

# The Corran Herald

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY BALLYMOTE HERITAGE GROUP

ISSUE NO.43

2010/2011

PRICE €6.00



**21st Annual**  
*Ballymote  
Heritage  
Weekend*

**Friday 30th July to Monday 2nd August 2010  
In Coach House Hotel, Ballymote, Co. Sligo.**

**FRIDAY 30st JULY**

**8.30 p.m OFFICIAL OPENING**

Dr Bruce Arnold, writer and  
journalist, Chief Critic with the  
Irish Independent



**LECTURE**

**“Derek Hill:  
English Painter in Ireland”**  
Dr Bruce Arnold

**SATURDAY 31st JULY**

**9.00 a.m OUTING**

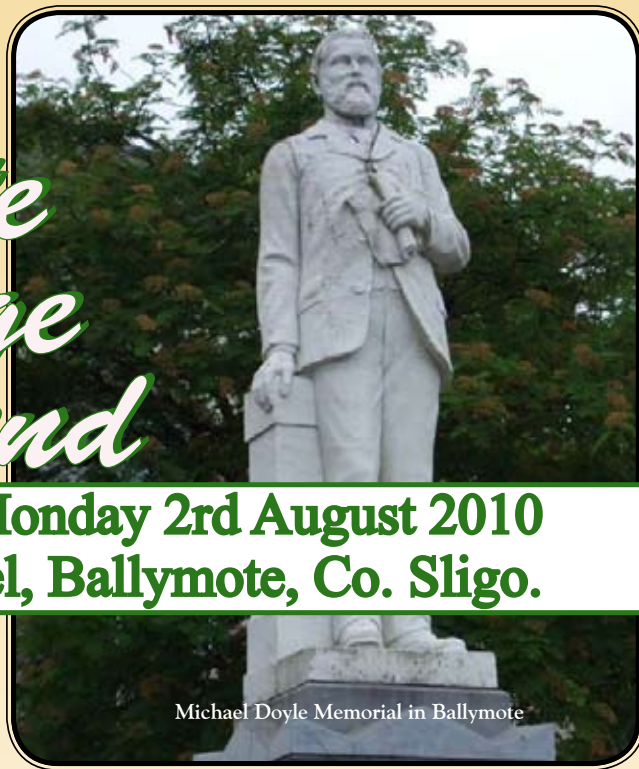
**Co Cavan, including the grave of  
Bishop Bedell of Kilmore, Church  
of Ireland cathedral in Kilmore,  
Catholic cathedral in Cavan  
town, and Corravahan House.**  
Guide: Frank Tivnan MA,  
Historian

**8.30 p.m LECTURE**

**“Aspects of Ireland’s Cultural  
Heritage”**  
Michael Conry,  
Soil scientist and agronomist.



Supported by  
Sligo Co Council Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2010



Michael Doyle Memorial in Ballymote

**SUNDAY 1st AUGUST**

**2.00 p.m OUTING**

Streedagh and Creevykeel  
Guide: Mark Keane, archaeologist

**8.30 p.m LECTURE**

**“Selling Ballymote: Manuscripts  
and Society in Northwest Ireland  
1500-1550”**  
Professor Raymond Gillespie  
History Department,  
NUI Maynooth



**MONDAY 2nd AUGUST**

**9.00 a.m OUTING**

Castletown House and Newbridge  
Silverware (including museum)

**8.30 p.m LECTURE**

**“Landscapes of Western Ireland: the  
Large-Scale Influence of Climate”**  
Professor Peter Coxon, MRIA, FTCD,  
Geography Department, TCD

Lectures €10.00

Transport available  
for outings

Further information from,  
071-9189275 or 071 9183380

# The Corran Herald

Annual Publication of Ballymote Heritage Group

Compiled and Published by Ballymote Heritage Group

Editor: James Flanagan

Design, Typesetting and Printing: Orbicon Print, Collooney.

Cover Design and Artwork: Brenda Friel

Issue No 43 2010/2011

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The Corran Herald wishes to sincerely thank all those who have written articles or contributed photographs or other material for this Issue

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# Sligo Protestants and the First World War

by Pdraig Deignan

In the years before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, most of the Protestant population of Sligo town and county were campaigning in defence of the union between Ireland and Britain. The total population of Sligo town at the time was about 11,000 of which over 1,700, or over 15 percent were members of Protestant Churches.<sup>1</sup> The total population of County Sligo at the time was over 84,000 and Protestants numbered about 8,000 or approximately 10 percent of the total.<sup>2</sup> The Protestant population of Sligo was more of a community than a class. However, for all Protestants in Sligo, their respective churches proved to be the most important for fostering community spirit and whatever their class status the majority of Sligo Protestants were Unionist and were opposed to the Third Home Rule Bill.

Before the First World War Unionists in Ireland were represented by the Irish Unionist Party and the Irish Unionist Alliance (I.U.A.). Unionism was well organised in Sligo and by the end of February 1914 the total membership of the I.U.A. in Sligo had reached over 3,000.<sup>3</sup> There was never a sufficient Unionist vote in Sligo to secure the election of an M.P. from the county in the early part of the twentieth century. However, Unionists were able to gain representation on Sligo Borough Corporation through Robert Smylie.<sup>4</sup>

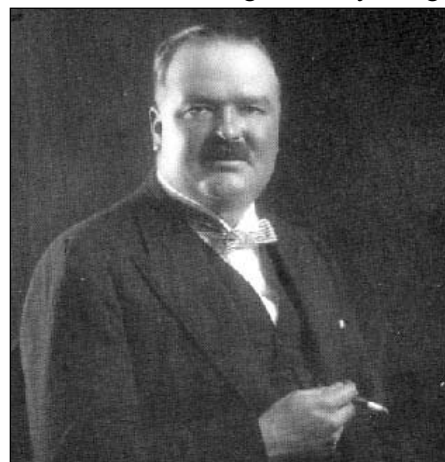
On 25 May 1914 the Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.) under John Redmond secured self-government for Ireland when the House of Commons passed the Irish Home Rule Bill for the third time only requiring the king's signature to become law. Irish Unionists led by Edward Carson were determined to continue to resist Home Rule, especially in Ulster, where the majority of Unionists resided. To demonstrate their resolve against Home Rule, the Unionists in Ulster had formed the Ulster Volunteer Force in January 1913. To ensure that Home Rule was implemented, Irish Nationalists had formed the Irish Volunteers in November 1913. In February 1914 the mayor of Sligo John Jinks, a strong

supporter of the I.P.P., had founded a branch of the Irish Volunteers in Sligo and by the beginning of August there were over 3,000 members of the Sligo Volunteers.<sup>5</sup>

Britain's declaration of war on 4 August 1914 prevented conflict between Nationalists and Unionists and both the Ulster Volunteers and the Irish Volunteers were encouraged by their political leaders to support Britain in wartime.

In an editorial on 8 August 1914 the *Sligo Independent*, a supporter of Irish Unionism, praised both the Ulster Volunteers and the Irish Volunteers for backing Britain.<sup>6</sup> The *Sligo Independent* was always wary of the fact that it expressed the sentiments of the Protestant and Unionist minority in Sligo and wished to give the impression at the start of the war that the differences between Nationalists and Unionists were not as fundamental as many believed.

A typical example of many Unionists from the south and west of Ireland at the start of the First World War was the Sligo Unionist, Major Bryan Cooper. Cooper was a member of a large Protestant landowning family in Sligo and until December 1910 Cooper had been an M.P. representing South County Dublin and he had campaigned in Britain and Ireland against Home Rule.<sup>7</sup> Cooper was impressed by Redmond's promise of support for Britain and immediately informed the press of his intention to join the National Volunteers and urged every Sligo



Brian Cooper

Unionist to do the same.<sup>8</sup> However, Cooper, a passionate defender of the union may also have been under the impression that cooperation between Nationalists and Unionists in the war effort could possibly persuade Nationalists to revise their position on Home Rule.

At the start of the war Sligo Unionists were trying to gain the support of Nationalists both militarily and politically in the war. In August 1914, Philip Perceval, a Protestant landowner and a leader of the Sligo Unionist Alliance, approached the mayor of Sligo, John Jinks, with the suggestion that a meeting should be held to form a committee of Unionists and Nationalists to assist the poor during the war. This meeting took place on 5 August 1914, and was attended by many leading Nationalists and Unionists.<sup>9</sup>

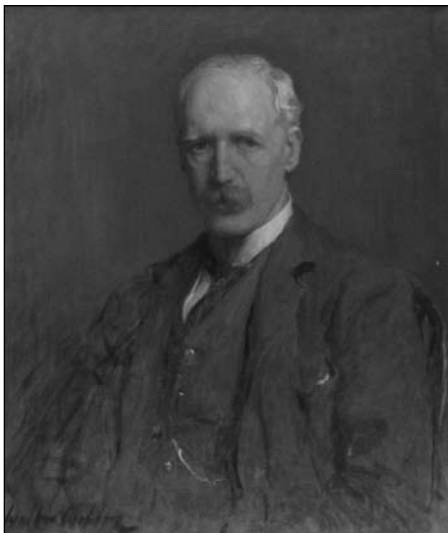
The meeting seemed like a genuine effort by Unionists to assist wartime distress and to work on an equal basis with Nationalists and both Nationalists and Unionists praised each other in their speeches. However Perceval who was instrumental in organising the meeting was still a committed Unionist and the meeting could also be interpreted as a tactic by Sligo Unionists to actively engage Nationalists in the war effort with the ultimate hope that collective involvement may persuade Nationalists that if Ireland remained a part of the United Kingdom the country could stand up against outside threats.

Another important meeting in August 1914 attended by Nationalists and Unionists, was held in Calry village, four miles from Sligo town.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of the meeting was to form a corps of Sligo Unionists, which would be part of the Irish Volunteers. Perceval, was again the driving force behind the meeting, and a Unionist, Colonel Wynne took charge of the unit. At the end of August about seventy men had joined the Sligo Unionist Volunteer Corps.<sup>11</sup> The war was proving to be an opportunity for Unionists to gain influence in the Volunteer movement, an organisation originally set up to

guarantee Home Rule.

As there was a shortage of Nationalist officers in Sligo to train new recruits, many from the Protestant Unionist landed families who had experience in drilling men were offering their services to help organise and instruct the Volunteers. On 9 August 1914 Major Richard Hillas, a Unionist and Protestant landowner in Co. Sligo wrote to Colonel Maurice Moore, the commander of the Irish Volunteers, offering to train and organise the Irish Volunteers in Sligo and in the absence of a senior Nationalist officer, Colonel Moore appointed Major Hillas the County Inspection Officer for all Volunteers in Sligo.<sup>12</sup>

Some Sligo Nationalists were now worried that Unionists were becoming too involved in the Irish Volunteers and some local concerns over the appointment of Major Hillas were voiced by Seamus Kennedy of the Ballymote Volunteer Corps, Co. Sligo in a letter to Colonel Moore. Kennedy complained that some Sligo Volunteers were opposed to 'Unionist officers' and they did not believe that Major Hillas was sympathetic to the



Colonel Maurice Moore

aims of the Volunteers movement and some were refusing to serve under a Unionist officer.<sup>13</sup> Kennedy demanded the removal of Hillas maintaining that if he wasn't replaced then Volunteer commanders in the surrounding districts would endeavour to have their units attached to a neighbouring county's Volunteer Corps.<sup>14</sup>

On 20 August 1914 Colonel Moore wrote to Kennedy emphasising the

difficulty of finding efficient and experienced officers with Nationalist views willing to train Volunteer units.<sup>15</sup> It seemed that Colonel Moore took the long-term pragmatic approach towards Volunteer training in Co. Sligo and he asked the local commanders to work with Hillas arguing that 'when our officers are trained we can do as we like'.<sup>16</sup> Colonel Moore, as overall commander of the Irish Volunteers, could see the benefits of Unionist officers, but would the local Volunteers accept his wisdom in permitting Hillas to impart his military experience?

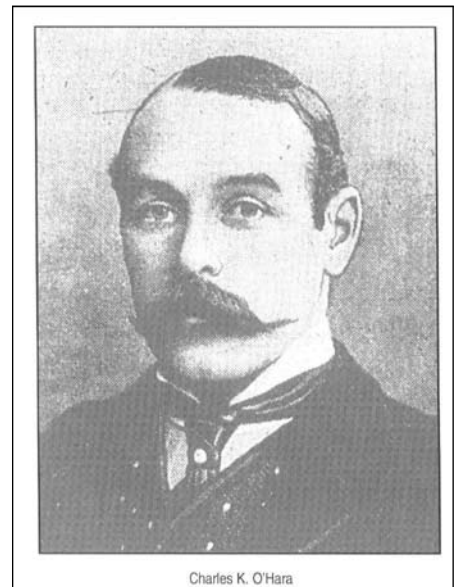
When Hillas was appointed he wrote to fifteen Volunteer corps in Co. Sligo requesting information on training and logistics and he reported that he had received only five replies by 2 September 1914.<sup>17</sup> He interpreted the slow response to his request for information as opposition to him and he wrote a letter to Maurice Moore, tendering his resignation and maintaining that 'it is too evident that people of my class are not required by certain supporters of the movement in the Irish Volunteers'. Colonel Moore tried to calm Hillas and pleaded with him to wait and be patient with what he called 'casual methods' of his subordinates. Moore argued that the delay in answering the requests for information 'is due to carelessness rather than any presumed hostility'.<sup>19</sup> However, Hillas refused to see it from Moore's perspective and he was determined to resign.<sup>20</sup> Was Hillas right or did he act too impulsively?

On 23 August 1914, after he had received Hillas's letter requesting information Alex McCabe responded with detailed information concerning the Keash Volunteer Corps.<sup>21</sup> McCabe was a committed Nationalist and later commanded Republican forces in Sligo during the War of Independence. Two other commanders with strong Nationalist views who responded promptly to Hillas were Owen Tansey, Gurteen Volunteers and Seamus Devins Grange Volunteers.<sup>22</sup> Both men later took a very active role in the Republican movement during the War of Independence. It seemed as if these men shared the pragmatism of Colonel Moore and were willing to accept training and organisation from a Unionist officer at least until they themselves gained the necessary

experience.

It also appeared that more than five Sligo Volunteer commanders responded to Hillas's request for information concerning the commanders, numbers, training and experience of their units by the time he resigned. In addition to McCabe, Tansey and Devins, seven other officers in the Irish Volunteers, representing six Corps of the County Sligo Volunteers dated their replies to Hillas's before his resignation on 2 September 1914.<sup>23</sup> It is not known if Hillas received all the replies to his request for information before he took the decision to resign and Colonel Moore was probably correct when he asked Hillas to be patient with his subordinates.

On 18 September 1914 Home Rule became law and was suspended until the end of the war, and a renewed appeal was made to Nationalists in Sligo to join the army. One of the most important people in Sligo responsible for recruiting during the war was Major Charles Kean O'Hara. O'Hara was a Protestant landowner with extensive holdings at Annaghmore in Co. Sligo. He was also His Majesty's Lieutenant



Charles K. O'Hara

for Co. Sligo and a prominent member of the Sligo Unionist Alliance. O'Hara immediately used the opportunity offered by the granting of Home Rule to submit an article to the *Sligo Champion* encouraging Nationalists to enlist in the army.<sup>24</sup>

At the beginning of 1915 Sligo Nationalists believed they were enlisting in greater numbers than Unionists in

Sligo. The *Sligo Champion* criticised Unionist volunteering in Sligo in late January 1915 claiming that Sligo Unionists were not volunteering in large numbers.<sup>25</sup> Sligo Unionists were quick to defend themselves and the *Sligo Independent* reported on a meeting of the Sligo Unionist Alliance, in February 1915 where the members expressed their annoyance regarding the *Sligo Champion's* criticism of Unionist volunteering and argued that both communities had done well as regards recruiting. The *Sligo Champion* did not engage in any further criticism of Sligo Unionist volunteering and over the course of 1915 the paper switched its criticism to the lack of Ulster Unionist enlistment.<sup>26</sup>

Recruiting levels in Sligo town from August 1914 and up to mid February 1915 were high. At this point in the war 350 recruits and 200 reservists had joined up from County Sligo and of the 350 recruits, Sligo town had supplied 279 of them, while 152 of the reservists were from Sligo town.<sup>27</sup> It seemed that the town of Sligo was supplying most of the army recruits since the beginning of the war and complaints that Sligo farmers were not responding to the call to arms were expressed by Nationalists and Unionists at various recruiting meetings.<sup>28</sup>

Some of the most ardent supporters of Britain in Sligo were Protestant women who served as nurses during the war and also help to set up war charities.<sup>29</sup> However, support for charitable organisations was an area where both Protestant and Catholics worked closely together and in particular they became deeply involved raising funds for the sixty-four Sligo prisoners of war held in Germany.<sup>30</sup> The donations and concern shown by Protestants and Catholics in Sligo for the prisoners of war proved to be an opportunity for both communities to combine their efforts in a common cause. Were both communities becoming closer because of their shared experience of the war, as Unionists hoped they would, or were old differences lying just under the surface?

John MacKay Wilson provided an important insight into local Unionist opinion in Sligo at this time. Wilson was travelling around Ireland gaining the opinions of Unionists on various

issues. In February 1916 Wilson, visited Sligo and spoke to five different Protestant Unionists. The five men interviewed were Alexander Lyons, a solicitor from Sligo town, Francis Nelson, a jeweller, William Fenton, the Clerk of Crown and Peace and Arthur Jackson, a large businessman. The fifth Unionist interviewed was Major Charles O'Hara.<sup>31</sup>

All five men told Wilson that Sligo town had done well as regards recruiting, while Alex Lyons and Francis Nelson tried to claim that Unionists had done more for recruiting in Sligo than Nationalists.<sup>32</sup> This claim did not seem to be true as the most prominent Nationalist politicians in Sligo, including the mayor John Jinks, and the two Nationalist M.P.s, John O'Dowd and Thomas Scanlon, were supporting the war effort and had been involved in recruitment since the start of the war.

Francis Nelson and Arthur Jackson also mentioned that they believed the Catholic clergy were not doing enough to encourage recruitment.<sup>33</sup> There is little evidence to suggest that the Catholic clergy in Sligo were opposed to recruiting at this time and when Mike O'Leary V.C., a lieutenant in the Connaught Rangers visited Sligo in November 1915 to encourage recruiting, Catholic clergy and members of the Sligo Catholic Institute provided entertainment for O'Leary, and the officers and men of the Connaught Rangers embarked on a recruiting campaign after they had attended mass at Sligo Catholic Cathedral.<sup>34</sup>

When Wilson visited Sligo he found that Unionists were focused on supporting the war effort and was informed by the five Unionists he interviewed that the Sligo branch of the I.U.A. was virtually inactive.<sup>35</sup> Francis Nelson pessimistically informed Wilson that he didn't believe that Unionist movement in Sligo could ever be reactivated again.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, Arthur Jackson maintained that 'Unionists would again stand up', and that a settlement along federal lines was discussed by some Sligo Unionists.<sup>37</sup> The fact that some Sligo Unionists were discussing the idea of a federal settlement indicated a change in attitude by Unionists towards Home

Rule.

Of particular concern to the Sligo Unionists interviewed by Wilson was the growth of the Sinn Féin movement. William Fenton told Wilson that Sinn Féiners in Sligo were more numerous than people think and that they wanted Germany to win the war. He also mentioned that Home Rulers in Sligo actually feared Sinn Féin and 'would welcome their arrest' and O'Hara blamed Sinn Féin activity for the small number of recruits from the country areas of Co. Sligo.<sup>38</sup> In January 1916 the R.I.C. believed that Sinn Féin was damaging recruitment in Sligo, especially in the country areas. In March 1916, Sir Malby Crofton a Protestant landowner and a member of the Sligo Unionist Alliance complained that while the government was demanding more recruits they were doing absolutely nothing to control Sinn Féin activists, who were frustrating recruiting meetings.<sup>39</sup>

However most Nationalists in Sligo were generally supportive of recruiting and were not publicly opposing it and it would seem that the low number of recruits from the country areas had more to do with the attractiveness of staying on the land while agricultural prices were high. When it came to those opposing the war, Sinn Féin did not appear to have a large membership or support base in Sligo at the time. Over the course of the year 1915 the R.I.C. Co. Sligo Inspector consistently mentioned that Sinn Féin were gathering strength in the county, however he could only point to the fact that 254 members of the estimated 4,544 members of the Volunteers in Sligo were 'Sinn Féiners', which was not a very large number.<sup>40</sup> Part of the Unionist exaggeration of the Sinn Féin threat in Sligo at the time may have been to try and rekindle Unionist support during the war.

However, on 24 April 1916 units of the Irish Volunteers along with the Irish Citizen Army occupied some key positions around Dublin City Centre and staged a rebellion against British rule in Ireland. British troops and police heavily outnumbered the rebels and on 29 April the insurgents surrendered. The rebellion was later associated with Sinn Féin, even though the party had taken no active part in it.

The Irish Volunteers in Sligo at the time numbered about 136 men in three branches and some Irish Volunteer leaders in Sligo knew that the rising was going to take place but because of confusion over the exact date when the insurrection would commence they were unable to mobilise their units in time to take any action.<sup>41</sup>

The actions of the British authorities following the Easter Rising were very heavy handed and while some of the leaders of the rising in Dublin were executed, local leaders and members of the Irish Volunteers from around the country were arrested and imprisoned. Even though the Irish Volunteers in Sligo did not take part in the Rising, the R.I.C. imprisoned fifteen leaders of Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers in the county.<sup>42</sup> At first the Rising was not popular amongst the majority of the people in Sligo but the news of the execution of Irishmen by the British authorities swayed public sympathy in favour of Sinn Féin. On 20 May 1916 the *Sligo Champion* commented on the execution of the leaders of the 1916 Rising saying ‘a sickening thud went through the heart of Ireland with each fresh announcement’<sup>43</sup> and a week later on 27 May, the paper’s editorial argued that people from Sligo who had nothing to do with the Rising in Dublin were being arrested and this was resulting in ‘a good deal of dissatisfaction’.<sup>44</sup>

Sligo Unionists were very concerned over the Easter Rising and the expansion of the Sinn Féin Party and were feeling increasingly more powerless to do anything about it or to influence government policy. When Wilson made a return visit to Sligo in late June 1917 he discovered that many Unionists were ‘despondent as to the future’.<sup>45</sup> Other Unionists in Sligo were feeling much more than despondency and Wilson mentioned a rumour he heard from a Colonel James Campbell, who was concerned that the next time Sinn Féin organised a rebellion, they had plans to take important men of rank hostage in each county. Wilson’s general comment on Unionists in Sligo at this time was that ‘people seem to drift from day to day not knowing either what to expect, or what to hope for’.<sup>46</sup> Which is a strong indication that Sligo Unionists would have a lot of difficulty in reactivating

their organisation after the war.

The British government were now fearful that the growth in Sinn Féin popularity was jeopardising the war effort and in March 1917 the government proposed the idea that the various Irish parties should attend a convention and discuss all the issues relating to Irish self-government and the status of Ulster within a future settlement.<sup>47</sup> Many southern Unionists were accepting the fact that some form of change in the legislative union between Britain and Ireland after the war was inevitable. Even determined Unionists like O’Hara seemed to have been convinced to at least think about the idea of Irish self-government and he displayed a significant change of mind when he wrote to Sir Malby Crofton on 27 March 1917 expressing the view that the I.U.A. should consider entertaining any proposals made by the British government concerning Home Rule.<sup>48</sup>

On the 21 July 1917 Countess Markievicz arrived in Sligo to receive the freedom of the borough.<sup>49</sup> Countess



**Countess Markievicz Military Uniform**

Markievicz was the daughter of the Protestant landowner Henry Gore Booth of Lissadell and the sister of Josslyn Gore Booth, a leading member of the Sligo Unionist Alliance. However, she disagreed with the Unionist politics of her family and she became involved in

the Republican movement.<sup>50</sup> Countess Markievicz’s visit gave the Sinn Féin party a boost in Sligo and by the end of December 1917 Sinn Féin membership in Sligo stood at over 2,700.<sup>51</sup>

In January 1918, in order to further increase the party’s profile Sinn Féin got involved in what became known as the conacre campaign. The campaign was a spontaneous reaction by land hungry tenants, who were mostly Catholic and Nationalist, to what was ironically a government demand for farmers to ‘till more land’.<sup>52</sup> However, Sinn Féin took advantage of the situation and ‘cashed in’ politically on agrarian discontent. Sinn Féin activists encouraged large groups of poorer farmers to confiscate the lands of large landowners, which particularly affected the lands of Protestants and Unionists in Sligo.

However, by March 1918 many of those involved in the agrarian troubles had been arrested and prosecuted.<sup>53</sup> With the end of the conacre campaign of 1918, Protestant and Unionist landowners in Sligo could breathe a temporary sigh of relief. However it wasn’t long before Sinn Féin was given the opportunity to embark on another campaign in Sligo.

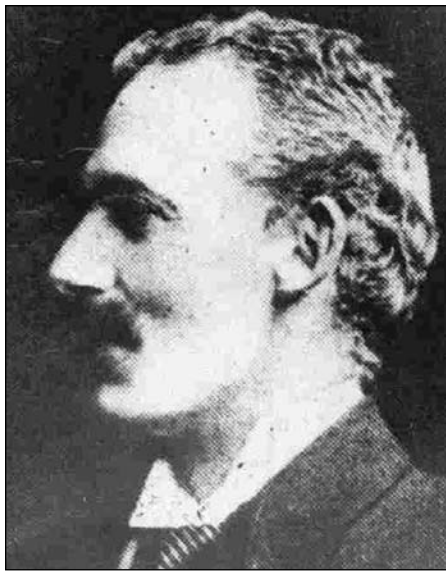
In March 1918 with Allied losses mounting on the Western Front the British government proposed to extend conscription to Ireland. Although many political movements in Ireland, including the I.P.P., were opposed to conscription, it was Sinn Féin who had continually opposed the war and benefited most from anti-conscription meetings. In April 1918 Sligo Corporation and Sligo County Council passed resolutions against Conscription and the Catholic clergy and local Sinn Féiners in Sligo spoke out strongly against conscription at a large meeting held on 15 April 1918 in Sligo Town Hall.<sup>54</sup>

Sinn Féin were now associating themselves with the I.P.P. and Catholic Church, the respectable and conservative elements in Sligo. However, it was Sinn Féin that seemed to benefit most from this national solidarity and ‘recruits rushed not into the army but into Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers’.<sup>55</sup> By May 1918 Sinn Féin membership in Co. Sligo stood at almost 4,000.<sup>56</sup> Membership of the Irish Volunteers increased from



225 members in January 1918 to 429 members in April 1918 and by July 1918 membership of the Irish Volunteers in Sligo stood at 646.<sup>57</sup>

In late April 1918 an anti-conscription meeting was held in Maugherow, north Sligo, and Nationalist councillors and the Catholic clergy urged the gathered crowd to resist conscription.<sup>58</sup> Sir Josslyn Gore Booth gave a speech at this meeting appealing to the young men to join the British army, however his views were at out of touch with the majority and the crowd repeatedly heckled him. Protestant Unionists



**Josslyn Gore Booth**

continued to support the British war effort and refused to criticise conscription. The anti-conscription campaign came to a close in June 1918 when the British government decided not to extend conscription to Ireland.

In April 1918, during the conscription crisis, the Irish Convention was concluded. A majority of the delegates at the convention agreed to a scheme of Irish self-government with safeguards for Ulster Unionists and southern Unionists. However, the scheme was not implemented as Sinn Féin and the Ulster Unionists strongly opposed the agreement.

The convention was an important milestone in that it was the first time the southern Unionists, led by Lord Midleton had supported Home Rule. A small group of southern Unionists disagreed with Midleton and on 20 February 1918 they formed themselves into the Southern Unionist Committee (S.U.C.).<sup>59</sup> They issued the 'Call to

Unionists' reaffirming their support for the Union and rejected self-government for Ireland. The S.U.C. sought close cooperation between Ulster Unionists and Southern Unionists, which they believed, was essential for successful resistance to Home Rule.<sup>60</sup>

All through April and May 1918 the *Sligo Independent* published the S.U.C.s 'call to Unionists' encouraging Unionists to speak out against Irish self-government.<sup>61</sup> In June and July 1918 Charles O'Hara wrote to Lord Midleton leader of the I.U.A. praising his work in reaching an agreement at the Irish Convention. However, he argued that as a result of the agrarian trouble and the conscription crisis 'any form of Home Government would be unthinkable now as it would mean handing our country over to the Sinn Féiners'.<sup>62</sup>

With potential divisions in the Unionist movement brewing, O'Hara decided to intensify his efforts to gain more recruits for the army and in August 1918 he wrote to Major Murphy, the recruiting officer in Sligo offering his support and assistance.<sup>63</sup> The conacre campaign and the trouble over conscription had damaged recruiting in Sligo and for the period January to July 1918 only thirty-three men joined up, the number for the same period of 1917 had been fifty-eight.<sup>64</sup> However, O'Hara was now swimming against the tide of popular opinion in Sligo and in early September 1918 a large Sinn Féin led crowd disrupted a recruiting meeting organised by O'Hara and Major Murphy.<sup>65</sup>

Evidence indicates that a figure of 1,000 men who joined the army from Sligo town, while 500 men joined from the county.<sup>66</sup> A total of 385 Protestant males were living in Sligo town in 1911 who would have been between the ages of 18 and 40 in 1914, which was the age band for military service in the First World War and 282 of them served in the First World War including forty-three who were killed.<sup>67</sup> This means that almost three-quarters of Protestant males in Sligo town between the ages of 18 and 40 enlisted.

When the war ended in November 1918, the British government planned an election for December 1918. The Unionists of Sligo wished to reactivate their opposition to Home Rule but

had little idea of how to oppose either Home Rule or Sinn Féin. As no Unionist candidate was going to run for election in either of the Sligo constituencies, the only plan the Sligo Unionist Alliance came up with was to urge their supporters to completely boycott the election and they strongly criticised both the I.P.P. and Sinn Féin claiming that the I.P.P. would have welcomed a British defeat in the war as much as Sinn Féin would have.<sup>68</sup>

The comments directed at the I.P.P. by Sligo Unionists were unfair and inaccurate and John Jinks, Thomas



**Michael O'Leary WWI Poster**

Scanlon M.P. and John O'Dowd M.P. had endured continuous criticism for their encouragement of recruitment and desire to see Britain win the war and grant Home Rule. The Unionist aloofness from politics in Sligo and the negative remarks directed at Sinn Féin and the I.P.P. was not going to gain them any sympathy for their plight as an isolated minority outside Ulster.<sup>69</sup>

However, it is hard to imagine Sligo Unionists adopting any other policy than abstention from the election. The small numbers of Unionists dictated that they could not possibly hope to field a successful candidate in either Sligo constituency. As they were completely opposed to Sinn Féin policies, the only other party they could have supported was the I.P.P. Sligo Unionists could have supported the I.P.P., which from

their perspective was the lesser of two evils, however the divisions within the ranks of southern Unionism at the time along with their tradition of strong loyalty to the Union and the elation felt by the Unionists at the British victory in the war also prevented them from urging their supporters to vote for the I.P.P.

The election, which took place on 14 December 1918, resulted in the two



**Opposition to Home Rule**

Sinn Féin candidates defeating the two sitting I.P.P. M.P.s. In the south Sligo constituency John O'Dowd M.P. received only eighteen per cent of the poll while Alex McCabe of Sinn Féin received over eighty-two per cent.<sup>70</sup> In North Sligo John Clancy, Sinn Féin, received sixty-eight per cent of the votes cast, while Thomas Scanlon got thirty-two per cent.<sup>71</sup> One explanation why the I.P.P. polled better in north Sligo may have been that the North Sligo constituency, which included Sligo town, was also home to a larger number of Protestant Unionists and many of them may have gone against the wishes of the Sligo Unionist Alliance and voted for the I.P.P. candidate.

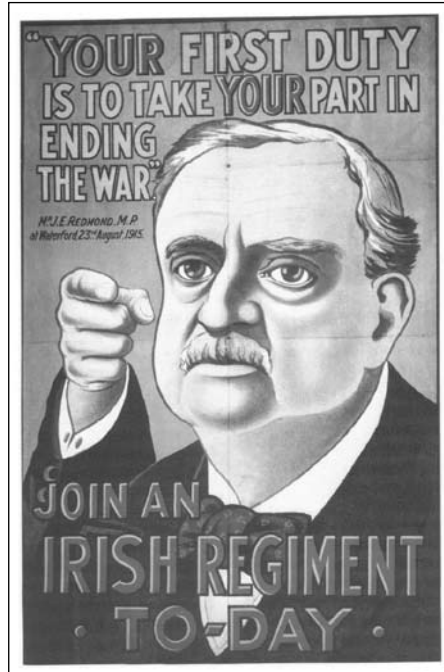
**Conclusion**



**Redmond inspecting Irish Volunteers 1914**

Many Protestants and Unionists were dismayed by Sinn Féin's electoral success in Sligo. However, Major Bryan Cooper, who had served in the Connaught Rangers during the war,<sup>72</sup> and had been a vocal and a passionate defender of Unionism before the war expressed one of the few optimistic

notes for the future when at the end of 1918 he wrote that 'the bond of common service proved so strong and enduring that Catholic and Protestant, Unionist and Nationalist, lived and fought and died side by side like brothers. Little was spoken concerning the points on which we differed and once we had



**Redmond Recruiting Poster**

tacitly agreed to let the past be buried we found thousands of points on which we agreed'.<sup>73</sup> After his time in the army Cooper returned to politics and he was only one of a handful Protestants in the Irish Free State to take an active part politically at national level and in 1923 Cooper was elected as an independent T.D. for County Dublin, in 1927 he was re-elected for the Cumann na nGaedheal Party.

At the end of the war the Protestant Unionists in Sligo were isolated both politically and religiously from their Catholic and Nationalist neighbours and the hoped for co-operation between the two communities at the start of the war had never really materialised. While Protestants and Unionists in Sligo strongly supported the war effort and neglected Unionist politics as the war wore on, they made little effort to come to any consensus with the I.P.P. on how to oppose Sinn Féin. No effort was made locally by Unionists to capitalise on the agreements regarding Irish self-government reached by the I.U.A. at the Irish Conference of 1917-18. The anti-conscription campaign further isolated Unionists and many Protestants in Sligo as they were largely the only

ones left encouraging recruitment. The political apathy shown by Sligo Unionists at the general election after the war only increased the alienation of the Unionist population in Sligo. However, if Cooper, who had been a leader of Unionist opposition to Home Rule, could change his views then it showed that it was not impossible for other Protestants and Unionists to come to some form of accommodation with the Catholic and Nationalist majority in Sligo.



**SinnFein AnitRedmond**

**Appendix**

**Table 1: December 1918 General Election Results for the north Sligo Constituency**

Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage share
John Clancy	Sinn Féin	9,030	68.04
Thomas Scanlon	I.P.P.	4,242	31.96
Total poll		13,272	71.79
Majority	Sinn Féin	4,788	36.08

One seat and an electorate of 18,488

Source: Elections Ireland, General Election, north Sligo constituency results, 14 Dec. 1918 (<http://electionsireland.org/result.cfm?election=1918&cons=205>) (1 June 2006).

**Table 2: December 1918 General Election Results for the south Sligo Constituency**

One seat and an electorate of 18,013

Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage share
Alec McCabe	Sinn Féin	9,113	82.09
John O'Dowd	I.P.P.	1,988	17.91
Total poll		11,101	61.63
Majority	Sinn Féin	7,125	64.18

Source: Elections Ireland, General Election, south

Sligo constituency results, 14 Dec. 1918 (<http://electionsireland.org/result.cfm?election=1918&cons=206>) (1 June 2006).

(Endnotes)

- <sup>1</sup> *Census of Ireland for the Year 1911*, p. 32.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>3</sup> *Sligo Independent [S.I.]*, 28 Feb. 1914.
- <sup>4</sup> *Sligo Times [S.T.]*, 13 Jan. 1912.
- <sup>5</sup> *Sligo Champion [S.C.]*, 8 Feb. 1914; Sligo County Inspector R.I.C. Monthly Report [S.C.I. R.I.C. M.R.], 1 Aug. 1914 (T.N.A., CO/904: microfilm, N.L.I., POS 8536).
- <sup>6</sup> *S.I.*, 8 Aug. 1914.
- <sup>7</sup> R.B. McDowell, *Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists*, (Dublin, 1997), p. 38.
- <sup>8</sup> *S.C.*, 8 Aug. 1914.
- <sup>9</sup> *S.I.*, 8 Aug. 1914.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 Aug. 1914.
- <sup>11</sup> S.C.I. R.I.C. M.R., 1 Sept. 1914 (T.N.A., CO/904: microfilm, N.L.I., POS 8537).
- <sup>12</sup> Colonel Maurice Moore to Major R.W. Hillas, 11 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>13</sup> Seamus Kennedy to Colonel Maurice Moore, 18 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> Colonel Maurice Moore to Seamus Kennedy, 20 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> Major R.W. Hillas to Colonel Maurice Moore, 2 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Colonel Maurice Moore to Major R.W. Hillas, 3 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>20</sup> Major R.W. Hillas to Colonel Maurice Moore, 5 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>21</sup> Alex McCabe to Major Hillas, 23 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>22</sup> Owen Tansey to Major Hillas, 26 Aug. 1914, Seamus Devins to Major Hillas, 28 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>23</sup> William Lipsett, Collooney Corps to Hillas, 20 Aug. 1914; Domnick Bree, Collooney Corps to Hillas, 26 Aug. 1914; Michael McDonagh, Geevagh Corps to Hillas, 21 Aug. 1914; William Caffrey, Easkey Corps to Hillas, 28 Aug. 1914; R. B. Anderson, Calry Corps to Hillas, 29 Aug. 1914, Thomas Clarke, Skreen and Dromard Corps to Hillas, 31 Aug. 1914; Tom Deignan, Maugherow Corps to Hillas, 31 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10550).
- <sup>24</sup> *S.C.*, 19 Sept. 1914.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 Jan. 1915.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 July 1915 and 25 Sept. 1915.
- <sup>27</sup> *S.I.*, 13 Mar. 1915.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 April 1915.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 Dec. 1915, *Ibid.*, 29 Jan. 1916.
- <sup>30</sup> Charles Kean O'Hara's bound volume containing alphabetical list of prisoners of war from Co. Sligo held in Germany and Turkey, 1915-18 (N.L.I., O'Hara Papers, MS 36446/3).
- <sup>31</sup> J.M. Wilson's tour of Ireland, Co. Sligo, 24 Feb. 1916 (P.R.O.N.I., J.M. Wilson papers, D/989/A/9/7).
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> *S.C.*, 13 Nov. 1915.
- <sup>35</sup> J.M. Wilson's tour of Ireland, Co. Sligo, 24 Feb. 1916 (P.R.O.N.I., J.M. Wilson papers, D/989/A/9/7).
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Sir Malby Crofton to Denis R. Pack-Beresford, Hon. Sec. I.U.A., 11 Mar. 1916 (P.R.O.N.I., J.M. Wilson papers, D/989A/8/6).
- <sup>40</sup> S.C.I. R.I.C. M.R., 1 Jan. - 1 Dec. 1915 (T.N.A., CO/904: microfilm, N.L.I., POS 8540).
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 April 1916.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 June 1916.
- <sup>43</sup> *S.C.*, 20 May 1916.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 May 1916.
- <sup>45</sup> J.M. Wilson's tour of Ireland, Co. Sligo, 28 June-18 July 1917 (P.R.O.N.I., J.M. Wilson's papers, D/989A/9/7).
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>47</sup> Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism 1: The Anglo-Irish and the New Ireland 1885 to 1922* (Dublin, 1972), pp 351-52.
- <sup>48</sup> O'Hara to Sir Malby Crofton, 27 Mar. 1917 (N.L.I., O'Hara papers, MS 16826).
- <sup>49</sup> *S.C.*, 28 July 1917
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- <sup>52</sup> *S.I.*, 16 Feb. 1918.
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- <sup>54</sup> *S.C.*, 13 April 1918.
- <sup>55</sup> David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Dublin, 1977), p. 127.
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- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 Jan 1918; 1 April 1918; 1 July 1918.
- <sup>58</sup> *S.C.*, 4 May 1918.
- <sup>59</sup> Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism 1: The Anglo-Irish and the New Ireland 1885 to 1922* (Dublin, 1972), p. 360.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>63</sup> O'Hara to Major Murphy, 21 Aug. 1918 (N.L.I., O'Hara papers, MS 16826).
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- <sup>65</sup> *S.I.*, 14 Sept. 1918.
- <sup>66</sup> *S.I.* and *S.C.*, 26 Feb. 1916 and *Sligo Champion Sesquicentenary Supplement 1836-1986* (Sligo, 1986), p. 57.
- <sup>67</sup> *Census of Ireland for the Year 1911*, p. 32; War Memorials in Sligo Presbyterian Church, *S.I.*, 27 Dec. 1919. War Memorials in Clary Parish Church and Sligo Grammar School, *S.I.*, 8 Oct. 1921. War Memorials in St. John's Church of Ireland Cathedral, *S.I.*, 13 Sept. 1947. *S.I.*, 27 Oct. 1928, 3 Nov. 1928 and 17 Nov. 1928.
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Michael O'Leary VC poster from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michael\\_O'Leary\\_WWI\\_poster.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michael_O'Leary_WWI_poster.jpg).

Opposition to Home Rule poster from P.R.O.N.I.

Colonel Maurice Moore from [http://www.hughlane.ie/online\\_catalogue/all-works.php?page=228](http://www.hughlane.ie/online_catalogue/all-works.php?page=228)

Josslyn Gore-Booth from Sligo County Library

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Charles O'Hara from John C. McTernan, *In Sligo long ago* (Dublin, 1998), p.545

# The Colour and Fashion of Death

Niamh Conlon

Black is the colour most people associate with funerals and mourning. The reasons for this are varied. Some think the wearing of black comes from the Greek, and later Roman, habit of wearing dark coloured togas during mourning. Others believe that black symbolised the night and the person wearing it would be invisible to the dead, making them safe from evil. However, black is not the only colour of mourning.

In China white is worn, just as it was in France during Mary Queen of Scots' time (mid to late 16<sup>th</sup> century), which is why she is often pictured wearing white mourning. In Scotland black was not commonly worn until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before this, many rural women went to funerals wearing red plaids or cloaks, possibly because this was their best clothing or because red was considered to be a colour disliked by evil. There are reports of lowland ladies in the early 1700s wearing their brightest dresses and ornaments to funerals. This later gave way to the wearing of dark colours which was particularly loved by the Victorians.

