



THE O'SHEA CLAN SOCIETY

Promoting Interest in the History & Genealogy of the O'Shea Clan

www.osheaclan.org

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Winter Newsletter



We would like to wish everyone *Seasons Greetings*. This is our third Newsletter. It has been a busy year with many new recruits to the O'Shea Surname yDNA Project. Some interesting results have emerged and these are referred to in the yDNA Update article.

Here follows, a story put together by Brian O'Shea on a Fr William O'Shea. It is based on fact and legend but there is no doubt that there was a man by that name who became a priest, was beloved in life and after his death (1823) had a headstone erected to him at Templebreedy Graveyard in south County Cork.

Also, we include another list of poets bearing the name O'Shea (and variant spellings). This comes from a book entitled: **The Poets of Ireland, A Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of Irish Writers of English Verse** and it further shows the artistic talent of the O'Shea Clan.

James O'Shea presents an interesting article on Gaelic Footballers and International Soccer players from the past and present, showing sporting talents of O'Sheas.

A brief look at the use of double-barrelled surnames used in conjunction with the surname "Shea" and the consequences of this, for the genealogist, are addressed by Margaret Jordan.

Editor: Margaret Jordan

The Legend of Father William O' Shea

There lived in the two parishes near the mouth of Cork harbour a family called O'Shea. This family had been there since at least the seventeenth century. Out of this family there emerged in the late 1700s, a lad who was christened William. He was born near what is now called Roberts Cove but at that time was known by its more Monastic descriptions: Doonavannig - tower of the Blessed and Knocknamannagh - hill of the Monks. This was in the Parish of Tracton, a name given it by the Cistercian monks. Here William grew up, studied and eventually was ordained a Priest.

Fr O'Shea's family had returned, for generations, to a ruined church called Templebreedy on a ridge at the harbour mouth, to bury their dead. Living during the era of the Penal Laws, Father William O'Shea maintained a low profile. In humble obedience he took on the challenge of a poor and modest parish called Skull on the south west coast. The land there was bad and the tenant holdings, small and numerous. The parishioners lived mostly on what they could catch in the sea or what they could gather on the sea shore. Even on this, they had to pay a Tithe to the Established Church.

Father William was much loved by his people in Skull as he lived as one of them. He did not preach at them but led by example. As he could not afford a housekeeper out of the Christmas and Easter Dues, his own sister lived with him. He had not served that long as Parish Priest of Skull when he passed away. He was interred in the local churchyard at Skull on the Colla Road after a service attended by just about everyone for miles around, out of respect for a good man.

One night many months later, an old friend of his encountered his spirit abroad on the roadside near Tracton. He was recognised at once in the moonlight. Father William had an urgent request "I want to be buried with my parents in Templebreedy (Fig.1). Tell the Parish Priest of Tracton!". The perturbed man said "I will not be believed". Fr William insisted "Tell the Parish Priest to supply a special ship, a Galway Hooker at Fountainstown and crew it only with my relatives; the Corrigans, the Punches, and the Noonans. When you reach Skull, you will find a candle, one inch tall, lighting over me and when you dig, you will find my remains sitting in water".

Though reluctant, the Parish Priest of Tracton, finally gave his blessing and the body of Fr William was dug up. The body was as foretold, with the candle lighting over the body. The parishioners of Skull did attempt to rescue their beloved priest's body from the people of Tracton who wanted to take it back to Templebreedy by boat but on the journey, their boat was hidden first by fog and later by storms so that it could safely sail back into Fountainstown. On its arrival, on the sandy beach, stretched a large party of old neighbours, relatives and friends and to the fore were the Tracton Parish Priest with his curate. Two sugán chairs from a local cottage were placed on the foreshore on which to rest the coffin. The Parish Priest opened the lid, though buried for some time, he immediately recognised his old comrade. The body was uncorrupted. Fr William's brow just had a few beads of sweat. The Parish Priest got out his lace handkerchief and wiped it dry. From behind the Parish Priest, slipped Fr. William's old dog which the Parish Priest had looked after, from when the priest had gone to Skull. He recognised his old master. To the utter amazement of the crowd he leapt into the coffin and licked Fr. William's face. Later, the lid was shut and after much ceremony and the reciting of the rosary, with all the trimmings, Fr William got his wish. He was eventually buried at Templebreedy. This was 1823.

