

1996 – Jim and Helen Martin visit Fanore

It was mid morning on a clear day in the summer of 1996 when, approaching Galway, we phoned Fanore to see if it were convenient for us to drop in later. The warm response was encouraging for we did not know how we might be received.

So into the kartic limestone Burren country, the largest area of such in Western Europe, certainly the like of which we had never encountered. Roads lined with stone fences with the occasional shell of a famine-abandoned habitation in the distance, then houses alongside the glistening ocean.

"Look for the red door", they had said, and there it was. A stone dwelling with whitened walls and its red door!

An abandoned shell of a curragh, long past its Atlantic days was lying in the grass.

The door was flung open and there he stood, the other Jim or rather Jimmy as his family called him. He whose great grandfather and grandmother were my great great grandfather and grandmother. Across the years, across the oceans and the genes stood out with the resemblance notably marked! Nancy, seated by the fireplace completed the welcome.

It was an occasion to celebrate. "Have you ever had a true Irish Coffee?" Jimmy asked. We thought how better to celebrate!

In a while the door opened and in walked their son Patsy and a continuing friendship was commenced.

It was all too brief a brief visit, and armed with instructions for the road to the Cliffs of Moher we were on our way. But the bond was firm and the basis for our lasting contact established.

Jim and Helen Martin



Jim Martin with Patsy Carrucan and Patsy's parents Jim and Nancy – outside the red door!