

MOUNTAINY KENNEDYS MAILING LIST 30
August 2014

NEW KENNEDY CHIEF INAUGURATED

At an open air ceremony at Curreeny Hedge School memorial on Sunday July 6th, Rody Kennedy of Rearcross was inaugurated as the first Kennedy Chief in over 400 years.

A crowd of people made the journey to the site on a high hillside at Windygap to witness the ceremony. Kennedys and their relatives and friends from all over expressed their approval of the proceedings and welcomed Rody Kennedy as their new chief. Some of the wellwishers are pictured below.



Rody Kennedy is the first chief to be inaugurated under the Brehon system since Conor alias McTigue of Ballycahill (Nenagh). The Kennedy Shanachie conducted the ceremony following an introduction by a piper who spread the skirl of the pipes across the hillsides. The procedure followed the ancient Brehon tradition and included the Sanachie handing a white wand to the new chief as his sceptre of office.



Ann Kennedy, Brian Kennedy and Chief Rody Kennedy
Following the ceremony

THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE CEREMONY:

(A video is available on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/theirishkennedysbooks>)

Noble people. 100,000 welcomes to you all

We are gathered here today for a very important occasion. Today we will inaugurate the first Kennedy Chief for over 400 years.

With us today are descendants of the great O’Kennedy Chiefs of the past. Gilla Kevin O’Kennedy, Gila Patrick O’Kennedy and Rory Mor O’Kennedy and the other great Kennedy chiefs live on among us today in the blood of their descendants.

But first – let me introduce myself: My name is Brian Patrick Kennedy. I am descended from the OKennedy chiefs of Lower Ormond. My great, great, great, great grandfather, Patrick Kennedy, passed this way in 1750 on his way to Toureenbrien from the Templederry area. His ancestors were disposed of their lands in Lower Ormond by Cromwell 100 years before. Many people here today are of this line of descent.

Through my research into and writing about the history of the Irish Kennedys over many years I have the great honour to be recognised by the Kennedys as their Shanachie or historian and storyteller. It was Breda Kennedy who first nominated me as the Shanachie. The ancient Irish tradition is that the inauguration of a new chief is the responsibility of the Shanachie. I am honoured to undertake that task.

Following an appropriate selection process through which he was determined to meet the conditions for chieftainship, Rody Kennedy of Rearcross, has agreed to a request for him to accept nomination for the position of the new Kennedy Chief. I now call for him to come forward.

As the Shanachie of the territory I will now read to you, Rody Kennedy, the heads of the law relating to the conduct of the Kennedy Chief.

- *You will lead the Irish Kennedys in matters relating to the Kennedy Clan.*
- *You will represent the Irish Kennedys as their chief when required.*
- *You will preserve and foster the history of the Irish Kennedys*
- *You will promote the dissemination of Irish Kennedy history.*

Do you swear to observe these laws and to maintain the customs of the Irish Kennedys?

“I do”

Would you now lay aside your sword or other weapons?

“I have no sword”

I now present you with this wand of office as a sceptre and an emblem of purity and rectitude, to indicate to your people you require no other weapon to command them.

I now call upon Father Pat Murphy to address the chief by the name KENNEDY.

I now call on others to address the chief by the name KENNEDY.

The new chieftain will now turn round thrice forwards and thrice backwards to view his people and his territory in every direction.

Rody Kennedy of Rearcross is now the legitimate chief of his name.

BOOK LAUNCH BY RODDY KENNEDY

Volume 2 of “*The Mountainy Kennedys – Linking Past and Present*” was launched at the Kennedy Gathering at Rearcross that followed the inauguration ceremony. A transcript of Roddy Kennedy’s presentation follows.

Hello Everyone and Welcome,

If I were making these remarks in England, where I live, I would have to open with the words “My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen”.

I guess here this evening it would be more appropriate to say “My Last Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen”. (Reference to the Kennedys as “The Last Lords of Ormond”).

I’m Rody Kennedy, a more humble namesake – and very possibly distant cousin – of the landlord of this establishment. My people came originally from Curreeny. The overgrown ruins of my great-great grandfather’s cottage stand a little way down the lane from the Hedge School where we gathered earlier this evening.

