



**Ballaghameehan Parish,  
County Leitrim 1800-1922.**



**Gerry Fox**

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Gerry Fox



*This book is dedicated to my late parents Katie nee Gilligan (1920-2009) and Owenie Fox (1913-2009), Shasmore.*

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**List of Abbreviations**

- AOH Ancient Order of Hibernians.
- BOG Board of Guardians.
- COI Church of Ireland.
- DMP Dublin Metropolitan Police.
- GOLI Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.
- GV Griffith's Valuations.
- IRA Irish Republican Army.
- IRB Irish Republican Brotherhood.
- IPP Irish Parliamentary Party.
- INF Irish National Federation.
- INL Irish National League.
- INV Irish National Volunteers.
- IV Irish Volunteers.
- LLL Ladies Land League.
- LL Land League.
- OC Officer Commanding.
- PP Parish Priest.
- PLG Poor Law Guardian.
- PLU Poor Law Union.
- RC Roman Catholic.

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RIC Royal Irish Constabulary.

RDC Rural District Council.

SF Sinn Fein.

UIL United Irish League.

UVF Ulster Volunteer Force.

VO Valuation Office.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Introduction**

The period under review in the history of the parish of Ballaghameehan is primarily the era when Ireland had no native Parliament (1800-1922). Ireland was subject to rule from London. Sources include histories and articles written about the area as well as a review of newspapers printed during this period. Much of the great work by Una deBreadun and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, when publishing ‘Rossinver Braes’ (1995) and ‘Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan’s 1831-1998’ (1998) is referenced in this publication.

As with writing on many subjects it is difficult to compartmentalise periods of time or geography as it may be necessary to make reference to events prior to and after the period under review and to events in adjoining parishes.

## Gerry Fox

### About the Author



Gerry Fox was born and raised in Shasmore, in the parish of Ballaghameehan. He was educated in Brackarybeg National School and St. Joseph's College, Manorhamilton. He holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the National University of Ireland, Galway. During his career he has worked in the

manufacturing sector for many global organisations located in the west of Ireland. He and his family have resided in Westport, Co. Mayo for over thirty years.

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## **Chapter 1 Ballaghameehan Parish.**

The Roman Catholic parish of Ballaghameehan was formed during the Penal times at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is situated in the Barony of Rosclogher, County Leitrim.

Ballaghameehan parish consists of the townlands in the electoral division of Ballaghameehan, the townlands in the electoral division of Melvin (Rossinver) and the townlands in part of the electoral division of Glenaniff. This parish is bounded by Cloonclare to the east, Killasnet to the south, Kinlough to the west and County Fermanagh to the north.

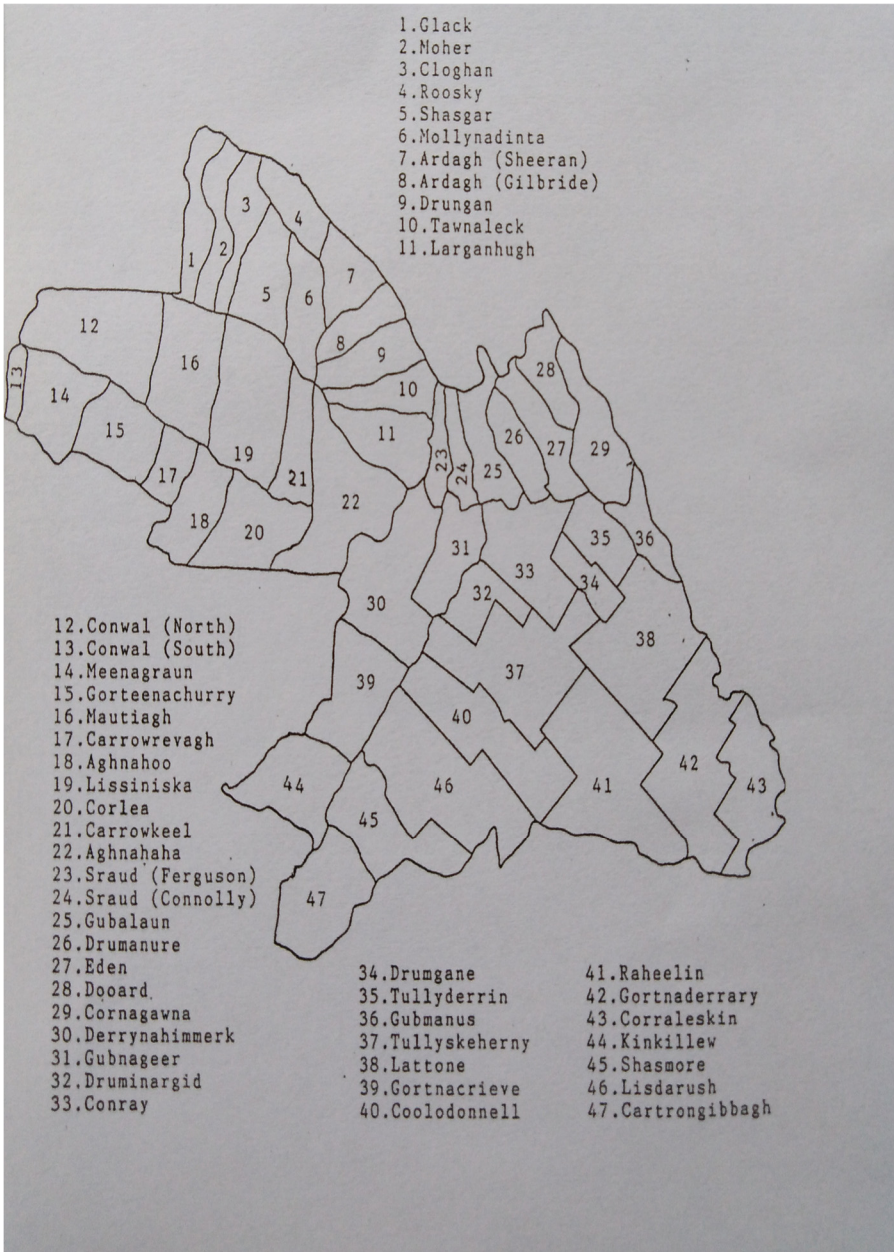
The landlords of Ballaghameehan were the Wynnes of Hazelwood in Sligo. The landlords of Rossinver were the Johnstons of Kinlough, County Leitrim. There were many landlord changes in Glenaniff during the period under review.

The townlands in the electoral division of Ballaghameehan are Cartrongibbagh (Corthoon), Conray, Coolodonnell, Corraleskin, Derrynahimmirk, Drumgane, Druminargid, Gortnacrieve, Gortnaderrary, Gubmanus, Gubnageer, Kinkillew, Lattone, Lisdarush (Lisross), Raheelin, Shasmore, Tullyderrin and Tullyskeherny.<sup>1</sup>

The townlands in the electoral division of Glenaniff are Aghnahaha, Aghnahoo, Carrowkeel, Carrowreevagh, Conwal North, Conwal South, Corlea, Gorteenachurry, Lissiniska, Mautiagh and Meenagraun.<sup>2</sup>

The townlands in the electoral division of Melvin (Rossinver) are Ardagh Gilbride, Ardagh Sheeran, Cloghan, Cornagawna, Dooard, Drumanure, Drungan, Eden, Glack, Gubalaun, Larganhugh, Moher, Mollynadinta, Roosky, Shasgar, Sraud Conolly, Sraud Ferguson and Tawnaleck.

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*Townlands of Ballaghameehan Parish.<sup>3</sup>*

## **Chapter 2 The Wynnes of Leitrim and Sligo.**

Col. Owen Wynne came from Wales to live at Lurganboy, Co. Leitrim. He was beneficiary of the Cromwellian plantation of Ireland. In 1658, he was granted two leases of church land in County Leitrim, one of land belonging to the See of Kilmore and the other of land belonging to the See of Ardagh. This land had been the property of the established church of which the King of England was head. However, at this time, this land was declared to be the property of Parliament. These leases consisted of 14,500 acres. In 1668, Owen Wynne bought for £750 from John Abercromby of Ballinaleck, County Fermanagh, a further 1,000 acres in County Leitrim.<sup>1</sup>

The Wynne family became the landlords over part of north Leitrim and part of County Sligo and remained so for over two hundred and fifty years. During this period, the head of the Wynne family, with one exception, John Arthur, bore the forename of Owen.

The latter part of the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth century saw the Wynne family increase their influence and increase the size of their estate. In 1720, Lt. Gen. Owen Wynne (1664-1737) bought land in County Cavan for £15,000 from the Duke of Wharton. Two years later he became the owner of 14,500 acres of land in County Sligo for which he paid £20,000. In 1724, Hazelwood House was built and this became the main residence of the Wynne family. During this period the Wynnes were members of parliament. One of the Sligo borough seats was always held by a Wynne from 1715 to 1806 and one of the county seats from 1727 to 1790.

By the end of the eighteenth century the Wynne Estate was heavily in debt. This was due to family members contesting costly parliamentary elections and due to expensive marriage settlements. The larger mortgages were made necessary by marriage. Each of the

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two families concerned contributed to the marriage settlement. On the Wynne side the contribution consisted of land which was to be mortgaged; on the bride's side it consisted of a capital sum, which could be described as a dowry. These settlements contributed substantially to the Wynne family's debts.



*Hazelwood House, Sligo.*

At the commencement of the nineteenth century, Owen Wynne (1755-1841) attempted to reduce some of the debt over his estate. In 1803, the Wynne's sold their lands in County Cavan for £12,000. A further £4,000 was raised by the sale of other land. In 1806, Owen Wynne retired from parliament to take up a salaried position by being appointed Escheator of Munster. He then sold his borough seat for an annuity which continued until 1820 when he again resumed his seat.

During the second half of the eighteenth century many landlords took a direct and improving interest in the management of their estates. The swing towards tillage farming after 1780 promoted subdivision. New field arrangements were laid out, field enclosures were formed and land drainage projects were undertaken. These developments would result in the abandonment of the rundale

system of farming and its replacement with individual farms operated by individual tenants.

In his book 'Innishmurray', Dr. Patrick Heraughty describes Owen Wynne as '*a remarkable man who has scarcely been given due recognition for the social and agricultural advances for which he was responsible. He was a dedicated cattle farmer; the proper and beneficial use of the land meant more to him than anything. He used nine different types of plough on his own land and received first prize at Ballinasloe Fair in 1801 for a plough designed by himself. It is not surprising that his advice was sought by neighbouring estates.*'<sup>2</sup>

As regard stock, Wynne introduced Devon cattle and South Down sheep from England. He continued his father's widespread afforestation. Much of this was carried out for commercial purposes. He tried to incentivise his tenants to improve their tenancies by offering prizes. Categories of prizes included:

The farm in the best condition and best state of cultivation;

- the farmer who would plough the greatest acreage with one man and two horses driven by reins without a leader;
- the farmer who would have the best crop of, respectively, potatoes cultivated with the plough, turnips and red clover;
- the farmer who would have planted the greatest number of forest trees, not less than three hundred.

Also, there were categories of prizes for labourers and their spouses.<sup>3</sup>

### **Chapter 3 The Act of Union 1801.**

The last decade of the eighteenth century was a volatile and violent period in Ireland. The Society of United Irishmen, founded in 1791, embraced Catholics, Protestants and Dissenters in its aim to remove English control from Irish affairs. The bloody rebellion of 1798, however, resulted in the 1801 Act of Union, which brought Ireland under tighter British control.

During the eighteenth-century Ireland was stripped of regular troops since the army was employed abroad. Therefore, Ireland was at risk of invasion. To meet such threats public-spirited Irishmen, led by landlords, formed volunteer corps. In 1796, a group of soldiers called Yeomanry were set up. These were civilians who were put into groups as soldiers. Owen Wynne (1755-1841) raised and commanded the Sligo Volunteers. In 1798, Wynnes yeomanry regiment was involved in defeating the remaining French troops near Killala.<sup>1</sup>

The Orange Order was founded by Ulster Protestants in County Armagh in 1795, during a period of Protestant–Catholic sectarian conflict, as a fraternity sworn to maintain the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. It was headed by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, established in 1798.

Owen Wynne was a member of the Irish House of Commons during the fateful debates at the end of the eighteenth century concerning the union of the two Kingdoms (Britain and Ireland). The Acts of Union 1801 formally annexed Ireland into a United Kingdom and dissolved the Irish Parliament. The fact that the measure could only be carried by the use of bribery and the wholesale distribution of titles shows that the members, who were all Protestants, had serious doubts about the wisdom of the step. These methods were all legal and not unusual for the time. It was known on all sides that full Catholic emancipation would follow on the heels of the Act. Owen

Wynne voted against the bill. In the fullness of time the Act spelt the end of the Irish Protestant ascendancy.<sup>2</sup>

It took another generation before the granting of Catholic emancipation was achieved. The Orange Order provided fuel to sectarian fighting for many more decades with the use of yeomanry arms.

During the eighteenth century, it had become common for landlords to let substantial parts of their properties on long leases to so-called middlemen. These middlemen, in turn, subdivided the land into smaller parcels which were then let out to farmers at a higher amount. Landlords benefitted by avoiding the costs of direct management of their lands. However, the agricultural boom produced by the French wars of 1793-1815 made landlords anxious to share in the advantage of rising prices. As long middlemen leases at fixed rents clearly stood in their way, they began to take back land into their own hands as leases fell in and then to let it out directly themselves.<sup>3</sup>

## **Chapter 4 The Restructuring of the Tenancies of the Wynne Estate in Ballaghameehan.**

The Wynne family of Hazelwood, Sligo, were the landlords over the Ballaghameehan part of the parish. Prior to 1807 there were 17 middlemen in Ballaghameehan paying rent to the Wynne Estate. During the summer of 1807, the Wynne Estate restructured the tenancies for the lands of the See of Kilmore in Ballaghameehan. In doing so the landlord increased by three-fold the total rental income from these lands. The rent had to be paid by the tenants in two equal instalments during the year. One instalment fell due in March and the other was due in September.

However, in restructuring the tenancies in Ballaghameehan, Owen Wynne (1755-1841) increased the number of tenants paying rent to his estate by nine-fold. The new tenants were now predominantly Roman Catholics. The original middlemen received smaller tenancies. Some remained in the same townland. Others were relocated to other townlands within the parish of Ballaghameehan. The division of the townlands into smaller parts became, in many cases, the farm structure which still exists in the parish of Ballaghameehan.

Prior to the restructuring of the tenancies of the Wynne Estate in Ballaghameehan, there were fourteen tenancies with seventeen middlemen tenants. Seven of the middlemen or forty-one per cent were Protestant. The Wynne Estate received annual rents of £708 from these middlemen.

Following the restructuring of the tenancies there were now one hundred and forty-two tenancies with one hundred and forty-eight tenants. The number of the Protestant tenants was reduced from forty-one per cent to eleven per cent. There were sixteen Protestant tenants. There were one hundred and thirty-two Roman Catholic

tenants. The Wynne Estate received annual rents of £1,947 from these tenants.

The Wynne Estate had a reputation for setting high rents. H. D. Inglis, writing in 'A Journey Throughout Ireland' in 1834 stated '*The land in the barony of Carbury, especially Wynnes is let extremely high. Owen Wynne's tenants are, with very few exceptions, in arrear, but he is one of those short-sighted landlords who is resolved at all costs to keep up the nominal amount of his rent-roll. His rents are taken in dribbles, in shillings and copper; and agents have been known to accompany tenants to market with their produce, lest any part of its value should escape the landlord's pocket.*'<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Protestant nation, which had been installed into Ireland as a result of the Cromwellian plantation 150 years earlier, began its slow decline in the parish of Ballaghameehan. The indebtedness of the Wynne Estate caused the demise of the Protestant tenants in Ballaghameehan. It was out of economic necessity rather than the desire to improve the lot of the Roman Catholics of Ballaghameehan which prompted Owen Wynne to share out the tenancies previously occupied by a few Protestants with a much larger number of Catholic tenants.

The See of Kilmore lands in Ballaghameehan were the first part of the Wynne Estate to have its tenancies offered in such a large scale to Roman Catholics. The enactment of laws towards the end of the eighteenth century made it possible for landlords to transfer some of their debt-ridden tenancies from Protestant to Catholic occupants. Many of the Roman Catholics, who received tenancies from the Wynne Estate in 1807, had been sub-tenants of middlemen. In a letter from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the Sligo Journal, dated 7 December, 1832, he defended Owen Wynne when writing: '*In letting his lands a few years ago, he was never known to make any distinction between Protestant and Catholic, or to give preference to the former; on the contrary, he refused every application, from*

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*whatever quarter it came, and retained his old tenants (Catholics), though many years in arrears, which might serve as a specious pretext for their extermination, had he been liberal. '2*

## Chapter 5 Catholic Emancipation.

Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire was actively involved in the development of the Catholic Association within his parish. The Catholic Association was an Irish Roman Catholic political organisation set up by Daniel O'Connell in the early nineteenth century to campaign for Catholic emancipation. The Catholic Rent was introduced in 1828, so as to broaden the membership of the Catholic Association into a mass organisation. The Catholic Rent was a subscription that was to be paid monthly to the Catholic Association in Ireland. It amounted to one penny levied per person each month.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1828, it was announced at a meeting of the Catholic Association that Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire P.P., Ballaghameehan, had forwarded two pounds to the Catholic Association. *'The Reverend Gentleman stated in his letter that he had at the May Conference subscribed for the same purpose a similar sum, and that he would willingly contribute still further if there were a necessity for his doing so. The Reverend Gentleman added that he had appointed Church wardens, and that his parishioners were most ready to unite their efforts in every way with the exertions of the Catholic Association, and that he attributed the active spirit of patriotism which now possessed them to the circulation amongst them of that most excellent journal, the Weekly Register.'*<sup>2</sup> The Weekly Register was the official journal of the Catholic Association.

The views of Owen Wynne (1755-1841) on the threat posed by the Catholic population through the Catholic Emancipation movement were aired some years earlier. Among four resolutions (relating to Catholic Emancipation) proposed by Owen Wynne at a meeting of Protestants held in the court house in Sligo on 12 August, 1812, was the following: *'Resolved, that it appears to us that the unqualified repeal of these laws would not be consistent with that perfect safety*

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*to the constitution which we feel we have a right to require, but would eventually substitute in its place a Roman Catholic ascendancy, which would proceed to a domination necessarily subversive to the Protestant settlement of the country on the preservation and strength of which, we firmly believe, the connection between the two countries, and ultimately the security of the Empire, to depend.*<sup>3</sup>

The final years of the 1820s had been very divisive and sectarian in north Leitrim. On one hand, the Protestant gentry and the Orange Order were campaigning against the granting of further religious freedom to Catholics by the government. On the other hand, Daniel O'Connell and the Catholic Association were campaigning for Catholic Emancipation.

Orange Order parades on 12 July each year only added fuel to the fire. On 21 July, 1828, at an early hour, four Protestants returning towards Manorhamilton from the fair of Blacklion, were waylaid and dreadfully beaten by their assailants. Some of these Protestants had taken part in the Orange Order Parade, in Manorhamilton, on 12 July, 1828. It was claimed that several Roman Catholics witnessed the assaults but did not intervene.

Catholic Emancipation was granted by parliament in early 1829. On 1 July, 1829, at the fair of Manorhamilton, a riot broke out which resulted in three deaths and nine people were wounded. It is difficult to get impartial reporting on the riot. The Protestant newspapers blamed the Papists for causing the riot. The Catholic newspapers took the opposite view.

One of the more balanced accounts of events on that day was published by the Roscommon Journal and Western Impartial Reporter on 25 July, 1829, which credited the story to the Sligo Observer. This report appeared three weeks after the event. The Sligo Observer had a reporter in Manorhamilton on the day of the riot. It stated that only one man by the name of Patrick Skea was

shot dead. Two men by the names of Gilroy and Clinton had since died from their wounds. The newspaper also stated that neither the Constabulary or the Revenue Police were involved in these shootings.

The affray originated with a female ballad-singer singing the praises of Daniel O'Connell. An Orangeman by the name of Malley attacked this woman with his fist and with a bayonet. A stout countryman intervened and knocked Malley to the ground. Immediately other Orangemen joined in and a general battle ensued with the peasantry. The Orangemen were badly beaten. The Orangemen retired to collect additional forces.

They soon returned to the combat led by James Johnston and armed with bludgeons. The battle again raged for a few minutes. The Orangemen made a good fight but they were soon soundly thrashed. Infuriated by this second defeat, those Orangemen who lived in Manorhamilton returned to their homes for swords, bayonets and fire-arms, which they shared with their fellow brethren from outside of the town.

After the lapse of half an hour, the Orangemen returned with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets. Meanwhile, the Catholics had congregated together at the Fair green for mutual protection. There were more Catholics present than Orangemen. The Orangemen advanced upon them led by Paddy Armstrong. They fired into the crowd of Catholics. Skea fell from the first shot. It was claimed to have been discharged by a man named John Galnagh, who was the jailer in Manorhamilton. Several people were severely injured.

The Catholic peasantry rushed the Orangemen and they had to withdraw once more. Some of the Orangemen were badly beaten. As the Orangemen prepared to make a fourth charge on the Catholics, they were met by Colonel Cullen, who was the local magistrate. The peasantry showed Colonel Cullen great respect and cleared a path for him to pass through the assembled crowd. Colonel

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Cullen ordered the crowd to disperse, but they argued that if they separated that they would be murdered.

He went on then to meet the Orangemen. The Orangemen while standing close to Colonel Cullen began to open fire on the people. The crowd rushed the Orangemen and drove them and the Colonel to the other end of the town towards the Court House. The crowd threw stones at the Orangemen, some of which hit the Colonel knocking him to the ground and breaking his hat. The Revenue Police and a few of the Constabulary offered to come under his command. He ordered them to fire over the heads of the peasantry. Nobody was injured as a result of this action. The crowd dispersed soon afterwards.

The Orangemen were disappointed with the actions of Colonel Cullen and branded him a coward. The newspaper praised the actions of Colonel Cullen. It went on to explain that not a single respectable Protestant in Manorhamilton assisted the Orangemen. James Rutledge, a Protestant, did all he could to restrain them.

After the events in Manorhamilton on 1 July, 1829, tensions ran very high. On the following day a party of surveyors, who were engaged in taking a Cost Survey, were attacked and badly beaten. Their instruments were destroyed also. The spirit of revenge for the deaths of Skea, Gilroy and Clinton had taken possession of the people. Any Orangeman caught travelling the roads was badly beaten. The newspaper pleaded with the clergy to intervene so as to stop these atrocious proceedings.

Three commissioners were sent from Dublin Castle to enquire into the riot. Also, a military company, the 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment, were sent from Boyle to Manorhamilton to maintain law and order. The newspaper also stated that the regular troops were more acceptable than the constabulary, who for the most part, were themselves Orangemen.

The local magistrates refused to investigate the deaths of the three men. They also refused to accept witness affidavits. It was left to the local priests of the area to collect witness statements and push for a trial. Only one man, John Galnagh, the jailer, was charged with the murder of Patrick Skea. Because of the delays in gathering evidence the trial did not take place until 16 March 1830. John Galnagh was acquitted but left the area soon afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

On 10 August, 1829, the Dublin Morning Register, which was a publication for the Catholic Association, published a list of crimes against Catholics in north Leitrim. This publication captured the tension and violence in the area. All of these crimes were alleged to have been carried out by Orangemen and Protestant yeomanry. Yet, nobody was ever prosecuted. This article by the Dublin Morning Register was in response to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland publishing three proclamations, offering rewards for the apprehension of persons engaged in crimes against Orangemen. The newspaper noted that there were no rewards offered for the discovery of persons called Orangemen, who had committed atrocious deeds.

The Dublin Morning Register credited the Sligo Luminary with the following catalogue of horrors:

- A person named Dolan, the brother of a Roman Catholic Priest, was shot dead in his own house in Glenfarn, while smoking his pipe on a Sunday morning, by an Orangeman by the name of Nixon. Nixon was immediately apprehended by friends and neighbours of Dolan and handed over to a certain noble man. Nixon escaped and was still at large.
- Meehan, a water keeper, was shot near Ballaghameehan church.
- McNulty, another water keeper, was shot more recently at the same place. The guns used could be traced to certain yeomanry but no action was taken.

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- Rooney, another water keeper who worked for Mr. Martin, was shot at Milltown bridge. Martin attempted to bring the murderer to justice but he failed as the murderer could not be identified from the gang involved, all of whom were armed with yeomanry muskets.
- McMorrow was shot at Belhavel lake, while trying to escape from an Orange mob. Nobody was charged with his murder. Some of those who murdered him were now charged with being implicated as principals in one of the recent murders in Manorhamilton.
- Rooney, a comfortable farmer, was shot in his own house by a party who came to carry off his daughter, to whom it was believed he could give a handsome ransom. One of the persons charged with this murder was also charged with the murder of another of the unfortunate victims at Manorhamilton.
- Hannon was shot at Ballinaglera church while driving some cattle along the road. A person was tried but acquitted, as it was discovered after Hannon's death, that he had illegally rescued the cattle.
- Lavin met a similar fate at the same place.
- McGuinness was shot sitting at his own fireside in Glencar. An inquest into his death detailed that two people, having military arms, called yeomanry muskets, were seen running from the door of his house after the fatal shots were fired.
- Foy or Fahey was murdered on Benbo mountain. An innocent man named Lagan was tried and acquitted, while the real murderer was screened. No effort was made to bring the known murderer to justice.
- James Carney from Killargue was killed. The suspicion was that this killing was carried out by Orangemen.
- Woods was shot in the street of Drumkeeran, by a person employed as a watchman to guard the materials of a new church. At his trial evidence was given that the watchman

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was not of sound mind on the day he shot Woods. The watchman was acquitted of murder.

Philip McNulty was a water-keeper on the Ballaghameehan river. He worked for J. Cassidy, Bundrowes, who owned the fishing rites to the river. On 24 December, 1823, Philip McNulty was shot dead when he encountered a number of persons who were poaching salmon going up the river to spawn.<sup>5</sup> At a sitting of the Leitrim Assizes on 29 July, 1824, John Connolly, Andrew Ferguson, Brian Fox, Patrick Fox, James Murray and Pat Murray were charged with the murder of Philip McNulty. At the end of the trial all were found to be not guilty.<sup>6</sup> At a sitting of the Leitrim Assizes in March, 1825, new charges, for the same crime, were brought against Daniel Connolly and William Connolly with three others. As the brother of the deceased, who was present when the incident occurred, could not identify the assailants the jury found them not guilty.<sup>7</sup>

After his success with achieving Catholic Emancipation, Daniel O'Connell set up the Loyal National Repeal Association in 1830. It was an Irish mass membership political movement to campaign for a repeal of the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. During November, 1841, Rev. Fr. Terence P. Fergus C.C. submitted £10 collected in Ballaghameehan parish since his arrival during the previous month of August. The following collectors contributed £1 each: Thomas McKeon (Kinkillew), Lazarus Meehan (Gubmanus), John Ferguson (Corraleskin), Owen McGourty (Gortnaderrary), Daniel Gilbride (Drumgane) and James Gilligan (Cartrongibbagh).

By the end of the 1840s, the Loyal National Repeal Association had failed in its goal to repeal of the Act of Union.<sup>8</sup> This organisation died with the death of Daniel O'Connell on 15 May, 1847.

## **Chapter 6 The Churches in Ballaghameehan Roman Catholic Parish.**

The building of the new church in Gubnageer was not a planned event. The opposite was the case, as it was because the roof had fallen in on the old church in 1829, which forced the parish priest to look for a site and funding to build a new church.



*St. Molaise's Holy Well.*

Around the year 1779, a Mass-house was built near where the townland of Tullyskeherny borders that of Derrynahimmirk. Tradition would suggest that it was situated near the early Christian site of St. Molaise's Church and Holy Well. Perhaps the year in which it was built has some significance. In 1778, the first Relief Act was passed by the British Parliament and it was from this year on that there was quite a development in church building throughout the diocese of Kilmore, whenever sites were made available by landlords.<sup>1</sup>

At least thirteen churches were built in the diocese during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century, including Glenade in 1790

and Killargue in 1791. Ballaghameehan had to wait a further fifty years before it was to have a proper church, due to the difficulty of procuring a site from the landlord.

The Mass-house built in 1779 served the people of Ballaghameehan until the winter of 1829, when during Divine Service a stake fell from the roof, causing injuries to some members of the congregation. The building was in such a dangerous condition that it was deemed unwise to attempt to repair it.<sup>2</sup>

The parish priest of Ballaghameehan was Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire, a native of the townland of Gortnaderrary. He was born in 1785. He was ordained in 1809, having attended both Carlow and Maynooth as a seminarian. He was parish priest in Ballaghameehan in 1822 and remained there until his death in 1834.<sup>3</sup> While parish priest of Ballaghameehan, he built a private residence on his 48 acres tenant farm in the townland of Drumgane and was living there in 1832.<sup>4</sup> At this time it was not unusual for priests to farm their lands as well as to administer their parishes.

From the winter of 1829, until the new church was built some years later, Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire found himself without even a Mass-house, however inadequate, in which to say Mass. It would appear that Mass was said without any other shelter than the canopy of heaven.<sup>5</sup>

Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire faced a number of challenges within his own parish in attempting to raise funds to build a church. Firstly, many of the wealthier Roman Catholics living in the southern part of the parish had been attending services in Killasnet parish for over a century. Many of the parishioners from Cartrongibbagh, Kinkillew, Shasmore, Gortnacrieve and Lisdarush attended Mass in Killasnet parish. Their children were baptised there and their dead were buried in Cartrontemple cemetery. Their support for Rossinver parish would be secondary to their support for Killasnet parish.

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Secondly, there was a large Protestant community living in Ballaghameehan which was part of the Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver. Many of these families were quite wealthy in terms of the state of the parish. However, these families attended services in Cloonclare because Manorhamilton was much closer than Kinlough. Their ties to Cloonclare were stronger as that was where most of them had been married and where their children were baptised into the Protestant faith. Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire did not try to raise funds in Cloonclare as it was outside of his parish.

Thirdly, the remaining parishioners of Ballaghameehan were suffering from extreme destitution and were unable to build a new church. So, Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire had to apply for financial aid to several Protestant gentlemen from the Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver. Rossinver, a parish, partly in the lower half barony of Carbery, County Sligo, but chiefly in that of Rosclogher, County Leitrim, 5½ miles south, south-west from Ballyshannon, on the road to Manorhamilton. The parish is situated at the northern extremity of the county, where it touches the bay of Donegal.<sup>6</sup>

The landlord of the Rossinver part of the Roman Catholic parish of Ballaghameehan was Robert Johnston, Kinlough. At the Easter Vestry, 1830, they passed the payment of a grant of £50 which was later collected by the Protestant church wardens and given to Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire. The local landlord of the Ballaghameehan part of the parish, Owen Wynne (1755-1841), Esq., Hazelwood House, granted an acre of land gratis and promised to contribute towards the building. Others to contribute were Terence Connolly, Esq., Mount Prospect, his brother, William Connolly Esq. J.P., and Robert Johnston Esq., J.P. Brookhill. The Rev. Chairman, Rev. Dixon, Rector, and his curate, the Rev. Williamson pledged themselves, that should any of their flock refuse paying, they would make good the deficiency; and other gentlemen in like manner for their tenants.<sup>7</sup>

Later the following names were added as subscribers: Robert Johnston, Esq., Kinlough, Assistant-Barrister for County Mayo, £10,

and £1 each from Percy Clarke and John Carson, Derrynahimmirk, Ballaghameehan; Peter Kelly, Ballyshannon; and J. Cassidy, Bundrowes.<sup>8</sup>

Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire stated that *'we have indeed many reasons to be grateful to our Protestant friends. We are subject to Tithes, but such is their extreme moderation that I may truly say, they are an unfelt impost; the church rates do not indeed amount to anything like the Protestant contributions to the churches in this neighbourhood, of which there are three. I myself am a holder of a farm with a pretty good crop, and I owe to Protestant generosity entire freedom from all demands for tithes.'*<sup>9</sup>

It would appear that little, or no progress, was made on securing a site for the new church during the following year. In a letter from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the Sligo Journal, dated 7 December, 1832, he wanted to contradict a malicious report that Owen Wynne, Esq., of Hazelwood, refused a site on his property in Ballaghameehan, County Leitrim, for building a new church. Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire continues *'the contrary was acknowledged a year ago, in the Dublin and Provincial papers, I mentioned that our very indulgent landlord, O. Wynne, Esq., granted an acre of ground, the most beautiful and romantic spot on his estate (gratis) as a site for the newly-intended church of Ballaghameehan; and have now to add, that in so doing, he liberally required no condition, interfering directly or indirectly with our religion.'*

Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire attached a copy of a letter from Owen Wynne, dated 12 August, 1832, in which he agreed to give the site gratis. He also states that *'the man who is there must quit it.'* So, it is clear that the site was not vacant as of August, 1832.

Finally, Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire defends Owen Wynne. He continues *'there are many instances of Owen Wynne's liberality towards his tenants in this place. I will confine myself to the following, as the most public and least liable to contradiction-*

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

*First - In letting his lands a few years ago, he was never known to make any distinction between Protestant and Catholic, or to give preference to the former; on the contrary, he refused every application, from whatever quarter it came, and retained his old tenants (Catholics), though many years in arrears, which might serve as a specious pretext for their extermination, had he been liberal.*

*Secondly – At the last Carrick-on-Shannon Assizes, he materially contributed towards saving the lives and liberties of four Roman Catholic tenants, prosecuted for robbery of fire arms, by forwarding a memorial from me on their behalf to the Lord Lieutenant, accompanied by a favourable statement of his own, with other exertions both with the Judge and Grand Jury, to which is attributed the acquittal of those poor people, whom I knew to be innocent.*

*I have no motive in publishing facts so creditable in themselves, but a sense of duty to my flock. I know Owen Wynne is above any eulogy of mine, and that he equally despises calumny and flattery; but as the above misrepresentations might tend to deprive his tenants of future aid towards their church without, which, I fear they will never be able to complete the work which his munificent grant enabled them to commence.'*

In his letter dated 29 November, 1831,<sup>10</sup> and repeated in his letter dated 7 December, 1832,<sup>11</sup> Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire described the site for the Ballaghameehan church as '*the most beautiful and romantic spot on the estate of Owen Wynne Esq.*' This might describe the site as viewed by the grateful parish priest. However, much work had to be done before the foundations could be laid down and the church built. The site was a high bank of land running down to a river. It was located at the junction or fork of an alt or ravine with the Ballaghameehan river. This spot is known locally as 'Gabhail an Ailt.'<sup>12</sup> This site was surrounded by many more suitable and leveller sites on which to build a church but they were not made available.

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Before the foundations could be laid much of the bank of land had to be dug out and transported away from the site of the church. This work would have further delayed the completion of the church. Most of the work involved in preparing the site and building the church was voluntary labour. Only the skilled workers, namely the stonemasons were paid. Stones from local quarries were firstly carried by hand-barrow to the roadway and from there transported by horses and carts to the site of the church.