For six months his friends held vigil both day and night over his grave for fear of the West Cork men, who threatened to steal the body back to Skull, but none ever arrived. For the next 150 years prayers were said over his grave regularly as part of a "Triangle of Rounds" which included Holy Wells.

On the cusp of the twenty-first century a Miss O' Shea from Roberts Cove passed away. She expressed a desire to be buried in the old family plot with Fr. O' Shea in Templebreedy. A large gravestone (Fig. 2) stands there with his details deeply inscribed, facing west.



Fig. 1



The gravedigger got out his pick and shovel and started digging. His work he found easy as the plot had been dug before. At a depth of six feet he found the base, lined with limestone slabs which came from the doorway of the old church, in a tradition reserved to our clergy. On these slabs, at that depth there sat two leather shoes and old rosary beads, all in perfect condition. There was no sign of the body of Father William O' Shea. Had the men of Skull got to him or were the O'Sheas so clever that this was just a dummy grave? Or was there a more Supernatural answer?

I personally spoke to the gravedigger at the funeral of Miss O' Shea. I read a statement written in 1937 by Denis Noonan, regarding his grandfather's involvement in the recovery of the priest's body from the grave in Skull. I went down to Skull and spoke to the present PP. We searched the old graveyard on the Colla Road but found no headstone for Fr W O'Shea..

Where is Father O' Shea? He is with His people.

Brian O'Shea, Cork December 2005

Fig. 2

Excerpts from **The Poets of Ireland, A Biographical and bibliographical Dictionary of Irish Writers of English Verse, compiled By D. J. O'Donoghue and published in 1912.**

O'Shea, John – NENAGH MINSTRELSY; One Day in Cain's Life, a poem; and the LEGENDS OF DROMINEER CASTLE, AND PAUL SHESHEREIGH, prose and verse, Nenagh (Co. Tipperary), 1838, 8 vo.

Father of the well-known John Augustus O'Shea, one of the most brilliant journalists of his day. Was connected with the Munster Press for very many years. Over the signature of "Mount Atlas", he wrote poems for Clonmel Advertiser (afterwards *Nenagh Guardian*), and other southern journals. There is a poem addressed to him in Wm. Downes' first volume. Among the subscribers to his poems was J. F. Corkran and among the poems are nearly a dozen by local bards named P. Guillofoyle, T. King, S. Taylor and James Raleigh Baxter. One of his own pieces is addressed to a brother poet, John O'Donoghue.

O'Shea, John J - Formerly a member of the staff of *Freeman's Journal and United Ireland*, and now a leading member of the staff of *Catholic World*, New York. He left Ireland just after the split in the National party under Parnell. He wrote numerous articles and stories for *Weekly Freeman*, *Catholic Fireside*, *Shamrock*, etc., and occasional poems for the *Catholic World* and *Catholic Columbian*.

O'Shea, William – PATRICK'S ARMOUR, a poem, Irish and English, Boston (Mass.), 1879.

Said to be the first book printed in Irish characters in New England.

Shea, Rev. James Bartley – KERRIE PIE AND OTHER INDIGESTIBLES, poems, Dublin, 1904?

Shea, John Augustus - RUDEKKli, a tale of the seventh century; THE LAMENT OF HELLAS, and other poems, London and Cork, 1826; ADOLPH and other poems, New York, 1831, PARNASSIAN WILD FLOWERS; Georgetown, 1836; CLONTARF, a narrative poem, etc., New York, 1843; POEMS, collected by his son, New York, 1846.

