

The Fuldiew Seat

Cushendun



The Fuldiew Seat is located on the north side of the Riverside car park in Cushendun.

The seat was unveiled by Mary McNeill - McAuley of Glendun, in her 100th year, on the 11th July 2013.

It is known as the Fuldiew Seat, because it is linked to the Fuldiew Story and to the Fuldiew Tombstone in the graveyard of St. Patrick's Church, Craigagh, Cushendun.



THE FULDEW TOMBSTONE

The Fuldiew tombstone lies about 30 feet from the west wall of St. Patrick's Church in Craigagh Cemetery. It is an unusual slate tombstone lying flat on the ground.



The handwritten inscription on it reads (in the spelling of the day):

*CHARLES MC ALASTERS BURR
ING PLACE
HERE LIES THE
BODDY OF JOHN
HIS SON DIED 11
MARCH 1803
AGED 18 YEARS
YOUR SHIP
LOVE IS MOR
ED HEAD AND
STARN FOR A
FULDEW*

At the bottom of the stone there is a crude drawing of a sailing ship, and on the left of the ship is a sketch of a goat (or it may be a stag).

'Full Due' is a nautical term, with this possible meaning - When a ship was taken out of commission, for any reason or at the end of a sea journey, the crew received all the payment & leave that accrued during the voyage - they received what was due to them in full - the 'full due'.

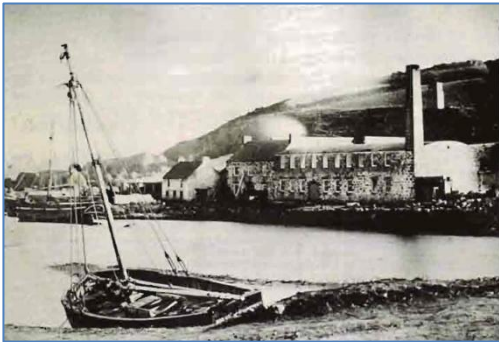
THE FULDEW STORY

John McAlaster, an eighteen year old seaman from Cushendun, had a childhood sweetheart. He and she had arranged to marry when he returned from his latest voyage in 1803. The bride-to-be journeyed to Glenravel to have her wedding clothes made. She had a cousin there who was a seamstress.

When the schooner anchored in Cushendun Bay, a small rowing boat was lowered and approached shore. It was assumed that John McAlaster was coming home to be married. A number of people gathered on the shore to observe and to welcome him.

As the boat neared, a bundle covered with a sheet could be discerned. Silence and a sense of foreboding fell on the assembled people.

When the boat landed, the bundle was indeed John – the body of the dead sailor, who had been killed on board, when he fell from the rigging. The body was claimed by his father, most likely waked as was the fashion then and, the next day, buried in the graveyard at Craigagh Churchyard.



Harbour Cushendun mid 1800's
R. McDonnell Cushendun

John's bride-to-be was unaware of the tragic happening, as she travelled from Glenravel back to Cushendun. When she returned home, she heard the awful news. It is said that, at dusk she left her home unaccompanied.

Her family, it may be presumed, thought that she was going to visit either John's grave or the McAlaster family.

When she did not return that night family members went in search of her and found her dead body stretched over her sweetheart's grave. They noticed the rough etching and drawing on the headstone.

According to the legend, after completing the inscription, the girl died of a broken heart.

A nineteenth century traveller, who collected folk stories of the Glens, gives us an alternative ending to the story. - It was that the body of the dead, drowned girl was found on the rocks at Cushendun.

(Acknowledgement - taken mainly from a local publication 'Lookin Back – The Parish of St. Patrick' Cushendun 1848-2010')



Cushendun around 1895
Bridget McSparran Cushendun

REFLECTIONS

The Fuldeiw Story is one handed down within the Cushendun area for over two hundred years. Like many tales from the Irish oral tradition, it has 'not lost anything in the telling'.

We may assume that the main points of the story are based on fact, on a real happening, but with some embellishments over the centuries.

Questions that many people ask and, to date, have not been answered, include - Who was the lady in the story? Where did she come from? Where is she laid to rest? Did she do all or some of the writing and illustrating on the tombstone in Craigagh Graveyard? What do the drawings symbolise and mean?

We may be naturally conditioned to search for truth, but with the Fuldeiw Story, some believe that it is, perhaps, better not knowing all the facts and so the legend may be left intact for Cushendun's generations to come.

One thing is certain – the story is unique to this area and so a Fuldeiw seat, close to the sea, is an appropriate reminder and celebration of a Cushendun story.



Compiled by
Cushendun & District Development Association
Glenmona House, Cushendun BT44 0PX
Email: cdda.antrimglens@btopenworld.com

**Promoting the People & Environment
of the Cushendun Area**



© CDDA 2015