*Ballaghameehan Roman Catholic Church.*

The Ballaghameehan church was a single cell barn type with a door in each gable and the main altar in the centre of the back side-wall. The front wall which faced the river had four gothic windows. There were no windows in the back wall as it faced onto a high bank of land. There was a clay floor with a flagged aisle. It is not known how much it cost to build Ballaghameehan church but the average cost of building a church at that time ranged from £150 to £700.<sup>13</sup> Church buildings during this period were very basic and were described in the valuation books in the 1830s as ‘*unfinished with no interior fitting, ceiling, flooring, plastering or decoration.*’<sup>14</sup>



*Plaque on outside wall of Ballaghameehan church.*

The following inscription '*Orate pro Rev. do Francisco Maguire qui me fieri facit An: Dom: 1831 DEO VIVO & VERO*' is on the outside wall of the church. However, we know from the letter sent by Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the Sligo Journal dated 7 December, 1832, that the church was not completed in 1831. This was not unusual at that time. Dates given then for completions of churches were often inaccurate and sometimes there was a disparity of a few years between both dates.<sup>15</sup>

In the postscript to his letter dated 29 November, 1831, Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire promised that '*the names of the subscribers shall be transmitted to posterity by a record preserved for that purpose in our church.*'<sup>16</sup> His untimely death may have occurred before this could be achieved.

Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire P.P. died on 23 October, 1834 aged 49 years. The Enniskillen Chronical and Erin Packet dated 6 November, 1834, described Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire as '*simple and retiring in his habits, his benevolence was exerted in attending to the temporal and spiritual wants of his flock, whose unaffected*

*sorrow for his loss best testifies the regard in which they held him. His remains were attended to the grave by a numerous assemblage of Clergymen, while an immense multitude of persons of every persuasion paid the last mournful tribute of respect to the amiable qualities of their father and friend.'*

In 1835, Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire was succeeded by his nephew Rev. Fr. James McGourty, who was born in Gortnaderrary. Rev. Fr. McGourty died on 15 August, 1874 aged 74 years. By the time of his death, Ballaghameehan parish had been administered for over half a century by two priests from the same family born within the same townland. In 1874, Rev. Fr. John McManus from Glenfarn was appointed parish priest.

In 1894, the church was reconstructed with the walls being raised up and the roof was replaced by Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. The contractor who carried out this work was a man named Mulligan from Kiltyclogher. This work was financed by each household donating £1, paid in eight instalments of two shillings and six pence. A marble altar, costing £200, was donated by Rev. Fr. McManus. The altar was relocated from the west wall to the south wall. The gallery was refurbished and a pitch pine ceiling was fitted. A room adjoining the church was converted into a sacristy. Previously, this room had been used as a school room.

In 1905, Rev. Fr. Peter Brady P.P. organised to have a wooden floor put into the church and the flagged aisle was tiled. Wooden church seats were installed also. In 1906, the entrance to the church yard was laid out. Perimeter walls and gate piers were constructed and new gates erected.<sup>17</sup>

Many of the barn style churches built during the 1830s in Kilmore diocese were extended and made cruciform by the addition of a nave and a chancel. However, this was not possible with Ballaghameehan church. No major alterations in shape or structure were carried out

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

because the church was sandwiched between the high bank of earth at the rear and the river to the front of the structure.<sup>18</sup>

While Rev. Fr. James McGourty was parish priest, he lived in Drungan, Rossinver. He had some personal wealth. He built a two-storey house on fourteen acres of land which he was renting from the landlord, William Johnston, Kinlough. In 1857, Griffith's Valuation of the land was six pounds and five shillings per annum and the valuation of the house was six pounds per annum. The house overlooked Lough Melvin. Rev. Fr. McGourty planned to build an oratory here, so as to say daily Mass, as his parish church in Ballaghameehan was one and a half miles away. Rev. Fr. McGourty was adverse to travelling too far from his residence. This may have been as a result of poor health. By 1873, Rev. Fr. McGourty was a feeble old man and he was assisted by two curates.<sup>19</sup>

In 1854, the Department Inspector for schools, while visiting Rossinver school, noted that '*The celebration of Divine worship in this school must be discontinued or all grants will be instantly withdrawn.*' As a result of this threat, Rev. Fr. McGourty was forced to put a plan in place to build a church for himself and for his Rossinver parishioners.<sup>20</sup>

At least two sites were considered before it was agreed to build the church in the townland of Drungan. The church was constructed by the Meehan family from Moher. Stones were drawn manually from the lake shore up a steep hill to the site of the church. Most of the work on the church would have been performed by voluntary labour.

The structure of the church was very basic. It was of rectangular shape with plain glass windows. The door was on the side of the church facing the road. There was a wooden altar which was placed near the gable wall to the right of the entrance door. The seats for the church were made in Kinlough by a Gallagher family. These seats were made for the parish church in Ballaghameehan but they

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were put into the new church in Rossinver. They were transported by boat on Lough Melvin and then carried to Rossinver church.



*Rossinver Roman Catholic Church.*

In 1858, the new church in Rossinver was officially opened and blessed. While Mass was celebrated every Sunday and confessions heard there, it was only a chapel of ease. All other religious functions were performed in the parish church in Ballaghameehan. There was a regularly good attendance at Rossinver church during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>21</sup>

Following the building of Rossinver church during the late 1850s, the people of Glenaniff demanded that they, too, deserved to get a church. While the building of the Rossinver church was championed by the parish priest, the parishioners of Glenaniff built their church without ecclesiastical approval. There were now three churches within a radius of two miles from each other in a relatively small parish. Nowhere else in the Diocese of Kilmore could one find such a high density of churches.

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In 1862, Glenaniff church was built in the townland of Lissiniska. With the exception of the masonry and woodwork, the remainder of the work to construct the church was performed by voluntary labour. The contractor who did the masonry work and roofing for the sum of £20 was Patrick Bredin, Gubalaun. A stone wall forty yards long was built on the roadside by John McGuinness for £1. The church was of rectangular shape. The flagstones which were used for the centre aisle of the church were quarried in the mountain area known as Cnoc a Mhile near the townland of Gorteenachurry. Local men carried the flagstones on their backs.



*Glenaniff Roman Catholic Church.*

The new church in Glenaniff lay idle for some years as it had not got ecclesiastical approval from the Diocese of Kilmore. Only after a deputation of local parishioners had gone to petition the Bishop of Kilmore, did services commence in this new church. By 1912, a wooden altar was erected by John Gilbride from Dooard. This was a model of the altar in St. Aidan's Church, Ballaghameehan. John Gilbride also made two stands to hold the statues of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady. In 1914, Rev. Fr. Bartle McCabe organised having a ceiling erected and laying a concrete floor beneath the seats in the church. This work was performed by local labour.<sup>22</sup>

Priests born in Ballaghameehan Parish (1800 – 1922)<sup>23</sup>

**Rev. Fr. Charles Ferguson** was born in Sraud Ferguson in Rossinver. He belonged to the illustrious O’Fergus family, who were coarbs for St. Mogue of Rossinver Abbey. He studied for the priesthood for seven years in Prague. He spent fourteen years in Paris, France. While there he suffered from a sore on his leg which had to be amputated. He was known as the priest with the wooden leg. Rev. Fr. Ferguson, like almost all Kilmore priests of the time was a Franciscan. He was the first post Penal priest in Ballaghameehan. In 1801, he was the parish priest in Ballaghameehan. After his death, he was buried in Rossinver Abbey.<sup>24</sup>

**Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire** was born in the townland of Gortnaderrary, Ballaghameehan in 1785. He studied for the priesthood in Carlow and Maynooth. He was ordained in 1809. He was parish priest in Ballaghameehan between 1822 and 1834. He was responsible for building Ballaghameehan church in the townland of Gubnageer. Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire died on 23 October, 1834 aged 49 years.

**Rev. Fr. James McGourty** was born in 1803 in Gortnaderrary. He was curate in Ballaghameehan between 1829 and 1835. In 1835, Rev. Fr. James McGourty succeeded his uncle Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire as parish priest in Ballaghameehan. He spent all of his life as a priest ministering in Ballaghameehan parish. He was responsible for building a church in the townland of Drungan in Rossinver. The church in Glenaniff was built during his tenure as parish priest. He was responsible for having five schools in Ballaghameehan parish taken into connection with the National School Board in the space of nine years. Rev. Fr. James McGourty died on 15 August, 1874.

**Rev. Fr. Matthew Ferguson** was born on 22 December, 1831. He was son of Patrick Ferguson and Catherine Ferguson from the

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townland of Gortnaderrary in Ballaghameehan. He studied for the priesthood in Maynooth. He was ordained on 27 July 1856. He ministered as curate in Arva (1856), Templeport (1867) and Crosserlough (1875). He died on 1 September, 1879.

Fathers Maguire, McGourty and Ferguson were all born in the townland of Gortnaderrary within a half a mile of each other between 1785 and 1831. Collectively, they spent 94 years ministering in the diocese of Kilmore.<sup>25</sup>

**Rev. Fr John J. Connolly** was born on 27 January, 1879. He was son of Terence Connolly and Maria McGowan from the townland of Larganhugh in Rossinver. He studied for the priesthood in France and was ordained in 1906. He taught in County Cork before emigrating to America. He was assigned to the missions in Montana where he built several churches. He served for many years as director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in the diocese of Helena, Montana. A great scholar and noted preacher, he was author of a book on spiritual life entitled *Eternal Values*. He was stationed at the Church of the Assumption in Manhattan during the 1940's and he was appointed pastor in 1947. Rev. Fr John J. Connolly died on 22 November, 1948, having been in poor health for several years.<sup>26</sup>

**Rev. Fr. Patrick J. Bredin** was born on 24 September, 1905. He was son of Patrick Bredin and Mary Brennan, Carrowkeel in Glenaniff. He studied for the priesthood in Maynooth. He was ordained on 21 June 1931. He ministered in Edinburgh (1931), Drumreilly Upper (1936), Drumreilly Lower (1938), Kilsherdany (1941) and Killinagh (1943). Rev. Fr. Patrick Bredin died on 27 May, 1950.

Christian Brothers and Nuns born in Ballaghameehan Parish (1800 – 1922)<sup>27</sup>

**James Bredin (Brother Majella)** was born on 10 August, 1888. He was son of Hugh Bredin and Margaret Hernan from the townland of Lissiniska in Glenaniff. He was a member of the Irish Christian Brothers in Canada.

**Catherine Clinton (Sister Mary Borromeo)** was born on 23 February, 1872. She was daughter of Charles Clinton and Mary O'Rourke from the townland of Conray in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Sisters of Mercy in Des Moines, Iowa, United States of America.

**Maria Clinton (Sister Mary Xavier)** was born on 19 June, 1873. She was daughter of Charles Clinton and Mary O'Rourke from the townland of Conray in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Sisters of Mercy in Des Moines, Iowa, United States of America.

**Mary Connolly (Sister Mary Rita)** was born on 1 March, 1898. She was daughter of John Connolly and Bridget McEnroy from the townland of Carrowkeel in Glenaniff. She was a member of the Presentation Sisters, Matlock, Derbyshire, England.

**Mary Connolly** was born circa 1901. She was daughter of Thady Connolly and Kate McGuinness from the townland of Corlea in Glenaniff. She was a member of the Carmelite Sisters, England.

**Katherine Meehan (Sister Valentine)** was born on 23 December, 1902. She was daughter of Patrick Meehan and Ellen McGrath from the townland of Gortnaderrary in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles in Nigeria.

**Alice McGowan (Sister Mary Lytona)** was born on 20 November, 1906. She was daughter of Felix McGowan and Margaret Maguire

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from the townland of Drungan in Rossinver. She was a member of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary in London, England.

**Mary McGowan (Sister Joseph Assumpta)** was born on 16 August, 1908. She was daughter of Felix McGowan and Margaret Maguire from the townland of Drungan in Rossinver. She was a member of the Irish Sisters of Charity in Kells Road, Kilkenny.

**Mary Catherine McGrath (Sister Mary Catherine)** was born on 8 September, 1908. She was daughter of Patrick McGrath and Anne Sheeran from the townland of Derrynahimmirk in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart Order in Philadelphia, United States of America.

**Alice Clinton (Sister Mary Carlotta)** was born on 5 July, 1913. She was daughter of James Clinton and Mary Keaney from the townland of Conray in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Sisters of Mercy in Des Moines, Iowa, United States of America.

**Bridget Mitchell (Sister John the Baptist)** was born on 26 February, 1916. She was daughter of Edward Mitchell and Mary Ellen Sweeney from the townland of Gortnaderrary in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Atonement in Italy, Wales, England, United States of America and Canada.

**Cecelia Rooney (Sister Mercy)** was born on 20 March, 1916. She was daughter of Philip Rooney and Catherine Sheeran from the townland of Glack in Rossinver. She was a member of the Sisters of Mercy in Belturbet, Co. Cavan. She worked in St. Felim's Hospital, Cavan.

**Teresa Rooney (Sister Brendan)** was born on 12 February, 1918. She was daughter of Philip Rooney and Catherine Sheeran from the townland of Glack in Rossinver. She was a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Atonement in Ireland, United States of America and Canada.

**Celia Clinton (Sister Mary Killian)** was born on 30 December, 1918. She was daughter of James Clinton and Mary Keaney from the townland of Conray in Ballaghameehan. She was a member of the Sisters of Mercy in Des Moines, Iowa, United States of America.

**Margaret Bredin (Sister Mary Oliver)** was born on 8 September, 1919. She was daughter of James Bredin and Sarah McGovern from the townland of Lissiniska in Glenaniff. She was a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Atonement in Canada and the United States of America.

**Kathleen Ferguson (Sister Dorothea)** was born on 11 October, 1920. She was daughter of Terence Ferguson and Margaret Maguire from the townland of Tullyshehery. She was a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Atonement in Canada, United States of America and Ireland.

## Chapter 7 The Tithes.

The 1830s was the period when the tithe agitation was rife. The tithe war as it was known, was fought between 1831 and 1838. Tithes were the tenth part of the annual produce of land such as corn, hay, flax, garden produce, potatoes, etc., the stock upon the land and the personal industry of the inhabitants of the land. These taxes were paid for the upkeep of the established Church. As they were then payable by the Catholic population for the upkeep of the Church of Ireland to whose doctrines they did not subscribe, tithes became a chronic source of complaint and unrest in the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Assessment of the tithes was carried out by tithe proctors, who were often Roman Catholics and held in contempt by their co-religionists. The proctor in Ballaghameehan in 1833 was named Edward Hernan, who was from Sligo. There were three methods of payment: in kind, (tithe proctors were notorious for taking the best quality share of the produce); by fixed annual payment, based upon acreage; and by a variable tithe which depended on the output of the farm.<sup>2</sup>

The description of the land in the Tithe Applotment Books for Ballaghameehan in 1833 is as follows: arable land, pasture, rushy pasture, moory pasture, inferior pasture, grassy hill, grassy mountain, heather hill, mountain and bog. Tithes payable on mountain land were somewhat lower than those on arable land, so generally speaking the tithes payable by land-holders in Glenaniff and Rossinver were not quite as high as for those in Ballaghameehan.<sup>3</sup>

The landlord in Ballaghameehan was Owen Wynne (1755-1841), the landlord in Rossinver was Robert Johnston, while the landlords in Glenaniff were Mrs. Coen and Mrs. Knox.<sup>4</sup>

In 1837, Samuel Lewis describes Rossinver Church of Ireland parish as '*a vicarage, in the diocese of Kilmore, and in the patronage of the*

*Bishop; the rectory is partly appropriate to the see, and partly inappropriate in Owen Wynne, Esq. (Ballaghameehan). In the Roman Catholic divisions, the parish forms the three separate benefices of Kinlough, Glenade, and Ballaghameehan, in each of which is a church.*

*The tithes amount to £450, of which £140 is payable to the bishop, £140 to the impropriator (Owen Wynne), and £170 to the vicar. The glebe, situated in the parish of Killasnet, six miles distant, comprises 320 acres, valued at £170 per annum. The church, for the repairs of which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have granted £406, is a neat plain edifice.*<sup>5</sup>

Of the £450 paid in Tithes for the total Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver, Ballaghameehan contributed £59-04s-05½d which represented thirteen per cent of the total. Glenaniff contributed £23-08s-05d which represented five per cent of the total. Rossinver contributed £29-10s-07½d which represented six per cent of the total. The total Roman Catholic parish of Ballaghameehan was contributing £119-08s-06d in Tithes to the Established Church. This represented almost a quarter of the tithes for the total Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver.

In the Church of Ireland parish of Cloonclare, the tithes amounted to £300, of which £200 was paid to the Bishop, and £100 to the vicar. In the Church of Ireland parish of Killasnet, the tithes amount to £205, of which £136. 13s. 4d., was payable to the bishop, and £68. 6s. 8d., to the vicar.<sup>6</sup>

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**TITHE COMPOSITION.**

Edmond Heman appointed Commissioner by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, under the Provisions of 2d & 3d WILL. IV. Chap. CXIX. Sec. III  
 for the Parish of *Ballaghameehan* alias Diocese of *Milne* County of *Leitrim and Sligo*

	Acre	Roods	Poles	
This Parish contains of	Tithable Land . . .	502	35	1 27
	Untithable Do. . .	125	1	34
Total				30360 3 27 Measure.

Amount of COMPOSITION, as duly fixed according to the above recited Act, and the Acts therein referred to, . . . £ 450 0 0

Payable as follows:		£	£	£		
To	Rectorial . . .	310	140	0	0	} 450
	Parish . . .		170	0	0	
	Collegiate or Body Corporate	310				
	Lay Impropriator		140	0	0	
		£450 0 0				

I Edmond Heman Commissioner for the Parish of *Ballaghameehan* alias Diocese of *Milne* County of *Leitrim & Sligo* hereby Certify that the Sum of *Four Hundred and Fifty Pounds* . . . . . Shillings, and . . . Pence Sterling, is the just amount of the Composition for Tithes in said Parish, as duly ascertained and fixed according to the Provisions of the Act of 2d & 3d William 4th, Chap. 110; and I further Certify, that in the appointing of said Sum upon said Parish, I have, to the best of my ability, acted faithfully and impartially, and that I have not incurred any Expence which was not strictly necessary to the proper discharge of my duty.

Signed this 21<sup>st</sup> day of November 1832 Edmond Heman  
 Commr.

In Witness's Presence.

## **Chapter 8 The Great Famine Period.**

Following the recommendations of a commission of inquiry into poverty in Ireland, the Irish Poor Law Act of 1838 was an Act of Parliament which created the system of poor relief in Ireland. The legislation was largely influenced by the English Poor Law Act of 1834. Under this system 130 poor law unions were to be established throughout Ireland, each served by a workhouse and administered by a board of guardians, some elected and some ex-officio. The maintenance and upkeep of such institutions was to be met by a new levy, the poor rate, paid by occupiers of land of value greater than £4.<sup>1</sup> According to the Act indoor relief only was to be administered. No relief was to be granted to anyone who remained outside of the Workhouse.<sup>2</sup> To obtain relief, the old, the sick, the disabled and even the able-bodied poor had to abandon their houses and farms.

Leitrim was divided into five poor law unions: Ballyshannon (included part of North Leitrim and South Donegal), Manorhamilton, Bawnboy (included part of East Leitrim and West Cavan), Mohill and Carrick-on-Shannon (included part of South Leitrim and North Roscommon). Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff were part of the Manorhamilton Union while Rossinver was in the Ballyshannon Union. A workhouse was built in Manorhamilton with the capacity to accommodate 500 people.

The Manorhamilton union was made up of ten electoral divisions. In the election to the first Board of Guardians of the Manorhamilton union, seven of the ten divisions were settled without a contest. The Rossinver electoral division, which included Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff, was one of those which was contested. This was brought about by the interference of the local priest who wanted to have his candidate elected. Rossinver elected the only Guardian nominated by the priests to the new Board of Guardians of the Manorhamilton Union.<sup>3</sup>

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Candidate	Occupation	Nomination	Votes
James Fox	Farmer	Landlord	897
Hugh O'Rourke	Publican	Priest	631
Edmond Keaney	Farmer	Landlord	287
John Whittaker	Farmer	Landlord	92
Charles Fergus	Farmer	Priest	20

James Fox (Shasmore), who was nominated by Owen Wynne (1755-1841) (landlord) topped the poll. Hugh O'Rourke (Conray) who was nominated by the local parish priest, Rev. Fr. James McGourty, came second and both were elected. The Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette of 5 October, 1839, stated that *'I am happy to tell you that out of seven Guardians returned (for the contested electoral divisions of Lurganboy, Manorhamilton and Rossinver), the priests could only return one and even this one they would not have if Owen Wynne, of Hazelwood, had taken the same trouble in the Rossinver division as he took in Lurganboy. His tenants not having received instructions who to vote for, (although they waited till the last hour) of course went with the priest.'*

On 11 November, 1839, the Manorhamilton Board of Guardians appointed wardens to each electoral division of the union. John McKeon (Coolodonnell) was appointed in Rossinver. On 1 August, 1842, a second warden was appointed to each district. Terence McGowan was appointed in Rossinver.<sup>4</sup>

The famine resulted from the failure of the potato due to blight. The potato was the staple food for a large percentage of the Irish population. A chronology of the blight can be briefly stated. The fungus, for which there was then no known cure, first struck in late August, 1845, and that season's crop was about one-third short, though some parts of the country escaped altogether. In 1846, three-

quarters was lost. Yields were better in 1847, but little had been planted by despairing people who had eaten their seed potatoes. In 1848, yields were again only two-thirds of normal. Although thereafter things improved, it was not until 1850 that it became possible to regard the worst as being over.<sup>5</sup>

The great famine did not have a devastating effect on the tenant farmers of the parish of Ballaghameehan. Of course, the potato crop failed as it had elsewhere but the majority of the population were not solely dependent on the potato as their only source of food. They were able to grow alternative foods. The tenant farmers of Ballaghameehan, for the most part, had quite large farms. Through an analysis of Griffiths Valuations, 1857, eighty-seven per cent of tenant farmers in Ballaghameehan had holdings larger than 10 acres. In fact, fifty per cent of tenant farmers had holdings larger than 20 acres. In Rossinver, seventy-seven per cent of tenant farmers had holdings larger than 10 acres, with thirty-three per cent with holdings larger than 20 acres. In Glenaniff, seventy per cent of tenant farmers had holdings larger than 10 acres with thirty-seven per cent with holdings larger than 20 acres.

The Hazelwood Estate Farming Society held its first annual exhibition of cattle and produce on the Hazelwood demesne on 20 September, 1848. This gave an insight into some of the farming activities in Ballaghameehan during the famine period.<sup>6</sup>

Prizes for growing swede turnips were awarded to Myles Gordon (Gortnaderrary), William Ross (Derrynahimmirk), and Pat Meehan (Gubnageer). The following were commended for growing turnips on indifferent soils for the third year in a row: John Whittaker (Tullyskeherny), Lazarus Meehan (Tullyderrin), Michael Cullen (Gubnageer), Thady Clancy (Lattone) and Owen McGourty (Gortnaderrary). John Sweeney (Gubmanus), received an award for growing an acre of beans on indifferent soil. Owen Sweeney (Gubmanus), was awarded second prize in its class for a year-old heifer.

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During this period, life continued in a normal fashion in the parish of Ballaghameehan. Schools were established in the parish which were connected to the Board of Education. On 8 September, 1844, Gubnageer school, which was attached to Ballaghameehan church, was taken into connection with the Board of Education. Lissiniska school was built and was taken into connection with the Board of Education on 3 July, 1845. During 1846, Ardagh Gilbride school in Rossinver was built and was taken into connection by the Board of Education. On 12 July, 1849, Lattone school was taken into connection by the Board of Education.

The most vulnerable group of people were farm labourers. The diet of farm labourers, which in summer consisted of potatoes and buttermilk and in winter, potatoes and salted herrings. Occasionally, when employed by large farmers, butter and eggs could be obtained whilst in the area around Rossinver, cabbage, oatmeal and oatbread were available. In general, labourers worked only in harvest periods, being unemployed between the months of June and August, and December and March.

The practice prior to the famine was one where a large farmer would rent a small house and garden to a labourer and his family. Sometimes this was a herd house located near the mountain where the labourer was hired to look after the farmer's animals grazing on the uplands and mountains during the summer months.

The Irish Poor Law Act of 1838 failed miserably to cope with the demands of the famine. The government reacted with different measures but all initiatives introduced were designed not to interfere with *laissez faire* or free market conditions. As part of the government response to the famine crises, relief schemes were introduced in March, 1846, where out-door employment was provided. Relief work was the preferred option of the administration which was determined to see that people should work for any food or money they were to receive. The average wage on such works was 7d per day, which in a time of food shortage and subsequent rising prices

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was hardly enough to support a family of five or six for a week.<sup>7</sup> In most cases this involved providing work by making roads.

Date	Work	Cost
14/01/1847	To make 800 perches (5 miles) of new road through Glenaniff, Aghnahaha and terminate at Mount Prospect Road.	£1000
26/01/1847	To complete the improvement of a road from Lattone to Rossinver.	£734
26/01/1847	To complete road from Kinlough to Rossinver.	£1120
26/01/1847	To complete 600 perches (3.75 miles) of road from Manorhamilton to Garrison.	£150
26/01/1847	To complete 25 perches from Rossinver Road to the grave yard.	£25
27/01/1847	To make new road from Glenaniff to Rossinver.	£450
27/01/1847	To make 1040 perches (6.5 miles) of new road and other improvements to avoid hills on the road from Lattone to Blair's Bridge (Kiltyclogher).	£2140
22/04/1847	To complete the new road through Glenaniff.	£500
22/04/1847	To complete 25 perches from Rossinver Road to the grave yard.	£20
13/05/1847	To complete 25 perches from Rossinver Road to the grave yard.	£15
13/05/1847	To complete road between Shasmore and the road from Manorhamilton to Garrison.	£150

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In total £6,304 was spent on out-door relief through employment in the Ballaghameehan parish. There was £3,174 spent in Ballaghameehan and £1,500 in Glenaniff which were in the Manorhamilton Union. There was £1,630 spent in Rossinver which was in the Ballyshannon Union. The government ceased these out-door works once the soup kitchens were introduced.

A number of electoral divisions were combined to form the various Poor Relief Areas. The Rossinver relief area included the electoral divisions of Aghavoghil, Ballaghameehan, Glenaniff and Melvin. It would appear that the relief effort crossed union boundaries as Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff were in the Manorhamilton Union while Aghvoghil and Melvin were in the Ballyshannon Union. While the part of the Rossinver poor relief area was included in the Manorhamilton union, most of its officers belonged to the Ballyshannon union.

The members of the Kinlough Relief Committee were Capt. James Johnston (Chairman); Rev. Archibald St. George; H. J. Johnston; John Dickson; Rev. Fr. A. O'Neill; Rev. James Franks; Rev. Fr. I. Maguire; Rev. Fr. I. O'Neill; Rev. Fr. J. Gormtry. The Kinlough Relief Committee was also known as the Rossinver Relief Committee as it catered for the Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver. The Rossinver Relief Committee's area of responsibility extended from the Rossinver part of the Roman Catholic parish of Ballaghameehan west as far as Tullaghan and included Glenade and Kinlough.

The members of the Manorhamilton Relief Committee were Nicholas Loftus Tottenham (Chairman); Capt. Slain; Rev. John Hamilton; Rev. Fr. John Hogan; Simon Armstrong J. P.; General Armstrong J. P.; Louis Algeo J. P.<sup>8</sup>

Early in 1847, The Temporary Relief of the Destitute Persons Act (The Soup Kitchen Act) was passed by the government. Henceforth, soup became the chief food for the starving but the kitchens were

too few in number to meet the demand for sustenance.<sup>9</sup> Bureaucratic mishaps and delays caused panic in some quarters. For example, in March, 1847, when John Dickson applied for a government contribution of £73 in aid of the Rossinver Relief committee, he was informed that this had been necessarily delayed until a certificate shall have been received. This in spite of the fact that such had been already signed and forwarded by the chairman and secretary.<sup>10</sup> In April, 1847, the Rossinver Relief Committee eventually received the sum of £73 from the Relief Office in Dublin. John Dickson, who was secretary for Rossinver, was a resident landlord and a member of the Board of Guardians for the Ballyshannon Union.

Rev. James Franks, who came from Coleraine, Co. Derry, had studied at Trinity College Dublin. He was ordained in Cavan by the Bishop of Kilmore for the Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver on 20 September, 1846.<sup>11</sup> Following his arrival, he resided in Manorhamilton. As a youthful and enthusiastic minister, he was instrumental in sourcing aid in both the forms of money and food for his parishioners. Having received the funding for the Rossinver Relief committee, Rev. Franks placed advertisements in the local newspapers inviting tenders for the supply of oatmeal, Indian meal, rice, peas and household bread.<sup>12</sup>

On 16 April, 1847, Rev. Franks published an acknowledgement of funds received in *The Ballyshannon Herald*. He had received £10 for the sick poor of Ballaghameehan from William Forster, The Society of Friends (Quakers), Norwick. Also, he had received a further sum of £3 to be expended in the purchase of wool, to employ a few destitute persons in the spinning of same; to be converted into flannel for the use of the poor.

About this time Rev. Franks, encountered further bureaucracy by the refusal of the government to deviate from its policy of non-interference in the market. Money had been collected in Kinlough for the purchase of four or five tons of Indian meal at Sligo. However, Rev. Franks was informed that the state of the area did not

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require such assistance from the depot before the first of June. In this way, procedure often took precedence over provision, and when private supplies eventually ran out of stock, the government released large quantities of meal onto the market when demand was high and people were willing to pay inflated prices.<sup>13</sup>

By 29 September 1847, Rev. James Franks was also Chairman of the Boho Relief Committee in Co. Fermanagh. This committee held its meetings in Garrison. He had a letter published thanking Captain Laing, the Government Inspecting Officer, for his advice, tact and discernment with which he smoothed out difficulties. At this time, Rev. Franks was residing in Ballaghameehan.<sup>14</sup>

At the beginning of Autumn 1847, Relief Officers were appointed to each of the relief areas of the Manorhamilton Union. They would be in charge of dispensing food in their own localities. J. Dundass was appointed Relief Officer for Rossinver. By 1847, the representative on the Board of Guardians for Ballaghameehan was John Whittaker (Tullyskeherny). However, he resigned his position in December, 1847.

At the beginning of 1848, the seven original relief areas were reduced to four main centres. Lurganboy and Rossinver centres were amalgamated and they received 15 cwt. of Indian Meal.<sup>15</sup> The situation in the Manorhamilton Union began to improve in the second half of the summer of 1848.

By August 1848, the attendance had increased at Rossinver national school due to the distribution of food from the school. The distribution of food was the response of the Rossinver Relief Committee to the famine conditions in the area.<sup>16</sup>

The Board of Guardians introduced a new system of outdoor relief arising from the diminishing numbers receiving assistance. The Union was reduced into three districts. Manorhamilton/Kiltyclogher and Lurganboy/Rossinver areas were combined into one district. The Relief Officer was Thomas Armstrong and he received a salary

of £50 per annum. The Soup Kitchen system seems to have been discontinued in late 1848 or early 1849. At the end of September, 1849, all outdoor relief ceased. Anybody requiring assistance would have to present to the Workhouse in Manorhamilton.

The Quakers provided relief during the famine. The relief offered by the Quakers was, unlike that under the Poor Law, given free of charge. Therefore, they took great pains in ascertaining the conditions of those areas applying to them. Application forms had to be completed and those signing them very carefully vetted as regards position in the community, trustworthiness, etc. On completion of such details, grants were disbursed in three ways: money, clothing and food. Usually, one person from each district received the grant. On 25 February, 1848, Rev. James Franks received £10 on behalf of the Ballaghameehan area.

After the worst of the famine had passed, Rev. James Franks was transferred to the curacy of Kilconnel, Co. Limerick, on 8 March, 1852.<sup>17</sup>

The Great Famine of 1845-1850 had a devastating effect on Ireland and, particularly, the west of Ireland. Besides the horrors of starvation and disease, the population of Ireland decreased by 1.6 million people, or twenty per cent, between 1841 and 1851 as a result of death and emigration. Between 1841 and 1851 the population of Leitrim decreased by 43,382 people or twenty-eight per cent. The south of the county was the worst affected. Here the population decreased by 32,084 (thirty-two per cent) while the decrease in the north of the county was 11,298 (twenty-one per cent).

While the parish of Ballaghameehan survived the worst effects of the famine, the population loss was disproportionately higher than other poorer areas in north Leitrim. Most of the population of the parish did not require food relief. In Ballaghameehan, eighty-seven per cent of tenant farmers had holdings larger than 10 acres. In

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Rossinver, seventy-seven per cent of tenant farmers had holding larger than 10 acres. In Glenaniff, seventy per cent of tenant farmers had holding larger than 10 acres.

The population for the total parish of Ballaghameehan decreased by 850 people (22%). This was in line with the overall decrease for North Leitrim but there was a great difference between neighbouring electoral divisions. The parish of Ballaghameehan included Ballaghameehan, Glenaniff and Rossinver. The population of Rossinver (Melvin E.D.) decreased by 337 (27%) with 58 houses becoming uninhabited. The population of Ballaghameehan decreased by 478 (25%) with 87 houses becoming uninhabited. The population of Glenaniff decreased by 35 (4%) with 5 houses becoming uninhabited.

The decrease in population for Rossinver and Ballaghameehan was higher than the average for north Leitrim. However, the decrease in population for Glenaniff was the lowest in north Leitrim. The Electoral Division of Glenaniff included all of the townlands of Glenaniff in the parish of Ballaghameehan as well as five townlands from the parish of Killasnet. These were Cornagillagh, Fallacarra, Mullies, Rassaun East and Rassaun West. When the five townlands from Killasnet are included the decline in population was 89 (8%) which was on par with the best results for North Leitrim.

When further analysis is performed on the population decrease in Ballaghameehan and Rossinver, it is apparent that most of this decrease happened in a small number of townlands. In the Ballaghameehan part of the parish, which was part of the Wynne Estate, 50% of the townlands accounted for 78% of the decrease in population. These townlands had the largest and best quality farms. This would suggest that the population loss was due to farm labourers moving out of the parish.

In the Rossinver part of the parish, which was part of the Johnston Estate, five townlands accounted for 50% of the decrease in

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population. Four of these townlands were in the western part of Rossinver where the land was very mountainous and of poor quality. This part of the parish may not have been able to support any more than one family per tenancy.

A clearer picture emerges when the population loss in north Leitrim is analysed by Poor Relief Areas.

Poor Relief Area	Population 1841	Population 1851	Population Loss	Per Centage
Rossinver	4686	3635	1051	22%
Lurganboy	4017	3164	853	21%
Manorhamilton	7902	6416	1486	19%
Kinlough	4397	3551	846	19%
Glenade	4483	3803	680	15%
Kiltyclogher	4852	4463	389	8%

The Rossinver poor relief area consisted of the electoral divisions of Aghavoghil, Ballaghameehan, Glenaniff and Melvin (Rossinver). The Lurganboy poor relief area consisted of the electoral divisions of Killasnet, Lurganboy and part of Glencar. The Manorhamilton poor relief area consisted of the electoral divisions of Glenboy, Manorhamilton and Munakill. The Kinlough poor relief area consisted of the electoral divisions of Gubacreeeny and Kinlough. The Glenade poor relief area consisted of the electoral divisions of Aghalateeve, Aghanlish and Tullaghan. The Kiltyclogher poor relief area consisted of the electoral divisions of Cloonclare, Glenfarn and Kiltyclogher.

