



## *GIFCC NEWSLETTER No 9*

### *“Looking Forward and Remembering”*

*March 2020*

Dear Members and Supporters,

How our world has changed in the last few months! Hopefully you escaped the bushfires and will now avoid COVID-19. The latter is causing huge havoc:- the cancellation of St Patrick’s Day festivities around the world, including here in Sydney, and many other events and activities over the next few months (at least); at this stage we can only hope we will be able to hold our Annual Commemoration in August.

#### AGM Report

The GIFCC AGM was held on Monday Nov 18<sup>th</sup>. Attendees were the 2019 Committee and Consul-General Owen Feeney who conducted the election of the 2020 Committee. It was disappointing that no-one else was in attendance; maybe the day and time is not good for many people who might like to attend; a change of AGM date and time will be discussed at our next Committee Meeting scheduled for Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Election of 2020 Committee: Elected un-opposed:- Chair: Perry McIntyre, Vice-Chair: Martin Folan, Secretary: Trish Power, Treasurer: Breda Drumgoole, Committee: Eva Moffet, Joan Leach, Richard Reid.

Since the AGM, the Secretary received resignations from Perry McIntyre (official) and Richard Reid (un-official).

The Committee held its first 2020 meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>; as a result of the above resignations, the Committee appointed Trish Power as Acting Chair pro tem. The meeting was also attended by Gerry Faulkner (per phone) and Dawn Wong. Gerry will continue as our “Rural Rep” while Dawn responded to an invitation on our Facebook page for members to apply to join the committee.

Both Gerry and Dawn fill 2 Casual Vacancies on the Committee which leaves 2 vacancies on the Committee; **please contact [Trish Power](mailto:Trish.Power@irishfaminememorial.org) at [secretary@irishfaminememorial.org](mailto:secretary@irishfaminememorial.org) if you would like to join the Committee, especially if you have experience in any of the following areas:- committee/secretarial/internet/website/membership/event management. A calm personality and a sense of humour will be helpful.**

*Please note: Dawn Wong is a descendent; please see her orphan profile in this Newsletter.*

Presentations were made to long-standing committee members and loyal supporters, Martin Folan and Joan Leach. Over many years, their interest and dedication have been remarkable; Martin is a Foundation Member of the GIFCC, ie., since 1995. We thank them both for their commitment.

*Martin presents first donation to GIFCC Memorial Building Fund on behalf of The Galway Association to Tom Power, GIFCC Chair, 1995 (below) Martin is the quiet but solid rock on the Committee; for years he has been in charge of setting up at the Hyde Park Barracks and has generously donated wine for those occasions.*



*As a descendent, Joan became involved about twenty years ago and has been a valuable member of the Committee for many of those years; Joan will put her hand to anything, whether it is taking Minutes, making tea or coffee at events or buttering bread rolls. Not to mention sweetly singing the Australian Anthem at our events.*



## **APOLOGY to Members:**

In the last 6 months there have been a large number of renewals and new Member Applications. As our previous membership Secretary became ill last year, the Secretary took on the job of managing Memberships. This involves processing Application forms and adding or updating our Member Database on an Excel spreadsheet; posted applications are collected from our P.O Box and cheques banked; ideally we acknowledge receipt of application and payment. Along with August event bookings and organization, numerous Meetings with SLM, WSU, Mamre and the Consulate, a huge amount of time and energy is consumed, allowing limited time for personal responsibilities and activities. Hence a backlog has developed. Rest assured, if you receive this Newsletter, your Membership has been recorded.

A solution to this situation could be having a Membership Application/Renewal and payment facility on our website. This idea will be discussed at our next meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Secretary appreciates your patience and understanding.

## **FINANCES:**

At present we have nearly \$5500 in our transaction account; our Term Deposit of \$11,378.00 is rolled over until July 2020.

Membership fees, event entry fees and donations are our sources of funding for Committee costs which include website hosting, Dept of Fair Trading Fees, RAHS Membership and Insurance, P.O Box etc

Our major event, the August Commemoration, always runs at a loss of \$2000-\$3000 despite charging an entry fee and, in 2019, charging for Symposium attendance and receiving a contribution to our costs from the Consulate. We also drew down \$4000 from the Term Deposit to assist with event costs. (Catering, SLM staff, printing labels and programmes..)

