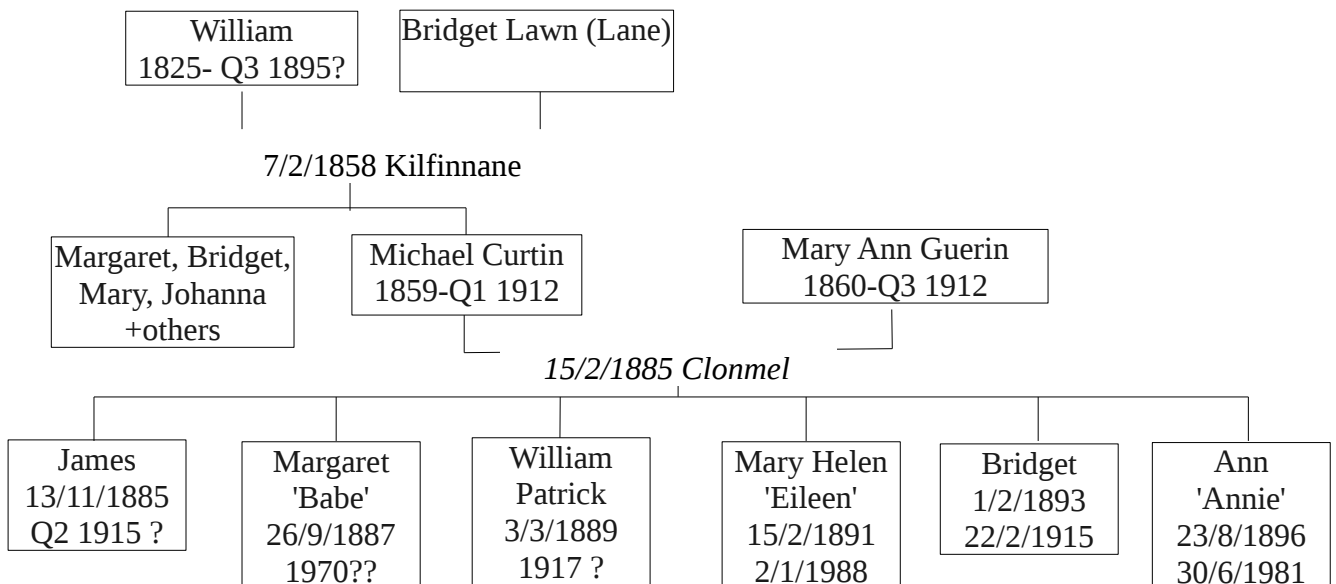


# Curtin History

Now the Curtin family come back into our story. If you remember, Michael Joseph Guerin had a younger sister, Mary Anne, who married a Michael Curtin in Clonmel in 1885. Michael was the eldest of a large family who lived in Kilflyn south of Kilfinnane in Co. Limerick. His father William was born in Kilfinnane in 1836. There are still members of the extended family living in Kilfinnane.

Michael was a prison officer in Clonmel and Mary Ann Guerin was working as a barmaid. One of the witnesses was a colleague of his, John Kenefick. Mary Anne lived in Main St. which is now O'Connell St. the main street in Clonmel. His father William's occupation is recorded as Farmer and her father James Guerin as caretaker. Within nine months of the marriage they had a first son James. He was born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo where his father was now working as a prison guard. A sister Margaret followed in October '87 and a brother William Patrick before the family returned to Clonmel. In Clonmel they had three more girls, Mary Helen (Eileen), Bridget and Annie.

*Kilflyn, Kilfinnane, Co. Limerick*



The birth certificates of James, Margaret and William all give the family address as “The Prison Castlebar”. On James certificate his father is shown as “Prison Warder” and on William Patrick's he is shown as being the 'Storkekeeper in the prison'. A promotion one supposes. Lord Lucan erected the following sign outside the prison. “Outside Beware: Inside Amend”



*Main Gate of The Prison Castlebar*



*The Prison Castlebar*



*Castlebar C 1900*

The prison was on the south west corner of the town. The 1901 census shows some 13 staff still living at the prison (no 5 Knockaphunta) and these quarters must be where the young Curtin family lived. The 1901 census shows that some of the prison staff lived in the town but most lived on site.