The actions of the landlords were instrumental in assisting with the efforts to provide relief for their tenants. Alternatively, the inaction of some landlords meant that relief committees were left to fend for themselves. John Wynne of Hazelwood was the landlord for the

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Ballaghameehan electoral division and parts of the Lurganboy electoral division. John Wynne was actively involved in the relief effort for his tenants in Sligo but the same cannot be said of his efforts in supporting his tenants in Leitrim. John Wynne told the Carbury Relief Committee, of which he was chairman, that he could not contribute money to their committee as he had 300 people employed on his estate and he could not afford to give both money and employment.<sup>18</sup> Rev. Fr. James McGauran (Lurganboy) complained that two of the main landlords in his area, John Wynne and Cairncross Cullen had not made any subscriptions to his relief committee. Likewise, Rev. John Hudson's attempts at relief for the Glencar area had been frustrated by his inability to solicit subscriptions due to no gentlemen residing in the parish. Locally he had only received £5 from John Wynne and £4-10s-0d from the Manorhamilton relief committee which had been augmented by a total of £8 from two members of the clergy. He had applied these sums in distributing bread and meal free to the most destitute. Interestingly, while observing that the amount of distress and want was exceedingly great he noted that the Protestant population were not in want generally and he had not witnessed any cases of extreme suffering.<sup>19</sup>

This observation was probably true for the Protestant population in the Ballaghameehan electoral district. In 1857, twenty (13%) of the two hundred and twenty-six tenancies in Ballaghameehan were held by Protestants. There were only two tenancies held by Protestants in Rossinver and none in Glenaniff.

John Wynne replaced his father as landlord in 1841. It would appear that some of the population loss in the Ballaghameehan electoral district was due to the landlord, John Wynne, not allowing subdivision of tenancies and replacing many small tenancies with fewer larger tenancies. Also, he would not allow tenancies held by Protestants to be transferred to Roman Catholics.

In 1845, Archibald Downey returned from Canada to take possession of a tenancy of 72 acres in Cartrongibbagh where a number of smaller tenants had been removed. In the same year John Fox took possession of a tenancy of 106 acres in Gortnacrieve where a number of smaller tenants had been removed. Patrick Eames had possession of a tenancy of 52 acres in Kinkillew where a number of smaller tenants had been removed. Also, there are examples where sub-division had taken place within a family tenancy and this was reversed to leave only one tenant in possession.

Capt. James Johnston was the landlord for the Melvin electoral division in Rossinver. He was also the main landlord for the Kinlough electoral division. He was a member of the Board of Guardians of the Ballyshannon union. He was also the chairman of the Kinlough Relief committee. The Ballyshannon Herald stated on 21 May 1847, that *'James Johnston Esq., of Kinlough House, has been busily employed during the past season in supplying not only the wants of the poor of his own estates, but all who came got employment and food supplies by that amiable family. We wish public relief committees would take a lesson from James Johnston as to the management of their duties, they would be enabled to give more useful relief at a far less cost if they would.'*

His sister Penelope was very active in securing relief for the poor of Kinlough. In early 1847, she claimed that three-quarters of the population of Kinlough was in need of public relief, and so, she had established a soup shop by which means she was able to distribute ten gallons each day. Some of the food was given out freely and some at 1d per quart. The Quakers informed her that if she was able to raise more subscriptions and increase the daily distribution to between seventy and one-hundred gallons per day they would support her with a new boiler and £20 cash. The problem for Miss Johnston was the fact that many persons of large property did not reside in the area. Attached are some details of the grants made by the Quakers to Penelope Johnston.<sup>20</sup>

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Date	Grant	Cost
22/02/1847	Money.	£10
24/04/1847	Grant for boiler to make soup.	£3
26/04/1847	Money.	£10
15/05/1847	2 tons of Indian meal and 1 ton of Biscuit.	
17/06/1847	Money.	£10
03/07/1847	Money.	£10
03/07/1847	1 ton of Indian meal and 1 ton of Rice.	
06/07/1847	Money.	£10
28/08/1847	10 barrels of Indian meal, 2 barrels of flour and 10 bags of peas.	
16/10/1847	8 sacks of Indian meal and 8 bags of peas.	
08/12/1847	1 ton of Indian meal to aid her efforts to promote female employment.	
30/01/1848	Half ton of rice and half ton of Indian meal for providing soup for school children.	
18/03/1848	5 barrels of beef or pork and 10 bags of peas.	
26/04/1848	1 ton of Indian meal	
07/06/1848	5 cwt. of rice, 2 cwt. of sugar, 4 cwt. of biscuits and 10 bags of peas.	
08/07/1848	1 ton of Indian meal	
25/11/1848	10 bags of peas.	
31/07/1849	Money.	£20

Penelope Johnston, with a grant of £10 from the Quakers, employed spinners and weavers in making flannel and linen. This was then

sold to the needy of the area who paid in weekly instalments. During the spring of 1847, Penelope Johnston had bought a great deal of seed oats, turnip and flax and later she was delighted that the crops were good. The following year, with the aid of a grant from the Quakers, there was great demand for seeds, particularly pea seeds. Pea seeds required little manure when planting.<sup>21</sup>

Again, on 5 November, 1847, the Ballyshannon Herald praised *'Mr. and Miss Johnston, of Kinlough, who are engaged in a great cause of charity: their philanthropy during the past year has been, under Providence, the means of saving the lives of hundreds of the poor in that neighbourhood; and they are still exerting themselves in the good cause.'* It would appear that Penelope Johnston was more active in the relief effort than her brother. The efforts of the Johnston family to provide relief for the poor did not extend much further outside of the Kinlough area and they left it to the Rossinver Relief committee to look after the poor of the rural areas who were also tenants of the Johnston Estate.

Capt. James Johnston had a fractured relationship with his tenants and their priests in Rossinver. In 1841, the Grand Jury organised to have a new bridge and parapet built on the road bordering Straid and Gubalaun. This bridge was to be built on the site of an old bridge which required to be replaced in Straid. However, Johnston moved the location of the bridge contrary to the instructions of the County Surveyor. The new bridge was built in a dry field. After construction of the bridge had been completed the river was re-routed to flow underneath the bridge.

However, the bridge and parapet were built in such a location so as to cut across a right-of-way used by Johnston's Roman Catholic tenants on their way to Mass in Ballaghameehan church. The tenants used to walk alongside the route of the Ballaghameehan river until they reached the church in the townland of Gubnageer. Johnston warned his tenants not to trespass over the new bridge by placing a

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notice on the door of the church. In January 1844, he had two tenants prosecuted and fined for trespass at Kinlough Petty Sessions.

On 21 October, 1844, Rev. Fr. John Keaney, the curate in Ballaghameehan, was summoned to the Kinlough Petty Sessions by Capt. Johnston for a malicious trespass on 6 October, 1844, because he was asserting the right which his parishioners had enjoyed from time immemorial. One of many witnesses called was Rev. Fr. James McGourty who was the parish priest in Ballaghameehan. He stated that he had been connected with the parish for fifteen years, and he had resided in it before he became a clergyman. He stated that the pass in question was in being as long as he could remember. He did not believe that much change had been made in the path by the alteration. He never knew of any person having been prevented from passing it.

Rev. Fr. McGourty recollected that after the bridge was built, he had a conversation with the County Surveyor who told him that the bridge was not built in its proper place. Rev. Fr. McGourty recollected that when the parapet wall was being constructed, he asked the architect to put up a style, to enable the people to pass. However, this did not happen and subsequently some stones have been removed from the wall of the parapet.



*Bridge at Gubalaun near entrance to Rossinver cemetery.*

At the end of the court hearing, it was agreed that this case would be referred to the Attorney-General. However, Johnston's prosecution council requested that a pledge be given by the defence not to trespass until the opinion of the Attorney-General was received. Rev. Fr. McGourty said '*we will make no such engagement; we will not give up our right to the pass for one instant.*'<sup>22</sup> At that the court adjourned. We do not know what was the opinion of the Attorney-General. When a wall was built sometime later connecting the parapet of the bridge to the entrance gate to the Rossinver cemetery, a style was fitted to this wall to enable people to pass.

Capt. James Johnston died in January 1848. He was succeeded as landlord of the Kinlough and Rossinver tenancies by his brother Capt. William Johnston. On 10 November 1848, Penelope Johnston married Rev. Archibald St. George who was rector of the Church of Ireland parish in Kinlough.

Nicholas Loftus Tottenham was the landlord for the Glenfarn and Kiltyclogher electoral divisions. He was chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Manorhamilton Poor Law Union during the famine period. He was also the chairman of the Glenfarn Relief committee. This committee was responsible for providing relief to the people from the electoral divisions of Kiltyclogher, Glenfarn and Cloonclare. The fact that population loss in this area was lower than that for the rest of north Leitrim may have been the result of the efforts of Nicholas Loftus Tottenham who was a resident landlord.

Emigration was an option for the children of large families who could not find a livelihood in Ireland. However, there were exceptions to the reasons why people emigrated from north Leitrim after the famine period. Mary Fox (nee McGloin), Brackarybeg, parish of Killasnet, became the beneficiary of 3,000 acres of land in Texas on the death of her brother who had lived there for many years. Mary Fox, her husband John, their eight adult children and their families emigrated to Texas between 1848 and 1854. A total of 55 family members sailed on seven separate ships to either New

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York or Boston and from there onto New Orleans. Some of the extended family members were from the parish of Ballaghameehan.

John and Mary's son Darby Fox died from wounds inflicted by an unknown assailant in Texas on 18 April, 1854, aged 45 years. Darby Fox bequeathed \$20.00 to Mullies church, \$10.00 to Ballaghameehan church and \$50.00 to Rev. Fr. Pat Trainor, P.P. Killasnet.<sup>23</sup>

## Chapter 9 Education in Ballaghameehan.

The earliest schools in Ballaghameehan parish were hedge schools.<sup>1</sup> These were free-enterprise pay schools conducted by teachers who were not subject to any ecclesiastical or political control. These were the schools which provided education for the children of the ordinary people who despite their poverty were very keen to have their children educated. These parents struggled to pay the quarterly fees which in Ballaghameehan parish, in 1824, ranged from 1s-3d to 11s-4½d per quarter.

In 1824, there were four schools in the Ballaghameehan part of the parish, two in Glenaniff and one in Rossinver. Information on the schools is detailed below.

**Coolodonnell:** James Clinton conducted the largest school in the parish. It was attended by 66 pupils (54 Catholics and 12 Protestants) according to the Protestant return, or (66 Catholics and 12 Protestants) according to the Catholic return. He was in receipt of a salary of between £20 and £26 per annum due to the large number of pupils attending the school. This school was built of stone and lime and cost £7 to build. In this school the authorised version of Scripture was read.

**Cartrongibbagh:** Roger Gillan conducted a school for 38 pupils (36 Catholics and 2 Protestants). His annual salary amounted to £10. In this school the authorised version of Scripture was read.

**Gortnacrieve:** Francis Fox was the teacher in charge of a school for 31 pupils (30 Catholics and 1 Protestant). His annual income was £10. This school was built of stone and lime and cost £9 to build. In this school, Scripture was not read.

**Gortnaderrary:** Here the smallest school in the parish was run by John Murphy. He taught 28 pupils (18 Catholics and 10 Protestants).

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They paid between 1s-3d to 11s-4½d per quarter for instruction. This school was held in an old house valued at £1-10s. In this school the authorised version of Scripture was read by a Protestant.

**Mautiagh:** This was the largest school in Glenaniff and the second largest school in the parish of Ballaghameehan. Owen Murray taught 46 pupils (all Catholics) and he received an annual salary of £14. This school was built of stone and lime and cost £10 to build. This school contained one copy of the Douay version of the Bible.

**Aghnahaha:** Francis Sheeran conducted a second school in Glenaniff for 30 pupils (27 Catholics and 3 Protestants) according to the Protestant return, or (39 Catholics and 3 Protestants) according to the Catholic return. His income was £11 per annum. This school was built of stone and lime and cost £3 to build. In this school, Scripture was not read.

**Rossinver:** There was one school in the Rossinver part of the parish. Patrick Connolly taught 36 pupils (all Catholics) and he received an annual salary of £18. This school was built of stone and lime and cost £8 to build. In this school, Scripture was not read.

**Moher:** The first school in the parish of Ballaghameehan to come under the direction of the Society for the Promoting the Education of the Poor in Ireland was located in Moher, Rossinver. This was an all-female school and it was conducted by Anne Black. This school came into connection with the Society on 22 September, 1830, and was still in existence in 1846. The attendance at the time of the opening of the school was 67 pupils. The dimensions of the school were 14 feet by 12 feet. Anne Black was succeeded in the school by Abraham and Jayne Taylor.

Of the seven schools which existed in 1824 only one remained by 1835. That was the school at Mautiagh in Glenaniff. The enrolment had increased from 46 to 51 pupils. The fees charged were 1s-3d per quarter. Two new hedge schools were located in Ballaghameehan. In one school Charles Clancy taught 57 children for fees which ranged

from 1s-3d to 7s-6d per quarter. The other school was located at Shasmore and Michael Fox was the school master. There were 38 pupils on the rolls and the quarterly fees were from 10d to 2s.

The National School System of education came into being on 29 November, 1831, on the instruction of the Chief Secretary for Ireland and not by an Act of Parliament. The Catholic Hierarchy were in favour of the new system as the clergy of each denomination were to be given the opportunity of imparting religious instruction to the children of their respective creeds.

**Lissiniska:** It was not until 1844 that the first school in Ballaghameehan parish was approved to be connected to the National School System. The school was to be built in Mautiagh in Glenaniff. The application was made by Rev. Fr. James McGourty P.P. One hundred and fifty pupils were to attend this school. On 25 July, 1844, a grant of £66-10s-4d was approved for the building of the school and a grant of £7-10s-0d was approved to furnish it. However, Rev. Fr. McGourty P.P. failed to establish a school at Mautiagh.

By 1845, a school had been built in the townland of Lissiniska in Glenaniff. It was built of stone and lime. The dimensions of the new school, which had a thatched roof, were 29½ feet long by 11½ feet wide and by 6½ feet high. It had two rooms. A local carpenter made seven desks for the school. The average number of pupils in attendance was 150. The fees being charged to the pupils were 1s, 1s-6d and 2s-6d per quarter. Thirty pupils were admitted free on the recommendation of the patron, Rev. Fr. McGourty P.P.

Rev. Fr. McGourty P.P. applied to the Board of Education seeking aid towards payment of salaries for two teachers and a supply of books. The two teachers were Owen Murray, who was 48 years of age, and Philip O'Rourke who was 22 years old. In 1824, Owen Murray taught in the old hedge school in Mautiagh. Neither of the teachers had received instruction in the art of teaching and both were

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recommended by the parish priest for the posts. The school hours were from 10.00am to 4pm in summer and 10.00am to 3pm in the winter. Religious instruction was provided on Saturday from 10.00am to 2pm.

On 3 July, 1845, the school was taken into connection with the Board of Education and a grant of £2-12s-0d was given for requisites and books for 100 children. A salary of £8 per annum was granted to Philip O'Rourke. The Commissioners of Education could not grant a salary to Owen Murray due to the low average attendance at this school and neither did the small accommodation warrant payment of a salary to two teachers.

By 1848, Peter Gordon was appointed Principal and his income was £15 per annum. He died in service on 13 November, 1856. Daniel Gilgunn was appointed Principal on 1 January, 1866, and departed on 16 January, 1873. Bridget McSharry (nee Connolly) was appointed work-mistress on 1 December, 1866, with a salary of £14 per annum. In December, 1867, she was appointed assistant to the Principal. Thomas Gilligan was Principal from 10 January, 1873 until 9 October, 1880. James Bredin was appointed Principal on 11 October, 1880, and witnessed the closure of the old school.

In 1892, a grant for a new school to accommodate 120 pupils was applied for by Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. and sanctioned by the Board of Education. In 1895, the annual salary of the Principal, James Bredin, was £35 and that of Mrs Bridget McSharry, assistant teacher, was £27.

In 1903, the two Glenaniff National School Rolls number 15433 and 15434 were opened on the opposite side of the road from the old school which was Roll number 4390. The grant given to build the school was £274-13s-4d on expenditure of £412 and £43-6s-4d to enclose the yard on expenditure of £64-19s-6d. The area now had two schools, Glenaniff Male and Glenaniff Female. The two

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Principals were James Bredin and Miss Mary McSharry daughter of Mrs Bridget McSharry.



*Glenaniff National School*

**Coolodonnell:** In 1844, there was a Protestant school for the poor in the townland of Coolodonnell which had been established by the landlord, Owen Wynne (1755-1841). In 1849, this school was still in existence. When Rev. Fr. James McGourty P.P. applied to have Lattone school taken into connection by the Board of Education in 1849, the school inspector stated that the Protestant curate was opposed to the national school system. The nearest school was in the townland of Coolodonnell which was half a mile away.

**Lattone:** On 12 July, 1849, Lattone school was taken into connection by the Board of Education. The school-house measured 30 feet long by 13 feet wide by 7 feet high and it had a thatched roof. The furniture consisted of four tables and six forms and could accommodate about 50 children. The average attendance was 65 pupils.

The Principal of the school was Thomas Feely. One half-hour daily was dedicated to religious instruction after general instruction had concluded. The fees being charged were 1s-3d, 2s-6d and 5 shillings per quarter and six children were taught free at the teacher's

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discretion. This school had but a very short life. On 17 July, 1855, the Board ordered that the school be struck off the Roll and all grants cancelled as it had ceased operation.

**Conray:** On 9 December, 1853, Conray school was taken into connection with the Board of Education. The school-house was a barn beside McGorrin's house in the townland of Conray. It measured 25 feet long by 12 feet wide by 7 feet high. The Principal was Anne McGorrin and she was paid a salary of £10 per annum.

Her three sisters were appointed monitors and taught with her in the school at various times. Their names were Bridget, Rose and Margaret. Margaret was appointed Assistant teacher with an annual salary of £14 in August, 1870. By this time, she was 20 years old and she had become Mrs. Margaret Tucker. In 1870, there were 112 female pupils on the school roll. Anne McGorrin taught in Conray National School for almost all of her teaching career until she transferred to the Ballaghameehan Female National School in 1892, when Conray was closed. Her sister, Margaret Tucker transferred also as Assistant teacher.

**Gubnageer:** On 8 September, 1844, a school which was attached to Ballaghameehan church was the first school in the parish to be taken into connection with the Board of Education. The application had been made by Rev. Fr. James McGourty P.P. The school-house had one room which measured 21 feet long by 13 feet wide by 12 feet high. The building was constructed of stone and lime with a slated roof.

In the Gubnageer school there were 90 pupils on the rolls but the average attendance was 70. The fees being charged were 1s-3d; 2s-6d and 5s-0d per quarter. The name of the teacher was Daniel McGowan who was 21 years of age. He received a salary of £8 per annum. The school operated from 10.00am to 4pm during the week and on Saturday from 10.00am to 2pm. Religious instruction was taught for half an hour each day after general instruction.

Daniel McGowan was Principal of Gubnageer school until 24 March, 1851. P. O'Rourke taught in this school until 30 June, 1852. Bartley Ferguson was appointed Principal on 10 July, 1852, and his annual salary was £18. There were 117 pupils on the rolls. Bartley Ferguson taught in Gubnageer National School for 37 years until 26 March, 1889. He retired on a pension of £60 per annum. On 1 April, 1889, he was succeeded by Michael O'Rourke as school Principal.

Following an application made by Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P., a grant to build a two roomed school-house was sanctioned by order of the Board of Education on 22 April, 1890. The site for the school was on a portion of the Ballaghameehan church grounds. The grant given to build the school was £449-6s-8d on expenditure of £674 and £28-3s-4d to enclose the yard on expenditure of £42-5s-0d.

There were now two schools within the same building which could accommodate 200 pupils. The dimensions of both rooms were 24 feet long by 20 feet wide by 13¾ feet high. On 10 March, 1892, Ballaghameehan Male school, Roll number 13908, and Ballaghameehan Female school, Roll number 13909, were opened. Michael O'Rourke was Principal of the Ballaghameehan Male school. Anne McGorin transferred from Conray National School and became Principal of the Ballaghameehan Female school. When she retired on 30 September, 1896, she received a pension of £51 per annum. She was replaced by her sister Margaret Tucker as Principal.

**Tullyskeherny** When the Protestant school in Coolodonnell ceased it was replaced by a school in Tullyskeherny. This school was built prior to 1857 and was situated near the Church of Ireland building and the Glebe. John Carson was the first school master in the Church of Ireland school in Tullyskeherny. During the final years of his life, he was the parish clerk for the Church of Ireland in Ballaghameehan. John Carson died on 20 February, 1896, aged 74 years.

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*Church of Ireland National School, Tullysheherry*

**Ardagh Gilbride:** On 11 May, 1846, an application for aid towards the payment of a teacher's salary was made to the Board of Education by Rev. Fr. James McGourty P.P. The teacher was James Croal, who was 22 years old. His father had built the school on his property in the townland of Ardagh Gilbride in Rossinver. It was newly built of stone and lime mortar with a thatched roof. The dimensions were 31 feet long by 15 feet wide by 8 feet high and it had four windows.

James Croal was appointed Principal on a salary of £8 per annum. The average attendance at the school was 47. By August 1848, the attendance had increased due to the distribution of food from the school. The distribution of food was the response of the Rossinver Relief Committee to the famine conditions in the area. The school fees were 1s, 1s-6d, 2s-6d and 5s per quarter. The school hours were from 10.00am to 4pm in summer and 10.00am to 3pm in the winter. Religious instruction was provided on Saturday from 10.00am to 2pm.

Bartley Ferguson was Principal between 1 November, 1848, and 2 January, 1850, when he was replaced by Patrick Croal. John

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Gilbride was appointed Principal on 1 October, 1854, on a salary of £11 per annum. James Bredin succeeded John Gilbride as Principal of the school in late 1866 and taught in Rossinver until 1880. James Bredin was appointed Principal of Glenaniff National School on 11 October, 1880. He was succeeded by his cousin Patrick Bredin, age 17, as Principal of Rossinver National School. By 1895, Patrick Bredin's annual salary was £53. He taught in Rossinver until 1915 when he transferred to Glenaniff.

On 12 December, 1893, a grant of £180 towards the building of a new school in Ardagh Gilbride in Rossinver was sanctioned. Likewise, a grant of £42-15s-00d was sanctioned to enclose the school. The total expenditure on completing the school amounted to £333-2s-6d. the dimensions of the school were 30½ feet long by 17 feet wide by 13½ feet high.



*Rossinver National School*

The school opened on 29 July, 1901. The manager was Fr. Peter Brady P.P. Patrick Bredin was Principal of Rossinver National School. On 1 May, 1902, Miss Annie Murphy was appointed Manual Instructress.

**Brackarybeg:** Brackarybeg national school which was in the parish of Killasnet was established in 1841 and taken over by the

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Education Board on 8 June 1843. As this school building was close to the parish of Ballaghameehan, it attracted many students from the townlands of Cartrongibbagh, Kinkillew, Shasmore, Gortnacrieve and Lisdarush.

The school was granted books for 100 children. The school roll number was 3724 and the dimensions of the one room school were 24feet by 10feet. By 20 Aug 1849, the teacher was Michael Fox, who was aged 24 years. School hours were 10am–3pm in winter and 10am–4pm in summer. Also, Saturdays 10am–2pm. The school was in good repair. The one room school contained 4 large desks each 9ft. long, and 7 benches each 9ft long and one book shelf. The building was built of stone and lime and was thatched. It had been built by a small farmer named Keaveney as a dwelling and rented by Michael Fox. At this time, Barckarybeg national school was the only school in the locality. The Protestant clergy were opposed to this school. While there were 86 children on the rolls, the average attendance was 65 pupils. The parish priest of Killasnet was manager of the school. The teacher's salary was paid by the parents of the students. Students paid between 1s and 1s-6d per quarter but four children went to school for free.

On 1 August 1855, the salary was withdrawn from Michael Fox for being negligent and inefficient in his duties. He was replaced by Owen Meehan as teacher in Brackarybeg national school.

On 15 Sept 1866, an application was made to the Commissioners of National Education for a grant towards the salary of an assistant teacher to support Patrick Meehan. Cecily Meehan (aged 18) had been appointed as senior monitor since August 1863. Her work consisted of one hour daily of needlework and the remainder in literary instruction. At this time there were 98 pupils on the rolls with the average attendance being 52 children.

Prior to the death of Rev. Fr. Hugh McGauran P.P. on 21 February, 1878, he transferred the management of all the schools in the parish

## Gerry Fox

of Killasnet to his curate Rev. Fr. Patrick Brady C.C. This action was timely, as on 25 February, 1878, Lord Leitrim wrote to advise of the death of Rev. Fr McGauran and requested that as the Brackarybeg school house was his property that he should be appointed as patron and manager. This request was refused on the basis that Rev. Fr. Patrick Brady had already been appointed.

On 27 September, 1887, Ellen Rooney, aged 19, was appointed assistant teacher. Duties include plain sewing, knitting and crochet. She also taught Irish and instrumental. In 1887, there were 80 students on the rolls with the average attendance being 40 children. Around this time, Brackarybeg school moved from Keaveney's to a new location about a quarter of a mile further north on Meehan's property.



*Brackarybeg National School.*

On 1 August, 1896, a lease was granted to the trustees of Brackarybeg National school for a site for a new school building. The lease was for 99 years under Leases for Schools (Ireland) Act 1881. The new school was built on the opposite side of the road from the old school building. The new school had two rooms measuring 23feet by 20feet and 15½feet by 20feet. The smaller room was partitioned for a small cloakroom measuring 7½feet by 20feet. The senior classes were taught in the larger room while the

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junior classes were taught in the smaller room. The school yard was segregated into two parts, one area for girls and another area for boys. Each area had its own toilet. There was a grant of £265-9s-4d on expenditure of £398-4s-0d for the building of the school which was completed in 1898.

Patrick Meehan resigned as teacher from 31 July, 1901 and qualified for a pension of £35 per annum. His son, Daniel Meehan replaces him as teacher. The Meehan family had provided teachers to Brackarybeg National school for almost three quarters of a century.

What is apparent from a review of the changes in education in Ballaghameehan parish during the nineteenth century is that, prior to the introduction of the National School System in 1831, schools were integrated with both sexes and all religions in attendance. After 1831, the Protestant clergy did not support the National School System. There was a Protestant school set up in the townland of Coolodonnell which had been established by the landlord, Owen Wynne. It was replaced later by a school in Tullyshehery. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the Catholic run national schools were segregating the sexes as was the case with Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff schools.

## **Chapter 10 Protestant Families in Ballaghameehan.**

The first Protestant families were introduced as tenants to Ballaghameehan by the landlord Owen Wynne sometime after 1659, when planter families were brought from Scotland, Wales and England.

In 1658, Owen Wynne received his grants of land in Leitrim. In 1659, he is resident in Lurganboy where the majority of the residents are English.<sup>1</sup> Being English would have indicated that these people were Protestant. At this time there are no English people living in Ballaghameehan. With the introduction of the Penal Laws, the landlord gave preference to Protestants when allocating the main tenancies of the Wynne Estate. The majority of the main tenants living in Ballaghameehan during the eighteenth century were Protestants.

In 1738, Richard Malley was the main tenant in Cartrongibbagh. By 1741, Alan Rutherford and William Whittaker were the main tenants. By 1748, William Rutherford had replaced Alan Rutherford as the main tenant. In 1798, James Rogan was the main tenant. During the previous sixty years all of the major tenants in Cartrongibbagh were Protestants.

By 1750, Richard Malley and William Whittaker had moved from Cartrongibbagh to the townland of Kinkillew. By 1798, Darby Clarke was the main tenant in Kinkillew.

In 1741, Richard Malley and William Whittaker were also the main tenants in Shasmore. By 1750, Thomas Johnston and William Dixon held the tenancies for Shasmore and Lisdarush. In 1767, Thomas Johnston now held the tenancies for Shasmore and Lisdarush. By 1798, John Johnston and a man named Hurst were the main tenants in Shasmore, while Dolan was the main tenant in Lisdarush. The Dolans were stonemasons and had moved from Derry. With the

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exception of Dolan, who was a Catholic, all of the other tenants had been Protestants.

In 1738, John Johnston Snr. was the main tenant in Lattone. In 1752, the tenancy was given to Robert Johnston. By 1798, the main tenant was J. Whittaker. The major tenants in the townland of Lattone were Protestants.

In 1738, Manus Henry was the main tenant in Derrynahimmirk. By 1739, John Johnston Jnr. was the major tenant in Derrynahimmirk. At this time, John Johnston Jnr. was also the main tenant in Gortnaderrary. By 1767, John Johnston was the main tenant in Derrynahimmirk, Gortnaderrary and Corraleskin. In 1798, the main tenant in Derrynahimmirk was John Johnston. During the previous sixty years the major tenants in these townlands were Protestants.

In 1738, the main tenant in Coolodonnell was Terence Harte who was a Catholic. In 1745, John Whittaker was the major tenant in Coolodonnell and he also held the tenancy for Tullysheherny. By 1765, the main tenant in Coolodonnell was William Morgan. In 1767, William Whittaker was tenant, but, in 1768 he was replaced by another member of his family, Robert Whittaker. A member of the Whittaker family was still a tenant in Coolodonnell in 1798. For over half a century the major tenants in the townland of Coolodonnell were Protestants.

In 1767, William Whittaker moved from Coolodonnell to become the main tenant in Druminargid. By 1798, the major tenants in Druminargid were Gilligan and J. Whittaker. The Whittaker family were Protestants. In 1767, the main tenant in Gubnageer was John Mason. He was a Protestant.

The tenants of the remaining townlands in Ballaghameehan were Catholics. These townlands were Gortnacrieve, Raheelin, Conray, Drumgane, Tullyderrin and Gubmanus.

The Protestant population in Ballaghameehan had increased during the first half of the nineteenth century. There were between twenty and thirty families living in Ballaghameehan. Although part of Rossinver Church of Ireland parish, most parishioners living in Ballaghameehan attended services in nearby Manorhamilton, which was in the parish of Cloonclare. The Church of Ireland services for the Rossinver parish were held in Kinlough which was 10 miles away and it was too far for the Ballaghameehan parishioners to travel there. Since 1842, religious service had been conducted in a school-house in Ballaghameehan.

In 1849, Rev. Alexander Smullen was appointed curate to the parish of Rossinver. At that time an offer was made to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to collect £100, provided they would build a church. It took seven years before they consented to do so. The funds were raised and lodged with the Commissioners in less than three months.<sup>2</sup>

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Ireland advertised in local newspapers for contractors to tender, on or before the 14 August, 1856, for building the church of Ballaghameehan, parish of Rossinver, County Leitrim, according to the plans and specifications to be seen in the hands of Rev. A. Smullen, Manorhamilton.<sup>3</sup>

The landlord, the Rt. Hon. John Wynne, donated a site in the townland of Tullyskeherny for the new church. This site which was an exceptionally beautiful site was situated in the centre of an area where most of the Protestant community lived. In 1856 construction was commenced by a firm of Belfast builders on the Church of Ireland in the townland of Tullyskearney, just across the road from the schoolhouse. This new church, which is said to be one of only two of its kind in the country, was given no other name than Ballagh Church. The construction was completed in 1857.

Sandstone, said to have been cut in Belfast and transported to the site by train, and horse and cart, was used for the quoins (corners of

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the walls), windowsills, rybats (uprights around the windows), arches and keystones, capping stones, bell tower entrance steps and landings. Clay bricks were used in the building of the arches, sides of the windows, and the doorways.



*Church of Ireland, Ballaghameehan*

The remainder of the walls (the rubble) was built with a very hard but brittle local blue limestone. This stone could not be cut easily by hand without it shattering into many pieces. It had to be built as it was, the finished job looking like a sort of jigsaw puzzle. The finish

produced, in spite of the lack of any definite pattern, is very pleasant, and the whole building blended well into its surroundings.

It is disputed as to where the blue limestone came from. It is claimed that much of the stone came from the monastery ruins on the site of the nearby Saint Molaise's Well. Another claim is that it was taken from the Ballagh River and a local quarry.

An interesting feature of the church was the under-floor heating which was a rare comfort for that period of time. It came up through gratings in the central aisle. There were two fires, one in the vestry and another in the church, which provided the heat.

A graveyard surrounds the church on all sides. It is claimed that burials have taken place on the site from at least as early as the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

John Wynne was invited to lay the foundation stone for the new church. This ceremony was performed at the end of June, 1857. To mark the occasion the Rt. Hon. John Wynne was presented with an inscribed trowel. The inscription read '*Presented to the Right. Hon. John Wynne, on laying the first stone of Ballaghameehan church, by the Rev. Alexander Smullen, incumbent, and William Graham, contractor, June, 1857.*'

The following gentry and clergy attended on the occasion: The Right Hon. John Wynne; William Johnston Esq., J.P., D.L.; Capt. Slane, R.M.; Francis Montgomery Olpherts Esq., J.P.; Rev. Ash, incumbent of Rossinver; Rev. Shone, Sligo; Rev. Gully, Sligo; Rev. John Hudson, Glencar; Rev. Robert Brown, Belleek; and Rev. John Fleury, Garrison.

Rev. Alexander Smullen, when presenting the engraved trowel to John Wynne stated: "*Mr Wynne, I beg to present you with this trowel, with the fervent wish and prayer that you may long survive to be the father and guardian of your tenantry, and the grace and honour of your name.*" In response, John Wynne expressed his

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thanks. He said that fifteen years ago that he had it in his mind to build this church but that the circumstances then prevented it from happening. Through the exertions of Rev. Smullen, the work had begun. Rev. Ash, incumbent of Rossinver who was resident in Kinlough, kindly endowed the parish of Ballaghameehan with £30 per annum.<sup>5</sup> The new church was not valued until 1859 when the building was completed. By 1867, a rectory had been constructed nearby to house the minister for Ballaghameehan parish. It was known as the Glebe. Rev. Smullen was the first minister to live here.

The first rector appointed to Ballaghameehan parish was a Rev. Fletcher, who was a travelling rector in the sense that he visited many other small Protestant communities in the area.<sup>6</sup>

Rev. James Franks was appointed curate to the Church of Ireland parish of Rossinver, with responsibility for Ballaghameehan, in the autumn of 1846. Following his arrival, he resided in Manorhamilton. In 1847, Rev. Franks was residing in Ballaghameehan.<sup>7</sup> After the worst of the famine had passed, Rev. James Franks was transferred to the curacy of Kilconnel, Co. Limerick, on 8 March, 1852.<sup>8</sup>

The ministers who served in Ballaghameehan parish between 1852 and 1926 were Rev. Alexander Smullen, Rev. William Scott, Rev. John Richard Gahagan and Rev. Edward Flower.

