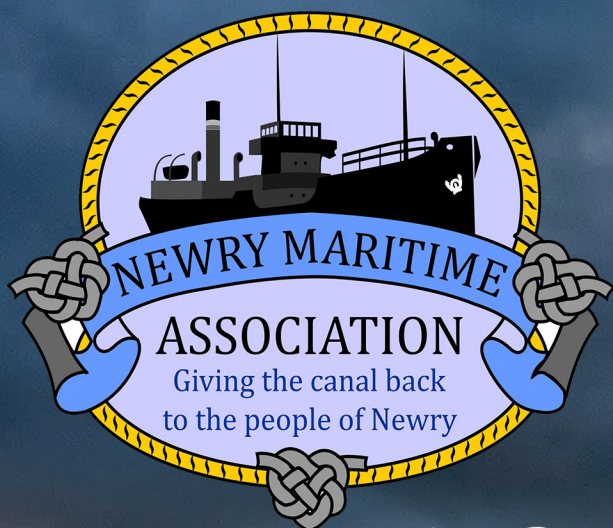




Lighthouse Bi-Centennial Project.

The Square, Warrenpoint
22nd June 2024 at 3.30pm



**A Service of Remembrance to mark the
70th anniversary of the terrible boating tragedy off
Carlingford, which claimed the lives of 7 people and
occurred on Tuesday 22nd June 1954.**

The sole survivor, Mr Charles Mc Donald, was a Newry Draper.

Text by James McArevey

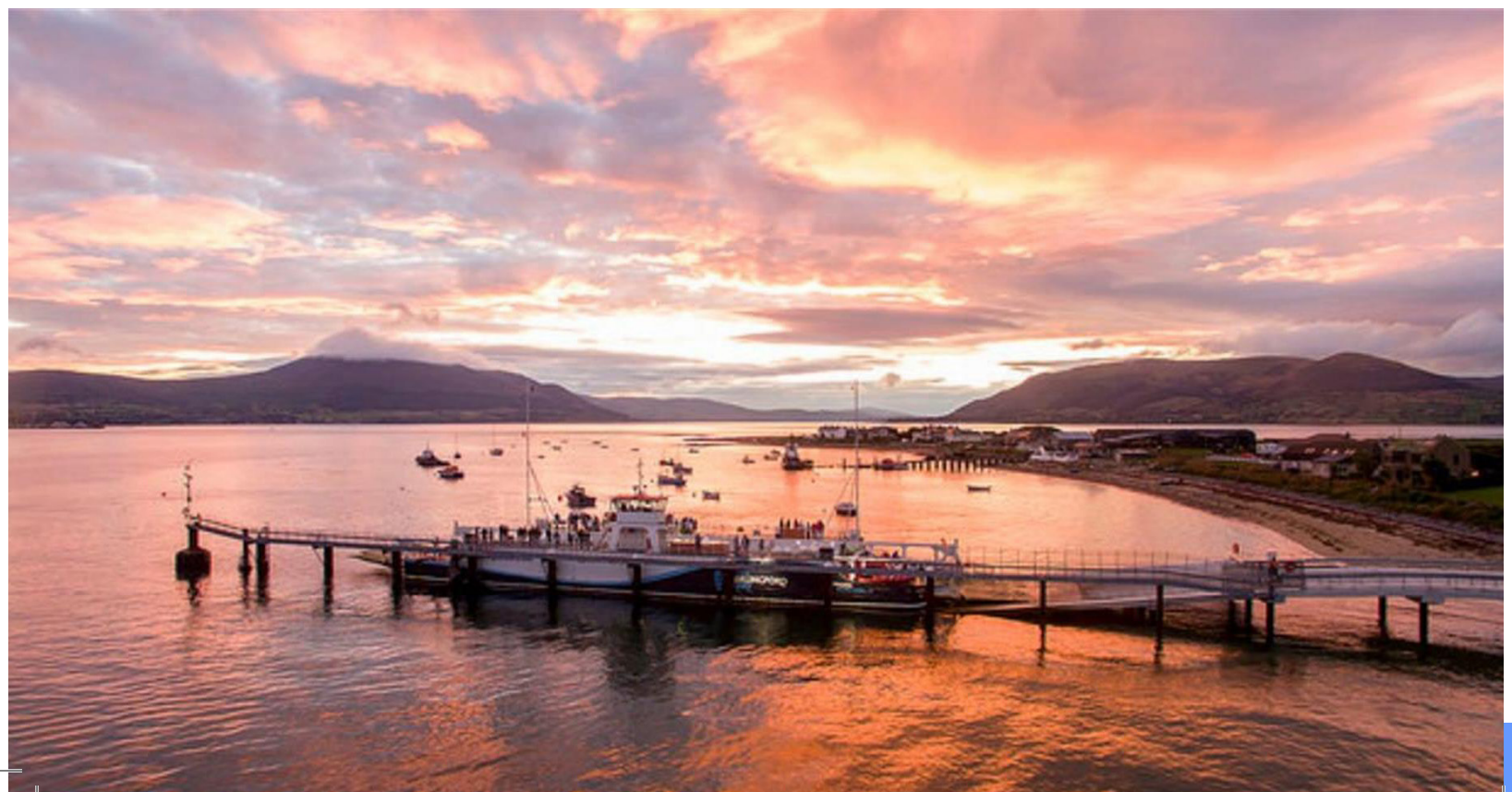
WELCOME.



