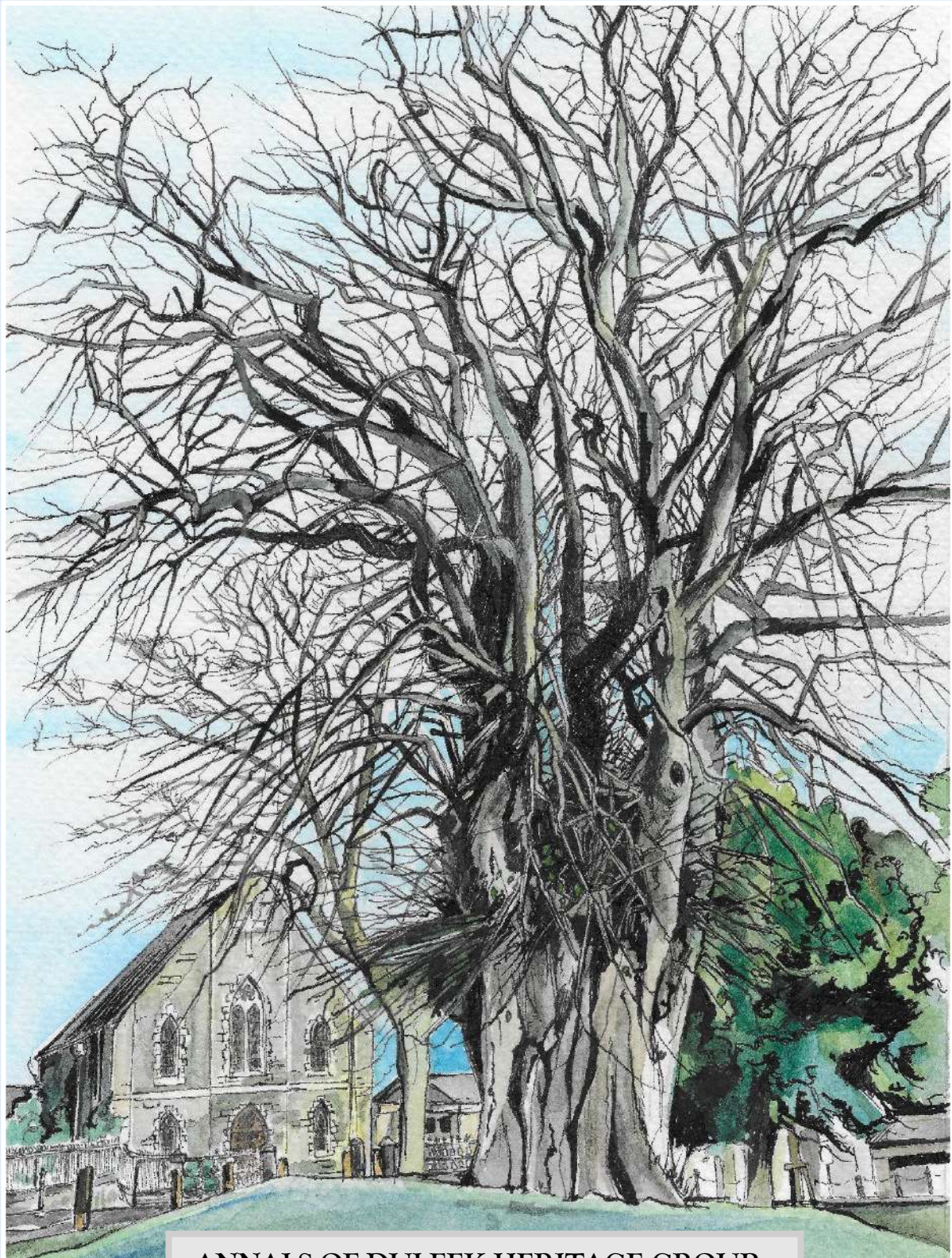




ANNALS OF DULEEK HERITAGE GROUP

2021

No.4

Contents

Duleek Heritage Group	2
Frederick Augustus Smith	4
Strange Stories from Duleek from 1950's and onwards.	6
Two Graves No Body	8
Rosie Hackett	13
A Day in the Bog	16
Bringing Home the Cows	17
My Favourite Tree	19
The Big Tree	20
Simon Coleman Working for the Folklore Commission Co. Galway	21
The Murder of William Hatch	30
Duleek School Photographs	48

Cover

The Lime tree on the green at Duleek – original watercolour by Andria Wright.

Cover design Andria Wright

Duleek Heritage Group

Chairperson Report 2022

by Patricia Spellacey

Welcome back everyone from Duleek heritage group. The Fair Day was back in June after a couple of years' absence due to the COVID epidemic and this year our worthy recipient for the freedom of Duleek was Derek Clarke

Derek was born and raised here and took an interest in the history and heritage of Duleek and the surrounding areas from an early age. He discovered a fair in Duleek started by king Edward in 1342 which sadly fell by the wayside in successive years. Fortunately for us the fair was re-introduced, by Derek and the Heritage Group, in 2010. During the summer months Derek keeps the heritage office open in the courthouse for the public to avail of the information that is stored there. He is also available for talks and walks by highlighting the heritage sites scattered around the village. (on request). There have been many visitors from Europe and as far away as America and Canada to see where their ancestors originated from and have gathered much information through Derek's help and research. Derek has also kept the commons alive for the people of Duleek by walking round and challenging anyone who encroaches on it. Thankyou Derek for all your hard work.



Derek with family receiving the Freedom of Duleek

Simon Coleman RHA - The proposed commemorative exhibition to mark the 25 anniversary of the artist death finally happened after a two and half year wait due to COVID, on the weekend of 12/14th August 2022 in Heritage week. The exhibition started with an opening speech welcoming everyone and a bit of history about Simon and his life's work.

Many of the forty or so paintings and sketches owners came to the opening evening and the people asked many questions about Simon and his paintings. During the weekend there was a steady flow of people who came and looked which included children of various ages who enjoyed the different subjects on show.



The opening of the Simon Coleman Exhibition



Presentation of the framed copy of "The Man of the West" by Simon Coleman to Father Mark English & Father Anthony Ayoola by the Heritage Group. Group members Phil Kelly, Jim Curley, Derek Clarke, Pat Spellacey, Andrew Wright and Catriona Dillon.

Finally, I would like to thank Andria Wright for designing the cover.

Frederick Augustus Smith

By Patricia Spellacey

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Augustus Smith VC (18 November 1826 – 22 July 1887) was a British Army officer and an Irish recipient of the Victoria Cross. His family connections to Duleek is the Smith's of Duleek House.



Born in Dublin on 18 November 1826, Smith was commissioned as an ensign into the 1st Regiment of Foot (Royal Scots) on 1 January 1849. He was promoted to lieutenant on 30 April 1852. He saw action during the Crimean War at Alma, Inkerman and Sebastopol and was promoted to captain on 30 March 1855. He later transferred to the 43rd (Monmouthshire) Regiment of Foot

Smith was 37 years old, and a captain in the 43rd (Monmouthshire) Regiment of Foot during the Waikato-Hauhau Maori War in New Zealand. He commanded a detachment of the 43rd to attack an entrenchment held by the Māori. The following deed took place during the attack on 21 June 1864 at Tauranga for which he was awarded the VC.

“For his distinguished conduct during the engagement at Tauranga, on the 21st of June. He is stated to have led on his Company in the most gallant manner at the attack on the Maories' position, and, although wounded previously to reaching the Rifle Pits, to have jumped down into them, where he commenced a hand to hand encounter with the Enemy, thereby giving his men great encouragement, and setting them a fine example.”

In the charge he was struck by a bullet which lodged in the upper part of his leg. He continued to lead his men and was the first man into the entrenchment. Following fierce fighting, the Māori having sustained heavy casualties were driven from their position. In the attack Smith killed one of the Māori Chiefs and took possession of his baton known as a Mere. The Chief's family subsequently offered substantial sums of money to retrieve the Mere. After Smith's death the Mere was eventually returned to a museum in New Zealand; a relic of the British Army's wars in that country.

He later achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel. He commanded the 43rd Foot from 1 December 1875 to 2 February 1878 when he retired from the army.

He died in Duleek, Co Meath, 22 July 1887. His grave (unmarked) is in Duleek (Church of Ireland) Churchyard, Co Meath. A memorial plaque to him, originally in Duleek Church, is now situated in Kilmore Church, standing in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Co Down. It was Norman and Eileen Irvine and their son David (Irish Guards) from Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim who rescued the marble plaque from ruin in the Duleek church. The Ox and Bucks regiment wished to have it but it was decided to have it stay in Ireland.



Extract edited from Wikipedia

Pictures from [Frederick Augustus Smith VC - Lord Ashcroft Medal Collection \(lordashcroftmedals.com\)](https://www.fredashcroftmedals.com/) & <https://www.geni.com/>

Strange Stories from Duleek from 1950's and onwards.

By Jim Curley

At a young age I had great admiration for my father and his close friends – namely Paddy Reilly, Jim Conlon. They would come to visit my father a couple of times a week. They would relate back to the 1800's. The events they would discuss in our kitchen – “ghosts”, “Banshee” and many strange happenings area the area.

The big houses in the area would have many stories related to them. Duleek house was a priority with many ghostly happenings. Paddy and his father worked in Duleek house at the dairy. One night a cow was due to calve. Paddy said to his father he would go up to the dairy on his bike – on the road. The father said he would walk up the avenue - there was an entrance at the Nanny bridge. This entrance was for the coaches. Paddy sat waiting for his father. When the father arrived he was in a complete state of stock. He told Paddy a large black dog had walked with him and vanished when he reached the entry gate as there were no dogs of any description in the house or yard. Paddy would always say the dog was the devil's advocate!

One night after a dance in Abbeylands Ballroom Brian Connaughton and myself left the girls – who worked in Duleek house home. They told us they – on a regular basis heard footsteps on the stairs - a light would appear at the bottom door, then go into the yard and disappear. It would put a certain fear into one walking by the gates.

I had my experience – Mr Dwyer reared thousands of chickens. I worked catching them at 3 – 4 in the mornings. One morning in February, I had to go by the gates. It was snowing heavily – I thought some one was following me. I could hear a funny noise behind me just at the gates. I slipped and fell on my back scared stiff - as I lay on the road – guess what – a big sheet of newspaper flew over me!

My father used to play cards with his mates down in Cologan Street. The house they played in was owned by James McKenna – who had a large bulldog – as he called it. The dog was scraping at the door to get out one night – but he was back a short time later – lay on the floor – four paws up in the air – frothing out of the mouth and would not move! Two of the lads went out on a call of nature – when they came back in they said, they heard the banshee wailing nearby at a house near by a neighbour – who had died. The myth at the time was that the Banshee followed certain families. When the cards resumed accidentally one of the lads let a card fall under the table. When he leaned down to pick up the card, he saw a club foot under the table. Next day he tells the lads the story. The old myth was at the time when the banshee and the devils advocate appeared when someone died. I spoke with people who claimed they saw a banshee with long red hair - a small woman.

My father managed Mr Byrnes farm covered the land where the school is built and right up to Brierly Every field had a name i.e. “The wicked meadow”, “The straw field”, “The Crook Field”, “The lump Field”, “Cronins” and more. We used to help father pump water for the cattle at weekends. Our reward was a new football. I experienced a most unusual happening one Saturday on the field known as “The Wicked Meadow”. Another said keep away from the top of the field. Curiosity made us have a look – about twenty or so hares around in a circle.

His description of the event - don't disturb them that's is the witches conference. At the bottom of the field was a large pond – I often get a call to get up during the night, dogs attacking the sheep and lambs. I would be told not to go near the pond – why? – he told me a huntsman was killed when thrown from his horse in the pond, he, the huntsman broke his neck. Father said he often heard the noise of the horse running through the pond late at night.

Another happening and much talked about, even when we were going to school was the “Stray” sod. I had an experience with good angling friend Paddy Lewins. This only happened in the night time. It goes – if you walk on a stray sod. You could walk around a field all night and not find the gate or gap to get out. The only way to solve the problem was to turn your coat inside out and wear it. We were fishing down the country. We were heading for a gap in the hedge. We always got out – but no way could we find it. Walked up and down a few times – shone lights etc. We had to walk back up the field and cross to a shallow part and walk down the opposite bank. Three days later we went down to check things and there was a gap – wide open!

One of the other myths of the area was the lone bush. They would say in the past if you cut a lone white thorn bush something would happen to you. I knew a man who worked on the Duleek House estate. With a workmate while replacing a stone wall they cut down a lone white thorn bush. Three days later going to a field to exercise horses at the exact same spot one of the horses reared up, and threw the man. He broke his shoulder getting a heavy fall on the road. That was the School Road. The ruins of the wall still stand. This was known as Granny Weldons. Remains of the house still stand. Another incident occurred at this area a year or so later. Cattle would arrive from the sales in Drogheda for Mr Byrnes farm. It was a regular slot to unload them. I had to stand on the road holding a lantern. I saw lights in the distance – it was getting closer. My father pulled the lorry helper one side and the driver did likewise with me. It was a black car and a priest was driving. We said a prayer and thanked god no one was hurt. Two weeks later the lorry helper was killed down in Wexford at the back of the same lorry. Father said after the tragedy “What we witnessed – a message of warning”.

One of the famous locations in the area was Caragubbin. It was regularly talked about. People would say the fairies lived there and only came out at night – played music and danced. The rock of Caragubbin is located above Stonyford Quarry on the right hand side clearly visible. On the front of the rock face there is a cave. As young lads we visited the cave now and then. Some of the old folk would say the cave came from Millrace up to Caragubbin. I saw when Millrace was being built. A large opening on the high bank near the road. It was filled in at the time. A friend still alive and well living in Duleek told me a story related to Caragubbin. As a teenager himself and three friends decided to sleep in the cave one night. As the night wore on they heard waves of fiddle music coming from the back of the cave. He was convinced all the stories about Caragubbin handed down by people over the years bore some form of truth.

Jim Conlon RIP was a great source of information. Jim lived to 90 plus. I had a little recorder – he would let me record some of his stories. I would call in to him a couple of nights a week. He would have a doze – waken up and say “*Jim*” as he called me “*we are still together*” – just stories would be on the menu. One night he said “*Jim do you know what. When the electricity came in and plenty of light around. The ghosts and banshee all disappeared!*”

Two Graves No Body

By Rose Ryan

Uncle Richard (Clarke) was always a shadowy figure in our family. He kind of hung around the edges of stories and only came into conversations really when Mammy and Auntie May got together. Even then, there was a wistfulness around when they talked about Richard. They would quickly move on to another subject. They never said much about him.



For me, he was kind of mysterious and a bit glamorous too.

Well he had been a pilot!' Men in uniforms' and all that. Mammy would sometimes refer to 'Richard' in a strong, proud voice but this held no real meaning for any of us as we had never met him and knew nothing about him.

The 'blessing of the graves' in Duleek always made me think of him, I would read the words - on the headstone. I would wonder again about this young man and try to fill in the blanks. I don't know why I didn't ask more questions before people died. Somehow I knew Mammy didn't really want to talk about him, that wistfulness would come over her again and you just knew, quit!

Richard was my mother's brother, younger than her. There was also Auntie May and Uncle John and they grew up on Main Street, Duleek. Mammy was Bernadette Clarke.

The family story that we, the cousins, had pieced together was that Richard was in love with one of the St George Smyth girls from Duleek House and in those days that just 'didn't do', He was 'only' the son of a carpenter and she was 'gentry'! I wonder have things REALLY changed all that much. The relationship was forbidden and Richard packed his bag and his broken heart and headed, like so many others, to England and there he joined the Royal Air Force but, then there was another story, not nearly as romantic, that he had had a row with his father (our grandfather) and left, just like that.

So, you know the way of stories, and the way of families, nothing gets lost, bits get added and you never really know the truth - but then again, is there ever one truth? Sure... there are lots of facts but people put those facts together in their own way, from their own point of view, caught in their own history as it were, That's the way we all are, caught in our own notions of what 'really happened'.

But back to Richard, all we did know for sure, as 'Oprah says, we (the cousins and me) was that Richard did join the Royal Airforce and he did die whilst in service during the Second World War.

You know those family occasions, you know like weddings or funerals or when you meet the cousins and you PROMISE to keep in touch and not just 'meet like this. Well Edward, 1st cousin, here tonight, Auntie May's son. You remember Auntie May, Mammy's sister of the Bernadette, Richard, John and May from Main Street family fame, father carpenter, mother fruit merchant, woman before her time, employed only women and they could bring their children. NO child care issues in those days but that's another story about Granny!

Back to Richard and Edward-Edward 1st cousin here tonight - Edward said, I'll do it! I'll get some information about 'Uncle Richard' I always notice how Edward still uses the terms Uncle Richard and Auntie Bernadette for my mammy. I think it's lovely, it smacks of nice old families. Lovely,

Sooo..... Edward took it on 'find out' and did he what?

