

# TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY



*Newsletter No. 7*

*December 2022*



**Tulsk History Society**      [historytulsk@gmail.com](mailto:historytulsk@gmail.com)



*Members: John Higgins (Chair), Cathal McCormack, Mary Kelly, Mike Lennon (Secretary), Catherine McGuire, Eileen Beirne, Noel Sheerin (Archivist), Maeve Hanley, Jim Dockery, Jody Moylan (PRO), Therese Hanley (Treasurer), Joe Donoghue, Melissa Keigher, Eithne Jones, Mary Cregg, Lorna Keaveney, Mick Beirne, Mike Higgins, John Quinn, Manus Tiernan, Edward Flanagan, Tina Galvin Beirne, Marese Feeney, Milo*

*Lowry, Marty Brady, Mary Conry, Thomas A. Burke.*



WELCOME to all our readers to the December/Christmas newsletter - our fourth edition of 2022. It's been a very eventful year, with much done (and much more to do!). As this edition circulates on Christmas Eve, its been a week when we've also released our first substantial hardcopy publication - a print collection of our first six newsletters. The printers did a fine job of putting it all together. Additionally, this season's Roscommon Herald Christmas magazine has seen THS feature heavily, with our article on World War Two veteran Mike Rogers sharing space with features on our successful cemetery project in Tulsk village, as well as having a nice interview with our Canada-based genealogist, Melissa Keigher. On the project front, our phase one refurbishment of Ogulla Shrine is now well underway, and the new year promises very positive developments on that front. We are also working with the Kilcooley Cemetery Committee on a recording project they initiated, and we hope to complete a full gravestone survey of the site in due course. Contact details for those who wish to join THS, contribute to our archives, write a newsletter article, or just wish to drop us a line, can be found at the end.



*We begin this edition with our cover story - a special festive feature on the snow scene paintings of Percy French. Then, the epic life of seventeenth century Castleplunkett native Tomás Bán Ó Caiside is explored by Manus Tiernan, while Mike Lennon follows with a look at the history of Caddlebrook school. Marese Feeney continues her examination of the census records of 1901 and 1911, which this time features comparisons for Tulsk District Electoral Division (DED). Also in this issue we continue our series on the wells of the parish, while the very interesting Tulsk newspaper notes from Christmas 1905 rounds off the edition. We hope you enjoy the read!*

THS

## THE SNOW SCENES OF PERCY FRENCH

PERCY FRENCH may be most popularly known as an entertainer and songwriter, but he saw painting as his true calling. His work regularly appears at auction, and is becoming increasingly popular with collectors. Always carrying his easel while touring as an entertainer to places like the USA, Canada and the West Indies, Percy's paintings provide a nice record of his travels.



*Percy French painting outdoors*

His snow scenes were executed almost exclusively in Switzerland in the early 1900s; a place where French sometimes entertained at ski resorts. These winter scenes are a nice reminder of what he witnessed in times of quiet, as well as being seasonal and festive.



*Girl with a Toboggan circa. 1914*





Two Swiss scenes from 1914



Alpine scenes, Switzerland c. 1914





**Tomás Bán Ó Caiside by Manus Tiernan**

A CHANCE encounter and subsequent conversation at a social event aroused my curiosity and interest in a long-forgotten son of the parish, whose amazing life and times inspired a self-written biography – a forerunner to the modern autobiography of today. That lost son was Tomás Bán Ó Caiside, rogue priest, poet and soldier. Ó Caiside regales his life in his book ‘Eachtra an Athar Tomás Ó Caiside’.

**FAMILY:**

Tomás Ó Caiside was born at Drishaghaun, near Castleplunkett, sometime between the years 1690 and 1700. His father was Eoghan Ó Caiside, who came from a very learned family in County Fermanagh, and in adult life Ó Caiside visited relations there near Derrygonnelly and was well aware of his northern roots. Ó Caiside’s father Eoghan married Catherine (alias Plunkett) – possibly a sister to James Plunkett of Castleplunkett (1662-1732) – sometime after 1690. Why Eoghan ended up in Drishaghaun one will never know but it could be assumed that he possibly arrived as a young man to educate the children of Patrick Plunkett and fell for one of Patrick’s youngest daughters. Eoghan and Catherine are buried in Toberelva Cemetery – the burial ground where the Plunkett Family had their chapel and burial plot. The headstone dates from the 1700’s and records the following:

Pray for y<sup>e</sup> soul of Owen Cafsidy sen<sup>e</sup>  
who caused this stone to be made as  
a monument for himself his wife  
Cath Cafsidy Al<sup>f</sup> Plunkett and in the  
memory of the family.

