

Kieran's Completed Community Projects, 2020 Projects:

– Remembering 1920, Kieran's *Our City, Our Town* column in the *Cork Independent*

Welcome to year 21 for my column *Our City, Our Town* in the *Cork Independent*. The column for 2020 highlights everyday events and local history nuggets from this period of centenary commemorations, and are weekly posted on this blog website.

The indices for *Our City, Our Town* are here,

http://corkheritage.ie/?page_id=5202



- Award Ceremony, Discover Cork Schools' Heritage Project 2020

Wednesday evening, 4 March coincided with the Cork City award ceremony of the Discover Cork Schools' Heritage Project. A total of 25 schools in Cork City took part in the 2019-2020 edition, which included schools in Ballinlough, Ballintemple, Blackrock and Douglas. This year the project was open to new schools within the broader area of the new city boundary. *Circa* 1200 students participated in the process with approx 220 project books submitted on all aspects of Cork's local history & heritage.

The Discover Cork Schools' Heritage Project is in its 17th year and is a youth platform for students to do research and write it up in a project book whilst offering their opinions on important decisions being made on their heritage in their locality and how they affect the lives

of people locally. The aim of the project is to allow students to explore, investigate and debate their local heritage in a constructive, active and fun way.

Co-ordinator and founder of the project, Cllr Kieran McCarthy noted that: “The project is about developing new skill sets within young people in thinking about, understanding, appreciating and making relevant in today’s society the role of our heritage – our landmarks, our stories, our landscapes in our modern world. The project also focuses on motivating and inspiring young people, giving them an opportunity to develop leadership and self-development skills, which are very important in the world we live in today”.

The City Edition of the Project is funded by Cork City Council with further sponsorship offered by Learnit Lego Education, Old Cork Waterworks Experience and Cllr Kieran McCarthy. Full results for the City edition are online on Cllr McCarthy’s heritage website, http://corkheritage.ie/?page_id=5110

– New Book! Witness to Murder, The Inquest of Tomás MacCurtain Publication Launched

The new book ‘Witness to Murder’ by Cllr Kieran McCarthy and John O’Mahony, and published by the Irish Examiner, has been launched. It is a transcript of the Tomás MacCurtain inquest one hundred years ago following his murder on 20 March 1920.

The last time Tomás’ inquest in full was published was in the Cork Examiner between 23 March 1920 and 18 April 1920. Despite the ordeal and daily fallout, over time the fourteen hearing sessions have not overly been revisited by scholars of the Irish War of Independence.

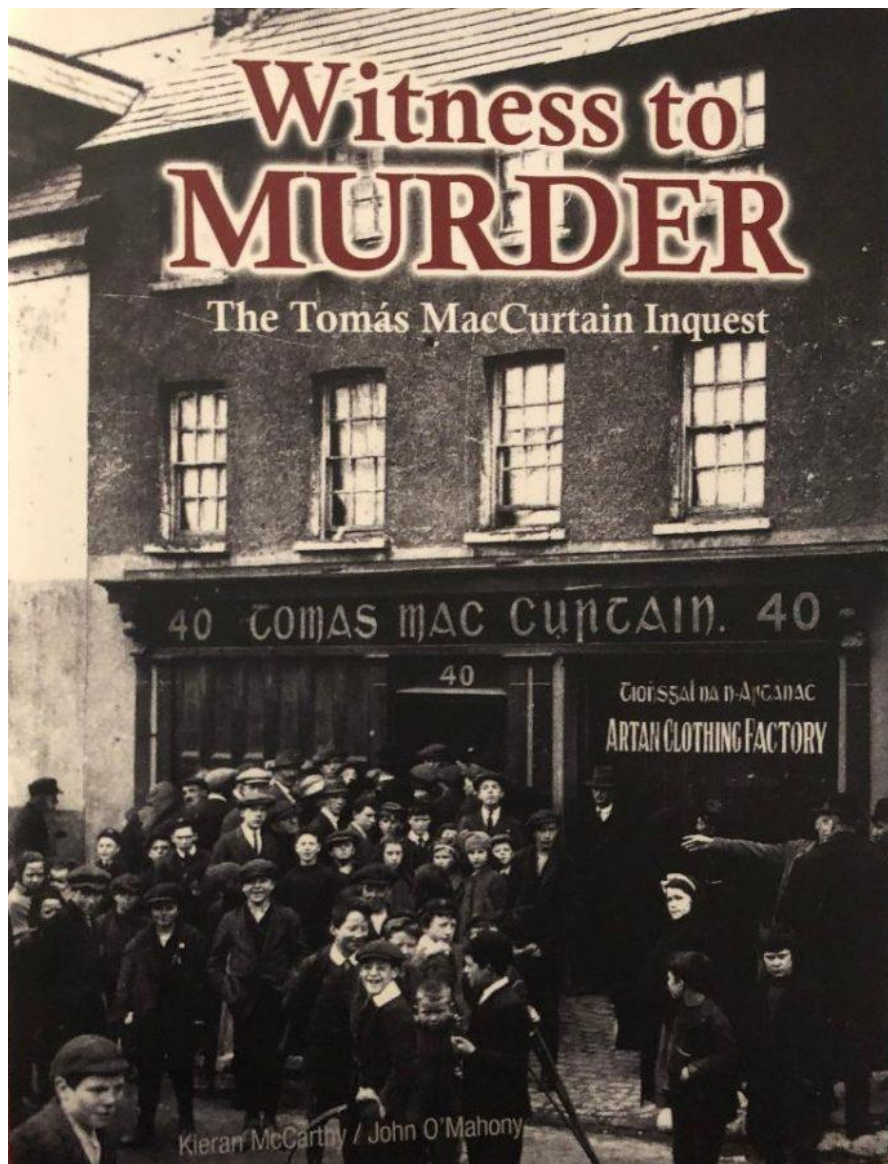
The verdict has been highlighted on many occasions by many historians, but the information of the inquest has never been overly written about or the narratives within it championed. So, this book brings together the inquest data into one source. It is about giving a voice to the solicitors, jury and those interviewed

