. The first Sunday after churches closed, the usual viewing figures for RTÉ's Sunday services were four times higher than usual. People began working from home where possible, airlines grounded their fleets and sporting events were cancelled. Uncertainty and fear sent global markets tumbling day by day. The world was in a whirlwind with every new day bringing alarming news and normal living grinding to a halt. News bulletins became filled with protocol statements, problems obtaining personal protective equipment and ventilation kits, isolation wards and ICUs filling up in hospitals, queues at testing stations, city streets free from traffic and not a word about Brexit that had previously consumed the airwaves. A new vocabulary came into usage with terms such as containment, social distancing, flattening the curve, reproduction number, clusters and household contacts becoming commonplace.

There was no need for a calendar in the stay-at-home month of April 2020 as one day was the same as the next. The initial panic in grocery shopping, especially for flour and toilet rolls slowly waned. The awful images of coffin-filled trucks from Italy and America filled TV screens. By the end of the month the total number of deaths in Ireland from the pandemic stood at 1,160 with a total of 20,000 confirmed cases. The UK reported over 27,000 deaths while in the US there were almost 60,000 fatalities from the virus - just ahead of the number it lost in the Vietnam war. The US also confirmed one million cases of the infection, a third of the global total. The sad and devastating high

mortality rate of people in Ireland's nursing and care homes continued where regrettably the initial government response was slow.

People who could, worked from home while carbon emissions plummeted. Zoom conferencing brought changes to the workplace during April that previously would have taken years. Wage subsidies and other payments helped the new unemployed as what could be closed was securely bolted. The financial cost was high with the economy shrinking daily. Half of global jobs were at risk, with oil falling to negative values due to little demand for crude. Daily updates on deaths and new infection rates were eagerly awaited in hope of good news regarding the lifting of restrictions, though people were aware any such changes in restrictions could present a new wave of infections. Around 80% of COVID cases led to mild to moderate illness, close to 14% had severe disease and around 6% were critical. People with severe obesity and the elderly were especially vulnerable with over sixty-five's accounting for over 90% of deaths from the virus. The number of weekly confirmed cases of the virus in Ireland peaked in mid-April at just over six thousand, with the weekly death rate at 270 and 160 ICU beds occupied. The number of cases, deaths and people requiring ICU all declined during the month of May with the weekly death rate down to thirty-four by the end of the month. The median age of death was eighty-six. The weekly number of confirmed cases in Ireland also dropped to just below four hundred with healthcare workers continuing to make up almost a third of all cases. By the end of May, over 1600 people had died from the disease and 25,000 cases of the virus confirmed, the median age of cases was forty-

eight.

In a battle between the health of the people and the health of the economy, the Irish government laid down a roadmap for reopening the lock-down as economists had warned that if opening-up did not happen soon, some businesses would be lost for good. The number of people in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment had reached over six hundred thousand. The ill wind favoured some as online shopping thrived as delivery vans zipped by on empty roads. People walked the allowed two km loop repeatedly, some having done the Camino distance in their driveways, but the extended lockdown had a profound impact on mental health due to the lack of social contact. Netflix films and the Normal People series passed some of the time and puzzles and quizzes were solved. All sports were hugely disrupted by the restrictions but the great voluntary efforts by the members of sports clubs and others to help and support those in need was inspirational.

The heroic work of the frontline workers continued with unrelenting resolve and their immense joy was displayed when patients were discharged home from hospitals. The tired faces of the Chief Medical Officer Tony Holohan, Minister for Health Simon Harris and Leo Varadkar on news bulletins demonstrated their enduring work. The work of Nphet, HSE and the Department of Health ensured the country was now setting appropriate controls that would save thousands of lives. Leaving Cert. students were assessed by their teachers and given calculated grades, a process that saw a significant inflation in grades from previous years. As restrictions were eased in June, traffic increased on the M50 by 30% on the previous week and at the end of the month, hairdressers, barbers, gyms, cinemas, pubs serving food, cafés, restaurants, hotels, beauty salons and tourist attractions opened to the great relief of the public.

Attendance at places of worship was possible again with capacity limits, social distancing and sanitising practices being put in place. The Catholic Church in Ireland was the faith most affected by the pandemic due to the emphasis placed on public worship and was now facing financial uncertainty as church collections ground to a halt due to closures from March. Reduced numbers were allowed after reopening in June. Webcam became popular in a novel approach to facilitate online attendance at religious ceremonies. Restrictions applying to funerals had been particularly difficult with church attendance limited to ten people, barely enough places allowed for family members. There was now a real fear the pandemic could hasten the decline of the Catholic Church in Irish life, already following the wider European trend towards secularisation.

Sports clubs were required to lay down strict and complex protocols on re-opening for members and visitors to follow which were difficult to organise and set in place. Sporting events and matches took place behind closed doors with strict avoidance of social gatherings before and after events. Mask wearing on transport and in retail settings became necessary in July with restrictions on numbers in indoor gatherings remaining in place. Pubs that did not serve food and nightclubs remained closed. Amid all the travel bans, reliable data from John Hopkins university kept us aware that extended shutdowns were necessary and waves involving new variants of the virus were inevitable.

Hydroxychloroquine was authorised for treatment of COVID illness by the FDA in March but later rescinded in June as it did not reduce mortality rates or provide any benefit. The anti-viral Remdesivir was approved by FDA in April but by August it was found to have insignificant effect on patients. Rapid 15-minute antibody home tests were approved by the FDA in August, while there was promising news of

vaccine development by AstraZeneca and Moderna, with Pfizer having phase 3 trials underway. Latest information came regarding a risk of reinfection as antibody levels dropped after 3 months following COVID infection.

By the middle of August, COVID was the third leading cause of death in the US. COVAX, with 172 countries participating but with the Trump administration refusing to become involved, was launched with the purpose of having an eventual vaccine distributed evenly to poor and developing countries. As COVID case numbers rose relentlessly in August the government tightened restrictions on gatherings. Shortly afterwards some members of the government attended a dinner during the Oireachtas Golf Society outing in Clifden and Golfgate emerged over concerns on possible breaches of the regulations at the dinner. Resignations of some of the politicians involved followed afterwards.

During September, a new more contagious strain of COVID-19 was discovered in a new infection wave that had a mutation allowing the virus to bind and infect more cells. By the end of that month, global COVID-19 deaths surpassed one million with the US reporting an unprecedented 100,000 cases in one day. In October, new restrictions came into play in Ireland with a ban on people leaving their county, all indoor museums, galleries, cinemas and other cultural attractions were closed. A maximum of twenty-five were allowed attend weddings and visitors could attend one other household only. Schools, early-learning and childcare services remained open. Retail and services such as hairdressers, beauticians, restaurants and cafes (including pubs serving food) remained open for takeaway and delivery with outdoor dining limited to a maximum of fifteen people. Hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs remained open, but with services limited to residents.

Good news arrived in November when Moderna revealed significant mRNA vaccine results, an innovative

approach that had not previously been used in approved vaccines against any disease. It reduced the risk of COVID-19 infection by 95% in participants who received the vaccine. Pfizer and AstraZeneca also reported satisfactory results with their vaccines and by December the FDA signed off on the vaccines. The American physician Tony Fauci highlighted the cardiovascular implications of COVID-19 and the need to follow up with patients to better understand the long-term effects of the infection. He pointed to symptoms of patients with profound fatigue, shortness of breath, temporary loss of taste and smell, muscle aches, sporadic fevers, and an inability to concentrate lasting for weeks or months after contacting COVID-19.

The All-Ireland finals were played a week before Christmas in an empty Croke Park.

The government decided against Nphet advice and despite the emergence of

the Alpha variant of the virus to reopen hospitality with pubs and restaurants to remain open for a “meaningful” Christmas. It led to a massive wave of infections and a sudden lockdown that lasted for months after Christmas. There were 1,500 deaths in Ireland in January 2021, the single worst month for deaths during the entire pandemic. On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the first person in Ireland was vaccinated against Covid-19. However, other new variants of Covid surfaced later and despite billions of doses of the vaccines being administered, the global inequity of vaccine distribution ensured the pandemic would continue for some time.

After more than three years of duration and almost seven million deaths worldwide, the pandemic was officially declared over on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, though the disease continues in the population. Over a million people in the US, a quarter of a million in the UK and nine thousand people in

Ireland died from COVID, Ireland having one of the lowest excess death rates in the world. It is worth recalling Leo Varadkar’s prophetic speech from New York on that St. Patrick’s Day, 2020 when he said, “In years to come let them say of us when things were at their worst, we were at our best”.

The rapid deployment of vaccines against the virus was a fundamental step in ending the pandemic. The emergence of more viral threats can be expected in the future and one lesson learned from Covid-19 is that the world is a small place, with travel connecting people everywhere. A dangerous, infectious disease at the far end of the world is now a threat to the health of everybody across the globe. The difficult learning throughout this pandemic will help in the preparedness and dealing with a future pandemic.

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## Bellamont House of 1625, Collooney, Co. Sligo – A Correction

By *Martin A. Timoney*

On a Sligo Field Club outing to Collooney and surroundings about twenty years ago, while sitting on the earthen mound, SL20-207, near the strategic confluence of the Owenmore and Unshin rivers in Cloonmacduff Aidan Mannion was sitting in front of me. He was holding a copy of the 1:2,500 OS map. Screaming from it was a clear indication that there was a 17<sup>th</sup> century house on the site we were on.

Bellamont, Belmont House was here, not somewhere near the RC church in the town which I struggled with in my article in issue 38 of *The Corran*

*Herald*, 2005-2006, p 24-26, entitled "Bellamont House, Collooney, and other 17<sup>th</sup> Century Fortified Houses in Co. Sligo". I was wrong, badly wrong, with a location in the town of Collooney, for Bellamont House. I was following Terence O’Rorke and James McGarry, both local historians who lived in their own times close to the RC church.

The house has been totally demolished, but on the mound some wall footings are to be seen. There are fragments of red brick here, not the usual Sligo orange or red bricks, but a heavier and darker one. There are also

fragments of roofing stones, the type I dealt with in an article entitled "Roofing Stones of Sandstone, Schist or Shale", *The Corran Herald*, 2007-2008, issue 40, page 46.

Bellamont House was built in 1655, traditionally using stones from the McDonagh castle of 1408, and had ten hearths. The McDonagh castle was in turn on an earlier site, probably of the 12<sup>th</sup> century; that is for another article by Dr. Danial Patrick Curly and myself.

# A Perspective on Time

By Kevin McLoughlin



The flow of sand in an hourglass provides a measure for the passage of time. Looking at it, we see the past, present and the future before our eyes, showing the present between the past and the future. The flow of sand is very even, with no jumps forward or back in the process. The length of time over one precise minute is the same in the following minute as it was in the previous minute. Well not so in all instances but more of that later.

Ahead of the visit of the president of the United States to Ballina last year, some people believed Joe Biden's link to Ireland, being so far back in time, was trivial and insignificant. In his memorable speech by the banks of the river Moy, the president spoke about his great, great grandfather, Patrick Blewitt, who was born in Ballina in 1832 and emigrated to the US in 1850.

Patrick's son Edward was born in 1859 and became a senator in 1907. His daughter Geraldine married Ambrose Finnegan, whose father had emigrated from Co. Louth in the 1840's, and their daughter Jean, was the president's mother, five generations in all.

To put that period in perspective from a personal viewpoint, my great, grandfather, Thomas Quigley was born in 1830 in Ardsallagh, 3km from Ballymote, and continuing to my own children covers those five generations. Seven of Thomas' ten children also emigrated to America.

To put five generations on a more recent scale, my grandchildren's great, great grandmother, Mary Anne Gormley from Dernaskeagh, (5km from Ardsallagh towards Boyle) was married to Thomas Quigley's son, James (both pictured right). I knew Mary Anne, my grandmother, for twenty-six years of my life.

Taking that span of time a little further, a current ninety-year-old's parents would have been old enough to remember the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865, who would in turn have heard their own parents recall the hardships from the famine.

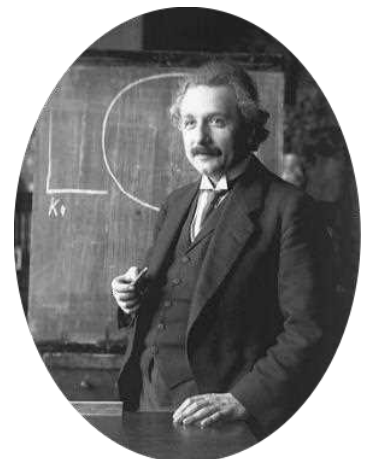
The perception of time has always intrigued humankind and around 350 BC, Aristotle, the ancient Greek



**Mary Anne Gormley and Thomas Quigley**

philosopher expounded that time does not exist at all, since it is composed of the past which no longer exists, the future, which has not happened yet, and the present which continually disappears. Albert Einstein also studied the nature of time and went further to say that time is an illusion; a second is not always a second everywhere in the universe as the rate at which time flows depends upon where you are and how fast you are travelling; time will speed up and slow down around stars and galaxies with different masses and velocities. If we ignore the fact that the earth is spinning on its axis while rotating around the sun, while the sun

**Obituary.**  
 The death occurred during the week of Mr. Thomas Quigley, at his residence, Ardsallagh. Mr. Quigley had been ailing for some time past, and though not unexpected his demise came as a shock to his family. The funeral which was a large and representative one, bore fitting testimony to the esteem in which Mr. Quigley and his family were held.



**Albert Einstein**

in turn is spiralling around the Milky Way Galaxy, coupled with the movement of the Galaxy itself along with the overall expansion of the universe, we can very nearly leave Einstein's relativity aside for us here on Earth. We must not forget however, to take account of the relative movement of time in operating our GPS systems as otherwise errors would amount to many kilometres per day. One other point that Einstein said about time was that to know where you are in three-dimensional space, having the length, width, and height is not enough, you have also to know what time it is, time being the fourth dimension, and we will leave his work with that.

Physics may seem at odds with our general perception of time and the common experience of most people is that time is not an illusion and is in fact very real in dealing with the past, present and the future. When we ask about 'the' time, somebody thinks of the present, looks at a clock, and says something like ten past two, so we know it is after lunchtime. 'Our' time is framed by our experiences and memory of the past which shapes our present and future. We discover about further back in time by learning from what previous generations have left behind, which critically depends on the place and culture into which we are born. The future is the time after the present which we feel is inevitable. We can let our imagination run wild about what will happen in the future but built into that is a large measure of uncertainty. In leaping ahead at the phenomenal pace that we are now acquiring knowledge and



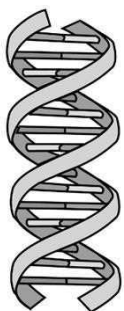
skills and along with artificial intelligence, it is difficult to know what future innovation will bring. Driverless cars are already here and flying cars have been successfully test-flown in Europe (though coming later than the 2015 year predicted in the 1989 film Back to the Future Part II); gene therapy now treats and prevents disease but tinkering with our DNA to having photosynthetic cells across the foreheads of humans for manufacturing food, making us part plant, is further into the future. Harnessing nuclear fusion for energy is just a little while away which will solve all energy needs; anybody's guess could transpire in the future.

Over the past half century, the measurement of time has become exceedingly accurate. In 2020, the shortest measurement of a time was achieved (the time it takes a light particle to cross a hydrogen molecule) at 247 zeptoseconds, that is eighteen zeros after the decimal point and before the 247. At the other end of the scale is the distance across the observable universe (which is still expanding). If the universe is considered as a sphere, the diameter is ninety-three billion light years or almost nine million, billion, billion km.

What complicates the nature of time for us is that the past is so infinite by comparison to our length of time on

planet earth. Scientists now agree that the beginning of the universe was about 13.8 billion years ago, the time of the Big Bang, so the earth itself is a young planet and is about four and a half billion years old (4,500,000,000).

The first forms of life on earth were simple bacteria that evolved a billion years after the formation of the planet. Over time they advanced into more complex forms of life with the first animals on earth about six hundred million years ago and first mammals about four hundred million years later. Dinosaurs went extinct about sixty-five million years ago having lived on Earth for about 165 million years. A common ancestor to chimps and humans lived around six million years ago with the first homo genus emerging about 2.3 million years ago, having no speech and living in Africa. The oldest homo sapiens fossil is from about 300,000 years ago. Clothes began being worn by humans around 170,000 BC and speaking with each other from 60,000 BC as migration



DNA Strand



The Big Bang



### Galaxies

from Africa began. Cave paintings date from 40,000 BC but writing only started 3,500 years ago and since then, has recorded human history.

The relative time that modern humans have been on earth can best be understood by representing the time since the earth was formed as exactly 24 hours. Humans are present for just the last second of that time, arriving one second before midnight. If human history itself spans 24 hours, the last 14 minutes would represent the time since Jesus walked on earth.

Regarding the future, there is one thing we can be sure of and that is the fate of our planet earth. If human intervention does not cause its demise, it can exist for about the same time as its current existence. The fuel in our sun is about half used up and by another five billion years the sun will have turned into a red giant and expanded beyond earth's orbit, devouring our earth inside.

So, what is the destiny for humankind? Our planet is one of 8 main planets along with dozens of moons that orbit our sun which is a star in the Milky Way galaxy. Given there are 100 billion stars in a typical galaxy and about 2 trillion galaxies, the number of planets in the universe at the right distance from a star suitable for biological life is unfathomable and we would be very

naive to believe planet earth is the only planet where life, of whatever nature, has evolved. Astronomers using the James Webb Space Telescope have just last year discovered carbon-based molecules in an exoplanet that occurs at the right distance from the Star for Life as we know it to exist. This suggests the possibility of life on a habitable exoplanet and will transform our understanding of our place in the universe.

Currently there are over 9,000 exoplanets known, the only problem is the time it will take for us to get to one such planet when we must bid goodbye to earth. The distance to our nearest star, Proxima Centauri, is 4.246 light years or 40,170,000,000,000 km and has an earth-like planet orbiting it. However, it would take us over 6,000 years to get there using current technology. Many of the septillion planets out there are billions of years older than earth with possible civilisations significantly more advanced than ours, both intellectually and technologically, as evolution of artificial intelligent robots is just beginning on earth. In the centuries ahead, it is possible that humans on planet earth might be overtaken by intelligent machines which no longer need an atmosphere that has become

depleted of oxygen as the rainforests get stripped away and independent of an excessive temperature that was caused by global warming.

Whether aliens are made of flesh and blood like us or what we perceive now as being artificial, they have yet to communicate with us even though we have been listening to detect their existence by way of radio waves using giant radio-telescopes since 1985. Friendly aliens (we hope) who have developed the means of crossing the vast interstellar space may yet be our saviour and whisk us off to a safer place.

*"I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.*

*"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." - J.R.R. Tolkien (The Fellowship of the Ring)*

We should now appreciate that the length of time since Joe Biden's ancestors emigrated during the famine five generations ago is not far back in time. Though the Quigley homestead of my forebears in Ardsallagh is no more, like Joe Biden, I also treasure my family roots through the generations and appreciate my family's past and their origins and roots. It is reassuring to know who our ancestors were, what they did, the hardships they endured, the achievements they made and the dreams they had to carry them forward. However short our time on earth may be, it is knowing our past, living in the present, and aiming for the future that those dreams become a reality.

Albert Einstein said that *life is like riding a bicycle; to keep your balance, you must be moving* – just like time.