The Black and Tans used the prison as a local headquarters in the war of independence (1919-1921) and the prison was badly damaged during this period such that it fell into disuse and was demolished in 1935 to make way for the regional

hospital. Some of the original structure still forms part of the hospital.

Castlebar is the county town and is the largest town by population in Mayo. It was a very import



*Irish National Land League, Castlebar, 1879*

market town.

The Irish National Land League was set up in Castlebar in 1879 and so shows the town was at the very centre of unrest in the countryside at this time. The Curtins lived here from 1885 until around 1890 (Also the year the Guerins left Sallypark, Waterford and moved to Limerick).



*William , Bridget, Mary Ann, Margaret, Michael and Eileen Curtin ~ 1895 (Clonmel)*

So the Curtins moved back to Clonmel where the three youngest were born. The addresses given shown that they moved around within the town. Eileen was born when they lived in Rink Place (Certificate says 'Street').



But when Bridget is born (Baby in picture above) they are living in Thomas street. Around 1895 a new terrace of 6 houses was built for the prison staff. They were right adjacent to the prison in Emmet street and this is the address given on Ann's birth certificate in 1896. So the house on the left or part of the terrace, might be where she was born. All three children were

baptised in St. Peter and Paul's church where Michael and Mary Ann had married in 1885. One of the witnesses at that wedding had been John Kenefick and the 1901 and 1911 census shows he is also living in Emmet street.

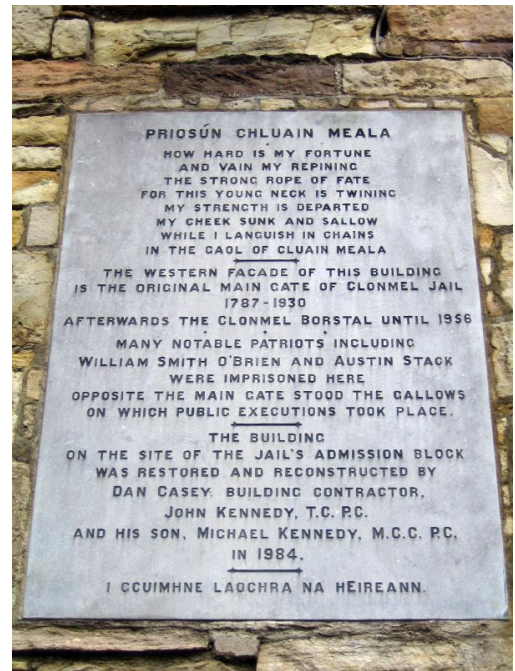


*Emmet Street Clonmel*

The gaol at Emmet Street (formerly Richmond St and Gaol St before that) was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and had on average 340 prisoners at any time. Outside the prison gates there was a pillory, a frame with holes for the unfortunate wrongdoers' head and hands.



*Gate Block, Clonmel Prison*



Around 1899 Michael Curtin was transferred to Tullamore Gaol. The family are shown there in the 1901 census. Their address is in the same road as the prison, 25 Charleville St. (now Cormac St.). The house had 5-6 rooms with three windows to the front. There was one outhouse. James is shown as a solicitor's clerk and father Michael as Prison Warder. How long they lived here is not known but they had certainly moved by 1911.



*Courthouse and Gaol Tullamore*

The picture below shows some of the houses in Charleville Rd. and one of



*Charleville Rd. Tullamore*

those on the right might be the Curtin home.

On the other side of the road and virtually opposite the Gaol was the station from which the Curtins and Guerins must have come and gone. The gaol and the courthouse were destroyed in 1922 during the civil war. The place was sandbagged by the republicans in anticipation of an attack by the National army. However, on thursday morning the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1922 the Gaol, Courthouse and the barrack nextdoor were set on fire by the departing republican force.



