

Billy Hogan RIP
Funeral Mass
Rathdowney Church
Friday 18th March 2022

William (Billy) Hogan, Conoboro Road, Rathdowney, Co. Laois. March 16th 2022. Peacefully at home in the presence of his loving family. Predeceased by his brothers and sisters. Sadly missed by his loving wife Anne, sons Kevin and Eddie, daughters Aíne and Catherine, sons-in-law Michael, Paul and LLOYD, grandchildren Yanna, Jackson, Billy, Ellie, Alfie and brother Tom, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

Symbols;

Family photograph, hurl, playing cards Farmers journal

Readers eddie and Aidam

Thank HSE workers and carers

When Kieran O'Sullivan called me early on Wednesday morning to tell me that Billy had died I was actually walking along the coastline looking out at the ocean in west Cork where I had gone to celebrate a wedding on Wednesday afternoon. There was something about the scene I was watching and the news of Billy Hogan's death after more than ninety years of life which in some way merged together. For those of us who live in the most inland county in Ireland the sea perhaps holds a even greater fascination for us.

So I'm going to ask you to in your imagination come with me to scene I was witnessing when I heard of Billy's death. I would like you to imagine yourself standing on the seashore, watching the waves come in. at a certain point you fix your eyes on one particular wave which is a long way out. Tall and majestic, it stands out from the others by reason of its frothy mane. Full of power and beauty, it is capable of carrying enormous weights on its crested back. You watch it roll forward, driven

by the wind and pulled by the gravity of the moon. As it moves forward bits of it begin to spill off. However, as it nears the shore, it gathers all its resources together and raises itself to its full height. Then it touches the bottom and topples over, spilling out its contents down to the very last drop. These rush forward towards you with much hissing and seething. It delivers the last drop right at your feet. It has exhausted itself completely. It has given itself away totally. It has been spent utterly. Then, having gently caressed the sand at your feet, it immediately begins to withdraw. Its work done, slowly and without fuss, it ebbs away. It slips back to join the great ocean whence it came. There it will be re-assembled in some new combination of molecules and droplets, and on another day, it will be washed up on another shore.

So it is when an older person dies. Once they were strong, healthy and laden with human freight. But at some point, they go over the top and a decline sets in. Finally, the shore of death looms up ahead. But that is alright for their work is done. They have given themselves away completely. They have nothing left. They withdraw gently from us, and after death delivers them onto the shore of eternity they return to God, the Source of their being. If the old are feeble and a little troublesome at times, it is because they have given away their all. Their work is done. Even though Christ was only thirty-three when he died, he was able to say, "Father, I have finished the work you gave me to do." It is a great blessing to be able to say that one has finished one's life's work. Last Wednesday morning, Billy gently slipped away back to the ocean from which he came, back to God the source of his being.

When someone lives to be almost 91 years of age, there is a sense of completeness of fullness, and notwithstanding the sadness which is felt by family and loved ones their funeral Mass allows us to truly celebrate their life's journey. Despite living well in to his 91st year, in modern terminology, the carbon footprint of Billy Hogan's life was very small

indeed. Apart from a short time spent working in England, Billy lived in within a very short radius of this church here in Rathdowney.

Billy's journey began on the 6th of August 1931 when the youngest of twelve children was born to the Michael and Catherine Hogan family of Coolowley. Like many young people of his generation Billy went over to work in England. I have a memory of Anne telling me some years ago that work was not the only motivation for Billy going to England. It was not so much a case of what he would find in England but rather who he would find in England. As neighbours Billy Hogan and Anne Jones had known each other from their childhood days. You came back from England to get married, and I understand that your wedding was the first one celebrated by the newly ordained Fr. Seamus McEvoy, another neighbour's child. Billy and Anne returned to England where Catherine was born. The intention was always to return home and initially they lived in Killasmeestia before buying the house down in down in the Conoboro. Billy's working life was mainly spent at the creamery in Donaghmore and later in Portlaoise. He also spent time working in the with his brother-in-law Christy in his Chimney business. Later still Billy worked in the meat factory and after retiring from there he missed it so much that he was re-employed as a maintenance man in the factory. Billy Hogan has been described to me as a man who could in his heyday turn his hands to anything. Just like that tall wave out in the ocean that is at its full strength and power.

And of course, it was not just work that he used to those powerful hands for. He was also a stylish and accomplished hurler. He was the last surviving member of the victorious Kyle team which won the 1951 Laois Senior Hurling title. Billy Hogan was barely 20 years old at the time. He later also played for Borris in Ossory and Kilcotton. Given the very strict rules there were around only playing for your own parish I'm not exactly sure how Billy ended up playing for Kyle which was not only a different parish but also a different diocese. I'm sure some of the local

GAA historians will have found an explanation for that somewhere along the line.

Billy hogan was in many ways born into a traditional Irish family where certain values and traditions were always important. One of those was faith. Two of Billy's sisters were to become missionary religious sisters working out in Tasmania. When I first came to know Billy and Anne it was when I was bringing communion to Billy's sister, sr. Sarah whom they cared for in the Conoboro in the last years of her life. I know that Billy's own faith was very important to him and as we gather here today to say farewell to Billy we do so in the knowledge that just as the waves, having done their job and completed their work, return to the ocean and the source of their being so too Billy Hogan returns to the God who first created him. With St. Paul in that second reading today, Billy can also say

'The time of my departure has come, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race' I have kept the faith.

Billy, you have and now may your gentle soul rest in peace.

Healthcare staff HSE to thank