

## Secretary's Report AGM 2020

Since the last AGM for the year 30 Sept. 2018 – 1 Oct 2019 held on 3 Feb 2020, we have had a number of events covering national and local history and archaeology in the year 1 Oct 2019 -30 Sept 2020. Since March 2020, the Society has been unable to hold events because of the Covid 19 pandemic.

There had been five talks. These were:-

### **The Role played by Bantry in Jacobite/Williamite War & Propaganda Campaign of the Battle of Bantry Bay.** This was held on 21st October 2019

The talk by **Daithi Mac an Bhiocaire**, covered the pivotal role played by County Cork ports of Bantry, Cork and Kinsale in the Jacobite/Williamite War. Daithi looked at the propaganda war in the aftermath of The Naval Battle of Bantry Bay. He detailed the vital transport links between Ireland and France in terms of logistics and supplies during this era. Daithi utilised French, Irish, British and USA archives over a 10 year research period on this topic.

### **Back to the Beginning: The Rituals and Magic of Christmas.** This was held on 25th November 2019.

Shane Lehane, Cultural and Heritage Studies, CSN College of Further Education, Cork, spoke about the traditions of Christmas. He stated that :-

‘As we approach the midpoint of the cold, wet and dark, winter season of the year, Irish people have filled this significant time with an extraordinary plethora of compulsory observations and traditions.’ As familiar as these may be, he explained the relevance and the nature and character of the many automatically observed mid-winter, Christmas and New Year rituals and importantly why they take place.

### **The Life and Times of the Bryce family of Garinish Island, Glengarriff.** This was held on 20 January 2020

Dr. Jim Lerner presented an illustrated lecture to a capacity audience. The talk covered the story of the achievements and set-backs of the Bryces in the turbulent times in Ireland of the early 20th century and how in 1910, John Annan and Violet Bryce bought a barren rocky island off of Glengarriff in Co Cork and set about creating their own garden paradise. Today, the island of Garinish, is famous the world over for its sub-tropical garden, set against a magnificent backdrop of mountains and sparkling water. The Italianate garden at its heart is now one of the most iconic mages of Irish gardening.

### **AGM for the year Oct 2018 to Sept 2019**

Held on Monday 3rd February 2020 in the Christian Fellowship Church, Bantry, the Annual General Meeting reviewed our activities over the year and *inter alia* elected the following committee-

**President:** Arethusa Greacen  
**Cathaoirleach:** Angela O'Donovan  
**Hon. Secretary:** Jim Lerner  
**Asst. Sec:** Terrie Erdpohl  
**Treasurer:** Margaret Mc Allister  
**PRO:** Bernard O'Leary  
**Social Sec:** Catriona Tobin  
**Museum Curator:** Hazel Vickery  
**Committee Members:** John Connolly, Geraldine Mullins.

**Get thee to a nunnery: excavations at Old Abbey, Co. Limerick.** This was held on Monday 2nd March 2020

Dr Tracy Collins, is a professional archaeologist and founding director of Aegis Archaeology, a consultancy firm. She holds a PhD from University College Cork. She stated that in Ireland, nunneries are perhaps the most under-studied of all medieval religious houses. Not only is there a relative dearth of source material on these female religious communities, but too often, nunneries have been compared to the more "mainstream" male medieval monasticism. This view has marginalised nunneries in archaeological narratives. The talk, including some background on medieval nunneries generally, was based on archaeological excavations by Dr Collins of a later medieval nunnery near Shanagolden, Co. Limerick.

The talk by Dr. Andrew Bielenberg on **The Tan War? The RIC, the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries in Cork during the War of Independence**, scheduled for **Friday, 27 March 2020** had to be cancelled because of restriction imposed because of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Similarly no outdoor events were possible during the summer of 2020.

For our contribution to the National Heritage Week 2020, the society presented our project, **A Decade of Celebrating Heritage of Bantry**. Our project was short-listed from a group of projects from County Cork and we won the **County Award** in the Heritage Council's Awards for our entry

Hon. Sec.  
Jim Lerner

## **Draft Minutes of the 2020 AGM of the Bantry Historical and Archaeological Society.**

The AGM was held in the Christian Fellowship Church, Bantry on Monday 3rd February 2020 at 8pm.

17 members were present and apologies were received from Joan Marshall and Kate Smyth and Lettie Baker.

**An Cathaoirleach**, Angela O'Donovan welcomed the members present and asked the Secretary, Terrie Erdpohl to read the Minutes of the previous AGM. As there were no matters arising, Jim Larnar proposed that the Minutes should be accepted as an accurate record of the previous AGM and this was seconded by Hazel Vickery. The minutes were duly signed by Angela O'Donovan.

**The Secretary's Report** was then read by Terrie Erdpohl. She reported that over the year, there had been 6 talks. These were:-

- 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018. The Bicentenary of St Brendan's Church by Hazel Vickery
- 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018. The Sinking of the RMS Leinster – Tragedy, Romance and a Link to Bantry. by Niall O'Reilly.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018. Wolfe Tone, Matilda & Family by Larry Breen.
- 28<sup>th</sup> Nov 2018. The Irish Folk Year by Shane Lehane.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019. The History of White-Tailed Sea Eagles in Ireland by Clare Heardman.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Mar 2019. Exploring the Origins and Practices of Station Masses in W.Cork by Fr Tom Hayes
- 21<sup>st</sup> Mar 2019. Between Bantry and Beara- The O'Sullivans in Co. Cork before and after Kinsale by Dr Hiram Morgan, UCC

There were also 5 Field Trips. These were:-

- 28<sup>th</sup> Apr 2019. Member's Field Trip to Whiddy Island, led by Tim O'Leary
- 9<sup>th</sup> Jun 2019. Garinish Island Field Trip led by Bernard O'Leary.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Jul 2019. Sherkin Island organized by Hazel Vickery and led by Karen a native of the Island.
- 28<sup>th</sup> Jul 2019. Local Field Trip led by Kate Smyth to St Bartholomew's Well, Cappanaboul Stone Circle and Carraig na Gaeointe
- 10<sup>th</sup> Sep 2019. Keakil Stone Circle & Carriganass Castle led by Aine Brosnan and Dan Sullivan.