We have a lot of the story now - Richard Joseph Clarke was born on 4th April 1915. Educated to Leaving Certificate standard by the Christian Brothers in Drogheda. He must have trained as a carpenter with his father as carpentry is mentioned in his RAF papers - the old father and son working together story. Richard enlisted in the Air force on the 19th April 1939 at age 24 - remember the broken love affair or was it the row. He was five foot six inches with a thirty three inch chest, brown hair, blue eyes, smallpox vaccination and a small mark over left eyebrow - wonder where he got that - boyhood fight? - wonder with whom?

His career is well documented in the records - recommended for Airman Pilot training 11th September 1940 at age 25. He was lauded in his work. Awarded Flying Badge 17th September 1941. Awarded 1939/1945 War Medal. Awarded the Aircrew Europe Star 19 November 1943. He gained a 1st for conduct on the 19th April 1942. He received the Defence Medal and the France and Germany Clasp. I wonder did they know about his honours at home in Main Street? On 13th December 1944 he was discharged from unit 652 on appointment to a Temporary Commission —wonder what that was and on 23rd December 1944 ten days later, he was FB - found to be missing - his body was never found. He had a total service of five years and 239 days. He was twenty-nine years old. His own father was deceased by then. Can you imagine his sorrowful mother when she was notified of his missing? It is heart breaking to think that had he lived a short time longer he may well have come home 'safe and sound to Main St Duleek.

We still don't know the why of Richard's story but we now know a lot of the what. Yes he was glamorous, he had integrity; he did his duty well by all accounts. He was beautiful, see photo. He was honoured and honourable. We have his medals, see medals and yes I think he was sad, he carried this sadness with him whether about his lost love or a family rift, I don't know. I think it was this sadness that Mammy and Aunty May felt when his name came up. They carried it for him too. Now when I go to the grave garden (as my granddaughter calls it), I know Richard better.. ... He is not as shadowy. I like him, I like him very much. It seems to me that he had fine qualities He did his work with diligence, he had courage to do that work, he was intelligent and had character as all the words on his records testify. Mammy was right to speak his name in that voice. We (the cousins and me) are all proud now of Uncle Richard, our' officer and gentleman'.

Our family (Clarke) grave is at the back wall of the 'old cemetery' near the Catholic gate. It's the grave with the four small pillars and you can read his name there. His other memorial reference is on Panel 210 at Runnymede. Two graves no body. And.... I wonder... at the end of this story, in all the time since 1939 are things any different today? Does class still break hearts in today's Ireland and do we still let family rows tear us apart?

On this special day Duleek's first Culture Night storytelling and, my mother's 100th birthday – yes today if she was still alive - I dedicate this story to her and to Edward (cousin here tonight) who found this story for us and especially to 56445 Pilot Officer R J Clarke Royal Air Force, 'An Officer and A Gentleman' - indeed!



Richard's medals – Aircrew Europe Star with France and German Clasp – Defence Medal – War Medal – 39-45 Star.

CLARKE Richard Joseph. 17/4/40 Duleek 640809--

BIRTH. Date 14/15. Nationality British. RELIGION. CIVIL OCCUPATION. CARPENTER. Period Employed.

Place: Town Drogheda. R. C. 22 Employer FATHER. Address 78 MEATH. EIRE.

MARRIAGE. Wife's Maiden Name. Date Place Date transferred to Married Establishment

CHILDREN. NAMES. DATE OF BIRTH. NEXT OF KIN OR PERSON TO BE NOTIFIED OF CASUALTIES. (To be entered in pencil). Name Mrs. J. S. CLARKE. Address Main St. Duleek, MEATH. EIRE. Relationship Brother 19/4/43

PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENTS. Unit. Period. From To Rank on Discharge Former Service permitted: — As Service yrs. days " Qual. Service " " For G.C. Badge " " For Prog. Pay " " Authy.

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT. 9 & 0. Reg. Service Exp. 18/4/48. Date of Enlistment 19/4/39. Service Commenced 19/4/39. Transferred from. Extended for. Prolonged for. Re-engaged for.

TIME FORFEITED. Authy. Cause. Dates. From To No. of Days.

DESCRIPTION. Height. Feet. Ins. Chest. Ins. Colour of Hair. Eyes. Comp. Marks. Scars, etc. On Entry 5 6: 33 DBRN Blu Fsh Vac 1L Rn. Sm Sc Lt. E Brow. MISCELLANEOUS. Recommended for training as Airman Pilot on 11/9/40. F.S.S. Medically fit A1B & A3B for Pilot. Dst. 5 Years 3 9 44 809/44. ANNUAL FILMING MAR 1941. ANNUAL FILMING MAR 1942. 14/4. Awarded Flying Badge 17-9-41. 17/42. Awarded 1939/43 Star 19-11-43.

HOME ADDRESS. (To be entered in pencil). 11. Duleek, Drogheda, MEATH. EIRE.

TRANSFER TO RESERVE. Date Para. K.R. Mohn. Stn. Annl. Trg. Date Recall from Reserve (Date)

DISCHARGE. Date 13. 12. 44 Para. 652 (14) KRACI Cause On Appointment to a Temporary Commission Total Service 5 years 239 days. " Qual. Service 5 " 239 " Pension Award.

GOOD CONDUCT BADGES. Authy. 1st. 2nd. 3rd. A. D. R. Date of Effect. F.1520 1st. A. 19. 4. 42. 55 Awards Section 29/2/44. FB Missing 23-12-44.

Particulars of Medals, etc. Authy. & Date DATE Received Despatched Stock Rk. Ref. Page Book.

Form 543. (440) W/L 22568-2376 20,000 in 3 parts 4/38 T.S. 703 (269-440) W/L 22561-633 40,000 7/38 T.S. 700

AR9/5 6-4-45 XAA000685631 TNT

Richard Clarke's war record II.

Rosie Hackett

by Patricia Spellacey

Rosanna "Rosie" Hackett (25 July 1893 – 4 May 1976) was an Irish insurgent and trade union leader. She was a founder-member of the Irish Women Workers' Union, and supported strikers during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. She later became a member of the Irish Citizen Army and was involved in the 1916 Easter Rising. In the 1970s, the labour movement awarded Hackett a gold medal for decades of service, and in 2014 a Dublin city bridge was named in her memory. Hackett never married and lived in Fairview with her brother Tommy until her death.



Rosie Hackett fought for many decades for the rights of workers. Through her affiliation and work with the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU), the Irish Women Worker's Union (IWWU) and the Irish Citizen Army, she helped carve out and secure modern-day working conditions. Hackett's career began as a packer in a paper store, she then became a messenger for Jacob's biscuits.

On 22 August 1911 Hackett helped organise the withdrawal of women's labour in Jacob's factory to support their male colleagues who were already on strike. With the women's help, the men secured better working conditions and a pay rise. Two weeks later, at the age of eighteen, Hackett co-founded the Irish Women Worker's Union (IWWU) with Delia Larkin. During the 1913 Lockout Hackett helped mobilise the Jacob's workers to come out in solidarity with other workers, they, in turn, were locked out by their own employers. This did not stop Rosie Hackett's work to help others, and she along with several of her IWWU colleagues set up soup kitchens in Liberty Hall to help feed the strikers. However, in 1914 her Jacob's employers sacked her over her role in the Lockout.

Hackett began work as a clerk in the printshop in Liberty Hall, and it was here she became involved with the Irish Citizen Army. Hackett was involved in preparations for the 1916 Rising, working in a union shop, helping with printers, and making first-aid kits and knap-sacks.

She took up first aid training provided by Dr. Kathleen Lynn for six months before the rising and attended night marches organised by the Irish Citizen Army. According to her own account, Hackett said *"A week before Easter, I took part in the ceremony of hoisting the*

challenge flag over Hall". Like other girls and women who were involved in the Rising, she carried messages and guns, and prepared uniforms and food for Irish Republican Army members *"and sometimes risky work"*.

Three weeks before the Easter Rising, the Royal Irish Constabulary raided a shop where Hackett was working. She was alone when they came and they were looking for a copy of *"Gael"*. She said to them *"wait till I get the head"* and she called for Connolly. The police were stopped by Connolly and Helena Molony who were armed, and Hackett immediately hid everything, so that when the police came back they could not get anything. Because of that event, the police knew that they were armed and they had to double up work, so Rosie was in Liberty Hall all the time.

Hackett was part of the group that printed the first proclamation of 1916. Through her experience of working in the printshop she helped to print the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. She was in the printing room in Liberty Hall as a trusted messenger in 1916 when the Proclamation was printed and it was the first time she was allowed in. However, she knew about their technical difficulties: *"they hadn't much type, (...) the type was short and they had to patch it up a bit (...) and they worked at night"*. She remembers that three men were there when she entered the room and one came over to her, shook her hand and congratulated her. It made her very proud; especially that no one else was allowed to get in. She subsequently told family members of handing it still wet to James Connolly before it was read out by Padraic Pearse on the steps of the GPO.

Hackett was an active member of the Irish Citizen Army. On Easter Tuesday, under the command of Constance Markievicz, Hackett took part in the 1916 Rising and was located in the area of St Stephen's Green and the Royal College of Surgeons. This position was heavily attacked with guns, short of first-aid and *"looked like a death trap"*. However, after moving from an initially overlooked position in Stephen's Green, it was one of the last positions to surrender. In the Royal College, Rosie Hackett as a first-aid practitioner was allowed entry to the lecture room sanctioned to the Red Cross only. Another first-aider, Aider Nora O'Daily, later reported that during those days: *"I have a very kind remembrance of Little Rosie Hackett of the Citizen Army, always cheerful and always willing; to see her face about the place was a tonic itself"*. After surrendering, the rebels were taken to Dublin Castle. Hackett was imprisoned in Kilmainham Jail for ten days.

In 1917, on the anniversary of Connolly's death, Hackett together with Helena Molony, Jinny Shanahan and Brigid Davis printed and hung a poster detailing the anniversary, *"James Connolly, Murdered May 12th, 1916."* After the first poster displayed by the ITGWU members was taken down by the police, they worked to ensure that their poster would stay on Liberty Hall much longer – by staying on top of the roof to defend it. They barricaded the door using a ton of coal and nails on the windows. The poster was hanging there until 6 pm and thousands of people could see it. Hackett has reported that, *"it took four hundred policemen to take four women"* and only to avoid embarrassment in the public eye was the reason why they were not arrested. She described their revolutionist feelings about this action: *"We enjoyed it at the time – all the trouble they were put to."*

After the Rising, Hackett returned to the IWWU which, at its strongest, organised over 70,000 women. After the 1945 laundry strike, they won an extra week of paid holidays for the workers. She attended many important labour union events such as the opening of the

new Liberty Hall on 2 May 1965 and Arbour Hill memorial services. Until her retirement, she ran the trade union shops resulting in over 5 decades of active participation in the Irish trades union movement work to improve conditions for Irish workers. In 1970 she was awarded a gold medal for fifty years of ITGWU membership.



Article edited from Wikipedia

Pictures from <https://operatoday.com/> & <https://www.thinkbusiness.ie/>

A Day in the Bog

By Catriona Dillon

At school we were told that Ireland resembled a saucer or basin. The mountains were along the coast from the Dublin Mountains all around to the Cooley Hills. The centre of the country was a wet-land or bog, called The Bog of Allen. Bogs play a very big part in biodiversity and the reversal of the damage caused by climate change. Sadly, less than ten per cent of Irish peat-land remains intact. Awareness of their importance means more of them are being protected and preserved as nature reserves. Because of the acidic nature of the soil in the bog-land food and even human bodies have been dug up after hundreds of years relatively intact.

Bogs are formed by thousands of years of vegetation which grew on the wet lands, Year after year the plants, shrubs and small trees grew and died back forming layer after layer of dead vegetation which became peat land. The flowers and fauna of the bog are particular to the area. Various heathers and bog cotton grow everywhere and present a very different landscape. A drainage system was put in place to dry up the area for turf-cutting. These drains can be quite deep and much of the wild flowers grow on their banks. Frogs, toads and newts are common sights on the bog-land.

In the mid-seventies we lived in a cottage on five acres on the edge of Knockirr Bog on the Kildare and Offaly border. The land was well suited to market gardening. Vegetables especially root vegetables like carrots, parsnips and potatoes grew very well uninhibited by stones and rough soil. We had turf-cutting rights in the local bog. In the early years we cut our own turf. This was done by an implement called a "slan". This had a long handle and resembled a narrow spade with a curve on the right side which cut the sods of turf from the bank. These sods were then spread out on the ground to dry. This operation usually took place in early May but was weather dependant. The sods had to be turned several times to dry out. Next the turf was "footed". This meant that they were put into small stacks for the wind to dry them out. The next step was "heaps" to finish off the drying process, the turf remained in the bog until before the weather broke, usually at the end of July, when it was brought home.

Work in the bog was back-breaking. Children who were nearer to the ground were very well suited to the work. However, they very soon got bored and met up with friends and school mates and went off exploring and playing hide-and-seek. It was also hungry work so a picnic was essential. The comradery and craic was great, some of the older people didn't have the help they needed so it was all hands on deck. Some young people supplemented their pocket money by spending their summer working in the bog.

After a couple of years, the turf was cut by a very large machine. This cut down on a lot of the heavy work. The ground was soft and springy underfoot, but the hard nature of the heather stems meant that we didn't go barefoot. Also there was no shelter from the relentless sun.

Small tractors and sometimes homemade trailers brought home the turf. For those who didn't have a "turf Shed" the turf was stacked in such a way that the rain flowed off. The stacks were often covered by plastic.

We moved away from the area some years later but the bog still is a great place for a stroll down memory lane.

Bringing Home the Cows

By Catriona Dillon

*The little black cow lows in my dream
Her eyes like clouds on an upland hill,
Rich and soft mid it's lowly streams.*

This beautiful pastoral extract from the poem “Dreams” by Francis Ledwidge brought me on a journey back down the corridors of my mind, to my time spent “bringing home the cows” as a young teenager. Being the eldest of three girls this was my job. This was the early to mid-sixties. The Department of Agriculture introduced grants for farmers who wished to go into Dairying. My father was one who took up the challenge.

I was a bit of a dreamer so I loved this time spent in the fields with the gentlest of animals -- lactating cows. Like every society, a herd of cows has it's pecking order. The big bossy ones out in front, udders swinging and long legs flying, like women on a mission. Their aim to be first into the milking shed and devour as many nuts as possible. In the middle were the shy ones, the nervous ones and the mediocre milkers, the ones who didn't want to be noticed at all and cause the least possible fuss. My favourites were the cows who stayed at the back of the herd, the greedy cows who snatched every last morsel of grass as they travelled along, the old ones who knew the score and knew that they would get their fair share of the food no matter when they arrived at the shed and the friendly ones who seemed to like my company as I chatted away to them. (I was always a bit of a chatterbox)

Each cow had her place in the milking shed and were tied about the neck for the duration of the milking. Hugs were a scarce commodity in those days. I was allowed tie up the quiet cows. This allowed me a lovely warm hug and sometimes a sloppy kiss as well!

This ritual lasted from Spring 'til late autumn. Spring was always my favourite. She appeared in the fields dressed in yellow. She waved her wand and buttercups, dandelions and shy primroses on the banks of the stream appeared and shone like stars on a dark night. Wild life came back to the fields. Mad March hares dashed about. Rabbits scurried into their burrows. Birds built their nests in newly leaved hedges. From time to time however Winter was slow to relinquish its icy grip and sent Spring reeling back into her corner. Rain, sleet and even snow made things very uncomfortable for newly calved cows. Welly boots and rain coats were retrieved from the winter wardrobe.

I loved Summer because the cows didn't seem to be in a hurry, all the more time for me to daydream. The urgency the cows felt in their newly extended udders slowed down and comfort of the luscious grass meant that they wanted to spend more time in the sun. The farm was a very busy place particularly in Summer. The heady smell of new mown hay was magic. Dog daisies, meadow sweet and blue cornflowers added colour to the pasture.

Summer turned to Autumn. Back to school, conkers on the chestnut tree and piles of fallen leaves were the order of the day. Rose hips and haws brightened up the dreary hedgerows. Elderberries and blackberries spilt their purple stain on the lane which led to the

yard. Fat purple blackberries were picked for jam making, staining our fingers and mouths a tell tale dark colour.

Come winter, the cows stayed indoors eating the hay which was saved during the warm sunny Summer days. Stuff which my dad called sugar pulp was fed in addition to the hay. This was a by-product of sugar manufacturing and was high in fibre and sugar for energy, Turnips and mangolds were chopped in a special hand operated machine and added variety to the cows' diet. Most of the cows didn't produce milk during Winter and were pregnant and resting - till early Spring when the calves are born.

