# Matthew Bermingham

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:09:21
VANDELEUR EVICTIONS –

Matthew recalls what he heard about the Vandeleur Evictions in which his grandfather Tom Bermingham and father Matt Bermingham were evicted. His father was responsible for making light porridge to throw at the evicting party. Matthew speaks about how the eviction occurred and how the battering ram was used to knock the wall. He recalls that his father was told to spill the porridge when the eviction was complete. He states that the RIC were not aggressive as they were in favour of the farmer.

Matthew speaks about Mathias McGrath (or Pat?) who broke his handcuffs a number of times and who it took two days to events.

Matthew states that his father did not speak much about the evictions. He recalls learning about it at school from the school master Paddy Pender. He speaks briefly about his great grandfather Matthew Bermingham who had been evicted from a number of places including Cree. He states that this man was employed as a sapper by Conyngham. He mentions McDonnells and O'Donnells.

Matthew speaks about the Plan of Campaign.

Matthew speaks about an incident where a family (Lynchs) near Monmore Chapel, where they pretended to wake their grandmother who was still alive.

Speaks briefly about Mathias McGrath's wake and states that he was a huge man in the bed.

0:09:22 – 0:11:42

THE WAKE –

Matthew recalls the wakes he saw and describes the various parts including snuff. He states that the quality of the snuff was important. He says that they would take their snuff and say 'smithe duit'(sic.). He also states that clay pipes were popular and recalls findings clay pipes when ploughing about twenty years ago.

0:11:43 – 0:20:26
EMIGRATION –

Matthew speaks briefly about the American wake although he was never at one. He recalls seeing John Joe Haugh when he was emigrating. There was a big crowd there to see him off when he got on his bus. He was later beheaded as a prisoner of war in Japan after being conscripted into the American army.

Speaks generally about emigration from the area. Recalls how the local postman Timmy Murphy was very busy at Christmas with parcels from America. He had to get a second man Mickey Talty, who was the auxiliary postman with a pony and car to deliver the parcels.

Matthew speaks about emigration in his own family. A number of his uncles went to America. His mother spent twelve years in America. She came home and married Matthew's father when she came home on holiday. Matthew's mother was Murphy from Knocknahoon. Matt states that it took the mother three weeks on a boat to go to America.

Speaks about a neighbour Yankee Carey who 'crossed the Atlantic nine times'. States that he was conscripted in World War I but didn't get active service. He recalls speaking to him and that Yankee Carey told him that he got sick the night before the shift. Another person told Matthew that Yankee had eaten soap the night before to make him sick. The first time Yankee Carey went to America it took him nine weeks.

States that World War II slowed down emigration because if people went to another country they would be conscripted.

0:20:27 – 0:25:03
THE ECONOMIC WAR –

Matthew speaks of the Economic War (1933-39). He recalls going to the fair in Doonbeg on February 8 which was the principal fair. He recalls his father selling thirteen yearlings for Â£39.

He says that a number of buyers from Charleville (The Hickeys) came to buy cattle in Doonbeg.

0:25:59 – 0:30:16
RATIONING –

Matthew states that where people weren't great to use money during the rationing, it was severe. He states that women were great to make use of what they had. He states that a man called Marty Mahoney used to collect winkles on the shore when food was scarce.

Matthew speaks about the black market locally. He says tea and cigarettes were the most popular items. He says that Mrs.Harvey was a local shopkeeper who would always try to help people locally. He states that paraffin oil wasn't the same concern because they had candles.

0:30:17 – 0:32:14
HUNTING AND TRAPPING –

Matthew speaks briefly about hunting. He recalls when Myxomatosis was introduced to eliminate rabbits. He states that it was very sad to see the rabbits so badly affected by it.

0:32:15 – 0:37:16

GRANDPARENTS –

Matthew states that his grandfather Tom Bermingham spent nine months in Limerick jail after resisting arrest during the Vandeleur Evictions of 1888. While he was there he was ploughing on the prison land. When his time was up he was let out and went home to Kilrush on a merchant boat from Limerick.

Matthew states that the clock which can be heard in the background was bought with his grandmother's marriage money. It had been in the house during the evictions but was removed.

He states that an ex-Guard who opened a shop in Kilrush as a jeweller, who got the clock going when it stopped a number of years ago.

States that his grandfather Tom Bermingham died in Ballykett at this daughter's house. This woman (Ellie) was teaching English in Shanghai. She was married to a man called John O'Toole from Lissycasey who joined the Shanghai police.

0:37:17 – 0:41:28
UNCLE IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES –

Matthew speaks about his uncle PJ Bermingham who competed in the 1928 Olympic games. He got the best throw but ended up with the bronze medal because he put his foot over the line.

Matthew speaks about Dr.Pat O'Callaghan and Ned Tobin who were also athletes around this time. He speaks briefly about Pat McDonnell from Doonbeg. His mother saw McDonnell throwing in New York. She used to see it advertised and would always to see him weight throwing.

0:41:29 – 0:52:16
THE BOG AND TURF –

Speaks about farming in general and states that farmers would amalgamate in

marriage. Speaks generally about how marriages were arranged and how people got farms.

Speaks about people coming back from Kilbaha to bogs in the Moyasta area with a big creel. The people from Kilbaha 'Western people' who bought their turf from James Vaughan. States that he used to take a 'tá sé' (a drink). They would bring a horse and car and a big creel. They could only get one load in the day. He states that they would amalgamate when they were cutting the turf.

Matthew refers to the circular he just received from the Department of the Environment stating that he has been banned from using his bog because of the Hen Harrier under an SPA directive. He speaks about when his family got the bog in the 1930s the first cutting of it when they got it.

