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Papal Concert link to Churchtown

The Relihan Musical Legacy

by Gerry Murphy
Churchtown Heritage Society

Saturday 25th August 2018 was a historic day for the Relihan family, Churchtown, when an accordion owned and played by their father, Dan Relihan (1902–1958), was on stage at the World Meeting of Families Concert attended by Pope Francis in Croke Park. The accordion has a long history. It was carefully selected and ordered by Dan Relihan in 1954 and collected by his son, Noel, from Borrowes of O’Brien Street in Mallow. Although intended for playing by Dan’s sons Noel and his brother, Denis, it was their father, Dan, who would mainly play it. Hard to believe, but the current monetary equivalent of the £40 paid for the instrument in 1954 is now over €1,250.



Funding for the purchase was provided by Dan’s brother-in-law, New York based Donal O’Sullivan. Donal was raised in Churchtown village. There were seven boys and four girls in the O’Sullivan family – Jack, Paddy, Jim, Donal, Denis, Jerry, Billy and Elizabeth (Bess), Ann, Alice and Peggy. The accordion Dan selected was a German-made Hohner Chromatic and was notoriously difficult to play. To achieve optimal sound the accordionist must engage with all three rows. Dan could handle all three rows but Noel and Denis found it difficult to progress beyond one row. Dan played contemporary tunes such as Glenn Miller’s “In the Mood” as well as traditional airs. Local man Richie Flynn - also an expert player, had a similar accordion. The youthful Bill Egan often called to Relihan’s house on his way home from Churchtown Creamery to talk to Dan and play the accordion. On one occasion Bill was so engaged in chatting and playing of the accordion that the donkey hauling the creamery cart fell asleep on the road outside Relihan’s.

So, why was the three-row button accordion on stage at the Papal Concert in Croke Park? It’s because the late Dan’s son Danny - who lives in Malahide - is related through marriage to the famous Begley musical family from Baile na bPoc, Dingle, and James and his brother Brendan Begley were invited to play at the Papal concert. To honour their musical forebears they decided to have a collection of family accordions on stage for the Concert. In total, three of the eight accordions on the stage belonged to members of the Relihan family, and Dan’s accordion was actually played during the concert. The accordion purchased in Borrowes on that fateful day in 1954 has travelled the world. Noel emigrated to the USA in 1962, and in the early 1970s his aunt Alice brought it to him on a visit she was making to America. In later years the accordion returned to Ireland when Noel presented it to his brother, Danny, for the use of his son Niall who is now an accomplished accordionist.

The Relihan family are well known for their musical skills. Dan played with the Michael O'Callaghan Big Band in the 1950s. He also played Hawaiian slide guitar with the Hugh Cahill band and featured with the Regan band in Buttevant. At his original family home at Ballindillanig, Dan began playing on the family accordion. He first learned the banjo on an instrument he received as a wedding present from Mrs Oliver of Stream Hill and on which he became accomplished. Dan also played both instruments by invitation from a Mrs Barrett, Knockardbane, Liscarroll who was herself an accomplished piano player.



Dan Relihan 1902 - 1958

Dan's son, Willie, has released several CDs and his music is well known and very popular with listeners to local radio. Dan's daughter, Margaret O'Keeffe in Charleville, plays piano accordion, keyboard, guitar and the organ in Holy Cross Church in Charleville. Margaret's sister Hannah - who lives in the US - is also an excellent musician having learned the piano in Buttevant Convent while attending secondary school. Hannah also plays the piano accordion and was an award winning step dancer. She practiced her dancing in the family kitchen while her father played on the accordion.

One of Dan's greatest joys in his younger days was to play banjo for his close friend and Godfather to Noel, Bill Murphy of the Leap. It is well known that my Uncle Bill appreciated good music and song, as he and others sang the old and the new to the strains of Dan's banjo. Dan's son, Denis, who also emigrated to the US, died in 2016 in Philadelphia and his ashes were buried in the Kilgrogan grave of his Grandfather and Grandmother. Dan Relihan and his wife Elizabeth (Bess) 1915-1995 are buried in the Abbey in Buttevant. They are surely resting peacefully in the knowledge that Dan's accordion had the singular honour of being played at the Papal Concert 64 years after its purchase. *Apologies if any musical Relihan family members are omitted from this article; there are so many it is not easy to ensure all are included. The author acknowledges the assistance of Noel Relihan in the preparation of this article and Denis J Hickey for proof reading / editing support.*

Picture Caption 1

James and Brendan Begley with the eight family accordions on stage at the World Meeting of Families Concert in Croke Park attended by Pope Francis. The three-row Hohner Chromatic button accordion on the top right that was played at the concert was originally owned and played by Dan Relihan (1902 – 1958) from Churchtown.