It was during Victorian times that the fashion of mourning reached its height in Britain. At this time there were set rules of the length of mourning, the colours to be worn and even the types of jewellery to be worn. For a year following the death of a close relative a Victorian woman would be in deep mourning, this involved the wearing of black to be replaced by other dark colours (green or purple) during half mourning and then when the time was right they would begin to wear bright colours again. The closer the relationship the longer the period of deep mourning. All items of clothing had to adhere to the rules of mourning including accessories, wedding dresses, which were grey or lavender when the bride was in mourning and undergarments which had a black ribbon.

Due to the instability of dyes at the time underwear was not dyed black as it would probably have dyed the skin. This did not prevent everything else being dyed black and exposure to dye chemicals led to health problems such as asthma and cataracts. Over the hair a long back veil to the waist was worn and decorated with 'weepers' or black ribbons. A face covering veil was worn whenever the lady in mourning left the house and even children and servants were expected to wear mourning.

When most people think of mourning jewellery they think of jet which was made fashionable by Queen Victoria. Jet was expensive and was a show of wealth as



**Skull and Crossbones - detail on a grave at St Bridget's Kirk, Dalgety Bay, Fife.**

well as mourning but its association with death goes back over the millennia. Jet beads have been found in a few Scottish Bronze Age burials and it was also used by the Romans. Some archaeologists believe that the appearance of jet beads in burial contexts shows its ritual status, which may have been augmented by its electrostatic properties, giving jet an air of magic. Others argue that these items were buried with the last of a family or clan line. As often they show signs of wear and bead replacements it can be argued that they were treasured possessions that were buried when there was no one left to inherit them. Either way jet would have been an expensive and slightly exotic item. British jet comes from Whitby in Yorkshire which would have been quite a journey in the Bronze Age.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century when jet became a fashionable mourning symbol the jet industry in Whitby thrived. In 1820 there were only a few men working in the jet industry and by mid nineteenth century over 1400 people were employed in the enterprise. Over time alternatives to jet were introduced to make it more affordable for the poor. French jet, which was black glass, was used, as was vulcanite, a rubber compound invented by Goodyear in the 1840s. Unfortunately very little French jet had survived to this day as it was very brittle and prone to damage.

Mourning rings were also common for many years with early ones showing religious motifs. Some were handed

down to mourners but proper mourning rings were made for people attending the funeral and were made following instruction in the deceased's will. In 1616 Shakespeare's will requested that his friends receive rings valued at 26s each. Putting the value in the will was very common, what happened to the rings in the long term is often speculated on with many suggestions that they were melted down by the receivers after an appropriate length of time.

As the popularity and variety of mourning jewellery grew over time, jewellers kept stocks of items for mourning. Some of these were for use with hair which was provided by the client or later came with hair already in them. It was common for some jewellers to keep stocks of hair for mourning jewellery. This led to DIY kits coming out that helped mourners learn how to make their own hair braids for jewellery such as the 1871 book entitled "The Art of Working Hair" by Miss A Speighs. By 1877 The Pringles Catalogue sold hair braids for mourning rings, the connection to the dead was now just a symbol.

Over time mourning became less rigorous and now the use of muted colours and the black ties worn by men are probably the only outward signs of mourning and even these are restricted to use at funerals.

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# Margaret Logan

Eugene Gillan

Margaret Logan was born in 1872 in Courtcoolbeg, Drumcliffe, Co Sligo. Her family were farmers who also engaged in salmon and shell fishing. The Logan home was close to the ruins of an old Augustinian monastic site. The remains of a Dovecote called Caislain na Colm was in one of the fields called Pairc na Colm and from an early age Margaret was interested in the history of the folklore of her locality. She was encouraged in this by local historian Bernard Hart.

Margaret went to her local school in Rathcormac and later to another in Sligo town. She then attended a convent in Liverpool. Coming home from



Taken at Newtownstewart creamery. Margaret Logan is on the left of the two ladies

second, third and fifth prizes for the several classes of butter forwarded by the Newtownstewart Creamery. Mainly due to this success the Creamery was able to sell its products to the great ocean liners and all the high class hotels in London.

Margaret became very involved in both the Gaelic League and Cumann na mBan. In 1910 she joined the Achony Creamery. This was a very successful enterprise and provided a wide range of products. Her efforts to found a fisherman's co-op were in part the result of her great interest in local history and in particular the dispute in the nineteenth century involving landlords and the local fishermen in Ballysodare Bay, Sligo Bay and Drumcliffe Bay. The rights to the oyster fishing were the subject of several court cases.

Regarding Drumcliffe Bay, huge damage was caused by the great storm of 1839. However the local fishermen managed to restore the beds. Later from 1858 to 1862 numerous gales piled sand all over the beds and again and again they were restored by the fishermen. In 1863 the local landlord Sir Robert Gore Booth claimed ownership of the oyster beds and refused to meet with the local fishermen. When the fishermen arrived at the oyster beds they were prevented from dredging by a large force, comprised of the Coastguards, Police, and units of the British army and some of the Gore Booth tenants. Many

of the fishermen's boats were seized and their leaders including Margaret's grandfather and neighbour Morgan Farrell were arrested. Both family homes were attacked and damaged.

Many years later in 1936, Sir Jocelyn Gore Booth visited both families and explained that his family had not been involved in the burning of the houses. He also said that in hindsight his family should not have taken part in the oyster bed incident.

Because of her membership of the cooperative movement and her activities in Cumann na mBan Margaret made many friends in the Tubbercurry and Ballymote areas. The will of the people at the time to achieve independence remained as strong as ever. One Sunday in September 1917 she was among a group of women attached to Cumann na nBan who climbed Knocknasidhe. They resolved that day to carry on with their endeavours to achieve independence for Ireland.

In 1918 Margaret was invited to Dublin by the Glasnevin Dairy School to discuss exam procedures. It was to prove a fatal journey. While there she contracted the lethal Spanish flu. Margaret came home to Drumcliffe but never recovered and died soon afterwards. Her brief but fruitful life had ended. She is buried in Drumcliffe graveyard.

*Thanks to Mandy Byrne, Mandy Gogharty and Sally O'Neill.*

Irish News.  
New Zealand Tablet, Rōrahi XXIX, Putanga 4,  
.24 Kohitātea 1901, Page 9

**Irish News.**

**MAYO.**—Visit of the Irish Chief Secretary.—About the middle of November Mr. George Wyndham, the Irish Chief Secretary, spent some days in County Mayo, inspecting the results achieved by the Congested Districts Board, and the still greater results waiting to be achieved by that body. In Swinford, Mr. Wyndham made a short speech from the hotel window, expressing the mingled feelings with which his tour had inspired him—sympathy at the distress he witnessed and the sufferings existing, and pleasure at the work already accomplished towards the desired end. In a country where they were divided on so many subjects it was an encouragement to find that they were united in a common effort to help the people in Mayo towards helping themselves. At Killybegh, where splendid new schools had been built by the pastor, Father Denis O'Hara, cousin of Mr. Dillon and himself a member of the Congested Districts Board, Mr. Wyndham was shown over the schools, conducted by the nuns of St. Louis, who teach lace-making and other industries to the children. They also give instructions in cooking, dressmaking, and laundry work, so as to fit many of their pupils for domestic service.

**SLIGO.**—A Successful Dairymaid.—Among the Sligo girls who have adopted the profession of dairymaids and who have achieved the best successes at the London Exhibition, is Miss Margaret Logan, formerly of Drumcliffe Creamery and medalist of Glasnevin. She took first, second, third, and fifth prizes in several classes for the butter which was forwarded from the Newtownstewart Creamery under the patronage of the Duchess of Abercorn.

**ASH for the Dominican Church.**—The Most Rev. Dr. Flood, Archbishop of Tuam, has sent £10 to the Dominican church, Sligo, as his contribution towards the building fund.

**WATERFORD.**—Appointment of a Medical Officer.—Dr. D. Power, nephew of the Rev. D. H. Power, Tralee, has been appointed medical officer for the Bonmahon district by the Poor Law Guardians of the Kilmacshusanna Union, Waterford. He studied very successfully at Blackrock College and in the Medical School of the Catholic University, O'Connell street, Dublin. At the termination of his medical studies he was attached to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital.

from <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/>

Liverpool Margaret went to study at the Glasnevin Dairy School in Dublin where she was awarded a gold medal and remained on in the College to teach.

When Drumcliffe Creamery opened in 1875 Margaret obtained the position of Dairy Maid and was delighted to be back home with her family and friends. However in 1899 she was approached by the Duchess of Abercorn to work in her creamery in Newtownstewart just outside of Omagh. The Duchess was a progressive lady and the creamery became very successful.

In 1901 Margaret and the Duchess travelled to the Great London Exhibition where Margaret took first prize in the major competition. She was also awarded



# Materials from the Robinson Estate Office, Sligo

Mary B. Timoney

Two years ago I presented some outline of the massive collection of Meldrum papers discovered by Martin A. Timoney in an upper room of a building that was then soon to be demolished on the Meldrum premises in Castle St., Sligo. The story of their discovery was related in the accompanying article by Brian Donnelly of the National Archives of Ireland. Those articles were a plea for the preservation of business records where developments were taking place or families were moving on. By sheer good luck yet another piece of Sligo history has been saved by being brought to our attention and deposited in Sligo Library Local Studies Archive.

One evening last March I had a call from Margaret McBrien in Sligo who told me that one of her fellow members at a painting class, Vivienne Gilmore, was talking of several big account books that were in her shed and in her attic. McBrien thought that they had come from an office in Sligo several years ago. As Martin A. was heading into north Sligo he made contact with Vivienne and she showed him the books. Yes, books, big books, the largest is 18" high, two are 5" thick and one has 1,000 pages. She told him that there were more in the attic. They had all been rescued from Robinson's Estate Office in Stephen St., Sligo, in the 1970s. He mentioned the articles on the Meldrum papers in *The Corran Herald* in 2008 which are now in the National Archives of Ireland. Several weeks later Martin A. returned to take a more detailed look at the books, including some recently taken down from the attic. He expressed the idea that the best home for the books was the local Sligo Library Local Studies Archive. Vivienne gave over the seventeen volumes and some loose papers to him. Following a rapid examination of the volumes here in Keash, the volumes were transferred to Sligo Library to be put with the one hundred and eighty items already there from the Robinson Estate Office. Some notes taken from one of the volumes are given below.

The content ranges quite a bit but it essentially concerns payments and are good on detail: Account Book; Indexed List of Tenants of Landlords, Alliance Assurance Fire Order Book; Alliance Life Proposals; Cash Book; Killaspugbrone and Sligo area; Landlord's Accounts; Plaintiff / Defendant Accounts; Private Cash Book; Rent Book; Workmen's Accounts and Payments.

They were started between 1850 and 1928 and finished between 1861 and 1981. They were used for between three years and eighty years. One was commenced by D.K. Tuner, 28 Nov., 1928, a lady who is still recollected in some circles in Sligo.

Some of the volumes have a label on the inside the cover. Some of these labels have numbers written in: 288 for Aug. 1884, 1060 for Nov. 1928, 2535 for 1895, 2615 for April 1891 and 3984 for May 1902. If these are actual numbers, as opposed to a code number system, then the Robinson Office had almost 4,000 volumes in use by 1902.

The discovery of these books is a major addition to the Robison collection of about one hundred and eighty items already in Sligo Library. With research you never know where the next item of information will come from to lead you further.

I thank Vivienne Gilmore for rescuing and minding these volumes since the late 1970s and for her wisdom in giving them to Sligo Library. I also thank Margaret McBrien, Ultan McNasser and Martin A. Timoney for help in compiling this article.

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 Timoney, Mary B., 2008-2009: "Meldrum's Account Books, Record of the Social Life of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Sligo", *The Corran Herald*, 41, 38.

## Rent Ledger, No. 10, Register No. 2615 April 7/91

Taking this ledger as a sample of the collection and looking at the entries in it I have extracted the following list of Clients for Robinsons. Spellings are as in the volume.

- Reps. Capt. Armstrong No. II; Dec. 1891 to July 1894  
 Reps. of Baker; Feb. 1894 to Feb. 1900, Mar. 1900 to Dec. 1900  
 B. Barstow, Esq.; Mar. 1902 to Nov. 1905  
 Major John A. Barstow; July 1891 to Jan 1898, Nov. 1898 to Mar. 1900  
 Reps. Major John A. Barstow; Mar. 1900 to Jan. 1902  
 Rev. W. F. Black D.D.; Mar. 1892 to Nov. 1898  
 C.O. Blake Esq.; Nov. 1894 to Oct. 1897  
 Reps. Godfrey Brereton; Feb. 1892 to July 1896  
 R.G. Brinkley; May 1895 to June 1902  
 Sir Benjamin Bromhead; June 1894 to Mar. 1902  
 John Lloyd Brinkley Esq.; April 1891 to Oct. 1893, Sept. 1893 to Mar. 1895, Mar. 1895 to April 1902  
 J.F. Clarke Esq.; June 1891 to Jan. 1893  
 Cogan & Cogan; Dec. 1896 to Jan. 1900  
 Miss Margaret Cogan; June 1893 to Mar. 1907  
 Rev. A. Coates & anr.; May 1894 to Feb. 1896  
 Reps. Mrs. Craig; Jan. 1897 to April 1900  
 Sir Malby Crofton, Bart.; May 1894 to June 1897  
 Col. M.E. Crofton; Feb. 1895 to Dec. 1903  
 Reps. Mrs. Craig; Aug. 1898 to Mar. 1897  
 Reps. Vernon Davys; July 1894 to Nov. 1907  
 Reps. of Davys; May 1914 to Nov. 1918, Feb. 1908 to April 1914  
 Alexander Duke Esq.; Jan. 1892 to April 1894  
 Laurence P. Duke Esq.; Mar. 1891 to Dec. 1896  
 Col. J.C. Duke; April 1895 to May 1903  
 Col. R.H. French; Mar. 1892 to June 1896  
 Capt. J.P. Gethins, (Major Nov. 1895); 1891 to April 1899  
 Mrs. A.S. Gethins, Aughris; July 1891 to June 1900  
 Mrs. Emma Gray; Mar. 1895 to Sept. 1908  
 Col. Wm. Gilmore; Nov. 1894 to Aug. 1898  
 Rev. F.J.C. Gillmor; Aug 1898 to July 1902

James Grove Esq.; May 1892 to May 1898, May 1898 to June 1899  
 Reprs. Jas. J. Grove July 1899 to Jan. 1901  
 J.M.C. Grove Esq.; June 1901 to May 1906  
 Col. H.A. Hewetson No. II; Sept. 1894 to Dec. 1898  
 James H. Hale Esq.; June 1891 to June 1893, July 1893 to April 1896  
 Reprs. James Hale; Sept. 1893 to Jan. 1899  
 Mrs. Hale; July 1891 to July 1893  
 Col. H.A. Hewitson; Dec. 1893 to July 1899  
 Capt. R.G. Hillas (Major 1896); May 1893 to Nov. 1897  
 John F. Kane Esq.; Oct. 1896 to No. 1903  
 George Keogh Esq.; Sept. 1891 to May 1894, June 1894 to Oct 1899  
 John Kilkelly Esq.; May 1891 to 1May 1904  
 Killadoon; Mar. 1891 to Jan 1895  
 Reprs. Lloyd; June 1891 to Mar. 1896  
 H.W. Meredith Esq.; Nov. 1893 to May 1894  
 Messrs. Philips & Noble; Feb. 1894 to Aug. 1894, Nov. 1894 to Nov. 1907  
 Messrs. Pollexfen; May 1902 to April 1907  
 Miss H.A. Mosman; Jan. 1892 to Nov. 1895  
 James O'Connor Esq.; Jan. 1895 to July 1898, Sept. 1898 to Dec. 1904  
 Peter O'Connor No. II; Mar. 1894 to Sept. 1894  
 Peter O'Connor Esq.; July 1894 to July 1907  
 Reprs. P. O'Connor; Dec. 1893 to Jan. 1896  
 Capt. R.W. Orme; Nov. 1892 to July 1896  
 Col. R. S. Ormsby; Dec. 1893 to Dec. 1905  
 Major J. Paget; Dec. 1892 to June 1899  
 Johnstone Parke Esq.; April 1892 to Jan. 1901; Johnstone Parke died 22 Oct. 1899  
 Reprs. Johnstone Parke; Jan. 1901 to April 1901  
 R.H. Phibbs Esq.; Mar. 1894 to Nov. 1897, Dec. 1897 to July 1901  
 Reprs. Miss A. Phibbs; Nov. 1893 to Oct. 1894  
 Col. Phibbs No 2; Oct. 1892 to Aug. 1894  
 Misses. Pollexfen & Co.; Sept. 1896 to Mar. 1902  
 Mrs. A.G. Leybourne Popham; Nov. 1893 to Feb. 1894, Feb. 1894 to Nov. 1894, Mar. 1895 to Dec. 1902  
 Mrs. Purcell; June 1907 to Jan. 1912  
 Reprs. Mrs. Purcell; Jan. 1912 to Dec. 1914  
 Mrs. M. Ramsey; April 1893 to Jan. 1899  
 Mrs. Reynardson; Jan. 1892 to Dec. 1899  
 J.G. Reynolds Esq.; Mar. 1893 to Dec. 1905  
 Maurice Redfern Fitzmaurice Stack, Esq.; Sept. 1894 to Mar. 1895, Jan. 1901 to Jan. 1903  
 David Sherlock, Esq.; July 1894 to July 1985  
 Estate of Thomas Stinson, Esq.; Feb. 1894 to Dec. 1900  
 Messrs. Stirke and Tighe; Dec. 1891 to Oct. 1895  
 Thompson No. I; Mar. 1893 to Jan. 1902  
 Thompson No. II; Jan. 1897 to Jan. 1897  
 Thompson No. III; Jan. 1892 to Jan. 1898  
 Reprs. Thompson I; Feb. 1904 to Feb. 1910  
 Reprs. Thompson II; April 1899 to April 1907  
 Mrs. Edward Walsh; Dec. 1891 to Feb. 1899  
 Charles P. Webber Esq.; Dec. 1891 to May 1894, Dec. 1894 to May 1895,  
 C.P. Webber, now Mrs. M. Webber; May 1895 to Nov. 1895  
 Mrs. A. Wood-Martin; Jan. 1893 to Aug. 1895  
 Col. W.G. Wood-Martin; March 1893 to Mar. 1895

Mrs. Hannah Wynne; Sept. 1891 to Sept. 1900, Mrs. Wynne died 19<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1898  
 Dr. E. and Mrs. Wills-Martin; Feb. 1892 to Nov. 1895  
 E.N. Wills-Martin; Dec. 1895 to Dec. 1895  
 Mrs. F. Wills-Martin; Dec. 1896 to June 1899  
 Francis Wills Martin; Nov. 1899 to Jan. 1900

The entries shown are mainly general accounts. There is little detail of tenants' names. Much of the monies out were for rent, income tax, indentures, assurances, with some detail on wages and buying stock and other materials. The most interesting information noted is from the accounts of John Brinkley, Fortland House, Easkey. The rates of pay are given for bog rangers and shore rangers. There are details of stock buying at fairs at Farranyharpy, Collooney, Ardnaglass, Ardnaree, Roslea, Dromore West, Tobercurry and Sligo. Costs of ploughing, threshing, mowing and fencing are given and also the names of workers involved. Many of the names recorded, like Carnegie, Kilcullen, Conway and Maloney, are still in Fortland area today.

The entries after the death Major R.G. Hillas, Donecoy, Templeboy, in 1897, include cost of advertising of his death, 5/7, the driver's fees, *etc.*, at his funeral, £1, and paying J. McDermott £1-4-6 for engraving the vault in Skreen graveyard. Strangely it was not the local stone masons, Diamonds or Flannellys who got this job but John McDermott who would have been in Sligo town at that time (Timoney 2005, 214).

Charles Webber, Gerrib House, Skreen, paid £20 for an outfit for his son, Charles Kingston, and £10 to R.D. Cuscadden, a dentist, for him. He paid Messrs. Ponsonby 11/3 for Wood-Martin's *History of Sligo* in March 1892; this may have been for the final volume which was published in 1892. In May 1892 he paid £18-3-0, 13 years instalments to Nov. 1891 for Dunmorran Drainage.

#### John L. Brinkley, Fortland, Easkey

Sample of expenditure between April 1891 and Oct 1893  
 J. Pery for 14 cwt. Oil-cake 3/6  
 Joynt & Son for map & attendance in Court Lewis' case £5-5-0  
 A. Flynne one yrs. salary bog ranger to May 1891 £1-10-0  
 J. Gray per Peter for threshing oats  
 Atkinson fortnight's board wages to 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1891 £1-0-0  
 Atkinson amt. of a/c for bran per Devany & McNama 17/6  
 H. Golden for carting to Sligo & back 7 loads £3-10-0  
 J. Maloney amt of a/c for smith work to date £1-7-9  
 J. Munds 7 weeks wages to 30<sup>th</sup> May £2-12-6  
 Two telegrams re Fortland House 1/10  
 25 sheep bought at Ardnaglass at £1-17-3 each, £46-10-0  
 J. Kearns 7 heifers bought at Farnaharpy at £9-10-0 each, £66-10-0  
 R. Morrison 6 cwt. Bone manure £1-16-0  
 Geo. Thompson 2 days cutting meadow 1891 £1-0-0  
 T. Kilcullen 1 yrs. salary shoreranger to Nov. 1891 £1-0-0  
 J. Carnegie for ploughing 5a. 1r. 5p. Burns shuttle £3-3-4  
 Board of Works drainage instalt. due Ap. '92 £69-0-3  
 J. Carnegie 12 sacks oats at 17/6 delivered £10-10-0  
 Men's expenses at Collooney fair 6/6  
 J. Conway 1 yrs. salary bogranger to Nov. 1892 £3-0-0  
 Tom Helly cutting 376 barrels turf at £2-10-0 £3-18-4

# Máire McDonnell Garvey (1927-2009) – An Appreciation

Dan Healy

I first met Máire in the late sixties, I think it was in Vi (Violet) Preston's home in Kimmage, Dublin. Of course Vi was a former neighbour of mine as she came from a great musical family in Carnaree, and when she heard I was in Dublin she wanted me in her band, the 'Eamonn Ceannt Céili Band' which was very popular at the time. She had frequent broadcasts on 'Céili House' with Sean ÓMurchú.

The next time I met Máire was at band practice in the 'Pipers Club' premises in Thomas Street, Dublin. It was usual for Vi to have a band practice every Wednesday evening and there I met all the members of the band, and what fun we had. I knew nearly all the tunes and as I learned all my music from listening to the now legendary musicians from very young days, the written note did not really interest me, but Máire could read music or 'play by ear'. However Vi insisted she needed the music in front of her. One time when playing at a céili her book of music fell from the stand and she had to stop - just couldn't play until some band member in a panic got the book back on the stand. She then proceeded to play the eight reels at the end of which one member said "I knew you were a good reader but didn't think you could read them upside down". I suppose it was nerves.

It was there I also met band member Ciarán O'Reilly, another great fiddle player who had and has a flair for the technical side of things, be that recording music or the written tune. Some years later Máire, myself and Ciarán would combine our efforts and play on the CDs that Máire would produce.

Máire invited me out to her house where she and husband Bob were now rearing their five children. Bob did not play an instrument but loved the music and always had an up to the minute recorder and made some legendary recordings.

Máire had an open door for everyone but especially for anyone interested in our music and culture. She told a story once about being in bed asleep at 3.00 AM when she heard lovely fiddle music. Not sure whether she was dreaming or

awake she listened for a minute and was sure it was coming from downstairs. Going down to her sitting room there was the famous Máirtín Byrnes seated beside a lovely fire complete with fiddle tucked under his fine beard as he played. "God save you, Mam" he said, "I saw the key in the door and thought



**Máire McDonnell Garvey**

I'd make myself at home. Threw a few sods on the fire". She made him welcome - and put down the "kittle".

To further show her energies, as she reared her family of five children she undertook to study for her BA and H.Dip.Ed. Being Máire, she passed her exams and got her degree. She then started teaching in Árdcoil Éanna, an all Irish school of note. She also taught for some time in Collinstown Park Community College. This did not deter her from her music which she loved so dearly. She invited me along to the National Library where she did much research, procuring books dealing with folklore and traditional music. I thoroughly enjoyed it and going to the lectures. I remember T. Danaher especially. He always spoke on folklore and old customs in Ireland and would give you a great sense of pride in our own traditional music.

Then we'd go to Connradh na Gaeilge, Harcourt Street, Dublin, where the 'cúpla focal' was spoken amid music and song. You had to have a wee bit of Irish to get in there

and I had a little bit thanks to Sean Devaney, R.I.P., in Ballinacarrow N.S. where I went to school. Máire was fluent in Irish and introduced me to all the Gaeilgeori who were there. One such was Flann Ó Riann R.I.P. who later joined our group - he might be better remembered in the early days of R.T.E. as 'Dathi Lacha'. He also wrote a regular piece on place names in Irish for the 'Irish Times' and contributed to the "Irish Independent" as a cartoonist under the pen-name "doll". Another was Gabriel Byrne, famous actor, who volunteered to sing one night when we were short a singer. He sang 'The Sally Gardens'. I could do with him now in 'Durkins' in Ballinacarrow!

Now back to Máire. She was a powerful strong lady as regards our country, our language and our music. She had emphatic and well-developed views on all topics right up to the Lisbon Treaty which was being debated at the time of her death. She was very perturbed about the North of Ireland and how the people were treated. When the Catholics were burned out of their houses in Belfast she worked with helpers including myself to gather blankets to send to those poor people while all the time she was beginning to write her first book, "Mid-Connacht" (all about its ancient history). She wrote three more books after that: "A Traditional Music Journey 1600 - 2000 from Erris to Mullaghban", "Cómhrá na dTonn", and "Under the Shadow of the Summerhills" (where she tells the stories of her young life before she went to Dublin), as well as producing four CDs: 'The Windy Turn', 'Whispering Strains from the Past', 'Cómhrá na dTonn' and 'The Giblin Legacy'.

Speaking about Erris, we knew those five men who went to prison for protecting their rights. She supported them all the way and helped them out every way she could. She launched nearly all her books over there at the Erris Festival, a place she was very fond of. I travelled with her and heard all the stories of J.M. Synge and "The Playboy of the Western World".

A very dear friend of hers from Mullaghban, Co. Armagh, is Josephine

Keegan, a wonderful musician from that area who also composes lovely tunes and has written at least four books of music. She has composed a couple of tunes in Máire's honour, and indeed played them for her: 'Máire mo Chara', a lovely slow air, and 'The McDonnell Garvey Hornpipe' that will be recorded later.

Máire was very generous in every way with her time and she was there to help anyone in any kind of distress. One thing that stands out in my mind was when Máire had just finished her exams. She was very tired but still agreed to travel down from Dublin to play at a céili in Riverstown. Máire was possibly dozing a little as the band van crossed the bridge at Drumsna which was planked at that time. The noise and the racket made by the van really startled and frightened her. She thought the bridge had collapsed and that we'd all end up in the Shannon in Drumsna! It seemed like a cruel trick to play but was quite unintentional of course.

We were welcomed and entertained by P McDonagh and his wife Mary and we became lifelong friends.

All the work Máire did writing, giving grinds, teaching and playing music is only a fraction of all the work she did while rearing her five children - I don't know how she did it. But she never missed Mass every morning while she was well, and midnight Mass at Christmas was to her very special. She



**Máirtín Byrnes**

gave me a greater appreciation of the music, its origins and who collected it. Only a short time before she died I asked her about the tune 'Farewell to Gurteen' and in a jiffy she told me who collected it - a man from Northumberland in the North of England. Little things like that were part of Máire.

We started a music session in 'The Belgard Lounge', Tallaght, Dublin, which was owned by a Sligo man. It was huge - actually the largest in Europe at the time. Some of the best musicians, poets and sean nós singers were there. Máire researched and named the tunes and told the stories of their background and people were fascinated and music

was never the same since. A lot of other groups followed but she was the first and music meant more to people after that. What more can I say about Máire - she was a fountain of knowledge and gave of it freely to anyone who requested it. I could go on and on. I'm sure anyone who reads any of her books, particularly 'The Summerhills', will understand what I mean. She was a regular contributor to this publication where she wrote about music, about local history and characters from the past. We all know now the kind of writing she did.

She visited her home place frequently and no visit would be complete without going to see Madam McDermott in Coolavin. Máire always visited there and I was with her when the prince was alive. They talked about India where he worked most of his life. He loved having discussions with Máire. She could discuss anything with anyone.

The Douglas Hyde conference was a must for Máire and, as her life was ebbing away, one of Douglas Hyde's collections was playing beside her bed 'Beann Dubh a' Ghleanna' which she loved.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam. Ni bheidh a leithéid arís ann.

*Máire McDonnell Garvey wrote articles for twelve Issues of The Corran Herald. She attended many Heritage Weekends and participated often either through her music or lecturing.*



**Steam train arriving at Ballymote station, about 2000. This was a special train laid on by Iarnród Éireann for steam enthusiasts.**

*Photo: Gerry Cassidy*



**Dan the Street Singer during a Shopping Bonanza week in Ballymote, about 1990.**

*Photo courtesy Gerry Cassidy*

# Craftsmen From Bygone Days who Left their Mark on our Landscape.

PJ Duffy

They were very often a rare breed of gifted people who arrived onto the scene here from time to time, down through the years. Sometimes they might emerge from the most unlikely of places, the progeny of humble parents living in the remotest parts of our land. From a very early age it would be obvious that these people possessed certain skills and talents that set them apart from their fellow countrymen.

Survival of the fittest was something we had inherited from our very early ancestors and this meant that we had to develop our brains, our skills and our enterprise and use them to protect our very existence.

Ancient man constructed hill forts and stone cashels to protect his brood and his livestock from imminent danger, and from the weather. The Celts, we are told, built staunch crannógs complete with palisades and fortified dwellings, near the shores of our lakes. A crannóg usually had a causeway built in shallow water, so arranged as to baffle entry by strangers.

The Normans came and by using stone and mortar they constructed huge fortifications, with towers, turrets and huge curtain walls to protect themselves from warring factions. Many of these old structures, though often badly eroded, are still in existence.

Religious orders carried on building and extending their monastic sites with breathtaking skills that have produced some of the great wonders of the world. Sadly for them, those fine buildings did not offer the protection they had anticipated. Cruel persecution was what they afterwards had to endure.

We have been told that for hundreds of years our ancestors had to exist under such conditions, constantly living under fear of attack from one source or other. It was, it would seem, well into the sixteenth century before man began to finally move away from the siege mentality.

Planners and architects then began to shed the mantle of fortification to which they had been tied for so long. Family

homes with walls of stone began to spring up all over the countryside. The better-off classes would set about constructing fine spacious mansions complete with equally well designed and well constructed out-buildings. In this post-Renaissance period more architects and planners were arriving on the scene, many of them having qualified in Scotland and other parts of Great Britain.

The old less well off native Irish had to settle for modest little thatched abodes constructed mostly from materials obtained locally. Progress in the field of development created endless opportunities for Irish carpenters and stone masons. Well trained tradesmen were assured of constant employment. The better qualified tradesmen could be seen working at the big houses and their lavish surroundings while the less qualified were likely to find themselves doing jobs for their fellow compatriots.

Ironic as this may have seemed, the ongoing development had produced and recruited from among the Irish populace some of the finest craftsmen the civilised world had ever seen. It was, as far as construction and development were concerned, the age of the stone mason and the carpenter. Working with meticulous skill these people had with hammer and chisel produced masterpieces in stone and wood that to this day stand out as singular works of art.

It was subsequent to this kind of development that we in this country began to produce our very own planners and architects and developers, but it was well into the nineteenth century before these made much if any impact on the building industry here. We still had to rely on experts brought in from abroad to show us how it was done, yet it was our own people working quietly in the background who made all the difference. It was their skill at shaping, tapering or dressing every stone that mattered when the builders came to put the final touches on religious edifices or stately homes, or position the voussoir wedges, the keystones used to secure and consolidate stone

arched bridges.

Right through that era of the mason and carpenter, large numbers of young Irishmen were destined to acquire and perfect these skills. As we move into the nineteenth century we find rapid development taking place, with Government programmes drawn up for building schools, granaries and stone bridges spanning the broadest rivers in the land. This was to result in almost full employment for well qualified carpenters and masons. A large number of them chose to become contractors themselves.

In those days grain production was a Government number one priority, so legislation was introduced to allow grants to be paid to suitable applicants for the construction of granaries to be located close to their dwelling houses. This resulted in hundreds of these buildings being constructed right across the countryside. A grant payment of five pounds was given for the construction of a rectangular stone building of specific measurements, provided it had a wooden loft, a door at each end and a roof covered in blue bangor slates. A grant of four pounds was given for a similar building roofed with galvanised iron.

All this provided a golden opportunity for young tradesmen to get started as contractors and a good number availed of the opening. They later progressed to building dwelling houses, schools and other public buildings. Although now well over one hundred years old, many of these buildings are still in existence.

The names of stone masons who took on the task of erecting these buildings still linger on here in folk memory. In the closing decades of the last century there were still some people around who could name, for instance, the contractor who had built the schoolhouse where they had received their early education. The same applied in the case of some dwelling houses, granaries and masonry walls.

Prominent names from our own local area were John Corley of Knockrower, Bartley Coen who was born in the same townland but later resided at Lower



Spurtown, and Jimmy Hunt who was born near Killaville church but emigrated and worked for a number of years in Britain before returning in the early 1900s. John Corley built a number of fine two storey houses while still a young man. In the 1920s he emigrated to Australia where he spent the rest of his life.

During the years 1896 – 1898 Pat O'Dowd of Goldfield near Tubbercurry took on the contract of building the present schoolhouse at Killaville. Numbered among those tradesmen recruited to assist him were the masons just named. Although this old building, which has been refurbished for time to time, is now well over one hundred years in existence, it still stands out as an example of the skill and craftsmanship exhibited by the tradesmen of that time.

In the years 1883 – 1885 Martin Igoe of Kilmee, Gurteen, erected a schoolhouse at Carn, about a mile from Gurteen village. Martin, who came from a family of renowned stone masons, recruited a couple of local craftsmen to assist him in the task. This old building, completed in 1885, is still in use as a schoolhouse.

During the years 1903 – 1905 the Powell brothers of Moydoo erected a new schoolhouse at Cloonanure in the Gurteen area. The brothers had got little formal training as masons but had acquired enormous experience erecting granaries in the late 1800s, and this old building, though no longer used as a schoolhouse, is still in a remarkable state of preservation.

With the coming of the railways the country had witnessed the building of the railway stations. Today these fine cut-stone buildings must surely stand out as masterpieces in fine art and an enduring credit to the people who put them there. The same can be said about the craftsmen who built the cut-stone bridges over our waterways.

The mid 1800s was a period when many fine churches were completed throughout this part of our country. As we approach any town or village, the first thing we are likely to see is a church spire jutting right into the skyline. When we arrive we are likely to find one or more churches built from cut limestone and with a streamlined architectural finish that is almost unbelievable. We know that it was the highly-skilled architects, masons and carpenters of bygone days who put them there.

The masons did all the heavy groundwork. Working through all

kinds of weather, they occupied the building site, cutting large blocks of stone down to size, tapering, shaping and dressing them, and then assembling them at ground level before placing them on a windlass to be hoisted onto scaffolding near the builders. A tugrope was usually attached to the windlass and a quiet horse was used to draw the rope through a pulley situated high up on the building.

On specialised buildings like churches only the finest of craftsmen were employed. These worksmen would be referred to as cracker-jacks because of their high level of skill. The people who worked on spires were steeple-jacks. To complete the spires, steeple-jacks were sometimes drafted in from abroad, from places like northern Italy where they had already gained massive experience in their field.

Apart from those people who worked on building sites there was also the local stonecutter who worked away quietly in his own backyard. Using hammer and chisel he hacked away at large blocks of stone to create lintels, window sills and punched stone effect bases for under door jambs. He was the craftsman who could also produce small stone pillars for holding wicket gates and corner stones (quoins) for schools and churches. He could also hollow out from solid rock a small rectangular basin used to cool red hot iron from the forge fire. The water contained in this vessel was reputed to have healing powers for sore or strained limbs. He was however better known locally as a scythe stone maker, and if while cutting meadow you happened to break your scythe stone, you would head for his workplace to find a replacement.

The passing of the nineteenth century by and large brought to a close the golden era of the stone mason as we had come to know him.

With the coming of the twentieth century, advanced skills and modern technology took us into the age of the concrete block and readymix grout delivered to building sites by rotating containers mounted on large lorry bodies.

Later in that century architects were committed to enhancing the appearance of new house designs by including sections of stonework of varying colour and composition in their outward facades. This modern development gave rise to a very new kind of stone mason who was to establish his own mark on the face of

our countryside.

In the 1940s members of the previous generation had lots of stories relating to the *gobán saor* and the masons of their time. One man clearly remembered the days he had spent drawing stones with a donkey and cart from a local quarry to a building site. Another aged gentleman had actually worked for a time as a mason. He could give a vivid description of the type of tools used by those craftsmen in the course of their work. Most of them had each got two, or sometimes three, hammers to choose from when going to work on blocks of stone. In addition, the mason was equipped with his mitre board, bob, mason's line, large wooden try square, trowel and measuring rod. Some seasoned old worksmen took measurements with their thumb and middle finger and seldom bothered with measuring equipment. This used to be referred to as the "rule of thumb."

One mature gentleman had a story to tell of days spent drawing bricks from a maker's yard and delivering them to building sites for use in constructing fireplaces, chimney breasts and window openings.

The old stone masons and the engineers who supervised them were very precise about the quality of stone to be used in an important building. Several quarries would be tested before a decision was made. Any flaking or fissuring would cause the stone to be rejected.

Today when we stop to examine our churches, cathedrals, bridges and numerous public buildings, we can be quite sure that what we are looking at are masterpieces in stone, put there by persons from a bygone age whose skill and craftsmanship have surely stood the test of time.

And when media people come out to the countryside to interview individuals for their programmes, they often stand their subjects in full view of these historic buildings in full knowledge that what they, and those who view their programme, are seeing are priceless works of art.

*Information contained in this article was gleaned from conversations and stories related by members of a previous generation, many of whom lived their lives when the events described were actually taking place.*

# John Black of Sligo and his 'Tyrone' Posterity

Jack Johnston

John Black of Sligo, merchant and ship owner, had three daughters who were married into prominent Tyrone families. His descendants through these lines included as grandsons Dr John Benjamin Story, the ophthalmologist who was honorary surgeon-oculist to two Viceroy's and to King George V, Sir Charles Falls, a Conservative MP, and Surgeon Leslie Maturin, the medical officer at Kilmainham hospital.

John Black and his father, William (or Billy) Black, were both merchants in Sligo town. William had a rope works and John owned a number of sailing vessels. He was an importer of a wide selection of goods ranging from tea to timber. John also had a lease of the marine villa of Elsinore out at Rosses Point. Indeed some said that he leased this villa from the Coopers of Markree as it was part of his 'unofficial' livelihood. He was reputed to have set cannons on his lawn as it commanded the entrance to Sligo port. Black was reputed to be the leading brandy smuggler in the West of Ireland though a respected merchant and pillar of local society. He served as churchwarden in St John's parish for the three years from 1822 to 1824.

John Black married a Miss Bessy Faucett from a Sligo family and they had eleven children - eight daughters and three sons. Black died a young man in the Cholera epidemic of



Dr John Benjamin Story, Grandson of John Benjamin Black of Elsinore

1832 leaving his wife to raise her large brood with some help from her mother. She took her family to Callowhill where her mother lived but after a year or two they all removed to Dublin. John Black came to his death when attending to a young boy that he found crying in the dead house at the local hospital. Black brought the boy home and fed and clothed him, though by then he had caught the disease himself.

Two of John's sons became clergymen in the Church of England while the third, Johnny, ran away to sea. All the girls married except Marion the second youngest. Susan the eldest married John R. Hime<sup>a</sup>, a civil engineer of Gardiner St. Dublin, who in later life had a career in the colonial service in India and Ceylon. Jane, Maggie and Jemima became the wives respectively of gentlemen named Linklater, Von Doddleson and Keene. Jane married Thomas Linklater from an old Orkney Family. Their son, Rev Dr Robert Linklater (1839-1916) was a prominent ritualist in the Church of England. He was the Vicar of Stroud, published extensively and gained an entry in *Who's Who* when he was a canon of St Paul's cathedral.

<sup>b</sup> Maggie married George Von Doddleson (sometimes Von Dadelzen and other variants) a Surrey metal broker. They lived in a fashionable area of Greenwich, with Maggie's sister Marion and two Keene nieces<sup>c</sup>. We have no knowledge of their mother, Jemima. The remaining three daughters through their marriages all had strong Tyrone links. It is their story that now concerns us.

Sarah Bernard Black the fifth daughter married the Rev William Story of Clogher. He had been a curate in his native parish until 1844 when he was appointed rector of Aghabog in South Monaghan. They were married at Monkstown Parish Church in 1848 and lived for the next 24 years in Aghabog rectory. Story then gave up the parish and returned to Clogher where he had inherited the family estate. His two older brothers - both unmarried, had died in their middle life and he came into an inheritance rather unexpectedly.

The Corick estate was held under lease from the bishop of Clogher and

had been in the Story family since 1697. It ran to almost 3000 acres and was scattered through eight townlands. It was William and Sarah who added the new garden front and Italianate tower to their mansion house at Corick in 1863 though they still lived for the most part in Aghabog rectory near Dartry. They employed the Belfast firm of architects, Lanyon and Lynn, who incorporated part of the old house in the overall plan. The property today is Corick House Hotel - the venue for the annual William Carleton Summer School.



Elsinore, Rosses Point. Front view. July 1988

The Storys had sixteen years together at Corick before he died in 1888, Sarah survived him until 1909. A very fine portrait of her painted by Lavery was at Corick until the house was sold in the early 1990s. William and Sarah had two sons and four daughters.

The eldest son Dr John Benjamin Story was a distinguished eye surgeon in Dublin and was still performing cataract operations when in his early seventies. He had a town house in Merrion Square but retained some staff at Corick for his visits North. He was a keen cricketer, golfer and cyclist and in 1904 set up a nine hole links at Corick. He was High Sheriff for Tyrone in 1911 and in that capacity was a guest at Westminster Abbey for the coronation of George V.

One of his sisters, Mary Story, was one of the first women graduates at the old Royal University of Ireland. She taught French in Alexandra College and was an Irish hockey international. Another sister, Marion, became the wife of General Sir Edmund Barrow, who had commanded the Southern Army in India. Marion lived on the sub-continent for almost 20 years before her husband retired in 1919 to Milestown, near Castlebellingham.

She died in London in 1933.

