

Begley



Mary Anne Begley (1927)

Mary Anne was the first of Michael (Snr.) and Catherine's children to marry. Marian Wurr, who was her first cousin, recalled that Mary Anne was training as a teacher when she met an RIC policeman, one John James Begley. They married on 13/11/1889 at St. Peter's Church, Athlone. The sponsors were her sister Delia and one William Creaven (possibly another RIC policeman).

John James Begley was the son of another in the force, one Alexander Begley (from Derry) and Margaret Walsh. John and Margaret Begley had a large family of 10 children and John James was the eldest. He was born in 1860 in Birr, Co. Offaly where his parents had married the previous year. Two years later the next child, Elizabeth, was born in Co. Tipperary. It was then they moved to Mayo where all the rest were born and it was in Belmullet in that county they seem to have settled. In the 1901 census Alexander Begley was still alive and is shown living in Belmullet, Co. Mayo with his sons Thomas and Henry and his granddaughter Maggie Reilly. These two sons say they were born in Mayo. They were born 1881 and 1883.

John James enlisted into the RIC in 1882 in Kings Co., when he was 22 years old. His father Alex had enlisted in 1849 in Derry when he was 20 years old. Quite why John James was back in Kings County (Offaly) at the time he enlisted is unknown. Perhaps he was with his mother's, Walsh, family.

The marriage record of Mary Anne Fitzgerald and John James Begley shows that both the fathers had retired from the RIC by this time. Michael Fitzgerald (Snr.) as Ex Constable of Police and Alexander Begley as Ex Head Constable of Police. The record shows too that the bride and groom were both living in

Bealnamulla So perhaps John James was stationed at the RIC station in Bealnamulla and had met Mary Anne. It was the custom for RIC officers to be placed outside their county of birth.

They had four children.

Catherine (Kathleen)

Josephine 1891 (later married to Martin Cunningham and mother to Angie and Nora),

Michael Alexander 1892,

Henry 1897 and Mary Frances

(Babe) 1902. Kathleen was

born in Galway City but

Michael was born in Athlone (Co. Roscommon side). Then

the youngest two were born in

Co. Galway. Perhaps in

Headford 50 miles due west

of Bealnamulla where he was stationed at the time of the 1901 census.



Bealnamulla RIC station today

In the return, John James is shown in barracks in Bridge street, Headford (still a police station to this day) and Mary Anne was with her young sons, Michael and Henry, at 47 High Street. Remember the eldest Catherine (Kathleen) is living with her grandparents in Bealnamulla Mary gives her occupation as "Housekeeper".

The youngest, Mary Frances (Baby), was born the following year, 1902. Marian Wurr recalled that John James died of TB the

following year (1903) and so it seems Mary moved back nearer her family by the time of the 1911 census. She is shown living in Glasson, Westmeath. I think this is close to where her mother (Catherine Carty) came from. Ultimately Michael would join the RIC and Henry served in the British Army in first world war. I think Henry married a Mary Boyle in Wexford in 1936 and they



Headford, Co. Galway

had four daughters.

1	Mary	Beigley	Wife of Widr	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	-	41	District Nurse	Widow	-	-	-	Co. Roscommon	
2	Michael	Beigley	Son	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	18	-	Scholar	Single	-	-	-	Co. Roscommon	Irish & English
3	Henry	Beigley	Son	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	14	-	Scholar	Single	-	-	-	Co. Galway	Irish & English
4	Delia	Willy Beigley	Wife of	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	-	36	-	Single	-	-	-	Co. Galway	

Glasson 1911 return

The 1911 census shows that Mary's sister Delia is with her in Glasson, presumably she left Bealnamulla to help her rear the two boys. The house they lived in was in Glasson high street and had been unoccupied in the 1901 census so no clues there as to family connections. The girls, Kathleen and Baby though were living with their grandparents in Bealnamulla. Mary has trained as



Glassan (Glasson)

a nurse since the 1901 census and gives her occupation as “District Nurse”.

She worked in the district hospital according to Marian Wurr, and serving the whole community as midwife, even to 'tinkers by the wayside' on occasion. Interesting to note that the two boys, Michael and Henry, are fluent in Irish as well as English. The young generation fluent in a tongue strange to their parents.

1	Michael	Willy Beigley	Wife	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	22	-	R. I. C. Dispenser	Married	44	4	3	Co. Wick	
2	Kathleen	Willy Beigley	Wife	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	-	20	-	Single	44	4	-	Co. Wick	
3	Delia	Willy Beigley	Wife	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	-	19	-	Single	-	-	-	Co. Galway	Irish & English
4	Mary Louise	Willy Beigley	Wife	Roman Catholic	Read and Write	-	9	Scholar	Single	-	-	-	Co. Galway	Irish & English

Bealnamulla 1911 census return

Quite why the family were broken up with the girls living with their grandparents and the boys with their mother seems strange. We can but imagine the reason. We know the Kathleen had been living with her grandparents for some time so perhaps this was seen as the best option.

The cottage at Bealnamulla was described thus by Marian Wurr; *There was an Iron Gate and the cottage was set back behind them with flower beds in between. The door was in the middle with a room on each side as you entered.* When Marian Wurr visited Bealnamulla in the 1980's only the

back wall and the gable ends remained. Google maps shows that only the gate and front garden wall now exist.

'Off each of these rooms was, in turn, a bedroom. In time, when Delia needed an to supplement her income converted the right hand room into a shop. Until that time the post brought in some income. The post was sorted and the post man, "Derry", would do the round for them. There were three windows to the front.



Post Office at Bealnamulla

Michael(Snr.) and Catherine both died around 1912. Towards the end of her life Catherine was crippled with sponsorships, bent up almost double. Marian Wurr recalled that while they respected their grandfather and liked him they did not love him. He was too autocratic but Catherine, their grandmother was charming. Michael (Snr.) stood as though he had *a rod in his back* and acted as though *King of all he surveyed*.

Marian Wurr recalled that her father Michael (Jnr.) would hire a horse and cart and that after attending the early mass in Aughrim they would go out to Bealnamulla arriving in time for lunch. All the children were expected to go and kiss their grandfather when they arrived. He was always delighted to see them all. Delia would have prepared the lunch, *Lunch in style – just so* is how Marian Wurr recalled it. They would eat in the dining room at the front but her crippled grandmother would stay on the couch to eat on a low table in the sitting room. There was always much praise of Delia's work by Michael Snr. which greatly embarrassed her.

There is an on-line record of Michael (Snr.)'s death in the second quarter of 1912 in Athlone but I can not find a similar record for Catherine. Perhaps this is when Delia returned to Bealnamulla from Glasson and ran the post office and store. Delia raised Kathleen Begley. Marian Wurr remembers that she was not a natural mother. Kathleen Begley's education was, according to Marian Wurr, paid for by her Grandfather Begley, Alex in Belmullett. As Marian Wurr recalled everything had to be paid for at that time.

Baby, the youngest Begley was Marian's good friend. Baby was born in September 1901 and

Marian in December and they would go for bike rides together. Often with no pedals or brakes. Baby married an American returnee but I have no record of his name.



Post Office Bealnamulla