**Rev. Alexander Smullen (1849-1873):** Rev. Alexander Smullen was ordained in 1843. In 1849, Rev. Smullen was appointed curate to the parish of Ballaghameehan. He was instrumental in organising the building of the Church of Ireland in Ballaghameehan. In 1859 Rev. Smullen bought the book-shrine of Saint Molaise (Soiscél Molaise). Dating back perhaps to the eighth century, this was originally a silver lined wooden box with a Gospel inside. When Rev. Smullen purchased this box, the Gospel was not inside as it had been lost. The records (Royal Irish Academy, Antiq. Comm., Minutes, Vol. II, p. 172-3, 26 November, 1859) state that he paid £45 to a Charles Meehan of Lattone. The Meehan family had

traditionally been the keepers of this shrine down through the centuries. Rev. Smullen donated the shrine to the National Museum in Dublin, where it is still held.

On 13 September, 1865, Rev. Smullen married Catherine Cullen from Manorhamilton. She was the second daughter of Cairncross Cullen who was a landlord. They had four children. On 6 February, 1873, Catherine Smullen died aged 39 years. Rev. Smullen was left a widower with four young children. Also, in 1873, Rev. Smullen was transferred to Drumkeeran following the amalgamation of Kiltyclogher and Ballaghameehan parishes. Following the death of Rev. Alexander Smullen on 12 September 1904, aged 92 years, he was buried along-side his wife Catherine in Ballaghameehan Church of Ireland graveyard.

**Rev. William Scott (1873-1897):** In 1858, Rev. William Scott was ordained. In 1862, Rev. Scott was appointed as district curate to Kiltyclogher which was part of Cloonclare parish. In 1865, Kiltyclogher was made a parish. Also, in 1865, it was proposed to build a new church in Kiltyclogher but it was not completed until 1867. On 6 October, 1865, the foundation stone was laid for the building of the Church of Ireland in Kiltyclogher by Mrs. Loftus Tottenham who was wife of the local landlord. Rev. William Scott outlined the difficulties which had been surmounted to raise the funding to build the church. The cost of the present building would be greater than the cost of the church originally proposed, but he felt they were assured that the beauty, durability and comfort of this church would more than justify the additional outlay.<sup>9</sup>

The Church of Ireland in Kiltyclogher was consecrated by the Bishop of Kilmore on 24 July, 1867. In 1873, Kiltyclogher parish was joined with Ballaghameehan parish and both parishes were administered by the same rector who was based in the rectory in Ballaghameehan.<sup>10</sup> Rev. William Scott was to administer this parish until 1897. He presided over his community during the turmoil of the land war period.<sup>11</sup> Rev. William Scott died on 24 April, 1897,

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aged 83 years. He and his wife Elizabeth were buried in Ballaghameehan Church of Ireland graveyard.

**Rev. John Richard Gahagan (1898-1902):** Rev. John Richard Gahagan arrived from Drumahaire to Ballaghameehan in 1898. He was born in Dublin and was ordained in 1891. Rev. Gahagan lived in relative splendour with his coachman and all the trappings of wealth, so unbecoming to a clergyman. He had the road from Rossinver to Kiltyclogher altered so as to accommodate his coach and horses while travelling to Kiltyclogher.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1901 census, Rev. John Richard Gahagan was living in the Glebe house in Tullyshehery. He was a widower. In 1888, his wife Harriett had died, soon after the birth of their first child. Living with him, in 1901, was his son, James Henry. His father, mother and sister were visitors. He had two servants. Emily Robinson was a domestic servant and Johnston Elliott was his coachman.

There is an unsubstantiated story that Rev. Gahagan may have been involved in a scandal in the area. This story suggests that Rev. Gahagan fathered a child and blamed it on a local man named Irwin. Unable to cope with the pressure of the scandal, Irwin is reported to have committed suicide in the waters of Lough Melvin.<sup>13</sup>

In 1902, Rev. Gahagan was transferred to Kinlough in the Rossinver parish. Later he transferred to Athleague in County Roscommon.

**Rev. Edward Flower (1903-1926):** The last permanent rector, Rev Edward Flower was born in Dublin. He arrived in Ballaghameehan in 1903. Previously he served in Kinawley, Co. Fermanagh, (1879 - 1881); Kilcornan, Co. Limerick, (1881 – 1886) and Denn, Co. Cavan, (1886 – 1903).<sup>14</sup>

He was a humble person. He arrived into a fairly active parish with its church, rectory and school. He did much of his work by travelling on foot. This included walking from the Glebe house in

Ballaghameehan to Kiltyclogher to perform the service at 3p.m. each Sunday.<sup>15</sup>

In 1904, Rev. Edward Flower successfully sued the sheriff and sub-sheriff from County Fermanagh for trespass on the plaintiff's premises on 6 February, 1904. Rev. Flower had got into pecuniary difficulties and had fallen into the hands of money lenders. Previously a judgement for £20 plus £19 costs had been made against Rev. Flower. The sheriff sent two bailiffs to collect the debt. The sheriff and sub-sheriff were authorised only so far as County Fermanagh was concerned. However, they went beyond their jurisdiction, and went over the border into County Leitrim by sending two bailiffs into the plaintiff's residence. The bailiffs insisted on entering the house at the Glebe, Ballaghameehan. They took an inventory of all the furniture. They entered Mrs. Flower's bedroom, where she was lying ill, and behaved in a most violent manner. One of the bailiff's was accused of being drunk but this was denied. Rev. Edward Flower was awarded £75 damages. At this time, Rev. Flower was earning £220 per annum.<sup>16</sup>

In 1905, his wife Catherine Elizabeth died and she is buried in Ballaghameehan Church of Ireland graveyard. In 1911, Rev. Flower wrote to the Local Government Board, Manorhamilton, requesting that a doctor be appointed in Kiltyclogher to cover both the Ballaghameehan and Kiltyclogher areas. Prior to this the doctor was based in Manorhamilton. On 25 July, 1916, his son John was wounded for a second time during World War 1. He lived to survive the war and became an engineer.

Rev. Flower witnessed much upheaval and great suffering during the years of civil unrest as a result of the 1916 rising and the subsequent violent events of the War of Independence and the Civil War. The Church of Ireland population in Ballaghameehan parish was decimated as a result. Protestant parishioners fled north across the border never to return again.<sup>17</sup> Many of these families emigrated to England and America. Some of these families had lived in

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Ballaghameehan parish for over 200 years. The families who left the parish after the establishment of the Free State were Bustard, Carson (Lattone), Hurst, Irwin (Lisdarush), Edwards (Tullyskeherny), Johnston (Druminargid), and Ross (Derrynahimrick).

Apprehension of life in an increasingly Gaelic and Roman Catholic state and insecurity in the face of republican hostility prompted a sizeable portion of Leitrim Protestants to remove themselves from the region wherein their families had lived for generations.<sup>18</sup>

Rev. Edward Flower witnessed the demise of his beloved Ballaghameehan parish. He suffered from failing eye sight and general ill health. Rev. Edward Flower died in poverty on 20 September, 1926, aged 79 years. Before he died, he chose four Catholics to carry his coffin from the Rectory to the church.<sup>19</sup> He was buried along-side his wife in Ballaghameehan Church of Ireland graveyard.

Rev. Flower was not replaced as a resident minister for the parish. This was due to the dwindling population of Protestants in Ballaghameehan and Kiltyclogher areas. Ballaghameehan parish was administered at times from Manorhamilton, but finally from Killinagh until it became extinct.<sup>20</sup>

The Protestant families living in Ballaghameehan during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were Blair, Boyd, Brock, Bustard, Carson, Clarke, Downey, Elliott, Follis, Hawksby, Hurst, Irwin, Johnston, Robinson, Ross, Saunders (Sanderson), and Whittaker. There were only two Protestant families who lived in the Rossinver part of Ballaghameehan parish. They were the Edwards and Whitten families. Their landlord was the Johnstons of Kinlough. When describing where each family lived reference will be made to the holding number used in Griffith's Valuations, 1857, and used by the Valuation Office since then.

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*Blair Family Home.*

**Blair:** The Blair family arrived in Ballaghameehan around 1820. Hamilton Blair who was from Garrison, County Fermanagh, married Anne Fletcher from Manorhamilton on 11 March, 1818. They had a large family. Hamilton Blair appeared in the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, in the townland of Gortnacrieve. In Griffith's Valuations he occupied holding number 3 in Lisdarush and holding number 3 in Gortnacrieve. He built a large house in Gortnacrieve. Edward Blair replaced his father who died on 16 August, 1883, aged 95 years. Edward Blair was not married and he died on 16 January, 1904, aged 83 years. This holding was taken over by Edward's nephew Thomas Whitten from Kinlough. Thomas and his wife Anne had nine children. This family had departed from Ballaghameehan by 1915.

**Boyd:** In 1807, J Boyd lived in Derrynahimmirk. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, James, John and William Boyd lived in this townland. John Boyd replaced his father James as sole tenant in Derrynahimmirk. In 1845, John married Margaret Johnston from Kinlough. They had at least five children. John died in 1856. In Griffith's Valuations, Margaret Boyd occupied holding number 1 in

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Derrynahimmirk. In 1864, Margaret's oldest son Robert took over the tenancy. In 1871, Robert Boyd married his neighbour Margaret Clarke but they emigrated. Most of John and Margaret Boyd's children emigrated to New York. In 1871, Margaret's youngest son Thomas took over the tenancy. Margaret Boyd died on 29 December, 1883, aged 65 years. In 1874, Thomas Boyd married Mary Saunders and they had twelve children. In 1916, Thomas, Mary and the youngest members of the Boyd family emigrated to England. This was the last Boyd family to live in Ballaghameehan.

**Brock:** The Brock name did not appear as a tenant in the Wynne Estate rentals for Ballaghameehan in 1807. David Brock and his family moved from Manorhamilton to Ballaghameehan. David Brock appeared in the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, in the townland of Druminargid. In Griffith's Valuations he occupied holding number 4 in Druminargid. David and Elizabeth Brock had a large family, most of whom did not marry.

His son Christopher Brock was a Methodist minister in Limerick. He was the only Protestant clergyman to come out of the parish of Ballaghameehan. He died in Druminargid on 25 July, 1875, aged 37 years. He was married with a young family.

John Brock, who was a bachelor, replaced his father David, who died on 14 October, 1866, aged 85 years. Jane Brock replaced her brother John who died on 17 February, 1887, aged 67 years. The Brock holding was transferred to a relative of the family named John Johnston in 1897. John Johnston was a son of Thomas Johnston from Corraleskin. He married Elizabeth Edwards from Tullyskeherny and they had a large family. Three of David Brock's children were alive in 1901, Jane, Mary and Eliza. By 1927, John Johnston and his family had departed from Ballaghameehan.

**Bustard:** In Griffith's Valuations James Bustard shared half of holding number 7 with Thomas Carson in Lattone. He also had holding number 8. In 1869, John Bustard replaced his father as

tenant in holdings number 7 and 8 in Lattone. In 1867, John Bustard married Catherine Nixon from Kiltyclogher and they had four children. John died in 1879. Catherine remarried to William Follis from Glenboy, Manorhamilton. They had three children. In 1917, John Bustard Junior took over these tenancies. He held them until 1927 when his family permanently departed from Ballaghameehan.

**Carson:** There were two families of Carson living in Ballaghameehan. One family lived in Derrynahimmirk and the other lived in Lattone. In 1807, John Carson and John Carson Jnr. lived in Derrynahimmirk. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John and Thomas Carson lived in this townland. William Carson and Jane Carson, who lived in Tullysheherny, had a daughter Anne, who was born on 6 January, 1837. A Protestant school had been built in the area before 1830. It had two classrooms, but only one was ever used. The first teacher was John Carson. In Griffith's Valuations, John Carson occupied a house and one rood in holding number 14 in Derrynahimmirk.

John Carson's daughter Eliza Carson married Edward McBrien from Drumcliff, Co. Sligo. John's son John married Rebecca Boyd from Glencar on 3 March, 1862. They had four daughters. John Carson Jnr. was the school master in the Church of Ireland school in Tullysheherny. During the final years of his life, he was the parish clerk for the Church of Ireland in Ballaghameehan. John Carson died on 20 February, 1896, aged 74 years. Rebecca Carson moved to Dublin where she died on 14 May, 1909, aged 68 years. Rebecca Carson was the last of this family of Carson's to live in Tullysheherny.

In 1807, John Carson lived in Lattone. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, Widow Carson lived in this townland. In Griffith's Valuations Thomas Carson shared half of holding number 7 with James Bustard in Lattone. Thomas' widowed mother had remarried to James Bustard. Thomas and Eliza Jane Carson raised a large family in Lattone. Thomas Carson died on 15 March, 1886, aged 83

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years and his wife Eliza Jane died on 6 December, 1894, aged 90 years. Joseph Carson took over this holding from his father. On 16 October, 1883, he married Pheobe Brock from Garrison, County Fermanagh. In 1926, the Carson family permanently departed from Ballaghameehan.

**Clarke:** Percy Clarke appears in the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, with holdings in the townlands of Coolodonnell and Gubnageer. Also, Edward Clarke had a holding in Gortnacrieve. Percy Clarke died in 1834 and he was replaced by his son, who was also named Percy. In Griffith's Valuations, Percy Clarke junior occupied holding number 10 in Derrynahimmirk. This holding was previously held by John Carson. Percy's brother John occupied holding number 14 in the townland of Coolodonnell. Percy Clarke junior died in 1889 and he was replaced by his son William. William Clarke married Catherine Blair from Garrison. They had three children. William died in 1903 and he was replaced by his wife Catherine as tenant of holding number 10 in Derrynahimmirk. Catherine Clarke died in 1916 and she was replaced by her son William. William Clarke, who was a bachelor, died in 1949 and he was replaced by his brother George. George Fawcett Clarke, who was a bachelor, died in 1975. He was the last Protestant to live in the parish of Ballaghameehan.

**Crowe:** The Crowe family arrived in Ballaghameehan in 1865. They occupied holding number 9 in Gubnageer. William Crowe married Isabella Blair from Gortnacrieve on 23 May, 1867. They reared a family of nine children. Isabella died on 13 January, 1890. By 1895 the family were no longer resident in Ballaghameehan.

**Downey:** Three Downey brothers lived in Cartrongibbagh at different times during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup> They were all born in Grange, County Sligo, during the 1750's. In 1807, James Downey lived in holding number 2 in Cartrongibbagh with reference to Griffiths Valuations, 1857. He was married on two occasions. James and Jane Downey had a large

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family. Some years after Jane's death, James married Mary Moore. The children from his first marriage were grown up by this time. James and Mary had three young children. However, Mary died, leaving James a widower, with three young children. These three children were separated and reared by James and Mary's extended families.

In 1807, Robert Downey lived in Druminargid. He was the oldest son of James and Jane Downey. James Downey went to live with his son Robert after the death of his second wife. Robert's family including James moved to County Fermanagh. James died there at an advanced age and he is buried in Monea cemetery. Later Robert Downey and his family moved to the U.S.A.

James Downey was replaced by his brother John as tenant in Cartrongibbagh. John Downey and his wife Jane had moved from Glencar. They had no children but they had reared James' son Archibald after the death of his second wife. Another brother named Henry lived in holding number 1 in Cartrongibbagh with reference to Griffiths Valuations, 1857. Henry Downey and Catherine Downey had a large family. All of Henry's children had married and emigrated by 1838. Most of them went to Ontario in Canada. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John and his brother Henry, and Henry's son Robert lived in Cartrongibbagh.

In 1844, Archibald Downey who had emigrated to Canada in 1840 returned home at the request of his elderly uncle John. He took over his uncle's tenancy in 1845. Archibald married Mary Anne Hawksby from Skreeny, Manorhamilton. They had eight children. In 1845, Archibald Downey purchased the tenant rights of three farms adjoining his own. By the end of the famine period, he could have got these tenant rights for little or nothing. Also, at the time of the purchasing of the tenant rights, he had on deposit with the landlord, Right Hon. John Wynne, sufficient sums of money to be used for the purchase of additional livestock and equipment for the improvement of the farms. John Wynne never returned any of this money,

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claiming that though the money was owed, his circumstances prevented him from doing so. In Griffith's Valuations, Archibald Downey occupied holding number 2 in the townland of Cartrongibbagh.

Conditions in Ireland were such that Archibald Downey decided in 1864 to sell all his holdings and emigrate with his family to New York in the United States. The landlord Right Hon. John Wynne would not permit the sale of the tenant rights for the farms to anyone except a Protestant. There being only three Protestant families in the adjoining five or six townlands, there was no chance of selling. He turned the farms over to his brother-in-law, John Hawksby, who assumed a debt of \$300 and took the farms. In 1864, the last Downey left Cartrongibbagh and the last Hawksby left Skreeny. John Hawksby left Cartrongibbagh in 1886.

**Elliott:** Elliott does not appear as a tenant in the Wynne Estate rentals for Ballaghameehan in 1807. James and Sydney Elliott and their family were living in Ballaghameehan on 7 January, 1830, when their son Adam was baptised in the Church of Ireland, Manorhamilton. James Elliott appeared in the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, in the townland of Druminargid. In Griffith's Valuations he occupied holding number 5 in Druminargid. James and Sydney Elliott had a large family. In 1874, James Elliott's tenancy was divided between his two sons. Follis received holding number 5 in Druminargid, while Robert received holding number 6. Robert Elliott was married three times and Follis was married twice. Follis' son Johnstone was a driver for Rev. Richard Gahagan who was minister for the Ballaghameehan Church of Ireland. By 1924, with the deaths of Robert Elliott (1922) and Follis Elliott (1924), the Elliott name had disappeared from Ballaghameehan.

**Edwards:** In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John Edwards lived in the townland of Dooard. In Griffith's Valuations, John Edwards occupied holding number 8 in the townland of Larganhugh. John and Alice Edwards had a large family. When John died in 1881, this

holding was taken over by his son Thomas. Thomas married Elizabeth McNasser and they had three children. By 1911, this family had left the Rossinver area.

Another son of John and Alice Edwards' named William Edwards married Mary Anne Johnston. They had ten children. William worked as a labourer and herd in the Killasnet area until he received a tenancy in holding number 11 in Tullyskeherny. This tenancy had been vacated by George Hurst. When William died in 1922, he was replaced by his son Robert. By 1925, Robert Edwards had departed from Ballaghameehan.

**Hawksby:** John Hawksby was born on 25 December, 1835, in Screeny, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim.<sup>22</sup> He married Jane Geale on 6 July, 1857. They had no children. In 1864, Archibald Downey turned his farms in Cartrongibbagh over to his brother-in-law, John Hawksby. In taking the farms, John also assumed a debt of \$300. In 1886, John Hawksby sold the Cartrongibbagh farm for £700 and purchased his wife's homestead at Carrigeencor near Drumahaire.

**Hurst:** Hursts were tenants in Ballaghameehan during the eighteenth century. The Hursts were yeomen.<sup>23</sup> In 1807, Francis Hurst lived in Lisdarush. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, William Hurst lived in this townland. After the death of Francis Hurst, this tenancy was divided between two of his sons, George and William. George and his wife Jane raised a large family in Lisdarush. George died in 1845. William and his wife Anne raised their family in Lisdarush. William died in 1852. In Griffith's Valuations Jane Hurst lived in holding number 4 and Anne Hurst lived in holding number 5 in Lisdarush.

Jane Hurst died in 1867 and she was succeeded by her son William. William Hurst married Elizabeth Robinson and they had three children. William died in 1889 and he was succeeded by his wife Elizabeth. When Elizabeth died in 1913, she was succeeded by her son James. James Hurst and his sister Mary Anne lived primitive

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lives. They housed a cow in the kitchen of their house. Mary Anne did not use the road way when travelling to visit her neighbours. Instead, she travelled through the fields in her bare feet while carrying her shoes. On reaching her neighbours house, she put on her shoes before entering the house.<sup>24</sup> In most areas these practices had died out a century earlier. Mary Anne Hurst was a spinster and she died in 1941. James was a bachelor and he was the last Hurst to live in holding number 4 in Lisdarush. He died in 1943.

Anne Hurst who lived in holding number 5 in Lisdarush, died in 1894. She was succeeded by her son Francis. After Francis Hurst died in 1924, his son Francis junior with his wife Frances and family emigrated to America. He was the last Hurst to live in holding number 5 in Lisdarush.

In Griffith's Valuations John Hurst, another son of Francis Hurst of Lisdarush, lived in holding number 11 in the townland of Tullyskeherny. John died in 1873. He was replaced by his nephew George Hurst. George was son of George and Jane Hurst of Lisdarush. George married Margaret Hazzard and they had a large family. In 1890, George Hurst lost the tenancy to holding number 11 in the townland of Tullyskeherny. He was replaced by William Edwards. George Hurst and his family moved to Drumkeeran. In 1899, George and most of his family emigrated to Chicago, U.S.A.

**Irwin:** There were two families by the name of Irwin in Ballaghameehan in 1807. The Irwins were yeomen.<sup>25</sup> Thomas Irwin lived in Lisdarush while John Irwin lived in Tullyskeherny.

Thomas and Elizabeth Irwin reared a large family in Lisdarush. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, Thomas Irwin has a holding in Lisdarush. In Griffith's Valuations, Thomas Irwin occupied holding number 1 in the townland of Lisdarush. Thomas died in 1861 and he was replaced as tenant by his son William. William Irwin married Margaret Allingham and they had ten children. Margaret replaced her husband William, who died in 1888. In 1910, Robert Irwin

replaced his mother as tenant of holding number 1 in Lisdarush. By 1929, there were no family by the name of Irwin living in Lisdarush.

In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John Irwin had a holding in Tullysheherny. In Griffith's Valuations John Irwin occupied holding number 21 in the townland of Tullysheherny. John and Jane Irwin reared a large family in this townland. In 1885, Francis Irwin replaced his father as tenant. His son, Johnny Irwin was the last member of this family to live in Tullysheherny.

**Johnston:** Johnstons were tenants in Ballaghameehan during the eighteenth century. In 1807, Alexander Johnston lived in Corraleskin. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, his son also named Alexander Johnston lived in this townland. In Griffith's Valuations Alexander Johnston occupies holding number 3 in the townland of Corraleskin.

Alexander Johnston and his wife Jane had a large family. In 1863, George Johnston replaced his father as tenant in holding number 3 in the townland of Corraleskin. George was married to Fanny but they had no children. In 1894, Thomas Johnston who was a brother of George took over the tenancy. Thomas and Margaret Johnston had a large family. In 1901, holding number 3 was divided into two parts between two of Thomas' sons. Robert received one half and George received the other part. By 1927, the Johnston name had disappeared from Corraleskin.

Another son of Thomas and Margaret Johnston, named John, took over holding number 4 in Drumnargid from Jane Brock. He married Elizabeth Edwards from Tullysheherny and they had a large family.

**Robinson:** John Robinson arrived in Ballaghameehan around the time of the famine. He had land in Coolodonnell and Tullysheherny. In Griffith's Valuations John Robinson occupies holdings number 19 and 20 in the townland of Tullysheherny. He also occupies holdings number 5 and 6 in the townland of Coolodonnell. John and Barbara Robinson had a large family. After the death of John

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Robinson, holdings number 19 and 20 were combined in the townland of Tullyskeherny. In 1866, James Robinson succeeded his father as tenant for the four holdings. In 1920, James Robinson's son John replaced his father in these holdings. When John died in 1926, the Robinson name died with him in Tullyskeherny.



*Ross Family Home*

**Ross:** William Ross and his family arrived in Ballaghameehan prior to 1857. In Griffith's Valuations William Ross occupied holding number 1 in the townland of Gortnacrieve and holding number 11 in the townland of Derrynahimmirk. This land was previously held by Thomas Carson. After William's death this holding was taken over by his son John. In 1873, John Ross married Mary McBrien from County Fermanagh. They had five children. Around this time John Ross built a large house on this holding. By 1901, John and Mary were living apart. Mary and her children were living in Derrynahimmirk. John was living near Ballintra, County Donegal. John died there in 1910. His son William James took over the holding in Derrynahimmirk. In 1912, he married Margaret Clifford from Cloonaquin. They had five children including twin girls born before Christmas 1920. William James Ross died by suicide on 24 July, 1921, aged 47 years. His death was confirmed by a military court. This family departed Ballaghameehan in 1929.

**Saunders (Sanderson):** Both versions of name were used. Sanderson was used in the rental records while Saunders was used in the registration of births, deaths and marriages. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John Saunders lived in the townland of Tullyshehery. In Griffith's Valuations, John Saunders' wife Barbara shared half of holding number 22 with her son William. John had died in 1838. Following the death of William's first wife, he married Jane Irwin from Tullyshehery in 1867. After William died in 1869, his widow, Jane married Andrew Johnston. William's mother Barbara Saunders died in 1868 which resulted in Andrew Johnston taking over all of holding number 22. The Saunders name disappeared from Ballaghameehan with the death of William Saunders in 1869.

Andrew Johnston junior replaced his father Andrew when he died in 1917. He married Sarah Jane Carson from County Fermanagh in 1935 but they had no issue. Sarah died in 1955 and Andrew died in 1958. Andrew Johnston junior's sister Anne Jane Johnston married Thomas Fullerton from Collooney, Co. Sligo, in 1936. They had no issue. They were the last people to live in the Glebe house. Anne Jane died in 1954 and Thomas Fullerton died in 1973.

**Whittaker:** The Whittakers were tenants in Ballaghameehan during the eighteenth century. In 1807, John Whittaker senior and John Whittaker junior held tenancies in Coolodonnell and Tullyshehery. In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John Whittaker lived in the townland of Tullyshehery. John and Lavinia Whittaker had a large family. John was the Ballaghameehan representative on the Board of Guardians for the Manorhamilton Union during the famine period. He resigned this position at the end of 1847. When John died in 1855 his son Robert took over the running of holding number 23 in Tullyshehery. When Robert Whittaker died in 1879 his son John took over the running of this holding. In 1885, during the land war, John Whittaker lost this tenancy and he and his family moved to Brackerybeg, Manorhamilton. At that time John was clerk of the

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Manorhamilton Union. In 1886, John Whittaker died aged 27 years, leaving a widow and three children.

John Whittaker was the last member of his family to live in Ballaghameehan. His ancestors had lived in the parish for almost two hundred years.

**Whitten:** In the Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, John Whitten and James Whitten lived in the townland of Ardagh Sheeran. In Griffith's Valuations, James Whitten occupied holding numbers 1 and 2 in Ardagh Sheeran. James had no male heir. When his daughter Mary Anne McSharry became widowed in 1873, James moved to Aghavoghil to help her rear her eight children. James Whitten died there on 27 February, 1885, aged 85 years.

In 1874, James' nephew Stephenson Whitten took over these tenancies. He was a grocer and farmer and lived in Kinlough. When Stephenson died on 10 April, 1890, aged 51 years, he was the last Whitten to hold these tenancies.

In Griffith's Valuations, John Whitten occupied holding number 3 in the townland of Ardagh Sheeran. John and Anne Whitten had a large family. When John Whitten died in 1864, his wife Anne took over this tenancy. In 1879, William Whitten replaced his mother as tenant in holding numbers 3 in Ardagh Sheeran. In 1872, William married Catherine Collins and they had a large family. By 1906 this family were no longer resident in Rossinver.

## **Chapter 11 The Royal Irish Constabulary in Ballaghameehan.**

The Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) was the police force in Ireland from 1822 until 1922, when all of the country was part of the United Kingdom. A separate civic police force, the unarmed Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.), patrolled the capital. The RIC was under the authority of the British administration in Ireland. It was a quasi-military police force. RIC constables were routinely armed and billeted in barracks, and the force had a militaristic structure. The ethnic and religious makeup of the RIC broadly matched that of the Irish population, although Protestants were over-represented among its senior officers.



*Gubalaun R.I.C. Barracks.*

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A R.I.C. barracks was established in Ballaghameehan in 1885. It was located in the townland of Gubalaun which was the property of the landlord James Johnston from Kinlough. The building was rented from John Murphy. The Gubalaun police district was a sub-district of the Manorhamilton police district. There were usually three or four police officers stationed at Gubalaun. The officers based in this barracks policed all of the area of Ballaghameehan Roman Catholic parish. This included the townlands of Ballaghameehan, Glenaniff and Rossinver.

The motivation for establishing this barracks in Gubalaun at this time may have been due to the social unrest in the area as a result of the land war. During the thirty-five years of the existence of Gubalaun police barracks investigations were carried out into murder, assault, shootings, accidents and the making of poteen along with other minor offences.

During November, 1888, Sergeant Jackson accompanied by Constables McCormack and Miller of the Gubalaun R.I.C. Barracks made a seizure of illicit whiskey in the Glenaniff mountains. They also recovered a large still, still-head and worm, together with several large vessels used for holding illicit material. All of these items were found in a well-roofed and ingeniously constructed still-house.

The police were not successful in identifying or capturing any of the distillers, all of whom fled from the still-house on observing the advancing police force. This is the second seizure that had taken place within a month on the Glenaniff mountain by the same two constables, the former of whom is only a few months in the station.<sup>1</sup>

On 2 July, 1894, at the County Leitrim Summer Assizes in Carrick-on-Shannon, William Thompson was indicted on the charge of the manslaughter of James Rooney at Druminargid on 2 March, 1894. William Thompson pleaded not guilty. James Rooney, who lived in

Tullyskeherny, was between 60 and 70 years of age. He was deaf and almost blind. He was described as a beggar.

James Rooney had been at Rossinver Post Office. On his way home he was in collision with the bread cart which was driven by William Thompson. Thompson had called on Follis Elliott, who lived close by, to say that there was a man lying on the road. William Thompson asked Follis Elliott to go to see the man. When they arrived Follis Elliott recognised the man as James Rooney. He was still alive but he was not conscience. They moved him from where he lay near the water table to the other side of the road and put him in a sitting position against a ditch. William Thompson went to inform the police at Gubalaun R.I.C. barracks while Follis Elliott remained with James Rooney.

Constable Michael Connolly attended the scene where he observed the body of James Rooney. On the following day, Dr. R. J. Tate performed a post-mortem on the body. The fourth, fifth and sixth left ribs were broken and there was an abrasion of the right side of the skull. The doctor concluded that the injuries had been caused by direct violence and the man died from shock, the result of injuries over the heart. The doctor suggested that the injuries could have been caused by the shaft of a cart.

On 3 March, 1894, Sergeant Matthew Mulligan arrested William Thompson. Later Dr. James Carroll, the coroner for Co. Leitrim, held an inquest. He agreed with Dr. Tate's medical evidence that James Rooney died from shock. He took a disposition from William Thompson in which he said that the cart which Thompson was driving on 2 March, 1894, knocked down the deceased. Having heard all of the evidence the jury found William Thompson not guilty.<sup>2</sup>

On 3 November, 1902, James Johnston, accompanied by two other men, were hunting in the townlands of Drumanure and Gubalaun. James Johnston was the landlord over all of the townlands in the

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Rossinver part of Ballaghameehan parish. James Johnston observed two men and a dog hunting on a hill about a quarter of a mile away. These were poachers who were hunting illegally on the Johnston Estate. One of the men was described as being stout with a beard. James Johnston pursued the men and encountered them beside an outhouse. One of the men shouted "*you keep back*" before discharging his gun and shooting at James Johnston. Johnston received injuries to his left forefinger and left foot from gunshot pellets.

The men left the area going towards Gubalaun police barracks. John James Edwards, aged 13 years, who was son of Johnston's gamekeeper, met the men on the road. He recognised one of the men as James McMorrow. The incident was reported to the local police. Constable John McGowan went to James McMorrow's house but he was not at home. Also, he called to the house of Terence McGowan. He was not at home either. Constable McGowan searched this house for the gun but could not find it. Both McMorrow and McGowan were neighbours and lived in Gubnageer.

Later that day, Sergeant John Joyce accompanied by Constable John Gettings went to McGowan's house and found the two suspects there. Following questioning, Terence McGowan admitted to having a gun and went outside where he took two guns from a ditch. James McMorrow denied that the second gun belonged to him. Then both men accompanied Sergeant Joyce to Gubalaun barracks where they were cautioned and arrested.

The following day, Constables McGowan and Gettings searched McGowan's property again. They found items of clothing and a beard made from horsehair at the rear of the house. These items matched what one of the men was wearing on 3 November, 1902. A red setter dog was at the house which matched the dog seen with the men.

Both men were charged with attempted murder at a special court in Maorhamilton where they were sent for trial to the Connacht Assizes in Sligo.<sup>3</sup> At the Connaught Winter Assizes in Sligo on 2 December, 1902, Terence McGowan and James McMorrow, Gubnageer, were charged with shooting at and unlawfully wounding James Johnston. They pleaded guilty. Their defence said that there was no intention to injure Johnston. They just wanted to frighten him off so that they could make their escape. The judge accepted that there was nothing agrarian about the case. In consideration of their previous good character, he only sentenced them to four months in prison in Sligo jail.<sup>4</sup>

During 1903, Sergeant John Joyce had attempted to interfere with members of the Rossinver branch of the United Irish League in their dispute with the local landlords. Sergeant Joyce had threatened to bring extra constabulary in to police the parish. As a result of a complaint by the Rossinver branch of the United Irish League, Sergeant Joyce was transferred out of the district. The Inspector General of the R.I.C. wrote to the Rossinver branch of the U.I.L. stating that he had ordered Sergeant John Joyce, Gubalaun, to be transferred in consequence of certain charges proved against him.<sup>5</sup>

In early 1905, there was an incident where four police officers from Gubalaun station were disciplined for being drunk while in uniform in Manorhamilton. They were constables John Keaney, Frederick McDermott, Michael McGinley and John McGowan. Constables Keaney and McGowan were fined. Constable McGinley was cautioned and Constable McDermott was acquitted. All were transferred out of the district.<sup>6</sup>

On 10 June, 1914, the parish of Ballaghameehan was shocked with news of the murder of Anne Keaney from Coolodonnell. She was 53 years of age and was single. She was living with her father Daniel and her brother, also named Daniel, since she recently returned from living in the United States of America. She had spent 30 years

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residing in the U.S.A. Daniel Keaney senior was 84 years of age and his son was 35 years old.

Daniel Keaney junior had spent two period in the lunatic asylum during the previous eight years. On the date in question his behaviour was quite irrational. Anne Keaney came out of the house to her father saying that her brother was very mad and that they should send for the police. Daniel junior had spent some hours of the afternoon in bed. Anne told her father that her brother might have a knife. Daniel senior went to his son's bedroom and asked if he had his father's knife. Daniel junior did not answer. He got out of bed and put on his clothes and shoes. He walked through the kitchen to the upper room. Anne Keaney was sitting on a chair churning in the kitchen.

Daniel Keaney junior immediately returned to the kitchen carrying a hammer in his hand. He walked over to where his sister Anne was sitting and struck her on the back of the head with the hammer. She fell to the floor, where he hit her several more times on the head with the hammer, as she lay on the floor. He dropped the hammer and left the house. A neighbour went to inform the police. Sergeant Michael McGlynn accompanied by Constables Patrick Mocklare and Patrick Frain arrived at Keaney's house about an hour later.

