



*Aleen Cust*

1868 ~ 1937



Centenary Conference 2022

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> & Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Mountbellew Agricultural College, Galway





# Aleen Cust

1868~1937

The first woman to become a veterinary surgeon in Ireland and the UK was born in County Tipperary, Ireland. Remembered in Galway and Roscommon for her charm, integrity, intelligence and a highly capable practitioner.

If you have any information  
with regards to Aleen  
please email:

# Bookings

To book the Scientific Day of the conference...

To book the Heritage Day of the conference...

To book 'The Lone Furrow' play, performed by the Roscommon Drama Group...

## CVE Credits

7 CVE credits have been approved by the VCI for this event.

5.5 CVE credits pending for Friday 12th.

This conference is part funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Decade of Centenaries Local Authority Funding), Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council, and Atlantic Technological University. It is an action of Galway County Council's Decade of Commemoration Strategy 2013-2023.

Official transport for the Aleen Cust Conference is provided by ŠKODA Monaghan & Sons Ltd., Tuam Road, Galway.



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Comhairle Contae  
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UCD School of Veterinary Medicine  
Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD



Ollscoil  
Taisceolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh  
Atlantic  
Technological  
University



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council



ŠKODA



# About Aleen Cust

Aleen Cust was a pioneering Tipperary woman who commenced her studies in veterinary science at the New Veterinary College in Edinburgh. She qualified in 1900 but was not allowed to call herself a veterinary surgeon as the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) claimed to have no power to admit women. After over 20 years of fighting, Aleen Cust was finally awarded her qualification in December 1922.

## Family Background

Aleen Isabel Cust was born on 7 February 1868 at Cordangan Manor, County Tipperary. She was one of six children of Sir Leopold and Lady Isabel Cust. Her father, a land agent for the Smith-Barry family, died when Aleen was just 10 years old and her mother took the family to England.

## The road to becoming a veterinary surgeon and her post in Galway County Council

Her guardian encouraged her decision to become a veterinary surgeon, despite her mother's disapproval. She enrolled in the New Veterinary College, Edinburgh. She was an excellent student, coming top of her class in her first year. She completed her training in 1900, but was barred because of her gender from using the title 'veterinary surgeon'.

Aleen had excellent references and when William Byrne, an esteemed vet in Athleague, Co Roscommon, heard of her case he offered her a role working as his assistant.

She was appointed as a veterinary inspector by Galway County Council in 1905 under the Diseases of Animals Acts, an appointment that was denied by the RCVS due to her lack of professional recognition. The post was advertised again, and when Cust was again selected for the post in 1906 an agreement was reached under which she carried out the duties of the position with an amended title of "inspector".

## World War 1: Volunteer on the Western Front

In 1915, she took a leave of absence from Galway County Council and drove her own car to Abbeville, France, to volunteer in the treatment and care of horses on the Western Front. She worked

as a bacteriologist with an animal vaccine unit and looked after many horses.

## **Final Recognition**

The passage of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act in 1919 prohibited the exclusion of women from professions, and meant that the RCVS were now required to consider Aleen's membership. She was finally awarded her diploma in December 1922.

## **Later Life**

She sold her practice in Ireland in 1924 and moved to Plaitford, Hampshire, England. Aleen died in Jamaica on 29 January 1937. In her will she left £5,000 for a scholarship in veterinary research (with a preference for female candidates), and £100 for a kennel at the RCVS in memory of her spaniels.

## **Why Commemorate Aleen Cust?**

Aleen Cust was the first female Veterinary Surgeon, admitted to the Register of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) in 1922. She is a leading example of a visionary in the sphere of animal welfare, overcoming many barriers to practise a profession she dedicated her life to, against many odds.

This is further relevant to the Sex Disqualification Act of 1919 which enabled females to gain admittance to the professions for the first time in Ireland.

Volunteering in the treatment and care of horses on the Western Front and working with the farming community in Co Roscommon and Co Galway was not the typical life path for a woman of her aristocratic background.

By undertaking this commemorative project it will assist in creating a greater awareness and knowledge of what Ireland was like one hundred years ago and the hardships, difficulties that people endured and how Aleen's perseverance triumphed over adversity.

It will also shed light on the life of one of Ireland's unsung heroes and ensure that her work, sacrifices and her determination are known by those of us who live in the Ireland of 2022.

## Who is the Aleen Cust Memorial Society?

The Aleen Cust Memorial Society is an ad hoc group of 3 veterinary surgeons who came together in early 2021 to remember and honour a brave courageous woman who suffered tremendously both personally and professionally in order to achieve her dream to become the first lady veterinary surgeon in Ireland, England, and indeed Europe.