He and his brothers and cousins were farming land around Windygap in the mid-1800s. Their father John was listed as liable for tithes in the Applotment records of 1823, so the chances are the line had been in the area since Cromwellian times.

They are all laid to rest in a bank of graves in Kilkeary cemetery, right down to my own aunts and uncles. I was brought up in Bunacum near Toomevara and moved to England in my early teens. I live today just south of Cambridge.

*I’m here this evening at Brian’s invitation to say a few words to mark the launch of his book, *The Mountainy Kennedys – Linking Past and Present*. And I’m honoured to have been asked.*

It’s amazing to see so many Kennedys gathered in one place, but maybe not so amazing when one realises that this part of Tipperary is the epicentre of the clan and that these wild hills and woods gave refuge to so many of our ancestors when their very lives were under threat.

It was moving also to see such a fine turnout at Curreeny where Rody was installed as our honorary chief. A very well-merited appointment and, again, Rody, congratulations from us all.

Brian mentioned in some of his correspondence that it was customary to pay tribute to the chief in the form of gifts and other contributions to his well-being.

My own researches unearthed another, even older, tradition where the chief was obliged to hold lavish feasts for his followers and his extended family at regular intervals through the year. These, of course, included alcoholic beverages....free of charge!

But then those of you who’ve had the odd pint next door may have noticed a brass plaque over the bar which says “A friend in need is a pain in the arse”.

Just joking, Rody.

Speaking for myself – and I suspect many others here – I think a robust sense of humour is the most important single trait of any Kennedy chief. And I’m sure Rody won’t let us down on that score.

So this great get-together and our earlier session at Windygap should be seen for the occasions they're meant to be – an opportunity for fun, for laughter, for gossip, for making new friends, renewing old acquaintance, maybe even for linking up with cousins we never knew we had, for enjoying ourselves.

In other words, we're not here to take ourselves too seriously. We're not cherishing fanciful elusions of noble blood ... or of getting back any of the fertile lands probably confiscated from our ancestors around Kilkeary and Ballinaclough.

Sorry Pat, I know you'd appreciate an extra hundred acres or two!

The clock can never be turned back on history and I have to say that, even if it could be, we might be surprised at what we'd find.

When I was a child at school in Toomevara we learnt poems and legends about the heroes of ancient Ireland, about knights and warriors and the marbled halls of Tara.

Within our daily sight indeed, dotted around the local countryside, were the ruins of medieval castles to fire our imaginations about the golden age of The Ormonds, Upper and Lower, when the O'Kennedys held unbroken sway for half a millennium.

But actually I suspect that, on the whole, life for our Kennedy ancestors was pretty tough.

Constant wars over land and cattle, a system of inheritance that encouraged internecine strife, a handful of privileged families and their retainers living in stone tower house and owning huge tracts of land which they rented to their lesser kin, also mostly Kennedys, who had to make do with mud-walled cabins.

Did you know, as Brian reminded me recently, that much of feudal Ireland was what we would call today a slave society? I believe the normal exchange rate for an everyday female slave was four cows.

I imagine the really attractive ones would have fetched a lot more.

Which means, if I may say so, that there's quite a lot of valuable livestock represented here in this room tonight.

But that's enough flippant Kennedy humour for the moment.

As well as marking Rody's elevation to the gentry, we're here to pay tribute to Brian and the astonishing work he has done to help us make sense of the Kennedy story

Trawling through the internet a while back, I was amused by the despairing response of, I think, an American Kennedy searching for her Irish roots and clearly overwhelmed by the sheer wall of namesakes unleashed from the records.

"Kennedys, Kennedys, too many bloody Kennedys", was her plaintive cry. And who can blame her! I read somewhere that ours is the eighth most common surname in Ireland, though I suspect that the Ryans are some way ahead of us.

All credit then to Brian for his extraordinary efforts to make sense of this genealogical jigsaw. Mainstream historians are interested principally in kings and queens, in the great leaders, the warriors, the martyrs, the political heroes and villains.