Good afternoon and welcome to Warrenpoint for our Service of Remembrance for the victims of the worst domestic tragedy on Carlingford Lough which occurred 70 years ago today.

The number of victims far surpasses those 7 souls who perished on that awful day. Families were plunged into unimaginable grief as they endeavoured to cope with their loss and the communities on both sides of the Lough were immersed in a tsunami of shock and sorrow.

Earlier, having been kindly invited, we attended a service in Carlingford and were reminded of the dangers posed by the water and the devastation it can cause. We also heard of the raw courage and bravery displayed by a local Garda, Frank Rice, John Oakes a resident and David Murray, a visitor who disregarded their safety and went to the rescue of those on the stricken craft. Their efforts saved the life of Charles McDonald. Such was his trauma, Charles left his successful drapery business in Newry and moved to Liverpool where he died on 26th October 1960, aged just 50. Charles too, was a victim.





MARITIME TRIBUTE



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

THIS PLAQUE RECALLS THE EVENTS OF A SUNNY TUESDAY AFTERNOON ON 22ND JUNE 1954. LOCAL BUSINESSMAN, HUGH O'HARE, HAD ORGANISED A PLEASURE TRIP FROM WARRENPOINT TO CARLINGFORD FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ON BOARD HIS LAUNCH, "NAUTICAL MAID".

ON THE RETURN JOURNEY A ROPE FOULED THE PROPELLOR, STOPPING THE ENGINE, AND THE VESSEL BEGAN TO TAKE WATER AND FACED WITH THE STRONG POSSIBILITY OF THE CRAFT SINKING THE PASSENGERS TOOK TO THE WATER. CONDITIONS WERE POOR WITH STRONG WINDS AND AN EBB TIDE.

THE SOLE SURVIVOR, MR CHARLES MC DONALD FROM NEWRY, LATER GAVE EVIDENCE OF HOW HE HELPLESSLY WATCHED HIS 7 FRIENDS SUCCUMB BENEATH THE WAVES. THIS IS STILL THE WORST DOMESTIC DROWNING TRAGEDY ON CARLINGFORD LOUGH WHOSE WATERS CAN BE CRUEL AND UNFORGIVING.



WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO PERISHED,
ALL FROM WARRENPOINT.

HUGH O HARE (FATHER)
MAISIE O HARE (MOTHER)
BRIAN O HARE (SON)
MISS BERNADETTE OGLE (SISTER IN LAW)
FRANK O HARE
ERNEST MC MANUS (BOATMAN)
JOSEPHINE KEEGAN

THE SOLE SURVIVOR WAS MR CHARLES MC DONALD, A DRAPER FROM NEWRY.

"Just whisper my name in your heart and i will be there"

UNVEILED ON THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THIS TRAGEDY BY,

MICHAEL MALLON,
CHAIRPERSON,
NEWRY MARITIME ASSOCIATION.