The transcript of the newspaper text will help scholars of the War of Independence in their research to mine down further into the complexities of the time but also to keep the human dimension at the heart of new emerging research. This transcript in particular is inspired by the epic ‘Atlas of the Irish Revolution’ and the ongoing digitisation of State files and interviews of veterans of the War of Independence held at the Bureau of Military History in Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin– both sources, the Atlas and the Bureau try to bring a holistic perspective to what narratives, sources and memories have survived.

Cllr McCarthy notes: “Tomás MacCurtain (1884-1920) is truly a colossus in Cork history who has attracted many historians, enthusiasts and champions to tell his story. His story is peppered with several aspects – amongst those that shine out are his love of his family, city, country, language comradeship, and hope – all mixed with pure tragedy. In many ways, the murder of Tomás MacCurtain on the night of 19-20 March 1920 changed the future public and collective memory narrative of Cork history forever”.

Cllr McCarthy continued; “One hundred years on after his murder, the memory of Tomás and his life and times and works are a central part of the history of politics in the city and the city and region’s role within the Irish War of Independence”.

At this moment in time *Witness to Murder* by Kieran McCarthy and John O’Mahony is only available to buy online at www.examiner.ie.



- **12th Cllr Kieran McCarthy’s *Community Talent Competition* produced by Red Sandstone Varied Productions (deferred).**

– 10th McCarthy’s Make a Model Boat Project, At Home By the Lee:

Douglas Road and Independent Cllr Kieran McCarthy invites all Cork young people to participate in the tenth year of McCarthy’s Make a Model Boat Project. This year because of the Coronavirus all interested participants must make a model boat at home from recycled materials and submit a picture or a video of it to the competition organisers at kidsmodelboat2020@gmail.com.

The event is being run in association with Meitheal Mara and the Cork Harbour Festival Team who have cancelled nearly all of their festival this year bar their collaboration with Kieran on the Make a Model Boat Project. There are three categories, two for primary and one for secondary students. The theme is ‘At Home by the Lee’, which is open to interpretation. The model must be creative though and must be able to float. There are prizes for best models and the event is free to enter. For further information, please see the events section at www.corkharbourfestival.com. The closing date for participants is 30 April 2020.

Cllr McCarthy, who is heading up the event, noted “I am encouraging creation, innovation and imagination amongst our young people, which are important traits for all of us to develop. I am going to miss this year seeing the models float at The Lough. The Make a Model Boat Project is part of a suite of community projects I have organised and personally invested in over the years – the others include the Discover Cork: Schools’ Heritage Project with Cork City Council, the Community local history walks, local history publications, McCarthy’s Community Talent Competition and Cork City Musical Society. Many of the latter projects were have gone digital or soon will go digital for this year. I look forward to the digital challenge”.

- **Kieran’s Heritage Week Events 2020:**

Saturday 15 August, 13:00-13:40

The River Lee and Cork City: Stories from the Past

Cllr. Kieran McCarthy in collaboration with Meitheal Mara

Online on Zoom and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/meithealmara/>

Register for Zoom invite here: <https://forms.gle/CSu6F3owzeXzpUZg8>

This online talk looks at the Cork City’s amazing development on a swamp. The city is constructed on a shift-shaping landscape – sand and gravel, rushes and reeds, and the River Lee – a wetland knitted together to create a working port through the ages. It was a combination of native and outside influences, primarily people who shaped its changing townscape and society since its origins as a settlement. The city possesses a unique character derived from a combination of its plan, topography, built fabric and its location on the lowest

crossing point of the river Lee as it meets the tidal estuary and the second largest natural harbour in the world.

