

Tulsk History Society



Newsletter No. 16

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Tulsk History Society historytulsk@gmail.com



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Welcome to the sixteenth edition of our newsletter. In many ways it's hard to believe that we've been able to produce so much material in just four years but it's all down to the hard work and great articles we've received from our many contributors. It's also been a lesson in local history: even small places are capable of giving up a great amount of content. We're not stopping yet though (!) and this month's edition is, thanks to our writers, as strong as we've had so far. We have a few events in the pipeline that we hope to update on very soon – notably a talk on publications of the parish, as well as an event to mark Heritage Week (yet to be finalised). Our cemetery surveys continue, with great work being done behind the scenes to make our online database already an excellent resource for anyone to peruse and research, available at www.tulskhs.com. Our AGM this year takes place on Friday 11th April at Tulsk Macra Hall (7.30pm) and all are welcome to attend. At the time of writing we are preparing for our annual Quiz Night; always a good event with great local support. In the meantime, enjoy the March 2025 newsletter!

In this issue Mike Lennon tells the very interesting, little-known tale of the 'Battle at Cloonakilla', which adds another layer to Tulsk's nineteenth-century history. Breege Hyland then follows up her recent article on Rahardagh House with a look at the influence of forts and raths on local placenames. Noel Sheerin brings us our cover story this quarter – a detailed, 40th anniversary feature on the official opening of Tulsk Lord Edward's GAA grounds in 1985. A special inclusion this month is the story of Tomona House, as written by the late Paddy Moffatt for the 2009 Co. Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society Journal. We've also got a 20-year anniversary photo feature of a collection of images from Tulsk village in 2005, all captured by Ann O'Leary. We round off the edition with a primary source document from the Tulsk Relief Committee, written during the Great Irish Famine in 1846. It all makes for a big Spring issue and we hope you enjoy it!

THS

THE BATTLE AT CLOONAKILLA IN DECEMBER 1831 by Mike Lennon

The end of the Penal Laws saw the return of some land to Catholic control. This was land held by family converts to Protestantism or by friendly Protestant neighbours who returned it to the original Catholic owners when the anti-papery laws were repealed in the 1780s. By 1830 Catholic landholders were qualified to vote as 'forty shillings freeholders'. However, the lure of political and economic power with its greater social status led to considerable jostling among the new freeholders, sometimes with deadly consequences as occurred in this story of bad blood between two Tusk landlords, supported by their respective tenants.

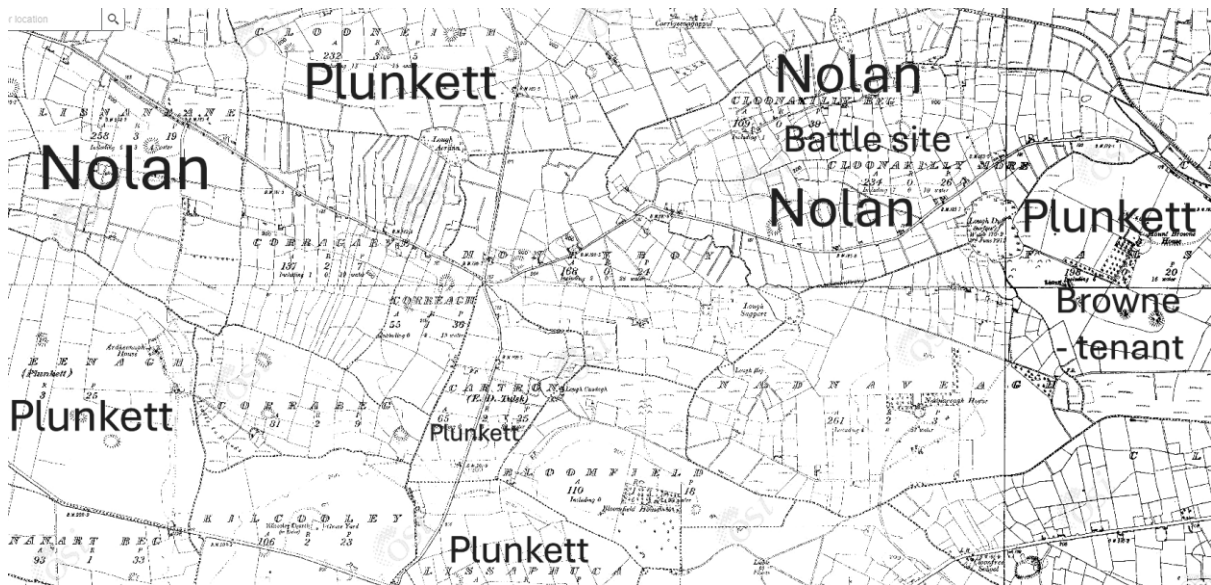
The neighbouring protagonists were Robert Nolan of Lisnaneane and James Gunning Plunkett in the adjoining townland of Clooneigh. Nolan, a captain in the 101st Regiment, inherited by devious means about 600 acres, including Lisnaneane and Cloonakilla (shown as Cloonakilly More & Beg on the map), from his aunt, Catherine Lavinia O'Connor (née Kelly of Cargins), widow of Dominick O'Connor Don. Plunkett was a son of Major John Plunkett of Kinnard, Elphin, who was the leader of the United Irishmen in Roscommon during the 1798 Rebellion. As well as Clooneigh, his estate included Falsk, Ardkeenagh (Plunkett), Cartron and Lisaphuca townlands. Each had a prominent local supporter - bailiff and clerk of Tusk Petty Sessions Court, Edward Flynn for Nolan and attorney-at-law, George Browne of Falsk for Plunkett.

