

The Scullys of Galway, Southland and Timaru

This is the story, such as I know it, of our Scully forbears. Scully is an unusual name in some respects but a surprisingly common one in others. It seems to be rare and quite distinctive but then when you start looking there are Scullys everywhere. Ever watched the end credits on *The Simpsons*? Produced by Mike Scully. Ever read about corporate battles at Pepsi and Apple? – John Scully at the heart of it all. If you search the Internet there are loads of Scullys, many men and women of some distinction, or notoriety. A William Scully, for example, was a notorious rack-renting Irish landlord who bought up huge tracts of land in America and recreated the worst features of the Irish land system there. His activities made the Scully name a byword for oppressive behaviour in several states.

Scully as a name

The name itself comes from the Irish word *Scolaidhe*, which translates as student or scholar. This meaning seems rather ironic for our forbears who had little education and little inclination toward scholarship or learning. The O'Scolaidhe sept (a subdivision of a clan probably similar to a hapu in the Maori tribal system) apparently originated in County Westmeath in the eastern Irish province of Leinster. Westmeath is on the western side of Leinster, however, not so very far from Galway with just the sliver of County Roscommon between them. The Scullys are known to have moved from Westmeath to County Tipperary as the Anglo Normans established

themselves in the east in the 12th century. Our branch evidently stopped off en route. In any case it is to County Galway in Connaught some 700 years later that we trace the known history of the family.

Bareness of details from Ireland

Not that we actually know much about the family in Ireland. When William Scully and Annie Finnerty left Galway, they left for good. Unable to read or write they carried only their memories and we have no idea if they were good or bad. In New Zealand they built new lives and never had the luxury, or perhaps the capacity, to reminisce in any formal way. Their memories therefore died with them and we are left with the very slight imprint they created in New Zealand's documentary record. We do know, however, that William Scully's father died young and his mother, Ellen Moylan, remarried. William's birthdate is uncertain: according to his marriage registration he was 32 years old in 1864 and therefore born about 1832. His death registration gives his age as 68 years in 1895. This puts his birth back by five years to 1827. He had a younger brother Thomas who also came to New Zealand. Tom died in 1876 aged 40, which theoretically puts his birth around 1836 but it must have been at a bit earlier as his mother remarried in August 1835 and gave birth to a daughter, Mary Burke, in mid-1836.

The Scully-Burke family

Marriage and baptismal registers survive for Annaghdown from 1832. This is too late for William's birth to appear and Tom's baptism does not appear in the surviving records either. Their mother's second marriage, to John Burke, is recorded however on 21 August 1835. William can have been no older than nine (and quite possibly younger) and Tom just an infant when they acquired this step-father. It is common enough to find a second marriage and a step-parent in the stories of nineteenth century emigrants. The difficulty of such relationships is often remembered as a stimulus to leaving home. On the other hand, William cannot be confirmed in New Zealand until 1861 and Tom until 1864. Even if they had spent time in other places before coming here, they probably did not leave Ireland until they

were adults. More solid evidence of positive relationships within the Scully/Burke family is that two of the Scully boys half-brothers – Patrick (born 1839) and John (born 1842) Burke - also came to Southland. But more of that later.

Population pressures in Ireland

Looking through the spidery, faded entries in the Annaghdown baptismal registers it is striking to see how many babies were being baptised there in the 1830s and early 1840s. This reflects the prevailing social pattern that saw Irish couples marrying young and having large families. Under the hated penal laws imposed by William of Orange after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, when a Catholic landowner died, his land had to be subdivided among all his sons (unless the eldest became a Protestant whereby he was able to inherit the whole). This saw Catholic holdings become smaller and smaller, and Catholic farmers reduced generation by generation into greater poverty as the countryside became overpopulated. This law was revoked in 1778 but its effects had been marked. By 1845, a quarter of all Irish tenant farms were just one to five acres in size, forty percent of them from no bigger than five to fifteen acres. With holdings this small only potatoes and no other single crop would suffice to sustain a family.

The Great Famine

The potato, introduced to Europe from South America in the 16th century, had thus become the staple diet of the Irish masses by the 1840s. Miraculously prolific, immensely nutritious, the potato is the only single cheap food that can support life as a sole diet. Its easy cultivation also freed up young men like the Scullys to head away each summer as deck cargo on ships out of Galway to find work on the English harvest, returning in time to raise the potato crop at the end of the season. But when the fate of an entire people relies on a single crop, disaster is inevitable. This had long been predicted in Ireland. Indeed there had been blights and famines in Ireland before – fourteen partial or complete crop failures between 1816 and 1842. The calamity that struck Ireland's potato culture in 1845, however, was something else. A new fungus disease appeared, spreading rapidly and

acting quickly to reduce the potato crops everywhere to rotteness. The result for the ordinary people was catastrophic.

At least some of our Scully/Burke family survived this Great Famine – *An Gorta Mor* in Irish – between 1845 and 1849. No doubt others were among the million or so casualties, killed by starvation or the disease, especially cholera. Galway was one of the counties hit hardest. Its population of 422,923 in 1841 dropped by more than a quarter to just 298,564 in 1851. The area bounded by Oranmore, Claregalway and Annaghdown (the heartland of the later Otago-Southland migration chains) lost over 40% of its population in the same period. The old tenant farming system went into decline. All through the western areas villages were abandoned and as one modern account puts it “a terrible silence descended on the countryside.” (Peader O’Dowd *A History of County Galway*, 2004)

It is hard to imagine what this must have been like. I suppose if we think of television news images of the starving people of Ethiopia or the Sudan during one of their regular modern famines we might get some idea. Think of the pitiful faces of the African famine victims on the TV news. William Scully was a teenager, his future wife Annie Finnerty a ten year old, when the blight first struck. They would have witnessed all the scenes of horror with their own eyes at a most impressionable age. They must have carried the scars of those experiences throughout their lives. Perhaps that is why there is also a “terrible silence” in our family history about the old country. There are some few stories and details about pioneering days in Southland, a couple of scraps about the voyage by ship to New Zealand, but before that – nothing. Annaghdown, Galway, Ireland: all forgotten as completely as if struck by collective amnesia. Perhaps it was just too painful to remember.