### **Mission statement of the group:**

1. To make her name and struggle better known by her fellow Irish in general and by her profession in particular. She has been totally forgotten about and has been written out of history.
2. To find her grave and to place some acknowledgement on it in this the centenary year of her graduation.

In their few short months in existence the group achieved a lot but two things stand out:

They discovered a diary previously unknown of a 4 day fishing trip that she and 3 friends spent on Lough Mask in August 1913. This describes what they did during that time, conversations they had, and also has Aleen's handwriting. It also contains poetry composed by them.

Secondly, they discovered her grave in Jamaica. A record of her burial was never recorded or documented in any official or church record in Jamaica. As a result of a sheer stroke of luck the group located it. Now the grave of Aleen Isobel Cust MRCVS is recorded in the official registry of St Andrew's Church, Kingston, Jamaica for the very first time. The group persevered looking for Aleen's grave despite having been officially told 6 times she was not buried there.

Only for their existence would her grave ever have been found?

The members of The Aleen Cust Memorial Society are:

Donal Connolly, MRCVS

Ascinta Kilroy, MRCVS

Brendan Gardiner, MRCVS

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022

9:00am – 7:00pm

Mountbellew Agricultural College, Galway

8:30am – 9:30am	Registration Tea/coffee and scones
9:30am – 10:00am	Official opening by Maria Walsh MEP
10:00am – 10:45am	Taking inspiration from a veterinary pioneer Professor Siobhan Mullan, Professor of Animal Welfare and Ethics, UCD Veterinary School
10:45m – 11:15am	Panel discussion and Questions & Answers
11:15m – 11:45am	Break – with exhibitors
11:45am – 12:15pm	Are healthy horses happy? Meta Osborne, former Senior Steward of the Turf Club
12:15pm – 12:30pm	Question and answers
12:30pm – 1:30pm	Lunch – with exhibitors
1:30pm – 2:30pm	Let's look at it from their point of view! Professor Mary Temple Grandin
2:30pm – 2:45pm	Panel discussion and Questions & Answers
2:45pm – 3:15pm	Break – with exhibitors
3:15pm – 4:15pm	Aleen Cust uncovered Mary Fanning, RTÉ
4:15pm – 5:00pm	Panel discussion
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Parasitology workshop – a field event. This workshop will be delivered by Professor John Dalton NUIG, Michael Gottstein, Teagasc, and Dr Natascha Meunier, Animal Health Ireland

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022

9.00am – 5.00pm

Mountbellew Agricultural College, Galway

8:30am – 9:30am	Registration Tea/coffee and scones
9:30am – 10:00am	Official welcome by Dr Orla Flynn, President of Atlantic Technological University (ATU);  Cllr Eileen Mannion, Leas Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway;  Cllr Laurence Fallon, Leas Cathaoirleach of Roscommon County Council;  Cllr Roger Kennedy, Cathaoirleach Tipperary County Council;  Virginia Teehan, Chief Executive Officer, The Heritage Council;  Dr Sinéad McCoole, member of the Expert Advisory Group on the Decade of Centenaries
10:00am – 10:45am	Making Aleen popular on TV 100 years later! Mary Fanning
10:45am – 11:30am	Irish women's experiences in the medical profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Dr Laura Kelly
11:30am – 12:00 noon	Tea/coffee
12:00 noon – 12:30 pm	Galway County Council Veterinary Service 1906-2022 – following in the footsteps of Aleen Cust Rita Gately & Joanne Perry

12:30pm – 1:15pm	Cures, ailments and potions on the farm long ago Albert Siggins
1.15pm – 1.25pm	Celebrating untold stories Dr Martina Moloney, Chairperson of the Heritage Council
1.25pm – 1.30pm	Mná 100: A short overview (a short film)
1:30pm – 2:45pm	Lunch
2:45pm – 3:10pm	In search of Aleen's grave Brendan Gardiner
3:10pm – 3:35pm	'And the Band Turned Out': the Tipperary background of Aleen Cust Dr Denis G. Marnane
3:35pm – 4:20pm	Mr William Byrne (Willie), MRCVS – A Profile Elizabeth Clayton
4:20pm – 4:45pm	The Darcy Diary: A short sojourn on Lough Mask with Aleen Cust and friends Mary Burke
4:45pm – 5:30 pm	Open discussion about remembering and commemorating the life and work of Aleen Cust: Past, present and future Moderator: Dr Carmel Connolly
5:30pm – 6:30pm	Tea/coffee and biscuits and viewing the exhibitions. Please see page 27 for more information on the exhibitions.



# Biographies



# Maria Walsh

## MEP

Maria Walsh was born in Boston, USA, but the village of Shrute, Co. Mayo, has been home for her since 1994. She graduated from Griffith College Dublin with a BA in Journalism and Visual Media in 2009 and pursued a career in television production and creative management.