This was the ritual year after year on the farm. There were many other jobs which my sisters and I helped out with, feeding the calves and cleaning out sheds which was very heavy work.

My leaving cert year loomed and I was exempt from my duties as head cow -girl. I handed the baton to my sister Maria.

EASTER 2016

I met you on a dusty road

I was carrying a heavy load.

You looked at me and I looked at you,

As sometimes passing strangers do.

You spoke. I don't know what you said.

There were bruises on your hands and head.

I was tired and hungry and my clothes were bad

I felt feeling down and out and sad.

My friend, my hero had died that day

And I had just walked away.

You smiled and lifted up my sack

You hoisted it up on your strong back.

You looked familiar but not the same

Then I shyly asked your name.

"I am The One who died today,

Believe, it was the only way.

In three days I will rise again

And take you where there is no pain"

You bent your head and we kissed,

You disappeared and I felt blessed

The clouds parted and I saw the sun.

All sadness from my Spirit gone.

My Favourite Tree

By Catriona Dillon

*“Beneath the spreading Chestnut tree
The village smith he stands”*

These immortal lines from Goldsmith’s poem *The Deserted Village* remind me of my favourite tree situated in my now deserted farm-yard. The Chestnut tree is a non-native tree introduced into Ireland by the English in the sixteen hundreds. It originated in the Baltic Countries, It is one of the first trees to put forth leaves in the spring, the sticky buds open up into a five pronged leaf. In the month of May, the tree is decked with white flowers These pretty flowers are like white candles pointing prayer-like up to the sky, slowly over the Summer they morph into chestnuts or conkers. The spikey green fruit of the chestnut splits to reveal a shiny brown nut. These were formally used to feed horses- hence the term horse chestnuts. In my school days these shiny very hard nuts were used by children, particularly the boys in a game simply called “conkers”. A hole was made in the nut and a piece of twine inserted through with a good knot at the end. The game involved hitting the nut against the competitor’s nut. The winner was the owner of the nut that survived in one piece. The tree is also one of the first to loose it’s leaves. The bare branches and twigs stand ghost-like along the landscape gathering strength for the year ahead when the cycle starts all over again.

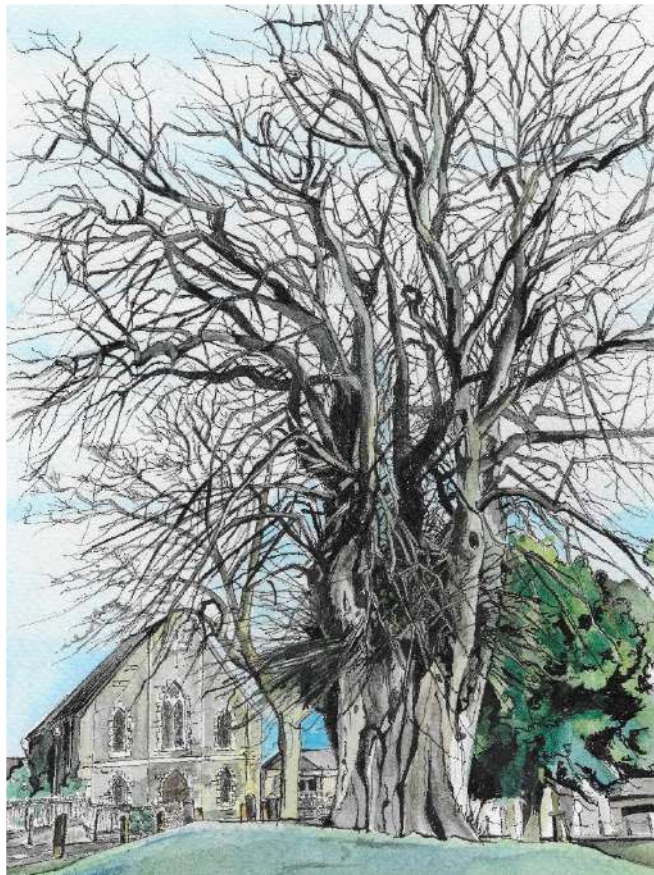
My particular tree was planted to commemorate the building of a water-mill for grinding corn in 1773. The mill hasn’t been in use since the eighteen hundreds. The tree stands staunch and proud on the banks of the mill-race. I recently heard that a new disease has swept into this country wiping out many of our chestnut trees. It is called “weeping canker”. I hope that it’s isolated position will save my tree for many generations to come. No wonder the poet wrote “Poems are made by fools like me but only God can make a tree”.

The Big Tree

By Catriona Dillon

Situated on the green in the centre of Duleek village, standing proud and tall is the “Big Tree”. It is reputed to be the biggest and oldest tree in Ireland. It dates from just after the battle of the Boyne in 1690. At that time the journey from Dublin to Belfast took three days. Duleek was one hour's travelling on that journey. At the coach-house on the Ashbourne road from the village the horses were rested and changed and the travellers stayed overnight and were fed and watered.

After the battle of the Boyne in 1690 King William of Orange took over from the defeated King James. It is said that King William and his wife Mary were on a visit to Dublin. At that time the coach to the port of Drogheda stopped in Duleek where fresh horses were introduced, while they waited William and Mary sat hand in hand where the green is now situated.



At this time there was a large Colony of Huguenots living in Duleek. These were French protestants who fled persecution in their own country. They were mostly engaged in the weaving industry. Their work contributed greatly to the economy of the area. When they saw the romantic couple they decided to plant two trees, one a lime tree and the other a native ash which were entwined in each other. Unfortunately, the ash tree didn't survive but the indent which it made on the Lime tree is visible to this day.

Is the “Big Tree” the biggest and oldest tree in Ireland, it certainly is the most romantic!

Simon Coleman Working for the Folklore Commission Co. Galway

By Simon Coleman edit by Alex McKenna



Simon Coleman meets the president

The year was 1959. My mother was slowly dying. She was 79.

Because we could no longer look after her in the house she went into the County Home in Trim. This was something that we had been putting off as long as possible because, even though she was old and no longer the tender, compassionate mother we once knew - we hated to see her go.

There were three of us left in the house - my father, my brother and myself. It was a gloomy place with the heart torn out of it.

My brother, at least, would be spared some of the gloom as he worked in Mosney holiday camp ten miles away and only came home at weekends. This meant that in reality only my father and myself were in the house all of the time. My father himself was old - eighty odd years and had been ailing with bronchial trouble for years. During the week I had been doing the rudimentary cooking for my father and myself and my brother did it on weekends when he came home. It was the very minimum to keep us going.

At the time I was desperately short of money as I hadn't sold anything for a long time and my small savings had dwindled almost to nothing. We existed on my father's old age pension and whatever little financial assistance my brother could give us. He was the breadwinner and I was the housekeeper. It was respectable poverty in a land flowing with milk and honey.

I still had some contacts in Dublin notably the Folklore Commission which at the time was in Stephens Green; I had got to know Dr. Tom Wall of the Commission during my

halagon days in Dublin. Some years before this I had been sent by the Director, Dr. Seamus Delaror to Donegal to work with a folklorist called Seán O Heochaidh who lived in Gortahork. Seán O Heochaidh who lived in Gortahork. Seán O Heochaidh was a fisherman from Feelin who wrote the fine book in Irish called *Rótha Mór and tSaoil* which was the story of his father-in-law's adventures in the Klondike during the Gold Rush. While I was in Donegal I made a pencil sketch of an old Gaelic-speaking Seancaidhe woman called Áine Nic Aloon and later made an oil-portrait from it which was hung in the Commission: I also did a watercolour of the house where the subject of *Rótha Mór an tSaoil* was born and which was later used by O Heochaidh as an illustration in his book.

I was an up an down Catholic of all times but now I got a sudden access of fervour. I went into the local church one day and prayed very hard that a miracle of some sort would occur to relieve my present situation. I was in the frame of mind to believe that miracles can and do happen to people who really need them and believe in them.

When therefore, some days later a letter came through the letter-box from Dr. Wall offering me further work I was in a mood to believe that this was an answer to my prayers.

The work entailed going to Galway for three months to do the same work as I had done in Donegal - drawing old houses, fireplaces, fire-irons, furniture, cooking utensils or any mementos of the past in the Gaeltacht areas that were still to be found.

Paradoxically this offer of work coming when it did was a mixed blessing. To leave home for three months now meant leaving my father entirely on his own. This in turn meant that my brother in Mosney would now have to come home every night to sleep with him but during the day he would be on his own. As well as this it was mid-winter and hardly the time of the year to be travelling westwards. In my mind it was a daunting prospect but I had to go. Money was money.

Galway seemed a very long way away on the morning I set out. I left the house carrying a suitcase and walked down to the village with a bitterly cold east wind stinging my face to get the bus to Drogheda on the first stage of my journey westwards. I had just said goodbye to my father still in bed and his weak protest at being left alone made me feel like a criminal. As I have said it was mid-winter and not completely light. In the three-quarter light my thoughts were bleak indeed as I headed for the bus.

When I reached the Commission that morning they told me I would be working in the company of a folklorist called Ciarán Barrett, who they informed me, I knew well; apparently we all had drinks together in a pub in Baggot Street some time or other. I couldn't recollect him at all. In my overwrought imagination he assumed the character of an ogre.

They also told me that I would be staying for the three months in the home of a farmer called John Carney at Beechmount House, Turloughmore, twelve miles from Galway city. This was where the folklorist usually stayed when in Galway and where Barrett himself lived almost permanently nowadays. Barrett would pick me up at Galway station when I arrived.

I left the Commission and headed for Kingsbridge station to get the afternoon train full of gloom and foreboding.

Crossing the Midlands in the train I sat looking dismally out the window at a dead winter countryside where a scattering of snow lay along hedges and ditches. Looming even

closer was an unfamiliar world of things and people getting ready, I felt, to devour me. As the train sped onwards the distance increased inexorably between me and the County Home in Trim where my mother was now lying. I was convinced I would never see her alive again. I was plagued too with a sense of guilt over leaving my father back in a cold friendless house on his own.



Special occasion clothes: Sunday attire. Painting by Simon Coleman from the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

On arrival at Galway station I tumbled out of the train and started frantically searching among the crowds thronging the platform for a face that I could recognise. I had not gone towards the exit when I saw coming towards me a familiar figure in a black topcoat and wearing a beret. In a flash the trauma of the past six or seven hours was replaced by a feeling of weightless relief. When I saw who I was confronted with I found it difficult to understand how I had forgotten him. Ciarán Barrett a timid, shy little stump of a man who wouldn't hurt a fly. Ogre indeed!

One further source of my inordinate anxiety was Mrs. John Carney the wife of the farmer with whom I would be spending three long months in the close confinement of her family circle. However when we finally arrived in Barret's car at Beechmount House I was granted a short respite: Mrs. Carney had gone down to her native place in Mayo to attend her father's funeral and would not be back until the following evening.

With the male members of the family I had little difficulty. John Carney was like myself, a country man and too busy with the heavy work around the farm to be concerned with social niceties. The only children Francis and Joseph, about ten and eleven respectively proved no problem either. In no time at all I was on familiar terms with all of them. But on

going to bed that night I was still not sure how I would fare with the woman of the house when she got back from Mayo.



Supplies being offloaded from boat to currachs; taking off stones: Aran Islands. Painting by Simon Coleman from the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

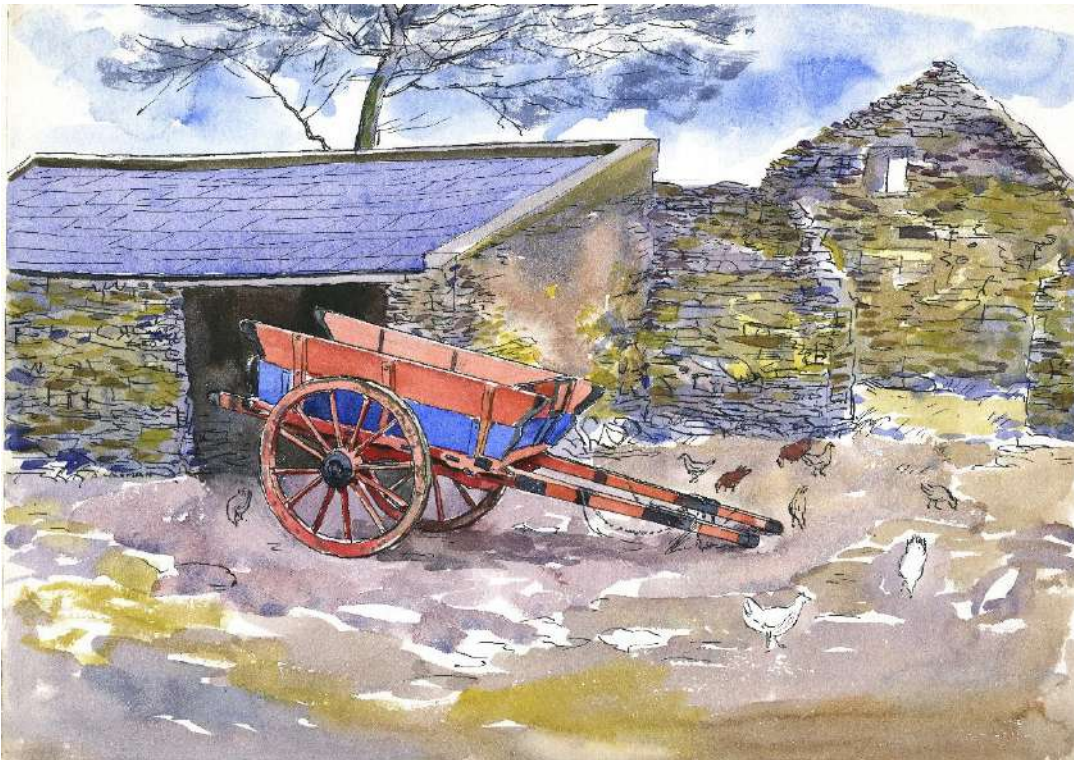
With the exception of a young niece of the family from up-the-ways who came in every morning to do the household chores in the housewife's absence I had the place to myself when I got up the following morning: Barrett and the farmer had left early in the car for Mayo to bring back Mrs. Carney. This was my first time in this part of Galway and I spent the day wandering about the stone-walled fields surrounding the house and admiring the fine views that stretched back to the distant hills around Lough Corrib and Connemara. Beechmount House was a substantial two-story dwelling built on the high ground of a sloping field overlooking the Tuam-Galway road and surrounded by a grove of beech-trees that gave the place its name. John Carney was a substantial farmer on the good land of East Galway well stocked with sheep and cows. He was a man who worked himself into the ground night and day.

I was cowering in the kitchen when they all came back from Mayo dreading the prospect of at last coming face to face with Mrs. Carney. After preliminary introductions took place between us she gave me a stony look and then turned her attention to the letters that had come during her absence. I quailed inwardly and felt my early fears were realised. Going to bed that night I was still in a perplexed state of mind.

Morning thankfully brought a different view of these matters. Seated down in a country kitchen eating breakfast that consisted of cups of strong Galway tea, eggs and homemade bread with the light of a new day all around certainly altered all our perspectives.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the three months I spent in the home of John Carney of Galway were among the pleasantest I've ever known.

In Mrs. John Carney I found someone of my own level. she was a strapping Mayo woman who, at the time when the greatest break in my life was imminent - the loss of my mother - she exerted with others a tranquilising influence upon me beyond measure. As time went on all my early apprehensions and fears had vanished completely. Not for a long time had I felt a sense of home until this time.



Farm carts. Painting by Simon Coleman from the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

Some people might find Ciarán Barrett something of an eccentric, an oddity even. But among the people of Galway whom he knew he was immensely popular; he was known in Carna, Carraroe, Rosmuck, Roundstone, Spiddal and even in the Aran Islands. Undoubtedly there was something highly amusing about him which arose mainly from the way which he drove his little thin-lizzy of a motor car. He drove all over Galway in the most unconventional fashion never being greatly perturbed if he dislodged a stone here or there from a wall as he entered someone's yard. One story current in Beechmount House concerned the occasion he laid flat one of the gate-posts of the local church going into Mass one Sunday. He got a bill from the P.P. for that one.

In strictly Gaelic terms he had an illustrious background. His father was Stiofán Bairréid first treasurer of the Gaelic League (I only learned this fact when I came back from Galway). He was born in Dublin but hated the city. It was said in the Commission that wild horses would never get Ciarán back from the West again; this was where his people originated and here was where he was happiest. So they let him be.

Not surprisingly in view of his background his knowledge of Connaught Irish was vast; he spoke the Gaelic language to old men and women he met on his travels as though he

had been born at the same fireside with them. Indeed I heard him conversing in a sort of semiaudible Gaelic that is often the despair of beginners to the language.