The cataclysm of Famine did not fall evenly on all sections of society. For a start the landlord class was not directly affected. In fact Ireland remained a net exporter of food throughout the crisis. It was the lowest levels of society – that group whose diet was so dependent on the potato – that suffered the most. This was not the ‘strong farmers’, the men who held tenancies to decent sized farms, but the landless labourers who worked for them. This class often depended on small plots of land where they were permitted to

grow their crop of potatoes. Their families subsisted almost entirely on what was produced. The fact that the Scullys and the Finnertys survived the Famine may indicate that they were a little way off the bottom of the social scale. Likewise their subsequent emigration to New Zealand. The poorest migrants only made it as far as England or Scotland, or perhaps on a rotting 'coffin ship' across the Atlantic to Canada or the United States.

Social consequences of the Famine

The calamity of the Famine and its aftermath had enormous consequences. Not just the casualties of starvation and disease, variously estimated at between 500,000 and 1 million. Some 2 million more Irish fled their homeland in desperation, most making for England and Scotland, or across the Atlantic to Canada and the United States. A small stream reached Australia but there was no direct New Zealand-bound flow of Irish famine refugees in 1845-49. This does not mean that the Famine has no relevance to our emigration stories however. The young people who were to emigrate in the 1850s and later were also seeking to escape the trauma of those times. The Famine cast a long shadow – emigration out of Ireland became a flood that scarcely slowed for decades.

In the wake of the disastrous years of famine the social and economic structures of Ireland's countryside changed decisively. The old cottier class of landless labourers was virtually wiped out and the consolidation of land holdings became an obsession with the tenant farmers. One son would now inherit his father's tenancy, one daughter benefit from a dowry. Other children would have to find their own opportunities. Without the possibility of inheriting land, they had no economic asset or financial incentives to consider early marriage. The average age at marriage quickly rose in Ireland and the numbers of ageing bachelors and spinsters boomed. Emigration emerged as the default choice of all the younger sons and daughters who aspired to marriage and independence. Young people poured out of Ireland to every corner of the globe, all looking for better prospects than they faced at home.

Coming to New Zealand

As a step-son, our William Scully would have had little chance of inheriting rights to any land in Galway. Emigration would offer his only chance of becoming a farmer in his own right and indeed of marrying. But why New Zealand? Why Southland? Irish emigrants of the 1850s had a wide range of destinations to choose from. England and Scotland were the most straightforward choices, being the closest. Moreover as already mentioned Irish labourers had been traveling back and forth to seasonal work in England for generations. By the 1850s, demand for labour on large-scale construction projects in Britain – railways, road-building, building work – prompted increasing numbers to move across the Irish sea permanently. Some would subsequently move on to other destinations further afield, especially America or the British colonies. These rovers were often scouts for friends and relatives back in Galway, sending back information on opportunities abroad.

Something like this happened for Galway migrants to southern New Zealand. Some years ago I undertook a close study of Otago immigration records. I found that official immigration policy was calculated to weed out undesirable candidates for assisted immigration, among which Irish Catholics rated highly – i.e. as the least desirable type of migrant for Otago's Scottish Presbyterian character. This was particularly important because the cost of coming to Otago – the furthest migrant destination from Ireland anywhere in the world – was proportionately very high. Few Scots or English families could afford the passage for such a long journey, even among the most desirable classes of settlers. Accordingly the Otago colonial administration had to offer subsidised fares to keep a much-needed flow of labour into Dunedin in the 1850s.

How the Irish slipped through the selection net

These 'assisted migrants' were subjected to close selection, however. They needed to be physically fit, morally acceptable to a Presbyterian establishment – which automatically ruled out Irish Catholics - and with appropriate work skills. Most of the time they also had to be able to make a reasonable contribution to the fare. All of these requirements lifted the bar

for Otago-bound migrants. For about eight years they were sufficient to keep Otago a Scottish Presbyterian stronghold. A good number of English immigrants were accepted and a few Irish Protestants. But so far as I can tell no Irish Catholics were able to secure an assisted passage to Otago until the mid-1850s. At that point Otago's demand for labour – and a change in leadership that replaced the conservatism of the original leader of the settlement, Captain William Cargill, with the boosterism of his successor, James Macandrew – prompted a change of policy.

Otago's established migrant recruitment operations in Scotland and London simply weren't delivering enough emigrants. To remedy this lack in the cheapest way possible Otago dispatched a representative to Melbourne to try and secure workers from this much closer source. The third group of these Victorian recruits arrived in Dunedin in May 1856. Among them was at least one Galway man, William Cavanagh. My analysis suggests he was probably the first Irish Catholic to arrive in Otago under the auspices of the provincially-funded immigration. Once in Otago he wasted little time in 'nominating' his friends and relatives back in Galway for similar assistance. In 1857 five young immigrants from Galway arrived in Port Chalmers on the *George Canning* and every year thereafter their numbers steadily increased.

This was the point at which Otago's de facto discrimination against Irish immigrants broke down. To save money on recruitment efforts the authorities had always allowed migrants already in Otago – who were assumed to pass all the character requirements since they were actually in the place – to recommend or 'nominate' people they knew at home for subsidised fares. Such applications did not face the same scrutiny as independent applicants from 'Home'. For one thing it was assumed that those who nominated them would also be able to support them through their initial weeks in the colony and help them get work. Again, it was a sensible way to save the provincial authorities money.

Irish migrants were notoriously adept at taking advantage of schemes such as these and establishing what are known as migration chains. They were always significantly over-represented in the numbers of nominated migrants. They were also different in their willingness to nominate friends as well as

relations for assisted passages. William Cavanagh put down the Galway anchor in Otago circa 1856. Thereafter he and numerous other subsequent arrivals kept extending the chain. More and more Galway people – mostly young adults of both sexes – made their way onto the ships laid on by Otago’s immigration administration.