**Honorary Auditor:** Brendan O'Connell has recently retired from Accountancy and therefore, as our Honorary Auditor. We owe a great debt and our very sincere thanks to Brendan for his assistance with our Annual Audit for such a long time, and always with a smile.

**\*\*Brendan's retirement means we are looking for a replacement.**

**Any volunteers????**

## GIFCC FUTURE:

Critical issues we need to consider:-

1. Committee casual vacancies
2. Honorary Auditor appointment
3. Membership fee increase
4. Website membership facility
5. Website event booking facility
6. AGM date – move from Nov to August?
7. Sustainability – ie., how do we keep doing what we do?

## **HYDE PARK BARRACKS MUSEUM**

The **Hyde Park Barracks Museum** was **officially re-opened on Thurs Feb 20th**. Three of GIFCC Committee Members were invited to attend.

I encourage EVERYONE to visit the Museum at the first opportunity to see the new high-tech, interactive exhibition show-casing the significance of the building from early colonial Australia to the present, and it's role in housing various categories of immigrants, many of whom were Irish. The GIFCC is extremely proud of its achievement in establishing the Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine at this World Heritage Site and maintaining an active involvement with the Museum via our Annual Commemoration for the past 20 years. This achievement would not have been possible without the support of many people, organisations and The Irish and Australian Governments and, you, our Members!!

The **2020 Annual Commemoration** is scheduled for the last Sunday in August, ie., **Sunday August 30th**. This will be the **GIFCC's 21<sup>st</sup> Commemoration and the 25th Anniversary of the GIFCC, founded in 1995** At this stage we cannot say whether it will be possible to hold this event; restrictions to such events may still be in place.



## **PROFILE OF ELLEN CONNELL**

## **Born c1833 Ireland – Died 1888 Australia**

I am an orphan descendant, a great great granddaughter of Ellen Connell from Kinsale, County Cork. Ellen, aged 16, and her sister Catherine, 17, arrived in Sydney per the “Lismoyne” on 29 November 1849.

Both girls were described in the Immigrant Lists as farm servants. They were Roman Catholics, could not read or write, had no relations in New South Wales and their “state of bodily health and probable usefulness” was described as good. Neither had expressed any complaints about their treatment on board the ship. Both their parents, John and Mary, were dead.

Ellen and Catherine’s ultimate destination was the Bathurst area, where they were both employed by J McPhellamy of Bellvue. In late 1851, Ellen married John Cunningham in Bathurst. Both were listed as residing at “Bellevue”. Catherine was a witness at the ceremony, but this is the last record I have of her.

John Cunningham had arrived in New South Wales in August 1840 on board the “Lady Clarke”. He was from Cloyne, County Cork, the son of William (“a hatter”) and Margaret (née Sullivan). He was 20, could read and write and had been brought to New South Wales as a labourer for the Australian Agricultural Company.

By mid-1857, Ellen and John Cunningham had three children – John (4) and Margaret (2) and William a baby.

John Cunningham’s death at Caloola, near Bathurst, of unspecified causes on 16 December 1857 left Ellen to carry on with three very young children.

Not surprisingly, Ellen remarried in less than six months. Her second husband was William Joyce of Foster’s Valley, near Rockley, also in the Bathurst area. The record of their marriage lists him as a farmer, originally from County Mayo. Ellen’s occupation was shown as housemaid. I have identified eight children of this second marriage, born between 1860 and 1875.

In 1871 Ellen’s daughter Margaret Cunningham, aged 16 and with the consent of her stepfather William Joyce, married Thomas Mullin, from County Galway. Between 1871 and 1897 they had 11 children.

Their seventh child, Ethel Jane (who at birth in 1885 was registered as Emmeline Jane Mullins) was my paternal grandmother. In 1906 Ethel married Thomas Hackney Wong, son of Wong Sat and Amelia Elizabeth Hackney of “Bolong” near Crookwell, hence my surname and whole other ancestral tale.

My family research meant I was aware of the Earl Grey scheme; as a member of the Society of Australian Genealogists, who had put out a call for orphan descendants to contact Trevor McLaughlin, author of “Barefoot and Pregnant”, with details of their research, I subsequently contributed details about Ellen and Catherine Connell. It was not until New Year’s Day 1998 that I became aware of plans for a memorial to recognise the Early Grey Irish Orphans.