They found Anne Keaney lying dead, in a pool of blood, on the kitchen floor. The accused was sitting on a chair beside the fire and there was no other person in the house. Having searched the accused, Sergeant McGlynn charged Daniel Keaney junior with the wilful murder of his sister Anne and gave him the usual caution to which he replied "*it's true.*" He was taken to Gabalaun barracks. He was then conveyed to Sligo jail as a large crowd had gathered at the barracks before he left.

At the inquest into the death of Anne Keaney, Dr. M. J. Dolan gave the medical evidence of her death. As a result, the jury returned the following verdict: *'That the said Anne Keaney came to her death on*

*10 June, 1914, from shock caused by fracture of the skull and laceration of the brain, the result of injuries caused by blows from a hammer wilfully and feloniously inflicted by her brother, Dan Keaney jun.* <sup>7</sup> Later, he was tried and found guilty of murder but insane. Daniel Keaney junior was committed to Sligo asylum for the remainder of his life.

Daniel Keaney senior went to live with another daughter Bridget and her husband Hugh Cullen in Swanlinbar, Co. Cavan. He died there on 24 December, 1916.

Romance blossomed between some of the constables based at Gubalaun station and women from the district. However, when a police officer married a woman from the district in which he served, he would have to transfer out of the district.

Constable James Conway married Maria McGurrin from Cartrongibbagh on 29 June, 1891. They met when Constable Conway was enumerating the 1891 census in Ballaghameehan parish. Maria McGurrin was daughter of Edward McGurrin and Mary Gilligan. Constable Conway, who was from County Clare, had been stationed in Tullaghan. After their marriage the couple moved to County Sligo.

Constable John Foynes married Margaret Ferguson from Sraud Ferguson on 15 April, 1901. Margaret Ferguson was daughter of Daniel Ferguson and Ellen McKeon. Constable Foynes, who was from County Kildare, had been stationed in Gubalaun. After their marriage the couple moved to County Mayo.

Constable Thomas Reidy married Dorothy Rooney from Sraud Ferguson on 15 July, 1901. Dorothy Rooney was daughter of Patrick Rooney and Catherine Rooney. Constable Reidy, who was from County Clare, had been stationed in Gubalaun. After their marriage the couple moved to County Longford.

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Constable Charles Walker married Catherine Gilligan from Corlea on 13 October, 1902. Catherine Gilligan was daughter of John Gilligan and Alice Sheeran. Constable Walker, who was from County Longford, had been stationed in Gubalaun. After their marriage the couple moved to Derry.

Constable John Gettings married Cecelia Ferguson from Gortnaderrary on 14 July, 1904. Cecelia Ferguson was daughter of James Ferguson and Alice Feely. Constable Gettings, who was from County Longford, had been stationed in Gubalaun. After their marriage the couple moved to County Roscommon.

Constable Patrick Mocklare married Rose McGowan from Ardagh Gilbride on 15 September, 1917. Rose McGowan was daughter of James McGowan and Mary Monaghan. Constable Mocklare, who was from Ballygar, County Galway, had been stationed in Gubalaun. After their marriage the couple moved to County Sligo.

Prior to the War of Independence, relations between the R.I.C. officers stationed in Gubalaun barracks and the local community were quite good. According to John McMorrow, Aghnahaha, who had a great knowledge of local history, policemen like Patrick Mocklare and Thomas Gartlan were well accepted. They were kind of peaceable and nobody had any grudge against them. He never heard anybody threatening them.<sup>8</sup> The actions of the R.I.C. Auxiliaries (Black and Tans) during the War of Independence in Ireland tarnished the image of the R.I.C.

During 1919, Gubalaun barracks was closed. Other R.I.C. barracks to close at this time included Glenade and Glencar. The last R.I.C. officers to serve in Gubalaun barracks were Sergeant Edward Martin, Constables Richard Clinton, Patrick Frain and Thomas Gartlan. Sergeant Martin and Constable Gartlan were transferred to Kiltyclogher. Constable Clinton was transferred to Drumkeeran and Constable Frain was transferred to Annagh, near Glenfarn.

The R.I.C. barracks at Gubalaun was burned down on 12 May, 1920. Some years later, John Murphy received £362 compensation for the destruction of this building so as it could be repaired.

Between 1838 and 1922 at least 52 men from Ballaghameehan parish joined the Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.), the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) and the Liverpool City Police. Becoming a member of either police force guaranteed a steady income and a good pension at the end of service. This was another option for the son of a large farming family. Of the men from Ballaghameehan parish who joined the D.M.P., the Liverpool City Police and the R.I.C., only three were Protestants.<sup>9</sup> The remainder were Roman Catholics. There were a number of families where more than one member of the family joined a police force.

After the Sinn Fein by-election of 1908, the recruitment of members of the R.I.C. dwindled in Ballaghameehan. Between 1913 and 1920, there were no recruits from the parish. Five men from the parish were recruited into the Black and Tan auxiliaries. Two were former soldiers and two came from families who had members in the R.I.C. The other person failed the R.I.C. medical.

### **Ballaghameehan**

**William Ferguson** was born in 1813 in Ballaghameehan parish. William Ferguson (1223) joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) on 22 June, 1838. He resigned on 5 January, 1839.

**Bryan Ferguson** was born in 1839 in Corraleskin. He was son of John Ferguson and Margaret Ferguson. Bryan Ferguson (27355) joined the R.I.C. on 17 December, 1861. He was recommended for the position by the parish priest in Ballaghameehan, Rev. Fr. James McGourty. He was stationed in Roscommon. He retired on 1 November, 1877, with a pension of £26 per annum. He returned to the parish to live with his sister Mary McGowan in Kinkillew. He died on 9 April, 1921, and is buried in Rossinver Cemetery.

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

**Patrick O'Rourke** was born in 1841 in Ballaghameehan parish. Patrick O'Rourke (6383) joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) on 21 February, 1862. He was discharged on 15 March, 1864.

### **Cartrongibbagh**

**Edward McGurrin** was born on 16 February, 1870, in Cartrongibbagh. He was son of Edward McGurrin and Mary Gilligan. Edward McGurrin (54161) joined the R.I.C. on 14 January, 1890. He was stationed in Clare, Belfast and Tyrone. He was promoted to acting sergeant on 1 October, 1899. He was dismissed on 5 March, 1900.

**Michael McGurrin** was born on 3 September, 1874, in Cartrongibbagh. He was son of Edward McGurrin and Mary Gilligan. Michael McGurrin (57741) joined the R.I.C. on 15 May, 1896. He was discharged as unfit by the R.I.C. surgeon on 17 May, 1896.

### **Corraleskin**

**Patrick O'Rourke** was born on 17 September, 1861, in Corraleskin. He was son of John O'Rourke and Rose McDermott. Patrick O'Rourke (46445) joined the R.I.C. on 28 January, 1881. He was stationed in Clare, Longford and Antrim. He retired on 1 October, 1906, on a pension of £42-2s-4d per annum.

**Francis Keaney** was born on 5 October, 1888, in Corraleskin. He was son of Terence Keaney and Mary McGowan. Francis Keaney (64776) joined the R.I.C. on 17 May, 1909. He was stationed in Derry. He resigned on 4 September, 1912, so as to emigrate to Australia.

**Thomas Hugh Maguire.** was born on 14 March, 1889, in Corraleskin. He was son of Andrew Maguire and Sarah O'Donnell. Thomas Maguire (64417) joined the R.I.C. on 1 November, 1909.

## Gerry Fox

He was stationed in Derry, Mayo, Sligo and Kerry. He was promoted to head constable on 1 July, 1920. On 1 April, 1922, he was transferred to the Dublin Castle Guard company. He retired on 23 June, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £184-12s.

### **Derrynahimmirk**

**John Boyd** was born on 26 April, 1875, in Derrynahimmirk. He was son of Thomas Boyd and Mary Saunders. John Boyd (59647) joined the R.I.C. on 2 July, 1900. He was discharged as unfit by the R.I.C. surgeon.

### **Druminargid**

**Bernard O'Rourke** was born on 21 July, 1855, in Druminargid. He was son of Bernard O'Rourke and Bridget Flynn. Bernard O'Rourke (43095) joined the R.I.C. on 16 July, 1877. He resigned on 1 December, 1877, due to ill health. He died on 14 December, 1878, and is buried in Rossinver Cemetery.

**John O'Rourke** was born on 29 August, 1860, in Druminargid. He was son of Bernard O'Rourke and Bridget Flynn. John O'Rourke (45349) joined the R.I.C. on 26 April, 1880. He was stationed in Monaghan, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Kerry. He resigned on 19 April, 1887.

### **Gortnacrieve**

**James Travers** was born on 6 July, 1859, in Gortnacrieve. He was son of Charles Travers and Mary Clancy. James Travers (8655) joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) on 12 November, 1880. He was promoted to senior sergeant on 18 January, 1901. He retired on 5 April, 1906, with a pension of £62-8s.

**Peter Fox** was born on 29 April, 1864, in Gortnacrieve. He was son of John Fox and Mary Clinton. He emigrated and joined the Liverpool City Police.

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

**Hugh Travers** was born on 22 May, 1865, in Gortnacrieve. He was son of Charles Travers and Mary Clancy. Hugh Travers (9193) joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) on 20 March, 1885. He was promoted to superintendent on 1 June, 1919. He retired on 1 July, 1920, with a pension of £240.

**Michael Travers** was born on 24 June, 1866, in Gortnacrieve. He was son of Charles Travers and Mary Clancy. Michael Travers (53380) joined the R.I.C. on 23 October, 1888. He was stationed in Cork, Mayo and Donegal. He was promoted to sergeant on 1 April, 1906. He retired on 1 May, 1919, on a pension of £195 per annum.

**Joseph Fox** was born on 25 January, 1872, in Gortnacrieve. He was son of John Fox and Mary Clinton. He emigrated and joined the Liverpool City Police. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

### Gortnaderrary

**James O'Rourke** was born on 12 September, 1863, in Gortnaderrary. He was son of Patrick O'Rourke and Catherine McGowan. James O'Rourke (52143) joined the R.I.C. on 14 October, 1886. He was stationed in Cork, Derry, Louth, Roscommon and Mayo. He was promoted to sergeant on 1 July, 1902. He retired on 24 October, 1911, on a pension of £48-7s-2d per annum.

**Daniel O'Rourke** was born on 5 May, 1870, in Gortnaderrary. He was son of Patrick O'Rourke and Catherine McGowan. Daniel O'Rourke (54589) joined the R.I.C. on 15 May, 1891. He was stationed in Dublin. On 4 August, 1897, he resigned so as to emigrate from Ireland.

**Patrick Gordon** was born on 1 December, 1892, in Gortnaderrary. He was son of Patrick Gordon and Catherine Sheeran. Patrick Gordon was an unemployed soldier who had fought with one of the British regiments during World War 1. Patrick Gordon (70496) joined the R.I.C. on 27 February, 1920. He was stationed in

## Gerry Fox

Tipperary. On 10 July, 1920, he resigned because R.I.C. members were being boycotted by the public.

**John Gordon** was born on 6 April, 1899, in Gortnaderrary. He was son of Patrick Gordon and Catherine Sheeran. John Gordon (70485) joined the R.I.C. on 27 February, 1920. He was discharged as unfit by the R.I.C. surgeon on 1 March, 1920.

## Gubnageer

**Francis Gallagher** was born on 22 September, 1865, in Gubnageer. He was son of Francis Gallagher and Catherine Gilmartin. Francis Gallagher (52142) joined the R.I.C. on 14 October, 1886. He was stationed in Donegal. On 9 September, 1891, he resigned so as to emigrate from Ireland.

**Thomas Gallagher** was born on 5 June, 1873, in Gubnageer. He was son of Thomas Gallagher and Anne O'Rourke. Thomas Gallagher (58104) joined the R.I.C. on 1 March, 1898. He was stationed in Mayo and Roscommon. On 23 July, 1904, he resigned so as to emigrate from Ireland.

## Kinkillew

**Patrick McGowan** was born in March, 1851, in Kinkillew. He was son of William McGowan and Bridget Gilligan. Patrick McGowan (40924) joined the R.I.C. on 8 February, 1875. He was stationed in Belfast. He was promoted to sergeant on 1 December, 1891. He retired on 11 April, 1900, on a pension of £48-7s-2d per annum. He died on 26 February, 1928, and is buried in Rossinver Cemetery.

**James McKeon** was born on 21 January, 1853, in Kinkillew. He was son of Daniel McKeon and Catherine McMorow. James McKeon (38295) joined the R.I.C. on 8 December, 1871. He was stationed in Derry, Kerry, Limerick, Kildare, Armagh, Monaghan and Mayo. He was promoted to head constable on 1 February, 1894.

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

He retired on 20 November, 1905, on a pension of £69-6s-8d per annum.

**John James McGowan** was born on 2 November, 1896, in Kinkillew. He was son of William McGowan and Catherine O'Rourke. John James McGowan (70343) joined the R.I.C. on 16 February, 1920. He was stationed in Meath. He retired on 21 May, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £96-04s.

### Lisdarush

**James Irwin** was born on 7 July, 1878, in Lisdarush. He was son of William Irwin and Margaret Allingham. James Irwin (60209) joined the R.I.C. on 16 May, 1901. He was stationed in Donegal and Belfast. He retired on 24 May, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £164-13s-4d.

### Raheelin

**Owen McGowan** was born on 4 February, 1875, in Raheelin. He was son of Patrick McGowan and Catherine McGorin. Owen McGowan (57321) joined the R.I.C. on 22 November, 1895. He was stationed in Roscommon and Donegal. He died from illness on 18 August, 1901, aged 26 years.

**Laurence McGowan** was born on 15 February, 1889, in Raheelin. He was son of Patrick McGowan and Anne Gallagher. Laurence McGowan (64358) joined the R.I.C. on 16 September, 1908. He was stationed in Cavan. On 1 March, 1922, he was transferred to Gormanstown training sub-depot for new recruits. He retired on 16 August, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £138-6s-4d.

### Shasmore

Neil Fox was born on 8 December, 1872, in Shasmore. He was son of Cormac Fox and Honor Curneen. He emigrated and joined the Liverpool City Police.

## **Tullyderrin**

**John Meehan** was born on 27 June, 1857, in Tullyderrin. He was son of Patrick Meehan and Catherine Keoghan. John Meehan (42956) joined the R.I.C. on 8 May, 1877. He was stationed in Belfast. He died from illness at his home in Tullyderrin on 11 May, 1886, aged 28 years. He is buried in Rossinver Cemetery.

**Thomas Meehan** was born on 19 August, 1866, in Tullyderrin. He was son of Patrick Meehan and Catherine Keoghan. Thomas Meehan (52397) joined the R.I.C. on 11 November, 1886. He was stationed in Clare. He was discharged from the R.I.C. on 15 January, 1889.

**Lazarus Meehan** was born on 19 March, 1885, in Tullyderrin. He was son of Lazarus Meehan and Anne Bredin. Lazarus Meehan (63101) joined the R.I.C. on 1 October, 1907. He died during his training period on 3 March, 1908, aged 22 years.

## **Tullysheherry**

**Philip O'Rourke** was born on 3 July, 1856, in Tullysheherry. He was son of Hugh O'Rourke and Catherine O'Rourke. Philip O'Rourke (43408) joined the R.I.C. on 8 October, 1877. He was stationed in Galway, Limerick and Kerry. He retired on 1 July, 1908, on a pension of £46-16s per annum.

**James Johnston** was born on 27 March, 1883, in Tullysheherry. He was son of Andrew Johnston and Jane Irwin. James Johnston (60833) joined the R.I.C. on 1 July, 1902. He was stationed in Galway and Belfast. He retired on 31 May, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £164-13s-4d.

**Joseph McNulty** was born on 18 October, 1891, in Tullysheherry. He was son of Hugh McNulty and Ellen Spear. Joseph McNulty was an unemployed soldier who had fought with one of the British regiments during World War 1. Joseph McNulty (73595) joined the

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

R.I.C. on 30 September, 1920. He was stationed in Cork. He retired on 27 March, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £50-14s.

### **Aghnahaha**

**John Boylan** was born on 27 October, 1880, in Aghnahaha. He was son of Francis Boylan and Rose McCabe. John Boylan (60741) joined the R.I.C. on 16 May, 1902. He was stationed in Kilkenny, Galway East, Kerry and Galway West. On 22 February, 1914, he married Mary Spillane from Kenmare, County Kerry. During 1920, he was widowed when his wife died. On 23 April, 1921, John Boylan was killed in an I.R.A. ambush near Maam, County Galway. He left five orphan children. On 19 September, 1921, he was posthumously awarded the Constabulary Medal.

**Edward Boylan** was born on 13 May, 1882, in Aghnahaha. He was son of Francis Boylan and Rose McCabe. Edward Boylan (61085) joined the R.I.C. on 1 December, 1902. He was stationed in Derry. He retired early due to being unfit for duty. On 15 March, 1906, he received a gratuity of £16-3s-6d

### **Aghnahoo**

**Patrick Gilligan** was born on 25 January, 1863, in Aghnahoo. He was son of Patrick Gilligan and Sarah Gilroy. Patrick Gilligan (46854) joined the R.I.C. on 30 March, 1881. He was stationed in Cork. He resigned on 13 December, 1894, for having been reported for drunkenness.

**John Rooney** was born on 12 September, 1892, in Aghnahoo. He was son of Peter Rooney and Bridget Gilligan. John Rooney (67180) joined the R.I.C. on 18 June, 1912. He was stationed in Armagh and Mayo. On 17 May, 1916, he joined the Royal Enniskillen Fusiliers and fought in World War 1. On 15 June, 1919, he returned to duty with the R.I.C. He retired on 2 August, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £91-7s-9d.

## **Carrowkeel**

**James Feely** was born on 13 May, 1867, in Carrowkeel. He was son of Patrick Feely and Mary Gilmartin. James Feely (53384) joined the R.I.C. on 26 October, 1888. He was stationed in Meath and Sligo. He was discharged on 4 May, 1895.

## **Lissiniska**

**James Bredin** was born on 19 August, 1856, in Lissiniska. He was son of Timothy Bredin and Mary McGurrin. James Bredin (47342) joined the R.I.C. on 22 June, 1881. He was stationed in Kerry. He died following a long illness at his home in Lissiniska on 28 May, 1884, aged 27 years. He is buried in Rossinver Cemetery.

**James Bredin** was born on 14 August, 1858, in Lissiniska. He was son of James Bredin and Catherine McGowan. James Bredin (46337) joined the R.I.C. on 12 January, 1881. He was stationed in Tipperary, Limerick and Clare. He was promoted to sergeant on 1 November, 1897. He retired on 19 June, 1906, on a pension of £48-7s-2d per annum.

**Patrick Rooney** was born on 12 April, 1891, in Lissiniska. He was son of John Rooney and Bridget Gilligan. Patrick Rooney (66641) joined the R.I.C. on 18 March, 1913. He was stationed in Donegal. He retired on 14 April, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £96-4s.

## **Mautiagh**

**William Gilmartin** was born on 17 May, 1857, in Mautiagh. He was son of Michael Gilmartin and Honor Gaffney. William Gilmartin (47600) joined the R.I.C. on 11 August, 1881. He was stationed in Wexford and Galway. He was promoted to sergeant on 1 August, 1900. He retired on 1 October, 1907, on a pension of £49-19s-5d per annum.

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**Michael Hernan** was born on 14 July, 1867, in Mautiagh. He was son of Francis Hernan and Sarah Mitchell. Michael Hernan (53204) joined the R.I.C. on 11 July, 1888. He was stationed in Fermanagh and Donegal. He resigned on 20 October, 1905, because of pending disciplinary charges.

**Francis William Gilmartin** was born on 29 August, 1901, in Mautiagh. He was son of Francis Gilmartin and Catherine Anne Dolan. Francis William Gilmartin (70571) joined the R.I.C. on 5 March, 1920. He was stationed in Tyrone. He retired on 24 May, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £54-12s.

### **Meenagraun**

**John Regan** was born on 17 April, 1854, in Meenagraun. He was son of Loughlin Regan and Mary Gilbride. John Regan (42456) joined the R.I.C. on 8 August, 1876. He was stationed in Clare, Fermanagh, Donegal and Roscommon. He retired on 26 April, 1908, on a pension of £46-16s per annum.

### **Ardagh Sheeran**

**Charles Sheeran** was born on 21 March, 1864, in Ardagh Sheeran. He was son of Charles Sheeran and Anne Gaffney. Charles Sheeran (53321) joined the R.I.C. on 11 September, 1888. He was stationed in Kilkenny, Roscommon and Derry. He died as a result of a swimming accident on 8 July, 1901, aged 37 years.

**Thomas Sheeran** was born on 21 December, 1868, in Ardagh Sheeran. He was son of Charles Sheeran and Anne Gaffney. Thomas Sheeran (54317) joined the R.I.C. on 15 May, 1890. He was stationed in Derry, Waterford and Kilkenny. He was promoted to sergeant on 1 September, 1912. He retired on 6 April, 1922, when the R.I.C. were disbanded with a pension of £195.

**Dooard**



*John Gilbride Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.)*

**John Gilbride** was born on 16 February, 1882, in Dooard. He was son of Patrick Gilbride and Margaret Croal. John Gilbride (10413) joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) on 13 December,

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1901. In his youth he was an all-round athlete, winning many prizes as a cyclist, swimmer and rower. He was promoted to inspector on 1 April, 1924. He retired on 28 June, 1933, with a pension of £213-6s-8d. He died on 18 February, 1934, and is buried in Rossinver Cemetery.

### **Eden**

**James McGowan** was born on 3 March, 1859, in Eden. He was son of Patrick McGowan and Rose Keaney. James McGowan (43759) joined the R.I.C. on 21 May, 1878. He was stationed in Waterford, Belfast, Dublin and Roscommon. He was promoted to head constable on 20 May, 1899. He retired on 1 October, 1909, on a pension of £48-7s-2d per annum.

### **Larganhugh**

**Hugh Connolly** was born on 25 August, 1859, in Larganhugh. He was son of Terence Connolly and Nabby Connolly. Hugh Connolly (8369) joined the Dublin Metropolitan Police (D.M.P.) on 25 January, 1878. He resigned on 6 February, 1879.

## Chapter 12 The Land War and its Aftermath.

This turned out to be one of the most turbulent periods in Ireland during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The agricultural economy in Ireland had expanded since the end of the Famine. This was particularly true during most of the years between 1850 and 1875. Prices rose substantially but in an extremely uneven manner. The price growth of cereal crops did not match that of animal production, beef and butter<sup>1</sup>. The price growth over this period for young store cattle was one hundred and forty-three per cent. Most of these were produced in the west of Ireland in areas such as Ballaghameehan.

Irish farmers reacted rationally to changes in the market place with a reduction in the acreage under tillage while the pasture acreage increased so that the ratio between the two shifted significantly in favour of grass and animal production. By the end of the century there were twice as many dry cattle and sheep as there had been fifty years earlier. Especially dramatic was the fall in the acreage devoted to potato cultivation from two million acres before the Famine to half a million acres by the end of the nineteenth century.

In a letter dated 3 September, 1871, written by Patrick Maguire, Gubalaun, Rossinver, to his daughter in America there is the following account of the times: *'at present, crops are of the best; there is very little failure in the potato crop; cattle of every kind are selling well; butter is from 12d to 14d a lb... it is very easy paying rent here now, thank God... land is of great value at present; a farm that would be got at £50 some years ago would not now be got for £100, we have tenant rights which causes the tenant to be paid for his land if he is going and seven years rent if the rent be £10 a year.'*<sup>2</sup>

By the late 1870s Ireland, like the rest of the world, was experiencing an agricultural depression, due mainly to American

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competition, which resulted in a serious decline in prices for farm produce. The decline in cattle prices hit badly those small farmers in the west of Ireland. Poor weather conditions and a partial failure of the potato crop compounded the depression.

During the period of the boom between 1850 and 1875 agricultural output increased by twelve and a half per cent, rents increased by twenty per cent but, tenants incomes rose by no more than seven and three quarter per cent. Now, that the bottom had fallen out of the market, tenants were finding it difficult to pay their rents. As a result of the plight of tenant farmers, the Irish National Land League was founded on 21 October, 1879. Its aims were to bring about a reduction of rents and to facilitate the obtaining of the ownership of the land by the occupiers.

This was the worst economic catastrophe to hit the parish of Ballaghameehan in over a century. At the outset, the tenants of this parish were not as badly affected by evictions and Land League activities as were the tenants of the neighbouring parishes. However, there was much distress, and a letter addressed by the Parish Priest of Ballaghameehan to the Mansion House Committee for the Relief of Distress in Ireland during the month of January, 1880, paints a bleak picture on the condition of some of his parishioners.<sup>3</sup>

*'Ballaghameehan, Garrison, Co. Leitrim,*

*22 January, 1880.*

*MY LORD,*

*This parish is partly in the Union of Ballyshannon and partly in the Union of Manorhamilton, and comprises the following divisions: Ballaghameehan, Glenariff, and Rossinver. In these divisions, notwithstanding local exertions, there is a vast amount of destitution, bordering on starvation, consequent on the total failure of the potato crop, which is the only means of support the poor people have here.*

Gerry Fox

*I do candidly believe there are not less than 100 families in the parish in deep distress. Some have a little as yet left; some have nothing.*

*On visiting the sick a few days since I entered the cabin of a poor old man, who, I believe, is bordering on eighty years old. I was grieved to see him in the miserable plight he was in hanging over a few sods of turf, without shoe or stocking to ward off the cold from a damp floor. His hollowed cheeks, penetrating looks, and emaciated visage evidently tell a sad tale. I reached another house on the same day; the inmates of this comprised four individuals—the father, an old man, unable to leave his bed unless carried; the son, the only support of the old father, and two sickly sisters, one of whom is now far advanced in dropsy, and, I believe, is dying. Having asked the son why it was that one of the girls did not look for employment, even if she were only to get her support, and his answer was, “No one wants her.” I am sorry to say there are many such cases of distress as those given in this parish.*

*I am, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient servant,*

*JOHN MCMANUS, P.P. ’*

In response to his appeal, Rev. Fr. John McManus received a total of £32. He received £25 from the Mansion House Committee; £3 from Rev. Dr. Conaty, Bishop of Kilmore; £3 from St. George Johnston, Mount Prospect, Kinlough and £1 from James Gilmartin, New York.<sup>4</sup>

On 3 October, 1880, a public meeting was held in Rossinver to form a branch of the Land League. There was a large attendance. John McGourty (Gortnaderrary) was appointed president; Patrick Tucker (Tullyskeherny), vice-president; James McGourty (Gortnaderrary), treasurer; James O'Rourke (Conray), hon. secretary. The following were appointed to the executive committee: Daniel Ward (Dooard), James Gilligan (Cartrongibbagh), Francis Meehan (Kinkillew), Patrick Gilbride (Dooard), Hugh Bredin (Lissiniska), Daniel

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Ferguson (Sraud Conolly), John Maguire (Gortnaderrary) and John Sheeran (Aghnahaha). The meeting appointed men to visit each townland and canvass for members, and report to a meeting of the committee on the following Sunday. John Cullen, president of the Manorhamilton branch, delivered an address, in which he detailed the objectives of the League.<sup>5</sup>

The recruitment campaign was very successful. At a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Land League on 4 December, 1880, it was confirmed that every tenant farmer in the parish was a member of the League. The total number enrolled was four-hundred and forty, including twenty-two Protestants, who voluntarily joined, and the branch was in an active and healthy condition. The membership included the tenants of the Wynne Estate in Ballaghameehan, the tenants of the Johnston Estate in Rossinver and the tenants of the landlords in Glenaniff. At this meeting it was also decided, for the better organisation of the branch, to reduce the executive committee from twenty-four to thirteen members. They also appointed a leader in every townland who would report to the executive on matters relating to the Land League.<sup>6</sup> This was one of the few times in the history of Ballaghameehan parish that all of its inhabitants were united in a single cause.

On Sunday, 21 November, 1880, a Land League (L.L.) demonstration, with a crowd of between four and five thousand people, was held in Ballaghameehan. The crowd came from counties Leitrim, Fermanagh and Donegal. The platform was erected in a field beside the Protestant church and the Glebe House in the townland of Tullyskeherny. This field belonged to a Protestant man by the name of John Whittaker. Many Protestants from Leitrim and Fermanagh were present at the meeting.

On the platform were Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P., Rossinver; Rev. Fr. John Kelly P.P., Garrison; Rev. Fr. Patrick Gilchrist C.C., Rossinver; Rev. Fr. O'Neill C.C., Garrison; Rev. Fr. Brady C.C., Manorhamilton; Rev. Fr. Charles Flynn C.C., Kiltyclogher; Messrs.

P.J. Sheridan, Land League delegate, John McGourty (Gortnaderrary), president Rossinver branch of Land League; Patrick Tucker (Tullyskeherny), vice-president; James McGourty (Gortnaderrary), treasurer; James O'Rourke (Conray), secretary, Daniel Ward (Dooard), Patrick Gilbride (Dooard), Daniel Ferguson (Sraud Conolly), John Maguire (Gortnaderrary), Charles McKeon (Coolodonnell), James Fox (Shasmore), James Gilligan (Cartrongibbagh), Edward McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh), Francis Meehan (Kinkillew), Peter Gilligan (Aghnahoo) and John Rooney (Lissiniska) represented Glenaniff. Delegates from Glenfarn and Kiltyclogher were present also.<sup>7</sup>

The chair was taken by Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. In his address he said that this protest was against the present iniquitous system of land laws. He questioned was there anything more unjust than that one man should appropriate the toil of another; and this has been the case with landlord and tenant in Ireland for the past two hundred years. His parish was blessed with good landlords. He said that could not be denied and we have been treated well by them. He continued that Ireland was barren and bad, and the rents in some parts were unquestionably high; but he believed that if the landlords knew this fact that they would abate the rents.

The following resolutions were passed:

- The abolition of landlordism,
- Pledged themselves not to take or work on a farm from which a tenant had been unjustly evicted,
- Not to purchase cattle or crops seized for rent,
- Demanded a peasant proprietorship,
- Protest against the government action in prosecuting Charles Stewart Parnell and his colleagues.
- That Griffith's Valuations were too exorbitant, and asked the landlords in the neighbourhood to give a reduction of one-third of the rental, as the land was inadequate to even produce the necessities of life.<sup>8</sup>

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While there was little happening within Ballaghameehan parish, with the exception of holding branch meetings, its members were lending their support in neighbouring parishes. At a branch meeting on 19 June, 1881, it was announced that some members had formed their own Fife and Drum band.

On 16 January, 1881, the Rossinver branch of the Ladies Land League (LLL) was set up in Ballaghameehan. The following were elected to the branch executive: Miss Barbara McGovern, president; Miss Mary O'Rourke, vice-president; Mrs. Cormac Fox, treasurer; Miss Catherine O'Rourke and Miss Bridget Fox, secretaries.

The following were chosen as committee: Mrs. John Connolly, Miss Ellen O'Rourke, Miss Catherine Sheeran, Miss Mary Croal, Miss Mary Anne Sheeran, Miss Ellen Bredin, Miss Mary Feely, Miss Anne McPartland, Miss Mary Anne Ferguson, Miss Catherine Fox, Miss Maria Fox, Miss Mary Harte, Miss Catherine Sweeney, Miss Catherine McKeon, Miss Catherine Connolly, Miss Betsy Rooney, Miss Bridget Gilligan, Miss Bridget Regan, Miss Bridget Bredin and Miss Anne McCabe.<sup>9</sup>

However, three weeks later, on 7 February, 1881, a new branch of the Ladies Land League was set up in Rossinver. Eight members of the old committee remained but all the officers had been replaced. The new officers were: Mrs. James Gilligan, president; Miss Betsy Rooney, vice-president; Miss A. Gallagher, treasurer; Miss Ellen Bredin, secretary; Miss K. Ferguson, assistant secretary.

Committee: Miss M. Fox, Miss M. McGurn, Miss Catherine McKeon, Miss A. McGowan, Miss M. Gilligan, Miss N. Feely, Miss A. McSharry, Miss E. Meehan, Miss A. Fox, Miss B. McKeon, Miss M. McGrath, Miss Bridget Bredin, Miss Bridget Regan, Miss Anne McCabe, Miss M. Brady, Miss Mary Anne Bredin, Miss Catherine Sheeran, Miss Maria Fox, Miss C. Ferguson and Miss A. Keaney.<sup>10</sup>

Another significant event took place during March, 1881. There was an election to appoint a new Board of Guardians for the

Manorhamilton Union. This election was contested by Land League candidates for the first time. Nine of the twelve representatives returned were Land League candidates. Only the Land League candidates for Lurganboy and Manorhamilton were unsuccessful. For the first time since the establishment of the Manorhamilton Poor Law Union in 1839, the Protestant ascendancy had lost control of the union.<sup>11</sup>

On 24 September, 1882, a large meeting in support of the Labour League and the movement for the relief of evicted tenants, was held in Manorhamilton. Representatives from surrounding Land League branches were in attendance. James Gilligan, Cartrongibbagh and Patrick Tucker, Tullyskeherny, represented the Rossinver Land League branch. John Cullen P.L.G., Brackarybeg, who was recently released from prison for his Land League activities, took the chair. He said that he believed the two classes, the labourers and evicted tenants, whom they had met to assist had contributed largely to the passing of the Land and Arrears Acts. If the farmers did not share with them the reductions of rent, which they had been instrumental in wringing from the landlords, they would be men without gratitude.

The Coercion Act which became law on 2 March, 1881, allowed for internment without trial of those suspected of involvement in the Land War in Ireland. By the autumn of 1882, the Land League and the Ladies Land League had been disbanded. In October, 1882, the Land League was replaced by the Irish National League. On 12 November, 1882, a branch of the Irish National League was set up in Rossinver. Rev. Fr. Francis O'Hara C.C. was elected President.

Two people who were very active in Land League activities were James and Bridget Gilligan, Cartrongibbagh. James, who was born in December 1851, married Bridget McDermott from Lisnagroath in Glenfarn. They had no children and they lived with James' elderly parents, James and Catherine Gilligan. In 1882, James took possession of his father's tenancy.

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James was a committee member of the Rossinver Land League branch. He represented this branch at meetings and demonstrations all over north Leitrim. His wife Bridget was president of Manorhamilton branch and the Rossinver branch of the Ladies Land League. She also travelled all over the county assisting in the setting up of branches. At the end of January, 1882, she travelled to Kiltrustan, near Strokestown, County Roscommon, to help set up a branch of the Ladies Land League. In early February, 1882, she was a Ladies Land League observer at the sale of lands, from which tenants had been evicted, in Carrick-on-Shannon.

In April, 1882, Daniel Duffy and his daughters were evicted from their holding in Buckode, Kinlough by Lord Massey. During June, 1882, people from the neighbouring parishes gathered and they built a house nearby for the evicted family. This was all completed in one day. On 1 August, 1882, a large crowd gathered to frustrate new tenants taking over the lands of the evicted family. The police took the names of those present.

