

TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter No. 19

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Tulsk History Society historytulsk@gmail.com



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Welcome to all to what is, believe it or not, the fifth December/Christmas issue of our newsletter. It feels like time is flying by! We have been active across this year on a number of fronts and after our first two publications (February *Morning Howl* and March *Newsletter*) we enjoyed another great night at O'Connor's pub for our annual table quiz, which was held on Saturday 15th March. We look forward to another night out in the coming months. Our members continued to work on our big project of surveying the cemeteries of the parish and in 2025 completed the THS recordings of both Toberelva and Killina gravestones. All those who contributed - on the outdoor side of things, and the computer based work - have done trojan work.

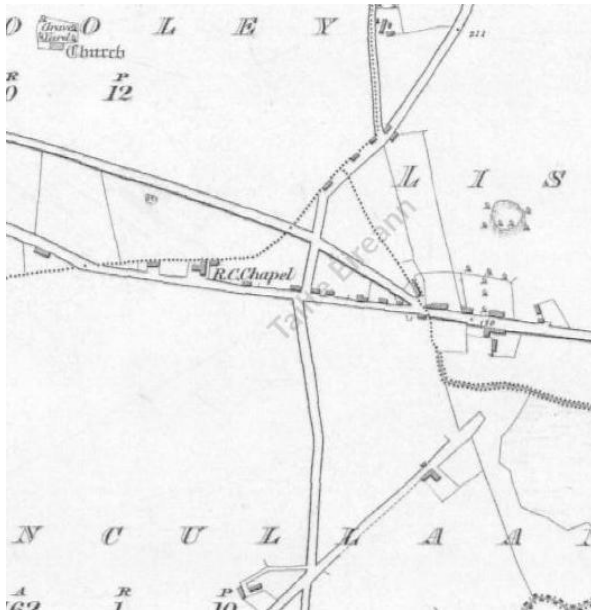
This year's day trip took us to Portumna workhouse and castle in August - a very enjoyable excursion. That was a busy month as we also marked National Heritage Week with our Famine memorial unveilings in Tulsk and Baslick cemeteries, and the launch of our book *Tulsk Remembers the Great Famine 1845-1849*. A great success, and well supported, it was the first time the Famine has been properly marked in the parish and we were delighted to have been a part of that. We hope to continue our work into 2026 but for now it's time to focus on this month's newsletter:

This month's issue opens with Mike Lennon's fascinating exploration of the history behind the landmark known as *Simpson's Cross*. Breege Hyland follows with an insightful piece on the Roscommon Herd's Association, a 19th-century labour movement in which Tulsk and its people played a leading role. We are delighted to feature a guest article by Mary Hunt, who reflects on the heritage and beauty of Tulsk's Church of St Eithne & Fidelma. Manus Tiernan contributes a detailed study of the Dillon family of Brackloon and Rathmoyle, adding further depth to our local history. Rounding out the edition are evocative notes from the *Roscommon Herald* of Christmas in Tulsk in 1906, along with a special *Ephemera Corner* feature. We hope you enjoy the read!

THS

SIMPSON'S CROSS – A RENOWNED LANDMARK by Mike Lennon

Anyone giving directions to a place between Strokestown and Tulsk is almost certain to mention Simpson's Cross, the junction of the soon-to-be demoted N5 with the Blackstick



road going north to Elphin and south to Clashaganny. In pre-Famine times, there were three cross-roads close together as seen on this 1838 map (left). The original Strokestown-Tulsk route is in the middle with the old Tulsk parish chapel on its north side. The small, thatched chapel was destroyed during the Night of the Big Wind on the 6th of January 1839. To the north, a short bypass had been constructed that created the current crossing. Buildings are indicated by small dark-shaded boxes on the map. The absence of a box at the new junction indicates there was no house

there at the time. The junction at the bottom of the map remains as it is today except that the laneway to the right is no longer in use.

Five generations of the Simpson family traded as publicans and grocers at the cross-roads for a century and a half before the last occupant, M.



J. Simpson, died in 2015. M.J.'s maternal great-great-grandfather, James Stanley was the founder of the business in Clooncullane, probably in late 1840s when it was reported to be a terminus stop for Bianconi coaches on the Dublin-Ballina route. Patrick Simpson (1812-1867) married James' daughter, Mary Stanley (1823-1881), and took over the business after her father died. According to the 1855 Griffith's Valuation records, Patrick Simpson's Clooncullane property measured 3 roods 16 perches while he also had 3 acres and 3 roods in neighbouring Lissaphuca. Patrick and Mary had four children that we

know of; James, Thomas, Edward and Patrick, who are named on their headstone in Tulsk Cemetery. James and Thomas remained at home, but we have not traced where Edward and Patrick went to. After their father's death in 1867, James and Thomas assisted their mother until her death in 1881, when the older brother James succeeded her.

