

TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY



Newsletter No. 21

June 2026

Tulsk History Society historytulsk@gmail.com



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Welcome to the 21st edition of our newsletter. Since the last one, in March, we've held our AGM at the Macra Hall. Thanks to the hall committee for making available the room and it was great to see a healthy turnout on the night. Two new members joined us (John Dowd and Luke Keogh). It's always a positive to be getting additional local history enthusiasts on board. Our committee remains the same as last year and until the next AGM (April 2027). All agreed to stay in place when no other member expressed an interest for the executive roles.

We've been doing a lot of talking about a new THS publication that's in the works – on the history of the commercial premises of the parish – which is due for publication during Heritage Week in August. If anyone out there has any pictures or ephemera of interest regarding the old shops and pubs of the locality we would be delighted to accept them. More on that publication over the following pages.

Of course, there's never a bad time to submit old photos or items of interest to THS and as we've noted before: copies will be kept and all originals returned, unless of course you wish to donate anything original for our safe keeping!

In this month's edition Noel Sheerin looks at the fascinating history of policing in Tulsk. This includes both codes of RIC and an Garda Siochana. The article is a valuable look at an historic aspect of Tulsk life that is sometimes overlooked. Breege Hyland then examines the history of the wonderful Ancient Order of Hibernians banner that once held pride of place above the door in the interior of Tulsk Church. What many don't realise is that the back of the banner is just as interesting as the oft seen front and Breege does a great job here in bringing the whole story to life! It's our cover story this month. Mike Lennon has again contributed much to the newsletter and this issue he summarises the recently released 1926 Census from a Tulsk context, as well as giving us Part 2 of the list of customers of Simpson's shop, Clooncullane, from more than a century ago. Also in this edition is a fine history of Fahy's shop in Glenvale/Glenvela contributed by guest writer Caroline Fahy Bailey. It's a shop that will feature in the August publication and this article is a brilliant contribution to the ongoing research. The great stallion Lapcock also makes an appearance, but you'll have to keep reading to discover his very interesting story!

Overview of Policing in Tusk 1851 – 2026

by Noel Sheerin

Tusk RIC Station is recorded in the 1851 edition of the RIC Constabulary List, the earliest edition the Garda Museum holds. The relevant extracts for Roscommon, which was divided into 7 sub-districts comprising 63 stations in total, are as shown below:

COUNTY OF ROSCOMMON—69 STATIONS.					
1 Roscommon*††	8 Fuerty†	3¾	..
2 Athleague†	5	...	9 Knockmain	3½	..
3 Ballinderry	5½	...	10 Leacarrow†	7	..
4 Ballough	6¾	...	11 Mnt. Talbot, J. S.†	7½	..
5 Ballymurry	3½	...	12 Rockfield	5¼	..
6 Beechwood	4¼	...	1 Athlone, J. S. *††	19	..
7 Four Roads†	9	..	2 Ballydangan†	10	8

PART I.] COUNTIES AND BY DISTRICTS. 69					
COUNTY OF ROSCOMMON—continued.					
Stations.	Distance from Hd. Qrtrs. of		Stations.	Distance from Hd. Qrtrs. of	
	Co.	Distr.		Co.	Distr.
3 Ballyforan††	14	15	2 Carnidoe	22	12
4 Beaulnamulla	22	3	3 Clashiganny	9	8¾
5 Brideswell†	15	6½	4 Hillstreet	23¼	5½
6 Camla	18¾	10¼	5 Killukin	27	10
7 Clonown	26	9	6 Kilmore†	26½	8¾
8 Johnstown	20	6	7 Mohedian	21¼	3½
9 Kiltoom	12½	6½	8 Tusk††	11	6¾
1 Boyle*††	28	...	1 Strokestown*††	13	...
2 Arigna Valley, J.S.	45½	17½	2 Strokestown house. P.	13	..
3 Ballyarden	33	5	3 Annaghmore, P.	14½	2
4 Ballyfarnon†	38½	10½	4 Ballykilcline	20	7½
5 Belview	33	5	5 Cullagh	15¼	3¾
6 Cootehall††	34½	6½	6 Curraghroef	10	6½
7 Drumcormick	36	8	7 Gillstown	15½	3¾
8 Grevisk	31	3½	8 Kilglass	19	6
9 Keadue†	40¾	12¾	9 Mount Pleasant	9	3½
10 Knockvicar	34	6	10 Ruskey, J. S.†	22½	9¼
11 Nursery	31½	2	11 Tarmonbarry†	17¾	5¾
1 Castlereah*††	19	...	1 Frenchpark††	22	..
2 Carrendangan	9	9½	2 Ballinagore††	19½	2½
3 Castleplunket†	12½	6	3 Croghan††	21½	9
4 Ballinlough††	25½	6¾	4 Granny	21½	5
5 Ballintobber††	12¾	6¼	5 Mantua	17	5
6 Loughglyn††	24¾	5¾	6 Portahard	24	2
1 Elphin††	17¾	...			

RIC Barracks up to 1921 and Garda Station 1922-1932)



House No.11: 1 Constable + family

1911 Census Record for RIC in Tulsk (2 houses, 1 + Barracks)

Note: House No.11: 2-3 rooms, 1 constable, wife +3 children, 1 turf house

House No.12: 5-6 rooms, 5 front windows, 10 persons: 1 sergeant + 9 constables, 1 turf house, 1 shed

