

The life and career of Bere Island Nurse Mary Mullins 1910-2002

Most of this account is based on the portion of an audio-taped conversation with Christy O'Sullivan 1985, where Mary recounted some of her life and career on Bere Island. The conversation took place in 1985 in Cork City, in the house she bought and moved to after she retired in 1975. The first-person excerpts (in italics) have been edited for clarity and continuity. The other sources are identified in the text.

Birth

Mary Mullins, daughter of Johnny Mullins and Annie Murphy, was born in Ardra in the most easterly house on Bere Island [now owned by Paul Moore and Noelette Buckley].

[Please note that all Copies made on this Page should be certified at foot.]

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First Page.

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Castletown</u>		Registrar's District <u>Castletown</u>								
BIRTHS Registered in the District of <u>Castletown</u> in the Union of <u>Castletown</u> in the County of <u>Cork</u>										
No. (1.)	Date and Place of Birth. (2.)	Name (if any). (3.)	Sex. (4.)	Name and Surname and Dwelling-place of Father. (5.)	Name and Surname of Mother. (6.)	Rank or Profession of Father. (7.)	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Informant. (8.)	When Registered. (9.)	Signature of Registrar. (10.)	Baptismal Name if added after Registration of Birth, and Date. (11.)
422	19.10 January 22nd Ardra	Mary	F	John Mullins Ardra	Annie Mullins formerly Murphy	Farmer	Annie Mullins Mucker Ardra	February 24th 1910	J.H. Lyne Registrar.	

I, Michael Lyne Assistant Registrar of Births and Deaths in the District of Castletown in the Union of Castletown in the County of Cork do hereby certify, that this is a true copy of the Registrar's Book of Births within the said District, from the Entry of the Birth of John O'Neill No. 420 to the Entry of the Birth of Margaret Sullivan No. 429

Witness my hand, this 25th day of April 1910

Michael Lyne Assistant Registrar.

I have examined the above, and compared it with the said original Registrar's Book, and hereby certify that it is a true Copy.

Witness my hand, this 25th day of April 1910

J. J. Donovan Superintendent Registrar.

*Should the Copy be certified by the Assistant or Informant, Registrar, or Assistant or Informant Superintendent Registrar, please insert word "Assistant" or "Informant" as the case may be.

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1910/01576/1635068.pdf

I was born the night of Halley's comet. It's often Father used tell it. When he was going for the nurse -- I suppose they called her a handy woman that time -- he saw it. T'was over Greenane, the comet. When he was first telling me about it, "What is a comet", said I? "A big star with a tail out of it", he said. "Always remember that, that's the night you were born, Mary".

We {myself, John/Sonny 1911-1939, Annie/Anita 1912-1973, Michael/Mick 1914-1971} were all born in Ardra. Sure nearly everyone was born at home that time.

During her career, Mary herself was to deliver most of the Bere Island children. The informant for the birth of her youngest brother Michael is listed as Annie O'Sullivan, midwife, resident of Castletown, and present at his birth in Ardra.

Mary lived in Lonehort, her mother's old home, later known as (her aunt) "Ellie Lonehort's" place, until she was nine years, and began her primary schooling while there.

National School

In Lawrence Cove National School, there were, I suppose, 13 or 14 in every class, easily! In my class there were Mary Hanley, May!, Kathleen Leary and Mary Leary, Maura in Bank, Nora Sullivan, Nora Peter Mickey (Michael Sullivan's sister), and ah.. wait a minute now. Mary Gihane (Tadgh Gihane's sister), and ... wait a while now, there must be more, ... Mary Agnes in the Point, and ??? Katherine Harrington.

There weren't any boys in the class; it wasn't mixed at all then, do you know. No, no. No no no! We daren't, we couldn't look at the boys, we couldn't look at a boy that time! [laughs] They were separate, and the two schools upstairs and downstairs. The girls were upstairs and the boys below. And we couldn't even look over the wall – but we used to peek in! The western school was mixed.

As our teachers we had Mrs Sullivan Doyle, and Miss O'Reilly, two lady teachers. And there was another one then, Maud Harrington told me a sister of hers was teaching there one time for a while. I can barely remember her. And then Miss O'Reilly came there and then the two of them were there the whole time.

And downstairs was Donal's father, George, and Mrs Casey.

I'd say there was about 80 or that in our rolls, you know. I'd say 80-89 or that ... it used to be that something like that now, she used to be marking the roll, you see 80-89. And probably the same down in the boy's school ... Sure, after all, there was a big family of the Neills, and the Leary's, ... all the houses in the east end were occupied; there's none occupied now, there's nobody there.

I didn't agree with Mrs Sullivan Doyle; she had a set on me anyway. She hadn't a set on May now at all, but she had an awful set on me and Mary Hanley. And they were going to ... [laughs] My father told her one time he was thinking of withdrawing me.

Relations with the British, and the pupils in the military school

In the conversation, Mary returned several times the relationship with The British Army personnel; their children attended the military school at the top of Rerrin village (just across the road from where she herself would spend most of her adult years on Bere Island).

They, you know, they were calling us Irish pigs and all ... it's the same atmosphere as in the North now [1988]. We grew up in that, like. My father was interned in the North of Ireland at the time, [see below] but didn't encourage us to retaliate. And my mother when we would come home, she'd say, "in the name of God will ye walk the road home and leave the ... don't wait for the military crowd." The military crowd used wait for us and start calling us names, Irish pigs, ... oh, that was the truth now, yeah.

And of course, we would beat 'em up. We often went home with our clothes all torn after having a row. Oh, we were as bad as the North, every bit!

I can remember them [the students] there. We used to wait for them, until they would come out. [Or] they used to come out before us. There was a change of time anyway, they were vice versa. And we'd wait, Maura in Bank, May used go up, and into the quarry [above the school] we'd go, and we'd wait for the military ones to come. And then we'd go through the camp then having tit for tat, through the military; we weren't a bit afraid of rifles or guns at all.

Mary tells of the only time she ever got a beating from her father. She thinks she was only 8 or 9 at the time. Her father was working in the canteen, and he was coming home one day, and following soldiers who were marching along the road.

I was taking the horse to the bog. I loved riding the horse. The soldiers were all drilling east along the road, maybe a 100 of them in a line, down there by Carberys. There was one man walking behind them, and I thought he was an officer. They were whistling, and the more whistles I got, the more I was delighted with myself. Anyway, I put the horse in, and came back home straight. And when I did, I was met by my father. He lashed me across the legs with a cane. There was a cane alright, up in the lathes, and he took it down, and I had blisters in my legs from the lashing. I remember him saying "I'll have no British Tommy whistling at my daughter."