*Tullamore Station*

In the 1911 census they are shown at 21 Church Rd. more in the centre of Tullamore, right next to the Hospital. This house has again 5-6 rooms but 5 windows to the front and 2 out buildings. Interesting to note that one member of the household is recorded in the census as being 'Sick'. Which of them was sick can only be speculated on. Michael is shown as Clerk, a position he held within the prison according to his granddaughter Patricia Green. The eldest, James, is not shown with the rest of the family and could have been in Dublin by this time (Pat Green recollection) and I found a death record for a James Curtin in 1915 in Dublin. Patricia Green said that her mother Annie always said that he died of alcohol related problems. William Patrick is shown as a printer.

This census shows Margaret (babe) as a Governess and Eileen as Shop Assistant. Babe was governess to the children of a local businessman, Malachy Scally. Malachy owned a drapers shop in William street and at least one other, a grocery and provisions business in Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. He had a large family of 8 children.

Eileen might have worked for him too but certainly the youngest Anne (Annie) did. She learned to be a milliner at his premises.



*Eileen, W Patrick, Mary Ann*



*Scally's shop Tullamore*

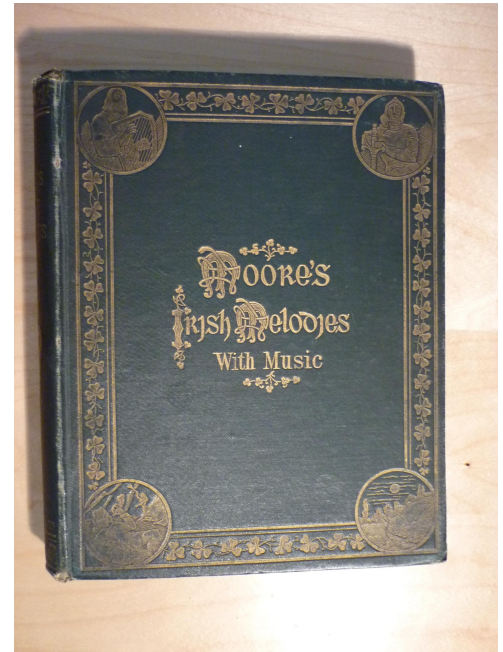
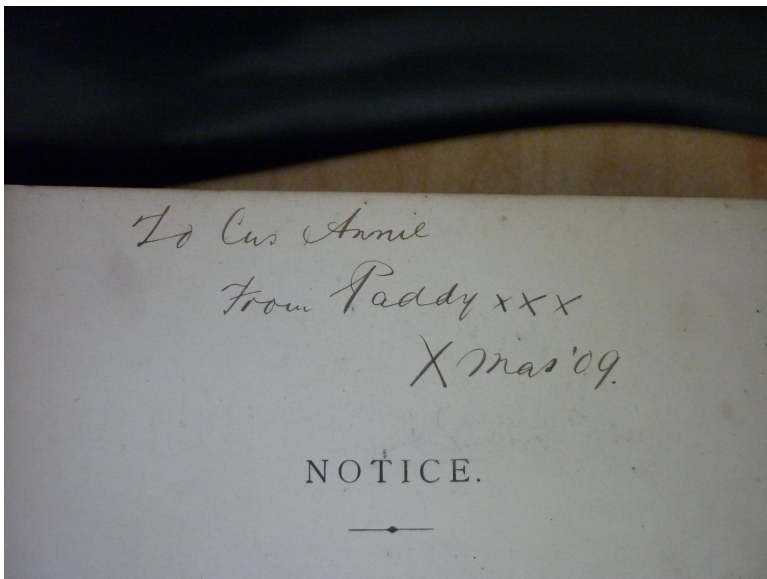
One of Malachy's sons was also Malachy (Gerard Anthony) and was born in 1900. Known as 'Manco' he was a motorcyclist and an aviator. I have found pictures of him competing in the motorcycle Tourist Trophy on the Isle of Man in 1923. In 1932 he decided to have a flying race to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) against a friend. The friend later puled out but with great ceremony he set off from Co. Dublin to fly solo to Ceylon. His flight in his plane "Shamrocket" was to be in multiple short stages. By nightfall he had reached Berre near Marseilles. But as he tried to land he was confused on the approach and in the dusk he crashed upside down. He was killed instantly. The year was 1932 and both Babe and Annie curtin were much saddened to hear of his demise.