In 2014, she was crowned the International Rose of Tralee at the festival of the same name that celebrates young women of Irish heritage. Up until July 2019, Maria served as a member of the Irish Reserve Defence Force in the First Armoured Cavalry Squadron, based in the Curragh, Co. Kildare.

Maria was elected as a Member of the European Parliament for the Midlands–North–West constituency at the 2019 European Parliament elections.

She has been an active advocate and campaigner for diversity and social inclusion for many years.

In the European Parliament Maria is a member of Fine Gael and sits in the European People's Party political group. She sits on three European Parliament Committees. She is a full member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs [EMPL] and the Committee on Culture and Education [CULT], and is a substitute member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs [LIBE]. Maria is also the Irish EPP representative on the Delegation for relations with the United States and for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

Furthermore, Maria is Vice-Chair of the LGBTI Rights Intergroup in the European Parliament, which advocates for equality in the EU and monitors Member States' legislative initiatives.



## Professor Siobhan Mullan

Siobhan Mullan is Professor of Animal Welfare and Ethics at University College Dublin. Her research focusses on the practical application of welfare assessment

of animals to drive welfare improvements. She has received over €6.5m worth of funding, published 53 peer-reviewed papers and had major collaborations with people in a wide range of fields, including theology, machine learning, data science, history and performance art. She is active in animal welfare policy development at national and international levels. Over many years Professor Mullan has supported the development of the discipline of Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law within the veterinary profession, including as a Founder of the European College of Animal Welfare and Behavioural Medicine, which now has 120 diplomates from 24 countries.

**Lecture Title:** Aleen Cust: Taking inspiration from a veterinary pioneer.

**Lecture abstract:** Aleen Cust was a veterinary pioneer, with many, many women following in her footsteps. She embodied the essence of veterinary surgery through the concern she demonstrated for animal well-being wherever she went. Demonstrating she was unafraid to challenge the status quo, both personally and subsequently professionally, I will reflect on her legacy for the profession, and what inspiration we can all take from her and apply in our own spheres.



## Meta Osborne

### Former Senior Steward of the Turf Club

Meta Osborne is a Kildare native, an equine vet with a focus on broodmare reproduction and co-owner of Tinnakill House, a leading commercial Irish stud. She is a Past-President of the Irish Veterinary Association and the Veterinary Council of Ireland. Meta was the first female Senior Steward of the Turf Club, is a board member of Horse Racing Ireland and co-founder of WINR (Women's Irish Network for Racing). She is currently studying for an MSc in animal welfare, ethics and law at the University of Edinburgh.

**Lecture Title:** Are healthy horses happy?

**Lecture Abstract:** In this lecture Meta will give an outline of what she learned about animal welfare in college, what she learned 'on the job' and the perceived role of the vet as a source of information about animal welfare.

She will also discuss why she decided to go 'back to school' and what she has learned from her studies; this ranged from the spread of contagious positive emotions in baby pigs through to the ethics of killing surplus zoo animals, the welfare of Bengal stud cats and designing a project to explore equine vets' attitudes to equine welfare.



## Temple Grandin

Professor Mary Temple Grandin (born August 29, 1947) is an American scientist and animal behaviourist. She is a prominent proponent for the humane treatment of livestock for slaughter and the author of more than 60 scientific papers on animal

behaviour. TempleGrandin is a consultant to the livestock industry, where she offers advice on animal behaviour, and she is also an autism spokesperson.

Temple Grandin is one of the first autistic people to document the insights she gained from her personal experience of autism. She is currently a faculty member with Animal Sciences in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Colorado State University.

In 2010, Time 100, an annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world, named her in the “Heroes” category. She was the subject of the Emmy- and Golden Globe-winning semi-biographical film Temple Grandin. She has been an outspoken proponent of autism rights and neurodiversity movements.

**Lecture Title:** Let’s look at it from their point of view!

**Lecture Abstract:** My parents were told I should be institutionalised but today I am a university professor, author and advocate for transforming attitudes towards neurodiversity. Particularly, I want you to think differently about kids who think differently!

My animal welfare work is based on simple audit scoring methods, easily understood and implemented, and my belief is that buying new equipment and not training the workers or maintaining that equipment is never going to improve a bad situation. One of my mantras is ‘how you do anything is how you do everything’.