Thanks to the coverage in the national and local newspapers, we can piece together the events that started in December 1831 and concluded at Roscommon Assizes in February 1832. The spark that inflamed the ensuing events took place in Strokestown Court on December 1st. 1831, with a case between Robert Nolan and George Browne over a disputed right-of-way pass on the border between Cloonakilla and Falsk. Heated words and insults were tossed back and forth in the court by George Browne and Edward Flynn on behalf of Nolan. Afterwards, the Roscommon Journal reported that Flynn and some of Nolan's tenants approached James Gunning Plunkett outside the court *in a menacing and threatening manner and challenged them to bring a mob to some place in the neighbourhood, where he would meet them; and addressing Mr. Plunkett, we are informed he said, "You are the son of an old Rebel who sold his country and sold the Rebels, and was banished to France, and I'll drive you out of the kingdom as your father was driven."*

The challenge thrown down by Edward Flynn was duly taken up by the Plunkett tenants on the following Sunday, December 4th. News of the planned encounter spread quickly and caused James Gunning Plunkett to travel to Roscommon on Saturday where he requested the local police chief, Nicholas Fitzhenry, to send a party of police to prevent the affray. Fitzhenry refused, saying the Elphin police had responsibility for the Tusk area.

Witness statements at the ensuing trial help to fill in the timeline of how the events on the Sunday developed. Showing that business outweighs loyalty, one of Robert Nolan's Cloonakilla tenants, James Boland, brought eight gallons of home-made whiskey to Plunkett's house at Clooneigh where he saw more than 200 men drinking it before breakfast. Ash plants and wattles were lying outside Plunkett's hall-door and men with hatchets were lopping off branches from trees to make more sticks. There was contradictory evidence as to whether or

not Plunkett ordered his tenants to go to Nolan's land at Cloonakilla. In any event, fortified with whiskey and armed with sticks, stones and other weapons, more than 100 men marched across Monaboy bridge to Cloonakilla, shouting their support for Plunkett along the way.



When the warring party arrived at Cloonakilla, a far smaller group of Nolan's tenants were awaiting them – one witness put the number at just over twenty. Statements from Nolan's tenants described some of the fighting that followed. James Gavin saw them throwing stones at Francis Banahan's house; Gavin was struck by a pitchfork and knocked down three men with his own stick. They followed John Banahan into his house and broke a chair on his head. Patrick Banahan was chased through the river to Monaboy.

While the Roscommon Journal reported that *three wretched beings were killed*, only one was identified during the trial. John Connor said he was the father of one of the prisoners, Robert Connor, and was also the father of John Connor who was killed with a pitchfork during the fight; he and his two sons worked for James Gunning Plunkett. Thomas and Pat Owens, tenants of Nolan, said their brother Bryan was in jail charged with the murder of John Connor. Catherine Mullooly, a sister-in-law of Bryan Owens, witnessed the battle while on a visit to her parents from Doon where she was servant. Unfortunately, no account of Bryan Owens' murder trial was published.

For the defence, Henry Kelly, Plunkett's brother-in-law, testified that Plunkett did not leave his house until the fight was over. George Lavender, Thomas Gormley (Plunkett's steward), Peter Dillon and Bartholomew Tighe gave supportive evidence for Plunkett. Some spectators came to Cloonakilla under the pretext of having business there; Thomas McCormack went to *buy a pair of soles for his pumps* while James Dillon went there to *buy a pig*. Piper Owen Casserly truthfully admitted that he went to see the fight but *did not bring his pipes as music would be of no use there*. Robert Atkinson, the Elphin chief of police, told the trial he went to Cloonakilla with a strong party of police and *saw an immense crowd fighting with sticks and stones. One party appeared stronger than the other*. The police arrested 15 or 16 tenants of

James Gunning Plunkett as well as Plunkett himself who was released on bail while awaiting trial. Afterwards, the rest of the tenants returned Clooneigh to drink the remaining whiskey which was guarded in Tom Dufficy's house during the fighting.

The fallout from the tragic events at Cloonakilla continued over the following weeks. The following day, Monday December 5th, Plunkett's friend George Browne called on Robert Nolan in Dublin demanding that he dismiss Edward Flynn. When Nolan refused, Browne challenged him to a duel, or a 'meeting' as it was diplomatically called at the time. The duellists met at Londonbridge, Irishtown (now Ringsend) on Tuesday December 6th but fled when the police arrived. Intent on receiving *that satisfaction that is due from one gentleman to another*, Nolan and Browne met again on Thursday, December 8th at Phillipsborough (now Daingean, Co. Offaly) where *at the second shot, Mr. Browne received his antagonist's fire, and being slightly wounded in the right arm, a little below the elbow, the affair terminated.*

The new year of 1832 began with James Gunning Plunkett's letter in the Roscommon Journal outlining how Robert Nolan declined to dismiss Edward Flynn who Plunkett said had *grossly and wantonly insulted me*. Nolan refused to have a duel with Plunkett who ended his letter, *I now proclaim CAPTAIN ROBERT NOLAN to be a COWARD*. Robert Nolan duly replied in the following week's paper stating that Edward Flynn was not his servant but rather an independent agent whom he could not dismiss. He claimed his duel with Plunkett's friend, George Browne, was sufficient satisfaction and *that I would compromise my station in society by giving him a meeting. As to the imputation of Cowardice coming from a person of Mr. J. Gunning Plunkett's character and conduct in the county, I hold it in the contempt and scorn that an assertion so false deserves.*

Needless to say, a week later Plunkett penned a long reply full of insults towards Nolan. *I must confess I would appear very little in my own eyes, if I was not persuaded I had more character to spare than he could possibly have to lose by condescending to divest himself of the Bully and act the Gentleman. I have now unmasked him and have proclaimed him a Coward, a Liar and a Bully, and I treat with the greatest contempt his threats of legal proceedings, satisfied that none but those who act like a gentleman (a character the very reverse of this Bully) will receive that legal protection which his Cowardly and Ruffianly conduct now compels him to seek for.*

