

Tulsk History Society



Plaques Erected By
Tulsk History Society
Commemorating Prominent
And Some Forgotten People
And Events Associated With
Tulsk Parish

MIKE ROGERS
(1911 - 1994)
D-Day Veteran
Decorated By The US Army
Fought On The Beaches Of
Normandy On 6 June 1944
Born In Oglish

TOM McHALE
(1844 - 1977)
Influential Traditional
Musician And All Ireland
Tin Whistle Champion
Born In Rathaggy

RODERIC O'CONNOR
(1860 - 1940)
Internationally Renowned
Artist
Born Milltown Castleplunkett

MARY KELLY GORGES
(1826-1911)
Distinguished Author & Poet
Born At Cargin House



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Tulsk History Society historytulsk@gmail.com



Members: Mike Lennon (Chair) Marese Feeney (Secretary) John Higgins (Assist. Chair) Mary Kelly (Assistant Secretary), Catherine McGuire, Eileen Beirne (Archivist), Noel Sheerin (Treasurer), James Dockery, Jody Moylan (PRO), Therese Hanley, Joe Donoghue, Manus Tiernan, Edward Flanagan, Milo Lowry, Marty Brady, Mary Conry, Michael Jones, Melissa Keigher, Mike Higgins, Cathal McCormack, Tina Galvin Beirne, Pat Fox, James Rogers, Sinead Moylan, Tom Rogers, Breege Hyland, Marty Nolan.

Welcome to the September '24 edition of the Society e-newsletter. It's hard to believe we're heading into the last quarter of the year and another summer(!) is behind us. That said, we've been keeping ourselves busy and since our last newsletter we've gotten over our big Heritage Week event of the plaque unveiling in Tulsk village, and we've also enjoyed a nice day trip to County Sligo (more about these anon). Most importantly, we've added new members to the Society, and our numbers are now up to 27 (from 17 in June). See above for all our fully signed up members. As we head into the shorter days, we'll now be returning to our long-term cemetery surveys project. The project takes up a few enjoyable hours on Saturday mornings (weather permitting) and it's something that has firmly established itself as our 'back end' activity. We could always do with gaining more volunteers for it however, and whoever wishes to come out and join us is very welcome and encouraged to do so. Details on how to join THS as a full member is covered below, at the end of this edition.

This month we kick off with the very interesting story of the 'Fashionable Marriage' of Walter A. Jones and Bridie French Browne of Mount Browne House (formerly of Tulsk Parish) as it was covered in the local press way back in 1907. Mike Lennon has compiled the story. There's news of our August trip to County Sligo, with pictures of a rare day of perfect sunshine! The little known, interesting and tragic tale of Slevin's Thomas F. Neary follows, as Mike Lennon uncovers the life of this Tulsk parish native who was killed in action at St Mihiel in France during World War One. Manus Tiernan brings us the story of Father Plunkett's monument in Drishaghau; a wonderful tale of old Castleplunkett. We also cover the Society's big event of Heritage Week 2024 - the plaque unveiling in Tulsk village, which took place last month. Rounding off our September issue is four short biography pieces of the plaque honourees, four natives we are truly honoured to call our own. We hope you enjoy the read!

THS

Fashionable Marriage compiled by Mike Lennon

The wedding photograph of Walter A Jones and Bridie French Browne taken at Mount Browne House, Falsk, * Strokestown on August 26, 1907, by Walter's brother, Arthur H. Browne. Bridie was a daughter of Robert Henry French of Larchgrove and was the third wife and widow of Arthur Brown of Mount Brown. Walter Jones was a descendant of a Welsh family who held high-ranking military and political positions during Oliver Cromwell's campaign in Ireland. He was born in Kilmore House in 1878 and was educated locally and at classical schools in Sligo. As poor health prevented him from going to Trinity College Dublin, he joined his brother Arthur who was a pharmacist in Doneraile, Co. Cork. While there, Walter became interested in researching local history and contributed articles to local journals. He met Bridie while on a research visit to Rathcroghan and they continued to reside at Mount Brown after their marriage in Killina Church. Walter continued his historical research in Roscommon and Leitrim and over the following thirty years went on to publish over fifty essays in the *Roscommon Herald*, *Tuam Herald* and *Strokestown Democrat*. Copies of his published material can be consulted at Roscommon County Library. Bridie died in 1918 and was buried in Killina Cemetery while Walter died in 1939 and was buried in Annaduff Graveyard, Drumsna. *Falsk was in Tulsk parish until 1909 when it transferred to Strokestown.