Harriet Humfrey Black the fourth daughter married in 1845 John William Henry Maturin, a Dublin solicitor, who also had a practice in Strabane. Black practised in Upper Temple Street and in later years on Lower Ormond Quay. The Maturins were French Huguenots and arrived in Ireland (via Holland) in 1715. John's brother, Charles the barrister, married an heiress, Jane Baird of Boom Hall near Londonderry and it was their son, Daniel Maturin Baird who in 1862 inherited much of the Mountjoy (Blessington) estate north of Omagh. The Earl of Blessington's encumbered Tyrone property passed by sale in 1847 to among others, Daniel Baird, a Derry merchant. Baird's heir was his grandson, Daniel Maturin, who in 1875 took the surname Baird. He resided at Mourne Lodge, Newtownstewart.

John Maturin died in 1889 at his nephew's home in Newtownstewart and was buried there. Harriet spent her remaining years in Dublin and died at Rathmines on 31 January 1907. Her final resting place was at Mount Jerome. They had seven children, five sons and two girls, the girls both dying in infancy. Leslie the eldest boy was a surgeon on Achill Island before his appointment as Medical Officer at Kilmainham Fever Hospital. Albert the second son was rector of Maghera from 1890 until his retirement in 1926. Albert presented new alms dishes to the church at Clondevaddock (Co Donegal) in memory of his parents, John and Harriett. A third son, Charles who was a surgeon, was accidentally drowned in Ceylon when just 25.

The Maturins produced a whole crop of Irish Anglican clergy, the most notable being the novelist, the Rev Charles Robert Maturin (1780-1824). His father, William was a cousin to John's father, Henry Maturin (1771-1842).

Elizabeth (Bessie) Black married another Dublin solicitor, Henry Falls. In fact Bessie and Susan her eldest sister had a joint wedding in St Thomas's Church, Dublin in September 1838. Falls, like Story, belonged to a well-known South Tyrone family. Henry's original base was at Aughnacloy and he lived at Derrycush House in that town until about 1865. From then on we find him at Kentfield House, Loughlinstown, Co Dublin with an office in Lower Dominic Street. Henry and Elizabeth had 11 children – eight sons and three daughters.

Richard the eldest born became a

clergyman while three sons became solicitors, two working in their father's practice, which in later years had moved to Sackville Street. One of these sons, Thomas who lived in Fitzwilliam Square later acquired a small estate in Tyrone. He bought most of the mountainous townland of Lislap East near Gortin and built a shooting lodge on it. He was thereafter



**Elsinore 1992. Rear view showing stables**

a regular visitor to Tyrone, where he was a JP. He died in London in 1928.

Charles Fausset Falls the youngest son was also a lawyer. In 1890 he set up in practice in Enniskillen with James Pringle operating as Falls and Pringle in Townhall Street. After Mr Pringle became a King's Counsel he was joined by his law clerk, John Hanna and the firm rebranded as Falls and Hanna – a partnership that endures in Enniskillen to this day.

Charles Falls had a varied career outside his practice as he was a member of the urban council, was prominent in the Orange order and was for some years a Conservative member of parliament. He joined the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and served in the Great War with the Ulster Division. He lived in Fermanagh until 1929 during which time he kept a racing yacht on Lough Erne. Falls was knighted in 1923. He was a keen political 'fixer' and once arranged for a number of heads of households to get a temporary address in a house in a different Enniskillen ward before a bye-election. These electors became known as 'Falls' swallows'. It was his son, Capt Cyril Bentham Falls, who became the eminent military historian.

C B Falls published histories of the two world wars, of the Ulster Division and of the Irish wars of Elizabeth I. One of his most enduring works was *The Birth of Ulster* (1936), an analysis of the Ulster Plantation, which was still in print in paperback sixty years later. His other works included studies on Rudyard Kipling and Marshal Foch. His expertise was recognized in 1946 when he was appointed Chichele Professor of the History of War at

Oxford.

Professor Falls once wrote of his own family in the *Illustrated London News*

.....They owned some land but not much...they attained to the dignity of house with a family name, Fallsbrook...and later (recounting some family members) there was a major-general but of his military exploits I am ignorant.

This was a surprising admission from a leading military historian. He was a regular contributor to the *News* and I have no doubt if a search were made in its files there must be some mention by him of the Faussets of Sligo and the great-grandfather who smuggled the kegs of brandy into the coves around Coney Island and Deadman's Point. Such was the posterity of John Black of Elsinore.

Sources used:

Notes on Blacks and Faussets; Story papers, PRONI: Memoirs of Mrs McClintock-granddaughter of Susan Hime  
*Spark*. No 19 (2006) 'The Falls Family; Attornies, Merchants, Farmers and Distillers' Jack Johnston, pp 11- 16  
*Dictionary of Irish Biography* Vol 9 pp 120-121  
J C McTernan : *Sligo: The Light of Bygone Days* Vol I. pp 78-79  
Charles Tyndall, *St John's Church, Sligo*, nd.  
Michael Osborne *The Maturin and Johnston families*  
*Belfast Newsletter*, 18 Sept 1838

(Endnotes)

a John was a son of Maurice Hime, merchant, Roebuck, Co Dublin. John's nephew, Sir Albert Hime, was Prime Minister of Natal from 1899-1903

b His death was also listed in the *Annual Register* for 1917

c George Von Dadelszen, his wife Margaret and sister-in-law, Marion Black were listed at 5 Blackheath Terrace, Greenwich on the 1881 Census of England & Wales. The three are still alive at the same address in 1901, living with a cook, housemaid and parlour maid. (Thanks to Grace Moloney for this and the Linklater reference)

# Golden Jubilee of Culfadda Church 1959 - 2009

John Higgins

Bishop Brendan Kelly was the chief celebrant at the Golden Jubilee Mass in the Church of the Holy Rosary, Culfadda, which took place on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. There was a very large congregation present for this special occasion. In his homily, the Bishop congratulated the local community for their loyalty and commitment to the church over the years. He paid special tribute to Canon Jim Finan PP and the organising committee for the marvellous work they had done in preparing the church for the occasion. Canon Finan welcomed the Bishop, the large number of clergy present from the diocese, and the laity from the parish and the surrounding areas.

John Higgins, retired teacher, speaking on behalf of the local community, traced the history of the church from the time work commenced on its erection in the mid 1950s.

The erection of the church was made possible by the generosity of a son of the parish, the late Fr Nicholas Rafferty. Fr Nicholas was born in the townland of Dernagrang in 1881 and spent most of his life in the U.S. Returning home on his retirement, he decided to fund the building of this very beautiful church in honour of Our Lady, but he was called to his eternal reward when the work was about two-thirds complete.

The work however was completed according to the original plans thanks to the goodwill and cooperation of the local community. Work commenced in 1955 when the blocks used in the construction of the church were made on site, by three men with a small cement mixer. The foundations were laid in 1956.

The following people worked on the building: John Dodd, contractor, and his brothers Joe and Christy, Andrew Davy, Josie Connor, Vincent Murray, Bertie Langton, Owen McGowan, Paddy Kieilty, John Francis McGowan,

Ned Keane, John Scanlon, Mike Ward, Paddy Higgins, Tommy Scanlon, Tom Drury, John Igoe (Senior), John Igoe (Junior), Kevin Igoe, Matthew Reid, Sean Conroy, John Hannon, Mike McGowan, Paddy McGowan and John Higgins.

The roofing contractors were the Lynch Brothers. Tommy Hamilton and Vincent O'Shea designed the ceiling.

There was no modern technology at the time, no teleports or cherry pickers, no hoists and no running water. The water for mixing the concrete was carried in buckets from the local river. The building blocks were carried on the men's shoulders up ladders and as they were not unionised nobody complained about working conditions. People were delighted to have this employment in the area at the time, as there was a severe economic crisis in the country then. Work commenced at 8 am and finished at 6 pm five days a week and the working week finished at 4 pm on Saturday. The weekly wage for labourers was £5-2-6, which was less than the minimum wage per hour paid to today's workers.

The building was completed in 1958 and was officially blessed and opened on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1959, by the late Bishop James Fergus.

The cost of the church was £22 600. It has seating accommodation for 400 people. It was designed by Leonard Architects, Dublin. Gowna Wood Industries Ltd, Tubbercurry, supplied the altar and altar rails. The furniture was designed to harmonise with the general architectural character of the building. The figurines depicting the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary on the stained glass windows and the stations of the cross are certainly the jewel in the crown. Bishop Fergus said at the official opening "It would be difficult to find anywhere in a country parish a succursal church as beautiful as this".

Before the erection of this church,

the place of worship was in the building next door which had been the local church from the early years of the nineteenth century, and before that it was in a thatched church in the townland of Lisconry.

The last Mass in the old church was celebrated by Fr Michael Giblin of St Nathy's College, on the morning of the official opening of this church. Canon Peter Harte was PP here when the building of the new church commenced, and Canon Eddie Gallagher was PP when it opened.

Canon John (Jack) McGarry replaced Canon Gallagher in 1973 and was PP here until 1985. He was replaced by Canon Christy McLoughlin who remained as PP until 1990 when the present incumbent, Canon Jim Finan, was appointed.

The following priests served as curates during the last fifty years:

Rev James Flannery 1954 – 1981

Rev Pat Lynch 1981 – 1986

Rev Farrel Cawley 1986 – 1987

Rev Tom Flanagan 1987 – 1989

Rev Roger McDonagh 1989 – 1993

Rev John Geelan 1993 – 1999

and the last curate in Culfadda was retired Archdeacon James Gavigan from 1999 until his death in 2005.

The first person baptised in this church was Nicholas Murray and the first couple married here were Mary Doyle and Paddy Candon. The first funeral from it was that of Martin Dwyer, Townaghy.

John concluded his address by expressing the hope that many of the congregation present would be alive for the celebration of the centenary in 2059.

# My Search for the Craigs of Spurtown

John McDonagh

In the year 1899, my grandfather, Thomas Mc Donagh, a forty seven year old returned emigrant, bought the house and farm where my family and myself now live. The vendor was Robert Craig, aged forty five, who like his father before him, had farmed here successfully for a number of years.

Throughout my early years, as I worked the land with my own father, occasionally unearthing souvenirs and artefacts from the Craig's term of occupancy, I frequently asked the questions, Who were the Craigs? Where did they come from? Where did they go? Why did they leave? And can I ever learn what happened to them?

The years have moved on. The people who could attempt to answer these questions are long gone to their eternal reward, but the questions still remained in my mind. Although the "Craigs of Spurtown" are just a distant memory, as I looked forward to my impending retirement, and learned the complexities of the web, I felt it would be an interesting project if I could use my new-found skills to find answers to some of these questions.

## BEGINNING THE SEARCH -- LANDLORDS & ESTATE RECORDS

Where to start? Where to begin? I had learned from the older generation that Robert Craig, a prosperous and successful farmer, sold up his farm and with his wife Jane, nee Gorman, ( late of Gorman's Hardware Shop, Ballymote) and a young family of two daughters emigrated to Canada. I had no more information. Canada is a vast country, spanning six time zones, with many provinces, big cities, and a huge population. Finding descendants from a family that had emigrated over a century ago, without more definite information, could be like finding a needle in a haystack. However, before I embarked on a Canadian search, I needed more information on their time in this locality. Where did they come from? How many generations of them had lived here? Were they the builders of our house, which was

clearly marked on the 1836 O.S map?

To research any area of the past centuries requires a great deal of determination. Records are scarce;



most were destroyed in the tragic Four Courts fire of 1922. What are left are usually incomplete parochial records, estate papers, Griffith's Valuation Records, Tithe applotments books and of course tradition and memories of conversations with the previous generation - which should always be recorded before they too are lost forever.

## TITHE APPLLOTMENTS & GRIFFITH'S VALUATION.

The Tithes were a tax on land, payable to The Church of Ireland. Because they were not payable on all lands and because they were payable by everybody who qualified, irrespective of religion or denomination, they gave The Church of Ireland a very privileged position, thus causing much trouble, antagonism and strife. None the less, Tithe records books of 1825 provide much valuable information on the landholders of that period.

On the other hand, Griffith's Valuation records give the first fully comprehensive and accurate survey of Irish property owners in the mid nineteenth century. The Valuation record of 1858 is easily accessible on the web. It contains maps, and lists

the occupants of each townland. In some instances the holdings of each tenant are identifiable. It lists three Craig members, Robert, William, and Noble, all with separate holdings of land in this townland of Spurtown, but the Tithe applotments book of 1825, thirty three years earlier contains absolutely no record of them. That leaves just church and estate records for my research.

## Alexander Sims

It should be understood that prior to "The Wyndham Land Act 1903" nearly all the lands of Ireland were in the ownership of landlords, often with estates containing many thousands of acres. These landlords usually leased or rented the land out to tenant farmers. Because there were few other natural resources in the country, the hunger for land was so great that it was often leased, sub-leased and leased on again, with the impoverished tenants at the end of the line being forced to pay enormous and totally uneconomic rents. This system, open to abuse at every level, caused endless hardship, hostility and violence and was a contributory factor to the catastrophic famine of the 1840s.

A number of Acts of Parliament, in the 1870s and 1880s attempted to redress this iniquitous system and eventually gave the tenants security of tenure and co-ownership with the landlord, but the rents still had to be paid.

The records show that the last landlord for this townland of Spurtown was Alexander Sims from Collooney, but I gathered that he was a comparative new-comer to the scene. My father remembered him quite well. Our house was a bailiff's residence, where the rent was paid over to the landlord. My grandfather was responsible for notifying the tenants when the rent was due and providing facilities for the landlord or the landlord's agent (John Valentine) to collect it. This much despised enterprise earned an allowance on our own rent, and was inherited from Robert Craig, along



with the farm. It also brought the rather doubtful title of Peace Commissioner.

Alexander Sims came from Scotland. He was a member of a very industrious family, who had made their money from a number of lucrative industries in the Collooney area. Sims bought out the landlord's interests in Spurtown and Ougham at an encumbered estate court in Sept 1873. Both townlands were part of the lands once held by Nicholas Taafe, Earl of Carlingford, and granted to Major Thomas Harte, (a Cromwellian grantee) on a nine hundred year lease, two centuries earlier, but that's a story for another day!

### THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES & THE O'REILLYS

A search in The Record Office revealed that Sim's predecessors were Myles George O'Reilly, and his father, Myles John, then residing at Heath House Abbeyliex. Co. Laois. This piece of information astonished me. I knew that house well! By a strange quirk of fate, an uncle of mine had lived there for the last few decades of his life.

More curious than ever, I browsed through "The Landed Estate Database". My search was rewarded: I learned that records, papers and manuscripts, of both Myles George and Myles John O'Reilly were presented to Trinity College, Dublin, in 1954 by Myles George's grand-son, Captain Beresford Mundy (a WW 1 survivor), and that they were now available to the public on microfilm. Copies were also available in The National Library Archives in Kildare St. More accessible to the general public, this was where my search now headed.

Complete amateurs, and greenhorns at this type of work, my sister and myself went to the reading-room in the National Library, naively thinking we could be out of there in a couple of hours. It was only when I had gone through the normal procedures and made my request for the O'Reilly Papers that I began to see the enormity of the task facing us. There were three rolls of microfilm, with each roll literally containing volumes. However the staff were very helpful, and advised us of one particular roll that they felt would be more relevant to our search.

We started to run the film, and I despaired. It contained reams of material, some in Irish some in Latin, some literary endeavours including a three-act play, genealogy dealing with the O'Reilly clan, stretching all the way back to the fourteenth century and documents dealing with just about everything under the sun. My eyes were giving out, I was fast forwarding, at a reckless rate, and having thoughts of abandoning the whole operation, when I caught a glimpse of a carefully written headline entitled, "A Survey of Ballinspur August 1849, for Myles John O'Reilly. Survey undertaken by John Nary, Surveyor". At last I was getting someplace! I was reading a document that nobody had read with any degree of interest, for the past 160 years. Among the listed tenants, was one "Robert Craig". I had found an ancestor to the subject of my research. This was the first tangible and verifiable evidence that I could find about the early Craigs of Spurtown.

### Ballinspur or Spurtown

The townland of Spurtown, in the half parish of Killavil, and the civil parish of Kilshalvy, is now divided into three parts, Spurtown Lower, Knockanima, and Spurtown Duke. These subdivisions appear to have taken place after the 1849 survey. For that, the whole townland is treated as one unit under its ancient Irish name—Ballinspur. I browsed on through the carefully preserved documents becoming more and more excited by what I was finding.

In "The Nary Survey" Robert Craig was the only Craig listed. His land and buildings carried a rent of £13-3-1 but nine years later in "Griffith's Valuation" of 1858, there are three Craigs in Spurtown: William, a son of Robert's, living in our house, valuation £22 at that time, Robert, (the same man, or another son?) who had a field sub-leased from William, at a rent of £4 (we still know it as "Bob's Field"), and Noble, another son of Robert's apparently a brother of William's who lived in Knockanima, and who also had a farm, in the neighbouring townland of Deechomade. Thankfully, these holdings are all identifiable on the map.

Noble Craig is very important to my

research, because it was through him, that I eventually learned where the Craigs had originated, and to where they finally emigrated. I subsequently learned that Robert C. of the 1849 survey died Aug 15, 1865, aged seventy eight and that his son Noble C. died on 23/4/1883 aged sixty three years.

As I continued reading the O'Reilly papers, the next significant documents that came to light were letters dated September 1864, from Noble Craig to M.J O'Reilly, Heath House, Abbeyliex. It was evident that Noble Craig was collecting rents and acting as a landlord's agent. There were rent accounts, valuations and, surprisingly, a reference to when O'Reilly "was managing the place himself". From reading the insignificant bits of gossip that were passed on, it was clear O'Reilly was very familiar with this area and its people. One can only surmise that he had been living here at some stage in the fairly recent past.

The closing-time bell in the library meant that the search had to be abandoned for that day, but I would definitely be back! I had answered one of my own questions. What I discovered left me in no doubt that the first Craig came to Spurtown in the 1830s or 1840s. Next question, where did they come from? The answer to that came from a very improbable source.

### THE KANSAS CONNECTION

In the course of my web search, I regularly trawled the L.D.S. Family Search website (Mormon Church online genealogy) for death and obituary notices. Because my subject could be anywhere in the U.S.A. or Canada, I could not confine my search to any particular area. Needless to say, the name Robert Craig cropped up many, many, times and I investigated every one, but to no avail. Then, just before Christmas 2009, I found a submission listing the death of "Robert Craig", Windsor, Ontario, Jan 1935. His date of birth was given as 11/3/1847, in Ballymote Co Sligo. Everything appeared to fit within my parameters, and I set about the complicated task of contacting the submitter. When I eventually made contact I found an extremely kind, courteous, and

knowledgeable lady who responded immediately to my emails and who was able to fill some of the gaps that I thought never could be filled.

She informed me that “Windsor Robert” was her great, great grandfather and that his father, Joseph, came to Ballymote from Tollyganee, Co. Down. That Joseph and family fled Ireland to escape the effects of the famine, when *her* Robert was only an infant. She also informed me that her Robert was married in Windsor, and that their first-born was christened Noble. I had the right family, but the wrong branch and the wrong Robert!!

**Births, Deaths and Marriages**

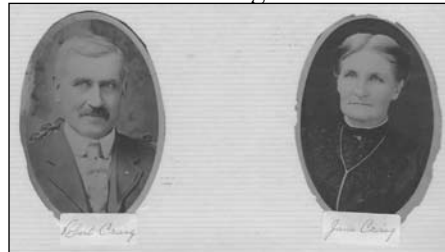
My next search was an online trawl through the records of Co. Sligo heritage and genealogy society, and once again I got snippets of information that started to bind my story together. The first piece of really interesting information---William Craig from Speertown(sic) full age!! Married Mary Anne Harte (aged 16) of Donroat p Kilmacshalgan, Drumore West. The marriage took place in Kilmacshalgan C.I. on 9/11/1852. The religious denomination of both was “Church of Ireland.” William’s father was Robert, and the witnesses were David Harte, and Noble Craig. We can reasonably assume that William and Noble were brothers. The first-born to the marriage was Robert, they also had Thomas, Mary Eliza, Joseph, William, Sarah, James and John. There may well have been others; records from that period are often incomplete and unsatisfactory.

**How many Robert Craigs?**

Further expeditions to the Heritage site added other significant pieces of information: Robert’s Church baptism record, and also the Church record of a marriage. The baptism record shows that Robert Craig, son of William and Mary Anne, of “Spurtown, near Ballymote” was baptised on 18/10/1853. Parish district, Sligo Circuit, denomination, Methodist. Unusual--- both his parents and his many siblings were all Church of Ireland. The Church marriage record is also slightly unusual. It records the

wedding of Robert Noble Craig, and Jane Gorman in Emlafad (sic) on 10/4/1880. No further information given, no witnesses, no proper address, just a very bare record of the wedding, but it verified what I’d learned from the past generation.

I felt confident that at last I had found the right subject. Events subsequently proved my assumption wrong. *There were two Robert Craigs in Spurtown* at that time, one born 1853, to William & Mary Anne. The other Robert *Noble* was born 17/3/ 1855 to Noble & Mary Anne. *He* was also baptised in the Methodist Faith and it was *he* that married Jane Gorman. All very confusing! There had been three Robert Craigs born in Spurtown between 1847 and 1855. Their grandfather was also Robert and there may have been an “Uncle Robert” as well. To make matters even more confusing, William and family left this area circa 1870 and the house and farm where they had lived was subsequently occupied by Noble and his family. It was only when I finally got in touch with the Craig descendants in



Ontario that I learned the whole story. Noble Craig married Mary Anne Shera in Boyle Church of Ireland on 19/7/1848. The witnesses were John Crawford and Edward Shera. The place of residence was given as “Daghamara “ which I presume is how an unfamiliar clergyman may have spelt “Deechomade”

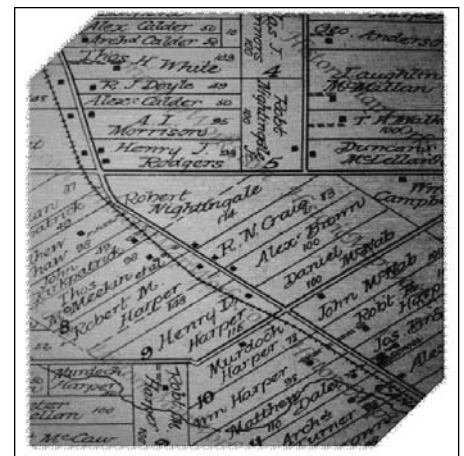
**Ontario---Canada**

Many hours were spent searching the shipping lists from the last years of the nineteenth century, without any success whatsoever. It appeared as if the Craigs of Spurtown had disappeared into the mists of time. Then on a hunch and with my previous success in mind, I thought if one family member had gone to Ontario, well maybe??? I trawled the 1901 Canadian census and met with instantaneous success.

The first Robert Craig listed was the one I was looking for. Robert N Craig, year of birth 1855-Ireland. Wife Jane, two daughters Mary and Sarah. It was a perfect match. I had hit the pay-dirt. The place of residence was Arthur, Wellington North, Ontario.

Once again I was back on the web, going back through every little piece of information I could find, concerning Arthur. I was amazed when I found a 1906 map of The Township. When my imperfect P.C. skills eventually allowed me to blow the map up to a readable size, and I started to read the names thereon, I felt it wouldn’t be out of place in Ballymote, Riverstown, Gurteen, or any other area of Co. Sligo. All the names had a local ring to them. Practically all Sligo names, all common in this particular locality. They even have a street named “Sligo Road,” in the local town of Mount Forest.

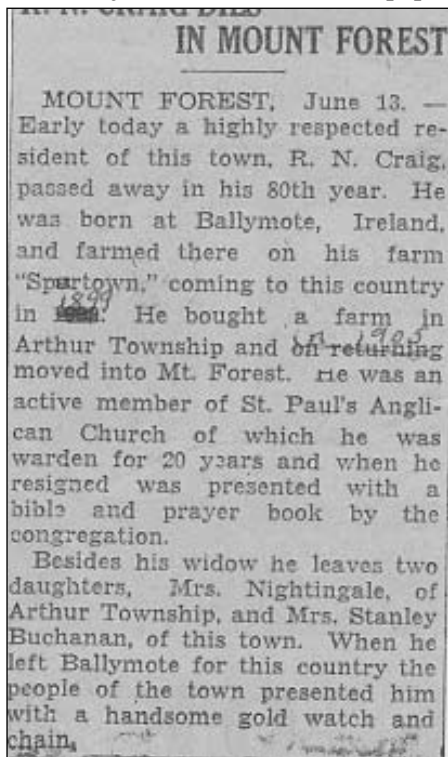
It was a farming area and one could see immediately that it had been recently laid out and well planned. The farms were all oblong in shape, all stretching back from the road, mostly around 100 acres in size. Every single one had road frontage, with the dwelling house situated convenient to the road. It was evident that this was a relatively new settlement. In their midst was the farm of Robert N Craig-- 83 acres stretching backwards from the Owen Sound Road, with The Canadian Pacific Railway in the immediate vicinity. There were three other Craig families in the immediate area, John, James and Hugh. There were also Morrisons, Gormans and Grahams, whom I know were relatives. Can I conclude that Robert C. left Spurtown and emigrated to



Ontario, to start a new life with his brother-in-law and relatives, like The Founding Fathers of old?

**MOUNT FOREST**

Another foray through the 1911 Canadian Census revealed that Robert had moved from his farm in Arthur and was now living in Mount Forest where he owned a machine-shop. Once again I was on the web looking for any snippet I could find. Again I hit luck! A book, "Memories Of Mount Forest," by Arthur Walker Wright, was published in 1928, to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the local newspaper



Robert Craig passed away on 20/6/1935, and his wife Jane on 29/12/1938. From her obituary I learned that she was born in Co. Wexford and that Robert and Jane had eleven children, but only Annie and Sarah survived.

Sarah Buchanan died on 1/3/1978 aged 88. She had no family. Annie Nightingale died on 7/11/1965, aged 83. She had a number of children and grandchildren and I feel privileged to have made contact with them after a time lapse of one hundred and eleven years.



there is a clear photograph of Noble Craig who died in 1883, the last link between Spurtown and the illustrious O'Reilly family. This is what has made the whole exercise worthwhile. Jim Scot is contemplating a visit to Ireland in 2010. Ballymote and Spurtown will certainly make him welcome.

**The Analogy**

As the time marches on, I cast my mind back to the tales I have heard about the Craigs of Spurtown and my own grandfather. I picture two men in their late forties, each crossing the



"The Mount Forest Confederate". I was able to read this book on line and was thrilled to see that Robert Craig, the one-time owner of my house and farm had been a town councillor for Mount Forest in 1908 and 1909.

I emailed the editor, and he directed me to the archives of The Wellington County Museum. There I got in touch with two very courteous and helpful ladies, Elysia and Karen. Their research finally allowed me to close the remaining gaps. Among the many newspaper cuttings that they sent me were obituary notices for both Robert and his wife Jane. Also for their two daughters Annie Nightingale, and Sarah Buchanan, both of whom were born in Spurtown.

**The Descendants**

In the course of the last few weeks I have exchanged many emails and photos with the great-grandchildren of Robert and Jane Craig-- Marjorie Dennis and Jim Scot. I have received numerous photographs that are of great relevance to the heritage and history of this area and I now know how Robert, Jane and their two daughters looked. There are also photos of John R Gorman, one of the principal Ballymote shop-keepers in the late nineteenth century. There's even one of his father, Abraham. Also a priceless shot of Gorman's shop, showing a wonderful view of the premises with a paved foot path outside. But almost unbelievably,

Atlantic from a different direction in the closing months of the nineteenth century. Each in pursuit of his own dream. One, my grandfather, returned to his roots, to his family and the place of his birth, with a spring in his step, and the confidence of a man who had made it. He had built up a highly successful and specialised contracting business, building coke ovens for the big mining interests in the coal-fields of West Virginia. He had rubbed shoulders with the "big-boys of Bramwell", and had enough savvy to get out before the cataclysmic strike and subsequent collapse of 1895.

The other man, Robert Craig, had also reason to be pleased with himself. Tradition says he was hugely popular

in the area. Within his forty five years, he had nearly doubled the size of his holding and been elected to the Grand



**Noble Craig 1820-1883**



**Abraham Gorman (Father of Jane Craig)**

Jury (Boyle Union). He ran a very successful and modernised farm for the time and was involved in nearly all local committees and community affairs, before deciding that his destiny lay with his cousins and relatives in the township of Arthur, Ontario.

I have childhood memories from the 1950s of two old men discussing the farewell dance that was held in our barn (still standing) for the friends and neighbours to say goodbye to the Craigs. Amazingly, one of the newspaper cuttings that I received from Mount Forrest mentions his pride in the “handsome gold watch and chain”(pictured) that was presented to Robert by “the people of the village” before he departed for Ontario.

It’s now nearly one hundred and eleven years since the Craigs left Spurtown and my own predecessors took up residence here. This has been an unprecedented period in the

long history of the human race. The world of one hundred years ago is almost unrecognisable. Science and technology have made gigantic strides, with so many amazing developments reflecting man’s inventiveness. Air travel, lunar landings, space exploration and the atomic age, to name but a few. However, I’m convinced that the greatest revolution of all must be the I.T. development which allows me to sit here, in the same corner, in the same house, where Robert Craig and his forbearers must have often sat, and with a lap-top upon my knees research and write this article.

*Photos Courtesy of Marjorie, Dennis and Jim Scott – Great grand children.*



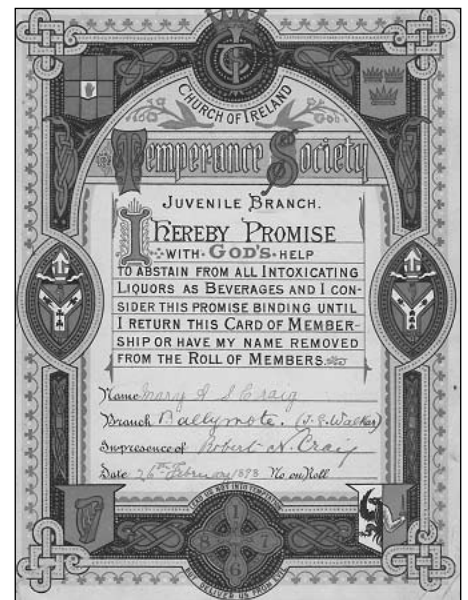
**Thomas Mc Donagh circa 1890**



**John & Dotie Gorman**



**John R Gorman (Left) – Brother in-law of Robert Craig**



**Robert Craig (2nd from Left)  
Outside Craig’s Implement Shop Mount Forest Canada**

## Restoration of 1795 Sir Jocelyn Gore-Booth Mill in Ballymote set to be a flagship Tourist Attraction for County Sligo.

John Perry T.D

The restoration of the old Corn Mill in Keenaghan Ballymote by the Ballymote Enterprise Company under the Direction of its Chair John Perry will result in the development of one of the northwest's premier tourist attractions and a flagship development for County Sligo.

The Mill was built by Sir Jocelyn Gore-Booth of Lissadell in 1795. It survived until 1941 when it was destroyed by fire. It is listed as a protected building.

The features and attractions of the newly restored mill will include; a Transport Museum where a set of 10 original Bianconi Coaches will be displayed; the mill wheel will be restored to its full working order; the Paddy Killoran Room, a memorial and musical tribute to the great Ballymote traditional musician, Paddy Killoran; a memorial display to Brigadier General Michael Corcoran of the 69th 'Fighting Irish' Regiment and a collection of 69th Regiment Memorabilia which is currently on display in Collins Barracks, Dublin; the Taaffe Family History Room, a

history and information collection on the Taaffe Family of Ballymote Castle. There will also be a tourist visitor centre in the newly restored Mill as well as craft shops, a restaurant and ancillary facilities.

The Original set of Bianconi Coaches which will go on permanent display in the Mill's Transport Museum were donated to the State by the O'Hara family of Annaghmore Co. Sligo in 1952. Chairman of Ballymote Enterprise Company John Perry TD has now secured the return of these Coaches to Ballymote from the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. These Bianconi Coaches were the original mode of Public Transport prior to the establishment of the country's rail network, and were introduced by Charles Bianconi in about 1815.

Deputy Perry stated; "This is a very exciting development for the town of Ballymote and indeed the northwest region as a whole. This flagship tourist attraction will be among the most unique in the Country and will provide an enormous boost to tourism and to the wider economy in County Sligo.

As well as the feature of the newly restored mill itself, it will encompass much of the diverse and unique history of this region of the County.

"The Corn Mill Restoration will bring back into use this facility as a tourist attraction, which will respect the history of the building, its importance to the town of Ballymote and will preserve for future generations an image of the past in a contemporary context where old functions are recognised, but allow new functions within a suitable environment. It will also provide a much needed employment boost in the current difficult economic conditions.

"I wish to compliment the Project Design and Management Architect, James Drew and his company for his outstanding work in designing and planning this restoration project. Ballymote, South Sligo and the wider region can look forward to a truly unique and flagship attraction upon completion of the restoration of Ballymote Corn Mill.

"Phase 1 of the restoration work is due to commence in the coming months."

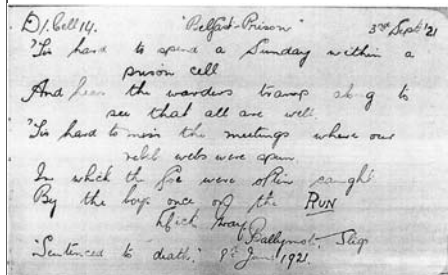




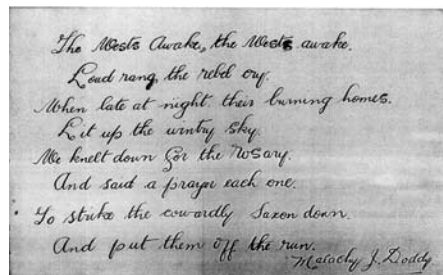
# On Death Row ...

Padraig Doddy

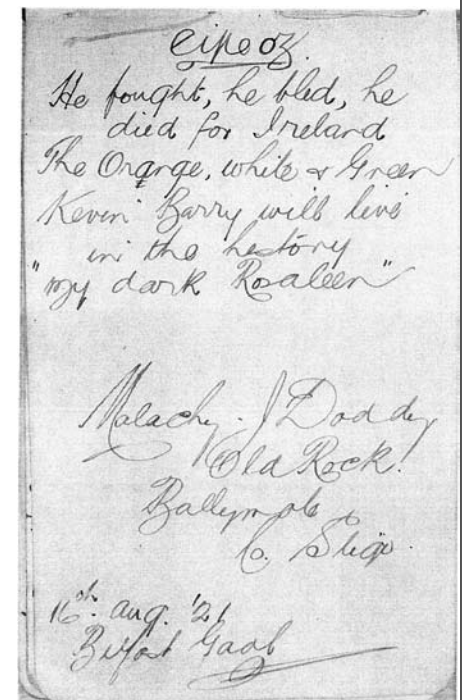
The Irish War of Independence of the early twentieth century comes alive in the pages of an autograph book kept by the prisoners in Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, in 1921. Below are pages written by two Ballymote men, Michael Gray of Ballinaglough and Malachy Doddy of Old Rock.



with the Sergeant's murder, although he was not involved in the shooting. He was held at Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast, until his trial. He had several alibis who stated he was in their company at the time of the shooting. However he was later convicted of the murder and sentenced to hang



and Jack all joined the IRA. They joined the Garda Siochana later on and Malachy became a detective. He had two daughters who have passed on. He died in England in the fifties and was buried in Ballymote. I know nothing of his having been in Crumlin Road Jail.



Michael Gray was born in Ballinaglough in 1898. He had an older brother Pat and a younger sister Mary. His parents were Mary Doddy and Michael Gray. Pat worked in McManus's Bakery for many years. Michael was a student at St. Nathy's College in Ballaghaderreen for some time. Both brothers joined the IRA.

Sergeant Fallon (RIC) was shot dead in Ballymote in November 1920. Michael Gray was arrested and charged

While he was awaiting execution, the Truce was signed in London and this eventually allowed prisoners like him to walk free. He later joined the Garda Siochana. He died in the mid 1960s. His two sons and one daughter currently live in Dublin.

Malachy Doddy was born in Old Rock, Ballymote, one of a family of about ten. His father, also Malachy, was an RIC man. Malachy, Jimmy

# Granary Restoration

PJ Duffy

This old granary situated at Ballyfahey, Killavil, was originally built for the Orr family in the 1800s. At that time it was grant-aided by a five-pound payment from the Government of the day.

Many of the stone masons of the time were so eager for employment that they actually did all the stonework for that amount.

The large gable door on the east end was where the grain was riddled and winnowed after being threshed by flail on the granary loft. A door on the west end was left open on windy

days letting a draught pass through the building, thus allowing the grain to be separated from the chaff.

This building, now in the ownership of the McDonagh family, was recently

renovated with its character and architecture being totally preserved.



# Church of Ireland missions to the Roman Catholics of South Sligo, 1850-1900

Miriam Moffitt

The onset of famine conditions in the west of Ireland in 1845 provided fresh opportunities by which evangelical Protestants from England could mount an aggressive campaign to convert the Roman Catholics of Ireland to scriptural Protestantism. This article will trace the development, operations and decline of missions to Catholics in the Coolaney section of County Sligo and in the Ballaghaderreen-Boyle area of Roscommon-east Mayo. Mission-work in Coolaney was undertaken by Revd George Garrett, whose father was rector of Ballymote, assisted by the fundraising efforts of his brother, Revd John Garrett. Another mission was founded at Ballaghaderreen by Revd Anthony Thomas, a brother-in-law of George Garrett. These men made strenuous efforts to change the religious character of Ireland; this essay will estimate the success of their crusade.

This crusade to convert the Catholics of Ireland, often termed the Second Reformation, gathered momentum in the wake of the Act of Union of 1800. The first phase of the Second Reformation occurred in the 1820s and 1830s, notably in the districts of Kingscourt in County Cavan, Achill and Erris in County Mayo, Dingle or Ventry in County Kerry and Doon in County Limerick. A great number of organisations from almost all Protestant denominations were engaged in mission-work among the Catholic population. Missions of this nature were carried out by the Irish Society (a Church of Ireland mission) and by missions of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist churches. However, by the mid 1840s, missions founded during the 'first phase' were in severe decline, most of

their converts having returned to the Catholic Church.

The arrival of the Great Famine of 1845-48 provided suitable conditions whereby a renewed effort could be made to rescue the souls of Irish Catholics from the 'errors of Rome'. This resulted in the formation of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, a Church of Ireland mission who spearheaded the 'second phase' of the Second Reformation.

Efforts to convert the Roman Catholic population of Ireland to scriptural Protestantism were underpinned by the genuine conviction among evangelical Protestants that souls trapped in the clutches of the Roman religion were outside the scope of salvation and were, without question, destined for the fires of hell. They were also, however, influenced by unvoiced political and sociological motives as many English Protestants wished to curb the political power of the Catholic clergy, which had been influential in the successful campaigns for Catholic emancipation and relief of tithes. They also wished to 'civilise' the 'barbaric Irish' and to imbue Catholic peasantry with the values of the English middle-classes: industry, sobriety and – above all – loyalty to the Empire. Supporters of missions to the Catholic poor of Ireland naively believed that the Irish peasantry, if converted to Protestantism, would automatically become hard-working, sober, loyal citizens of the Empire. In other words, the 'Irish Problem' would be solved by the religious conversion of Ireland's Catholics.

Many Englishmen were horrified by

the arrival of tens of thousands of Irish famine migrants into English cities. In their opinion, the Irish migrants who flooded into English cities brought with them 'popery, in all its degrading and debasing forms'. They were confident, however, of 'peace and goodwill amongst men' if these migrants were brought to a knowledge of 'vital Christianity' through aggressive missionary work in Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

The arrival of potato blight in the summer of 1845, followed by three years of harsh famine conditions, was of pivotal importance in the establishment of the Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics which was founded by an English clergyman, Revd Alexander Dallas. Revd Dallas's interest in the conversion of Irish Catholics was sparked by a chance meeting with Revd Anthony Thomas, then rector and missionary clergyman in Connemara and later rector of Ballaghaderreen.<sup>3</sup> In 1846, even before the onset of extreme famine conditions, Revd Dallas started a small-scale mission to the Catholic community at Castlekerke, near Clonbur on the north shore of Lough Corrib in County Galway. Here he established schools for children and adults, at which food was distributed and where the teachings and doctrines of Rome were clearly and often insultingly denounced. He freely admitted that problems in funding his Castlekerke mission were solved by the arrival of the famine which provided 'streams of charity' in the shape of funds from England which allowed his mission to 'maintain many souls within the reach of the gospel salvation, who would otherwise have passed out of the body

into their spiritual darkness'.<sup>4</sup> Clearly Dallas made use of famine conditions, not only to persuade the Catholic community to avail of his mission services, but also to encourage English supporters to donate generously to his cause. Within a short time of the establishment of Castlekerke mission, bible or scriptural schools were established around the shores of Lough Corrib, staffed by an impressive number of scripture-readers, mission-teachers and ordained missionaries.

In 1848 Revd Dallas expanded his missionary operations westwards, founding mission-schools, and later mission-churches throughout Connemara and Íar Connacht. Missionary work among Connemara's Catholics had been tried in previous decades during the tenure of Archbishop le Poer Trench of Tuam who had appointed Revd Charles Seymour to the region. In 1822, Revd Charles Seymour was replaced by his nephew, Revd Anthony Thomas, who remained in Clifden until 1851 when he was transferred to Ballaghaderreen. Revd Thomas was assisted in Connemara by two missionary curates, Revd Mark Anthony Foster (later vicar of Killedan, near Kiltamagh) and Revd Brabazon Ellis. Protestant missionary work in Connemara, which aroused intense opposition from the Catholic clergy, got off to a promising start but had gone into abeyance somewhat by the famine era.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Plunket succeeded Archbishop le Poer Trench as Bishop of Tuam in 1839<sup>6</sup> and wholeheartedly supported the efforts of the Irish Church Missions until his death in 1866. This support extended to the eviction of tenants who refused to send their children to mission schools on his estate, as discussed later.

Following the arrival of the Irish Church Missions in Connemara in 1848, sixty-four mission schools, fourteen new Protestant churches and four orphanages were established west of a line from Spiddal to Leenane. The poor of the region, ravaged by years

of famine, flocked to these Protestant missions where food and clothing was distributed. No mention was made in mission literature of the distribution of food and supporters were repeatedly assured that vast numbers of Catholic were deserting the Church of Rome. In fact, the Irish Church Missions repeatedly and strenuously (and correctly) insisted that none of its missionary income was used to provide any form of assistance. It never mentioned, however, that a parallel relief fund existed called 'The Fund for the Relief of the Converts and Children of Connemara', which provided food and clothing to those who attended its schools and services. Mission-supporters in England were convinced that Irish Catholics were deserting the 'Church of Rome' in their thousands (which was certainly correct) inspired by purely doctrinal motives (which was certainly not correct).