This extraordinarily-brilliant little stump of a man who never learned how to drive a motor car properly drove me all over Galway without once making me feel concerned for my safety. I used to cogitate that if he drove all the way from Dublin to Galway he would have a few dents and scrapes to show for it but he would get there first all the same. He was not a dangerous driver as many Irish people often are: he did not drink and drive and he took a sensible length of time to get where he was going.

What he lacked in mechanical skills he made up for in his determination to make my stay in Galway a success. After a long day spent in the remote areas of East Galway or Connemara he always headed back to Galway city and the plush comfort of the Great Southern Hotel where we drank, ate our fill of confectionary and worked on our days contributions to Irish folklore.

On this trip to the West of Ireland I saw more thatched houses than I ever thought existed. I even tried, in my sketch books to show, layer by layer how the roofs were constructed. To one born east of the Shannon it often proved a very complex task indeed.

In 1959 I was pitch-forked into what was left of Gaelic-speaking Ireland. We in the east of the country had been reading and hear about the Gaeltacht since our schooldays; it was a place where people still spoke a language that we had to sweat over in desks every day. It never meant much more than that.

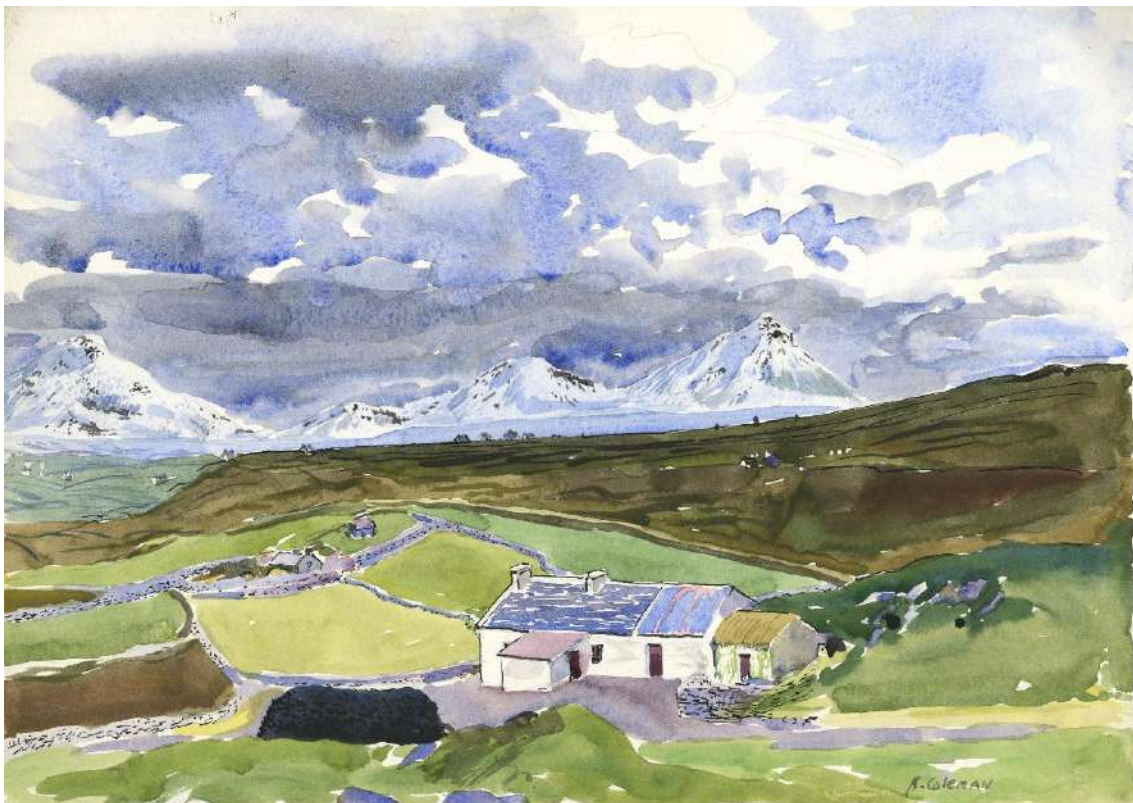


Caherlea; wooden chimney (house of W. Kelly). Painting by Simon Coleman from the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

The reality was somewhat different. In the little isolated clusters of thatched houses with ecstatic Gaelic names where we worked most of the time the sensation always was of looking through a window at a part of Ireland that had stood still for centuries. It was fascinating.

Before going to Galway I had little or no interest in the Gaelic language. Somewhere in the dim recesses of memory were a few words and grammatical rules but generally I was as free of any desire to learn as anyone else. "Caidé mar atá tú?" my father would ejaculate abruptly in one of his rare moments of jocularly when we were young. It was probably the only bit of Irish he knew. But in Galway all this daily contact with Gaelic sights and sounds was having its effect on me. Gradually the notion of speaking in a language that was different to the one I was brought up with became a source of excitement to me. Like the prospect of donning a new suit and casting aside the old. But more than that I wanted to learn it so that I could stand before a group of foreigners parading their own language and speak volubly in a tongue so enigmatic to them as theirs was to me.

A great part of the reason for such fundamental change arose from meeting the people themselves. I had always thought that the people from Gaelic-speaking areas were the quintessence or Irishness; as an artist I had always admired the sculptured quality of their faces with their complexions burnished and scarred with the uncompromising Irish climate. One saw more of these types in the West, Northwest and South than anywhere else in Ireland; they came from the remote regions of Mayo, Donegal, Galway, Clare, Kerry etc. and in Galway they spoke a type of Gaelic that was less of a dialect than a language in its own right. Here the language was a living fact of everyday existence.



Mountain farms. Painting by Simon Coleman from the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

One of the houses that Ciarán visited regularly in the evenings was the home of two old farmers called Mike and Pat Silke in Carranmore off the beaten track from Thrloughmore. Here evening after evening I sat in silence listening while Mike and Pat conversed in Irish until it was time to go home. Mike spoke it with a fluency born of a lifetime of familiarity with every inflection of Galway Irish and it sounded as natural in the frugal surroundings of this little thatched farmhouse as French would in the Latin quarter of Paris. And its becalming influence on my tired nerves was miraculous.

To suggest that the Silkes were behind the times would be short-sighted in the extreme. These two old brothers were well known in the Commission back in Dublin and had supplied them with a lot of material for their archives. The remarkable fact was that at the time there were highly paid men and women teaching Irish in Universities and second-level schools all over Ireland and here we were seated down in a remote area of County Galway listening to two old countrymen speaking flawless Irish who probably never had gone beyond national school.

For three months in Galway I heard Irish spoken in a way that gave the impression of a people more conscious of being Irish than anyone I had ever met before. In truth they seemed a different race altogether.

Galway is an absolute storehouse of beautiful Gaelic place-names; and unlike in the rest of the country where old Gaelic place-names in terms of English a matter of conjecture or deleted altogether by local authorities and replaced with a stylish modern name in keeping with the smart urbanisation or rural Ireland. In Galway the names were alive and meaningful in 1959.



A thatched farmhouse with slate roofed extension and adjoining outhouses. Painting by Simon Coleman from the National Folklore Collection, UCD.

One name among dozens that I noticed was "Lisheenwalla" a small community that we visited many times. I once heard the local priest pronounce this name at Mass one Sunday with obvious relish - proving for me that in an area where very little Irish was to be heard, some at least among the population were proud of their heritage of Gaelic placenames; and in Cornamona heard an old Galway footballer pronounce the name "Moain Eain", with a peculiar indigenous inflection that defied every effort on my part to imitate. When I said to this man "I'd love to have a knowledge of Irish" he snapped at me "Well I have it and I'm fed up with it." - proving for me that it's not only in the Pale that people are indifferent about the passing of Irish.

Everywhere we wandered - and we wandered far and wide in Barrett's little tin-lizzy of a Morris Minor - deep into Connemara, along little boreens that seemed to go nowhere, into little thatched villages that must have been built centuries ago., out to Leenane, to Clifden where the footpaths had green lichen on them attesting the lack of use, down among the upturned curraghs at Carraore, into farmyards where as ever Ciarán managed to dislodge stones at the entrance - always the Gaelic language seemed to hang above our heads. One could not escape from it; and with Barrett always beside me tantalising me with his incomprehensible chats in Irish with people we talked to along the way. I spent in the Galway Gaeltacht floating around on cloud nine was no illusion but an unforgettable experience. There was something in the Galway air that I never experienced in Ireland before.

I came home at the end of it all with an unspeakable resolve to learn Irish. I lost no time in digging up whatever old Gaelic books I could find often borrowing text-books from school children I knew; I joined the Club Leabhair and read such books as *Rótha Mór an tSaoil*, *Ubhall i mBarr an Ghéagáin*, *Comhcheilg sa Chaisleán Ba Fiú*, *an Braon Fola*, *Na hÁird* (j Thuaidh, Saoirse Gan Só and many more; I went for long walks in the deserted fields and practiced the spoken word out of earshot of all but the creatures of the hedges and fields.

The yawning vacuum being created by the imminent loss of my mother was slowly being filled by a consuming passion to learn nothing more important than a bit of Irish.

It served me well during those traumatic days.

Sources:

Extract taken from program notes produce for the "A Retrospective Exhibition" of Simon Coleman works staged at the Droichead Arts Centre, Stockwell Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Simon Coleman pictures from the National Folklore Collection, U.C.D. accessed at <https://www.ucd.ie/folklore/en/>

Pictures of works

The Murder of William Hatch

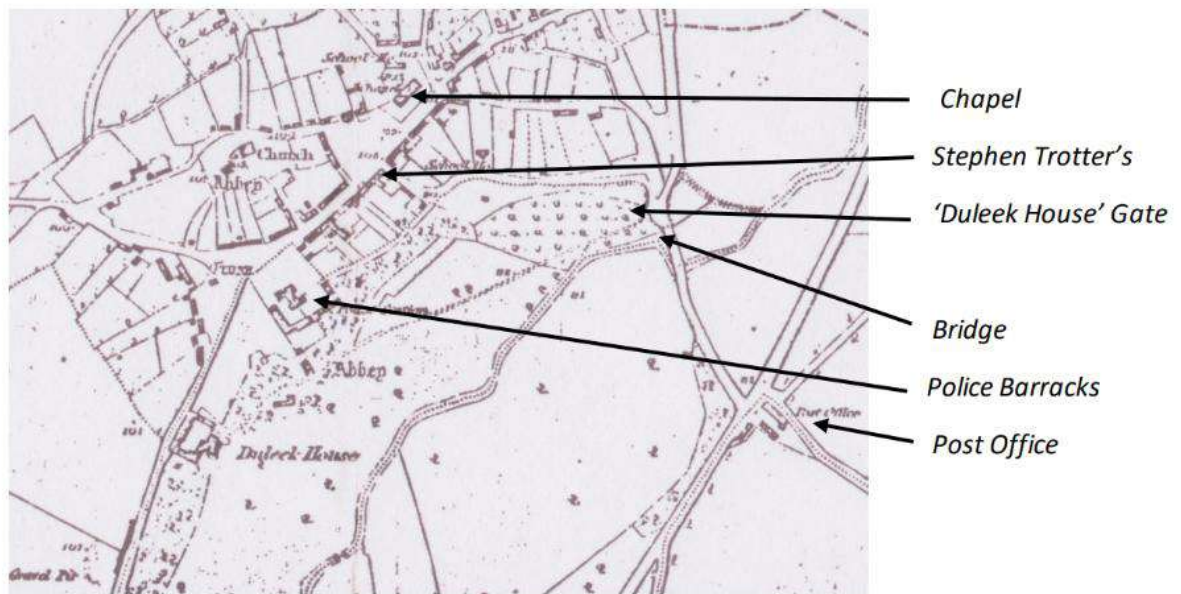
By Ita O'Boyle

The 'Drogheda Journal' and the 'Freeman's Journal' (among other publications) carried the following news item on Monday, 14 August 1837. Early newspaper reporting can be quite florid, with no detail spared, no matter how gruesome, or indeed, how true! GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) was a thing of the future, and it was no-holds-barred regarding the identification of suspects in crimes.

HORRIBLE MURDER

It is this day our painful and melancholy duty to place upon record one of the most diabolical murders ever perpetrated in a Christian or civilized country. About ten o'clock on last Thursday night, Mr. William Hatch, of Duleek (a village four miles hence), youngest brother of Mr. Nicholas Hatch, of same place, the sub agent to the most noble, the Marquis of Thomond, went to the Post-office, which is not quite a quarter of a mile outside the village, for the purpose of meeting a friend whom he expected from Dublin. After the mail had passed he remained a short time behind. He then left, on his way home to the house of his brother Nicholas, with whom he resided. It had been, however, arranged that into that house he should never again enter. He was waylaid, and barbarously murdered on his return from the Post-office, and found, at the early hour on Friday morning, in the ditch immediately at the end of the bridge (which is close to the Post-office), in such a dreadfully mangled state that his own relatives did not, at first, know him. There were two large wounds on the back of his head, evidently inflicted by some sharp instrument. The right temple was completely dashed in; and, horrible to relate, the blood-thirsty miscreants, not satisfied with the deadly wounds they had already inflicted, had, by some unknown means, burned him almost to a cinder from the waist downwards. The body of the unfortunate man presented an awfully appalling spectacle. A flat bar of iron, about three feet long, and the one-eighth of an inch thick, was found within eight or ten yards of the body, besmeared at one end with blood – the end, too, that corresponded to the wounds on the head. Upwards of sixteen ounces of coagulated blood were found under his head, and various portions of his dress were discovered in a half-burned state. No words can adequately describe the grief and horror depicted in the countenance of every inhabitant of Duleek, hitherto a most peaceful village, at this monstrously atrocious transaction. The sensation also excited in this town, on the frightful intelligence reaching it, was perfectly indescribable. The deceased, who was the youngest of three brothers, and unmarried, was a most amiable man in every relation of life. He was a warm friend, a kind neighbour, and a most cheerful companion; and, in consequence, universally esteemed. He was in the habit of travelling at all hours, both by day and night, and never carried any arms. Indeed, he repeatedly refused to do so, although strongly advised by his friends. Four persons, two men and two women, have been arrested on suspicion.

Reports on the murder reached all corners of Ireland and was carried in many local publications from Kerry in the South to Belfast in the North. The 'Londonderry Standard' (16 August 1837) had their own twist on the story:



Map of Duleek, c.1835.

BARBAROUS MURDER OF A PROTESTANT

On Friday morning, William Hatch, of Duleek, a most respectable and unoffending Protestant farmer, was most barbarously murdered. His body was found in a ditch about twenty perches from the town. On his head were several large cuts, and a quantity of the flesh was burned off the body, which was otherwise dreadfully mangled. The only reason to be assigned for this barbarous murder, in addition to the victim being a Protestant, was that his brother had got a lease of a portion of land in that neighbourhood which was formerly in the possession of a person of the name of Brannigan, whose lease had long before expired. At this moment there are in the jail of Trim fifteen individuals under sentence of transportation for various crimes of the deepest die, on the greater number of whom sentence of death has been recorded, and whose lives, according to the laws of the country, have been forfeited. A short time since the house of a respectable Protestant, in the town of Duleek, was set on fire, for his having the audacity to disobey the mandates of the leader of Dan's police. Duleek is a populous place, and this murder was committed, after sun-rise, within twenty perches of the town; yet such is the state of depravity of the peasantry, and the terror which exists, that not a trace has been found, nor any clue had to the perpetrators of this most barbarous murder.

On the Saturday following the murder of William Hatch, a Coroner's Inquest was held in Duleek and a detailed report on the proceedings was carried in the 'Drogheda Argus' in their edition of 19 August 1837:

INQUEST ON MR. HATCH

Which was held in the Court House took place at 9 O'clock on Saturday last. The following jury were sworn before W. Higgins, Esq. one of the Coroners of the County Meath:

Messrs. Bartholomew Ennis, Tandy Tailor. Patrick Mathews, Stephen Hanly, Richard Morgan, Thomas Hanlon, Patrick Daly, William Taylor, James Dunn, Owen Beahan, John Campbell and John Fitzharris.

Before the proceedings commenced the Coroner intimated that although the inquiry was an open one, yet he should feel it his duty to prohibit any one of those present from leaving the Court House.

On the bench with the Coroner were the following Magistrates – Sir William Somerville Bart. M.P., James Mathews Esq. J.P., Mounthanover; Captain Despard, Henry Smith Esq. D.L., Nicholas Boylan Esq. J.P., Hilltown.