Born in Cork in November 1802, and died in New York on August 15, 1845. Went to U.S.A. in 1827 and became a journalist. He was a clever poet, and is mentioned with praise in *Dublin and London Magazine*, 1827 (pp. 632-636).

He commenced life as

A clerk in Beamish and Crawford's counting-house in Cork, and like Joseph O'Leary, and J.J. Callanan, wrote early in life for *The Cork Mercantile Reporter*, afterwards contributing several pieces to *Bolster's Cork Quarterly*.

He went to U.S.A. in 1827. He was a friend of John Hogan the sculptor, and when O'Connell at one of the monster meetings was presented with the Repeal cap by Hogan, he was at the same time given a copy of Shea's "Clontarf". Shea was twice married. One of his sons became a judge. Richard Ryan, in his "Poets and Poetry", calls him O'Shea.

Shea, John Charles - An Irish American poet and journalist, born of Irish parentage at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on February 21, 1831. He was connected with various Toronto and New York and Kansas papers etc. Three of his poems are included in *The Magazine of Poetry*, Buffalo, January 1890.

Shee, Elias- Mentioned as an early alumnus of Kilkenny College by Rev. John Browne, L.L. D., in a paper on that institution in "Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society" for 1851, vol.1, part 2, p221. "A gentleman of passing good

wit, a pleasing conceited companion, full of mirth without gall, who wrote in English divers sonnets.”

Shee, John- LINES ON THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, Dublin, 1816, 8vo; 1817

Received a B.A. from T.C.D., 1819

Shee, Sir Martin Archer, P.R.A – RHYMES ON ART, London, 1805; second edition, ELEMENTS OF ART, a poem in six cantos, London, 1809; The COMMEMORATION OF REYNOLDS, etc., and other poems, London 1814; *Alasco*, a tragedy in verse, excluded from the stage by the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, London, 1824; do., New York, 1825.

This eminent artist was born in Dublin on December 20, 1769, and died at Brighton on August 19, 1850. He entered the Royal Academy about 1789, and was made A.R.A. in 1798, and R.A. in 1800, and in 1830 was elected president. His tragedy *Alasco* was refused a licence by the Censor.

The above is just a very brief look at the works and lives of those mentioned. In a future article, I hope to deal more with the careers and lives of some of the above, especially Martin Archer-Shee whose artistic contribution deserves to be outlined in far greater detail.

Margaret Jordan, Dec. 2005

O’Shea: Gaelic Footballers and Soccer Internationals?

The O’Shea name in sporting circles in Ireland is almost exclusively limited to Gaelic football, being synonymous with the Kerry team, the super-stars of football in Ireland. In the post-war era to 2005, Kerry has won the national All-Ireland title on no fewer than eighteen occasions, far outstripping any other county. Fifteen of these winning sides included at least one O’Shea with ten of them featuring two. These included Páidí Ó Sé and Jack O’Shea members of the all-conquering teams in the period 1975 to 1986 with an astonishing fifteen championships between them. Both came from the two western peninsulas associated with the O’Shea clan since the dawn of recorded history, with Páidí from Ventry on the Dingle peninsula and Jack from Cahirsiveen the capital of the Iveragh peninsula. In the current era Páidí’s three nephews, the brothers, Darragh, Tomás and Marc Ó Sé have taken up the mantle with recent victories.