Without a doubt, the mission could correctly boast of attracting large numbers of Catholics, a fact acknowledged even by the Catholic Church which was greatly alarmed at what it saw as an attack on its flock. In September 1851, Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Armagh (later Archbishop of Dublin and Cardinal), informed the Vatican that in the Glan district of Castlekerke, 140 out of 150 families had 'perverted'.<sup>7</sup> The enormous success of the Irish Church Missions horrified the Catholic clergy of the region, who repeatedly condemned the distribution of food to the starving on condition that they reject their Catholic beliefs.<sup>8</sup>

Bolstered by its success in Connemara, the Society for Irish Church Missions was officially established in March 1849.<sup>9</sup> It established an extensive missionary operation in Dublin, where the ranks of the poor and destitute had been swelled by the many persons impoverished or rendered homeless by the famine who had gravitated to the capital. As in

Connemara, the activities of the Irish Church Missions were aimed at the very poorest of society, who swiftly and eagerly availed of the relief and education offered at its schools and services. Encouraging reports of vast attendances were relayed to its growing body of supporters, through its printed annual reports and in the mission's monthly publications, *The Banner of the Truth* and *Erin's Hope*.

The mission commanded considerable support among English Protestants in the early 1850s, bolstered by the increasing anti-Catholic sentiments of the time. Funds flowed into the Society's coffers and it seemed at one time that its objective of converting the Catholic population of the entire island was not only achievable, but was practically unstoppable. Although the Mission could correctly report that large numbers of former Catholics were now regular attenders at its services, descriptions of missionary progress portrayed to its supporters were greatly exaggerated as when, its founder, Revd Dallas, boasted to a London audience in 1851 that Ireland was, by then, fifty per cent Protestant.<sup>10</sup>

While Ireland was not, in reality, fifty per cent Protestant by 1851, the Irish Church Missions and its supporters believed that religious conversion on a nation-wide scale was possible. Encouraged by its recent successes in Connemara and in the slums of Dublin, missions were established in a number of rural locations including portions of counties Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon and Leitrim. Proselytising efforts had been made in some of these regions since the start of the century by Presbyterian and Baptist missions, and by the Anglican Irish Society and others had tried to capitalise on famine conditions to bring about religious change.

In 1847 Emily and Rebecca Irwin applied to the Society of Friends (Quakers) for funds to establish a

scriptural school at Boyle, County Roscommon, but were refused. Although these ladies considered that Catholics had 'greatly lost their faith in their church and their clergy and are now ready to receive sounder instruction', the Quaker committee could not countenance 'anything of a party or sectarian character' and considered 'the present particularly unsuitable for proselytising'.<sup>11</sup> Revd Joseph Verschoyle, rector of Coolaney also applied for Quaker relief to be distributed in his parish schools during the famine era. In spite of the fact that two-thirds of his pupils were Catholic, the Society of Friends replied that 'we cannot make grant to a school that is evidently sectarian'.<sup>12</sup>

Mission-work in the Ballaghaderreen district commenced shortly after the arrival of Revd Anthony Thomas in 1851, when he succeeded his cousin, Revd Joseph Seymour (son of Revd Charles Seymour, one-time missionary in Connemara) as parish rector.<sup>13</sup> Good inter-faith relations existed during Revd Joseph Seymour's tenure in Ballaghaderreen and he worked closely with the Catholic clergy in accessing and distributing famine relief. He died in 1850, worn out by his famine-exertions and was mourned by the entire population of Ballaghaderreen, Catholic as well as Protestant. However, the tenor of religious life in his parish was to change with the arrival of his cousin, Revd Anthony Thomas.<sup>14</sup>

The Irish Church Missions also utilised the presence of Revd Mark Anthony Foster at Kiltamagh (Killedan parish). An extensive mission was established in east-Mayo in June 1852, strangely termed the 'Balla mission'. It functioned as two sub-missions called Upper Balla and Lower Balla, divided at the town of Swinford. Lower Balla covered the area from Balla to Kiltamagh and Ballyhane, Upper Balla stretched from Swinford to Ballaghaderreen.<sup>15</sup> As can be seen, each sub-section was

centred on a parish held by a former Connemara missionary.

By 1853, six agents were employed in the Lower Balla mission, with mission-houses rented in Kiltamagh, Balla and Ballyhane.<sup>16</sup> Their agents, they said, were well received at first, but were soon denounced by the Catholic clergy which resulted in violence towards mission agents, converts, and their property. Catholics were forbidden to speak to persons connected to the mission, or admit them to their houses, or to sell to them. At Kiltamagh and Ballyhane the persecution of agents and converts was particularly severe.<sup>17</sup>

Revd Thomas explained the need for mission-work in the Ballaghaderreen district, telling that the area was 'under the entire domination of Romanism'.<sup>18</sup> The fact that the Catholic bishop of Achonry resided in the area would have added impetus to his crusade. In early 1853, Revd Thomas preached five missionary sermons outlining the errors of Catholic teaching to good-sized congregations at Ballaghaderreen, Ballymote and Clogher (a Presbyterian Church near Ballaghaderreen). He assured supporters that his efforts were successful, telling of two Catholics who had attended his sermons in Ballaghaderreen and assured him that they were 'convinced of the truth of what was put before them'. He told of others who wished to send their children to his mission-school, some of whom would travel three miles for this purpose, passing several Catholic national schools on the way.<sup>19</sup>

A mission was established in Sligo town in October 1852, followed by a west-Sligo mission in early 1854, which centred on parishes to the south of the county. It was especially active in Coolaney, where mission work was strongly supported by Revd George Garrett, curate of Killoran (Coolaney) from 1847 to 1863, whose sister was married to Revd Anthony

Thomas of Ballaghaderreen.<sup>20</sup> Missionary sermons were preached once a month in St John's Church in Sligo town and at Collooney,<sup>21</sup> and occasionally at Ballymote, Coolaney and Knocknashee.<sup>22</sup> Weekly meetings, optimistically termed 'inquiring classes', were held each Mondays at the mission house in Sligo and each Friday in Collooney; weekly meetings were also held at Lissadel. In mid 1854, the west-Sligo mission was again active in Ballymote and Coolaney, and also in Dromard and Donelva [Dunowla?]. It reported that 'ignorance and bigotry' was widespread in Tubbercurry but that in Ballymote the people were 'enquiring' but were closely watched by 'clever and subtle priests'.<sup>23</sup>

A Ragged day and Sunday school was established in Sligo town, attended by fifty-four children in 1853 who made 'very rapid progress ... considering the short time they have been under instruction'. Agents of the Sligo mission visited over two hundred people each week that year, and the mission reported that two Sligo families had 'come out of Rome' and many more were of a mind to do so being 'convinced of the errors of their system'.<sup>24</sup>

The missions in Sligo town and in west Sligo were much more successful than the Ballaghaderreen mission which encountered strenuous opposition from the outset and which floundered in the mid 1850s. At first, the Irish Church Missions rented a 'good and commodious slated house' in Ballaghaderreen which functioned as a schoolhouse and in which their agents lived. Trouble soon broke out as the mission faced a hostile reception from the local Catholic community. Every window in the mission-house was broken and its owner, whom the mission described as 'a poor simple man', asked them to leave at the end of January 1854. Mission agents suffered 'every species of annoyance and persecution' and were forced

to withdraw to the parish church [situated in the small graveyard beside St Nathy's College]. For a short while they lived in the belfry, porch and vestry of the parish church and held school in the church-porch, but the mission folded within a short time.<sup>25</sup> Kiltamagh mission officially closed in 1853 and Ballaghaderreen in 1854, and work continued in Balla and Ballyhane until 1859 and 1861 respectively but on a very small scale. Mission-work continued on a reduced scale in east Mayo for another few years. In 1855, the mission reported that 'Roman Catholic young men come across a dangerous bog, in the darkest nights, to learn and to read the scriptures' at its school at a school at Buckhill, near Ballaghaderreen.<sup>26</sup> It appears, however, that all aggressive mission-work in Mayo had ceased by the mid 1850s.

In the post-famine era, in addition to the Sligo and Balla missions already mentioned, the Roscommon and Leitrim mission of the Irish Church Missions was active in six locations: Athlone (1851-54), Carrick-on-Shannon (1853-56), Croghan (1852-52), Boyle (1852-57), Mohill (1853-54) and Roscommon (1851-57).<sup>27</sup>

The Irish Church Missions established an 'important station' in Mohill, County Leitrim, where the parish schoolroom was 'kindly lent' by the rector (Revd Arthur Hyde, grandfather of Dr Douglas Hyde),<sup>28</sup> but admitted that mission-work in Carrick-on-Shannon encountered much opposition.<sup>29</sup> In its Boyle station, the Irish Church Missions reported that the number of persons who came nightly to read and to learn the scriptures was 'most encouraging', but they conceded that converts came under enormous pressure to return to their former church, especially during a parish mission given by Redemptorist priests in 1854.<sup>30</sup> The following year they reported that agents had unhindered access throughout the parish, and that one convert baptised his son in Boyle

Protestant Church on the day after St Patrick's Day, giving him the name Patrick.<sup>31</sup> No record of this baptism exists in the baptismal register of Boyle parish. No baptism took place on 18 March 1855; only two boys were baptised that month, neither of whom could be described as converts, and no child was christened Patrick in that year.<sup>32</sup> Publications of the Irish Church Missions regularly included personal details which gave a convincing air of authenticity to their reports. In some cases, as we can see, these accounts of missionary progress do not stand up to scrutiny.

After its initial flurry, it appears that mission-work ceased in counties Mayo, Roscommon and Leitrim but activities continued in the Coolaney region and in Sligo town, chiefly through the efforts of Revd George Garrett. Revd Garrett laboured energetically to save the Catholic souls in the Coolaney region warning them against trusting in the non-scriptural doctrines and practices of Rome. In 1858 he cautioned those living on the side of the Ox Mountains 'against worshiping the Virgin, bowing down before the host, trusting in the priest for absolution, or vainly resting upon any merit or penance of their own'.<sup>33</sup> In September 1856, he presented ten converts for confirmation by the Bishop of Tuam and claimed that he held back many others who were in need of further instruction. He also described the deaths of two steadfast converts who refused admittance to the priest in their dying hours. His converts for confirmation included a family grouping of a father, son and daughter, all adults who wished that they might 'as a family dedicate themselves to God'.<sup>34</sup>

The Irish Church Missions opened a mission-school at Creevaun near Coolaney in March 1858, known locally as 'Rinn School'. It was around this time that Revd Garrett intensified the mission's system of 'Irish teaching' or 'text teaching'. This

involved the use of converts and older pupils of mission schools as informal teachers, teaching their neighbours and relatives to recite five verses of scripture per month. Payment of 'Irish teachers' (who taught in both the English and Irish languages) was dependent on results. In Connemara, many families depended on income derived in this way and it is likely that this was also the case in west-Sligo.

From the viewpoint of the Catholic clergy, Irish teaching was the most feared of all the methods of the Irish Church Missions. As Irish teachers were, by nature, native to the area and worked among their own families and neighbours, the Roman clergy found it impossible to prevent their access within the Catholic community. This was certainly the case in Coolaney where Revd Garrett commented that 'The English and Irish teaching continues to baffle the priests' and a few months later reported that the priests had ordered at a recent station that the scriptures should not be read or learned. As proof that priests were powerless in obstructing the work of Irish teachers, Revd Garrett reported that he had a group of 'grown-up young women' who answered remarkably well, and some labourers who 'learned while at work'. He also told of older men and women, who were unable to read but who committed verses of the bible to memory,<sup>35</sup> and said that Irish teachers were crucially important in connecting with the Catholic population, and had 'spread their ramifications pretty extensively through the district, and are therefore not easily uprooted'.<sup>36</sup>

He claimed that local Catholics disapproved of the priest's denunciation of the mission work and of himself personally. The priest had, he reported, criticised all those who were 'base enough to send their children to be corrupted by us' and had called Revd Garrett a devil, a jumper and a dance-master.<sup>37</sup>

Revd George Garrett's interest in the conversion of Irish Catholics was shared by his brother, Revd John Garrett, a Church of England clergyman in Manchester. Their grandfather, Revd William Garrett, and their father, Revd John Garrett, had between them served as rectors of Ballymote for over a century.<sup>38</sup> A memoir of the Power le Poer Trench, the evangelical archbishop of Tuam, suggested that good inter-faith relations existed in Ballymote during the tenure of Revd John Garrett.<sup>39</sup> Other sources suggest this might not have been the case, telling instead that Revd John Garrett, father of George and John, held extremely anti-Catholic views and saw 'all the horrors of popery ... in each effort to alleviate the civil and religious disabilities of his fellow-countrymen'.<sup>40</sup> It appears that John Garrett's political views were at odds with those of the Catholics of Ballymote, he certainly took an active part in the campaign to prevent Catholic emancipation arguing in 1828 that he wished 'to repel these agitators who are destroying the country'.<sup>41</sup> His political views regarding Catholics do not seem to have impacted on his charitable work and, like Revd Seymour in Ballaghaderreen, he worked and laboured tirelessly to secure relief in the famine years.<sup>42</sup>

His sons George (b. 1821) and John (b. 1824) were probably too young to witness their father's strong objections to the campaign for Catholic emancipation, but would have fully appreciated his condemnation of the anti-tithe agitation in the 1830s, which would have seriously impacted on their own circumstances. Revd Arthur Moore, who succeeded John Garrett as rector of Ballymote in 1855, found the district 'torn asunder with religious bigotry and political strife'. He swiftly closed the Orange Lodge, which remained closed for the twenty-five years of his tenure but was re-opened by his successor, Revd Thomas Walker in 1880.<sup>43</sup> Revd Moore did not grant the use of his

church to the Irish Church Missions but could not prevent their activities in the district. The last mention of a missionary sermon in Ballymote church occurred during the tenure of Revd Garrett, while mission-agent Thomas Crump certainly circulated scriptures within the parish in 1866.<sup>44</sup>

Revs George and John Garrett worked energetically to outline the false and superstitious beliefs held by the Catholic population in Ireland to supporters of the Irish Church Missions, assuring them that this could be remedied by direct missionary work. In 1866, George Garrett told a Dublin audience of his personal experience of missionary work in the west of Ireland, where Catholics who previously attended 'many absurd superstitions ... such as holding stations at holy wells', would now be 'ashamed to be seen going through such these foolish and idle mummeries'.<sup>45</sup> However, as we will see later, this change in the practice of Catholicism was not altogether due to Revd Garrett's efforts.

Even after his transfer to Lacken in north Mayo in June 1863, Revd Garrett acted as missionary for the Sligo mission, which functioned on a reduced scale until he was transferred to Kilmeague in County Kildare in 1873. A Protestant colony had been founded in Kilmeague in the 1830s to shelter persecuted converts to the Protestant faith but the colony appears to have folded at some time before 1857, but left a feeling of religious bitterness in the parish.<sup>46</sup> From his Kildare parish, Revd Garrett regularly preached in the ICM's Mission's Church in Townsend Street, Dublin and at various venues throughout the capital. His sermons invariably took issue with some aspect of Catholic doctrine as when he spoke in the mission-school-room in the Coombe on the 'Feast of Corpus Christi and the divine worship of the lifeless host, mere modern novelties of and in the Church of Rome'.<sup>47</sup> Newspaper

advertisements for his sermons regularly urged that 'R.C. friends, hear and judge for yourselves'.<sup>48</sup>

Mission-work in Revd Garrett's former parish of Killoran (Coolaney), passed to its new clergyman, Archdeacon Hamilton Townsend, a native of County Down who had been educated in the Ventry Mission in Kerry.<sup>49</sup> He was a vigorous missionary with seventeen years experience of the Irish Church Missions,<sup>50</sup> and who had recently come to prominence in his previous parish of Ballyovie (Tourmakeady) during the infamous episode often referred to as the 'War in Partry'.

Hostilities between the Catholic and Protestant churches in the Partry-Tourmakeady district on the shores of Lough Mask in west county Mayo began when the local landlord, Thomas Plunket, Protestant Bishop of Tuam (1839-66), threatened to evict tenants who refused to send their children to schools of the Irish Church Missions. A vicious war ensued between the Catholic Church, in the shape of Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam and Father Patrick Lavelle, parish priest of Partry, and the Anglican Irish Church Missions in the shape of Bishop Thomas Plunket of Tuam, his chaplain and nephew Revd William Conyngham Plunket, and Revd Hamilton Townsend, parish rector.<sup>51</sup> This battle for the souls of Partry's peasantry, which took place in the 1850s and early 1860s, was fought at local level and was the subject of numerous court-cases. It was frequently reported in the national and international media and was twice raised in the House of Commons. In rewarding Revd Townsend with the position of Archdeacon of Achonry and rector of Killoran in 1863, Bishop Plunket was clearly showing his approval for Revd Townsend's efforts to promote mission-work among the Catholics population.

With the transfer of Archdeacon



Townsend to Killoran in 1863, Coolaney mission was separated from that of Sligo town. Revd Garrett, although now stationed at Lacken in North Mayo, continued to supervise the Sligo mission, while Coolaney mission came under the control of Archdeacon Townsend. Two years after his arrival in Coolaney, Archdeacon Townsend introduced Thomas Crump, a mission-agent from his former embattled parish of Tourmakeady. He was also assisted by Mr and Mrs James Gallagher, teachers at Creevaun. Crump was to serve over twenty years in Coolaney, as scripture reader from 1865 to 1869, and as teacher of Creevaun mission-school from 1873 until he retired on pension in 1894.<sup>52</sup>

Archdeacon Townsend's first report in 1865 praised the existing state of the mission, telling of twenty Catholic children on the roll of Creevaun school, out of the total of eighty-three, and reporting that six Irish teachers taught the scriptures to sixty or seventy Catholics each month. His scripture reader (Crump) was, he said, 'very active in working up the Sunday schools'.<sup>53</sup> The following year he reported that Crump's 'excellent example, his quiet demeanour, and his patience in dealing with the prejudices and superstition of the people is gaining ground day by day' and told that Crump circulated religious tracts and periodicals in the neighbouring parishes of Collooney, Ballisodare, Ballymote and Tubbercurry. Some members of the local Protestant community supported his efforts, but he admitted with regret that 'there are many who are hinderers instead of being helpers' and these looked upon his mission-work with 'scorn and contempt'.<sup>54</sup>

Catholic attendance at Creevaun school decreased in the 1870s, mirroring the trend in west-Galway where Catholic attendances at Connemara's mission-schools fell to zero during the era of the Land War.<sup>55</sup> Although Revd Townsend

had boasted an attendance of eighty-three in 1865, census results show that only twenty-six pupils attended Creevaun in 1871, nine of whom were Catholic. Ten years later, there was one Catholic pupil and nineteen Church of Ireland children in the school and in 1891, all of Creevaun's sixteen pupils were members of the Church of Ireland. Presbyterian mission schools in County Sligo did not experience this total removal of Catholic pupils during the Land War, although the number of Catholic pupils attending Presbyterian mission schools declined from eighteen to nine between 1871 and 1891.<sup>56</sup>

Mission reports regularly tell of converts and former pupils from this district being transferred to mission institutions in other locations. The 1869 report told that two Coolaney girls who were sent to Mrs D'Arcy's training school for servants in Clifden and that a boy was sent to the Boys' Home in Dublin but died soon after, firm in his newly adopted faith. The mission looked after not only the religious needs of its converts and mission-pupils, but also their vocational and employment needs. It founded 'training' institutions where children who passed through their schools could learn skills likely to lead to employment, such as Mrs D'Arcy's servants' training school in Clifden. An agricultural school for boys was founded at Rockfield in Connemara to teach horticulture and animal husbandry; it was known locally as 'Forty Boys' as this was the number of boys it could accommodate in its dormitories. When declining finances forced the sale of Rockfield in the 1880s, the mission ordered that it not be sold to a Catholic. Archbishop John MacHale, however, arranged that it was purchased on his behalf and placed it under the care of the Christian Brothers. This former school of the Irish Church Missions has become better – or more notoriously – known as Letterfrack Industrial School.

Thomas Crump was transferred to Connemara in 1869 but returned to Coolaney in 1873 as teacher at Creevaun school; by this time mission finances did not stretch to a scripture-reader. The Irish Church Missions had quickly learned that child-focussed proselytism was the most efficient method of gaining long-term conversions, and as finances dwindled towards the end of the century, they maintained teacher-numbers in preference to scripture readers. In addition to teaching at Creevaun, Crump took Sunday school in the courthouse and in the church in Coolaney. Michael Farry has noted that, until recently, Crump was remembered as a person who looked down on Catholics.<sup>57</sup>

Archdeacon Townsend reported in 1876 that many Protestants who had previously attended Catholic national schools were now enrolled at Creevaun school as a result of Crump's excellent teaching, he also told that Irish teaching was bringing the scriptures within the reach of forty to fifty Catholics each month. He reported that since his arrival in Coolaney fourteen years ago, seven converts from Rome had died steadfast in the Protestant faith, three of whom had died during the previous years. The most recent death was that of a man, the last of three convert brothers, who was practically deaf as a result of a beating he received from Catholics. As the Burial Register of Killoran for this period was destroyed in the fire in the Public Records Office in 1922, we can neither verify nor disprove Revd Townsend's claim.

Without a doubt, the Irish Church Missions and other Protestant missionary societies gained conversions from Rome throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but probably on a smaller scale than their publications would suggest. In many cases, the ground had been broken by the missions of the pre-famine era (Hibernian Bible Society,

Irish Society, Presbyterian Missions, Baptist Missions). Some who were influenced by pre-famine missions left the Church of Rome at that point, others were rendered more susceptible to the efforts of the post-famine Irish Church Missions. Occasionally converts from previous missions were employed as agents of the Irish Church Missions, their ability to speak Irish being an important asset in the early years of its operations. One such convert was Patrick Sheridan, who was employed by the Irish Church Missions at Castlekerke and Tourmakeady.<sup>59</sup> His tombstone, which can be seen in the graveyard of St Anne's Church, Easky, reads

In loving memory of Patrick Sheridan, who fell asleep in Jesus on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June 1877, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. Converted on early life from the errors of Romanism, he was for more than half a century a bold and able defender of evangelical religion. As he lived, so he died, trusting wholly in Christ for salvation. Also Hannah his wife, who died Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 1870'.

As the inscription states that the tombstone was erected by his sons, John and William, Baptist ministers in America, it is probable that this man was converted through the efforts of the Baptist missions. Archdeacon Townsend gave thanks that many, like Patrick Sheridan, had been rescued from the 'darkness and error and superstition of Rome',<sup>60</sup> asserting on another occasion that 'Truly the Irish Church Missions is doing a mighty work'.<sup>61</sup>

Revd Townsend described the amiable relationship between the denominations in the 1880s, stating the Catholics were generally 'friendly or indifferent' and remarked that there was less hostility than formerly. He told how Catholic clergyman from

neighbouring parishes attended the funeral of his son the previous year (but did not enter the church).<sup>62</sup> This may reflect mutual respect among clergyman of the various churches, and does not suggest an increased affinity among the Catholic population for Archdeacon Townsend's mission.

In spite of the inter-faith tolerance in Coolaney of which Archdeacon Townsend boasted, it is clear that his own views were extremely anti-Catholic. He would have had little in common with the neighbouring population which was overwhelmingly Catholic and nationalist. We can only imagine what they would have thought of comments he expressed in 1883 that 'it was the spirit of the Bible and the Reformation that inspired the pen of Shakespeare, nerved the arm of Cromwell, and sanctified the genius of Bunyan'.<sup>63</sup> He regularly celebrated notably Protestant anniversaries and festivals. He preached in October 1885 on the Bicentenary of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which he said gave him an opportunity of showing 'the intolerant and persecuting spirit of Rome ... [and] she is still that same persecuting system, only she lacks the power'. His report stated that the Church of Rome was 'Nationally tyrannical, ecclesiastically schismatical, theologically heretical, and socially immoral'.<sup>64</sup>

It is evident that by this time Archdeacon Townsend's efforts are directed more at his existing Protestant parishioners than at the 'non-converted' Catholic population. He instructed his parishioners in how they should resist the 'seductive teaching of Rome ... [and] crafty Romish agents'. This shift in focus reflected an increasing terror at the prospect of Home Rule in the face of an impending Home Rule Bill and was in line with the overall activities of the Irish Church Missions which gradually (but unofficially) changed its *raison d'être* from an aggressive mission to Catholics, becoming instead a bastion

of Protestant interests in the face of an increasingly powerful nationalist population.<sup>65</sup>

By this time, both Archdeacon Townsend and his scripture reader had each served the Irish Church Missions for over thirty-five years. In 1887, the archdeacon was sixty-five years and Thomas Crump was at least fifty-five and probably much older. Crump had been employed as an agent of the Irish Society before the establishment of the Irish Church Missions.<sup>66</sup> When Townsend and Crump joined the organisation there was a very real hope that conversions on a nationwide scale could be effected. In the intervening period, the futility of the mission's objectives, and the exaggerated nature of their claimed successes had come to light. Much had been publicised regarding the offensive nature of their methods, especially their insulting denunciations of Catholicism. Above all, however, the results of each census from 1861 confirmed that Protestant numbers in Ireland were not increasing but were actually decreasing.

Support for the Irish Church Missions began to decline from the mid 1850s, due to a number of factors. The Crimean War (1854) and the Indian Mutiny (1857) caused the interest of the mainstream English public to be diverted from missions to Irish Catholics to missions to 'heathens' in the east. Reduced support and the consequent reduction in income led to a contraction of missionary work. The Irish Church Missions attempted to remedy this situation by founding the West Connaught Church Endowment Society (WCCES), which it hoped would provide funding for its existing missions, thereby enabling the annual income of the Irish Church Mission to be diverted to new or previously 'un-missioned' locations.

The chief organiser and fundraiser for the WCCES in England was Revd John Garrett, brother of George Garrett, one-time missionary at

Coolaney. John Garrett's publication, *Good News from Ireland*, published in 1863, gave a glowing, if somewhat exaggerated, account of the work of the Irish Church Missions.<sup>67</sup> Its description of missionary progress was quickly rejected by Sir Henry Cunningham, an English Protestant, in *Is Good News from Ireland true?*<sup>68</sup> Cunningham's criticism of Garrett's work was unconvincingly answered by George Venables's publication, *The Good News is true* in which Venables admitted that the 1861 census results were somewhat disappointing and that persons connection with the mission might have exaggerated their success or 'spoken of the progress too much as a romance, and in terms too glowing'.<sup>69</sup>

In the wake of the disestablishment of their church in 1869, few members of the Church of Ireland saw any merit in continuing a costly and ineffectual mission to the Catholic population of Ireland. Irish support for the mission had diminished markedly by then and support from England was already in severe decline. While some Protestants, like Archdeacon Townsend and Thomas Crump, wished to continue and even expand mission-work among the Catholic population of Ireland, they were met for the most part with indifference and even hostility from fellow-Protestants. The once promising crusade had failed and by then the era of landslide conversions belonged to a previous generation. If anything Catholic efforts to thwart the success of Protestant missions cemented the position of the Roman church in Ireland as it ensured increased vigilance on the part of Catholic clergy, especially in proselytised areas. It also reinforced the connection between Catholicism and Irishness in the Irish psyche by depicting religious conversion as a treacherous coupling with the English enemy.<sup>70</sup>

The Irish Church Missions came to realise that conversions are less likely

in the tightly-knit communities of rural Ireland. In 1868, the mission made the decision to concentrate its efforts in areas which provided some degree of anonymity and established missions in the cities and large towns of Belfast, Cork, Kilkenny and Waterford. Revd Benjamin Irwin, who spent fifteen years as a missionary in Connemara, explained that rural Catholics were reluctant to embrace scriptural Protestantism because of 'family, social and political ties'.<sup>71</sup> A study of Archdeacon Townsend's reports suggests that, while not publicly admitting it, he may have veered in the same direction. From c.1880 he speaks less of winning conversions from Rome, and stresses instead his efforts to strengthen the faith of his flock so they can resist the increasing power of Rome. As already stated, this should be viewed in the context of an increasingly confident and competent nationalist force.

The death of Archdeacon Townsend in 1895 brought an end to the operations of the Irish Church Missions in Coolaney. The previous year Thomas Crump had been transferred to Bundorogha in the Delphi Mission (near Leenane). He retired a few months later.

It would be untrue to suggest the Irish Church Missions made no impact on the faith of Ireland's Catholics. Revd Garrett was certainly telling the truth when he told his Dublin audience in 1866 of the decline in 'absurd superstitions' in south County Sligo, but in reality his mission was only indirectly responsible for the obliteration of the folk-religion which had persisted in isolated regions.<sup>72</sup> The Catholic Church was more directly influential in reducing participation in what Garrett described as 'foolish and idle mummeries' than were the Protestant missions. Remnants of pre-famine religion, which often involved patterns and celebrations of holy places, was generally conducted without the presence of clergy, and

had been maintained throughout the previous centuries when numbers of clerics were low. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, and especially after the advent of Paul Cullen as archbishop of Armagh (1850-52) and later of Dublin (1852-74), during the period when diocesan control of parish clergy and administration was intensified, the Catholic clergy took possession of the rites and rituals of religion, and moved them within the confines of church buildings.

Although at first glance we might think Revd Garrett was incorrect in assuming credit for this decline in 'superstitious' religion, there is a significant degree of truth in his assertions, but not in the way he would have imagined. The increased discipline and the more structured systems of parish and diocesan administration evident in the Catholic Church from the second half of nineteenth century occurred as a direct response to Protestant missionary work. In effect, the activities of the Irish Church Missions spurred the Catholic hierarchy and clergy to reform church practices and to eliminate the superstitious forms of religion which so offended Revd Garrett and his ilk.

The ultimate result of this obliteration of folk-religion, however, was the direct opposite of the aims of the Irish Church Missions. Instead of casting aside their superstitious practices in favour of scriptural Protestantism, the Catholic laity adopted a form of tightly regulated and highly structured Catholicism, in which discipline was enforced at parish level through sodalities and confraternities overseen by Catholic clergy. Contrary to the aspirations of the Irish Church Missions, the power of the Catholic clergy was increased and the laity adopted doctrines and practices that were significantly more Rome-ward in orientation than previously. Although the change in character of Irish Catholicism in the second half of the nineteenth century cannot be

totally attributed to the activities of proselytising missions, their presence contributed significantly to the outcome.

The Irish Church Missions, through persons like Anthony Thomas, George Garrett, Hamilton Townsend and Thomas Crump, sought to change the religious character of Ireland. These gentlemen certainly altered the form of religion espoused by the majority population but ironically, their crusading mission to rescue souls from the 'errors of Rome' merely strengthened and intensified the Roman influence on the Catholic population of Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this essay, the term Catholic may be read as Roman Catholic and unless specified otherwise, the term Protestant may be read as Church of Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> William Marrable, *Sketch of the origin and operations of the society for the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics* (London, 1853), p. 451.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander R. C. Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, Part 1* (London, 1867), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Dallas, *The story of the Irish Church Missions, Part 1*, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Irene Whelan, *The bible war in Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp 248-50.

<sup>6</sup> The archbishopric of Tuam was discontinued under the terms of the Irish Church Temporalities Act, 1833.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Desmond Bowen, *Paul Cardinal Cullen* (Dublin, 1983), p. 170.

<sup>8</sup> Miriam Moffitt, *Soupers and Jumpers, the Protestant missions in Connemara, 1846-1937* (Dublin, 2008), pp 69-80.

<sup>9</sup> It operated as the Special Fund for the Spiritual Exigencies of Ireland since 1847 and was formally re-organised as The Society for Irish Church Missions on 24 March 1849.

<sup>10</sup> A.R.C. Dallas, *Protestantism in Ireland: Lecture to the Church of England Young Men's Society, 10 February 1851* (London, 1851), pp.193-94.

<sup>11</sup> Emily and Rebecca Irwin to Society of Friends, 7 Oct. 1847 and draft reply 15 Dec. 1847, quoted in Liam Swords, *In their own words, the famine in north Connaught* (Dublin, 1999), pp 231, 258-9.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Michael Farry, *Killoran and Coolaney* (Trim, 1985), p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> Charles Henry Seymour, son of Revd Joseph Seymour, was rector of the intensely proselytised region of Achill during and immediately after the famine.

<sup>14</sup> Desmond Bowen, *Souperism, myth or*

*reality?* (Cork, 1970), pp 207-08.

<sup>15</sup> Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1853, pp 41-44.

<sup>16</sup> Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1853, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> *The Irish Missionary Record and Chronicle of the Reformation*, Mar., Aug. 1853.

<sup>18</sup> Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1853, p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1853, pp 43-44.

<sup>20</sup> J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry* (n.p., 2008), p. 364.

<sup>21</sup> Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1853, p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, June 1854, pp 98-99.

<sup>23</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Jan. 19-20, June 97-98.

<sup>24</sup> Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1853, p. 51.

<sup>25</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Feb. 1854, pp. Feb. 31-32.

<sup>26</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Feb. 1855, pp. Feb. 82.

<sup>27</sup> Agency Books, 1856-60 (Irish Church Missions Archive).

<sup>28</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Apr. 1854, p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, 1855, p. 82.

<sup>30</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Apr. 1854, pp 63-64.

<sup>31</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Apr. 1855, p. 81.

<sup>32</sup> Baptismal register of Boyle parish, MS No. P 840/2/1 (Representative Church Body Library).

<sup>33</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Jan. 1858, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Oct. 1856, p. 161.

<sup>35</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Mar. 1858, p. 49; July 1858, pp 114-15.

<sup>36</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Aug. 1858, p. 131.

<sup>37</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, Aug. 1858, p. 131.

<sup>38</sup> Revd William Garrett, was rector of Ballymote 1765-1806, his son, Revd John Garrett, from 1806 to 1855. Baptismal Register of Emlyfad, MS No. P.203/1/1 (Representative Church Body Library): J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry* (n.p., 2008), p. 364.

<sup>39</sup> J. D. Sirr, *A memoir of Power Le Poer Trench, last archbishop of Tuam* (Dublin, 1845), pp 378-9.

<sup>40</sup> J.C. MacDonagh, *Ballymote and the parish of Emlyfad* (Dublin, 1936), pp 166, 175.

<sup>41</sup> *Sligo Journal*, 10 Oct. 1828.

<sup>42</sup> Desmond Bowen, *Souperism, myth or reality?* (Cork, 1970), pp 209-10.

<sup>43</sup> Orange Lodges were opened, and dormant lodges revived, at many locations during the era of the Land War. In County Sligo. A lodge was established at Drumcliff (1880) and Lisadell (1881), and another at Boyle (1881) which came under the umbrella of the Grand Lodge of County Sligo and a dormant lodge at Ballisadare-Beltra was revived in 1880. *Report of the proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland at the half yearly meeting held at the Rotundo, Dublin*, 1880,

1881 (Archives of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast); *Sligo Champion*, 24 Dec. 1880.

<sup>44</sup> *Banner of the Truth*, June 1854; Irish Church Missions, *Annual Report*, 1866, p. 94.

<sup>45</sup> *Irish Times*, 10 April 1866.

<sup>46</sup> *Dublin University Magazine*, xxv (1845), pp 735-38; *The Nation*, 19 December 1857.

<sup>47</sup> *Irish Times*, 19 June 1873.

<sup>48</sup> *Irish Times*, 17 Jan. 1874.

<sup>49</sup> J.B. Leslie, *Clergy of Tuam, Killala and Achonry*, p. 642.

<sup>50</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1863, p. 78.

<sup>51</sup> Events at Partry are described in Gerard Moran, *A radical priest in Mayo, Fr. Patrick Lavelle, the rise and fall of an Irish nationalist 1825-86* (Dublin, 1994); Gerard Moran, *The Mayo evictions of 1860* (Westport, 1986); Miriam Moffitt, *Soupers and Jumpers, the Protestant missions in Connemara, 1846-1937* (Dublin, 2008), pp 80-84.

<sup>52</sup> Between 1869 and 1873 he was a scripture reader in Connemara, serving Clifden, Castlekerke and Spiddal.

<sup>53</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1865, pp 77-78.

<sup>54</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1866, pp 93-95.

<sup>55</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1883, p. 52; Miriam Moffitt, *The Society for Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, 1849-1950* (Manchester, 2010), p. 192.

<sup>56</sup> There were Presbyterian mission schools in the following parishes: Castleconnor, Easky, Kilfree (Clogher), Kilglass and Kilmacshalgan (Dromore West).

<sup>57</sup> Farry, *Killoran and Coolaney*, p. 114.

<sup>58</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1875, pp 78-79.

<sup>59</sup> His wife, Hannah, was also a convert.

<sup>60</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1880, pp 52-53.

<sup>61</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1866, p. 95.

<sup>62</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1882, pp 55-56

<sup>63</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1883, p. 53.

<sup>64</sup> ICM, *Annual Report*, 1885, p. 41.

<sup>65</sup> Moffitt, *Irish Church Missions*, pp 228-33.

<sup>66</sup> *Proceedings of the Irish Society*, 1850.

<sup>67</sup> John Garrett, *Good news from Ireland. An address to the archbishops and bishops of the Church of England* (London, 1863).

<sup>68</sup> Henry Stewart Cunningham, *Is 'Good news from Ireland' true?: remarks on the position and prospects of the Irish Church establishment* (London, 1865)

<sup>69</sup> George Venables, *The good news is true; or, what an English clergyman saw in Connemara ... with a preface by the Rev. W. C. Plunket* (London, 1865), pp 54-5, and *passim*.

<sup>70</sup> Moffitt, *Irish Church Missions*, pp 125-26.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Benjamin Irwin, *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*, 4 June 1885.

<sup>72</sup> *Irish Times*, 10 April 1866.

# The Spanish Armada in Sligo

Joe McGowan

Throughout 1587 and early 1588, rumours that Philip of Spain was assembling a massive fleet to conquer England were spreading like wildfire. English intelligence sources confirmed these rumours but Elizabeth, even up to early 1588, when the massive fleet was nearing readiness to sail from Lisbon, believed that a war situation could be avoided.

From the outset, the Spanish fleet seemed destined for bad luck. After a month at sea, little progress had been

wind changed to south-southwest and the commander of the Armada, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, ordered that the fleet should sail North around Scotland and Ireland and back to Spain.

During the journey many of these ships were wrecked along the coast but three, the La Lavia, La Juliana and the Santa Maria de Vison reached the coast of Sligo. Francesco de Cuellar was aboard this last group of Armada ships wrecked towards the end of September 1588. He

for which there is sufficient reason in the great hardships and misfortunes I have passed through since the Armada sailed from Lisbon for England, from which our Lord, in His infinite good pleasure, delivered me. As I have not had an opportunity to write to you for more than a year, I have not done so until now that God has brought me to these States of Flanders, where I arrived twelve days ago with the Spaniards who escaped from the ships that were lost in Ireland, Scotland, and Shetland, which were more than twenty of the largest in the Armada. In them came a great force of picked infantry, many captains, ensigns, commanders, and other war officials, besides several gentlemen and scions of nobility, out of all of whom, being more than two hundred, not five survived; because some of them were drowned, and those who reached the shore by swimming were cut in pieces by the English, whom the Queen keeps quartered in the Kingdom of Ireland...

...The ship I sailed in was from the Levant, to which were attached two others, very large, to afford us aid if they could. In these came Don Diego Enriquez, 'the hunchback', as commander; and not being able to weather round or double Cape Clear, in Ireland, on account of the severe storm which arose upon the bow, he was forced to make for the land with these three ships, which, as I say, were of the largest size, and to anchor more than half a league from the shore, where we remained for four days without being able to make any provision, nor could it even be made. On the fifth day there sprang up so great a storm on our beam, with a sea up to the heavens, so that the cables could not hold nor the sails serve us, and we were driven ashore with all three ships upon a beach, covered with very fine sand, shut in on one side and the other by great rocks [Streedagh]. Such a thing was never seen: for within the space of an hour all three ships were broken in pieces, so that there did not escape three hundred men, and more than one thousand were drowned, among them many persons of importance, captains, gentlemen, and other officials...

...And as it would not be right to omit to mention my own good fortune, and how I got to land, I say that I placed myself on the top of the poop of my ship, after having commended myself to God and to Our Lady, and from thence I gazed at the terrible spectacle. Many were



**Streedagh Spanish Armada Memorial**

**Photo by Martin A Timoney**

made due to unfavourable winds. Food, which was badly packed, had gone rotten and drinking water had become stagnant. Scarcely had the major part of the fleet reached the shelter of Corunna, in the North West of Spain, when a fierce gale arose in the Bay of Biscay, scattering the remaining ships. By the time these had made their way back to Corunna and were ready to sail again with fresh provisions, it was July 12th. Morale was much higher as the fleet of over 130 vessels, galleons, galleys, merchantmen, galleasses, supply ships and pataches, carrying almost 30,000 men, hoisted sails for the English channel.

Approaching the mouth of the channel the Armada moved in a tight crescent-shaped battle formation. However, the English succeeded in breaking the crescent by sending in fireships by night, causing panic among the Spaniards. In the subsequent sea battle of Gravelines, grave losses of ships and men were incurred by the Spanish fleet while the English fleet came through relatively unscathed. The

was driven ashore at Streedagh strand, near Grange in Co. Sligo, territory of the O'Connor but garrisoned by the English. De Cúellar eventually documented his shipwreck at Streedagh, the subsequent horrors ashore, and his attempts to find hospitality from friendly chieftains notably O'Rourke and MacClancy as he made his way back to Spain via Antrim and Scotland.

His use of the term 'savage' to describe the Irish should not be regarded as pejorative. Contemporaries referred to inhabitants of Galicia, in their own country of Spain, in the same way. This eyewitness account of the shipwrecks makes Francisco de Cuellar's letter a most valuable social document.

**A condensed version of Captain Cuellar's Adventures in Connacht and Ulster:**

'I believe that you will be astonished at seeing this letter on account of the slight certainty that could have existed as to my being alive. That you may be quite sure of this I write this letter, at some length,

drowning within the ships; others, casting themselves into the water, sank to the bottom without returning to the surface; others on rafts and barrels, and gentlemen on pieces of timber, others cried aloud in the ships, calling upon God; captains threw their chains and crown-pieces into the sea; the waves swept others away, washing them out of the ships. I went to the Judge Advocate — God pardon him! — he was very sorrowful and depressed, and I said to him that he should make some provision for saving his life before the ship went to pieces, as she could not last for half a quarter of an hour longer; nor did she last it. Most of her complement of men and all the captains and officers were already drowned and dead when I determined to seek means of safety for my life, and placed myself upon a piece of the ship that had been broken off, and the Judge Advocate followed me, loaded with crown-pieces, which he carried stitched up in his waistcoat and trousers. There was no way to detach the portion of wreck from the ship's side, as it was held fast by some heavy iron chains, and the sea and the pieces of timber floating about loose struck it, nearly killing us.