Her father was interned in Ballykinler [in Co. Down] for more than a year

Ballykinler Internment Camp was just south of Downpatrick in County Down. Established in 1920, it was the first mass internment camp established by the British authorities in Ireland to help quell the War of Independence. This converted military camp held up to 2,000 Irishmen who were suspected of IRA activity. At various places in the tape, Mary tells why her father was interned, and how he was arrested, and the day he was taken from the Island. {she gave more details on the canteen itself as well}

My uncle Jim Mullins (in town) had been in the ambush on the coastguard station in Castletown [July 20, 1920: see <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000817910> and http://irishhistory1919-1923chronology.ie/july_1920.htm] and he was injured and brought into the hospital, and he was arrested. And then of course they associated father with that; father wasn't in the IRA at all, but he was his brother.

Anyway, this day father was working in the canteen, along with maybe John Dwyer and other fellows there -- they were all probably local. In came the OC (Officer in Charge) of the British Southern Command, and the canteen inspector. Father was wondering what was up. And the first thing the OC said was "Are you in sympathy with the IRA?" Father answered "Well, I'm in sympathy with the IRA, if it means freeing my country."

He was arrested at home. T'was the time of the year he was outside cleaning mangels or turnips, with his dungarees on, when they came to arrest him. He told them he would not walk the public road in his dungarees, and insisted on putting on his good clothes. They wouldn't leave him into the house to do that, he had to change outside. Of course, as canteen manager, father was always dressed up.

He was put into Rerrin battery. They brought ones in from outside as well, a man named Hayes,

an Irish teacher, from the outside, and he was in Rerrin battery. And Mike Tade (Gerry Murphy's uncle). They were there, I'd say, for maybe a week. And we going to school, we used to go around the back but we could only talk through the barbed wire. And the next thing was, when we went in to school one morning, George, Donal's father, was outside the school gate waiting for us: they were gone away in the destroyer. They were brought to Spike Island first, and from that up to Belfast and down to Ballykindler.

The four that were brought away were Dan Cahill, Mike Murphy, and father from the Island; and Hayes the Irish teacher from the outside.

Later on, Dan Cahill, who was in a different hut than father, would joke that father was in the hut with the big fellas. One of those 'big fellas' was Seán Lemass.[#]. Father was in the next bed to Lemass. Later on, Father used to be telling about Lemass. and would refer to him as the "hatter's son" [Lemass was the son of a hatmaker] and say that he was a "lively young fella."
<https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/2016-family-history/case-studies/sean-lemass>
<https://www.facebook.com/BallykinlarHistoryHut/posts/the-story-of-sean-lemass-1899-1971-at-ballykinlar-camp-1920-21the-second-of-seve/951044312390701/>

Father was also in the same hut as Hayes, and learned the Irish from him. After father came home, the rosary was always said in Irish in our house all our life after that.

He never got his job back in the canteen or had any more associations with the British Army. Before that, we had been supplying milk, and mother didn't stop the milk at all; she continued to supply the milk [though the Murphys]

The internment camp on Bere Island

In 1921, when Mary was 11, on her way home from school, she had to pass by the internment camp in Bere Island, which was in operation from April to December of that year.

[See <https://bereisland.heritagecork.org/topics/bere-island-internment-camp-2> for more on this camp. The 30-minute video includes, starting at minute 17.25, a description, by Ted Sullivan, of an escape that Mary witnessed. And starting at minute 26.05, Ted briefly describes the Canon O'Kennedy episode, in which Mary's mother Annie played an important role. Further details on that episode, and the lives of the 2 altar boys who served Mass for him in the camp, one of whom was Mary's brother Sonny, are available in a longer interview Ted gave to Bere Island Radio in 2021.]

When talking with Christy, Mary refers briefly to the camp, and then continues on about her and her classmates' fights with the British schoolchildren.

And the prisoners were all interned in huts, beyond where the pump house is now They had a platform there, they used to hold the concert there. And we would have great strength; they were inside the barbed wire but they were our strength [encouraging us] all the same; we would have the battle then outside of them, calling the British crowd every name. We used to have great kip, you see, going home. And then we go along then after and well we'd still be at it I suppose, the Neills and Peter's crowd, Jerry and Michael and Mark.

Learning music in the Convent in Castletown

I wasn't musical at all, but anyway I went out learning music. And my uncle Jim, he wasn't married, but he had the house in town, and I used to stay with him; and I was for a while anyway, going to the convent.

Travel to/from Castletown

To get in and out, we could go in the military boat; you could sneak in and out in the boat that way, off and on. But if Peter Mickey, now, or my father was with them, no, we had no hope.

You could go away with a crowd of girls that weren't bothered. But you had to have a pass. We were not allowed the pass all the time, sometimes you might get it, you might have a good officer there, and you would get it.

But sometimes you were not allowed the pass. I can always remember walking to the west end if you had to go out to a funeral or something, and coming in the west end, walking home.

Maura in Bank, I remember, used to go out in the military boat. Saturday was the day then to go out, you know, to have the day to walk up and down the town. Like doing Pana! Maura in Bank and I used to go out often.

Elsewhere in the interview, Mary spoke about Peter Mickey, Christy's grandfather, who was great pals with her father.

Your grandfather was more of a nationalist; he was a bit extreme. He wouldn't go out in their boat. He wouldn't condescend to go out in their boat. That is the kind he was. I don't think anyone belong to him did either. I can always remember coming in the West End with him in Pat Barule's [boat] and walking home and all, different times coming in from town. He would go out some way and come in that way. He would go in the barge or with someone else but not in their boat.

Nor did my father. They weren't being brought anyway; they'd only have to stow away. Pat Sullivan (The Post Office) couldn't go either. Pat stowed away one time coming in, and he couldn't get out of the boat when he got in East. He was there all day in the boat until it got dark in the night. Sometimes he went out and there was no other boat in; there weren't a lot of boats that time at all. I remember Pat telling that.

Becoming a nurse

Well, I suppose, that time, they were all going to America, or going to England. T'was America or England. Mostly to America, my crowd were going. Anyway, I was going out to the convent. But I didn't know what I was going to do. But they were going to America and I suppose I was probably thinking of it too. And of course the usual thing that time was really they were making matches, you know, you could be married, do you know like, that kind of. [laughs] I used to get letters of proposals when I was only 18 and 19. Mary Hanley and I, we used to go out dancing to

the platform on the mainland, and we'd get letters in from fellas outside then after [laughs].

There was this other girl going to the convent that time, Eileen Murphy, Millcove. It wasn't a secondary school that time; but you could be going to the convent. Anyway, Eileen Murphy and myself were great pals, she was going to join the Bons Secours nuns. They were some joining the nuns too that time. She was thinking of doing that, so I said no I wasn't going to be a nun at all anyway. Then she said it was nursing. Father was in the County Council that time too, and I suppose maybe he was talking to others or something, and he said to me, "If you want to go nursing can't you choose the North Infirmary?" But it was some fellow in the Council, I believe it was Con Buckley, where he was the secretary above in the North [Infirmary] but he was also an independent councillor here for Cork, I'm sure it's he said it to him. Somehow, in any case, we got the prospectus.