Some Gaelic Football O’Sheas

(Left) A recent picture of Páidí Ó Sé as manager of Westmeath

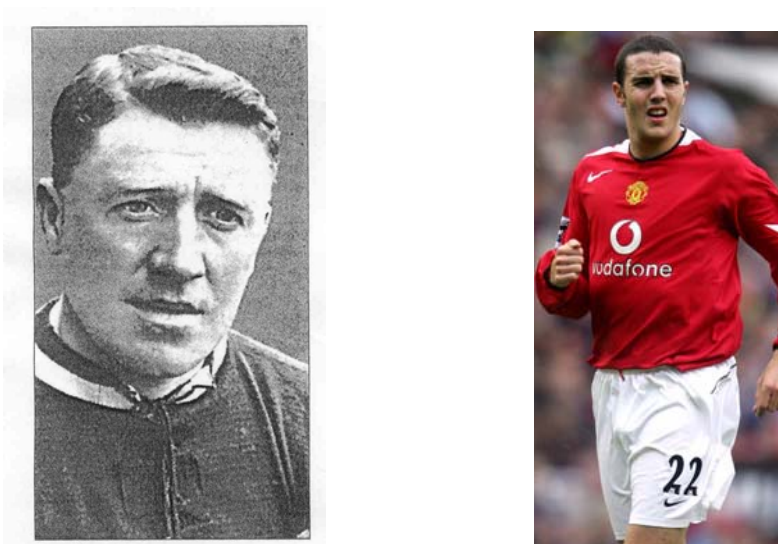
(Right) Jack O’Shea in the 1980s

However there have also been O'Shea achievements in the soccer world although one would probably lose a bet on how many have played international soccer. Young John O'Shea from Waterford, a current regular with Manchester United and with the Irish international side readily springs to mind. His United 'No. 22' shirt is providing unpaid marketing exposure for the O'Shea clan throughout the worldwide soccer community.

However the first Shea to play international soccer was Danny Shea who was capped twice for England in 1914. Shea was born in Wapping, London in 1887 to Cork born parents. Discovered by West Ham United, while playing for the Builders Arms pub in 1908, he quickly developed into the leading light in their attack. In 1913 Blackburn Rovers broke the existing British transfer record to take him to Ewood Park for £2000, which saw Shea pocket a handsome £550 as his share of the fee. In the 1913-14 season he starred in a talented team that won the English championship, scoring 28 goals in that campaign. His all-round wizardry enthralled the Blackburn fans and his guile created endless opportunities for team mates while opponents found him ghostlike in his ability to drift past them. He also reportedly had the knack of wheeling suddenly when near goal and unleashing a thunderbolt shot

In 1914 before a crowd of 27,000 in Middlesbrough, Shea debuted for England in a match against his ancestral home of Ireland. The Irish unexpectedly won 3-0 but the newspapers paid tribute to Shea as one of the better English players mentioning that *'England's best chance was a shot against the post by inside forward Danny Shea.'*

Like many other professional sportsmen Danny's career was lost to the First World War during which he worked as a docker in London playing soccer when the occasion arose. With the cessation of hostilities in 1918 he returned to Blackburn but was no longer the same player and he was subsequently transferred back to London and West Ham in 1920, playing out the last days of his career with other smaller London clubs. Thereafter he became a publican. He died in 1960 aged 73 at Wapping.



The 'soccer' O'Sheas

(Left) Danny Shea of England 1914 (Right) John O'Shea of Ireland 2003

James O'Shea, Cork City 7th Dec 2005

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Double-barrelled Surnames and Twentyfirst Century yDNA!

I thought I would write about the use of double barrelled surnames which I have encountered in my O'Shea research and the implications for yDNA Surname Projects which require a male paternal line.

The first of these surnames is **Baldwin-Shea**, which originated from the marriage of Ann Shea, daughter of John Shea, merchant of Cork City and his wife Mary Hennessy (of the famous distilling family), to Michael Baldwin M.D. in the late 1700s. Michael Baldwin was a member of the eminent medical Baldwin family of Cork. The couple had two sons and two daughters. Dr Baldwin died at an early age leaving a young family. The sons were: George Baldwin-Shea and Herbert Baldwin-Shea. There were also two daughters, both of whom joined the Ursuline Convent. One of these daughters was Mary Baldwin not Baldwin-Shea. The reason for this double-barrelled name for the sons, was most likely due to the fact that both families were prestigious and wanted the male line to have both their family names. This led to a line of Baldwin-Sheas, which for the purposes of yDNA would be a Baldwin male paternal line! However, the name seems to have died out or perhaps descendants are known by the surname Baldwin or O'Shea?