Laurence Warren examined – I live on the lands of Bellewstown, Parish of Duleek. As I was coming into this town yesterday morning, at six o'clock – I saw the deceased lying in the ditch coming up to the Post-office – I did not go over to look at him, but I took notice of his clothes being burnt and his skin scorched – I was delicate of going near him – I gave alarm immediately in the town – I did not know it was Hatch – I did not tell any of his people – told Peter White, James Murray and J. Mackenna, who went down to look at him – I didn't go back with them to look at him – a man named James Daly, told me he saw a man dead in the ditch – the hat of the deceased was off when I saw him – I saw blood on the road near him – he was down in the gripe of the ditch – he was lying on his side – he was lying opposite the little by-lane going to Duleek.

To a Juror – It was after I met Daly that I saw the deceased.

To the Coroner – It was between Duleek and the Post-office I saw deceased.

This witness' examination closed here and at the request of the Coroner he signed a copy of the above depositions.

James Daly sworn – At six o'clock yesterday morning I saw the deceased lying in the ditch – did not go over to him because a man was waiting for him, with whom he was going to reap – I thought he was drunk.

The first witness here stated that Daly told him he thought he was dead.

Daly – I live near where the man was burnt – heard the ten o'clock coach go by the night before – my brother was up after me – there was a man named Brannigan with his wife – was lying in the house that night – Mr. Charles Hatch was the last in the house that night – I did not hear any noise that night – my brother did not say he heard any – we had no conversation about it the next morning – Warren did not tell me the name of the deceased – did not see any one about our house that night.

The next witness was Robert Carey, Post Master – Was in Duleek on Thursday evening last, about a quarter after nine o'clock – I live in the town – I saw the deceased in the street then – he told me he was going to meet the coach – he said so in a loud tone – it was the Belfast night mail he meant – any one at a distance could have heard him say so – we were standing exactly at the corner of the footpath at Stephen Trotter's House – to my knowledge there were no other persons in the street at that time – he parted me immediately – he went down in the direction of the Post-office – I saw no persons about the big tree at the time – the night was a little foggy, and they might be there as I did not look in that direction – did not see deceased from that time until Friday evening – I saw him go down the lane that night but heard no more of him until yesterday evening – when he said he was going to the Post office persons at the big tree might have heard what he said to me – he was

in the habit of speaking loud – he asked me to go with him to the Post-office – I would have done so but I had no occasion to do so – I think he might have drank something, but he was perfectly sober – he had been in my company in Trotters at 9 o'clock – he merely walked in and out of the room.

This witness also signed his deposition.

Michael M'Daniel examined – Lives beside the Post-office of Duleek; recollects the previous Thursday evening; saw the deceased, William Hatch on that evening; saw him standing in the middle of the road, convenient to the Post-office; deponent was talking to deceased, but only for about ten minutes; deceased asked deponent: did the coach pass, and deponent replied that it did; deceased then said he expected a message from Dublin, bid deponent good night, and said it was near time to go to bed; deponent saw two girls standing near the Post-office long before deceased came there; they were standing at the corner of the wall; they afterwards went away, but deponent does not know where; thinks deceased was perfectly sober when he saw him; there was a smell of liquor off him, but nothing more; deponent did not see any car or cart going into or coming from Duleek at that time; did not hear any shot fired on that night.

Thomas M'Cabe examined – lives in Duleek – I work for Mr. Behan, whose horses I went to water, between 7 and 8 o'clock yesterday morning; on my way I found a long bar of iron, marked with blood; [here the bar of iron was produced] – that is it; I found it within seven or eight yards of the deceased; I gave it to a man named Mooney.

Alice Caffrey examined – I am gate keeper to Mr. Smith; on Thursday evening last I let Mr. Kettlewell out of the gate; in a few minutes afterwards I heard a noise; I think it was Mr. Kettlewell returning to go the other road; I also heard a voice; I did not hear the words. In a quarter of an hour after that, heard a shot fired; it seemed to have been in the direction of Mr. Pendry's meadow; I think it was a pistol shot; it was not strong enough to be that of a gun; I opened the lodge window and listened, but heard nothing further; I cannot say the hour this happened; it was quite dark at the time; as far as I can judge it was past eleven o'clock.

The Rev. Mr. Batty stated that Mr. Kettlewell had dined with him that day and that it was at least half-past ten when the gentleman left him.

Peter M'Kone, a blacksmith, was next examined, as to whether he had ever seen the bar of iron above mentioned, but he said he knew nothing about it.

George Delahoyde, M.D., examined; I have examined the body of deceased; there are two wounds on the head; from the examination I have made I cannot be sure that the skull has been fractured; there are two wounds on the face, one on the lower jaw, another on the upper lip; I do not think any one of these wounds would produce instant death; there are no wounds on the body; the lower part of the abdomen, and greater part of the legs, are burnt; I think it was the burning together with the wounds caused deceased's death; I can see no gunshot wounds; I cannot say the skull is fractured, because I have made only an external examination; I cannot say if the palms of the hands are burned; I do not think they are [at the request of the jury, the Coroner directed the witness to make a minute examination.]

Bridget Duffy examined – I was in this town on Thursday last; I was most of the day about Mr. Smith's place; I have no place of residence; I was reared in Trim; never was in Duleek before, except once, when I merely passed through. At nine o'clock on Thursday

night last; passed by the Post-office; I was in company with the deceased for a while that night, at the foot of the bridge, near the meadow; I think it might have been about ten, or half past ten when I was with him; he told me he was going to the Post-office when I first met him; that was near Mr. Stephen Trotter's House; he told me to go on the road before him, and that he would see me coming back; he did so, and stopped for about a quarter of an hour with me; I waited for him at the foot of the bridge; I saw no persons on the bridge during that time; but when deceased left me the last time, I saw two men standing on the bridge; they were on the rise of the bridge, about three perches from me; one of them was a very tall man, and wore a frieze bang-up coat with a velvet collar; I think it was brownish velvet; the other man was middle-size, with a frieze coat and a straw hat.

Sir W. Somerville – Did you remark the kind of hat worn by the tall man? It was a black hat; I was near enough to see that the tall man had something in his hand; I can't say whether it was a stick or not; it was more than two feetlong; I had another girl with me; the man held whatever he had in his hand quite close to his side.

[All persons were here desired to stand up and wear their hats, the prisoners doing likewise.]

Captain Despard – Look now among those present and say, if, from the opportunity you had of seeing those men on the bridge; you can point out any persons like them? [The witness, having cast her eyes around, pointed to the prisoners, and said,] I think they are like the two men. Do you mean as to their persons? No, as to their dresses, for I could not see their faces plain enough to know them again. The deceased, after leaving us, passed these two men on the bridge, as well as I can remember; and, in a minute or two after they went on, in the same direction as he did; in about 8 or 10 minutes after, I heard a shot fired, in the direction the deceased and the men appeared to have gone; I became quite frightened and my comrade and myself left the bridge and went to the grove where we slept all night; we did not hear any noise while there; we heard of the murder next morning from girls who were going to milk; they were talking of it; they asked a man passing who it was that had been murdered; he replied that it was Hatch; I did not then think it was the man who had been with me the night before. Mr. Smith was the first person to whom I mentioned that I had been in company with the deceased, that was after the police had taken us prisoners.

To. Mr. Mathews – The two men that left the bridge were next to Duleek; I was not in any house with the deceased but he wanted me to go to a waste house he said he had on the road, and that he had the key of it with him; I was in Trim during the last assizes; I never knew either of the prisoners before; I saw no fire that night, nor did I smell any; I heard no noise or scuffle of any kind after the shot, after deceased left me; I saw a car or dray come over the bridge; it was driving very quickly; I think there were two men on it; they bid the men on the bridge "the time of the night"; deceased was near the two men at the time; some one answered the man on the car, and said, "good night"; I can't say whether it was the men or deceased did so; it was about 8 or 10 minutes after that I heard the shot; I think it was about ten o'clock when I first took up my position on the bridge; it might have been after that hour; I think it was near 11 o'clock when I left it. I saw no carriage coming out of the demesne while on the bridge. The two men were talking while standing on the bridge, but I did not hear what they were saying; they said something when deceased passed, but I did not understand what it was.

Captain Kettlewell examined: I think it was about 11 when I left Mr. Battey's on Thursday night, for it was half past eleven when I got home; after leaving the gate, I did not return to go by any other road; neither did I hear any noise whatever on the road that night.

Doctor Delahoyde having returned was examined – I have since examined the skull, and I find it fractured about an inch from the external angle of the eye; there is also a suffusion of blood on the brain; the palms of the hands are burned and the abdomen from the naval downwards is also burned. I found no match or anything else adhering to the body; there is no gunshot wound; I think the suffusion of blood on the brain with the wounds would cause instant death. [The bar of iron was here handed to the witness.] I think that instrument may have inflicted the wounds on the head of deceased.

The witness stated that he was not able, from the examination he had made, to state if it had been with vitriol the deceased was burned, (he therefore, at the desire of Captain Despard, retired to make a third examination.) The witness, after the lapse of a few moments, returned and said the body had been washed, and that he was in consequence prevented from ascertaining by what means the burning had been effected.

Margaret Anderson sworn: I know the witness, Bridget Duffy, she is my comrade; I was born in Dunboyne; I was in company with Bridget Duffy, in Duleek, on Thursday evening; I think we left the town about half-past ten that night; we went towards the Post-office, and met a man on our way, near the corner of the plantation, at the end of the bridge; he remained a few minutes with us and then went on towards the Post-office; he left us and said he was going to meet the coach; he came back again to us on the bridge and stopped with us for about a quarter of an hour; he then went over the bridge towards Duleek, about three minutes after two men came over the bridge, they stood on the centre of the bridge, at a distance of about two yards, or two yards and a half from where we were; they then turned back, and went in the direction of the town, after the deceased, as far as I can judge; they were about three minutes gone when I heard a shot fired; I can't say how the men were dressed, nor what kind of hats they had on them; I did not look closely at them; the girl that was with me stood up and looked sharply after them; after the shot was fired my comrade said to me that that was no place to sit; that it was dangerous to be sitting on the side of the road and that, therefore, we should get up and go to the wood; they then did so; the next morning we were going towards Annsbrook when we were arrested by the police; saw a cart passing before we left the bridge; I think there were two persons on it; my comrade then desired me to sit in as we would be seen by the people going along along; witness replied, "what matter who sees us", and then shouted "good night"; there was no one in the grove with them all night; was not in any house with the man on the bridge; heard other people bid "good night" to those on the cart, and thinks it was the men who were on the bridge who did so.

The Coroner: At what distance were the two men who were on the bridge from you? About two, or two and a half yards.

How far is it from this bench to the door of this Court? I think it is near three yards (the real distance was more than eight yards.)

A desultory conversation now took place among the magistrates relative to the discrepancy in the testimony of this witness and her companion as to distance. Sir William Somerville observed that this witness seemed to have no idea whatever of distance, and suggested that the Coroner, magistrates and jury should accompany her to the bridge, in

order that she might point out the positions occupied by both parties. This was accordingly done, when she brought the jury to the gate at the end of the battlements of the bridge, on the right hand side. She then pointed to a little nook beyond the far pier, and said, she sat inside and her comrade outside. She next pointed out where the two men were standing which measured nearly 20 yards from the gate.

On the return of the Jury to Court, the Coroner asked Constable Louns had the two women been together in the police barrack, and he replied in the negative.

Coroner – Why, someone stated to me that they had breakfasted together this morning. Was that the case? Louns – Yes, but they had no conversation.

John Hand examined: Where do you live? At the Carns, about one mile from Duleek.

Were you in Duleek last Thursday evening with your master's milk? I was.

At what hour did you leave Duleek on your return home? About ten o'clock at night.

Were you on a car? Yes

Did you go out of the town by the bridge leading to the Post-office? I did.

Did you, when crossing the bridge, see any men standing upon it? I did: two men.

Where were they standing? Nearly in the centre of the bridge.

On what side? The right hand side.

Did you bid those men "good night"? We did.

Can you take upon yourself to say that one of those men was taller than the other? I can. There was, Sir.

Can you tell how the taller man was dressed? He wore a frieze frock, and corduroy trousers.

What kind of hat had he on? It was a felt hat.

Was it a black hat? Yes.

How was the shorter man dressed? He had a frieze body coat, and a straw hat.

Was there anything remarkable in the size of the hat? There was not; it had only a large leaf.

[Here the two prisoners, with two other men who had just been brought in by the police, were desired to stand up and put on their hats.]

Were any of those four men on the bridge? No.

Can you swear positively that none of those four men were there? I can.

Did you see any girls after you passed the bridge? I did not.

Did you hear a shot? I did not.

Did you hear any girls shout, "good night" after you? I did not.

Was it a dray or a cart you were on? It was an empty cart with a churn on it.

Did you observe any weapon with either of the two men? I did not.

By a Juror: Did you ever say you would know the two men who were on the bridge if you saw them? I did. I would do so.

John Cunningham, the man who passed over the bridge with the dray, was examined; said he saw two men that night, but did not know them.

A man named Christopher Dowdall stated, that about two months since, Robert Brannigan, father to the prisoners, said to witness, "The Hatches would rue the day they took the farm, but they would not have time to rue it." Brannigan had been drinking at the time.

Jane Connor, servant to Mr. Trotter, gave similar testimony to the last witness.

Sergeant Louns examined – Having heard of the murder of the deceased at an early hour on Friday morning, went to the spot where the body lay, and found the statement to be correct in consequence of the information he had received; he arrested the girls, Anderson and Duffy and, from what he had heard, he concluded it to be his duty to arrest the Brannigans, after doing which he returned to their residences and searched for their clothes; found two coats, the breasts of which were wet, from which he thinks they had been washed an hour before.

To a Juror: The coats I have described, are those worn by the prisoners this day.

A Juror: Was there any velvet on either of those coats? No

The evidence having been terminated, the Coroner read over his notes of the evidence for the Jury, who were then locked up in the Court-house, and having been left in deliberation for upwards of two hours, when they sent word to the Coroner that they could not agree; that officer then adjourned the inquest to last Thursday evening for the interment of the deceased.

The funeral took place at 7 o'clock in the evening, and the remains of the lamented and unhappily ill-fated individual were followed by an immense number of persons of all classes and of every religious opinion, from all parts of the surrounding country.

Previous to interment, the coffin was borne into the chancel of the church, and having been laid on tressels, the Rev. Mr. Batty, the Rector of the parish of Duleek, pronounced a most solemn and impressive discourse on the awful calamity which had befallen the deceased, beseeching his sorrowing and afflicted relatives not to give way to the frailty of human nature, in seeking themselves to avenge the death of their unfortunate kinsman and friend; but to leave in the hands of the all wise and omniscient Being, the punishment due to the perpetrators of so foul a deed. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord", was a text which, with many others suitable to the solemn subject were cited by the Rev. pastor.

The coffin was then removed, and the burial service for the dead was performed, and the grave closed over the remains of one, the even tenor of his life had won from every one who knew him, esteem and affection, and whose untimely death had aroused the indignation of all against his base and atrocious murder.

On 21 August 1837, the 'Drogheda Journal' further reported:

MURDER OF MR. HATCH
ADJOURNED INVESTIGATION

On Thursday last the investigation into the atrocious murder was resumed, at the petty sessions' house, Duleek, by Mr. Higgins, the coroner, Sir William M. Somerville, M.P., and Captain Despard, stipendiary magistrate, and the other magistrates and gentlemen who were present on the previous Saturday, were in attendance. No new evidence having been adduced, the coroner recapitulated that given on Saturday, when the court was again cleared and the jury left to decide. After about fifteen minutes' deliberation, the foreman stated to the coroner that the jury could not agree on a verdict. The coroner accordingly discharged the jury. We have been informed that seven of the jury were for finding a verdict implicating William and Peter Brannigan, the two men arrested on suspicion and that the remaining five were for a verdict of murder, not implicating anyone. The two Brannigans were then committed to the county gaol. For further examination by Captain Despard.

It will be seen, by reference to our advertising columns, that a public meeting of the Baronies of Upper and Lower Duleek will be held on Monday next, for the purpose of furthering the ends of justice. The meeting will, of course, be most numerous and respectably attended, and such measures taken as shall be most likely to lead to the discovery of the perpetrator of this unprecedented and sanguinary crime. It is almost needless for us to say that it is the solemn duty of the inhabitants of the district to make every possible exertion to remove the foul stain from their locality.

Since the above was written we have been informed that, in consequence of a communication made on yesterday to the magistrates, by one of the men who assisted in preparing the body of the deceased for internment, it was by them deemed advisable that the body should be exhumed and subjected to another examination. This was accordingly done, and Doctors Delahoyde and Toler, after a long and accurate examination, discovered that the deceased had been wounded by a discharge proceeding from either a large bell-mouthed pistol or blunderbuss. There were four very small punctures on the surface, which, owing to the blackened and burned state of the body were almost imperceptible. On proceeding they found twelve swan drops lodged in the integuments of the skin on the right side, having ruptured a portion of the small intestines and torn a part of the liver. They are of the opinion that the pistol or blunderbuss was, previously to its discharge, placed in direct contact with the body, about two inches above the navel, and that the swan drops had taken an oblique direction towards the right side. Several small portions of the dress of the unfortunate man were found in the wound. Both gentlemen concur in thinking that the clothes of the deceased were ignited by the wadding of the pistol, which in some degree diminishes the atrocity of the crime, as it was at first generally supposed that the burning was premeditated.