## Mary Fanning

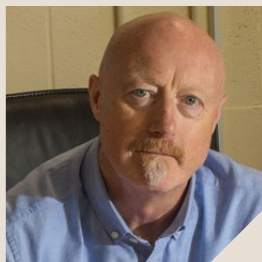
Mary Fanning is a multi-award-winning journalist who has worked with RTE News and Nationwide for 33 years. Mary says she owes everything to the West of Ireland and the late great J.P. Burke, the legendary editor of the Tuam Herald. Mary cut her teeth at the

newspaper and was the first woman to work at this establishment; 29 national journalists started their careers at the Tuam Herald. Mary hunted with the Bermingham and North Galway hounds when working in the West. During her career, Mary has covered stories the length and breadth of the country and has travelled to Israel, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Poland, Portugal, France and the UK, following the Irish and their exploits in those regions. She is passionate about rural Ireland, farming, racing and community positive enterprises. Working with the Aleen Cust Committee, the historians, veterinary surgeons, Donal Connolly and Brendan Gardiner was a very special time for Mary as the team just pulled the story and visuals from absolutely nothing.

**Lecture Title:** Aleen Cust uncovered and Making Aleen popular on TV 100 years later!

**Lecture Abstract:** Filming the story of Aleen Cust was a special time for me. Mountbellew was an area I where I covered the District Court as a reporter with the Tuam Herald. Women journalists were a rarity back then.

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons were fantastic with the stills produced and material from the Great War added greatly to the sparse imagery available from the Aleen Cust Memorial Society. Local historians all had gems of photo albums and ledgers from Aleen's time at Fort Lyster and Castlestrange. Local vet Teresa Glynn rode a white horse along roads where Aleen would have travelled to her work and Fiona Clabby tended to Martin Mannion's cow, on a farm that Aleen would have almost certainly attended 100 years ago. Martin sagely commented that 'we were never too slow in the West'. What a legacy Aleen left for the female vets that have followed and the legacy is in very safe hands.



## Professor John Pius Dalton

John Pius Dalton is an Established Professor and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Professor in Molecular Parasitology at NUI Galway. He was previously Professor in

Infectious Diseases in the School of Biological Sciences, Queen's University Belfast, and Director of Research (Pathogen and Microbes).

Before this he was a Canada Research Chair in Infectious Diseases and Director of McGill's Graduate Program in Biotechnology at the Institute of Parasitology, McGill University, Canada. Before joining McGill, Dalton was Director of the Institute for the Biotechnology of Infectious Diseases (IBID), University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Australia. He was awarded the New South Wales Government BioFirst Award in Biotechnology between 2003-2008.

Prof. Dalton received his BSc (Hons) in Zoology/Biochemistry (1980) and a PhD in Parasitology (1984) at University College Dublin. He spent postdoctoral training periods in the John Hopkins School of Medicine, (Baltimore, USA) and at the Laboratories of Parasitic Diseases, National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, MD, USA).

Between 1992 and 1998 he spent several research sabbaticals at the Queensland Institute for Medical Research (QIMR), Brisbane, Australia (in 2012 he was awarded the QIMR Bancroft Fellow-in-Residence Award). Prof. Dalton was specialist editor for the International Journal of Parasitology and Journal of Infectious Diseases, and International editor for Parasite Immunology. He is currently an Associate Editor for the journals PlosNTD and Royal Society Open Science. His interests include anti-malaria drug design, vaccine development against helminth (worm) parasites of humans and their livestock (sheep & cattle), and discovery of novel worm parasite-derived immunotherapeutics. He was a member of the FP7-funded PARAVAC Consortium (awarded Euro9 million, 2014-2019) for the development of vaccines against farm animal diseases. Recently, he was awarded a Royal Society Research Merit Award (2014-2019) and European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant Award (2013-2019) for the study of animal and human vaccines. He is currently a Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Professor in Molecular Parasitology.



## Michael Gottstein

Michael Gottstein works as Head of Sheep Knowledge Transfer Department for Teagasc, The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority. Michael, whose family originate from Germany, is a native German speaker and undertook his B. Agr.

Sc. (ACP) in University College Dublin, graduating in 1995. In 1997 Michael completed his Masters Degree (animal nutrition) by research and after a few years in private practice he joined Teagasc as a dairy adviser in late 2000. Michael was appointed as a drystock specialist in 2003 during which time he completed a Graduate Diploma in Farm Financial Management. He was appointed as a sheep specialist in 2007 and was appointed as Head of Sheep Knowledge Transfer Programme in 2012. In his spare time Michael breeds pedigree sheep and cattle on his farm in west Cork.



## **Natascha Meunier** **Animal Health Ireland**

Natascha graduated as a veterinarian in South Africa where she worked for several years in mixed practice and as a government vet. After moving to Europe,

she completed an MSc in epidemiology at Utrecht University and a PhD on the epidemiology of bovine tuberculosis through the Royal Veterinary College and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She has since worked on research projects based at the University of Edinburgh and undertook a residency with the European College of Veterinary Public Health and Population Medicine, which she completed in 2020. She has since applied her experience in population medicine to parasites after joining Animal Health Ireland in 2019 where she currently manages the Beef HealthCheck and Parasite Control programmes.