CENSUS OF IRELAND 1911.										
Form H.—Return of Military, R. I. Constabulary or Metropolitan Police, in Barracks.										No. on Form. B. 12
County, <i>Roscommon</i>		Parliamentary Division, <i>North Roscommon</i>		Poor Law Union, <i>Bokeedown</i>		District Electoral Division, <i>Tulsk</i>		Townland, <i>Grange</i>		
Parliamentary Borough		City		Urban District		Town or Village		Street		
GENERAL RETURN of the OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, PRIVATES, and OTHERS, who were Quartered in the <i>R. I. Constabulary</i> Barrack of <i>Tulsk</i> on the Night of Sunday, the 2nd of April, 1911, and of those who arrived on Monday, the 3rd of April, who were not enumerated elsewhere.										
NOTE.—In filling these Returns, pay observe the Instructions given on "Form A."—The Family Return.										
NOTE.—In addition to this Return each Married Man, residing with his wife in Barrack, and each Widower whose Children, or any of them, reside with him in Barrack, must fill for his Family (excluding himself) a separate "Form A."—The Form used by the Community at large—a note being made on the "Form A." that the Head of the Family is returned on "Form H."—Any required number of "Form A." will be supplied by the Enumerator of the District. Permanent officials residing in Barracks, such as Barrack-Masters, Barrack-Sergeants, Canteen-Keepers, &c., with their servants, are to be supplied with "Form A."; such persons are not to be entered on "Form H."										
Number.	Initial Letters of Christian Name or Name, & of Surname.		RANK.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE.	OCCUPATION.	MARRIAGE.	WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.
	Christian Name.	Surname.	State the particular Rank or Occupation. (NOTE.—In the case of Military, the Title of the Corps should also be entered in this column.)	State here the particular Religion, or Religious Denomination, to which each person belongs. (Members of Protestant Denominations should not be described by the vague term "Protestant," but the name of the particular Church, Denomination, or Body, to which they belong, should be entered.)	Whether he can "Read and Write," or "Read" only, or "Cannot Read."	Years in last Birthday.	State the particular Profession, Trade, or other Employment of each Person before Enlistment or appointment.	Whether "Married," "Widower," or "Single."	If in Ireland, state in what County or City; if elsewhere, state the name of the Country.	Write the word "Irish" in this column opposite the initials of each person who speaks Irish only, and the words "Irish and English" opposite the initials of those who can speak both languages. In other cases no entry should be made in this column.
1	James	Hillman	Constable R. I. C.	Protestant, Irish Church	Read & Write	43	Farmer's son	Single	Monaghan	
2	William	Hayley	Sergeant R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	39	Farmer's son	Single	Londonderry	
3	Bernard	Keilly	Actg Sergt R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	37	Farmer's son	Single	Mayo	
4	Peter	Ward	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	33	Farmer's son	Single	Longford	
5	John	Spencer	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	32	Farmer's son	Single	Clare	
6	Peter	Shanahan	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	23	Farmer's son	Single	Longford	
7	John	Gahry	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	23	Farmer's son	Single	Galway & R.	
8	Wm	Grier	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	22	Farmer's son	Single	Sligo	
9	Avon	Thomson	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	23	Farmer's son	Single	Galway W.R.	
10	James	Hillman	Constable R. I. C.	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	25	Farmer's son	Single	Galway & R.	

Because Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) members were recorded only by their initials on standard public census returns while living in barracks, and because personnel were frequently transferred to prevent local bias, there is no single, static list of every constable who ever served in the village of Tulsk. However, specific names can be recovered by cross-referencing regional historical events, military claim files, and specialized genealogical indexes. Below are the findings from this research for Tulsk:

- Constable John Gallagher: Formally stationed at the Tulsk barracks. Tragically, he died on December 8, 1912, at the County Infirmary after suffering injuries from falling off his bicycle while traveling on the public road between Roscommon and Tulsk. He was originally a native of Collooney, County Sligo
- Sergeant John Shanagher: Born in 1868 and a native of the Tulsk area (Killina/Tulsk). Though he was serving away from his home county at the time of his death—as mandated by strict RIC rules—he was an RIC Sergeant who was killed during the 1916 Easter Rising at the Battle of Ashbourne, County Meath. He is buried locally in Killina Cemetery, Tulsk.
- Constable Duffy: Mentioned in local War of Independence intelligence files (Bureau of Military History). While working in the region, he acted as a sympathetic pipeline, passing crucial operational information from the County Inspector's clerk over to the local Irish Volunteers

COUNTY OF ROSCOMMON—11 STATIONS.

1. Roscommon*††	-	-	1. Castlereagh*††	17½	-
2. Clonark	24½	-	2. Frenchpark	23	9½
			1. Strokestown*††	13	-
			2. Elphin††	17	6½
1. Boyle*††	27	-	3. Ruskey††	22½	9½
2. Ballaghaderreen††	30	17	4. Termonbarry, J.S.	16	8½
3. Keadue††	35	12			

Tulsk also appears in the 1920 edition of the RIC Constabulary List but not in the 1921 edition as shown where only 11 stations remained open as a result of the ferocity of the fighting during 1919-21 War of Independence period.

S Á R D A . Aibreán 16, 1923.

DIVISION OF ROSCOMMON (26 STATIONS).

Chief Superintendent's (Division) Headquarters at Roscommon.
 Superintendents' (Sub-Divisions) Headquarters at Roscommon and Boyle.
 Inspectors' (Districts)... ... Headquarters at Castlereagh and Strokestown.

Sub-Districts (Stations)	STRENGTH	
	Sergeants	Guards
*ROSCOMMON	2	10
Athleague	1	4
Ballyforan	1	4
Carrowreagh	1	4
Clonfad	1	4
Kiltoom	1	4
*CASTLERAAGH	1	7
Ballinlough	1	4
Ballintubber	1	4
Ballaghderreen	1	5
Castleplunket	1	4
Loughglynn	1	4
*BOYLE	1	10
Ballinacorney	1	4
Ballyfarnon	1	4
Cooteshall	1	4
Croghan	1	4
Keadue	1	4
Frenchpark	1	4
*STROKESTOWN	1	5
Ballinderry	1	4
*ELPHIN	1	5
Kilmore	1	4
Termonbarry	1	4
*RUSKEY	1	5
Tulsk	1	4

*NOTE.—Stations already occupied, marked with an asterisk.
 In Stations unoccupied the strength given above is the proposed strength.