First Otago record of William Scully

But what about William Scully? Well there’s the rub. We simply do not know for sure when he arrived or how he got to Otago. We do know he was here by August 1861 because his name is listed among the first 6,000 men to take up miners’ rights at Gabriels Gully in the new Tuapeka goldfield. Next to his name on the list is Thomas Kilkelly. A mate presumably. Also from Galway. His name does appear on a passenger list. Unfortunately it appears on two separate lists, meaning that there were two men of that name who came to Otago, both from Annaghdwn. The first arrived at Port Chalmers on the *Lady Egidia* in January 1861, the second on the *Melbourne* on 17 March of the same year. Both arrived in time for the rush to Gabriels Gully in July and indeed there are two Thomas Kilkellys on the list of original miners. We assume that Thomas Kilkelly, William’s mate, is the one who subsequently settled near him at Grove Bush and married Mary Caulfield from Annaghdwn.

William Scully’s arrival in southern New Zealand may be unknown but it was still part of this wider story of Galway migration chains to Otago and (later) Southland. It was only through these informal channels of communication that prospective migrants in Galway could possibly find out about a place as far away as Otago. There were no recruiting agents for the New Zealand colonies in western Ireland until at least a decade later. Galway people were dependent on their kith and kin to pick up on news about far away New Zealand from agencies operating in England or Scotland, or from people like William Cavanagh who had successfully made it there already. Until the big gold discovery in 1861 Otago was a little known destination among a host of other potential New World settlements.

A family migration chain

William's younger half brothers, Patrick and John Burke, can however be identified in one of these migration 'chains'. They arrived in Otago in early October 1861 on the *Robert Henderson*, a vessel that had brought a whole batch of other young people from Galway. Intriguingly the name of their sponsor is listed alongside their name in the only surviving record of assisted passages. But it is not 'William' Scully. Rather it is John Scully. And he was also sponsoring a 'Thomas Moylan' on the same vessel. Remember that Moylan was William, Thomas and the Burke boys' mother's maiden name. So is John another Scully brother, and Thomas Moylan a cousin? And what about Michael Scully and his wife who were fellow passengers on the *Robert Henderson*, but not sponsored by John Scully. Or William Finaughty (Finnerty) another assisted passenger. It may be impossible to untangle this web of relationships now but clearly such links demonstrate the communal nature of the Galway migrants coming in to southern New Zealand in the late 1850s and early 1860s.

The 'chain' element is further demonstrated with the arrival in New Zealand of William's younger brother Thomas in 1864. Thomas was already married, to Mary Elwood, and the couple came as 'nominated immigrants' on the *Edward Thornhill*, a vessel chartered by the Southland Provincial Government to bring migrants to Bluff. Records of the nomination process do not survive for this shipment but William (or John or the Burkes) is the most likely pick as sponsor for Tom's passage. Like many of the early Galway arrivals William Scully had moved southwards after his stint on the goldfields. There was cheap land available on the Southland plains for those prepared to take on the swamps and bush that covered it. Hence the names of the settlements that grew up around Invercargill – Long Bush, Myross Bush, Woodlands, Mabel Bush, Grove Bush. Galway men were active pioneers, combining sawmilling and labouring with the back-breaking work of felling the trees and draining the land to create small farms.

Annie Finnerty's arrival

Getting a patch of land was of course one of the primary goals of many young Irish immigrants, something they could not have done in Ireland. The

second part of the emigrant's mission – getting married and raising a family – often depended on success with the first goal. William seems to have achieved the double in 1864. On the same ship that brought his brother to Bluff were a number of other Galway people, undoubtedly some of them known to him from home. Among them were the Finnertys (often spelled in the records as Feenaghty or Finaughty). This was an extended family group. Annie (or Honorah) Finnerty was its head. She was the wife of Thomas who had preceded her to New Zealand, arriving in Port Chalmers with his brother Lawrence on the *Silistria* in 1862. Thomas and Annie had already had a go at migration in the United States. A son had been born to them in Kentucky in 1860 but they had then gone back to Ireland. No doubt Thomas came ahead to New Zealand to check it out carefully and, unusually for the Galway migrants, he paid for his own passage. Mrs Annie Finnerty followed with their children: Lawrence, Michael, Patrick and John.

Accompanying them was a single woman, Honor (Annie) Finaughty. In fact all that we really know is that she was also on board the *Edward Thornhill*. We may be pushing it a bit to say that she was 'accompanying' them, although in a sense all the Galway people on board might be seen as a group. It has been suggested that Annie (or Honor as she is listed) might have been Thomas Finnerty's sister. Unfortunately nothing is known about Thomas's parents to link him definitely with Annie as the child of James Finnerty and Ann Killalea. It does seem more likely that they were related than not – we simply cannot now be definite about their relationship. In any case, Annie was certainly nominated for her assisted passage, meaning she had close connections already living in Southland. The Finnerty family was likewise 'nominated'. So too were other obviously Galway passengers – Cavanaghs, Caulfields, and as already mentioned, Thomas and Mary Scully.

Remember that the provincial agents in Britain who selected emigrants for assisted passages only took Irish passengers when they were desperate and had to fill the ships to meet deadlines. In the case of the *Edward Thornhill* there were 84 immigrants and over a third of them were Irish. Southland's British agent realised that this would need explanation. His letters to the Southland authorities were profoundly apologetic, offering numerous excuses for providing such 'poor quality' migrants. Perhaps not

coincidentally the Southland provincial government abandoned its assisted immigration programme in 1864 – the *Edward Thornhill* was its last ship (except for a brief revival in 1868). This is a good reminder that William and Annie and their Galway kin were lucky to make it here at all; they were not what was wanted.