A special Petty Sessions Court was held at Kinlough, on 8 August, 1882, under the provisions of the Provention of Crime Act. Margaret Duffy and Catherine Duffy were each sentenced to a month's imprisonment for threatening and intimidating one Bryan Feely, with a view to cause him to abstain from doing an act which he had a legal right to do. Patrick Fergus, James Gilligan and William Rodgers and sixty-two other defendants were summoned for unlawfully assembling at Bahanas and Buckode, for the purpose of intimidating Bryan Gilbride and Bryan Feely. These cases were sent for trial to next assizes for County Leitrim.<sup>12</sup>

These events brought James Gilligan to the attention of the police and the authorities. During the last week of April, 1883, Joseph Biggar, M.P. for Cavan, asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the House of Commons, "*was it the case that the house of James Gilligan, of Cartrongibbagh, near Manorhamilton, was searched by the police on 14 August, 1882, and again on 13 April last by a*

*resident magistrate, a sub-inspector of police, and a large force of police, and whether anything objectionable was found in the house in August last; and if not, what reason was there for the search on 13 April?"*

George Trevelyan said it was the case that Gilligan's house was searched on both the occasions mentioned, and without result. He mentioned a few days ago the case of a man named Honey, living in the same locality, who, by a misleading communication to the authorities, brought about the search of his own premises (laughter). In the same communication he involved his neighbour Gilligan, whose house was searched before the authorship of the letter had been discovered. Joseph Biggar asked if the right honourable gentleman would show him the letter? Trevelyan replied that that would be a rather irregular proceeding.<sup>13</sup>

There was a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League (I.N.L.) held on 11 April, 1886, with Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. in the chair. The meeting resolved *'that the committee had heard with regret that Edward McGurrin had aided and assisted the sheriff in evicting James Gilligan from his house on the lands of Cartrongibbagh, and consider his conduct inconsistent with the principles of a good nationalist.'*<sup>14</sup> Edward McGurrin was a son-in-law of James Gilligan senior and a brother-in-law of James Gilligan junior.

The next meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League was held on 25 April, 1886, with Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. in the chair. A resolution proposed by Daniel Ward (Dooard) and seconded by Peter Gilligan (Aghnahoo) was passed by the meeting. *'That having heard Edward McGurrin's explanation of the charges preferred against him of supplying the sheriff with materials for the closing up of the house of James Gilligan on the occasion of that man's eviction, and in reference to which this committee has already passed a resolution, we are still of the opinion, seeing that he acknowledges himself that the materials in his house and in his*

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*presence, that his action was inconsistent with the principles of a good nationalist.'*<sup>15</sup>



*Edward McGurrin*

## Gerry Fox

It would appear that the Gilligans had been re-instated into their tenancy during 1886 as caretakers. This was quite a common practice. However, proceedings were brought by the landlord to have them evicted one year later. At a meeting of Manorhamilton Board of Guardians on 24 March, 1887, the meeting was informed of two planned evictions, involving four named persons, at the request of the landlord, Owen Wynne (1843-1910). They were Terence Meehan and Neil Monaghan from Cartrongibbagh and James Gilligan senior and James Gilligan junior, father and son, also from Cartrongibbagh. The Gilligans were evicted along with 21 other families from Ballaghameehan on 10 May, 1887.



*House from which the Gilligan family were evicted in Cartrongibbagh.*

James and Bridget Gilligan had lost their war with landlordism. The Gilligan family were evicted from their home on 10 May, 1887, and later that year, James junior and Bridget emigrated to New York, U.S.A. James Gilligan senior died a few months later in the home of his daughter Giles Meehan, Cartrongibbagh, on 23 October, 1887, aged 86 years. James senior's wife Catherine went to live with her son Cormac in Brackarymore. Earlier in his life, James Gilligan

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senior had been one of the largest and most influential tenants in Ballaghameehan. However, he had suffered the ignominy of becoming an evicted tenant just before his death.

The evictions of the Gilligans and other families were in response to the tenants of the Wynne Estate in Ballaghameehan adopting the Plan of Campaign against the landlord Owen Wynne. The Plan of Campaign manifesto was published in the nationalist newspaper *United Ireland* on 23 October 1886. According to the manifesto, tenants on individual properties were to decide the percentage rent reduction they required. If the landlords refused their demands, the tenants were to entrust their rents, less the desired reduction, to individuals known only to themselves. This money, which was known as 'the estate fund' or 'the campaign fund,' was to pay general expenses and to support evicted tenants.

During 1885, the government set up a Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) barracks in Gubalaun, Rossinver. This barracks was situated on the Johnston Estate but the R.I.C. officers were responsible for policing Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff as well as Rossinver.

Prior to the adoption of the Plan of Campaign in Ballaghameehan, the Wynne Estate had started to evict families for non-payment of rents. At a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League on 20 December, 1885, a resolution was passed strongly condemning the action of Owen Wynne who, in times of agricultural depression, had served his tenants with ejectment processes in reply to a demand for a reduction in rents of twenty-five per cent.<sup>16</sup>

At a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League on 24 January, 1886, an election of officers for the coming year took place. The officers elected were Roger Feely (Gubalaun), President; Peter Gilligan (Aghnahoo), Vice President; Myles McKeon (Derrynahimmirk), Treasurer; William Travers (Gortnacrieve), Secretary. Committee members were James McKeon (Kinkillew), James Gilligan (Cartrongibbagh), Philip O'Rourke (Druminargid),

Patrick Spear (Derrynahimmirk), Daniel Ward (Dooard), Percy Clarke (Derrynahimmirk), Terence Sweeney (Raheelin), James O'Rourke (Conray), Francis Meehan (Kinkillew), John Rooney (Lissiniska), Michael O'Rourke (Corraleskin), Francis McGowan (Kinkillew), Owen O'Rourke (Corraleskin), Michael Gilmartin (Conwal North), Philip Sweeney (Gubmanus) and Owen Connolly (Aghnahaha).

Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. counselled unity and energy of action for the coming year and to abide by the law. Specifically, he warned members to guard and protect their branch against secret societies.<sup>17</sup>

Captain William Johnston, Kinlough, had a good relationship with his tenants for nearly forty years and he did not invite confrontation. It would appear that Captain Johnston, who was landlord of the Rossinver area of Ballaghameehan parish, made a deal with Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. to reduce his rents by 3s in the £. The very first tenants to accept this offer were the leading members of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League who held tenancies on the Johnston Estate. Other tenants followed suit. This informal agreement was made despite the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League agreeing to seek a reduction of 8s in the £.<sup>18</sup>

From a letter published in the Donegal Independent on 31 July, 1886, written by their correspondent for Rossinver, it is clear that at least 22 tenants had been evicted in Ballaghameehan and replaced by new tenants. This letter is highly critical of the treatment of the new tenants by the officers and committee of the Rossinver branch of the National League. The correspondent asks: *'what part of the rules of the National League have those twenty-two families being guilty of breaking that causes them to be scandalised as boycotts over parishes and counties? For what reason do the members of that committee, and their agents, follow those victims of misrule in the public fairs and markets, striving to prevent them from selling their cattle and butter, and intimidating tradesmen and labourers from working for them? I now ask the officers and committee what is the*

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*reason such vindictive principles had been exhibited throughout the parish, where there is not one perch of land or grass to be grabbed.'*

Early in September, 1886, the old land agent on the Wynne Estate Francis Montgomery Olpherts was replaced by George Hewson, Drumahaire. Olpherts was sixty-five years old and he had been the land agent on the Wynne Estate for forty years. George Hewson was twenty-seven years old. His reputation for ruthlessly evicting tenants in Donegal had preceded his appointment. Hewson was an agent to several landlords and he accepted any agency which became vacant in north Leitrim.<sup>19</sup> On becoming agent on the Wynne Estate, he found that tenancy records were very poorly maintained. He set about to correct this deficiency.

Almost immediately rent notices were sent out by Hewson calling on all the tenantry to come in and pay their rents on 14 September, 1886. This date clashed with the administering of the Sacrament of Confirmation by Bishop Bernard Finegan in Ballaghameehan parish. Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. had written a letter to George Hewson explaining that the tenantry could not meet him on this date and asked him to appoint another date.

George Hewson replied by sending out processes of ejectment and civil bills. At a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League on 3 October, 1886, it was revealed that almost one hundred ejectment processes had been issued for the tenants of Ballaghameehan and Rossinver.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the frightened tenantry settled with the agent.

Buoyed by this success, Hewson sent out rent notices to all parties, even those who had paid rents a few weeks earlier, at the end of October, 1886. The tenants met the agent, George Hewson, at Manorhamilton, and demanded a reduction of 6s-8d in the pound. This he refused to grant. He replied that Owen Wynne had authorised him to offer the lands of Ballaghameehan for sale to the tenants at twenty years purchase, thereby reducing the rent by 15 per

cent.<sup>21</sup> This was less than half what the tenants had demanded. They all left in a body without paying, with the exception of one solitary backslider.

Because of the intransience, of the landlord Owen Wynne, as portrayed by George Hewson, the Rossinver branch of the National Irish League decided to adopt the Plan of Campaign. Plans were put in place to hold a demonstration in the parish at the earliest possible date in view of the coming struggle between tenants and landlord.

The decision of the League leaders to choose the Wynne Estate for the Plan may have been influenced by the fact that the landlord, prior to the arrival of George Hewson, was not considered harsh in his dealings with tenants and, therefore, the achievements of a favourable settlement within a short time was a real possibility. On the other hand, however, local leaders may have desired a confrontation with George Hewson, which would give them the opportunity of undermining his reputation as one of the most feared land agents in the country.<sup>22</sup>

At a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League on 5 December, 1886, three resolutions were passed by the members which outlined their expectations for the level of rent reductions to be demanded. That, in view of the reductions granted by the late land court at Manorhamilton, we approve of the very moderate reduction of 6s-8d in the £1 asked for by all tenants on the Wynne Estate, whether in arrears or not. That a meeting of Johnstons Rossinver tenantry, to consider reduction to be accepted, be held at Rossinver church, and we advise them to remember in their deliberation that up to 50 per cent and over was granted by the late land court at Ballyshannon. That the Glenaniff tenantry meet at Glenaniff church for the same purpose on 7 December, 1886.<sup>23</sup>

On 19 December, 1886, a large demonstration of the tenants of the Johnston, Tottenham and Wynne Estates took place in Ballaghameehan. Despite the fact that the meeting was held on a day

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when blizzard like and freezing conditions prevailed, thousands of people attended the demonstration. On the motion of Roger Feely (Gubalaun), seconded by James Gilligan (Cartrongibbagh), the chair was taken by Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P., Ballaghameehan.

Rev. Fr. McManus P.P. outlined how agricultural produce had been reduced to such a low ebb that poverty and starvation had stared the people in the face. He challenged the local landlords to imitate the example of their English counterparts and agree fair rents with their tenants. He stated that the landlords had been exacting unjust rents from the tenants for years. He warned that some neighbouring tenants were forced to sign judicial agreements for small rent reductions by the land agents who threatened to eject them if they did not do so. This was the way that the people have been made to sign agreements against themselves. Rev. Fr. McManus then read a list of the reductions granted by the sub-commission averaging fifty per cent in the neighbourhood of Ballaghameehan. He continued that these were the rents which are pronounced fair and square by a judicial tribunal, and how can the landlords expect the people to pay the extraordinary rents that have taxed them for so long.

Next to speak was Michael Conway, M.P. for North Leitrim. He told the crowd that the fight on the land question depended, in large measure, on their efforts and determination as to whether it will be successful or not. It is a battle which affects their very lives. He warned the crowd that if they were going to win this fight, that they must go into it with the same energy as if they take the spade in their hands to tackle the soil so as to get a living out of it. He advised that they must appoint men, whom they thrust, to collect the rents from the tenants.

Michael Conway M.P. pledged that if the tenants take up the Plan of Campaign that they will have the Irish representatives at their back, and the Irish National League will stand by them to the last penny in its coffers. He stated that the tenants were getting very small prices for their produce, and yet they are expected to pay big prices to the

landlord in the form of rents and the landlord does not suffer at all from the depression. He confirmed that the rents of some tenants on the Johnston Estate had been reduced by fifty percent. Some rents on the Tottenham Estate had been reduced by forty-five percent. Tottenham, who sat in the House of Commons, would not give his tenants any reduction, and yet the Land Commission reduced some of his rents by sixty-five percent. He claimed that the tenants in the north of Leitrim are more rack-rented than in any other part of Ireland.

Michael Conway claimed that the landlords were trying to keep up the rents in order that when the time comes that they may get twenty years purchase. He said that the intervention of the Land Commission had brought this down to eighteen years. He cautioned tenants to bide their time in the matter of the purchase of their holdings. If the tenants get a substantial reduction in rents this will bring the land to a reasonable figure to enable purchase. He warned that conditions for tenants would be difficult during the coming winter. He said that Tuesday next was rent day at Lurganboy for the Wynne Estate, so they had only forty-eight hours to get organised. By then the world could be turned upside down.

Patrick Tucker (Tullyskeherny), a tenant farmer, was next to address the crowd. He had previously been a vice president of the Rossinver branch of the Land League and, later, secretary of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League. He said it was the duty of every man to take his part in this fight, and let the world see that they would not allow the robbers to rob them any longer. The man who tilled the soil must own the soil, and if the landlords wanted bread they must go and earn it. He continued that the tenants were better men in every way than the landlords and they only asked the government to stand aside and they would soon dispose of the landlords.<sup>24</sup>

The demonstration in Ballaghameehan was overshadowed by the death of two young men who perished in the freezing conditions on

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their way home from the meeting. Ironically both men shared the same names. The bodies were discovered on different roads leading into the village of Kiltyclogher. John McGowan from Corranmore, Kiltyclogher was 30 years old. John McGowan from Lattone was 20 years old. Both deaths were registered by the County Leitrim coroner, Dr. James Carroll.

The adoption of the Plan of Campaign was inaugurated on Tuesday, 21 December, 1886, on the Wynne Estate near Manorhamilton, County Leitrim. George Hewson, agent, sat in the rent office in Lurganboy, at ten o'clock but none of the tenants approached until after one o'clock, when a large number of tenants, numbering several hundred, marched from Manorhamilton, headed by Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. and Michael Conway M.P. A deputation consisting of Rev. Fr. McManus and Michael Conway, and about twelve tenants entered the rent office, and demanded a twenty-five per cent reduction in rents. George Hewson refused, saying that he had no instructions to grant any reduction.

The interview was concluded by Michael Conway, saying that as the agent would not grant a penny of reduction that he would not get a penny of rent. The deputation withdrew and announced the result to the main body of tenants who were outside.

Only about a dozen of the tenants on the estate paid their rent. The majority of tenants had made arrangements to bank their money on the Plan of Campaign if the landlord still remained obdurate.<sup>25</sup>

Support for the aims of the Irish National League came from as far away as Texas in the United States of America. Descendants of families from the parish of Ballaghameehan and Killasnet who had emigrated after the famine set up a branch. It was called the Gussettville C. J. Kickham Branch of the Irish American National League. Its objective was to earnestly and actively sustain the Irish people with moral and material aid in achieving self-government for

Ireland. Names on the committee included Fox, Gallagher, McMurray and Dolan.<sup>26</sup>

Gussettville, Texas  
October 29, 1887

The C. J. Rickham Branch of the Irish American National League met this day, pursuant to adjournment.

A quorum being present, Mr. J. H. O'Callaghan was, in the absence of the President and Vice-President, elected Chairman, pro. tem.

The Com. on By-Laws then submitted the following Rules and By-Laws, which were un-animously adopted, to wit:-

I.  
This association shall be known as the Gussettville C. J. Rickham Branch of the Irish American National League.

II  
Its object shall be to earnestly and actively sustain the Irish people in Ireland with moral and material aid in achieving self government for Ireland.

The Protestant minister for Ballaghameehan and Kiltyclogher had no sympathy for the aims of the Irish National League. The Donegal Independent, on 1 January, 1887, reported on the Garrison Christmas Festival which was held on 26 December, 1886. This was an annual event held by the Protestant communities from the surrounding areas. During this event Rev. William Scott, from Ballaghameehan, made a speech. In it, Rev. Scott spoke of the sad calamity which happened in the neighbourhood on last Sunday week, when two men had lost their lives in the snow when returning from a Land League meeting. He went on to say that the desecration of the Sabbath seldom ends well, and he was happy to say that the Protestants kept aloof from such pernicious meetings, although it had been said that a few Protestant men were seen in the ranks of the rebels on last Sunday week. He hoped the Protestants would discountenance disloyalty in every possible way.

Rev. William Scott then spoke about the Plan of Campaign. He advised all decent men to keep their money in their pockets and not entrust it to the keeping of those self-appointed land agents. He

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thought that this Plan was the last resource, and the time was coming when those disloyal rebels would be banished from our priest-ridden country.

On 18 January, 1887, Rev. Scott wrote a letter to the editor of The Donegal Independent complaining about the content of the article published on 1 January, 1887. He stated that he denied having said what was published. In particular, he denied saying of the *“banishment of rebels from our priest-ridden country.”*

During the month of February, 1887, Michael Conway, M.P. for the division, has quietly collected the rents from the tenants under the Plan. However, on Lord Massey’s Glenfarn estate the plan had been adopted, but owing to the remonstrations of Rev. John Maguire P.P., Cloonclare, it was dropped and the rents paid, less 2s in the pound.<sup>27</sup>

On 27 February, 1887, the landlord for Ballaghameehan, Owen Wynne lost his wife due to an accident.<sup>28</sup> This tragedy gave George Hewson a free hand to deal with matters on the Wynne Estate while Owen Wynne was mourning the death of his wife.

On Tuesday, 10 May, 1887, a large body of police attended at Ballaghameehan, and assisted in evicting twenty-two tenants on the estate of Owen Wynne, Hazelwood, Sligo. A great crowd of people assembled with bands and banners to witness the evictions, which were carried out with much celebrity by the sheriff and bailiffs. No attempts at interference were made by the crowd, who confined themselves to cheering and groaning. Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P., Ballaghameehan; Rev. Fr. Patrick McLoughlin C.C., Manorhamilton; Rev. Fr. Stephen McTiernan P.P., Killasnet; and a number of other clergymen were present. On the completion of the evictions the tenants who had been turned out of their homes were escorted by a band and crowds to the Manorhamilton workhouse.<sup>29</sup>

At a meeting of the Manorhamilton Board of Guardians on 12 May, 1887, Rev. Fr. Francis O’Hara C.C., Ballaghameehan, and Rev. Fr. Patrick Cooke C.C., Killasnet. urged the Guardians to deal

somewhat more leniently with these poor people than their landlord had done. On the proposal of James Fox, Guardian for Ballaghameehan, and seconded by another Guardian by the name of Maguire, an extra tea and meat allowance was granted for one week.<sup>30</sup>

On 1 January, 1888, a new branch of the Irish National League was set up in Ballaghameehan called the William O'Brien branch. Not only was a new branch set up but there was a totally new officer board and committee elected. The following officers were elected: James McGourty (Gortnaderrary), President; Michael O'Rourke (Corraleskin), Treasurer; Terence Maguire (Gortnaderrary), Secretary; Committee: Francis Gordon (Corraleskin), O'Rourke Hugh (Corraleskin), Patrick Meehan (Gortnaderrary), James Maguire (Tullyshehery), Patrick Meehan (Lattone), Owen McPartland (Raheelin), Loughlin McGowan (Lattone), Patrick McGowan (Raheelin) and John Clancy (Lattone).<sup>31</sup>

At a meeting of the William O'Brien branch on 8 January, 1888, resolutions were passed condemning the conduct of Owen Wynne, Hazelwood, for sending amongst his impoverished tenantry civil and ejectment processes, and protesting against the reductions on judicial rents made by the Land Commissioners as inadequate to meet the general fall in prices for farm produce.<sup>32</sup>

At a meeting of the Rossinver branch of the Irish National League on 24 March, 1889, a number of resolutions were passed. Amongst them were condemnation of the action James Johnston in scattering about fifty processes among his poor, oppressed tenants in Rossinver and Glenaniff, while a similar number have been scattered among the Ballaghameehan tenants by George Hewson. In 1888, James Johnston became landlord of the Johnston Estate following the death of his father William. A discussion was held concerning the conduct of some of the members of the branch who seem cool about upholding the principles of the League, and the

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feeling of the meeting was that half-hearted members were more harm than good.

One of those evicted on 10 May, 1887, was James McKeon from the townland of Kinkillew. On 9 May, 1888, at the Crimes Court in Manorhamilton, McKeon was prosecuted for re-entering the house from which he had been evicted. He had applied for a writ of restitution on 18 October, 1887, when the County Court Judge ordered him to be restored if he would pay a year's rent within one month. He subsequently tendered the agent, George Hewson, a year's rent, which the agent refused to accept, without the costs also being paid. James McKeon afterwards re-entered his house, where his family still resided. He was sent to jail for fourteen days.<sup>33</sup>



*House in Kinkillew from which James McKeon was evicted.*

At a meeting of the William O'Brien branch of the Irish National League in Ballaghameehan on 27 May, 1888, the chair was given to James McKeon who was recently released from prison. The chairman, who gave a very elaborate account of the harsh treatment he was subjected to whilst in Sligo prison, thanked the committee very sincerely for setting his potatoes and cutting his turf in his absence. The action of the agent, George Hewson, in selling cattle under civil bill decrees was severely censured. He was further

censured for his attempt to deprive tenants in arrears of the right of turbary.<sup>34</sup>

On 26 June, 1888, Michael Conway M.P. raised this case in the House of Commons when he asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Lord Chancellor of Ireland will inquire into the conduct of George Hewson, and whether the Government will consider the advisability of making some compensation to James McKeon for unmerited punishment, and the grave loss sustained by his family.

The Secretary General in his reply detailed the various proceedings in the matter, and said that if James McKeon felt aggrieved he could bring an action for damages, but the Government had no intention of compensating him.<sup>35</sup>

An insight into how the neighbours of James McKeon felt about what was happening to him and the poor of the area can be summarised in a letter, signed Shasmore, which appeared in the Sligo Champion in September, 1888. The letter stated *'that the people of Ballaghameehan must be extremely charitable; at least they seem to exercise that virtue in a marked degree towards George Hewson. In that valley every year the poor are made the victims of some of the foulest outrages perpetrated by Irish landlords. Every session brings its shower of processes and ruinous law costs. Evictions scatter the little homes. The wholesale clearances are absent but the process of thinning the land goes steadily on. George Hewson is hammering away at the tenants as tyrannically as he might have done a quarter of a century ago.'*<sup>36</sup>

Less than a year later, adherence to the Plan of Campaign in Ballaghameehan had faltered and sympathy for some of those threatened with eviction and, in particular, for James McKeon was waning. At the Manorhamilton Board of Guardians meeting on 13 June, 1889, James McKeon applied for outdoor relief for three weeks. The Relieving Officer, named Keaney, reported that he

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visited the family after eviction. They had no visible means only one old cow grazing on the mountain. He gave them 15s provisional relief in kind from the nearest shop and recommended a similar relief for three weeks.

The Board of Guardians representative for Ballaghameehan, James Fox, objected to relief being given to James McKeon. James Fox lived on a farm in Shasmore next to that of James Mc Keon. He called McKeon a humbug. He said that McKeon had paid no rent for eight years, and now he wants to get Parnell's money and the money of the rate payers at the same time. Fox went on to say that these are the sort of patriots that we have in Ballaghameehan. They started the Plan of Campaign but did not stick to it.

James Fox went on to outline how one woman who made a great noise in the parish, and who got Parnell's money, paid her rent the other day when she found out that she was to be evicted. James McKeon was evicted before and came into the Workhouse with his family but they soon got tired of it. Fox continued "*I tell you that they are sham Leaguers, and I oppose the grant.*" The voting being even, the motion was declared lost and the relief was not granted.<sup>37</sup> The Plan of Campaign had failed in the parish of Ballaghameehan. This was due to the tenants losing their appetite for the campaign and due to the perseverance of the landlord's agent, George Hewson, in pursuing tenants for the collection of rents.

James McKeon was charged with wilfully trespassing on the lands of Owen Wynne Esq. on 11 September and again on 25 September, 1889 and he was sentenced to two weeks in Sligo prison. Also, he was sentenced to one month in Sligo prison during March, 1890, for the same offence.

Rev. Fr John McManus P.P. had given great leadership to his parishioners. However, he was undermined by the actions of his curate Rev. Fr. Francis O'Hara C.C.

During September, 1885, Rev. Fr. Francis O'Hara's brother Bernard purchased the tenancy of John Whittaker, Tullyshehery, from the landlord, Owen Wynne. The tenancy consisted of fifty-seven acres of the best land in Ballaghameehan. The O'Hara's were born in Barrs East, Glenfarn. Bernard O'Hara was a R.I.C. sergeant stationed in Derry city. Rev. Fr. O'Hara was appointed trustee over this tenancy by his brother. However, Rev. Fr. O'Hara registered his own name as tenant in 1887. When Bernard O'Hara died in 1891, his widow had to go to the High Court so as to have this tenancy returned to the estate of her husband.<sup>38</sup> Rev. Fr. O'Hara C.C. was transferred out of Ballaghameehan parish on 16 November, 1889. He returned as curate to the parish on 15 February, 1902, one year following the death of Rev. Fr John McManus P.P.

The Irish National League was the main base of support for the Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.) while Charles Stewart Parnell was its leader. When it became public knowledge that Parnell was in a relationship with a married woman, Kitty O'Shea, both the I.P.P. and the Irish National League split. The majority of the Irish National League supported by the clergy broke away to form the anti-Parnellite Irish National Federation. John Dillon became leader of the Irish National Federation.

On 26 April, 1891, the Rossinver branch of the Irish National Federation was established. The local clergy took control of the new organisation. A large crowd attended this meeting which was held in the grounds of Ballaghameehan church. Rev. Fr. Francis Brennan C.C. chaired the meeting where the following officers were elected: Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P., President; Rev. Fr. Francis Brennan C.C., Vice President; Patrick Tucker, Treasurer; Patrick F. McGloin, Secretary. The committee consisted most of those who served in the defunct National League branch.<sup>39</sup>

During the following decade, the Rossinver branch of the Irish National Federation spent much of its efforts assisting evicted tenants. At a meeting on 21 January, 1894, plans were put in place

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to hold a house-to-house collection within the parish to support the Evicted Tenants Fund.<sup>40</sup>

In 1898, the Local Government (Ireland) Act replaced the grand jury system of local government with locally elected county and rural district councils.<sup>41</sup> Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff were part of the Manorhamilton Rural District Council, while Rossinver were part of the Melvin Rural District Council. The first elected representatives for Ballaghameehan were William Travers (Gornacrieve) and Michael O'Rourke (Corraleskin). John Rooney (Lissiniska) represented Glenaniff. There were no representatives from Rossinver elected to the Melvin Electoral District. All of the elected councillors were members of the United Irish League.

During 1900, the Irish Parliamentary Party re-united under the leadership of John Redmond. The Irish National Federation and the Irish National League merged to become the United Irish League. On 15 October, 1899, the Rossinver branch of the United Irish League was established. Officers elected were Myles McKeon (Derrynahimmirk), President; James O'Rourke (Conray), Vice-president; Michael McMorrough (Tullyskeherny), Treasurer; William Travers (Gornacrieve) and James McMorrough (Gubnageer), Secretaries. Committee: James McKeon (Kinkillew), Cormac Fox (Shasmore), Pat Dolan (Coolodonnell), James Meehan (Cartrongibbagh), Terence Fox (Lisdarush), James Maguire (Tullyskeherny), Pat McGowan (Raheelin), Charles McDermott (Lattone), Thomas Gallagher (Gubnageer), James McGourty (Gortnaderrary), Philip Sweeney (Gubmanus), Terence Meehan (Drumgane), Hugh Sweeney (Conray), Philip O'Rourke (Druminargid), John Gallagher (Derrynahimmirk), Hugh O'Rourke (Druminargid), Terence Connolly (Larganhugh), John Sheeran (Mautiagh), Michael Gilmartin (Conwal North), John McCabe (Aghnahaha), John Rooney (Lissiniska), John O'Rourke (Corlea) and James Gordon (Carrowkeel).<sup>42</sup>

After almost thirty years of campaigning the tenant farmers of Glenaniff and Ballaghameehan achieved their goal of owning their own farms. On 26 October, 1908, the tenants of the estate of Margaret Revell in Glenaniff met at Aghnahaha, the agent George Hewson, with a view to arranging terms of sale. The interests of the tenants were represented by Patrick O’Flynn, solicitor, Manorhamilton and Francis Meehan M.P.

The following terms were agreed:

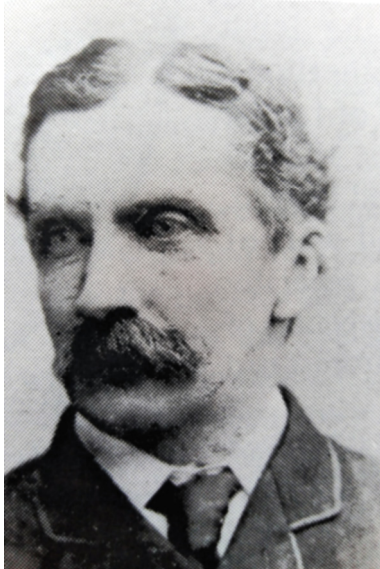
- First term tenants to purchase at a reduction of 7s in the £;
- Second term tenants to purchase at a reduction of 5s in the £;
- Non-judicial tenants to purchase at a reduction of 9s in the £ on their present rents;
- Half-a-years rent in each case to be added to the purchase money to clear arrears;
- All sporting rights reserved to the landlord;
- One year’s interest to be paid in cash by tenants to clear them to the following November;
- All future tenants to have their rents so adjusted as to place them on an equality with the other tenants;
- Interest at 3½ per cent to be paid to Land Commission until purchase-money is advanced to landlord.<sup>43</sup>

On 29 March, 1909, the tenants of the Wynne Estate in Ballaghameehan met the agent George Hewson at the Courthouse, Manorhamilton, with a view to arranging terms of sale. The tenants were not professionally represented, but their interests were looked after by Rev. Fr. Bartle McCabe P.P. and James Lynott D.C. There were almost three hundred tenants present.

After prolonged negotiations and discussion, the following terms were agreed:

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- First term tenants to buy at a reduction of 7s in the £ (equal to 20 years purchase);
- Second term tenants to buy at a reduction of 5s in the £ (equal to 23 years purchase);
- Half-a-years rent in each case to be added to the purchase money;
- All arrears to be wiped out;
- Tenants to have the turbary where they at present cut their turf. The large tract of bog in landlord's own hands to be vested in trustees for future use of tenants, if he has power to do so. The landlord to make roads to the bog for tenants where none at present exist;
- All sporting rights reserved to the landlord;
- All future tenants to have their rents so adjusted as to place them on an equality with the other tenants;
- All evicted tenants to be re-instated and buy on same terms as others;
- Interest at 3½ per cent to be paid to Land Commission until purchase-money is advanced to landlord.<sup>44</sup>



*Owen Wynne (1843-1910).*

Under the Wyndham Act 1903, the Wynne Estate was sold to the Land Commission for £79,000. The last Owen Wynne died in 1910 aged 67 years. Since he had no male heir, with his death the line of the Wynnes of Hazelwood came to an end.<sup>45</sup>

**Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P.** was parish priest in Ballaghameehan for over twenty-six years. He was born in West Barrs, Glenfarn in 1828. He studied in Maynooth, County Kildare, and was ordained in 1861. His first curacy was in Ballaghameehan (1861) followed by Glenfarn (1863), Ballaghameehan (1866) and Killasnet (1867). Following the death of Fr. James McGourty, he was appointed parish priest in Ballaghameehan in 1874. After a few years in the parish, he had a parochial house built in the townland of Sraud Conolly.

Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. was a leader for his parishioners during the land war which was the worst economic depression for over a century in Ballaghameehan parish. During the last decade of the nineteenth century Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. put his efforts into building new schools within the parish. He also had the church in Ballaghameehan reconstructed.

During May, 1891, there was a mission by the Passionist Fathers in Ballaghameehan parish. There is an engraved cross within the church grounds commemorating this event and that of another mission which was held in October, 1903. This later mission was performed by the Redemptorists Fathers.

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*Engraved cross at Ballaghameehan church commemorating missions presented by the Passionist Fathers and Redemptorists Fathers.*

During 1897, Rev. Fr. McManus P.P. was instrumental in assisting the setting up of a creamery called the Ballaghameehan Co-Operative Society which was affiliated to the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (I.A.O.S.). His curate, Rev. Fr. Patrick Osborne C.C. was appointed President and he was appointed joint treasurer of the Society.

Rev. Fr. John McManus P.P. died on 25 March, 1901, aged 73 years.



*Memorial on the east wall of Ballaghameehan church commemorating Rev. Fr. McManus P.P.*

Tenants evicted from Ballaghameehan parish during the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Cartrongibbagh**

**James Gilligan junior** was born in December 1851. On 26 September, 1870, he married Bridget McDermott from Lisinagroath, Glenfarn, Co. Leitrim. They lived in Cartrongibbagh with his parents, James' senior and Catherine. They did not have any children.

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James and Bridget were very active in the Land League campaign in North Leitrim. James was an active member of the Rossinver branch. Mrs. Bridget Gilligan was president of the Ladies Land League branches in Manorhamilton and Rossinver. The Gilligan family were evicted from their home on 10 May, 1887, and later that year, James junior and Bridget emigrated to New York, U.S.A. From 1889, the tenancy was held in fee by the landlord, Owen Wynne, until 1896 when the tenancy was taken over by Patrick McGowan. Patrick McGowan was a grandson of James Gilligan Senior. Bridget Gilligan died on 29 February, 1912, in Manhattan, New York, U.S.A., aged 61 years. James Gilligan junior died on 16 February, 1927, in Manhattan, New York, U.S.A., aged 75 years.

### **Corraleskin**

**Patrick O'Rourke** was born in 1857. In 1883, he married Rose Anne Meehan and they had 13 children. During 1896, Patrick O'Rourke and his family were evicted from their tenancy. From 1898 until 1901, the tenancy was held in fee by the landlord, Owen Wynne. By 1901, Patrick O'Rourke had settled with the landlord and returned to have full use of his tenancy.

### **Gortnaderrary**

**Charles Ferguson** was born circa 1830. During 1887, Charles Ferguson was evicted from his tenancy. From 1889 until 1896, the tenancy was held in fee by the landlord, Owen Wynne. In 1896, the tenancy was taken over by James Ferguson Junior who was related to Charles Ferguson. In 1905, Charles Ferguson died in Manorhamilton workhouse. He was 74 years of age and was a bachelor.



*John McGourty.*

**John McGourty** was born circa 1831 in the townland of Gortnaderrary. John McGourty married Ellen Gilligan on 20 January, 1859. They had 13 children. His uncle was Rev. Fr. James McGourty P.P., Ballaghameehan.

On 3 October, 1880, John McGourty was appointed president of the Rossinver branch of the Land League. His brother James was appointed treasurer and his brother-in-laws James Gilligan and Edward McGurrin were committee members. John McGourty campaigned for many years on behalf of the tenants of Ballaghameehan for reductions in rents in the face of an economic crisis. However, during 1892 John and his family emigrated to

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California. John McGourty died in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. on 22 April, 1919, aged 87 years.