Tomás Ó Caiside grew up under the shadow of the Plunkett family and castle. It is also no coincidence that Augustine Plunkett (a brother of James Plunkett) was an Augustinian priest in Ballyhaunis prior to the destruction of religious orders under reign of Queen Anne (1702 – 1707). It can be assumed that Fr. Plunkett would have had an influence on the young Tomás as he eventually became an Augustinian Priest in Ballyhaunis.

*continues overleaf*





It would appear from his writings that Tomás was a free spirit and it was not long before he was admonished by his superiors in the Augustinians. Why Tomás departed from the order in Ballyhaunis is not clear, but he tells us ‘that he got into trouble for presiding over a bad marriage’ It would appear he was not expelled but left of his own accord. He wandered the countryside as a freelance priest giving his services for food and lodgings. He tells us he was abducted by a press gang and sold to the French where he fought in the wars of the Polish succession in the 1730s (a major European-wide conflict sparked by a succession crisis after the death of Poland’s Augustus II). He was at the siege of Philipsburg (1734) where the commander of the French army - the Duke of Berwick - was killed by a cannon ball to the head. Thinking his time was not yet up to depart this life Ó Caiside and a friend deserted as he says ‘like blackbirds darting from a bush’. He then travelled around central Europe evading capture until in Berlin he was snared again and pressed into the service of the Prussians. He soon found himself in a regiment known as the Potsdam Guards, otherwise known as the ‘Potsdam Giants’. Founded in 1675 by King Friedrich (1657-1740) its members were cherry picked for their height. Each entrant had to be over 6’ 2”. Despite good wages and the fact it was a ceremonial regiment, recruits were few, hence agents across Europe kidnapped individuals for the regiment. From this we know Tomás had to be tall in stature to be a soldier in the Kings favourite regiment. (the King was 5’ 2” in height). By the time the King died in 1740 the regiment had in excess of 3000 soldiers. His son, Fredrick the Great, disbanded the regiment as it was an unnecessary cost. Ó Caiside decided to return to Britain after a few more adventures in Europe but, as he said himself, ‘his loyal lover misfortune’ visited him again when he was shipwrecked off the coast of England. He survived a watery grave and upon landing on dry land he promptly joined the British Army. Tomás enjoyed its food and lodgings for two weeks before realizing his mistake and, not for the first time, deserted. Ó Caiside goes on to tell us he spent two months in Devonshire enjoying the attentions of an amorous landlady and filling her with stories of his adventures.



The free spirit in him had Ó Caiside on the move again, this time back to Ireland where he landed in Kinsale. Undaunted, he reported to the Augustinians in Dublin. Not enamored with his past behaviors’ Ó Caiside was posted to Wexford for his sins. While on his way Tomás instead took a detour, and spent time with





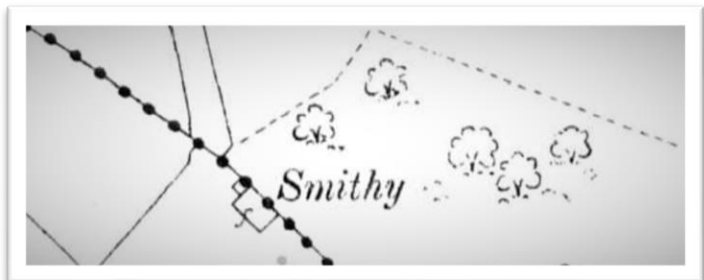
the order in Naas Co. Kildare. However, conflict soon arose with his fellow priests and Ó Caiside resumed his old lifestyle by earning a living with a mixture of storytelling, poetry, ministry and the occasional few drinks and romantic interludes until husbands found out and he moved on. O Caiside wrote the ‘Eachtra’ in his twilight years at a time when his ‘worst lover’ as he recalls, ‘sickness visited him.’ This was around the year 1749. This is the last year we hear of him. We do not know when or where O Caiside died, but his poetry survives to tell us of his adventures. We’ll catch up with this great native son, and his poetry, in the next edition.

**THE WELLS OF THE PARISH #2: CASTLELAND**

Coordinates: 53°46’49”N 8°15’12”W  
Townland: Castleland  
Condition 2022: Intact/Not in use



Located just to the north of Tulsk village, on the land of Jimmy Flanagan, this mid-1900s well is a great example of its type. The well provided a year-round freshwater source for locals, something needed in summer months given that particularly good summers caused the Tulsk river to run dry (or almost dry). THS member John Higgins notes that it was used by the Higgins family for a decade from 1959 to 1969. The well was also used as a water source by the local Flanagan ‘smithy’, where the old forge still exists today. The well is perfectly intact and is a nice monument to a fondly remembered bygone age.