This image (left) shows the list of Garda Stations which were set to continue or to reopen from 1923 onwards by the new Free State government. The stations with an asterisk (*) are those that survived the War of Independence attacks and burnings while the others are listed for re-opening or new beginnings with proposed personnel numbers at each station shown.



Above: The wall plaque of the RIC that would have appeared on the outside of pre-independence police stations, and the early wall plaque of An Garda Síochána

Extract from the HQ Inspection Report of the old Tulsk Barracks July 1928:

There were 3 gardai present. Sergeant on patrol. One Garda on leave. Records appear to be correctly kept. And the Barrick was clean. The premises merely consist of a wretched, congested hovel with walls mouldy and damp and a leaking roof. It is a disgrace to have men

living under such conditions. Two men have to sleep in the sergeant's office. The kitchen is a gloomy hole. These premises should be evacuated before the winter.

Extract from the HQ Inspection Report of the new Tulsk Garda Station July 1933:

(The new station was built in 1932 at Tulsk Cross where it still remains)

Sergeant Power and three gardai present. The premises were neat and clean. It would appear that the work on the new barracks is not yet finished. The gardai were well turned out and they answered fairly satisfactorily on police duties. Generally one receives the impression that the station is run efficiently.

Extract from the HQ Inspection Report of Tulsk Garda Station April 1940

Sergeant John Kelly and two gardai present. Garda Richard Colley absent on sick leave. Those present were examined on the licencing laws.

Extract from the HQ Inspection Report of Tulsk Garda Station June 1955.

Sergeant Fogarty. Gardai Gallagher and O'Connor. Paraded smartly and later answered well on Prevention of Electoral Abuses Act. This is a very nice sub district. Internal painting hasn't been done for 10 years. There is surely need for movement here. Premises are a bungalow and the garden is well maintained. Population is 2108. And there are 10 Hackney cars. There is no bus service from Boyle to Roscommon. General running of the station is competent.

The above extracts from the Inspection Reports of Tulsk Garda Station were transcribed from the old Inspection Book for record purposes to appear in the new book introduced in 1958. Also from this point on Inspections were conducted monthly by senior officers from within the Garda Division i.e. Chief Supt, Supt. or Inspector. Previously such inspections were carried out by senior officers from HQ on an annual basis primarily which remained an option if and when the need arose before Tulsk Station was downgraded to its existing level of operation.

From 1958 onwards the monthly inspections were carried out using the same criteria based on station size, personnel numbers, population, location and crime situation. A typical inspection was carried out by the visiting Divisional Officer who wrote his report into the Station Inspection Book before departure. The following matters were contained therein:

- Name of Sgt / Acting Sgt and Gardai attached to station
- Names of those present, out on duty, sick leave, temp transfer, off duty
- How well presented those present are e.g. uniform, tidiness, cleanliness
- Condition and appearance of station inside and outside
- Condition of uniform and equipment in use
- Patrol vehicle(s) allocated to station and condition thereof
- Records re fines, gun licences, crime reports, investigations, convictions, etc
- Knowledge of specific laws e.g. Licencing, Road Safety, Power of arrest, etc
- Knowledge of duties
- Any complaints or issues raised in need of attention
- No. of women and/or children (+ages) living in Station

Timeline of personnel changes and issues of the time as noted.

Year	Sgt - est. year of arrival	Gardai – estimated year of arrival	Issue
1931	John Power		
1938	John Kelly	Richard Cawley, Martin Loftus, ? Daly	Tragic Fire 1945 Read below
1944	Michael Power	? Hegarty 1949	
1954	Patrick Fogarty	? Gallagher, ? O'Connor, ? King 1958	Water tank overflow
1960	E Hatton		Subversive activity. Trouble at VEC class. Agitation- Clooneyquinn Estate.
1961	Patrick McSweeney	Gerry Kerr, ? McGilly, Tom Reilly	
1964	P Hoare		
1965	T O'Neill	? O'Connor, John Garvey 1966	
1967	MJ Hogan	Matt Reynolds 1968	Fatal traffic acc. 1968
1969	EF Looby	Micheal McFadden	
1970	JJ Fogarty	Tom Tarpey	Subversive activity. Empty houses
1974	Patrick Bevan		
1975	Joe Rushe	Donal Power , John Gildea 1978, ? Mulligan 1979, Tom McGarty 1979	Larceny of cattle
1981	EJ McGuinn	John Freeman, Tommie Kenoy	Subversive activity
1984	Willie Gallagher	J. Kearns 1983, ? Cafferty 1985	Fatal accident Mar 1983. Attacks on elderly
1986	Dominick Conway	Jim Beirne 1989	Night patrols 1989
1995	? Smyth (May) ? Hanrahan (Dec)		
1996	Noreen Mc'Brien (Winter) ? McEntee (Spring)	1995-1999 A high turnover of newly promoted Sergeants awaiting more permanent placement elsewhere.	
1997	O'Daly (mid-year)		
1999	Declan Hunt		
2000	Tim Gleeson		
2001		Vincent Hickey	Foot & Mouth
2002	Tim Gleeson	Vincent Hickey	Final Inspection

Tulsk Garda Station is still operating but its opening hours to the public are now limited to a few hours per month on average. There is a lit-up call button on the side of the Tulsk building which can be used to contact the Castlerea Garda Station at any time on site. One of course can also

contact Castlerea by normal means of communication from anywhere at any time. It is also normal to see a Garda Patrol car parked beside the Tulsk Station quite regularly day and night for operational reasons. The Castlerea personnel now service the needs of the Tulsk community on a call-out basis or by appointment if appropriate.

Article reprint: Tulsk Garda Station Tragic Fire - August 1945.....Child In Flames

Three children of Sgt. John Kelly, GS, Tulsk, Co. Roscommon received burns, one fatally in a kitchen at the barracks where the family occupy the married quarters.