The *Edward Thornhill* arrived at Bluff on 26 January 1864. In later years Annie would talk about helping her fellow Galway passengers Thomas and Mary Garvey look after their two-year-old twins Michael and Patrick during the voyage. What she did for the next nine months is not known but we can assume she would have worked as a domestic servant. The huge demand for young women to help with the heavy labour of colonial households was the main reason for the provincial authorities subsidising their passages. More intriguing is the question of whether Annie already knew William Scully before she came out from Ireland. Indeed, did she come out to join him as part of some romantic plan? If so, they were patient people for he had been away from Galway for at least three years before she came to Southland. In any case, their marriage was the fourth to be celebrated by Bishop Viard at the new church of St Mary's in Invercargill on 24 October 1864.

Marriage and after

Neither William nor Annie was able to sign their name in the marriage register. Nor could their witnesses, Thomas Moylan and Catherine Craven. William and Thomas gave their occupations as 'labourer' and Annie's name was written down by the bishop as 'Fenarghty', perhaps a clue to how the Irish sounded to the Frenchman's ear. It is worth stressing here that Annie is known to have been a Gaelic speaker all her life. It would be odd if the others were not as well. The retreat of Gaelic in Ireland was well under way by the mid-nineteenth century but it remained the first language for a majority of the Catholic population. Galway was the Irish county with the highest number of Gaelic speakers well after their departure. The fact that William, Annie, Thomas and Catherine could not sign their names suggests that none of them had been to school. They would have thereby avoided the pressure to learn English that was a major feature of the national school system established in Ireland at this time.

What did they do next? Presumably they set themselves up in a humble little cottage and set to work. Their experience was probably much like that recorded for William's old gold mining mate Thomas Kilkelly:

“A fern-tree whare was erected, lined with a plaster of clay and tussock, thatched with brown tussock, and with a floor of clay. These clay floors were made by removing the soil from the floor space, and filling up to a foot or more with clay, which when tramped down and worked smooth, set as hard as concrete, and allowed no dampness through. With the wide fireplace, which in winter cast a glowing warmth throughout the small abode, these pioneer homes were the essence of warmth and comfort, and the large families which gathered around the clay hobs and hearths, were generally happy and contented, despite the long hours of hard toil which were the lot of the farmer pioneers and their families.” Reminiscence of Thomas Kilkelly recorded in Yeoman of the South, M C Thomas, Invercargill, 1940.

What sort of a reception did people like William and Annie get once they made it to Otago or Southland? Well whatever else could be said about them, the Irish capacity for hard work was a welcome feature as the southern settlements established themselves. The prejudices of the Protestant majority were, like most such prejudices directed at theoretical Irish or at their church. Indeed many of the settlers pitied the Irish for the ignorance and superstition they equated with Catholicism. As neighbours and workers they got along pretty well, keeping their differences in faith and politics to themselves for the most part. They shared the common experiences of the pioneer with their fellow colonists: backbreaking work, heat and cold, shortages and challenges of all kinds. In the bush settlements like Rakahouka ringing Invercargill, there was plenty of work cutting down the bush, draining the swamps and creating productive fields out of the primeval forests.

The first New Zealand-born generation

There is not much more we know for sure about William and Annie. There were the children of course. John Scully was the first to arrive, on 6 August

1865. Next came James, on 21 October 1867. Thomas followed on 10 April 1869. All of these births were recorded in the baptismal register as being at the Scullys' house in Invercargill. William had been listed as a 'labourer' in the marriage register and would have continued to live by the sweat of his brow through these years. Bridget was born some time around 1872 but I do not have a record of her baptism or where the family were living at the time. By 27 August 1874, however, when an Ellen was born they were recorded as having a house in the "Mable District". I have not yet been able to determine when William acquired his section in the Mabel District nor exactly where it was in relation to the later home at Rakahouka. This latter property was in the Invercargill Hundred survey district. The family is recorded as at Rakahouka by the time Patrick was born on 24 March 1877. Michael followed on 14 August 1879.

Land!

Land hunger was a major driver behind the Irish migration to New Zealand as we have seen. For many years I have posited a history for the early Galway arrivals of a period on the Otago goldfields followed by a move south to Southland and investment of the proceeds in land. There is corroboration for this in maps of the earliest Crown Grants of land in the Mabel Bush Hundred in 1864 (just at the end of the first phase of goldrushes). These show Galway men like William Cavanagh, Laurence Finnerty, Bartholomew Burke, Thomas Kilkelly and Daniel Caulfield among others, taking up small farm sections in this district, William and Annie were of course closely connected by kinship or common origin with all of these people. Yet the section that would become their home property was originally granted to the Mataura merchant John MacGibbon. Much of the land was in fact first purchased by land speculators like MacGibbon. William Scully did not secure the Rakahouka section until September 1878.

The Irish 'naming pattern' and a conundrum

The children's names are interestingly suggestive and raise a conundrum. If they follow the traditional Irish naming pattern they will confirm for us the names of William and Annie's parents and siblings. Thus the oldest boy will

be named for William's father (John) and the oldest girl for his mother (Ellen). Ellen is not known to later generations of the family so can be presumed to have died young. Nonetheless her name accords with the pattern. Continuing this correlation we would expect the next boy to be named for Annie's father (James) and the next girl for her mother. This works for the boy's name but would give us 'Annie' or 'Hanorah' for the girl's name according to the details of Annie Scully's parentage on her death certificate. Instead we find the next girl's name used is in fact 'Bridget'. We might ignore this as an exception to the pattern except for one thing. The name links to an entry in the extant Annaghdown baptismal records for 1836 for a Bridget Finnerty, the daughter of James Finnerty and Bridget Killalea. This is the only place in the records where a Finnerty and a Killalea are the parents. Since we know that James Finnerty was our Annie's father, and that her mother was a Killalea, I suspect that this record is for Annie's sister and that her mother's name was actually 'Bridget', not Ann.