Picture Caption 2

Dan Relihan, Churchtown (1902-1958)

Churchtown

CHURCH NEWS
Churchtown - Saturday 6pm
Sunday 11.30am
Liscarrow - Saturday 7p.m.
Sunday 9.30am

Weekday Masses
Churchtown - Monday 6p.m.
Wednesday and Friday 9.30am
Liscarrow - Tuesday and
Thursday 6.30am
Friday 10.15am

Retirement Homes
Windshill - Wednesday 11am
Padre Pio - Thursday 11.45am

Adoration
Churchtown - Wednesday after
Mass until 11am
Liscarrow - Tuesday after Mass
until 11 noon

Weekend Mass Changes
Starting October 14th
Only one Vigil Mass will be
celebrated in our parish. The
Saturday Vigil Mass will
alternate every second week
between Churchtown and
Liscarrow. Starting with
Liscarrow in October, Vigil
Mass times at 6.30pm, Sunday
Mass will go with whichever
month the Sunday falls on.

Sunday Mass times: Liscarrow
10.15am and Churchtown
11.30am starts on Sunday
October 7th

Autumn Station
If you are willing to loan a
house switch please contact Fr.
Robin at 087-5272525. House
stations at 6pm

Friday September 21st
Mounthairbert, Mounthbride
and Ballinacree - Dan and
Nogetta Curtin.

Friday October 19th Moyuge,
Aldane and Cooladora - Liam
and Jane Fitzgerald.

**Cosbise, Kilnace, Rockspring
and Knockfoona** - Joan
O'Regan.

BEST WISHES
Best wishes to all those who are
ill at present whether at home or
in hospital.

KIND REGARDS
Kind regards to all the residents
and the staff of both the
Windmill and the Padre Pio
Retirement Home.

GREAT HONOUR
Best wishes to the extended
Reihan family on the great
honour of having an accordion
which belonged to their father,
the much respected Dan
Reihan, played during the Papal
Concert in the Phoenix Park last

weekend. This was not only an
honour for the Reihan, but
also for the parish of
Churchtown.

CONGRATULATIONS
Congratulations to our two
19th wedding anniversaries,
Michael Heffernan and Eileen
Reihan on their recent trip to
Massachusetts, USA. Representing
Liscarrow Handball Club. They
were also most welcome in
W. at the recent 11th
Championships. Well done
boys.

WORDS OF WISDOM
There's a great wisdom aptness
in the proverbs (sunders) that
you'll find in a job's book.
No every body gives better
advice than an owning tenant.
Wisdom is the fence around the
baggard where wisdom is
needed.

Every man is wise till he
speaks.
Don't believe half of what you
see, or a quarter of what you
hear.

Don't crowd till you're out of
the wood.
A diplomat must always think
twice before he says nothing.
Never talk about a rope in the
house of a hanged man.
Miracles won't bend a strong
man's will.

Be wary for the golden man.
Don't get a giddy man at the
tilts.
On an unknown path, it is
better to slow.

SYMPATHY
Sympathy is extended to the
family, relatives and friends
of John Flaherty, Chapel
View, and formerly of
Anagh. John was a real
character, a real trooper who
went through a tough time
during the last years and
came out on the other side
with his own unique sense of
humour.

John's great love of all things
politic was legendary and he
was a long time member
of Churchtown Farmers (AI)
Committee. He walked many a
highway and by way of
his best for Fianna Fail
several election, whether it
be local election or Dail
election.

His presence will be greatly
missed in Churchtown. Ar
diehis De go taibh a nam
diis.

DID YOU KNOW?
The last person to be killed
by a single bullet was a

man who has the quality
of being able to pay with
the quarter, to the whole.
If you are interested contact
Suzanne O'Donnell at 087-
5272525.

Towards the Millennium
This is a Millennium Programme
service, typically a 11 week
programme led by the participants
and a facilitator. The main
objective is to promote
social connectedness, make
friends and overall to achieve
a sense of purpose and well-being.
The programme is aimed at
those who overall need a
change in their lives. It is
aimed at those who are
looking for a change.

To find out more contact
Louise Henry in Charleville
on 083-030994. For further
information on imports and
services log onto www
imports.ie or contact 065-91360.

ST. PLO PILGRIMAGE
The annual National
Pilgrimage in honour of St. Plo will take
place on Sunday, September
16th. There will be some
members of the Catholic
Community from San
Giorgio, Romagna, Italy at
the celebration.