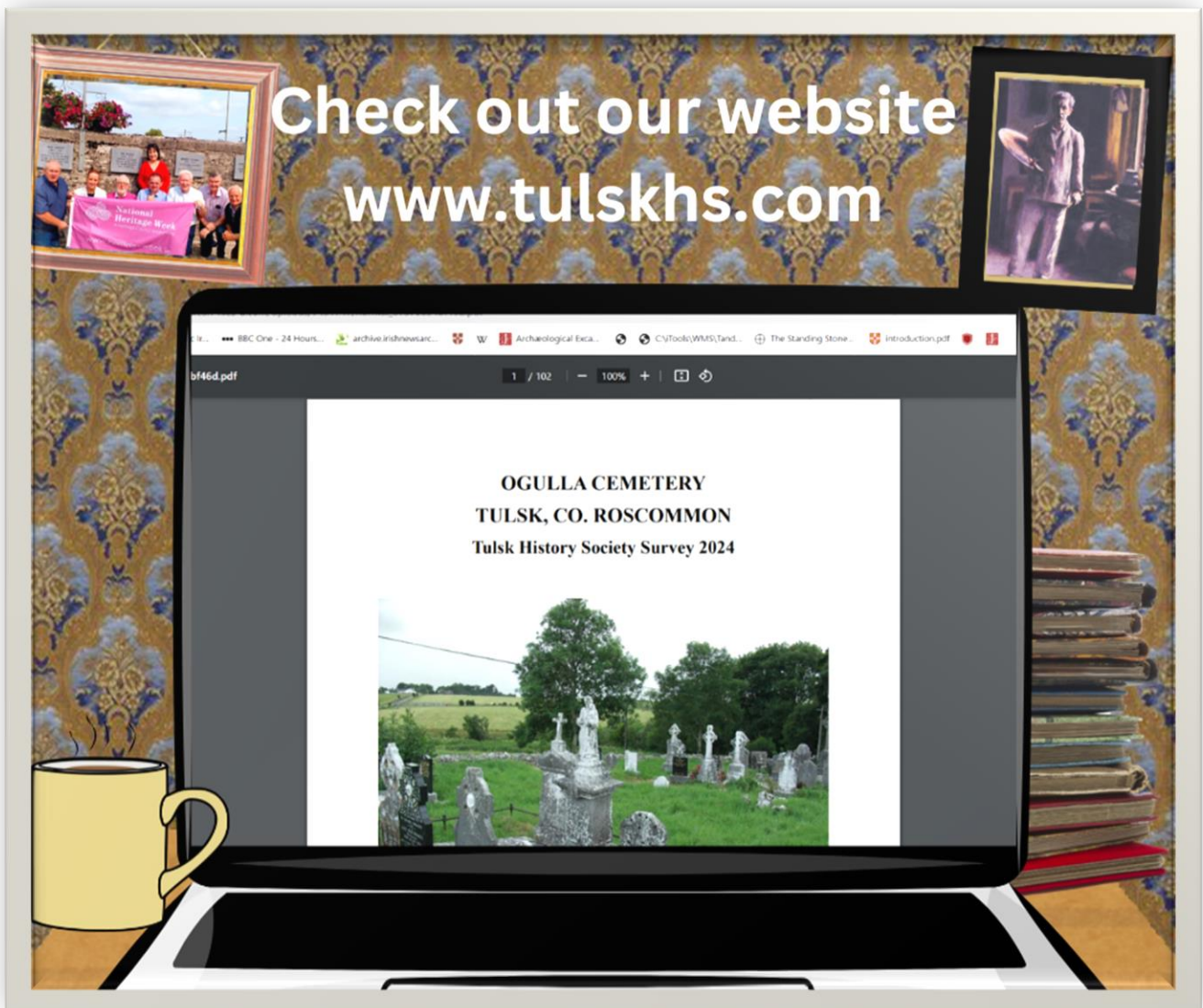
This brought the letter-writing war to an end and the newspaper columns were free of the controversy until the trial, which was held in Roscommon on Thursday, March 1st. 1832 before Mr. Justice Vandeleur. The indictment charged James Gunning Plunkett, Michael Dufficy, Thomas Kelly, John Elwood, John Breslin, Peter Quinn, George English, Robert Connor, Christopher Noone, Thomas Dufficy, Patrick Dowd and John Flanagan with being concerned in a riot on Robert Nolan's land at Cloonakilla on Sunday December 4th. 1831.

The evidence given by the witnesses was predictable. Those for the prosecution were tenants of Robert Nolan while Gunning tenants came forward for the defence. The evidence given in court by these witnesses is the basis for the description of the riot given earlier in this article.

The following is the conclusion of the trial as reported by the Roscommon Journal: *The learned judge charged the jury at some length; they retired for a few minutes and returned a verdict*

finding all the defendants guilty of a riot only. When the verdict was read, the learned judge, with evident surprise, said "what, gentlemen, all guilty?" It will be seen by our report that there was no evidence whatever against seven of the persons. They were not even identified as being at all present. The accused were sentenced to be confined in prison for six months. James Gunning Plunkett was to be further confined until he agreed to keep the peace for one year and put up personal bail of £2,000 along with two independent sureties of £500 each.

While middle class Catholics like Plunkett and Nolan were competing with each other for status among the gentry, it is interesting to note the loyalty shown by the tenants to upholding the reputation of their respective landlords, even to the extent of killing and injuring each other. ♦



Ancient Rath and Forts in Parish Townland Names by Breege Hyland

The townland of Rahardagh, about which I wrote in *Newsletter No. 15* as the onetime home of the McDermott Family of Rahardagh, is one of several townlands in the parish that reference the presence of an ancient fort in their names. Rahardagh contains the Irish words *ráth* (fort) and *ard* (high). The root of the final syllable of its name is not clear. One interpretation is that it comes from *dearg* (red). While *ráth* and *ard* are clear associations with the fort located at the summit of the hill overlooking the locality, there is no apparent association with *dearg*. In 1837, John O'Donovan recorded the place as being named after the high fort located in it: *ráth ard achadh*, the fort of the high field. He also recorded two possible interpretations that are not generally known: *ráth áird each*, fort of the height of the horses; and *aird each*, from *áirdeach*, meaning retreat. These etymologies are certainly worth considering. There is no known association or tradition involving horses in the townland. However, the fort would unquestionably have been a retreat, a place of refuge, for its inhabitants.

The Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) details an enclosure and an associated field system on the hill at Rahardagh. The site was reported to the Office of Public Works in the mid-1960s by the then new owner who was told that as it was an historical site the ground was not to be disturbed.

There is no way of dating the site to any exact degree. The ASI describes the enclosure as a fort or rath, a rectangular area defined by two earthen banks and an outer fosse, noting that such structures can date to any period from prehistory to the late medieval period (i.e. 4000 BC - 1700 AD). The field system associated with the fort is described as traces of rectangular fields covering an area of 2.5 acres. Accompanying notes say that such a system is a group or complex of fields which appear to form a coherent whole, dating from c. 4000 - 2400 BC onwards. A rath or fort was, in general, an enclosed farmstead, often centrally located in a prominent position with a commanding view of the countryside. The primary concern of its resident farmer and his household was the management of livestock.

The widespread term for this type of historical compound or enclosure is a "ringfort." Other terms in use are a "rath" and a "lios," for enclosures with earthen banks, and a "cashel" for stone-built enclosures. Archaeological studies have found ringforts to be very widespread throughout the whole country, and in Tulsk, as much as anywhere else in the country, the ancient landscape of the parish was peppered with them. This can be seen from an overview of the occurrence in parish townland names of the Irish words *ráth*, *lios*, *caiseal* and variations of them, which all have the meaning of a fort of one kind or another. Another synonym, *dún*, appears not to occur in parish townland names. Three major sources of information for this are John O'Donovan's 1830s survey of the placenames of Ireland, the digital resource www.logainm.ie, and the Irish Townland and Historical Map Viewer at www.heritagedata.maps.arcgis.com/.

In addition to the fort in Rahardagh, the ASI has mapped records of three enclosures in Rathfuadagh (from *ráth fuadach*, fort of the abduction); three forts in Rathmore (from *ráth mór*, big fort), one of which O'Donovan describes as "very large" and one of which the ASI

notes has a rock-cut fosse; one in Rathmoyle (from *ráth mhaol* or *maoil*, level fort); and two in Rathnaglye (from *ráth na nglaidh*, rath of the shouts, or of the calling). The enclosure in Rathkeva (from *ráth céibhe*, fort of the long, coarse grass) is a moated site. These were rectangular shaped enclosures that are primarily associated with thirteenth and fourteenth century Anglo-Norman settlements. They were most likely the homes of minor lords and well-to-do tenant farmers and would have formed the focal point of large agricultural estates. In the west, a small number may have been used by Gaelic lords.

The commonly occurring “castle” in English language versions of placenames is frequently a corruption of *caiseal*, as appears to be the case with Castleruby and Castleteheen. O’Donovan gives *caiseal Rúimhe* (Rumha’s stone fort) as the derivative for Castleruby. The castle associated with the townland name is located to the east on what was O’Connor Roe land in the seventeenth century. It may have been built on the site of the aforementioned stone fort of Rumha. A similar corruption of “castle” occurs in the name Castleteheen, from *caiseal Téithín* – Teithin’s stone fort. The ASI records a hillfort at the top of Mullaghadowey Hill, on the western edge of the townland. Rathra is located 600 metres to the WNW, just outside of the parish boundary. There is a ringfort nearby, to the southeast of the hillfort. The terminology is significant in regard to dating these two sites. Ringforts (raths) were mainly constructed from 500 - 1100 AD, as farmsteads with limited protection. Hillforts were built on hilltop sites in the Bronze Age for defence.

The ASI has mapped no fort in the townland of Lisheen (from *lisín*, small fort), despite its name. It has recorded two enclosures in Lisnaneane (from *lios na n-éan*, fort of the birds); five enclosures of various types in Lissacurkia (from *lios a’ choirce*, fort of the oats); four in Lissalway (from *lios Sealbhaigh*, Shallow’s fort); and one in Lissaphuca (from *lios a’phúca*, fort of the pooka). There are six large forts mapped in Lismurtagh (from *lios Muircheartaigh*, Murtagh’s fort). One of these, on the boundary with Carnfree (in the townland of Carrowgarve), has an interesting accompanying note that it has been identified as part of Dumha Selga, which has mythological associations. Two forts are mapped in Lissawady (from *lisín a mhadaigh*, little fort of the dog). We have their individual names courtesy of O’Donovan who recorded that the one to the north is called Lisheenawaddy, and the other is Lis[h]meelontha. The toponymic reference might be less obvious in the townland name of Corlis (from *corlios beg*, odd or small fort) where three ringforts are mapped by the ASI. The reference is even less obvious in regard to Castleplunkett, although very obvious in its Irish name, *Lios Lachna* (fort of Lachna). The fort is on the northern side of the townland.

While the townland names detailed above point to the occurrence of raths and enclosures within their boundaries, such structures are mapped by the ASI in almost all townlands throughout the parish. One townland of particular note in this regard is Glenballythomas where Rathcroghan Mound is located. A major associated ancient monument complex stretches across the townland south and east from the Mound and extends north beyond the parish boundaries.◊

Pairc an Tiarna Edbhaird Tuisc 40th Anniversary 2025

Official Opening 12th May 1985

By Noel Sheerin

Great work is currently in progress at the grounds of Tusk GAA Club as part of the most recent phase in its development. This work is due to be completed in the not-too-distant future and no doubt will be commemorated with a very worthy re-opening ceremony and celebration for the local community generally and GAA followers in particular. We all look forward with great anticipation to what no doubt will be a wonderful occasion for all concerned.

It is hard to believe that it is now 40 years since the Club officially opened its grounds at the townland of Corbally and this article at this time is primarily to mark that initial move to the club's first permanently owned full size pitch and clubhouse. Prior to that a number of individuals at different times generously made certain fields on their respective farms available free of charge to the club in different parts of the parish. No clubhouse or spectator stand existed and neither did any physical boundary fence exist around the selected playing areas. Pitch invasions were a regular feature at that time, especially when neighbouring clubs were involved. Such was the situation with most rural clubs in the country at that time. Clubs were beginning to realise that it was time for the GAA to move on and provide better facilities to the youth they served. Other sporting organisations were already doing this and benefitting in terms of increased membership.