Saturday 22 August, 13:00-13:30

BRIDGES OF CORK: HERITAGE TREASURE HUNT

Cllr Kieran McCarthy in collaboration with Meitheal Mara

Meet Cllr Kieran McCarthy at National Monument, Grand Parade, Cork, between 1pm-1.30pm, no booking required. Bring a pen.

Suitable for all ages, approx. 2hr walk, mixed footpaths on city's quays.

On meeting Kieran, he will give you a self-guided walking and heritage treasure hunt trail to follow around the historic bridges of Cork City Centre island. Discover the city's unique relationship with the River Lee.

On the way your task is to explore the built heritage around the bridges and unlock the answers to the Heritage Treasure Hunt. Those who get all the answers right will be in with a chance to win a copy of Kieran's new book, Witness to Murder, The Tomás MacCurtain Inquest (with John O'Mahony, *Irish Examiner*, 2020).

Cllr McCarthy to partake in Cork Heritage Open Day and National Heritage Week 2020:

On next Saturday 15 August 2020 Cllr Kieran McCarthy will take part in the virtual Cork Heritage Open Day. Due to Covid-19 Cork Heritage Open Day, which has always had up to this year had 40 buildings opened to the public, will now go online with a mixture of virtual tours, interviews, history quizzes and completions. Cllr McCarthy has contributed to the virtual City Hall tour and the Chamber of Commerce Fitzgerald House tour.

To mark the start of Heritage Week the Cork Heritage Open Day website will go live on Saturday 15 August and members of the public will be able to explore virtually some of Cork's finest historic and most beautiful buildings including Cork City Hall, Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills, the Custom House Port of Cork, Blarney Castle, the National Sculpture Factory, Cork Savings Bank, the Unitarian Church, Fitzgerald House and lots more.

Cork Heritage Open Day is organised by Cork City Council. Cork's 96FM and the Echo are the media sponsors of Cork Heritage Open Day which is supported by Cork City Council and the Heritage Council.

On Heritage Open Day at 1pm Cllr McCarthy will also present a free webinar in collaboration with Meitheal Mara entitled "The River Lee and Cork City: Stories from the Past". The link to the webinar is under Kieran's Heritage Events at www.corkheritage.ie.

Cllr McCarthy noted: "Covid 19 has brought my heritage work online more and more this year. I have had to put my walking tours to one side for the moment, due to the social distancing requirements but they will be back in time. My Cork Heritage Open Day online talk

looks at the Cork City's amazing development on a swamp. The city possesses a unique character derived from a combination of its plan, topography, built fabric and its location on the lowest crossing point of the river Lee as it meets the tidal estuary and the second largest natural harbour in the world".

In addition, on Saturday, 22 August, Cllr McCarthy in collaboration with Meitheal Mara, will host a Heritage Treasure Hunt along the City's bridges. Meet at the National Monument, Grand Parade, Cork, between 1pm and 1.30pm (for social distancing reasons). No booking is required. Just bring a pen. The treasure hunt is suitable for all ages and is approximately a two-hour walk. On meeting Kieran, he will give you a self-guided walking and heritage treasure hunt trail to follow around the historic bridges of Cork City Centre island. Discover the city's unique relationship with the River Lee.

On the way your task is to explore the built heritage around the bridges and unlock the answers to the heritage treasure hunt. Those who get all the answers right will be in with a chance to win a copy of Kieran's new book, *Witness to Murder, The Tomás MacCurtain Inquest* (with John O'Mahony, *Irish Examiner*, 2020).

– Monkey Puzzle Tree Distribution, 3 September 2020

Over the past few days great progress has been made in relation to the monkey puzzle tree and how best to use it. Following a very productive meeting between O'Callaghan Properties, St. Michael's Credit Union, Cllr. Kieran McCarthy and Dr Eoin Lettice of UCC, a plan has been developed to distribute the felled iconic monkey puzzle tree back to the community where it was here for approximately 161 years.

It is a beautiful wood and we've worked together to make sure it's used in a variety of forms to commemorate this iconic tree. Crafts people and artists in the area and from Cork City have been contacted about using the wood to create artistic pieces.

A number of local businesses have also expressed an interest in wanting to use the wood to create a featured piece to be displayed within the communities of Blackrock and Mahon. St. Michael's Credit Union has engaged with a number of local sports clubs and organisations to see if they would like to acquire a piece of this historic tree. A section of the tree will also be provided to University College Cork for educational purposes.

Collectively the decision has been made to also offer blocks sized approximately 30 cm x 23 cm from the tree to members of the public for them to use and remember this iconic tree. This is an initiative that gives the tree back to those from within the Blackrock and Mahon areas who had enjoyed the tree for generations.

Due to limited availability and COVID 19 restrictions we ask people who are interested in securing a piece of this iconic tree to complete the follow short online registration of interest form on this website.

<https://www.stmichaelscu.ie/MonkeyPuzzleTreeDistributionh>