And I went up anyway for the interview. Katie Mahony (one of the 16! Mahonys), and I were great friends, Katie went with me; and Katie would love to go nursing, too. We probably went down (by boat) on the Beara (to Bantry) and up by train. And we had the exam and the interview anyway. But Katie did not do well in the interview. Now I wasn't brainy but, I seemed to win out. But Katie, anyway, went off to America. I think now, probably I was thinking of going to America too.

And so that's how I went nursing. Well, I never looked back, like. I was lucky once I started off.

Back to the Island as a nurse (1935)

Even though Mary was reluctant to go back and work in the Island, she eventually did. But it took her a few tries.

I was on the staff in the Erinville [Maternity Hospita in Cork Cityl]. I didn't want to go back. I had no notion of going back. I wouldn't tell anyone go back to their own home place, that was the feeling I had about it. But anyway, Mother wasn't well like, you know, she was kind of a kidney case; she was up in the Mercy [Hospital] when I was away that time, and she wasn't well and she was wanting me to come back. No, there was a nurse anyway, Father Kelliher [The Parish Priest in Bere Island] wanted a nurse for Bere Island. There was no nurse on Bere Island. There were only midwives in Castletown that time, there were no nurses in Berehaven or anywhere that time. And, Father Kelliher, anyway, there was something about he wouldn't have a Jubilee Nurse¹. He wanted a District nurse, the same as Tory Island or something. But anyway they applied [advertised] for one. Someone from up there I think (Donegal?) or Sligo or somewhere got it. I forget what her name was now. And she was appointed there. And she was there for a year. She was staying west in the Hotel and she was there for about a year, do you see. And then she went. And then Nurse O'Brien came, a Cavan girl, answered the ad. Well you know you are your own boss, kind of style and that. I think she was single when she went there and then she got married, do you see, and the husband came. But there was no job for him do you see. He probably thought he would get a job there, but there was nothing.

¹ <https://www.kildare.ie/ehistory/index.php/jubilee-nurse-the-forgotten-heroine-of-irelands-public-health-service/>

She was there four of five years anyway. But then again you had to qualify in Irish under the rules, the Gaeltacht, and she told me after that she didn't qualify. But I don't think they'd have fired her; they would have given her, you know, extensions. But anyway she went, she was up in the Midlands. She actually went and took a midwife's post after.

But anyway, it was advertised then again (by the) Local Appointments Commission. And I don't know if someone said to me anyway would I ... Father didn't ever encourage me to go back, no, but Mother wanted me, and anyway I answered it. And I went up to Dublin. I remember Father Bob [Murphy] was going back to Maynooth the same time and we travelling up together, up to Local Appointments for the interview. And I was on night duty in Erinville at the time and I was after being up the night before, and he said "give me you bag and go have a good sleep." And I slept in the train going up; I was dead tired. And I had the interview anyway, and I didn't really... there was a good few for it, you know, from all over. And I didn't, I really wasn't successful, I didn't do the best, you see. The others were more experienced; I was only just qualified, I think. And I didn't get it. But the next thing was, the one that got it, apparently couldn't get a reference; you had to have a priest, a reference ... she didn't get a reference from her parish priest. That's what happened now how exact we were that time, do you see.

And you had to qualify in Irish. It was harder than it is now, really, in a way. But anyway I had this thing: I had to do the two parts, but I'd have passed but one, but I didn't but the written I think I failed now. Or, I got the written, I don't know which now. But I had to do the two. I got three years then to do the two anyway. And of course I had no hope. But anyway, there was an Irish teacher in Castletown and I went to him and got lessons from him in Castletown. And when I took it, you had to [take it] at the University here do you see. that was where, what was the name, Bastible. She was an Irish professor anyway and I had a sister of Dean Bastible's; she was one of the examiners I remember. So I did it, that thing, and I was lucky, I got it, the second thing. T'was, you know, just your work, like, as you'd say.

I lived at home first, but I found I was disturbing them at home and getting calls at all hours ... you worked a 24 hour day.

The British Army were still there for 3 years more after Mary returned to the Island

In the taped conversation Mary spoke about how she got on with the British after she came back as a nurse, and how she was treated by them.

The British Army were still there for 3 more years after I went back in 1935. The big change I noticed when I went back was that I was now treated VIP. I had a pass to travel aft [The first class cabin, with the officers] and I got a boat at my service.

But one thing, I can praise the British for, right from the start: I went through the camp as a child, as a teenager, and I went back as a still young – I was still only 25. But looking back on it now, the ordinary Englishman treated us well. We were treated as ladies. But of course, the parents would come out to meet us if we were going home late, when it was getting dark. They would be out to know we were coming along. But still there were never any incidents.

She was sometimes called to give care to British Army personnel

No. I was for the people of Bere Island, not for the Army. But you see you were called on maternity and emergencies. They had no doctor oftentimes. They had an old fella, Blackwood; yerra he was 70 or 80 maybe at the time.

They had no nurse of their own, They had a hospital with orderlies [above near the church now] They had a fairly good hospital there, there were patients there and all.

It was more that. I was a nurse, and they wanted my advice. We worked in co[-operation] very much. There was an orderly sergeant there, and there were different military doctors. This Blackwood fella was there a year or so, he was the last. He didn't take any maternity cases, or anything like that. Dr Lyne came over to help him. He was paid; he used to come in often, and Dr Power he used to come in, The Castletown doctors came in from time to time while the British [were there]. I don't think they did in the Irish Army [time] at all – no, the Irish had their own man.

I went in to their hospital several times. They had often an acute case of maybe pneumonia there, they kind of wanted a nurse.

When I got sick calls from the British crowd, I answered them. I answered all calls, and went to their houses. You just couldn't [not answer], you know. I you remember going into those houses. I suppose there isn't a house in the Island I wasn't into. I answered all the calls.

I delivered children of the British Army personnel. I have a lawful index of it. There's all sorts of unusual names. I don't know how exactly the British reimbursed me, but they did. Well, the way t'is, you kind of went with the doctor sometimes like that. But no, if I attended her in midwifery, they paid me. That time there was something with the National Health, or something. They got 2 pounds something. With the British crowd, there was some health service thing; that was 2 pounds odd anyway.

The Emergency (1939-1945) under the Irish Army, and moving to Rerrin

I lived east at home until about 1941 or so. The war years were on then and when I would get calls coming for me, they were halted in the battery east, Lonehort Battery. They were halted there and they were afraid coming for me. And I was even myself afraid; you were being challenged, you see.