*M Guerin and W P Curtin*

The Guerin and Curtin families were close it seems as this picture of William Curtin and M Guerin shows. On the reverse, in pencil, is the inscription "M Guerin and W Curtin", I presume this is Mary as Margaret Guerin died in 1906 and so would not have been this old in any photograph. Mary Guerin died in 1911 aged 25 so this might be around this time. William P disappeared around the time of the first world war, he went off to join the British Army to fight in the First World War and was never heard of again. All efforts to trace a W.P Curtin in the British Army records have turned up a blank. Perhaps he emigrated; I think we shall never know.

Certainly Patrick Joseph Guerin and Annie Curtin were very close. He sent her a copy of Moore's Irish Melodies in 1909. In the inside cover she records his address as 2 St. John's Villas, Mulgrave St., Limerick and hers as Church Rd. Tullamore.



Mary, Eileen and another in garden.

Michael Curtin died of Alcohol related problems at The Meath Hospital, Dublin in 1912. Years later his daughter Annie remembered how in the course of two years she lost both her parents, a brother and a sister. Mary Anne only lived until the third quarter of 1912 which fits that recollection. Pat Green thinks the picture on the left shows Eileen seated on the right and her mother Mary Anne seated on the left. Given the apparent age of Eileen I think this must be around 1912 so not long before Mary Anne died. Is she dressed in black as would be correct for a grieving widow?

Bridget died in early 1915 and as I said before I think James died a few months later that year in Dublin; according to Annie Green, of alcohol related problems.

So by 1917 the Curtin family was reduced to Babe, Eileen and Annie. Eileen though was no longer in Tullamore. She had moved to Whitby by the time of the first world where she nursed wounded soldiers. She had gone to Whitby via the Isle of Man. Where she trained to nurse is not known.

One change that Eileen seems to have made between Tullamore and Whitby was to add the “Mac” to her surname. Therefore Mary Helen Curtin of Tullamore would now be known as Eileen MacCurtin of Whitby or indeed “Auntie Lal”. Eileen commented some time before her death that she had been known by so many names during her life time that she would answer to almost anything. Margaret and Annie were now the only members of the family in Tullamore.

The picture here, taken in Limerick, is of Nellie Tier and Margaret Curtin, back row. Annie Curtin (MacCurtin) and Kathleen Guerin. Obviously taken before 1919 but perhaps not too much before.



*Annie and Kathleen with unknown male*



*3 cousins and Nellie*

The picture above left is obviously taken on the same day as the picture of the four cousins above right. There is an unknown male with them. There are two possibilities for his identity. Firstly that this is Michael Freeman, Hanora's youngest brother. He was born in 1871 and if this picture was taken just before 1919 then he might be in his mid 40's. I have compared his picture with the picture of Hanora in Tralee when she was a similar age. There is no resemblance that I can see.

Alternatively. Kathleen had a lodger at 2 Lord Edward Terrace in 1933 when she died. Patrick “Bull” Mason was actually there in 1923 with PJG and Kathleen which was a lot earlier then thought so why not a few years earlier still around 1919. Is this Bull Mason? He fits the description given by Joseph Liam Guerin of being a large man.

According to Joseph Liam, Bull Mason had lived there for so long that when Kathleen died in 1933 he rather fancied that he would now inherit the house and was most put out when Jim and Babe decided to move from St. Joseph Place to 2 Lord Ed. Terr. As it was much closer to work and presumably of course they would not have any rent to pay. But this is jumping ahead.