### Gubmanus

**Philip Sweeney senior** was born in 1831. In 1865, he married Bridget Boyle from Gubmanus. They had two sons. He took over the tenancy of the family farm when his mother died in 1893. During that year, Philip Sweeney and his family were evicted from their tenancy. From 1895 until 1912, the tenancy was held in fee by the landlord, Owen Wynne.

During April, 1907, Charles J. Dolan M.P. asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in the House of Commons, “*why the Estates Commission were unable to take any action in the case of Philip Sweeney?*” Augustine Birrell replied that the Estate Commissioners had made inquiries into the case of Philip Sweeney, who had applied for re-instatement in the holding formerly occupied by him and now occupied by another tenant. The commissioners have, in the exercise of their discretion, decided that, having regard to the circumstances and to No. VI. of the Lord Lieutenant’s regulations of 13 February, 1906, the case is not one in which they should take any action.<sup>46</sup>

In June, 1909, the case of the eviction of Philip Sweeney was again raised in the House of Commons. Francis Meehan M.P. asked the Chief Secretary whether the Estates Commissioners, having refused to re-instate Philip Sweeney, an evicted tenant on the Wynne Estate, Ballaghameehan, owing to his age, would consider the application of his son for re-instatement, as the person in possession was willing to surrender on receiving compensation. Birrell said he had referred this question to the Estates Commissioners, who would consider the suggestion of the honourable member when they were dealing with the estate.<sup>47</sup>

By 1912, the Sweeney family had settled with the executors of the landlord and Philip Sweeney junior returned to have full use of his

property. On 5 April, 1914, Philip Sweeney senior died in Manorhamilton workhouse. He was 82 years of age.

### **Kinkillew**

**James McKeon** was born in 1845. In 1871, he married Mary Meehan from Lattone. They had 8 children. He took over the tenancy of the family farm when his mother died in 1884. As a result of the introduction of the Plan of Campaign in Ballaghameehan, James McKeon and his family were evicted for non-payment of rent. They went to live in the Workhouse for a while. The family were allowed to return to their home but they were not allowed use of the land. From 1889 until 1896, the tenancy was held in fee by the landlord, Owen Wynne. By 1896, James McKeon had settled with the landlord and returned to have full use of his tenancy.

### **Shasmore**

**James Fox** was born at Shasmore, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim in 1831. James Fox married Mary McGowan from Glenade on 12 October, 1855. They had eleven children. He was a member of a well-off farming family and was a member of the Manorhamilton Board of Guardians representing Ballaghameehan parish.

James Fox lost his tenancy in 1898. He was not evicted for non-payment of rent. On the contrary, he paid his rent but to do so he built up debt with a merchant in Manorhamilton. On 18 March, 1887, John Dolan, Manorhamilton, registered a debt of £48 against James Fox. On 15 June, 1897, John Dolan registered a further debt of £50 against James Fox. On 19 February, 1898, John Dolan took possession of James Fox's farms in Shasmore and Lisdarush in return for clearing the debts<sup>48</sup>. He immediately rented out these farms. James Fox's family were never to return to Shasmore again. During 1922, Patrick Fox, a nephew of James Fox, paid £1,800 to purchase these lands. On 14 August, 1911, James Fox died in Manorhamilton workhouse. He was 80 years of age.

## **Chapter 13 The Evolution of Politics within the Parish of Ballaghameehan.**

The 1908 by-election caused the electorate of the parish of Ballaghameehan to split. This turned out to be an acrimonious split of the political family of the Irish Parliamentary Party. For the previous 34 years, the Ballaghameehan electorate had solely supported the Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.). It believed that Home Rule for Ireland could be achieved by participating in the parliamentary process. The United Irish League (U.I.L.) had become the grass roots constituency organisation for the I.P.P. There were U.I.L. branches in most parishes including Ballaghameehan.

Now a new party had arrived to challenge the status quo. This new party was Sinn Fein. This situation came about when the sitting M.P. for North Leitrim, Charles J. Dolan, resigned from the Irish Parliamentary Party and aligned to Sinn Fein. The policies of Sinn Fein included the development and protection of home industries while abstaining from sitting in the House of Commons in London. While Charles J. Dolan, resigned from the Irish Parliamentary Party, he did not resign his seat in parliament for another seven months. This was bitterly condemned by the Irish Parliamentary Party as it prevented them from filling the seat.

Charles J. Dolan used this time to educate the people of North Leitrim in the policies of Sinn Fein. This took the form of organising branches of the Sinn Fein National Council and publishing a newspaper, called the Leitrim Guardian.<sup>1</sup> Also, Church gate meetings were organised to coincide with Mass times. Sinn Fein organisers would speak at these meetings. One such organiser was Sean McDermott from Corranmore, Kiltyclogher, Co. Leitrim, who was director of elections for Dolan.

The U.I.L. branch in Rossinver was re-organised at a meeting held on 14 July, 1907, so as to be able to contest the by-election on behalf of the Irish Parliamentary Party. It would appear that few if any of the Sinn Fein supporters in the parish of Ballaghameehan had defected from the U.I.L. branch. On 17 February, 1908, five days before polling, the Sligo Champion reporter covered a meeting of the Irish Parliamentary Party held near the parish hall in Ballaghameehan. The reporter inquired about the level of support for both parties. He was told that there were about 400 voters in the parish and that Sinn Fein would get about 35 votes (9 %), the majority of these being from the Glenaniff area. This level of support for Sinn Fein was biased towards the low side as he probably only canvassed the views of U.I.L. supporters. The outcome of the by-election would indicate that the support for Sinn Fein within the parish was double that estimate.

Charles Joseph Dolan was born on 18 August, 1881. He was a son of John Dolan and Bridget Fitzpatrick from Manorhamilton. He was born into a wealthy merchant family. His brother James was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.). During the summer and autumn of 1907, the Sinn Fein organisation in North Leitrim began to take shape. Branches had been organised in several places including Ballaghameehan and Glenaniff.

Some of the members of the Ballaghameehan Sinn Fein branch included Michael Tucker (Tullyshehery), Bryan McGowan (Eden), Henry O'Rourke (Drumgane), Pat Maguire (Gortnaderrary) and James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh). Some of the members of the Glenaniff Sinn Fein branch included Thady Bredin and Patrick Bredin (Lissiniska), John Connolly (Carrowkeel) and Patrick Rooney.

The president of the Rossinver branch of the U.I.L. was Fr. Peter Brady P.P. He was very active in local politics. He did much to frustrate the rise of Sinn Fein within the parish of Ballaghameehan. This included not allowing parish property, including the parish hall,

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to be used by Sinn Fein for holding meetings. While support for Sinn Fein was growing, support for the U.I.P. branch within the parish was also increasing with the membership of the branch increasing on a monthly basis. Both sides seen out 1907 by holding meetings and growing membership.

Charles J. Dolan resigned his seat at Westminster on 28 January, 1908. The writ for the by-election in the North Leitrim constituency was moved on 5 February, 1908, with the by-election set for 21 February and nominations closing on 14 February. The scene was set for a short but a fructuous campaign.

When the by-election was called, the Irish Parliamentary Party had not selected a candidate to contest the by-election. The Ancient Order of Hibernian (A.O.H.) branches put forward one of their members named Francis Edward Meehan from Manorhamilton as a candidate. He was a farmer and businessman. Francis Edward Meehan was born on 17 September, 1864. He was a son of Laurence Meehan and Jane Rooney.



*Gilbrides Bar formally known as Keenans Public House.*

Gerry Fox

At a meeting of the Rossinver U.I.L. branch on 2 February, 1908, delegates were selected to attend the convention which would select a candidate for the Irish Parliamentary Party to contest the North Leitrim by-election. On the same day there was a fracas between members of the U.I.L. and the Sinn Fein branches in Ballaghameehan. It took place in the vicinity of Keenan's public house in the townland of Druminargid. Most of the participants were neighbours from the townland of Cartrongibbagh and some adjoining townlands.

The court case came up for mention at the Kiltyclogher Petty Sessions on 7 April, 1908.<sup>2</sup> Eventually, all of the cases of assault and breach of the peace were settled out of court. However, Patrick McGowan, Cartrongibbagh, a retired sergeant in the R.I.C. was determined that the case should be heard, so that he might be afforded the opportunity of defending his good character. The magistrates advised that if this case went ahead that all of the other cases arising out of the fracas must go ahead also. They encouraged for a settlement to be reached and peace all round. Eventually, McGowan relented. The other cases arising from the fracas were as follows:

CLAIMANT

DEFENDANT

Laurence Meehan (Cartrongibbagh) James McGurrin  
(Cartrongibbagh)

Laurence Meehan (Cartrongibbagh) Edward Bredin (Shasgar)

William Meehan (Cartrongibbagh) James McGurrin  
(Cartrongibbagh)

Michael McDermott (Cartrongibbagh) James McGurrin  
(Cartrongibbagh)

Michael McDermott (Cartrongibbagh) William McGowan  
(Kinkillew)

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Patrick Eames jun. (Kinkillew)	Cormac Fox jun. (Shasmore)
James McGowan (Cartrongibbagh)	Michael McDermott
James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh)	Patrick Eames sen. (Kinkillew)
James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh)	Patrick Eames jun. (Kinkillew)
James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh) (Cartrongibbagh)	Michael McDermott
James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh) (Cartrongibbagh)	William Meehan

James McGurrin was a member of the Ballaghameehan Sinn Fein branch while William Meehan, Laurence Meehan, Michael McDermott and Patrick Eames were members of the Rossinver branch of U.I.L. At the same Petty Sessions in Kiltyclogher, John Bredin and Patrick Maguire were fined 10 shillings each for an assault on John Connolly, whom they claimed was a Sinn Feiner. All three lived in the townland of Aghnahaha.

Ballaghameehan Poet: James McGurrin.

James McGurrin was born on 31 March, 1879, in Cartrongibbagh. He attended Brackarybeg national school, in the neighbouring parish of Killasnet. He took over the running of the family farm following the death of his father Edward on 20 May, 1904. He composed many poems about local events and places. Welcome Ballagh Sons was a poem written in honour of Charles J. Dolan, Manorhamilton, who contested the 1908 by-election on behalf of Sinn Fein. James McGurrin was a supporter of Dolan's and represented Sinn Fein on the Manorhamilton Rural District Council for over a decade.



*James McGurrin.*

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

*Welcome Ballagh Sons*

*Welcome Ballagh sons and sires to the standard of Sinn Fein,  
Worthy champions of a nation whom your father's foes have slain.  
Come and join the nation's mustering with the manhood of your  
glen,  
Who can cut a prouder figure, who can boast of braver men.*

*We began the battle early when the foe was ten to one,  
Good and true men spoke out bravely for to cheer and help us on.  
Brawny hands and perverse tricksters, Irish men alas in name,  
But when facts come down to figures will they turn aside in shame.*

*Young Sinn Fein is in the cradle growing, thriving every day,  
When the boy is big and able, thieves and traitors leave the way.  
Hearken to the Sinn Fein chieftain, hear his sweet familiar voice,  
All ye folks that value Freedom have good reason to rejoice.*

*A nation's mandate yet unbroken comes across from shore to shore,  
One young man aloud has spoken, one bright youth of love and lore.  
Leitrim has the choicest blessing, dancing to the truest tune,  
Liberty is fast progressing, echo answers freedom soon.  
We'll not repeat those years misspent but strive for that brighter  
day,  
Soon we'll see our isle made free, North Leitrim leads the way.*

On 11 February, 1908, Francis Edward Meehan was selected as the Irish Parliamentary Party's candidate to contest the by-election in North Leitrim. Dolan and Meehan were the only candidates in the field. On 14 February, 1908, both candidates handed in their nomination papers to the returning officer.<sup>3</sup> Over 50 nomination papers were handed in on behalf of Meehan covering every district in the constituency. The Rossinver U.I.L. branch was represented by William Travers D.C. (Gortnacrieve), John Gallagher (Derrynahimmirk), William Meehan (Cartrongibbagh), Michael McDermott (Cartrongibbagh), James McMorrow (Gubnageer),

## Gerry Fox

James O'Rourke (Conray), Owen O'Rourke (Corraleskin), Myles McKeon (Derrynahimmirk), Felix Harte (Gubnageer) and Lazarus Meehan (Tullyderrin).

Following the completion of the nomination process, both parties headed to Kiltyclogher to hold rallies. This resulted in a clash between the supporters of both candidates resulting in fighting and brawling.

On 11 February, 1908, there was a large demonstration in support of Meehan held near the parish hall in Ballaghameehan. P.A. McHugh M.P. and Richard Hazleton M.P. travelled from Manorhamilton to participate in the demonstration. When they arrived at the townland of Druminargid, they encountered a party of Dolan supporters. These Sinn Fein supporters were from Glenaniff and they lined up along both sides of the road where they groaned and booed vigorously as the politicians passed by.

While the meeting in support of Meehan was in progress, the Sinn Fein contingent observed at Druminargid passed by and although both parties abused one another there was no violence as the R.I.C. maintained a strict line between them. Dolan's supporters proceeded to hold a meeting at which speeches were delivered by Sinn Fein organisers including Sean McDermott.<sup>4</sup>

The by-election was held on 21 February, 1908. The turnout of electors was high at 69%, reflecting the bitter campaign waged by both parties. Meehan received 73% (3103) of the valid poll while Dolan received a respectable 27% (1157).

An incident which occurred about a week later showed the depth of bitterness which the campaign had left in the parish of Ballaghameehan. At the Manorhamilton Petty Sessions held on 18 March, 1908, Patrick Eames junior (Kinkillew) prosecuted Terence McGowan (Gubnageer) and John Dolan (Lisdarush) for assault at Skreeny, Manorhamilton, on 2 March, 1908. Eames was bringing

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

his neighbour Neil Fox to an appointment with his doctor on his horse and car.



*Neil Fox.*

McGowan and Dolan passed them on his horse and car at Skreeny. He then stopped and blocked Eames from passing. In doing so he caught Eames' horse by the head and backed the car up on the ditch. The car and the harness on the horse were damaged. The defendant then caught Eames by the lapels of his coat and tried to choke him. During the course of the evidence, it was claimed that McGowan attacked Eames because he did not support Sinn Fein during the North Leitrim by-election. Patrick Eames jun. was a member of the Rossinver branch of the U.I.L. which supported the Irish Parliamentary Party. Terence McGowan, who was a Sinn Fein supporter, was fined £2 with £1 costs and bound to the peace for twelve months. The case against John Dolan was dismissed.

Another incident occurred on St. Patrick's Day, 1908. James Keaveney, Brackarybeg, invited Michael McDermott, Laurence Meehan (Cartrongibbagh) and Patrick Rooney (Lisnabrack) to a party at the house of his brother Francis. When they arrived, they

were attacked by Francis Keaveney. A fight broke out where Francis Keaveney and Cormac Fox (Shasmore) received injuries. Francis Keaveney reported the incident to the police who charged Michael McDermott and Patrick Rooney with assault. The case came up at the Manorhamilton Petty sessions on 29 April, 1908. The court having heard conflicting evidence from both sides dismissed the charges. The magistrate stated that in the case just heard that there appeared to be no other reason or motive for the row than that both parties had taken opposite sides at the recent by-election. People ought to be allowed to do what they pleased at elections, and he hoped that any bad feeling which it had engendered would disappear.<sup>5</sup>

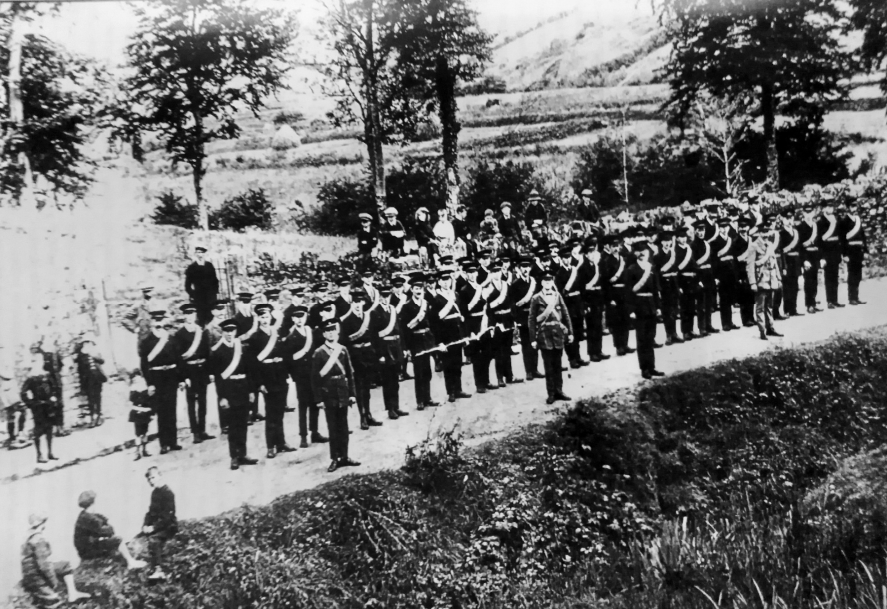
During the following year there were still cases coming before the courts where fighting had broken out over the 1908 by-election. The fair day in Kiltyclogher was held on 14 April, 1908. Three men from Killea who were coming home from the fair called to the house of Patrick O'Rourke (Corraleskin). When they discovered that Michael McGowan (Corraleskin), who was a Sinn Fein supporter, was present in the house a fight broke out. The three men were United Irish League (U.I.L.) supporters. At the Kiltyclogher Petty sessions on 11 May, 1909, Daniel Rooney, Denis Rooney and Francis Gallagher were charged with assaulting Patrick O'Rourke and others. Daniel Rooney was sentenced to one month in prison, Denis Rooney was sentenced to two weeks in prison, and Francis Gallagher was fined 10 shillings.<sup>6</sup>

After the by-election, Dolan went to St. Louis, U.S.A., to study the shoe industry. He returned to Ireland in 1911 with the intention of establishing a boot factory but it never got off the ground. During 1912, he returned to St. Louis, where he married Katherine Kenney. They had one daughter named Alice. He studied law and began practice as a lawyer. Charles J. Dolan died in 1963 in St. Louis.<sup>7</sup>

## Chapter 14 World War 1 and the Easter Rising.

After the 1908 by-election in Leitrim, Sinn Fein went into decline. Tenant farmers in the parish of Ballaghameehan were very satisfied with their situation as they now owned their farms. The local U.I.L. branch was satisfied that the Irish Parliamentary Party was about to witness the British government deliver Home Rule for Ireland. However, this was put on-hold when World War 1 broke out.

In the lead up to the outbreak of the world war, Ireland seemed to be facing into a civil war over the granting of Home Rule. The Ulster Volunteer Force was opposed to Home Rule while the Irish National Volunteers were formed to support the Irish Parliamentary Party deliver Home Rule. The Ulster Volunteer Force were well armed but the Irish National Volunteers had almost no arms available to them.



*Manorhamilton Irish National Volunteer Corps.*

On 24 May, 1914, an Irish National Volunteer corps was set up in Manorhamilton by members of the Manorhamilton Rural District

Council with the support of the local curate Fr. Thomas Kelly C.C. James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh) outlined the need for nationalist Ireland to have as strong and powerful pressure group to achieve Home Rule as that of Carson's Ulster Volunteers, who opposed it.<sup>1</sup>

On 20 September, 1914, two days after the Home Rule Act was passed into law, John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party called on members of the National Volunteers to join the British Army so as to fight the Germans. Sir Edward Carson had made the same request to the Ulster Volunteers. About 27,000 volunteers took Redmond's advice but a further 10,000 of the more extreme nationalists volunteers refused and they set up a separate organisation led by Eoin McNeill. This group became known as the Irish Volunteers or the Sinn Fein Volunteers.

By April, 1915, there were 117 men from the Manorhamilton area serving on the front line of battle. This was the largest percentage of men to join the army from any town of the size and population of Manorhamilton throughout Ireland or the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

Of the army recruits from Ballaghameehan parish, there were ten fatalities.<sup>3</sup> Five had joined the British Army in Ireland. Two had joined in Scotland and two in England. One joined the American Army in New York. There were two deaths during 1915, three each during 1916 and 1917, and two during 1918. The youngest was 20 years old and the oldest was 43 years of age.

### **Cartrongibbagh**

**Bernard Meehan** was born on 20 August, 1891, in Cartrongibbagh. He was a son of Terence Meehan and Mary McEnroy. He was living in Cartrongibbagh at the time of the 1901 and 1911 census. Private Bernard Meehan (8016) enlisted with the Irish Guards, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. He was killed in action in Guillemont, France on 13 September, 1916. He was 25 years of age. His name appears on the Thiépval Memorial in Belgium.

### **Conray**

**James McGorin** was born on 4 September, 1880, in Conray. He was a son of James McGorin and Anne McLoughlin. He was living in Conray at the time of the 1901 census. Private James McGorin (307956) enlisted with the Kings Liverpool Regiment, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Manchester. He was killed in action in France on 31 July, 1917. He was 36 years of age. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial in Belgium.

### **Lattone**

**John Gallagher** was born on 6 January, 1882, in Lattone. He was a son of John Gallagher and Rose McMorrow. Lance Corporal John Gallagher (33103) enlisted with the Highland Light Infantry, 18<sup>th</sup> Service Battalion 4<sup>th</sup> Glasgow in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. He was killed in action on 25 March, 1918. He was 36 years of age. He is buried in Bronfray Farm Military Cemetery, Bray-Sur-Somme, France.

### **Raheelin**

**Francis Sweeney** was born on 20 May, 1874, in Raheelin. He was a son of Myles Sweeney and Catherine Harte. Private Francis Sweeney (4880) enlisted with the Connaught Rangers, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, in Sligo. He died in France on 1 March, 1915. He was 40 years of age. He is buried in the Boulogne Eastern Cemetery in France.

**Denis McSharry** was born on 10 April, 1888, in Raheelin. He was a son of Patrick McSharry and Rose O'Hara. He was living in Raheelin at the time of the 1901 census. Private Denis McSharry (5057) enlisted with the Leinster Regiment, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, in Clydebank, Scotland. He was killed in action in France on 5 August, 1917. He was 29 years of age. He is buried in the Ypres Town Cemetery Extension in Belgium.

## Shasmore

**Martin Flaherty (alternative spelling Flagherty /Faherty)** was born on 2 October, 1895, in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. He was a son of Thomas Flaherty and Mary McMorrow from Killargue, Co. Leitrim. Thomas Flaherty was a constable in the R.I.C. and was stationed in Pettigo in 1901. When Thomas Flaherty died on 13 January, 1906, his wife and two children moved to Shasmore. Mary Flaherty's brother Patrick owned a farm in Shasmore which had a vacant house. In 1911 census, Martin Flaherty was living there. Private Martin Flaherty (2593) enlisted with the Leinster Regiment, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. He died from wounds received in action in Ballahurst Hospital, Glasgow, on 24 March, 1916. He was 20 years of age. He is buried in Western Necropolis, Glasgow. Circa 1920, Mary Flaherty and her daughter emigrated to America.

## Carrowreevagh



*Headstone over grave of Lance Corporal Patrick McGuinness in Rossinver cemetery.*

**Patrick McGuinness** was born on 22 March, 1872, in Carrowreevagh. He was a son of Thomas McGuinness and Bridget McGuinness. He was living in Carrowreevagh at the time of the 1901 census. Lance Corporal Patrick McGuinness (16702) enlisted with the Royal Engineers Field Squadron in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh. He died at his home from wounds received in action on

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

23 October, 1915. He was 43 years of age. He is buried in Rossinver Old Cemetery.

**Patrick McSharry** was born on 21 November, 1892, in Carrowreevagh. He was a son of Denis McSharry and Maria Fox. He was living in Carrowreevagh at the time of the 1901 and 1911 census. He emigrated to New York and resided at 202 East, 30<sup>th</sup> Street. Private Patrick McSharry and his brother James enlisted with the American Expeditionary Force, 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Company H in New York. Patrick McSharry died from shrapnel wounds received in action in France on 17 July, 1918. He was 25 years of age. His brother James was allowed to visit him in a military hospital before he died. During May 1922, his body was repatriated in a program organised by the American Government through its Consulate in Dublin. He was re-interred in Rossinver Old Cemetery.<sup>4</sup>

### **Drumanure**

**John Gilmartin** was born on 15 October, 1887, in Drumanure. He was a son of John Gilmartin and Margaret Finnegan. He was living in Drumanure at the time of the 1901 and 1911 census. Private John Gilmartin (11032) enlisted with the Irish Guards, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Liverpool. He died from wounds received in action on 19 March, 1917. He was 29 years of age. He is buried in Grove Town Cemetery, Meute, France.

### **Roosky**

**Roger McSharry (alternative spelling McSherry)** was born on 5 May, 1880, in Roosky. He was a son of Bernard McSharry and Catherine Feely. Private Roger McSharry (5131) enlisted with the Connaught Rangers, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, in Edinburgh. He was killed in action in Mesopotamia on 21 January, 1916. He was 25 years of age. His name appears on the Basra Memorial in Iraq.

By the end of 1915, enthusiasm for the war cooled as reports of the slaughter in the trenches reached Ireland with no sight of an end to

## Gerry Fox

the conflict. This lack of enthusiasm resulted in the National Volunteers going into a steady decline with falling attendances and less frequent activities. Also, there was a fall in the number of Irish recruits coming forward to join the British army. Many eligible candidates, particularly, from among the farming community had emigrated to America in order to avoid conscription. Redmond and the I.P.P. were losing their grip on nationalist Ireland.

During March, 1916, conscription was introduced in Britain but not in Ireland. The Irish Volunteers, led by Eoin McNeill, refused to enlist in the British Army. They continued to drill and parade, and were organised along more military lines. The Irish Volunteers were infiltrated by members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.). The I.R.B. were convinced from the beginning of the war that the opportunity for a rebellion, using the Irish Volunteers, must not be allowed to pass.



*House at Laghty Barr, Glenfarn, where Sean McDermott was born.*

On 24 April, 1916, the Easter Rising commenced in Dublin. It was organised by members of the I.R.B. with the support of a small number of Irish Volunteers. Sean McDermott from Kiltyclogher was one of the leaders. Within a week, the rising had been defeated by the British Army.



*Sean McDermott.*

Sean McDermott (also known by the Irish translation of his name, Sean MacDiarmada) was born on 27 January, 1883 in Laghty Barr, Glenfarn, just outside of Kiltyclogher. This area is locally known as Corranmore. He was one of ten children born to Daniel McDermott and Mary McMorrow. Sean was nine years old when his mother died on 3 March, 1892. Following a short time in Edinburgh, Scotland, he returned home before moving to live in Belfast. He joined the Dungannon Clubs, a semi-literary, semi-political society, followed by the I.R.B. and then Sinn Fein. He became director of elections for Charles J. Dolan during his unsuccessful 1908 by-election campaign. He became the national organiser for the I.R.B. and travelled around the country organising and recruiting on behalf of the I.R.B.<sup>5</sup>

After the failed Easter Rising, all of the leaders, including Sean McDermott, were executed. He was executed on 12 May, 1916. He was 33 years old.

Locally, people were critical and not supportive of the actions of the republicans who had taken part in the Easter Rising. William Meehan (Drumgane) claimed that the people of Ballaghameehan parish thought that the rising was daft.<sup>6</sup> However, the execution of the Easter Rising leaders, including McDermott, and the arrest of local Sinn Fein sympathisers were critical factors in transforming public opinion. William Meehan's home was raided by the R.I.C. and British military during May, 1916, because of the family's support for Sinn Fein. Widespread state repression in the wake of the Easter Rising and the failure to deliver Home Rule spelt the death knell for the Irish Parliamentary Party. Support for Sinn Fein was on the rise.

During November, 1916, there was a High Mass held in Kiltyclogher Roman Catholic Church for Sean McDermott. There were twenty priests in attendance. Large crowds travelled from north Leitrim, Fermanagh, Cavan and Sligo to attend the service.

Local Sinn Fein sympathisers, James N. Dolan, Thomas Gilgunn, John Daly and Ben Maguire were released from prison during Christmas 1916. The released prisoners set about reorganising the political and military arms of Sinn Fein. Over the next two years, a highly organised, younger and more energetic group of idealists wrestled control of Irish nationalism with relative ease from an aging and disorganised Irish Parliamentary Party.<sup>7</sup>

During 1917, Dolan and Maguire established Sinn Fein clubs all over north Leitrim, including one in Ballaghameehan parish. The strategy was to form Irish Volunteer structures to co-exist alongside the Sinn Fein clubs. There had been a Sinn Fein organisation in the parish nine years previously but it had lapsed. As had been the case nine years earlier, most of the support for Sinn Fein came from the Glenaniff area.

According to William Meehan, a volunteer group was established in the parish of Ballaghameehan during April, 1917. Many young men

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joined the volunteers but their parents did not approve of this. On 10 April, 1918, the British Government extended conscription to Ireland. As a result, volunteer companies throughout Leitrim saw an influx of recruits. According to John McMorrogh, when training commenced the volunteers used hurleys and sticks as they had no arms available to use. They trained at Glenaniff school every Sunday.<sup>8</sup>

The Irish Volunteers, Glenaniff, were the military wing of Sinn Fein between April, 1917, and the end of 1919, in Ballaghameehan parish. The battalion officer commanding (O.C.) was Lieutenant John Wilson, Manorhamilton. The company captain was Edward Connolly, Aghnahaha, and the first lieutenant was James Rooney (Lissiniska).

By the time that the 1918 general election came around, Sinn Fein was a very effective political organisation at local level. For the first time in history women over thirty years of age could vote. Sinn Fein ensured that every eligible voter was registered by undertaking a plebiscite in each parish. In some parishes, they also used the plebiscite to carry out a house-to-house collection to raise funds. Many United Irish League supporters transferred allegiance to Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein selected James N. Dolan as their candidate for the Leitrim constituency, with Ben Maguire acting as his director of elections. James Nicholas Dolan was born in Manorhamilton on 16 October, 1884. He was a son of John Dolan and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick. His brother Charles Joseph had unsuccessfully contested the 1908 by-election on behalf of Sinn Fein. James N. Dolan was one of five men from the Manorhamilton area who were interned in Frongoch, north Wales, after the 1916 Easter Rising, although they had played no part in it.

The Irish Parliamentary Party struggled to find a candidate to contest the election in Leitrim. Eventually, they selected a Longford

man named Gerald Farrell. The general election was held on 14 December, 1918. Although, in jail in England, Dolan won the election by a landslide, polling 85% of the electorate. Sinn Fein's electoral success throughout Ireland was driven by events between 1916 and 1918, leading to a change in political allegiance in the wider electorate.

After the 1918 election success, Sinn Fein established an alternative parliament, Dail Eireann, in Dublin. The Dail, immediately, set about establishing an alternative government and civil administration to that of the British. Over the next three years, it successfully implemented separate systems of local government and judicial administration in Ireland.

In 1919, a Sinn Fein marching band was formed in Glenaniff. The bass drum was played by John McGuinness (Derrynahimmirk ) with Patrick Bredin (Aghnahaha) as relief bass drummer. The side drummers were John Deery (Larganhugh), James Connolly (Conwal North), John Regan (Aghnahaha) and Patrick McGoey (Lissiniska). The flute players were Hugh Bredin (Lissiniska), Patrick McGowan (Corlea), Owen McGowan (Drungan), John Sheeran (Ardagh Sheeran), William Parkes (Conray), Patrick Maguire (Corlea), Joseph Rooney (Lissiniska), Patrick McGuinness (Conwal North), James Bredin (Aghnahaha), Malachy McGowan (Drungan), Thomas McGuinness (Aghnahoo) and James McGowan.

Patrick Bredin was secretary of the Glenaniff Sinn Fein club. He was also responsible for ordering and storing the band equipment in his house. The cost of the band equipment was paid with the proceeds of two Sinn Fein dances held in Ballaghameehan Hall which raised £48. Band practice took place each Sunday outside of Glenaniff national school. The band played at all of the local Sinn Fein rallies until 1921, when the band ceased its activities due to the threat posed by the Black and Tans.

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Tunes played by the Sinn Fein marching band included:

A Nation Once Again.

Killarney.

Let Erin Remember.

O'Donnell Abu.

The Boys of Wexford.

The Harp that once.

The Ship that never returned.

The Soldiers Song.

The Wearing of the Green.

Wrap the Green Flag.

‘The Soldiers Song’ was later to become the Irish National Anthem.<sup>9</sup>

## Chapter 15 The War of Independence.

The Ballaghameehan company of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army did not see any military action during the period of their existence. They burned down the vacant R.I.C. barracks at Gubalaun on 12 May, 1920. It had been vacated during 1918. According to William Meehan, officer commanding (O.C.) Ballaghameehan company, '*there was nothing to hit there, no military places or R.I.C.*'<sup>1</sup> This account of events is verified by John McMorro, Aghnahaha, who claimed that the Ballaghameehan company of the I.R.A. were never in a battle at all. John McMorro had a great knowledge of local history.<sup>2</sup>

Other activities carried out by the Ballaghameehan company of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army included digging up roads to frustrate the British military and R.I.C., canvassing for Sinn Fein during elections, censoring mail and raiding shops for Belfast goods. They helped discourage recruitment to R.I.C. However, while there was no recruitment from the parish of Ballaghameehan between 1913 and 1920, five men applied to join the R.I.C. during the recruitment campaign for the Black and Tan auxiliaries. Two were former soldiers and two came from families who had members in the R.I.C. The other person failed the R.I.C. medical.

One of those men was Francis William Gilmartin, Mautiagh, who joined the R.I.C. on 5 March, 1920. He was stationed in Co. Tyrone. Sometime before the truce on 11 July, 1921, he returned home on holiday. Next day, a party of R.I.C. officers visited him. In doing so they were guarding him.

According to John McMorro, Aghnahaha, the I.R.A. planned to attack Francis William Gilmartin because he was a R.I.C. officer. However, he was tipped off and he left the area. This suited the local I.R.A. members as they did not want their houses to be burned down

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or to get arrested in retaliation by the Black and Tans. Francis William Gilmartin did not return home until after the R.I.C. had been disbanded on 24 May, 1922. When he returned, there was no remarks passed by his neighbours about his R.I.C. career and there was never anything done to him.<sup>3</sup> On 23 May, 1923, his brother Michael Patrick Gilmartin joined 'The Civic Guards,' later known as An Garda Síochána.