*The old Flanagan blacksmiths as mapped in the 1890s*







## **CADDLEBROOK SCHOOL 1871-1967** by Mike Lennon

While the building of Caddlebrook School was started in 1860 by the local landlord, Richard O'Farrell Caddell, it fell to Mary Irwin of Rathmoyle House to have it completed and ready for its opening on November 2, 1871. Mary had also established the nearby Kilmurry School in 1858. The one room school was constructed with stone and lime and had a slated roof and boarded floor. Rev. Patrick Donoher took on the role of manager of the school. The first teachers were Mary Rogers aged 24 and 37-year-old Michael Mulhern. Mary, who had previously



served as a monitor for 6 years at Swinford Convent School, was given a salary of £24. Michael Mulhern trained in 1853 and had taught at Cordrumman School, Kiltristan where he was suspended in June 1866 for cheering at the arrest of his brother Patrick for “unlawfully and traitorously conspiring to depose the Queen in Ireland.” He was reinstated in March 1868. His salary in Caddlebrook was set at £32. His brother Patrick served 6 months for his Fenian activity and went on to found the Harmony Hollow Academy in Elphin Street, Strokestown.

The visiting inspector reported there were 80 farming and labourer families within a half mile radius of Caddlebrook School. He also said some of children attending were withdrawn from Kilmurry and Ballinagare schools but he believed that sufficient attendance averages would be maintained in all the schools. Among the other teachers who worked in Caddlebrook School over the following three decades were Pat Colgan, Pat Fallon, Mrs. Larkin, Kate O'Connor, Bridget Dufficy, M. Beirne and Winnie Vesey.

In the late 1890s, Loughglynn native Andrew Finan was appointed principal of the male school while Ellen Coll (later Mrs Patrick Connolly, Brackloon) was in charge of the girls. When Ellen Connolly retired in 1912, she was replaced by the newly married Rose Dockery (née Kelly, Ballyglass, Baslick) who had previously taught in Co. Kildare. After 30 years' service in Caddlebrook, Andrew Finan retired in 1926 and Rose Dockery was named principal of the entire school with Elizabeth





Kerrane (later Mrs Ned Campion) as her assistant. Rose Dockery retired in 1940 and died in 1962. She was the great-grandmother of actress Michelle Dockery, pictured here in her role as Lady Mary Crawley in the *Downton Abbey* TV series and movies.

Over the following 27 years, the teaching staff in Caddlebrook included Freda Keane (née Morahan, Ballinagare) who retired from Castleplunkett School in 1992 and died in 2019; Tom Regan who was later principal of Elphin Boys School and died in 2001; Miss N. Silke and Evelyn Mulvihill (née Hawkes) who retired as principal of Frenchpark School and died in 2003. When the school closed due to the low number of children attending in July 1967, the last teacher, Maureen Rabbitte (née Gallagher) transferred to Kilmurry School with the remaining pupils. Maureen retired from teaching in 1978 and passed away in December 2001.

By 1991 Caddlebrook School had fallen into disrepair, but a committee was formed to give it a facelift in preparation for a reunion of past pupils and former teachers. In July, over 200 past pupils from Ireland, England and the United States gathered for Mass in the school grounds followed by a reception and dance in the Don Arms Hotel, Castlerea. The original school building has been refurbished and is now a private residence.

**Footnote – I wish to acknowledge Mary Gormley’s ‘Tulsk Parish in Historic Maigh Ai’ and Mary Kelly as invaluable sources for the information in this article. Killina/Clooneyquinn National School will feature in the next edition of the E-Newsletter.**

## TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY ARCHIVES



Winners of the 2022 Digital Repository of Ireland Community Archive Scheme

Qualified in document preservation

THS are seeking to preserve our parish history with your help

We collect all documented local history, including

- Old letters, photographs, documents, books, newspapers, objects, and anything that relates to our past that can be stored in safe keeping. Copies welcome

