Conor Tuohy

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:17:33
DRAMA AND 'THE BODYKE EVICTIONS PLAY' –

Conor always had an interest in drama and he says that there was always a drama group in Feakle reaching as far back as the 1930s. Dramas were frequently in the Market House in Feakle. Conor talks about a National School teacher who was great at writing, producing and directing plays.

Conor would also travel to Scariff to see plays during the Drama Festival.

Conor talks about Fr. Peter Ryan who wrote a play about the Bodyke Evictions which was very successful. Its opening night was staged in the Market House and ran for four nights. The play then toured all around the county resulting in the play raising a lot of funds. These were then used to build the grounds of the present hurling pitch in Feakle.

Conor talks about one of the scenes in the play when there is a struggle between the Red Coats and the people. At this point the audience would always be jumping and shouting on their seats.

Mrs MacDonagh was in charge of producing the play which ran for three years.

Fr. Peter Ryan was a native of Kilrush and was always involved with the play.

Conor talks about some experiences while on tour with the play.

Note: Interview takes a break here.

0:17:33 – 0:27:03
THE BODYKE EVICTIONS PLAY' CONT.

Conor says that Mrs MacDonagh was a school teacher who was constantly involved in drama.

Note: Interview pauses here.

Rehearsals were often held in her kitchen. She was married to Dr. MacDonagh and Conor talks about him briefly.

The Bodyke Evictions was the biggest production Conor took part in. Conor's role was that of the curate Father Hannon. The reason he was chosen for his part was because of his stature and the way he spoke. Conor talks about the time that he was confused for a real priest.

0:27:03 – 0:28:28
THE BODYKE EVICTIONS PLAY' RECEPTION –

Every week there was a write up in different papers about the play.

The play was even played outside of Co Clare. Conor talks about going to Newport, County Tipperary. He says that the reception was never as good as when it was on in Clare.

0:28:28 – 0:34:45
DRAMA –

Dan Cunningham and his wife were always involved with drama and were constantly watching out for young talent. Dan was Conor's neighbour and it was him that got Conor involved in drama.

Conor talks about some of the other plays that he was involved in over the years.

0:34:45 – 0:36:07
BIDDY EARLY PLAY –

Conor says that he doesn't have many memories of Mrs MacDonaghs play about Biddy Early.

0:36:08 – 0:38:48
EARLY LIFE –

Conor never finished National School because his father died when he was 12 years old. All of his other siblings were away so he stayed at home with his mother. She was Mary McNamara from Fossa Beg, Scariff.

0:38:49 – 0:40:38
WORLD WAR II –

Conor remembers the day he heard about the outbreak of war. One of his uncles was down visiting from Dublin and he brought the news with him. He remembers the anti-British atmosphere that existed in Ireland at that time.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:07:55
THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE –

The Feakle area was always a very strong Republican area. During of the War of Independence, everyone would hear about houses been burned and the burning of Feakle post office and barracks. A lot of houses were burned in reprisal for the destruction of Feakle barracks. The closest one to Conor's was Timmy Kelly's House.

Conor remembers his mother talking about attending the funeral of the four Scariff martyrs. She said there were British soldiers present at the ceremony monitoring who attended and what was happening. Because of this anyone that was wanted by the crown forces dressed up in women's clothes so they wouldn't be recognised.

Conor says that there was a huge public effect because of the way the four men

were killed.

Conor says that the ambush of two RIC men in Feakle was widely discussed at the time. A lot of people saw it as unnecessary as the two men were fathers.

Fr. O' Reilly was the local priest was strongly against the Republican movement and very outspoken too. Fr. Hayes was a very pro British priest.

0:07:56 – 0:15:00
SCHOOL –

Master Harrington is described here as a great teacher. All of his pupils were educated to a much higher standard than the norm. Conor's farther got very sick while he was at school and this would have had serious effects on his studies.

0:17:11 – 0:20:32
GOLD IN FEAKLE –

Conor remembers only a small bit of Paddy O'Malley finding the gold in Feakle in 1948. He was leaning on the wall when he saw a glint on one of the stones which turned out to be a bit of gold. Today, Conor's local GAA club portrays this on their emblem.

There was another connection to gold with the Chieftain's grave and Conor continues to tell this story.

0:20:32 – 0:24:17
FOLKLORE –

There was a fort in the next town and people were always nervous when they were passing it. This is because it was believed to be a fairy fort. These stories were popularly exchanged when people were on 'cuaird' Conor says that he remembers his own father been the best story teller. Neighbours would say this also. There was a strong following in these beliefs and 'pisreÃ³g'Ã', ('pisreÃ³gs') in

Conor's area

Conor and Kitty then proceed to talk about the banshee.

0:24:17 – 0:30:45
WAKES –

Kitty talks about some of her oldest memories which included attending a wake. She remembers drinking tea at Pat O'Grady's. According to her wakes would involve a lot of alcohol and had a tendency to last all night.

Conor then remembers his father's wake which was also an all night affair. He also remembers clay pipes been smoked at these events. Conor remembers coffins been brought out of the house through the window as the doors weren't big enough. There was always a lady in a parish that would do the laying out.

0:30:45 – 0:37:06
HOUSE DANCES –

Conor's aunt was the fist lady to get wireless and people would listen to all the matches there. They would also listen to question time.

House dances generally involved local musicians and Conor talks about a few here. Conor's father, John, played the concertina and so could his mother.

0:37:06 – 0:45:51
CHANGES IN SOCIETY –

Conor talks about some the changes he has seen in his life time. Most of them occurred only in the last 20 to 30 years. People's dependence on religion has all but been vanquished. Conor says that he has always been religious and talks about this change of dependence briefly.