



# Cumann Oidhreachta Eanách Dhúin Annaghdown Heritage Society

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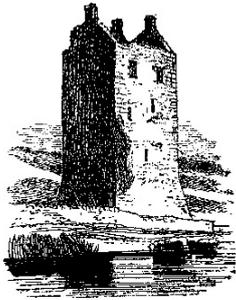
Nuachtlitir Lámh. 10

FREE

Samhradh 2022

## FÁILTE

The Society has continued with an active program since our last issue. We have held a number of online and in-person events since our last issue, including lectures by Sean Brosnahan, Nollaig Ó Muraíle, Mary Mercer and Jessica Cooke. Recordings of each lecture are available on our YouTube channel. We plan to continue having our events available on Zoom, as this has greatly increased engagement and participation with members and friends overseas. Members enjoyed a very interesting trip to the Rathcroghan complex of archaeological sites in Roscommon on Saturday 11 June.



We also held a church gate collection in March after a hiatus in 2021; sincere thanks to the local community for your continued support.

Membership of the Society is open to all and costs €10 per annum, which can be paid via PayPal using the 'Join Us' button on our website, or at any of our events. You can follow our activities on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and by visiting our website.

## HOW FARMERS LIVED AND WORKED DURING THE LANDLORD ERA IN ANNAGHDOWN

*Evelyn Stevens*

The old villages in various townlands in the parish are a familiar sight to us all. They are a snapshot of how close together neighbours lived back then, the houses huddled together in a way that looks very cosy.

In some of the villages a few thatched houses remain, in others the old houses have had the thatch replaced with tiles or slates, while in others all the old houses are ruins.

Such villages were given the name 'clachan' by Estyn Evans who documented their prevalence in the areas of the country where the land was fairly poor. Some other Irish geographers prefer the name 'rundale village' because the farming system associated with these villages was known as 'rundale'.

The old Ordnance Survey (OSI) map of Tonegurrane dated from around 1839 shows the close proximity of the houses and outhouses represented by the red rectangles on the map. A life of co-operation with the neighbours is easy to imagine. Farming was the way of life for all. Older people in the community will remember farmers working 'in co' with each other, whether that meant sharing a horse for farm work,

or carrying out various farm jobs together. Fields were sometimes swapped between people, if the location was more convenient for the farmer- for example. 94 year old John Murphy (born in 1928) from Cregduff and formerly of Addergoole described how an area called an Móinéir Beag in Addergoole was collectively used by the people from the village.

While the area was usually flooded by the Cregg River during the winter, in the summer hay was made in the Móinéir Beag by each of the Addergoole farmers. Each family had a piece of the land, but the only divisions were mearing stones on the ground about 50 yards apart. There were no permanent walls or fences to mark each holding even though the map has lines indicating the divisions. The lines on the current map are in the same positions as those on the OSI map from the 19th century.

These old co-operative farming practices are probably a reminder of the way that the land was divided up and farmed in the 19th century at a time when the land was all owned by landlords.

The system by which the land was organised was called 'rundale'. It survived longer in parts of Co Mayo than elsewhere and was documented in a paper by Tom Yager (Béaloideas 2002) 'What was Rundale and where did it come from?' He studied the isolated village of Faulmore at the tip of the Mullet peninsula over a period of years and described rundale as a communal land system mainly practised in the west of Ireland during the landlord era. (The Rundale system of land use was not peculiar to the west of Ireland, -according to Yager this system also existed in Europe in the Middle Ages.)

The land was rented from landlords but largely regulated by the tenants themselves. Under the rundale system some or all of the people in the village held joint leases to the land. The fields were not divided up as they are nowadays. Large open fields without walls were farmed by the whole community who lived in the village.

The entire community would have followed the same plan for the year in the large field, potatoes one year, grain the next, with each tenant's portion of 10 to 12 foot wide marked along the length of the field by a simple line of stones. There would have been separate commonage for cattle and after the crops were harvested the large field would also have been available for the animals.