**CONTACT:** [historytulsk@gmail.com](mailto:historytulsk@gmail.com)



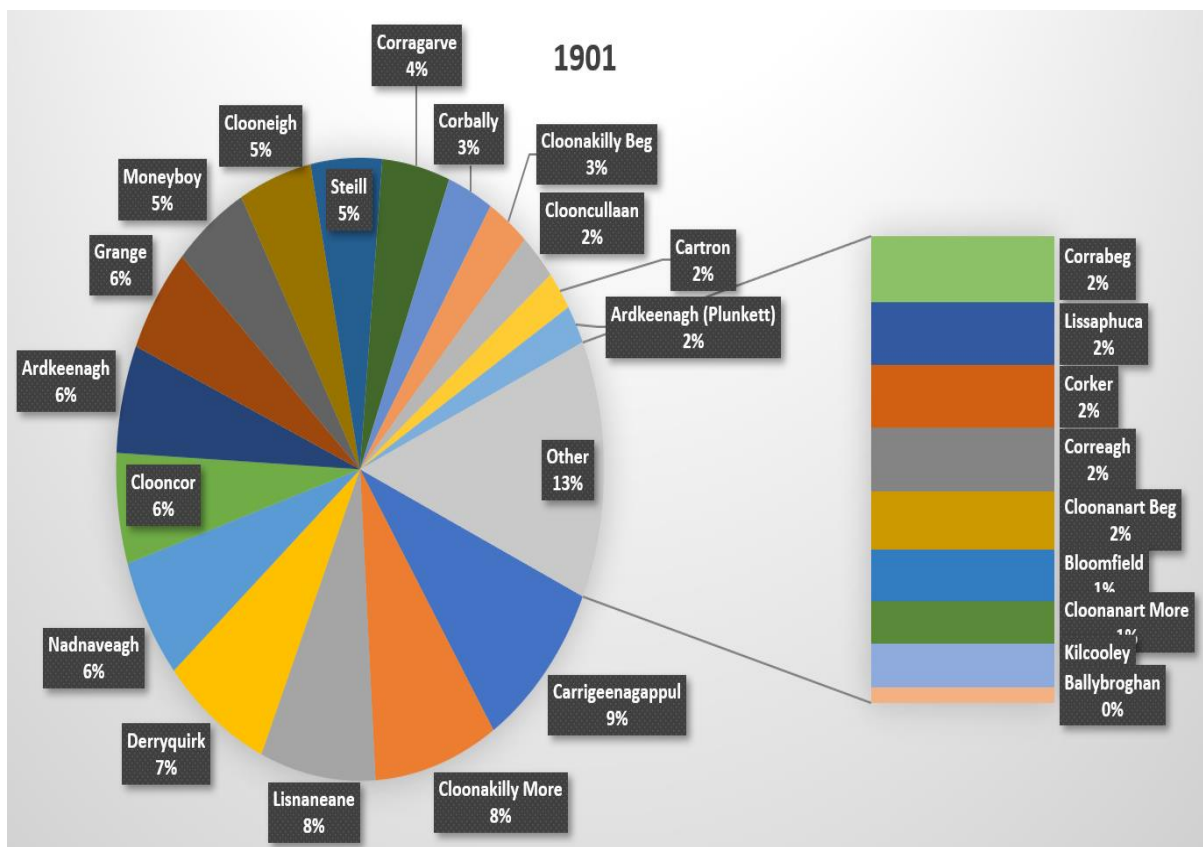


## 1901 & 1911 Census report by Marese Feeney

As detailed in Newsletter No. 5, we have started to delve into the 1901 and 1911 census' data and we look forward to sharing our observations. Having previously looked at the occupation of respondents in the Ogulla District Electoral Division (DED), for this article we are looking at the townlands, surnames of individuals, male/ female movements during the census period for Tusk DED.

Over the two censuses, 26 townlands were noted in the Tusk DED area, and these are highlighted in Graphs 1 & 2 below, with an indication of the percentage of population that lived in each townland.

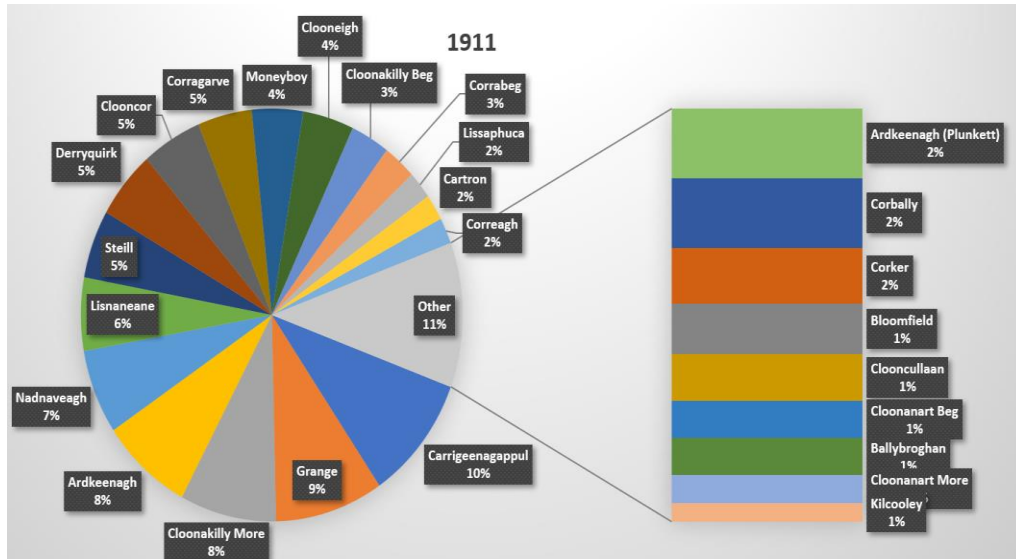
The townlands that saw the biggest reduction in respondents from 1901 to 1911 were Lisnaneane (↓23) and Derryquirk (↓22) compared with Grange and Ardkeenagh - where the populations increased by 23 and 11 respectively.



