



Name: Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Hanley  
From: Carnmore, Claregalway  
Age: 40+  
Interviewers: Brona Gallagher  
Date: 16<sup>th</sup> August 1991

**Brona**

***Can you tell me something about the mass rock?***

Mr. H.

There is a mass rock there in the field with the graveyard. It's kind of shoved away now from the original place it was. There are  $\frac{3}{4}$  big stones and about 200-300 yards away, on the top of the hill in the wall, a big double stone wall, there is a stone in the wall about 4ft off the ground and sticking out. A 'guardsman' or whatever used to stand there and look out while mass was being said. There is a holy water font there somewhere as well – down in Paddy Flaherty's field. A stone with a shallow hole in it. There is an underground tunnel in that field as well, but it's closed in now.

**Brona**

***The same field as the Lisheen?***

Mr. H.

Yes, we were hunting rabbits there one time when we were young. There was a few heaps of stone in the field. And there was this big heap with big stones thrown down in it and a rabbit went down, the rabbit disappeared. The stones got bigger as they went down as they were rolled in. There is some kind of underground hole there. It could be a hide out.

**Brona**

***Was it lined with stones, do you remember?***

Mr. H.

I couldn't tell you now. They used to dig sand in the next field to the graveyard one time and once when my uncle and father and another man were digging, the sand started to fall down. About 10 years ago, the Foxes found a tunnel when they were building their house – that's about two or three fields away. It was going towards the same place. There must be a lot of tunnels underground there I'd say. Where the lookout post was there, near the mass rock is probably the highest point in Carnmore or the parish I suppose. If you stood on the stone in the wall you could see someone coming for miles around, and the people would be gone underground in the tunnel. There is supposed to be things buried there all the time – old chalices and things from the old mass rock, but it's probably only stories.

**Brona**

***Are the main rocks natural or would someone have moved them there?***

Mr. H.

They look more natural I suppose.

**Brona**

***Is the area stony? Would there be boulders around anyway?***

Mr. H. Yes, it's stony. There is no other boulder around in that field or near it. There is a lot of small stones. The next field is a craggy field. I don't know if it was a mass rock or not, my father said it was. Old Mike Silke, the old historian told Michael Flaherty that there was a holy water font there and when he was a young lad, he looked for it and he got it and he put it up in the wall there. It was there twenty years ago anyway.

**Brona** *Is the Lisheen enclosed by a wall?*

Mr. H. No, by a rathin. A fort, they call it, but we call it a rathin around here.

**Brona** *An earthen bank?*

Mr. H. Yes.

Mrs. H. Tell her the story about the man whose mother died?

Mr. H. Oh yea! When they were making the firing range over there in Oranmore there, they had no machine at all – it was all carried up with hand barrows. There is a sheet there all the time. Well one of the men that was working on it couldn't go home to bury his mother because he'd lose his ½ penny a day – his wages. He came over the road and went across that field there and he carried his dead mother down on his back – he buried his mother there one evening late and went to work the next day.

**Brona** *Would that have been during the famine?*

Mrs. H. It would, I'd say. It was John Clarke told me that. That was lufin na la – a 1/2 penny a day. Lufin ??? is the old Irish for a ½ d.

**Brona** *Up to twenty years ago, children were buried in the Lisheen and up to forty years ago adults were – is that right?*

Mr. H. It's over forty five years ago since any adult was buried there. Mrs. Rooney from Derrydonnell in the next parish. But it doesn't matter what parish you're in. There are a lot of people from the Claregalway parish buried in Lackagh. It's usually wherever the family graves are.

**Brona** *So what other parish would have used it?*

Mr. H. There wouldn't be many more because the next adjoining parish is Castlegar and there's five there – between Lisheens and real graveyards. There was a couple of graveyards in every parish then. There is five in the old parish of Castlegar not the new one now. There's one down in Greanhall. There is one at the race course, one at the church, and there'd be one or two more – there'd be six in that parish. There'd be only two in this parish and this one here – three. There's only two inscribed headstones in it. There are stones standing up there and there is a definite mark on them and people would know where their relatives are buried. There is an old iron cross thrown in as well. It's gone rusty now.