# Memories of Patrick McGovern, Roscrib, Ballymote

Submitted by Pdraig Doddy

A family history book, *The McGovern Family: From Ballymote, County Sligo, Ireland to America* contains memories and stories of the descendants of Peter McGovern and Patrick Egan of Co. Sligo. One of their descendants was Patrick McGovern born June 15<sup>th</sup> 1897 in Ballymote, Co. Sligo.



Patrick McGovern 1897 - 1971

His parents were James McGovern (1858-1908), a butcher, and Margaret Egan (1861-1941). Patrick was the second child of seven children. The 1901 Census shows their residence as 14 Mill Street, Ballymote.

In 1947, he married Mary Teresa (Maisie) Benson (born 1918, Ballymote) and they lived in Roscrib, Ballymote. In the intervening years before his marriage, Patrick had an intriguing life. His nephew Walter Afield shared stories as told to him by his Uncle Paddy in *The McGovern Family* book.

Patrick served Great Britain during World War I from 1917-1920 and after his return Paddy joined the Irish Republican Army. He also spent some time in Chicago, USA.

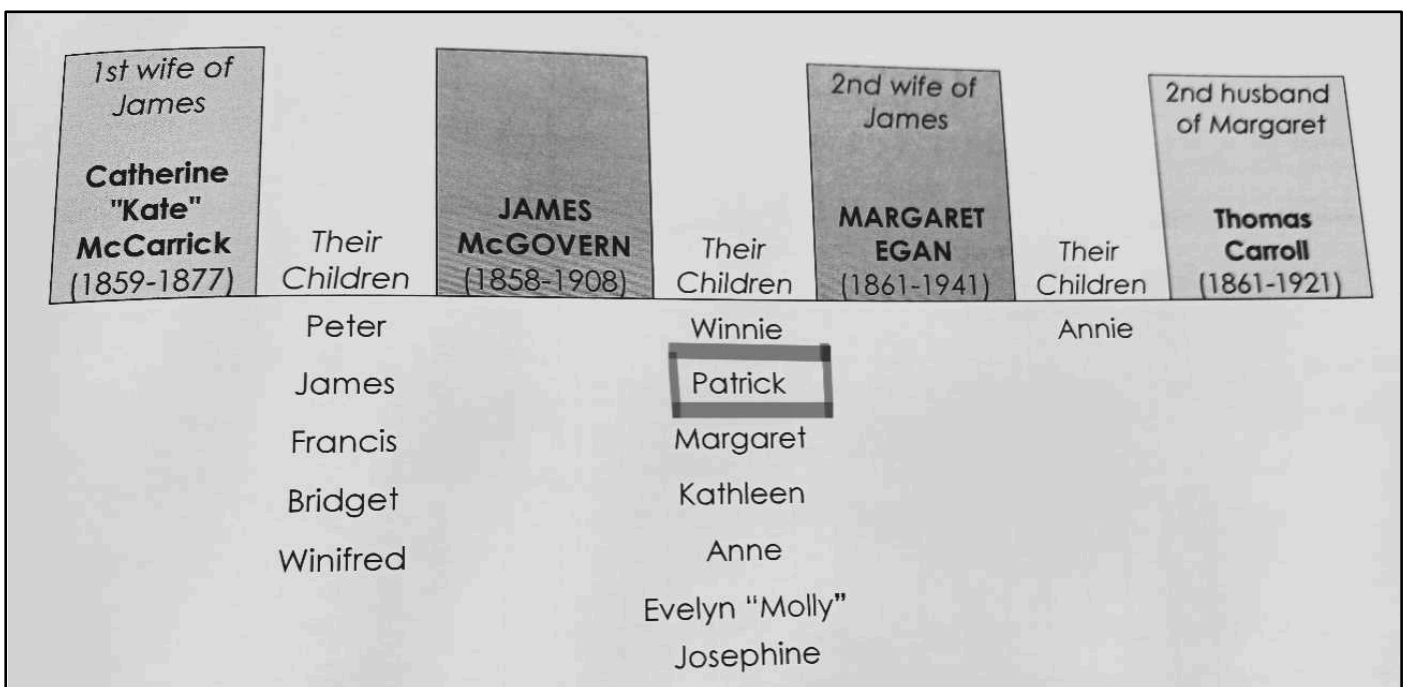
### Military Service

Excerpt from *The McGovern Family* (Afield 2018 p71):

‘When World War I came, the McGovern boys (Frank and Charlie) went off to join the troops to fight the

“War with the Huns”. The English confiscated all of the farms to feed the troops. Margaret (Egan) McGovern was left with all the girls. Uncle Patrick (Paddy), who was redheaded and reportedly a good singer, went off to join in the battle too.

Uncle Paddy came back from the War and often talked about how, while marching off to the battlefield, he would hear the magnificent music, the drums and the bagpipes playing all the “tunes of glory”. “It made the blood boil”, he would say. Suddenly the band would back off and there would be a “deadening silence”. Troops entered the trenches and the endless shooting began. As Paddy described it, he remembered “some giant German with a large moustache and a pointed helmet” coming over the top of the trench pointing his gun and bayonet at him. Paddy shot and killed him and the man fell on him! Paddy vomited! He was subsequently taken prisoner by the Germans. He had great respect for them because they



Patrick McGovern family tree

taught him to read and write while he was prisoner.

At the end of the War, he came back to Ireland becoming part of the Irish Republican Army as they fought for independence from England.'

### Irish Republican Army

Excerpt from *The McGovern Family* (Afield 2018 p14):

'Uncle Paddy (Patrick McGovern), who came back from the War, joined the Irish Republican Army in the fight against the British. He was still involved in "fighting, running, hiding and fighting again". He did participate in Bloody Sunday, the Massacre which occurred in Dublin in November of 1920. Twenty people were killed. From then on, he was a wanted man with a "price on his head". He was chased throughout the Irish countryside, hiding in farms and caves. The Black and Tans were ruthless and would shoot anyone suspicious.

At the end, he was in Belfast. In the large town square there was a major bronze statue of the much hated Oliver Cromwell astride his horse. In the middle of the night "armed with a brush and a bucket of horse shit", Paddy proceeded to paint the entire statue with what "King Billy richly deserved". Putting the bucket of shit on the tail of the horse, he wrote "keep your eye on the bucket, I've not finished with him yet!"

He decided his safety was in America and immediately emigrated to Chicago. There he started a butcher shop which became successful.'

Patrick eventually moved back to the family farm (Roscrib House) in Ballymote. He married Mary Teresa (Maisie) Benson on August 12<sup>th</sup> 1947 in the Immaculate Conception Church, Ballymote. They did not have any family. Patrick died July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1971 in Ballymote. Maisie, who was a former President of the Ballymote Heritage Group, died 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2008 and is buried in Ballymote.



**Paddy's sister Evelyn (also known a Mollie) front of the family butcher shop in Ballymote**  
47, 69-71,145,152,173.



**The McGovern butcher shop in Chicago**

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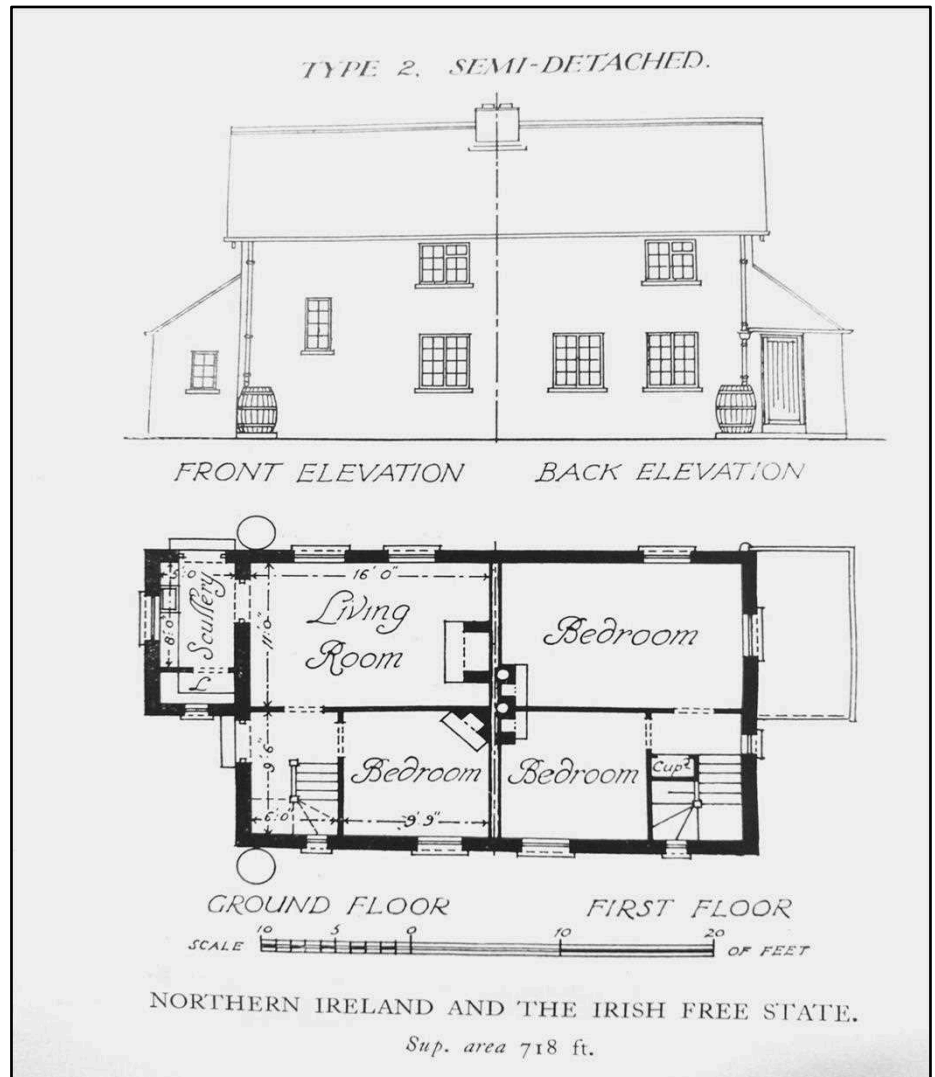
# When Britain Built Homes in Ireland

By Marian Foley & Derek Davey

“Lack of suitable homes”, “Tenements falling down”, “Tumbledown cottages,” “Rural depopulation” and on and on went the refrain in the years after the 1916 Rising and the end of the First World War. The British government had a programme for reform and reconstruction after WW1 in Britain and also, to an extent, in Ireland by 1919.

A friend of Lloyd George (and his Director of Welfare at the Ministry of Munitions) along with others in the Liberal Party, debated that precedence be given to the supply of an immense housing development which would kick-start the lack of any construction during the war years. They hoped this would quell any unrest, or indeed revolution, as they rolled out a state programme for working-class housing. This friend was Seeborn Rowntree, an industrialist and social reformer, who had already undertaken a widespread study of poverty in northern England and it was he who advised on the urban renewal and also the need for development in the countryside to attract demobbed men to rural areas. The need for some land with these rural cottages meant an acceleration of the acquisition of property from the state and large estate holders.

These ideas for the countryside were not totally new as reformers had posed solutions to the urban congestion and to land productivity in poorly populated areas of the country for over 20 years. These were all ready to roll out in 1913/14 but the war had begun and stalled the project. Now there was a greater need for the programme to start as there were tens of thousands of men back from the



## The cottages built in Ballymote were of the Type 2 design

war, food imports were sluggish and the supply of home-grown food was small. There were separate plans for parts of the Union but they met with opposition in Scotland, Wales and England and slow progress was made.

However, the Irish situation already had an attempt ongoing with one of many Land Acts up to 1909. The April 1918 Bill of The Irish Land (Provision for Sailors and Soldiers), had an immediate and negative response due in part to the attempt to impose

conscription for the second time just six months earlier in part due to the influence of Cork born Bishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix). This provoked such a backlash that the new Viceroy of Ireland, Field Marshall French, called instead for 50,000 volunteers while announcing that discharged soldiers would be rewarded with plots of land after the war finished.

His official proclamation, clause V, in part, stated “We recognise that men who come forward and fight for their

motherland are entitled to share in all their motherland can offer.....”

John Dillon, along with other Irish Nationalists, saw this as a straightforward bribe to volunteers after the mishandled conscription issue and said the outcome would bring about a new “plantation” plan. Thus, the Bill was withdrawn but due to the proclamation by Field Marshall French, the then Government was obliged to go in some way towards meeting the Proclamations statement of providing houses to servicemen.

The Irish Land (Provision for Soldiers and Sailors) Bill of 1919 was aligned more to the Bills for Scotland, England and Wales. It was recognised that there could be opposition to the returning servicemen resulting in unemployment and nowhere for them to live and the bill tried to give them special provisions to settle on the land. The Irish Local Government Board (LGB) was to deal with this as part of the Labourers Act. The LGB could accept gifts of land or obtain land through compulsory purchase for two years after the enactment of the Bill.

The bill went through unopposed as Dáil Eireann had been established in 1918 and Irish Nationalists withdrew from Parliament. Nonetheless, provision of farms, cottages and plots of land began throughout the land but then halted in 1922 when the Irish Free State was formed. Other provisions now had to be found to continue this work which was far from completed. The Governments of Westminster, Dublin and Belfast devolved the LGB task of land provision to a new body, Irish Sailors and Soldiers Trust (ISSLT) set up in 1922 and ratified by all the legislatures. It came into full power in 1924 with the houses already constructed made over to the ISSLT and a grant of £1.5 million to carry on with any further construction.

Therefore, the provision of land recommenced with the Irish Land



**A Photo of a pair of cottages clearly showing the scullery to the side of each home.**

Commission allocating 10,000 acres amounting to 360 holdings for farms for ex-servicemen. This was part of the original rural revitalisation and not truly part of this narrative.

Under the 1919 Act the Board of Works had designed and erected some 2,000 houses (1,508 in the Free State and 408 in the North) with many dozens more under construction by 1922 when a joint Consequential Provision Act was signed off in 1922. The ISSLT inherited these and Treasury regulations were drawn up regarding future building with a target of 2,626 for the Free State and 1,046 for the North. The initial money had largely been spent and in late 1923 a further sum of £1.3 million was eventually ceded to the Trust which formally came into operation in 1924.

“Homes for Heroes” could now begin in earnest and would be in line with labourer’s cottages of £500 per dwelling with no

commercial advantage to the Trust as rents were to cover administration and maintenance. Rents were considerably higher than for the labourers’ cottages (5 shillings per week as opposed to 1 shilling and 6 pence) but the labourers’ cottages were not of such a high specification as the Trust houses. Nevertheless, rents became increasingly contentious in the Free State and by 1927 there were rent strikes and arrears of £13,500. Matters came to a head in 1931 when the large estate of ISSLT houses in Killester, Dublin, brought a lawsuit against the Trust, which was heard in the High Court, citing that Field Marshal French proclaimed the volunteers would be *rewarded* with houses and land. This action was dismissed but a later appeal to the Supreme Court (in July 1932) concluded that the tenants should pay no rent. Judge Gerald Fitzgibbon, QC ruled that there was “No power whatsoever to charge those objects of this Trust any rent for such

residences". The building and maintenance of the houses basically stopped from that date. (The Trust itself continued to function and in fact, one of the trustees of the ISSLT from 1948 was Lord Killanin.)

The large estate of houses built in Killester, Dublin, was the subject of a documentary, with a book written by Nigel Henderson and Tom Burke called "Killester Garden Village" which proved to be a great help in some of the research.

In all, there were 2,720 cottages built in the Free State and 1,217 in Northern Ireland.

F.H.A.Aalens book doesn't give a total breakdown for all the Counties in the Free State but does suggest that there were 20 built in Sligo.(Century Ireland suggests 28. Where are the others in County Sligo?) As there are 18 around Ballymote alone, this figure would need to be corroborated but all records pertaining to the ISSLT were transferred to Kew Public Records Office, England in 1988.

The semi-detached cottages built around Ballymote have in some instances been difficult to discover due to renovations or almost complete reconstruction work, but the three detached cottages have been easier to locate.

The Irish ex-servicemen and women who lived and reared their families in these houses at the beginning of the Irish Free State should not be forgotten and indeed there is a Not Forgotten Society Archive in the Dublin National Library. President Michael Higgins gave a talk at the Glencree centre for Peace and Reconciliation ("1916 and the Ethics of Memory") and quoted from the writings of Paul Ricoeur "..... .forgetting the past is itself a harmful and damaging act..... as to be forgotten is to die twice." Therefore we must remember their services and where they lived and reared their families afterwards.

To put the Irish soldiers and sailors in context, they came back to an Ireland which still had very little employment, still had mostly tenement housing and still had a need for rural renewal which would also help with the supply of home-grown food, but was a totally different country. The servicemen who returned were also totally changed with not just physical or medical conditions but also severe mental health issues and many young men could not hold down employment due to these disabilities. The supply of these cottages was a lifeline to those who got them and many more would have helped further.

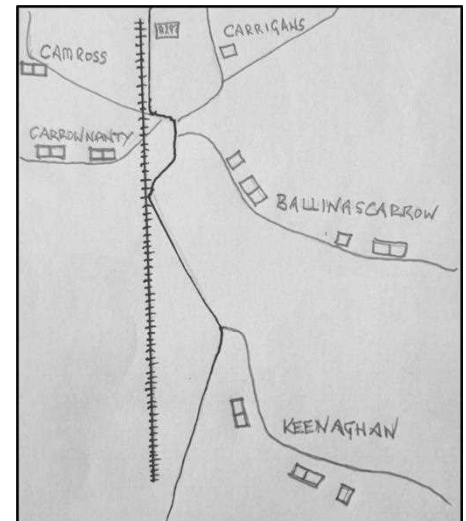
Some of the names of those allocated cottages around Ballymote have been identified and can be recorded. Once we found all the cottages of both designs and mapped them, we realised how they could go unrecognised in the coming years, and this is an effort to prevent that.

The houses were built around the town of Ballymote on County Council land or land donated by the landlord in or about 1927-8. While some of the original servicemen are known, others could only be traced through the Registry of Deeds office on Henrietta Street or from the Valuations office in Abbey Street, both of which require names to facilitate the search! The relevant census for Ireland 1925-29 is not available yet.

However, we can go on what we have, and the original tenants are thought to be:

1. Carrigans. Murtagh.
2. Camross. Cawley.
3. Camross. Mulhern.
4. Carrownanty. Rea.
5. Carrownanty. McGuinness.
6. Carrownanty. Maye.
7. Carrownanty. Brady.
8. Keenaghan. J.Price.

9. Keenaghan. T.Price
10. Keenaghan. Mulligan.
11. Keenaghan. Ward.
12. Keenaghan. Higgins.
13. Ballinascarrow. Kilcoyne.
14. Ballinascarrow. Brady.
15. Ballinascarrow. McDermott.
16. Ballinascarrow. McDonagh.



A schematic representation of the areas around Ballymote.

17. Ballinascarrow. Muldoon.
18. Ballinascarrow. Sheridan.

From the map it can be seen that the houses are mostly clustered around the townlands of Ballinascarrow, Keenaghan and Carrownanty with 2 further out in Camross and 1 in Carrigans.