JUNE 22ND 2019

NMA marked the 65th anniversary of the tragedy by unveiling a commemorative plaque in The Square, Warrenpoint on 22nd June 2019.

The outworkings of this awful tragedy were far-reaching for all involved, particularly the O Hare and Ogle families. Hugh and Maisie O Hare (nee Ogle) were the only married couple involved and had 4 children.

Brian travelled with his parents while Orla, Siobhan and Terry remained home. Brian was accompanied by his little dog, Tandy. A sister of Maisie, Bernadette Ogle was on board also on that fateful day when a carefree pleasure trip on the Lough turned into an unmitigated disaster. The awful consequences were worsened by the fact that the bodies of Maisie, Brian and Bernadette were never recovered and more poignantly, a near-to-death Tandy was found lying on the shore at Rostrevor the following day. Happily, he survived and lived his life with an adopted family in Rostrevor at the request of the O Hare and Ogle families.

The sole survivor, Charles McDonald, cuts a very tragic figure. Only weeks before the tragedy he had become engaged to Miss Josephine Keegan. Josephine had met up with the party in Carlingford and decided to travel back to Warrenpoint for a little celebration to mark the happy occasion but fate intervened with catastrophic consequences.

Tragedy on Carlingford Lough: The Fateful Voyage of "Naughtigal" on June 22, 1954

TRAGIC BOAT TOWED IN

Rope coiled round propeller may be clue to disaster

SEARCH GOES ON FOR FIVE BODIES

-TWO RECOVERED

THE WARRENPOINT MOTOR BOAT Nautilus, which foundered in Carlingford Lough last night with the loss of seven lives, was towed into Carlingford harbour this morning. A rope was seen to be entangled tightly around its propeller.

The Nautilus was brought in by the Clough Head lifeboat.

Out in the Lough a fleet of small craft from Co. Down and Co. Louth was continuing the search for bodies of the victims.

So far only two have been recovered, those of Hugh O'Hare, junior (38), a well-known bookmaker, of Seriview, Warrenpoint, and Miss Josephine Keegan (36), a teacher at Bush Technical School, Carlingford. A native of Dundalk she had resided with Mrs. J. Thornton of Dundalk Street, Carlingford.

Mr. O'Hare's wife Maisie (34), and son Brian (7) were also lost. The other victims were: Mrs. O'Hare's sister, Miss Bernadette

in getting away but it reached the scene in time to rescue McDonald who was found clinging to the almost submerged motor boat.

There was then no sign of the other occupants.

After medical attention Mr. McDonald was taken to Dundalk.

He said: "After the boat started to fill I saw Mr. Hugh O'Hare trying to reach his son in the water. I saw him turn around and jump myself over the back of the little portion of the boat. Only a little portion was above the water. I dragged him up above it and remained there until rescue came."

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The ill-fated Nautilus at Carlingford to-day after being brought in by the Clough Head lifeboat. Guard F. J. Rice and Mr. W. H. McGeiff are seen examining the boat which rescued Mr. McDonald.

DIDN'T HEAR

Miss Kathleen Pearse, of Carlingford, who was in a car on the Lough shore saw the tragedy.

When the first rescue boat went out she tried to attract the occupants' attention to a person in the water about half-a-mile away.

The people in the boat could not hear her and then the figure in the water disappeared.

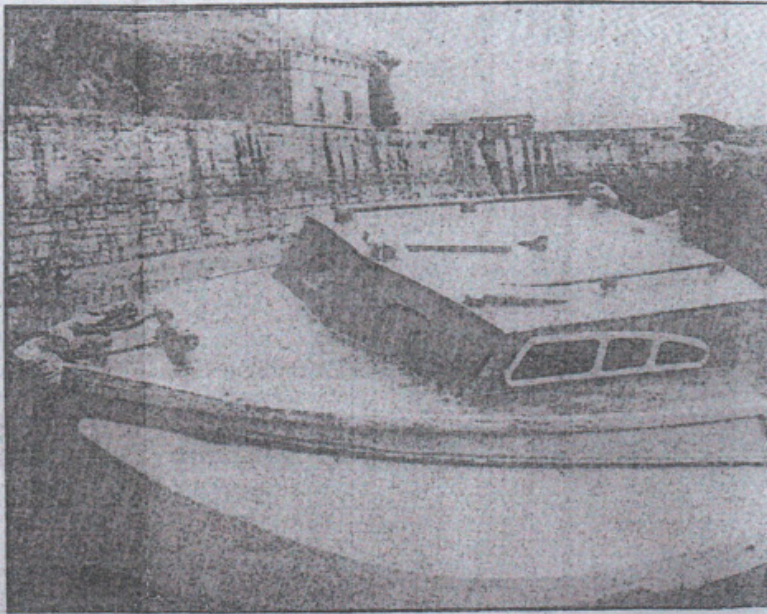
The search was joined by the Clough Head and Newcastle lifeboats and other motorboats.

