



THE NOLAN

The Newsletter of the O'Nolan Clan Family Association



December 2006

Issue 17

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Childhood Reminiscences in Carlow

My father, Matthew Nolan or Matt as he was better known, was born in 1910, the eldest son of Michael Nolan, Ballaghmore (three miles from Myshall) Co. Carlow.

His chosen career was secondary teaching and as a result we spent three wonderfully happy months of every summer holiday during the 1940's and early 1950's in Ballaghmore. Matt was a historian and I'd like to share some of the stories he told me as a child.

Matt, his siblings and all the local children from neighboring farms and cottages around walked the three miles to school in Myshall every day. In winter they wore boots, in good weather they walked barefoot. Footwear was expensive and was often passed down, much repaired, from one child to the next. All the children did the same, whether from farms or labourers' cottages. Matt often boasted that as a result, they all had very healthy feet, no athletes' foot, etc.

He showed me the spot, near his own home, where in Penal times there was a hedge school and it was said about two thousand children over the years had attended it.

The population was much larger then and many eked out a miserable existence with their potatoes and whatever bit of seasonal work they could get from local farms. He pointed out the fields in his own farm, where, when ploughing, they had discovered the remains of the miserable homes of these poor and landless. These people

disappeared in Famine times, presumably with their passage paid to America by landlords wishing to clear the land. The landlords only wanted those who could pay rent!

Matt spoke with deep affection of the schoolmaster Mr. Molyneaux. This caring, scholarly man had a good knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek and was willing to pass on this learning to any interested child. Matt was one such child.

He stayed in every evening after school and by the time he was twelve, he had a good grasp of those languages then necessary for entrance to university.

As a result of these studies, he was awarded a scholarship to Knockbeg. His very religious mother would have had hopes of the priesthood. From Knockbeg, he got another scholarship to Rockwell and thence one to University College Dublin.

When he got his first scholarship, the old schoolmaster was so delighted, he carried Matt shoulder high around the school play yard.

Large families are a thing of the past. The roads and country lanes no longer ring with the voices of those barefoot children walking the miles to school. Mr. Molyneaux had long, long, even before I was born, gone to his reward.

Ar dheis De go rabh a anam.

Mary (Nolan) Fitzsimons

**O’Nolan Clan
Family Association**

**Chief – Mary
(Nolan) Fitzsimons**
"Orion", Crosschapple
Blessington, Co. Wicklow
Republic of Ireland

TEL: +44 (117) 9737992

**Secretary – Eamonn
Fitzsimons**
(same address as above)

eamon.fitzsimons@dit.ie

**Treasurers & Membership
– Sean & Mai Nolan**
Ardattin, Co. Carlow
Republic of Ireland

TEL: +353 (59) 91 55666

Editor - Roger Nowlan
222 Ave. De La Colline
Gatineau, Quebec
J9J 1T8 Canada
FAX : +1(819) 684-6321
nowlan@primus.ca

TEL: +1 (819) 684-2535
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Editorial views and
opinions expressed in
this publication are not
necessarily those of the
Clan association.

Greetings to all clan members!

Beannachtai na Feile Nollag,
is gach dea-ghui i gcomhair
na h-athbliana.

Christmas blessings and Best
wishes for the coming year.

Looking forward to keeping in touch
with you all in 2007.

From your Clan Chief,

Mary (Nolan) Fitzsimons



In Brief ...

In this Issue ...

The dominant theme of the current newsletter is our recollections of the past and the sense of union we feel with those who came before us. Our new chief, Mary Fitzsimons, provides us with some of her childhood reminiscences from growing up in Carlow and my cousin Paul, in “A Message through Time”, reflects upon the feelings that his emigrant ancestor might have felt upon leaving Ireland and settling in Atlantic Canada.

For my part, I have included a research article on the early history of the Shangarry Nolans of Carlow which I believe sheds new light on the origins of the three Nowlan brothers, John, James and William, who emigrated to Virginia around 1700.

This being Christmastime what would the Newsletter be without a good Christmas story and I am happy to oblige with a “A Christmas for Grandmother”, a wonderful story

written by Michael O. Nowlan, one of our members from Atlantic Canada. The New Year will also soon be upon us and, in that spirit, I have included a short reflection on living life to the fullest entitled “Now Never Waits”. It is not from me but it is one which my wife, Rosie, and I once clipped out of a school newsletter – source unknown.