Startled by cries from the kitchen where there was an open unprotected fire, Sgt. Kelly rushed from his room where he was dressing, only to find his son Richard, aged 3 years and 9 months in flames.

Failing to put out the flames with his hands he ran to the bedroom and wrapped the child in a blanket. The boy received extensive burns however. and died later in Roscommon Co. Hospital.

Mary Kelly (11½) who was in the kitchen with her brother was badly burned on her chest and face and is in hospital but out of danger and her sister Honoria (5½) was burned on the right arm. The mother and other children were attending Mass at the time.

A verdict of death from shock and burns was returned at the inquest on the boy, the jury adding that no blame was attached to anyone

In Conclusion

Tulsk Garda Station 2026



Let's hope that An Garda Síochána continues to have a base in Tulsk to meet the needs of the local community for the foreseeable future. As one can see from the records above, many members of the force spent time (some more than others) attached to the station. Now is an opportunity to thank each one for his/her contribution in helping to preserve a comfortable level of peace and safety for the whole community, young and not so young.

The policing service is greatly enhanced by the presence of a Garda Station especially when the population is increasing and ageing and the traffic movement is so hectic throughout the year. The new by-pass will see big changes with traffic flow East-West but North-South movement will remain as it is for many years to come. The Garda Station is ideally located to deal with that and associated challenges that arise along with all the other social issues of modern-day living.

*In the wake of the release of the 1926 Census in April **Mike Lennon** has compiled a summary for Tulsk Parish*

1926 Census Summary for Tulsk Parish

	1911 Population	1926 Population	Percent Change
Ireland (26 counties)	3,139,688	2,971,992	-5.3%
County Roscommon	93,536	83,651	-10.7%
Tulsk Parish	3,537	3,469	-0.2%

Tulsk Parish by District Electoral Division (DED)

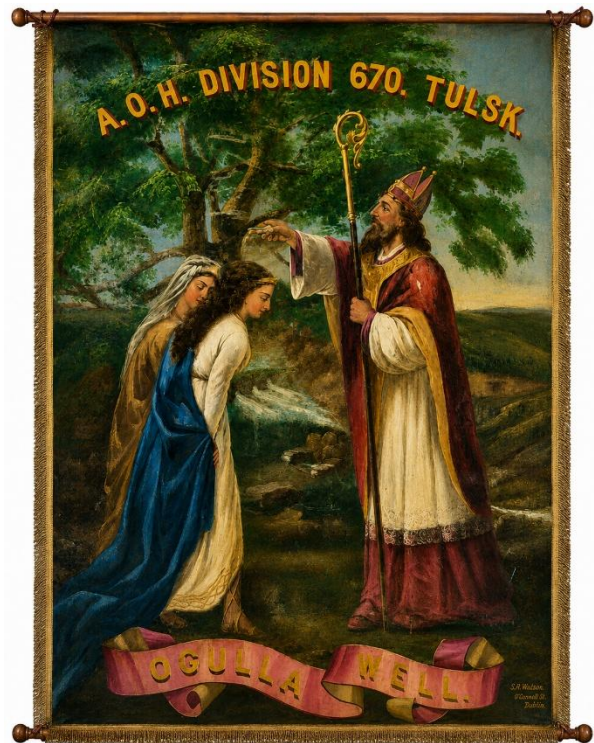
	1911 Population	1926 Population	Percent Change
Tulsk DED	785	621	-20.9%
Ogulla DED	316	349	+10.4%
Killukin DED	476	389	-18.3%
Castleplunkett DED	534	916	+71.5%
Baslick DED	594	448	-24.5%
Clooneyquinn DED	832	746	-10.3%

Note: The increased population in Ogulla and Castleplunkett DEDs can be explained by the division of the large grazier farms by the Congested Districts Board and its successor, the Irish Land Commission, and the resulting migration of people in the 1920s from Galway, Mayo and the western borders of Roscommon to their new properties.

Background image: Tulsk village in the early 1900s

The Tulsk AOH Banner by Breege Hyland

The banner of the Tulsk Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) formed part of the regalia that was, and continues to be, typical of such organisations. A branch's fife and drum band, sashes, ceremonial regalia and attire, and a banner, were central to the way it presented itself to the world and expressed its identity and values. Tulsk AOH Division 670 was formed in 1911. As was the practice, the Division turned out in full ceremonial trappings for events such as feast days, processions, visits of religious leaders, and political demonstrations. Its banner was part of that array from once it was acquired some months into 1912.



The AOH Division 670 banner, painted in oils on oil cloth, measuring approximately 10ft. by 6ft and trimmed with gold fringe, was made to order by the Dublin artist Samuel Rowan Watson (1853-1923).

The accompanying photos, showing the banner back and front, clearly indicate that it was a joint Tulsk AOH/UIIL banner. The overall style of presentation is similar on both sides. The UIL side has not survived as well as the reverse; it is faded somewhat, owing to dampness.

On the AOH side, the focal point of the baptism scene at Ogulla Well shows the three central parties to the locally well-known legend — the two young princesses being baptised by St. Patrick. It is a typical rendition, in most respects. The details on the girls' attire — flowing dresses and cloaks, knee-high laced sandals, tiaras — clearly indicate their royal status, and their devout pose is part of the traditional story of their conversion and reception into the Christian faith. Patrick, too, is the usual holy man we see in images of the saint. Bearded, long-haired, attired as a bishop in a white, lace-trimmed alb, with crozier in hand, he is quite the romanticised figure. He is, however, neither the clichéd, green-bedecked Patrick, nor the man in delicate shades of blue, white and gold of earlier religious art, such as Collaert's 1603 depictions that are in the National Gallery. His cope and mitre are in the unusual tones of cerise and salmon, shades that are also reflected in the bottom ribbon. Nothing of the setting at Ogulla is recognizable in the background of the painting, other than a suggestion of the well, perhaps, with its surround out of stones. While the overarching tree might be evocative of the trees at Ogulla beside which the spring has its source, the remainder of the detail is an imagined rendering of flowing waters and stone bridges.