They want to tell a cohesive, comprehensive story, neatly packaged and delivered in pre-digested form with clear delineation and unambiguous conclusions.

Brian does not, cannot, offer us any such certainty because he is dealing with ordinary people, the common stream, what the poet John Grey called "the rude forefathers of the hamlet". For the most part they left no accounts of their own lives and they appear in the records only briefly or not at all.

We all of us obviously have strong memories of the generations that immediately preceded us, our parents, aunts and uncles and grandparents. Beyond that our knowledge dims very rapidly indeed, like the receding images of one mirror held to another.

In Ireland, the records are particularly poor. Aside from Catholic Church registers, which began to be kept following Emancipation in 1829, there is not much that survived the Four Courts fire in 1922.

So we are reliant on anecdote, on family memory, mostly orally transmitted on records of births, marriages and deaths, and on newspaper stories which rarely pre-date the mid-19th century – and, sad to say – all too often comprise accounts of appearances before the Nenagh Magistrates.

It is possible for those with a great deal of time on their hands, plus a high degree of persistence, ingenuity and determination, to trawl these sources for themselves and to assemble a reasonably accurate lineage going back a century or so.

What Brian has done, with patience and passion that spans more than a decade, involving endless visits to Ireland, year after year – not to mention significant cost – is to pull all these disparate sources together into a single volume containing nearly 500 closely-packaged pages of historical data from which we can draw the raw material to construct the particular lineage of our own branches of the great Kennedy family tree.

With this, and his other earlier volumes, many of us will be able to take our lines back at least 200 years with reasonable certainty and, in some cases much further.

The Mountainy Kennedys have a proud and distinguished history hitherto largely unrecorded. This volume puts that right. It is a great bequest to future generations.

I now hand over to the man himself who I'm sure will have a few words to say and a few stories to tell.

But before I do, I would ask you to raise your glasses for a toast.

To Brian Kennedy.

A MESSAGE FROM CHRISTINA GORMAN

Just to show how challenging it is to get everything right and to show that there is always more to learn, I have received the following from Christina Gorman:

Good afternoon Brian,

*I have gone through most of your new book: *The Mountainy Kennedys - Volume 2 - Linking Past and Present*. There are a few corrections to be made as follows:-*

1) The house referred to as the 'Turf House' on page 378 is really the back of the Kennedy's House in Gleninchaveigh - where my Great Grandparent's - Condy Kennedy and Ellen Kennedy (nee Hanley) lived. (That house was thatched in earlier times). For the front of that house - see the first attached photograph - 'Mam Glown'. The turf shed is facing the front door. If you look at your photograph (in colour) on p378 you will see an

old turf shed - red roof - that is where the cousins of the Kennedys lived prior to and indeed after my ancestors from Templeberry moved in across the yard from them.

2) With regard to Hugh Kennedy - as already pointed out to you in a previous email. Hugh Kennedy's name along with relatives of mine was listed on a grave slab that was originally on our Kennedy Grave in Templeberry. I saw it when I visited the grave many years ago with my late Mother. Unfortunately, when the new headstone was put over the grave (see attached photograph - Mam Templeberry), the old grave slab was removed. My understanding is that the slab is still in the graveyard near a wall with over grown weeds on it. The slab definitely belonged to our grave and the details i.e names on it are correct as they refer to my Mother's family. It is my intention to have the slab returned to the Kennedy grave in the not too distant future.

Yes, we do not know the connection between our Kennedys and Hugh Kennedy, who died 7 April 1766, aged 70 years, but there must be some connection when his name was on the same grave slab as my relatives. Hopefully, in the fullness of time the connection will be revealed.

3) See p381 - Rodger / Rody Kennedy son of Condry and Mary Kennedy - this Rodger / Rody Kennedy replaced his mother's name on the rent book after his mother died. Patrick (not Rodger /Rody) was listed with his mother, Mary on the Rent book - see attachment - copied valuation book etc Rodger/Rody and his brother Patrick were then listed on the rent book after the death of their mother.