The current owners are known but due to GDPR are not named here.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

President Michael D. Higgins.  
 Nigel Henderson and Tom Burke.  
 Killester Garden Village.  
 Marie Brennan. Sligo Co Co Library  
 Claire Reilly. Sligo Co Co Library  
 Des and Peggy Walsh, Ballymote.  
 F. H. A. Aalen "Homes for Heroes"  
 Poverty, A Study of Town Life.  
 Seebohm Rowntree.  
[ouririshheritage.org](http://ouririshheritage.org)  
[rte.ie/centuryireland](http://rte.ie/centuryireland) Tag-Dublin, 1  
 June 1922

# Scholars of the Enlightenment

By *Padraic Feehily*

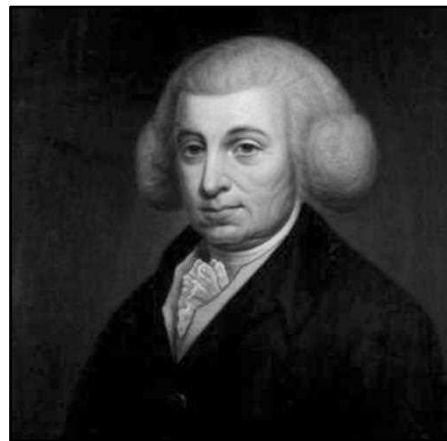
The linking of phenomena like earthquakes and eclipses with human events goes back a long long time to the beginning of our species. In 1648, earthquake tremors in Istanbul were seen as portents of the Sultan's death a few months later. But a century after that, a huge earthquake struck Lisbon, Portugal on All Saints Day of 1755. Tens of thousands of people died, many from a tsunami that followed the quake. Now, some theologians argued this was a punishment from God for the world's sins, but others pointed out that the earthquake had destroyed a lot of churches while sparing a lot of brothels. The latter group were, it appears, attempting to grasp the ideas of the Enlightenment.

Declan McBride, lecturer in the Department of History at King's College London, posed the question in his book *Eighteenth Century Ireland* "why is it that the words 'Irish' and 'Enlightenment' are never uttered in the same breath."

It is evident that we are following the philosophers of Europe, who simply adopted the English attitude that Ireland was a barbaric country in need of government by a civilised, enlightened and less superstitious authority than the Roman Catholic natives. Irishman, Edmund Burke, achieved recognition in the highest ranks of the English political and intellectual establishment, despite the fact that his mother and sister were members of well-respected Irish Roman Catholic families – Nagles and Nugents respectively. Edmund Burke, though clearly progressive in his attitudes towards African slavery and English colonialism in India was otherwise anti-enlightenment. But it is for its intellectual and cultural achievements, its reputation as "the age of reason", that the eighteenth century has been celebrated as laying the foundations of modern Europe. Despite benefiting from an unenlightened system of apartheid

established by the anti-Catholic Penal Laws, Protestant intellectuals – particularly clergymen, teachers and professors, found themselves in total agreement with the mainstream European Enlightenment viewpoint. One Catholic, Charles O'Connor, who was the eloquent voice of Gaelic and Catholic Ireland for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was an unmistakeable Enlightenment figure.

The Anglican clergy were particularly interested in finding a way of reconciling theology and the deist central philosophy that was part of a larger debate between the religions and anti-religious strain of the Enlightenment.



**Charles O'Connor**

Charles O'Connor (1710-91), an Irish language scholar, antiquarian and Catholic activist was born at Kilmactranny, County Sligo. The family, who were direct descendants of the High Kings of Ireland, had lost their lands in the confiscations following Aughrim and the Boyne and had manifold links with the dispossessed Irish aristocracy dispersed throughout Europe. By the early 1720s, after many years of litigation, the family succeeded in recovering some 800 acres of their lands. As the eldest son, Charles was placed to inherit and farm the land but was by nature inclined towards scholarship.

Amid the Penal Laws, however, one observer noted the traditional patronage by the gentry learned class, that played its part in the education of the young O'Connor. He was an avid reader and constantly procured books and manuscripts of which it is recorded, he was familiar with every important script in the country. He read the important writers in English and French, while exhaustively exploring the Irish literary tradition. This broad scope of his learning is reflected in his writing and his ability to discourse with some of the finest minds of the Enlightenment.

The attitude of some of the leaders of the European Enlightenment such as Hegel and Voltaire towards Ireland was such as to see the country through the prism of English learning and culture (or lack of it). O'Connor was predisposed to familiarise himself with Ireland's rich cultural past and seat of learning. Thus, he armed himself to become one of the leading pamphleteers of the day. The penal times framed the latitude within which he could express his ideas. For O'Connor was caught between the hostility of the establishment to the principles of popery and the desire of the dominant church hierarchy to maintain its monopoly over Catholic public utterances. This pamphleteering was a risky and complicated business. His tracts were published anonymously enunciating the ideas of freedom embodied in the works of the philosophers of the Enlightenment and members of Parliament. He wrote in the guise of a liberal Protestant and explicitly perused the works of others like the philosopher Bishop Berkeley who was also exposing the constraints of the Penal Laws. O'Connor corresponded with the eminent minds of the day, including the French political philosopher Baron De Montesquieu whose theories of the separation of power he liberally cited

in his pamphlets. Not only had Montesquieu analysed the political systems of various nations in relation to their physical and climatic influences and their social and historic developments but he was also an opponent of the Penal Laws. The argument had frequently been made that the persecution of religious sectors often associated with particular trades or professions was damaging to economic prosperity. O'Connor contended that the Irish Penal Laws discouraged labour, drained the island (of money), and left the Catholic tenants with no incentive.

The same ideological commitment shaped O'Connor's reconstructions of Irish antiquity. His *"Dissertations on the Ancient History of Ireland"* (1753) set out to present the Ireland of pre-Norman time as a society of advanced political virtue and high culture. O'Connor sought to turn the tables on the Protestants by suggesting that the infliction of pains and penalties on the grounds of religious belief was "Popish ecclesiastical policy in disguise" – a legacy of Catholic corruption which had no place in a more philosophical age. As an enlightened historian, he deplored the encroachments of ecclesiastical authority upon civil society, expressing his admiration for the early popes and missionaries who avoided interfering with civil authority. By the 1760s the failure of Ireland to produce a "philosophical" historian was becoming an embarrassment. Philosophical, in this context, meant impartial – understood in typically Enlightenment terms as distanced from the political and ecclesiastical factionalism that disfigured the early modern era. O'Connor at this time was quoting examples of toleration of Catholics in other Protestant states of Europe like Hanover and Brandenburg and asking, "Are Irish Catholics alone irreclaimable?"

**Robert Howard DD 1663 – 1740  
Bishop of Killala and Achonry  
1727. Bishop of Elphin 1730**  
To understand the dimensions of the

ascendancy class in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the writings of Protestant preachers and writers reflect their thinking and attitudes. In 1722 Howard was chosen to preach before the Lords Justices at St. Andrew's Church on St. Andrew's Street, Dublin, on the anniversary of the 1641 rebellion and used the occasion to present a fascinating historical analysis of the Irish problem. Like many of his class, he believed that the Anglo-Norman invasion was part of a providential plan for the extension of "the Arts of Government and Decent Manners of Life", comparable to the migration of Saxons and Normans into England .... And like others too, he was perplexed by the endurance of ethnic antagonisms in Ireland. In every other case the settlers and natives had become "*blended together*" as one national community, whereas the English, even after 500 years, were looked upon "*as foreign invaders*". The following passage reveals the predictable anxieties of the ascendancy class; but it also reminds us, perhaps unexpectedly, that the shared goodness of the human race, as described in the Book of Genesis, remained an unquestioned belief well into the eighteenth century:

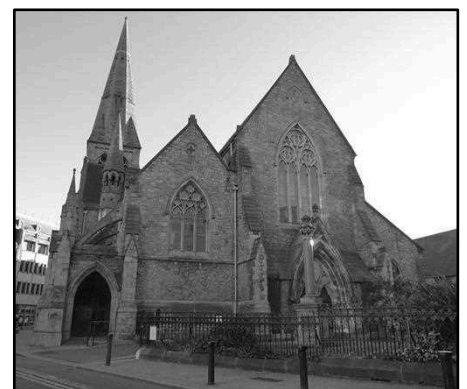
"When God was pleased by the confusion of languages to disperse men over the face of the earth, the world began to be inhabited and by degrees colonies were spread into the remoter parts, as families increased and grew too large for countries that at first they possessed; and this not only before these countries were inhabited but ever since, families and nations have with great variety transferred and changed their seats and by force or compact or connivance or many other methods, have possessed themselves of lands and by degrees fixed themselves in a quiet legal establishment by these means the world has undergone so many changes as to the possessors of its several countries that it is ridiculous and impossible to set up the right of aborigines or original possessors to any country and consequently the legal possession must certainly

remain in those, who have long possessed of power quietly submittal to, and property legally enjoyed under it."

Fourteen years later, in 1738, Robert Howard recorded his impressions "Few countries have been more improved in the same compass of time than Ireland ... the era of labour and industry." He believed that "civil life had been refined, inventions perfected, manufacturers improved, and ornaments added to the planners of nature." Unfortunately, Ireland is less cultivated and improved than any other country in Europe, he concluded.

Charles O'Connor was unique in his visions that a clearer understanding of the past was a key to a better uncovering "latent treasures under and over ground that would excite a spirit of improvement throughout the whole kingdom", hence his interest in researching and recording an authentic past.

For all their commitment to humanitarian causes, the political thinkers of the Enlightenment did not produce a body of anti-imperial thought to match the outpouring of anti-slavery writings of Baron De Montesquieu. Those who launched explicit criticisms of the colonising powers abuses did not question the imperial mission itself. Enlightened self-interest took precedence.



**St Andrew's Church, St Andrew's Street, Dublin where Bishop Howard addressed the Lord Chief Justices and Commons**

# Remembering John McDonagh

By Thomas McDonagh



**John McDonagh**

John McDonagh lived a full and rich life until he passed away, surrounded by his loving family at his home in Spurtown on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024, at the age of 78.

He met Colette Quigley over 58 years ago and they were happily married for over 52 years. In that time, he took over the family farm and together they worked extremely hard and developed a successful farming enterprise enabling them to raise and educate their family.

He forged lifelong bonds of friendship through his active involvement with Macra na Feirme, the IFA, and most notably was a founding management committee member of the North Connacht Farmers' (NCF) Co-operative Society, which eventually became Aurivo. He was acknowledged as a man ahead of his time when it came to farming due to his progressive outlook and his ability to innovate, diversify, and advise others.

John faced many health challenges, too many to catalogue, since his first bypass surgeries over 36 years ago in 1987 but he never let illness limit or define him.

Over the past 20 years, on entering his home in Spurtown, you were likely greeted with a head periodically popping out behind a laptop screen where John would be deep in pursuit of his latest historical research project, tracing ancestry, uncovering colourful tidbits from the petty court sessions of the last century, or perhaps a new poem of humorous verse or satire was under

development under the pen name of the "Bard of Bunninadden".

John was very proud of his poems, some of which were published in the Corran Herald or in the Sligo Weekender. He won numerous awards and accolades at the Percy French Literary Festival in Strokestown and at the Bard of Armagh competition.

He had a keen sense of place and of history and an even keener sense of fun. John loved telling stories of the characters past and present, the quirkiest the character the better and these stories would be regaled at our home to an enthralled audience.

His love of the land, the outdoors and of people often served as the muse for his various research projects where he would ponder who had worked the land before him, what were their circumstances and what became of them or their descendants? First revisiting the oral history, he would then seek to reinforce it with facts and records and if he was lucky enough he would uncover photographic evidence or perhaps even a link to significant historical events. One such personal highlight for him was published in the 2019 edition of the Corran Herald which saw him establish a previously unknown Sligo and family link to the conspirators involved in the Abraham Lincoln assassination.

John is sadly missed and fondly remembered by those who were blessed to have known him.

Editor's note: John McDonagh contributed many articles and poems to the Corran Herald over the years. This poem by John is a reprint from CH Issue 45 - 2012/2013.

## Treasured Memories

*John McDonagh*

The big machines have done their work  
There's nothing left to show  
That a little farmstead prospered here  
So many years ago  
A little house, with golden thatch,  
Whitewashed walls so clean  
Turf smoke curling upwards  
In a landscape so serene

The byre where the cows were milked  
The shed where calves were reared,  
Just like the little farm house  
They've gone, long disappeared  
The plot where vegetables were grown  
And tended with such care,  
By special people, old and bent  
Is now no longer there

In self-sufficient wealth they lived  
With cash almost unknown  
In prosperous contentment  
And happiness, home grown  
I can still see the cheerful hearth,  
The chairs around the flame  
The rosary beads hung on a nail  
Holy pictures in their frame.  
People, simple, yet so proud  
And so adverse to change  
No need to travel with the crowd  
No use for new or strange

They did what they had always done  
With diligence and pride  
Until bent and spent, but still content  
Their time came and they died.  
The little house and buildings  
That once adorned this place  
Were ruthlessly demolished  
And buried without trace.  
The diggers and the dozers  
Levelled out the homely fields  
In an unrelenting scramble  
For more and higher yields

But a poignant memory remains  
In a hedge that has survived –  
Each June white roses blossom through  
To show Summer has arrived  
A little show of happiness  
In a culture brown and plain  
Through briar, brush and thorn they come  
On a long deserted lane

Perhaps it's to reflect the love  
That was lavished on this place  
The care and dedication  
Of a long forgotten race  
To show a soulless, heartless land,  
No matter what we do  
The rose, like treasured memories  
Will still come peeping through

# Try to Remember

By Rose Marie Stanley

Dear Corran Herald Readers,  
Greetings from Canada

*A dozen years ago I began my quest to find as many descendants of Patrick (Keaveny) Kavanagh and Sarah (McDonough) Kavanagh as I could.*

*For anyone unfamiliar with this story, here is a very brief history.*

In April 1847, 147 passengers from Lord Palmerston's Estate set sail to North America aboard the brig named Carricks of Whitehaven. Among the 147 assisted emigrants were Patrick and Sarah Keaveny and their six children, one son and five daughters. Tragically, on 28th April 1847, they were shipwrecked off the shores of Cap des Rosiers, Quebec. Of the 180 passengers and crew only 48 of them survived. The bodies of 86 victims washed ashore and the remaining individuals were buried at sea. (All crew members except one survived).

My ancestors, Patrick, Sarah and their son, Martin survived the shipwreck but sadly, all five daughters perished.

In the years that followed, three sons and one daughter were born to them. They were Patrick (1848-1933), Dominick (1850-1932), James (1852-1933) and Marguerite/Maggie (1854-1938).

Eight years later, tragedy struck again. On 17th of March 1855, while crossing the frozen waters of the Gaspé Bay heading to the village of Douglstown for St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Patrick Keaveny Kavanagh was overtaken by a snowstorm and froze to death. Patrick was forty-nine years of age. Sarah was left with Martin aged twenty and her four very young children.

I am a descendant of Dominick and Malvina Ste-Croix. Dominick and Malvina had one child, Arthur. Arthur Kavanagh was my great-grandfather. Arthur and his wife Josephine had

thirteen children. (Two died as infants) and they adopted two. My grandmother, Malvina Kavanagh was Arthur and Josephine's first-born child.

I've been very fortunate to know most of my grandmother's siblings and their families as many of them lived in Cap des Rosiers in nearby areas of the Gaspé Peninsula. Others visited their father, Arthur in the summertime. Arthur worked in his general store until he passed away in 1967 at the age of 95.

Although I knew Dominick and Malvina's grandchildren, I never met or knew any descendants of Dominick's siblings: Martin, James and Maggie. (Dominick's brother Patrick and his wife, Salome had no children).

Thus my quest in the past number of years has been to connect with Patrick and Sarah's other descendants.

In a country as broad as Canada, it is and continues to be a challenge. As with the change of the spelling of Patrick Keaveny, the Kavanagh name too has many variations.

In the past decade or so, I have been fortunate to find and to connect with some descendants of Martin's children, James' children and Maggie's children.

In this message I'll be focusing on Maggie and Michel's family. Maggie and Michel had eight children, three daughters and five sons.

The photo below shows two of Maggie and Michel Bilodeau's great granddaughters, Beverly and Louise. On the far right is the late Beverly Tucker Jacques, and on the far left, is Louise Jalbert. My late mother, Frances Riffou Kilbride and myself are between Beverly and Louise.

The second photo (page 70) is simply amazing and is what I'd like to share with you, dear readers.

In this beautiful photo from right to left we have Lucille Morin Synotte, Lucille's daughter Edmonde Synotte and Lucille's sister Liliane Morin. Lucille just turned 103 years young on April 12, 2024, and Lucille's sister, Liliane Morin is 90 years young.



Imagine that 177 years after the shipwreck of the Carricks and 170 years after Maggie's birth, Maggie and her husband, Michel Bilodeau have two living granddaughters, Lucille and Liliane that I know of, and a number of great granddaughters.

As this point, I haven't yet connected with other descendants of Maggie Keaveny and Michel Bilodeau. Maggie and Michel's family grew up in the village of L'Anse au Griffon. Like so many villages along the eastern coast of the Gaspé Peninsula, in the last three to four decades, a great majority of its young people have moved away to Quebec City, Montreal or to other Canadian cities outside of the province of Quebec. Sadly, many if not most of Maggie and Patrick's descendants no longer have or know relatives living on the Gaspé Peninsula.

Sincerely,  
Rose Marie Kilbride Stanley



### **Sarah's Granddaughters**

It was with great delight and excitement.

That I learned about Sarah's living granddaughters

Two sisters, named Lucille Morin and Liliane Morin

Both so bright, lovely, kind, and lively women.

Age doesn't define them, nor does it hold them back.

I have yet to meet them face to face,  
The Good Lord willing, this summer I will.

And in them I will certainly meet a bit of Sarah's soul,  
Her strength, her determination, and her joy.

Regardless of what life gives you,  
Always live the best life possible  
Filled with love, laughter and enjoyment.

# To The Lighthouse

By Lynda Hart

Situated on the North Cornish coast is St. Ives Bay, a beautiful expanse of golden sand and azure sea (Fig. 1). At the western end of the bay lies St. Ives town. St. Ives or St. La was, according to legend, an Irish princess and missionary who sailed to Cornwall on a leaf in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century and built a church on the site that became the town. Famous for its unique, exquisite light it has been a favourite of artists for hundreds of years. Since 1993 it has been home to the Tate Gallery, an offshoot of Tate, London, and is responsible for the Barbara Hepworth Museum in the town. Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) was a renowned sculptor who lived and worked in St Ives until her death in 1975.

Along with artists such as Ben Nicholson and the potter Bernard Leech, they were the leading lights of their time. Another famous artist was Alfred Wallis (1855-1942). He didn't begin painting until he was seventy and he had not the money for canvas, so painted on any surface he could find, including cigarette packets and cardboard. His paintings were of seascapes and ships and he painted in a 'naïve' style.

Today, walking through the narrow streets of the town, there are many shops and galleries with a plethora of different artists and styles.