In 1887, Thomas Simpson (1865-1941) married Ellen McDermott (1866-1935) from neighbouring Corrabeg and moved to Ardikillan where he built a slated house on leased land which was formerly held by Daniel Devanny. According to the 1901 census, Thomas

had a shop next door to another shop owned by Martin Finnerty. Thomas and Ellen had three sons and a daughter Mary Ellen who died in 1905 aged 7. Thomas (1888-1970) married teacher Margaret Tiernan (1908-1985) from Emlagh, Elphin and lived in Cherryfield, Elphin. Charles (1890-1952) married Mary Gormley (1890-1973) from Shrove and inherited the Ardikillan property where his descendants continue to live. Edward (1893-1975) married Mary Margaret Egan (1900-1971) and moved into her home in Cloonakilla – their son Thomas (1927-1993) married Madge O'Hara (1932-2016) and set up the garage business at Clashaganny.

Back in Clooncullane, James Simpson married Elizabeth Nerney, Culleen, Elphin in January 1890. Patrick J (Paddy) was born in December 1890 followed by Winifred in January 1892. Sadly, Elizabeth died a few weeks later due to peritonitis of the womb. This must have affected James greatly afterwards as one newspaper court report stated he was drunk in his own pub, and another that he was an invalid. The 1901 census records that Martin Darcy was assisting him in the shop. James died in November 1905, and his death certificate stated the cause of death was “heart failure and alcoholism for some years.” Because Paddy was only aged 15, his uncle Thomas from Ardikillan was granted



the transfer of the alcohol license until 1911 when Paddy was 21 and legally eligible to become the licensee. Paddy's sister Winifred married Michael Lane from Sheegeeragh in 1916. He died in 1918 aged 24 during the Spanish Flu, just four months after the birth of their daughter Mary Bridget. She entered the convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Sligo in 1938 with the name

Sister M. Clement. She taught in Sligo and Athlone Convent schools. She died in July 2008 and is buried in Tulsk Cemetery.

Over the following twenty years, Paddy continued to build the business and give good

PATRICK J. SIMPSON,
CLOONCULLANE, TULSK.

Grocer, Tea, Wine and Spirit Merchant.

Guinness's Stout a Speciality.

ALL CLASSES OF

Provisions and Feeding Stuffs stocked

At Lowest Prices.

Advertisement from 1921

service to his customers. Over the years, Simpson's Cross was a popular location for political, sporting and social events as well as auctions of local properties. One such happening was a cock fight in October 1916 attended by a “select audience” of men and birds from Longford, Roscommon, Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon and Ballaghaderreen “without the presence of a single policeman.” Following 20 fights, the Leitrim birds were victorious and “a large

pile of money exchanged hands.” A few months later in February 1917, the Clooncullane Ploughing Match was held on Andrew Morahan's land with classes for wheel and swing ploughs and included three competitions confined to Co. Roscommon and two to Tulsk parish. The Tulsk winners were John Healy, Ardikillan and Michael Neary, Shrove. Paddy Simpson acted as treasurer for the event.

In June 1930, Paddy married Mary Jane (Ciss) Forde from Church Street, Strokestown. Mary's father, Michael Forde, was a native of Ballygar who returned from America and bought a farm in Cloonshee, Kilmore. He married Bridget Hannon, a shopkeeper in Elphin Street, Strokestown where his daughter Lizzie continued to run a confectionery shop up to the late 1980s. Michael later established a pub and grocery business in Church Street where his son John succeeded him. Another son, Bernie Joe Forde, a Clann na Talmhan and Independent member of Roscommon County Council for 22 years, married Anastasia Monaghan, a publican on the opposite side of Church Street.

In the summer of 1931, a year after their wedding, Paddy and Ciss Simpson were witnesses to an unusual incident that had a sequel in Strokestown Court. The Hudson Circus company had pitched its tent in a field opposite their shop in Clooncullane. Samuel Hudson wondered why nobody was coming in for the 9pm performance, so he went outside and saw a "good-sized crowd" assembled in front of the shop. He was told "we won't go in. you are black and tans." In reply to the judge, Hudson said his family were Irish and came from Killenaule, Co. Tipperary. It seems the 'fake news' was spread by local young men named McDermott along with one named Curley. That night's performance was cancelled but "a fairly good crowd" attended the following night. The defendants' offer of £3 compensation plus £1 expenses was accepted by Hudson.

Later in 1931, Paddy and Ciss's first child, Loreto, was born, followed by Fidelma (1933), Michael James (M. J.) (1936) and Carmel (1941). After attending Cloonfree National School, the girls were sent to boarding secondary schools in Sligo and Monaghan while M. J. cycled to the Vocational School in Elphin. Loreto graduated from UCG and Bonn University before starting a teaching career that spanned London, Saskatchewan in Canada and Dublin. After doing a secretarial course at the Greally Commercial College, Galway, Fidelma worked as a librarian before switching to a nursing career in England. Carmel joined the Bank of Ireland and resided in Dublin with her husband and two children. M. J. was destined to take over the family business from his parents.

