

O Shaughnessys to rally at Gort in Sept

CALLING ALL O Shaughnessys in Limerick and its environs — your family hath need of you!

It is to a hosting of the clan, as the autumn leaves doth fall.

The O Shaughnessy Society will hold a rally for family members at Gort-inse-Guaire, the modern town of Gort, on the Limerick-Galway road, from 10th September to 13th September. Shaughnessy, O Shanassy, Shanassy are all variations of the name which itself is the Anglicised version of the Gaelic O Seachnasaigh.

The family has genealogical roots which stretch back to the dawn of history. A prominent family of the Southern Hy Fiachrach, they were chieftains of Kinelea, South Galway, from the 12th century to the end of the 17th century. All the O Shaughnessys appear to have originated from South Galway. Their principal residence was at Gort-inse-Guaire.

In the latter part of the 17th century and in particular following the defeat of King James and his Irish supporters, and the Treaty of Limerick, 1691, they were dispersed. Many went to Co. Limerick, where the greatest concentration of the name exists today.

Notable personalities in the O Shaughnessy genealogy were: Daithi, the last

pagan high king of Ireland; Guaire the Hospitable, King of Connacht; St. Colman Mac Duagh, patron of Kilmacduagh, now part of the Diocese of Galway and Kilmacduagh. His feast day is on the 29th October.

In modern times there were soldiers, doctors, engineers, bankers, actors and writers as well as farmers, businessmen and millers.

When William O Shaughnessy died in 1744 he was the oldest serving major-general in the French Army. He had fought with Clare's Dragoons (his uncle's regiment) in battles too numerous to mention. He was knighted by Pope Clement XI and was about to be made a Count by the French King when he died. A stalwart supporter of the Jacobite cause, he was head of the Gort family. His brother, who succeeded him as chief, was a Dominican and Bishop of Ossory.

Sir William Brooke O Shaughnessy, born in Limerick, 1809, was a surgeon with the East India Company and later director general of telegraphs in India. He brought the telegraph to that great sub continent. He wrote extensively on medical and scientific topics. He died in 1889.

Sir John Shanassy, 1818/1883, was born near Thurles. He became a prominent statesman in Australia and premier of the State of Victoria. A staunch Catholic, he was a businessman and chairman of the Colonial Bank. In recent

times, Margaret O Shaughnessy Hecker was a member of President Reagan's cabinet and U.S. Ambassador to Ireland.

Arthur William Edgar O Shaughnessy, poet, died young in 1881. His first volume will always hold a place in English literature for its wealth of fancy and melody, and its marked individuality of style. He is remembered particularly for his Ode:

*We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers
of dreams;
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate
streams;
World-losers and world
forsakers,
On whom the pale moon
gleams;
Yet we are the movers
and shakers
Of the world for ever, it
seems.*

Michael Maurice O Shaughnessy, 1864/1934, engineered many major public works in the U.S.A., including Pearl Harbour, in the early part of this century. The O Shaughnessy Dam in the Yosemite National Park outside San Francisco is an enduring testimony to his memory. This scheme delivers 400 million gallons of water to San Francisco daily. Thomas George Shaughnessy became head of the Canadian Pacific Railway and was made Baron of Ashford,

Co. Limerick, in 1916.

Here in Ireland, Andrew O Shaughnessy of Cork, who died in 1956, was an eminent industrialist associated with milling and coming from a long tradition which may stem back to the mill at Gort.

There have been many O Shaughnessy priests, nuns and brothers. However, not all members of the family were saints and scholars. In 1821, Michael O Shaughnessy was hanged for burning a house near Newcastle West. While there is no member of the family in Dáil Eireann, there have been Members of Parliament in the past as well as local representatives. The tradition of public life goes back to opposition to the plantation of Connacht and the participation in the Confederation of Kilkenny.

There are sizeable numbers bearing the name in Australia, England, the United States and Canada, some French-speaking O Shaughnessys in Quebec. Many are expected to attend the rally at Gort in September.

Extracts from the itinerary include:

Thursday, 10th, 8.45 p.m.: Medieval banquet at Dún Guaire Castle, Kinvara. Family gathering, venue Convent Auditorium, Gort.

Friday, 11th: 10 a.m., talk on family history of the O Shaughnessys; 10.45 a.m., talk on Bishop Colman O Shaughnessy; 11.45 a.m., Coole Park, the Burren and Slieve Aughty by Peter O.

Shaughnessy, actor and author.; 1.30 p.m., visit to Coole Park interpretative centre, gardens, etc.; 3.30 p.m., short coach tour of part of the Burren; 4.30 p.m., short talks, Australian O Shaughnessys; the poet, Arthur Edgar O Shaughnessy; consultation regarding genealogical research; 8.00 p.m., symposium on Gort and its future.

Saturday, 12th: 11.00 a.m., talk on Munster O

Shaughnessys at Convent Auditorium; 12.30 p.m., visit to Kilmacduagh Cathedral, O Shaughnessy chapel, round tower, followed by lunch; 2.30 p.m., tour of O Shaughnessy castles and places of interest; 4.30 p.m., visit to Thor Ballylee with Peter O Shaughnessy.

Sunday, 13th September: 12 noon, meeting of O Shaughnessy Society, all welcome, at Sullivan's Royal Hotel; 2.00 p.m., visit to site of Gort Castle.

'The Searchers' next Sunday

JOHN Ford's masterpieces among westerns, "The Searchers", will be screened next Sunday evening at the Belltable as part of its "Golden Oldies" season, starting 8.30pm.

Once again, two of Ford's two great stars, John Wayne and Ward Bond, are the heroes—they played together in his earlier epic, "The Quiet Man", as the returned emigrant Frank Thornton and the local parish priest, Fr Flanagan.

"The Searchers", made in 1956, does not include Ford's other great star, Victor McLaglen, who played opposite Wayne in the masterly western, "She wore a Yellow Ribbon" as an expatriate Irishman in the US Cavalry, and also in "The Quiet Man" as the

screen father of Mary Kate Danagher (Maureen O'Hara), old Bill Danagher.

In "The Searchers", Wayne is the nomad—a Confederate war veteran—who returns home briefly, only to have that his home has been destroyed in an Indian attack, and his loved ones massacred. Natalie Wood, his niece and daughter that could have been, are taken captive. He sets off on an impossible five-year search for her.

This western classic also includes the late Jeffrey Hunter—he later played the part of Christ in "King of Kings"—as well as Vera Miles (of "Ryan's Daughter" fame), Hank Worden, Henry Brandon, and John Qualen.

Running time two hours.

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