Front row seated L-R: Georgina French, wife of Robert Nugent French; Charlotte Jones, mother of the groom; Bridie French Browne, the bride; Walter A Jones, the groom; Marion Whelan, Abbey Street, Roscommon, the bridesmaid (per marriage certificate)

Back row standing L-R: Arthur Browne, stepson of the bride; Robert Nugent French, brother of the bride; Rev. Michael Henehan, curate in Killina; Very Rev. John O'Brien, parish priest of Tulsk; Michael Whelan (solicitor in Roscommon), brother of the bridesmaid OR Patrick J Gaynor (solicitor in Strokestown); Bolton C. Jones, best man and brother of the groom.

Published in The Roscommon Herald, August 31, 1907

A very fashionable marriage took place at the pretty little church of Killina, which was specially decorated for the occasion, on Monday last, when Walter Alfred Jones, Esq., Doneraile, Co. Cork, was united in holy wedlock to Mrs. Bridie Jane Browne, Mount Browne House, Strokestown. The bridegroom was attended by Bolton C. Jones, Esq., LL.D., Bushmead Hall, Bedford, as best man. The ceremony was performed by Rev. John O'Brien, P.P., Tulsk. The bride looked charming in a beautiful and costly dress of dove-coloured taffeta silk, trimmed with real Limerick lace; the bodice of same material trimmed to match with pearl and horse buttons of real gold of a very valuable description. She wore a rare picture hat, touched with dove-coloured silk, trimmed with Limerick lace and rich ostrich plumes while an invaluable necklet of diamonds and rubies (the gift of the bridegroom) hung resplendent on her breast. The bride, who is very popular with rich and poor alike, was the recipient of a very extensive collection of costly presents, which would be too numerous to mention, that of Mr. P. J. Gaynor, solicitor, being something superb. We join with the legion of friends of the bride and bridegroom in wishing them many years of untold happiness in which to enjoy their wedded life.



Walter & Bridie Jones with horse and trap on the road near Mount Browne.

Photographs courtesy of Cork City & County Archive

History Society Trip to County Sligo

We took our day trip this year on Saturday 10th of August to the Yeats County of Sligo, and a nice day it was too; a rare day of lovely sunshine and clear skies. We boarded the mini-bus from our base at Tusk Macra Hall with the first stop being Lissadell House – the childhood home of 1916 revolutionary Constance Markievicz, her sister Eva Gore-Booth and her brother Josslyn Gore-Booth. After a nice tour of the house and gardens, and after a short tea & coffee break at Lissadell's café we made our way to Drumcliffe Church and the grave of the great Sligo poet W.B. Yeats. It's quite a modest grave for such a famous man, but the setting under the great Benbulbin is worth the trip alone. It was then on to the Sligo Folk Park at Riverstown, which was fantastic; a brilliant recreation of the way rural Ireland used to be. We rounded off our tour at McDermott's Bar & Restaurant in Castlebaldwin, where we enjoyed a nice meal – we needed it after all the walking and talking! Special thanks to our wonderful driver on the day – Garda Sinead Higgins. Some pictures follow over the next few pages of a good day had by all!



Above: Riverstown Folkpark indoor area 'The Street' and (top) at Lissadell



Above: Joe, John and Mike at Lissadell House and (below) Annie and Eileen at Riverstown Folk Park





Members of THS visiting Yeats' grave at Drumcliffe Church and (top) John and Joe in the smithy at Riverstown Folk Park

Thomas F. Neary (1886-1918) - World War 1 Fatality by Mike Lennon



1918.”

From the lush fields around the Hill of Slevin to the green fields of France via New York encapsulates the story of Thomas Francis Neary who lost his life as an American G.I. in World War 1. The catalyst for researching and telling Thomas’ story happened during the recent Tusk History Society survey of memorial stones in Ogulla Cemetery with the recording of these words from a Neary headstone: “Also their son Thomas Francis Neary killed in action in France Sept 25th,

The register of births shows that Thomas was born in the townland of Slevin, near Castleplunkett, on the 16th of November 1886 to John Neary (recorded as Nary) and Catherine Neary (née Cunningham). In the 1911 Census, we learn John and Catherine had twelve children but only nine survived.