The Society also participated in the Ellen Hutchins Exhibition in the Boole Library UCC. 15<sup>th</sup> Oct – 21<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2018.

We also hosted on 20<sup>th</sup> Aug 2019 the evening celebration of local heritage of the four Bantry Valleys as part of the **Creative Ireland/Cork Co Council Programme 2019.**

**The Financial Report** was circulated by Margaret McAllister. This showed an opening balance of €7,403.72. There was a total income of €6,846.90 including Membership fees, donations at Talks, Sale of Publications and income from the Museum. Expenses for the year totalled €4,499.54. The closing balance therefore amounts to €9,750.68.

Angela O'Donovan explained that as the Society was so buoyant financially a decision had been made by the Committee that donations at talks would no longer be collected.

Hazel Vickery as Curator of the Museum, reported that the Museum was opened during the season from the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in April until the 1<sup>st</sup> week in October. Overall, the number of visitors was down on the previous year from 1300 in 2018 to 920 in 2019. August visitor numbers averaged 220 per week.

An **Cathaoirleach**, Angela O'Donovan then addressed the Meeting. She welcomed Members, supporters and friends of Bantry Historical Society. In reviewing the year 2018/2019, Angela explained that although we were regarding this as the AGM, for 2020, legally our year ended at the end of Sept 2019, as is apparent from the Financial Statement and the Secretary's Report. Angela recorded that it had been a good year and that our membership has almost doubled in the past few years.

Since the creation of our website we have become more visible, more accessible to people, especially people who live far away from here. We have been kept busy especially this past year with queries from all quarters of the world with people asking us if we could find any living relatives of theirs' here locally. We are very happy to report that we have united some people with their cousins here in Bantry, and there are more coming here in a few months time. Actually, DNA data was also useful in uniting a New Zealander with his cousin in the US, their respective parents having been separated by hostilities during the War of Independence in Ireland.

A special word of thanks here to Bernard O'Leary our PRO who works away quietly behind the scenes on his own initiative and keeps our name and our events before the people in the local media. Also Cathriona Tobin our Social Media person who keeps us before that audience deserves a very big thank you. In fact, Cathriona's fantastic work on line has brought many more users to our website.

Apart from having Talks and outings throughout the year, we also undertook a project which was part funded by the **Creative Ireland/Cork Co Council Programme 2019**. We have actually been successful in each year of that Programme so far. It's a legacy programme, or a follow-on programme, after the 1916 Centenary Fund, and will continue up to 2022. Last year's project "Celebrating the Culture & Creativity of Bantry's Four Valleys" is now available on our website, and has received several hits on YouTube also. All of the tedious work relating to the Schools Folklore section of this project was undertaken, and carried out most efficiently, by Mary Doyle. Angela thanked Mary sincerely for her work on this project.

"A big thank you goes to the officers and committee for their commitment and dedication over the year. I want to say a special Thank You to all our speakers, and those who guided us on our field trips. Thanks to Hazel Vickery for managing Bantry Museum, her team of volunteers and Mary from the Tús Programme for your time and generous help in keeping the museum open to the public during an extended summer period."

"Thanks to David Ross and his team for the use of these premises, especially Carmel Reaney who dealt so efficiently with bookings/queries etc. Thank you the members

and supporters for turning up to so many of our events. Your attendance is very much appreciated.”

“Looking ahead, I can confirm we have a number of talks already organised. Check in to our website for upcoming details. I’m delighted to be able to say that next year, which marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of the Railway line to Bantry, we will have a special event to commemorate same. Research is ongoing, but much is already done, so I’m looking forward to hearing all that.”

Angela concluded by asking for any ideas and suggestions for future activities. She stated “This is a co-operative venture for all of us, and all of us together can achieve so much more than any one individual.”

The Meeting then proceeded to the Election of Officers.

**President:** Arethusa Greacen was proposed by Terrie Erdpohl and seconded by Frank O’Donovan. There being no other nominations, Arathusa was deemed elected.

**Cathaoirleach:** Angela O’Donovan was proposed by Terrie Erdpohl and seconded by Hazel Vickery.

**Hon. Secretary:** Jim Lerner was proposed by Terrie Erdpohl and seconded by Bernard O’Leary

**Treasurer:** Margaret Mc Allister was proposed by John Connolly and seconded by Jim Lerner.

**PRO:** Bernard O’Leary was proposed by Frank O’Donovan and seconded by Jim Lerner.

**Social Sec:** Catriona Tobin was proposed Terrie Erdpohl and seconded by Margaret McAllister.

**Museum Curator:** Hazel Vickery was proposed by Terrie Erdpohl and seconded by Mary O’Regan-Barsum.

**Asst. Sec:** Terrie Erdpohl was proposed by Hazel Vickery and seconded by Bernard O’Leary

**Committee:** John Connolly was proposed by Jim Lerner and seconded by Frank O’Donovan. Geraldine Mullins was proposed by Terrie Erdpohl and seconded by Bernard O’Leary.

There being no other proposals the Officers and Committee Members were deemed elected.

There being no other business, the AGM was concluded.