I managed to find another resource, which was to take the cover of a hatchway, about as large as a good-sized table that by chance the mercy of God brought to my hand. When I tried to place myself upon it, it sank with me to a depth of six times my height below the surface, and I swallowed so much water that I was nearly drowned. When I came up again, I called to the Judge Advocate, and I managed to get him upon the hatchway cover with myself. In the act of casting-off from the ship, there came a huge wave, breaking over us in such a manner that the Judge Advocate was unable to resist it, and the wave bore him away and drowned him, crying out and calling upon God while drowning. I could not aid him, as the hatchway cover, being without weight at one end, began to turn over with me, and at that moment a piece of timber crushed my legs. With great exertion I righted myself upon my supporting timber; and, supplicating Our Lady of Ontanar, there came four waves, one after the other, and, without knowing how, or knowing how to swim, they cast me upon the shore, where I emerged, unable to stand, all covered with blood, and very much injured.

The enemies and savages, who were on the beach stripping those who had been able to reach it by swimming, did not touch me nor approach me, seeing me, as I have said, with my legs and hands and my linen trousers covered with blood. In this condition I proceeded, little by little, as I could, meeting many

Spaniards stripped to the skin, without any kind of clothing whatsoever upon them, chattering with the cold, which was severe, and thus I stopped for the night in a deserted place, and was forced to lie down upon some rushes on the ground, with the great pain I suffered in my leg. I was then wet through to the skin, dying with pain and hunger, when there came up two people—one of them armed, and the other with a large iron axe in his hands—and upon reaching me and the other man who was with me, we remained silent, as if we had not anything amiss with us. They were sorry to see us; and without speaking a word to us, cut a quantity of rushes and grass, covered us well, and then betook themselves to the shore to plunder and break open money-chests and whatever they might find, at which work more than two thousand savages and Englishmen, who were stationed in garrisons near there, took part...

... At the dawn of day I began to walk, little by little, searching for a monastery of monks, that I might repair to it or might recover in it as best I could, which I arrived at with much trouble and toil. I found it deserted, and the church and images of the saints burned and completely ruined, and twelve Spaniards hanging within the church by the act of the Lutheran English, who went about searching for us to make an end of all of us who had escaped from the perils of the sea. All the monks had fled to the woods for fear of the enemies, who would have sacrificed them as well if they had caught them, as they were accustomed to do, leaving neither place of worship nor hermitage standing; for they had demolished them all, and made them drinking places for cows and swine.

As I did not meet with any one at the said monastery, except the Spaniards hanging within from the iron window gratings of the church, I sallied forth speedily, and betook myself to a road which lay through a great wood. When I had gone by it for the matter of a mile, I met with a woman of more than eighty years of age, a rough savage, who was carrying off five or six cows to hide them in that wood, so that the English who had come to stop in her village might not take them. As she saw me, she stopped and recognised me, and said to me: 'Thou Spain'. I said yes to her by signs, and that I had been shipwrecked. She began to lament much and to weep, making me signs that I was near her house, but not to go there, as there were numerous enemies in it, and they had cut the heads off many Spaniards. All this was affliction and hardship for me, as I travelled alone, and badly injured by a stick of timber, which almost broke my legs in the water. At last,

with the information of the old woman, I decided to go to the shore, where I saw two Spanish soldiers approaching, stripped naked as when they were born, crying out and calling upon God to help them. The one bore a bad wound in the head, which they had given him when stripping him. They came to me, as I called to them from where I was concealed, and recounted to me the cruel deaths and punishments that the English had inflicted upon more than one hundred Spaniards they had taken.

Then we went off, and searched for something to eat along the shore—of biscuits, which the sea was casting up—when four savages came up to me to strip me of the clothing which I wore, and another was grieved and took them away, seeing that they began to maltreat me, and he may have been a chief, for they respected him.

This man, by the grace of God, assisted me and my two companions, and brought us away from there, and remained a good while in our company, until he put us on a road which led from the coast to a village where he lived. There he told us to await him, and that he would return soon and put us on the way to a good place. Along with all this misery, that road was very stony, and I was unable to move or go a step forward, because I went shoe-less, and dying with pain in one of my legs, which was severely wounded. My poor companions were naked and freezing with the cold, which was very great; and not being able to exist nor assist me, they went on in front by the road, and I remained there supplicating God's favour. He aided me, and I began to move along, little by little, and reached a height, from whence I discovered some huts of straw; and going towards them by a valley, I entered a wood.

When I had gone a distance of two shots of an arquebus in it, an old savage of more than seventy years came out from behind the rocks, and two young men, with their arms—one English, the other French—and a girl of the age of twenty years, most beautiful in the extreme, who were all going to the shore to plunder. When they saw me pass among the trees, they changed their course towards me, and the Englishman came up saying, 'Yield, Spanish poltroon', and made a slash at me with a knife, desiring to kill me. I warded off the blow with a stick which I carried in my hand; but, in the end, he got at me, and cut the sinew of my right leg. He wanted to repeat the blow immediately, had not the savage come up with his daughter, who may have been this Englishman's friend, and I replied he might do what he wished to me, for fortune had subdued me, and deprived



me of my arms in the sea. They took him away from me then, and the savage began to strip me, to the taking off of my shirt, under which I wore a gold chain of the value of rather more than a thousand dollars. When they saw it, they rejoiced greatly, and searched the jacket, thread by thread, in which I carried forty-five crown-pieces in gold, that the Duke had ordered to be given to me at Corunna for two months' pay; and when the Englishman saw that I carried a chain and crown-pieces, he wanted to take me prisoner, saying that he should be offered a ransom. I replied that I had nothing to give; that I was a very poor soldier, and had gained that, what they saw, in the ship. The girl lamented much to see the bad treatment I received, and asked them to leave me the clothes, and not to injure me any more.

They all returned to the hut of the savage, and I remained among those trees, bleeding from the wound that the Englishman had inflicted upon me. I proceeded to put on again my jacket and sack-coat; moreover they had taken away my shirt, and some relics of great value which I wore in a small garment vestment, of the Order of the Holy Trinity, that had been given to me at Lisbon. These the savage damsel took and hung them round her neck, making me a sign that she wished to keep them, saying to me that she was a Christian: which she was in like manner as Mahomet. From her hut they sent me a boy with a poultice made of herbs, to put upon my wound, and butter and milk and a small piece of oaten bread to eat. When the boy was about to turn back, he told me to continue travelling straight towards some mountains that appeared to be about six leagues off, behind which there were good lands belonging to an important savage very friendly to the King of Spain; O'Rourke, and that he gave shelter to, and treated well, all the Spaniards who went to him; and that he had in his village more than eighty of those from the ships who reached there naked. At this news I took some courage; and with my stick in hand, I began to walk as best I could, making for the direction of the mountains or for the north of the mountains, as the boy had told me.

That night I reached some huts, where they did not do me harm, because there was in them one who knew Latin; and in the necessity of the circumstances, our Lord was pleased that we should understand one another, talking Latin. I narrated to them my hardships. The Latin-speaking man sheltered me in his hut that night. He dressed my wound, gave me supper, and a place where I might sleep upon some straw. In the middle of the night his father arrived and his brothers,

loaded with plunder and our things, and it did not displease the old man that I had been sheltered in his house and well treated.

In the morning they gave me a horse and a boy to convey me over a mile of bad road that there was, with mud up to the girths. Having passed it by the distance of the shot of a cross-bow, we heard a very great noise, and the boy said to me, by signs, 'Save yourself, Spain' (for so they call us); 'many Sassana horsemen are coming this way, and they will make bits of thee if thou doest not hide thyself: come this way quickly.' They call the English 'Sassanas'. He took me away to hide in some rugged places among the rocks, where we were very well concealed...

De Cuellar and his comrades eventually made it to the safety of O'Rourke territory where they were given food and shelter. From there they travelled to the castle of Mac Clancy in Rosclougher Co. Leitrim, directed there by a priest (also on the run from the soldiers) who told them they would be given shelter by this chieftain who was a "very brave soldier and great enemy of the Queen of England and of her affairs, a man who had never cared to obey her or pay tribute, attending only to his castle and mountains, which made it strong".

The English, hearing that Mac Clancy was harbouring Spaniards, moved against him:

'One Sunday, after Mass, the chief, with dishevelled hair down to his eyes, took us apart, and, burning with rage, said that he could not remain, and he had decided to fly with all his villagers, their cattle, and their families, and that we should settle what we wished to do to save our lives.'

De Cuellar insisted on defending the castle and, after a siege of seventeen days, did so successfully. Despite the grateful Mac Clancy's offer of marriage to his sister, De Cuellar was determined to make his way back to Spain via Scotland. After many more adventures and enduring much hardship and treachery this he did eventually via Scotland.

Experiencing treachery to the end his narrative concludes:

'I reached the shore [of Dunkirk] in my shirt, without other description of clothing, and some soldiers of Medina who were there came to help me. It was sad to see us enter the town once more, stripped naked; and for the other part we saw, as before our eyes, the Dutch making a thousand pieces of two hundred and seventy Spaniards who came in the ship which brought us to Dunkirk, without leaving more than three alive; for which they are now being paid out, as more than four hundred Dutchmen who have been

taken since then have been beheaded. This I have wished to write to you.

From the City of Antwerp, 4th October, 1589. Sgd. FRANCISCO DE CUELLAR.

De Cuellar's account of his escape from drowning and his subsequent adventures was written in Antwerp on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1589 to a friend. It survives in two manuscripts: MS N-7 of the Academia de la Historia and MS 1750 of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, both of which documents lay in oblivion for three centuries until the Spanish text, drawn from the original, (*La Armada Invencible*) was edited and published by Caesáro Fernández Duro, who was a Spanish naval officer in Madrid, in 1884.

Other publications include: that of P. O'Reilly, 'Remarks on Certain Passages in Captain Cuellar's Narrative of his Adventures in Ireland after the Wreck of the Spanish Armada in 1588-89 followed by a Literal Translation of the Narrative', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Series III, iii (1893) pp 175-217; Hugh Allingham, *Captain Cuellar's Adventures in Connacht and Ulster*, A.D. 1588 (London 1897).

Following three years documentary research, an archaeological team, under the direction of Dr Steven Birch of Scalpay, Isle of Skye, Scotland, discovered the remains of the three Armada ships on Streedagh Beach, Co. Sligo on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1985. In a booklet detailing their extensive finds they report this on the La Juliana (site 1):

'...This site has, due to its more exposed position, revealed the largest archaeological assemblage. It comprises sections of articulated ship structure overlaid by extensive concretions. Held within the concretions are iron and stone shot of varying calibre, and lead sheeting. Sitting on top of this concretion were three anchors and three bronze guns. The three guns have been lifted and are being conserved by the National Museum of Ireland. Further elements of the ship can be seen protruding through the sand with one composite piece being identified as a floor rider, its scarf still recognisable. A further four wooden spoked wheels, making a total of five, were also recorded. At a later date the continued exportation of sand from the site uncovered the rudder of the vessel overlying another bronze gun with lifting dolphins...' (From a report by Steven Birch and D. M. McElvogue printed in *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* (1999) 28.3: 265-276, Article No. ijna.1999.0227

# God's Country

Leo Mattimoe

From a casual glance at an Ordnance Survey map encompassing most of Co. Sligo, stretching from the Sliabh Garnh range of mountains in the west to the Arigna range in the East and from the Dartry range in the North to the Bricklieves in the South one cannot but be struck by the diversity of the landscape. There are lakes of all sizes and shapes, some with many islands, some with few and a few with none, and there is an abundance of rivers.

Equally obvious are the shaded areas of varying density, denoting hills and mountains. All of these physical features bear beautiful names in our native language and allow us to glimpse into the minds of our ancestors. There are associations with gods, goddesses, heroes and great events from our prehistoric and historic past.

I feel privileged to have been born and reared in this wonderful part of the world, a niche that luckily has escaped the worst excesses of unbridled capitalism, even though the signs were ominous until quite recently. I have known freedom as a child, the kind of freedom that William Wordsworth had in mind when he first visited Tintern Abbey. The shapes, forms and colours of the landscape delighted the senses and were a pleasure to behold. There were trees to climb, rivers to fish and paddle in and dusty bohereens to explore. The fields and woods were not out of bounds and the children of my generation were country wise. We heeded warnings and sensing danger came as second nature to us.

I drank clear water from spring wells and not from plastic bottles. I have heard the first song of the cuckoo in joyous anticipation of Summer. I have heard the corncrake while working in the meadow and I've heard the cricket in the hearth. I've been startled by a waterhen on the riverbank. I have outstared a fox at the edge of the wood and have tended a sick calf in the corner of the field.

The only 'gateway' project I was involved in was to make sure the gate was closed to ensure the cattle didn't wander out.

On a clear day when Knocknarea was visible in the distance, I could see the great cairn, the most impressive man-made structure in the county, built, presumably without planning permission, 6000 years ago and predating the Egyptian pyramids. It still remains and presumably will remain, the most impressive and interesting sight on entering the environs of Sligo. Even a ten story hotel at Carraroe could not compete.

One summer Sunday morning over twenty years ago I noticed an elderly man on the roadway outside my house. He was American and had walked the three miles from Sligo town, intending to visit Innisfree. The only problem was that Innisfree was on the other side of the town and he had nearly arrived in Strandhill. He told me it had been his life's ambition to see the lake isle of Innisfree and to experience the peace there. I then realised that this man (Sam Ennis was his name) was not just a sightseer: he was on a pilgrimage. So to help the pilgrim's progress I drove him to the lake isle. Unfortunately it was too choppy for him to get a boat but I arranged for him to get out the next day, which he did. I have forgotten most of the conversation but one phrase sticks in my mind. He turned to me and he said "You are blessed, this is truly God's Country."

During the intervening years we have seen much change. We have witnessed unprecedented opportunities for young people, all kinds of recreational facilities for young and old alike, vastly increased job opportunities and chances to travel and see the world.

Unfortunately we blew it. We spread concrete instead of manure, some of it on the best agricultural land in Europe. We built modern crannogs on flood plains. We gazed at computer screens till cross-eyed. We tolerated the greed, arrogance and ignorance of the so called movers and shakers in our society and we congratulated ourselves on being multicultural when not one in ten of us is capable of conducting a sustained conversation in our own

national language, the only exception in the entire European Union.

Over this period mistakes were made, some of them deliberate and now we have to pay for them in various ways. Change is inevitable but the pace and quality of change must be monitored and properly regulated, to ensure that development does not involve the spoliation of our precious natural and built heritage. This is God's Country. We have a wonderful, practically unspoilt, landscape and nobody, for the sake of popularity or gain, has the right to deprive us of this.

Mankind has left his marks on the landscape from prehistoric times, which tell a story and to consciously destroy them is like ripping pages from a valuable book. The ring fort on your land is more precious than the extra few square metres of land you gain by tampering with it and if it has a name it can be a vital link to a person, usage or event.

We escaped the negative results of the agricultural revolution. Much in Europe was destroyed in the interests of production and economic growth. In Ireland, superstition and an innate respect for things ancestral ensured that we have inherited an enviable store of archaeological material.

Now we cannot preserve everything; even Carrowmore was new at one time. If a preservation order were placed on every old structure we would end up as one big museum. However, there are certain things that speak to us from a mysterious and distant past, which are irreplaceable. All of this, like our language, literature and music are the hallmarks of our identity and all the plastic leprechauns and t-shirts advertising a popular Irish drink are merely phoney substitutes.

So let us wake up and appreciate what we have. We are an ancient nation and should be proud of that status no matter what part of the land we come from. So be on the alert and don't make life too comfortable for those who would seek to deprive us of our precious landscape and unique heritage.

Keep it God's Country.

# The Templars

Padraig Feehily

Prior to the arrival on the book shelves of the best selling book “*The Da Vinci Code*”, little interest existed amongst the general public in the history of the Knights Templar in Ireland and very meager details are to be found in the bibliography of the Order about their history in this country, though even these often depend for their authority on mere tradition.

The history of the Crusaders and more especially of the chivalry of Knights of the Temple has for hundreds of years formed an attractive study to the historian and romance writer. That so little should be definitely known on the subject is not to be wondered at when we remember that, soon after the suppression of the Templars, the absence of orderly government and the long continued civil strife destroyed in a great degree the historical continuity existing in other countries. Further too, the fact that most of the Templars possessions were handed over to the Knight Hospitallers produced such confusion in people’s minds that lands seem to have been attributed to one or the other Order.

During the height of the Templar influence in Europe, Ireland was part and parcel of the Templar province of England; although there were separate Masters for both countries, they seem to have been chosen in the English General Chapter from among the English brethren.

In advance of appraising the establishment of the Templars in Ireland, it is necessary to consider some background history.

‘Strongbow’ (Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke and Strigul) led the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland from Wales. Henry II of England, furnished with a papal bull and the need to ‘*proclaim the truths of Christian religion*’ to the Irish people of which he fully convinced the pope, was given permission in 1155 to

invade.

The Treaty of Windsor was negotiated with the High King Rory O’Connor. Rory was left as King of Connacht under Henry who became *Dominus Hiberniae* (Lord of Ireland). The treaty, made in 1175, opened the way for a mass migration from the English mainland to Ireland. The coming of the foreigners changed Ireland’s religious and socio-economic structure. The Church was reorganized and the parish as the basic unit of local focus. Tithes were introduced and coinage made its appearance for the first time in Ireland replacing cattle to some extent as a means of exchange.



We might suppose that, with numerous religious houses throughout Ireland, the moral well-being of the people was assured. Unfortunately this was not so, for after the long centuries of the Viking wars and consequent upheavals there was spiritual and moral laxity. Deeds of violence were frequent, even against priests and nuns and against church property. Consequently, the Norman invasion produced a new wave of religious activity and the religious orders in particular benefited from the Norman advance. Always quick to seize on what was new, practical and

progressive, the invaders welcomed the friars to Ireland in the thirteenth century – Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and Carmelites. The new Orders were for the most part regulated from abroad with English officials in charge.

The invaders organised the Irish world to their standards; possibilities of colonization were immense. Now for the first time Ireland knew systematic agriculture and estate management. The only people to be displaced were the Gaelic nobility as the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy had been in England, and this was not because of any anti-Gaelic policy but rather because of a struggle for power between two groups of aristocracy: the Normans and the Gaelic. With this new social order came the Templars.

## Origin Of The Templars

The capture of Jerusalem by the armies of Islam in 1065 AD. and the harsh treatment of pilgrims outraged the religious feelings of Christendom to such a degree, that at the preaching of Peter the Hermit, everyone from prince to peasant was faced with an extraordinary enthusiasm which culminated in the first Crusade and the recapturing of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1099 AD. The flow of pilgrims recommenced with fresh ardour. Though the armies of Islam were driven out of Jerusalem, they still infested the countryside and lost no opportunity of pillaging and slaying the unfortunate pilgrims. To remedy the deteriorating state of affairs, nine noble knights formed themselves into a company for the protection of pilgrims on their way to the holy city. They bound themselves together under the rules of the Augustinian canons, with vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. At the outset they had no church or fixed abode but in 1118 AD Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, gave

them a church (which had been turned into the Al Aqsa mosque) erected originally by the Emperor Justinian. Built on the Temple Mount, it inspired their name “Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon” or “Templars”. The church with the adjacent buildings became their headquarters until the Christians were finally driven from Jerusalem. Baldwin induced Saint Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux, to interest himself and the Pope in the new order. At the Council of Troyes in 1128 AD Saint Bernard undertook to revise their rules and draw up a code of statutes for the government of the religious and military Order of the Temple.



**An early 17<sup>th</sup> century map showing an earlier Templar Castle.**

Map courtesy of Public Records office Northern Ireland

Reliable record for the presence of the Templars in Ireland is dated 1177, when Matthew the Templar “witnessed” an Irish charter and the first known grant of land by Henry II, a deed in frankalmoign i.e. “on condition that the grantees prayed for the soul of the grantor and his ancestors”. By the year 1308 the Irish lands were the third most valuable of all the Templar holdings. They were located in Sligo in the west but most of their lands were centered on

the eastern seaboard; these involved manors in Carlow, Louth, Kilkenny, Kildare and Dublin.

Where land hitherto had been used for cattle grazing, the Templars commenced cropping wheat, soon producing a surplus which they could move about and sell throughout the country. In 1213 the king also permitted them to export their own wool for sale.

The Templars in Ireland retained the Normal manorial structure. The tenants were in the main Irish as recorded in the plea rolls of Edward I. They were liable to render effective service to their master and if any tenant forfeited his fee (title) they (the Order of the Temple) might put themselves in *seizen* (possession). If a tenant was amerced (fined) for any cause the amercement was collected and handed over to the Order. Unclaimed waifs found on their lands were to belong to them. In addition these privileges were added to by King Edward I who gave them complete criminal and civil jurisdiction over their tenants and vassals: to try criminals by ordeal of pit and gallows. The king also freed them from all military services and ordinary feudal customs.

Besides the aforementioned privileges, the Templars enjoyed, under the authority of Papal Bulls, freedom from excommunication of themselves or interdict on their churches by bishop or priest. They had their own chaplains to accompany them; their dwellings too were to be considered as sanctuaries and any felon flying there was safe from arrest.

The head of the Order was called the Grand Master. Next in line were the Priors – who governed the large estates, the several portions of which were governed by Preceptors. They in turn governed the *serviente*: men-at-arms. In Ireland the head of the order was called Master of the Knighthood of the Temple of Ireland. The Masters in Ireland were officers of the English Crown and auditors of the Irish Exchequer. Surrounded by a hostile population, life was difficult for the

Order in Ireland. Though a long way from the head of the Order in London, the Masters had more freedom of action. The local church officials objected to the Templars holding the advowsons (the right to recommend a priest for a vacant parish) and this privilege led to certain hostility.

Although they produced a surplus of corn in Ireland, the pastoral way of life had not disappeared. A large number of horses other than draught horses suggests the breeding of other classes may have been a special skill of the Irish Manors.

Clonaul, Co. Tipperary is a prime example of industry at work within the manorial system. A number of horses of high value was found recorded in the accounts at Kilsaran, Co. Kildare, and the record includes goods that suggest the Templars may have stimulated the local cloths industry: “six ells of white cloth in store as well as robes in coloured wool”.

### **The Templars in Co. Sligo**

Archdeacon O’Rorke in his History of Sligo Vol II, pp 73 ff, suggests that the Templehouse castle *Teaghtempul* was not the work of the Templars but was built by MacWilliam Burke in 1263 AD and called Loghnehely (*Ath-angaile*). O’Rorke further suggests that in a 1307 state inventory of Templar possessions, “there is not a word of Templehouse Castle or the county Sligo property, an omission which seems to prove that those religious had nothing to do with the property”. However Mr. Herbert Wood, BA (Oxon) in a paper read to the Royal Irish Academy, April 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in the year 1907, states the following: “County Sligo Teachtemple or Templehouse – Goods worth 73s.8d.; a yearly value of lands, 40s.; one church, 40s.” This preceptory was called Loghnehely in the certificate of 1 Ed. III. It obtained this name from the lake Lough Awnally (*ath-angaile*). In the Annals of Loch Cé the castle of Tech Temple is mentioned (1270), and Templehouse is its modern name. In the taxation of 1302-6 the vicarage was

called Kellecath, and corresponded to the modern parish of Kilvarnet. On the suppression of the Templars it passed to the priory of Saint John of Randown, which is stated to have held 16 quarters of land here, and the rectory and tithes. Archdeacon O'Rourke contends that the castle was built by MacWilliam Burke in 1262, but he is certainly wrong in stating that the Templars had no possessions here.

The Order farmed some of their lands; portions they let out to tenants. They also possessed or leased small portions of land – not large enough for

a preceptory and these were managed by stewards. Beside their free tenants they had *firmarii* and *betagii* on their lands, who had to give certain days assistance in the year. The Templars in their preceptories held manor courts and also ecclesiastical courts in which a canonist sat and dispensed justice.

A privilege which they shared with the feudal lords of the time, and which was much prized, was that of having mills to which not only their tenants, but neighbours also, came to have their corn ground. By the law of “milling stoke”, tenants were bound to support the mills set up by their lords, who

drew large revenues.

It would be reasonable to expect that the Templars should have left a considerable mark on the history of the times. But the only reference to them in the Irish Annals states the fact that in 1183 the Orders of the Templars and Hospitallers is confirmed. This however is a mistake as the Order of the Templars was confirmed in 1128 and that of the Hospitallers in 1113.

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## The Unnamed Cave

Kathleen Fairbanks

Situated in the townland of Cuilsheeghary More, Ballinafad, Co. Sligo and Aghanagh district, just behind the Church and visible from the N4 motorway, is a cave.

This simple cave has a remarkable feature of an undated stone seat at its entrance. From here there is a panoramic view of the Ox Mountains, the Arigna and Curlew mountains, and also Lough Arrow.

On a sunny day the surrounding area looks magnificent with the whitethorn blossom and the aroma of wild flowers, with nearby birds chirping in the overhanging shrubbery.

Maybe this cave was used as a Hunting Lodge. The fox is known to have his home there.

It also may have been used as a

Viewing Bay during the many wars that took place in this Island of ours. We do know it is not possible to venture in too far as there is a lot of water and mud but many folks did scrawl their initials on the rock at the entrance.

During winter time when cattle lived outside they took shelter near the cave and the local farmer was able to give them fodder for food there.

Interesting to say just some miles away over the hills are the Caves of Keash.

A bedtime story often told was about “The Little People”, the fairies who travelled underground and came to visit.

The local people loved to recall an incident about a judge who was on his way to the Sligo courts being

kidnapped and hidden in this cave for a period.

Very little has been recorded of other events or happenings.

During the summer school holidays the children love to go and play near the cave and have a rest on the famous stone seat wondering who thought of putting it there those many years ago. That will always remain a mystery and the cave another one of “Ireland’s Hidden Gems”.

This was once an area owned by The O’Healy clan for many centuries, later came the Ffolliott family and the landlords took over, it was then many English families came as emigrants and were granted portions of land here.



# Come Dancing

Kathleen Fitzmaurice

At a recent session of our Active Age Group we got chatting about our dancing days. We spoke about house dances, the local dance halls, forays further afield and the Carnivals.

House dances were held for different reasons. There was the "American Wake" where the family of someone about to seek fame and fortune in the U.S. was treated to one last party, a dance in his or her own home. I suppose this served as a distraction on the final night among family and friends and it often went on right into the early hours of the morning.

Indeed one lady recalled one emigrant who at the end of the night set off on foot for Arigna Railway Station to board the train on the first leg of her long journey. A group of family and friends accompanied her to the Station and her baggage was so meagre that they had no trouble carrying it.

Another house dance was part of the "Game and Dance" often held in the run up to Christmas. The game was a card game for which there was a charge, the prize a turkey or maybe a pig's head, if it coincided with pig-slaughtering time. The dancers had the kitchen for their activities, making the floor flags resound to the half-sets, polkas and Stack O' Barley and the fine music of local musicians.

Every village had a Dance Hall. They were to be found at practically every crossroads. They were simple structures lit by oil-lamps, just large unheated rooms with a stage, a space which served as a cloakroom and very basic sanitary facilities. In my area there were Halls in Highwood, Geevagh, Corrigreenoe, Ballyfarnon, Jackie's

at Conway's Cross and in later days the Pavilion in Kilmactranny, to mention a few. This meant that there was a dance within striking, or rather cycling distance, every week-end but sadly our finances restricted our attendance.

Local Bands provided the music in the local Halls. There was the legendary Havana Band from Boyle-three Cryan brothers, Francis, Michael and Leo who, reputedly, recited the Rosary on their way to a dance. They certainly had their own style of music and Francis would encourage all and sundry to "take the floor" with his exhortation, "I want to see you all swerving". The Conlon Band, Ballyfarnon, was a great favourite in this part of the country. It comprised some members of the Conlon Family of the village, with Stephen Sheerin and Joe Martin. Their lively music got us on the floor. Boyle Crystal Band provided music in all the local halls from time to time and later there was Wood's Band, a family group from Drumshanbo of which we have happy memories. There was also a Band called "Flynn's Men" and they enjoyed a big following.

The usual admission charge to local dances was the old half-crown and there were no alcoholic drinks on sale. There were soft drinks to buy and tea was often served with no charge. We got there on bikes at no cost, so the magic wand to a good night's dancing was the elusive half-crown.

As things got back to normal after the war cars re-appeared and we went further afield. The Gaiety in Carrick was the venue on St. Stephen's Night to dance to the wonderful music of Stephen

Garvey and his Band. The next big dance hall to come on the scene was Fenaghville in rural Co. Leitrim. It was purpose built with maple floor, exotic lighting and the pick of the bands. It was the place to go. Tooreen Hall in Mayo made the headlines too and there was the Mayflower in Drumshanbo. Later the Reynolds brothers built halls at several venues in the mid-lands of which Cloudland was one.

The 1950s was the era of the Carnivals. They were an entirely new departure. A large Marquee was erected in a suitable spot. It had a good dancing floor and aimed at catering for a big crowd. Several parishes ran Carnivals as fundraisers and if all went well, they were an ideal way to collect money. A carnival usually lasted for ten days and during that time there might five or six dances, a concert and a Ceile. Only top class bands with huge popularity were worth engaging so there was no place for the humble half-crown. Taking your sweetheart to the Carnival a few times put a big hole in your pocket! Some of the big bands were The Clipper Carlton, The Melody Aces, The Mighty Avons, Bros Walsh, Jack Ruane and the one and only Mick Delahunty.

But fashions change. The Singing Pub took over and where once we graced the big maple floor our successors frequented the Singing Pub or the Disco. Gone are the days of the little local hall and the canvas of the marquee has rotted in someone's back garden. But we can still recall our favourite Ballroom of Romance because happy memories last forever.



# The Remarkable Career of Frank Carty, BL, TD

Compiled by Tommy Kilcoyne and Rory O'Beirne

Francis J. Carty was born in April 1897 in Clooncunny in the parish of Achonry/Mullinabreena. His parents Mr and Mrs John Carty were farmers. He attended Carrowrile National School. While still in his teens he became closely attached to the Sinn Fein organisation. The Irish Volunteers were founded in Dublin in 1913 and Frank Carty was present at the inaugural meeting of the Volunteers



FRANK CARTY  
1897-1942

held in Tubbercurry in May 1914. With the outbreak of the World War later that same year a major split took place in the Volunteer movement with the majority supporting John Redmond and the war effort. Some branches such as Mullinabreena where Carty was in charge continued to support Eoin McNeill and the Republican movement. During the 1916 Easter Rising he was preparing to join the conflict in his native county along with leading IRB man Alec McCabe, a native of Keash, when news of the surrender in Dublin put an end to their plans.

During 1917 the spread of the Sinn Fein movement continued side by

side with the Volunteer movement and as a result of the influence of Carty and McCabe the South Sligo area was particularly well organised. Classes for Volunteer officers were organised and Carty travelled by train to Sligo to attend one of these.

In many areas the members of the Sinn Fein clubs also joined the local Dramatic Society which provided a cover for meetings of Volunteers and in the spring of 1918 Frank Carty was a member of the Mullinabreena Dramatic Club that staged two plays in the local Technical Hall in Lavagh.

The officers of each Sinn Fein Club and Volunteer company were often the same and the county was slowly organised into Battalions with Carty elected as Commandant of the Tubbercurry Battalion early in 1918. He was actively involved in organising the Volunteers or the IRA, as they were increasingly being called, and in October 1919 he commenced weekly classes for Company and Battalion Officers.

Following a raid for arms on the residence of Col Alexander Perceval at Templehouse in February 1920 Carty was arrested and imprisoned. While serving his sentence in Sligo jail he was elected to the first Sligo Republican County Council and also as chairman of Tubbercurry Board of Guardians. In May 1920 Carty was rescued from Sligo jail by a number of prominent Volunteers and made his way to the Ox Mountain region of Cloonacool. He remained there on the run with a number of other Volunteers and under his leadership several raids were carried out on the police and military in the Tubbercurry area.

He was arrested near Moylough in South Sligo in November 1920 and imprisoned in Derry jail from where he made another daring escape in February 1921. He succeeded in reaching Glasgow but while making arrangements to return

to Ireland he was rearrested and brought back to prison in Mountjoy.

Following the truce with the British in July 1921 and the subsequent signing of the Treaty, all republican prisoners including Carty were released. He later played a prominent role on the anti-treaty side during the tragic 1922/23 Civil War.

He was elected for the first time as a TD representing Sinn Fein at the 1921 General Election in the Sligo and East Mayo constituency, becoming the youngest deputy in the Dáil. He was aged 24 and of smart appearance and fine physique. He was known as the 'Babe' of the House, a 'Babe' however who stood over six feet tall and weighed over fifteen stone. He retained this seat in the General Election of May 1922. He was returned as an Anti-Treatyite TD for the Sligo and Leitrim constituency at the General Election of August 1923. Subsequently he was returned as a Fianna Fáil TD with an increased majority at each of the five General Elections between 1927 and 1938. He was also Chairman of Sligo County Council from 1928 to 1934 after which he did not seek re-election to that particular post.

Frank Carty was a remarkable man in many respects. In addition to his farming interests, he studied law and was called to the Bar at King's Inn in 1936. He was a forceful and eloquent speaker and possessed of a keen intellect, qualities he used to advantage in the law courts, Dáil Eireann and the local councils. He was a born leader, an able public representative and a legendary figure in the fight for national freedom. He married Kathleen Margaret McGowan from Templeboy. She was a teacher by profession. They did not have any children.

His unexpected death in September 1942 at the age of forty five caused great shock throughout the county and further afield. On the day previous to his death he appeared to be in excellent

health and paid a visit to Achonry Co-Operative Dairy Society, of whose committee he was chairman for many years. In the afternoon he travelled to Ballymote on the Achonry Creamery lorry and did not return home till about midnight. At the inquest evidence was given by Annie Gavaghan, who said she had been employed as a maid in the Carty household for four months. She had prepared his supper the night before he died but he did not eat it. After he went to bed she heard him going to the bathroom on a number of occasions and she believed he was vomiting. In the morning he complained of a severe pain in his heart. At 9.30am she sent a messenger for the priest and the doctor. When Dr. Harry McDonagh, Ballymote, arrived at approximately 11am, Mr. Carty was dead. In evidence the doctor said there were no signs of external injury or violence and gave the opinion that death was due to angina pectoris and cardiac failure. His wife was not at home when he died. She had cycled to Sligo the previous day and stayed the night there.

Frank Carty's funeral Mass was celebrated in the Church of the Sacred

Heart, Mullinabreena, on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1942, and a large and representative cortege followed his remains along the winding roads of his native parish to Achonry Cemetery where his comrades of the Old IRA formed a Guard of Honour and fired a volley of shots at the graveside. The Last Post was sounded by Mr. Willie Lavin, Ballymote, and the oration was delivered by Micheál O'Chléirigh, TD, Mayo, who described Frank Carty as a giant of a man in everything he did and said his loss was not just parochial or provincial but national. An Taoiseach was represented by Patrick Smith, Parliamentary Secretary. Among the many other public representatives present were G. Boland, Minister for Justice, S. O'Grady, Parliamentary Secretary, Dr. M. Brennan T.D., P. J. Rogers T.D., R. Walsh T.D., Senators Ruane, McEllin and Lynch, Alderman William J. Tolan, Mayor of Sligo and Eugene Gilbride, Chairman, Sligo County Council.

A fine stone Celtic Cross was subsequently raised over his final resting place in Achonry Cemetery. Crossed firearms were also part of this monument. In later years this

tombstone was removed and replaced by a black granite Celtic Cross which bears the inscription:

Thy Will be Done  
In  
Loving memory of  
Frank Carty  
BL, TD

Late O/C 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade  
3<sup>rd</sup> Western Division IRA  
Died 10<sup>th</sup> September, 1942

Aged 45 years  
His wife

Kathleen Margaret  
BA, B Comm, HDE

Died 6<sup>th</sup> march, 1998  
Aged 90 years

Ar dheis De go raibh a nanamacha

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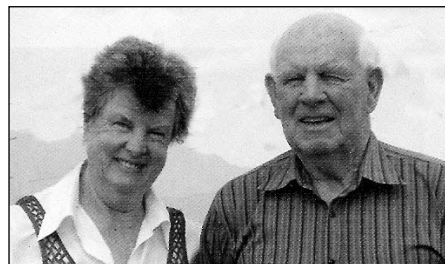
## Ballymote Man Honoured Again in Perth

The Brendan Award is conferred annually by the Australian-Irish Heritage Association on an individual who has made "an outstanding contribution to the cause of Australia's Irish heritage". Tom Kearns from Emlaghfad, Ballymote, was presented with this award at a special function in Perth's Irish Club on Monday April 19, 2004 (*The Corran Herald* 38, 34)

Now, very recently, Tom has been honoured once again on the occasion of his retirement from the St Vincent de Paul Society for his life-long contribution, along with his wife Kathleen, to the work of the Society.

They have been active with SVP since shortly after their arrival in Australia back in the winter of 1970. What started out as helping with

the organisation of bingo nights to help raise money for a soup kitchen in Fremantle turned into a lifelong commitment and involvement with the Society. They worked at the provision of food to those in need. They helped



Tom and Kathleen Kearns

source and supply furniture where needed (their garage at times was like a furniture depot). They helped wherever they could, and whoever

they could, be they immigrants, Aboriginals or single mothers.

To mark his retirement, and to thank him for his years of membership and his years as President, a surprise party was organised for Tom. Certificates of appreciation and badges were presented to him and to Kathleen.

As well as her work for SVP, Kathleen has long been involved in teaching Natural Family Planning and working with Pregnancy Assistance which provides a house where women in need of help can go to find accommodation and advice.

# The Australian Visitors

Bernie Gilbride

It was a bright June morning at the turn of the century. On reaching the office she saw a message on the fax machine. Someone was starting the day early, she thought. It was from Australia. Aha! That explains it. Taking the fax up she read:

'We wish to book a week's holiday with you as advertised. Double room from 14 - 21 July inclusive, preferably one of the two front rooms in the old house. Please advise if available.' Consulting the booking chart for July she ascertained that, yes, No. 21, one of the rooms requested, was available. Typing in the reply with a welcoming note she asked for confirmation of the booking. She watched as the machine delivered the message, only noticing then that the visitors were coming from Perth, Western Australia. She marvelled at modern communication - so new to her generation but so readily accepted by the younger people of today. A short time later the confirmation came through in the name of Cassidy. An Irish name, she thought, probably coming to seek out their roots. Later that day the receptionist remarked that they were filling the vacancies caused by the cancellation of the wedding booked for that week.

The whole thing had slipped her mind until on the evening of 15 July a Mr Eugene Cassidy was being paged during dinner and a very tall man answered the call and was directed by the receptionist to a private booth nearby.

'Yes,' the receptionist said in answer to her enquiry, 'He is the Australian who arrived last evening with his wife and they are occupying room 21 as they had requested. They appear to be in their early 30s and on their honeymoon.'

Taking a stroll through the dining room a little later she made a point of talking to the guests at each table. On reaching the Australian couple, who happened to be seated at a table overlooking the rose garden, she suggested that they take a walk there after dinner and, pointing out an old rose tree entwined with honeysuckle, told them of the beautiful scent from it at that time on a summer evening.

Smiling broadly, the young woman said 'I know all about that rose tree and am looking forward to doing just that this evening.' Seeing the question in her eyes, the young woman continued 'My great-grandmother was born and reared in this house long before it became a

hotel and many times my grandmother told us of the garden and that particular tree, which she said had been planted by my great-great-grandfather in honour of her birth all those years ago. I am so thrilled to be able to have room 21, as it is now known, because it was there my great-grandmother was born. We lived with my grandparents while they were alive and were regaled with many stories handed down to them as children about the old home way back in Ireland. I have always hoped to visit here one day.'

It was very evident that this was indeed a very special visit and she was so glad that room 21 had been vacant for them, seeing that it meant so much to the young woman. Telling them about the wedding cancellation, she said that room 21 was their 'Bridal Suite' and but for that cancellation it would not have been possible for her to have had it. 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good,' she said with a laugh. Holding out her hand the young woman said her name was Isobella McConnell-Hart, now Isobella Cassidy.

Over the next few days they wandered all over the grounds exploring the gardens and even the meadow where the sheep grazed so contentedly.

'Perhaps there were sheep there in great-grandfather's day too,' Isobella remarked to Eugene, 'and that was his reason for settling in sheep country where we now own a sheep farm.' This they could only guess at. They wandered along the many roads near the hotel and were anxious to know all about the area. They appeared to know the places to visit in the nearby town and villages, even along the river at the back of the hotel which had once been part of the original property, as if familiar with every nook and cranny.

At the top of the driveway stood an old oak tree and with unerring instinct they had found their great-grandparents' initials entwined in a heart-shaped V, which their great-grandparents had carved there on their wedding day - now much higher up the trunk of the tree, but just as they had been described to them. As these souvenirs gave the couple so much pleasure she was loathe to ask what had happened and why that couple had left the home they so evidently loved and gone so far away, knowing, at that time, how slim their

chances were of ever coming back.

What delighted them most was the portrait of an elegant foreign-looking woman in what had been the sitting-room of the old house, now the Visitors Lounge. In truth, Isobella resembled the lady in the portrait: she had her dark hair, dark eyes, long face, high forehead and Eugene had photographed her from every angle and direction with the portrait. This lady was her Spanish great-great-grandmother Isobel who had come to the old house as a bride so many years ago.

The evening before they left they asked if they might take the portrait down. This request was granted and as it was very heavy, John, the handyman, assisted. Turning it very carefully onto its face Isobella ran her fingers very gently over the edges of the frame towards which her grandmother faced in the portrait. We watched in amusement wondering what she was about. After a moment or two we heard a very slight click, part of the frame slid away, and she stood almost speechless and trembling as she drew a tiny box from the deep space. Opening it she withdrew a piece of faded paper wrapped around a very old gold ring. Slipping it on the third finger of her right hand with tears running down her cheeks, she held her hand high. The light caught the ring, causing the ruby in the centre to glow blood red and the surrounding diamonds to sparkle. We all gasped at its beauty.

'Mother was right. This is her great-grandmother's treasured ring brought all the way from Spain, a last gift to her from her own mother. Her tearful Spanish mother had slipped the ring from her own finger as she held her daughter in her arms for what she knew would be the last time, bidding her keep it safe, as it was valuable and she might need cash sometime.' When the portrait was being framed her husband, Tieman, had the frame made deep enough to secrete the box with the family heirloom, known only to them.

'My mother died last year,' Isobelle said, 'and a couple of days before she died, while I sat with her, she told me of the secret hiding place of the ring. I thought it was the ravings of a dying woman as it had never been mentioned in any of the tales about the old house. "This secret has been passed down from mother to daughter and I am passing it on to you. Promise me if ever you go to

Ireland you will seek it out," she said.'