Their joint depositions to the above effect have been sworn before Captain Despard, and thus this tragical affair terminates for the present.

The 'Drogheda Journal' of the same issue carried a report on a public meeting held in the village for the purpose of finding the perpetrator(s) of the crime:

MURDER OF WILLIAM HATCH – PUBLIC MEETING AT DULEEK

On Monday, a public meeting of the inhabitants of the Baronies of Upper and Lower Duleek took place at the Court House of Duleek, pursuant to requisition, for the purposes of “taking such steps as should appear most advisable towards obtaining the ends of justice.” The Court House was crowded with the principal gentry and farmers.

At one o’clock, Sir William Somerville, Bart. M.P., was called to the chair, and the Rev. Mr. Batty was requested to act as secretary.

The Chairman briefly explained the object of the meeting.

Mr. H. Smith proposed that a subscription list should be opened, in order that a liberal reward might be offered for such information as would lead to the discovery of the perpetrators of the diabolical deed. Considering the enormity of the crime, he thought that the reward should be a large one (hear, hear). He was authorised by the Marquis of Thomond to put his name down for any sum he (Mr. S.) might deem proper.

Captain Kettlewell seconded this proposition.

After a long and desultory conversation, the Chairman put the motion, which was unanimously adopted.

A list was accordingly opened and signed by every gentleman present. It will remain at the Police office, Duleek, for additional signatures until Friday next, and appear in the advertising columns of our next publication.

A committee of management, consisting of Messrs. H. Smith, D.L., B. Coddington, J.P., J. Gernon, J.P., James Mathews, J.P., N. Boylan, J.P., B. Ennis, Mr. Hughes and Captain Kettlewell was next chosen – five to form a quorum.

The meeting soon after separated.

Following this meeting, with generous subscriptions from the gentry and farmers of the district, TWO HUNDRED POUNDS REWARD was offered to anyone who could prosecute to conviction the person or persons concerned in said murder; or ONE HUNDRED POUNDS for such private information as shall lead to the conviction of the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, the Dublin Evening Mail opines in its editorial:

“Whereas it has been represented to the Lord Lieutenant that on the morning of 11th inst., about six o’clock, William Hatch, of Duleek, in the county Meath, was barbarously murdered by some person or persons unknown, after which part of the flesh was burned of his body and otherwise dreadfully mangled; his Excellency, for the better apprehending and bringing to justice the perpetrators of this murder, is pleased hereby to offer a reward of one hundred pounds”.

This murder – perpetrated, observe, close to a populous town, after sunrise – was, in its nature as horrifying as the most barbarous act of any tribe of savage Indians; yet - a reward of one hundred pounds is deemed sufficient to offer for the discovery of the perpetrators – friends in human shape, who not content with depriving the victim of life, actually set fire to his body!

But look at the want of vigilance on the part of the Executive, and say is it not most reprehensible? A quick pursuit in such cases is always deemed indispensable. Has there been a quick pursuit or any manifestation of such by the Government? Quite contrary. Thirteen days elapsed between the murder and the appearance of the proclamation. How or why was this? The news of the murder must have arrived at the Castle on the 12th or 13th, through the Police, yet the proclamation did not issue until Thursday last, the 24th. There is more to this case than meets the eye. We have given elsewhere a report, from the Drogheda Journal, of a meeting held on the subject in the county of Meath on Monday at which (we are assured by a gentleman present) that there was as a manifestation by certain persons of a disposition to cushion inquiry. Can it be possible that these persons were instrumental in causing the delay of the proclamation? We shall have more to say on this frightful state of society. Hatch's death and everything connected with it, before and after, must be narrowly looked to by the gentry of Meath.

The reward offered proved too tempting for some:

DUBLIN, SEPTEMBER 10 -

The persons suspected of the murder of Mr. Hatch, near Duleek, in the county of Meath, have been committed for trial under circumstances strongly presumptive against them. They are a father and two sons, named Brannigan, who had been dispossessed of a farm of which Mr. Hatch was latterly the tenant. A witness has come forward against them, who declares that he was on a bank of an adjoining river fishing, when he heard some heavy blows followed by a voice, which he knew to be that of Hatch, exclaiming, "Oh, Peter Brannigan, won't you spare my life?" Immediately upon which a shot was discharged. A blunderbuss has been found in the possession of the Brannigans, with which it is possible the unfortunate man was killed. In addition to the above-mentioned witness, a chimney-sweep is also forthcoming, who slept on the night of the murder in an outhouse belonging to the Brannigans, and overheard a conversation which corroborates the proofs against them.

'Londonderry Standard', 23 September 1837

Peter Byrne, a Labourer, attempted to claim the reward and on 2 November 1837, the 'Drogheda Journal' reported on developments in the case:

MURDER OF MR. WM. HATCH, OF DULEEK

On last Thursday morning, between four and five o'clock, the following six persons, viz.- Patrick Clarke, of Lougher, Farmer; Nicholas Madden of Glanageery, Farmer; Nicholas Heffernan, of Rathdrinagh, Farmer, John and James Nulty, both of Knockcommon, farmers; and John Callin, of same place, Farmer – were arrested by the police stationed at Somerville, marched to Duleek, and brought to the police barracks of that town, where they remained for some hours. They were then taken before Captain Despard, S.M., Captain Walsh of the Duleek police and Mr. Gale, one of the Crown Solicitors, who were at the residence of Captain Walsh, and examined separately on a charge of having, with others, conspired, in a tent at the last Bellewstown races, to have the late Mr. William Hatch, of Duleek, murdered. A labourer, Peter Byrne, who generally resided about Duleek, gave, it appears, some information to Captain Despard, which caused the abovementioned arrests. Byrne having been confronted with the accused, stated that they were all present in Thomas Wosser's tent, at the last Bellewstown races, when Peter Brannigan (who is now in Trim Gaol) offered him five Pounds to murder Mr. William Hatch and more money to enable him to escape to America after the perpetration of the deed. The accused having satisfactorily proved that

they were not present on any occasion when any such offer was made by Brannigan, were, after a lengthened investigation, liberated, on promising to appear whenever Captain Despard might require it.

On the same morning, the Duleek police arrested the following persons, on the same charge, viz.- William Pentony, of Corballis, Farmer; Christopher Smith, of Sodstown, caretaker to Mr. Doran, of Duleek; Michael Byrne, of Sodstown, farmer; Michael Mooney, of Staleen, labourer; Matthew Quinn, of Corballis, farmer and Mr. Carney, of Kellystown, labourer and marched them to Duleek. These six men were also imprisoned in the police barracks for some hours, and then examined before Captain Despard, &c., like the others. As Byrne's statement was the only evidence against them, they were likewise liberated on promising to be forthcoming whenever it might be required.

We have been informed that it is the intention of the parties concerned to commence legal proceedings, forthwith, for having been thus arrested.

MOST EXTRAORDINARY PROCEEDINGS

We regret being obliged to call public attention to what we must designate as one of the most unconstitutional proceedings, as well as gross and wanton violation of the rights and liberties of the subjects, which as ever come under our cognizance. The facts are as follows:- On Thursday morning last, twelve respectable and industrious men, all of whom are well known to us, and to whose characters we can amply testify, were, without any previous intimation, summons, or other proceeding, arrested, taken from their beds and from the midst of their alarmed families, handcuffed like common felons, and brought by an armed force, before daylight, to the police-barrack of Duleek – all by the order of Captain Despard S.M. On being taken before his high mightiness, at the hour of eleven o'clock, up to which time they remained in confinement, the first thing he deems proper to do, is to put the book in their hands, and require of them to testify as to the truth or otherwise of the assertions – the individual and unsupported assertions of (to say the least of him) some characterless, and, no doubt, interested person – as to their presence in a Tent at Bellewstown Races, where, he alleged, a conspiracy was formed by those individuals for the murder of the late Mr. William Hatch.

The result of this extraordinary scene was, that not a particle of ground was adduced in support of the information against the men and after the farce had been gone through for some time, they were at length liberated, and allowed to return to the homes, from which they had been so suddenly, and, as events proved, so causelessly taken. We would not wish to be unnecessarily severe on the conduct of those concerned in the proceeding; but this much we do unhesitatingly affirm, that as there was no substantial or conclusive evidence whatever adduced, and as the men were without further examination liberated, that the entire transaction will turn to be the false alarm of a Tory plot, and that Captain Despard and his advisers have been duped, and cajoled to play the game for those who are interested in the circulation of these absurd and lying slanders on the characters of the people. As we are informed that it is the intention of these respectable men to seek legal redress, for the outrages inflicted upon their personal liberty, we will conclude by warning the Government that the purlieus of the Castle are not yet sufficiently cleansed of the old leaven of Toryism; and also by expressing a hope that Captain Despard will not again trifle with the feelings of men as respectable as himself, and cause the well-conducted people of the country the pain

and insult which a repetition of such conduct must unquestionably occasion. (Drogheda Argus and Leinster Journal 28 October 1837)

A public meeting was called to ‘memorialize Government’ on the following Sunday and a lengthy report was carried by the ‘Drogheda Argus’ of Saturday, 11 November 1837.

THE DULEEK AFFAIR – MEETING TO MEMORIAL GOVERNMENT

On Sunday last, a highly respectable and very numerous meeting of the inhabitants of the Baronies of Upper and Lower Duleek took place in front of the Chapel. Although the circumstances which occasioned the necessity of the assembly were of a very exciting nature, and intimately and closely connected with the feelings of every individual present, nothing could be calmer, more peaceable or more orderly than the demeanour and conduct of the persons present, throughout the entire proceedings. Neither in tone nor language was the slightest display or evidence of the indignation which every one present must have felt at the narratives, plain and unvarnished as they were, of the circumstances of the case, and the treatment which the respectable men endured. It seemed to be the wish and purpose of all parties to have everything proceed in the quietest and most deliberate manner, and that nothing whatever, either of expression or action, should cast a doubt or reproach on the solemn object of demanding strict, full and impartial justice, for which the meeting had been called.

After a lengthy introduction, those who had been arrested on the word of Peter Byrne gave a detailed account of their treatment at the hands of the Police and Captain Despard. Three of those arrested addressed the meeting, Michael Byrne of Sodstown, a well-dressed, respectable farmer, with all the apparent evidence about him of active and successful industry and competence; John Callan, from Knockcommon, a farmer of equally respectable appearance and demeanour and William Pentony, also a farmer, from Corballis.

William Pentony described his arrest and subsequent treatment:

Mr. William Pentony, of Corballis, then ascended the platform, and, like his predecessors, was distinguished for the evidence of his respectability and independence which he bore about him. He commenced his statement by saying that about the hour of half past one of the morning of Thursday, the 26th ultimo, a party of men tapped at his window – got up, and having opened the shutters was told it was the Police in answer to his inquiry, and that he might look pout to assure himself of the fact – was then desired to open his door and let them in, as they wanted to speak to him. He then admitted them, and on their entrance was asked by them if he had any fire or light, and in reply told them that he had both, and accordingly lit a candle for them and gave it to the sergeant. Was then asked in due form by the sergeant what was his name, and readily gave it. The next question was as to whether he had any strangers in his house, and told them he had none. Upon this the sergeant said he should make a search, to which I answered he was quite welcome. He then took the candle and proceeded on his search. Went first to the bed of his aged father and held the candle over him in the bed; went in a similar way to the room where the maid servants slept, and also held the candle over them. He then came and went into his (Mr. Pentony’s) own apartment, and also flared the light backward and forward over his wife (disapprobation). All this time I remained on the floor in my shirt. After completing his search, the policeman desired me to put on my clothes, for that he wanted me to go to the house of a man named Quinn, for the purpose of shewing it to them. I then dressed myself and accompanied him to the place, and immediately on leaving the house had my coat taken hold of by a policeman. I told him

he had no occasion to do so, for that I would go with him like a lamb. The policemen were, however, placed around them, up and down, here and there, rank and file. On arriving at Quinn's House found the door with no other fastening than the latch, as Quinn himself being out that day sowing, his family expected him home that night. On arriving at the door was put in first by the policeman, who called several times aloud without getting an answer, and then turning to him said, "this is an empty house". I then myself called aloud, and was answered by Quinn's brother what I have stated before, that he was at work. As soon as the sergeant heard this he cried out, "come, handcuff Pentony". Was then handcuffed, and brought to the house of Michael Mooney, where we were kept for a considerable time under the guard of three policemen (for about two hours), until Mr. Byrne and others were brought in, when the entire party were marched to the police barrack of Duleek. When there, requested to have the handcuffs taken off, but, as Mr. Byrne remarked, there was some confusion as to finding the key, and consequently it was over fifteen minutes before they were at last removed. We remained here a long time, until the others of the party were brought in, and then we were seated on the stools and iron bedsteads, with a policeman between every two or three of us. Upon Mr. Byrne and Mr. Clarke entering into some conversation, the sergeant called out at once, "Come, come, no conversation". Thus silenced, they remained so long that their legs and hands became quite stiff and cold, and they were eventually obliged to get up, and continue walking up and down, to keep themselves at all warm. Things remained in this state until they were brought before Captain Despard. Mr. Pentony could not say whether he had been cautioned not to say anything that might incriminate himself and went on to say that he was then questioned in a manner similar to Mr. Byrne and Mr. Callan. Was I at Bellewstown Races? – I replied that I was; and also in answer to another question, that I had been in Wooser's tent that day; however, I did not see Byrne there, and that I was quite sure I did not meet him on that occasion (hear, hear). I was then asked did I see other people, mentioning several names, such as my fellow prisoners and others. I then stated those I had seen and those I had not. Did not see any signs whatever of a conspiracy, or hear any conversation concerning such a thing (hear, hear). After answering two or three other questions of a like nature, was told I might go home. On leaving the room I could not help remarking that it was a grievous thing that a person of my character should have been treated in such a manner – handcuffed and guarded like a common felon, upon Captain Despard said, "See, Pentony, with all your good character, I could have you in Trim gaol, and then you might look to your remedy to get out." I replied, "of course you might, sir", and then left the room.

The meeting concluded with the proposal be sent to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, praying an investigation into the harsh and despotic transaction.

Peter and William Brannigan both pleaded not guilty and were arraigned in Trim Gaol for the murder of William Hatch on 18 August 1837. When the trial was postponed almost a year later, in late July 1838, they were both released on bail, with a personal security of £100 each and further securities of £50 each. (Drogheda Journal, 28 July 1838).

The story disappears from the newspapers at this stage but further information is gleaned from the 'Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of the Law and Practice in Respect to the Occupation of Land in Ireland' in 1845.

Robert Brannigan, from Duleek was sworn and examined by the commission:

1. What is your occupation? – I am now a Grocer in Duleek; I was formerly a Farmer.
2. Under whom did you hold your farm and what was the extent of it? – The Marquess of Thomond; 76 Acres.
3. What lease did you have of it? – I think it was 41 years and two lives.
4. Had the lease expired? – Yes, it had.
5. When did the lease expire? – Candlemas Day, or the 29th January 1837; it is nine years ago.
6. How long did you hold the farm after that? – When the lease dropped at Candlemas, I stopped my work for a few days, thinking the agent would send some word to me not to go on with any more ploughing, and he sent me no word, and I went on with my work as usual, until I got my spring crops in; then he served me an ejectment and turned me out, and kept my entire spring crop as it was, and gave me no recompense; and he sold also the eighth sheaf of twenty acres of wheat.
7. Is it the custom of that country that a tenant going out, after the wheat is sown, is entitled to the eighth sheaf? – No, the landlord is entitled to it; but the landlord kept all, because the land had been sown after the lease had expired. He also kept eleven acres of clover and seven acres of rye-grass, and never gave me any recompense.
8. Had they given you any notice? – no, not a word; and I stopped my work for a few days, thinking they would send me word.
9. What is the name of the agent? – Mr. Crow, of the County of Clare. I wrote to Lord Thomond to give me a preference for the land; and this – [producing a paper] – is a letter of character I sent to him in London; and he sent it back to me, and paid no attention to it. The agent gave me a letter to the under-agent (Mr. Hatch), and but for the under-agent I would have got my land – he had such an influence over him; and that was the way they did the job and took the land from me. I never owed one shilling rent, nor my father before me. We were English tenants, up to the day.
10. Did you lay out any money for improvements? – No, I did not.
11. Was there any house upon the farm? – Yes, but it was not worth while improving it, on account of the farm having nothing but this old place left upon it.
12. Is Mr. Hatch now in possession? – Yes, he is indeed.

