



# ACHILL ORAL HISTORIES NEWS

## Christmas Edition 2022

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## An Achill Island Christmas

**Welcome to Achill Oral Histories News Christmas News 2022. A very merry Christmas to you and yours. Thank you very much for subscribing to our newsletter. We are delighted to be able to share with you the wonders of Achill Island as recounted by the Achill people in their own words in this special Christmas 2022 newsletter - their stories told their way.**

**We all have a tale to tell** Ireland has a long tradition of storytelling. The *seanachí* (storyteller) of times gone by had a deep connection with landscape, people and place. In the same way, those who have so generously shared their stories with us at [Achill Oral Histories](#) are the protagonists in their own storytelling. Each unique and life affirming oral account is testament to how the human spirit prevails, the 'extraordinary ordinary' which show the deep connection the Achill people, both past and present, have with Ireland's biggest island.

## **ACHILL CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS**



### **Lá na Dreoilín - The Day Of The Wren**



DREOILÍN, DREOILÍN,  
 RÍ NA N-ÉAN,  
 LÁ FHÉILE STÍOFÁIN  
 A BAISTEADH AN T-ÉAN,  
 IS MÓR É A MHAIRÍN,  
 IS BEAG É FÉIN,  
 TABHAIR DOM PINGIN,  
 AS UCHT MHC DÉ,  
 'S NÁ LIQ AMACH FOLAMH MÉ!

Hear first hand about how on 26th December, St Stephen's Day, the children in Achill would dress up as straw men on Lá na Dreoilín (The Day Of The Wren) The children would visit the homes of neighbours in Achill chanting the Lá na Dreoilín rhyme collecting change to be spent in Achill Sound. Listen to [Tom Johnston's beautiful account](#) of Lá na Dreoilín when he was a boy growing up in Achill. Might it be time to revive this tradition? Let us know what you think! Email Achill Oral Histories [info@achilloralhistories.com](mailto:info@achilloralhistories.com)

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 history archive

## Nollag na Mban - Little Christmas, 6th January

Christmas begins early December in Achill with the festive celebrations stretching well into the new year. 'Little Christmas', held on 6th January, better known as 'Epiphany or 'Nollag na Mban' is part of the festive celebrations. On this day, the traditional roles of men and women were reversed to enable the women to have a full day off to enjoy themselves while the men had to cook and clean. Maybe every day should be 'Nollaig Na Mna Agus Fir' - Women and Men's Christmas! Listen to first hand accounts of Nollag na Mban of this fascinating tradition on [RTE archives](#).



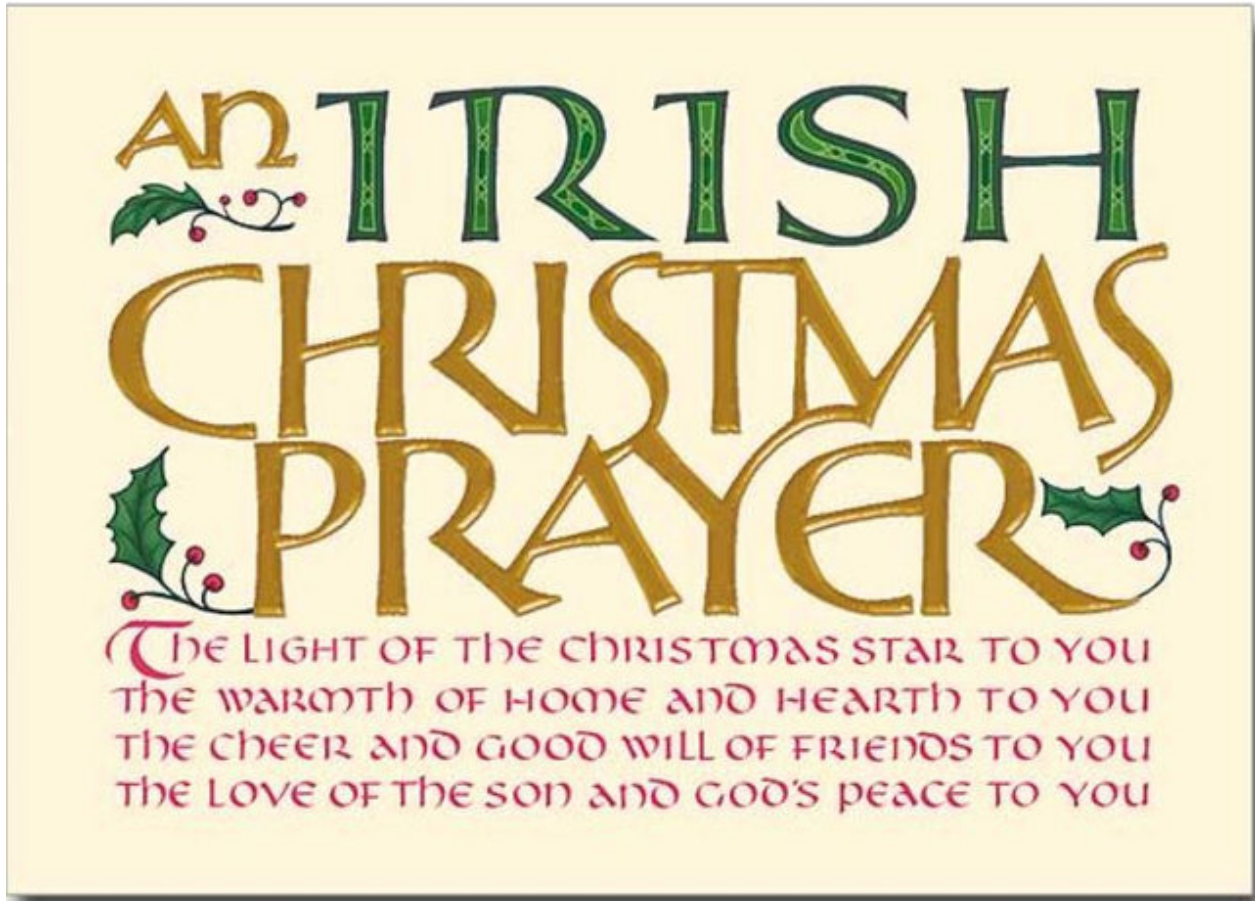
## Seminal December Events Which Have Shaped Achill's Story

**8th Dec 1943** Birthday of Achill born celebrated poet John F Deane To hear John talk about his memories of Achill life, [click here](#).

**21st Dec 1917** Birthday of writer and Nobel prize winner Heinrich Böll. To hear acclaimed artist René Böll discuss the importance of Achill to himself, his father Heinrich and the Böll family, [click here](#).

**23rd Dec 1834** Rev Edward Nangle opened first school in Achill (Slievemore). Nangle, founder of the Achill Mission Colony, was a controversial figure who made it his mission to convert Achill's Catholic population to Protestantism. To find out more about Edward Nangle, [click here](#).





## Looking forward to 2023

**More oral history interviews 2023** Our next round of interviews will take place 2nd - 6th January 2023. So whether you're a current resident of Achill Island, have lived on the island before and/or are part of the Achill diaspora, we'd love to hear from you. If you would like to share your story of Achill Island life with us as part of our oral history collection, please get in touch with Dr Angela Maye-Banbury [info@achilloralhistories.com](mailto:info@achilloralhistories.com)

**Public engagement event spring 2023** We will be holding two public engagement events, one in Achill and another online (Zoom), which will give everyone a chance to find out more about oral history and Achill Oral Histories. Details of how to register to follow,

**Nollaig Shona Daoibh Agus Athbhliain Faoi Mhaise  
Daoibh**

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