Mrs. H. There's McDonaghs down the road buried in it as children, isn't there? And there's Walshes. There's two of your brothers. I don't know now if they were still born or whether they were alive but Eddie's aunt told us that Eddie's two little brothers were buried down in the Lisheen, so it must have been consecrated ground come and gone out of memory.

Mr. H. That's why no one was buried there when Canon Moran was here – he stopped it.

**Brona** *Where would they have buried them instead?*

Mr. H. Claregalway or Lackagh. There is a lot of Carnmore people buried in Lackagh. And people from Lisarulla and all that – they're buried down there. And Lydican as well – you'd seen them on cemetery Sunday.

**Brona** *How far is the Lackagh cemetery from here?*

Mr. H. About 8 or 9 miles.

**Brona** *Are there any named fields in the area?*

Mrs. H. Cnoc an nDorethy (Doreithy in Irish). She had a house on top of the hill in the field beside the Lisheen. The field beside us here is called Pairc na Rasa because there used to be races there.

Mr. H. My father told me, when he was very young, there was an old man living back there – and it must be 150 years ago since the old man was young because my father would be 100 years now, God rest him and when he was young this man was old. Well he said he remembered looking at the races in that field over there and the stable were there. He was standing up on the leachts of stones when he was only 12 or 14 years of age, looking at the races – the leachts were the stands. But the stables closed down here in 1840. The stables are still there – the walls. I can't think of the man that owned the land and my great-grandfather got the land. The stables were here originally. This old man said that they close down the races in 1840, and changed back to Kiltulla Turlough and then in the history of the Galway Plate and the Galway races, it was never stated that way – it was stated wrongly. It said Kiltulla, Athenry, but there was races here as well. And my father said that there were races outside Tuam as well – not Parkmore, but somewhere else and they made the three of them into one big races in Galway. The land here was too stony for racing – they were here before 1840. It was only a couple of years in Kiltulla because I suppose it was too soft there. Three big fields for Pairc na Rasa, just there near Sunshine Aluminium. They were not big enough any way. I remember when the leachts of stones were there and the lorries came in and took all the stones about twenty years ago.

Mrs. H. Were they old burial mounds – Dr. O'Connor said they were communal burial maces?

Mr. H. No, they weren't! They were just heaps of stones thrown in there when they were digging the ridges of spuds.

**Brona** *Whatever they were, they're gone now!*

Mrs. H. And they call one field back behind the house here the boreen – I don't know why they call it that. There seems to be a boreen in lots of villages. I think it's kind of a low lying thing or something, but I don't know.

Mr. H. The stile mor is another one – the four big walls together and stile going into it. There is another field the Cloch bhan – there is a big stone in it.

**Brona** *When did the races stop in Kiltulla?*

Mr. H. It closed down when Ballybrit opened. When the races were here, there was a row of sheds going all the way along the back of the yard. And there was a flat roof in it and it was thatched. The walls are out there all the time. A big load roof and I suppose there were 15 horses in it and they were tied in together – there were no boxes in it. There are holes in the walls there for the horses. The most important thing about this area here is that it was the highest spot in the parish and it was a lookout point during penal times. They wouldn't go by horse because they'd be noticed or followed so they used walk.

**Brona** *While people were being buried in the Lisheen, would there be a priest present?*

Mrs. H. I don't know. Very few went to the funeral – the mother mightn't even go. The priest may have come to the house to say the prayers.

**Brona** *Your mother is from Gortadooey – did she ever talk about what it was like there years ago?*

Mrs. H. No, the only thing she said was that when she went to school at six years of age, her father used to tell her to lie in the field if she heard a Black and Tan lorry – to keep to the nearest wall in the case they'd take a pot-shot at you. She remembers doing it twice. There'd really be no other lorries around at that time. Her maiden name was Kerran. I heard a story about Tim Feeney – the Black and Tans were torturing him for information and when they had him cut and bruised, didn't they throw him into a bed of nettles – it's a wonder he didn't die. He's only dead a few years now. But that was common place at the time.

**Brona** *What kind of land is there in this area?*

Mr. H. The ground is loamy. There is all rocks under the grass and the rain will only stay on it for a day or two – it dries up quickly. Other parts of Carnmore then are dark. The land in Claregalway is good around the church.