The Beef HealthCheck programme aims to deliver slaughter health information directly to farmers and their veterinarians so that they can make effective decisions on the control of liver fluke, liver abscesses and pneumonias for their cattle. The Parasite Control programme aims to inform farmers and veterinarians on best practice for sustainable parasite control.



## Laura Kelly

Dr Laura Kelly is senior lecturer in the history of health and medicine at the University of Strathclyde. She has published two monographs to date, *Irish Women in Medicine, c. 1880s-1920s: Origins, Education and Careers* (Manchester

University Press, 2012) and *Irish Medical Education and Student Culture, c. 1850-1950* (Liverpool University Press, 2017), as well as numerous articles and book chapters related to the social history of medicine in modern Ireland. Her most recent project, 'Contraception and Modern Ireland, c. 1922-92', was funded by a Wellcome Trust research fellowship.

**Lecture Title:** Irish women's experiences in the medical profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

**Lecture Abstract:** This paper examines attitudes towards women in the professions and women's entry into higher education in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ireland. In particular, I will focus on women's experiences in the medical profession during this period, looking at attitudes towards 'lady doctors' and the experiences of women studying medicine.



### **Rita Gately** **MVB MRCVS MSc**

Rita is a Fermanagh native who has worked as County Veterinary Officer with Galway County Council for over 20 years. Her role involves the regulation and provision of

advice to over 25 low-throughput abattoirs, and meat processing premises in Galway, as well as overseeing the dog control service and other animal-related issues which come before the council. She was previously employed in the Department of Agriculture and in private practice. She holds a Masters in Veterinary Public Health and has a keen interest in the One Health concept.



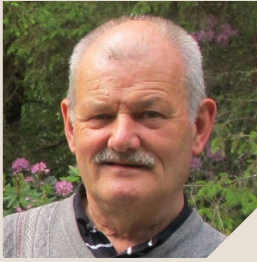
## Dr Joanne Perry

Dr Joanne Perry hails from Boyle, Co. Roscommon and has worked as a Veterinary Inspector with Galway County Council since 2016. Prior to that, she worked in private veterinary practice in Galway City. She lives in Connemara with her husband, two

children and a menagerie of animals, and has recently started a herd of native Irish Dexter cattle.

**Lecture Title:** Galway County Council Veterinary Service 1906-2022 –following in the footsteps of Aleen Cust.

**Lecture Abstract:** What role did Galway County Council's Veterinary Inspector, Aleen Cust, play in veterinary public health in 1906? The concept of One Health was as relevant when Aleen was appointed as a Veterinary Inspector under the Diseases of Animals Act (1894) as it is now. This presentation will look at her role in the early 20th-century Galway veterinary service and examine what has - and hasn't - changed.



## Albert Siggins

Albert Siggins has a background in technical and conservation practices, spending most of his career with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI), beginning in 1972. He was with the Irish Antiquities Division (now Department of Archaeology) and some years later moved to the Folklife Division (now National Museum of Ireland–Turlough Park, Castlebar). Much of his time in the early years was spent on research and excavation work. Other aspects of his work included curating exhibitions and replica making. He remembers his time in the Folklife Division as his duty being to assist curatorial and conservation staff in the safe management of the unique collection of the Straw, Hay and Rush Collection of artifacts. This work involved an awareness of the folklore of looking after animals and the associated cures of common maladies and diseases of the old days as it was recorded from the 1930s by the Department of Folklore, UCD, and its sister institution in the NMI now known as NMI–Turlough Park. He is Secretary of the County Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society since 1987 and a contributor of articles and illustrations to its Journal. He retired in 2012 and likes to travel and hillwalk in Ireland.

**Lecture Title:** Cures, ailments and potions on the farm long ago.

**Lecture Abstract:** For thousands of years, farmers have learned from their predecessors and have placed those with cures, quacks and cow doctors in high esteem and they rushed to them in the hope to save an animal from pain or death. Good cures were closely guarded and passed on for generations. When man ceased his hunter-gatherer period of existence, they settled, cleared the land and became tillage farmers. Once that was done, the prospect of an increase in pests and diseases loomed large. Still, over time they learned what relieved animals' diseases and they became the forerunners of the modern veterinary profession, however poor their knowledge might appear to the profession today. The notable vet Willie Byrne of Athleague compiled an exercise book of hundreds of cures which were collected locally and sometimes taken from farming and veterinary magazines. This book is preserved by a relative of Byrne. It was almost certainly used by Ms Cust and Byrne on their prescriptive advice to farmers with sick animals.



