



Cumann Oidhreachta Eanach Dhúin Annaghdown Heritage Society

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Nuachtlitrí Limh. 11

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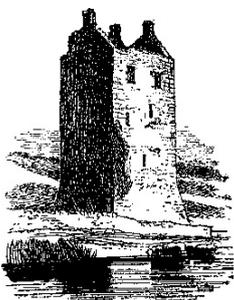
Geimhreadh 2022

FÁILTE

Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of our newsletter. While we still live in challenging times, some levels of normality are returning to our lives. The good news for our Society has been the ability to organise in-person events again. Our open day coincided with the Corrandulla Show on June 26 and focussed on demonstrating the facilities available online to build a family tree. For Heritage Week, Jessica Cooke led a most entertaining Tour of the Annaghdown Monastic and Heritage Sites on August 19. The weather was kind and the large crowd had a most enjoyable evening. Our Autumn lecture was entitled “Everyone knows a Land Commission Family” and was delivered by Martin O’Halloran. The topic of family migrations from Clonbur, Co. Galway to Allenstown, Co. Meath filled the Heritage Room and also attracted people via Zoom. Such family migrations to the east of Ireland also occurred in Annaghdown and so the Heritage Society has begun a project to research and document the detail. Please do contact us if you have any information or comment on the subject. Our AGM was held on September 8. Nicholas Lyons stood down from the post of Chairperson and Gerry Morgan was elected in his place. We wish to acknowledge the trojan work that Nicholas has carried out for the Society. As well as holding the chair for the past year, Nicholas was Treasurer for more than 25 years, since the foundation of the Society and his guidance has left us on a sound financial footing. We wish him well in his many current and future activities. Our founding Chairperson, Br Conal Thomas has also been very active lately on the local heritage front. “Local” refers to his home turf in Co. Mayo, and he has just published a most entertaining book, “Errew Now and Then”. We’re sure many copies will be exchanged as Christmas presents in the coming weeks!

We thank all who have contributed to this newsletter and are sure you will find the diverse range of topics to be of much interest. If you have a story or a view that would be of interest to the community, please do put pen to paper for our next Summer 2023 issue.

Guímid Nollaig faoi shéan is faoi mhaise daoibh go léir.



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, Instagram and YouTube, and by visiting our website.

PRIVATE JOHN FORDE, 31ST BATTALION, AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

John Wynne

As children, we hadn’t much heed in our grandmother’s old photographs. Our grandmother, Bridget Forde, from the Forde house near Corrandulla Barracks, was married to Martin Wynne. Her framed photos sat on the sideboard in the sitting room. As I got older, I learned the photos were of her brothers, John, Dan and Thomas, who had emigrated to Australia, New Zealand and America, respectively.

When my grandmother died in May 1974, we packed her old photos and letters away in a box. They remained there until after my father’s death in November 2000. While clearing out the house, I found the box and took an interest in its contents. Among them was a postcard my grandmother had received from her brother, John. It was written in Beaumont, France, on 12 March 1919. The photo on the front showed a church in Hallencourt, near Oisement in the Somme, France. In the postcard, John said that he had helped to ring the bell in that church on the day the Armistice was signed (11 November 1918). I put the postcard away in a safe place, thinking to myself, “Wouldn’t it be nice to visit that church on 11 November 2018, for the 100th anniversary?”.



Figure 1. My grandmother’s photo of her brother, John Forde

So, in 2017, I began researching and found the church via Google Maps. On Friday 9 November 2018, my wife, Anne, and I flew to Beauvais Airport, near the Somme. We stayed



Figure 5. World War I trenches



Figure 6. John Forde with his niece, Maureen

He married and had two daughters. His daughter, Mary, died in a fire at the Ballantynes department store where she worked. Maureen lost contact with the other daughter and so could not give me any further information on the family.

However, we have since discovered that John died in April 1967. He, his wife, Elizabeth, and their daughter, Mary, are buried in Ruru Lawn Cemetery, Christchurch.

THE SUSTAINABILITY LOAN FUND ON THE CASTLEHACKET ESTATE

Paul Greaney

Between 1720 and 1925, many local loan associations operated throughout Ireland, offering small loans to the ‘industrious poor’, for purposes such as buying grain, farm animals, or machinery. A scheme on the Kirwan estate at Castlehacket operated from the 1830s to the 1850s, which resulted in an excellent set of surviving records. A return of the state of the scheme in December 1853 is particularly interesting. It offers an insight into local conditions before and during the Famine, and records several inhabitants of the townlands of Bunatober, Cahermorris, Cluidrevagh, and Biggera, who died or emigrated during this period, as well as recording the progress of each person who took out a loan.