Every few years the land would have been redistributed between the tenants. This was organised by a 'headman', who was also tasked with collecting the rents from the tenants to pay the landlord. When the land was being redistributed attention was paid to the quality of the land with an effort being made to ensure that each tenant got some good land as well as poor land. Around the village houses each tenant would have had a garden fenced in for their own use, as



Figure 1. OSI map of Tonagarraun

shown here around the houses in Addergoole.

Griffith's Valuation of 1853 shows that of the 64 townlands in the parish 24 had a village consisting of at least six buildings clustered close together. There is also an indication that for many of the villages the land was held in rundale. This is shown in the documents by a bracket covering all the tenancies, as shown here for Cloonboo. The 'headman' would have organised the distribution of the land and the collection of rents to be paid to the landlord. This method of land use must have been on the way out after the Famine, and there is no trace of it left. The work of the Land Commission, the disappearance of the landlords and the ownership of the land by the farmers themselves put paid to the Rundale system. While the way people lived in the villages and the way the land was divided up and farmed has long gone, it is fascinating to know that in the parish of Annaghdown traces of it still survive. The compact old villages in the west of Ireland are the last reminder of a different way of living and farming.

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## SCHOOLING IN ANNAGHDOWN SINCE C. 1822

*Irene McGoldrick*

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As SN Naomh Breandán prepares to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the opening of the current school building, it seems an opportune time to consider the history of education on this side of the parish. The long tradition of education in Annaghdown goes back to the early 19th century and had an interesting progression through endowed non-secular education in the early 1800s through to an 1870s vested National School in Lisanoran and subsequent 1898 Woodpark School in and 1962 building that houses the current school.

In 1782 the Penal Laws relating to education were repealed, which legalised hedge schools in Ireland. This was

likely the only form of education available to Catholic children in the parish until sometime between 1809 and 1822, when Rev. Raymond Hargadon (from the Irish O'hArgadáin - Hardiman), on arriving to the parish, found that his flock were 'deeply sunk in a state of ignorance, particularly in the literary sense, without a knowledge even of the English alphabet, with very few exceptions.' In order to address this, Rev. Hargadon set up two schools in the parish out of his own means and supported by the London Hibernian and Kildare Place Societies. The London Hibernian Society was formed in 1806 'for the diffusion of religious knowledge in Ireland.' A proselytising organisation, whereby the only books of instruction allowed were the bible and a spelling book, it aimed to convert the poor uneducated Catholic Irish through the medium of education. The Kildare Place Society, also known as the Society for the Promotion of Education of the Poor of Ireland, was founded in 1811, providing bible based non-denominational education. Rev. Hargadon appears to have been most opportunistic in securing funding for the schools through such organisations, an unusual move in a time where the church was strongly opposed to non-secular education and particularly the two societies that provided funding. James Glassford noted that 'There are three schools of this Society [London Hibernian] in Annaghdown parish, the only place, as it is said, where they are not opposed - the priest there rather favours them.'

The schools set up by Rev. Hargadon in the early 1820's were 'endowed' - provided for out of his own means. Applying to the Kildare Place Society for funding in 1822, he described the Corrandulla School as 'well thatched, with a chimney for the accommodation of master and scholars, nearly at my sole expense, which has already amounted to near 30l.,' requesting 'a small sum' for furniture and equipment.

The Appendix to the Second Report From the Commissioners of Irish Education Inquiry lists two schools in the



Figure 2. OSI map of Addergoole

Parish of Annaghdown, one of which, Woodpark, was built of stone and lime at a cost of 30l., James Bains was the R.C. master, with between 83 and 124 pupils were enrolled. The master was paid 4l. by the Church of Ireland rector, Rev. Marley. This illustrates the working relationship between the parish priest, Raymond Hargadon, and the Church of Ireland rector, Richard Marley during this time, as they worked in tandem to secure education for the children of Annaghdown - a relationship that would shift in the subsequent years.