## Brendan Gardiner

### MVB MRCVS

Brendan Gardiner, MVB MRCVS, graduated in 1973 from UCD Veterinary School.

He is a Large Animal Veterinary Practitioner in Mountbellew, Co. Galway to date.

He is a member of the Aleen Cust Memorial Society.

**Lecture Title:** In search of Aleen's grave.

**Lecture Abstract:** It was astonishing that Aleen Cust was buried in an unrecorded grave in 1937 and not officially registered at any of the churches or graveyards in Jamaica. The Aleen Cust Memorial Society searched for eighteen months and, by pure chance, on the 1st of December 2021, we found her grave. This is one of our proudest achievements and was part of our mission statement.



## Elizabeth Clayton

Elizabeth Clayton is a native of Athleague, Co. Roscommon. She qualified as a Vet in 1988 and currently lives and works in Co. Clare. She has a keen interest in the history of counties Roscommon and Galway.

**Lecture Title:** Mr William Byrne (Willie), MRCVS – A Profile.

**Lecture Abstract:** William A. Byrne, MRCVS (1863-1910) was born in Co. Roscommon and established a successful Veterinary Practice in Castlestrange near Athleague, Co. Roscommon. He was an accomplished veterinary practitioner who had involvement in equine sports and national and veterinary politics. He played a pivotal role in the life of Ms Aleen Cust, MRCVS, and his progressive attitudes and practical support enabled her to succeed in a male-dominated profession. This presentation outlines the details of his life and pays tribute to this charismatic and interesting person.



## Dr Denis G. Marnane

Dr Denis G. Marnane is editor of the Tipperary Historical Journal and has written on all aspects of the county's history. Among his publications are a two-volume history of Mid-West Tipperary; two volumes covering 1914-23: The 3rd Brigade - a history of the

Volunteers/IRA in South Tipperary, 1913-21 (2018) and The Civil War in County Tipperary (2021). He is a former board member of the National Library of Ireland and in co-operation with Mary Guinan Darmody of Tipperary Studies, Tipperary County Library Service, has produced the 'Finding Tipperary' series of publications, of which the most recent is County Tipperary 1921-1923, a history in 60 documents.

**Lecture Title:** 'And the Band Turned Out': the Tipperary background of Aleen Cust.

**Lecture Abstract:** Aleen Cust spent the first ten years of her life in Tipperary. Her father Leopold was the first resident agent for the Tipperary estate (about 8,600 acres) of the Smith-Barry family, whose Irish residence was at Fota in Cobh. The Custs lived at Cordangan Manor, a small country house a short distance from Tipperary town.

This talk discusses Leopold Cust's unusual background in the context of his Irish job, the nature of his work in Tipperary and the tensions engendered between him and sections of local opinion. None of this made an easy background to a childhood. Given Aleen Cust's age when her father died suddenly, its impact must have been very difficult, made a good deal worse by the reaction of the local community. It would not have been surprising if she had no further contact with Ireland.



## Mary Burke

Mary Burke is a former teacher and a native of Tuam with a lifelong interest in history, sparked by an inspirational female history teacher in secondary school. A graduate in History from University College Galway, she has been a regular contributor to the

Tuam Herald newspaper on a broad range of subjects. Mary has written articles for the Tuam and Claremorris history journals as well as the recent War of Independence Supplement in the Tuam Herald, and she researched some historical women of note of North Galway for the Women Who Dared magazine produced this year. Galway history and heritage are of particular interest to Mary, with the contributions of local people to their communities at home and abroad the focus of ongoing research.

**Lecture Title:** The d'Arcy Diary: A short Sojourn on Lough Mask with Aleen Cust and friends.

**Lecture Abstract:** A recently unearthed notebook in the possession of Angela d'Arcy, whose family lived in Newforest, Kilkerrin, contains a handwritten account of a four-day camping trip on the shores of Lough Mask in August 1913. Accompanying Aleen were Charlie Bellew and Willie d'Arcy, members of the local gentry, along with another gentleman called Moran. The diary contains verses written by Aleen in her distinctive penmanship where she displays a playful side to her character as she pokes fun at her companions, the local stationmaster and their attempts to forage for their meals. This new discovery not only uncovers another facet to her character, but also displays her continuing disregard for the social norms and etiquette that was expected of women of her class in the early years of the 20th century.



## Carmel Connolly

Dr Carmel Connolly, NUI, Galway. Her interests include the Early Modern Atlantic World, Black Women during and after Slavery, and History through Art.



### Ascinta Kilroy

Dr Ascinta Kilroy qualified as a vet from Dublin Veterinary College, UCD, in June 1974. She then worked in a GP practice in Gort, Co. Galway until 1979 when she joined the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, working in Co. Clare, mainly in the

Burren. Ascinta retired in 2017 and she now does some contract work for the Department and she also farms.