In Cahermorris, for example, we find Martin McHugh, a

farmer in good circumstances, who took out a loan in November 1839, and died in the summer of 1844. Winifred Forde, a small landholder, went to America in 1847. John Fitzpatrick, a poor landholder, went to America in 1847. John Cohen, a stonecutter, went to reside in Galway in 1847.

In Bunatober, Michael Templeton took out a loan in May 1839. He left Bunatober in 1850 and was thereafter in Glenrevagh supported by his daughter. Francis Noone, a labourer, died in October 1842. Pat Flaherty, a farmer in good circumstances, died in May 1841. Michael Crisham, a small poor landholder, died in the winter of 1847. William Gilmore, a small poor landholder, died in summer 1848. Pat Raftery, a farmer in good circumstances, died in summer 1848. Pat Drinane, a labourer, went to America in 1847. James Nevin, a farmer of good circumstances in 1839, died in June 1848, leaving his family in middling circumstances. James Noone, a landholder of poor circumstances, went to America with his family in the year 1844. William Noone, a poor landholder, went to America with his family in 1848. Thomas Cunningham, a poor landholder, left his holding in 1848 and died in Tuam Workhouse, following which his family left the country. James Fitzpatrick left his holding in Bunatober in 1848 and was described in 1853 as a farmer of good circumstances in Cahermorris.

In Cluidrevagh, Pat Lydon died of destitution in the summer of 1847 and his family left the country. Peggy Lydon, a poor landholder, left her holding in 1850 and was subsequently ‘a pauper about Galway’. Michael Gibbons, a small farmer of middling circumstances, ‘himself and family went to America in 1849’. Mary Gibbons, a poor landholder of poor circumstances, left her holding in 1850 and died a pauper near Castlehacket. John Dowd, a small farmer of middling circumstances, took his family to America in 1848.

In the ‘neighbourhood of Biggery’, Catherine Grealley, a poor landholder, went to America in the summer of 1846. Thomas Turner, a poor labourer, left his holding in 1845 and went to reside in Galway town, with the loan officer unable to say his circumstances there. Pat Fallon, a farmer of good circumstances, went to America in July 1853. Michael Wynne, a poor landholder, left his holding in 1847 and by 1853 was residing in the adjoining townland of Carheens, a farmer in good circumstances. Owen Mangan, a blacksmith and farmer of good circumstances, went to America in 1846.

A full list of the report for the above townlands is available on the Society’s website, and the full collection for Castlehacket and other estates is available at Ancestry.com.

UPROOTED AND TRANSPLANTED

Frances Fahy

Uprooted. I’m the sixth of eight children and one of my childhood boasts was that I was the first one born in hospital, on 4th March 1952, while the others were born at home! We lived on a farm in Corrandulla until 1962. Memories from then are pleasant and probably selective! We didn’t know that farm life was hard as it was the only one we knew. I remember visits to relatives in Liss, Headford, Tuam, Galway, places that seemed really far away. That was until we moved

to Kilcloon in south Meath as part of the great relocation of part of the west of Ireland rural population. The Land Commission reclaimed the great estates in fertile Leinster and parcelled them out in very small allotments. I was uprooted from fourth class in an all-girls primary school where Irish was spoken as much as English to a mixed school in Kilcloon. I remember feeling we'd landed in a totally alien environment. Migrant kids were considered a bit... different... and our Irish was strange.

Going "home". Two years later, I won a scholarship and was back, this time as a boarder, to another Galway school, the Presentation Convent in Oranmore, where my sister Bridie had stayed when we moved. Going back to Galway was still in a sense, going 'home'. Being in a boarding school so far from my new home meant very few visitors. I remember envying the girls from the area whose parents visited most Sundays! However, my parents kept in touch with their own families and friends so Oranmore and a visit to the 'girls' was an occasional treat. By the time Bridie had finished school, I was well and truly settled and enjoying school life. I was on the camogie team which meant getting to visit other schools. Only later does one understand the implications of the fan-fare around the visits to the school of the political stalwarts of the day! Being introduced to Jack Lynch and demonstrating my skill at taking a thirty-yard free was a highlight and 'be sure to tell your mother and father that I said you were very good.' I realised later that my younger brother and sister Joe and Katheen who went to the local secondary schools in Kilcock assimilated into our new neighbourhood more easily than I did. I didn't really belong to the local youth population and mingling in only during the school holidays was a challenge.