In 1949, the Simpsons built a two-story residence with a spacious shop and pub. It replaced the building on the right that became a store. Roscommon architect Jack Gavin



designed it, and the builders were the Mulhair Brothers from Ballinlough. Moving to the 1960s, the *Roscommon Herald* of 1 February 1964 reported the outcome of a Roscommon Circuit Court case dealing with pub opening hours on Sundays in the Tusk area. The case was taken by Tusk publicans Robbie Kilgannon and James Kelly as well as Margaret Flanagan, Clashaganny and Paddy Simpson. Because the opening time was 12.30 and Tusk Mass ended about 12.05, the publicans said that people were “hanging around,” and knocking on the doors for up to a half hour before the official opening time. After the judge heard the parish priest (Fr. Joe Kilmartin) had no objection, he allowed the pubs to open at 12 noon.

After seventy years of serving the food and refreshments needs of his community, Paddy Simpson retired in 1970, and the liquor license was transferred to M. J. Paddy died in



M. J. in his pub

Galway Hospital in April 1972 and was buried in Tusk Cemetery. His widow, Ciss remained in charge of the grocery end of shop for several years until ill-health forced her to reside at Castlecree Nursing Home, Ballymahon where she passed away in April 1990. Her chosen resting place was in the neighbouring Kilcooley Cemetery. The move away in grocery buying habits from local shops to supermarkets caused M. J. to

concentrate on the bar business along with some farming until he retired and closed the pub in 2009. As his health failed, he moved into the Sonas Nursing Home, Cloverhill followed by the Inis Ree Nursing Home, Ballyleague. He died in Mullingar Hospital in March 2015 and was interred in Kilcooley Cemetery. His sister Loreto predeceased him in November 2009 while Carmel passed in February 2019 and Fidelma in April 2023. Simpson’s pub and land were sold in 2016 to the Devine family who renovated and converted the building into a private residence.

Regulars remember the atmosphere in M. J.’s pub as more like the kitchen in a rambling house than a licensed premises. The banter and storytelling were all part of making a night in Simpson’s unforgettable. Memories of olden times were recounted and many of the stories stretched the truth. The oily smell wafting from the paraffin heater seemed to improve the taste of the stout and beer. It was a community hub for staying in touch with neighbours and friends. While there is no longer a Simpson’s pub or a Simpson living in Clooncullane, Simpson’s Cross will long remain a historical landmark.

Note: Future editions of the Newsletter will feature articles from the business records of Simpson’s shop in the early 1900s, 1920s, 1940s and 1950s. These records were kindly donated to Tusk History Society by the Devine family who now own the former shop premises.♦

The Roscommon Herds' Association by Breege Hyland

When I was growing up, my mother always referred to a house up the road from us in Rahardagh as 'the herd's house'. By then, it had not been inhabited for decades but it was evident, and still is, that it was once a substantial two-storey building. In 1901, it was the home of Thomas Lavin who described himself in that year's census as a 'shepherd'; the census category for 'herd'. In 1911, Martin Concannon, also a 'shepherd', lived there.

Lavin and Concannon herded on the McDermott estate in Rahardagh. They were members of a distinct group of employees in nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland who worked on estates and large farms, looking after the cattle and sheep. Their duties extended much further than that, however, like meeting with prospective tenants, walking boundaries and showing land. A herd was, in practical terms, 'next to the gentleman himself'. In the 1800s, herds were still being paid by an ancient system of 'freedoms', or 'collops', which included the right to live at the expense of the employer, along with various other benefits (depending on local practices and the quality of the land) such as running a number of their own animals with the land owners', having some acres for tillage, and keeping pigs and poultry on their employer's land. The herd had considerable status and enjoyed a number of privileges that set him and his family way above the ordinary labourer and, indeed, many smaller farmers.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the rules in respect of the payment of collops to Roscommon herds were so firmly established that the herds in the county were enjoying exceptional circumstances. In 1891, almost one-fifth of Irish herds were concentrated in an area encompassing seven adjoining Poor Law unions in Roscommon and east Galway. There were 624 herds in Co. Roscommon, of which 431 were in the combined unions of Castlerea, Roscommon and Strokestown. In 1836, there were as many as 40 in the parish of Baslick. When, in the later decades of the century, graziers began to move away from the collop system towards weekly wages, the collective activism that was a feature of the Land War period led to Roscommon herds forming a representative organisation to fight their cause. It is not at all unlikely that Lavin and Concannon were involved in that organisation, the Tulsk-based Roscommon Herds' Association.