During 1981 Kildare native, Paddy Walsh, the owner of a very suitable site on the eastern side of Tusk Village, adjacent to the N5 and with plenty of room for development, indicated that he might sell some acres of land to the club if it was interested. Informal conversations took place but little progress was made in agreeing a price. So on December 27th 1981 at the Club AGM in the Macra Hall it was decided, following intense discussion, to form a club development committee for the purpose of engaging more seriously with Mr. Walsh to finalise a deal as soon as possible. Otherwise a golden opportunity



The Club Development Committee signing the agreement to purchase land at Corbally

for the club to obtain a prized home site could be lost. Pat Burke, club secretary at that time, was the driving force behind this project and together with an equally determined group of committee members an agreement to buy 5.5 acres for £21,000 (€26,670) was reached around Easter time. A significant round of talks had previously taken place in Mr Walsh's home on Good Friday of that year. At this time parallel talks were taking place with the club bank, solicitors and County Board to get their clearance at all times. Members of the initial development committee set-up in

1981 were: Haulie Beirne (Chairman), Pat Burke (Secretary), Martin O'Connor, Noel Sheerin, Jimmy Flanagan, John Joe O'Connor, John Flannery, Kevin Kennedy and Seamus Conway. Later Peter Carney, Sean Mannion, Michael Hunt, Seamus Collins, Jimmy Beirne, Josie Lenehan, Laurence Mannion, Sean Raftery and Gerry Miley joined the team. It must be recognised that the support of many others, young

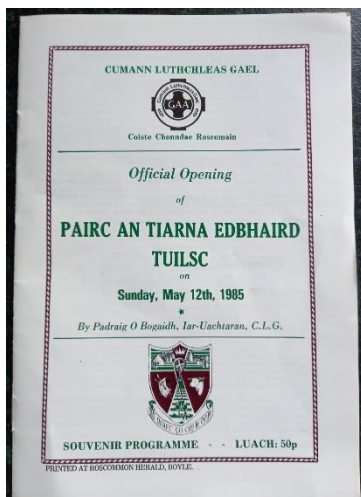
and not so young, responded generously to the multiple calls from the committee members whenever additional help was needed. A very active Ladies Committee also emerged to assist with fund-raising and with catering whenever the need arose. Their workload was particularly evident for the likes of Fashion Shows and on the occasion of catering for people actively involved with the official opening in particular. The Ladies Committee comprised of Mary Conway, Anne Sheerin, Mary Flanagan, Nonie Beirne, Lettie Hynes, Alice Mannion, Margaret Hunt, Marella Fallon, Carmel O'Connor, Carol Flannery and indeed many others who offered help when occasionally asked to do so.

The development committee had now to organise a spread of fund-raising events to ensure that the club could pay for the land acquired without over-borrowing from the bank. There were delays on both sides with legal matters which allowed the club additional time to manage its financial affairs while the purchase was being completed. The sale actually closed on 3rd January 1983. Much of the groundwork had already been completed. The agreed purchase price was paid from fund-raising activities to that date, without yet having to borrow from any bank.

During this time a series of fund-raising events were held within the parish and more were organised in places like Dublin and London by club members living away from home. Interest-free loans were obtained and a 200 Members Draw was also in place. A major event took place over four days in August 1982 when a 120 mile walk from Cooley, Louth to Tulsk was held to re-enact the Brown Bull of Cooley's legendary trail. A 300 Club Members draw was later in place. A monster raffle, Cabaret Show, Fashion Show, Barn Dance, and Race Night were other such significant ventures in 1983.

A Youth Employment Scheme commenced on June 13th 1983 and provided work for twelve club members in developing the pitch and new dressing rooms. Workers included Seamus Collins (supervisor), JP Hynes, Eddie Brady, Liam Callaghan, Martin Kearney, Gerard Goggins, Peter Keaveney, Leo Cunnane, Michael Dufficy, Michael McGarry, Michael Kennedy, Sean Donoghue and Seamus Coyne.

The club was forced to borrow £17,000 from the bank to complete the project which now included fencing and a spectator stand. In 1984 a Lord Mayor of Tulsk campaign raised £21,331 which was a fantastic sum generated by nine volunteers from the club. The late Gerry Feeney (London) emerged eventual winner but each contender made an enormous financial contribution. The other participants were Haulie Beirne, Michael Donoghue, Martin Connor, Madeline Murphy, Seamus Finan, Deirdre Hunt, Conor Hand and Joe Greene. The generosity of so many individuals, businesses and organisations from Tulsk, the county and further afield to the whole fund-raising effort over those years paved the way for the official opening of Pairc an Tiarna Edbhaird Tuilsc on Sunday May 12th, 1985.



The programme for the Official Opening on Sunday May 12th, 1985

This was a memorable day for the parish and one on which so many people from the community, young and old, attended with such pride. While the weather over the weeks leading up to the event were very bad, the day itself was dry - much to the relief of everyone present.

After Mass, which was offered for deceased members and friends, the action moved to the new Park. At 1.30 p.m. Referee Enda Beirne set the day's events in motion as he threw in the ball for the minor

match between two local teams, aptly named St. Eithne's and St. Fidelma's. The game displayed some good football and honest endeavour and resulted in a victory for St. Fidelma's.

Present for St. Eithne's were – Lorcan Mannion, Jimmy Harte, Michael Kirrane, Joseph Conry, Michael McGarry, Martin Kilkenny, Kenneth Fahy, David Flynn (captain), Patrick Beirne, Sean Kilkenny, Michael Keane, Vincent Connolly, Declan Mannion, Fintan Beirne, Paul Egan, Paul Hanly, Eamon Donoghue, Gerry Miley, Raymond Keaveney, Patrick Lenehan, John Fahy and Francis Egan.

