

MARY AND TIM O'DONNELL OF RAHIN

By Kay (Kathleen) O'Donnell

It was in the late 1930s when for the first time in almost a century a new house was being built in Rahin, a small townland which up to that time comprised of just seven houses together with a Great House, often referred to as “Rahin House” or “The Castle”. This new build would become home to Mary and Tim O'Donnell. Mary being Mary Ryan from the Old Road, whose sister, Katie, was a housekeeper at Mayor Seoirse Clancy's home at the time of his assassination.

Tim hailed from Fedamore. They soon settled in their new home and were immediately welcomed by all their neighbours. It was here that their four surviving children would grow up, three boys and one girl. Mary did the laundry for Madame and Colonel RL Galloway, who resided at Lough Gur House. When one remembers that those were pre rural electrification days, doing the laundry entailed a lot of hard work. The tub and the washing board were labour intensive enough, but the ironing was a nightmare. Heating the old irons in the open fire and ensuring no black specks got on the starched white laundry was a challenge. Otherwise, the process would have to start all over again!

Tim worked at Joe Hogan's farm at Holycross. The Hogans also ran a thriving post office there at that time, no landlines – never mind mobiles – in those days, and important messages would be relayed by telegram through the post office. Joe Hogan also had a field in Rahin from where Tim drew the hay to Holycross by horse and hay float. All the local children would enjoy rides at the rear of the float as far as Grange Cross, where they would ‘jump off’ and walk home.

Not too long after moving into the new home, Tim, who was an excellent gardener, had a wonderful flower garden to the front and a vegetable garden to the rear, which was the envy of many. Tim would also be described as a man who



Mary and Tim O'Donnell, Rahin.

had great taste and to complement his wonderful flower garden, he encased the front wall of the house and panels in the boundary wall with a sort of red cement. On to this cement were fastened pieces of glass and china of all colours, shapes and sizes. The neighbours all found a home for their breakages, no “Mr Binman” then! It was a truly magnificent spectacle, and especially in the summer time when the glass sparkled and glistened in the sunshine.



Jim O'Donnell and Pat O'Dwyer with Santa.

Tim was a staunch member of the Old IRA Volunteers and was present at the dance held in Caherguillamore House on that infamous night in December 1920, when havoc was wreaked by the Black-and-Tans. Tim was sent to Spike Island and remained there for some months. His IRA medals are now in the possession of his grandson, Donal.



Telegram sent to Kay and Dan on their wedding day.

Their children, Paddy, Dan, Peggy and Jim, all attended Grange School and having worked locally for a short time, each, in turn, immigrated to England. Their daughter, Bridget, had died very young. Paddy at ninety-one is still hale and hearty and lives with his wife, Pam, in Derbyshire. Peggy also lives in this county but sadly her husband, Fred, died some years ago. Dan and Jim also lived and worked there, but, sadly, Jim died on

26th October 1970 at a young age. Tim (4th February 1984) and Dan (6th January 2010) have both since died. All are buried in the family burial plot in Grange.



Dan, Kay, Peggy, Paddy and Pam O'Donnell, family of Tim and Mary, Rahin.

Aileen. When Mary died on 31st October 1980, Dan, I and our family relocated to Rahin to be nearer to Tim. Our children are Madeline, Stella and Donal. Stella and Donal are still living in Rahin, to where Tim and Mary came so many years ago, while Madeline married Mike O'Rourke and lives in Ballygrennan, Bruff.