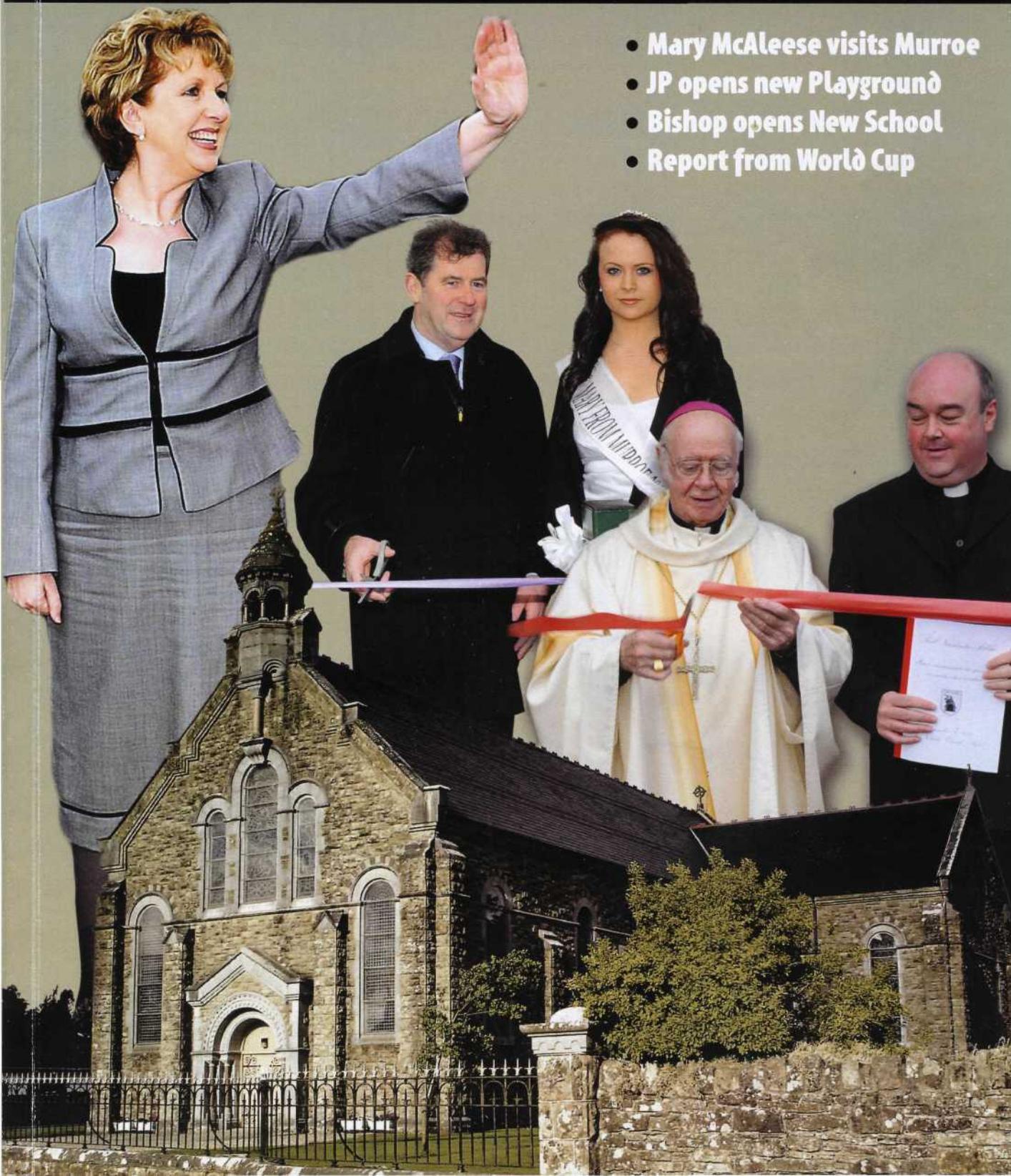


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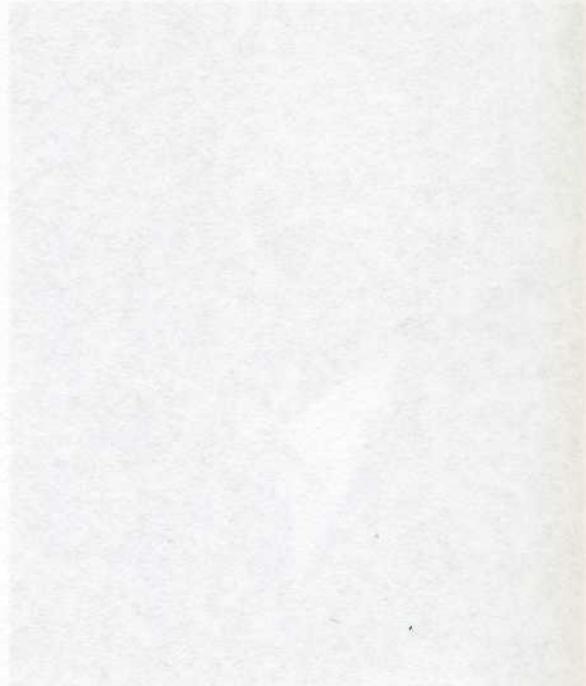
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- **Report from World Cup**



