

Long search for family pays off to tune of £1m

THE death of an elderly West Cork woman intestate in London 16 years ago has prompted a major search for relatives in Ireland, Britain and the US to share in an estate worth more than £1m.

The late Mary O'Shea from Cahirkeem, Eyries on the rugged Beara Peninsula died childless in London in 1983 at the age of 93 leaving behind an estate of stocks and shares worth more than stg £900,000.

According to Welsh genealogist, Peter Birchwood who has spent seven years working on the case, he has now traced over 40

By **BARRY ROCHE**

of Ms O'Shea's relatives in Ireland, Britain and the United States who will now share in her legacy.

Mary O'Shea, one of a family of 14 brothers and sisters born to John O'Shea and Margaret O'Neill, travelled to London in 1917. There she met and married Australian, Gilbert Nathan who left her £60,000 when he died in 1942. Through playing the stock market she had increased this to £900,000 by 1983.

Although Ms O'Shea, or Mrs Nathan as she became, was known as Catherine —

the name of one of Mary O'Shea's sisters who had emigrated to the US — Mr Birchwood is satisfied that she was Mary O'Shea born in Cahirkeem in 1890.

Last month — after seven visits to Ireland — Mr Birchwood found a birth certificate that matched in Eyeries and later found relatives.

"All her brothers and sisters are dead but she has a number of nieces and nephews and grandnieces and nephews in Cork — there are also a lot of relatives in America — I have now completed the family tree," said Mr Birchwood.