Graph 1 Population % of Tusk DED by Townland 1901







Graph 2 Population % of Tusk DED by townland for 1911

In Grange, for example - Flanagan, Rushe, McCabe, Feeney, Hands and Mangan have 26 entries in 1911 but do not appear at all in 1901. Other surnames, which have a single entry in 1911 but none in 1901, includes the names Shendan, McDermottroe, Warren, Gilleland, May, Hans, Feely and Grier. Some were RIC officers moved into the local barracks, while others like Philip Warren, Elizabeth May and Elizabeth McDermottroe were young servants, recently arrived.

Although there were many additions to the 1911 census, there were some details that differed from 1901. For example, there are five entries in the 1901 census where names from one house are indicated only by their initials. These entries relate to five RIC officers stationed in Tusk barracks. The written record from the time, as illustrated in Figure 1 below, records each individuals' rank. However, their occupations are recorded as 'Farmers Son'.

**CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.**

**Form H.—Return of Military, R. I. Constabulary or Metropolitan Police in Barracks. No. on Form B.**

County Down Parliamentary Division North Down Poor Law Union Whitehead District Electoral Division Tusk Townland Grange

Parliamentary Borough \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Urban District \_\_\_\_\_ Town or Village \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_

GENERAL RETURN of the OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, PRIVATES, and OTHERS who were Quartered in the R.I. Constabulary Barrack of Tusk on the Night of Sunday the 31st of March, 1901, and of those who arrived on Monday, the 1st of April, who were not enumerated elsewhere.

**NOTE.** In filling these Returns, pay observe the Instructions given on "Form A."—The Family Return.

**NOTE.**—In addition to this Return, each Married Man, residing with his Wife in Barrack, and each Widower whose Children, or any of them, reside with him in Barrack, must fill for his Family (including himself) a separate "Form A."—the Form used by the Community at large—no wife being made on the "Form A."—the Head of the Family is returned on "Form B."—The required number of "Form A." will be supplied by the Inspector of the District. Persons official residing in Barracks, such as Barrack-Masters, Barrack-Sergeants, Customs-Supers, &c., with their servants, are to be supplied with "Form A."; such persons are not to be entered on "Form B."

Number	Initial Letters of Christian Name or Name, and of Surname		RANK	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE.	OCCUPATION.	MARRIAGE.	WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.
	Christian Name.	Surname.								
1	C	J	Supt. McConry	Roman Catholic	Read & write	42	Farmers Son	Married	Downpatrick	✓
2	M	G	Const. McConry	Roman Catholic	Read & write	46	Farmers Son	Married	Mayo	✓
3	P	C	Const. R. Conroy	Roman Catholic	Read & write	40	Farmers Son	Married	Feltrim	✓
4	M	G	Const. R. Conroy	Roman Catholic	Read & write	37	Farmers Son	Married	Cavan	✓
5	M	G	Const. R. Conroy	Roman Catholic	Read & write	28	Farmers Son	Married	Sligo	✓

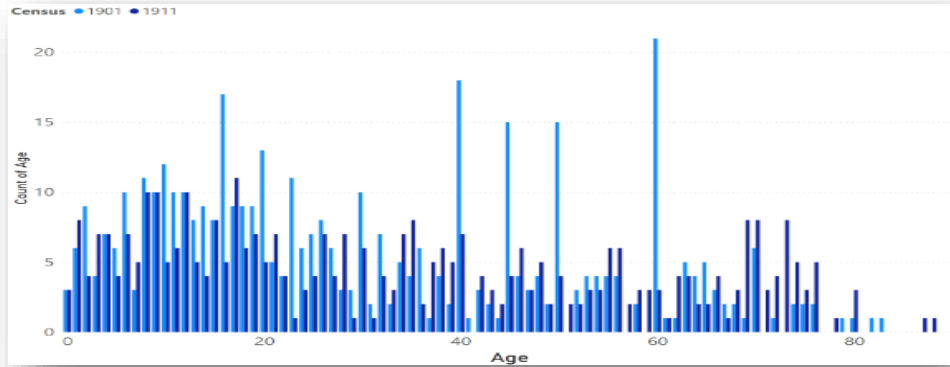
Figure 1. Written Record for the Royal Irish Constabulary Barrack of Tusk 1901

