

The Late Elizabeth (Lizzie) Barry RIP

1854-1921



‘History is not about times and dates and wars, it is about the people who occupy the spaces in between’

One local person who deserves recognition and acknowledgement of time well served in her historical space is Elizabeth (Lizzie) Barry, Chapel Hill, Mayobridge, who passed away on 19th May 1921, nearly 100 years ago.

Lizzie had bequeathed her house and 9-acre farm to the then Catholic Bishop of Dromore with some very specific charitable objectives attached to the utilisation of the Gift of the land to the Parish, which were to have enormous benefits for the People, Children and Community of Mayobridge.

Indeed, much has been written about the Parish, School, Convent, the Community and GAA, but very little was known about this remarkable generous lady until recently.

To fully appreciate her Gift to the Parish it is necessary to consider it in the context of 1921.

Lizzie was born in 1854, just 5 years after the famine ended in Ireland, she was from a family of 6 and was only 3 years old when her mother tragically died 3 weeks after giving birth to her brother John. When people talk of hard times, one cannot begin to imagine the position Lizzie’s father found himself in. He was left with 6 children under the age of 10 in a country that was in absolute dire poverty and like so many people in this part of the world they decided to emigrate. The family went to live and work in Warrington, Lancaster, England. Lizzie did return to Mayobridge sometime around 1900 and resided in the family homestead which later became part of the former Poor Clare Convent building.

Some of the family remained in England, while her 3 sisters married locally, namely Mrs Mary Rose Grant, Mrs Rose Anne Butterfield and Mrs Ellen O’Hare.

There are still descendants of Lizzie’s living in Mayobridge today, namely the Butterfield family The Village, Mc Namee’s Edenmore, O Rorke’s Newry, and the O’Hare families from The Village, Crossan and Ryan and the extended Barry Family.

She was friendly with Miss Morgan and Miss Marianne Flynn, two of the teachers in the local National School, and through this friendship and maybe her close proximity to the old school house itself, enabled her to get a very true picture of the utter poverty and deprivation in the Mayobridge area at that time. From what has been gleaned from the available records, Lizzie was a very astute and learned lady, who had great thought for others, so much so that the provision of 9 acres and house enabled the Poor Clare Convent to be built in 1924, which today facilitates various Parish activities, the new School in 1927 and our beloved Shrine to St Anne in 1959. These buildings, coupled with the Sisters, lay teachers and numerous others, have facilitated the education, spiritual wellbeing, and welfare of thousands of local children, and indeed the People and Community of Mayobridge for over 95 years.

The Parish Finance Committee, on behalf of the Mayobridge Parish and Community, felt that this remarkable lady should be formally remembered for her vision, kindness and benevolence which will continue for generations to come. So, on Tuesday 5/11/19 with a number of her family, Fr Desmond Mooney PP, The Sisters and the Committee dedicated the former front parlour room of the Convent to her,

‘The Lizzie Barry Room, In Memory and Gratitude, 1854-1921.’

A short history and Barry family tree is now depicted in this room in special recognition and to honour this remarkable lady. Please feel free to visit and read the short profile. Any further information in relation to this generous lady would be gratefully appreciated.

Mayobridge Parish Finance Committee