## Donal Connolly MRCVS

Donal Connolly is originally of West Cork extraction and has been based in Gort, Co. Galway, since qualification from UCD in 1974. His interest in Aleen Cust developed in 1995 because of a thesis he undertook on feminisation of the veterinary profession as part of a degree course undertaken experientially to gather better traction on training and education at the time.

More interest was garnered with the Aleen Cust Conference in 2013, organised in conjunction with the Roscommon Lamb Festival, at which he was invited to speak. This interest continued after a visit to the Herriot Museum in 2016 and a desire to do something similar in the West of Ireland.

Finally, as part of the newly established Aleen Cust Memorial Society, he and fellow members wanted her legacy recognised and her name remembered in perpetuity. To promote her memory, the Society decided to hold a conference in 2022 to celebrate her admittance to the RCVS in 1922, her centenary year.



## Dr Orla Flynn

Dr Orla Flynn is the first President of Atlantic Technological University (ATU).

She served as President of GMIT from March 2020 to March 2022 having previously served as Vice President for External Affairs

in Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) for six years.

Prior to that she led the CIT Crawford College of Art and Design for 8 years following periods as Head of School of Humanities (3 years) and Head of Department of Media Communications (5 years) at CIT.

She was also a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics and Computing for 13 years at CIT.

Dr Flynn holds undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in Mathematical Physics and Computer Science from University College Cork, an MA in Management in Education from Waterford Institute of Technology and a PhD from the University of Limerick.

She is a director on the Boards of THEA and HEANet, and has just completed two years on the board of Galway Chamber of Commerce.



## **Cllr Eileen Mannion**

Cllr Eileen Mannion is Leas Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council. She has been a member of Galway County Council since 2009 representing Connemara. Eileen served as Cathaoirleach in 2017/2018 and served as Leas Cathaoirleach 2013/2014.

She is a member of Governing Authority of NUIG and Chair of NUIG Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.



### **Cllr Laurence Fallon**

Cllr Laurence Fallon is the Leas Cathaoirleach of Roscommon County Council. He is a farmer and County Councillor for the Athlone Municipal District in South Roscommon.



## **Cllr Roger Kennedy**

### **Cathaoirleach Tipperary County Council**

First elected South Tipperary County Council in 2004, currently sitting on Housing Strategic Policy Committee,

Planning Strategic Policy committee, Audit Committee, Tipperary Educational Board, member Education Training Board Ireland. I am very heavily involved and committed to Tipperary GAA and this is the first time representing the people of Tipperary as Cathaoirleach of Tipperary County Council.



## Virginia Teehan

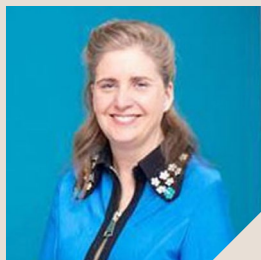
Virginia Teehan is a cultural leader with significant experience in the fields of heritage protection and interpretation with a wealth of executive and non-executive experience across museums and galleries and universities. Virginia took over the post

of CEO of the Heritage Council in February 2019.

Prior to taking up position at the Heritage Council, worked as Director of Cultural Projects at University College Cork where she developed several cross-disciplinary cultural projects connecting the University's research profile with the wider community. Virginia was Executive Producer for the RTÉ/UCC award winning three-part documentary, *The Atlas of the Irish Revolution* a major collaboration which brought history and heritage to wide audience. A professional archivist and curator, Virginia was appointed, University Archivist at UCC, in 1991. From 2003-2009, Virginia was Director of the Museum, Limerick. The Museum was awarded Irish Museum of the Year during Virginia's tenure.

As a curator, researcher and lecturer, Virginia has lectured and published extensively on art-history a special interest in the Irish Arts and Crafts Movement. She has curated over eighty exhibitions within Ireland, the UK, France, Germany and USA.

In May 2022 Virginia was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy.



## Dr Sinéad McCoolle

Dr Sinéad McCoolle Historian, Curator and author has worked in the area of Irish culture, arts and public history for almost three decades. She is the author of several book including *Hazel, A Life of Lady Lavery, Guns and Chiffon, No*

*Ordinary Women* and *Easter Widows*. Among the award winning exhibitions she has curated include 1 man 100,000 item - Jackie Clarke Collection in Ballina County Mayo; 'Lady Lavery - Society and Politics' (1996) and 'Passion and Politics - The Salon Revisited' (2010) for the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin; Mná 1916-2016 - the 2016 national centenary touring exhibition and for the commemoration of the introduction of voting rights for women and their right to stand in parliamentary elections she curated: A Pop-Up Women's Museum - 100 years of Women in Politics and Public Life. Since 2021 she has been Curator of the Mna100.ie website on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and the Media. This is an online resource for podcasts, films, webinars, articles, photo essays relating to the role of women, 1921-1923 the final the part of the Government of Ireland's Decade of Centenaries Programme. She has been a member of the Expert Advisory Group on the Decade of Centenaries since 2012.