There was no phone that time, and someone who needed help had to come to your home to fetch you. And the officer in charge, he advised me to move outside the Camp area: "Do you realize you were nearly shot one night?" One night apparently, they called out the guard and you could hear him, you know, getting ready. "In the east end do you realize that?" So, "My advice to you", he said, "you will be called at all hours of the night," he said, "and they'll think t'is a raid on the magazine". They had the ammunition stored there, in Lonehort Battery, and there might be a raid on the magazine. So he said, "listen, move outside the Camp area." So I moved outside the Camp area. At least, he got the house, he said "I'll get a house." I got the house there in the

station then, where Julia Burns is, there, and then I moved from that when the other one became vacant, when Stockleys went away. I moved down then the village to be more convenient, down to the present one.

My parents didn't want me to move but 'twas too far away from the people.

After 7-8 years nursing on Bere Island, her attempt to move out of the Island

I was about seven or eight years in Bere Island and I was fed up there, I was wanting to get out of it like, I felt that there was no future there. There was a job going here in Cork: Infant Life Protection Visitor. and I applied for the job. [And talking about City Managers now, Monahan was there that time, Monaghan he was the City Manager, I remember at the time 'twas a city manager they had]

I remember they were questioning my experience. And I said to him that I worked with the different positions. I worked with the medical officer in Castletown, and the county medical officer, and different British medical offers, you see, I said, or Army medical offers I suppose I said. And they said, how did you work with them? Why did you work with them? And I said, well, you had to answer calls, answer emergencies, like, the doctor could be missing or he was away, he weren't always there. That was really how it worked.

[Christy, you say it's incredible for an organization like them to have no resident doctor. Well, They had this old man, now, like, he had the name of it like. They were supposed to have one, but they'd be missing at times, and then they had nobody. They had the orderlies, they had the hospital running, and the (orderly) sergeant, and I suppose maybe two or three qualified orderlies, you know. What you would call male nurses now I suppose.]

I never got out of the Island anyway. I never left. I didn't get the job. I remember meeting somebody here in the city and I telling them after that I had the county medical officer, and the city medical officer, and the county manager and the city manager, that they were the board. They were the interviewing board really. They said (to me) well you had a very good board. But no, 'twas a person named Crowley that got it. But after a year, she gave it up. She got married. [That time] you had to resign on marriage. I had that as one of the terms in my appointment: you couldn't saty on; you had to resign on marriage. But this Crowley person, anyway, she got it and she took the job. [She left] after a year and they offered it to me then, but I didn't take it. But anyway my mother didn't want me to go, she wasn't well and she didn't want me to go, like, you know. That's really I'd say what stopped me, why I never left like. But I made several attempts alright! [laughs]

The Irish Army left in 1947, taking the ferry services with them; Mary just carried on.

I had to cover the whole Island. And I had to bike, up on a bike! I often did the island three times a day. You might have calls back. And the Island was thickly populated. I remember, when I was interviewed, they asked me what was the population of Bere Island. I suppose I wasn't all that sure, but I said well there is 300 farming anyway, and there's personnel, I knew that, about 700. I made a rough guess of a thousand, you know. And I remember when I went back I questioned

it, you know, and they said you were right.

I had to cycle all the way west. Even the west end was occupied that time. There were some of the houses in the west end occupied too like. I had the west end and the east end. But the military were good enough, like, sending you, when I went back, they'd get/send the lorries, they had mules even.

First female car owner on Bere Island [and her 'documentary' nature]

I got the first car after having an accident down the High Road. I fell off the bike and I was unconscious there, I suppose I was unconscious for three or four hours, I'm sure, because it was Pat Barule that found me going home from work; and I left the west end school at 12 o'clock, I was there, you see, and Pat Harrington said I left there at 12. And Pat Barule was going home at 5 o'clock, when the County Council crowd [knocked off]. He found me there with the bike; I must've been unconscious. I suppose I was cycling mad east the highroad you know and 'twasn't even as good as 'tis now.

But after that then I was very slow to go up in the bike. And Pat Harrington he had a car and he used to come for me in calls with the car. And Pat made me drive his car. Every night that we would get a call Pat had me learn to drive. That's how I learned to drive [laughs]. "Push over there; drive it now", he'd say. And I didn't know what was at my feet.

No matter the topic, mundane or important, Mary was known for her obsession with 'documenting' (and backing up, triangulating, and going into long tangents) any statement she made. Some of this may have come from her nursing training, where she learned to document, and leave written *remarks* in patient's charts for doctors to read. And, of course, she had to do the same whenever she called the doctor in Castletownbere about a Bere Island case. [In non-medical conversations, she would often use the word '*unremarkable*' to characterize something that was not of any consequence]. Notice how, above, she convinced us (decades later) that she was indeed unconscious for three or four hours.

She could not be quite sure which year she got the car, but again she was able to use evidence to narrow it down.

When my mother was alive, I hadn't a car, and you see my mother died in 1955. I had it when my father was alive, and he died in 1957. So I am guessing that I got the car in say 1956. I was sorry then that I hadn't got it earlier.

The results of her triangulation, done 30-years later, agree exactly with that she told the Radio Eireann people in 1959, much closer to the event.

Christy then asked her how many cars there were on the Island at that time. Mary's answer is another example of her considerable efforts to produce evidence to back up any statement or opinion she expressed, medical or otherwise. [Ironically, in this instance, the corroboration she was able to supply involves an occasion where Bere Island itself got some attention from mainland Ireland. The Annex reproduces an excerpt from Radio Eireann programme broadcast in

1960]

There weren't many cars in the Island then. When the radio/tv crowd {from the Cork Studios of Radio Eireann} came to the Island, [in September 1959, to gather material for a radio program on the Islands of Munster}, I was the only car (available). They were looking for a car. Someone had a car alright, in the village, Suonishes probably, maybe they had some old thing. They sent them up to me anyway. There was a football match on (outside) and that's why people were all away. They went up to me and I was listening to a hurling match in Jim Greene's inside, and the next thing [there was] a knock at the door. And 'twas Sile Ni Bhriain and that Dr Daphne Pochin Mould, you know, that writer. 'Twas them anyway, and they were looking for some car to take them around and see the Island. Anyway, I didn't know who they were. When they were introduced, I thought one [that writer] was a medical doctor. One introduced the other, like, at the door.

[Mary took the producer Sile Ni Bhriain and the writer Dr Daphne Pochin Mould all around the Island in her car, and they interviewed several locals. Mary featured prominently in the program broadcast by Radio Eireann in January 1960, which also contained audio clips from several others. Fortunately, a few years ago, we were able to obtain the typed script of that broadcast – (see excerpts in Annex)]

But I suppose I couldn't afford to get the car anyway. Because I remember when I was getting the money for the car, when I went to the bank. Michael Kennedy was the bank manager then; he wasn't long manager, he was only just back. He said to me, what are you doing? I said, taking out my money. Ah, God, says he, leave it there! [laughs] what do you want to do, closing down the bank or something. I said, no I want a car, telling him, I'm getting a car, and he says, that's more than I have.