Contemporary reports appear to give two different dates for the founding of the association. The lack of clarity may arise owing to a number of preliminary meetings being held prior to the formal set up. The purpose of these meetings was to lay out the association's position and to garner support among herds. On March 2, 1882, a large outdoor meeting, of over 400 people, was held on the ancient hill of Carns. The symbolism of this site, and of the location of Rathcroghan for a similar meeting later in September, evidenced a desire to place the new association alongside a nationalist vision and the country's ancient traditions and heritage, of which the collop system was a part. The reported attendance figures at large meetings such as these, of which there were a number held around the time, and the distances travelled to them — from, to name some, Athleague, Ballinagare, Ballinaheglish, Ballintubber, Castlerea, Elphin, Heathfield, Kilbride, Kilglass, Kilmurry, Mantua, Oran, Rahara, Rathmoyle,

Roscommon, Southpark, Strokestown, Tulsk — indicate the solidarity among herds and their perceived need for an association to exist. It is also a point that most herds had a horse - if not more than one - which would more easily facilitate journeying to such gatherings.

Following the meeting in Carns, a meeting in Tulsk in late April was chaired by Carns man James Scott. Earlier in the day, Catholic parish priest, Rev. James Kelly, had spoken at the church against injury or damage to property. The proceedings were orderly and enthusiastic and the ten or so members of the constabulary on duty, and armed, had not been required. In Scott's address, he too condemned the maiming of animals and 'outrages'. He laid out the terms herds should seek from their employers: 'the grass of two cows with keep, two acres of land, and £10 per annum for every eighty acres of land we care'. Members should cease herding from May 1 where these terms were declined. He emphasised the determination to use legal means only.

A meeting in Strokestown in May 1882, attended by branch delegates, elected the inaugural officers of the central branch of the association and formed a thirteen-member council. The unanimously elected officers were: James Scott, President; John Scott, Vice President; O'Connor Keigher, Deputy Vice Chair; Thomas Mylott and Michael Tiernan, Honourable Secretaries; and Dominick Rogers and Patrick Beirne, Treasurers. The first formal meeting of the officers was held about a week later at the branch's office in Tulsk. The meeting condemned the Phoenix Park Murders in the strongest language possible, agreed that in future members not adhering to rules would be discontinued, and approved grants for herds whose employers 'took the charge from their herds'. An outdoor meeting of the herds of Roscommon and Galway was arranged for Ballintubber.

From the very outset, it was intended that the Roscommon Herds' Association would be a national organisation. Tulsk was to be the national centre. Interestingly, the association saw itself not just as a representative body, but also as something akin to a professional regulator. It was agreed that where a herd was found to be incompetent or of bad character, he would no longer be recognized as a fit member. Monthly meetings were held, the usual proceedings of which were reflected in local newspaper notes such as the following, from December 1882:

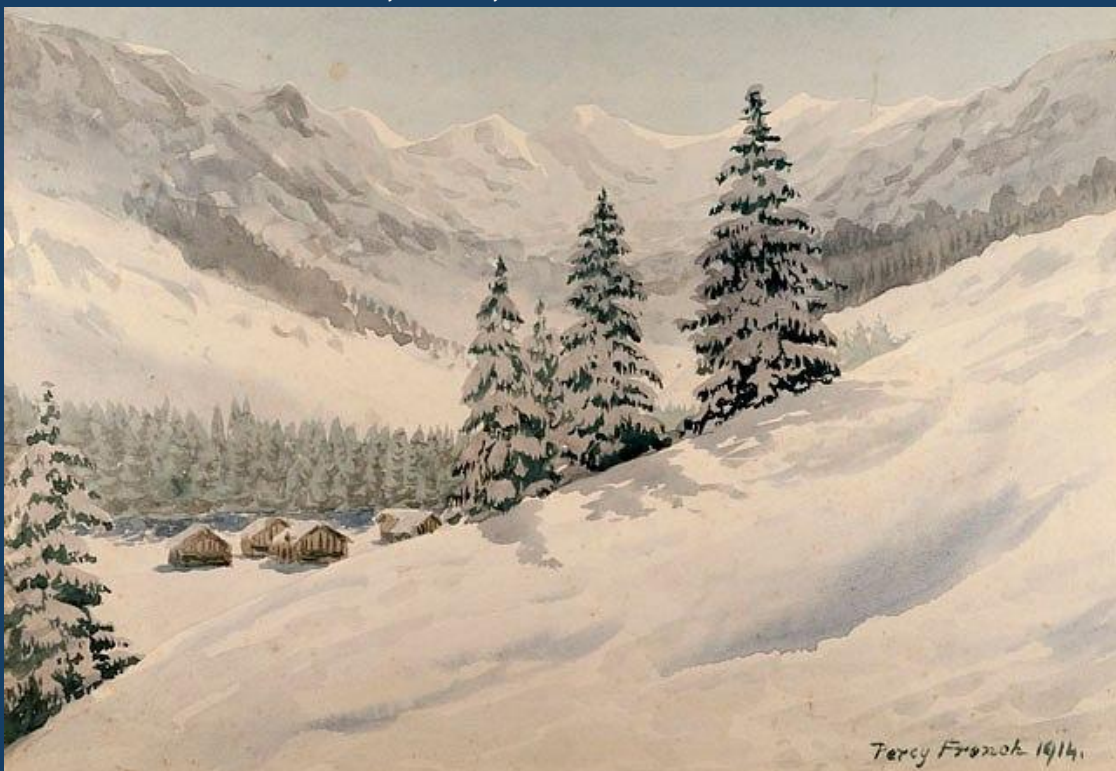
TULSK. Usual monthly meeting on Thursday, the 14th. inst. — Mr. O'Connor Keigher in the chair. Others present were — Messrs. James Scott, Michael Tiernan, John Kean, Peter Flanagan, Dominick Rogers, Michael Flanagan, Michael Cronan, James Gibbons, Peter Lowe, Patrick Devine, Darby Cuttle. The following grants were made to evicted herds: — Darby Cuttle, £6; Mr Gillooly, £3; Peter O'Connor, £2. The secretaries submitted the accounts of the expenditure of the association, which were gone through by the committee and vouched. Arrangements were made for the reorganisation of the association and for the collection of the usual subscriptions for the coming year. After other business the meeting adjourned.