1886								
Sixteenth	Thomas	John	Catherine	Catherine	Shirley =	William		
20th November	Neary	Nary	Nary	Nary	June	December	Assistant	
Slevin	Slevin	Slevin	Cunningham	Slevin	1886		Registrar.	
18								

In 1878, John Neary married into the 42-acre Slevin farm which Catherine Cunningham had inherited from her late father. This was a comparatively large holding at the time but not sufficient to support the large Neary family, leading to the older children having to emigrate. Preceded by his brother Patrick, Thomas sailed on the *Baltic* from Queenstown to New York in May 1913 and was followed in August 1914 by their sister Delia.

While World War 1 was raging in Europe since 1914, it was only in April 1917 that the United States declared war on Germany. This led to the mandatory registration of males aged 18 to 45, or the ‘Draft’ as it

became known. Thomas Neary’s 1917 registration card reveals several details about his life in the America. Although he lived in the Bronx, New York City, he worked across the Hudson River in Jersey City as a freight handler for American Express (originally a freight forwarding company, it later expanded into travel and financial

services). Of his legal status, he declared himself a subject of England but had declared his intention to become a U.S. citizen. Stating that his father, brother and sister were dependent on

him for support, he claimed exemption from being drafted into the military. We also learn that he was tall, slender, had brown eyes, black hair and was not married. It should also be noted, whether intentionally or not, he gave a very different date of birth, April 13th, 1889, instead of November 16th, 1886.

Thomas' claim for an exemption was unsuccessful as evidenced by his army service card.

7

Neary, Thomas F. 2,450,260 * White * Colored.
(Surname) (Christian name) (Army serial number)

Residence: 385 E 134th St New York NEW YORK
(Street and house number) (Town or city) (County) (State)

* Enlisted * R. A. * N. G. * E. R. C. * Inducted at New York N.Y. on Apr 1, 1918

Place of birth: Rosecommon Co Ireland Age or date of birth: 28 11/12 Yrs.

Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers: 8 Co 152 Dep Brig Apr 1/18 to Apr 16/18; Co D 311 Inf to Sept 25/18.

Grades, with date of appointment: Pvt 600

Engagements:

Served overseas from May 19/18 to Sept 25/18 from to to

Died Sept 25, 1918, of wounds received in action.

Other wounds or injuries received in action: None
(If none, so state)

Person notified of death: Miss Delia Neary, sister
(Name) (Degree of relationship)
 33 E. 39th Street, New York, N.Y.
(No. and street or rural route) (City, town, or post office) (State or country)

Remarks:

Form No. 724-7, A. G. O. * Strike out words not applicable. † Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S.
 Nov. 22, 1919. 3-7387

He was inducted into the U.S. Army on April 1st, 1918, and he went through a few weeks of training at Camp Dix, New Jersey until he boarded the S/S Nestor troop ship at Brooklyn on May 19th, 1918, bound for Liverpool. There were 79 officers and 2,721 troops on board. The ship arrived in Liverpool on May 31st. After disembarking, the contingent was taken on five trains to Folkestone and then ferried across the Channel to Boulogne in France.

Prior to sailing, Thomas would have made a will and nominated who was to be notified in case of an emergency – his sister Delia. He was attached to the Company D, 311th Infantry Regiment, 156th Infantry Brigade which in turn was part of the U.S. Army's 78th Division. Company D had 6 officers and 239 in non-officer ranks. After arriving in France, the 311th Regiment provided support to the British army in Flanders before moving further south in late August in preparation for a major combat operation in September. What came to be known as the St. Mihiel Offensive (12-16 September) was the first large U.S. lead operation in the war, and its success paved the way for the ending of hostilities two months later.

The U.S. commander-in-chief, General John J. Pershing waited for the troop build-up to reach over one million men before putting his combat plan into action. Back in 1914, the German army had captured a large V-shaped area of territory stretching out from Metz towards Verdun and Nancy. The Germans continued to retain it despite several French army attempts to retake

it. This territorial bulge became known as the St. Mihiel Salient after the town situated inside its furthest reach into France. Pershing decided to attack the salient which was strategically important as it hindered communications between Paris and the east of the country. The five-day battle was fierce and bloody but the reduction of the salient and the German retreat were the first major victories for the allies. It led to the ending of the war and the signing of the Armistice (Treaty of Versailles) on November 11th, 1918. Besides General Pershing, there were other



The area of the St. Mihiel Salient under German control until September 1918

officers involved in the battle who would become household names during World War Two – Lt. Colonel George C Marshall, Lt. Colonel George S Patton, Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur and Captain Harry S Truman.