As a public servant, she was one of the few to have her car registered and insured. In 1959, long before there were roll-on roll-off ferries, she told Radio Eireann what extra was involved in maintaining a car on the Island

And of course running a car on Bere Island is a bit different from running one on the mainland. There are no petrol pumps and petrol is brought in in drums. And repairs or greasing that you, or a neighbour can't manage, means shipping the car across to a garage in Castletown.

Population and social changes during Mary's time as District Nurse

Ted Sullivan's *Short History of Bere Island* documents the dramatic changes in population over the first three quarters of the 20th century, and in particular during Mary's tenure as the Nurse. Both in the 1901 and 1911 census, Bere Island had just over one thousand inhabitants. The year after Mary returned to the Island in 1935, the number was still at **1000** (310 of them in Rerrin). By 1946 it had dropped to **783** (83), by 1956 to **493**, by 1966 to **306**, by 1971 to **288** and by 1979 to **259**.

The children's numbers tell the same story. In the Census of 1911, some 24 children, including Mary, had their 'age last birthday' given as 1 year old. Mary listed the names of ten other girls in

her class in Lawrence Cove National school. In the 1970s, that school was closed, for lack of numbers, and amalgamated with the school in the West End, the new ‘center of gravity’ of a much diminished Island population.

In 1959, when interviewed for the Radio Éireann broadcast, Mary told how emigration from the Island meant that there were not enough people to make their amusements for themselves, that the population was down to 380 and that the teenage group (whom Mary had brought into the world) have all left.

‘Social life is nil’.

The couple who ran the Island’s main Post Office described how Island people used to make their own fun, and put on plays, etc. When the ESB service arrived the year before, virtually every Bere Island household bought an electric radio from the enterprising salesman and many paid for it on an installments scheme that the couple facilitated. The couple also told the Radio Éireann interviewers how this increased exposure to the outside world was quickly affecting the young crowd:

‘T’is all tinned music for them now.’

Delivering public health measures

In one of the few photographs we have of her on Bere Island, Nurse Mullins is washing the seats of the Ballinakilla church. It was taken in 1936/37, soon after she came back to the Island as the District Nurse. She is doing so outside, when, during some work taking place in the church, all the pews were removed.

Every Bere Islander from that time remembers when Nurse Mullins would conduct mass vaccinations in the schools. Some of those memories go back to their pre-school years. Their mothers brought them to the school, and waited outside in the school shelter until called in in their turn. The bigger children scared the younger ones by telling how long the needles were, and the longer the wait, the longer the needles got. Later, as schoolchildren, they got to see first hand the preparations for these ‘inoculation’ or ‘immunization’ campaigns (the word vaccination wasn’t used in those days). The Primus would be placed on the Schoolmaster’s desk, and a large pot of water was boiled in readiness for sterilizing those needles. Many still remember the ‘medical’ smells surrounding these immunizations in the school.

The older children who received the attenuated ‘Salk’ polio vaccine via a needle envied their younger sibs who received the live ‘Sabin’ version on a sugar cube. Summer campaigns took place at the Dispensary beside the Ballinakilla Post Office. Nurse Mullins made sure to tell the accompanying person that one of the downsides of the Sabin vaccine was that it was ‘live’ and that the child could shed the polio virus and infect others.

Nurse Mullins conducted regular eye vision screening of the schoolchildren, and, even if their parents did not welcome the news, or even agree with her, it is she who first told them that their child needed eye glasses or eye corrections.

Delivering babies and delivering individual health care

One person, born at home in Ardra in the late 1940s, told how Nurse Mullins brought

“all six of us into the world. The only one there was some difficulty with was the last of us, so Nurse Mullins brought my mother to Cork and he was born there. So, otherwise we were all brought into the world by Nurse Mullins at home. My mother often said that she had total trust in her; once she knew that Nurse Mullins was there, and ready to cover whatever else, she never feared for anything.”

Another, from Ardagh, born in the late 1940s in the hospital in Castletownbere, said it was the same in his family:

“Nurse Mullins, she was like three doctors’ worth.”

Because his mother had to go out ahead of time for each of the six births, it put extra pressure on the Nurse to anticipate when a baby was going to be born, and not have her go out way too early, or wait until it was too late. Figuring out how many days ahead of time to go out was no mean feat. Even today the experts can’t always get that right.

That same person remembers how, in the 1950s, his father made a simple coffin for a baby who had died soon after birth from rhesus incompatibility – and later heard about how observant and up to date Nurse Mullins was, and how with her help the subsequent pregnancies were managed successfully.

A Derrycreeveen person, born in the 1950s, wrote that

“all six of us were born in the Erinville hospital in Cork. There were two babies ahead of us six, the first born at home and died at birth and the next born in the Erinville also died at home at 18 days of gastroenteritis. Between Nurse Mullins and Dr Lyne (a Castletownbere doctor in the early 1950s) and (Mr.) Dr. Kearney in Cork my mother was certainly sent up well in advance of the subsequent births.”

Nurse Mullins visited children when they failed to thrive, or got measles (and had to stay in darkened rooms) or whooping cough [in the summers, after the Dublin/Cork cousins arrived], or the usual respiratory infections, or ringworm, or boils.

She arranged for casts and slings when they suffered fractures, and transport to hospital when a child needed surgery for an appendicitis.

The current nurse, Catherine O’Sullivan remembers having measles as a child and Nurse Mullins arriving with multivitamins.

Mary also provided care to the old, and the not so old. Looking back later, she told us:

I wouldn’t be for anyone going back, to their own home, a native. You were working against

certain disadvantages. You do have the advantage that you know the people and their history, and what they expect. When I was called out, I nearly knew what to expect. I knew the family history. As time went on you got that way anyway.

In 1959 she told Radio Eireann that she was now able to get to most patients by car but that up until three years before, she got there by bicycle, and in any case, the car can't be got to all the island homes

lots of places you can only get on Shank's mare.

She had to improvise a stretcher and get the patient across to Castletown.

She told us about one particular emergency case; -- a day of storm and wind, when the crossing to the mainland and hospital seemed nearly impossible. Nurse Mullins travelled westward along the island looking for a boat crew to take the risk; eventually four picked rowers were found and with nurse and patient crouching in the bottom of the boat they set out. The dangerous journey ended with a safe landing and the patient's recovery after hospital treatment in Castletownbere.

She helped people's families when, as was common, people died (and were waked) at home.

Retirement, and move to Cork City; Mary looks back; her 'patients' remember her

In 1975, when she reached 65, Mary retired. She was just 5 months short of 40 years as the Nurse in Bere Island.

She bought and moved to a house in Ballinlough in Cork, but sometimes visited the Island, and still left a strong impression.

"She was an amazing woman, I remember as children when we were home on holiday, she was living in Cork at that stage but still came to visit the island and would call in to visit Mum; we always recognised her footsteps as she was coming near to our house, she had a very determined walk!" [2024 email]

On reading this remark, another person told us

"I remember her determined walk and energy very well and one certainly recognised when she was approaching accompanied by her distinctive bag. (I know a few children believed that she brought babies in that bag!!)"