It went on until early morning and was then resumed at first light.

Fishermen co-operated with members of the Civic Guard.

RECITED ROSARY

While the search operations were going on last night a large crowd





MRS. O'HARE.
She was swept away with her

The worst domestic tragedy on Carlingford Lough occurred on the evening of Tuesday 22 June 1954.

A local businessman, Hugh O Hare, decided to take a party of family and friends to Carlingford onboard his cabin cruiser, "Naughtigal". Mr O Hare was a well-known, successful bookmaker noted for his benevolence. Travelling with him on that sunny afternoon was his wife, Maisie, and eldest son, Brian, who his dog accompanied.

Maisie's sister, Bernadette completed the family unit. Ernest Mc Manus, boatman for Mr O Hare, and 2 friends, Frank O Hare and Charles Mc Donald made up the compliment of 7. The trip to Carlingford was uneventful and the party arrived in the village at 5.45 pm. Miss Josephine Keegan,



a Domestic Science teacher in the Bush School in Cooley, joined them.

Miss Keegan had just become engaged to Charles McDonald a couple of weeks previously and she was persuaded to return to Warrenpoint with the others for a celebratory party. Josephine informed her Headmaster of her plans, telling him she would travel to school on the bus via Newry the next morning.

At around 8 pm, the party set off for Warrenpoint. There were now 8 passengers and the dog onboard.

The wind had freshened and the tide was on the ebb making the sea choppy. Suddenly the engine began to splutter and then stopped. The boat was now at the mercy of the elements, drifting helplessly and taking in water. Frantic attempts to restart the engine were to no avail and the bilge pump couldn't cope with the ingress of water.

On shore, the Boyle family from North Commons saw the plight of the stricken craft and Miss Eunice Boyle rang the local Garda and raised the alarm. Garda Frank Rice raced to the Harbour where a local man, John Oakes and a visitor, David Murray, joined him. Alas, the ebb tide had dried the Harbour out and they were forced to drag a rowing boat for 50 yards across the mud before launching. When they eventually got to the almost submerged cruiser they found just one man Charles Mc Donald, hanging on to the hull. The others, he said, had decided to attempt to swim ashore but succumbed to the waves. With great difficulty, the men got Charles into their boat and headed for the shore but the drama wasn't over. One of the oars broke and the men got back on a wing and a prayer.

Other would-be rescuers around the Lough faced the same problems with the ebb tide. Their boats were high and dry. Eventually, emergency services appeared on the scene led by Gardai and RUC personnel.

A flotilla of small craft was also scouring the Lough. Around 5 am the next morning the body of Hugh O Hare was recovered by a Rostrevor boatman, Danny Tinnelly. Later that afternoon, the body of Josephine Keegan was recovered off Greenore by Clogherhead Lifeboat. Clogherhead Station celebrates its 125th year of service this year.

A few weeks passed before the body of Ernest Mc Manus was discovered by a fisherman off Greencastle and then the body of Frank O Hare was discovered at Ballagan.

Sadly, the remains of Mrs Maisie O Hare, her son Brian and sister Bernadette Ogle were never found and the loss of their grieving families was compounded.



The Heroic Legacy of Garda Frank Rice and the Tragic Waters of Carlingford

by Kevin & Therese Rice



Carlingford Lough Tragedy Recalled

Garda Frank Rice who has been stationed in Carlingford for the past 11 years, retires on pension at the end of this week. He has been 31 years in the force serving nine of those years in Co. Kilkenny and ten in the city and county of Waterford. A native of Augher, Co. Tyrone, he fought with the 3rd. Northern Division in the War of Independence.