[The witness withdrew.]

Thomas Crowe was also examined:

1. Where do you reside? – At Ennis, in the county of Clare.
2. Are you the agent to the Marquess of Thomond, for some property he had near Duleek? – Yes.

3. Having read the evidence of Robert Brannigan, have you any observations you wish to make to the commissioners? – I know Robert Brannigan. He was never tenant to Lord Thomond upon the farm, and never paid any rent for it. I do not know how Brannigan obtained it. I might have heard, but I do not recollect.

4. Was it ever with your knowledge? – I knew that he was on a part of the land, or, perhaps the whole of it; but he never paid me any rent for it. I did not recognise him as a tenant at all. A person of the name of Carpenter always paid me the rent for it. I do not know what right Brannigan had to it, or whether he had any; if he had any; if he had any, he might have had it under Forrester, but I do not know how he became possessed of it at all. Forrester's lease expired, I think, in January, 1837; and I wrote down to the person who acted for me there early in March, waiting for a communication from Lord Thomond upon the subject, and he demanded possession of Brannigan and Carpenter. Carpenter gave up his part of the holding, and Brannigan refused to do so. There was then an ejectment brought, and he held it against us until the May following, when he got possession under an habere. He says I turned him out and kept his entire crops and sold them; I never sold a crop of his in my life, nor do I know how he managed with the person to whom it was let; I suppose he gave him the modus of the country, which is, what he states here to be the eighth sheaf, that is, to the new tenant he gave the eighth sheaf. I know nothing of his statement about clover and rye-grass; I did not get it and did not keep it, though he states that I did. He then states that he got no notice – he got notice in March.

5. Did the lease depend upon a life? – Yes, a life and years, and they expired in January 1837. He knew of the expiration of the lease, as I sent to demand possession as soon as I had had a communication from Lord Thomond upon the subject. He got notice in March, and put crops in the ground after the notice, and put us to an ejectment, and would not give possession. He says he sent a character to Lord Thomond – I know nothing of that. He says but for the under-agent I would have given him the land, he has such influence over me; he never made use of any influence, nor would I permit it. I know nothing of him except that he had the land; but as a tenant he never paid me. A man of the name of Hatch, who got the land, has a small estate of his own adjoining the farm in Duleek. The late Mr. Trotter, Lady Thomond's father, was anxious to get a portion of this property of Hatch's and annex it to the demesne. Hatch made him a lease for ever of that portion which he required; and in consequence of that, Mr. Trotter promised him the next farm that fell out. Lady Thomond was appraised of this promise of her father after the expiration of the lease, and I was written to give it to Hatch in consequence.

6. Did you yourself visit the farm? – Not until just after the ejectment was served.

7. Have any improvements been made upon it? – Not until just after the ejectment was served.

8. Was any claim made upon you for any compensation or allowance in regard to it? – No, none whatever; there was no interference on this further than I have stated. In consequence of Hatch giving a part of the property to Mr. Trotter, this farm was promised to him, and Lady Thomond gave it to him afterwards. There was a murder committed about two years afterwards there.

9. Did that arise from the taking of land? – Hatch's brother was murdered there. What I have to say upon it is only hearsay, and I have heard it said, that it was supposed it was for the brother the farm was intended, and his brother was the man who was murdered.

10. Do you know whether any person was tried for the murder? – No. Two persons were taken up for it, relatives of the man who makes this complaint; they were in Trim gaol for a year, and the evidence was not found sufficient – they were discharged without being brought to trial. In my former examination before the commissioners, at Ennis, I stated that on the arrival of the parties in America who were sent out, they had each of them £2; I ought to have stated £1 was paid to each adult upon their arrival in America, to send them up the country.

[The witness withdrew]

The above extracts are transcribed verbatim.

THE TENANT AND HIS LAND

In the decade leading up to the famine, with a population of about eight million, almost 45% of agricultural land holdings in Ireland were between one and five acres in area. Irish small farmers and labourers lived under conditions of great hardship.

A central characteristic of the Irish Land system in the early 1800s was its shortage, in relation to the demand for it. Land, especially potato ground, was essential for sheer survival. This meant that those fortunate enough to hold some land had to cling stubbornly to it.

The Irish tenant and his family were constantly under this threat of insecurity of tenure and did not accept that the ‘tenant-at-will’ had no permanent interest in the land. Lack of trust between landlord and tenant, often supported by religious differences, did not encourage investment by either party in land improvement. This lack of investment into agriculture and land reclamation exacerbated the problem. In addition, absentee landlords meant that a great deal of wealth left the country instead of being reinvested into the land.

‘Agrarian outrage’ was the weapon employed to try to defeat evictions and the raising of rents. The most frequent object of attack was the man who took up land from which the previous tenant was evicted. He was regarded as a greater culprit than the landlord, as he was a man who had broken the conventions of his own society.

APPENDIX:

Subscribers towards reward for information regarding the perpetrators of the murder of William Hatch, as published in Drogheda Argus and Leinster Journal, 26 August 1837:

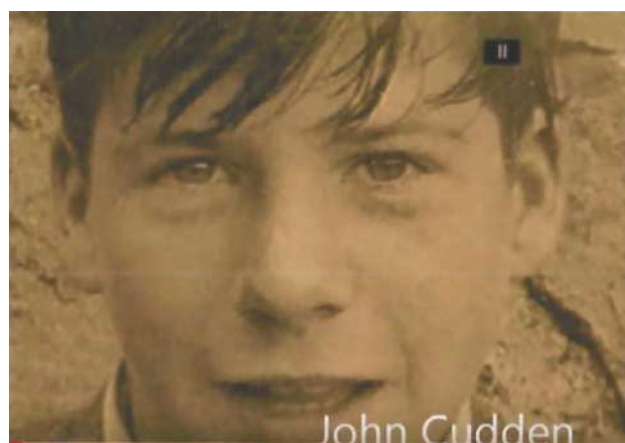
	£	S	D		
Marquis of Thomond	50.	00.	00	George Despard	10. 00. 00
William M. Somerville				Hugh Rothwell	5. 00. 00
	20.	00.	00	Hugh Cooper	5. 00. 00
Henry Smith	20.	00.	00	Laurence Ball	5. 00. 00
H.B. Coddington	20.	00.	00	Whitwell Butler	5. 00. 00
Nicholas Coddington	20.	00.	00	Richard O'Callaghan	3. 00. 00
Mayor of Drogheda	20.	00.	00	Peter Russell	1. 00. 00
J. Brabazon	10.	00.	00	Laurence Wasser	1. 00. 00
Evans Kettlewell	20.	00.	00	Cope Garnett	10. 00. 00
Edward Batty, Clerk	10.	00.	00	William Pendry	10. 00. 00
James Gernon	20.	00.	00	John Hatch	10. 00. 00
James Mathews	20.	00.	00	William Trotter	5. 00. 00
Henry Smith, Junr.	10.	00.	00	Francis Carey	1. 00. 00
Nicholas Hatch	50.	00.	00	Matthew Caffrey	1. 00. 00
Thomas Blacker Owens				John Gallagher	1. 00. 00
	10.	00.	00	Thomas Brown	3. 00. 00
Nicholas Boylan	20.	00.	00	James Trotter	1. 00. 00
Thomas Boylan	10.	00.	00	Bartholomew Maguire	1. 00. 00
George Delahoyde	5.	00.	00	H.J.M. Walsh	5. 00. 00
John Sibthorp	2.	00.	00	Andrew Armstrong	5. 00. 00
Owen Beahan	10.	00.	00	Richard Moore	1. 00. 00
William Hughes	10.	00.	00	John Carpenter	3. 00. 00
Edward Aylmer	2.	10.	00	John Deery	2. 00. 00
Laurence Kelly	2.	10.	00	A.S. Hussey	20. 00. 00
Bartholomew Ennis	2.	10.	00	Francis Anderson	5. 00. 00
Thomas Gargan	3.	00.	00	George Pepper	5. 00. 00
Richard Sheil	3.	00.	00	Richard Pepper	3. 00. 00
John Trotter	5.	00.	00	Thomas Brodigan	5. 00. 00
Robert Walsh	3.	00.	00	Thomas Pepper	20. 00. 00
Patrick Langan	3.	00.	00	G.W. Evans	3. 00. 00
Walter Coyle	5.	00.	00	James McCartney, Chief Constable,	
Michael Soran	5.	00.	00	Drogheda	5. 00. 00
Henry Warren	5.	00.	00	Henry Garvey	5. 00. 00
Patrick Gargan	5.	00.	00	Ralph Smyth	10. 00. 00
James Durnin	5.	00.	00	St. George Smith	10. 00. 00
Stephen Trotter	10.	00.	00	John Pendrey	20. 00. 00
George Warren	3.	00.	00	William Singleton	10. 00. 00
James Lynch	3.	00.	00	Ferguson Preston	10. 00. 00
James O'Brien	3.	00.	00		
John Campbell	5.	00.	00		
Christopher Cluskey	3.	00.	00		

Duleek School Photographs

Compiled by John Connor



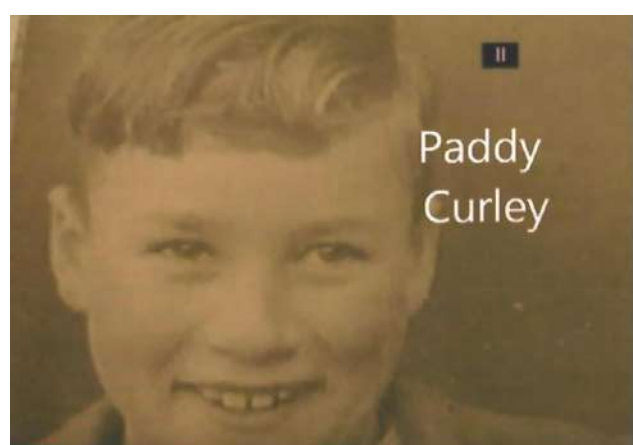
Jim Curley



John Cudden



Irene Connor & Mary
Cudden



Paddy
Curley



Breda Connor



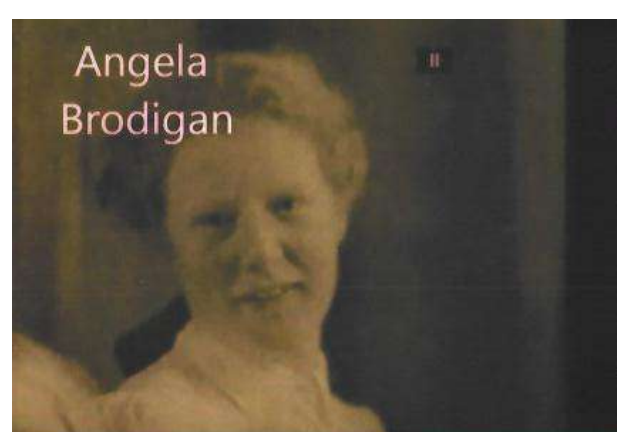
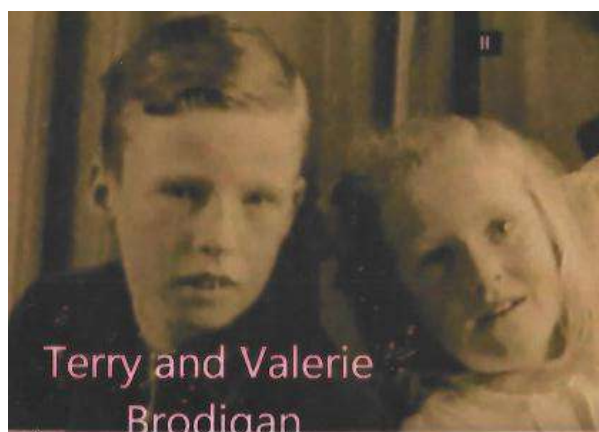
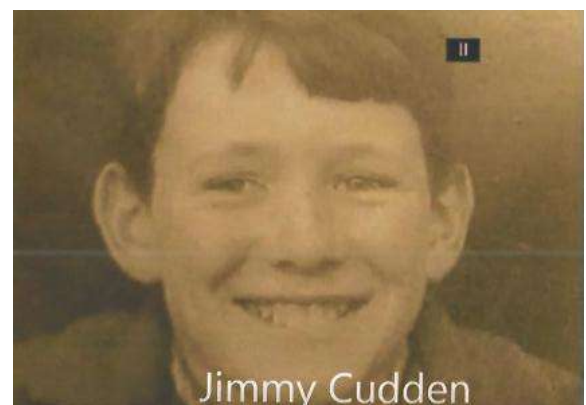
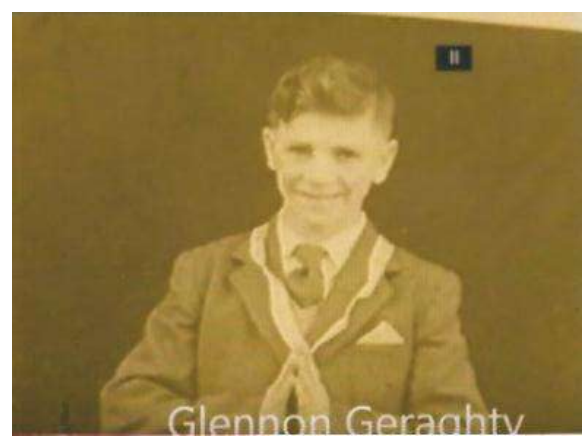
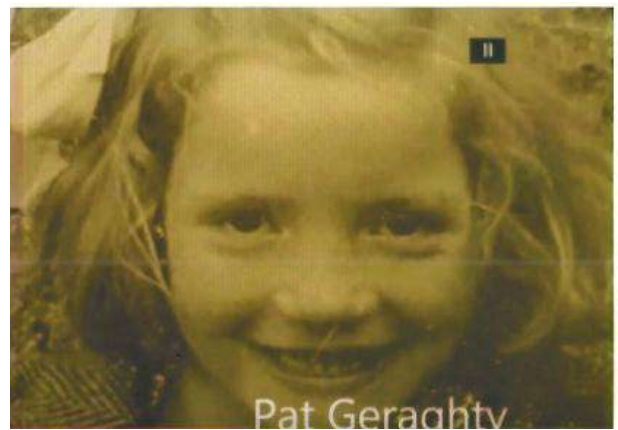
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Gallagher

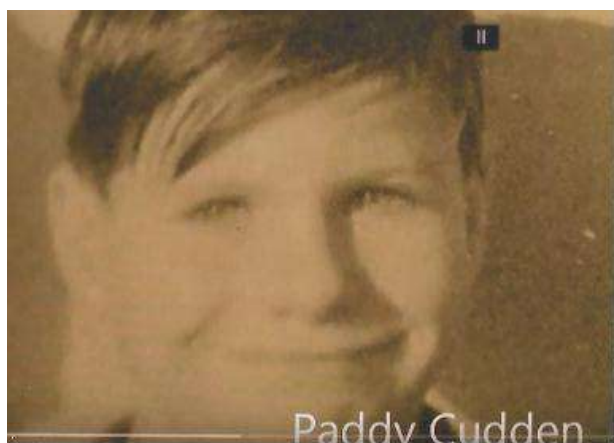
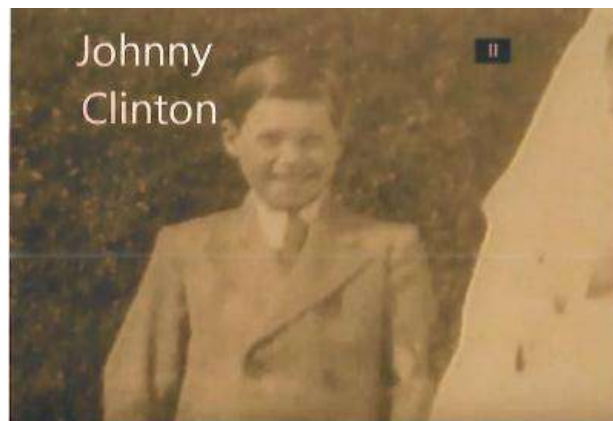
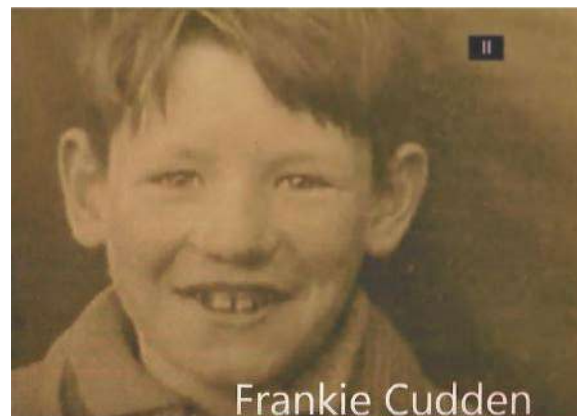
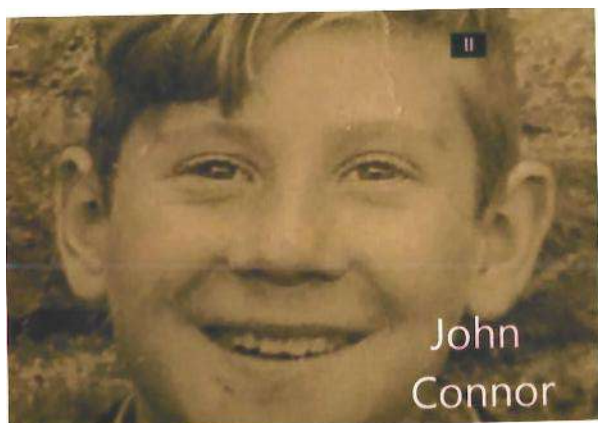


