

Some O'Shea Poets and Writers

The following is a list of some of the O'Shea men and women who were torchbearers for their native culture through béaloideas (word of mouth) and the written word. The biographical excerpts include notes from: "**Beathaisnéis**", a series of volumes compiled by Diarmuid Breathnach and Maire Ní Mhurchú and "**The Poets of Ireland, A Biographical and bibliographical Dictionary of Irish Writers of English Verse**", compiled By D. J. O'Donoghue (published in 1912). Contributions have also been submitted by descendants of two of the writers. We welcome corrections and additions to the information.

Diarmuid O'Sé (c1755-1846) born at Tuatha O Siosta on the Kerry side of the Beara Peninsula. He was a seventh son and his father gave him part of his land tenancy at Droinge. Marrying a close O'Shea relative, he lived off the sea and as a merchant trader with Cork, out of Kilmonogue, he fell on hard times and died during the famine. For a time, his patron had been Mac Fíinín Dubh O'Sullivan. Most of his poems were never written down.

An t-Athair Micheál O'Sé, OFM (1892-1958), born at Ballincollig, Co. Cork to James O'Shea, commercial traveller and Elizabeth O'Neill, a national school teacher, (from Dublin). He was a native speaker of Irish. He died at the Bons Secours Hospital, Cork on the 9th of December 1958.

Muircheatach (Mortimer) O'Séaghdha, (1882-1970), was born in Adrigole on the Beara Peninsula and lived at Cappanaparka, Adrigole, Co. Kerry. His father was Cornelius O'Shea, originally from Co. Kerry settled in Adrigole where he married Kate O'Sullivan. Cornelius and Kate had a farm and a small shop. Muircheatach had three brothers and five sisters. He taught in Adrigole for most of his career and his brother Connor was a teacher in Ballylickey near Bantry and was father to Sean O'Sé (of **An Puc Air Buile** fame) and Mairín, both teachers.

Seán O'Séaghdha, NT (circa 1873-1921), born in Adrigole, brother of Mortimer (above), parents Cornelius (farmer and shopkeeper) and Kate O'Sullivan. Seán married Nora O'Sullivan of Bunan and they had five children.

Séamus O'Séaghdha (1870 – 1959) was born in the townland of Cummeedeach on the Beara Peninsula. His parents were Bartholomew and Honoria O'Shea who were farmers.

Séamus went to America in 1889 and did many different jobs whilst there as well as enrolling for study at Columbia College. Following his return in 1893, he entered Trinity College, Dublin, on a sizarship with a Bedell scholarship, and was a Kyle prizewinner for Gaelic. Graduating in 1897 he subsequently became a minister in the Church of Ireland, being ordained as a Canon at Tuam in 1939. He married Jane Elizabeth Armstrong of Boyle, Co Roscommon and they had five children.

The bulk of his clerical life was served in Connemara and Co Mayo with his final posting being at Newport. He was a noted Gaelic scholar and is said to have been an early member of the Gaelic League. He preached in Irish at St Andrew's Church, Dublin, on St Patrick's Day 1915. In his early years of study he travelled Ireland as a 'missionary', preaching and selling tracts at country fairs etc. He wrote an extensive diary of these travels which gives a fascinating insight into the rural Ireland of that time.

He also wrote extensively for the Church of Ireland Gazette as well as other publications and produced several academic religious works. His grand daughter has obtained a great many of his contributions to the Gazette over the years and has edited his recollections of growing up on the Beara Peninsula for her children and wider family members. His autobiographical writings of his time in America are currently being edited.

From his writing, and from relatives in Ireland, it is evident that he was a man of wit, humour and great intellect with many interests. Widely known as James Bartley Shea, Séamus O'Séaghdha died on the 7th August 1959 at Phibsborough, Dublin and is buried at Mt Jerome cemetery.

Nora O'Shea, (1905-1975), born at Baile an Mhórdhaigh, Ballyferriter, Dingle. Her parents were Thomas and Nora. She married Donal Healy of Kilgarvan, They had Pádraig and two daughters. "Leasuncail di athair an fhile Micheál Dainín O'Sé".

Pádraig O'Séaghdha, (1855-1928), "Conán Maol": pen name, born at Gort Breac between Neidin (Kenmare) and Killarney, father a farmer. While at Cardiff, Pádraig married Nora James. They had two children.

Pádraig O'Séaghdha, (1864-1955), "Gruagach an Tobair": pen name, born at Crossaire Mór in Glengarriff, Co. Cork, father James, a farmer. Pádraig married Eileen O'Sullivan of Bunan, Co. Kerry. They had five children, one of whom became Fr Casáin OFM.

Pádraig O'Séaghdha, (1880-1921) "Pádraig na Léine": pen name, born at Cuan an Caislean, Caherdaniel, Co. Kerry, parents Donal O'Shea post master and Abbey Sullivan. He founded and taught at a school in Caherdaniel, was a National School teacher, JP.

Seán Pádraig O'Séaghdha, (1887-1971), born in Cork City, father James, printer, mother Minnie O'Brien. He was the eldest of five children. When his father died (before 1900) they went to Battersea, London to Daniel O'Shea, his brother in law. He married Kitty Kehilly in 1917, in "Dún Mánmha" (Dunmanway), Co. Cork. She died in 1917. Seán had six children: Finbarr, Nessa [see below], Roisin, Mairin, Nuala and Niamh.

Nessa Ní Séaghdha, (1916-1993), born in Dublin, father was Pádraig O'Séaghdha and her mother was Kitty Kehilly. Nessa married Dáibhí Doran in 1939. They had a son and three daughters.

Tadhg O'Séaghdha, NT (1870-1947), "Tadhg Saor", father John Shea, labourer, of Rath an Lis near Macroom, Co. Cork. He married Eileen O'Connell of Ballincollig at the Cathedral, Cork City in 1922. He worked and died at Ennis, Co. Clare.

Chormaic O'Sé (1853-1934), from "Churrach na nDamh" Ballinskelligs, Co. Kerry

O'Shea, John – Nenagh Mlinstrelsy; 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 volumes.

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. Guillfoyle, 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, 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.

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John Charles Shea - 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.

Elias Shee- 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."

John Shee- LINES ON THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, Dublin, 1816, 8vo; 1817Received a B.A. from T.C.D., 1819

Sir Martin Archer Shee, 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 re-issued from two articles by Brian O'Shea and Margaret Jordan respectively and which appeared in the O'Shea Clan online newsletters in July 2005 and December 2005.