The St. Fidelma players were – Brian Dobey, Michael Moylan, Aidan Waldron, Padraic Hession, Raymond Connor, Martin Feely (captain), Enda Raftery, Willie Hegarty (who scored the first point), Michael Greene, Joseph Lenihan, Timmy Fahy, Sean Óg Raftery, Gerard Keane, Mark Hanly, John Mannion, Declan Feely, Thomas Britton and Larry Owens.

Next to take the field were the senior players of Tulsk who took on their great rivals St. Croan's in a repeat of the 1984 Intermediate Championship County Final. The teams were led around the pitch by the Raheen Pipe Band before P.F Dwyer (Oran) blew the starting whistle. Pat Doyle, a member of the 1923-24 last Tulsk Lord Edward's County Senior title winning team, threw in the ball.

Cumann an Tiarna Edbhaird, Tuilse

Official Opening

— of —

PAIRC AN TIARNA EDBHAIRD

On Sunday, 12th May, 1985

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Clar an Lae

11.30 p.m. : Mass in Tulsk Church for deceased members and friends.

1.30 p.m. : Parish Minor Match. Referee: Enda Beirne.

3.00 p.m. : Senior Football Challenge –
TULSK LORD EDWARD'S v ST. CROAN'S
Referee : P. F. Dwyer.

4.30 p.m. : Blessing by Very Rev. Enda O'Farrell, P.P.
Official Opening by Paddy Buggy.

5.30 p.m. : Senior Football –
ROSCOMMON v MEATH
Referee : Mickey Kearns.

7.00 p.m. : Ladies Football –
St. Mary's v Eire Og
(Tulsk Parish Selection)

The Tulsk team was – Val Beirne, Gerry Callaghan, Haulie Beirne, Gerry Vesey, Gerry Earley, Liam Callaghan, Frank Kearney, Ollie Dufficy, Gerry Beirne, Manus Tiernan (0-3), Michael Donoghue, Padraic Kelly (1-1), Liam Cunnane (0-3), Fr. Padraig O'Grady (1-1), Pat Burke. Subs: John Hession, Michael Conry, Conor Hand, Liam Collins (0-1), Michael Cunnane, Ollie Callaghan, Tony Farrell and John Brady.

After the game the blessing and official opening took place. Fr. Enda O'Farrell, Club President blessed the park and clubhouse. Paddy Buggy, immediate past GAA President performed the official opening.

There followed speeches from Club Chairman, Seamus Conway; Co. Board Chairman Michael O'Callaghan; Connacht Council President Frank Kenny; County Board President Jimmy Murray and Club Development Committee Secretary, Pat Burke. Noel Sheerin, Club Secretary, was MC on the day.

The programme of events as published in 1985

The main sporting event was the meeting of the senior teams of Roscommon and Meath. Mickey Kearns of Sligo was the Referee. Meath were on the verge of becoming Senior All-Ireland champions within two years. The Roscommon team was: Gay Sheeran, Harry Keegan, Pat Lindsay, Gerry Connellan, Adrian Garvey, Gerry Fitzmaurice, Danny Murray, Seamus Hayden, Seamus Killoran, Eamonn McManus Snr., Padraig McNeill, Dermot Earley, Jimmy Connellan, Paul Earley, Tony McManus. Subs: Gary Wynne, Owen McManus, Paul Hickey, Gerry Emmett, Pat Doorey, Tom Og O'Brien.

The final contest of the day was between a parish selection and Eire Óg in a ladies football challenge. This ended in a rather easy win for the home side and completed a hat-trick of home wins

on the day. The Tusk Ladies panel comprised of Cora Nevin, Leila Gill, Linda Casey, Caroline Connaughton, Regina Hunt, Geraldine Cuttle, Sarah Kelly, Carmel Cribbin, Rita Cribbin, Pauline Kelly, Patti Ann Beirne, Patricia Peyton. Fiona Kelly. Orla Hunt, Martine Waldron, Chris Connaughton, Susan Keane, Majella Cuttle, Siobhan Dolan, Ann Cuttle, Olive Peyton, Noreen Dobey, Geraldine Dobey, Amanda Connaughton.

All through the day the very hardworking ladies committee provided meals and refreshments for the invited guests and many others. Trophies and plaques were presented to all the teams by the aforementioned Paddy Buggy, Michael O'Callaghan and Gerry Feeney, Tusk Lord Mayor.

The outdoor activities having been completed, it was then time to retire to the village for some well-earned refreshments. Crowds thronged the village and celebrations carried on late into the night. The day was a great occasion for the club and all associated with it.

The forthcoming launch of the wonderful developments of recent years will be another great occasion for the club. Long may this tradition of commitment, vision and dedication continue into the future for Tusk Lord Edwards. Due credit to all involved.◊



Photos from the day – (Top) Match Officials for Roscommon v Meath game : Tom Hynes, Mickey Kearns, Charlie Horan, Jimmy Beirne, Seamus Brennan, Michael Dufficy (Bottom) Blessing of Ground by Fr. Enda Farrell PP Tusk

Tomona House by Paddy Moffatt

In this special contribution to our March newsletter we here re-print an article written by the late Paddy Moffatt from Volume 11 of the County Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society Journal (2009). Much thanks to the Roscommon Society for permission to re-publish this very insightful essay on one of the parish's great abodes. Thanks to Fergus Moffatt who very kindly assisted THS



Tomona House

Tomona House stands in the townland of Tomona, from which it takes its name, Tuaim Móna, meaning the mound of tumulus in the bog. Tomona lies in the old parish of Baslick. In 1488 the Annals of Ireland record the following:

A whirlwind attacked a number of persons, as they were cutting turf on the bog of Tuaim-Mona, which killed one of them and swelled the faces of the rest; and four others were killed by the same wind in Machaire – Chonnacht.