James Scott, himself a herd, was reportedly 75 years of age when he assumed the presidency of the Herds' Association. He was a respected, reputable leader who received

acknowledgement from his peers for his 'self-sacrificing exertions in the shepherds' cause'. He was implicated in a charge of criminal coercive behaviour at one point in 1882 that was withdrawn in the subsequent trial. In 1901, Scott was living at Carns with his wife Ann, his son Patrick and his daughter Catherine. His death certificate states that he died in 1911, aged 95 years.

Initially, the herds' group had some success and gained improved conditions for its members. In 1919, Edward McDermott recorded in his farm accounts that he paid his four herds £69 that year. It is impossible to know if this reflected improvements negotiated in 1882–1883. The Roscommon Herds' Association encountered opposition from landowners and graziers who moved almost immediately to form the Landowners' Protection Association that held meetings to provide for replacement workers in the event of strike. By 1883 the herds had become less unified. Graziers had effectively combined to counteract them, and the Association was calling for re-organisation. Seemingly, the Herds' Association continued in 'fitful existence'. It came into conflict with the United Irish League (UIL) about 1899. No reports about it appear in contemporary newspapers between 1883 and 1904. In March, 1904, a meeting held at Kilmurry, under the auspices of the UIL, called on herds to join the League under the proposed Herds' United League. It appears, however, that this may not have been realised. In the end, the Association transferred into the Roscommon Labour League in 1909 led by R. A. Corr, a native of Ballinaheglish.◊

SNOWY ALPINE SCENE by Percy French (1914)



Tulsk Church, at the Centre of its Community by Mary Hunt

*(This article was written for the popular magazine **The Messenger** and is reprinted here in collaboration with the author)*

The church of Sts. Eithne and Fidelma in Tulsk, my mother's parish, like all churches has witnessed the high and low points of many lives. For me the church itself has a presence. It is God's house and it houses the spirit of the community which it serves. I believe that God is present, loving us at the big occasions of our lives. When we rejoice he rejoices, when we are sad he is sad. It is right to mark these occasions with ceremony. It gives them the solemnity and importance they deserve. God is present in the community. He is intimately involved in our lives.

In Tulsk parish, for many years the church of St Eithne and Fidelma has been at the centre of community life. The saints after whom Tulsk church is named were the daughters of King Laoghaire of Connacht in the time of St Patrick. They were among the country's first converts to Christianity. The story goes that they were baptized by St Patrick and died after receiving Holy Communion. The date was approximately 433A.D. In 1841 the church at Tulsk named after them was built. The old church, a thatched building, had been destroyed on the night of the big wind in 1839. On the 20th of April 1840 the first stone of the new church was laid by Daniel Kelly of Cargins who had donated the land on which it was to be built. He donated the then large sum of fifty pounds. He also donated the church bell. Another local man, Peter O'Connor, donated one hundred pounds for the same purpose. The priest at the time, the Very Reverend Michael Lennon, an educated and saintly man, is remembered as the parish priest during the great famine. He worked to aid the oppressed and poor of his parish. His memorial is a marble slab in the church.

Over the years the church at various times was renovated and repaired. The Westmeath Independent of December 1916 records that the parishioners themselves, alone and unaided bore the cost of the refurbishment of the church. A beautiful set of Stations of the Cross was put up by individual parishioners in memory of various deceased relatives at a cost of 10 guineas each.