The victory at St. Mihiel came at a bloody price – the 78th Division suffered 2,107 casualties. Thomas Neary was wounded and succumbed to his wounds on September 25th, nine days after the battle ended. The cause of death noted on his record is DWRIA or ‘died from wounds received in action’. As an infantry soldier, he would have been in the front lines.

File No.	Last Name	Army Serial No.	First name and Initials	Cablegram No.
24267	NEARY	2450260	Thomas F.	275
Rank	N.Y.	Organization	Cause of death	Date of Death
Pvt.	Co. D, 311th Inf.	78th Div.	DWRIA	9-25-18
Date of Burial	Place of Burial—Unconfirmed			No.
9-26-18				Cemetery Commune
Authority File No. D	Place of Burial—Confirmed			No.
1878	Grave No. 8, Amer. Cty., Andilly (M-et-M)			Cemetery Commune 537
Authority File No. D	Disinterred and Reburied: Date 5-14-19 In:			No.
10454	Grave No. 89, Section 5 Plot 2, St. Mihiel Amer. Cty., Thiaucourt M-et-M.			Cemetery 1233
Emergency Address	Miss Delia Neary, (Sister) 33 E. 39th St., New York City, N.Y.		Notified Emergency Address 11-20-19-107	
R. B. Sketch No.	Photograph No. D-15921		12-5-18 PERMANENT AMER. CTY. INTERMENT See Reverse Side of Card	
Grave Marker	Name Peg	Cross	Head Board	Bottle
		Yes		
Ident. Tags			Buried with body	On grave marker
			Yes	Yes
Benef. John Neary Jr., father-Slevin, Castleplunkett, Co. of Roscommon, Ireland				
REMARKS:				
3-7872				
2-115-2-1-21 (2725)				
G. R. S. Form 13 - Revised Jan. 25-20				

Authority File No. D. 31767	Reburied (date) 8-2-1922 Grave 34, Row 24, Block D, St. Mihiel American Cemetery	(within custody of U. S.)	Cemetery No. 1233
Emergency address notified of the reburial (date) 3-15-24 mfk			



He was buried the following day in a battlefield grave at Andilly, now the site of the largest German military cemetery in France. 285km east of Paris, on the west end of the town of Thiaucourt-Regniéville, lies the St. Mihiel American Cemetery which was established on a 40-acre site in 1919. The bodies of 4,153 soldiers buried in battlefield graves in the region were removed for permanent internment to the St. Mihiel cemetery. Thomas' remains were brought from Andilly to the new cemetery on May 14th, 1919. A further and final reburial of Thomas within St. Mihiel's cemetery is recorded as having taken place on February 8th, 1922. The record states the beneficiary of his will was his father John, who died in 1933.

Thomas Neary's remains rest under a white marble cross in Grave 34, Row 24, Block D among the thousands of his comrades who perished in the decisive St. Mihiel Offensive which led to the defeat of Germany and the end of the 'the war to end all wars' but unfortunately it failed to do so.



Countless symmetrical rows of white crosses in St. Mihiel Cemetery mark the final resting places of 4,153 WW1 soldiers

Father Plunkett's Monument by Manus Tiernan

The Plunketts:

The Plunkett family lived in Castleplunkett for 100 years between the years 1650 and 1750. The Plunketts were of Anglo-Norman origin arriving in this country with the Normans. They quickly created a power base in Louth and Meath through marriage and political dealings. The Castleplunkett Plunketts originated from Carstown near Termonfeckin in County Louth. They were a junior branch of the Plunkett lords of Louth. Patrick Plunkett of Carstown, married Mary Talbot of Castleruby, a townland within the parish of Baslick. Patrick Plunkett was deposed of lands in Louth and given lands at Castleplunkett where he built a house-cum-castle around 1650. By 1680 Patrick Plunkett had considerable land holding within the parish and the family had great influence on the local populace, setting up cottage industries, tilling land and bringing prosperity to the area. The family were very loyal to the crown and on the 8th April 1684 they were granted a charter from Charles II to allow them to call the local village "Lios Laghna" (Castleplunkett) and to set up a weekly market every Wednesday and three fairs annually on 11 May, 13 August, and 11 October. These fairs were held in the village until the early 1970's. The family were staunch Catholics and fought for King James II at the Battle of the Boyne. A lot of the family lands were confiscated after 1695, and the sons emigrated to Austria, Britain, and Europe. Due to the penal laws, by 1765 the family had lost most of its lands and by 1770 the castle was in ruins and the Plunketts had left the village that retained their name.

