

Delia and Belnamulla

Delia Fitzgerald had, by Marian Wurr's recollection, a monotonous life. She had a great love in her life a local man, James Roche. Her father, Michael (Snr.), did not approve of the Roche and forbid her having anything to do with James or any of the rest of his family. James had to marry elsewhere (Mary Anne Gough in 1896 - Athlone) and Delia later fell for a man who was a soldier killed in the first world war. There is somewhere a ring he gave her which he had inscribed on the inside. "To Delia from _____".

As I said James Roche married Mary Anne Gough in Athlone in the first quarter of 1896. They had nine children by 1911 though only six were living by the time of the census. Mary Anne died some time in the next few years and the widower James, who worked on the railways, met with Delia, thought she was almost. They used to meet at a gate somewhere so that they might keep their liaisons private. She feared her family finding out as she knew they would not have approved either. James and Delia married in Dublin in the third quarter of 1920 and honeymooned on the Isle of Man. They announced this to the family in the form of a postcard from there which said she and James (Jim) were on the Isle of Man "for the best of reasons".



James Roche

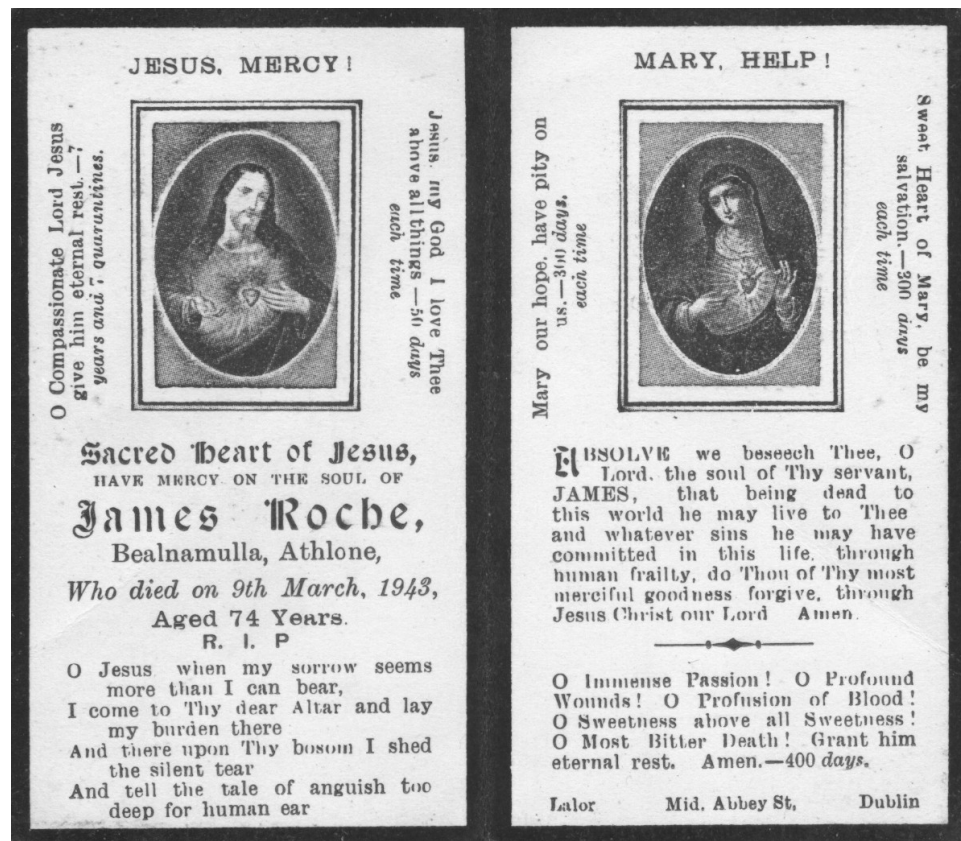


Family at Bealnamulla 1927

Back Row Delia and James Roche, Then Mary Anne Begley (nee Fitzgerald) two others unknown
Front row Baby (Mary Begley) and Jim Roche's son Jim and unknown woman with dog.

Peter Wurr remembers visiting Delia and James at Bealnamulla around 1936 and they were still in the Post Office. During the visit James took them about by pony and trap and attended Mass in Ballinasloe. The post office in Bealnamulla where they lived is now no longer standing. James died on the 9th of March 1943 and his memorial card below gives his address as Bealnamulla, Athlone so they were still there then. There is a death record for a Bridget Roche in 1953 which might be Delia but I have no proof.

As Marian Wurr recalled the cottage would eventually fall into ruin and only the gable end and the one wall were standing by the 1980s. Today it seems from the Googlemap image that any trace of the bungalow was obliterated when the road was straightened.



Site of the post office at Bealnamulla