

Newsletter

Of the Cork Folklore Project

**CORK
FOLKLORE
PROJECT**

RECORDING & SHARING
THE MEMORIES OF CORK

Issue 8

Winter 2020



What's new?

Past Memories

MOUNT CARA HOUSE *recording memories*



GRATAN STREET STORIES *cherishing memories*

Memory of Place



IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE *sharing memories*

War Memories



UCC AWARD FOR CFP *celebrating success*

Success

and much more

**CHECK
IT OUT!**

Double Award Success for CFP

In late 2019, we were recognised with two awards for our outstanding work in the area of research by UCC, at the University Staff and Research Awards. Our Manager Dr. Tomás Mac Conmara and Research Director, Dr. Cliona O'Carroll were both honoured for their contribution to research on behalf of the Project. At the ceremony, Tomás was the recipient of UCC Research Support Person of the Year and was acknowledged for the way he has 'transformed and energized the work of the project since joining the team in January 2016'. Cliona's contribution to the role of cultural archives in open research was celebrated with the award of UCC Open Researcher of the Year.



Chronicles of Covid

Call for participation

The Cork Folklore Project COVID Collection, was established in March 2020 to document the sights, sounds, everyday actions, thoughts and conversations around us during the pandemic, so that our community has a record of these times that will endure. The project is ongoing, and collection will continue for the foreseeable future.

As an organisation with almost twenty-five years of experience in folklore and oral history, CFP felt it was critical to respond to the singularity of the pandemic as a human experience.

We have collected people's stories and reflections through a range of platforms. We invite contributors to fill out our online questionnaire [HERE](#), reflecting their own experiences or those of their neighbours, family or community, and would like to have as broad a representation as possible in terms of age, occupation, caring roles, backgrounds, situations and attitudes to the crisis. A printable version of the questionnaire is available for download and use, and we welcome photographs, audio and video: just contact us at

covid19chronicles@corkfolklore.org We are working on an online exhibition of collected material, which will be available in October. In the meantime, you can browse the 'Chronicles' blog, articles, and some of our photo galleries [HERE](#). Please share our invitation so that we can add as many different voices as possible to the archive.



Chronicles of COVID

PHOTO COLLECTION

SUBMITTED AS PART OF ONGOING COVID COLLECTION



Photos taken by:
Pat Donlon, James Furey,
Pauline Matthews, Barry Donnelly,
Sascha Roos.



MEMORY OF THE *Irish War of Independence* IN CORK

The panels will include material drawn of the memories of Mary O'Donovan, who worked with "Tomás Mac Curtain" and saw him shortly before his murder in March 1920. In 1998, when 97 year old Mary O'Donovan was asked by CFP about the Black and Tans, her voice became appreciably amplified declaring to the interviewee; 'Oh, don't be talking girl, they done terrible things. First of all, you know, they shot Tomás Mac Curtain!' What followed was a moment of profound disclosure:

Yeah, I was working with him [Mac Curtain] at the time ... that night ... in the month of March you know and I was going out and it was wet and dull and it was misty. And I was going out, and the factory was at the back of that shop, that I told you. And I was going out, I was finishing off an order or something myself and I was going out and this man was singing outside the shop door. Ballad singing, it was around that time you know now. And I

was going out the door and Tomás, the Lord have mercy on him now. He called me back and he said "give that to the poor fella singing outside the door". I dunno was it ... a shilling he gave me now. He gave me something to hand to the poor singer outside the door ... And he was singing 'Wrap the Green Flag Around Me Boys', that's the song he was singing (CFP, SR 197 Mary O'Donovan, 1998).

When an impressed Tomás Mac Curtain asked Mary O'Donovan to reward the singer with a shilling, Mary approached the grateful balladeer, as Mac Curtain walked away towards the city centre. In 1998 Mary recalled poignantly:

'It was only that night that he was murdered. The Black and Tans. His wife was expecting, a baby, shur they had twins after. The same night ... they shot him dead ... wI don't know the exact date now, in the month of March'

Cork Folklore Project have been granted funding under the Cork Commemoration Fund 2020. The development of unique content and graphic exhibition panels, based on War of Independence stories and tradition in Cork, recorded by our collectors over the last 25 years will shine a light on the social memory connected to that period, in the words of Cork people. The exhibition, set for release in 2021, will underline how close and relatable history is to the people of Cork over a century since it took place.