The Dail loans were lunched in the autumn of 1919, so as to obtain financial support for the alternative government. Levies were placed on households within the parish. The volunteers collected the Dail loans. Later, the I.R.A. levy, as it was also called, was increased from 6d to £1 in the Ballaghameehan area. In January, 1921, Leitrim County Council was struggling to generate income. The councillors decided to sell the dispensaries and board of guardian houses in Drumahaire and Manorhamilton. This decision generated much local opposition from both within and outside of the council chamber. James McGurrin (Cartrongibbagh), vice chairman of both the Manorhamilton Rural District Council and Manorhamilton Board of Guardians, observed that *"if we are to sell those houses, and next year we are again in financial difficulties and sell something else, we will soon have nothing to sell, and when things are settled down, we will have to build and get into some property again."*<sup>4</sup>

One of the most remarkable achievements of the Dail was the establishment of republican courts, which were organised by the party's branches and local executives in a three-tiered structure of parish, district and circuit courts. As part of the administration of justice, local volunteers took an active part in the enforcement of court decisions. Volunteers throughout the county were also involved in a range of activities, notably area patrols, recovery of stolen property, public house licence enforcement and traffic duties.<sup>5</sup>

According to John McMorrow, the Ballaghameehan company of volunteers were involved in compelling recognition of the Dail

courts and enforcing court decrees. The court sat in Ballaghameehan Hall but there were not many cases ever tried there. On one occasion a local man wanted to bring a case before Kiltyclogher British Court. He was detained against his will by volunteers until the court session had ended so that the case could not proceed. The purpose of this action was to discourage people from using the British courts.

Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) structures replaced those of the Irish Volunteers from 1919 onwards. During the early years, the I.R.A. structures were very fluid and subject to constant change. The Ballaghameehan company became D Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo No.1 Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army.<sup>6</sup> The other companies which made up the battalion included Manorhamilton, Glenfarn, Kiltyclogher, Duagh, Mullies, Killargue and Glencar. The Commanding Officer was Philip Gilgunn, Boleyboy, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. The Vice Commander was James O'Rourke, Laghty, Glenfarn, Co. Leitrim. The Adjutant Commander was James Rooney, Main Street, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. The Quarter Master was Philip Rooney, Tully, Glenade, Co. Leitrim. On 1 July, 1921, there were further changes to the Sligo brigade. The 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion became the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

When the I.R.A. structures were established in Ballaghameehan, the company captain was John McGuinness, (Derrynahimmirk). William Meehan (Drumgane) became company captain during November, 1920. The first lieutenant was James Rooney (Lissiniska).

On 11 July, 1921, a truce was agreed between the leaders of the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) and the British government. On that date the Ballaghameehan Company was attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army.<sup>7</sup>

The Captain of the Ballaghameehan Company was William Meehan, Drumgane. The 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant was John Daly. He was replaced by James Rooney, Lissiniska. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant was John McSharry,

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Carrowreevagh. The Adjutant was Owen McGowan, Drungan. There were also 30 volunteers in the company, of which half of the members came from Glenaniff.

In November, 1921, the Ballaghameehan Company was transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. The other companies in this battalion were Broade, Cashel, Garrison, Latoon and Toura in south Fermanagh. William Meehan, Drumgane, replaced Sean Carty, Garrison, as the commanding officer of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army.

Following the outbreak of civil war on 28 June, 1922, most of the members of the Ballaghameehan company and all members of the Fermanagh companies of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion backed the Free State government. Those who remained supported the anti-treaty side during the civil war. The anti-treaty military structure included Officer Commanding, William Meehan, Drumgane. The captain was James Rooney, Lissiniska. The 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant was Patrick Connolly, Carrowkeel. Only 8 volunteers remained in the company. They were John Spear (Derrynahimmirk), John McGuinness (Derrynahimmirk), Edward Harte (Derrynahimmirk), Thomas Meehan (Drumgane), Francis Patrick Gallagher (Gortnaderrary), Denis Connolly (Carrowkeel), Bartley O'Rourke (Gubalaun) and Charles Murphy (Tawnaleck). The anti-treaty members of the Ballaghameehan company were not actively involved in the civil war.

While there was no military action in the parish of Ballaghameehan, one family, whose parents came from the parish, was the victim of both the War of Independence and the civil war. James Connolly, Unshinagh, Kinlough, was the only person who lost his life during the War of Independence in north Leitrim. He was 70 years old. James Connolly was born on 19 July, 1850, in the townland of Unshinagh, a few miles outside of Kinlough. His parents originally came from the parish of Ballaghameehan. His father Ned was born in Glenaniff and his mother Mary Gilligan was born in the townland

of Cartrongibbagh. James Connolly succeeded his father in taking over the running of the family farm. On 3 September, 1884, he married Catherine McGowan from Moneen, Kinlough. They had seven children. James' sons Edward and James junior were very involved in local politics and in the support of Sinn Fein.

James Connolly junior was captain of B Company (Kinlough), 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army. He was co-opted onto Leitrim County Council in 1920.<sup>8</sup> On 6 August, 1920, which was the Fair Day in Kinlough, he was observed by the R.I.C. acting with three others as I.R.A. police. They were wearing white armbands bearing the letters I.R.A. Owing to the large crowd at the fair, the R.I.C. considered it unwise to arrest prisoners as the crowd was hostile towards the R.I.C.

On the evening of 13 September, 1920, the Connolly family retired to bed. James senior and his wife Catherine and their daughter Margaret slept in one room. Edward shared another room with his brother James. James junior had gone to visit his sister Catherine and her husband John Gilligan in Manorhamilton. He arrived home without waking the other family members at about 1am on the 14 September, 1920.

On 14 September, 1920, Sergeant McClintock and Constable Gartlan from Kinlough R.I.C. barracks were instructed to accompany a body of military to arrest James Connolly junior and the three other men who had been observed acting as I.R.A. police in Kinlough on 6 August, 1920. Captain Small was in charge of the military. They were part of the Bedfordshire Regiment which was headquartered in Finner camp outside of Bundoran. He was accompanied by a sergeant and four soldiers. They arrived at Connolly's house between 4.30am and 5am. The soldiers took up position outside of the house.

James Connolly senior was awoken by loud banging on the door of his home. He got up out of bed and opened the door. He was

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

wearing only a long shirt. The house was in darkness except that the military sergeant carried a lamp. The military captain and the sergeant entered the house followed by Sergeant Robert McClintock. Constable Thomas Gartlan stayed by the door. Captain Small asked James Connolly senior where was his son James. He replied that he was not present as he was in Manorhamilton with his sister. He had not realised that his son had returned home earlier in the morning and was asleep in another room.

James Connolly senior returned to his bedroom. Captain Small and the sergeant rushed after him. Immediately on entering the bedroom, some gun shots rang out. When Sergeant McClintock reached the bedroom, he heard James Connolly say: "*I am shot, send for the priest.*" Captain Small again asked the wounded man where was his son. He replied that he was in Manorhamilton with his sister. Sergeant McClintock went into the bedroom and saw the old man lying on the floor on his back. He asked James Connolly where was he shot and he replied in the breast. Sergeant McClintock was ordered to leave the room by Captain Small who ordered the military to lift the body into the bed. Sergeant McClintock went into another bedroom where he discovered James Connolly junior and he arrested him. Mrs. Connolly asked Captain Small if her son James junior could see his father before he was taken away but he refused. James Connolly senior died from gunshot wounds about twelve hours later that day.

An inquest into the death of James Connolly was held in his own home on 28 September, 1920. This was the second time that the inquest had been scheduled. It was postponed a week earlier because the military did not turn up to give evidence. They failed to attend on this occasion also. After spending many hours listening to the evidence from witnesses who were present in Connolly's house on 14 September, 1920, the following verdict was returned by the jury: '*That the aforesaid James Connolly, aged 70 years, a farmer, died from shock and haemorrhage caused by a revolver bullet wound wilfully inflicted by Captain Small and the military sergeant*

*accompanying him. We find Captain Small and the military sergeant accompanying him guilty of wilful murder of a revolting and brutal character, accentuated by their conduct in not attending the inquiry into the cause of death; and we express our deepest sympathy with the family of the deceased.*<sup>9</sup>



*Memorial erected on the lands of James Connolly at Unshinagh, Kinlough.*

Following his arrest, James Connolly junior was taken to Belfast. On 20 September, 1920, he was court martialled for assuming without authority the duties of police.<sup>10</sup> In early October he was fined £10 and released. On his return from Belfast, he only learned of the death of his father.<sup>11</sup>

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.



*Connolly family grave in Kinlough Old Cemerery.*

Following the acceptance of the Treaty in January, 1922, the British military evacuated Finner Camp. The camp was handed over to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division of the IRA, which was commanded by Captain James Connolly junior of the Kinlough Company. James Connolly junior took charge of the barracks which was headquarters to the Bedfordshire Regiment, members of which killed his father. The only strategic outposts in Donegal occupied by the I.R.A. Executive forces, who were Anti-Treaty, were the former R.I.C. barracks in Ballyshannon and Finner Camp.



*Captain James Connolly Junior seated on car 1922.*

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

On 29 June, 1922, a large party of Free State forces under Commandant Henry McGowan travelled to Finner Camp. They gave an order to surrender, but the small garrison ignored the ultimatum. Later that night the Free State forces attacked the camp. A gun battle ensued for two hours but, having realised their resistance was hopeless, the camp was surrendered. The Finner Camp garrison suffered one fatality, Captain James Connolly from Kinlough. He was 34 years of age.<sup>12</sup>

The following were members of the Ballaghameehan Company attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion (later 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion), No. 1 Sligo Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army.<sup>13</sup>

### **Coolodonnell**

**Edward McKeon** was born on 17 May, 1895, in Coolodonnell. He was a son of John McKeon and Margaret O'Rourke. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were Seamus Devins, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

### **Conray**

**James Clinton** was born in Conray. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Derrynahimmirk**

**Edward Harte** was born on 22 April, 1901, in Derrynahimmirk. He was a son of Edward Harte and Catherine Gilroy. He was a private in the Ballaghameehan Company, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Francis McGrath** was born on 9 May, 1899, in Derrynahimmirk. He was a son of Patrick McGrath and Anne Sheeran. He was Sergeant in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish

## Gerry Fox

Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Rooney, Seamus Devins and William Meehan.

**John McGuinness** was born on 21 April, 1896, in Derrynahimmirk. He was a son of Patrick McGuinness and Mary Rooney. He was a captain in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Fox, James Rooney, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

**John Spear** was born on 12 March, 1891, in Derrynahimmirk. He was a son of Patrick Spear and Bridget Bredin. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Rooney, Philip Gilgunn, James O'Rourke and William Meehan.

## Drumgane

**Thomas Meehan** was born on 8 May, 1898, in Drumgane. He was a son of Terence Meehan and Mary Anne Dolan. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were John Deery, James Fox, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.



*Headstone on grave of William Meehan.*

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

**William Meehan** was born on 22 September, 1896, in Drumgane. He was a son of Terence Meehan and Mary Anne Dolan. William Meehan joined the Volunteers in early 1917. After the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) structures replaced those of the Irish Volunteers, William Meehan was a private in the Ballaghameehan company. He claimed that he was a passenger in a car which took possession of six rifles taken from Belleek R.I.C. barracks on 5 September, 1920, in a daring raid by 40 I.R.A. volunteers. He did not take part in the raid itself but helped to transport the arms to a safe location.

By November, 1920, he was captain of D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army and later he became officer commanding the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion. His commanding officers were James Fox and Philip Gilgunn. He claimed to be part of a Pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty I.R.A. force of seventy-five men who ambushed a patrol of A Specials on the outskirts of Garrison, Co. Fermanagh, on 5 April, 1922. Most members of the I.R.A. unit were Free State soldiers who had the use of a machine gun. The A Specials suffered one fatality, with three members seriously wounded. The mutilated body of Constable Edwin James Plumb was discovered within the parish of Ballaghameehan, close to the border with Co. Fermanagh. On the following day, two clergymen from Co. Fermanagh reclaimed the body of Constable Plumb and took it into Northern Ireland for burial.

When the civil war broke out, William Meehan rejected the Free State government. He went on the run but was captured and interned during 1923.

### **Gortnaderrary**

**Francis Patrick Gallagher** was born on 27 February, 1901, in the townland of Towermore, Garrison, Co. Fermanagh. He was a son of Francis Gallagher and Celia McGourty. He came to live with his grandparents, James and Mary McGourty in Gortnaderrary, after his

mother died in 1901. He was a private in the Ballaghameehan Company, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Lisdarush**

**Michael Dolan** was born on 1 December, 1897, in Lisdarush. He was a son of Thomas Dolan and Ellen O'Rourke. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Thomas Dolan** was born on 10 August, 1883, in Lisdarush. He was a son of John Dolan and Bridget Dolan. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Aghnahaha**

**James Bredin** was born on 4 June, 1901, in Aghnahaha. He was a son of James Bredin and Bridget Sheeran. He was Battalion Engineer in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Fox, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

**Edward Connolly** was born on 14 October, 1890, in Aghnahaha. He was a son of Owen Connolly and Mary Gonley. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Fox, James Rooney, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

### **Carrowkeel**

**Denis Connolly** was born on 12 March, 1898, in Carrowkeel. He was a son of Hugh Connolly and Elizabeth McGuinness. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Rooney, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

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**Patrick Connolly** was born on 14 March, 1893, in Carrowkeel. He was a son of Hugh Connolly and Elizabeth McGuinness. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Patrick Connolly** was born on 12 June, 1899, in Carrowkeel. He was a son of John Connolly and Bridget McEnroy. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Terence Connolly** was born on 17 July, 1900, in Carrowkeel. He was a son of John Connolly and Bridget McEnroy. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**John McGuinness** was born on 12 June, 1900, in Carrowkeel. He was a son of John McGuinness and Julia Boyle. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.



*Service (1917-1921) Medal awarded posthumously to Private John McGuinness, Carrowkeel and later Carrowreevagh, Glenaniff.*

### **Carrowreevagh**

**John McSharry** was born on 21 June, 1900, in Carrowreevagh. He was a son of Denis McSharry and Maria Fox. His brother Patrick was killed in action in France on 17 August, 1918, during World War 1. John McSharry was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James O'Rourke, Philip Gilgunn, William Meehan, Thomas Meehan and James Rooney.

### **Conwal North**

**Francis McGuinness** was born on 13 April, 1900, in Conwal North. He was a son of Thomas McGuinness and Sarah Connolly. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Corlea**

**John Gilligan** was born on 20 August, 1882, in Corlea. He was a son of John Gilligan and Alice Sheeran. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Patrick McGowan** was born on 16 July, 1902, in Corlea. He was a son of James McGowan and Ellen Sheeran. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Thomas McSharry** was born on 3 May, 1893, in Corlea. He was a son of Francis McSharry and Mary McGrath. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**Bernard McSharry** was born on 21 April, 1891, in Corlea. He was a son of Francis McSharry and Mary McGrath. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

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**Hugh O'Rourke** was born on 13 August, 1900, in Corlea. He was a son of John O'Rourke and Catherine Fox. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### Lissiniska

**Patrick Bredin** was born on 9 April, 1886, in Lissiniska. He was a son of Patrick Bredin and Bridget McSharry. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were Seamus Devins, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

**Patrick Bredin** was born on 23 February, 1891, in Lissiniska. He was a son of Hugh Bredin and Margaret Hernan. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**James Rooney** was born on 23 March, 1893, in Lissiniska. He was a son of John Rooney and Bridget Gilligan. He was 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Fox, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

### Mautiagh

**Thomas McGuinness** was born on 8 March, 1904, in Mautiagh. He was a son of Patrick McGuinness and Margaret Roan. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

**James McMorrow** was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Drumanure**

**Philip Gilmartin** was born on 10 December, 1881, in Drumanure. He was a son of John Gilmartin and Margaret Finnegan. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were Liam Pilkington, Philip Gilgunn and William Meehan.

### **Drungan**

**Owen McGowan** was born on 13 February, 1900, in Drungan. He was a son of Edward McGowan and Mary McPartland. He was an Adjutant in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were Seamus Devins and William Meehan.

### **Eden**

**Bartley Clancy** was born on 5 October, 1881, in the townland of Aghaderrard, Kinlough. He was a son of James Clancy and Mary Anne Gilmartin. He came to live with his uncle John Gilmartin in Eden, Rossinver. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Gubalaun**

**Bartley O'Rourke** was born on 1 June, 1897, in Gubalaun. He was a son of Owen O'Rourke and Catherine Harte. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Rooney, Philip Gilgunn, James O'Rourke and William Meehan.

### **Larganhugh**

**John Deery** was born on 15 June, 1893, in Larganhugh. He was a son of Patrick Deery and Mary McSharry. He was a private in D

## Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officer was William Meehan.

### **Tawnaleck**

**Charles Murphy** was born on 8 July, 1891, in Tawnaleck. He was a son of Francis Murphy and Catherine McGowan. He was a private in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. His commanding officers were James Rooney, Philip Gilgunn, James Fox and William Meehan.

There were at least two men from the parish of Ballaghameehan who served for companies from outside of the area.

### **Conray**

**Edward Murray** was born on 8 December, 1900, in Conray. He was a son of Edward Murray and Bridget Connolly. While he was a native of Ballaghameehan parish, he was not a member of the Ballaghameehan company. He was a private in C Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Northern Division, Irish Republican Army. This company was located around Belfast, Co. Antrim. His commanding officers was Seamus Keegan.

### **Corraleskin**

**William John Ferguson** was born on 25 August, 1899, in Corraleskin. He was a son of Patrick Ferguson and Bridget McGowan. While he was a native of Ballaghameehan parish, he was not a member of the Ballaghameehan company. He was a private in C Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. The C Company was located around Kiltyclogher. His commanding officers were James O'Rourke and James Mulligan.

## Gerry Fox

Commanding Officers from outside of the parish of Ballaghameehan:



*James Fox (1889-1974)*

**James Fox** was born on 12 January, 1889, in Brackarymore, Manorhamilton. He was son of Patrick Fox and Bridget McGowan. His mother came from Kinkillew. His uncle Patrick McGowan was a R.I.C. pensioner living in Cartrongibbagh. James Fox (65063) joined the R.I.C. on 16 November, 1909. He was stationed in Limerick. He resigned on 29 April, 1915. While a member of the R.I.C. he had gained valuable experience in drilling and in the use of firearms. He was a captain of A Company (Manorhamilton), 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. He helped train many of the members of D Company (Ballaghameehan), 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army. After the disbandment of the R.I.C. James Fox joined the Civic Guards on 10 March, 1922. He was one of the first Leitrim men to join the Civic Guards, later known as An Garda Siochana.



*Memorial to John Daly and his wife Margaret McDermott erected on the McDermott family vault in Kilmacurl Cemetery.*

John Daly was born on 15 July, 1888, in Dunaree, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan. He was an agricultural instructor in Manorhamilton. He was one of five men from the Manorhamilton area who were interned in Frongoch, north Wales, after the 1916 Rising, although they had played no part in it. For a period of time, he was the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant of the Ballaghameehan company of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, Irish Republican Army.



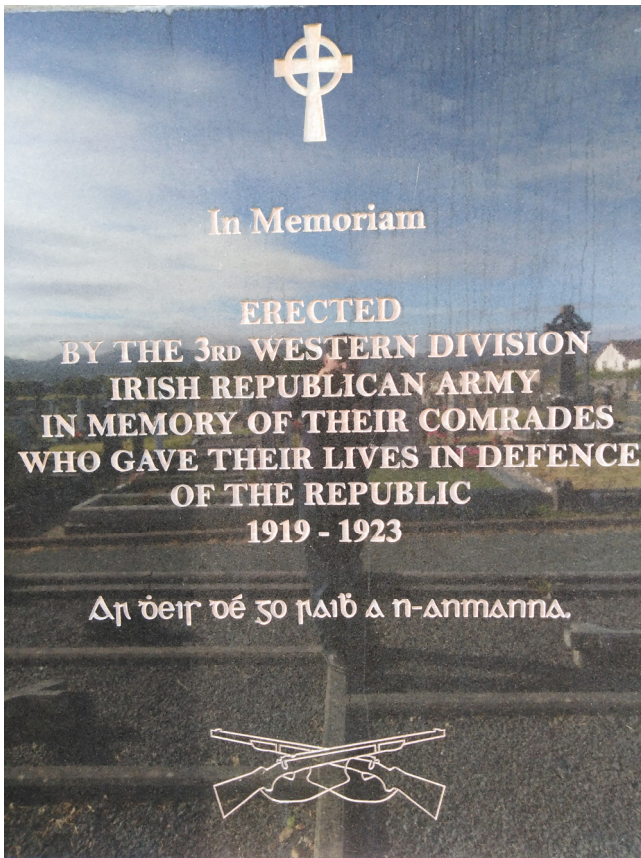
*Memorial to Philip Gilgunn on New Line, Manorhamilton.*

**Philip Gilgunn** was born on 28 November, 1898, in Boleyboy, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. He was son of Thomas Gilgunn and Bridget Gilgunn. His step-sister Bridget was married to Thomas Meehan and they lived in Cartrongibbagh. Philip Gilgunn was Commandant of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army. On 17 November, 1922, Philip Gilgunn led an attack by Anti-Treaty forces on Manorhamilton Post Office. Lieutenant Tennant of the Free State army was leaving the Post Office when the attack commenced. The lieutenant was shot in the jaw but was able to return fire. He shot Philip Gilgunn who died from his wounds on the following day in St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin. He was 23 years of age. Philip Gilgunn was the only Republican casualty of the Civil War to have lost his life within County Leitrim.

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**James Rooney** was born on 25 July, 1893, in Knockacullion, Townylea, Drumkeeran, Co. Leitrim. He was the Adjutant Commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army. He lived in Main Street, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim.

**James O'Rourke** was born on 3 August, 1895, in the townland of Laghty, Glenfarn, Co. Leitrim. He was a son of Francis O'Rourke and Margaret Bredin. He was Vice-Commandant of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army.



*Memorial in Sligo cemetery dedicated to members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, I.R.A. who died during the period 1919-1923.*



*Burial place of Seamus Devins in Sligo Cemetery and other members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division I.R.A. who died during period 1919-1923.*

**Seamus Devins** was born on 25 May, 1888, near Grange, County Sligo. In 1916, he married Mary Ellen Clancy and they had one son. Mary Ellen Clancy was the daughter of an R.I.C. constable. Seamus Devins served as a T.D. in both the second and third Dails. He opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty and voted against it. He was Brigadier of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army. Seamus Devins was killed on Benbulbin Mountain on 20 September, 1922, by Free State forces.

**Liam Pilkington** was born on 2 June, 1894, in Sligo. He served as General of 35<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Sligo Battalion) and later as General Officer Commanding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division, Irish Republican Army between 1917 and 1923. Later in life Liam Pilkington became a Redemptorist priest and served in South Africa and Wales.

## **Chapter 16 The Civic Guards.**

In 1922, the RIC disbanded and a new police force, 'The Civic Guards' (renamed An Garda Síochána na hÉireann on 8 August 1923) was formed by Michael Collins and the Irish Government. The early recruits were I.R.A. volunteers who had backed the 1921 Treaty and supported the Free State government as well as former members of the R.I.C. and British Army who were sympathetic to the establishment of a Free State. Of the first 1,500 recruits, 96% of them were former IRA and pro-Treaty men. However, the officers who were to train and command them had different backgrounds. They were former members of the RIC, men trusted by the first Garda Commissioner Michael Staines and Collins to be loyal and sympathetic to the ideals of the new State, but regarded by their new recruits as the same enemy they had fought during the War of Independence. Because of the backgrounds and training of the RIC men, Staines appointed many of them to the most senior jobs in the Civic Guards.<sup>1</sup>

By the time these former enemies reached their training base in Kildare, the resentment of the IRA men could no longer be contained. A mutiny broke out and the resignations of at least five named officers was demanded. Collins intervened in the mutiny and, characteristically, told the men they could either stay and accept the authority of their officers, or leave. A sweetener of six weeks back pay was also offered and the mutiny soon subsided. A commission of inquiry into the mutiny recommended that the new force be unarmed and non-political. It was a recommendation readily accepted by the government to ensure such a mutiny by armed policemen might not re-occur, but also to ensure the new force would be more acceptable to local communities.

The following men from Ballaghameehan parish joined the The Civic Guard before it was renamed An Garda Síochána.

**John Ferguson** was born in the U.S.A. He came to live with his uncle John Ferguson in Gortnaderrary. John Ferguson (548) joined the Civic Guards on 27 March, 1922. Previously, he was Adjutant in C Company (Kiltyclogher), 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, I.R.A.

**Francis McGrath** was born on 9 May, 1899, in Derrynahimmirk. He was a son of Patrick McGrath and Anne Sheeran. Francis McGrath (549) joined the Civic Guards on 27 March, 1922. Previously, he was Sergeant in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, I.R.A.

**James Bredin** was born on 4 June, 1901, in Aghnahaha. He was a son of James Bredin and Bridget Sheeran. James Bredin (2292) joined the Civic Guards on 9 November, 1922. Previously, he was Battalion Engineer in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, I.R.A.

**Patrick Bredin** was born on 29 October, 1899, in Aghnahaha. He was a son of James Bredin and Bridget Sheeran. Patrick Bredin (4204) joined the Civic Guards on 26 April, 1923. Previously, he was Adjutant in D Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Sligo Brigade, I.R.A.

**Michael Patrick Gilmartin** was born on 17 April, 1899, in Mautiagh. He was a son of Francis Gilmartin and Catherine Anne Dolan. Michael Patrick Gilmartin (3479) joined the Civic Guards on 23 May, 1923. Previously, he had served as a Corporal with the Royal Fusiliers in 1918.

**John Joseph Gilbride** was born on 17 April, 1904, in England. He returned home with his widowed father, John, to live with his grandparents Edward and Catherine Gilbride in Gubalaun. John Joseph Gilbride (4548) joined the Civic Guards on 30 May, 1923. Previously, he had served as a private with a regimen of the British Army.

**Appendix A**

A Rental of the Lands of Owen Wynne (1755-1841 Esq. held under the See of Kilmore (Ballaghameehan) in the County of Leitrim for the 29 September 1798.

Townland	Tenants Name
Barrs	Bredin, J. McGowan
Conray	McGurrin
Coolodonnell	Whittaker
Cartrongibbagh	Rogan
Derrynahimmirk	John Johnston
Druminargid	Gilligan J. Whittaker
Gortnacrieve	Glancy
Gubnageer	Maguire
Gubmanus	Sweeney
Kinkillew	Clarke
Lattone	J. Whittaker
Lisdarush	Dolan
Raheelin	Cox
Shasmore	J. Johnston, Hurst

**Appendix B**

A Rental of the Lands of Owen Wynne (1755-1841) Esq. held under the See of Kilmore (Ballaghameehan) in the County of Leitrim for the 29 September 1807.

Townland	Tenants Name	
Cartrongibbagh	Edward McGurrin	
	Cormac Gilligan	
	Daniel Mulhern	
	Matthew Rooney	
	Edward McMurray	
	James Rogan	
	James Downey	
	James Mulhern	
	Conray	William Ward
		Garry Ward
James McGorrin		
Patrick McGorrin		
Thady O'Rourke		
Hugh O'Rourke		
Widow O'Rourke		
Widow Fox		
Andrew Croal		

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

	Peter Sweeney
	John Murray
Coolodonnell	John McKeon
	John Whittaker Senior
	John Britton
	John Whittaker Junior
	Denis Gallagher
	Patrick Gallagher
	James Murray
Corraleskin	Charles O'Rourke
	Owen O'Rourke
	Patrick O'Rourke
	James O'Rourke
	James O'Rourke
	Thady Fergus
	Alexander Johnston
	Francis Gallagher
	Bryan Campbell
	Michael Dolan
	Phelim McGowan
Derrynahimmirk	John Carson

Gerry Fox

	John Carson Junior
	Myles McKeon
	J. Boyd
	Thomas McGrath
	Philip Harte
	John Meehan
	Darby Rooney
	John Meehan
	John Gallagher
Druminargid	Robert Downey
	Robert Armstrong
	William Britton
	Widow Keenan
	Patrick McNulty
	Bryan O'Rourke
	Terence Meehan
Drumgane	Mary Bredin
	James Bredin
	Terence O'Rourke
Gortnaderrary	James Maguire
	Widow Ferguson

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

	Henry Ferguson
	William Ferguson
	Terence Maguire
	Charles Maguire
	Denis O'Rourke
	Michael Meehan
	John Meehan
	Denis Maguire
	Hugh Meehan
Gortnacrieve	James Gildea
	Matthew Kerrigan
	Michael McGowan
	Charles Clancy
	Patrick McGowan
	Farrell Gilroy
	Manus Henry
	Patrick Henry
	Patrick Henry Junior
Gubmanus	William Ferguson
	John Sweeney
	Thady Meehan

Gerry Fox

	Thomas Meehan
	Owen Sweeney
Gubnageer	Redmond Maguire
	John Ferguson
	Myles Sweeney
	John Ferguson
	John Ferguson
	Marty Owens
	Roger Maguire
	Thomas Flanagan
Kinkillew	Thomas McLoughlin
	Daniel McKeon
	John O'Neill
	James McKeon
	William McGowan
	John Meehan
	Patrick Keaveney
	Philip Scott
	Neil Fox
	John Harte
Lattone	Charles Ferguson

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

	Thomas Meehan
	James Paterson
	Peter Sweeney
	John Maguire
	Patrick Owens
	John Meehan
	Patrick O'Rourke
	James Rogan
	Patrick Ferguson
	John Carson
	Patrick Bredin
	James Meehan
Lisdarush	James Boylan
	Francis Hurst
	James Fox
	James Dolan
	Patrick Dolan
	Thomas Irwin
	John Dolan
	Mountain
Raheelin	Patrick McGowan

## Gerry Fox

	Laurence McPartland
	Mary Cox
	Cornelius Cox
	Neil Mulhern
	William Ferguson
	John McGowan
	Edward Rooney
	Patrick McGowan
Shasmore	John Fox
Tullyderrin	John McGowan Terence McGowan Thomas McGowan Bartholomew McGowan
	Francis Meehan Patrick Meehan William Meehan
Tullyshehery	William Clancy Thomas Gallagher
	Daniel Gilligan
	John Gallagher
	John Whittaker

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

	John Irwin
	James Gilligan
	Bryan McNulty
	John Gilroy
	Patrick McNulty
	Patrick Monaghan
	Hugh Monaghan
	Thomas McNulty

**Appendix C**

Some of the R.I.C. officers who served in Gubalaun Barracks between 1885 and 1918.<sup>1</sup>

Number	Rank	Name	Birth County
25656	Sergeant	Michael Jackson	Donegal
39505	Sergeant	Thomas McCormack	Mayo
41832	Sergeant	John Joyce	Galway
44876	Sergeant	Patrick Glynn	Clare
45360	Sergeant	Alexander Hood	Sligo
48693	Constable	Michael Connolly	Roscommon
48924	Constable	George Miller	Tipperary
49546	Constable	John McGowan	Westmeath
49635	Sergeant	John Raftery	Roscommon
49994	Constable	Matthew Mulligan	Meath
54080	Constable	John Foynes	Kildare
55364	Constable	John Gettings	Longford
55552	Constable	John Keaney	Sligo
55603	Constable	Charles Walker	Longford
55606	Constable	Thomas Gillan	Sligo
56038	Constable	Laurence Flattley	Sligo

Ballaghameehan Parish, County Leitrim 1800-1922.

56133	Sergeant	Edward Martin	Fermanagh
56192	Sergeant	Michael McGlynn	Tyrone
56485	Constable	Thomas Reidy	Clare
58933	Constable	Frederick McDermott	Monaghan
61019	Constable	Michael McGinley	Donegal
62815	Constable	David Maxwell	Donegal
62975	Constable	Joseph Duignan	Roscommon
63528	Constable	Francis McHugh	Mayo
63645	Constable	Patrick Frain	Roscommon
65472	Constable	Patrick Mocklare	Galway
66883	Constable	Thomas Gartlan	Monaghan
67796	Constable	Thomas Brophy	Westmeath
69448	Constable	Richard Clinton	Clare

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### Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> Spelling of placenames and townlands taken from Townlands.ie.

<sup>2</sup> Note: The townlands in the electoral division of Glenaniff also include Cornagillagh, Cloghmeen, Fallcarra, Mullies, Rassaun East and Rassaun West. These townlands belong to Killasnet parish.

<sup>3</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. The Sligo Champion, 1998. p.63.

### Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim. 1994. p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim. 1994. p.60.

<sup>3</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim. 1994. p.52.

### Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim. 1994. pp.48-50.

<sup>2</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim. 1994. p.47.

<sup>3</sup> Hopper K. Theodore, Ireland since 1800 Conflict and Conformity, Second Edition, 1999. p.39.

### Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim. 1994. pp.50, 51.

<sup>2</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. The Sligo Champion, 1998. P.32.

## Chapter 5

<sup>1</sup> Hinde Wendy, *Catholic Emancipation: A Shake to Men's Minds* (1992).

<sup>2</sup> Article dated 28 January, 1828, in *The Daily Morning Register*.

<sup>3</sup> Guthrie-Jones Winston, *The Wynne's of Sligo and Leitrim*. 1994. pp.47, 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette*, 20 March, 1830.

<sup>5</sup> *Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette*, 10 January, 1824.

<sup>6</sup> *Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette*, 29 July, 1824.

<sup>7</sup> *Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette*, 19 March, 1825.

<sup>8</sup> *The Athlone Sentinel*, 3 December, 1841.

## Chapter 6

<sup>1</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. *The Sligo Champion*, 1998. pp.22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Letter dated 8 Dec, 1831, from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the *Enniskillen Chronical and Erin Packet*.

<sup>3</sup> MacKiernan Francis J., *Diocese of Kilmore Bishops and Priests 1136-1988*. Breifne Historical Society, 1989. p.178.

<sup>4</sup> Address for Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire on letter to *Sligo Journal* dated 7 December, 1832.

<sup>5</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. *The Sligo Champion*, 1998. p.26.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis Samuel, *Topographical Dictionary*, 1837.

<sup>7</sup> Letter dated 29 November, 1831, from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the *'Enniskillen Chronical and Erin Packet*.

<sup>8</sup> Postscript to Letter dated 29 November, 1831, from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the *'Enniskillen Chronical and Erin Packet*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> Letter dated 29 November, 1831, from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the *'Enniskillen Chronical and Erin Packet*.

<sup>11</sup> Letter dated 7 December, 1832, from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the *Sligo Journal*.

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- <sup>12</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. The Sligo Champion, 1998. p.36.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid. p.36.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid. p.36.
- <sup>15</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. The Sligo Champion, 1998. p.31.
- <sup>16</sup>Postscript to Letter dated 29 November, 1831, from Rev. Fr. Francis Maguire to the 'Enniskillen Chronical and Erin Packet.
- <sup>17</sup> McGorin J&M and McGuinness A&B, Ballaghameehan Parish Church. Published by Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir in Rossinver Braes, 1995. pp. 31, 32, 33.
- <sup>18</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. The Sligo Champion, 1998. p.36.
- <sup>19</sup> deBreadun Una and Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir, Ballaghameehan and St. Aidan's 1831-1998. The Sligo Champion, 1998. p.56.
- <sup>20</sup> MacGabhann M&S, Rossinver Chapel. Published by Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir in Rossinver Braes, 1995. pp. 40, 41.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.41.
- <sup>22</sup> Regan, Teresa, Glenaniff Chapel. Published by Cumann Seanchais Ros Inbhir in Rossinver Braes, 1995. pp. 45, 46.
- <sup>23</sup> MacKiernan Francis J., Diocese of Kilmore, Bishops and Priests 1136 – 1988. Breifne Historical Society, 1990.
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