



Peggy Brosnan, Liam O'Brien, John O'Brien, Angela Clancy, Patsy Brosnan, Seoirse Clancy, Jack Clancy and Tony Brosnan.

THE CLANCY FAMILY OF GRANGE

By Pat Clancy and Seoirse Clancy

We are proud members of the Clancy family of Grange. Accounts of and references to the Clancy family are to be found elsewhere in this book, including the story of Seoirse Clancy, murdered Mayor of Limerick who was a granduncle to us both, the memoirs of John G Clancy, uncle to Pat and the Bulfin family story. We will avoid repetition of matter in those articles, except where essential to our tale.

The first Clancy to come to Grange was George (1809-1890). He was born in Doneraile, Co Cork. He married Margaret Hickey (1810-1873) in Doneraile in 1831. They had twelve children. He came to Grange with his young family in 1854 to work as a carpenter at the Croker Estate. He died in Crean in 1890, and his death was registered by Ms Hanora Ahern.

George erected a headstone at Grange Cemetery to the memory of his wife, Margaret, who died in 1873. The burial plot and headstone are on the east side of the church building near the sacristy door. George's name is not recorded on the headstone, but we assume that he is buried there with Margaret.

The headstone also records the burial of George and Margaret's son, John (Johnny) – (1845-1935) and Johnny's wife, Bridget Farrell (1858-1898). Buried there also are members of the next generation, John (Jack) Clancy (1884-1944) and Jack's wife, Margaret Fitzgerald (1886-1950).

Our great-grandfather, John Clancy (Johnny) was born in Doneraile and came to Grange with his parents at around six years of age. He learned his trade as a carpenter from his father, George. He worked at the Croker Estate in Grange as a very young man. He married Bridget Farrell from Annacotty/Monaleen at the church there. They had twelve children, of whom seven survived into adulthood.

After working at the Croker Estate for a number of years, Johnny set up his own carpentry business at his home in Lower Grange and trained our respective grandfathers and our granduncles to the trade.

These men became excellent tradesmen and operated a workshop in Grange for many years. Amongst other activities, they made cars for horses and donkeys – for people over a wide radius. They also made horse traps, and they painted and decorated them which was very tedious work.

Not far from the carpentry shop in Lower Grange, there was a forge which was owned and operated by the Madden family, well-known blacksmiths, and it was there that all the wheels made by the Clancy carpenters were banded. It was skilled work.

Eventually, as our great-grandfather, Johnny, became older, two of his sons set up their own carpentry businesses – Jack in Upper Grange, which was very successful. Joe set up his business in Bruff, but he fell into severe illness and died a young man in 1929.

Our great grandmother, Bridget Clancy (nee Farrell), had an important role in running the Clancy post office and public house. As she died at forty years of age, our grandaunt, Bridget Clancy (later to become Mrs Thomas Bulfin), left school at twelve years of age to look after both. Subsequently, on 24 March 1919, she was appointed postmistress by Mr Gallagher, Post Master at Kilmallock.

Telephones were very scarce at the time, and only a few knew how to operate them. Consequently, our grandaunt, Bridget, assisted people wishing to make phone calls from the post office. In those times, all phone calls to private subscribers were routed through the post office exchange. She operated effectively as both a journalist and adviser to many.

The *1901 Census* recorded Johnny as living in Lower Grange with seven children (his wife was deceased). Three of his sons were recorded as being carpenters – Patrick, Joseph and John (Jack). Caroline Croker owned their residence. *Census* data described it as a stone, thatched house with three front windows. The residence was also a ‘public house’ and there was one workshop.

The *1911 Census* indicated that Johnny and family still resided in Lower Grange, but with improved circumstances. He was by then the owner of the house which had five (previously three) front windows. The property still contained a public house, but there were three workshops (previously one). Five children remained in residence with their father. The youngest, Edward (Egan), was also recorded as a carpenter.



Babs and Egan Clancy, New Line.

