

AN INTERESTING PHOTO – ELTHAM, CIRCA 1940



This photo is set in the late 1930's or early 1940's. Our grandfather Mick Carrucan is front left and this photo is taken probably not long before he died around 1942. My grandmother Mary Carrucan (nee Sweeney) is left back. The lady in the front is Ellen Sweeney (whom we used to call Narna) - you can see the family resemblance between her and my grandmother Mary. She came to live at Eltham in the late thirties or early forties. She had married Will Hooley in 1923 and they had lived in the western district but he had died at a relatively young age of hydatids after being bitten by a dog (or so the story goes). She was a school teacher and had a great influence on our mother Betty.

When she became sick (probably something like cancer?), she moved to the old family home in Dalton St Eltham and spent her last years there. She would have been living there when this photo was taken.

Uncle Jack used to tell the story that Narna's husband was notoriously forgetful and on one occasion, he loaded up the jinker and went all the way into town. When asked by the storekeeper where his wife was, he had to confess that he had forgotten her. This was always a family joke from then on whenever Narna was around.

Peter Cuffley asked his mother about the identify of the other family in the photo. She thought the family were Brasiers or Braziers. She thought they lived for a while in a cottage owned by one of our relatives at Research. They look a bit dressed up just to have come from Research, unless they were at Eltham for something special. The other possibility is that they were one of the many cousins and other family links who regularly visited Eltham. Peter's mother and her sisters sometimes stayed there, and our grandmother would go to Black Rock for holidays with the Ryan family.

Peter Cuffley has provided the following information on Ellen Sweeney and Culla Hill. While not directly related to the Carrucan family tree, it is still interesting reading.

Ellen (Nelly or Narna) Sweeney was born on the 27th of October 1874, the daughter of John Francis Sweeney and Ellen Mary Kenney. She married Will Hooley (after 1920?) and consequently lost her job as a teacher. This led to the loss of Culla Hill, because Will was notoriously lazy and did little to earn money. Pat Sweeney from Perth tells me that when they visited in the 1930s, Narna and Will were living at Culla Hill. Will had his truck in the shed or barn and the Sweeney kids commented, 'Our Dad's got a truck like that - but IT goes out!'. I think Narna met Will when she was teaching in the Western District. He was born in Rutherglen in 1879 and had two sisters, Charlotte and Delphina who both became nuns. He was apparently rather neat and brought up in comfortable circumstances. Mum says he was proud of his family and that his two sisters were nuns. Your uncle told me that your grandfather, considered Narna to be the most responsible and capable member of the family, so he appointed her Executrix of his will. After she was left Agatha's quarter (Elizabeth Agatha Sweeney, 'Aunt Gatha', died in 1917), she paid each of the other members of the family for their portion, including Frank Sweeney, who took all the equipment away from the farm'. Jack said his mother (your grandmother) would not accept money for her share of Culla Hill, to try and help Narna keep the property. Both Narna and Mary were very attached to the place and both were very proud of the family history. Narna was fairly well off until she lent Will Hooley a considerable sum of money. He subsequently lost it all in a business venture, and this left her with only the farm. At this stage the Depression was at its worst and there was little interest in a small farm. At one time it was in the hands of six agents. Many years ago, Justus Jorgensen told me he looked at the place as a possible site for his artists colony, before he purchased the land that became 'Montsalvat'. I have a friend whose

father's family rented it at one stage. In the end, the house and 75 acres were sold for about two and a half thousand pounds (late 1930s). The will of John Francis Sweeney, dated 24th May 1909, leaves the property to Ann Foley, Agatha Sweeney, Ellen Sweeney (Executrix), Mary Sweeney, Thomas Sweeney, Frank Sweeney and Kathleen Sweeney.

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