In June 1954, Garda Rice figured prominently in the rescue of the sole survivor - Mr. Chas McDonald of Newry - of a motor boat tragedy in Carlingford Lough.

Seven persons including three women and a boy, lost their lives when they abandoned the boat, which became filled with water and the engine had stopped. The bodies of the two women and the boy were never recovered.

With two other men, Garda Rice put out in a small rescue boat from Carlingford to the scene of the accident. They had difficulty in getting their boat afloat as the tide was out. On the return journey an oar broke.

Evening Herald
20th. November 1957

Guard Frank Rice

Guard Frank Rice was reared in Augher, Co. Tyrone and his family origins were in Meigh, Co. Armagh. He became a member of An Garda Síochána in 1926. He served in several places around the country and was transferred to Carlingford in 1946.

Agnes Rice

Agnes Rice went to St. Louis School in Bundoran.

Agnes did a commerce course in Ballyshannon technical school and graduated in short hand, typing, and book keeping. The Great Northern Railway Hotel (GNR Hotel) in Bundoran was looking for people and she was offered a job as a Book Keeper. She worked in the GNR Hotels in Bundoran, Belfast, Rostrevor and Greenore. She was promoted Manageress and was Manageress in Rostrevor during World War Two and then transferred to Greenore. While working in Greenore Agnes met Guard Frank Rice and got married in Dublin. Frank & Agnes set up home in a house called Oriel, Castle Hill, Carlingford.

Tragedy

On the evening of 22nd. June 1954 there was a call for help from people in a motor boat which had



capsized. Guard Rice, John Oaks from Carlingford and David Murray who was on holiday from Dublin and worked in Dublin Airport came down to the pier. The tide was out in the harbour. They managed to launch a small boat and rowed out in choppy seas to the capsized boat. There was only one man there, Charles McDonald, hanging onto the upturned boat. They took him on board and went in search for other people, unfortunately all had disappeared. There were eight people on board the boat that fatal night. One of the people who drowned was Miss Josephine Keegan who was a teacher in Bush Tech and just got engaged to Charles McDonald. She was persuaded to come back with them to Warrenpoint that night.

People on board that night.

The other people on board that night were the owner of the boat, Hugh O'Hare, his wife Maisie and their son Brian. Bernadette Ogle, Maisie's sister and two friends, Frank O'Hare and Ernest McManus were also on board that night.

Hugh & Maisie's wedding reception

Orla & Siobhan, daughters of Hugh & Maisie told me that their parents got married on 19th. April 1944 and had their reception in the GNR Hotel in Rostrevor, the hotel in which Agnes Rice was Manageress.

Motor engine trouble

Mr. Rory McKeivitt, a former neighbour and friend to the Rice family went out on that June night to help with the rescue but unfortunately his motor boat broke down and he had to return to the harbour.

Another sad Tragedy for Rory's family

On the 6th. March 1995 Rory lost 2 sons when their fishing boat capsized not far from Carlingford Harbour. The Irish Times reported that on "March 6th: Brothers Eugene McKeivitt (39) and Ferghal McKeivitt (34) drowned when their boat submerged during a mussel harvesting trip in Carlingford Lough. One man, Seamus McCrum, survived."

May they all rest in peace



Thank You.

We at NMA wish to thank everyone who has assisted with the delivery of our Remembrance Tribute today, especially,

Canon John Kearney,
Pipe Major David Hanna, Altnaveigh Memorial Pipe Band.
Maud Hamill, Historian and Genealogist.
Chris Cassidy, Heritage Officer, Newry City Library.
Inspector Sheila Loughran and PSNI Mournes Community Policing Team.
Sergeant John Brady, Garda Siochana Carlingford and Omeath.
Sheila Boyle and Carlingford Heritage Trust.
Kevin and Therese Rice.
Our local musicians.
RNLI.
HM Coastguard

Special thanks to Terry O Hare and his sisters,
Siobhan and Orla for kindly sponsoring hospitality today.