In the same document, Dr. Oliver Kelly, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, was questioned about the school in Annaghdown, and reported that the rules of the London Hibernian Society were not followed, that the master allowed the children to bring their own books, and that Roman Catholic Catechism was taught there. It would appear that while the schools were supported by the London Hibernian Society and the Kildare Place Society, the rules associated with such funding were, to a certain extent, disregarded. Rev. Raymond Hargadon died in 1824 and was succeeded by his nephew of the same name, who served in the parish until his untimely death in 1833 during a Cholera outbreak.

By 1835, seven schools in the diocese of Tuam were supported by the Kildare Street Society and 16 by the London Hibernian Society. There were 9 schools in the parochial returns for Annaghdown, and Woodpark School's enrolment had fallen to 50 male and 23 female pupils with Michel Nuel as master. The subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping and Roman Catholic Catechism. A parish school (Protestant), with Matthew Browne listed as master, also appears in the townland of Annaghdown, but with no returns for pupils or attendance.

Samuel Lewis, in his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, published in 1837, tells us that 'divine [RC] service is also regularly performed in a school-house at Woodpark. Schools at Annaghdown and Woodpark were each endowed with £100 late currency by the Rev. Redmond Hardagan, for the gratuitous instruction of 30 children in each; about 160 children are at present taught in these schools. There are also six hedge schools, in which are about 300 children; and a Sunday school supported by the vicar.'

While the Kildare Place Society continued to support non-secular education into the 1830s, this form of education was opposed by the Catholic church, particularly by Rev. John

McHale, then professor in Maynooth, who later succeeded Archbishop Kelly in the Tuam Archdiocese. In an effort to subvert the practice of secular education established in the parish, he introduced the Franciscan Brothers to the Corrandulla School in 1851. The Woodpark school ceased to operate in the intervening years between 1837 and 1855 when the 22nd Report of the Commissioners of Education in 1855 noted that the school had not been in existence for some years and the endowments of Annadown (Corrandulla) and Woodpark had been united. John McHale was appointed Archbishop of Tuam in 1834 and transferred Rev. Hargadon's endowment towards the building of the new Cathedral in Tuam, allowing the interest to pay the masters of Corrandulla school.

A Church of Ireland school was built in Annaghdown townland in 1853. The Protestant School House appeared on the Landed Estate Rental record for Horace Rochfort. According to the estate map, the school was situated between the current school and the graveyard. In Griffith's Valuation a 'Vacant School House' is listed in the townland of Annaghdown, with Horace Rochfort as immediate lessor, and Griffith's House Books lists a School House associated with Rev. Michael Seymour. No other records are immediately evident of this school, and it was no longer in existence by the time of the 1901 census. The building of this school was likely a response to the closure of the non-secular school in Woodpark to cater for a small protestant population of around 20 people that lived in the parish during this time period. It is unclear whether a school ever operated out of the purpose built premises.

### Lisheenoran School - 1870 - 1898

National Education in Annaghdown parish continued in the Corrandulla school until 1870 when a small school was founded in Lisheenoran. It appears on the 37th Report of the Commissioners of Education in 1870 with an enrolment of 147 male only children with a daily attendance of 49 pupils and one principal teacher. Bartley Keane was the master in this school. Brigid Murphy wrote about him in her publication 'Oideachas in Iar Chonnacht sa 19ú Céad', from which we learn that Bartholomew Keane (Partalán Ó Catháin), a native of Connemara, was born about 1815. He joined the British Navy as a young man, and it appears that he received



Figure 3. John O'Flynn with his wife Mary (née Kavanagh) and daughter Kathleen

his education there. He was well-educated, and knew Latin. He preferred to teach Geography than any other subject. He had fluent Irish which he used consistently outside of school time but he would not allow it to be spoken by pupils during school hours. He did not mind if the pupils used it during playtime. There was only one room in the school when it initially opened in 1870, and no toilet facilities, with an additional room added in 1879. The Lisheenananoran school also ran evening classes.