I have subsequently met a descendant of Ellen and John Cunningham’s third child, also John, and ponder occasionally on the fact that as a result of Ellen’s second marriage, I no doubt have a multitude of “half relatives” about whom I know nothing !!!

**Dawn Wong**

March 2020

## **A NEW BOOK!**

*‘Fair Delinquents’?* IRISH FAMINE ORPHANS OF COLONIAL BATHURST AND BEYOND by Leonie Glynn Blair & Perry McIntyre – Published Nov 2019

This book was launched in Bathurst in Nov 2019. It is a BIG READ (465pp); a very comprehensive, detailed account of 185 Earl Grey Orphans who were settled in the Bathurst area.

Available from [www.eithersidepublications.com](http://www.eithersidepublications.com)

### **GIFCC OUTREACH PROGRAMMES:**

***MAMRE:*** *We continue our association with Mamre Plains Refugee Support Centre to whom we released \$50,000 last year to assist with extension of their creche and to establish an education programme for refugees, Project Afriq. N.B. The Mamre Fund remains open for donations; please see website (below)*

### **WSU: Great Irish Famine Refugee Scholarship Appeal**

*Next August we will award our third Scholarship to a female refugee student at WSU as well as the Annual Prize.*

***Details about Mamre and the WSU Scholarship Appeal are on the GIFCC website under ‘Make a Donation’; please consider making a contribution to the Appeal.***

**[www.irishfaminememorial.org](http://www.irishfaminememorial.org)**

### ***Macquarie University History Honours Prize;***

*The 2020 recipient of this award has been chosen. Due to COVID-19 precautions, the Award Ceremony scheduled at the University on March 24<sup>th</sup> has been postponed until later in the year.*

*The recipient will be invited to attend our Commemoration on August 30<sup>th</sup> to receive the GIFCC’s cheque and certificate.*

## **GIFCC CONSTITUTION**



The GIFCC is an Incorporated Association governed by the Associations Corporation Act 2009. Our Committee and our Members are bound to comply with the requirements of the Constitution. The Constitution was reviewed and updated in 2016 to comply with new requirements. *Should you wish to read the complete document, please email your request to [secretary@irishfaminememorial.org](mailto:secretary@irishfaminememorial.org)*

Please read the following extract from the Constitution:-

## **Objectives**

The Association is a non-profit organisation established to pursue the call by the former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, (1990-1997) on her visit to Sydney in 1995 asking for “all Irish communities to remember the Irish Famine and strive to alleviate poverty in the world today.”

The following key objectives were established by this association to:

1. Provide on-going support for the Irish Famine Monument in partnership with Sydney Living Museums, the custodian of the Irish Famine Monument in Sydney.
2. Build a Database of information on the famine orphan girl refugees with the overall purpose of assisting Australian descendants and the Irish diaspora to trace their roots in Ireland and connect lost family members. The Irish Famine website and database facilitate engagement with the descendants of the Irish Orphan Girl famine survivors and the dissemination of their stories.
3. Host an Annual Commemoration to honour the Famine victims and those who survived and created a new life in Australia; the Commemoration takes place at the Irish Famine Monument, Hyde Park Barracks on, or around the last Sunday in August, the anniversary of its unveiling (1999)
4. Support Outreach Programmes designed to assist current refugees. These objectives include:
  - Irish Famine Memorial Fund-Mamre – to provide financial support for Refugee Services at Mamre House, St Mary’s, NSW, managed by Catholic Care Social Services, Diocese of Parramatta
  - Great Irish Famine Refugee Scholarship – raise sufficient funds for a scholarship to assist a female refugee studying at Western Sydney University.
  - WSU Annual Prize – fund an Annual Prize for a female refugee student at WSU
  - Irish Famine Memorial Prize – presented to a Macquarie University History Honours student for a thesis or essay.

*Note:-*

The Constitution was instituted when the GIFCC became an Incorporated Association following the establishment of The Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine (aka:- the Irish Famine Memorial, Sydney) in 1999.

***Please note, we welcome your contributions to the Newsletter and your feedback. Write to [secretary@irishfaminememorial.org](mailto:secretary@irishfaminememorial.org) All enquiries or information regarding orphan database should be directed to [contact@irishfaminememorial.org](mailto:contact@irishfaminememorial.org)***