One of the outstanding features of Tulsk church is the four-paned stained-glass window by A. E. Child. It was installed at Easter 1914 and was placed in the window frame behind the altar. It was acquired by the church as a gift from four donors, each of whom have an individually dedicated pane with their details inscribed. The donors and dedications were Annie Tighe, in memory of her parents Martin and Margaret; Matthew Flanagan of Tomona; the Tulsk branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH); Rev. P. Shanagher, Parish Priest of Ahascragh, in memory of his parents Michael and Bridget. At the time, *The Freeman's Journal* reported that 'few pieces of stained-glass work can compare to the latest achievement by [Child]'. The window, at 12 foot wide by 15 foot high, depicts different scenes from the life of Christ. Viewing the window from left to right, the Baptism is depicted on the first, with the 'Ecce Homo' second (or Pontius Pilate presenting the

about-to-be crucified Jesus to an irate crowd). The Easter Resurrection lights up the third pane, with a sunlit background contrasting with a grey foreground; the earthly and eternal dimensions being part of a well-thought-out piece. The fourth window depicts the Ascension of Christ, with the upstretched arms of the Apostles, a contrast with the venom of the crowd in 'Ecce Homo'. All windows are balanced with one of the four evangelists at the bottom of each. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, together with their respective symbols of winged man, winged lion, winged ox, and eagle, and accompanying angels, finish the piece. How beautiful is that? It is clear that the people of Tulska contributed to the building, maintenance and renovation of their church of which they are justly proud. There can be no church without community.♦



AI generated

An interpretation of Tulska Church in the early 1900s, using old photographs

The Dillon's of Brackloon and Rathmoyle by Manus Tiernan

The Dillon Family who were former Earls of Roscommon are an old and distinguished family. A junior branch of this family paternity resided at Rathmoyle (Tulsk parish) and Brackloon Castle (Parish of Kilcorkey).

Brackloon and Rathmoyle Dillons.

A castle in Brackloon in the parish of Kilcorkey was held by an O'Connor in the late 1500s, but by 1640 the tower castle was updated and changed into a house that was owned by Thomas Dillon. He was a son of Theobald Dillon, 1st Viscount Costello- Gallen. The Dillon family were well established in the parish before the 1641 rebellion and subsequent plantation. A William Dillon who could have been Thomas' brother (as he had a brother named William) owned lands in Ballyglass, in the old parish of 'Baslic' and not far from Brackloon. William obviously picked the wrong side and forfeited these lands during the 1641 rebellion and its aftermath. In the Books of Survey and Distribution which records in detail lands forfeited during the Confederate Wars and the Cromwellian Plantation, we see that Ballyglass is divided between a Gerald Dillon (could be a brother or related to Thomas), Theobald Dillon (possible son of Thomas of Brackloon) and Lord Dillon of Belgard Castle (whose ancestors built Heathfield House and owned considerable land in the Lissalway area but were not directly related to the Rathmoyle or Brackloon Dillon's). Gerard Dillon, along with Lord Dillon, also obtained land in Rathmoyle. Over time it appears that the Brackloon and Rathmoyle Dillons were related and the Dillons were firmly established in the area by the late 1500s.

In the 1749 Census of Elphin by Bishop Edward Synge we see Charles Dillon and his wife Mary residing at Rathmoyle. The Dillons of Rathmoyle do not appear to have been large landowners within the parish. They seemed to have a moderate house about half a mile from Rathmoyle crossroads on the Ballinagare road. Part of the ruined house could be observed up to the early 1900s. It appears to have been built on a smaller scale than other mansions of the locality. In Griffith's Valuation Patrick Dillon of Rathmoyle held 75 acres that backed onto Rathmoyle House (owned by the Irwins). Local knowledge or traditions about the Dillons of Rathmoyle or Brackloon is scant. In June 1855, 500 acres of James Dillon's estate, at Brackloon, parish of Kilcorkey, barony of Castlereagh, was advertised for sale in the Encumbered Estates court. In Griffith's Valuation of the 1860s

we find George Dillon owning 101 Acres of land in Lissalway and leasing it out to a Patrick Grehan. This land was located near Valeview as we know it today. Bordering this land towards Heathfield was 91 acres owned by Rev. Thomas Dillon who is buried in Baslick along with his ancestors. Like many other families the Dillons disappeared from the area within a generation with no trace by the late 1800's and this could be one of the reasons why local knowledge is so scant. The only information about the family is recorded on the headstones in Baslick cemetery which states:

Sacrum Cor Jesu

Sacred to

The Brackloon Castle and Rathmile branches of the Dillon family

Richard and Annie Dillon and children

Rev Thomas Dillon P.P.,

Edward, Charles, John, Gerald Luke,

his wife Mary (née McLaughlin) and Mary Prendergast

Also grandchildren -

Rev John Prendergast P. P.,

Rev Edward Dillon C.C.,

Bridget, James, Luke and Charles Blake Dillon

Erected by Edward Dillon, West Melbourne & Anne O'Farrell (née Dillon),

Strokestown in memory of their parents and other relatives buried here

1911

Mary O'Farrell died 31st Dec 1913

Annie O'Farrell died 26th Aug 1921

Another Stone reads.....