The town is a magnet for tourists. It has lovely beaches, some for families wanting a seaside holiday and others for the surf and the lifestyle. In the winter months surfing can be quite a challenge with large swells. Moving around the bay eastward, the next beach is Carbis Bay. It became known worldwide in 2021 as the venue for that year's G7 summit. However, for those of us of a certain age who grew up in the nearby towns of Redruth and Camborne, it was the venue of the annual day out for children known as the 'tea treat'. Although of my friends only Tracey

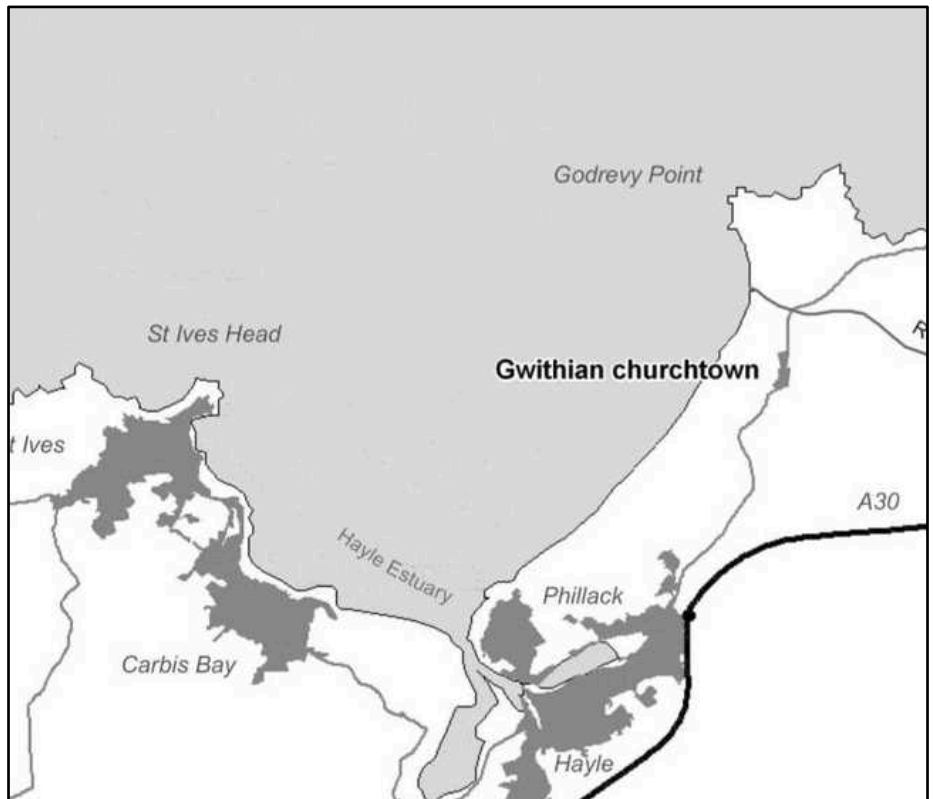


Fig.1 Map of St. Ives Bay



Fig.2 Hayle estuary looking towards St. Ives



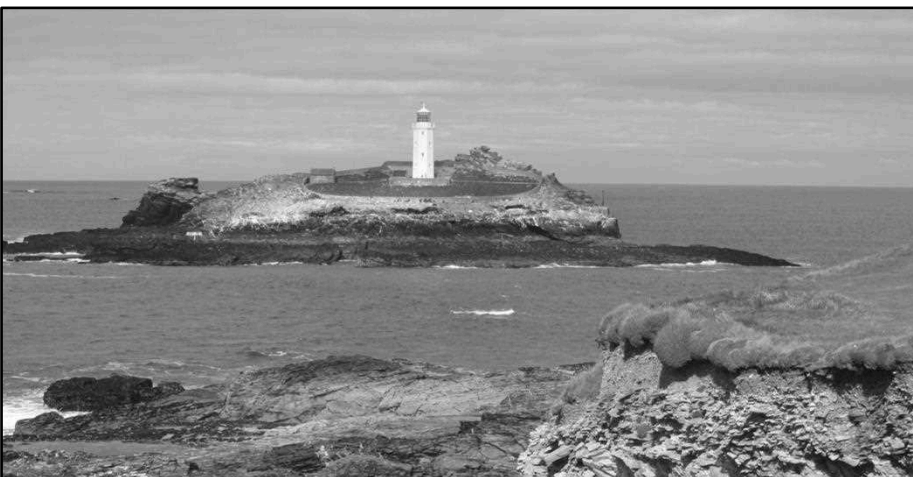
**Fig.3 The 'Towans'**

and myself had to go to church (Catholics) everyone else got to go on the tea treat. It was a day out at the seaside and had its origins back in the days of the mining and was run by the Methodist and Wesleyan chapels. Those whose parents didn't have cars got to go on the coach and it was always at Carbis Bay. Each child was provided with a pasty, a drink and a tea treat bun. The tea treat bun was a large flattish saffron bun with sultanas and currants. As a child, I remembered it as being the size of a dinner plate, but in reality, it was the size of a saucer. Of course, the day was always sunny(?) and we would play on the beach and swim in the calm sea. When we were a little older and bolder we would walk into St. Ives and peruse the shops and cafes.

Beyond Carbis Bay is Lelant, a pretty little village that is home to West Cornwall golf club, a demanding links course, that leads down to the beach, which in the winter has a great swell for the surfer and bodyboarder.

Next is Hayle and Hayle Estuary (Fig. 2). Hayle used to be an important port for the north coast but is now very silted and only small fishing and pleasure boats use it. The estuary is RSPB reserve (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) and is home to a wide range of birds. The estuary mouth can be very dangerous as there is quicksand.

We are now at the 'Towans' (Fig.3). Three miles of golden sands, which take in Hayle, Gwithian and Godrevy. Beautiful soft yellow sand with deep blue sea for paddling, swimming and



**Fig.4 Godrevy lighthouse**

surfing, and some deep rock pools where many a child learnt to swim, all backed by some wonderful dunes of undulating sand and marram grass. This was a dog walkers paradise, filled with extensive flora and fauna but beware on a warm summer's day you have to watch for adders that come out to bask in the sunshine.

During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, sand was extracted from the dunes for agricultural use. Later after the second world war, larger amounts were taken, the sand was washed until the salt had been extracted out and then the sand was deemed suitable for cement. This extraction went on until the early 1980s. Much of the areas that were used for this purpose have now been remodelled into a wildlife sanctuary.

And now we come towards the eastern end of the bay and one of my favourite places in the world, Godrevy (pronounced Go-drevy) Godrevy is a Cornish word meaning little huts or homesteads.

Dominating the end of the bay, about 0.25km from the coast is Godrevy lighthouse (Fig. 4). An octagonal lighthouse on an uninhabited rocky outcrop it was built in 1859 to mark a dangerous reef called the 'Stones'. It is 26 metres high and has been automated since 1939 and in 1995 it was converted to solar panels.

Godrevy lighthouse was said to be the inspiration for Virginia Woolf's novel *'To the Lighthouse'*. Although the book is set on the Isle of Skye in Scotland, she based it on Godrevy lighthouse which she could see from her family summer holidays which were spent at Tallard House across the bay in St. Ives.

Godrevy point is on the Southwest Coastal Path and there is a lovely walk from the point to Hells Mouth about 4km away. On the way is Mutton Cove where there is a large colony of grey seals and in the winter months there can be in excess of 100 seals in the cove, which is not accessible to humans. You may also see dolphins and porpoises as well as basking sharks. It is also a birdwatcher's dream with many different birds including gulls, Guillemots, Razorbills, Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Shearwaters and Petrels. Also, I have seen Ravens, Peregrines

and the occasional Cornish Chough. Away from the cliff face many heathland birds can be seen and heard amongst the heather and gorse.

The area of Godrevy is also excellent for the archaeologist. From the Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age-Pre 6000 years BCE (Before Common Era) through the Neolithic (6000-4400 years BCE) Bronze Age (4400-2800 years BCE) and the Iron Age (2800-1700 years BCE)

Excavations were carried out in the area in the 1950 and 1960s by Professor Charles Thomas as part of the Gwithian Landscapes project. Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts were found along with some earlier lithics. On the Godrevy headland point is a small Bronze Age barrow (Fig.5) that was excavated by Thomas. It was excavated again in 2012-2013. This later project was commissioned by the National Trust who own the area and was financed by the RDPE (Rural Development Programme for England).

On this walk along an area known as Knavocks you might well encounter some Shetland ponies wandering



**Fig.5 Godrevy lighthouse with Bronze Age barrow in foreground**

freely across the clifftop. They are there year around and they help to keep the vegetation under control, as they do not tend to eat flowers but happily devour grass, gorse and other vegetation. This allows the wildflowers to flourish and regenerate. The ponies have been there for about ten years and in that time the wildflowers have really established themselves. Flowers that can be found on the clifftop include thrift, eyebright, bell heather,

centaury, goldenrod and St. John's wort.

The ponies are just another project initiated by the National Trust.

The whole of the St Ives Bay area is designated an area of outstanding natural beauty, and to me Godrevy headland is the jewel in the crown.... well myself, Virginia Woolf, the Cornish and the thousands of tourists who visit this stunning landscape every year.

## Ahamlish Graveyard - Five in Row

By Michael O'Connor

Its probably a strange thing to say, but I can't think of anywhere more beautiful to be buried than Ahamlish Graveyard in North Sligo. Located just off the main Sligo to Donegal Road over one kilometre north of Grange village, the graveyard overlooks the beaches of Mullaghmore and Cliffoney and the nearby harbour area of Moneygold. The graveyard is dominated by a nineteenth century (Church of Ireland built c1813) which is now, sadly, in a state of disrepair. The bodies of generation after generation of local families, including my own, rest peacefully in the graveyard. The serenity of a still summer evening allows the sound of gently breaking waves to reach the graveyard bringing a sense of peace and calm to the area. That peace and calm was not always to be had at Ahamlish. On the 25<sup>th</sup>

October 1920, the peace was shattered when an RIC patrol of nine policemen from Cliffoney RIC barracks was ambushed nearby resulting in the deaths of four policemen and serious injury to 3 others. Some of those who took part in the ambush are buried in the graveyard. However, it's not the tragic events of the "Moneygold Ambush" that I wish to write about today, but the five headstones that stand in a row along the central wall of Ahamlish graveyard. Those graves hold the remains of five men who were washed up on the shores of the very beaches overlooked by Ahamlish. Five men from various sections of the British Army who were drowned when a U-Boat attacked British shipping during World War Two.

The graves are listed and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Association and the dead inhabiting those five graves are remembered each year in the local Cemetery Sunday, as are all those interred at Ahamlish.

So who were those five men and how did they come to be buried in this North Sligo graveyard?

The headstones show that the first casualty was Alexander Wilson, a trooper of the Lovat Scouts from Gask in Perthshire, Scotland. He died aged 34 on July 2nd, 1940, the day a German U-boat torpedo sank the prison ship "Arandora Star", a converted passenger vessel, that was taking internees and prisoners of war from Britain to Canada. More than half those on board lost their lives when the ship



**The five Headstones in a line along the wall.**

turned over on her side and sank, about 75 miles off the Donegal coast.

Five weeks passed before Wilson's remains were found on a beach near Grange by two local men who were out walking. According to the Sligo Champion report his was one of 11 bodies "found floating in the water or

left high on the rocks after the receding tides" on August 10th and 12th. Two were British soldiers, two were Italian civilians, there was one German person and six other people could not be identified.

An inquest heard that Wilson's possessions included a pack of letters addressed to him, a pipe and tobacco pouch, a pay book, a penknife, a razor blade, two mineral bottle openers and some English and French money. There was also a watch and chain, the watch stopped at 8.17.

The inscription on Alexander Wilson's gravestone reads as follows; "Ever faithful good and kind, sadly missed by those he left behind."

Local connection to the tragedy comes in the form of a 21 year old Sligo man, Jim Leydon from Coney Island, who was quarter master on the ill-fated liner and who told his version of events that happened that morning: "I was asleep on the Arandora Star when I heard a terrific explosion, which threw me on the floor of my cabin. The liner listed as I made for the door, and outside I could hear shouts rising to a terrible roar as the scrabble for boats began." Leydon helped get three boats away from the ship side, and then when the deck was awash he threw a raft overboard and with three crew members dived after it. "The sea was filled with struggling figures and overloaded boats were making away as fast as they could from beneath the towering bulk of the liners

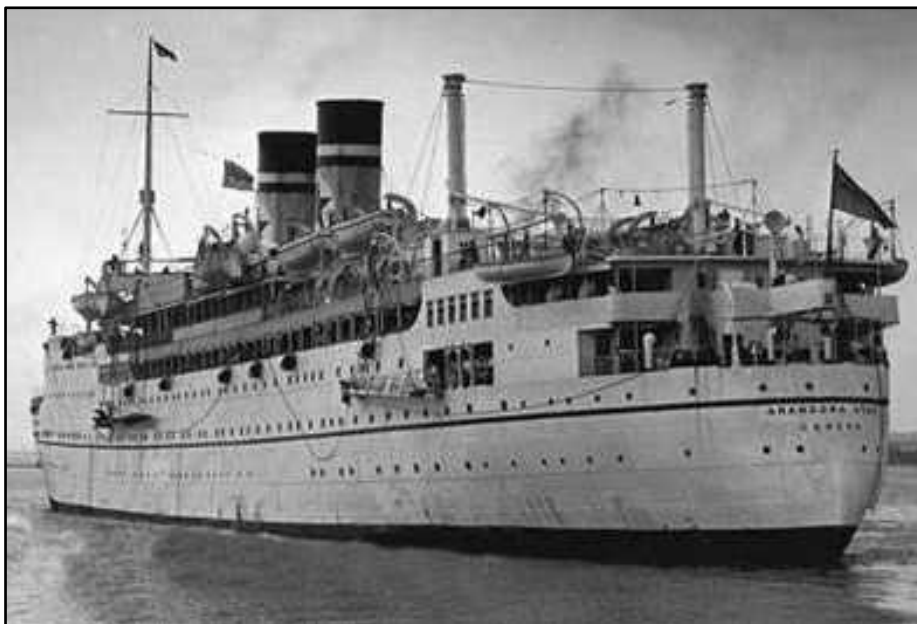


**Ahamlish Graveyard and Church**



**Final resting place in Ahamlish for Alexander Wilson, Crewman on the Arandora Star**

side". Leydon continued: "I clambered on the raft and no sooner had I done so then the ship gave a final plunge and sank. A tremendous frothing wave arose over the place where she had gone down and as it swept towards me I clung desperately to the raft. Although I held on like grim death with both hands, the force on the rushing water broke my hold and I felt myself being carried down beneath the surface. I struggled like mad and then my head once more was above the surface. I swam to a large piece of timber and rested on it for a while before I left it for a raft on which two other member of the crews were perched. It was difficult to hold on in the heavy seas but we managed to do so for two hours. Spread all over the sea, we could see the other survivors and then when we had almost given up hope an aeroplane appeared and circled over our heads. After another long wait, destroyers rushed across the horizon and the navy men lost no time



**Arandora Star torpedoed 75 miles off the Donegal Coast July 2nd 1940**

in picking up the exhausted survivors". Jim Leydon went on to serve the Irish Lights in 1941, his duty called him onto such places as the Skelligs, Inishearaght, Tusker, Tory and Eagle Light. He married and was appointed Principal Keeper to Fastnet in December 1970 on Eagle Island at the age of 58 in 1972. As Principal Light Keeper of Eagle Island he was one of many to drown at Black Rock Lighthouse off Rosses Point, Sligo. The Sligo Champion dated Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July 1972 reported "Rosses Point was numbed with shock and grief last weekend when three local men were drowned in one of the worst tragedies in Sligo Bay for many years. The men, two of whom were in their

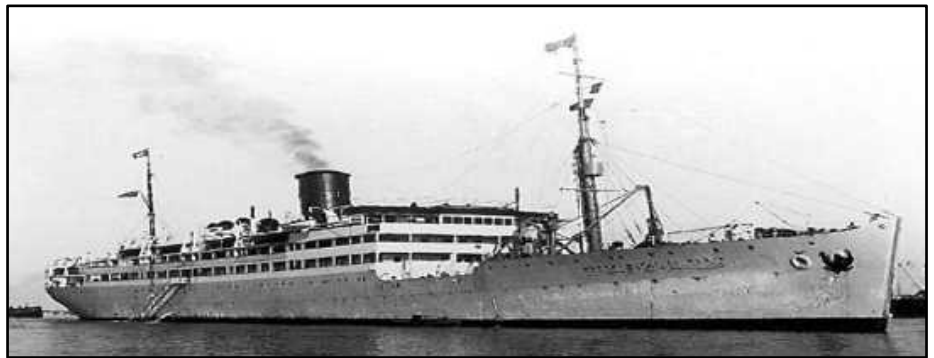
twenties, were lost when their boat was overturned by a freak wave in the vicinity of Blackrock Lighthouse as they attempted to reach a stranded boat early on Sunday morning. Three others who accompanied them were saved after they scrambled onto the reef of the lighthouse and sent up distress flares. During a massive sea-air search, which was quickly mounted, the body of one of those drowned, James Leydon, a married man, was found. The search, on sea and along shoreline, continued all this week for the remaining bodies. Up to yesterday (Wednesday), however, nothing had been found."

The other four graves along the wall at Ahamlish contain victims of another German U-Boat attack which took place about 230 miles west of Bloody Foreland, Donegal. This time the ship was the British Troop Transport ship "Mohamed Ali El-Kebir" which sank at 23:40hrs on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1940.

Photos of Ahamlish Graveyard and headstones copyright of Michael O'Connor Private collection. Ship photographs from Wikipedia. Narrative from author and sourced from various online articles. Michael O'Connor April 2024



View across the graveyard towards the sea



British Troop Transport ship Mohamed Ali El-Kebir



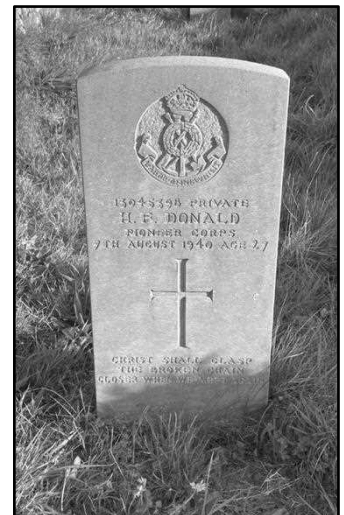
**L.Cpl. W. Rose** aged 40  
Royal Engineers No. 2688853  
Son of Donald Rose & Maud Mary Alice Chester. Husband of Isobel J. Fraser of Aboyne, Aberdeenshire. Married in London, England 1925. Body found on Sea Shore at Streedagh. Cause of death: Exposure/Drowning. Inscription "At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember him."



**Sgt. Herbert William Tristram Griffin** Age 29.  
56 Heavy Regiment Royal Artillery No. 857692  
Date of death: 7th August 1940. Body found on Sea Shore at Streedagh Beach 11<sup>th</sup> September 1940 Cause of Death: Exposure/Drowning.



**Pvt Frederick Merrick Robson**  
Pioneer Corps No. 13031846  
Husband to Frances Jane Robson of Sunderland. Died when the troopship SS Mohamed Ali-Kebir was sunk on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1940  
Inscription "Lost awhile our treasured love forever safe above. Thy will be done."



**Pvt Hector Fullerton Donald** age 27. Pioneer Corps No. 13045398 Born 1913 -Died 7th August 1940. Son of Andrew and Mary Donald, husband to Phyllis Donald of Fairfield, Liverpool. Inscription "Christ shall clasp the broken chain closer when we meet again."

# Bridget Keerin Adams - Carricks' Survivor

## Life in Sligo and in Canada

By John McKeon & Terry Stanley

Bridget Keerin Adams had a long and eventful life, most of which was never previously documented, leaving its turmoil and accomplishments largely unknown. But as one of the few Sligo Famine emigrants who survived the sinking of the Carricks of Whitehaven, and who went on to have a long life in Canada, her name and highlights of her life should be recognised in Sligo, where she was born, and in the Gaspé, Canada where she died.