# Family Histories With Herbert

Michael Dwyer, whose entry is below his name, however, both bears the name Healy, so it's likely that he was born in County Mayo, where his father, William, was a member of the local militia. He was a son of John Dwyer, a soldier in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who died in 1847. John's wife, Mary, was a member of the Society of Friends. She was an ardent opponent of the Slave Convention, and a member of the Anti-Slavery Society. Her husband, however, had a different view of things. After the Great Famine, he emigrated to the North American colonies, where he settled and became a farmer. He had three sons, and Michael was the youngest. He had a difficult upbringing, as his father was a gambler and a drunkard, and his mother had to work as a maid to support him and his brothers. Michael's mother died when he was very young, and he was left to look after himself. He had to work as a farmhand, and eventually became a labourer in a quarry.



Pól Ó Duibhir is a historian and author, known for his work on the Great Famine and its impact on Ireland. He has written several books on the subject, including 'The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-52' and 'The Great Hunger: A People's History'. He is also a regular contributor to various Irish media outlets, including RTÉ Radio 1 and The Sunday Independent. In addition to his writing, Pól is involved in community work, particularly in the area of oral history and genealogy. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and the Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

## The Dwyers Of Cappanahanagh With Pól Ó Duibhir

**M**y grandfather, Michael Dwyer, was born in Cappanahanagh on 31/3 1860. He was one of 8 children of William Dwyer and Mary Healy, but not the eldest, so he did not inherit the holding. Both he and his brother, William, joined the RIC. Michael had a long career with the force, ending



up in Ballyhaunis, where my father was born and, which was where I considered the family roots to be. That is, until I started taking a more systematic interest in my family history in general. My feeling now is that great-grandfather William was the son of John Dwyer and Ellen

Humphries. If I'm right, this would take my known family in the Cappanahanagh area back to 1789, the year of the French Revolution or thereabouts.

Grandfather Micheal's sister Ellen married James Meehan on 31/7/1875. As grandfather's eldest brother, Johnny Dwyer, born 16/1/1849, who had inherited the holding, had no heir, this passed to Ellen Dwyer's descendants which is how John Meehan (undertaker and Ellen's great grandson) and his wife, Nora (nee Fogarty), came to live there and their son, John-Paul, is the occupant today. The original homestead building itself is long gone.

A fairly cursory examination of the relevant ordnance survey maps for 1840 and 1900 suggest considerable post-famine consolidation of the original holdings of great-grandfather William and his siblings. A cousin thinks that great-grandfather William was a steward in the estate but I haven't yet got as far as checking this out. I expect, if true, it would have been the Barrington Estate.

I knew nothing of my grandfather's siblings until very recently. Nora Meehan, who had already researched her own family, set about investigating the parish records with forensic zeal. As a result, we now have a fairly good picture of great granda's family. Of my grandfather's siblings, I've already mentioned Ellen who married into the Meehans. Brother William joined the RIC in 1882 but only lasted five years in the force. He was fined twice and quit, supposedly to emigrate. However, by 1911, he was a publican in Crowle, North Tipperary and claiming to be an RIC pensioner, though former RIC member might have been more accurate. William's grand-daughter, Phyllis, married the son of Michael Tierney (former UCD president) and this effectively relates me (albeit through numerous threads and marriages) to the McDowells (Michael-former Attorney General and Moore-former UCD economist) and to Eoin McNeill himself (1916 and Free State minister for Education).

My grandfather, Michael, married Margaret O'Reilly of Kiltimagh, daughter of another RIC man, who would have been involved in that forces' follow-up reporting of the nearby Knock apparition of 1879. The fates of my grandfather's children, my aunts and uncles, reflect many different aspects of Irish life at the time. Willie, (eldest child) went on to become a national teacher and

regional secretary of the INTO. Maggie and Jimmy (youngest son) were also national teachers. John died on the Somme in 1916. Paddy drowned in Ballinasloe in 1922 in controversial circumstances. Norah and Bea were dressmakers and married two Kelly brothers from Clontuskert. Jane emigrated to the USA aged 17. I had a job tracing her on this side of the Atlantic until Nora Meehan produced her on census night in 1901, staying at her grandparents in Cappanahanagh. My father, Luke, was a CIE clerk while his brother, Michael, was a successful businessman. Mollie (youngest child) remained at home and looked after her mother until the latter's death in 1954. My granny's recorded 'cause of death' was 'old age' but with the added emphasis 'without dementia' inserted, no doubt, at her own request. She was a strong, clever and lucid woman who commanded all around her, even when bedridden, and unto death, and beyond! She would have been pleased to have seen her grandson Michael (Jimmy's son) "knighted" recently by the French government for his contribution to the analysis of that country's literary heritage. You can read up on the whole family in more detail in the family history section of my website [www.photopol.com](http://www.photopol.com). I have a separate page on Cappanahanagh; [www.photopol.com/james\\_st/cappanahanagh.html](http://www.photopol.com/james_st/cappanahanagh.html).