The oldest, Patrick, had moved next door, and George (future Mayor) was resident in Thomas Street, Limerick.

There was no mention in the records from either *Census* of a post office being contained within the buildings.

Johnny and Bridget had five sons and two daughters: Patrick, Joseph, George, John (Jack), Edward, Mary and Bridget.

PATRICK (1877-1943) was a carpenter and a Labour TD for Limerick from 1923 to 1932. JOSEPH (1880-1929) was a carpenter and lived in Bruff.



Jack Clancy with wife Margaret (nee Fitzgerald) and their children George, Paddy, Tony and May.

GEORGE (1881-1921) became Mayor of Limerick, and Crown forces murdered him in 1921. *(See Article by Jack Clancy)*

MARY (1883-1959) did not marry and lived all her life in Lower Grange.

JOHN (JACK) (1884-1944) moved to Upper Grange (Tony Clancy's house) where he carried on a carpentry business.

BRIDGET (1888-1965) married Thomas Bulfin and ran the Grange Post Office for many years.

EDWARD (EGAN) (1889-1933) was a carpenter and renowned hurler. He died in America, aged 44 years. *(See Article by Pat Clancy on Memoirs of his uncle, John G Clancy)*

One of us, Seoirse is descended from Jack Clancy (grandfather), while the other, Pat, is descended from Patrick (grandfather). In what follows, we each trace our families from grandfather to our own generations.

Jack Clancy and Descendants (by Seoirse)

My grandfather, Jack Clancy, moved from Lower Grange to Upper Grange when he married Margaret Fitzgerald and lived in the house later occupied by my uncle, Tony and his wife, Breda. He constructed a workshop there, where his three sons Paddy (1917-1993), Tony (1920-1993) and my father, George (1924-1962), all learned their trade as carpenters.

He had one daughter, May (1914-1975), who inherited the Meanus Post Office from her cousin, Joe Clancy, and she lived there with her husband, Liam Hayes, until the thatched premises was burned out, *circa* 1956. The couple did not have children. Subsequently, they moved to a house opposite the Gaelic Grounds in Limerick which proved convenient for us when we attended matches.



Bill Madden, Gardener, at work at Greene Barry garden.

Paddy moved to Dublin where he worked with the Dublin Port and Docks Authority as a carpenter, and he married Bernadette Sheridan from Clara, Co Offaly. They moved to the Ennis Rd, Limerick, in 1964 where Aunt Ber still resides. When they moved to Limerick, they operated a very successful Bed and Breakfast business. Uncle Paddy was very passionate about politics and wrote many articles in both local and national newspapers. He also wrote on other matters and extracts from his account of the history of Grange National School are to be found elsewhere in this book. Paddy travelled widely. Ber and Paddy had three children: Gerry, Damien and Trudy, all of whom live in the Limerick region.

Tony married Breda Penny from Donoghmore in 1948, and they lived in Upper Grange for the duration of their lives. They didn't have a family. Uncle Tony shared the family passion for hurling and played at all levels for Bruff. He was a life president of the Bruff GAA Club and was vice chairman of the South Board GAA for numerous years.

Tony worked as a carpenter with the family business in his earlier life and later worked in Limerick for various building companies. He cycled there every day. Later he worked for Limerick County Council as a carpenter in a repair and maintenance crew all over South Limerick. He subsequently worked as a carpenter and supervisor with Roadstone Ltd at Knockderk. He worked as a clerk of works with SFADCO in Shannon for many years before taking early retirement to return to his roots; he worked in his own workshop next door to his home. Even though he didn't have children himself, he was a very loving and caring person. He regularly

visited The Hamlet Bar and was often called to sing a song with his friends – Jim Madden, his cousin Egan, Tim O’Donnell and Tom (Toastie) O’Connell.

