

In the 1830s at the time of Griffiths valuation, Robert Martin Esq. was the Proprietor.

The land was described as *bad, stony and mountainous containing 258¾ acres with 150 acres under tillage and pasture, the remainder boggy and mountain pasture, a precipice the top of which forms its southern boundary together with a waterfall.*

There is an area near the southern boundary in Curraghduff West called Cappanamally (field of the walls). The wooded area between the stream at its eastern boundary and the stream at its western boundary at Shannawagh is known as Killederdauowen (*Choill idir dhá abhainn*) Wood between two streams.



Lake at Curraghduff West

The Landlord at the time was Henry Hodgson. His lands house and Forge there were rated at £38.10.0. Thomas Sullivan farmed 15 acres with a rent of £4.15.0 for the land and £0.10.0 for the house.

According to the 1911 census there were 11 people there. Martin Sullivan and his wife Honor and their 9 children Barbara, Patrick, Martin, Coleman, James, Sabina, Bartley, Nora and Joseph. The also had two other children Michael and Mary.

Bartley took over the farm and lived there until 1976. Bartley was a great accordion player and singer. Bartley married Bridget Joyce from Glantrasna. They had four in the family: Maureen, Bridie, Martin and Ann. His son Martin lives there now and has carried on the music tradition with some of his fine tin whistle and flute playing on record. James Sullivan married Maria O'Brien from the neighbouring townland. Mary Rose Mons is their only daughter. Sabina married a man from Dublin by the name of Mara. Their famous son PJ was press secretary to one Charles J Haughey Taoiseach.



James O'Sullivan Mary Rose and Mae Canavan

There are three other houses there which are holiday homes owned by John P. and Calire Alagheband, Michael and Barbara Bruglacher, and Richard and Annie Arnold.

There was another O'Sullivan family in Curraghduff West (living close to Curraghduff Middle)

No record shows for the 1911 census. At that time John (Andrew) Sullivan was at his uncle's house in Farravaun. The family later moved to Loughannon near Oughterard.



O'Sullivan family

John Andrew on the right in the picture was a great athlete described as the best all-round athlete in 3 parishes, at running, jumping, cycling and football.

The local football pitch was at Faughnakill and also at Sratheeny in Currarevagh one of the biggest fields in Glann at 11 acres.

GORTNASHINGAUN

Gort na Seangan Ant field

Area 69 acres.

This townland is situated west of Farravaun on the lake shore. The land area is mostly dry arable with field stone walls. The local church Our Lady of the Valley stands proudly overlooking the lake in this townland.

In 1641 according to The Patent Roll 16 of James 1 this townland was lorded over by the Earl of Clonrichard.

At the time of the Griffith valuation in the 1850s the Proprietor was Arthur French St. George Esq. of Tyrone. *The land was described as very bad containing 69½ acres all arable with the exception of 18 acres of bog. A lane passes through it to the east.*

That is now the main road. The main lessor at the time was Kennedy. A Robert Sullivan lived and farmed the land. The rent was £1.10.0. He also farmed Innislannaun which is the Island just offshore and part of Gortnashingaun townland.

It is locally called Bobs Island after Robert Sullivan. He would have farmed the land where the church is sited. There was also a school house just inside the wall by the edge of the road in the church grounds. Tom Kelly (Mayfly Cottage) went to school there as did Tom Joyce from Shannawagh. (See article on history of Glann school)

At the time of the census in 1911 there were four families living in Gortnashingaun townland.

The residents at house 1 were Pat and Margaret Kelly and 2 children Bridget and Katie. They had two other children James and John.



Patrick and Ann Kelly

The residents at house 2 were James and Honour Mons and five children Celia, Patrick, Michael, Mary and Anne.

Johnny Mons was another member of this family. He was a fantastic athlete and strong man. He could jump into a 40 gallon (4 feet 2 inches) steel drum with a 56 lb weight in each hand. After emigrating to America, he competed in many athletic meetings also. He reigned as world champion of this feat until it was banned. On the same day when he was aged 20 he was a member of the rowing crew that won the Cotton and Hollwell Cup. It is said that he swam across the Hudson river to win a bet. He lived into his nineties.