She was born in the small townland of Drumfarnaughty, south Sligo, and died almost ninety years later at her home in the Gaspé. Canadian records gave details on her life there, but little is known of her life in Sligo. After her young years, she and her family left Famine stricken Sligo and sailed from its Port in April 1847 for what they hoped was a better life in the New World. Had they known what lay ahead for them on their arrival in Canada and the new life they yearned for there, they would not have gone. They left on the first ship with emigrants from the Lord Palmerston's Sligo estate that year, the Carricks of Whitehaven. Just over three weeks later it crashed into rocks at Cap des Rosiers, a dangerous outcrop on the Canadian shore, and sank causing the death of most of those aboard. Bridget survived the tragedy, how we can only guess. Afterwards she lived in Lobster Cove, a small fishing and farming community in the Gaspé, about 40 km from Cap des Rosiers by road, or 18 km directly but over a mountain range and the Gaspé Bay. She was about seventeen years old at the time of the tragedy when she suddenly found herself alone in life, without any possessions and without the support of her family and former neighbours. Her home in Lobster Cove was 10 km from the home of Bridget Healy Crummy Adams, who had been one of her neighbours in Drumfarnaughty. Faced with many

major problems Bridget Keerin proved herself to be a resilient and extraordinary woman. Having lived through the sinking of the Carricks she went on to overcome many hurdles in an often hard and difficult life, but one which also brought love and happiness. In Lobster Cove, she reared a large family, some of whom predeceased her, others who emigrated to the USA, and still others who remained with her for her lifetime.

Drumfarnaughty was leased to one family, leaving the remaining, about seventy acres, leased among the other ten tenant families. Of these ten families, two farmed holdings of over ten acres, an amount then considered as the minimum acreage required for a family to survive. This meant that eight of the eleven families, lived in conditions of severe poverty, and on food supplies below the minimum needed for a healthy life. These tenants looked and were

**Table 1: Lord Palmerston's Tenants in Drumfarnaughty – Pre and Post the Famine.**

1824	1844: (Pre-Famine)	1864: (Post-Famine)
George Grier	Andrew Grier	Andrew Grier
Patrick Healy	James Healy	-
Owen Healy	Owen Healy	-
Bart Healy	Bartley Healy	-
James Keerins	John Keerins	Mich Keerins
Denis Keerins	Ketty Keerins	-
Martin Keerins	-	-
Thomas Brennan	Thomas Brennan	Pat Brennan
Thomas Brennan	Sally Brennan	-
Patrick Fury	John Fury	-
Bryan Mahon	-	-
-	Nancy Flynn	-
-	Matthew Brogan	-
<b>Total: 11 Families</b>	<b>11 Families</b>	<b>3 Families</b>

(Sources: 1824 & 1864 data from Broadland archives; 1844 data from a Cunningham Survey)  
 Note: John Keerin took over the property lease which James Keerin leased in 1824 and 1834.

### Life in Sligo.

Bridget Keerin (also spelled Keerins, Kerins, or Cairns) grew up in the then impoverished townland of Drumfarnaughty, a small drumlin townland of 130 acres in south Sligo. Throughout her young life eleven families lived there, all tenants on Lord Palmerston's estate – the widely-known British politician who twice became London's Prime Minister in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – and who was also an absentee landlord in Sligo and Dublin. Of the eleven families in her townland three were named Keerin and three others were named Healy. There she grew into her teens and most likely had only a rudimentary education. Almost half the land in

malnourished, Table 1.<sup>1</sup>

Growing up in that community, Bridget and her family lived a meagre existence. Surprisingly, given the reputation of absentee landlords, she did not see evictions in her townland during her years there, from 1829 to 1847. Estate records tell of conflicts between her neighbours and Palmerston's local agents, as when in 1835 Bartly Healy – probably a relative of hers – had his firearms confiscated by James Walker, Palmerston's Sligo land agent. Walker wrote that it was right to take firearms off 'such a class of person'. But these conflicts did not lead to evictions and virtually all the same families remained on these lands during her

young years, Table 2.<sup>2</sup>

Neither did she see large increases in rents in the years prior to the Famine. Rents in her townland were marginally over £89 in 1844 compared with slightly under £89 in 1824, an increase of five shillings among eleven families over twenty years. Nor did she experience a three-fold increase in rents in the years just prior to the Famine, as often claimed was demanded then. As for her family's landlord, often accused of shipping tenants off his estate in Famine times to increase profits, Drumfarnaughty did not yield increased profits despite virtually its entire population emigrating. There, total rents fell by £16 in the decades between 1844 and 1864.

Bridget's townland had no middleman

possession of her family descendants for many years.

Bridget, or members of her family, probably attended the large public meeting held in Ballymote in the autumn of 1845, when Palmerston spoke to his Ballymote tenants, and sought to assure them that under the highly controversial land squaring then underway, none of them would be worse off, or receive less land. Instead, most were assured that they would benefit from land squaring. But her family and neighbours in Drumfarnaughty, knew that land squaring, would not benefit them. No land was available for redistribution there as having no middlemen, land squaring was of less interest to them. Part of the large farm in the townland could have been redistributed among

Keerin families lived in the townland in 1829, one headed by Dennis and the other by Martin Keerin. In 1834, all three Keerins' families, headed by James, Dennis, and Martin, remained in Drumfarnaughty according to Tithe Applotment records, Table 3.<sup>3</sup> By 1844, just prior to the Famine, the names of James, Dennis and Martin were gone, and only two Keerin families remained, headed by John and Ketty. Both these families paid the same annual rent of £7/5/4 each. Three years later, in April 1847, members of those two Keerin families were on the Carricks and bound for Canada. Its manifest gave John as the head of one family and Nancy as head of the other. John had taken the lands previously leased by James Keerin, Bridget's father, and John most probably was her brother. Their departure was not the end of the Keerin family name in Drumfarnaughty as in 1865, almost two decades later, a Keerin family headed by Michael remained in that townland. And a Keerin family still lives there.

As the early signs of Famine appeared in the fall of 1845, Bridget and her neighbours were doubtless anxious and frightened by what they saw and heard. That November, their local Catholic priest, Fr Henry, wrote to Palmerston, who months earlier had visited the Ballymote estate, telling him about these signs and the fears of starvation that existed in the neighbourhood. Fr Henry also wrote in local papers then outlining the large scale of the problem already evident in Co. Sligo. In his letter to Palmerston, he added that lay and clerical agitators were promoting unrest in the area and were using the fear of starvation to cause 'the poor tenants ... to enter into combinations against paying any rents'.

Bridget, with her family and neighbours, must have shared this fear of starvation, and were probably among those being encouraged against paying rents. Their fears and apprehensions must have grown as conditions got worse in 1846. In 1847 seven of the eleven families in the townland decided to leave their homes and accept the assisted emigration offered by Palmerston to

**Table 2. Drumfarnaghty Tenants and Rents, 1824 -1864.**

1824		1844		1864	
Tenant	Rent	Tenant	Rent	Tenant	Rent
James Keerin	£6/11/4	John Keerin	£7/5/5	Mich. Keerin	£11/6/6
Denis Keerin & Mahon	£3/5/8 £3/5/8	Ketty Keerin	£7/5/5		
P. Furey & Bart Healy	£9/4/0	John Furey	£3/9/9		
Matt Brogan & Thomas Brennan	£4/15/0	M. Brogan & T. Brennan	£3/0/1	Pat Brennan	£7/18/8
T. Brennan	£4/8/8	S. Brennan	£2/3/7		
P. Healy	£4/8/8	Ja/ms Healy	£4/16/9		
Owen Healy	£6/12/6	Owen Healy	£7/5/5		
Martin Keerin	£3/4/6	Bart. Healy	£6/19/7		
George Grier	£42/12/0	An/drw Grier	£37/15/5		
		An/drw Grier	£53/11/4		
		Nancy Flynn	£3/12/7		
11 Families	£88/15/6	11 Families	£89/0/6	3 Families	£72/16/6

and for years before she was born its eleven tenants held their leases directly with Palmerston. Before 1813, Henry Irwin was its middleman, and all leases were with him then. But after Irwin's lease expired it was not renewed. Drumfarnaughty was on what was called the Settled Estate, an expression that arose from a 1702 Temple family agreement. In that agreement Sir John Temple, Lord Palmerston's great great-grandfather, divided the estate between his sons, Henry, and John. Henry got the family title and the Unsettled part of the estate, while John got the Settled sections. John died in 1735 and his wife, Elizabeth, inherited the Settled lands and they remained in the

the remaining tenants, but the redistribution of land among tenants was not part of the squaring process. Extra land for redistribution was mostly available where middlemen operated, who could be dispossessed of some, or all their leased lands which then could be redistributed among remaining tenants.

Canadian records name James Keerin as Bridget's father, and her mother as Winifred Bartley. James Keerin headed one of the three Keerin family tenants farming lands in Drumfarnaughty in 1824. That year James farmed lands with two others on which £22/10/0 in rents and arrears were due. In 1829, he was listed as the sole tenant on a holding with an annual rent of £6/1/4. Two other

those willing to emigrate. Palmerston directed his agents that only those willing to emigrate should be assisted out, but he did not object to tenants being ‘persuaded’ to go. Assisted emigration offered emigrants from the estate paid passage to Canada, together with funds for additional food on the voyage and for entry charges into Canada. Some were also cleared of outstanding rents and arrears. Arguments continue as to whether those who went to Canada, the US, and later to Australia, were ‘evicted’, or ‘persuaded’ or ‘agreed’ to leave during these years. These arguments will continue but in Drumfarnaughty that spring the seven families who decided to go had the names of the heads of these families, together with the numbers in each recorded on the Carricks manifest, Table 4, Chart 1.<sup>4</sup> Given the large exodus from that single small townland, it is hard to believe that there was not an element of them deciding to leave, probably with the intention of helping each other on the journey out and later in Canada. Bridget was with one of the two Keerin families who travelled on that sailing, most probably as one of the six in John Keerin’s family.

**Arrival on Canadian Coast.**

The Carricks of Whitehaven was scheduled to leave Sligo Port early on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1847. Disagreements exist over the total number of emigrants on the Carricks, but all 173 emigrants listed on its manifest, like Bridget Keerin, probably left their homes on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, or early on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April. Bridget, and the other 47 emigrants from Drumfarnaughty, would have walked to Sligo Port, a journey of about 29 Km (18 miles). Most of the other emigrants also walked to the Port, although five families from Innismurray came by boat. Those who didn’t walk, typically got a lift by horse, mule or donkey drawn cart. Older and younger family members, and emigrants limited belongings were carried on these carts, many of which together with the hauling animals were sold at the Port. Emigrants brought there by friends or neighbours, saw their friends return

home with their carts and hauling animals. All emigrants boarded the Carricks on Easter Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, and travelled a short distance to the Pool outside the harbour, from where they sailed early next morning. The Carricks was a 35-year-old vessel which regularly sailed, as a timber supply ship, between North American and Ireland. On that fateful journey, it made good progress until just off the Canadian coast on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April it was hit by a storm and driven onto the rocks at Cap des Rosiers. This dangerous rock outcrop was close to the St. Lawrence estuary and access to Quebec, their destination. On hitting the rocks, the ship broke up and depending on which figures are taken, between 116 and 130 emigrants aboard were drowned. All the crew, except one boy, survived and got ashore, an outcome which tells its own story. Some 48 emigrants survived, and Bridget Keerin was one of them.

What Bridget and the other emigrants experienced as the tragedy unfolded can only be imagined. One of the only two known accounts of the disaster, documented sixty years later, told of

**Table 3: Tithe Applotments in Drumfarnaughty, 1834.**

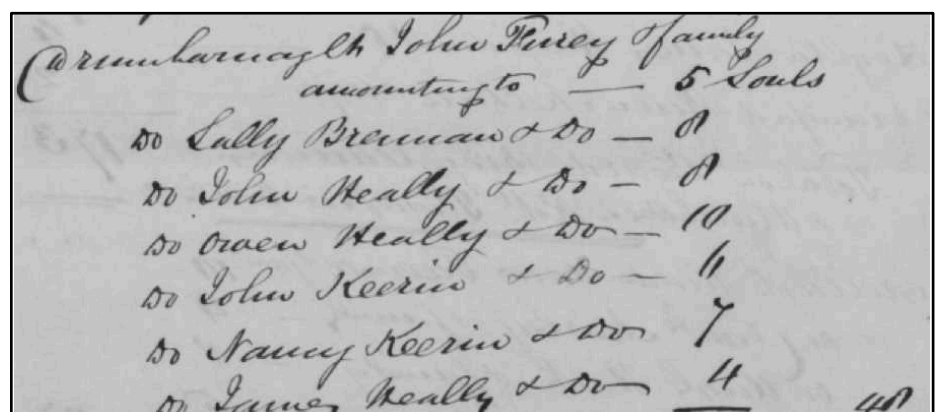
Tenants Charged Tithes, 1834	Tenants with Leases, 1824
James Kearns	James Keerin
Dennis Kearns	Dennis Keerin
Bryan Mahon	Bryan Mahon
Pat Furey	Patrick Furey
Bartle Healy	Bart Healy
Mathew Brogan	Mathew Brogan
Thomas Brennan Senior	Thomas Brennan
Thomas Brennan Junior	Thomas Brennan
Pat Healy	Patrick Healy
Owen Healy	Owen Healy
Martin Kearns	Martin Keerin
George Greer	George Grier
John Kane	-

(all Drumfarnaughty tenants were deemed liable for tithes in 1834)

the unbearable cold during the night and the longing for dawn and possible relief.<sup>5</sup> Bridget must have undergone panic and terror as the sinking went from bad to worse, and devastation

**Table 4: Drumfarnaughty Families on the Carrick, April 1847.**

Family	Number	Destination
John Furey & Family	5	Quebec
Sally Brennan & Family	8	“
John Heally & Family	8	“
Owen Heally & Family	10	“
John Keerin & Family	6	“
Nancy Keerin & Family	7	“
James Heally & Family	4	“
Total	7 Families, 48 emigrants	All for Quebec



**Chart 1: Original Manifest of the Carricks in April 1847 Listing all seven families from Drumfarnaughty who were aboard.**



**Chart 2: Locations in the Gaspé showing Cap des Rosiers, Lobster Cove and Fontenelle (Cap-des-Rosiers location –northern position is where it’s now, the southern location is where it was at the time of the tragedy) (Map courtesy of Terry and Rose Marie Stanley, Canada)**

when she realised that she had lost her entire family. Within hours her life changed from being a member of a large family to being alone, a scared teenager, in a world she knew nothing about. As she lay ashore, no doubt soaked wet and exposed to the freezing cold, despair and apprehension must have dominated her young mind. Death probably seemed inevitable. It was the middle of night when the ship hit the rocks and records tell of the storm of snow and hail that blew. Combined, the consternation and fear that engulfed her mind must have caused her to yearn for some easement of her plight and the arrival of dawn. She probably heard the ship’s captain and his crew talk about their plans, while apparently giving little thought to how they could help her or any of the other emigrants who were still alive and in desperate need of assistance. Those two accounts of the tragedy, both from female survivors, described the journey out as rough and

uncomfortable and took three weeks and three days.<sup>6</sup> Folklore in Cap des Rosiers correctly told of survivors who were rescued off part of the ship which remained above water, and of a ‘baby Anne’. Both these facts were likely references to the Healy Crummy family four of whom survived, but seven of whom had spent the night packed into a crew hammock including a baby named Anne. As dawn broke three of that family were drowned when one young girl fell into the water, dragging another with her, followed by their father jumping in after them hoping but failing to rescue them.<sup>8</sup> Local folklore also told of a ‘Bobbing Bidy’ who had survived. Bobbing Bidy’s clothing was believed to have trapped air that kept her afloat until a wave swept her ashore.<sup>6</sup> Bridget Keerin most probably was ‘Bobbing Bidy’, but no name was given in that recorded account. It is unlikely that any other members of the two Keerin families aboard survived, if they had,

Bridget probably would not have stayed in the Gaspé as she did. Most of the 48 people who survived the tragedy remain unknown as do their descendants.

Bridget Keerin remained near the village of Cap des Rosiers in the short term and later moved to Lobster Cove. She may have stayed in the Gaspé because she had lost her family and many neighbours in the tragedy, and probably because her cousin and former neighbour in Drumfarnaghty, Bridget Crummy Healy with three of her children, had survived and opted to stay in that area. Both women who would have known each other in Sligo, could comfort and help each other after the tragedy and loss they suffered. Both possibly got temporary accommodation in local unused logging or fishing cabins or may have been taken in by local families who needed domestic help.<sup>7</sup>

### Marriage and Family

In February 1850, almost three years after the sinking of the Carricks, Bridget Keerin married Matthew Adams, a member of a large and established family who lived across the bay from Cap des Rosiers. Her marriage certificate notes that she ‘was of age’, an addition which under Canadian laws suggested that she was just over 20 years old and legally eligible to marry. It also suggested that she was not 28 as some records stated, when she married. Earlier, in May 1849, her cousin and sister survivor, Bridget Crummy Healy had married John James Adams, Matthew’s older brother. John James Adams was a recent widower and had nine young children to care for from his first marriage. He needed someone to help him out. Both Adams brothers, and their families continued to live relatively close to one another, with Matthew and Bridget Keerin staying in Lobster Cove, the home base of the Adams family, and John James and Bridget Crummy Healy living in Fontenelle. Matthew worked their 100-acre mixed use farm and Bridget tended to their home and their large family (Chart 2). Lobster Cove was a fishing and farming community, but Matthew did not fish. Between 1851 and 1869, they

had nine children who survived infancy, and they had a busy life. At least three of their children predeceased Bridget, with two daughters, Theresa and Ann Caroline, dying before their tenth and sixteenth birthdays respectively. Four of their children never married, Ellen Jane, Edward Michael, John Raymond, and Wilfred, while three married, Frances Winnifred, James Joseph, and Suzanne Mary, Appendix 1.<sup>8</sup>

Matthew and Bridget's eldest daughter, Frances Winnifred married Andrew Morris in 1874 and they had a daughter, Mary Ann Gertrude Morris, who died in March 1881 when only 18 months old. Frances and Andrew moved to New York and in December 1881 they had a son, Raymond Milton Morris.

In January 1881 Matthew and Bridget's eldest son, James Joseph, married Mary McLaughlin. They had no children and he died in May 1913. Ellen Jane, their third child emigrated to New York in 1881. She worked as a housekeeper, became a US citizen, and lived in New York until her death in 1934. Three members of her extended family lived with her for years, her brother Wilfred, her niece Mary E Robson, and her nephew

Raymond Milton Morris. Wilfred became a music Professor and died in 1952, while Mary Robson became a teacher and died in 1981.

Bridget and Matthew's youngest daughter, Suzanne Mary, married Captain Thomas Robson in November 1888 and in December 1891 their daughter Eva Mary/Mary E. Robson was born. One month later Captain Robson was drowned when his ship, the Mizpah, sank off Cape Cod when on its way to Portugal. By 1898 Mary E. was in New York with her aunt Helen (Ellen) and Suzanne was living with her parents and her brother Edward Michael. Suzanne probably stayed with Edward Michael until his death in 1934. By 1940 Suzanne had joined her daughter, Mary E. in New York.

Edward Michael remained on the family farm in Lobster Cove and by 1920 his brother John Raymond, had returned home and joined him and Suzanne.

In 1911, Arthur Adams, a grandnephew of Matthew and Bridget and the grandson of Bridget's Drumfarnaughy friend and cousin, Bridget Crummy Adams, was living with them. Arthur's son Raymond subsequently took over their farm and

was the last member of the Adams family to live on what was the Adams home base for generations. Subsequently, a section of their farm was given to the Diocese of Gaspé, a transfer that was marked with a plaque (Chart 3).