Bartley served as master from 1870 to 1888. Joining him to teach in the school were Michael Gibbons from Headford in 1874 when the enrolment increased to 278 with a daily attendance of 81 pupils of both gender. John McGagh recounts details of an incident between Michael Gibbons and Bartley Keane in 1877, whereby in fear of the Principal and his use of a walking stick as a weapon, Gibbons had absented himself from school. The findings of an official investigation into this found that Michael Gibbons did not have a reasonable case for absenting himself and was dismissed. Michael Gibbons was replaced by Honor Costello in 1878, Margaret Hanniffy in 1882 and Catherine Boyle in 1907. Bartley Keane left the school in 1888, and his son Robert Keane lived in Lisheenananoran until his death in 1970's. Margaret Hanniffy was appointed as principal but appears to have moved to the Corrandulla school shortly afterwards. John O'Flynn was appointed principal on 9 of January 1889. He soon set up a juvenile branch of the Gaelic League in Annaghdown and was instrumental in the promotion of the Irish language and instilling a sense of pride in the language within the community. Thus began the enduring tradition of instruction through Irish that has endured in SN Naomh Breandán to the present day. In 1892 he had put forward a class for examination where only one child failed, and he described the children as being able to speak fluently.

#### **Woodpark School: 1898 - 1962**

John McGagh writes that the building of the new premises in Woodpark was completed in May 1898 and from 1 June 1898 grants were transferred from the old Lissanoran non-vested school which was struck off. The first child registered

in the two room building there was Siobhán Ó Grádaigh. The new school was situated in Woodpark, but in a different, purpose built premises than the original Woodpark school. This premises is no longer used as a school and is currently a private residence.

Much like the Lisheenananoran school, evening classes were held in the Woodpark school, both for the education of older people in that area and agricultural classes introduced to improve farming practices in the locality. John O'Flynn died in 1937. In 1932 Robert (Bert) O'Connell took over as master of Woodpark School and oversaw the construction of the new school premises in Annaghdown townland in 1962. Woodpark school, at this point, offered no facilities for children to play, with only a small backyard and outdoor 'dry' toilets. When the new school was opened, the children were required to wear socks over their shoes while inside to preserve the new wooden floors in the school.

#### **SN Naomh Breandán: 1962 - present**



Three teachers moved from Woodpark to the new Annaghdown school in 1962 - Master Bert O'Connell and teachers Mrs. Farrell and Miss Duggan (later Mrs Walsh). Bert O'Connell had a great love of the Irish language and worked concurrently with UCG in the Irish Department. Born in Brackloon near Westport, he trained in De La Salle College in Co. Waterford. He was a founding member of the Local Defence Force in Annaghdown and the school competed in drama competitions and notably took the pupils on a school tour to Dublin Zoo. Bert O'Connell died in service on the 2nd August 1975 and was replaced by Mr. Vincent Tedders who served as principal from 1975 until 1991 when, upon his retirement Briga O'Connell, daughter of Bert O'Connell, was appointed.

During Briga O'Connell's time as principal of SN Naomh Breandán, the water tower was demolished and replaced with a multi-purpose hall. An additional classroom was housed in the hall to bring the total classrooms to four and this was increased again in 2007 when a three room extension to the school building was completed. This new wing was officially opened by then President of Ireland, Mary McAleese. Following Briga O'Connell's retirement, Pádraig Ó Duinneacha was appointed in 2012 and the school adopted the Scéim Aitheantais Scoileanna Gaeltachta in 2017 to be recognised as a Scoil sa Ghaeltacht with instruction through the medium of Irish. Laura Ní Dhuinn was appointed as principal in 2017. The school currently has an enrolment of 131 children.

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