[There are some possible cross-references that might be checked out at some time: Bridget Finnerty may have been Annie's sister. She married James Forde in Ireland, came to Bluff with 5 children on the *Sir George Pollock* in 1863, had 4 more children and settled at Grove then Mabel Bush. Bridget died in 1905 aged 79 years. Likewise, Mary Finnerty who married Daniel Caulfield in Invercargill in 1878 and settled at Grove Bush, may have been another sister. Mary died in 1916 aged 64, At some time I might spend the money to see their death registrations. If they are Annie's sisters, their parentage will offer clues to that fact and may corroborate (or disprove) my theory.]

The three Thomas Scullys

There is one other detail about these years that we know. In November 1876 William Scully's younger brother, Thomas, died. He was the one who had come to Bluff with his wife Mary (nee Elwood) on the same boat as Annie Finnerty, the *Edward Thornhill*, in 1864. He lived subsequently at Richmond Grove in Invercargill and worked as a railway surfaceman. He was just 40 years old when he died of typhoid fever at the Invercargill hospital. There was a sad irony in this fate. Typhoid had been a major killer

in Ireland during the Famine years, a consequence of poor sanitation and hygiene. New Zealand as a 'New World' colony was supposed to promise a healthier environment to the settlers. The reappearance of 'old world' ills like typhoid and other epidemic diseases was a major disappointment to early settlers in places like Dunedin and Invercargill. For the Scullys it was a tragedy: Thomas left his wife with five children to care for and another on the way.

We don't know much about what happened to Mary and the elder five Scully children after Thomas's death. The youngest, however, was not born until July 1877, eight months later. It must have been an awful shock for Mary to discover herself pregnant after his death. Too much for a destitute widow to cope with on her own anyway. The baby was named Thomas after his father. Whether immediately or some time later, he was passed on to William and Annie at Rakahouka. They brought him up as an extra child. One immediate problem with this of course was his name – there was already a "Thomas" in the Scully household. Nicknames were the answer: "Black Tom" for the older boy (William's son) and "Long Tom" for the younger (Thomas's son). Perhaps he grew into the latter name, apparently given for his height.

William and Annie's family

John, the eldest son, is our direct forbear and more of him will be found below. James, the second son, married Bessie Richardson and settled in Gore. Their family of four daughters are set out in Kevin Dowling's family tree which follows. Likewise for Black Tom Scully (nicknamed for his dark hair) who married Delia Leonard and produced Mamie Scully who joined the Little Company of Mary as Sr Mary Louis (Mother Louis). They farmed at Woodlands. William junior was next. He married Margaret Leonard (Delia's sister) and had three sons and three daughters. They farmed at Dacre. His eldest son was Tom Scully who came to live in Timaru in the 1970s and had quite a bit to do with my grandfather Pat Scully who was his first cousin. Bridget (Delia) was born about 1872. She never married. Paddy Scully was next in line, born in 1877. He married Catherine Burke and also had a farm at Dacre. They had six sons and four daughters. Kevin

Dowling is Paddy's grandson. Michael was the youngest, born in 1879. He stayed on the original farm at Rakahouka with his sister Bridget until their deaths.

Mick and Bridgie Scully

Bridgie is just as often called "Delia", which was a common Irish nickname for Bridget. She actually appears as 'Delia' in her mother's will. She and her brother are fondly remembered by Rakahouka residents as stalwarts of the district. My impression is that they were quite simple people who carried on life in the old way of the immigrant generation. They grew up in what was almost a transplanted fragment of East Galway rural society. Their lives as a bachelor/spinster pair growing old together on the old family farm is reminiscent of the huge number of unmarried younger children who grew to old age on family farms in Ireland in a similar fashion at the same time. They were the last of their generation – the first New Zealand-born children of the immigrants – at Rakahouka. Their faithful devotion to the parish church is well remembered. Their father had given the land on which the church stands to the Bishop in 1894 and a fine small wooden church was then erected there. The simplicity of their life is confirmed by a telling detail in Michael's will: the solicitors valued all of his household furnishings and fittings as of nil value for assessment purposes.

William's death

William Scully died quite suddenly the year after the church opened. The beginning of the end was an accident. William was driving a spring cart, presumably in Invercargill, when the horse took fright at a bicycle being ridden. William was thrown out of the cart and hurt his shoulder. This required ongoing medical attention and about nine weeks later he was back in town with Annie and an unnamed son to see the doctor. They called on Dr Hogg at his home but he was out. As they were leaving William fell down in a fit. The doctor was called by telephone and arrived very promptly. William was complaining about a feeling of heaviness about his heart and chest. This was the first evidence of what turned out to be a diseased heart. William was taken off to the Invercargill hospital where he died soon after.

The death was reported in some detail in the *Southland Times*, where William was described as “an old Southland settler”, but no inquest was held – the doctors were sure the death was due to heart disease.

The thing that strikes me most about the circumstances of William’s death are the elements of modernity in it. It was the new fangled bicycle that began his troubles. It was the new fangled telephone that offered him hope of prompt medical attention. What an amazing period of change his life had encompassed. From the primitive conditions of an Irish cabin in East Galway, through the miseries and unparalleled suffering of the Great Famine, across the vast oceans to the new land of New Zealand and the opening up of the swamp and bus of the western Southland plains. In his own terms, it had been a life of real achievement. He had escaped the poverty of his upbringing to create a farm of his own at Rakahouka and support a family. He died on 17 May 1895, aged 68 years old according to the death notice that was published in the Invercargill newspaper. He must have been buried from the new church because his funeral was reported as leaving his late residence at Rakahouka for the East Road cemetery in Invercargill on Monday 20 May.

