

Water of life: Historic well with medicinal powers restored

Dedication in honour of a local patriot

DONAL O'REGAN

AN ANCIENT well with medicinal qualities has been restored and dedicated in honour of an Irish patriot - Capt James Horan.

A large crowd attended the official ceremony at Inch St Laurence Bridge, Caherconlish on Sunday.

Capt Horan, member of the Mid-Limerick Flying Column, and three comrades were killed by the Black and Tans at Shraherla on the Cork/Limerick border in 1921.

Local historian Pat Hourigan, who was instrumental in getting this project off the ground, said the Horan family farmed at Inch St Laurence and the spa well forms part of the entrance to it.

"The Horan family used to maintain it and there is no doubt that James Horan himself drank its waters as a young boy and played around there also," said Mr Hourigan.

A large contingent of Capt Horan's ancestors travelled to Caherconlish. Nephew Owen O'Neill unveiled the memorial plaque and received a framed certificate from Leas Cathaoirleach John Egan.

Cllr Brigid Teefy, who Mr Hourigan gave special mention to for her involvement in the project, unveiled the spa well.

"The spa water was noted for curing disaffection of the bowels and had a cure for sore eyes. It contains concentrates of iron and has a strong taste and a pungent almost gas-like smell," said Mr Hourigan.

While coins are often thrown into wells, this was not the case at the spa well.

"There was enough of metal in it already," according to a local character, Jack Murray, who lived not too far from it.

The old original spa stone house that encompassed the well was almost totally demolished in a motoring incident following frosty road conditions over a dozen years ago. The well itself and its carved bowl, however, were left undamaged but debris and overgrowth did not permit its use.

"It was generally expected that it would be repaired within a few years but time passed on and despite a lot of attempts at getting the job done the situation remained static. However, perseverance prevailed and eventually the Limerick County Council local area engineer gave the go ahead to start the restoration project.

"In September/October 2012,



Pat Hourigan, James Hickey, Cllr Eddie Ryan, Ger Mulcaire, Cllr John Egan, Fr Roy Donovan and Cllr Brigid Teefy



Cllr John Egan, Leas Cathaoirleach of Limerick County Council, presented a framed certificate to Owen O'Neill, nephew of Capt James Horan



Cllr Brigid Teefy officially unveiled the spa well on Sunday afternoon

the main work of reconstruction was started and the spa once again took the shape that was so familiar to the locality," said Mr Hourigan.

It was during that time that the thought arose to dedicate the restored spa to the memory of Capt Horan. Mr Hourigan also compiled a special booklet on his life.

"The local Area staff of Limerick County Council under Sean O'Malley really dedicated themselves to the job of reconstruction and the placement of the memorial plaque," said Mr Hourigan.

"The spa well is part and parcel of our history," he summed up.



The O'Neill family and relatives of Captain James Horan at the unveiling of a restored spa well dedicated in his honour at Inch St Laurence, Caherconlish
Pictures: Dave Gaynor



Tony Brennan, Caherconlish, Tim Mulcaire, Crecora and Joe Teefy, Caherelly



Kathleen Styles, Caherconlish, Pat Ryan, Ballysimon and Evelyn Lorigan, Murroe



Margaret Hayes, Carrigoreilly and Kitty Allis O'Sullivan, Caherdavin



Donie Collins, Inch St Laurence and Karina Cross, Ballyneety



Seamus Crosse, Ballyneety and Richard and Timmy O'Brien, Inch St Laurence



Timmy Lyons, Inch St Laurence and Tom Kennedy, Knockroe



Mike Warren, Ballybricken, Deputy Willie O'Dea and John Hickey, Caherconlish



Sheila Byrne, Cullen and Lena McNamara, Caherline