The present house was not the first as evidence of a friary is found to the rear of the house: 'An inquisition of 1585-6 found that a house of Toemonia belonged to the friars of the Third Order of St Francis and was then seized of a church, cemetery and a quarter of land, value 10s., including appurtenances and tithes adjacent to the friary; it was granted ... to Richard Kyndelinshe (Kendlemarch) in 1588, rent 57s. 2 ½ d' [from Medieval Religious Houses of Ireland by Gwynn and Hadcock].

Today the house consists of two-stories, over a basement. The basement now consists of five apartments and still has its original stone flagged floor. The ground floor now consists of three rooms, one on the right-hand side of the hallway with two further rooms on the left-hand side. When the plaster was removed from the walls of the room to the right, two alcoves were found on the rear wall. These possibly contained statues during the earlier years of the house's existence. These alcoves were a later addition to the back wall, as there is evidence of a walled-up archway and door occupying this wall, indicating the possibility of an original room to the rear of this room. The outer gable wall of this room also contains two blocked-up doorways indicating the possibility of an adjoining wing. The first floor now contains four bedrooms. The external walls of the first floor comprise larger masonry of better quality than the ground floor. In Penal times Catholics were not allowed to build two storey houses. Many overcame this law by building a basement under ground level and another storey at ground level. When the Penal Laws were relaxed many houses added an additional storey and Tomona may have been one of these. This is quite possibly correct given that the house belonged to the O'Connor family, who were Catholics.

The 'Book of Survey and Distribution' record that, in 1641, the lands of 'Tomonagh' consisting of '1 qr. Arable, Pasture & Bogg Church Land' were 'disposed with their Title whether by Decree, Certificate or Patent' to Edmund Crofton.

In the late 1600s and 1700s Tomona was the residence of the O'Connor Roe family. The Elphin Diocesan Census, of 1747, records Michael Connor and wife as residents of Tomona. Michael Connor's occupation is given as 'Gentleman.' He is recorded as having one Papist child above 14 years of age,

one manservant and two women servants, all three of whom were 'Papists'. A tombstone in Tulske records the death of John O'Connor of Tomona who died in June 1777. His tombstone reads:

*May the Almighty God be
Mercifull to the soul of
John O'Connor of Tomona
Esq / who departed this life
in June 1777 in the 45th year
of his Age And ordered this
Tomb to be Erected for
Himself And Family*



There is an interesting crucifixion plaque situated in the wall above the tomb (pictured above).

Samuel Lewis in 'A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland 1837' records Peter O'Connor as occupier of Tomona House. When John O'Donovan of the Ordnance Survey was in the area in the 1837 period Peter O'Connor, a son of John O'Connor and his wife a Miss Dowell of Gort, near Athlone, lived at Tomona House. In his O.S. Letters O'Donovan records the house as '*a comfortable dwelling, but Peter O'Connor Roe has no fee simple property.*' Peter O'Connor's sister, Bridget, was the wife of Jeffrey Martin French of Rocksavage, County Roscommon. Peter appears to have died in the 1830s without any male heirs and Tomona was inherited by his sister. Griffith's Valuation records Lord Crofton as the Immediate Lessor of Tomona, which extended to 300 acres and records a Michael Hanley as occupying a herd's house with 24 acres. A Martin Murray also had a house and 8 acres and Maria French leased 65 acres 0 roods and 7 perches and Tomona House and offices. The house and buildings had a rateable valuation of £10 and the land leased by Maria French had a rateable of £42. The £10 rateable valuation classifies Tomona House as a substantial residence by the standards of the time. Lord Crofton himself had a herd's house and 195 acres 3 roods and 28 perches.

In the late 1800s Captain Lynham owned Tomona House and farm. He was an accomplished journalist and wrote for local and national newspapers.

Matthew Flanagan, who came from Cartron House in the Tulske neighbourhood, was the next owner of Tomona House and farm and was a well-known cattle and sheep breeder. Frank Flanagan, possibly his father, was listed as occupier of Cartron House in Griffith's Valuation. He occupied a house, buildings and 286 acres 3 roods and 7 perches of land. He bred some fine hunting horses. Amongst them was a horse named Shane Rhue which won the first prize for the Stone Wall (6ft) competition run by the RDS in 1868. This was the first year the competition was held. The horse was ridden by Richard Flynn, a well-known gentleman farmer from Tulske, and was sold for £1,000 later that day. Richard Flynn later lived in Cams House, in the parish of Oran, and in that area the story is told that, on winning the competition, Richard Flynn turned the horse round and jumped the wall from the other side.

The 1901 Census records Matthew Flanagan, aged 54 and described as a farmer and Magistrate, as occupier of Tomona House. He and his wife, Ismy, had three children; Frank aged 11, Mary aged 10 and Isabel aged 8. The house was described as a first-class house with twelve windows to the front and with thirteen or more rooms. Outside there were eighteen 'outoffices or farm steadings.' The family had a comfortable life and employed five live-in servants consisting of a nurse, a cook, a parlour maid, kitchen boy and coachman as well as a herd living in the herd's house. The Flanagan family are

buried in a vault in Ballintubber graveyard, which is about 7 miles south of Tomona. A tombstone in this graveyard reads Matthew Flanagan of Tomona died 16th June 1915. The house and farm were sold to Patrick Murphy of Hollymount, Co. Mayo, who was brother of the famous singer of the era, Delia Murphy. Her repertoire included 'The Spinning Wheel' and 'If I were a Blackbird.'

In 1946 Tomona House and farm were sold to the Fallon family who came from Curraghroe. John James, or J.J. Fallon, played county football with the Roscommon teams of the 1940s and 1950s and owned racehorses including Hard Road; Beggars' Bridge; Montelado; and Strokestown Girl.

Today [2009] Tomona House and 70 acres of the farm are owned by Patrick Moffat [the author here], who came from Willsgrove, Ballintubber and owned the land since 1978. His mother, Ann McGreevy, was born and reared on the lands adjoining Tomona.