Father Augustine Plunkett

Augustine Plunkett was born in the castle sometime between 1665 and 1670. He was the second son of Patrick Plunkett. He joined the Augustine Fathers in Ballyhaunis Co. Mayo. During the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) there was

great religious persecution across Ireland and Connaught. The friary in Ballyhaunis was ravaged and suppressed. Father Plunkett returned home and administered the faith to the local populace. With the help of a few friars from the abbey he set up a hospice, or house for the sick and poor, in the neighbourhood at Rathmoyle. It stood near the spot where the present cemetery now stands. Donations were obtained from local wealthy families to relieve famine, fever and destitution. The Augustinians had a presence in the location up to 1802, serving the local community.

The monument in the townland of Drishaghawn marks the spot where Father Plunkett gathered the locals and administered the faith. As penal laws prevented religious freedom, this secluded spot was well patrolled for fear of crown forces abducting priests resulting in imminent execution. The older people of the 1890s had the tradition of calling the monument 'Crann a Leactac' - the tree of the monument. Tradition has it that a large whitethorn tree grew beside the monument and that it was uprooted on January 6th, 1839, the night of the big wind. The stump of the decayed tree was evident up to the 1900s. The monument stands upright and is a roughly carved flag of limestone. The stone bears carvings at the top and bottom and the centre is occupied by a rather crude inscription. The carving at the top of the stone represents a cross surmounted by the letters I.H.S. The inscription reads:

Pray for ye soul of Fr

Augustine Plunkett (O)

S.A. He caused ye croz

to be made in memory

of himself and his

friends Anno Dom 1723

Fryer of Bellahaunes

At the base of the stone are carvings somewhat defaced. It is evident that they were executed in relief. It is thought that on the left of the stone a chalice is represented and to the right an open book or missal. The stone monument is carved out of local limestone. It is believed that Father Plunkett is not buried under the monument but in the family plot located in the old ruined church at Toberelva cemetery, a quarter of a mile southeast of the monument and within sight of his birthplace and the spot he loved so well. It is believed that the stone monument was erected to mark a favourite spot. John O'Donovan in his letters refers to 'Crann na Leactac' but his reference is incorrect. He evidently never visited the monument for he writes 'In a field near here (Toberelva) is a monument, bearing a Latin inscription said to be the grave of an Ecclesiastic'.

In 2015 during heritage week the monument was re-dedicated with local dignitaries attending. The late Noel Keavney of Drishaghaun gave an access route to the monument on his land and the late Sean Raftery of Valeview led the refurbishment of the monument. A sign was erected outlining the brief history of the site. Nothing remains of the house or castle where Fr. Plunkett was born but the site is still known.



Monument 1934
(My great grandfather sitting Thomas O'Donnell)



Monument 1982



Monument 2015.

PLAQUE UNVEILING IN TULSK VILLAGE



This year's Tusk History Society Heritage Week event saw us unveiling four heritage plaques to four esteemed and historic natives of the parish - D-Day veteran Mike Rogers, traditional musician Tom McHale, writer and poet Mary Kelly Gorges, and esteemed artist Roderic O'Connor (bios of the four follows at the end here). We were blessed with a wonderful day's weather on the Sunday in question (18 August) and a great crowd of over 70 people turned out to enjoy the reception in the village picnic area. It was truly an honour for us to welcome descendants and family members of those being remembered. The unveiling of the Mike Rogers plaque was done by his eldest surviving niece, Rita Dayton. Tom McHale's plaque was unveiled by his widow Mary McHale. The honour of unveiling Roderic O'Connor's plaque went to Councillor Liam Callaghan, while Councillor Sean Moylan unveiled the plaque dedicated to Mary Kelly Gorges. Much thanks are extended to both councillors for attending on the day and to Michael Carney of Carney Memorials for his very generous support of the project. Thanks is also due to the County Heritage Officer Nollaig Feeney for the loan of the gazebo and Heritage Week bunting, and to Joe Donoghue for the sound system, which worked a treat. Thanks too to Pat Galvin for the use of his power, and to Roscommon County Council for the funds which covered our refreshments of teas, coffees and biscuits. After the plaques were unveiled, everyone spent an hour socialising in the nice weather, in what turned out to be a very enjoyable and rewarding afternoon in the village.



