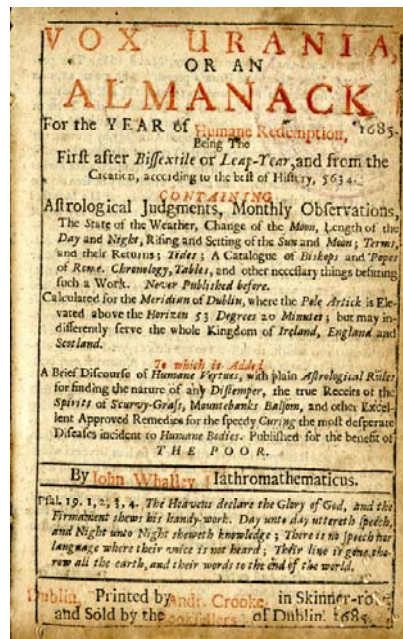


HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

BRID FITZPATRICK



(Image source -courtesy of Dublin City Public Libraries)

JOHN WHALLEY (1653-1724)

Born in April 1653, Whalley was the son of a Cromwellian Adventurer in Ireland. He came to Dublin in 1682. He was originally a shoemaker turned Astrologer/Almanac Maker. He was put in the pillory in 1688 over a political offence (he had printed and published an account of the Prince of Orange's landing in England) and in 1690-1 lived in London as a coffeehouse keeper. He returned to write vitriolic abuse at the defeated Catholic Irish. He engaged in several disputes with other Almanac Makers – most notably Andrew Cumpsty and John Coats; Cumpsty for plagiarizing one of his almanacs and Coats for forecasting Whalley's death. From 1714 he printed *Whalley's Newsletter* in which he satirized public figures. His chosen successor to his almanac writing was his student and protégé Isaac Butler who continued to produce it until his own death.

Whalley was also involved in the preparation and selling of quack medicines including his 'famous Elixir Pills' and the sardonically named 'Catholick Pills' (for purging). He advertised these and other 'cures' in many of his almanacs. In 1712 he married his last wife Mary Galloway. She carried on the 'medical' business after his death.

Whalley was undoubtedly the most controversial and productive of the Irish Almanac Writers. Swift's lines on Partridge were adapted to Whalley when he died: -

*Here five feet deep, lies on his back,
A cobbler, starmonger and quack.
Who to the stars in pure good will,
Does to his best look upward still.*

Following his death April 1724 a bookshop, 'The Whalley's Head' was named after him.