The residents at house 3 were John and Kate Kenny and their 3 children, Luke, Kate, Margaret May and Delia. According to the map of the time, there was a dwelling situated in the field (PJ Clancy's field) just east of the church.

The residents at house 4 were Morgan and Barbara Lydon and 6 of their children, Mary, Maggie, Maria, William, Patrick, John and Annie. Also there was Morgans mother Annie aged 80 a woman that would have lived through the famine times.

Their other son Peter was not born then. He used to say that he never laid eyes on some of his older siblings.



Peter and Fr. Coleman King

In the sixties only one of the above families remained in the townland and that was Peter Lydon. Peter remained a bachelor all his life. He was fondly



known as “Knack” because of his laid back stressless manner and easy way of getting things done. He had a great way with youngsters and was very gentle and caring. He was a tall thin frail man with snow white hair. He always wore a cardigan and a cap and trousers that seemed a bit short and woollen socks and sandals. He was sort of like the Grandad that many of us didn’t have. His regular visitors were his cousins Frank Lydon from Curraghduff, John Clancy, Bartley Sullivan, Martin John Molloy, Mike Kelly, Denis Manning, all the McGloins his nearest neighbours, Seamus Walsh and Mike Faherty from Oughterard. His door was always open even when he wasn’t there. Peter liked the mix of young and old. The crack and chat used to be mighty in a haze of turf and tobacco smoke. Peter smoked Gold Flake and the young lads smoked 10 Carrolls bought at Mary Matt’s shop over the road.

Peter used to bake his own bread in a black pot on the open fire, singing away as he slowly kneaded the bread. Those aromas of baking bread turf smoke and tobacco are instilled in my memory, though the tobacco one, stayed a bit longer than I would have liked. Peter liked to spare the blade of his bush-saw. It wasn’t unusual to see a ten foot branch of a tree sticking out of the open fire in Peters kitchen. There wouldn’t be much of it left the next evening.

All would congregate on Friday night to watch a Western, ‘The High Chapporal’, ‘Lancer’ or ‘The Rifleman’. Peter had a TV when many didn’t. Peter taught us all to fish, shoot and smoke and learn the art of patients and taking it easy. You wouldn’t want to be in a hurry if you were going fishing with Peter. “Pon me sowel (upon my soul) I need a cuppa te and a bit to ate before we go out.” He might make a cake or cut some wood and he’d give you a few jobs to do as well, like forking out the cows cabin or fetching a bucket of water from the well. It might be evening before one would get out. As long as he got a trout he was happy. “Pon me sowel I’ll make a Mouth Organ of that lad for Brookest” (Breakfast). He would take us shooting rabbits up in Lees Place and he knew the nice “grazers” to shoot and showed us how to skin them. He used to shoot ducks and geese when he was younger. There were lots of corn fields then. Great flocks of wild geese would arrive every winter. Peter said he shot six with one shot once. Maybe that was how he earned his name.

Peter was a true gentleman, never to be forgotten by those that met him.

Peter left the house and farm to his cousin John Clancy of Barnagorteeny after he died. John’s son P.J. and his wife Mary and 6 children Caroline, Liza, Breda, Mary, Anne Marie and Michael live there today.

The Kelly family all moved away. The holding was bought by Eamon King. The house became a holiday home owned firstly by a man by the name of Maundsell. Bob Madden reconstructed the house in the mid 00s and lives there today. Jim Kelly, the last of the Kelly family, ived in Newvillage townland until he died in 2011.

The Mons family home was run as guest house for visitors and anglers. It was a big two storey house with commanding views of the lake. It was advertised ‘that one could catch a trout in the morning for breakfast from the window of the house itself’. There was a regular clientele of anglers. One man by the name of Underwood came year after year.



Mons' old lodge now . . .



. . . and in its heyday