Annie’s widowhood

The Scully children were past the age where they were dependent on Annie when their father died. John was 28 and well established on his own property at Chatton (more below). Michael was the youngest at 15 but already fully capable of pulling his weight as an adult worker. William had made a will in 1892 by which he left all of his property to his wife. Annie was thus well set up to live out her considerable widowhood on the family farm at Rakahouka, surviving her husband by a full 27 years. This is how she appears to us in the formal portrait that survives. It was taken by F.W. Burrell “Photo Artist” in Invercargill somewhere between 1900 and 1907 (the years his business was in operation). Annie is dressed in the severe formality expected of an older Victorian woman, especially a widow, all in black, with an elaborate bonnet and cape that seem to be constructed of feathers. She has a number of pieces of jewellery: rings on her wedding finger and a matching pair on the same finger on her other hand. A piece

around her neck and another suspended from a chain above her bodice – perhaps a watch.

She looks hale and hearty, in the prime of middle age rather than elderly. More than that, she looks prosperous and confident, a woman assured of her place in the world. The portrait suggests a woman who feels that she has done well for herself. As indeed Annie had. She was a mother and had been a wife. She had landed property and a fine set of sons to carry on William's legacy. Hers would have been a comfortable old age, in her own home and supported by her youngest son and daughter. It is hard to imagine that she would have been anything but totally dominant in the farmhouse at Rakahouka. Speculative as this may be, it is the impression that Annie's portrait exudes.

Looking at similar portraits by other Galway women who reached old age in Southland – Annie's near neighbour and contemporary Mary Kilkelly or Ellen Ford, mother-in-law of her eldest son John at Gore – they all present the same confident and self-satisfied air. It is the look of the successful immigrant. These women had come half way around the world to find opportunities that were denied them at home in Galway. Their marriages, their landholdings, their families, their community life – these were the markers of aspirations satisfied. They had done well. The only other fragment we have comes from Mother Louis – Mamie Scully, only daughter of Tom Scully, and one of Annie's grand-daughters. She recalled that Annie spoke Gaelic as an old woman, to the giggles and mystification of her grand-children. We know that other Galway women did the same, seeking each other out for a natter in their own tongue. It was the one aspect of their lives that looked back to Ireland and was destined to die with them. For the Scullys this Gaelic-speaking world ended with Annie's death in 1921, aged 83.

Annie's will

The official cause of death recorded for Annie was “senectus”. This is just a fancy word for old age. Annie was buried with William in Invercargill. She had made a will with the Invercargill lawyer Francis O’Beirne three years earlier. This recorded that she had been born in Galway and was a British subject. She named Michael and ‘Delia’ Scully as her executors and also as her main beneficiaries. She left them the two farm properties to share equally if they remained unmarried and carried on living together. If either were to marry (unlikely at their time of life) or did not wish to live together any more, the properties were to be divided. Michael was to then take the 153 acre property at section 6, block 36 of the Mabel Hundred and Delia the 77 acre block at section 21, block 11 of the Invercargill Hundred. All stock and farm equipment was then to be divided equally between them. The only other beneficiary was James Scully, who was to receive £100.

James’s less successful efforts

This singling out of her second oldest son was explained in a fascinating clause of the will, which is worth quoting in full:

“I declare that the reason why I have not included my sons John, Thomas, William and Patrick in the benefits hereby is that each of them and also my son James has been assisted by his parents in making a start in life and each of them has in that way had ample provision made to him during the lifetime of his parents and to do otherwise would not be fair to my son Michael and my daughter Delia and I also declare that my reason for leaving James £100 is to assist him a little as he has not been as successful as his brothers although he too has been given the same assistance and opportunities as the others.” What an awkward gift that must have been for James to accept!

John Scully

John Scully was the eldest of William and Annie’s children and my great grandfather. There is a tradition that he was once thrashed at school and thereafter refused to return to his lessons. Consequently he could neither read nor write, though he could apparently sign his name. This was a

disability that he successfully concealed in later years with the assistance of his wife, Ellen Ford. She would accompany him to business meetings and give him the nod when she had read any written documents for him to sign. His lack of education may not have seemed a great concern to his parents, who were themselves illiterate. But when his own son, another William, sought to emulate him by abandoning his schooling at a tender age, John would have none of it. He is also on record as having agitated for a school to be established at Kaiwera. New Zealand was not old Ireland – you had to be able to read and write if you expected to prosper. John’s ability to do so without these skills was testimony to his native intelligence and wit.

John Scully’s farm at Kaiwera

William and Annie put their recalcitrant scholar’s presence at home to good use. In 1876, when he was no more than 12 years old, they acquired a second property at Kaiwera, near Pukerau off the main highway just north of Gore. This place, known as ‘The Raggitts’ was a section of the old Otakaramu Run. Pukerau means something like “land of many hills” and this is a good description of the district’s geography. When the settlers came it was a treeless zone covered in tussock with native bush in the numerous gullies. Sheep and cattle had been stocked on the 35,000-acre run since the mid-1850s. It was subdivided into small farms in 1876, offered at 30 shillings per acre on deferred payment. There were conditions attached to purchases: the buyer had to make specific improvements to the land within a given time and had to be in residence.

The residency requirement was designed to prevent the large landowners from securing ever larger amounts of land and shutting small farmers out. So it is quite ironic that someone like William Scully should have to act with a certain amount of deviousness to get around these regulations. In William’s case, this involved listing himself as the resident proprietor at Kaiwera while in effect his 12-year-old son was farming the property. John stayed with his relations, the Burkes who had a neighbouring property. I think this was William’s half-brother John, so in effect John Scully lived with his uncle and aunt. William and Annie must have visited regularly too, especially when the land office inspector was due to check that the

conditions attached to the purchase were being fulfilled.

The Deferred-Payment System

There is an interesting report on the working of the 'Deferred Payment' land system in Southland in the government publication known as the A.J.H.R. for 1879. This is written in an amazingly florid style and worth quoting for its idealistic vision of Southland's future as a paradise of yeomen farmers:

"In 1871 I stood on a hill in the centre of the Toi Tois Hundred, and as far as the eye could reach the noonday sun disclosed earth's bosom covered with its primeval carpet. The tussock lent its yellow hair to the breeze. The graceful head of the cabbage-tree quivered in its embrace. The brilliant green of the flax and tutu bushes glowed in contrast with the darker tints of the luxuriant fern, and the spirit of solitude brooded over the landscape. The purple shadows of descending night were unbroken by a single scintillation of light from cottage window or ruddy glow of cotter's fire, and, under the gently-falling beams of the mistress of the night, earth slumbered with the perfect rest of utter solitude.