Many members of the extended Adams family, the descendants of Matthew and Bridget's nephews and nieces, still live in the Gaspé and close to Lobster Cove. Matthew's brother John James helped build the local Catholic church, and both brothers together with their wives, appear to have been staunch Catholics.<sup>9</sup>

### Concluding Comments

Numerous writings exist on the horrors that faced Ireland's emigrants during the Famine years, but little has been written about their subsequent lives and those of their descendants. Few emigrants' descendants' have been traced, or the stories of their ancestors' lives told. Bridget Keerin Adams was a Famine emigrant who came from Sligo, survived a shipwreck, and went on to have a long and eventful life in Canada. She was one of the eight emigrants from Lord Palmerston's Ballymote estate who survived the sinking of the Carricks



**Chart 3: Plaque on Lands Worked by Matthew and Bridget Keerin Adams**

*This plaque Reads, English & French: IN MEMORY OF MATTHEW ADAMS AND BRIDGET ADAMS THIS PROPERTY HAS BEEN BEQUEATHED TO THE DIOCESE OF GASPE TO FURTHER THE CAUSE OF CHRIST. PRAY FOR THEM.*

(Provided by Terry Stanley, Canada)

and stayed near Cap des Rosiers. She had a large family, all of whom were reared on a sizeable farm in eastern Canada. Her story, and that of the other seven Carricks survivors from Palmerston's Ballymote estate who settled close to Cap des Rosiers, have all been uncovered and published in recent issues of the Corran Herald. Given the unique experiences they withstood their names and life accounts deserve to be known in the Gaspé Canada and in Sligo, Ireland. Almost two centuries after Bridget Keerin was born in Drumfarnaughty, signs of her harsh and demanding life are mostly gone. Large numbers of her extended Adams family live on. Matthew died in 1913, and prior to that the grandson of Bridget's friend, cousin, sister-in-law, former Drumfarnaughty resident, and Carricks survivor, joined her household to help run her farm. Both Bridget Keerin and Bridget Crummy Healy experienced the same highly traumatic events before meeting and marrying two brothers in Canada's Gaspé region. These two women supported and comforted each other, they lived relatively close to one another, raised large families and Bridget Healy Adam's grandchildren took over Bridget Keerin Adam's farm some years after she died.<sup>6</sup> For 63 years Bridget shared her life with Matthew Adams at Lobster Cove. A section of their farm was later given to the diocese of Gaspé while Matthew's brother John James built a Catholic church in his community. These acts were indicative of the strong role religion played in both families' lives. Bridget and Matthew's children and direct descendants are now dead, but the descendants of their nieces and nephews live on in the Gaspé and across North America.<sup>9</sup> Bridget Keerin Adams had a tough and demanding life, one unlikely to have been what she dreamt of when she was a young girl. She was a woman of proven courage and stamina, and her religious beliefs appear to have given her added strength in difficult times. Hopefully she would be pleased to know that her name is now recalled in Sligo and the Gaspé over a century after her death in 1917.

### Appendix 1: Children of Bridget Keerin and Matthew Adams.

(Keerin was also spelled as Kairns, Kerins, or Cairns. Bridget survived the Carrick Wreckage)

Bridget was born in Drumfarnaughty, Ireland in 1829. In 1850 she married Matthew Adams, a farmer in Lobster Cove, Gaspé, Canada.	
Frances Winnifred B. Aug 09, 1851 D. M. Jan 04, 1874	Frances Winnifred their first-born child carried the name of her grandmothers, Frances Suddard and Winnifred Bartley. She married Andrew Morris in 1874. Frances's sister Ellen Jane "Helen" attended the wedding. Frances Winnifred and Andrew Morris had a child Mary Ann Gertrude Morris baptised on Sept 19, 1879 and died March 9, 1881 (at 18 Months) in the Ottawa area. Frances and Andrew apparently moved to the USA in 1881. In December 1881 their son, Raymond Milton Morris was born and lived there with his mother Frances W Morris. In 1901 Milton Morris was listed as living with Matthew and Bridget in Lobster Cove. By 1915, Raymond Morris, was living with his aunt and uncle, together with his cousin Mary E. Robson, in New York. His mother Frances Winifred is not listed but he names his mother Frances Winifred as next of kin on his draft registration in 1917.
James Joseph B. July 22, 1853 D. May 10, 1913 M. Jan 11, 1881	James married Mary McLaughlin on Jan 11, 1881 at St Patrick's in Ottawa. His sister Ellen attended the wedding and signed the registry. James and Mary had no children. James was a carpenter and lived in the Nepean area of Ottawa.
Ellen Jane - Helen, B. May 11, 1855 D. Nov 4, 1934.	She was born on the 11 <sup>th</sup> May 1855, and emigrated to the USA in 1881 where she became a US citizen in 1900. She was a housekeeper. Her brother Wilfred, and niece Mary Eva, joined her in the US. Helen died on Nov 4, 1934, and was buried in the Gaspé by November 10.
Ann Caroline B. Aug 25, 1857 D. May 08, 1873	She lived for 15 years 8 months
Edward Michael B. Sept 16, 1859 D. May 23, 1934.	Edward never married and died at the age of 75. In 1911 he was living with his parents and his sister in Lobster Cove. By 1921, he was still living with Suzanne and working the family farm.
John Raymond B. Nov 05, 1861 D. Feb 01, 1927	John Raymond Adams lived in Lobster Cove, until 1881 after which he left the Gaspé. His obituary in the Cambellton Graphic newspaper, New Brunswick, states that he was unmarried and living with his brother Edward and his sister Suzanne in Lobster Cove when he died. He returned home after the 1921 census, and his obituary in the Cambellton Graphic, N.B. suggests he lived there for some years. The obit also mentioned that his mother was a survivor of the Carricks shipwreck in Cap des Rosiers in 1847.
Theresa B. April 12, 1864 D. Jan 27, 1873	She lived to the age of 9 years 3 months.

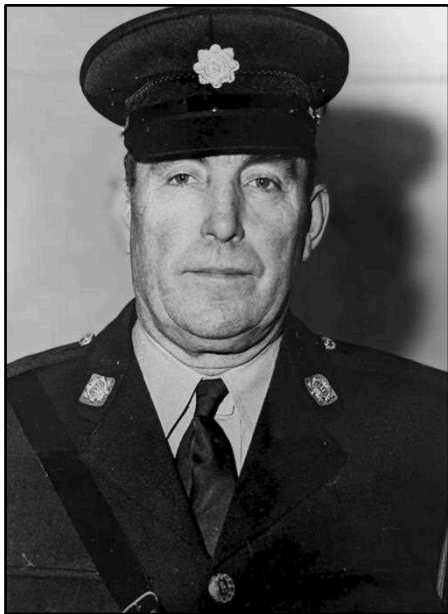
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 9. Peggy Slater, Magazine Gaspésie, Vol. 52, July – October 2015.

<p>Suzanne Mary                  B. Oct 10 1866                  D. Dec 25 1958                  M. Jan 31, 1888</p>	<p>She married Captain Thomas Robson the son of Charles and Judith Costello. Their child, Eva Mary /Mary E was born on Nov 12, 1891. Captain Robson died December 1891 when his ship, the Mizpah, sank off Cape Cod when bound for Portugal. Mary E was in Manhattan in 1898, age 8, living with her aunt Helen and uncle Wilfred. Suzanne returned to live with her parents but in the 1940 and 1950 (US census) she was living with her daughter Mary E. in New Rochelle. NY. USA. She probably stayed with her brother Edward in Lobster Cove until he died in 1934, and then emigrated to the USA to live with her daughter. Suzanne died in the USA on December 25, 1958, aged 92.</p>
<p>Wilfred                  B. Aug 31, 1869                  D. Nov 14, 1941                  N. 1900 /01</p>	<p>He emigrated to the USA in 1883 at the age of 15. There he lived with his sister Helen in Manhattan, New York. The US 1900 census listed him as head of the family and “at college “, living with his sister Helen (45) and niece Mary E. Robson. Wilfred became a US citizen in 1900. By 1920 the US census listed him as a music professor. In 1926 Wilfred, sister Helen and niece Mary Robson had moved to New Rochelle, NY, where he was living with Mary E (niece) and Mary S. Robson (sister) in 1940. Wilfred died there on November 14, 1941.</p>
<p>Grandchild                  Mary Ann Gertrude Morris</p>	<p>Matthew and Bridget had three recorded grandchildren. First born was Mary Ann Gertrude Morris, the daughter of Frances and Andrew Morris who died (age 1 year 6 months) in Ontario. She was buried at St Patrick -Ottawa- in the same church that John Adams and Mary McLaughlin were married in 1881.</p>
<p>Grandchild                  Mary Eva Robson                  B. Nov 12, 1891                  D. Dec 25, 1981                  N. 1924</p>	<p>Mary Eva was the daughter of Captain Robson and Suzanne Mary Adams and was born a month before her father's death. She emigrated to Manhattan, NY. at the age of 8 and lived with her uncle Wilfred and aunt Helen. By 1940 she was the head of her own home, and a teacher in New Rochelle. Her uncle Wilfred lived with her as did her mother Mary S Robson. By 1950 Mary E. was a teacher guidance counsellor in the City Public School and her mother, aged 83 was still with her. She died on December 25, 1981. Census data were not available after 1950 in the USA, and 1921 in Canada.</p>
<p>Grandchild                  Raymond Milton Morris                  B. Dec 4, 1881                  D. Dec 20, 1952</p>	<p>Raymond Milton Morris was born in the USA on December 4, 1881. His parents were Frances and Andrew Morris. In 1901 a Milton Morris born in the USA in 1881 was living with Matthew and Bridget in Gaspé. By 1915, Raymond Morris, born in the US, age 33 was living with Wilfred, Helen and Mary E Robson, his uncle, aunt, and cousin, in New York. In 1917 a Raymond Milton, born on Dec 4, 1881, whose next of kin was Frances W Morris was listed on a draft military notice. Raymond died December 20, 1952.</p>

# Posthumous Bravery Award for Former Ballymote Garda

By Michael Donegan



**Inspector Samuel Donegan**

My father, Samuel Donegan, was the Sergeant in Ballymote Garda Barracks from August 28<sup>th</sup> 1958 to April 12<sup>th</sup> 1965. I was eleven years of age when we left Ballymote but the days I spent living there have remained precious and vivid in my memory to this very moment. I recall those days with nostalgia for a place of kind and gentle neighbours, happy school pals, and innocent childhood adventure. In my mind's eye I see the huge horses pulling their churn-laden drays down the Rock on their way to the creamery. I am still with my nose to the big window of Dockry's Bakery longing for the delicious treats within. Once again, I cross from the school to the church with my class to sing the Latin Requiem Mass in Master Reid's choir and the old dusty classroom still echoes to his sonorous tones as he coaches us in singing 'Golden Days in The Sunshine of Our Happy Youth.' Those were indeed golden days. We had moved from Achill Island to Ballymote in September 1958. As



**The Scott Medal for Valor**

children we had always found it difficult to move from town to town. Each move meant new schools, leaving playmates behind, and trying to make new friends in a new and strange environment. No doubt our poor mother also felt the wrench of moving, stressful and upsetting but she faithfully cared for us and did her best to support and protect us through it all. My father was Sergeant in the Garda barracks at the top of 'the Rock' and we lived in a little rented house at the bottom of the town until moving briefly to an official Garda house beside the Abbey Cinema. My brother John and I attended the Boys' National School and John and some of my

sisters attended Colaiste Mhuire secondary school. Those were halcyon days for us all. We played on the street in Newtown, fished with our jam jars in the 'Commons' at the end of the street and gathered material for the annual St John's night bonfires. Our neighbours' doors were always on the latch. We ate bread and jam in Mrs. Hunt's kitchen and wandered freely into Jack and Agnus Hoey's farmyard at milking time. We munched Calypso bars and swung our spindly little legs on old car seats watching Rin Tin Tin or the Lone Ranger on a flickering black and white TV set in the back of Owen Breheny's shop on the Creamery Road. Then we re-

enacted the snowy, on-screen dramas in our street games.

When word came that our father was being transferred to Sligo Town in 1965, we were devastated to have to leave our friends and kind neighbours. Ballymote had been a haven of security, warmth and friendship for us and now we must move again. We would spend just two years in Sligo as once again, due to his promotion to the rank of Inspector, we moved in 1967, to Cavan Town. Leaving the west of Ireland was a terrible wrench for us but over the next five years our family quietly assimilated into the community in Cavan Town.

I was only an 18 year old teenager when tragedy struck on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1972. I was just about to sit down to an afternoon Leaving Cert exam paper in St Patrick's College, Cavan when a fellow student came rushing up to me with the news that my father had been injured in an explosion on the border. Before I had even a moment to absorb the shock of hearing this terrible news the President of the College was at my side telling me to ignore what I had heard and sit down to my exam. Soon the true horror of the event erupted into all our lives. Within a few hours my father would be dead from the catastrophic injuries he had incurred as a result of a booby trap

IRA bomb. He was just 60 years of age.

The tragedy took place on a narrow back road on the Cavan/Fermanagh border near Legakelly at noon on that day. He, along with a young Irish Army officer, Lieutenant John Gallagher, was inspecting a suspect device which was blocking the road when it suddenly exploded, fatally injuring him and seriously injuring Lieutenant Gallagher. Fortunately, Lieutenant Gallagher survived despite his grievous injuries. 1972 would have the ignominious distinction of being the bloodiest year of the Troubles with 500 deaths and almost 5000 injured in that year alone.

On Friday May 26<sup>th</sup> 2023 my father was posthumously awarded a Gold Scott Medal for Valor at a special ceremony in Walter Scott House, Dublin. The medal was presented by Garda Commissioner Drew Harris who was accompanied by the then Minister for Justice Simon Harris. The Walter Scott Medal for Valor is a medal instituted at the behest of Colonel Walter Scott, a New York philanthropist. In 1923 he gave to the fledgling Garda force a \$1000 gold bond to fund this award in perpetuity with the strict condition that ***'No action, however heroic, will merit the award of the Scott***

***Medal unless it takes the shape of an act of personal bravery, performed intelligently in the execution of duty at imminent risk to the life of the doer, and armed with full previous knowledge of the risks involved.'*** The Scott Medal is the highest award that can be bestowed by the Garda Commissioner and is presented as Gold, Silver or Bronze.

Of the 11 Scott Medals which were awarded at the ceremony my father's medal was the only Gold one presented. This was a very proud and emotional moment for our family although a poignant one also, as our dear mother, Mai, and two of our sisters, Maura and Kathleen, were no longer alive and with us to witness the event. Nevertheless, my elder brother John, sisters Frances and Sheila and myself, as well as many of our children and grandchildren were grateful that we could be present to see the acknowledgement of his great sacrifice at last.

The event which the award commemorated has affected our family greatly in the years since it occurred. All our lives we had known our father as a loving man who had cared for us unconditionally. We had seen him tend to his beehives and dig his garden. He had carried us on his broad shoulders when we were tired, had taught us how to fish, fixed up our battered bikes and repaired our shoes. He was a peaceful man and a good friend and neighbour to many. He did not deserve such a sudden and brutal death.

When my brother John walked up to the podium to accept my father's Scott Medal for Valor it was truly an emotional moment for our family. For us, our father's heroism had never been in doubt and it is a consolation for us that now at last his heroic sacrifice has been acknowledged at the highest level of the State and will be remembered in perpetuity.



L-R John, Frances, Sheila and Michael Donegan with Commissioner Drew Harris

# Recollections of a Rural Post Office

By Diane Keevans

In the autumn of 1994, a retirement function was held in John Doddy's pub, Ballymote, in honour of Bridie Curley, who had been Post Mistress in Cloonkeavy post office for 43 years. Bridie had succeeded her mother as post mistress in 1951. It was an occasion of smiles mixed with sadness, as Bridie's retirement also marked the closure of Cloonkeavy post office, which had first opened in 1900, with its last day being on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1994.

The residents of the 'Five Crossroads' area, who had availed of the services of Cloonkeavy post office over the years, attended the function with the array of presents they had bought for Bridie, which she wholeheartedly deserved and graciously received - a colour television, Waterford crystal glasses, a decanter and tray, a wallet of notes, and from her grandnephews, a bouquet of flowers. She also received a valedictory letter on behalf of An Post, as a thank you for all her years of service to the community. Her nephew Pat Curley has fond memories of growing up amidst the hustle and bustle of a rural post office during the 1950s and '60s. Pat's father Paddy Curley was Bridie's brother, and Paddy worked as a postman. Pat's mother was Breege (nee Niland, Doocastle). Pat and John were the twin sons of Breege and Paddy. They all lived together with Bridie, in the house adjoining Cloonkeavy post office, 3 miles from

Ballymote post office. As many of the rural people had no cars or phones in those days, the post office near their homes, with its old-fashioned public dial phone, was a Godsend for them. Bridie would be out on her bike, in all weathers, (and sometimes her nephews), delivering phone messages to the locals who had no phone in their homes.

In those days, there were no post vans, only bicycles. Pat recalls his aunt's long working hours, starting work at 8 o'clock and not finishing until 6 o'clock in the evening, five days a week, a half day on Saturday. Some days she could be still busy, well after closing time. She also ran a shop, selling confectionary and other small items. In the evenings the postman would collect the mail, put it into the mail bag, onto his bicycle and cycle the three miles to deliver it to Bunninadden post office. The busiest times of year were Christmas and Easter, when many parcels would be sent off to friends and relations of the locals in England. These parcels were loaded into the mailbags and delivered by bicycle to Bunninadden post office. All the stamps sold and phone calls made and received were written in the book kept by Bridie.

The Curley family loved to see people coming into their house for a chat, after doing their business in the post office. News would be exchanged, stories told, (even

some ghost stories!), cups of tea would be drunk and a warm welcome was given to all!

Pat recalls, with much fondness, his "good neighbour," Sean Keevans, helping out his father Paddy at Christmas time, with his postal rounds. He also recalls, with much sadness, his aunt Bridie's retirement.

Bridie was a diligent worker, devoted to her job and honest in her dealings with customers. She was a well-respected woman and well-liked by all the community. I looked on Bridie as a special friend, as she was my nearest neighbour, and we shared birthdays- 6th November! Despite the big age difference, Bridie would listen to all my "news", and would say "Just so!" at the end of my story. She liked to play Bingo and loved watching television. The door was always open for visitors and the kettle on the boil. Cloonkeavy post office was more than just a post office to the rural community of the 'Five Cross Roads';- it was a home from home, thanks to Bridie and all the Curley family. May their memory live on in our hearts forever.

Sources: Sligo Champion (16th September 1994)  
Stephen Ferguson, GPO, Dublin.  
Pat Curley.

# From Sligo to Sihanoukville Working with the United Nations

By Michael O'Connor

In 1992, at the request of the United Nations, the Irish Government had decided to send a contingent of 40 members of an Garda Síochána to the war-torn country of Cambodia on secondment to the U.N and sought applicants for the mission. I applied and was chosen for the first contingent. Cambodia, a former French colony in Southeast Asia, is located south of Thailand and west of Vietnam. The country had been involved in a civil war between 1967 and in 1975, the Khmer Rouge overthrew the Lon Nol Government and ruled the country until the Vietnamese invaded in 1979. The invading Vietnamese installed a puppet government in Cambodia which lasted until a U.N. brokered Peace Agreement was signed in Paris in October 1991. The Paris agreement sanctioned the most ambitious United Nations Mission to date. Army, Police and Civil Administration would descend on Cambodia with the object of running free and fair elections in the Spring of 1993. This was a huge logistical mission into a country that had been brought back to “Year Zero” by Saloth Sar, otherwise known as Brother Number One but better known to the World as the despotic leader Pol Pot.

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) would give sweeping powers both for the U.N Army and U.N Civilian Police allowing them to effectively take over operations and run the country, something never attempted before on a U.N Mission, to my knowledge.

Cambodia had been a sideshow of the Vietnam War and President Richard Nixon had secretly authorised the bombing of North Vietnamese Army sites in Eastern Cambodia between 1969 and 1973 in order to cut off the “Ho-Chi Minh Trail”. It is estimated that the bombing was equivalent to five Hiroshimas This resulted in many civilian deaths and brought hundreds



**Tuol Sleng Museum**

of new recruits into the ranks of the Khmer Rouge. When the Khmer Rouge eventually took control of Cambodia in April 1975, their first action was to empty the capital, Phnom Penh of all its human inhabitants, including the sick and infirm, an estimated 2 million people. The new rulers of Cambodia called 1975 “Year Zero”. The dawn of an age when there would be no families, no sentiment, no expressions of love or grief, no medicines, no hospitals, no schools, no books, no learning, no holidays, no music, no songs, no post, no money, only work and death. Of the seven million inhabitants of Cambodia it is estimated that almost two million people died from starvation, disease or were murdered between 1975 and 1979. almost a third of the population.

On arrival in Cambodia I, along with nine colleagues, was allocated to Sihanoukville, a city on the Gulf of Thailand and some 250 km south of the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. The highway connecting the capital to Sihanoukville. Route No. 4, had been badly damaged during the previous

years and most bridges along the route were simply made from wooden planks that were just wide enough to accommodate the wheels of our U.N vehicles. The countryside was ruled by local militias who on one occasion fired a shot at our vehicle. Luckily it whizzed past our heads. Travelling along that route always posed a danger. Both sides of the road were heavily mined with ingenious little traps that had a personal mine on top of an anti-tank mine so a step on one



**Pol Pot**



**Phnom Penh circa 1979**

of those little beauties would guarantee your complete annihilation. For that very good reason, we never wandered off the hard road surface. In Sihanoukville itself we were warmly welcomed and no animosity was shown towards the UN personnel. Apart from ordinary police work, we were also dealing with land issues where disputes had arisen on ownership of property taken over during the Khmer Rouge rule. But of course we were in a war zone and some terrible acts were still taking place. The traditional enemy of the Khmer people were the Vietnamese and many nights while lying in bed gunfights could be heard around our house and in the morning our police monitors would discover the bodies of slain Vietnamese civilians. All these incidents required investigation as did ordinary crimes such as burglaries, assaults, road traffic accidents etc. Cambodia is full of locations and images of what went on during the civil war and especially during the Pol Pot era.

I visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum which was the site of the S-21, an interrogation and detention center of the Khmer Rouge regime. A former High School located in the heart of Phnom Penh, it preserves a tragic period in history with the aim to encourage visitors to be messengers of peace. The walls of the Museum are covered with the haunting images of the victims of the Khmer Rouge, images taken just before and sometimes just after death. The hastily constructed 'Cells' contain evidence of incarceration such as chains and leg irons as well as evidence of water boarding and other torture techniques too gruesome to describe here. Only 12 people were found alive ( 7 adults and 5 children) when the invading Vietnamese army liberated the prison in 1979.

Not far from Tuol Sleng can be found **"The Killing Fields"**! at Choeung Ek. Choeung Ek is a former orchard which served a sinister purpose during the reign of the Khmer Rouge: It became known as The Killing Fields, where men, women and children were killed and buried. Located around 17 kilometres south of Phnom Penh city centre, Choeung Ek was used by the Khmer Rouge to commit wholesale murder. Almost all the victims came from Tuol Sleng prison. Prisoners were held and tortured at the S-21 prison, before being transported to the former Longan Orchard. Approximately 17,000 people are believed to have been killed and buried at Choeung Ek.

Cambodians come to pay their respects and remember what happened.

The one thing that I was impressed with on first entering the country was the friendliness of the people. It was just like walking down the street in Ballymote, Gurteen or Sligo. A friendliness that was more extraordinary considering the terrible experience most of those people had been through. When we were involved in dealing with these people, while they were friendly, they had a terrible sadness to them and they would tell of the loss of family members, in most cases the loss of the entire family. It was difficult to deal with such terrible details but deal with it we did. There were also some



**The Memorial Stupa contains hundreds of human skulls**

In 1980, the remains of over 9,000 people were exhumed from a mass grave – many of their remains (including 8000 skulls) form the centrepiece of the memorial site at Choeung Ek, in the form of a Memorial Stupa (See image above). Many of the graves remain untouched out of respect, but fragments of bone, teeth and bloodied cloth can still be seen on the site as you walk around. The 9<sup>th</sup> May is marked with a memorial ceremony every year at the Stupa where Khmer Rouge survivors and their relatives, officials and

funny moments like the day we arrived at our "Hotel" in Phnom Penh. I was assisting in booking in our party. The receptionist enquired where we were from to which I replied Ireland. "Where?" She asked. She had never heard of our little country. However, when we were leaving the hotel a week later there were Irish flags and Guinness coasters all around the place. The receptionist could even say "Go raibh maith agat" or at least a brave attempt at it.

After 8 months in the country, in

January 1993 we were brought home and replaced by another Garda contingent. The 2<sup>nd</sup> contingent oversaw the elections in May 1993 and saw democracy restored to a country I grew to love and to pity. Cambodia continues to have a democratic Government today and the country is now moving forward and experiencing normal development and living. The U.N Mission was deemed a success and UNTAC was wound down with UN forces leaving the country in September 1993. While it was great to return home to Sligo, I still remember my days as part of a wonderful Garda group that helped bring peace to that tragic State. What an incredible part of history in which to have been involved. Three years later I was bound for Cyprus on a second UN mission, but that's another story.



**The author (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) and Garda colleagues on a beach in Southern Cambodia after Mass - May 1992. The soldiers are from the French Foreign Legion**

## Moving to Ballymote; Discovering Lost Treasure

*By Jacqueline Bonass*

Our story begins in Dublin, with two people who were getting rather sick of the cost of Dublin. My husband and I had spent a year house hunting in the Capital and losing, so we decided to do what many others are and look west, towards Sligo. By chance, we came across a listing for a unique property in the town of Ballymote. After a fraught bidding war, we finally got the call that we had won the day, the house was ours! We moved in the week before Christmas and got right to the business of unpacking and settling in.

One of our first tasks was to remove the beds left by the previous family. We entered the bedroom that belonged to the former owner of the house to begin dismantling his bed to make room for our own. When we

lifted up the mattress, a thick manila envelope caught our eyes. I reached down to retrieve it and opened the top flap to see what was inside. My breath caught momentarily as I saw a long slip of aged parchment mixed in with various other papers of varying shades of yellow. The mattress was quickly turned into a makeshift table so we could investigate this time capsule. I reached in and pulled out a collection of documents ranging from a handwritten, beautifully preserved, original lease, dated December 1912 to a deed of sale from 1980. In total, we found a treasure trove of 27 documents mostly from the 1920's and 1930's. This was the story they told us:

The land we now own had been owned by the Gore-Booth family of Lissadell House, Co Sligo. (This

family bought the property as part of a large purchase of some 16,000 acres throughout Co Sligo for the sum of 130,000 pounds in 1833.) In 1912, the property, including the house and outbuildings, was leased from Josslyn A.R. Gore-Booth (perhaps better known as brother to Countess Constance Markievicz), to Joseph Flanagan of Ballymote for the term of sixty-one years and the yearly rent of 5 pounds and 5 shillings. The neighbouring properties at the time of the lease were a Thomas E. O'Brien to the left and a Francis Dyer to the right. (Today these buildings are the law offices of O'Connor Johnson Solicitors.) Joseph Flanagan was the son of Patrick and Mary Flanagan, also of Ballymote; his mother's maiden name being Anderson. He had three siblings: Patrick, Bridget,

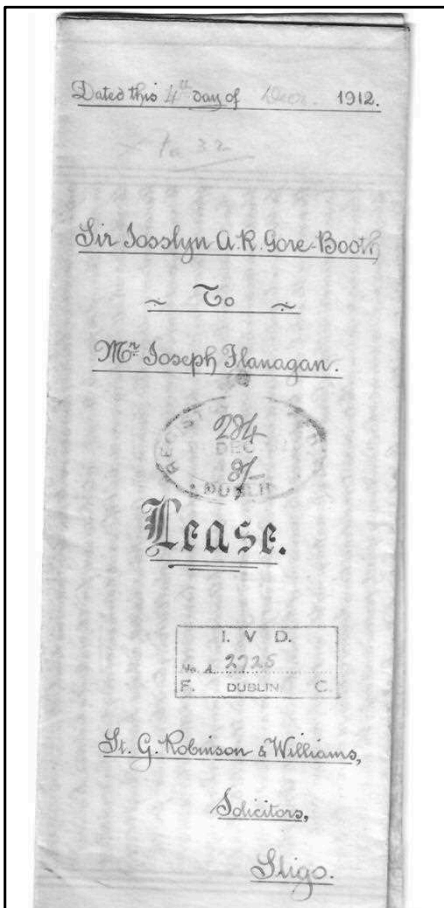
and James. Patrick and Bridget both passed without issue at early ages. This left James as Joseph's only living "lawful" relative when Joseph, a bachelor, passed at home on 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1927.

When he passed, Joseph didn't have a will, but the intestate documents we found indicate that the house and subsequent lease was then given to Joseph's brother James, who was an Auctioneer and Publican in Ballymote. James then applied for and was granted a mortgage from Ulster Bank in October of 1928 for the sum total of 600 pounds, which he used to purchase the property outright from the Gore-Booth family. On 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1933, James had a judgment of bankruptcy that was issued in 1895 officially annulled. The following April, 1934, James remortgaged the property for the sum of 700 pounds. James then passed away at home on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1934, leaving the property and house to his widow, Emily Flanagan. Emily then

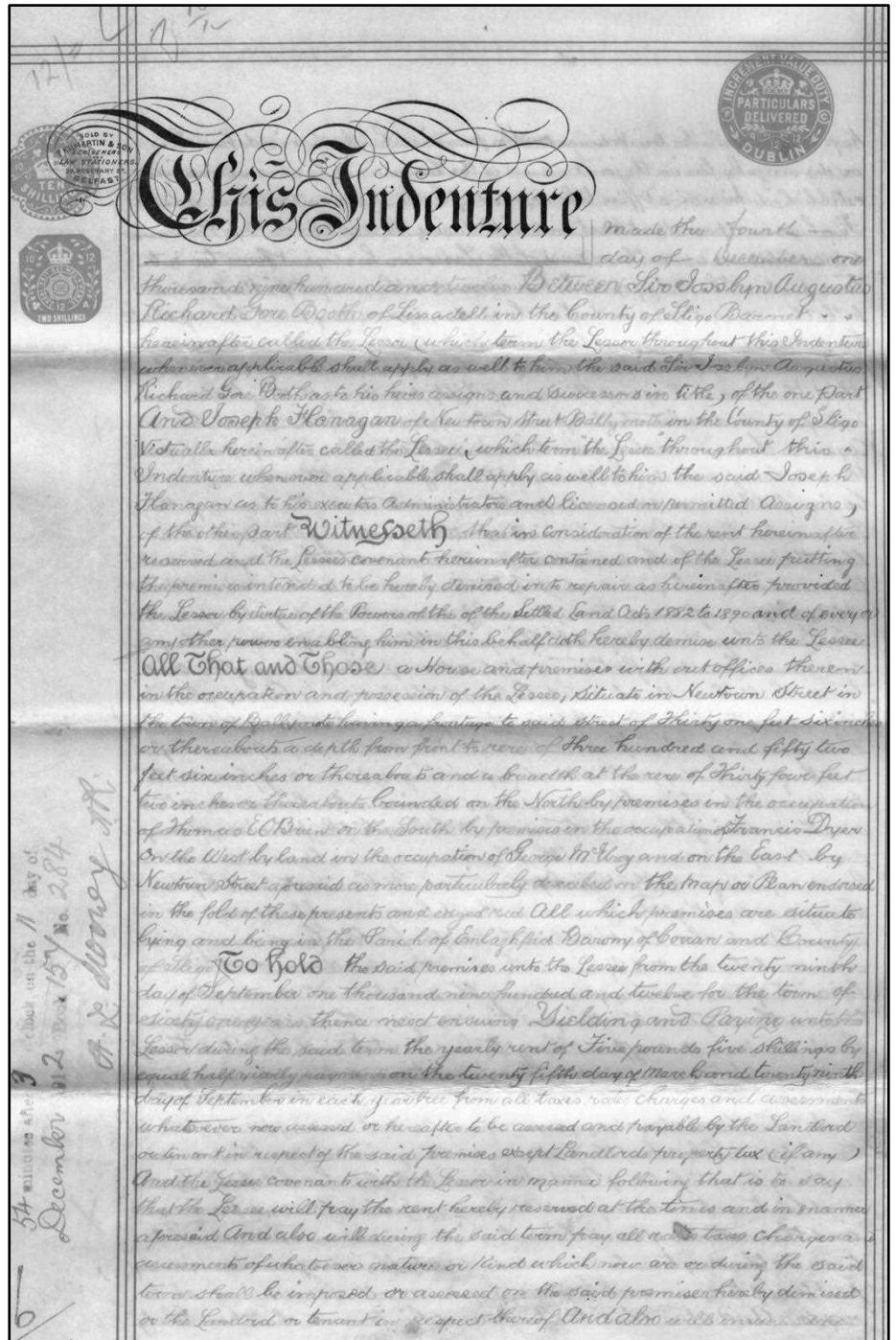
sold the property to Roger Egan, locally known as Roddy, on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1939.

Roddy raised five children in this home with his wife Annie. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1973, Roddy Egan passed away at home, intestate. However, by September of 1973, the courts had granted his widow, Annie Egan, ownership of the home. She sold the house to her son Patrick (Paddy) Egan in 1980.

Paddy and his wife Eileen then raised their own family of five children here before she passed in 2019 and he passed in 2021. Then we purchased the house and property in 2023, found the envelope and here we are now. We feel immensely privileged to be able to have this glimpse into the history of our new home. How many people are able to give an outline of some of the lives lived before them in their 150-year-old



1912 Lease front



Lease Page 1

home? These documents are precious records of the past and will most likely go to an archive for their preservation. The story they tell may be brief, but it is priceless, nonetheless.

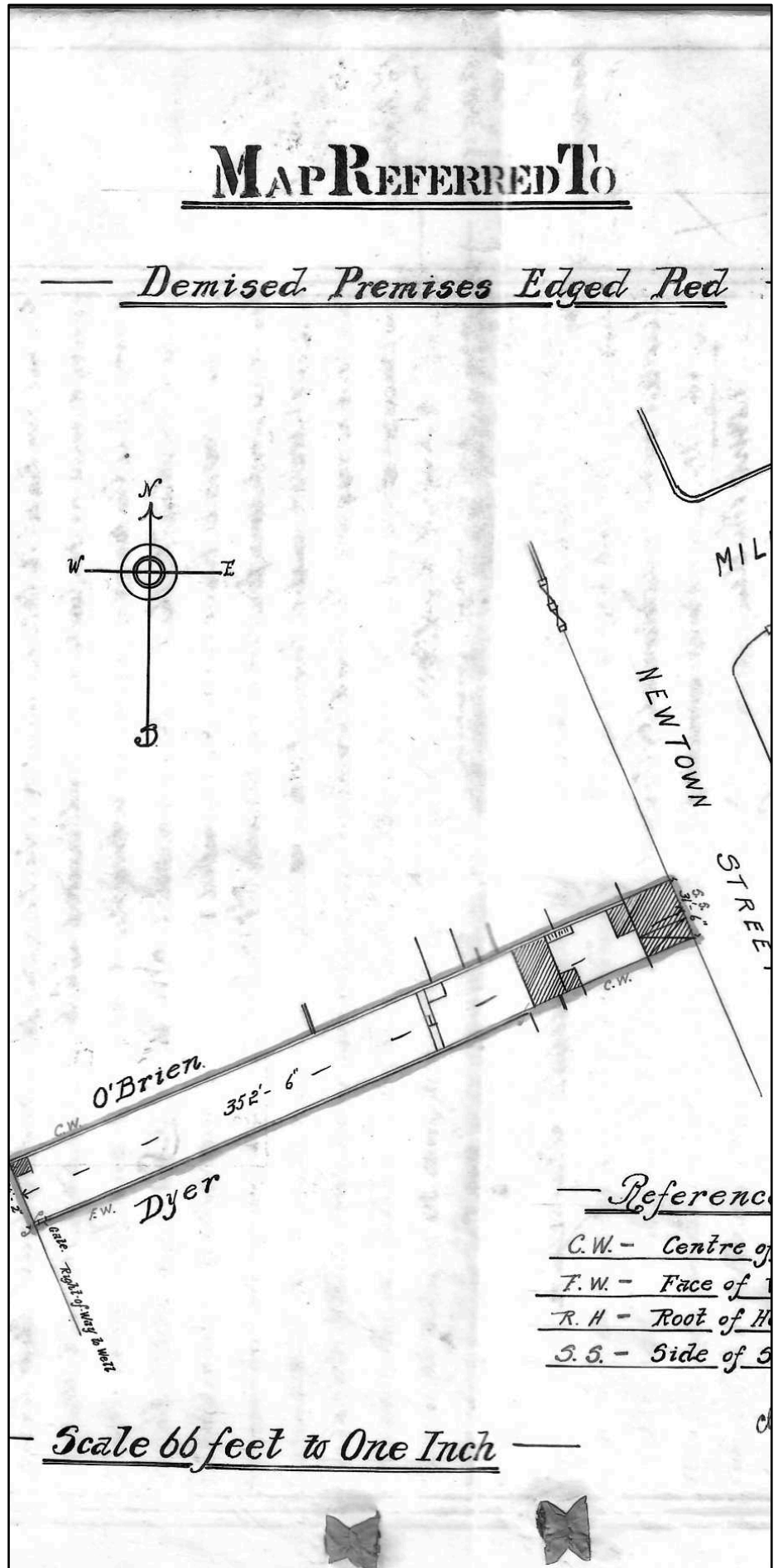
Amazingly, this envelope was not the only find of historical value as we also discovered a Celtic cross grave marker in the back garden, resting up against the outer stone wall of the property. A brief consultation with Martin Timoney has dated this grave marker to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. We don't know why or how the grave marker came to be here, but it was another exciting discovery as we became acquainted with our new home. Who knows what other treasures await us here in Ballymote?



Celtic Cross as found



Celtic Cross as found



Lease Map

# The Legend of Knocknora, St. Patrick's visit to Thubber Elive (Recitation)

*Submitted by Mary Kelly-White*

When St. Patrick crossed the Shannon,  
he came from the Eastern Side  
Wher'er he trod the Word of God  
He carried far and wide.  
The legends tell of Elive's Well,  
Where'er rare wild flowers grow,  
How Patrick paid a visit there,  
In ages long ago  
'Twas in the harvest time of year,  
The meadows hummed with bees;  
All nature seemed to welcome him-  
The birds sang in the trees  
The ferney glens were lovely then,  
Bedecked with holly green,  
And fishes leapt where sun rays crept  
Across each purling stream.  
When his feet found rest within the West,  
He blest it o'er and o'er  
The hills seemed greener and more fair,  
Than e'er they were before  
He blessed Arigna, rude and wild,  
And the Glen of Cille of Aurney;  
Long e'er he came to Focluth Wood,  
Or Erris by the sea.  
He passed through fair Roscommon's  
vales,  
The woods then looked their best;  
Till Sligo's glens at last he reached,  
As he went further West.  
In those fair hills his footprints still  
Are crowned with memories;  
His golden words can still be heard,  
Like Autumn's freshening breeze  
He then did pray beside a rock.  
As weary he sat down,  
Before he reached the mountain top  
That's called Aulth Nora's Crown.

A church now marks the spot whereon  
He rested on his march;  
A living proof of love and truth,  
By men with simple hearts,  
The humble peasants built it there,  
With willing heart and hand,  
What Patrick preached was practised  
well,  
In this holistic Glen.  
It showed how well his faith could live,  
Weathered the storms and breeze,  
For many's the day rolled by since then-  
Full fifteen centuries.  
The staff of Jesus, too, he bore,  
And where it chanced to pass,  
The Druid's Pagan Idols fell,  
Or crumbled o'er the grass,  
In Ardmagh's Cloisters it remained  
For long and many's the day,  
Until the time the English came-  
'Twas stolen, so they say,  
Aulth Nora is crowned with heather  
brown,  
Magnificent and rare.  
In all the West there's not a spot  
More beautiful or fair,  
What the eye can see is lovely,  
'Round the shores of sweet Lough Key,  
From Longford back to Breffney,  
Around to Knocknarea.  
Among the rocks were deep ravines,  
The way was rough and long,  
But St. Patrick's saintly heart was brave,  
As well became the man.  
Elive's Well at length was reached-  
'Twas there he preached and prayed-  
The people listened, deeply touched

With every word he said.  
He spoke until the evening fell,  
And shadows shifted East;  
The bees upon the meadow dell  
Their music long had ceased.  
And till the gentle breezes  
Wandered inland from the sea;  
Yet he told the Laws of Heaven  
And the glories yet to be,  
'Twas here the good St. Elive knelt,  
To be baptised and blest-  
The first of all the Bishops  
Consecrated in the West.  
And from his grave the water sprang,  
And sprang spontaneously,  
While yet today it springs the same  
For anyone to see.  
The pilgrims built a wall of stone,  
As the old traditions tell,  
Around the water where it ran,  
And called it Elive's Well.  
A tombstone marks the spot where rests  
His relics and remains,  
And a cross of stone the Bishop Coyne  
Erected to his name.  
This noble Bishop of Elphin  
Reveres his memory,  
This holy place will sure remain  
Within his Diocese free.  
So there's my story as I know,  
As well as I can tell,  
Of St. Patrick's visit long ago,  
To Elive's Holy Well.

[www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie)

# A Romanesque Corbel, Achonry High Medieval Cathedral, Co. Sligo

By Martin A. Timoney and Elaine Conroy

With wheels under him from 1971 and living in the Knocknarea area and teaching in Scarriff, Co. Clare, Martin A. Timoney's trips home, made visiting early ecclesiastical sites across Co. Sligo quite easy. On one trip he went to Achonry, where there is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century Church of Ireland Cathedral, a High Medieval 15<sup>th</sup> century Roman Catholic Cathedral (or rather the east wall of it with a gaping hole where there was what must have been a magnificent east window with cusping).

The ecclesiastical heritage of Achonry dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century when St. Finnian of Clonard established a monastery there and placed a priest, Nathy (referred to as St. Nathy Cruimthir) over his monastery. Achonry needs an overall survey, to map the extensive earthworks involved that include the Early Christian church, the Early Christian cross slabs and the flat face sculpture believed to be in Dublin in private possession and the High Medieval cathedral. A good start would be a severe briar cutting followed by severe grazing by sheep. Following this survey, a follow-up committee to keep the place maintained is needed. The Church of Ireland cathedral, St. Crumnathy's, was closed in 1997 and deconsecrated in 1998. Opened in 1822, presumably some of the masonry of the north, west and south walls of the Catholic High Medieval cathedral were incorporated into its construction, though there is no sign of any such in the exposed masonry. Perhaps some stones are concealed behind dry lining, similarly to how two sections of the shaft of a high cross were concealed at Drumcliff (*Sligo Field Club Journal*, Vol. 9).

The east end of the chancel floorspace of the High Medieval cathedral was relatively free of overgrowth. Clearly to be seen there was, and still is, an unusual rough grave marker, firmly fixed upright in the ground, with one

side sculpted but no sign of any inscription. The sculpted image and its original location has raised much speculation between the authors.

MAT took some photographic slides of the stone which he showed in early versions of *The Barking Dog* lecture – this constantly evolving lecture has reached its 19<sup>th</sup> edition. Those lectures tell some of the archaeology and local history in Connacht and Clare since 1966 that has come his way. MAT considered this Achonry stone to be a folklife piece, a headstone, perhaps of the last few centuries. Back then, he had not the extensive knowledge of Irish grave memorials that Mary B. Timoney has developed since 1984 – she rejected the folklife dating. Often the remnants of older ruinous church buildings were used to mark a grave of a loved one. This would appear to be the reasoning for the position of this stone at this location.

Mary B. showed Prof. Etienne Rynne, Department of Archaeology, Galway, photos of some of the wonderful, sculpted memorials, particularly those of the Diamonds of Skreen School of Stonemasons; some are included in *Had Me Made* (Mary B. Timoney, 2005). She handed photos of the Achonry stone to him, top towards him. Instantly, and without hesitation, he said “Romanesque!” That would put the stone in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the period before the arrival of the Gothic.

Dr. Cathy Swift of Mary Immaculate in Limerick spoke on ‘Celtic Goddesses and Women of Power’ at the two-lecture Brigid's Awakening Festival in February 2024 at Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, Tulsk in Co. Roscommon. One of the images she showed was of a stone from Guernsey that seemed similar to the Achonry one, and that sparked this current research. Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, under the managership of Dr. Daniel Curley, is one of the great

resources that Co. Roscommon has. Besides a café, a bookshop and a small museum display area there is a lecture room where a number of bespoke lectures and conferences are held, including an annual community archaeological conference and The Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society also hold their monthly lectures here. If only Co. Sligo had such a multi-purpose Visitor Centre like that at Tulsk! OK, Sligo has Visitor Centres at Sligo Abbey, Carrowmore, Drumcliff, and Riverstown; RCVC is a centre of academic debate on more than just Rathcroghan.

The *History and Society* volume for Sligo has been mooted for many years - almost all other counties have had their volume produced under the idea and guidance of Dr. William Nolan, originally of the Geography Department in UCD. He has used the imprint Geography Publications since 1985 when he began with his native Tipperary. Both Timoneys will have articles in the upcoming Sligo volume, being edited by Dr. Kieran D. O'Connor. Mary B. is writing about three of those highly decorated box tombs by the Diamond masons, commemorating Somers, Phibbs and Meredith, that are in the east side of the old Achonry graveyard, south of the High Medieval cathedral ruins. This recording and research required more visits to Achonry and that gave MAT the chance to have yet another look at that stone.

## Description

The Achonry stone is set upright in the ground, 2.40 m west of the inside of the east gable and 1.50 m north of the inside of the south wall of the 15<sup>th</sup> century cathedral. The stone is sedimentary, either limestone or shale. There are signs of weathering along the top edges. The back of the stone is uneven.

The stone is 40 cm wide and 53 cm of

it is above ground. It is 10 cm thick at the lower part and thins to 6 cm for the upper part which has been cut back to leave the sculpture in relief.

Now comes the tricky bit! Looking at it as it now stands it looks to be a female with well-developed breasts, decorated with swirls. However, looking at it inverted, as Rynne saw in Mary B. Timoney's photo, it looks like an animal head, with two eyes and a snout.

The sculpture is 21 cm long by 16 cm wide. It stands 4 cm out from the flattish face of the stone at the level of

the eyes. The now worn snout section is less, at 2 cm; its top is 9 cm from the top of the stone.

#### **Romanesque in Co. Sligo**

Romanesque in Ireland begins in Ireland in the 1120s and lasts until superseded by the Gothic. This design style with its rounded arched windows and doors, incorporated decorative elements on corbels, arches, pillars and capitals. Many of these features were human and animal heads. These elements not only graced large ecclesiastical buildings

but also small churches.

Tadhg O'Keeffe refers to buildings as "cultural artefacts" (2015, 23). So where does this Achonry Romanesque stone come from that we may record it alongside Sligo's vast collection of cultural artefacts? Are there any other Romanesque pieces here? As far as one can see through the long grass the only architectural pieces reused as grave markers come from the High Medieval cathedral. There is no other Romanesque to be seen at Achonry.

MAT lists nine Sligo sites in total that



**The Achonry Romanesque Corbel**

have Romanesque, though generally only single stones are to be seen, with two further possible ones, for the county (Timoney 2002, 178). St. Fechin's, Kilboglasy, Ballisodare, has a Romanesque doorway and the Carrowcullen stone, that with a seated Christ with a sword across his lap and a lion and an eagle either side, are the better sculpted Romanesque pieces in the county.

In the side of a south window of nearby High Medieval church in Church Hill, Cloonoghil parish, is a single Romanesque stone decorated with overlapping arcs of pellets.

This Achonry Romanesque corbel, probably second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, then adds another site in Co. Sligo for which we have Romanesque.

### Where Did the Corbel Come From?

There is no standing building at Achonry that this corbel could have come from.

Martin A. Timoney and Elaine Conroy examined the very ruinous and moss-covered remains of the church building in the field northwest of the cathedrals. The poor quality of the masonry of that building does not look like that of our corbel. MBT suggested that we should look for a second corbel, used as a grave-marker, and wondered if the Romanesque church that it came from was replaced by the High Medieval cathedral.

### Two Comparable Corbels

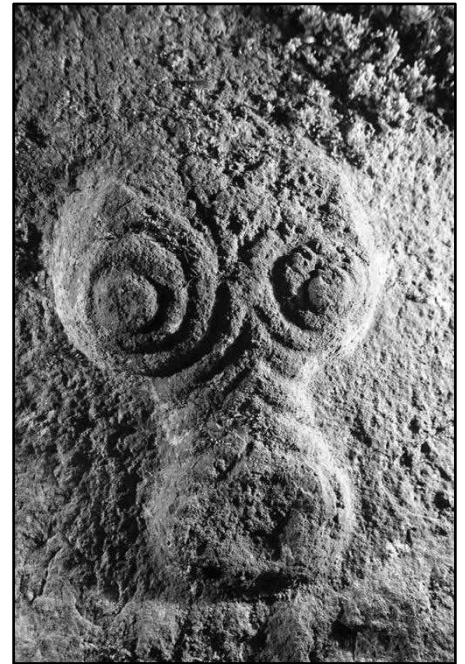
Two comparable corbels, Boynagh, near Glenamaddy, Co. Galway and Temple Cronan, Co. Clare, have come to our attention in Spring 2024.

EC works in the Rathcroghan Visitor Centre and when Daniel Curley saw images of the Achonry corbel he soon drew our attention to a similar corbel from Boynagh graveyard, described as a corbel dragon head.

By sheer chance, as frequently happens one of us, MAT, saw a published image of a Romanesque corbel at Temple Cronan in Dr. Peter Harbison's article "Some Romanesque Heads from County Clare" in *North Munster Antiquarian*

*Journal*, XV, 1972, 3-7. No wonder Rynne's response was so certain – he had edited the article in which the corbel is illustrated as pl. II-1.

It is worth quoting Harbison in full: "Two of the original corner corbels bear heads carved in relief on the concave underside. When we stand with our backs to the wall and look up at the corbel at the southwestern corner, we can see what appears to be an unfinished animal head (Pl. I,4); the square part in relief retains the outline of the head on which the bulging eyes and the ridge of the nose were roughed out but never completed. The other corner corbel, now at the southeastern angle of the church, is decorated with what is possibly the most fascinating of all the heads from Temple Cronan. When we stand with our faces to the wall and look up at it, we see a hobgoblin-like human mask with swelling eyes and a flat nose from the top of emerge two curled horns (Pl. II, 1). But the layout of the unfinished southwestern corner corbel mentioned above - which only makes sense when we look up at it when standing with our backs to the wall - suggests that we should also look at the southeastern corner corbel in the same way. The effect of what we can then see may be achieved if we turn it upside down, and by doing so we can make out an animal head with large and lentoid bovine eyes and a lyre shaped snout which narrows upwards between the eyes to emerge as the forehead above them. There is a wonderful sense of rhythmic all curving motion in the stylised rounded moulding of the various components of this face, all of which unite to form a single but ever pleasing whole. The lyre shaped snout gives at once a Celtic twist to this head, and the fact that the head can be seen as a human or an animal mask - depending on which way you look at it - shows that the sculpture is following in the time-honoured Celtic tradition of double meaning. This corbel is, indeed, one of the most striking examples of the influence of an earlier Celtic art preserved in the Romanesque sculpture of Clare."



The Achonry Stone

Now that we know which way is up, it is worth looking for similar corbels in our overgrown graveyards. In 2023, the Achonry Mullinabreena Community Enhancement group (A.M.C.E.) began the long road towards conservation of the graveyard and St. Crumnathy's Cathedral. Working with St. George's Parish in Tubbercurry, grant assistance from The Heritage Council to create a Conservation Plan was achieved. A local farmer assisted by placing sheep within the graveyard to help diminish the overgrowth. In 2024 A.M.C.E. together with St. George's Parish, were again successful in obtaining grant assistance from the Historic Environment Fund - match funding is currently being raised.

Perhaps with control of the vegetation and preservation works, some answers will grow out of the ground!

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We tender our thanks to Dr. Cathy Swift, Mary B. Timoney, Dr. Daniel Curley, Professor Tadhg O'Keefe and Dr. Jim Higgins for various suggestions incorporated in this initial note.

# Taunagh Church, Riverstown: Families and Clergy by John Taylor

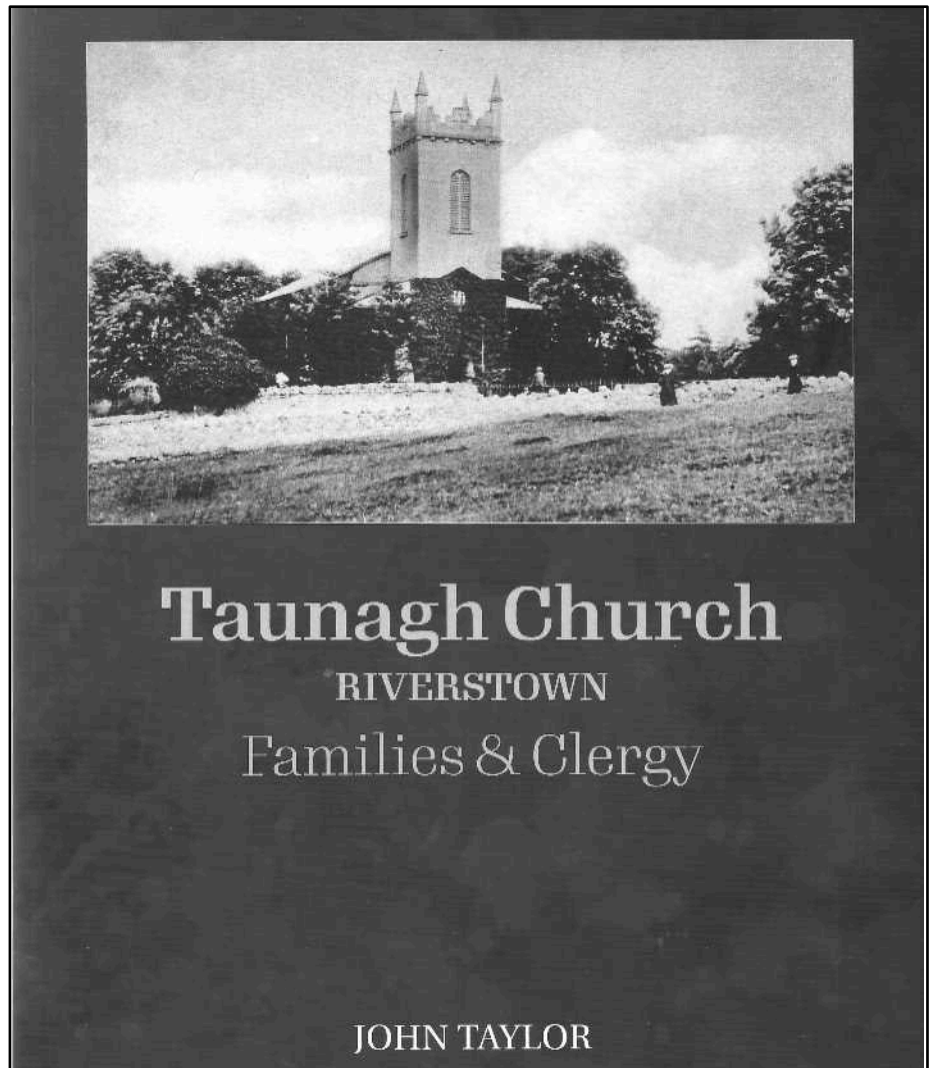
(Glóir Publications, Davis Cottage, Rathosey, Coolaney, 2024)

*Reviewed by John Coleman*

John Taylor's book provides a treasure house of information gleaned from his fellow parishioners and a lifetime of research in the evidently rich collection of records of Riverstown's Taunagh Church of Ireland parish. The book is superbly structured and meticulously edited – if only James Joyce had been so careful it would have deprived generations of scholars of decades of speculation as to what he really meant. There is an expansive chronology from 1813 as well as detailed information on individual families and community activities – the usual Irish story of emigration is reflected. An impressive audience of over 200 turned out for the launch in the galleries of Riverstown's impressive Folk Park.

Having grown up in a drapery business in Ballymote, I am reminded of the family names of many of our customers – Bagnall, Beattie, Bright and Patterson particularly ring bells. Other ancient Sligo names like Higgins, O'Hara and McDonagh would equally feature in any local catholic parish, illustrating the complexity of Irish history rather than the simplistic narrative usually and divisively presented. I see the name of Abraham Henderson who was born in the house in Market Street, Ballymote which was subsequently bought by my grandparents in 1913 and was my childhood home. My mother spoke of the Barlows who lived up the street in her youth.

As a child I often found myself sitting across the table from Daisy Rowlett when I came home from school for mid-day dinner. My mother always put extra in the pot for the unexpected guest. Having bicycled to Ballymote to do her shopping, Miss Rowlett regularly came with a gift of a plump chicken which she had reared.



**Book Cover - Taunagh Church, Riverstown: Families & Clergy**

Georgina Allen, the Riverstown church organist (Miss Allen to us children) made the journey to Ballymote weekly, spending the evening going from house to house as she tried valiantly to teach us to play piano – I remember learning a very simplified arrangement of the ode to joy from Beethoven's Choral Symphony – now regularly heard as the official EU Anthem (not to be confused with the more familiar Charpentier based Eurovision theme!)

I see mention of Kathleen Fairbanks who was a supporter of Ballymote Heritage Group and wrote 16 pieces for *The Corran Herald*. John has been a long-time supporter of the Ballymote Heritage Group and contributor to *The Corran Herald*. He is the leading collector of books about County Sligo and he has made a worthy and essential addition to this bibliography.

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Ballymote Heritage Group would like to acknowledge financial support approved by Sligo County Council under the Community and Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme 2024