### Dr Martina Moloney

Martina Moloney was a career official in Irish Local Government where she worked for 37 years, including 11 years as County Manager/Chief Executive. She holds a BA and Masters in Public Management and a Doctorate in Governance. She

is passionate about community, economic and cultural development, including community heritage. Martina was appointed to the Heritage Council in November 2020 and was appointed as Chairperson in October 2021. She has served on a number of State Boards including EirGrid Plc, the Arts Council and the National Oversight and Audit Commission for Local Government. She also acted as Treasurer Burrenbeo Trust for a number of years.

**Lecture Title:** Celebrating untold stories.

**Lecture Abstract:** This short lecture will discuss the importance of telling and celebrating the untold aspects of our history.

# EXHIBITIONS, Vintage Displays and Play

There will be a number of Heritage exhibitions on display including **'Daoine agus Áit: Connecting our Communities'** is a bi-lingual iCAN project developed by 19 community groups in Galway, Mayo, Clare and Wicklow and co-funded by the National Museum of Ireland and the Heritage Officers for counties Clare, Galway and Wicklow, with grants from the Healthy Ireland Keep Well Campaign & Creative Ireland.

**'An Garda Síochána: Galway, 1922–2022'** This exhibition gives an insight into the founding of An Garda Síochána and how An Garda Síochána developed its own style of policing in Ireland since the foundation of the state. With a particular focus on County Galway and its Gaeltacht, the exhibition highlights how An Garda Síochána has contributed to building a safe and peaceful society, and how members of An Garda Síochána forge strong relationships with the local communities in which they work and live. Exhibition developed by An Garda Síochána, Galway County Council & Galway City Council.

**'An Bhean Ghlúine - Woman of the knee - Midwives'**. Emma Laffey, Skehana and District Heritage has researched the role, work and lives of community midwife from early 20th century. To date there has been very little written about these wonderful women, their dedication to midwifery and their patients often in very poor circumstances. The project consists of a small exhibition, ebook, short film and podcasts. The project is funded by the Heritage Council.

**Vintage Displays** - Mountbellew Vintage Club, North Galway Vintage Club, Kiltullagh Vintage Club and South Roscommon Vintage Club will have vintage displays on show during the conference.

**Play** - 'The Lone Furrow' will be performed by the Roscommon Drama Group at the Roscommon Arts Centre on August 18th, 19th and 20th at 8 pm. Funded by Roscommon County Council and Creative Ireland.

For further information please see: <https://tinyurl.com/5ntfb363>



# ROSCOMMON DRAMA GROUP

'A Lone Furrow' written by local man, Tommy Murray, captures the main events in the life of Aleen Cust, the first woman vet in Britain and Ireland, who practised in Athleague for over 20 years (1900-1923), but because she was a woman she was not allowed to register as a Veterinary Surgeon by the (all male) members of the Royal Council of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

William Byrne, an enlightened veterinary surgeon from Roscommon town who had a practice in Athleague, and whose monument stands in the Square, Roscommon, defied the RCVS and appointed her as his Veterinary assistant.

The play dramatizes her long struggle for recognition as a professional vet and the obstacles placed in her path, both locally and on a broader front. It is a local story of courage and persistence, needing to be told some 100 years on.

Roscommon Drama Group first presented the play to packed houses in 2019 and as this is the 100th anniversary of Aleen Cust receiving her hard-fought-Diploma and getting her name on the Register of Veterinary Surgeons, it is appropriate that the play would be presented again in conjunction with other events organised by the recently formed Aleen Cust Memorial Society to commemorate this extraordinary woman.

**To Book:**



This conference was organised by the Aleen Cust Society, Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council, and Atlantic Technological University. It has been supported by Veterinary Council of Ireland, UCD School of Veterinary Medicine, various heritage organisations, vintage clubs and community groups in the counties of Galway, Roscommon and Tipperary.

This conference is part funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Decade of Centenaries Local Authority Funding), Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council, Tipperary County Council, and Atlantic Technological University. It is an action of Galway County Council's Decade of Commemoration Strategy 2013-2023.



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe  
Galway County Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreacht  
The Heritage Council



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



UCD School of Veterinary Medicine  
Scoil an Leighis Tréidliachta UCD



Ólascail  
Teicneolaíochta  
an Atlantaigh  
Atlantic  
Technological  
University



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann  
Tipperary County Council



ŠKODA