In 1879 I stand on the same hill, and see stretched before me the undulating plains clothed with the strong breath of man's labour, the spirit of man's life. The sunbeam dances over well-tilled fields ripe with cultivated abundance. The soft autumn breeze, sighing through the golden effort of the dying summer, wafts along the gladsome laughter of sunny childhood; kisses the russet cheek of the matron watching at her cottage door the gambols of her children; cools the brow of honest labour, as, resting for a moment the farmer surveys the bright landscape, and proudly realizes that the great gift of 'The Master' – 'and the earth and the abundance thereof,' is being turned to its legitimate use – the blessing of the many – while the grey smoke wreaths itself aloft from many a smiling homestead."

They don't write government reports like that any more! The writer, the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Invercargill, Walter H Pearson, was on site reviewing the success of the deferred payment settlers in the Tuturau, Makoreta and Toi Tois Hundreds whose cause he had promoted in earlier

reports in 1872 and 1873. The system had then advanced to the northeast, taking in the Waikaka valley and he now reported on its progress there:

“Here the same stable prosperity evinces that the battle with nature is being fought out to a successful issue. In many instances the struggle is undoubtedly hard, owing to the an insufficiency of material in commencing the campaign; but thrift, energy, practical acquaintance with the pursuit, assisted by the employment afforded by the surrounding large proprietors, will ultimately conquer, more particularly if they can obtain, what nature and sound policy dictate, a railway from Gore to Kelso, which would pass through the heart of the deferred-payment settlements, and would find little obstruction from natural impediments...”

Pearson had a high opinion to of the land in the Waikaka Valley, its natural amenities making it eminently suitable for the development of small farms by mean of limited capital:

“taking the land comprised within the watershed of the Mataura, the Waikaka, Waipahi, Chatton, Glenkenich, Greenvale, and Crookston Districts, and the original Province of Southland, and area of some 3,300,000 acres, I do not think a similar block for all-round agriculture can be found – not merely in New Zealand, but in the Australian Colonies.”

He estimated that typically expenditure of £460 would be required on a 200-acre section over the three years of occupation before a Crown Grant could be issued. This broke down to a substantial investment of labour and materials as follows: in fencing of £150 for about 200 chains ; the cultivation of 20 acres at £20; £20 on clearing of flax or tussock; £60 to erect a house; £120 for two horses and the dray, plough, harrow etc that they would need; plus six half-yearly payments of £90. Much of this expenditure seems to be simply placing a value on a settler’s own labour. If so, we can see the benefit of placing a capable son like John Scully on such a property.

Who owned what, and when?

This raises the question of when the benefits of his labour passed to John as

the owner of the Kaiwera farm in his own right. William Scully's name appears on the Mataura electoral roll for 1880-81 as a Waikaka resident with a freehold property at Section 16, Block 6 of the Waikaka survey district. He was still listed this way in 1893 while a John Scully was listed at "Otaria" with his occupation given as a farmer but one who could only claim a right to vote there as a district resident (not a freeholder like William). A James Scully also appears on this electoral roll with a Pukerau address but again only as a residential voter and not a freeholder. Land records in fact show that William held on to the title to the Kaiwera property – and perhaps other properties elsewhere - until his death. The property then passed to Annie who very quickly transferred the Kaiwera land on to John who became its freehold owner in August 1896. Until then, the sons must have worked for their father, perhaps leasing the land informally.

Galway neighbours in the Waikaka Valley

The Burkes and Scullys weren't the only Galway people who moved on to these Pukerau sections in the late 1870s. Paula Dickie's marvelous history of the district records the names of the first school committee for Otaria-Kaiwera in 1878. M Qualter was the chairman, with J (presumably John) Burke and M Collins also on the seven-man committee. Nellie Scully (John's daughter) recalled for Mrs Dickie how as a child she could "*hear Bartley [Burke] playing the Irish bagpipes on a clear night – they sounded very good as he walked up and down the hill... Denis Kean from 'Bankend' kept up Irish dancing for many years.*" Hints here of a surviving culture of Irish music and dance, even if the Gaelic did not survive with it. The Irish families would also gather on Sundays at the church at Pukerau five miles away and have a great social get together after Mass.

John Scully's marriage

John Scully married Ellen Ford of nearby Chatton on 20 June 1894. He was aged 28 and listed his occupation as a contract ploughman. He had stayed well within his ethnic and religious community in choosing a bride. Ellen was, like John himself, the New Zealand-born child of a pair of Galway immigrants. Her parents, Patrick Ford and Ellen Crowe, had come to Otago

with a whole group of young people from Galway on the *Melbourne*, arriving on St Patrick's Day 1861. Patrick was a wheelwright and was working at his trade in Milton when Gabriel Read made his famous discovery at gold in Tuapeka the following July. Read is reputed to have come back to Milton to get someone to make a 'long tom' for him and found the requisite skills in Paddy Ford. Like William Scully, Paddy then set off for the diggings himself and did quite well until being put out by the Shotover floods of 1863. He survived the disaster and returned to Dunedin where he married Ellen Crowe in 1863. Ellen Ford was their second daughter.

John Scully as a man

We have already seen that John Scully largely missed out on a formal education and probably regretted it. He seems to have been otherwise a clever and forward-looking colonial. He is recorded as the first farmer in the Kaiwera district to install a milking machine. He was also the first local to own a motor car – a Ford. During the great influenza epidemic of 1918 it is recalled that John Scully put his car to communal use, collecting and delivering medicine to afflicted households. He was also something of a sportsman. His obituary records that in his youth he was a champion pole vaulter – something of a surprising choice of discipline in rural Southland I would have thought. Perhaps not. There was a lively athletics scene in Southland in those days and John apparently performed with distinction at many fixtures. Paula Dickie's Pukerau history also records that John Scully was the top scorer for the Pukerau cricket team when it played Clinton in 1896 – he scored 9 runs!