Some of the best horses in Ireland were raised in Tomona including Murphy's Law; Tomona; Daring Choice; King Daithi; Rough Course; Cailín Ríolta; Night Caller; District Justice; and Loss of Faith.

The house was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1983 and has now been restored by the present owner.◊

References:

Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland

The Census of Elphin (2004 edition)

A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland (1837)

Tulsk Parish in Historic Maigh Aí by Mary Gormley (1989)

Medieval Religious Houses of Ireland (1988)

TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY ARCHIVES



CONTACT: historytulsk@gmail.com

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Photo Feature: Tulsk Village 2005



This collection of photographs from 2005 was taken by Ann O'Leary twenty years ago. It is part of her collection of over 3,500 images of Irish towns and villages captured during the course of her work as an environmental consultant to community groups nationwide. Even in that short period of time there are a number of changes – changes that have happened so gradually that it's been difficult to notice them in real time. The streetscape wall paint has (not surprisingly) changed somewhat, while the Tulsk Inn is looking noticeably fresh and open for business. The filling station at the crossroads has changed a great deal. Notice too how there is a great deal of ivy on the walls of Tulsk Abbey and Tower House, that has since been removed. The photos are set at a low pixelated size that has accounted for them being blurred slightly when enlarged. Ann O'Leary's collection goes to show the importance of photography, and of keeping a collection for posterity.◊







PRIMARY SOURCE – GREAT FAMINE DOCUMENT

The following is a document from the National Archives from the Tusk Relief Committee from 1846. Listed are local landlord contributions to Famine relief in the parish. The original is followed by a modern transcription for clarity.◊

NLFC 312/25/59

Tusk Relief Committee
 August 3rd 1846

A list of sums subscribed and received by the Treasurer in aid of the above

R. H French Esq. Sackville Street Dublin	£20. 0. 0
Dean Kelly Esq. 14 Mountjoy St. North Dublin	10. 0. 0
John French Esq. Cagenis	5. 0. 0
Jeffery M French Esq. Tomona	5. 0. 0
Miss French D ^o	5. 0. 0
The Rev W Lannon P.P.	5. 0. 0
The Rev W Hawkes Curate of Ardclare	1. 0. 0
The Rev Pat Kelly C.C.	2. 0. 0
Dom Corr Esq. Frenchpark	2. 0. 0
Hubert Croghan Esq. Ballyclap	1. 0. 0
W Geo A Kelly Prospect Lodge	1. 0. 0
W Genl Kelly D ^o	- 10 -
Mr John Dowd	1. 0. 0
Christ Jaaffe Esq	1. 0. 0
Jas Sykes & Devere Esq. Dublin	5. 0. 0
John Hague Esq. Cloonehee	1. 0. 0
£65. 10. 0	
Promised but not as yet rec.	
The Rev Dean French	£5. 0. 0
Cornelius Banaghan Esq	1. 0. 0
James Nolan Esq	1. 0. 0
Thos Conry Esq	1. 0. 0
John Feely	1. 0. 0
£9. 0. 0	

RLC3/2/25/59

A list of Landlords who have not contributed to the fund.

The Rt Honble Lord Crofton - Moate Park
 Tho Johnston Barton - Sackville St. Dubl.
 Francis O'Beirne Esq - Jamestown
 The Goughs Minors - Manor of Floomytein
 The Balfes Minors - Bunnemede
 Barth^r.
 Bentley & Reddick Esq -
 Gunning Plunkett Esq - Clonegh -
 Mr Dillon - Paris
 John E Thewles -
 Dan H Samuel - Beechwood

I have been handed Six
 ty-five Pounds ten Shillings
 the amt of the subscriptions of W^{ch}
 there is a list on the other side -

August 6th 1840

Geo A Kelly
 Treasurer to the
 Irish Relief Committee

National Archives Reference – RLFC 3/2/25/59**Received at Dublin Castle August 6, 1846**Tulsk Relief Committee – August 3rd 1846

A list of sums subscribed and received by the Treasurer in aid of the above:

R. H. French Esq., Sackville Street, Dublin	£20. 0.0
Dan Kelly Esq., 14 Mountjoy Square South, Dublin	10. 0.0
John French Esq., Cargins	5. 0.0
Jeffrey M. French, Tomona	5. 0.0
Miss French, Tomona	5. 0.0
The Rev. M. Lennon, P.P.	5. 0.0
The Rev. L. Hawkes, Curate of Ardclare	1. 0.0
The Rev. Pat Kelly, C.C.	2. 0.0
Dominick Corr Esq., Frenchpark	2. 0.0
Hubert Croghan Esq., Ballyglass	1. 0.0
Mr George A Kelly, Prospect Lodge	1. 0.0
Mr. Ignatius Kelly, Prospect Lodge	10.0
Mr John Dowd	1. 0.0
Christopher Taaffe Esq.	1. 0.0
James Lyster O'Beirne Esq., Dublin	5. 0.0
John Hague Esq, Cloonahee	<u>1. 0.0</u>
	£65.10.0

Promised but not as yet received:

The Very Rev. Dean French	£5. 0.0
Cornelius Banaghan Esq.	1. 0.0
James Nolan Esq.	1. 0.0
Thomas Conry Esq.	1. 0.0
John Feeney	<u>1. 0.0.</u>
	£9. 0.0

A list of landlords who have not contributed to the fund:

The Rt. Honourable Lord Crofton, Moate Park; Thomas Johnston Barton, Sackville St., Dublin; Francis O'Beirne Esq., Jamestown; The Goff Minors, Manor of Clooneybeirne; The Balfe Minors, Runnemede; Bentley & Reddick & Co.; Gunning Plunkett Esq., Clooneigh; Mr Dillon, Paris; John E. Thewles; Daniel H. Farrell, Beechwood.

I have been handed sixty five pounds ten shillings, the amount of the subscriptions of which there is a list on the other side.

TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY

Membership

*We hope you have enjoyed the March 2025 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 rest of Spring and we'll be back with more in Summer!*