O God have mercy on the soul of

Margaret Dalton alias Dillon, wife of Walter Plunkett

Who departed this 11th day of April 1751 in the 60th year of her age

Erected by her grandchild

A further stone reads:

God be mericiful to Ellinor Irwin otherwise Dillon

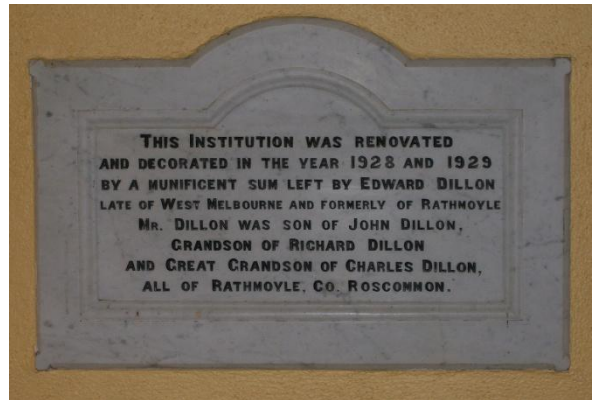
Who departed this life on the 11th of Feb 1765

in the 57th year of her age

Erected by her son Richard Irwin

A memorial slab erected in the main entrance hall to Roscommon County Library in Roscommon town reads:

This institution was renovated and decorated in the year 1928 and 1929 by a munificent sum left by Edward Dillon of West Melbourne and formerly of Rathmoyle. Mr. Dillon was son of John Dillon, grandson of Richard Dillon and great grandson of Charles Dillon all of Rathmoyle Co. Roscommon.



Well known Dillons were related to the Dillons of Brackloon and Rathmoyle.

John Blake Dillon of Ballaghaderreen, the politician, solicitor and writer and famed Young Irelander (who died in Killiney, Dublin in 1866) was one such relation.

Another esteemed clansman was Luke Gerard Dillon MD, born April 24th 1862, who was an army surgeon and was the eldest son of the late Charles Blake Dillon, of Springlawn Co. Roscommon; descended from Thomas Dillon, of Brackloon Castle, Co. Roscommon, who was the fourth son of Theobald, 1st Viscount Dillon, created March 16th, 1622.

Sources: Brackloon Reunion Facebook.

Writings Late James J O'Donnell NT Castleplunkett.

Tulsk History Society's Grave Archives.◇



A TULSK CHRISTMAS, AS RECORDED IN THE WESTMEATH INDEPENDENT

In the early 1900s *The Westmeath Independent* was an Athlone-based newspaper that covered south and mid-Roscommon. Here we re-print the notes from 22nd December 1906, when Christmas preparations from the shops in and around Tusk village were covered. This came under a big section under the (ironic) heading 'A Brief Peep at the Closing Year'. The newspaper header from that date is pictured below. Note: We printed the original in the latest edition of the Tusk Morning Howl but thought it apt to feature and highlight the article for this Christmas newsletter.



HILL'S HOTEL

This popular inn, presided over by Mr Joseph Kilgannon is looking a picture, so artistically are the arrangements made and that gentleman has knocked off a great deal of the old veneering, which clung to the place for ages and all for the better too. "Master Joe" should know how to run a show on real democratic lines as he has got experience across the pond, and that he has profited by his experience is quite apparent. The store has a healthy share of business about it, if there isn't a complete supply of Christmas dainties on sale, call me a Dutchman. Hill's teas has a reputation as old as the "hills" and is the bon mot of all the old crones and sure you can't get better judges. There are jams and jellies in wild abandon and Christmas cards ad infinitum. The liquors are good,

J.J. and sons whiskey being “strong” in evidence and Guinness’s stout in wood and bottle has come to remain. The worshippers of old nicotine are also well looked after, and he’s a dunce that knows not, that the pipe is man’s universal panacea for all ills.

MR TULLY’S

Mr Tully, right across the way has his magnificent concerns well fitted up for the season and his windows give in perspective, a capital idea of the stock within.

MRS FLANAGAN’S

At Clashaganny, Mrs Flanagan runs a business that a city firm might envy and right good value too is obtained here. The brands of flour is the very best and the prices can compare favourably with any other store. The teas are excellent and the wine department is acknowledged to be as good as can be found and a “small one” of “Power’s P” would take the load of your heart on a freezing night. The best tobacco is retailed here, and when dry after a whiff, Bass’s best or Guinness’s double will appease your thirst afterwards.

MR THOMAS SIMPSON’S

At Lisafooka, better known as “Simpson’s Cross,” Mr Thomas Simpson, as genial a soul as ever stood behind a counter drives a rushing trade at all seasons, while at the Christmas he has more than he can do to keep pace with the terrible drain of his stock. We have no occasion to give a detailed list of all the goods on show: suffice to say that all that is necessary for a comfortable Xmas can be had here at very moderate prices, just the same is charged at the county town, so no one grumbles at the tariff or the goods, and his liquors are of first-class quality.