Members of the Rogers family at the plaque dedicated to Ogulla native Mike Rogers, D-Day veteran and recipient of the US Army decoration, the Purple Heart. It was a true honour for the History Society to be joined by the family. We hope the plaque goes some way to giving this great Tusk man the esteem he rightly deserves.

McHale family members at the plaque dedicated to the great Tom McHale, influential traditional musician and All Ireland Tin Whistle Champion. Tom was born in Rathnagly and achieved much in a lifetime that was cut tragically short in 1977. It was a great honour for all at THS to acknowledge him and it was wonderful to have Tom's widow Mary unveil the plaque





We got very lucky with the weather for the Unveiling, and it was brilliant to see so many showing up and enjoying the few hours in the village





Above: Tusk History Society members John Higgins, Marese Feeney, Eileen Beirne, Mike Lennon, Jody Moylan and Joe Donoghue with Councillors Sean Moylan, Liam Callaghan and Anthony Waldron at the unveiling of our four plaques. A fifth, information plaque, was unveiled by our Assistant Chair., John Higgins

Below: Our four honourees have their memory set in stone



THE PLAQUE HONOUREES from the 2024 THS Heritage Week Event

MICHAEL (MIKE) ROGERS (1911-1994) was born in Ogulla, Tusk in May 1911 to James and Jane (née Hamill) Rogers. As an Irish emigrant, Mike and brother James landed in New Jersey in 1930. By 1933 Mike had secured a permanent job as a labourer in the Colgate Palmolive soap factory. Soon after, he became a U.S. citizen. As America prepared to enter WWII, military conscription was introduced (in 1940), but rather than being conscripted Mike chose to enlist voluntarily in the army in March 1941. Mike was shipped to the south of England in early 1944 to prepare for the land war with Germany. He was granted permission to visit his home in Ogulla where he spent a brief period meeting family and friends. The photograph in Kilgannon's pub (right) shows Mike in full uniform between his brothers Dominic and Bernard Joe, with Tom, Jim (U.S. based but pasted in afterwards) and Pat at the back. When D-Day dawned (June 6th, 1944) Mike Rogers headed towards Normandy beach in a landing craft. As it neared the beach, continuous enemy fire peppered the boats. When the ramp of his boat dropped, Mike waded into the water, water that was, in his own words, becoming "pink with blood." Under the intense bombardment Mike was hit with shrapnel to the chest and ribs. Despite his injuries, he kept surging forward and managed to grab hold of an injured comrade, dragging him to shore to save his life. Mike would later be decorated for this act of bravery. He spent three months in hospital recovering from his injuries before returning to duty guarding German Prisoners of War (POWs). After his discharge from the army in October 1945, he returned to work at Colgate-Palmolive as an elevator operator until retiring in 1976. Mike rarely mentioned the war, preferring to get on with life. He paid return visits to Tusk in 1970 and 1982. The memory of the man and his deeds will live on through his plaque.



MARY KELLY GORGES (1835-1911) was born into Cargins House, the daughter of the former landlord Daniel Kelly. She went on to become a writer and poet of some note. She was published widely in Irish, British and American magazines and newspapers. Mary's husband was John Gorges of Kilbrew, Co. Mayo, who was an adjutant in the Roscommon Militia. Mary was known primarily for her poetry, which appeared in the esteemed *Chambers Edinburgh Journal* from around the year 1890. Her poems, which were idyllic and descriptive, were then picked up by the papers and were 'carried into almost every corner of the world,' according to the *Cheltenham Examiner* of April 1912. As well as in Ireland and England, where her work appeared regularly in papers like the *Dublin Evening Post* and the *Yorkshire Post*, her poetry was published in newspapers right across the USA, from Rhode Island and Pennsylvania on the east coast, to states in the American West, like Oregon, Idaho, and Iowa. Books she wrote included 'On Life's Journey; Poems and Ballads' and 'Killarney' - a travel book about a journey around County Kerry in her later years. Mary was known to be tied to her Celtic lineage and was described by one newspaper as a writer of 'exquisite memorial verse, of pure poetic strain'. She died in Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) Dublin in December 1911, and was buried in St. Mobhi's Churchyard, Glasnevin.



RODERIC O'CONNOR (1860-1940). Born in Milltown, Castleplunket in October 1860 to Roderic Joseph and Elanor Mary (née Browne), Roderic O'Connor has posthumously become one of Ireland's most esteemed, distinguished and expensive artists. He received his early art education in Dublin and furthered his studies in Antwerp and Paris – a city at the centre of the art world in the late 1800s. It was here that O'Connor became part of a community of artists who were pushing the boundaries of traditional painting. Known for his independent spirit and determination, O'Connor was deeply influenced by the works of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin. These influences inspired him to explore new techniques and colour palettes. O'Connor spent a significant amount of time in Brittany, France, where he joined the Pont-Aven School; a group of artists known for their bold use of

colour. O'Connor's paintings from this period are known for their thick, textured brushstrokes and vivid colours. He often depicted the rugged Breton landscape and its inhabitants, capturing the essence of the region with his dynamic and innovative style. Notable works from this period include "La Lisière du Bois" and "Yellow Landscape," which showcase his mastery of colour and form. Despite his significant contributions to the style known as Post-Impressionism, O'Connor remained relatively unknown during his lifetime. His strong-willed nature and commitment to his artistic vision kept him dedicated to his work, regardless of his lack of fame. He continued to live and work in France, painting prolifically until his death in Nueil-sur-Layon in 1940. It was only in the latter part of the 20th century that his work began to receive the recognition it deserved. Today, Roderic O'Connor is celebrated as a key figure in the development of modern art. His paintings are held in high esteem and are featured in major collections such as at the National Gallery of Ireland and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. O'Connor's legacy lies in his fearless experimentation with colour and his ability to convey profound emotion through his art, cementing his place in art history.

TOM McHALE (1945-1977) was a native of Rathnagly, Tulsk, born in September 1945 to William (Bill) and Mary (née Moloney) McHale. His father, the local school master, played the accordion and was deeply involved in promoting traditional music. Their home was a popular venue for music sessions which meant Tom and his siblings were immersed in music from an early age. He and his brother Mike (All-Ireland tin whistle champion in 1958) learned to play the tin whistle and flute as toddlers. He played with the Killina Ceili Band at the age of 14. After completing his secondary education at St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, Tom moved to Belfast to take up a job in banking. He quickly became involved with the traditional music scene there and gave up banking to concentrate on music. In May 1966, he travelled to the Fleadh Ceoil Boyle where he won the All-Ireland title for tin whistle playing. Some months later, he recorded an LP, 'All Ireland Whistling Champion at Boyle'. After a brief sojourn in Germany, Tom rejoined the Killina Ceili Band and featured on radio and TV shows. In 1969 he went on the 'singing pub' circuit with locals, John Carlos and Michael Lohan, performing as 'The Provincials'. Birmingham was Tom's next stop where he played in the early 1970s with the Birmingham Ceili Band. Returning to Ireland in 1972, he settled in Athlone where he continued his music career. He also played football with Athlone GAA Club and won the instrumental music title at the 1973 All-Ireland Scor competition for the club. In May 1975, he began promoting Irish music sessions in The Jolly Mariner. This Monday night session was later named the Tom McHale Folk Club. Tom married Mary Fallon, a Dysart native, in 1973 and they became the parents of a son, Pdraig. Tom tragically died in July 1977 in a car crash while returning from playing music with his good friend, the late Tony Holleran. His contribution to Irish music as a player, adjudicator and promoter will be long remembered, especially by those who play the tin whistle.



TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY

Membership

*We hope you have enjoyed the September 2024 issue 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. Annual fees are €30 for adults and €10 for students. For those wishing to read our latest Tusk Morning Howl; you can do so by visiting our website at **tulskhs.com**. Until next time; enjoy the Autumn season as we all look forward to our next, Christmas edition!*