In 1901, there was a total of 890 respondents for Tusk DED, a tally that reduced by 11% for the 1911 census, to 785 persons. Sixty percent of the reduction was related to females i.e., 63 less females in 1911



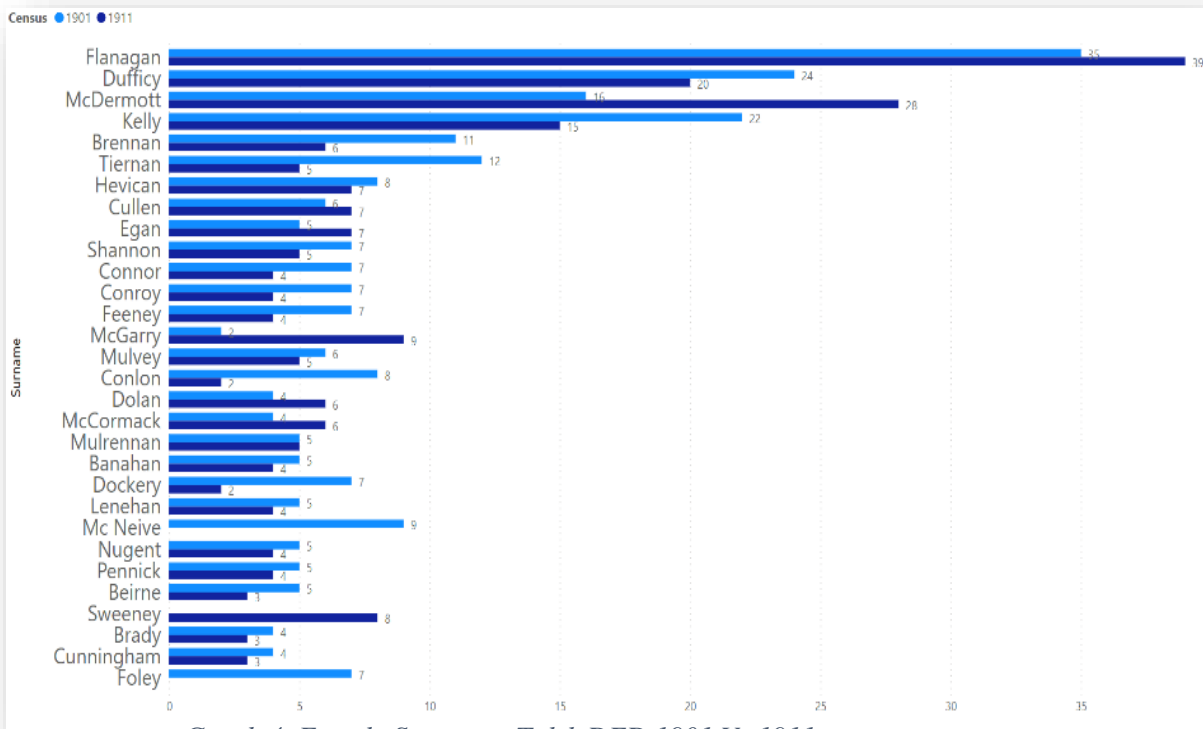


compared to 1901. While an obvious assumption might be that this change was due to younger females marrying and moving out of the area by the 1911, Graph 3 (right) illustrates that these demographic changes occurred in the 40-60 age group: not typically the age group for women to marry at the time.



Graph 3. Females, by Age, in the Tusk DED 1901 and 1911 censuses.

There were a number of interesting findings elsewhere. For example, there were seven Foley females recorded in the townland of Lisnaneane in 1901, but by 1911 the whole family (including Mr. Pierce Vetterville Barron Foley (50) - a widowed Bank Officer) had moved to Lisroyne, Strokestown. Two of his children captured on the 1901 census, a boy Robert N (13) and a girl Mary J (12), do not appear on the 1911 census for Strokestown. A search of the National Archives shows no record of either individual in Ireland in 1911. It is hoped that they had



Graph 4. Female Surnames Tusk DED 1901 Vs 1911

emigrated and that no ill fate fell upon them.

Graph 4 (above) also indicates that there were significant changes to the McNeive family from 1901 to 1911, with nine females recorded in the former and none in the latter. A review of the archived record, as shown in Figure 2, suggests that the McNeive surname may have been





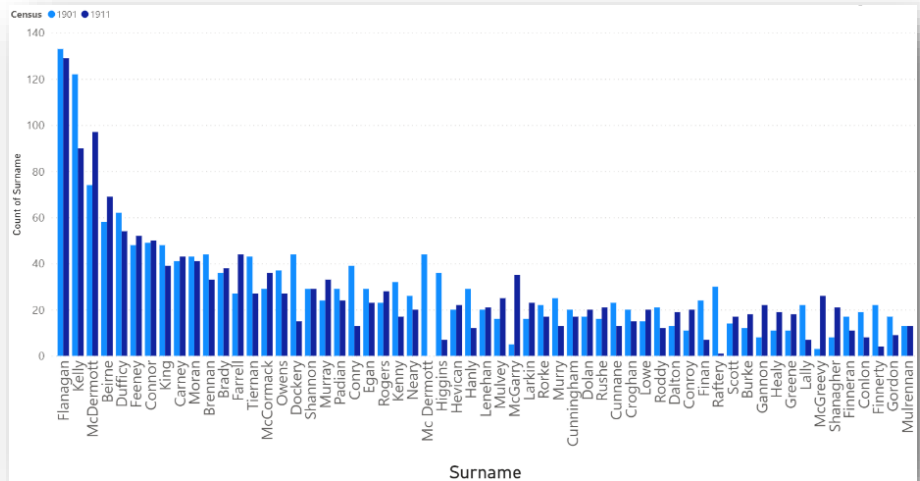
incorrectly captured in the electronic transfer of the data. However, further investigation needs to be done on this.

FORM A.										
RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY										
NAME and SURNAME.	RELATION to Head of Family.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE.	SEX.	RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	MARRIAGE.	WHERE BORN.		
								Country.	Townland.	Parish.
James Dr. P. P. P.	Head	Catholic	Read + Write	36	M	Farmer	Married	Co. Roscommon		
Ann Dr. P. P. P.	Wife	Catholic	Read + Write	46	F	Teacher	Married	Co. Roscommon		
John Dr. P. P. P.	Son	Catholic	Read + Write	17	M	Scholar	Not	Co. Roscommon		
Richard Dr. P. P. P.	Son	Catholic	Read + Write	14	M	Scholar	Not	Co. Roscommon		
John Dr. P. P. P.	Son	Catholic	Read + Write	11	M	Scholar	Not	Co. Roscommon		
Mary Dr. P. P. P.	Daughter	Catholic	Read + Write	8	F	Scholar	Not	Co. Roscommon		
Thomas Dr. P. P. P.	Son	Catholic	Read + Write	7	M	Scholar	Not	Co. Roscommon		

Figure 2. Written record for the McNeive household 1901

Flanagan, representing an average of 9% of the DED's surnames in both years. The Kelly and Dufficy surnames remained steady over the recording period, averaging 5% of the overall number of respondents.

The McDermott's saw an additional 22 individuals captured in the Tusk DED records in 1911 than in 1901. Fourteen of these were/are directly related to new births in the townlands of Ardkeenagh (Plunkett), Corrabeg and Cloonakilly More.



Graph 5. Surnames Tusk DED 1901 Vs 1911

It has been found, though, that there was double counting by the National Archives, as illustrated in Figure 3 (below), which shows the written record from Andrew McDermott's house in 1911. The last entry on the record, Mary McDermott (73) appears to be a duplication.

Figure 3. National Archives Record for Mary McDermott

Surname	Forename	Townland/Street	DED	County	Age	Sex	Birthplace	Occupation	Religion	Literacy
<a href="#">McDermott</a>	<a href="#">Mary</a>	Cloonanart More	Tusk	Roscommon	73	F	Co Roscommon	Domestic Servants	Roman Catholic	Read and write
<a href="#">McDermott</a>	<a href="#">Mary</a>	Cloonanart More	Tusk	Roscommon	73	F	Co Roscommon	Domestic Servant	Catholic	Read and write







Any anomalies like this that we come across are being recorded and will be sent to the National Archives for update on their system.

Since our last article, we have identified other anomalies with the reference data.

The Tusk parish area, as we know it today, is captured under five Distinct Electoral Divisions (DEDs) - Baslick, Cloonyquin, Kilukin, Ogulla and Tusk. However, some townlands like Castleplunket are not included in the aforementioned DEDs on the National Archives site. The data is currently being reviewed against the list of Civil Parishes and townlands which were confirmed in 2002 and illustrated in Figure 4.

