The annals of the Four Masters tell that Feilim played a central role in O'Byrne's orchestration of Hugh O'Donnell's (qv) first escape from Dublin castle in January 1591. Prior to O'Donnell's escape, Feilim – the Four Masters relate – visited him often and the two became firm friends. O'Donnell managed to reach Castlekevin, where Rose told Feilim (who is called the master of Castlekevin) to pretend to hold O'Donnell prisoner until O'Byrne arrived from Glenmalure. But the flooding of the Avonmore prevented O'Byrne from getting to Castlekevin. In the meantime English troops arrived at Castlekevin and arrested O'Donnell. A letter of about 1597, from Arthur Severus O'Toole (qv) to Queen Elizabeth, told a very different tale. He never mentioned Feilim at all, but said that Barnaby placed O'Donnell in irons and handed him over to the English.

In spite of this failure, O'Byrne and Hugh O'Neill (qv), 2nd earl of Tyrone, organised the second escape of O'Donnell on 6 January 1592. After O'Donnell had recovered from the ordeal of his escape, he was escorted into Meath by a company of O'Byrne's horse commanded by Feilim. It is likely, though, that Feilim and Rose had to use all their persuasive skills to bring Barnaby over to O'Byrne's side some time during early 1596. Their task was probably made easier by the occupation of Castlekevin by a government garrison.

In September 1596 Barnaby and Feilim threw their weight behind the campaign of O'Byrne and Domhnall MacMurrough Kavanagh (qv) (d. 1632), lord of Leinster, threatening to besiege Castlekevin before burning throughout much of east Wicklow and south Dublin. Barnaby died of cholera on 17 January 1597 in Glenmalure, weakening O'Byrne's cause. This prompted O'Byrne swiftly to shore up his alliance with the O'Tooles of Castlekevin by arranging the marriage of his daughter Margaret O'Byrne (d. p.1601), the widow of Walter Reagh Fitzgerald (d. 1595), to Feilim. Later that year Captain Thomas Lee (qv) was granted custody of the inheritance, as well as the wardship and the future marriage of Barnaby's heir, Luke. But Feilim was the de facto lord of Fartry, receiving a pardon that included Luke – named as Fiach – on 24 December 1597.
When Feilim's brother-in-law Feilim O'Byrne (qv) of Crioch Raghnuill (d. 1631) re-entered the Nine Years War during early 1599, the O'Tooles of Castlekevin duly followed their kinsman. On 29 May 1600 Feilim of Castlekevin obtained a pardon for his followers, the Harolds and his mother, but he did not remain at peace for long. The government offensive of the winter of 1600–01, however, brought Feilim O'Byrne and his remaining followers to the realisation that war could not be won. In March 1601 he surrendered before the Dublin council, to be followed later by Feilim of Castlekevin and Domhnall MacMurrough Kavanagh. On 13 July 1601 Feilim of Castlekevin, along with his wife and mother, received their pardon, resolving like the O'Byrnes of Crioch Raghnuill to remain at peace permanently. The last mention of Feilim was in his pardon of 14 December 1603 – indicating that he probably died some time after that.