

DONEGAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



ETHNA CARBERY (ANNE JOHNSTON)
(1864 – 1902)

Ethna Carbery was born Anna Johnston on 3 December 1864 in Ballymena Co. Antrim. Her parents Robert Johnson and Marjorie Magee later moved to Belfast and Robert became a successful contractor and timber importer. By 1890 their home 'Lisnarveen' on the Antrim Road was frequented by leading figures in the Nationalist and cultural life of the city inspiring in Ethna a great love of Ireland. She joined the Gaelic League, Kichham Literary Society and the Irishman's Association. During 1895 she and the writer Alice Milligan edited The Northern Patriot. From January 1896 to March 1899 they produced a monthly review called The Shan Van Vocht - an allegorical name for Ireland. Most of the patriotic writing and poems published there were by the editors themselves.

In August 1901 Ethna married the Mountcharles born writer Seamus Mc Manus and came to live in Donegal. But their life together was brief - she died at Easter 1902 and is buried in Frosses.

Ethna published 2 volumes of stories 'The Passionate Hearts' and in 'The Celtic Past'. Her book of poems 'The Fair Minds of Erin' was published posthumously by Seamus and it became an instant best seller.