A review of Nolans in Professional Sports by David Bryan Nolan, a primer on DNA Testing for Nolans by myself and a report on our September 2006 Clan Gathering round out the Newsletter.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the newsletter and that you will consider submitting an article for the next Newsletter. You will find my particulars in the border column on the left side of this page. In the meantime, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Roger Nowlan – Newsletter Editor

2006 Nolan Clan Gathering – A New Beginning

On the morning of Saturday, September 16, 2006, Nolan Clan members with family and friends from Ireland, England and Canada met at the Mount Wolseley Hilton Hotel in county Carlow to renew old friendships, make new ones and catch up on items of common interest. After a bit of socializing over coffee and biscuits, the group moved on to Rathwood House, near Tullow, for lunch.

In the afternoon, attendees branched out in groups each according to their own preferences, including visits to local sites of interest.

In the early evening, the group reassembled at the Talbot Hotel near Carlow town for coffee, cake and general socializing. Executive members of the clan also had a chance to catch up on outstanding issues.

After a report from the treasurer the outgoing Chief proceeded to thank all who helped with clan activities over the past two years and appointed Mary Fitzsimons (née Nolan) of Blessington, Co. Wicklow, the new Chief. Pa Nolan of Dublin was appointed Tanaiste (chief-in-waiting) and Sean and Mai Nolan of Ardattin volunteered to continue on as joint-treasurers. Roger Nowlan volunteered to continue on as Newsletter editor but relinquished his role as secretary in favour of Eamonn Fitzsimons, the new Chief's husband, whom he felt would be in a better position to assist the Chief in her duties over the next couple of years.

The goals and aspirations of the Clan were also revised to more properly reflect the nature of the Clan as a Family Association, dropping assistance with genealogical research from the list of benefits of membership. When such assistance is needed, it is expected that members will help each other as has been done in the past, for example by Roger Nowlan through his website [Editor's Note: For those without Internet access, Roger's mail address and full particulars are to be found on page 2].

The revised goals and aspirations of the Clan are now as follows:

- To organize a Clan Gathering every two years, providing members with the opportunity to meet and socialize with Nolans from Ireland and around the world
- To publish a Clan Newsletter at least once a year, containing articles of interest to those with a Nolan family heritage and providing a vehicle for members to share news and facts of common interest.
- To preserve the history and oral tradition of Nolan families, regardless of their origins; a recent example of this sort of effort is the book entitled "O Nolan - the History of a People" written under the sponsorship of the Clan.

After some discussion, to better serve the interests of the clan, Roger Nowlan, proposed that the current <http://onolanclan.org> website return to its original status prior to 2004 i.e. a personal "personal" website. The new revised website, while still maintaining a section reserved for the posting of information about the Nolan Clan and for archiving past Newsletters, would continue with its focus on genealogical research and the documentation of early Nolan family stories. [Editor's Note: The new website is up and running and is found at <http://nolanfamilies.org>]

To facilitate membership renewals it was also agreed that the membership fee for those outside of Ireland and the UK should be fixed as opposed to dependent upon the currency market. The membership renewal fee due January 1st, latest March 17th, is still 10 Euros for those in Ireland and the UK. For members in the US, Canada and Australia, the one-year renewal fees are \$13 USD, \$15 CAD and \$17 AUD respectively. [Editor's Note: For your convenience, a membership renewal form included is attached to the newsletter.]

O'Nolan Clan Ò Nuallàin



Membership Application / Renewal Form

I wish to join (*or renew my membership # _____ in*) the O'Nolan Clan, a voluntary, non-profit organisation, relying upon its members for fund-raising, organizing clan activities and recruiting new members.

I understand that membership is open to anyone who supports the goals and aspirations of the clan:

- To organize a Clan Gathering every second year
- To publish a Clan Newsletter at least once a year
- To preserve the history and oral traditions of Nolan families, regardless of their origins.

I also understand that membership dues are to be paid upon joining and, thereafter, at the beginning of each calendar year, prior to March 17. The yearly membership fee per household, in known **local currencies** of interest, is currently 10 Euros, \$13 USD, \$15 CAD or \$17 AUD. For other local currencies, the membership fee is the equivalent of 10 Euros in that currency. To save on postage and service charges, I may also choose to pay for more than one year at a time.

Enclosed is a **personal cheque in my local currency made out to "Sean Nolan - Nolan Clan"** in the amount of _____ as payment for _____ year(s) membership in the clan.

For clan records and to help with administration, my particulars (*or revisions thereto*) are:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Co./State/Prov. _____ Country/Postal/ZIP Code _____

Age _____ Telephone _____ E-Mail Address _____

Other family members _____

Post To:

**Sean Nolan
Rathnarrin,
Ardattin, County Carlow
Republic of IRELAND**

***** Thank You for your Support! *****

Date: 2006-12-06