MR. P. DEVANNY’S

Hard by the chapel gate Mr Patrick Devanny’s show rooms can be seen, and certainly he is in a good position to claim attention, which he does. His value is good and the prices very reasonable, while his tea has become quite famous, and is a most palatable beverage. His bacon and flour are of the best quality, and he stocks nothing only Gallagher’s plug tobacco, real Irish manufacture.

OUR GREETING

To each and all we wish a right royal Christmas, a happy New Year, and health to enjoy many of them.◇



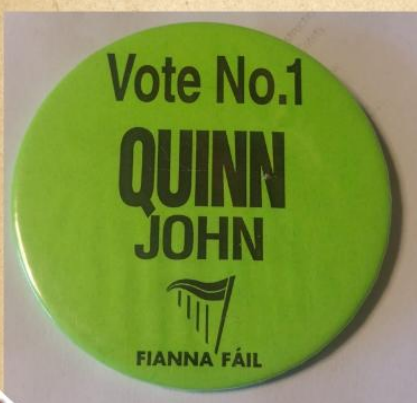
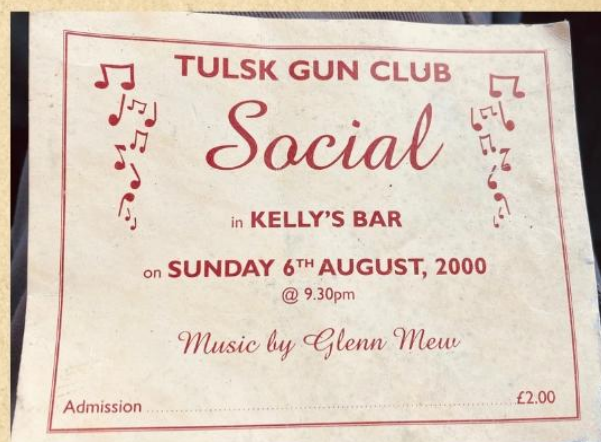
Ephemera Corner

In Summer 2001 the Handball Development Social was held in The Tusk Inn. The new alley at Corbally had recently been developed after the old famous court had been demolished in the late 1990s

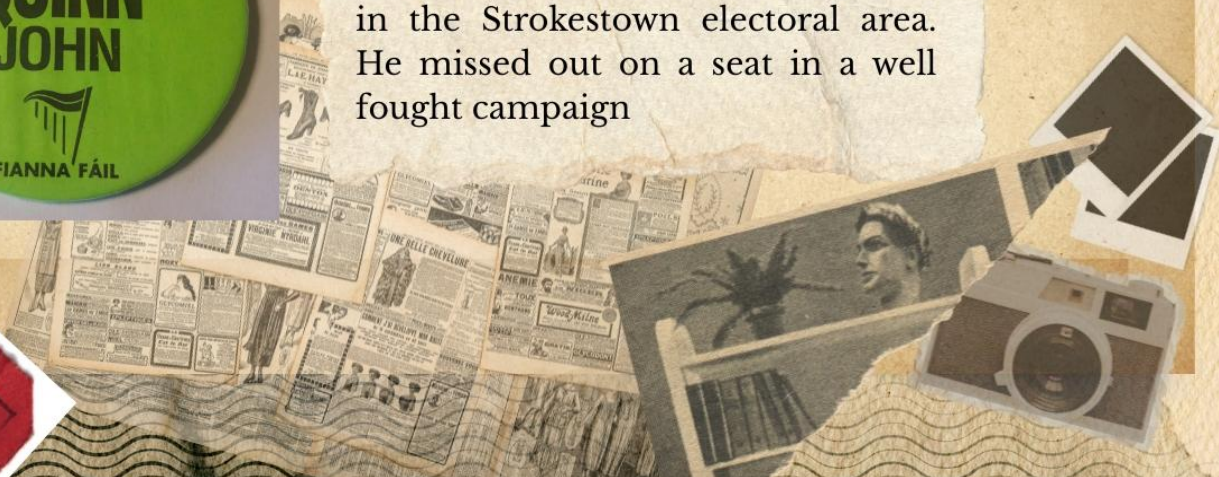


A beautifully designed medal from 1895 awarded to John Joseph Higgins. 'JJ' was one of the finest amateur athletes in Connaught at the time and, thanks to his descendants in Ballybeg, this brilliant keepsake remains in wonderful condition

A lovely old ticket for Tusk Gun Club's Social event in August of 2000. A quarter of a century ago and Kelly's were still in Tusk, Glenn Mew played the tunes and admission was just £2. Good days!



A badge from John Quinn's election bid in 1999. John ran for Fianna Fail in the Strokestown electoral area. He missed out on a seat in a well fought campaign





TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY

Membership

We hope you have enjoyed the December 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 Festive Season and have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