4) On p377 Christina Gorman Belfast NI should read Dublin 4 or formerly of Dundrum, Co. Tipperary.

A REQUEST FROM MARY FITZGERALD

Mary has sent me the following re her search for her Kennedys. I am sure that a number of our readers will recognise the names mentioned and be able to help out with information.

Hello Brian Patrick, just came across the Irish Kennedy's Facebook Page & I hope you don't mind me making contact with you. My name is Mary Fitzgerald (nee O'Brien). I live in Cork City, but I grew up in Ballyea which is 3 miles from Ballina Co Tipp. I am a descendant of the Kennedys of Rearcross on both sides of my father's family. I only began researching our family tree 5 years ago – still very much a novice at the job! Due to lack of factual information, I can't be sure which branch of the Kennedys we are related to. I am hoping that when you read the information I have so far you may be able to fill in some gaps for me.

Dad's maternal great grandmother was Bridget Kennedy who married Jeremiah McKeogh on the 16th Feb 1819 in Kilcommon. The Church record of their marriage shows that Jeremiah was from Birdhill, while Bridget is shown to have been from Kilcommon. The witnesses at the marriage were Daniel Kennedy, who may have been Bridget's father or brother & John Berkery. Unfortunately from a research point of view, their parents' names were not recorded. I have no idea where Jeremiah & Bridget lived between 1819 & 1823, or the circumstances of their coming to live at Gurrane Ballinahinch. Their first child Ellen was baptised in Newport, but there is no address provided on this record. Their second child Daniel who was a Doctor in Nenagh from about 1848-1880(he married a Mary Kennedy from Rathcabbin) was baptised in Kilcommon, address given on his Baptismal record was Birdhill. The other children: Jeremiah, who married Margaret Young from Killalane & lived in Gurrane Ballinahinch (they were my G Grandparents). Thomas, who was a doctor in Dublin; Pierce, who fought on the Union Side in the American Civil War & worked as a solicitor in Denver; Roger & Bridget were all baptised in Newport & on their records the priest recorded that the family resided in Gurrane Ballinahinch.

Margaret Young's sister Maria married Patrick Kennedy, son of Daniel Kennedy a farmer from Foilduff on the 18th February 1882 in Ballinahinch Church. Patrick Kennedy & Marie Young had 4 Daniel, Samuel, Bridget & Nora From information provided in the 1911 Census we know that 3 of their children survived. Samuel must have died in childhood My grandmother Mary McKeogh from Gurrane Ballinahinch married James O'Brien from Lackenavea Birdhill in 1907. Her

daughter Bridie O'Brien (my aunt) married Michael Kennedy (known as Mick the Post) of Curreeny in 1943. Michael was a descendant of a James Kennedy & Kitty Maloney who were married on the 27th November 1820 in Newport. Their daughter Hannah who was baptised in 1829 in Kilcommon & who married a Francis Kennedy in Kilcommon on the 19th February 1851 were his grandparents Francis died in Curreeny on the 27th February 1895 & Hannah died there in 1916.

One other connection - Dad's paternal gg grandparents were Catherine Kennedy & John Caplice. In 1822 Kennedy & Caplice shared 350 acres of land in Rearcross.

Looking forward to hearing from you

Kind Regards,
Mary.

BOOKS

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Note: Booksellers in various countries use pictures copied from the website to advertise books that they do not have in stock. We have amended the website pictures as a consequence.

Copies of "The Mountainy Kennedys" and "The Irish Kennedys" can be obtained Internationally from the website at:

<http://home.onthenet.com.au/~laurieag/index.htm>

Thank you to all of those people who have bought books over the years. The returns have gone some way towards defraying the expense of having them printed and distributed.

THE IRISH KENNEDYS NOW ON FACEBOOK

This mailing list will continue to come out monthly and will be sent to all recipients by email. In addition, Sean has now put us onto Facebook. Find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/theirishkennedysbooks>

If you are on Facebook and would click on "Like" on this page it would be appreciated.

Your contributions to the Mountainy Kennedys mailing list are most welcome. Please keep them rolling in.

Brian