Johnny & Mickey Brown



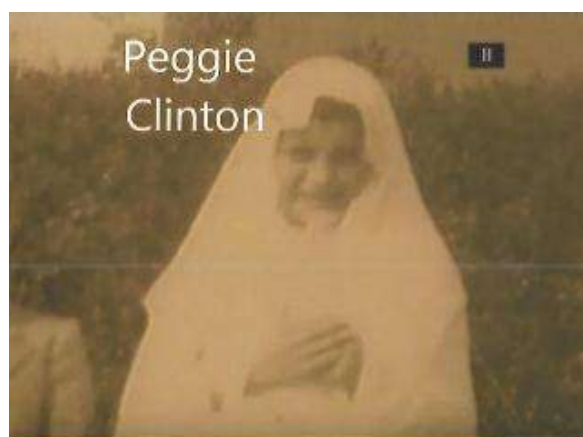
Geraldine & Joseph
Crosby



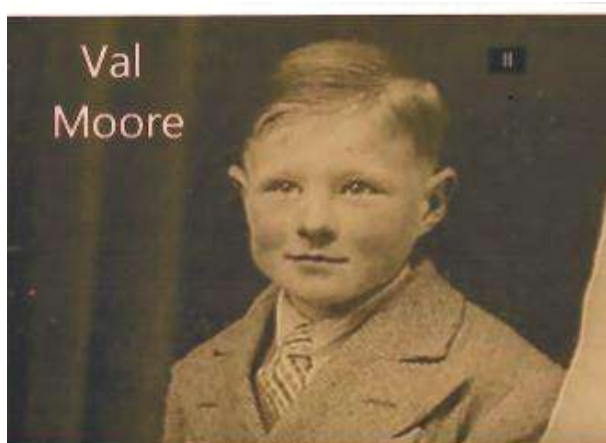




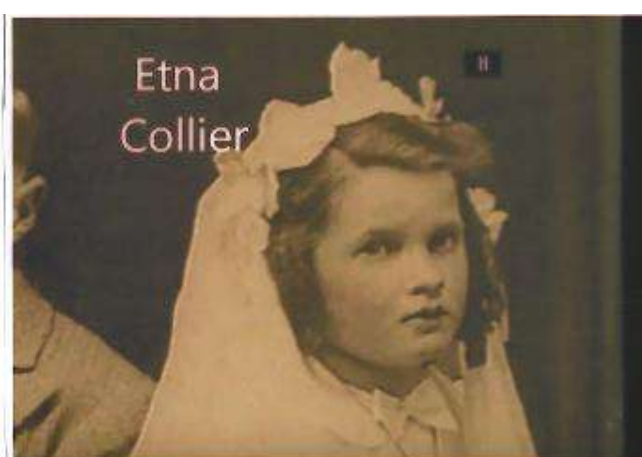
Brian
Crosby



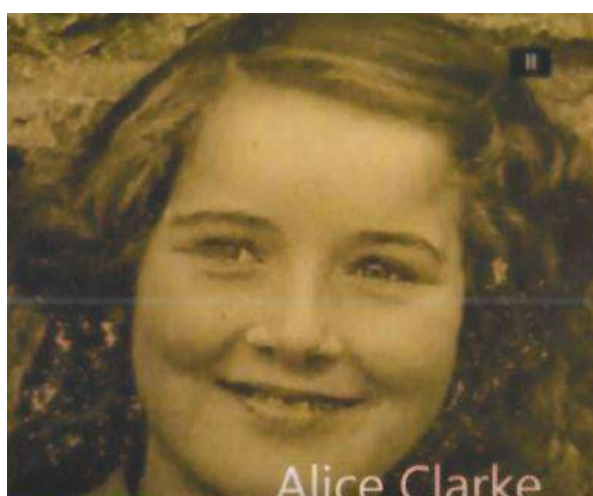
Peggie
Clinton



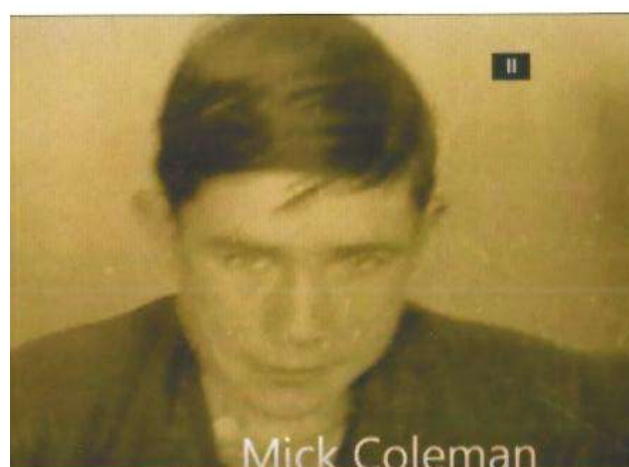
Val
Moore



Etna
Collier



Alice Clarke



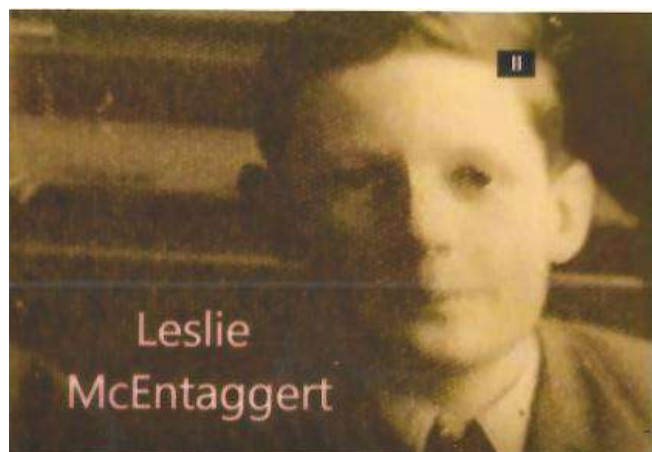
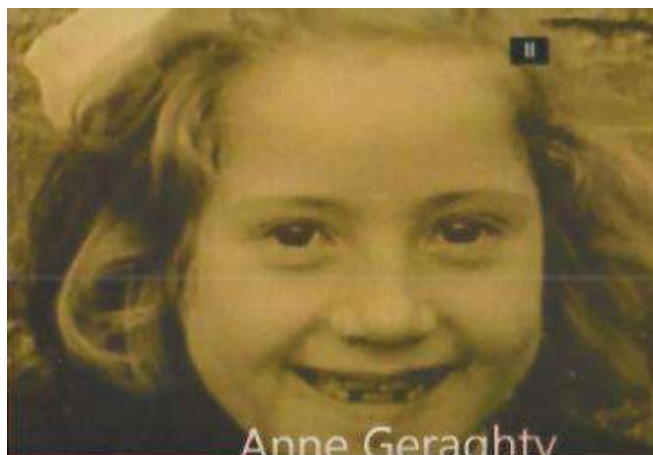
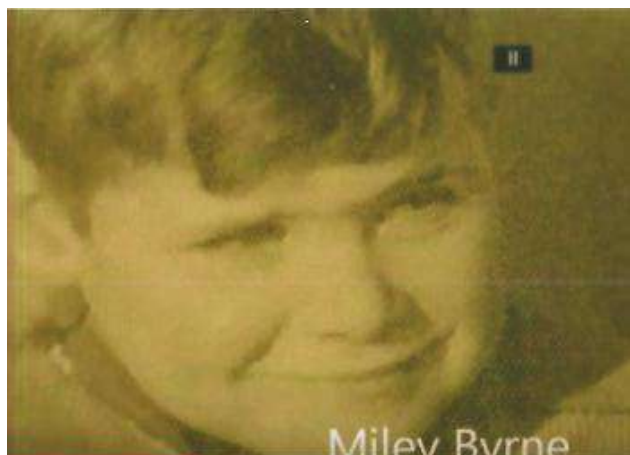
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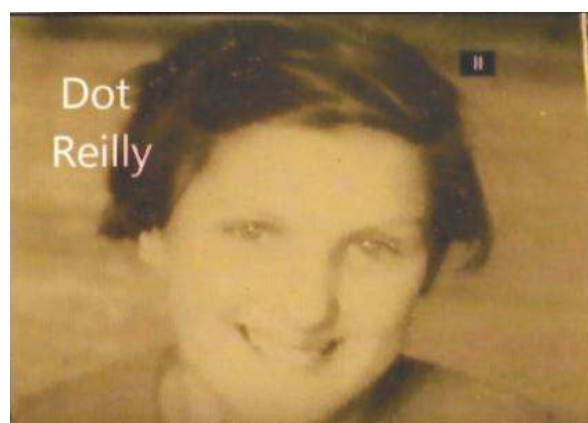
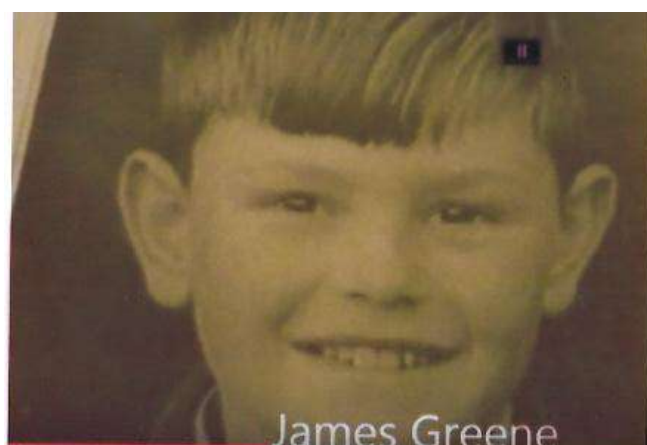
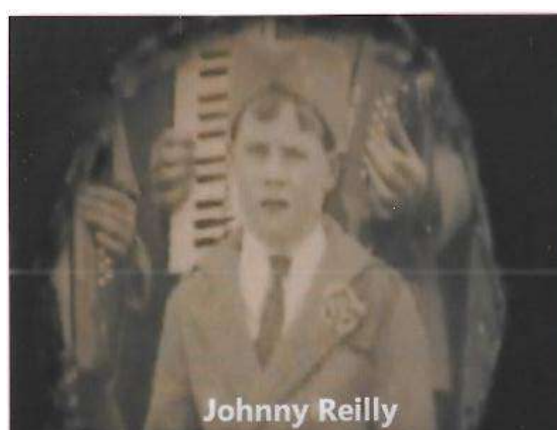
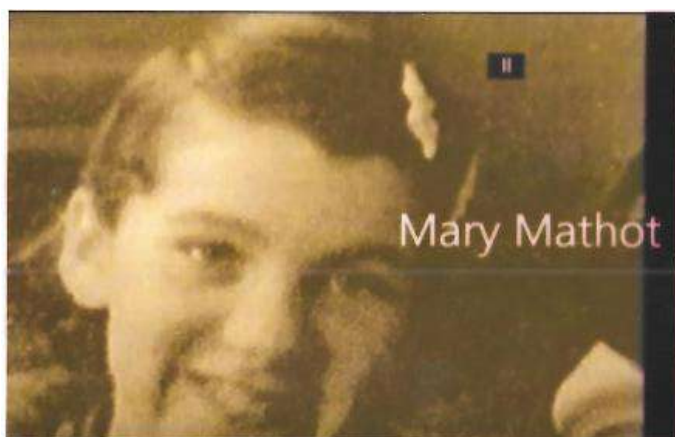


Betty McGuinness



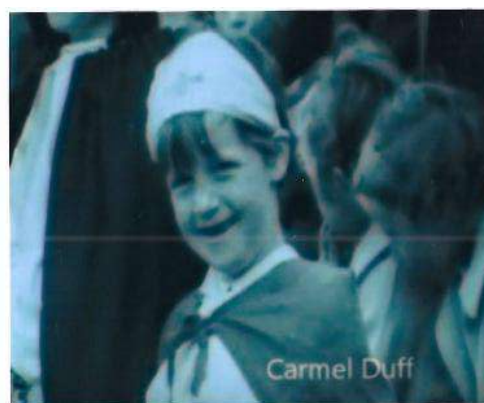
Maureen Murray



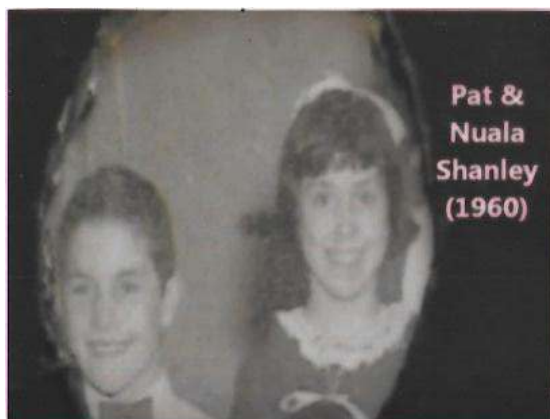




Anita & Mary Callaghan



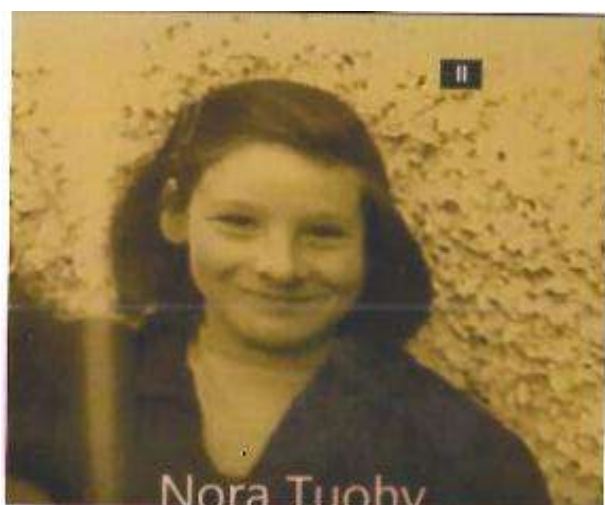
Carmel Duff



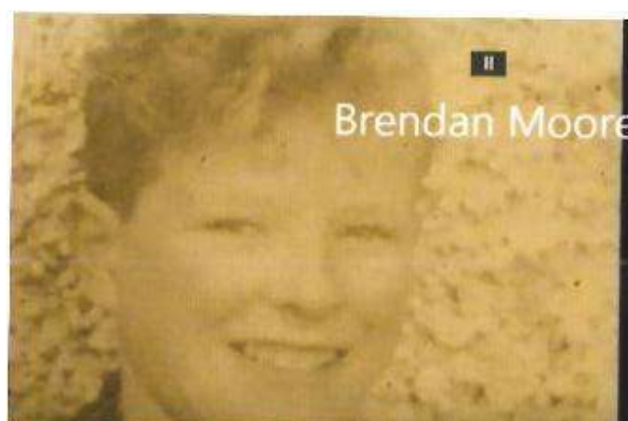
Pat &
Nuala
Shanley
(1960)



Gabriel O'Brien & Doreen Henry



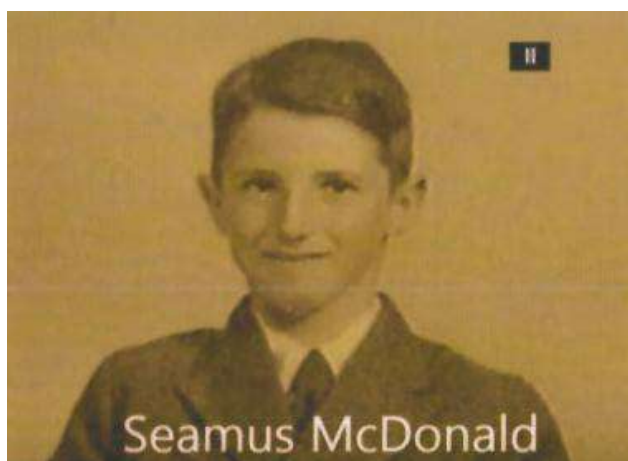
Nora Tuohy



Brendan Moore



Bertie
McGuinness



Seamus McDonald