Isobelle had promised she would but never thought she would come half-way round the world to see where her great-grandparents had once lived. She thought the old house was probably long demolished and its contents scattered to the four winds, including the old portrait should it ever have existed.

'Only for you, Eugene, who always wanted to see the country of your ancestors and decided we would spend our honeymoon here, I would never have come. It was by pure chance we saw the advertisement for here in the Travel Agent's office; the name rang a bell and we rather thought- perhaps? maybe? - stranger things have happened, so we had them fax you for a booking. I am sure you noticed my delight as so many of the old stories came to life for me - the carving on the tree, the old rose tree in the garden, the river way to the back, even the bedroom with its east window looking out over the gardens and its south window overlooking the estuary. All these had been described to me so many times,' said Isobelle.

'I only told Eugene of my mother's wanderings last night as we discussed the many stories that had come to life for us. It was he who decided to ask to have the portrait taken down just to see if there was any truth in what I had been told, and knowing we would hardly have a chance ever again to prove or disprove what Mum had told me. Eugene is fascinated at how I resemble my great-grandmother, as all my siblings are either blond or red-haired, hence all the photos. He wanted to show all at home how like her I was in actual fact. Now this I cannot believe! I never mentioned to anyone what Mum had told me until last night.' She started trembling and sobbing as she slid onto the chair near the portrait.

Kneeling before her Eugene put his around her, soothing her as best he could. 'Isobella love, you must take off the ring. It may indeed be your ancestor's ring, but first we must speak to the owners of this Hotel and then to a solicitor. I would assume it now belongs to the Hotel owners. In fact I'm sure it does.' Taking the precious ring Isobella re-wrapped it in the faded tissue paper, put it back in its box and handed it to the Manageress. With Eugene's arm around her waist they went to their room. The portrait was re-hung and the Manageress went to her office to ring the owner, who lived a few miles away, to inform him of what had occurred. He immediately agreed to come and meet the couple involved.

Before the owner, Mr Michael Connellan, arrived, Eugene rang the Manageress and asked if he might have a word alone with her. She readily agreed and told him to come to her office on the first floor down the corridor from his bedroom. It was quite evident that he was very upset. He asked her if she thought there might be any way he could buy the portrait and, perhaps, the ring, having found it now meant so much to his wife, as she could imagine. Telling him that the present owner, Mr Connellan, was on his way she suggested he wait and speak to him, as she had no power in those matters. Eugene eagerly agreed. The Manageress suggested they both go to the Lounge and rang the kitchen to order a pot of coffee for them.

About a half-an-hour later Mr Connellan arrived. He was an elderly man who immediately tried to put Eugene at ease. He congratulated him on his marriage and wished him years of happiness before he mentioned the happenings of the evening. He was absolutely amazed by what had happened.

Then Eugene asked him if he had ever had the portrait valued saying he would like to buy it for his wife, if possible, should Mr Connellan be willing to sell it and he be able to afford it. 'Just the portrait,' as he knew the ring would have to be valued separately.

'The idea of a sale has never come up before now,' said Mr Connellan, 'but, yes, the portrait was valued last year at €2000. As I'm thinking of selling the Hotel I would consider selling it, as the new owners might not even be interested in such an old portrait - modern art being the "in" thing nowadays. I had always liked the painting. For me, it was part and parcel of the place, giving it a sense of history and a touch of elegance.' Eugene's face lit up.

'I can afford €2000,' he said with a broad smile. 'Please say you will sell it. I know it will delight Isobella and console her if the ring is out of our reach.'

'I would like to meet this "Isobella" if I may,' said Mr Connellan.

'But, of course,' said Eugene, 'I will ring our room and have her come down. I'm sure she's wondering where I am. I only said I wanted to collect my paper which I had left here in the Lounge.' Making the call he asked Isobella to come down to the Lounge. At first she said she could not as her face was blotched with tears, but he persuaded her saying he was sure nobody would notice and it was important that she come. She arrived in a few minutes, having washed her face and changed.

Eugene introduced her to Michael

Connellan, saying he was hoping to buy the portrait from him. There was no doubt about her delight. With shining eyes she hugged Eugene, and turning to Mr Connellan held out her hand saying:

'Thank you, oh, thank you.' Turning back to Eugene with a frown on her face, she asked if they could afford it and what it would cost. Eugene assured he could afford it - just about! !

'The ring will have to be valued but we will think of that another day.' Leaving the Manageress and the owner in the lounge, Eugene and Isobella made their way back to their room.

Michael Connellan and the Manageress sat for quite a while discussing the whole affair. She showed him the ring saying it was very beautiful but rather old-fashioned in her opinion. They examined it in detail and Michael thought about it as he turned it over in his hand, admiring how it glowed and sparkled.

'I think it would never have been found only for the mother's remembering the old story. I think it belongs to that young woman. It would be a crime in my eyes to deprive her of it. What do you think?' he asked. Nodding her head she agreed completely.

'Better Isobella should have it, who would truly appreciate it, than that it be bought for someone who would probably love it for its beauty, but for whom it would have no real meaning,' she agreed. With that Michael Connellan suggested she ring room 21 once more and ask them to come down.

In great trepidation the pair appeared thinking that Michael Connellan had changed his mind about selling the portrait. So imagine the delight when he opened the tiny box, took out the ring, and held it out to Eugene, saying:

'Another ring for you to put on Isobella's finger. I think it should be hers to wear and enjoy - a present for her wedding from a great-great-grandmother of long ago.' Oh! The delight!

'Are you sure?' Isobella asked with tears in her eyes again as she hugged Mr Connellan, 'it is probably very valuable.' Smiling as he hugged her back, he said:

'I hope you never have to realise its worth, and having met your new husband, I don't think you will.'

The following morning with much hugging and good wishes the Cassidys left for Donegal, the county from which Eugene's great-grandfather had left for Australia on a prison ship, but of whom he had no stories or information of any kind except that he had been deported to Van Diemen's Land from Tory Island. Now Eugene, a lawyer, was returning hoping to find out why.

# Michael Doyle 1846-1928

Jim Higgins

*(As Michael Doyle was elected Central Secretary of the INTO in 1910, and as another Ballymote man now becomes President of the same Organisation, it is highly appropriate to pay tribute to them both, in this and the following articles).*

Michael Doyle was one of the founder members of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation in 1868. He was born at Floghena, Doocastle, Bunninadden, on the Sligo/Mayo border in December 1846. He was the son of a small farmer and miller, and while an infant during the Great Famine and "Black 47" he was lucky to survive. Stories of soup kitchens, the poorhouses and the coffin ships must have made an indelible impression on his youthful mind and must have influenced the course of his long life. At the age of 21 he was sworn in as a member of the Fenian Brotherhood by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa himself and his ability, energy and fearlessness made him a trusted leader, and he soon became an officer. Later on he played a prominent part in the Land League Movement in Sligo.

After his primary education at the local school, Michael Doyle trained as a teacher in London. He graduated with first class honours. His first teaching position was at a school in Lorrha, Co. Tipperary, where he taught for a short time before his appointment as principal teacher in Ballymote in 1868.

For 45 years he taught in Ballymote which is a few short miles from his birthplace. Stories still exist in the area about this larger than life teacher who influenced the lives of everyone around him, and one lady is adamant that for a period of time he carried out the duties of registrar for births, marriages and deaths.

Michael Doyle was married to Ellen Healy who also came from Doocastle, and they had three daughters, Kathleen, Winifred and Eily. Kathleen was a National teacher and taught in Lackagh N.S.

To understand the importance of Michael Doyle's courage and tenacity it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the education system in that Ireland in which he lived.

## Teaching conditions then.

Set up by the 1831 Education Act and intended to be multid denominational, the new National Schools soon became denominational. The local clergy became the managers and in this capacity were all-powerful with the right to hire and fire at will without giving reason or notice.



**Michael Doyle Memorial in Ballymote**

Salaries were only one-third of the corresponding salaries in England; they were paid only quarterly and through the managers who could withhold money if not satisfied with a particular teacher. In 1872 a system was introduced whereby the teacher's payment was made to depend on the answering of pupils at an annual examination conducted by an inspector of the Board of Commissioners. Increments and promotion depended on the results. This system lasted until 1900.

Strict rules to be observed by National teachers included (1) to avoid fairs, markets and meetings – especially political meetings; (2) to avoid controversy; (3) not to take part in elections except to vote; (4) not to keep a public house or lodge in one.

The Commissioners went even further in issuing their code in April 1900 when the following rule appeared:- "Urban Councillors, Rural Councillors, Poor Law Guardians, members of

School Attendance Committees etc., are not eligible for the position of National Teacher. The Commissioners regard the attendance of teachers at public meetings, or meetings held for political purposes, or their taking part in elections except by voting, as incompatible with the performance of their duties and as a violation of rule which will render them liable to withdrawal of salary."

There were specific instructions given in matters relating to cleanliness, neatness and decency as teachers were expected not alone to give good example themselves but to carry out personal inspections every morning of children's faces, hands, hair and clothes. Other duties ranged from looking after the school building and contents and also to ensure that each family brought a cart of turf to provide some basic heat. I came across the following document at an in-service course many years ago and I have no reason to doubt its authenticity!

Golden Rules for Teachers 1879:

Teachers each day will fill lamps and clean chimneys before beginning work.

Each teacher will bring a bucket of coal for the day's session.

Make your pens carefully! You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of each child.

Men teachers may take one evening a week for "courting" purposes or two evenings to attend church regularly.

After ten hours in school, you may spend the remaining time reading the Bible.

Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.

Every teacher should lay aside a sum of money for his declining years, so that he will not become a burden on society.

The teacher who smokes, uses liquor, frequents pool and public halls will give reason to suspect his work, intention and integrity.

## The beginnings of protest.

By the 1840s teachers were using nom de plumes and anonymous letters to the national newspapers as a way to highlight and protest about their highly restricted and unfair employment circumstances. Local meetings of



teachers began to be held in spite of condemnation by the Commissioners and harassment by inspectors.

Eventually "Redress Committees" were formed which sought to bring together the representatives of teachers on a national basis. However teachers quickly recognised the need for an independent voice from outside the profession to articulate their grievances. Vere Henry Louis Foster was identified as such a person. Vere Foster was a former diplomat and had considerable wealth which he used to establish "The Irish Teachers Journal". Teachers were encouraged to come together to promote their cause and so the INTO was born in 1868.

#### **Doyle joins the fray.**

Following graduation from training in London Michael Doyle's first appointment to a teaching post was in Lorrha N.S. Co. Tipperary close to the Offaly border. He was 21 years old and it must have been while teaching here that he was sworn in as a member of The Irish Republican Brotherhood by Jeremiah O Donovan Rossa. He later became an officer in the IRB. It is also interesting to note that Catherine Mahon, the first woman president of INTO, was born in North Tipperary in 1869. She and Michael Doyle campaigned together on many issues from 1907 to 1913 and remained friends until his death in 1928. In the year 1868 Michael was appointed Principal of Ballymote Boys' N.S. and he remained there until his retirement in 1913. Having learned the necessity of political involvement while in Tipperary, it seems that the young Michael wasted no time in becoming active when he returned to his native soil. In later years (1910) he was able to say: "At the early age of twenty one (i. e. 1867) I took off my coat to the wearisome and difficult work then before the wretchedly-paid, down-trodden teachers, just emerging out of darkness; and ever since in Press and on platform - in many a hard-fought campaign with all the pains and penalties attached - the sword has never been sheathed. Nor can it be said that this was for personal distinction or reward, for the results and outcome have been all the other way. Threatened, depressed and fined I kept on the even tenor of my way, unflinching and undeterred, and with pardonable pride". He goes on to state that he "has been in the thick of the fight since the

beginning, and at every Congress but two since 1870."

#### **Doyle as Central Secretary.**

In July 1909 the Central Secretary of the INTO Dr. Clarke died suddenly and the CEC elected Michael Doyle to act as Central Secretary pro tem until a new Central Secretary would be elected at Congress 1910. There were three candidates on the ballot paper for the post in 1910: Michael Doyle, James McGowan (Dromahair) and James Hegarty (Rathfarnham, Dublin). Doyle won with almost 52% of the votes cast.

In the year 1868 that he was appointed to Ballymote, the first two INTO Congresses had taken place in Dublin (in August and December) so it seems likely that he was busy organising local branches to give a fearless voice to "downtrodden" teachers of the day. I have no evidence to show that he was an INTO activist in Tipperary but it would seem very likely that he would have been, as it was in 1867 that the Fenian Rising took place there and we know he was a member and an officer in the IRB.

It would seem that he got on very well with the clerical managers in Ballymote and indeed that they encouraged and supported him. The Irish Teachers' Journal of 1872 shows that Rev. James McDermott C.C. Ballymote paid five shillings towards Mr. Chamney's Indemnity Fund while Michael Doyle himself managed to contribute a half crown. In 1913 Very Rev. Canon Batty Quinn P.P. Ballymote contributed £2 towards Michael Doyle's Testimonial---a most generous amount at the time. Having management on his side therefore meant that Doyle could be even bolder and more daring in his criticisms of the commissioners and the inspectorate.

#### **In pursuit of better conditions.**

With the arrival of the INTO teachers were emboldened to meet together in their schools although Doyle tells us that inspectors often chased such members from school premises. This may explain why "South Sligo INTO" met in Tubbercurry in 1872, with the next meeting arranged for Ballymote N.S. By rotating the venue any "nosy parkers" could be put off the trail. Branches sprung up in Sligo Town, North Sligo, Curry, Ballymote, Boyle and Ballaghaderreen and there is evidence that Doyle addressed all of them. As attendance

at such meetings often involved a forty miles walking return journey in all kinds of weather, it is little wonder that Doyle attracted the admiration and loyalty of teachers throughout the country. The pursuit of justice was his only reward for such dedication.

The Irish School Weekly of October 11<sup>th</sup> 1913 published the following comments made by Hugh O'Donnell (later to become president in 1927) and John Rafferty, in the course of an appeal for contributions to a testimonial for Michael Doyle: "Mr. Doyle joined the profession close on 50 years ago and soon he began to attract the notice of Tyrone House (i.e. The National Commissioners) and he was privately informed that they were about to dismiss him. To his eternal credit this stripling defied them and the INTO Branch to mark their appreciation for his manliness sent him to next Congress as their delegate." This must be a reference to his first Congress in 1870.

Continuing they state "For a speech delivered in Ballaghaderreen at the first public meeting of teachers held in the Province of Connaught, he was officially threatened, and warned to look to his future prospects; but the thunders of Tyrone House do not seem to have frightened him very much, for shortly afterwards, owing to some crisp criticisms of Sir Patrick Keenan and the Board of his day, he was permanently reduced by £2 in his annual salary, which with interest, would by now amount to a very large fine indeed. Surely now, this impudent critic of the Board and its officers was squelched. An ordinary man would, but Michael Doyle was no ordinary man, and he was not squelched."

Two further public meetings followed soon afterwards, one in Sligo and one in Ballaghaderreen, and Doyle again repeated his criticisms, and "took another £5 worth out of the Commissioners and their inspectors". Congress delegates on learning about the fines were "roused and delighted" and as they reimbursed him considered that they had got good value for their money.

The Board now threatened instant dismissal should he repeat the offence but it seems as if this was like the proverbial "red rag to the bull" as Doyle was not for turning, and as previously stated this may well have been due to the good relations he had with the clergy and managers of his own school. Of course he must also have been aware that

even teachers who had the full support of management were dismissed by the National Board of Commissioners. We know that 40 years later on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1912 Edmund Mansfield, Vice-president of the INTO was summarily dismissed by the Board from his post as principal of Cullen Boys' N.S. in Co. Tipperary, for a speech he had made calling for the removal of a senior inspector from the District. Ironically enough, Doyle was to be succeeded as Central Secretary by the same Mr. Mansfield until his dismissal was reversed two years later. The courage shown by Doyle in the "dark days", and which he continued for 45 years led to The Dill Enquiry of 1914 which exposed, condemned and overturned the iniquitous and unjust inspectorial system in Irish primary schools.

### Pensions

Doyle took an interest in the need for pensions while still a very young man. One can only assume that the poverty and misery surrounding his early years in the aftermath of the famine had made a deep impression on him. The miserly salary of the teachers of his day made it impossible to save and the prospect of depending on the workhouse or "County Home" in retirement would be unthinkable. The Powis Commission of 1870 accepted that pensions should be made available to national teachers but the money available was derisory. In 1878 Doyle became aware of a visit to Rockingham Estate near Boyle of the then Chief Secretary for Ireland - Mr. Lowther- and he managed to get a deputation of four to meet him. Mr. Thomas Little of Keash N. S. was one of the four. Shortly after this meeting a grant of £1,300,000 was added to the pension fund for National Teachers.

Almost 35 years later on 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1913, Doyle was in London with Catherine Mahon and Edmund Mansfield to meet with The Chancellor of the Exchequer H.P. Hamilton to discuss improvements in pension rights for teachers. He was disillusioned and disappointed with the lack of progress made and as he retired his own pension was reduced because of fines and salary reductions imposed for union activity. Catherine Mahon, who herself refused on principle to accept a testimonial, wrote to I.S.W. to argue that an exception should be made in Doyle's case as his pension would amount to only £47 per year,

while it should have been £60 per year.

### The Birrell Grant.

Michael Doyle championed the cause of the underdog for all of his professional life and this was never more evident than his stance on the distribution of The Birrell Grant. Augustine Birrell was 66 years of age when he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in January 1907, and he had been Education Secretary in England, where he showed an interest in primary education, before his promotion to Dublin. He was also renowned for his friendly attitude towards teachers and hopes were high that he would help to bridge the gap between the pay of teachers in Ireland and teachers in Scotland and England who were paid almost twice as much. Following intensive representations from INTO the Birrell Grant made an extra £114,000 available to supplement the salaries of national teachers. However, neither Principal Teachers with under 35 pupils nor Assistant Teachers would receive any share in the extra money. Within the ranks of the INTO, there were many differing opinions as to how the money should be divided, but Doyle was adamant from the beginning that no teacher should be excluded. He further argued that the grant should not be paid on capitation bonus system, thereby paying more to teachers in larger schools than those in smaller schools. This was in fact a revolutionary proposal at the time because it would mean equal pay for equal work, although no attention was drawn to that fact (perhaps deliberately) at the time. At the June 1908 meeting of the CEC, Doyle proposed that the Central Secretary Or. Terence Clarke inform the Chief Secretary Mr. Birrell that INTO would insist that all teachers be paid the same amount irrespective of rank or size of school. (Dr. Clarke died unexpectedly later that month and was succeeded by Doyle). Catherine Mahon who was now a member of the CEC seconded the motion and it was passed by the narrowest of margins (7 for and 6 against). Mahon later confided that she and Doyle argued for hours to convince the executive to vote in favour of their motion. When the bill came before the House of Commons later in the year all Irish M.P.s spoke against excluding the smaller schools, because teachers had been very active in lobbying throughout

the Summer months. Birrell withdrew the bill and promised to present it again to include all schools as requested. It was a great victory for the INTO and Doyle was lauded for it by the teachers throughout the 32 counties.

### Doyle INTO Vice President.

As his term of office as Central Secretary drew to a close, and as retirement beckoned, it is rather curious that Michael Doyle should want to contest the election for Vice President in 1913/1914 but contest it he did. He gives the dismissal of Vice President Edmund Mansfield the previous October as one reason why strong continuity was required and that he would be the ideal person to help Mansfield as the new Central Secretary. The second reason he gave referred to his visit to meet Chief Secretary Lowther in King Harman's Rockingham Estate 34 years earlier, when he succeeded in getting £1,300,000 towards pensions for national teachers. He now wanted to be present when Lloyd George presented a revised pension scheme later in the year 1913, as he would be ideally alert to any "obstacles" which might arise.

He refers also to literature of other candidates as "very peculiar and sinister" and "not unexpected". It would seem as if he suspected sectarian or political influences which he wanted to defeat. Bitterly critical letters to the ISW were exchanged between himself and the other main candidate for the position Mr. H. E. Carter of Belfast.

The result was very close when the votes were counted at Congress: Doyle 2997, Carter 2882.

His last letter to the teachers of Ireland paints the picture of a sad, disappointed yet proud advocate for teachers' rights. This letter appeared in ISW on March 7<sup>th</sup> 1914 and is printed in full below: *I desire to inform my friends in the National Teachers' Organisation that I shall not be a candidate for any office on the Executive Committee this year or in the future. Had I gone on for honours for another turn my friends, no doubt, would gather strongly around me and once again place me at the head of the poll. But I am wearied and grievously disappointed at the outcome of all the agitation on the pension scheme, and therefore have definitely made up my mind - after a hard and strenuous fight for forty six years - to retire to that rest and oblivion so necessary to a person of my age.*

*To the teachers of the West, as well as to my friends and supporters in the other provinces, I bid a very reluctant adieu. Through good and evil report, in all the vicissitudes of a somewhat stormy and eventful career, they accorded me an unswerving and loyal support on the Executive for more than a quarter of a century. The memory of this shall always be green and unfading - an abiding strength and comfort in the days to come.*

*With the fervent hope that the younger members of our profession may in the future emulate the ardent and unflagging zeal and perseverance which characterized the pioneers of the Organisation, and with kindly wishes for even my hard-headed and insuppressible opponents in the "North East Corner", I remain my dear friends, your very faithful servant,*  
*Michael Doyle, Ballymote, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1914.*

The CEC hosted a dinner in his honour in Dublin on September 19<sup>th</sup> 1914.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> December 1914 a lavish reception and presentation was made to Michael Doyle in The Loftus Hall Ballymote. Local dignitaries of Church and State were in attendance as well as teachers from all parts of the country. The CEC was represented by Mr. J. McGrath B.A. from Ballaghaderreen. An illuminated address and a substantial testimonial were presented to him and in his reply Mr. Doyle made particular

reference to the support he had received not only from the clergy and Bishop of Achonry, but throughout the whole of the West of Ireland. He said that clerical managers were among the most staunch and loyal supporters of INTO.

Michael Doyle lived out the rest of his retirement in Teeling Street, Ballymote, and passed to his eternal reward on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1928, aged 82 years. On the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1930 a life sized statue of white marble on a limestone base and surrounded by wrought iron railings of intricate design, was unveiled in his honour before a distinguished audience. It is located in front of the Ballymote Court House and just a few yards from where Michael Doyle lived since 1868. Mr. W.P. Ward of Ballinasloe, President of INTO, was the principal speaker and gave a brief outline of Doyle's commitment to national teachers. Ballymote Branch had organised the fundraising, and the secretary Sean Breheny N. T. received special praise. "Neither political borders nor religious denominations curtailed the list of contributors." Mr. Eugene Carragher of Portadown, ex president of INTO, was also present and spoke in glowing terms of Doyle and his unselfish and resolute opposition to injustice from wherever it came. Hugh O'Donnell, Cloonanure N.S., another ex President of INTO, also spoke in praise of his late friend. Nor did the passage of time allow the memory of Doyle to fade, as

INTO President Mr. A. J. Faulkner and General Secretary Mr. Jackie Brosnahan, attended a wreath-laying ceremony in Ballymote in June 1968 to mark the centenary of the founding of the INTO.

The centenary of Doyle's election as Central Secretary is upon us and INTO have organised a complete clean up of the statue, the refurbishment and rebuilding of the base, sanding and repainting of the surround and covering the inside of the plinth with black marble. The work has been carried out to the very highest standards by Jimmy Cawley of Cawley & Scanlon Ltd. Ballymote. The company have refused to take any payment.

**Acknowledgements:**

Ballymote Heritage Group for various articles on Michael Doyle in *The Corran Herald*.

The Sligo Champion for several articles on Michael Doyle but particularly those of 1930 and 1968.

One Hundred Years of Progress; The Story of the INTO 1868-1968 by TJ O'Connell (General Secretary 1916 to 1948).

John McTernan for "Worthies of Sligo". National Teachers of Sligo for "National Schools of County Sligo".

Ann McConnell in Head Office for "Irish School Weekly".

"Catherine Mahon First Woman president of the INTO" by Sile Chuinneagain.



At the opening of the 2009 Heritage Weekend a presentation of crystal was made on behalf of Ballymote Heritage Group by Eileen Tighe, President BHG, to James Flanagan to mark his completion of twenty five years as editor of *The Corran Herald*.

Photo: Paddy Conboy



Mrs Mary Ann Sheridan (nee Gardiner), sister of the famous Gardiner musicians (Corhubber). She had the only shop in Marren Park. - Photo courtesy Esther Cassidy

# Jim Higgins, President of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation 2010-2011

Harry Keaney (Sligo Champion) and Neal Farry

After working for more than 40 years as a national school teacher, Jim Higgins will certainly be going out on a high in 2011 because last Easter he took over as president of the 36,000 member Irish National Teachers' Organisation. Jim is the well-known and highly respected principal of Scoil Mathona Naofa, in Ardkeeran, Riverstown. Mr. Higgins's term as president will last for a year, from Easter 2010 to the next INTO Annual Congress in Easter 2011.

When the 61-years old Battlefield, Culfadda, native assumed his position, it was, in one sense, the closing of an 83-years old historical circle. The last time a Sligo person was president of the INTO was in 1927. It was Hugh O'Donnell, a staunch GAA man who taught Mr. Higgins's father, Paddy, in Cloonanure National School, near Gurteen.

"And the last time there was an INTO congress in Sligo was in 1905 and the next one will be Easter 2011," Mr. Higgins states.

The history of the INTO dates back to 1868, to an amalgam of 71 local teacher associations. The organisation has always been an advocate for teachers and, by extension, for pupils and parents. Now, as Mr. Higgins prepares to take over as president, a number of issues dominate the primary school agenda.

They are: the public service expenditure cuts, the pupil/teacher ratio, the continuing failure to provide an optimum teaching and learning environment for all primary school pupils, and what is likely to be the increasingly debated role of the Catholic Church in the future of primary education.

Mr. Higgins feels there was no doubt but that the fruits of the Celtic Tiger

boom were squandered when it came to primary school education. For example, he points out that despite a campaign to reduce class sizes, the fact remained that Ireland still had the biggest class sizes in Europe. As for the role of the Catholic Church in education, Mr. Higgins says he went to Secondary School to the Mercy Sisters in Ballymote and he pays a warm and generous tribute to the Mercy Order for their heroic and unselfish contribution



**Jim Higgins**

to education generally and for the particular educational role they played in the Ballymote catchment area.

Traditionally, the teacher, and particularly the local national school teacher, occupied a very special place in Irish society, respected not only as a teacher but as a torch bearer who inculcated in succeeding generations a sense of themselves and their identity, their history and culture, their religion and values.

The school principal was, after all, traditionally called the Master or the

Mistress. Now, in what Mr. Higgins describes as "these sad times generally", teachers' own self-image is something he is concerned about. "It's criminal for anybody in authority to erode the image of teachers in society or tear that down. And it has nothing to do with money. It's to do with trust," he says.

One incident on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1961 aptly illustrates the steely determination and the raw educational ambition that characterised the youthful Jim Higgins. On that Saturday morning the thirteen year old schoolboy defied the ferocity of Hurricane Debbie when he cycled the six miles from his home in Battlefield to Coláiste Mhuire, Ballymote, to the astonishment of the skeleton staff and the handful of intrepid students who braved the elements on that tempestuous day.

Jim received his own primary education at the two-teacher Culfadda National School and, in 6th Class, was taught by his brother, John, in Carrowcroy National School, Keash. After second level in Colaiste Mhuire, Ballymote, he went to St. Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, and qualified as a national teacher with first class honours in 1968. At his graduation Jim distinguished himself by annexing the College's Gold Medal in Educational Psychology and Education.

Jim started his teaching career in Palmerstown Boys' National School on June 15th, 1968. He subsequently attended U.C.D. and graduated with a BA in 1971 and HDipEd (Hons) in 1972.

From 1974 to 1976, Mr. Higgins taught Educational Psychology in a Federal Advanced Teachers' College in Pankshin, Nigeria, West Africa under a secondment scheme sponsored by the Department of Education.

He returned to Palmerstown in 1976 and in September 1977 was appointed principal of Ardkeeran N.S., in Riverstown, where he still teaches. He succeeded the late Master James Casey, who had previously taught in Coolbock, in the parish of Riverstown.

Mr. Higgins has been an INTO member all his teaching life, even while in Nigeria. He served as Sligo branch secretary, secretary of Sligo Principals and Deputy Principals Forum before being elected to the INTO executive committee by the teachers of Sligo and Mayo in 2002.

After his election as secretary of Sligo Branch Jim became a regular delegate to the Annual Congress where he identified the opportunities to promote improvements in the delivery of quality primary education. As a teaching principal, Mr. Higgins has been eager to see improvements in time allowed for administration duties.

Mr. Higgins is married to Frances; they have one son, Damien, a barrister, and four daughters, Teresa, an occupational therapist in Galway, Claire, a solicitor with the law firm Callan Tansey, Aileen, a secondary school teacher in Manorhamilton, and Eimear, a barrister. He also has two grandsons and one granddaughter.

In spite of his grassroots involvement with the INTO at branch level in Sligo and Dublin throughout his teaching career Jim could still be described as a late developer within the context of the INTO structures. Within six years of his appointment as secretary of the Sligo Branch he was elected to represent the primary teachers of Sligo and Mayo on the Central Executive Committee of the INTO.

Prior to his all-consuming dedication to his constituency of primary teachers since 2002 and since he assumed his onerous workload, Jim has given dedicated service to all activities that involved young people in Riverstown, the parish where he worked and in Ballymote, the parish where he lived from the day he arrived in the area from Dublin in 1977. He attended and assisted at Shamrock Gaels G.A.A.

juvenile football matches, at Ballymote G.A.A. and Ballymote Celtic football games, at Riverstown and Ballymote Community Games Athletics meetings, and at Corran A.C. Athletics meetings. Jim served on the committee of Co. Sligo Cumann na mBunscol and he was always in the forefront of the organisation of competitions right up to County Finals days.

His school football and hurling teams distinguished themselves in Cumann na mBunscol competitions, winning County Sligo football and hurling Cumann na mBunscol competitions on numerous occasions. Jim is particularly proud of his three pupils, Louise Harte and Sarah McDermott, for football, and Terri Gilligan for camogie, who represented their school and county in Croke Park in All-Ireland day exhibition games.

The well prepared quiz teams from Ardkeeran N.S. frequently struck fear in the hearts of opponents in Scór na nÓg, Gárda Association, Cumann na mBunscol and Pioneer Association quizzes. One of these teams won the silver medals at the National Final of the Pioneer Quiz.

Mr. Higgins also tried his hand at producing plays in Irish and he succeeded in bringing two Irish language plays from Ardkeeran school to the provincial finals in Taibhdhearc na Gallimhe.

At local level in Ballymote Jim Higgins was elected to represent the Carrigans area on Ballymote District Community Council in 1984. As a member of the research committee Jim played a vital part in carrying out a survey of the social, agricultural, historical, sporting and educational needs of the community. The "Ballymote Survey Report" document that was published by the research committee proved invaluable in later decades as a roadmap for the later development of facilities and services in the community.

While he was secretary of Sligo Branch of the INTO Jim Higgins established himself as a driving force to play an instrumental role on the INTO

Millennium Committee that published "The National Schools of Co. Sligo 1831-1999". Jim's motivational and organizational skills were well rewarded when this excellent history reached the bookshops and played a major part in raising the profile of primary schools and primary teachers at the dawn of the new millennium. Jim's perseverance ensured that Sligo was the only county in Ireland to undertake such a valuable project.

Mr. Higgins's election as president of the INTO coincides with what will, in effect, be the culmination of a distinguished teaching career. A temporary teacher began work in Ardkeeran N.S. on January 7<sup>th</sup> 2010 and at the INTO Annual Congress in Salthill at Easter 2010, Mr. Higgins was formally installed as INTO president. He intends to retire on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2011.

Now, more than forty-two years after he first stood in front of a class, the Culfadda man can certainly look back on a career that typified the best of what was always regarded as a Very Important Person in Irish society - the local national school teacher.

## St. Kevin's R.C. Church, Keash, Co. Sligo, before Renovation

Martin A. Timoney

Last year I presented research in *The Corran Herald* establishing that the locally accepted date for St. Kevin's R.C. church in Keash, Co. Sligo, as being 1809 is correct. That long *TCH* text was reduced for inclusion in the Bi-Centenary Mass booklet but some additional information that came to notice while the *TCH* article was at the printer, mainly through Jim and Elizabeth Taheny, was included. While the mass booklet was being prepared for printing by Fr. Pat Lynch in Tubbercurry some more pieces of information came to hand, mainly through Kathleen Brehony and Padraig and Nora Drury. There was total consensus that the pre-1809 church was at the side of Bóthar an Corran in Cross townland just outside of Drury's farmyard. From local knowledge and looking at the two remnant buildings I am not certain which side of the road the church was on.

Some weeks later Mary B. Timoney rediscovered almost postage

stamp sized very dark photocopies of two photos of the inside of Keash Church prior to the 1977-1979 reconstruction. The originals of these photos that she discovered are in the Irish Architectural Archive in 45, Merrion Sq., Dublin 2, where they were examined and found to be of much better quality than expected. The IAA made excellent copies at about 19 cm square size. The quality is good and they are reproduced here with the permission of the IAA. This yet again underlines the importance of Irish society maintaining and staffing archives of our heritage.

There are code numbers on these photos which are in the An Foras Forbartha collection of photos in IAA. There is no clear record of who the photographer was. However, from personal knowledge there were really only two possible architectural historians, Dr. Maurice Craig and William Garner, nowadays Garnerman, both of whom were involved in the

Foras Forbartha architectural surveys in the 1970s. Copies of their reports of 1973 and 1976 are in Sligo Library Local Studies Archive; curiously Keash church is not listed in either report. I have not been able to contact William Garnerman but Dr. Maurice Craig, now more than ninety years young, responded saying that he could not be sure, having visited so many buildings in those years; see Further Reading below for some of his works. I do recollect Craig taking a small Minnox pocket camera out of his pocket during a public lecture and saying that a building may be gone by the time you get back again, so take a photo, just in case! While the Keash photos are of the format of that camera the case is not proven, but it looks most likely that Dr. Craig should be given the credit.

The date of photos has to be between 1970, the earliest date that Craig, or Garner, would have been in the field examining buildings for An Foras Forbartha, and 1977, the start of



**Photo 2: Looking down the interior of the Women's House, Keash R.C. Church, Co. Sligo, as it was prior to the start of renovations in 1977.**

*Photo Courtesy Irish Architectural Archive.*



**Photo 1: Looking up the interior of the Men's House, Keash R.C. Church, Co. Sligo, as it was prior to the start of renovations in 1977.**

*Photo Courtesy Irish Architectural Archive.*



the renovations of the church.

For those who do not know the unusual arrangements within this church they should look at the plan of the church drawn by Donagh McDonagh in Swords (1997, 226).

Photo 1 is looking up the interior of the Men's House of Keash church as it was prior to the start of renovations in 1977. At that time the great metal pole dominated the church. The King post truss structure of the roof was open for all to admire the diagonal wood sheeting. Similar diagonal wood sheeting faced the galleries. The post-Vatican II altar, made by John Mulvey, had replaced the altar to be



Keash AD 1809 Stone

seen on the inside of the cover of the bi-centenary mass booklet. The altar rails, except for a section, had been removed. The sacristy doorway was to the left of where it is now. There was a side altar in the corner with windows in the adjacent walls. These two windows, and an additional one in the roadside wall, were blocked up and the tabernacle is now set in this corner. I have not learned what happened to those windows.

Photo 2 is looking down the interior of the Women's House side of Keash church as it was prior to the start of renovations in 1977. There is slight damage to the negative. The photo shows the flat floored gallery with stairs, and a confessional box in the opposite corner; there was a gallery to the Men's House also. The gallery was about 16 ft deep. There was a side window on the left which is now blocked up but it is recognisable in the plasterwork outside and one wonders if this was originally a doorway. The gas heaters were tended to by Francie McDonagh, the local shopkeeper. The organ is in front of the seating. There are two styles of bench ends, that with a trefoil head is the commonest.

In all the of the pre-renovation photos of the church that I have seen

the altar was placed so that it faced directly down the Men's House, with the Women's House been seen out of the corner of the celebrant's eye, so to speak. Today the altar is diagonally set with each side getting equal viewing.

The church has been dry-lined so one can not see the 'scars' of previous arrangements in the masonry. In that regard it could be informative to see the junctions of the walls between the Men's House and the Women's House. I have also speculated that the Men's House was extended at some stage, something that might be recognisable in the fabric of the wall. The spacing between the three windows down the side of the Women's House is not even and there may be a story of alteration or extension there also.

The Stations of the Cross are those there now, being of late 1950s or 1960s vintage they were kept. All of the woodwork was destroyed by wood infestation; one seat end was still at the parochial house when we came here in 1985.

The timber wallplate over the altar was decorated with cut trefoils and quatrefoils while the side wall had alternatingly set trefoils. All these were simply made by drilling holes through the timber. There were similar quatrefoils in the fascia board of the porch of the parochial house in Cloonagh; the porch dates to 1915, the house to 1885.

The renovations undertaken in the time of Canon John Alexander McGarry was expected to cost £25,000 but came to a total of £86,000 and the first post-renovation mass was said in it on the night before the arrival of Pope John Paul II in Knock in September 1979.

#### Acknowledgements

The two photos of Keash RC Church were rediscovered by Mary B. Timoney in September 2009. Their reproduction here is courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive. The cost of getting the prints was borne by Keash Parish through Canon James Finan, P.P., Keash. Additional information on the church and its predecessor was

got from Kathleen Brehony, Paddy Costello, Pdraig and Nora Drury, Imelda Killoran, Jim McGill, Kathleen Cosgrove, Pat and Kathleen Ward and Jim and Elizabeth Taheny, all local parishioners. Derry O'Connell gave me proper terminology for the timberwork within the church. Colm O'Riordan at IAA was also helpful.

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# A Country School in the 1930s

Máire Ní Mháirtín

We rushed out the school gates and as soon as they shut behind us the cheering began. As the crowd scattered it became less but it had been heard all over Coolbock and across the hills if the day was fine.

You see we had just gotten our summer holidays; it was possibly the middle of July, we never knew exactly what day we would get them. We were not going off to Spain or some sunny country, indeed we seemed to have lots of sun at home those days. It was just the freedom from being someplace at a special time. We spent the time working at hay and turf and there were always picnics involved and enjoyed, then if all the work was finished in good time we might have a day at Strandhill.

On our way down the hill from school of course we had to say goodbye to our friends. There were four cottages as I remember, older people lived in the first two, but then there was Mrs. T who kept a few jars of sweets. If a child had a penny or a halfpenny, one got a few sweets screwed up in a bit of paper; she always gave enough to pass around. I don't think she could have made any money on them. Then next there were Maggie, John and Martin, a sister and two brothers. The men were very quiet and did not talk a lot, but Maggie was different: she belonged to the Blue Shirts, which was a forerunner of Fine Gael and she always wore a blue shirt and would shout - "Up the Blue Shirts" every chance she got even louder than we could cheer.

At this point we would have reached "the Stream", and the cheering would have faded a bit as we took our different roads. That was the day we got our holidays but we had many more like it. I think most of us had a happy time going to school.

All this came back very clearly to me a couple of years ago when there was a school Reunion. Our

school opened in 1928 so the Reunion covered the years from then until 1980. Now it is one of the best afternoons I remember.

I started school in 1931. There were just two rooms and two very small cloakrooms, a small playground for the girls and one for the boys and with a lavatory which is beyond description at



The School as it is Today

the top of each. It was more up to date than the previous old school, which had a thatched roof, one room, and a small loft. My parents had their schooling there. Our school was on the hilltop, the old school at the bottom, and my mother pointed out to me where a hedge school had been in former times, across the road where her grandparents were at school.

The old school was in use from 1867 to 1928, when our school opened.

The Stream was just a nice little brook flowing by the roadside. We dallied there, there was no hurry, on the school holidays the Master would not heed us, but on normal school days he would come and chase us home.

The Stream no longer exists: it is dried up. I wonder is the old well still there? During hot weather at lunch time two senior girls could go there for a bucket of water to give all a drink - there was no water of any sort in the school.

I stand at the Stream and look along about a half mile of road which holds a great lot of my school memories. In those days it was just an old bog road, rough and stony. On either side was bog

nearly cut away but still a few bogholes here and there that iced over in the winter (in those days we had a lot of winters like the one we just had). We were able to have lots of enjoyment sliding on them, until someone would chase us, for our own safety. Once the ice was broken they were quite deep: here was one where Eileen was nearly drowned, only that a man heard our cries and came to our aid. She is dead now many a year as indeed are most of those who travelled that road with me, God rest them all.

The road was rough and stony and we got many stone bruises and sore feet, but the verge was nice and soft for our feet and we walked there mostly.

Seventy to eighty years ago there was very little traffic on country roads; there was only one car that I can remember to take the Protestant children to school in the town, and how we envied them in the bad weather. With such little traffic, cattle could graze along the roadside and the grass was nice and soft and it soothed our aching feet.

Across the road, another memory, not a happy one because for it I got the only three slaps from the master I ever got in my schooldays. There was a pile of old turf along the road, which we thought was just spodagh, we had a competition to see who could kick most of it back in the trench, I don't know who won but I know I got doubly punished because it belonged to my Uncle and he complained to my parents. I can assure you he was not my favourite relation from then on.

The Master rarely punished the girls but he kept the boys in "their place" as he would say and had a habit of tweaking their noses which was very painful. He was a small man who came from some part of the Gaeltacht, he loved Irish and instilled a love for it in anyone who cared and many of us did. He was a member of the

County Council and once a month took out his old bike and cycled the bad roads into Sligo for a meeting. Then the Mistress was in charge in his room and a senior pupil, usually a girl, was in charge in her room. In those days seventy to eighty years ago there were no expense accounts for County Councils.

Then on to the gate we had to cross over to get the shortcut up the hills. We passed around by the house and whenever the apples were falling, Mrs Robbie would have a bucket of them left at the wicket gate for us to help ourselves. Then down the lane and nearly home. One side of the lane was a high mossy bank, and we always got quiet as we came down there because the little wrens nested in the moss year after year. We thought it was the same ones back each year, it was only when we knew about birds we learned that a wren only nested about once in the same place; it was probably their families which came back, but it was such a thrill to hear them.

Looking down the road from the Stream now, it all seems so different. The road is a bit better

than it was in my schooldays but the verge is a scrub; cattle cannot graze there now, too much traffic. The bog holes are gone, some land has been reclaimed and in meadow, a lot of it is just overgrown old bog. The gate which we crossed is gone and there is a nice little roadway there instead. There are some new houses on the hill where the cottages were, all the old people are dead and gone, but they have left us with such great memories.