He and Tom (Toastie) attended games as often as possible including mid-week school games and they would adjourn to the local bar to “avoid leaving the curse of the parish on them”. Ironically, they often disagreed with each other’s interpretation of the games and sometimes you would wonder if they had been at the same game.

Tony was one of the founder members of the Grange/Lough Gur Water Scheme, and he served on the managing committee for years. He was one of several who worked tirelessly to bring high quality running water to Grange and the wider community. The water scheme is the subject of a comprehensive article elsewhere in this book.

My father, George, married Mary Neilan from Gort, Co Galway, and he built a new house at Chapel Road. They had three children, Angela (born 1949), Jack (born 1950) and me, George (Seoirse) (born 1952).

My father, George, worked as a carpenter also in the family business in his earlier life and also worked with various companies in Limerick. He followed Uncle Tony to work with Limerick County Council and with Roadstone Ltd. Unfortunately, he was killed in an industrial accident on the 17th November 1962, aged 38 years. My memories of my father are of great love and fun. Many children enjoyed his company playing hurling on summer evenings and at weekends in Paddy Carmody’s field, adjacent to the rear of our home. He bought a tape recorder to record his escapades in the local bars and *fleadh cheoils* all over Clare. He loved ceili music and, indeed, used to play pop music from Radio Luxembourg to entertain us after our exertions in Paddy’s field.

Patrick Clancy, TD, and Descendants (by Pat)

My grandfather, Patrick Clancy, was a carpenter, and he married Bridget Higgins from Skule. Bridget worked as a cook for the Croker family. Patrick was elected as a Labour Party TD to Dáil Éireann in 1923, where he held a seat for ten years. He was defeated in the 1932 election when he stood as an Independent Labour candidate. The following is an extract from the *Magill Book of Irish Politics* provided by the Office of the Tánaiste to my family in June 1995. *Patrick Clancy (Lab) Born Kilmallock, Co Limerick 1877. A carpenter. Prominent in the Land and Labour Association from about 1900 and an active trade unionist. Member of the*



Patrick Clancy TD, 22nd August 1911.

Irish Volunteers and IRA in East Limerick 1914-21. Elected in 1923 and both elections in 1927. Defeated in 1932 ... Subsequently he worked for the Land Commission.

Patrick had three sons and one daughter: Egan (my father); Jim married and lived in Limerick City; John G (Jack) married and lived in Doneraile; and Bridget who married Bill Madden and lived in Grange. The memoirs of John G are to be found elsewhere in this book.

My father, Egan, and his siblings attended school in Dublin for a period while their father was a TD. While in Dublin, Egan served Mass each morning. Frequently, there was a 'beggar' at the church door who was, in fact, the Venerable Matt Talbot, OFS.

Egan, my father, married Margaret Harty and had three children, Mary and Ned as well as me. He resided in Grange all his life. He was a skilful hurler, and he played club hurling with both Bruff and Fedamore.



Mary Clancy (Neilan) and her husband George Clancy, parents of Angela, Jack and Seoirse.

Dad and his brother, Jimmy, joined the Irish Army in the 1940s and were posted to Templemore and Donegal respectively. Dad worked with the Electricity Supply Board at the time of rural electrification in the Grange locality and in Plassey where the University of Limerick is now located. He also worked at Lough Gur on an archaeological dig team of Professor Ó Ríordáin. Finally, he worked with Grasslands Ltd.

One of many incidents that Dad recalled was a night when he was coming home from a dance in Bruff. He had no light on his bicycle and was being followed by a Garda, who had the advantage of riding a superior bicycle. Dad turned off at The Pike and with the law still in pursuit, he led the way to Fedamore. Dad turned into Johnny Flavin's property and knowing his way through the fields, he soon lost his pursuer.

Another incident arose one night at The Hamlet Public House when the Gardai raided it after closing time. When customers left through the back door, some asked, "Do I turn left or right?" Dad responded "left", and those who took that option suddenly found themselves in the piggery! In the meantime, Dad, knowing the layout very well, made his escape.