Ten years after she retired, at her home in Cork, just before the second side of the tape ran out, Mary spent just a few minutes looking back over her life and career.

As for earlier schooldays, Mary said she enjoyed the road from/to her aunt's home in Lonehort:

There was more devilment going that Ardra road: you had more company. There was the squad of Mahony's (16 of them).

When Christy asked if she had any stories from her nursing time on Bere Island, Mary, ever the professional, pretended she could not remember the nursing ones. She did say that Pat Sullivan the Post Office (RIP) used to know all of the old tricks he used to play on her and others, and wished he were with her to remind her of things that happened.

Asked if she looked back on them as hard times or enjoyable times, she continued

When you look at it now, they were hard times, really, I mean. We had no off-duty. It was a 24 hour day and a seven day week, as you say. 'Twas all work and no play, like kind of, really. There was plenty company, and whist drives and dances. We went to them. But like, often I was called away you didn't know when you would be called away, and I didn't know when I was dressed up, where I would end up. 'Twas the case you were called off out to an emergency or something.

As for the satisfaction she got out of the work, and having people depending on you:

Ah yea, I liked it, oh I was interested in it, maybe too much so, do you understand me like. Oh no, I loved it, in that kind of way. I kind of settled in to it then, but I had restless times, times I wanted to go, move away like. I wouldn't be for anyone going back, to their own home, a native. You were working against certain disadvantages. You do have the advantage that you know the people and their history, and what they expect. When I was called out, I nearly knew what to expect. I knew the family history. As time went on you got that way anyway,

I liked District work. And of course, I did an awful lot of midwifery and I liked it. You had a lot of responsibility alright, but that came automatically to you.

Outsiders reading this might not appreciate just how great that responsibility was, and what the island dimension added to it. Anywhere else (on the mainland), when someone got seriously ill, calling the doctor involved the usual worry as to whether the patient was sick enough to warrant the doctor visiting or not, but calling a doctor in to Bere Island also involved a lot more logistics – and much more of the doctor's time.

And the same responsibility and wise judgment were involved when Mary dealt with [the minority of] Bere Island parents who elected to have their child delivered in Castletown Hospital. If a woman who lived on the mainland wanted to do this, she could have her bags packed, and have someone on call, ready to drive her to the hospital when labour began. A Bere Island mother did not have this luxury, and Nurse Mullins' midwifery skills were key in deciding how far in advance she go out: not so long ahead that they would have to wait for days or weeks in the hospital or with relative, and not so close that the time of day or weather or delay would add to the risks for the mother and child.

These extra considerations are mentioned again in a 2023 interview with the current Bere Island nurse, Catherine O'Sullivan, <https://westcorkpeople.ie/interviews/always-an-island-nurse/>, who remembers when she got pneumonia at age 13, and how the doctor in Catletown told off her father for the risk he took in getting her across to the mainland in his punt before she was transferred to a Cork Hospital by ambulance. *"He said my heart could have given out from the*

strain of the journey.”

[Incidentally, that 2023 interview highlights almost 90 years of service by three Bere Island nurses, the two others of whom Catherine thanks in the interview. Mary Mullins served from 1935 to 1975, and Catherine “remembers having measles as a child and Nurse Mullins arriving on her bicycle with multivitamins.” Veronica Crowley served from 1975 to 1995, and Catherine tells how, when Catherine took over in 1995 “Veronica taught me so much, practical, sensible stuff. My own daughter is a nurse today and you don’t get that type of experience when you’re training anymore.”]

Her final coming home

Mary spent her last few years in a residential care home. She died on the 18th of October, 2002, and was buried in the graveyard in Bere Island, in the same plot as her mother, father, and sister Anita (also a nurse, who spent her career in the North Infirmary in Cork City mostly in the Dental Hospital).



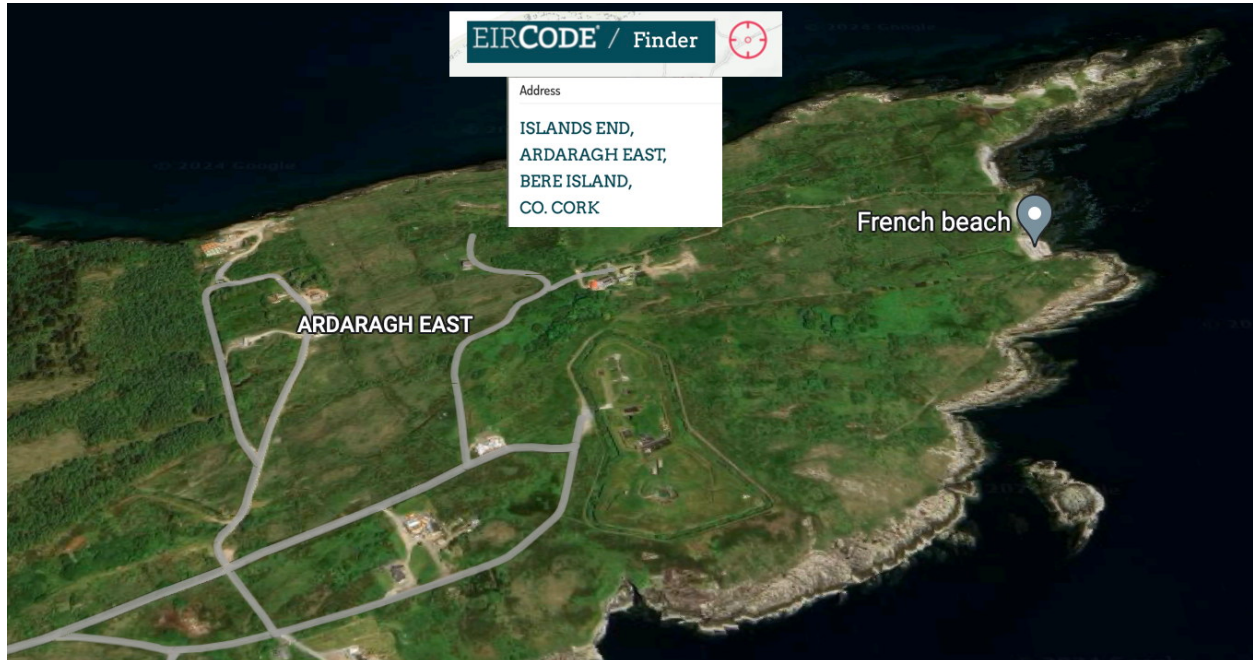
<https://bereisland.heritagecork.org/people/bere-island-graveyard-project/graveyard-plots-4-6>

2025.03.08

Prepared by Christy O’Sullivan and Séamus Hanley

Contact: james.hanley@mcgill.ca | seamus.hanley@gmail.com

Where Mary was born [Google and Eircode, 2024]



A photo of Mary (centre) and her sister Anita (left) [and their 1st cousin John Hanley] at the ordination of their brother John (Sonny) in All Hallows College in **1935** – the year Mary returned to Bere Island as the District Nurse.



