

Finding the Homeland. [from the Wynne Family CD]

The Kilshannig Church, in 1993 operating as a craft centre, is difficult to find, a couple of miles out of town past the paint factory and up a dirt road that seems to lead nowhere. We'd given up trying, but in late twilight I made another effort and found it just on dark. It was an eerie feeling being, I believe, the first of the 'Wynne's to return to that place where our ancestors had been. As the sun set the faded white graves, mostly untended and jutting at crazy angles, some already fallen to the earth, was a beautiful and moving sight though the church itself is small and unspectacular.

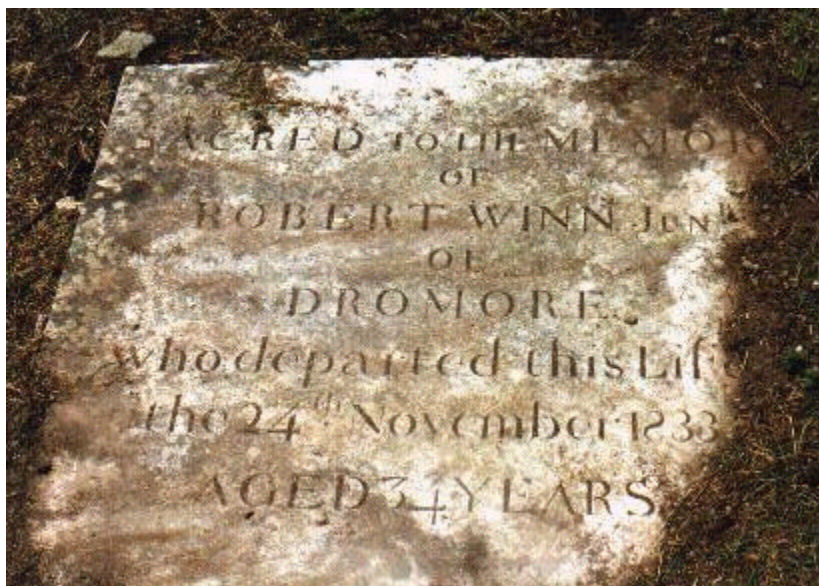
When we returned next day the caretaker of the records, Patricia Foote, the daughter of the old rector, showed us two 'Winn' graves around the old church and there are records of many Wynn, Winn, and Wynne births, deaths and marriages around that area but keeping to the Lutheran churches narrows the search considerably. Part of my journal entry for that time is reproduced below:

22nd June 1993 - The man in the off-licence gave me the directions and I found it, past the sugar factory and the abandoned factory then straight over the crossroad. And straight again, up a dirt road then went as the road turned, a small sign 'Kilshannig Crafts' and then it was the church, graves and rectory (down a long drive) It was late (nearly 9 pm) and the light was slanting across the stone weakly through the Celtic crosses and the jumble of oddly angled gravestones that looked like they'd been whitewashed with age

We did other things today today too – notably a drive down to Killarney and a look at a little of the Ring of Kerry – far too little really but a taste of the lakeland, but the best thing for me came later. After trying unsuccessfully to find Kilshannig Church I dropped Penny and the girls off at the B&B (2 acres in the heart of Mallow) and went looking again – and found it!

And found Patricia Foote who, eyes sparkling, left me to explore the graveyard while she changed from mowing. It took me a long time to find that flat stone – and she had already cleaned it up for me. Then she came back and invited me in for coffee and cake, telling me all about the church and her life...

23rd June 1993 - After a trip to Blarney Castle we drove back to Mallow to meet Patricia, and to show Penny and the girls the grave. Amazingly, Patricia had unearthed another 'Winn' grave overnight, that of a 14 year old girl named Elizabeth who died in 1794. She also had more records from Mallow which she had found. We agreed to meet in the Central Hotel and after a bowl of vegetable soup and a Guinness, she met us, gave us the material, and we said our sad goodbyes.



The grave of Robert Winn of Dromore



Warrick at the Kilshannig Chruch, July 1993.