John's youngest son, Patrick, once confided to his daughter Helen that he was glad that men no longer customarily wore beards. His father had worn one and he thought it made men appear more frightening. Perhaps this just reflects the customary role of fathers as patriarchs in colonial families. It does suggest, however, that John was an imposing personality, even a little intimidating. On the other hand, Helen also remembered how her grandmother never ceased speaking (appreciatively) about John in her later years, after his death, so he must have been a good husband to her.

John and Ellen Scully's family

John and Ellen farmed at 'The Raggits' from their marriage in 1894 until 1924, a period of thirty years. They added to the property, acquiring a further 200-acre block nearby in 1906. They had five children: Annie; Ellen (Nellie); William; Marie; Patrick; and Kitty. At one point these Scullys made up half of the roll at the Kaiwera School. One of the teachers boarded with them for a while and of course John was a member of the original school committee. In later years the Scullys all returned to celebrate the school's jubilee. The Scully family was also part of a small Catholic community at Kaiwera. In 1892 John and other members of the congregation collected funds to establish a church of their own. The visiting priests had previously celebrated marriages, Mass etc in private homes. A cottage was purchased in Station Street, Pukerau. It was nicknamed the "Pukerau Cathedral", since it was not a real church and never named for a saint. Mass was celebrated there at three-monthly intervals.

Marie's Wedding

Quite by chance, I stumbled upon a newspaper report of Marie Scully's wedding in April 1924. This is a rare appearance in the public record of the Scullys so is worth reproducing in full:

A wedding which created considerable interest was solemnized on April 23 at the Catholic Church, Gore, when Marie Catherine, third daughter of Mr and Mrs John Scully, of Kaiwera, Southland, was married to Stanley John, third son of Mr and Mrs John English Ryan, of Dunedin. Father Kaveney officiated. The bride wore a simple frock of ivory morocain, with panel of georgette draped on to the hip, and finished with pearl ornament. An embroidered tulle veil with a bouquet of white sweet peas and cactus dahlias completed a charming toilette. The bride was attended by her two sisters, Ellen and Kitty, wearing frocks of gold and rose duchesse mousseline, with little tulle caps and bouquets to tone. The bridegroom was supported by his brother, Mr H.L. Ryan, of Wellington, as best man, and Mr Pat Scully as groomsman. After the ceremony the guests were entertained at Hoffman's

rooms where a sumptuous wedding breakfast was partaken of. Mrs Scully received her guests, looking very charming in a frock of prune velvet, handsomely embroidered with beads, and a small black hat with osprey. The bride's traveling frock was of fawn morocain embroidered with almond green bugle beads, and a small fawn hat, with smart rosette of oriental ribbon, and a velour coat with beaver fur. In the evening Mr and Mrs Scully entertained over 200 guests at a dance at their home, "The Raggetts," a happy time being spent by all. [Otago Witness 1924]

Timaru

John and Ellen retired from the farm the following year, leaving the Pukerau property in the hands of their eldest son, William. He leased the land from his father under an agreement drawn up by the prominent Gore solicitor Dugald Poppelwell. Poppelwell was the son of the pioneer Scottish Catholic William Poppelwell whose farm, 'Sunwick', had been the centre of Catholic life in the Milton district in the early years. Many of the early Galway immigrants to Otago had found a welcome and a job at 'Sunwick' and Masses, weddings and baptisms were celebrated there when the Marist missionaries made their periodic visitations from Wellington or Akaroa in the 1850s. It is interesting to see these old ties enduring to the next generation. Bill eventually bought the Kaiwera farm off his father in 1934.

I don't know how the connection between Southland and Timaru began but the Scullys were not the first southern Catholics to retire to Timaru. The parents of Ellen's sister-in-law Ellen Ford (nee Roche) had retired there from Mandeville in 1906. Perhaps the links went back even further: there were plenty of Galway settlers in South Canterbury while Ellen's father, James Roche, was a Kerryman and South Canterbury was a great centre of settlement from Co Kerry. In any case, John and Ellen bought land in Wai-iti Road and had a new house built there in 1925. Their younger son, my grandfather Patrick Scully, also settled in Timaru (before or after his parents I am not sure). He married Norah O'Neill from Fairlie and bought a house at 12 Matilda Street with a mortgage from his father. Annie Scully also spent time in Timaru after the failure of her marriage to Alex Herron.

John Scully died in Timaru on 9 July 1936. He was just 70. His five younger brothers and his surviving sister all attended the funeral in Timaru. An obituary in the *Tablet* recorded that “Mr Scully lived a quiet life and never thought to win the good opinion of others and yet the high reputation which he held amongst his fellow men gives testimony itself. The respect and esteem in which he was held was clearly demonstrated by the large attendance at his funeral.” Ellen survived him by 19 years. She died at the Home of Compassion in Timaru on 16 August 1955. She was 85 years old and had outlived all but one of her 10 siblings (Kitty O’Neill was the sole survivor).

This is far from the end of the Scully story but it is far as I intend to take it in this document. This short account is intended as a gift to my mother, Helen Brosnahan (nee Scully), the great-granddaughter of William and Annie Scully at Christmas 2007. It complements the genealogical record put together by my cousin Kevin Dowling (descendant of Paddy Scully of Dacre) in 2002 and is appended here to a copy of Kevin’s document. It is meant as a small sign of my love and regard for my mother and a token of my respect for my Scully forbears and all that they represent to me. I am proud to be descended from such good, honest, ordinary people. Their imprint on the historic record might be slight but without them I would not be. They lived, loved, and moved on to their eternal reward. May they rest in peace and may perpetual light shine upon them.

Seán Brosnahan
Christmas 2007.

HELEN’S NOTES

Memories of the Scullys to add to the manuscript: