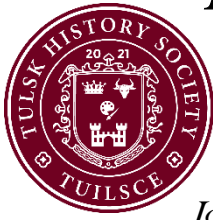


TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter No.4

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Tulsk History Society historytulsk@gmail.com

Members: Cathal McCormack (Chair), Mary Kelly, Deirdre Jones, John Higgins, Mike Lennon (Secretary), Pauline Jones, Catherine McGuire, Eileen Beirne, Noel Sheerin (Archivist), Maeve Hanley, Jim Dockery, Jody Moylan (PRO), Darragh Kelly, Therese Hanley (Treasurer), Fergus Moffitt, Michael Jones, Joe Donoghue, Melissa Keigher, Eithne Jones, Mary Cregg, Lorna Keaveney, Mick Beirne, Mike Higgins, John Quinn, Manus Tiernan, Edward Flanagan.

WELCOME to all our readers to the first THS newsletter of 2022. As we leave the winter



behind, we look forward to a positive year ahead. The society's much anticipated table quiz proved a great success on 5 March last. It was a fun night out with 17 tables participating and many spot prizes given out. On the fundraising front we can report a very positive evening, and we have been delighted to contribute part of our takings to

the very worthy local cause of the Zoe Cryan Trust, as well as donating to the Irish Red Cross for the Ukrainian victims of the Russian war. THS has acquired five new members since Christmas, our projects continue apace, while our archivist Noel has just begun document restoration training with the DRI Community Archive Scheme. So, plenty of positives! Contact details follow at the end if you'd like to join the society or simply drop us a line.

In this month's edition Melissa Keigher and Mike Lennon delve into the history of the Byrne (Beirne) family of Ballydaly after an inscription on a broken headstone in Tulske graveyard revealed a tragic past. We begin a series on the wells of the parish with a look at the roadside structure in Cloonmurray, while Jody Moylan looks at the history of Baslick's medieval church and cemetery. With her second contribution this month Melissa Keigher tells the tale of the accidental poisoning in 1900 of Michael Tiernan of Cargins. Our new 'picture diary' makes its THS debut, while our concluding article is the reproduction of a Duchas Folklore Collection entry from Killina, on the old crafts of the locality. We hope you enjoy the read!

THS

**A FAMILY'S SAD STORY ETCHED ON A FALLEN HEADSTONE - by
*Melissa L. Keigher & Mike Lennon***

DURING the recent survey of Tulsk Cemetery by members of the History Society, a memorial stone was discovered face down, broken in two and partially buried. When it was removed from the soil and turned over, it revealed the following inscription:

IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF MY DEAR HUSBAND
DENIS BYRNE, BALLYDALY, TULSK
WHO DIED 13 MARCH 1913
AND CHILDREN
MICHAEL JOSEPH BYRNE
DIED 22 NOV 1915, AGED 3½ YEARS
MARY J BYRNE
DIED 13 DEC 1916, AGED 6 YEARS
R. I. P.

When the discovery was posted on the Society's *WhatsApp* page, the members wanted to know more about the family whose name was Byrne, instead of Beirne, and what happened to the widow who lost her husband and two young children in less than three years.

As a distant relative, Mike Lennon had a general awareness of the family's history while Toronto based Melissa Keigher forensically researched the genealogy of Denis and his wife's families and produced a detailed report which she has donated to the Society's Archive. This article is a summary of their research findings.

Whether by design or accident, the names Beirne and Byrne were used interchangeably by the family in documents and reports, but there is no doubt that

Denis' father, Michael and grandfather, Denis were Beirnes from the townland of Rathmore. Through his connections with landlord Thomas Goff, Michael Beirne was given a tenancy of 64 acres in Ballydaly townland where evictions had taken place in 1849. He married Margaret Forde from Croghan parish in 1857, an introduction probably made by his wedding witness, Dr. Patrick Moran, Ardkeenagh House, who was also from Croghan. They had five children, Denis being the oldest. Their only daughter, Mary, became a nun with the Sisters of St. Joseph in England.

Michael Beirne was a progressive farmer as evidenced by his ability to purchase a large grazing farm of 260 acres at Grallagh, Rathcroghan in 1887. As well as being upwardly mobile in the economic sense, his social status was also on the rise. Due to the large amount of property tax he paid, he became a regular on the list of 14 cess payers summoned for selection to sit on the Roscommon Barony Grand Jury. His son and heir, Denis, succeeded him on this body in 1891. Following Michael's death in 1900, his estate was valued at £1,328 which equates to about €200,000 in today's money.



The Doorly premises in Roscommon town as it is today

Denis Beirne married Kathleen (Kitty) Doorly of the Corner House at the junction of Castle & Lanesboro Streets, Roscommon where her parents, James C. and Mary (née Mulligan) Doorly, carried on a drapery, grocery, and pub business from 1879. Their marriage took place on 26 January 1910 at St. Joseph's Church, Berkeley Road, Dublin.

A daughter, Mary Josephine, was born in October 1910 and their son, Michael Joseph, in May 1912. Less than a year later in March 1913, Denis, aged 55, died of acute kidney failure after a short illness. Kitty lost 3-year-old Michael Joseph to meningitis in November 1915, just two months after the death of her mother.

Tragedy struck again in December 1916 when her 6-year-old daughter, Mary Josephine, succumbed to diphtheria. The physical evidence of the loss of Kitty's family is carved on an ochre-coloured, cross-shaped broken stone, lying flat in Tulsk Cemetery.

Now on her own after the death of her daughter, Kitty sold her Ballydaly property to John Egan of Mantua for £2,540 in March 1917. She returned to Roscommon Town where she started a bed and breakfast business in Abbey Street. Her sister, Mary, was married to hotelier Thomas Grealy and Kitty assisted in the restaurant



A newspaper advertisement (Mayo News 12/11/1949) for the business of Kitty and sons

on Fair Days. One of the buyers who regularly attended the fairs was Michael McCormack, a farmer and butcher from Westport. His romance with Kitty stemmed from having dinner in Grealy's Hotel, and staying in her B&B. They were married in University Church, Stephen's Green, Dublin in June 1919, and Kitty joined her husband's business in Westport. Over the following four years, they became the parents of two sons, Patrick and Desmond.

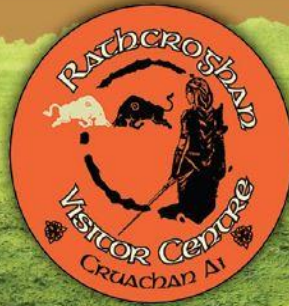


Kitty's shop-front remains to this day in Westport

Kitty lost her third child in October 1942 when 22-year-old Patrick McCormack died from pleurisy and meningitis. He was in his final year at University College Dublin and seemed destined for the priesthood, being described as a 'clerical student' on his death certificate. Her second husband, Michael, died in June 1945. Kitty's other son, Desmond, got married in 1947 and she had the pleasure of enjoying three grandchildren before

she died in March 1956. Over her 70-year lifespan, Kitty had to deal with many misfortunes but remained ‘a kind and charitable woman’ according to her obituary.

Kitty’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue to run the traditional family victualler business at Bridge Street, Westport. Unfortunately, they have few memories of their grandmother but are familiar with the loss of Kitty’s first family at Ballydaly. ♦



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 Tulsk, 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

Cruachan Aí, Tulsk, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon, Ireland

Phone: 00353 (0)71 9639268



@Rathcroghan



THE WELLS OF THE PARISH #1: CLOONMURRAY

Coordinates: 53° 44' 57" N 8° 11' 36" W

Townland: Cloonmurray

Condition 2022: Intact/not in use

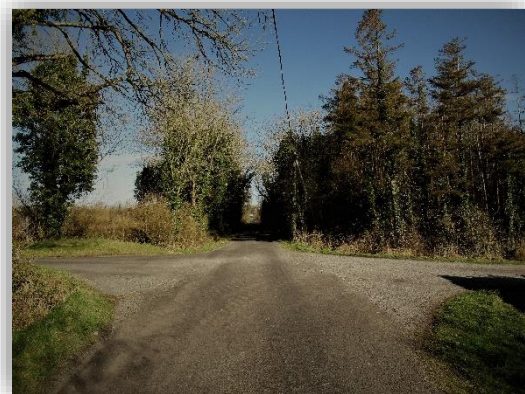


JUST off the road in Cloonmurray, near ‘Grehan’s crossroads’ is a fine example of the common block-built wells of the mid-1900s. This one was erected almost certainly in 1960 and was used from the start by five families – the Gunns, the Pake Beirnes, two Lennon families, Nearys, and Lenaghans. It was not the first well on the site, however, as before it there was a round hole lined with a wall of stones. In the days of the old well the neighbours cleaned it up twice a year by ‘teeming’ the water out with buckets before brushing down the wall and whitewashing it with lime. Frogs were

frequent visitors to the old well, as they were to many others before the cement structures were erected. The well today is becoming moss-covered and has not been used for some time. ◇



Looking west along the road



Grehan's crossroads (the Grehan house ruins are on the south-west corner of the intersection)

BASLICK CHURCH AND CEMETERY *by Jody Moylan*



Baslick today (THS 2022)

WHILE we celebrate our patron saint this month, it is important to note St. Patrick's deep association with the parish. There are several theories about the saint's connection to Baslick, one of which is that he founded a church here in 433 AD while passing through the old territory of Magh Ai. This theory also suggests that he gifted the church a portion of the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and the martyrs Stephen and Laurence, which he had brought from Rome. An alternative theory is these relics

arrived from Rome at a different date – either 441 or 442 AD – and were presented to the first bishop of Baslick, Sachellus, who himself had been ordained by Patrick.



Aerial view of Baslick (THS 2022)

Another explanation again is that the relics arrived some two centuries later, between 629-40 AD, at a time of a series of interchanges between Armagh and Rome (Armagh being the ecclesiastical/Christian capital of Ireland at that time). Whatever the truth, or the exact dates, the very presence of such prestigious relics that Patrick himself had delivered to Ireland gives an indication of the site's importance in early medieval Ireland, with our patron saint's influence being very much a part of that story.

There is no remaining evidence of the church that Patrick was said to have founded, with churches in Ireland before the tenth century being generally built with perishable materials such as timber, post and wattle, or clay. The later sixteenth century church and cemetery as we know them today is within a relatively small, walled enclosure.

As we have seen, the site once held great importance not only in its immediate area,



but within the province of Connacht itself. It was the main church of the Ciarraige Ai, for example, who were a major population group in Connacht in the early Christian years, while scholars have pointed out that Baslick's positioning between the prehistoric Rathcroghan complex

and the Iron Age site at Rathra was 'deliberate, symbolic and strategic'. Indeed, a great number of archaeological sites are located in close proximity to Baslick, such as linear earthworks, enclosures and raths in the Tusk parish townlands of Corlis and Cloonbard.

Additionally, the first recorded King of Connacht, Ragallach mac Uatach, who was killed in 649 AD (1,373 years ago) was buried at Baslick. In keeping with its regal

past, members of the Dillon family, formerly Earls of Roscommon from the early 1600s, were buried within the walls of the current church site.

The west gable wall is the most prominent feature of the remains of the sixteenth century building, with a recent survey finding that alterations and restoration work has occurred sporadically since the late 1700s. Sadly, there are not many prominent architectural features remaining, like a doorway or windows for instance, though fragments of these have been found in conservation work in the past twenty years.

The word 'Baslick' itself is a rarity. Taken from the Latin term *Basilica*, it occurs in some variation in only three other places on the islands of Ireland and Britain.



In County Kerry the name can be found in Baslickane, a townland on the ring of Kerry near Waterville, while in Wales the village of Bassaleg is

known to derive its name from the term. In Scotland, the town of Paisley also shares the rare commonality; its name ultimately derived from the Greek *basilikos* (meaning 'royal').

In his writings of his journey around Ireland in 1837 Samuel Lewis wrote that Baslick parish contained 3,574 inhabitants, with the state of agriculture 'wholly unimproved' - both points unsurprising given the growing population at the time, and widespread pre-famine poverty. Having been an independent parish, the post-famine decline in population caused the Bishop of Elphin, Dr. Browne, to decide to amalgamate Baslick with another parish.

A decision was made initially by the bishop to amalgamate Baslick with Ballinagare parish. However, the population were so against the move that they bolted the doors of Kilmurray church when the priest from Ballinagare first arrived. After being refused entry, the priest attempted to get in through a window but was pulled back by a crowd that had gathered, with his coat being torn in the process.

Ultimately, the decision was made in 1868 to amalgamate with Ogulla; another parish famed for its Patrician connection. The Catholic parish of Tulsk is historically richer because of it, and makes the feast day on 17 March all the more important on the local calendar.◇



The sun sets on Baslick.

THE ACCIDENTAL POISONING OF MICHAEL TIERNAN - by *Melissa L. Keigher*

ONE evening in February 1900 Michael Tiernan of Cargins left his house to visit his sister, Rose Ann, and her husband, Patrick Dolan. Just before his arrival, while walking on Castle Street in Roscommon town, Michael called into the shop owned by James and Jane Jones and purchased a naggin of whiskey - a bottle from which he began to sip on later that evening. The bottle was labelled '*Joseph O'Neill, Old Malt Whiskey, Roscommon*'.

Tragically, only hours later, Michael would die at the Dolan's house on Castle Street. It was the 5th of February 1900, and an inquest would be called for the following day.



Bridget Tiernan (nee Beirne, 1856-1927)
Photo c. 1905

Instead of containing whiskey, which the label declared, the naggin was filled with spirits of salts and corrosive sublimate without ever being relabelled. After caution, an employee of the Jones' shop, Robert Walker, admitted to selling the bottle to Michael Tiernan but the inquest proved the horrible incident was thankfully only accidental.

This left Bridget Tiernan, Michael's widow, on her own with 11 children, all of them under the age of 21. By the following year, the 1901 Irish Census showed Bridget, a visitor Michael McDermott, and five of her children enumerated at Cargins where her deceased husband Michael had been a herd:

1901 Irish Census				Date of Enumeration: 31 March 1901				
Cargins Demesne, Tulsk, Roscommon, Ireland				Enumerator: Patrick CANNON				
House 1.				Census signed: "Michael Tiernan for mother"				
Name	Relation	Religion	Education	Age	Sex	Profession	Marriage	Where Born
Bridget TIERNAN	Head of Family	Catholic	Can Read	42	Female	Shepherd	Widow	Co. Roscommon
Michael McDERMOTT	Visitor	Catholic	Can Read	66	Male	Shepherd	Widower	Co. Roscommon
Matt TIERNAN	Son	Catholic	Can Read	19	Male	Shepherd	Unmarried	Co. Roscommon
Thomas TIERNAN	Son	Catholic	Can Read	9	Male	Scholar	Unmarried	Co. Roscommon
Patrick TIERNAN	Son	Catholic	Can Read	10	Male	Scholar	Unmarried	Co. Roscommon
Margaret TIERNAN	Daughter	Catholic	Can Read	15	Female	Scholar	Unmarried	Co. Roscommon
Kate TIERNAN	Daughter	Catholic	Can Read	7	Female	Scholar	Unmarried	Co. Roscommon

Transcript of 1901 Census - Bridget (Beirne) Tiernan & family

And there, in Cargins, Bridget would remain up until her death at the age of 71, from bronchitis and heart failure, on 08 April 1927. Her obituary in the Roscommon Messenger read:

<p><i>Newspaper: The Roscommon Messenger</i> <i>Published: 16 April 1927; page 2. column 6 (f)</i> <i>Transcription</i></p>
<p>"Death and Funeral of Mrs. Bridget Tiernan. Cargins, Tulsk.</p> <p>It is with deep regret we announce this week the death of Mrs. Bridget Tiernan, which took place after a rather brief illness, at the County Hospital, Roscommon, on Friday 8th, inst. Deceased was a member of an old and respected Roscommon family and was highly esteemed by all who knew her. The remains were removed to the Church of the Sacred Heart on Friday evening. On Saturday morning Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated, at which the following clergymen officiated: celebrant, Rev. T.J. Waters; deacon, Rev. M.J. <u>McFloin</u>; sub-deacon, Rev. P.J. Hannon; master of ceremonies, Rev. M. O'Donnell. In the choir: Very Rev. T.H. Canon Cummins, D.D., P.P.</p> <p>The funeral to <u>Kilcooly</u> on Saturday was of large dimensions and was continually being added to by people from Tulsk and Strokestown...."</p>

Bridget would be interred next to her husband Michael Tiernan at Kilcooley Cemetery.

This is just one of many interesting family histories THIS will be highlighting. ◇

PICTURE DIARY from the members



Some recent photos from Tusk History Society members. Clockwise from top: aerial view of Ogulla cemetery; prehistoric standing stone at Carnfree; the ruins of St George's Church of Ireland Clashaganny (Manor townland); aerial view of Rathmoyle cemetery. ◇

CRAFTS OF KILLINA *from the Duchas Folklore Collection 1937-39*

BEGINNING an occasional feature on Tusk parish entries in the Schools Folklore Collection from 1937-39, we here reprint student Annie Kelly's contribution from Killina National School (Clooneyquinn). The project, which we covered in our first newsletter (Issue No. 1) was an initiative between the Department of Education and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation. Senior Primary School children recorded in excess of 750,000 pages of local history and oral tradition from across the 26 counties of the Irish Free State. This includes some 18,000 of the children's original school exercise books. The priceless archive gives much insight into local life that would otherwise have been lost. Some notes on Annie's entry follow below.

Student: Annie Kelly (Killynagh More)

Teacher: Mícheál Mac Floinn

Crafts.

In olden times there was a lot more Industry in this part of the country than there is now. There is not much Industry round here at the present time, except Cleeve making, and basket making. There was a flax mill and a corn mill in Killina in years gone by. There was also a man for making frieze. There was a man in Killina village that used to make blankets The wool was combed and spun into thread, and sent to him, and he used to make blankets out of it. One blanket that he used to make was worth ten in those days. This man died fifty years ago It was a loss to the people round the district, because they could get frieze and blankets made. He lived close to the School house of Killina. The house that he lived in is there yet

There was also a man by the name of John Keegan who lived in Curereigh. He was a Cooper, he used to make churns and firkins and butter cups and tubs. There are no firkins used in those days nor is there butter packed. In olden times the butter used to be packed into firkins and brought to the market and sold. Since the Creamery started, this packing is done away with.

In olden times the thatching was the principal work in the Winter Season. There is not much thatching done now. Nearly all the houses are slated. The thatched houses are the warmest and the best to live in.

Note: Annie's entry is quoted verbatim. The 'cleeve making' refers to the storage baskets draped over a donkey's back - also known as 'creels'. The 'firkin'

mentioned refers to a small cask that was used for containing liquids, butter or fish (in this case it seems to be specifically butter firkins).

Any information on people or places mentioned by Annie would be most welcomed by THS. We hope to cover more on the crafts of the parish over time.

Entry was from: "The Schools' Collection, Volume 0621, Page 413" by Dúchas © National Folklore Collection, UCD. ◇

TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY

Membership

We hope you have enjoyed this edition of our newsletter. The next edition will be circulated in June. New members to the society are most welcome. If you wish to join please email us on historytulsk@gmail.com. Annual fees are €30 for adults and €10 for students. We hope you all have a wonderful Spring!