WITTY AWARDS
Aware, a national support
organisation for people
suffering from depression or
bipolar disorder has a number
of volunteer opportunities
urgently need to be filled.
Notice that currently need
volunteers are support line,
support mail.

HALL/HOURA NEWS
Help your local community
while earning extra money. Are
you interested in any of the
following roles?
Administration. IT work,
building maintenance, outdoor
elderly, tour guide etc.

To qualify, you need to be
actively farming one hectare
(or more) of land, have an
active herd number, be in
receipt of a means tested social
welfare payment. A spouse/
partner, a daughter/son, or a
brother/sister of an active

delivery man in First
Class. More than 20% of people
commuting by train in
London, have to stand all the
way.

A beauty contest held in
Kesh in 1906 crowned
Miss of the month for
knowledge of the world.

Including the price of a glass
of brandy and a 27.09
pennance man in 195.

The 1.5m official definition
of a tourist is someone who
stays in a country more than
seven days, but less than six
months.

Every English elm is
descended from a single tree
imported by the Romans.
The world has lost 3% of its
timber since 1990.

In winter, quail birds used
to eat a third of their own
weight in food each day.

**CHURCHTOWN
PILGRIMAGE
ASSOCIATION**
March Masses
Saturday, August 26th,
St. Mary's United C. Church,
Munster, 7a, winner Lilian
Crowley.

Sunday, September 2nd,
Walton, 7, Tottenham
House, 11, winner
Teresa O'Keefe.

BROADBAND UPDATE
With a view to now an
important to everybody and
essential to business, it is
important to a number of well
known companies.

While adequate, it is not
100% reliable, can be
interrupted and slow. The
good news is that it is
improving. It is being
improved in the village that
will guarantee speeds of up
to 100MB. The consistency
of service when delivered
should be excellent and will
support high quality live
video streaming. It will also
mean we can use it to
broadcast events live from
Churchtown. Farmers (AI)
Committee. He walked many a
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DID YOU KNOW?
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by a single bullet was a



Children on their first day at Donna's Montessori, Churchtown with their teachers Karen Burke and Alison O'Dee.

EGMONT AND WALSHESTOWN

By Rosario Buckley

Smith 1750 wrote
Near Burton is Egmont which gives the title of Earl to the Percival family. In Egmont
House, the grandfather of the present Earl (2nd Earl who died in 1770) was born. It is
finely situated with a pleasure park adjacent which is well stocked with deer. The country
for some miles around is planted with ash, elm, oak and large quantities of fir of which no
firer trees in the winter season afford more beauty to a landscape.

In Taylor and Skinner's road maps of Ireland surveyed in 1777 Egmont House is shown
as the home of the Earl of Egmont. In 1781 it is thought that John O'Donnell bought it
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There is a well located in Egmont called Tubberliffen and a quarry called Clabunack.
The historic townland of Walshestown lies about two miles from Churchtown Village.
Smith (published 1750) states "Walshestown, a mile North East of Burton, in a good
house, inhabited by Mr. Conron, around which are good plantations. It was formerly in
the hands of the Earl of Egmont. In the War of 1641 it was fortified and
garrisoned at the expense of Sir Philip Percival, but was taken by the Irish in 1645."

In 1905 two men named Bill Torney and Paddy O'Mahony were repairing a fence when
they found some coins, eighteen in all. These coins were buried in an old wall which was
thought to have formerly been the boundary wall of Burton Park. The men handed over
the coins to Sergeant Jeremiah Conon, Churchtown RIC Barracks. The coins were gold
and silver. One gold coin was dated 1677 and another 1679. One was marked Elizabeth,
but not dated, and some were marked Carlos 11 1677. The coins are now in a collection in
the National Museum, Dublin.

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rows. Dan could handle all three rows but Noel and Denis found it difficult to progress beyond one row. Dan played contemporary tunes such as Glenn Miller's 'In the Mood', as well as traditional airs. Local man Richie Flynn, also an expert player, had a similar accordion. The youthful Bill Egan often called to Relihan's home on his way home from Churchtown Creamery to talk to Dan and play the accordion. On one occasion Bill was engaged in chatting and playing of the accordion that the donkey hauling the creamery cart fell asleep on the road outside Relihan's. So, why was the three-row button accordion on stage at the Papal Concert in Croke Park? It's because the late Dan's son Danny - who lives in Malahide - is related through marriage to the famous Begley musical family from Bally na Bpoc. Dingle, and James and his brother Brendan Begley were invited to play at the Papal concert. To honour their musical forebears, they decided to have a collection of family accordions on stage for the concert. In total, three of the eight accordions on the stage belonged to members of the Relihan family, and Dan's

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Daniel Relihan, Churchtown (1902-1958)