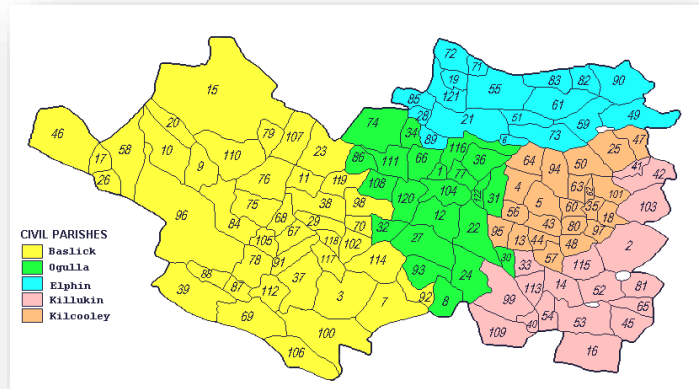
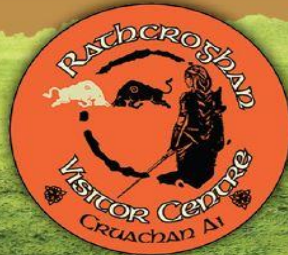


Figure 4. Tusk Civil Parishes and townlands  
Source: [Townland map of Tusk \(leirim-roscommon.com\)](http://Townland map of Tusk (leirim-roscommon.com))

In our next edition, we will delve into the birthplaces of individuals from both census' for the Parish of Tusk (all DEDs) and we will continue to update the data with the National Archives.



## BRINGING IRELAND'S PAST AND LEGENDS TO LIFE



Rathcroghan, Cruachan Aí, is known as the Ancient Capital of Connacht, where the festival of Samhain (Halloween) is said to originate. This majestic landscape is the oldest and largest unexcavated Royal Site in Europe, and home of the Iron Age Warrior Queen Medb. Experience Rathcroghan's rich archaeology, mythology and history through our interpretive rooms and expertly guided tours. The Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, the home of our museum, is located in the medieval village of Tusk, Co. Roscommon.

Rathcroghan Visitor Centre is open all year round, so why not book a place on one of our tours by visiting our website.

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

Cruachan Aí, Tusk, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, Ireland  
Phone: 00353 (0)71 9639268



@Rathcroghan



## CHRISTMAS IN TULSK 1905

*The following Tusk notes are taken from the Roscommon Herald of 30 December 1905. The notes give a nice indication of what Tusk was like during the festive seasons of old. Mrs Hill ran the old pub on the south side of the village street (later the site of Kilgannon's and subsequently the Tusk Inn). There was an adjacent family post office, while James Tully's premises was across the street (on the site of Kelly's/O'Connor's). Mr Tully owned a pub, as well as the shop mentioned, until he passed away in 1907.*

### TULSK

**The little borough of the O'Connors has not departed from the Yuletide custom of making decorations at the season of the year, when the whole world is enjoying the happy days of Christmas. It just now looks its best, being arrayed in a particularly striking manner, and quite so much up-to-date as more pretentious towns. During recent years the traffic of Tusk abated somewhat, the reason of which we cannot conjecture, but now there seems to be a going back to the old days, when 'James Rorke' ruled the stronghold, when Christmas saw the town besieged with vehicles and the presence of a large staff of assistants in attendance, in order to be able to attend to the orders of customers. The week here was very busy, and apparently a good trade was done.**

### MRS HILL'S

**The pretty situated premises presided over by Mrs Hill presents quite a charming appearance, and seems quite at home 'in Yuletide attire'. A large trade is being done, as usual, which is evident from the crowds that can be viewed resorting to the premises daily. Mrs Hill has ruled supreme in the borough for many years, and during her interim gained the patronage of the whole countryside, and deserving of such patronage she was; for personally, she has all that could be expected, and her goods were a recommendation for further orders in themselves. Her appearance, however, is not confined to her private apartments, and we regret we do not see her strutting through the shop [more often]**

### THE POST OFFICE

**The post office forms the western extremity of the above premises, and is in [the] charge of Mrs K. Kilgannon, who has the place picturesquely set up and emblazoned with the choicest of decorations.**

### MR TULLY'S

**Mr Tully's premises are stocked with goods in the grocery and spirit line, and a choice selection of Christmas cards, toys, pipes, pencils, stationary can be procured at the lowest possible prices. Jams, jellies, marmalade etc., are stocked in large quantities, which will command ready cash at low figures.**



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## *TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY*

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### *Membership*

*We hope you have enjoyed the Christmas edition of our newsletter. New members are most welcome to join the Society. If you wish to do so, please email us on [historytulsk@gmail.com](mailto:historytulsk@gmail.com). Annual fees are €30 for adults and €10 for students. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a great 2023!*

