



CONNECT

*The newsletter of AGI and ASGRA,
the accrediting bodies for Irish and Scottish Genealogists*



Issue No. 15:

February 2020

Page 1

The Irish Community Archive Network iCAN - supporting and promoting local Irish history and culture

For genealogists and local historians, this online resource provides a wealth of information about famine times, local race days and festivals, as well as archaeology, folklore and local events. Much of this information is not available elsewhere and refers to local families, grounding them in their townland and parish over generations. For genealogists, not familiar with the geography of a place, the history and map of each townland and parish is invaluable. Within the stories of emigration, famine, fairs and farming, economic boom and bust are the tales of everyday life in Ireland. What the records provide in facts, these sources supplement with colour and emotion, telling stories like those of the hardworking and dynamic women below.

Nora McGarry (nee Diskin) (1919 – 2013) was one of seven children born to Pat and Mary Martyn at Dillonbrook, Milltown, Co. Galway. Her early education was in Milltown National School where her father was principal.



She attended St Louis Convent Kiltimagh where she did her Leaving Cert and from there went on to do a degree in medicine in University College Galway, now the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her first employment was in Sheffield, England.

In 1945 Nora married Jack McGarry, a County Council engineer and in 1949 she returned to Ireland and began practising as a GP in Ballindine, Co. Mayo before moving to live and work in Milltown, Co. Galway. Norah and Jack had 8 children though sadly, Jack died in 1960, leaving Norah to bring up her children as well as run a busy medical practice. She has renowned for her patience and kindness, helped to deliver many babies and provided mothers with much needed advice and care.

Anne Duff born in Ballaghadeereen, Co. Mayo was the daughter of Joseph Duff and Monica Dillon. Anne went on to become President of the Dublin Branch of Women's Land League. Honour Kilbane was born in her grandmother's house in a small village on Achill Island, Co. Mayo called 'The Valley', on the 14th August 1893. She was the second daughter of Peter and Celia Kilbane. At age 11 she immigrated to Scotland to work in the potato fields, working as a tatty hoker. She was accompanied by her older sister Mary.

Nora, Anne and Honor and others like them are commemorated in their home parishes and their stories are available on the 17 Community archives websites, and via the umbrella of www.ouririshheritage.org. These websites reflect a flourishing and rapidly developing partnership between the National Museum of Ireland County Life, Galway County Council Heritage Office, local heritage groups and others.

Together, these partners work to collect, preserve and make available local heritage information that might otherwise be lost or never make it into the public domain. Interested heritage societies and local groups have their own individual presence on the iCAN website, hosting local stories, oral histories, photographs and other information that represent the history of their own areas.



Skehana Heritage Group

Members of the public, researchers, family historians, and others interested in local history, can explore and contribute their own information so that over time a unique archive is created and shared. As it is also possible to contact individual heritage groups, a collaborative relationship can spring up, and the diaspora can become part of the creation and preservation of the archive of their own people and place. These diaspora contacts can help fill in the gaps, providing information about 'lost' or little-known people, reconnecting them back to their homeplace. Local communities benefit too, as the descendants of their parishes, long gone through emigration, return to visit and learn more about their family's place of origin.

The 17 members of the iCAN network are based in Co. Galway and Mayo with 11 new archives in development in counties Clare and Wicklow. Each website is arranged in the same way so that local groups can come together for training and evaluate progress in regular meetings throughout the year. Information is collected about people, places, and other topics and so each group offers a useful and interesting source of family and local information.



You can visit the iCAN website at <https://www.ouririshheritage.org/> and explore the network and resources. If you have information that you would like to add to the archive, you can visit the contribute page.