The school now is quite modern, it was not so easy to see and compare as there was a big crowd of past pupils all like myself anxious to renew old acquaintances and compare the school to our time. To my amazement on the wall amongst others was something I had written when I was ten. That year there was a big search on for folklore, we were asked to go to old people and get stories from them. They are now preserved in the Sligo Folk Park.

Even though the playground was covered with seats on the day of the Reunion and they were full of people, I could remember each spot and the games we played. We had a lovely Mass that day and

I felt honoured to read a prayer and be part of it. Then there was a lovely tea for all. It lived up to the tradition of being well done.

It was always noted as a good school and pupils would come from other schools to finish off their last two years or so with us, always providing they had a bicycle and could cycle there.

That is many years ago now but the name still lives on and I know that Mr Enright keeps the history still alive from bits I read in the paper now and then.

A day like our Reunion covering so many years does not happen too often I'm sure. There were children, parents, grandparents and perhaps even the odd great grandparent present, and I'm sure it brought many a happy memory and sad one too.

Much thanks to the young people who organised the whole thing.

**O God be with those happy days,  
When life was free of care;  
I'll not forget my childhood friends  
I'll always hold them dear.**



At the 2009 annual dinner of Ballymote Heritage Group in the Coach House Hotel, Ballymote.

**Seated (L/R):** Eileen Tighe, President Ballymote Heritage Group; Mary Martin, Joint Treasurer BHG; Matilda Casey, Patron BHG; Betty Conlon, Secretary BHG

**Standing (L/R):** Barry Tighe, Patsy Tighe, Anne Flanagan, Gerry Cassidy, Mary Black, Olive Byrne, Jack Martin, James Flanagan Editor *The Corran Herald*, John Conlon, Mary Casey, Pam Benson Joint Treasurer BHG, Des Black Chairman BHG, Paddy Horan, Carmel Rogers Vice Chairperson BHG, Bernie Dwyer, Michael Rogers.

# Arabian Nights – Travels in Libya

Stephen Flanagan

Libya is one of those places that wanders into western news every now and again, and not usually for good reasons. Most recently there was the tragic air crash with its miracle nine-year-old survivor. Earlier this year there was a controversy over Libya's admission to the UN Human Rights Council, with allegations of a shaky record on that very topic. Before that, Libya refused entry to members of the Schengen countries due to a diplomatic row with Switzerland, and before that they welcomed home the Lockerbie bomber with open arms after his release from prison on health grounds. And for Irish people, the country is eternally linked with Colonel Gaddafi and the supply of guns to the IRA in the 1980s.

So I didn't know quite what to expect when I touched down in Tripoli in November of last year. Even though I had read about the country in advance I still assumed we would see some of the hallmarks of developing nations - proactive trinket sellers, bargaining taxi drivers, run-down buildings, rough-paved streets. Though I knew the country had a significant amount of oil revenue, I was under the impression that it was closer to the more southern countries of Africa than its northern neighbours in Europe. I could not have been more wrong.

Tripoli is a cosmopolitan city in the north-west of Libya, not far from the border with Tunisia, sitting on the shore of the Mediterranean. It's a relative stone's throw from the southern reaches of Italy, which has been both a blessing and a curse over the course of the country's history. Walking through the city in the dry heat of late evening, it's not hard to imagine you're in an Arabic-influenced version of Rome or Paris or Barcelona. Tripoli has more in common with modern Europe than it does with the sand-swept streets of the desert cities further south.

One of the first things we noticed on the drive into the city from the airport were signs in Arabic with the Roman numerals for '40' displayed beside a picture of the Colonel. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi, to give him his full



**Ruins of a temple in Leptis Magna. This was the home of the cult that was most intellectual, interested in philosophy and the arts rather than the barbarism of the arena**



**The Desert at Dawn**

title, was celebrating forty years in power since the bloodless coup d'état in 1969. His influence and personality loom large in the country. In the main city museum of Tripoli, proudly displayed beside priceless Roman statues and intricately beautiful two-thousand-year old mosaics, sits the Jeep that he used on the night of his takeover. And across the room is the Colonel's old Volkswagen Beetle. There is in fact an entire floor

dedicated to his achievements in the museum, but alas it was not open on the day of our visit. It must surely be worth a return trip.

Libya is formally known as the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and is nominally run based on the rules of Gaddafi's Green Book, which is on sale in several languages at the major sites around the country. It's broken into three sections and contains

thoughts on the Colonel's vision for how a state should be run, starting with a comprehensive deconstruction of democracy as practised in western countries and suggesting a complex and more representative system instead. The book is not without its more controversial ideas - towards the end, he starts to talk about his vision for the day when the sporting stadiums of Libya will be empty because the people will be out actually playing sports, not watching them. Some years ago he tried to put that particular idea into action and cancelled an international soccer match. There were riots on the streets in Tripoli.

Other ideas from the Green Book have wider acceptance. The country is wealthy from the production of oil - as our guide Tarek put it, you can't put up a tent in the desert without starting a geyser. And as Libya is run along socialist lines, that means the wealth is shared. So every adult Libyan citizen gets a house for free, courtesy of the state. And a free car. And an annual share of the oil money. Gaddafi's Green Book states that a person cannot be fully happy without the means to support themselves, and the free house and car are the execution of that idea, all funded by the happy fact that the country has 3.5% of the world's known oil reserves according to BP.

Yet even in the provision of free cars, there is something of the totalitarian nature of the state - until recently only farmers and tour guides were permitted to have 4X4 vehicles suitable for driving in the desert. That put the mostly roadless Sahara effectively off-limits for everyone else.

Our trip took us on a wandering loop south from Tripoli through the Sahara and back to the coast. We spent six nights camping in the desert, taking in its sights along the way. There are 60,000 known cave paintings and rock carvings in Libya, some of them more than 8,000 years old. Many of them are of elephants and giraffes and crocodiles and other animals, which seem incongruous in the sandy desert until you remember that at the time their creators lived there, that is what they saw every day. Until a few thousand years ago, north Africa was verdant and lush, similar to the present-day safari sites of the southern part of the continent.

Libya seems to have a complex relationship with tourism. On the one hand, the country is far more open than it used to be. On the other, the country itself is not suited to mass tourism. Sites are far apart and difficult to get to, and facilities in the desert can be minimal, to put it delicately. And tourism is not an important part of the economy, which is dominated by oil production. The most famous sites have a protective fence to keep tourists at a distance, but in many others you can just walk right up and touch what you're looking at. You shouldn't, of course. But people do. At least with rock carvings, the touch of tourist hands doesn't make much of a difference, and I must admit that touching something that a person worked on 8,000 years ago is a unique feeling.

We moved through the desert in Toyota Landcruisers driven by Bedouins. The image I had of a Bedouin probably

came from books I read as a child, and as with almost everything else in Libya the stereotype didn't reflect the reality. One of the Bedouin drivers for our group was a former lecturer in a technical college in a city south of Tripoli, and drove tourists around as a side-job. And of course, all the drivers owned their own cars.

The group travelled in two parts. There were four Landcruisers for the tourists, guide and state-mandated policeman who accompanied us. A fifth carried all the food supplies for the group, and was driven by the cooks. The Bedouins had grown up in the desert, and could easily find their way around. In the morning, the guys driving the food truck would take off across the desert and the four Landcruisers for the tourist party would proceed at a more leisurely pace, stopping to look at the carvings and paintings and arches and other wonders of the desert. When we were driving, the desert seemed all the same to me, a recurring background of dunes and scraggly trees and rocks and sand. But then when it was lunchtime, we would cross a dune and there would be the guys from the lunch truck in the shade of a tree or an overhanging rock, preparing food for everyone. The same at night - we would come around a corner in an endless sea of sand-dunes as the sun was beginning to set, and find the cooks at work. To me, who still gets lost pretty regularly in Dublin, it was like magic.

There are three layers to the Sahara in Libya. The first is very rocky, and looks quite like the surface of Mars, especially in the reddish light of the setting sun.



The Big Arch



Rock Carving of an Elephant

The second has fewer small rocks and there are broader patches of sand. Huge boulders are common, ranging up to the size of large buildings. The final layer is how you would typically think of the Sahara - sand dunes and sand shining bright in the sun as far as you can see.

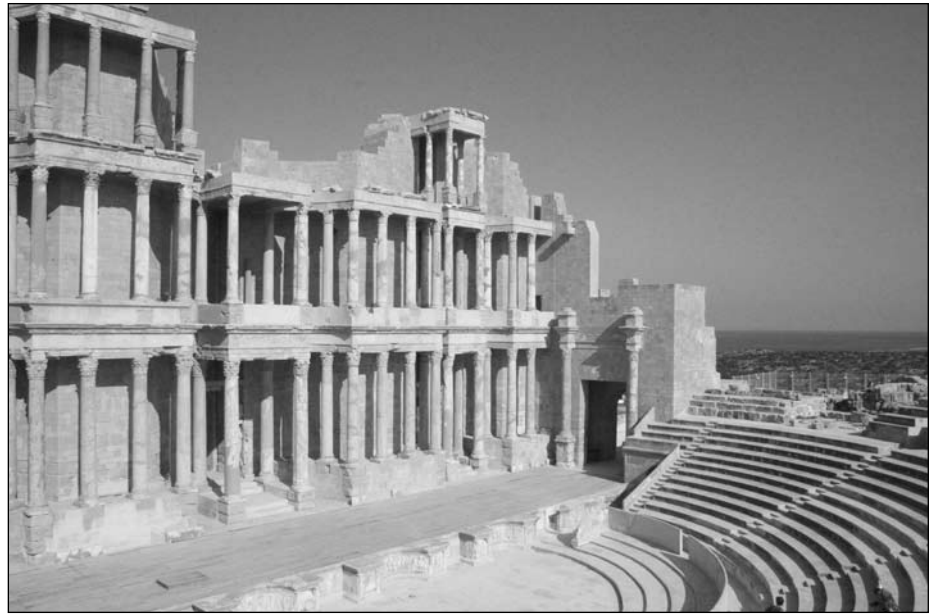
The desert is a remarkable place. The weather was mild enough while we were there that it was possible to sleep outside at night, even though it got down to just a few degrees above zero. At the most southerly part of our trip we were two days' drive from the nearest town (prompting the guide to give us gentle warnings about trying not to break a leg) and so there was zero light pollution. At night it was breathtaking. The Milky Way glimmered across the sky like a handle, plainly visible, and the stars were bright and glittering and countless. I fought to stay awake even after the long days just to try and drink it in.

Tarek told me that many people cry when they are leaving the desert after their first trip, and though I scoffed silently at first, I came to understand why. Bumping back onto solid road after the days travelling on sand felt jarring and unwelcome. But we still had things to look forward to: two of the finest Roman sites in the world are in northern Libya.

The Roman Empire never expanded very far into the country - once they had control of the cities and the olive production of the north they seemed to find expansion further south more trouble than it was worth. But they left an incredible legacy in Sabratha and Leptis Magna.

Both of those sites are old Roman cities that have been uncovered and restored, primarily by Italian archaeologists. We saw Sabratha first. Ancient stone pillars reach up out of the desert, marking the boundaries of where great buildings once stood, and original Roman roads wind through the site. The highlight is a reconstructed Roman theatre, rebuilt to the archaeologists' best understanding of what it would have been like when it first stood.

Leptis is even bigger and more spectacular. Walking through it you can see the athletic fields where there were games and training, then the baths where wealthy citizens went to unwind, first in the comfort of a sauna and then the shocking cold of the frigidarium.



### Roman Theatre at Leptis Magna

Further in is a market where all sorts of goods from Africa and Europe were on sale, and there is another theatre like the one at Sabratha. It is easy to picture what life would have been like there for the well-heeled Roman citizen circa 200 AD, on their way from the baths to the theatre or back to their villas on the nearby hills. And how much better it was to be one of those people, rather than one of the countless slaves that propped up the society.

The country's general disinterest in tourism is somewhat paralleled with a laissez faire attitude to their archaeological treasures. As one person put it to me, many of the locals are amused that foreign tourists are willing to come and pay money to see rocks. Much of the excavation work is done by Italians, who are eager to rediscover the glories of their own past. But Libya's own sites often seem to be almost ignored. We went to see a Garamantian town which flourished between 500BC and 500AD, where the remains of mud-brick walls stand a few feet high and map out the town and what it was like. It has been excavated by archaeologists seeking information on the almost-forgotten Garamantes, but it's fragile and brittle. Nevertheless, we were just let in through the gates to the sites and allowed to wander where we pleased. There are no ropes or paths or guidelines.

Tourism is also changed by the fact the country is run by Arabic law. One stop on our trip through the desert was at an old granary, a circular two-storey

building of about 140 grain silos. When it was active, each family in the nearby town had their own silo, and some were rented out to long-term visitors. About half way up, there was a crumbling ledge running around the granary, maybe a metre wide, which gave access to the upper level. When I asked if I could go up there, the guide shrugged and said sure, but told me to be careful. There was no handrail or ropes or anything else to prevent a fall. It's unthinkable that would be allowed in the west, but if I had fallen in Libya, there would have been no-one to sue.

Visiting Libya makes me wonder what it must have been like when the elite of Europe went on their Grand Tours back in the day, when travel was a luxury out of reach to normal people and sites were less regimented and controlled. Today, the world's headline attractions - the Mona Lisa in the Louvre, the Sistine Chapel, the Pyramids - are drained of their meaning through the infrastructure necessary to support so many visitors. Libya is not like that, or at least not yet. And while that was liberating and invigorating, it is not sustainable or scalable. If you have 1,000 visitors a year, you can let them in to tramp around. For 1,000,000, you cannot. And I wonder too if the treasures I saw will still be there for the generations to come. The distance that preservation puts between the visitor and the site is a regrettable necessity. But for now, it is mostly absent in Libya, and the experience is deeper and richer for it.



# Diaries of a Farmer

Mary Kelly-White

He was a tall man of 6ft, wore a hat and smoked a pipe. The son of a farmer, he was the eldest of nine and he flew the coop aged twenty-four. Ten years his senior, his bride was the youngest of her family. She too was a farmer's daughter. By 1933 she had spent seven years in America where she made her fortune. They were married in 1935 and came to live in Sligo town where they opened a grocery shop in Pound Street, now Connolly Street. They had seven children and lived on their wits like most people at the time. They were my parents Tom and Bea Kelly. They did everything they could to make money; they kept a fowl yard and sold eggs, they gave dinners on fair and market days, they hired out the large storage sheds behind the town house for everything and anything from which rent could be collected, they cut trees and sold blocks and turf. Tom loved horses and even then he had a pony and cart.

That was long ago and by 1950 times were changing. The seven children were progressing through the two schools, the three girls through the Mercy Convent, and the four boys through St. John's National School, Temple Street. And then it happened! I'm not sure whether it was Providence or not, at the time I thought it was the end of the world, but now, half a century later, I'm not so sure.

My mother's bachelor brother died suddenly that year and his house and farm which was my mother's family home fell into our laps. All of a sudden cattle, fowl, fields, trees, and a thatched house belonged to us, a town family. The only snag was the twenty miles of road between it and us, no transport, and we all townie kids knowing nothing about the house on the prairie or how to live in it. From farming backgrounds Tom and Bea were delighted, it was a windfall of a kind and they tried to embrace

it despite the obvious obstacles. It took about two years for the truth to dawn on them. They took turns living in town keeping the children at school and spending time on the farm.

For many years five or six of the children at a time spent school holidays on the farm, some liked it and others didn't. It was great fun and the neighbours were delightful. Apart from the bus from Sligo to Ballyfarnon and the three mile slog across the mountain there was no other mode of transport, and although the scenery was and still is the best in Ireland we did not see it, we were conscious only of the rough mountain road and all the hilly bends, and then the mossy heathery slopes down to the thatched cottage in the middle of a field down the valley. We were falling between two homes. There was only one solution, Tom would have to stay on the land alone and Bea would stay in Sligo, keep the children at school and we would continue to spend the school holidays on the farm. It must have been very lonely for Tom all alone in that dark little house day after day night after night for twenty seven years. There was no electricity for the first few years but there was a travelling library and Tom liked reading. Again and again he surprised us when he arrived at the back door of our town house having cycled the twenty miles up hill and down dale just to be with us. And that brings me to the Diaries. They span from 1956 to 1981, five hardback books of different sizes, not custom made but hardback ledgers cut in half and set out as follows:

Contents	
Notes	General knowledge
Cows	such as (a) animal weights,
Ploughing	(b) plan of family grave,
Mowing	(c) valuation of land,
Potatoes	(d) accounts etc, also included

Tom liked horses and during his voluntary exile in the country he worked hard. The land in Arigna was too hilly for tractors so he ploughed and mowed for neighbours as well as himself. He made and sold creels for donkeys, he kept a registered bull for breeding, and he kept a record of everything he did. The Notes section of his Diary gives a detailed account of his life as a farmer.

During that quarter of a century the seven children finished school, the four boys qualified as motor mechanics; the eldest girl qualified as a Clerical Officer with Sligo Co. Council; the youngest girl qualified as a Nurse and the one in the middle, well she became a free lance Jill of all trades with distinction.

Aged 24 and not married the oldest boy got sick and died in 1964. Aged 38 also single, the Nurse got leukaemia and she died in 1977. The others got married, had babies and christenings, and the mechanics had cars. The twenty miles got shorter and shorter but Tom and his thatched house were growing weary. The gable was leaning for some time and eventually part of the thatched roof collapsed. Tom was in the process of retiring from the land, he was selling his cattle, his horse had died, he hadn't replaced his last dog, and he wasn't feeling good himself. He returned to live with Bea in the town house and everything was rosy for a while. He got cancer of the aesophagus as many pipe smokers do and after a short illness, five weeks, he died in 1981 aged 71. Two years later 1983 aged 83, Bea lost her life in a house fire. And that was when I got the Diaries, in a broken damp suitcase. Apart from the suitcase and his Raleigh bike which he got for his twentieth birthday Tom had no other personal possessions.

# MARY (MAY) O'DONNELL N.T.

## Máire Bean Uí Dhómhnail (1913 - 2009)

Bernadette White

May O'Donnell, "Robin Hill", Keenaghan, Ballymote, Co. Sligo, died peacefully on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at Sligo General Hospital. Prior to her admission there on 12.12.2009 the dedicated Nursing staff at Ballymote Community Nursing Unit cared her for the previous seven years.

Before retiring to Ballymote she lived with her late husband, Gerard, on a farm at Rinbane, Ballinacarrow. She was heartbroken when her husband died in January 1988 and found it a very difficult time, but thanks to her relations, good neighbours and friends in Ballymote she was able to start taking part in the various activities again.

It is extremely hard to know where to start with May but she could only be described as being interested in practically everything: education, nature, heritage and much more

May was born in Carrentavey, Ballinacarrow on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1913 to Francis & Bridget Keane. She had one brother Frank and two sisters, Bridie Keane (later Mrs O'Hara) and Christina Keane (Mrs Clancy). She was educated at the Ursuline College Sligo and then went on to do her Primary Teacher Training Course at Our Lady of Mercy, Carysfort Park, Blackrock, Dublin. In her final year there she was presented with a Gold Medal for the best essay in Irish and this was for the whole of Ireland - she loved and always nurtured the Irish Language throughout her life.

After qualifying she spent some years teaching in Gardiner Street, Dublin. When an opportunity arose to return to her native county she was successful in securing a post in Scoil Lassara Naofa, Ballinacarrow, where she taught from 1943 to 1977 (she was acting principal from 1970 to 1971). She was a dedicated and efficient teacher.

She loved children and always had a carload to school with her; this of course was before the School buses were in action. Parents appreciated her gentle way with the children and how she was always able to coax the best from them, despite discipline and good manners

being a high priority for her. She always gave every pupilequal attention and never showed favouritism towards any child.

In early years in her classroom she had a black range which belched more smoke than heat when the wind blew



from a certain direction and anyone who knew May will know that she loved heat. She used to line up all the bottles of milk and tea on the range to keep them warm and distribute them to the children at lunch time. Lunches were eaten at the desk and supervised by her to make sure that there was no wastage.

Beyond teaching there were many interests especially her lifelong love of reading, music, promoting the Irish Language, bridge, walking, heritage, and the many organisations she belonged to i.e. St. Vincent De Paul, Legion of Mary, Ballymote Bridge Club, Ballymote Heritage Group and the Irish Countrywomen's Association.

Religion was an extremely important part of May's life. Her devotion to Our Lady was unique and she was a frequent visitor to Knock. Daily Mass was a must and she was great at giving a lift to anyone she would see along the way. The Rosary or two a day were part of her routine and any visitor who happened to call while she was reciting the Rosary was invited to take part. She loved to drive and this gave her great independence in travelling wherever she wished to go - she drove until she was 90.

Her love of life and helping others were very important to her. May was constantly looking after the needs of others in her own way, quietly and with dignity and absolute confidentiality. She was part of the local Legion of Mary in Ballymote and loved the

weekly meeting. She first joined the Legion of Mary in Dublin when she was a young teacher there. Through her work in the Legion she travelled to many regions in Ireland, England and Wales. When she was well into her 80s she went with a group to Glasgow and met with many different religions on the doorsteps but she said they were never insulted or discouraged but always treated with courtesy and respect.

She was a constant visitor, every week when she had the health to do so, to Sligo General Hospital and St. John's Hospital, Sligo, often with her good friends Ann Harrison, and the late Maureen Egan, and others - they used to go armed with baskets of goodies and home made buns etc. and distribute them to all they came in contact with. May could always be relied on to visit if there was somebody in the community sick or dying.

A member of Ballymote Heritage Group from its foundation in 1984, she attended all meetings and took part in all its discussions and activities - especially its Heritage Weekends (when her baking talents contributed much to the after-lecture refreshments).

May loved dancing and she and her late husband Gerard were great followers of Tony Chambers and his band.

Travelling she also loved and she went to New Zealand, America, Lourdes, Fatima, made many trips to England and visited nearly every county in her native Ireland.

She loved her garden and especially her roses - she also had lots of fruit trees: apples, raspberries, blackcurrants and gooseberries, and homemade jam was always available at her home. She also loved baking and her apple tarts were amazing.

In 1995 she was awarded a "Sligo 750" medal under the Telecom Éireann (eircom)-sponsored "Special Person Award" scheme.

In 2000 she was nominated for a County Person of the Year community award and a presentation of Sligo Crystal was made to her.

Go ndéana Dia trócaire ar a hanam.

# Ag Drobhaois - A Footnote to the Question of Where the Annals of the Four Masters was Written

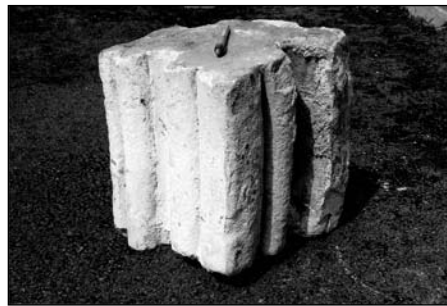
Gregory Daly

A proposal to erect a monument in County Leitrim to The Four Masters and their work provoked a storm of controversy in the form of letters to the Irish Independent during the years 1936 and 1937. The issue debated was where exactly the Annals were written, and there was much disagreement over the interpretation of Mícheál Ó Cléirigh's brief descriptions of that location. Although some eminent scholars such as Fr. Paul Walsh, Henry Morris, and Brendan Jennings OFM took part in the debate, much of it was verbose and pedantic, with opposing views being held in much contempt, making the letter pages of today seem tame in comparison. So as civil war raged in Spain and the world slipped ever closer to the conflagration of World War II, "the megalomania of the diocese of Raphoe"<sup>1</sup> asserted itself in the pages of the Irish Independent.

It is generally accepted today however, that the Annals were compiled at a temporary Franciscan refuge somewhere near the river Drowes, which forms the county boundary between Donegal and Leitrim. My mother's family home at Magheracar in County Donegal, near Bundoran and close to the river Drowes, had long been identified by local tradition as a site associated with the Four Masters. This oral tradition persisted well into the 20th century, and was often brought to my attention as a boy by the older members of the local community. The house is marked on the first edition of the OS 6 inch map 1837, and the site is marked **Church and Burial Ground (site of)** on the first edition of the OS 25 inch map surveyed in 1905 and published in 1906.

Originally a thatched house, it was damaged by fire in the 1980s, and a decision was taken to replace it. During demolition, a large, elaborately carved stone was found in the south west corner wall of the house. This architectural fragment features pronounced ribbed moulding and probably formed part of the window or door of a late 12th - early

13th century church.<sup>2</sup> The stone itself is sandstone, of a pale, yellowish colour. The nearest medieval ecclesiastical site is the Cistercian abbey of Assaroe, just outside the town of Ballyshannon and about five miles distant from the Magheracar site. The abbey at Assaroe was suppressed in the later part of the 16th century, but a Cistercian community appears to have survived there until-1607.<sup>3</sup> Very little of the abbey



The Carved Stone

buildings survive, and apart from a small collection of carved stone at the site, and some incorporated into the graveyard wall, the worked stone has disappeared. Although there is no match between what remains of the carved stone at Assaroe and that found at Magheracar, it is still the most likely provenance.<sup>4</sup> A somewhat similar moulding is found on a doorway at Boyle abbey, of which Assaroe was a daughter house.

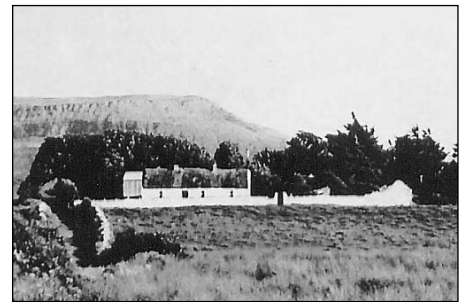


The Sandstone Basin or Font of indeterminate age

Other pieces found on the farm at the Magheracar site include an oval shaped sandstone basin or font, and part of the top stone of a rotary quem. The house itself was situated on the north facing slope of a low hill with good views north

and west. Significantly, an extensive area of marshy ground separates this hill from what would have been (and still is) a major route to and from Ulster. The local placename here is the Ross (*Ros*, 'wood'), suggesting the area was scrub covered or wooded at one time.

According to the Civil Survey 1654 - 1656, the land on which the house was located belonged at that time to "the College of Dublin" (Trinity)<sup>5</sup>. It is possible that the lands granted to the college were originally part of the monastic lands of Assaroe. Sir Henry Sidney's *Description of Ireland in 1598* also mentions the castle on the banks of the river Drowes at



The House at Magheracar. Dartry Mountains in the background.

Bundrowes as being in the hands of the O' Donnells at that time.<sup>6</sup> The Civil Survey describes it simply as "old castle" in the 1650s, although this may not necessarily mean it was a ruin then.

Although Mícheál Ó Cléirigh was a Franciscan, the hereditary seat of the Ó Cléirigh family was close to Assaroe at Kilbarron, and the Annals record members of the Ó Cléirigh family being buried there. So is there a link between the pieces found at the Gilmartin house in Magheracar and the local tradition identifying the house as the site of refuge of the Annalists? The fact that there was a stronghold in the form of an O'Donnell-held castle at Bundrowes may well have been a deciding factor in the choice of this location. It is possible the carved stone was at some time brought to this castle. Also of interest is information given by a Peter Kelly to Justices of the Peace on November 4th, 1712, to the

effect that “the last mass he heard was at Bundroos in the county of Donygall”.<sup>7</sup> The presence of the stone and other items, however, cannot be taken to prove anything other than the site being a good example of an oral tradition borne out by some material evidence, and shows that such traditions should never be dismissed. The controversy referred to above, concerning precisely where the Annals were written, and the rival claims of Leitrim and Donegal, tend only to distract from their real value.

As regards the monument, a new one was erected in the Diamond, Donegal town, in 1938. A new parish church in the town had already been dedicated to them. Much later, in 1975, a fine monument in bronze was placed on a bridge crossing the river Drowes at Mullinalleck, on the Kinlough (Co. Leitrim) and Bundoran (Co. Donegal) road, thereby forming something of a peace boundary between the two counties.

- 1 Irish Independent, July 11<sup>th</sup> 1936
- 2 Corlett, VChris, 1999: *Final report on archaeological testing at Magheracar, Co Donegal*. Unpublished



Map showing location of House

- 3 Stalley, Roger, 1987: *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, Yale University Press, London
- 4 Chris Corlett, Con Manning
- 5 Simington, Robert C. (ed.). 1937: *The Civil Survey AD1654 -1656, county of Donegal, Vol III* Irish

- Manuscripts Commission, Dublin.
- 6 Hogan, Edmund, SJ, (ed.). 1878: *A Description of Ireland in 1598*, by Sir Henry Sidney. Dublin and London.
- 7 Burke, William P. (ed.). 1969: *The Irish Priests in the Penal Times (1660 -1760)*. Irish University Press, Shannon.



At an afternoon dance in the Loftus Hall, Ballymote, on New Year's Eve 1955

Photo courtesy Gerry Cassidy

# Ballymote in 1834-8 - Interpreting the text and illustrations of The Ordinance Survey Memoirs

John Coleman

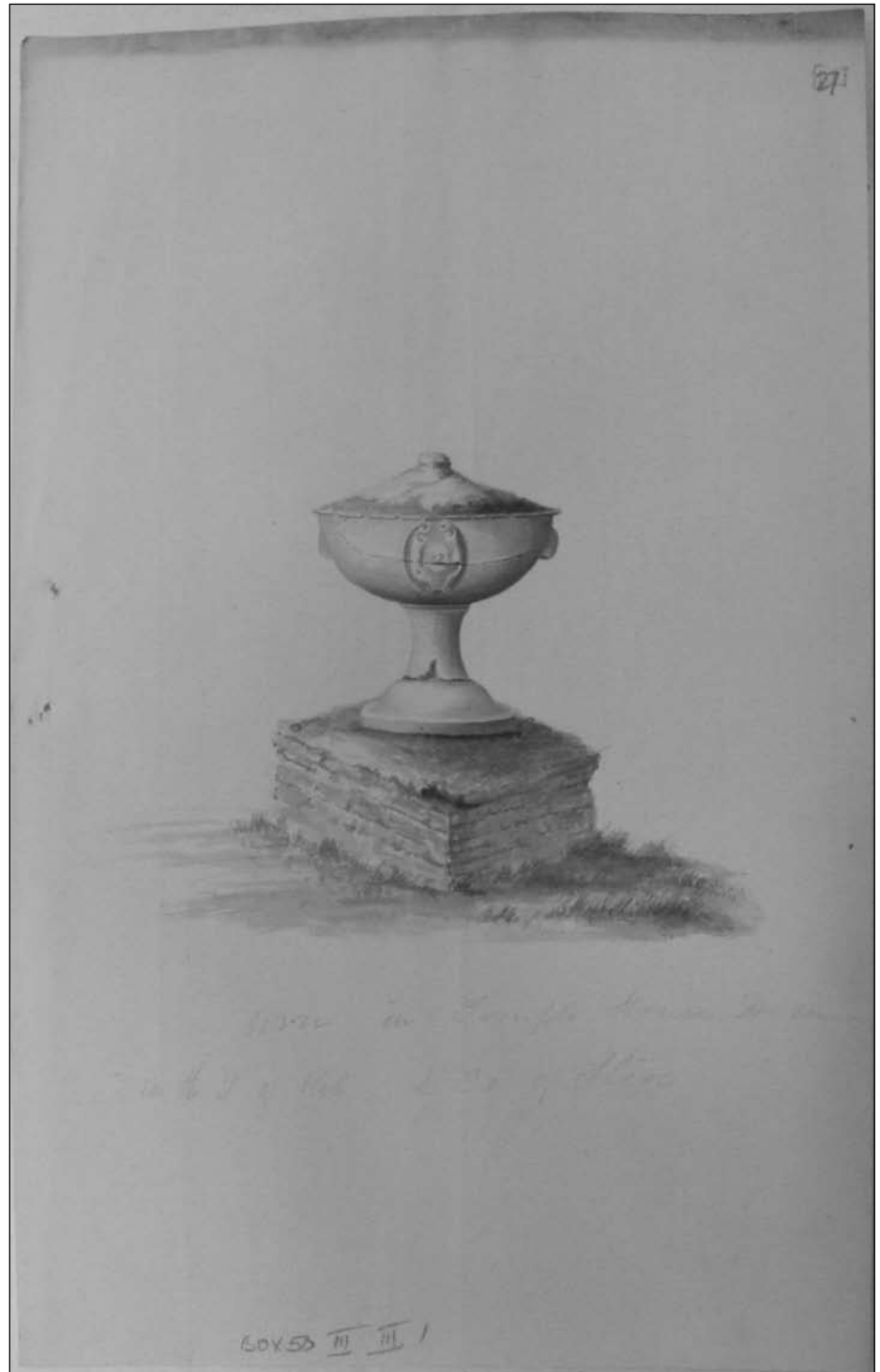
We are all familiar with the ordinance survey maps of Ireland which, until the developments of satellite technology, informed our primary impression about what our island looked like and provided us with navigation tools to make our way about the country. The ordinance survey was established in 1791 as a function of the military and it continues its work today. (1)

What are less well known are the *Ordinance Survey Memoirs*, observations of the surveyors, officers of the Royal Artillery and Engineers, made while they were travelling the country making the survey. These memoirs and letters form a comprehensive survey of statistical, botanical, geological and ethnographic information recorded in the period 1834-8. They form a remarkable firsthand account of Ireland just a few years before the failure of the potato crop and the great famine. They provide a very moving and immediate account of how people lived. This project was abandoned in 1840 after only covering Ulster. We are fortunate in that handwritten notes and drawings on the Ballymote area have survived and are preserved in the Royal Irish Academy, coincidentally also home to the original manuscript of the *Book of Ballymote*. (2)

The *Memoir* of the parish of Emlaghfad was written by Lieutenant P. Taylor and in the version published by the academy runs to seven pages. Lieutenant Taylor begins with an account of the landscape, climate, botany and zoology. He laments the lack of woodland, but notes that five years earlier 17 stems of oak were unearthed in a bog in Rathdooneymore. Finds of oak and fir are noted elsewhere, including oak stems laid horizontally in bog at Ballybrennan. There was mature growth of ash, elm, birch and recent formations of Scotch fir, spruce, larch, alder and oak. We are told of a great abundance of mallard, widgeon, teal and diver to be found at Templehouse, but not many grouse, partridge, woodcock

or snipe. A description of topography notes cairns and forts, particularly a square fort at Rathdooneymore

The most poignant aspect of the *Memoirs* is the description of the conditions in which the majority of



**Urn in Templehouse demesne**

Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy ©Royal Irish Academy.



**Ruins of Emlaghfad Church by William Groves**

Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy ©Royal Irish Academy.



**Graveyard and ruins of abbey, with new church**

Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy ©Royal Irish Academy.



the population lived. To read history is one thing but there is something very immediate and moving in reading a contemporary account of our own parish in an earlier time of great distress for many. In the countryside Lieutenant Taylor describes a population living in great poverty and destitution and sustained on a subsistence diet of potatoes and milk and employed in weaving of coarse linen or woollen cloth. He noted average families of 6 living on small size of farms from 2 to 10 acres with few above 20. A plough with 2 horses is hired through the parish and little is grown beyond oats and potatoes. Rents of from 7s. to 40s. per acre had to be paid together with tithe to the Church of Ireland. We are told that the health of the population was improved by the local dispensary where Dr Loughhead saw about 86 patients per week over his two visits on Mondays and Thursdays. He noted that there

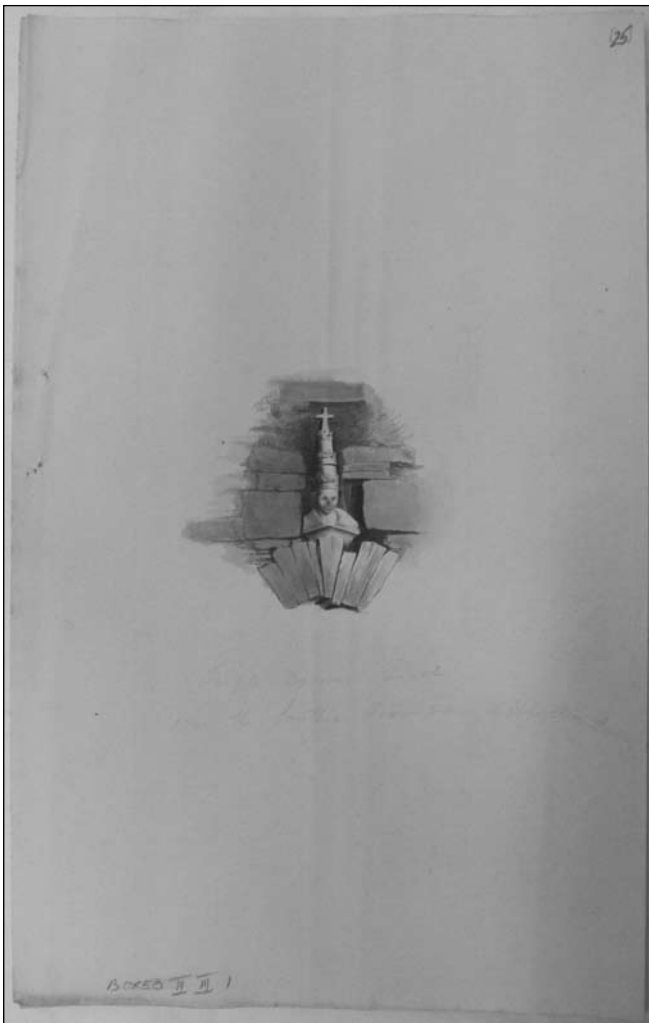
was no epidemic or virulent disease. The main diseases he characterised as 'rheumatic afflictions', consumption, 'catarrhs', 'superabundant dyspepsia' (!) and 'febris' [fever] He notes that 2/3rds of many family members have emigrated to 'the Canadas' in the last 8 years and that many others would do likewise if they could afford the £2. 10 s. to £4 passage from Sligo port.

**The Town**

The account of the town of Ballymote records a population of about 900 and 146 dwelling houses. There were markets for sale of potatoes, butter, poultry etc. There were 7 fairs a year for the sale mainly of 'horned' cattle and pigs but also horses, sheep, asses, goats and fowl (he details prices). Linen was sent for sale to Collooney or Sligo. There is one particularly cryptic comment 'No trade or commerce is carried out in the town'. Surely there were shops? Did he mean no trades or

manufacturing? As a surveyor we must trust the accuracy of his description of the corn mill as 18 feet in diameter and 3 feet 6 inches broad with the water power fed from 'Loch Ardree'.

The town had its constabulary barracks and Roman Catholic chapel erected in 1815 which had accommodation for about 1,000 [while built 14 years before emancipation, the penal laws had been slackened]. The church (of Ireland) (1832) had accommodation for 660 and the Methodist meeting house (1827) 150. [The distinction between church, chapel and meeting house is worth noting. Even as a child in the late 1960s I remember that my mother would talk of going to the chapel, not the church.] Earlsfield House is described as 'quadrangular' in form – the right side evidently had not yet been extended to double its length back to front. The 'premises, orchards and gardens' had 'run to great dilapidation'. The Gore



**Sculpted head of man with triple crown, above southern door of ruined abbey.**

Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy  
©Royal Irish Academy.



**Round tower in the townland of Carrownanty near Ballymote**

Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy  
©Royal Irish Academy.



**Ruins of castle, Ballymote, with tower and three story building by William Groves, civil assistant**  
*Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy ©Royal Irish Academy.*



**Castle ruins situated in Templehouse demesne built by the Knights Templars AD 1303 [with later additions], by William Grove**  
*Reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy ©Royal Irish Academy.*

Booth's agent George Dodwell lived elsewhere [he had his own estates, was also agent for Lord Palmerston at Classibawn and built Kevinsfort in Sligo for himself]. There was 'a very limited plantation' to the south and east of the house and in Deroon.

### **Schools**

A section on schools notes that there were seven in all: We only get details of 5; one in Ardree (founded 1834) and another in the town (f. 1832) in receipt of £8 and £10 per annum respectively from the National Board of Education. In the town there was a second school, in the courthouse, founded in 1815 and supported by the bishop and vicar (Church of Ireland) [Was this the stone building attached to the court house, until recently occupied by Miss Taylor? This brings back vivid memories of my own school days when on the way back to school after lunch we queued at the counter in the room to the left side of the front door where Miss Taylor dispensed from an infinite selection of liquorice pipes and other delicacies paid for in large copper 'old' pennies].

There were schools at Carrowkeel (1835) and Rathdooneymore (1834). All the schools received their principal funding in the form of 'scholars' fees' of from one shilling to one shilling and six pence per quarter year – the latter two had no other source of funding. The last two schools were entirely Roman Catholic, as was the national school in the town. The court house school had 52 protestants and 21 catholics while that at Ardree had 6 protestants and 156 catholics. There were more boys than girls: Ardree 102/60; Ballymote (NS) 40/30; Ballymote (Court Hse) 45/28; Carrowkeel 39/16; Rathdooneymore 19/17.

### **The Drawings**

The accompanying drawings on loose leafs along with the survey reward close examination. Four are signed by William Groves, civil assistant to the survey – the castle ruins in the town and at Templehouse, Emlaghfad Church and the tower in Carrownanty. They are not sophisticated works of art or draftsmanship - that of Ballymote castle is the best. Nevertheless they are a source of a good deal of interesting material and provide a stimulating addition to our understanding to the history of the area.

The catholic chapel which we are told

was built in 1815, and accommodated 1,000, can be seen in the grounds of the abbey ruin. It is generally accepted that the Loftus Hall incorporates part of this building. However, the illustration we get does not give the impression of a large scale building and the drawing is very primitive in contrast to the detailed depiction of the abbey; it is difficult to imagine that it was drawn by the same hand. What we see is an L shaped building with the wing to the left much closer to the abbey ruin than the present day hall. The block with the gothic window on its end gable might be part of the main body of the present hall. In accordance with liturgical practice the altar would have been located at the east end, opposite the gothic window visible to us.

The 'tower' in Carrownanty is not a 'tower' as such since those who remember it confirm that it was not a building; nevertheless the much later local GAA team were known as 'The Round Towers'. The tower is not depicted in its landscape setting but simply in isolation. It is a peculiar structure with an odd top to the cone and a primitive base to the shaft. There are what appears to be metal protrusions from the tower which could relate to its reputed function as a flag pole to signal rent days. Was it erected for this purpose? or adapted to that use? It remains a mystery when it was constructed but it undoubtedly resembles in appearance an ancient round tower and may be a very early example of the Celtic revival which did not become widespread until much later in the nineteenth century, with the rise of cultural nationalism. Was it the monument noted by Samuel Lewis in 1835 and thus wrongly described by him as an obelisk?