Fast forward to Maynooth for my B.A. and H.Dip, then two years of teaching English, Irish and French in Trim Convent of Mercy. In the meantime I'd fallen madly in love with Renzo Calabria (coincidentally from the Calabria region) whom I'd met in Lausanne, Switzerland while on a French course. We corresponded and phoned for almost a year as we made plans to see each other again! We went back and forth whenever we could afford it and then I took the huge step of leaving my job, getting married in 1975 and moving to Calabria.

Fairyland. It's not easy to summarise my reaction to arriving in Italy that first time. The country was just a geographic detail then, the place where this fantastic guy happened to live. Calabria, Cambodia, Carrantuohill, ... I think it wouldn't have made any difference to either of us! Being together was really all that mattered. I arrived on 23rd June and night-time temperatures were in the mid-thirties. That first impact with such intense heat has always remained vivid. Gizzeria, where Renzo's family lived, is a picture-postcard mountain village and the evening I arrived was the eve of the feast of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Gizzeria so the whole place was decked in lights with stalls and amusements, music, song and dance. It was like being transported to Fairyland. I was enthralled! I had very little Italian but people were so kind, trying to communicate in English and French. It was really special. Renzo came to Ireland that same summer and he found it just as enthralling!

Almost 50 years on we are still enjoying life and each

other's company. We're never short of visitors here of course! We have three children, Leo, Sergio and Mary and six grandchildren. Until they reached 17/18 and started travelling alone, Ireland was their summer holiday destination. Meath as base was taken for granted and we travelled a lot. They were always surprised at meeting some new cousins when we visited Galway. They were brought up bilingually and feel completely at ease with their being half-Irish. Sergio moved to Ireland to study and has been living in Dublin for the past twenty years. He and his wife Anne now have three children so I not only have links to the past but also to the future. I've retired from teaching and Renzo is semi-retired from his accounting job and we still have a few places to see but I think we'll stick with Europe. There's enough in this great continent to keep us on the move.

Calabria I don't think there is a real 'Italian' lifestyle in that regional identity is quite strong. Calabria is considered one of the depressed EU regions so it gets a lot of funding for business, infrastructure, transport networks, schools and so on. It doesn't enjoy a great reputation even among many Italians who may never have visited the place. The 'poor mouth', 'backward' stereotype would take too long to explain, but it's a burden that people carry. My students here sometimes wondered 'How could anyone choose to live in Calabria?' I ask them where they've been to compare it to and I try to get them to foster a more positive identity. Having said that, people who discover Calabria find it fascinating. Mountains, sea, scenery, remains of Greek and Roman culture, marvellous food and wine of course, friendly people, great resorts would have to rank among the things I love. By the way, women in Italy always use their birth name for official purposes so I'm known as Prof. Fahy with various pronunciations! And I, for one, thank Ryanair for choosing Lamezia Terme, where I live, as one of its top Italian destinations. That has really made an enormous difference to the region.

Strengthening links. I've taken secondary school students to Ireland over the years and Galway was a 'must' on our programme. We stayed in the Kinlay Hostel in Eyre Square. Like most people who compare the city to the city of our memories, I do find Galway a bit intimidating now especially as a student destination. I just hope the balance doesn't tip too much as charm, once lost, is hard to restore. When I get to Galway and I soak up the musicality of the local accents and turns of phrase, that easy-going gentleness of so many people especially in rural areas, I'm just grateful that this place still relates to me, even if only indirectly. I've been known to eavesdrop on conversations in pubs in Connemara just to hear two men talking 'as Gaeilge'!

I love writing and I've written two novels set in Galway: *The Law of the Land* and *Trá Salach*. They're available via Amazon. So the Galway imprint has touched my whole existence and now it has come full circle as I've been asked to speak about our family's relocation to Meath as part of the activities of the Annaghdown Heritage Society, located in 'The Old Girls' School', my own school in Corrandulla. As they say, you couldn't make it up!

Author's Note: This is an updated version of an article first published by Dúchas na Gaillimhe as part of the Galway Tribal Diaspora Project in 2016.