'Oh, I intend to go up and cut away again'.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:03:40
THE BOG AND TURF –

Matthew's family used to buy banks of turf from the landlord Stackpoole. Speaks about the other places they had plots of turf. The later got a part of Stackpooles bog in the divide of the land. Recalls cutting turf with hay knives when he was a teenager and states that it was tough work, particularly in the early years when the soil was tough. Matt states that he never cut turf but always spread it. He says that some people preferred to cut turf than spread it. He states that the wages for cutting turf was five shillings and the spreader got a half crown.

File 3 0:00:00 – 0:16:11
HUNTING (WEST CLARE HARRIERS) –

Peggy speaks about her involvement with the West Clare Harriers (Hunting Club). Tom Joe Garrihy set up the West Clare Harriers club. Joe Farrell and Michael Kelly were also involved. Peggy outlines the areas they hunted. Palkie McInerney

also was involved.

Peggy outlines her interest and background in horses. She was riding horses since she was a child in England. Peggy's father was from West Clare (Hamilton from Monmore) but she was born in England. Peggy states that she was one of the few women involved apart from Lady Hemphill who used to hire a horse in Kilmihil. She would always ride side saddle and it was feminine.

It was mostly drag hunting. Joe Lillis would be responsible for this. Michael Brew would keep the dog. Some of the farmers would take two dogs for the summer. Peggy speaks about the demise of the hunt over the years when land got more valuable etc.

Peggy outlines the type of horse she liked including size, breed and temperament.

Matthew outlines how they used to catch a horse that wasn't broken in. He recalls getting a horse shod at Tom Whelan's forge. They got two shoes on him but failed to get the two hind feed done. He states that he went to a different smith in Kilkee, Bernard Costelloe. He outlines how they knocked the horse and shod him. He states that 'Smiths are very proud people'.

Matthew speaks about a local man who had cures for horse ailments. Johnny Murtagh was the man with the cure. He speaks about maggots in the horse's stomach and how it was cured by letting the horse eat the rice grass off the shore. Eventually he was pass out the maggots. You would know the horse had maggots if he wasn't thriving despite being fed well.

Speaks about the importance of the horse in rural Ireland.

0:16:11 – 0:25:14
MY FATHER WAS FROM WEST CLARE' –

Peggy speaks about her father (Hamilton from Monmore) who had emigrated to

England. She speaks about her family's connection to Ireland. She first came to Ireland in 1948 and speaks about her impression of Ireland when she first came. Matthew speaks about travelling to England and seeing men who had served in World War II and who all had beards and white hair.

0:20:15 – 0:25:43
WORLD WAR II IN ENGLAND –

Peggy speaks about World War II and recalls hearing Chamberlin announcing over the radio that England was at war with Germany. Peggy speaks about conscription and states that she wanted to join the Royal Navy but she was only sixteen and was too young. She was in the land army at home. Peggy recalls the air raids and remembers seeing craters in various places. They had to bring gas masks everywhere they went. Peggy speaks about the rationing and outlines what was restricted at the time. Speaks about social life during World War II in England. Peggy just had one sister who was younger than her and so no one in her family joined the war.

0:25:44 – 0:32:57
THE LOCAL LORD HAW HAW –

Matthew speaks about Jacko Reilly from Kilkee who was arrested by the Germans during World War II on the Isle of White. He had been a clerical scholar for a while both left it. He was the son of Barney O'Reilly who arrested Roger Casement in Kerry. Barney Casement was married to a Ronan woman whose brother was an IRA man. Matthew outlines the story of Jacko Reilly who had been captured by the Germans and joined their side. He was arrested by them and was sent over to Ireland as a spy according to Matthew. Reilly was parachuted into Kilkee. He met Stephen Collins who brought him back to Kilkee on a pony and car. His father was in the FCA (or LDF) locally and decided to report him. He gave the information to Sargeant Carroll who later took him in. Reilly was then arrested and taken to Dublin from where he escaped and went back to Kilkee. He

was arrested again but was eventually liberated. Matthew speaks about how they both finished up. There is a rumour that he was murdered. He criticised the local FCA and stated that 'they wouldn't drive the Sheridan's out of Rathkeale'.

0:32:58 – 0:36:43
THE TINKERS (TRAVELLERS) –

Peggy and Matthew speak about the tinkers (travellers) who would come along the road over the years. Matthew states that the Dohertys were the main family who would come to Moyasta.

0:35:44 – 0:47:06
CALENDAR CUSTOMS –

Matthew and Peggy speak about various calendar customs including St. Bridget's Day, and May Night. Matthew states that the May bush was brought in and stuck on the thatch. It was burnt in some houses. Matthew's father burnt it on May Day. He speaks about local examples of 'piseÃ³gs'. He recalls a neighbour Kate Purtill who used to sit by a local well all night to make sure no one would come and take water from the well and take the luck of the year. They both recall that red haired woman had back luck associated with them on May Day and wedding days.

Matthew states that people would not discuss 'piseÃ³gs' but would adhere to them.

Peggy and Matthew speak about Candlemas Day, Chalk Sunday, Pipe Sunday, St. Johns Night and St. Martin's Day. Matthew recalls people going to the local blessed well (St. Martins) at 6.00am to 'do the rounds'. Speaks briefly about St. Senan's Well in Kilkee.

0:47:07 – 0:52:46
THE ROLE OF WOMEN –

Matthew and Peggy speak about the changing role of women over the years. Matt speaks about making 'sÃºgan' chairs. He describes how they were made.

0:52:47 – 0:57:28
CHANGE –

Matthew reflects on some of the changes over his life.

He recalls a man locally who would wear his worst suit to a funeral because if he wore a good suit he believed he would be dead within a week.