My second example is again from the merchant Shea family of Cork City. John Shea, most probably a son of Mary Hennessy and John Shea (see above) married Honora Lawlor, daughter of Dr Alexander Lawlor of Castlelough, Killarney, Co. Kerry. They married in 1795 and had an only son, John. John Shea died soon after his son was born and his son was brought up as John **Shea-Lawlor** in deference to both his parents. John Shea-Lawlor was brought up in County Kerry, where his mother was from. In time, this gave rise to a line of Shea-Lawlors, some of whom turn up in the records in New Zealand, USA, UK and even one in China. One son of John Shea-Lawlor, also of the same name, stayed in Ireland but moved from Kerry to Gurteenroe, Bantry where he lived and died in the late 1800's. He was considered to be of Kerry. However, this simplistic view could conceal the true migration of the Shea family, which in this case was undoubtedly Kerry to Cork City in the 1600s or early 1700s and then back to Killarney, County Kerry in the late 1700s and then onto Bantry, County Cork in the 1800s! Also, it is easy to see how a double-barrelled surname can camouflage a male Shea line. Over time, perhaps the Shea in the surname has been dropped and Lawlor is the name used?

My third example is the name **Shea-Simonds**. This name first turns up in England when a Mary Ann Simonds married a John Shea in the 1800s. Mary Ann Simonds belonged to an eminent Brewing family. To get on the board of directors of the brewery, John Shea had to take the name Simonds, thus giving rise to a line of Shea-Simonds. This surname still survives today and is found in the UK and Australia. The line is essentially a Shea male line and would be eligible for the O'Shea yDNA Surname Project.

In conclusion, double-barrelled surnames can be useful to the genealogist in identifying family alliances and wife's surname, which may otherwise be lost. Also, they can hinder tracing the line down to the present day if part of the name is dropped as in say Shea-Lawlor becoming Lawlor or Baldwin-Shea becoming Shea or even Baldwin. The historian would be interested in the societal aspect of life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which encouraged the use of both surnames of the couple getting married, in order to keep the continuity of the surname and preserve status of the offspring. In the twentieth and twenty first centuries, the practice of using multiple surnames connected by a hyphen, has become widespread again and even more varied so future generations will need good records to unravel their past!

Margaret Jordan, Cork Dec. 2005



O'Shea yDNA Surname Project Update



It is too early to draw any sweeping conclusions on clan origins from the relatively small number of current results. As I write, there are thirty two members in the project and twenty five results are available. Although these show considerable diversity, it has been possible to identify common groups (see yDNA page on website www.osheaclan.org). New participants continue to join the project and results arrive every few weeks. We are actively seeking more Irish based participants with proven family histories, particularly in Co Kerry, which can be used as benchmarks.

Recent results provided something of a breakthrough, when for the first time there was an exact 25/25 marker match between persons living outside Ireland. It is particularly interesting when one is resident in Virginia, USA while the other is on the other side of the globe in Victoria, Australia. It certainly shows the potential of 'Genetics by DNA!' It is also interesting that O'Sheas outside Ireland are now beginning to match those still resident in Ireland. In the case of #37384 the upgrading of his results from Y12 to Y37 has resulted in transferring him from Group 1 to 3 demonstrating that using only 12 markers on their own can be somewhat limited in usefulness. It is therefore advisable to order the 25 marker test or even better, the 37 marker test. Many members of the project upgrade when they find a close match with one or more at 25 markers.

Of the current participants, they are based in the following countries: USA, Ireland, Australia, Canada and South Africa. It is surprising that we still have not attracted anyone from Britain or any other European country as one would imagine O'Sheas there, would be as interested in their roots as their kinsmen in the USA or Australia. Voluntary participants have also been scarce on the ground within Ireland and the few recent additions have been due to pestering by and financial support of, the committee members of the Clan Society.

We look forward to an interesting 2006 in the yDNA Project!

O'Shea Clan Society, December2005