A lengthy discussion in connection with the purchase of a banner was held at a Tulsk AOH meeting in January 1912. It was decided to amalgamate with the local United Irish League (UIL) branch in the purchase of the banner. Brothers Flannery, Flanagan, O'Kelly and Feeney were to

attend the next UIL meeting in order to discuss the proposed purchase and to choose a “motto”, meaning, in this context, a central image.* The “motto” chosen was Ogulla Well. In a follow-up meeting, about two weeks later, a long debate took place that resulted in a design being chosen for the banner. In April, Brother Charles Flanagan, of Monaboy, produced a drawing of Ogulla Well that he had done, seemingly on foot of the previous meeting. The secretary forwarded on Flanagan’s drawing to the artist.

S. R. Watson (this is how he signed his name on the banner) was a son of Henry Watson (1822-1911), Dublin artist and heraldic painter, and a nephew of Cork-born draughtsman Samuel Watson (1818-1866). He had rooms and a studio at 34 Upper Sackville Street (later O’Connell Street). From a Catholic family, he shared the accommodation with his parents until their deaths after which he was the sole occupier of the property. He remained unmarried all his life. Watson specialised in oil paintings, portraits and local Dublin scenes, and between 1910 and 1923 regularly exhibited at the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA). In the wake of the Easter 1916 Rising, he unsuccessfully made a claim to the Property Losses (Ireland) Committee 1916 for five framed paintings lost through burning of the RHA during Easter Week. A second claim he submitted was successful. He was awarded £7-12-10 for “damage caused by fire”, “concussion due to artillery firing, and abstraction respectively”. Among the lost items he claimed for were “gilt edged opal letters” on the door and window of his studio, an “old flint-lock rifle”, an “old sword” and a “Morocco bound prayer book”. Watson was found dead at his rooms in 1923. It was believed he had suffered a haemorrhage and had lain undiscovered for a number of days. At the time of his death, he was a director of Messrs. Boland Ltd. and Messrs. Duffy and Co., publishers. He had been a former director of the *Freeman’s Journal* Company and had served for some years on the board of a Dublin distillery company.

Watson was also a well-known, much respected banner maker. His workmanship in this field found its way to many parts of the country; his correspondence with groups about their order with him is reported in the newspapers of the time. More than likely, the Tusk AOH had heard of his service by word of mouth. Going by a common response of his clients, he was often praised for being adept at capturing the requested spirit and mood of orders. St Molaga’s Branch of the Irish National Foresters (INF), Balbriggan, heaped praise on him upon receipt of his delivery in 1903, describing him as “an accomplished and learned antiquarian, well versed in the topographical and ancient antiquities of Ireland” whose work showed “the sublime ideals and Celtic characteristics of the great mind who conceived and designed them”. He was lauded, on one occasion, for having “carried out the special order entrusted to him with accuracy, elegance and genuine discernment”. One wonders how happy AOH 670 were with their purchase. Considerable effort was made to ensure their banner had a specific local “motto”. Charles Flanagan’s “very artistic and complete sketch of Ogulla Well” had been dispatched to the artist. Had the Tusk Hibernians a more true-to-life background scene in mind for their banner?

The Tusk United Irish league (UIL) side of the banner is less original again and in no way specific to the locality. The central harp-and-flag-bearing female is suggestive of Ériu or Erin, commonly used as a representation of Ireland by nationalist organisations and movements. The images

surrounding her — greyhound, round tower and Celtic cross — form a disjointed, albeit thematically linked, collage. It is, down to the smallest details, almost exactly like the scene on one side of a banner Watson did for the INF in Derry, in 1904. The praise may well, at times, have been merited, but the artist obviously also worked to a template that showed neither imagination nor originality, although, to give him his due, that may have been exactly what his customers wanted.



It is not surprising that the Tulsks branches of the AOH and UIL came together to purchase a banner. In the early 1900s, a number of cultural and political organisations existed that were nationalist in outlook, although with slightly diverging focus and differing in their perspectives on how political and social issues could and should be resolved. The AOH had its beginnings in 1830s America, prompted by ribbonism brought across the Atlantic by Irish immigrants. It caught the attention of Belfast man Joe Devlin who promoted and encouraged its spread in Ireland under the Bord of Erin national executive that had become estranged from its founder organisation in the USA. According to Jody Moylan, in his Tulsks History Society newsletter article about Tulsks AOH 670 (*Newsletter No. 17*), there were 15 AOH Divisions in Co. Roscommon in 1911. The UIL, founded in Westport in 1899 by William O'Brien, was a nationalist political party based on land reform. Within a short number of years, it was widespread throughout the country. Both organisations were active in their support for Home Rule, a drive spearheaded by the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) under John Redmond.

Between 1900 and 1920, the AOH became a major force within the ranks of the IPP. It has been described as “the most important popular political power block in nationalist Ireland”. Overlap, at national level, of the AOH, UIL and IPP was common. In 1905, for instance, a number of UIL and IPP men were elected to AOH leadership positions. This was reflected in Tulsks: local press reports show occurrence of dual AOH and UIL membership. It is probable that other collaborative actions that happened elsewhere also occurred in Tulsks, including meetings being held back-to-back on the same day to facilitate attendance of both organisations, appearing together in demonstrations, and shared organisation of events. Tensions and acrimony did surface. In Boyle, for example, in 1905, Jasper Tully established an AOH Division there after having been expelled from the UIL. In 1909, however, Dublin Castle’s Inspector General noted that the two organisations were not in opposition and differed only in name, reporting “an alliance” and “harmony” between the two societies in Co. Roscommon.