A photo of Mary Mullins washing the church seats in Ballinakilla, taken in **1936/37**, soon after Mary came back to the Island as the Nurse. The image was supplied to us by the Bere Island Projects Group. We are wondering whether there was some work taking place in the church that meant that all the pews were removed.



A photo, owned by Denis Crowley, taken in the **1950s**, courtesy of Bere Island Projects Group. Mary Mullins is second from the right. Each year, on International Women's Day, this photo gets posted to the Bere Island Facebook page. **We are asking for readers' help in identifying the occasion, and when and where it was.**



A photo of Nurse Mullins's car, taken outside the dispensary next to John O'Sullivan's post office taken in the **1970s**. A copy of it was supplied to us by the Bere Island Projects Group.



A still image of Mary Mullins (date unknown, from the videos made by Ed White; in the scene, John Sullivan the Post Office had just filled up the petrol tank of her car).



Courtesy Noreen Dennehy (Ed White Film Collection)



A photo of Mary in the front garden of her house in Marble Hall Park, Ballinlough, Cork. The date on the back of the photo is 1983; photographer not identified.

Annexes

Excerpts from script of Radio Eireann program {re-compiled in 2021 by SH}

January 1960

Radio Eireann. We now bring you the third in the series of feature programmes on the Islands of Munster, written by Dr. Daphne Pochin Mould. The programme which follows is about Bere Island in Bantry Bay.

[...]

A small car parked outside one of the houses at Lawrence Gove marked the home of the island's nurse, Miss Mullins. We found her listening to the hurling final, and after we'd satisfied our own curiosity about its progress, she switched it off to talk to us. Then with only the clock ticking in the background, Nurse Mullins, who is a native of Bere Island, told us about her work on the island.

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells she was born on Bear Island, trained on the mainland in Cork, came back as island nurse in 1935* The doctor is in Castletown.

We asked how she got about the island to her patients

Cut. Nurse Mullins says by car now, prior to 3 yrs ago by cycle, and the car can't be got to all the island homes ... "lots of places you can only get on shank's mare".

And of course running a car on Bear Island is a bit different from running one on the mainland. There are no petrol pumps and petrol is brought in in drums. And repairs or greasing that you, or a neighbour can't manage, means shipping the car across to a garage in Castletown. The nurse and her small car, but some houses only to be reached on foot. What happens to an emergency case?

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells what they do, improvise a stretcher and get the patient across to Castletown.

Nurse Mullins gave up the rest of the evening to driving us in her car the length of the island. As we headed up and down the narrow, hilly island road, she told us about one particular emergency case; -- a day of storm and wind, when the crossing to the mainland and hospital seemed nearly impossible. Nurse Mullins travelled westward along the island looking for a boat

crew to take the risk; eventually four picked rowers were found and with nurse and patient crouching in the bottom of the boat they set out. The dangerous journey ended with a safe landing and the patient's recovery after hospital treatment.

We stopped at the Post Office, and there Mr and Mrs O'Sullivan and Nurse Mullins told us about emigration from Bear Island and its effects

Cut. Nurse Mullins, "Social life is nil". Tells what it used to be like, now the people are gone there are not enough to make their amusements for themselves.

We asked was'nt Bear Island still fairly well populated ?

Cut. Nurse Mullins "not now". Down to 380 and the teenage group have all left.

[. . .]

Nurse Mullins' kindness in driving us in her car showed us the whole of Bear Island. Its heather clad heights, rising to the ruined signal tower that a very modern tradition has turned into Princess Beara's Castle. Its white washed houses set in green fields; the outlook across the water to the grey roofs of Castletown, and Spanish trawlers anchored in the Bay. The pines and the blue sea beside the parish priests house. And always Hungry Hill , the cloud rising and falling on its crest, the mountain on the mainland that looks down upon all Berehaven.

And now the little car took us eastward right to the eastmost tip of the island, to Lonehort Fort.² During the trouble time, there was an internment camp on the island in which many prominent men were imprisoned. We heard some of the exciting escape stories that are still vividly remembered. Now we headed out through the deserted and shut up buildings of the camp and fort . A keen wind blew over the island as Nurse Mullins pointed out where the prisoners had made a dancing platform : -

Cut. Nurse Mullins tells about the platform. Then goes on to speak about tourist possibilities on Bear Island.

²A pencilled in "change": "At the eastern tip of the island stands Lonehort Fort -- a reminder, if needed, of the Island's history."

Always an island nurse

By Mary O'Brien, October, 2023

[Reproduced here with the permission of Mary O'Brien.]

<https://westcorkpeople.ie/interviews/always-an-island-nurse/>

This piece was published in the West Cork People, a monthly free paper distributed throughout the Beara Peninsula. The online edition (see link) from which this was taken has a photo of Catherine.]

Catherine O'Sullivan has never left Bere Island: It's where she grew up, met her husband and reared her family. Being able to live and work there was always her heart's desire. When she does step off the island, inevitably she feels a fierce pull back: "I always find myself breathing a deep sigh of relief when I hit that patch of road at Adrigole where you can see the tip of the island," she shares.

Like most of the islanders, much of Catherine's childhood was spent along the shoreline, digging for clams and periwinkles and lobster fishing. A close family, Catherine remembers her parents were never far. "My dad fished and farmed, did a bit of everything really, he was a postman and a builder when needed too!"

Catherine's mother, who sadly passed away last year, worked at home and on the farm and when her children were reared, like many of the island women, she got a job in the fish factory in Castletownbere.

Catherine recalls how all of the children had a bucket – the size depending on age – and once you had filled your bucket with periwinkles, you were allowed to go and play. The periwinkles were sold to local buyers before being exported to France.

She remembers having measles as a child and Nurse Mullins arriving on her bicycle with multivitamins. Later on, when Catherine was 13, she developed pneumonia and recalls her father having to carry her down through the fields and across to the mainland in his punt before she was transferred to a Cork Hospital by ambulance. While today Catherine has a handheld radio that connects her directly with the ambulance and search and rescue helicopter control desk – there have been two successful helicopter evacuations for head injuries on Bere Island since August – in those days, emergency services to the island were limited. "The doctor in Castletownbere actually told off my poor father, as he said my heart could have given out from the strain of the journey, but sure what else could he have done," she shares. "For a long time, the only 'ambulance' we had access to on the island was a stretcher in the back of a van." Today there are four defibrillators and three Community Responders trained in CPR on Bere Island.

Warm and compassionate with an easy laugh and efficient manner, it's obvious that Catherine is good at her job: Her predecessor was Nurse Veronica Crowley and before her Nurse Mullins, both of whom made a strong impression on the young islander.

"Veronica Crowley taught me so much, practical, sensible stuff," she shares. "My own daughter is a nurse today and you don't got that type of experience when you're training anymore."

In the old days the public health nurse was also a midwife and cycled around the island from house to house. The last baby that was delivered on Bere Island is now nearing 40.

While Catherine had the luxury of an automobile for her role, her first car did come without a bonnet. "I was told I had the cleanest engine on the island because it was rained on," she laughs.

After leaving school, she did some voluntary work in Castletownbere hospital before starting her training in the Mercy in Cork in 1986. She married fellow islander Gerard O'Sullivan, who owns the local boatyard and drydock and continued working after having her two children, travelling up and down to Cork City before relocating to Castletownbere Hospital. When the job opening arose on Bere Island in 1995, she didn't think twice about returning from maternity leave after just a few weeks, to fill the post.

It's a role that involves everything from offering advice and assistance and supporting people in their own care, in particular the elderly and under-fives, to doing dressings and giving injections. She also covers essential services, offering palliative care if someone is dying at home. Island life can be isolating, with loneliness greatly impacting mental health, so sometimes just providing some company is more important than anything. There is a huge social care side to the role.

"Being an island nurse is a much broader role than being a nurse on the mainland," Catherine explains. "You have to be open to listening and learning but also to knowing your limitations. There is only me!"

Her biggest fear is a multi-person accident. "Who do you deal with first?" she explains. A few years ago a golf cart with four teenagers went over a 15-foot sand bank and Catherine was one of the first at the scene. "My happiest moment was looking over that bank and seeing four pairs of eyes staring up at me," she shares. "That kind of scenario is very daunting. Thankfully everyone came out of it ok."

There's a great sense of pride and inter-dependence in being an islander and nurse Catherine is grateful to be able to play her part in her community. "We have an amazing ferryman," she says. "I've pulled him away from all sorts of occasions including his Christmas dinner and he has never once uttered a word of complaint or refused me! Nothing gets in the way of helping someone on the island, even a disagreement between neighbours," she shares. "Everyone steps up when needed on the island."

Although she has worked more than enough hours to entitle her to retirement, Catherine has no intention of putting away her thermometer and bandages just yet. Once a nurse, always a nurse, especially on an island!

Other items that may be of interest:

Scotland: 2 books, supposedly fictional: *The Island Nurse* by Mary MacLeod.

USA: <https://www.pbs.org/video/island-nurse-e5i1s7/>

Two other items from Mary's conversation with Christy

The canteen

It was a store. like Murphys, a shop. You could get everything there. Things that maybe weren't in the rest of Ireland at all.

We mostly did most of our shopping in the canteen. I don't think we ever went down the village that time. People even came from the west, and passed Murphys on the way up. And for any family above, t'was the canteen.

It was a bit like the supermarkets now really, you could get anything there. There was more variety there. I would say it was cheaper too. It had to be.

When I say it was like a supermarket, I mean that you could get everything there. I mean, you say now Murphys wouldn't have margarine maybe, you got margarine. You got rice, tapioca, all those things: Murphys would have more the plain fare below, what people wanted like. You got new things above, all the British wanted.

The Lord have mercy on Ellie, my aunt in Lonehort, she used to always come up to the canteen. John Harrington (Cloughland?) worked there for a long while, and she would come up to John; he has great fun with her.

The Lord have mercy on Ellie, my aunt in Lonehort, she used to always come up to the canteen. John Harrington (Cloughland?) worked there for a long while, and she would come up to John; he has great fun with her.

Locals who worked for or serviced the British Base

Peter Mickey had the contract for collecting/burning the rubbish. He had that for a long time. I don't think he ever worked there, only the carting, and carting of coal. They all had that kind of jobs, anyone that had a horse and car.

Connie used to do the carting too. But Connie used to pull with the British like. And the girls were kind of you know, had boyfriends like. But Connie used to fight with them, with his pike up on his shoulder, he would tell them be off, d'you see. He wouldn't leave them go down to the Range, even times, Connie. ... he was great gas. I was very fond of Connie.

Jubilee Nurses [mentioned by District-Nurse Mary Mullins]

From <https://www.kildare.ie/ehistory/index.php/jubilee-nurse-the-forgotten-heroine-of-irelands-public-health-service/>

A key principle of the Jubilee Nurses scheme was the local committee – officially known as the District Health Association — which provided the community support for the nurse. There was no little or no government funding and the voluntary committees – generally drawn from prominent ladies in the locality – had to exercise considerable ingenuity in organising fund-raising events such as garden fetes, town hall dances, and parish hall bazaars to maintain the two essentials for each Jubilee Nurse to carry out her duties which were a comfortable cottage to rest after a demanding day of treating the house-bound infirm and a bicycle for navigating the rutted country lanes and unpaved town alleys on her calls to homes urban and rural.

The Jubilee Nurse: Voluntary District Nursing in Ireland 1890-1974, by Elizabeth Prendergast and Helen Sheridan (2012) lists the District Nursing Associations affiliated with the Queen's Institute of District Nursing. (For nationalistic reasons, the term "Jubilee" Nurse was used more often in Ireland, whereas the term "Queen's" Nurse was used in Britain.) The Institute was set up in Britain in 1887 to honour the 50 years that Queen Victoria had been on the throne. It was extended to Ireland a few years later. And has two components, the Lady Dudley Scheme (LDS) mostly in the west of the country, and the District Nursing Association (DNA). Four of the districts were on the Beara peninsula. Adrigole, Castletownbere, Glengarriff and Lauragh.

Adrigole had 1 LDS nurse from 1929-1934, and 8 DNA nurses from 1936-1962.
Castletownbere had 9 DNA nurses from 1932-1958.
Glengarriff had 15 DNA nurses from 1905-1956.
Lauragh had 3 DNA nurses from 1928-1932.

Between them, **5 islands** (Arranmore, Clare, Inisheer, Valentia and Cape Clear) **received a total of 240 years of service from 101 nurses in this voluntary scheme.** The lack of continuity of care (see below) may have been one of Fr Kelliher's reasons to insist on a State-funded District Nurse for Bere Island.

	Island	Scheme	Started	#Nurses	Ended	
505-7	Arranmore Island, Co. Donegal	LDS	1904	19	1966	Elizabeth Scully 1916-1945
583 v2	Athboy Co. Meath	DNA	1818			
167-8 v3	Clare Island, Co. Mayo	DNA	1933	12	1950	
187-8 v3	Innisheer, Co. Galway	LDS	1934	20	1966	
421	Valentia Village Hospital, Co. Kerry	DNA	1872	2	1917	
169-71 v2	Valentia Village Hospital, Co. Kerry (Part 2)	DNA	1909	26	1967	
221-2 v3	Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork	LDS	1937	22	1963	