

**John Geoghegan Uggool, Moycullen,
Centenary remembrance
20th February 2021**

February of this year 2021, marks the centenary of the death of John Geoghegan of Uggool, Moycullen, who was shot during the War of Independence. A remembrance ceremony is planned for the 20th February 2021 livestreaming on Moycullen Heritage /Cumann Staire Maigh Cuilinn facebook page.

Giving the background to John Geoghegan's life will be Scoil Mhuire Moycullen pupils and teacher Sean Flaherty presenting sections from a Decade of Centenaries (1912-1922) project they researched regarding John Geoghegan in 2014. Speaking also are Dean Michael McLoughlin P.P. Moycullen, Moycullen Heritage /Cumann Staire Maigh Cuilinn, Senator Sean Kyne, neighbours in Uggool and Killagoola, with music from Comhaltas Moycullen.



2004 unveiling of memorial stone. L-R Sean Kyne, Fr McLoughlin PP, Enda Kenny , Padraic McCormack. Photo Sean Lydon

On Saturday 28th February 2004 a monument, erected in memory of John Geoghegan by Billy and Rita Kyne and family, was unveiled by Enda Kenny. The Fine Gael leader was joined by Sean Kyne Connemara local election candidate at the time, Fr McLoughlin PP and Deputy Padraic McCormack. A large crowd from across the local townlands and parish of Moycullen attended. This monument has been restored and a wreath will be laid in memory of John at the remembrance ceremony on Saturday 20th February 2021.

John Geoghegan grew up in Uggool, Moycullen. Like all those recorded in the 1911 census in Uggool his family were farmers and Roman Catholics and bilingual in Irish and English. As a young man John was farming and also among the first members of the GAA and Moycullen Conradh na Gaeilge. In June 2015 Conradh records show S. Mac Eochaghain (John Geoghegan) in attendance at meetings with Pádraic Ó Droighneáin, M. Mac Donnchadha, and Tomás Bairead. Pádraic Ó'Droighneáin, Clooniffe was Uachtarán in 1914, when there was an amalgamation of the two Moycullen GAA clubs, Hurling and Football, and members were called on to support the



John Geoghegan memorial stone unveiling 28th February 2004 Uggool, Moycullen. Photo Sean Lydon

Volunteers. (1) Pádraic Ó'Droighneáin was leader of Moycullen volunteers in 1916 as the project by Scoil Mhuire Moycullen Pupils 2014 which follows shows. In Conradh na Gaeilge, Moycullen he was Ball Craoibhe and also attended the Oireachtas 1913 in Galway where many of the key figures in the 1916 rising were present.

Tomas Bairéad together with Pádraic Ó'Droighneáin was a leader in the nationalist movement in Moycullen. Born in 1893 in Ballydotia, Moycullen, Tomás Bairéad was a journalist with the Irish Independent newspaper and an Irish language author. (1) As well as being among the first members of the GAA in Moycullen and playing for his parish in 1914 on the first team to win the trophy with John Geoghegan, he was in the Moycullen Volunteers in 1916 and was close to Liam Mellows. In the "Tomás Bairéad Collection, Galway County Council archives" there is discussion of the era leading up to 1916 and Bairéad's influence is seen on "young men (taking) an active part in the Gaelic League, the GAA, the beginning of the volunteers" in Moycullen at this time.

However, while the nationalist movement led to national independence, on a personal level for many, involvement in nationalism was to have a tragic outcome. The Moycullen / Barna brigade were involved in 1920 in the shooting of PW Joyce. Fr Griffin was shot in November 1920 as retaliation and subsequently John Geoghegan in February 1921.

John Geoghegan Quartermaster had been advised in the days before his death not to return home, however he was concerned that his family would be targeted. An account is given that RIC officers had pointed out John Geoghegan in Galway city during these final days. (2) However John refused to leave the family home or go to Baile Thiar in Killagoola where others hid, as the Black and Tans were fearful of being ambushed there, instead attending confession in Galway city. (3) The night they came for John he was taking his time inside getting dressed. Killagoola neighbours still say that he was told not to bother tying his laces, that they "wouldn't keep him long". (4) He was taken to a tree beside where the monument now stands and was shot. A rose bush was later planted there by his mother.

Malachy Connor of Sráid an Tí Mhóir, Killagoola was called by John's brother Tom to get a priest and John was anointed by Fr Willie Cunnane curate. (3) It was also said that the Black and Tans were going afterwards that night to Killagoola for another volunteer but they were afraid of being ambushed at Sruthan a' Brún where Cru Valley Nursery stands today.

Tom Geoghegan well known for rhubarb he sold in Galway Market, lived in the family home until he died in. Tom dedicated a commemorative window to John and Michael Geoghegan which is to be found in Moycullen Church.



James Walsh's Service Medal (1917-1921)

Tony Lee of Killagoola has in his possession a Service Medal awarded to his uncle James Walsh, Killagoola, Moycullen. James was born in 1903 and was 17 years old and a member of Óglaigh na hÉireann when John Geoghegan was shot by the Black and Tans. He told Tony that he was present at the wake and funeral and always remembered seeing the body after it was laid out. Because of his young age, James received a medal without bar because his service was not deemed to be active however as Tony notes it is a tangible link to that tragic day, one hundred years ago.

James Walsh was awarded An Bonn (1917-1921) Seirbhíse The Service (1917-1921) Medal. Tony Lee has researched the conditions of the award: *This medal is awarded in two*

classes:- Medal with bar to persons who rendered active service in either of the periods (a) the period commencing on the 1st April, 1920, and ending on the 31st March, 1921, or (b) the period commencing on the 1st April, 1921, and ending on the 11th July, 1921. Medal, without bar to persons whose service is not deemed to be active military service, but who were members of Óglaigh na hÉireann, Na Fianna Éireann, Cumann na mBan or the Irish Citizen Army for the three months ended on the 11th July, 1921. (5)

In addition to the window in the Church of the Immaculate Conception Moycullen dedicated to John's memory by the Geoghegan family, and the memorial stone erected in Uggool in 2004 there is a mounted photograph display in the GAA clubhouse Pairc Maigh Cuilinn remembering one of the first players in the club and the Moycullen team that won the west Galway championship for Gaelic football in 2014.

The memorial stone at Uggool has been restored by the organising committee and community in Uggool and Killagoola. A rose bush will be replanted there commemorating the place where John Geoghegan was shot across the road from his family home and where neighbours recall his mother had planted a rose bush.

Due to covid restrictions a gathering of people on the day will not be possible. However a virtual ceremony will take place on the 20th February 2021 at 2pm to mark the centenary anniversary of John Geoghegan's death. This will be on the Cumann Staire Maigh Cuilinn facebook page livestream see the facebook page for further details.

Written by C Wall, who together with S Kyne, M McNally, J Loughnane, L Hynes, T Roche, T Faherty & T Lee is on the John Geoghegan Remembrance Committee 2021.

Acknowledgements/ references

Thanks to Sean Lydon and Sean Kyne for photographs.

To Sean Flaherty for inclusion of project on the life of John Geoghegan written in 2014 by Sixth Class Scoil Mhuire, Moycullen, Co Galway 2014.

Killagoola, a history of a west Galway Townland. Walsh Colour Print 2020 (1)

Moycullen Matters magazine Mean Fomhair 2011 (2)

Moycullen Matters magazine Marta 2004 (3)

Primary sources, Killagoola neighbours (4)

Tony Lee, Killagoola, Moycullen & Moycullen Matters magazine 2021 (5)