The AOH held a different view. Its *Hibernian Journal*, asked to define the difference between the AOH and the UIL, saw the latter as “a purely Nationalist organisation”, pledged to attaining

legislative independence, while the former, in addition to that objective, “strives for the betterment of the Catholic population”. Going by contemporary reports, while Tusk AOH 670 members did engage with the political issues of their day, their focus was on local pastoral and social concerns. Their choice of “motto” for their banner clearly expressed the importance of faith and native place to them. For many years, the banner hung in the home of the Flanagan family of Clashaganny. Thomas Flanagan of that family was a prominent Order member. It is possible that after the Tusk Division faded away, about 1918, the banner ended up in his home where it survived. It was later donated to the Church of Saints Eithne and Fidelma in Tusk where it hung until recently. We are beholden to the people who have cared down the years for this important local artefact so that we can still enjoy it today and learn about our past from it.

*Members of the AOH referred to each other as “Brothers”. ♦

New Publication: The History of the Commercial Properties of Tusk Parish

For Heritage Week 2026, Tusk History Society is planning to publish a history of the shops and pubs in our parish spanning almost two centuries. The modern parish of Tusk, the largest in area in the Diocese of Elphin, consists of the old civil parishes of Ogulla, Baslick, Kilcooley, Killukin and the Killina part of Elphin. Without a built-up town within its borders, commercial activity was, and still is, centered in the villages of Tusk and Castleplunkett. Up to recent times, some standalone grocery shops, pubs and post offices also operated on the outer borders of the parish. The aim of this publication is to trace the ownership and activities of these businesses in a chronological format.

As the project is currently in progress, we are consulting various sources for the necessary information to build up a history of each property. The sources consulted so far include Griffith’s Valuation, Valuation Office Cancelled Books, Census Records and local newspapers for articles, advertisements and court reports on licencing applications. Descendants of the business owners and older residents of the community are being contacted for information and a newspaper appeal for old photographs has been published. The book launch is planned for Sunday, 23rd August.



Kilgannon's Pub, Tusk in 1948 ♦

SEASON 1896.

THE THOROUGHBRED STALLION,

LAPCOCK

BY HAYMAKER—OUT OF CARRIE,

Registered in Stud Book, Vol. 1s. Page 525.

(The Property of Mr. JOHN McHUGH, Strokestown).

Will stand this year at

THE COTTAGE, TULSK,

On **MONDAYS** and **TUESDAYS**

During the Season.

And the remainder of the week at

LISROYAN, STROKESTOWN.

FEE FOR ALL MARES - - TWO GUINEAS

To be paid on or before the 1st of October next.

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One of the many notifications that appeared in local newspapers in the late 1800s advertising stud stallion services. Ads followed the newspaper format which is seen above left. (Modern poster designed by THS)

SIMPSON'S SHOP CUSTOMERS 1923 & 1924

In the December 2025 issue of the Newsletter (No. 19), we published the 160-year history of Simpson's of Clooncullane shop and public house. It described how we salvaged a large archive of damp and damaged business records that were donated to the Society by the Devine family who now own the property. Among the documents was a journal that recorded the names of customers who purchased groceries, beer, spirits, cigarettes and agricultural goods on credit. A list of customers from 1915 and 1916 appeared in the March (No. 20) issue, and here we continue the series with the names of 97 customers from the 1923/24 period. The final list from the 1940s will appear in the September issue.

Ardakillan

Bartley Brennan

John Devine

Patrick Dockery

Mrs Kate Lane

Charles Lavin

Thomas McCormack

Francis McNeive

Michael Saunders

James Shanagher

Joseph Smith

Ardkeenagh

Paddy Conlon

Ballintemple (Cloonfinlough)

Michael McDonnell

Ballybroghan

Thomas Kearns

Ballydaly

Henry Connor

Patrick Fox

Miss Mary Egan

James Scally

Miss Margaret Scally

Bloomfield

John Carty

Michael McGarry

James McGuire

Carrigeenagappul

Pat Dufficy

Mrs Mary Cunningham

Andrew Dolan

John Dolan

James Kelly

Thomas Kelly

Michael Sweeney

Cartron

Peter Dufficy

Harry Eustace

Pat Owens

Luke Sweeney

Cloonakilla

Peter Banahan

Thomas McNeive

Cloonart

Thomas McDermott

Peter McDermott

Clooncor

James Dockery

Clooncullane

Roderick Beirne

Luke Dockery

Andrew Morahan

Clooneigh

Bernard Balfe

Peter Dalton

John Dufficy

James Keaveney

James Owens

Thomas Owens

Cloonfree

Thomas Furey

Cloonmurray

John Farrell

Miss Ellen Quinn

Matthew King

Miss Margaret Kilroe

Miss Bridget Lenaghan

Miss Ellen Quinn

Clooneybeirne

Patrick Connor

Matthew King

Corbally

Martin Conry

Corker

Michael McDermott

Corrabeg

Patrick Dufficy

Andrew McDermott

Corragarve

Margaret Brennan

John Daly

John Flanagan

James Gordon

William Kenny

Kate Saunders

Stephen Saunders

Correagh

Owen Carney

Pat Moran

Derryphatten

Michael Clabby
Matthew Donovan
Thomas Murray

Derryquirk

Michael Dolan

Foxboro

Peter Croghan

Kilcooley

William Darcy
Denis Darcy

Lisnaneane

Michael Conlon
Mrs Sarah Feeney
Charles McDermott
Peter Lowry

Lissaphuca

Reps of Michael Murray (died June 1924)
John Shannon

Monaboy

Peter Doherty
Martin Mulvey

Owen Mulvey

Nadnaveigh

Joe Flanagan
Michael Nugent
Eddie McCormack

Ogulla

Michael Kelly

Rathmore

Michael Murray

Shrove

John Connor
John Conway
William Curley
Thomas Farrell
John Gormley
Joseph Gormley
Mrs Mary Neary

Steil

John Greene

FAHY'S SHOP, GLENVELA, KILMURRY by Caroline Fahy Bailey

For decades, the morning sun would hit the windows of Fahy's just as the village of Glenvela was waking up. It was a daily ritual of commerce and community that began in 1923, when Michael (retired RIC officer, nicknamed Sgt Fahy) and Bridget Fahy (née McGarry from Frenchpark) first turned the key in the lock of their shop, situated just a few hundred yards from Kilmurry Church where Michael's brother, Fr. Bernard, had been a curate until 1922. By 1942, their son, Patrick G., had taken the reins. He didn't just run a business; he shaped a lifeline for the community. Under his watch, the shop expanded into a sprawling general store that held absolutely everything the local area needed to survive, celebrate, and carry on.

To step across the threshold of Fahy's was to enter a world where no human need was overlooked. The shelves were a marvel of variety. On any given day, a customer could buy fresh food, prime cuts of meat, the daily newspaper, or a packet of snuff. If a farmer needed gates, fencing, ironmongery, animal feeds, horseshoes or veterinary supplies, Patrick had them. If a housewife needed vibrant wallpaper, a tin of paint, or a bag of traditional whitewash to freshen up her home for the Stations, it was waiting for her. There were everyday clothes, shoes, and rows of sturdy wellington boots. There were kitchen utensils and, most famous of all, the elegant bone china tea sets that became the definitive, must-have wedding gift for generations of local couples. On Fridays, fresh fish was sold as abstinence from meat was required by the church. Pencil or pen calculated receipts, listing each item and tallying by hand (without calculators) before punching the heavy keys down on the shining brass National Cash Register, the drawer popping open with a sharp chime to receive the notes and coins and return the precise change. All purchases were wrapped tightly in brown butchers' paper, ends folded into neat triangles and tied with twine from a special dispenser that hung over every counter. At Christmas, the shop transformed entirely, radiating the magic of festive lights and toys. Fahy's even stocked the heavy leather suitcases that carried the hopes and the clothes of local sons and daughters emigrating to the UK and the USA.

The shop was also a hive of local industry. It didn't just sell goods; it traded in life's raw materials. Farmers arrived with sacks of sheep's wool to sell and baskets of fresh farm eggs to trade for credit. In the back, the rumble of machinery echoed as grains were milled and corn was crushed for livestock feed. In the decades before modern electricity reached every home, Fahy's served as the local power station, recharging the heavy, liquid acid-filled wet batteries that kept the village's radios alive and singing. People arrived by every means imaginable. They came on foot, on bicycles, or guided donkeys and pony-and-cart teams down the road, tying them up alongside the village's very first motorcars.

In 1930, a young Patrick Gerard walked through the doors of Kilmurry National School for the very first time, joining a registry of over seventy children. The school photograph from that era captured a striking reality of rural Irish life: several of the children are barefoot. The population of Ireland in 1930 was just under 3 million with the vast majority living in the countryside. Irish families, especially in the countryside, were larger and the lack of transport, infrastructure meant that people were limited to how far they could walk or cycle to. Castlerea was over seven miles away, so Fahy's shop became essential for the local population, supplying everything they needed to survive and thrive.

More than anything, Fahy's was the social anchor of the parish. On Sundays, the street outside buzzed with life as neighbours gathered to trade gossip and news after both early and late Mass.

In the evenings, the shop took on a different, warmer rhythm. The click of darts and the shuffle of playing cards filled the air, fuelled by bottles of Lucozade, the definitive beverage of choice for a night out. Back then, the All-Ireland final was a community event of a different kind. In the early days of television, Fahy's home served as a local hub. Neighbours would gather to watch a grainy black and white screen; their ears tuned to the legendary Michael O'Hehir broadcasting through the window.

It was also the village's gateway to the wider world. When the Fahy's installed the very first telephone in the area, it came with the memorable phone number: Castleplunkett 2. The shop counter instantly became an emergency dispatch centre. From that wooden counter, locals phoned for the vet in the middle of the night, summoned the doctor, and stayed connected with the pulse of the world.

In the decades before modern cash-and-carry wholesale, the arrival of stock was a weekly, village stopping spectacle. Every manufacturer delivered their own goods, breathing vibrant life into the quiet street with the clatter of heavy engines and bold, rolling colour: the iconic, crimson Coca-Cola truck, the towering Kosangas double-decker lorry stacked with clanking yellow cylinders, and massive trucks weighed down by fertilizer. Once the shop floor and stores were fully stocked, Fahy's own delivery service sprang into action. Every evening, their steadfast van set out, traveling the length and breadth of the parish to bring animal feed, groceries and essential provisions directly to the doorsteps of those who couldn't make it to the village.

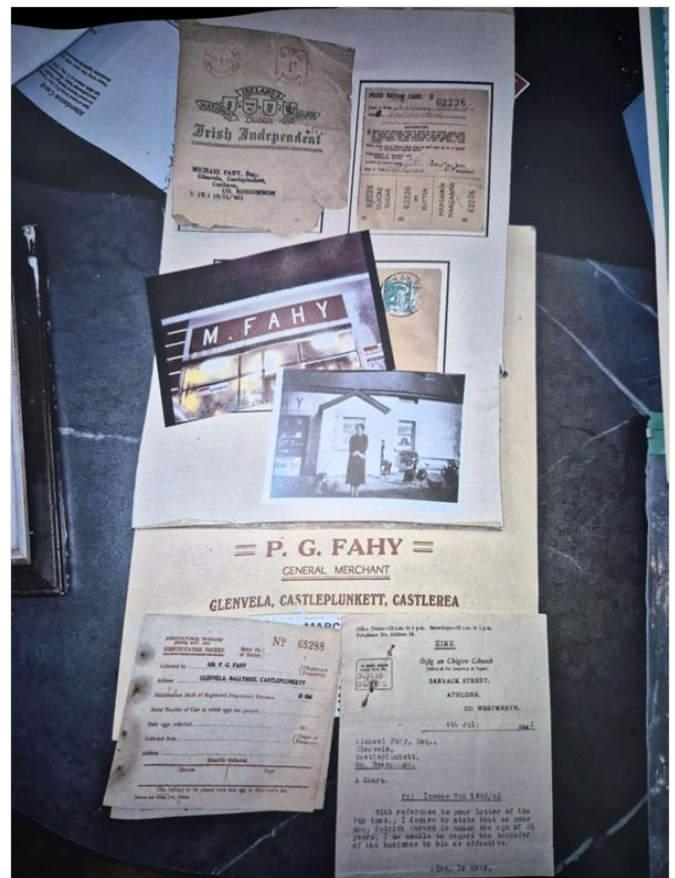
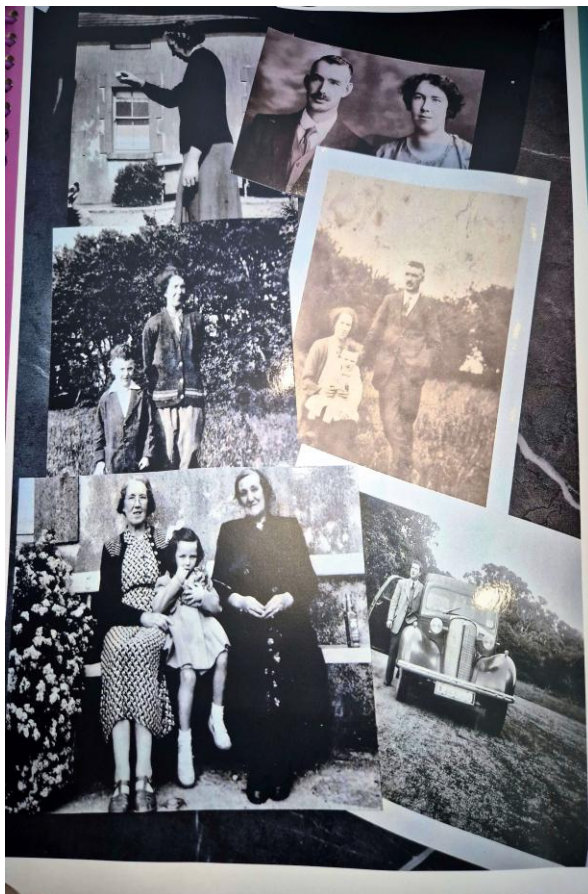
These beloved local shops were never merely businesses; they were the beating heart of the community. At their core were the remarkable men who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Fahy family- John, Martin, James, Paddy, T. P. and in later years, Tom. They transformed daily commerce into a warm, enduring tradition. Stepping through the front door and hearing that first familiar chime felt just like returning home. Whether you were a regular seeking sage advice, a curious tourist browsing the aisles, or a hurried sales rep carrying an armful of stock, you were met with the exact same measure of professionalism and kindness. They weren't just employees - they became a cherished pillar of the family's legacy. They always found a moment for a courteous word, a flash of light-hearted banter, and a steady, reassuring presence that kept the entire operation running like clockwork. Their collective legacy stands today as a beautiful reminder of what community and honest work truly mean. They never just served customers; they offered genuine human connection. Their kindness, professionalism, and unwavering loyalty became deeply etched into the history of the shop, the family, and the hearts of those lucky enough to step through the door.

Outside the shop walls, rural Ireland was undergoing a massive transformation. Over seventy years, a landscape once dominated by subsistence farming and the bittersweet sorrow of mass emigration evolved into a modernized, integrated European economy. This sweeping evolution was marked by defining historical milestones, including 'The Emergency', three major currency changes that forced shopkeepers to constantly adapt. World War II (The Emergency). squeezed rural Ireland through strict state-mandated agricultural controls, severe supply blockades and tight rationing. Ration cards or books became a daily feature in Fahy's as the Government oversaw the rationing of imported goods like tea, sugar, flour, butter and bread from 1942. Each book contained pages of numbered squares, and the shopkeeper had to clip out the corresponding coupons to track the items purchased

The arrival of Decimal Day, in Feb 1971 saw the complex old world of pounds, shillings, and pence, where 240 pence made a pound, vanish. It was replaced by a streamlined decimal system

of 100 new pence to the pound, instantly simplifying rural trade and bookkeeping for local businesses. Then came 1979, the year the Irish pound severed its one-to-one parity with the British pound sterling to join the European Monetary System finally, between 1999 and 2002. Adopting the euro sparked a brilliant, chaotic mix of debate and confusion on the shop floor. Shopkeepers faced the daily headache of dividing and multiplying every price tag just to figure out the price of a loaf of bread or a packet of cigarettes in this new "funny money."

Time, however, eventually brought an end to even the most bustling routines. Claire, Patrick G.'s beloved wife, passed away in 1982, and Patrick G. followed her in 1989. The responsibility of the family business fell to their son, Kieran. While Kieran successfully guided the store into a rapidly changing modern world, the era of the traditional, all-in-one country shop was drawing to an inevitable close. In the mid-1990s, the door of Fahy's General Store swung shut for the very last time. The familiar clatter of delivery trucks and the nostalgic ring of the Castleplunett 2 telephone faded into silence, leaving behind a rich, golden chapter of community spirit etched forever into the memory of Glenvela.



Above: Photos of the Fahy family during the time of the shop, and some documents and photos from the shop itself

TULSK HISTORY SOCIETY

Membership

*We hope you have enjoyed the June 2026 edition of our newsletter. New members are most welcome to join the Society. If you wish to do so, please email us on historytulsk@gmail.com. Annual fees are €30 for adults and €10 for students. For those wishing to read our latest Tusk Morning Howl or view our cemetery records; you can do so by visiting our website at **tulskhs.com**. Until next time; enjoy the rest of Summer and we'll be back with more in September!*