Cork Folklore Project - 20/20 Vision

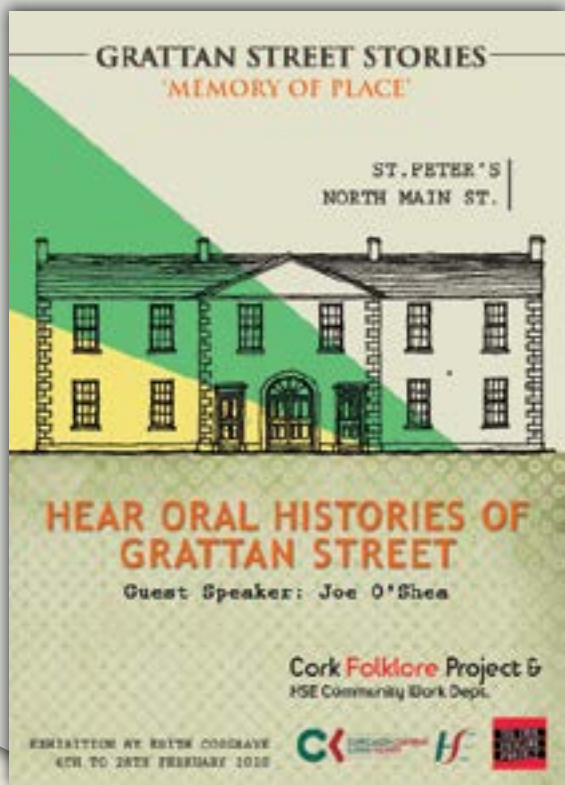


CFP Team : Standing Left to Right: Barry Donnelly, Dr. Tomás Mac Conmara, Professor Gearóid Ó Cruaíaoich, Ger Buckley, Dave Ryan, Jamie Furey, Pat Donlon. Front Row, Left to Right: David Ryan, Kieran Murphy, Dr. Cliona O'Carroll, Sylwia Krupa, Anne Hallinan.

The Cork Folklore Project remains committed to our mission of recording and sharing the memories and stories of Cork. As our project has grown, so too has the demand on our material.

We make every effort to support scholars, researchers and the public in accessing our collection but are challenged by a lack of resources in addition to the current restrictions of COVID-19.

We want to reassure the public however, that we will continue to work hard on behalf of the people of Cork and hope that in time, as more resources become available, we will be in a position to intensify that work and make an even more positive impact on the city and county.



ORAL HISTORY FOR HEALTH

Our exciting collaboration with the Cork North Community Work Department of the HSE, has seen major development since it commenced in early 2019. Kieran Murphy, who was appointed as Oral History Outreach Officer, has worked intensively with local community groups to document memory and to develop oral history as a way of both exploring health related experiences and to make a positive impact in its own right.

For more information, contact
communityfolklore@gmail.com



GRATTAN STREET MEMORIES

In February 2020, the “Grattan Street Stories of Place” Exhibition opened in St. Peter’s Church on North Main Street. The temporary exhibition followed collaboration between the Oral History for Health Project and the artist Edith Cosgrave. Memories documented by Kieran Murphy relating to Grattan Street Medical Centre were aired on the night while Cork journalist, Joe O’Shea addressed the large audience as the key note speaker. The event was also addressed by Sorcha Ní Chruailaich, Principal Community Worker, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, HSE South.



Mount Cara



Frank Lenihan with a copy of his recording.

In 2020, CFP began working on a collaborative project with Mount Cara, in advance of their thirtieth anniversary. Cara House - also known as Mount Cara - on Redemption Road on the northside of the city, has the capacity to care for 25 residents, with a dedicated staff that have been providing short and mid-term respite care to elderly people. Among their residents in 2019 were Joan O'Keefe and Frank Lenihan. We sat down for several wonderful and memory filled recordings with both Joan and Frank across the winter of 2019.

Joan and Frank offered wonderful memories of their lives, Cork in the past, World War II (the Emergency), social change, politics, the local and the global, soccer and much more.

Later, we returned to deliver a **Memory Morning** with staff and residents of the centre. The project was supported by a grant from the North Cork Community Work Department of the HSE.

BORN *in* FLAMES

When we sat down to record Joan O'Keefe, we knew she was in her ninety-eight year. We knew also there was something significant about the date of her birth. We invited her to tell us of what she knew of the night she was born and why it was so remarkable:

"Because Cork City was up in flames! The Black and Tans were burning the City. That was the 11th of December 1920. I was in the middle of the fire!"

Joan went on to describe the way that turbulent period impacted on her family life in Glenmire:

"My Dad was in the British Navy you see, so it was harder on her [Joan's mother] at home without him but then she packed up and wrapped me up at three months old and was off to Southampton ... If he was caught out after six o' clock he would have been shot! So as a small baby, there were no such things as carry cots! I suppose I was wrapped in a blanket and at three months old she went to Southampton and I lived there for four or five years and then when my dad would come off the liner in Southampton we were there for him instead of him coming to Cork



Joan O'Keefe after her recording with CFP.

and maybe where he could be shot by the Black and Tans ... My Mother was strong though..."