The view of the ruined castle at Templehouse shows the ivy covered stone medieval tower on the right with the wide medieval entrance in the centre. The left side of the building is of much later date. Inspection of the remains of the building on the left today reveals a red brick construction with stone quoins (left end/corner of the building). The two rectangular windows in the centre include the remains of stone mullion and transom windows typical of the Elizabethan or Jacobean period [reign of King James 1st (1603-25)]. These windows were narrowed with

brick, probably in the mid eighteenth century to hold then modern sash windows. The whole facade had been rendered or plastered to cover over the alterations. The top of another mullion and transom window can be detected just above and to the left of the gothic [pointed arch] window; an inspection of the building today reveals more of this window as some of the render has fallen away. We do not frequently find mullion and transom windows in this part of the country – Donegal castle comes to mind. These must be the remains of a substantial Jacobean mansion created by Edward Crofton who was granted the land by King James 1<sup>st</sup> and set out to impress with a home reflective of his new wealth and position.(3) It also reflects a move away from the fortified early dwelling living to more comfort relaxed living; his granddaughter Mary later inherited the estate and was to marry William Perceval. The gothic style window must have been inserted after the blocking up of the mullion and transom window to the left in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century gothic revival. The draftsman has cleverly suggested a shaft of light coming through the gothic doorway of the ruin. There is gothic revival style fret work above the door to the left.

The roofless church in Emlaghfad had at this time only been abandoned a few years as a place of worship: The church in the town was only completed in 1832. Emlaghfad church has round headed windows since it predated the gothic revival – it could date from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century or even the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is said to be on the site of a much earlier foundation from which the parish takes its name. The stout tower has so called stepped 'Irish' battlements and also characteristically Irish solid stone spires at each corner. Moving the Church of Ireland place of worship from this fine church in Emlaghfad leads one to speculate that this must have marked an important point in the development of the town. Church of Ireland residents were evidently no longer prepared to make the journey out of town and were prosperous enough to support the construction of a new and even more impressive building. The new church must have been at the edge of the expanding town since it had available a large site surrounded

by extensive grounds, opposite the new market house. Newtown was to develop beyond it – all of O’Connell Street was called Newtown Street in the 1911 census. My memory of my aunt Maisie using that name for the street was recently confirmed when I found a note she wrote “left Roscrib 20 April 1964 moved into Newtown”.

The Sculpted head of man with triple crown, above southern door of ruined abbey is usually taken to be an image of a pope due to the triple crown: The top of a formal arch beneath the head suggests that this piece was once located in another location – possibly above a more formal doorway. The drawing of the Urn at Templehouse is done with an odd perspective; the urn seen directly while the plinth is seen at an awkward and improbable angle slightly from above. The urn has an odd cone shaped top similar to the cone on the round tower and with a mask on the front set in a baroque style strap work cartouche. Roderick Perceval is not aware of such an urn surviving at Templehouse today.

The text and drawings provide significant and very rare evidence relating to Ballymote in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. While the above discussion demonstrates that drawings or other contemporary illustrations cannot be read at face value, when studied in a wider context they are a rewarding source of material to increase our understanding and to further stimulate our curiosity about the past.

*Note: The drawings are all on paper that measures 20cm x 32cm. The titles, including capitalisation, are as noted in the Memoirs. The drawings were photographed by the author in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy and grateful thanks are due to the academy staff for their kind assistance and to the academy for its generosity in permitting drawings to be published here. Thanks to Roderick Perceval of Templehouse for permission to inspect the ruins there.*

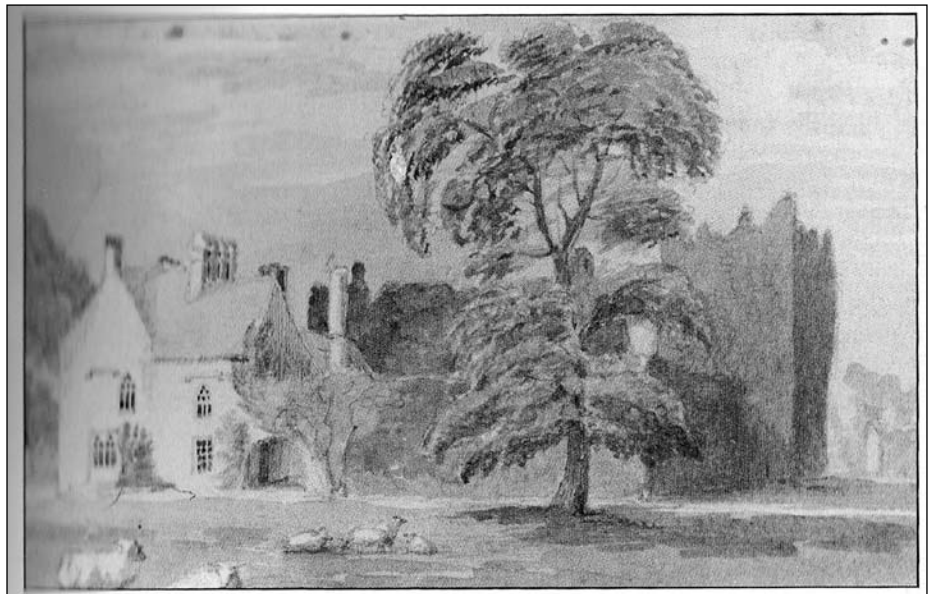
(1) Civilizing Ireland: Ordinance Survey 1824-1842, Ethnography, Cartography, Translation, Stiofan O’Cadhla, Dublin, 2007.

(2) Nuala Rogers wrote about the memoirs and illustrated the accompanying drawings in the 2nd edition of her book Aspects of

Ballymote. RIA reference for the memoirs is RIA, OS Memoirs, Box 50, III, III, 1. Sligo. Parish of Emlaghfad. The text of the Memoirs was published as Ordinance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, Volume Forty, Counties of Ulster 1834-8, Cavan, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo, ed., Angelique Day and Patrick McWilliams, pp. 176-182, The Institute of Irish Studies,

in association with the Royal Irish Academy, 1998. The Memoirs contain much additional information on the area, especially on topography and agricultural matters in 7 printed pages.

(3) John C. McTernan, Sligo: The Light of Bygone Days, Vol. 1, p. 466, Castlebar, 2009.



**This is a sketch of Templehouse Castle, probably before 1820, including the late 18th century alterations in the 'Batty Langley' gothic style [Batty Langley (1696-1751) advocated the gothic style in his influential work Gothic Architecture Restored and Improved (1741)]. This illustration is reproduced from John C McTernan's The Light of Bygone Days, vol I, Houses of Sligo and Associated Families, 2009, p. 219.**



**This is a photograph of the ruin of Templehouse Castle today, showing the Jacobean window which was blocked up in the 18th century when render was applied to the whole façade covering the red brick. The underlying seventeenth century red brick mansion is probably unique in this part of the country and possibly in Ireland as a whole. Photograph: John Coleman.**

# The Tubbercurry ‘Conspirators’

John C McTernan

On the morning of April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1884 Tubbercurry and surrounding areas were all agog on learning that eleven local men had been arrested at their respective addresses in an early morning swoop by the police on the suspicion that they were part of a Fenian conspiracy. They were committed to Sligo Gaol and were later joined by one Patrick N. Fitzgerald who had been arrested in London for his alleged involvement in the organization of a Fenian cell in Tubbercurry. It was subsequently learned that the group had been under police surveillance for some time.

In gaol they were initially treated as ‘untried’ prisoners and were allowed certain privileges but precluded from intercourse with each other. They were remanded from week to week to give the prosecution an opportunity of perfecting the charges against them including that of committing murderous outrages.

On the morning of April 31<sup>st</sup> 1884 the ‘conspirators’ were brought before a Magisterial Court and charged with being members of the Fenian Society and having conspired with each other to murder James Donoghue, Clerk of the Tubbercurry Poor Law Union, John Brett, jun., a Poor Law Guardian and land agent then residing at Streamstown, and others.

The prisoners were identified as follows by a “Sligo Champion” reporter who also commented on their personal appearances: James Lowry, a licensed publican and hotel owner, “who presented a rather decent appearance”. Luke Armstrong, a shopkeeper, “who was better dressed than his Tubbercurry companions”; Owen and Pat Gannon, farmers from Carrownacreevy; James Connolly, owner of a large tailoring concern in the town; Patrick Donoghue of Corsallagh. “a stout dark man with no occupation”; Patrick Durkan of Carrowntober, “a middle-aged farmer”; Michael Durkan, “an elderly egg-dealer”; John Moran of Tubbercurry,

no occupation; Thady Higgins, no occupation, “a young man”; Michael Murphy, “a weaver from Benada”; Patrick N. Fitzgerald, a commercial traveller, “decidedly the most respectable looking and best dressed of the prisoners and the apparent leader of the group in court”.

Prior to the commencement of the judicial proceedings it became known that John Moran, one of the prisoners, had turned informer and was about to give what was then known as “Queen’s evidence”. Moran, whose mother ran a public house in Tubbercurry, was aged 28 years and unemployed. In the words of the “Champion” reporter he “did not have the appearance of much intelligence” although he was very sure of his facts as they related to the other prisoners”. On cross-examination he admitted to being a member of the Fenian movement from the early 1870s and an ‘Invincible’ for two years.

In his opening address the Crown Solicitor stated that there was “ample evidence” of a Fenian conspiracy in Co. Sligo and in the Tubbercurry district in particular and that the principal organisers were Patrick J. Sheridan, James Lyons, a shoe maker, Patrick Reynolds of Pound St. and Patrick N. Fitzgerald “who combined and agreed to levy money for the purchase of arms”. He also revealed that three of the above had fled the country leaving Fitzgerald the sole survivor in custody. It was also revealed that between 1880 and 1883 the Tubbercurry district was very unsettled and a few dozen outrages had been reported.

The hearing was spread over two weeks and for most of the time was taken up with the evidence of the informer and of individual police and focussed to a large extent on the attempted murder of James Donoghue, who was suspected of passing information to the police, in his office at the Union Workhouse in December 1881. At the conclusion of the proceedings the prisoners

were returned for trial at the Summer Assizes.

When the case came before the Assizes in July 1884 the Crown refused to proceed on the grounds that a fair trial was not possible owing to statements reported to have made by Nicholas H. Devine of Tubbercurry in which he proclaimed the innocence of the prisoners on the charges they were facing and referred to the foul means adopted by the Crown in its endeavour to secure convictions. Although Devine denied making the alleged remarks, he did however admit to publishing a printed circular seeking financial help to cover the costs of defending the prisoners.

In the circumstances the trial on charges of conspiracy to murder and treason, was not proceeded with then and, at the request of the Crown Solicitor, the Judge approved of the transfer of the trial to Dublin. On the application of the defence six of the prisoners were allowed out on bail, with the remaining five, Armstrong, Donoghue, Fitzgerald, Higgins and Lowry, regarded as the leaders of the group, remaining in custody to await trial in Dublin in the following October.

Owing to the illness of Patrick N. Fitzgerald, then in Kilmainham Gaol, the State Trial before Judge Harrison and a jury of twelve men of differing persuasions did not open at Green Street Courthouse until November 1884. After five days hearing the proceedings came to an abrupt and sensational ending not merely with a verdict of acquittal of the accused but an unanimous expression of opinion by the jurors that the principal witnesses produced by the Crown, namely, the afore-mentioned John Moran, the informer, and a felon named Patrick Delaney, were unworthy of credence. The Dublin based “Freeman’s Journal” severely rebuked the Crown for saddling the members of the carefully selected jury with the responsibility of attempting to convict

political prisoners, and Fitzgerald in particular who was then in poor health, on the evidence of two “unworthy of belief”.

Following the collapse of the trial Fitzgerald and his fellow ‘conspirators’ were immediately released with their characters unimpaired.

Rejoicings on a large scale took place in Tubbercurry when news of the release of the prisoners was received by telegram. In response to a request the Sligo Fife and Drum Band lost no time getting to Tubbercurry and paraded the streets accompanied by large crowds who cheered enthusiastically.

*Sketches of the Principal ‘Conspirators’*

Patrick J. Sheridan, a native of Bohola, Co. Mayo, married Mary Anne McDermott, the daughter of a hotel keeper in Tubbercurry. They subsequently settled in the London area where he became acquainted with the leaders of the Fenian Movement in England. On his return home he was appointed Master of the Swinford Workhouse, a post he was relieved of a year later. He then took up residence in Tubbercurry as the proprietor of MacDermott’s Hotel and on the formation of the Land League was appointed Land League organiser for Connacht.

In the months that followed he was one of the principal speakers at Land League meetings at Gurteen, Tubbercurry, Curry and other venues throughout the Province, on which occasions his utterances were noted for repeated emphasis on the adoption of physical force means to achieve their aims.

After the Proclamation of the League as an illegal organisation in 1880 he was arrested in Tubbercurry and lodged in Kilmainham Gaol. A local balladeer penned a few verses on the event, the opening lines of which ran as follows:

*He spoke up for the tenants’ cause and never changed his coat. His voice was heard round Sligo Town and also Ballymote.*

On his release he escaped to Paris with a price on his head but returned a year later disguised as a priest using

the pseudonym ‘Fr. Murphy’. He then joined the ‘National Invincibles’, a secret society operating under the umbrella of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and toured the country in disguise organising branches.

Following the murder of Chief Secretary, Cavendish, in the Phoenix Park in May 1882, reputedly by the ‘Invincibles’, Sheridan escaped to America and settled for a time in New York where he found employment on the staff of the “Irish World” newspaper and at public meetings loudly confirmed his association with the ‘Invincibles’. He was later joined by his wife and family and moved to Colorado where he became a prominent rancher and where he died in March 1947. In an obituary a former comrade referred to him as “a notorious Fenian organiser” who for a period had been ‘Head Centre’ for County Sligo.

\* \* \*  
Patrick N. Fitzgerald, a commercial traveller from Cork, was arrested in London on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1884, by a Sergt. McDonagh of the R.I.C. who had followed him to England three weeks earlier. He was escorted back to Dublin and thence to Sligo where on foot of his known connections with the wholesale arrests in Tubbercurry a week earlier he was charged with conspiracy to murder and of treason felony and lodged in Sligo Gaol with his fellow ‘conspirators’. From an early age he was closely associated with the National Movement and was a close friend of the old Fenian, John O’Leary. He was widely known as a Fenian organiser and later as an agent for the Irish Republican Brotherhood. According to the evidence of the informer, John Moran, Fitzgerald was one of the founding members of the secret society known as ‘The Invincibles’.

Arising from his Fenian connections he was under police surveillance during his regular visits to Tubbercurry in the late 1870s where he was known locally as ‘Mr Fitz.’ and ‘Mr Sullivan’. He usually stayed overnight in Sheridan’s Hotel which was a popular meeting place of the leading ‘conspirators’ in the immediate neighbourhood.

At the time of his arrest he was described as being thirty to forty years of age, of middling height, was “slightly stooped in his gait” and respectfully dressed in a dark suit. Elsewhere he was referred to as “a slight man” with a stoop on his shoulders and walked “with his head thrown back”.

In April 1889, on the occasion of Sexton’s return as M.P. for South Sligo he attended a bonfire in Tubbercurry in the company of P. J. Sheridan and later visited Luke Armstrong’s shop. In the Spring of 1880 both he and Sheridan were among the platform party at a Land League meeting in Curry. Following the collapse of the State Trial in Dublin in November 1884 Fitzgerald, then in poor health, returned to his native Cork. Nothing further is known of his subsequent career prior to his death in Dublin in October 1907.

\* \* \*  
Luke Armstrong (1853-1910) was a prominent Tubbercurry merchant in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his youth he joined the Fenian Movement and later the Irish Republican Brotherhood, of which he acted as ‘Head Centre’ for the County. His premises was a popular rendezvous for the so-called ‘Conspirators’, including P. J. Sheridan and P.N. Fitzgerald, and as such was kept under constant police surveillance. He was closely associated with the GAA from its formation, was a member of the Co. Board in 1888 and three years later was named in a Crime Special Branch report as being in attendance at a championship game at Sooeey in the company of other IRB ‘suspects’.

Following the collapse of the State Trial in November 1884 he supported constitutional agitation and was elected onto the Board of the Tubbercurry Poor Law Union, of which he was a member for over thirty years and Chairman for a period. He was also a District Councillor and in 1899 was elected as a member of the first County Council for the Benada Electoral Division, a position he held until 1905. He died in 1910 and lies at rest in the family plot in Kilcummin cemetery.



# Changing circumstances for the O’Gara family and Jacobite residents of Saint-Germain

Maura O’Gara-O’Riordan

In the early years following their arrival in France in the winter of 1691/2, those involved in the Jacobite conflict in Ireland found that conditions gradually became reasonably secure at the Stuart court in exile at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, a few miles outside Paris. Louis XIV, king of France, had provided an annual pension of 600,000 livres for his cousin, James II, and after his death for his son and successor James III.<sup>i</sup> This allowance was used to maintain the Château-Vieux of Saint-Germain provided by Louis XIV for the deposed king and his court. The pension covered the royal family’s personal expenses, the household budget, staff salaries and various other costs. Irish army members were employed in the regiments of James II in France, where they took part in the ongoing European conflicts. However, Louis XIV was paymaster for all the Jacobite troops.<sup>ii</sup> A number of wives of the senior officers were employed in the royal household which was almost fully staffed by Catholics. Children of the household staff and of Jacobite army personnel were baptised in the chapel royal of Saint-Germain, and marriages and deaths were also recorded in the same parish register.

Colonel Oliver O’Gara, grandson of Fearghal O’Gara, Lord of Moygara and Coolavin, County Sligo and his wife, Maria Fleming, daughter of Randal, Lord Slane, of County Meath, lived in Saint-Germain where their eleven children were baptised between 1692 and 1708. There is no record of the date on which Oliver and Mary reached Saint-Germain. Mary had certainly arrived there before 25 October 1692, when their first-born child, John Patrick, was baptised in

the chapel royal.<sup>iii</sup>

## *French–Spanish connection*

France, embroiled in a major conflict with several European countries, signed the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 that settled the Nine Years’ War. As peace with England was included in the Treaty, Irish Jacobite supporters were very angry with the French for having failed to restore the Stuarts to the throne of England before ending the war.<sup>iv</sup>

Louis XIV broke the Treaty of Ryswick following the death of James II in September 1701, when he recognised James’s thirteen-year-old son, James Francis Edward Stuart, as king of England, Scotland and Ireland.<sup>v</sup>

Ten months earlier, in 1700, when Charles II of Spain died, his grand-nephew, Philip, of Anjou, was named in his will as heir to the Spanish throne, in the hope that a lasting peace would be made between Spain and France. Philip was born in France; his grandparents were Louis XIV of France and Maria Theresa, sister of King Charles II of Spain. In November 1700, Louis XIV accepted the terms of Charles’s will which was also a breach of the Treaty of Ryswick.

<sup>vi</sup> William III of England, and Ireland, known as William II of Scotland, died in March 1702 and was succeeded by Queen Anne. During her reign the title for the crown ruler changed in 1707 to King of Great Britain and Ireland. The suggestion of an alliance between Spain and France led to the war of the Spanish Succession, 1701–1714, which involved all the great powers of Europe and weakened France and Spain considerably,<sup>vii</sup> and was to have an impact on where many

of the soldiers who had served in the Irish regiment of James II at Saint-Germain would serve their future army careers.

Though Philip V became ruler of Spain in 1700, he was only recognised as King of Spain in 1713, the year in which the Treaty of Utrecht was signed between several European states. During these years plans were formed by the Jacobites to make a further attempt to invade both England and Ireland from France. Troops led by the Duke of Berwick, the natural-born son of James II, were supported by James III, Louis XIV, the pope and others. The Jacobites troops prepared for an expedition but it failed in the spring of 1708. Plans were also discussed between 1706 and 1708 for a proposed Jacobite invasion of Ireland and a list was drawn up of exiled Irish aristocrats who would wish to take part. Under Connacht the following names appear: Lieutenant General Dillon; O’Gara; Lieutenant General O’Shaughnessy and Captain O’Conor. It is very likely that the O’Gara mentioned is Colonel Oliver of the Queen’s Dragoons as his eldest son, John who did serve as an officer in Dillon’s regiment would only have been fourteen years old in 1706.<sup>viii</sup>

Leading up to the Treaty of Utrecht, when France was negotiating peace with England, a political reality was acknowledged at the court of Saint-Germain: James III would have to leave France. James was made aware that some English government ministers were refusing to sign the Treaty of Utrecht while he remained in France as Jacobites in England, Ireland Scotland and France had continued plotting methods to take back the throne of England for

James. His mother, Queen Mary of Modena, left Saint-Germain to spend most of her time at the convent of the Visitation at Chaillot in Paris.

James moved his court to Bar-le-Duc in the spring of 1713, in the district of Alsace–Lorraine, now in northeast France next to the German border. It was a partly independent duchy which was regularly used as a bargaining tool in French–German wars. James remained at Lorraine as Louis XIV promised to continue paying the pension and later agreed to divide it between James and his mother.<sup>ix</sup> Queen Mary gave substantial sums of her own private money to James for the Jacobite cause, as did the Duke of Lorraine and, later, Pope Clement XI.<sup>x</sup> Louis XIV died on 1 September 1715 and the duke of Orléans became regent for Louis XV who was an infant.

James Butler, second Duke of Ormond, who had been lord lieutenant of Ireland from 1710 to 1713 under Queen Anne, changed his allegiance from Anne to the cause of James III in the final years of Anne’s reign. When Queen Anne died in 1714, the throne was given to George I, the Queen’s closest living Protestant relative, though she had more than fifty closer Catholic blood relatives. George was born in Germany. He was ruler of Hanover, a state in the Holy Roman Empire; his elevation to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland inspired some of the English Protestants to support the Jacobite cause.

In 1715, as pro-Jacobite riots swept through parts of England, Ormond escaped to France around the time of Louis XIV’s death. James III and many of the Jacobites based at Saint-Germain organised the troops. They set forth for Scotland and landed there in January 1716 where James was declared King,<sup>xi</sup> but in less than five weeks had to leave for France. Shortly after his return to France the French regent exerted pressure on James to transfer to the Papal States in Italy by cutting off his French pension. James and his court settled for some time at Pesaro and Urbino in Italy and

finally moved to Rome in 1719.<sup>xii</sup>

### Conditions at Saint-Germain following the Treaty of Utrecht

Queen Mary of Modena was in poor health from about 1712 onwards when she rented an apartment at Chaillot. Even though she returned to the court in Saint-Germain for short periods, members of her staff were mainly idle but received pensions. She was to die at Saint-Germain in 1718. Following the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht thousands of Irish soldiers who had been taken out of active service came to live at Saint-Germain and existed in great poverty. With the defeat of the Jacobite invasions of 1615–16 all hope of ever returning to Ireland faded. The queen made every effort to help the increasing number of the poor in Saint-Germain but after the Regent delayed paying the royal pension, conditions continued to decline with people having to sell many of their possessions in order to buy food. In a document compiled in Spring 1718 it is recorded that Colonel Olliver O’Gara’s wife [i.e. Mary] was receiving a pension of 25 livres per mensem from the Queen [Mary of Modena]. (Personal communication with Edward Corp, author of *A Court in Exile* (Cambridge, 2004), and Professor of British History, University of Toulouse, France, September 2006). Both Oliver O’Gara and his wife are clearly identified in the following extract:

Wife of Colonel Olliver O’Gara, who commanded the Queen’s Regiment of Dragoons in France. She is sister to my Lord Slane who lost a considerable estate for his loyalty. She has a son unprovided for. Her husband has a Pension, as Reformed Colonel in the Court of France.<sup>xiii</sup>

It is evident from this source that the son who had not been provided for was Oliver and Mary’s youngest son Joseph, who would have been nine years old in 1717. His three older brothers John, Oliver and Charles

had already commenced their careers. There is no record of the three daughters who may have survived.<sup>xiv</sup>

Three of Oliver and Mary O’Gara’s sons, John, Oliver and Joseph, joined the Irish regiments in the early years of the eighteenth century. In France these regiments were recognised under the name of the serving colonel. Many members of former Jacobite regiments in France went to Spain, where several regiments were created between 1698 and 1715, including the regiments of Waterford; Hibernia; Ultonia (Ulster), Limerick and Irlanda. The majority of soldiers who fought with the Irish regiments under Louis XIV in the war of the Spanish Succession 1701–1714 and who wished to continue with a military career were transferred to the Irish regiments in Spain to serve under Philip V. A few outstanding agreements were settled between Charles VI the Holy Roman Emperor and Spain following the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 therefore the conflict with Spain was not finalised until 1714.

Oliver and Mary’s eldest son – baptised John Patrick – was referred to in all records, other than his baptismal certificate, simply as John. He had by 1710, at the age of eighteen, already begun his military career in France. John was an officer in the regiment of infantry of Dillon in 1710, and by 1715 he was a captain in the regiment of the Count of Tinnmouth Berwick.<sup>xv</sup>

After 1715 the next listing for John O’Gara is as a lieutenant colonel on the reserve list in the regiment of Limerick in 1718, when he was twenty-six years of age.<sup>xvi</sup> As the regiment of Limerick was one of those serving in Spain it can be suggested that John had moved there by that time. In 1722, he was awarded the knighthood of Santiago (Saint James).<sup>xvii</sup>

The particular award of knighthoods in Spain ‘continue to be recognized down to the present day as titles of the highest honour and

prestige'.<sup>xviii</sup> When the 'military orders of chivalry' were first established in twelfth-century Spain, the orders had rules which 'combined the ordinary aims of a religious order with the duty of fighting the infidels'.<sup>xix</sup> Through the centuries the orders became very strong and wealthy. The Spanish crown took four orders, Santiago, Calatrava, Alcantara, and Montesa under its control in the sixteenth century, and a fifth order, that of Charles III, was founded in the eighteenth century. The three orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcantara were brought under the control of the kings of Spain, recognised by Pope Adrian VI in 1523.<sup>xx</sup> The principal ecclesiastical seat for bestowing the orders today is the Church of the four Orders in Madrid. The candidate had to be nominated by the king for the award. Documents required from the candidate were proof of his genealogy, his noble origin, his qualifications, his personal worthiness and certificates. Witnesses or sponsors giving sworn affidavits were interviewed and recorded. Two members of the Council of Knights were appointed to examine the submissions, present them to the Council of Knights who then either gave their approval or rejection of the candidate.

The documents of the orders are kept in the National Historical Archives in Madrid and provide a rich source of information on the family background of the Irish men and their families who were awarded knighthoods by the Spanish crown. All the records are available on micro film. Almost two hundred Irishmen were awarded the honour of knighthood in various orders, from Daniel O'Sullivan Beare in 1607 to Henry Borrás O'Brien in 1889.<sup>xxi</sup> John O'Gara was recommended by Philip V, king of Spain, grandson of Louis XIV.

In the case of John O'Gara, his documentation runs to 78 leaves in the manuscript,<sup>xxii</sup> and the material includes:

- A copy of his baptismal certificate,

in French and translated to Spanish.

- A testimonial in his favour dated June 1710, from De Burke, regiment of Burke, Briancon. (Burke stated that John was an officer in Dillon's regiment of infantry).

- A testimonial in his favour dated June 1715, from the Count of Tinmouth Berwick, Paris. (The count stated that John was a captain in his regiment, a gallant man and a good officer)

- A testimonial in his favour dated May 1722, from James, Duke of Ormond, Madrid.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The number of witnesses or sponsors giving sworn affidavits varied from candidate to candidate. There were twenty witnesses or sponsors in John O'Gara's case. Their occupations were: four clerics, three serving knights of Santiago and thirteen officers in the Spanish service. All were required to answer the same ten standard questions.

The clerics who supported John O'Gara's cause for knighthood were Edward Fitzgerald, a Dominican, born in County Longford; Nicholas Bodkin, a Franciscan, born in Galway city; Nicholas Falon, a priest, born in Connaught, Ireland, and James O'Hara, described as a 'cleric', born in Connaught.

The serving knights of the order of Santiago who supported John O'Gara's nomination were: Tobias Burke, knighted in 1702, born in Farranatlaba, County Limerick and described as a captain in the Spanish service; Thomas Barry, knighted in 1706, colonel of the dragoons in the Spanish service, born in Cork city, and Miles MacSweeney knighted 1714, a colonel in the Spanish service, born in Ballymacrice, County Limerick.<sup>xxiv</sup>

The details of the thirteen army officers in the Spanish service who were witnesses for John O'Gara's nomination for knighthood are also preserved in the National History Archives in Madrid. Although some of the records are less complete, they provide information on the army ranks attained by members of the Irish

regiment in exile, and their places of origin in Ireland. The thirteen listed are:

James Francis Fitzjames, duke of Lira, brigadier, who was born in France of Irish mother. George Bagnal and Peter Sherlock, both colonels, were described as being born in Ireland although no place is given, whereas the birthplace for Daniel MacSweeney, also a colonel, is listed as County Cork. Daniel O'Sullivan Bear, count of Berhaven, born in Bantry, County Cork, was a colonel in the Spanish service. Others were: John Murphy from Wexford and Thomas Burke from Killonan, County Limerick, both holding the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Three captains are listed, John Coghlan, born in County Offaly, Diego Pettit, born in Leinster and Charles MacCormack, described simply as being born in Ireland. Robert Lynch, born in Connacht, was a major of the Limerick regiment. Raymond Burke of Ireland is just listed as an officer in the Spanish service. No details of rank were given for Richard Butler, born in Ireland.

The sponsors who agreed to promote the cause of John O'Gara for the knighthood of Santiago were obliged by the standard requirements of the Spanish Orders to answer a series of ten questions on his family background, character, social status and general suitability for the honour that was to be bestowed. When reading the genealogical data for John's ancestors that was submitted by his sponsors, it is obvious that they had consulted the same sources before giving evidence under oath. The fact that the same inaccuracies are repeated in the genealogies by all twenty witnesses is further proof that a common source was used to obtain information.

The documents show that, on his father's side, John's parents and paternal grandparents were named correctly. However, due to some confusion between the names of John's great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents, the witnesses

incorrectly gave one set of his paternal great-grandparents as Thady O'Gara and Maria O'Hara. John's paternal great grandparents were Fearghal O'Gara and Isobel (Elizabeth) Taafe whereas Thady O'Gara and Una (not Maria) O'Hara were John's great great grandparents, that is, Fearghal's parents.<sup>xxv</sup>

Another error names John's grandmother's parents as Charles O'Connor Donne and Mary O'Rorke. According to the O'Connor Donne Genealogy,<sup>xxvi</sup> Charles' wife was Anne O'Mulloy. However, Charles O'Connor's mother and daughter-in-law were both named Mary O'Rorke, which may have caused confusion among the witnesses. John O'Gara's ancestors were described in detail in 1722 by the sponsors in their responses to the questions put to them as part of the process towards the knighthood: The text below is a record of the responses given by the fourth witness Father Nicolas Falon and is a good example of the average answers submitted by all twenty witnesses.

In Madrid June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1722 Dn. Francisco Costanzo and Dn. Miguel De Perea, knight and member of the Holy Order of St. James, concerning Lieutenant Dn. Juan Ogara's action, call the witness Dn. Nicolas Falon native of Ireland, priest and head of the Hospital of the Irish in this city, who swears to tell the truth and not to reveal the secret of this Act:

In answer to the first question he answered: [concerning how well he knows the candidate]

That he knows Lieutenant Colonel Dn Juan Ogara and that he has heard saying he is candidate to the Holy Order of St. James: that he is 29 or 30 years old and that he was born in St. German of France and that he is son of Dn. Oliviero Ogara, native of Coolavin and Dna Maria Fleming, his legitimate wife, native of Slane in County Sligo, Connaught, Ireland: and that he knows Dn. Oliviero, the suitor's father, because he has seen him sometime, but he has never seen

Dna Maria though he has heard of her by his Irish friends in Madrid; and that for the same reason he knows that the candidate's parents live in St. Germain as they brought him up and they call him their son and he calls them his parents.....

To the second question he answered; [concerning his relationship with the candidate and giving his own age] *That he has no kinship with the candidate..... and that he is 50 years old.*

To the third question he answered: [concerning the legitimacy of the candidates family]

*That the candidate and his parents and grandparents on both his father's and mother's side were born in legitimate marriage in accordance with the Catholic Church and that there is no illegitimacy or bastardy in this family and no son or unmarried man or woman and that if it were not so he would have had notice of it from the Catholic Irish families and he would also know it as far as he is from the same Province as the candidate's parents and grandparents both on his mother's and father's side.*<sup>xxvii</sup>

To the fourth question he answered: [concerning the noble origin of the candidate],

*That the candidate's parents and grandparents both on his mother's and father's side belong to nobility either following the masculine or feminine line as Dn. Oliver Ogara, the suitor's father was a Member of the Commons from Sligo and attended King James II last speech in Ireland and descends from the Baron Dn. Tadeo Ogara of the House of Coolavin, father of Dn. Juan Ogara who was the candidate's grandfather on the father's side, and also father of the above mentioned Dn. Oliver Ogara; that Dn. Tadeo Ogara married Dna Maria Ohara who was also noble as it is shown by the 'O' which is the initial of her name, and which is a sign of distinction and nobility in Ireland in*

*such a way that no Irish man can write an "O" before his name without being noble; and thus these houses of Ogara and Ohara have always had this letter as an indication of their ancient and well-known nobility; and in the same way the houses of Oconor and Orouerke which are the suitor's names following the paternal line. Have the initial "O" being equally old, noble and distinguished in Ireland; and following the maternal line, the suitor is legitimate son of Dna Maria Fleming and daughter of Reynaldo Fleming and Dna Maria Cathalina Barnabal and thus he is legitimate descendant and great-grandson of Dn Ricardo Fleming Baron of Slane and Dna Cathalina Oneil daughter of the Count of Antrim; and after the name of Barnawall the candidate is also great-grandson of the knight Patrick Barnwall from Cricstown and that there is no Jewism, Moslem or converted blood in this family being one of the noblest Christian Catholic families in Ireland.*<sup>xxviii</sup>

To the fifth question [concerning the religion of the candidate], he answered:

*That he confirms what he answered to the previous question and that he knows the candidate's grandmothers both on his mother's and father's side are Christian with no Jewish or Moslem blood, and that they have never had any dealings with those races in whatever way you may consider; and that this is well-known in Ireland and also what he has heard his ancestors saying.*

To the sixth question [concerning the occupation of the candidate and his family], he answered:

*That neither the candidate nor his father nor anyone in his family has ever been merchant or barterer; that neither of them has had any mean, idle or mechanical occupation; that the candidate and his parents live on the salary they are given in Spain and France for their military services as the candidate's*

*father was Colonel in France and the candidate himself is now lieutenant-colonel; and that the rest of his ancestors lived on the incomes of their estates, which are today confiscated in Ireland because of the candidate and his parents having supported James II and the Catholic religion.*<sup>xxxix</sup>

To the seventh question he answered:

*That he knows the candidate rides his own horse and that he was told by the officers of Limerick's Regiment that the candidate has his own arms.*<sup>xxx</sup>

To the eighth question he answered: [concerning a physical challenge]

*That he does not know the candidate having ever been challenged by anyone.*

To the ninth question he answered: [concerning how his colleagues rate him]

*That he knows the candidate has never been dishonoured but he is considered a Christian knight by the officers of his regiment, ready to fulfill his duties.*

To the tenth question he answered:

*Neither the candidate nor his parents nor his grandparents both on his mother's and father's side nor any of his ancestors has ever been punished; that neither the inquisition nor any other ecclesiastical or secular court has ever imposed a penance on any of them; that neither of them has ever suffered public or secret punishment, and that they have never been questioned of their faith; on the contrary, they have risked their lives in defence of the Catholic religion and lost their estates in Ireland, and that this is well known in Ireland, and that this is all he knows about what he has been asked, and thus he signs an oath as we do.*<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Given that the sponsors had to produce family genealogical information that went back over

several generations on both sides, it is hardly surprising that the sponsors made errors in their statements. There are a number of inaccuracies that relate to the genealogies and county of origin of Mary Fleming, John O'Gara's mother. Her maternal grandmother was named as Dna Maria Catalina Barnewall when it should have read Eleanor Barnewall. Eleanor had a sister named Catherine, who was married to John Berford.<sup>xxxii</sup> Mary's paternal grandparents were given as Richard Fleming and Catherine O'Neil, legitimate daughter of the Earl of Antrim. Richard Fleming was the name of Mary's first husband, but not the name of her grandfather. Mary's paternal grandparents were William Fleming, nineteenth Baron of Slane and Ann MacDonnell, daughter of the Earl of Antrim. Ann MacDonnell's mother was Ellis O'Neill, daughter of the third Earl of Tyrone, not daughter of the Earl of Antrim.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

When it came to establishing an identity for Maria Catalina's (Eleanor) Barnewall's family the sponsors were correct in saying that she belonged to the house of Sir Patrick Barnewall of Crickstown, [Co. Meath], as Patrick was Eleanor's brother. According to many sources, Patrick, Eleanor and Catherine were offspring of Richard Barnewall second Baronet of Crickstown and Julia Aylmer.<sup>xxxiv</sup> The house of Barnewall was described as that of 'a very old family, Papist landlords and barons related to the House of Kingsland, Viscounts of Kingsland, whose nobility both on the father's and the mother's side is so well known among Irish people'.<sup>xxxv</sup> Some of the sponsors' knowledge of geography was rather poor: Slane was stated to be in Sligo, Connaught rather than in County Meath, Leinster.

Regarding other aspects of the candidate's life that sponsors were asked to comment on some stated that they knew either one or both of John O'Gara's parents. Robert Lynch, Major of Limerick regiment, stated that 'he knows the candidate's parents as his own acquaintances in France,

that he has seen them bringing him up and taking care of him calling him their son, in the same way that the candidate called them his parents'.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

John O'Gara, Knight of Santiago was not listed in the 1724 review of the regiment of Limerick so one may conclude that he had changed to the regiment of Irlanda where he was mentioned some years later.<sup>xxxvii</sup> John's career in the military continued for a number of years as his name appeared in his reviews in the regiment of Irlanda in 1731, 1733, 1734 and 1737.

In May 1727 a Lieutenant Colonel O'Gara was awarded a baronetcy by James III. In *The Jacobite Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage and Grants of Honour*, published in 1904, the Lieutenant Colonel O'Gara is identified by the Marquis of Ruvigny and Raineval as Lieutenant Colonel Oliver O'Gara, MP for County Sligo in 1689. Ruvigny continued with his narrative by relating further details of Oliver's marriage partner, the names of three of Oliver's surviving sons, mentioning a fourth son without naming him and naming one daughter. However, it is certain that Ruvigny's identification is incorrect as it is known that Oliver O'Gara MP was dead by 15 May 1726.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Oliver was colonel of the Queen's dragoons in France from at least 1697, from which post he had retired on a pension by 1717. As his son, John, knight of Santiago was the only member of the O'Gara family who had reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel by 1727 one may suggest that he was the O'Gara who received the baronetcy. The entry in the Stuart Papers at the Royal Archives in Windsor Castle states that:

Lieut. Colonel O'Gara was made a Knight and Baronet of Ireland by warrant dated 2 May 1727. He was in the Spanish service and it was noted that he 'may serve The King with Success in case of necessity'. 'Lieut. Colonel Ogara, of good conduct, brave & Secret, & trusted by The Kings friends in England'<sup>xxxix</sup>

The review of the regiment of Irlanda in 1737 is the last live record that has been discovered for John (Juan). In 1761 when his younger brother Joseph was receiving the Knighthood of Alcantara in Spain, it was noted that his brother Don Juan de OGara, knight of the habit of Santiago died as a lieutenant-colonel of the regiment of Irlanda.<sup>xl</sup>

**(Endnotes)**

i E. Corp, *A Court in Exile* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 5.  
 ii P. Wauchope, *Patrick Sarsfield and the Williamite War* (Dublin, 1992) p. 285.  
 iii M. O’Gara-O’Riordan ‘Births, baptisms and deaths in the exiled O’Gara family after the Jacobite defeat’ *The Corran Herald*, (2009/2010 ), No. 42, pp 25-9.  
 iv E. Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685–1766* (Dublin, 2001), p. 102.  
 v Corp, *Court in Exile*, p. 59; Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, p. 112.  
 vi E. Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Irish involvement in the “surprise of Cremona”, 1702’ in T. O’Connor and M.A. Lyons (eds), *Irish Communities in Early-Modern Europe* (Dublin, 2006), p. 430; Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, p. 112.  
 vii Ó hAnnracháin, ‘Irish involvement in the “surprise of Cremona”’, p. 430.  
 viii Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, p. 147.  
 ix Corp, *Court in Exile*, pp 281–90.  
 x Ibid., p. 291.  
 xi Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, p. 429; Corp, *Court in Exile*, p. 298.  
 xii Corp, *Court in Exile*, p.p 309-14; Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, p. 430.  
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 xv M. Walsh (ed.) *Spanish Knights of Irish Origin*, (1965) vol. ii, p. 6.  
 xvi R. Wall, ‘Irish Officers in the Spanish Service’ in *Irish Genealogist*, (1978) vol. 5, no. 5, p. 603.  
 xvii Micros 112 NP/377 exp. 5854, MM Santiago, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, fo. 9r.  
 xviii Walsh (ed.) *Spanish Knights of Irish Origin*, , introd. p. v.  
 xix Ibid.  
 xx Ibid.  
 xxi Ibid., p. vi.  
 xxii Micros 112 NP/377 exp. 5854, MM Santiago, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid.  
 xxiii Micros 112 NP/377 exp. 5854, MM Santiago, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid; Walsh (ed.) *Spanish Knights of Irish Origin*, pp 4–8.  
 xxiv M. Walsh (ed.) *Spanish Knights of Irish Origin*, (1960) vol. i. Page number?  
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 xxvii Micros 112 NP/377 exp. 5854, MM Santiago, fo. 21v  
 xxviii Ibid. fo. 20r.  
 xxix Ibid. fo. 22v-23r.  
 xxx Ibid. fo. 23r.  
 xxxi Ibid. fo. 23v.  
 xxxii S. B. Barnwell, *The Irish Genealogist*, (1961), vol. 3, No. 6, p. 202.  
 xxxiii J. H. Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration in the three Stuart Kingdoms, The career of Randal MacDonnell, Marquis of Antrim, 1609-1683* (Cambridge, 1993) pp 44-5.  
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xxxv Micros 112 NP/377 exp. 5854, MM Santiago, fo. 18v.  
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 xxxvii M. Walsh, ‘A Galway Officer of the Spanish Navy’, *Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, (1954/5), vol. xxvi, p. 32.  
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 xxxix SP/106/84 by the permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.  
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John Perry T.D.

Ballymote Enterprise Company has announced the full restoration and refurbishment of Ballymote Cinema.

Speaking on this matter the Chairman Deputy John Perry recently stated: “I am delighted to announce as Chair of Ballymote Enterprise Company that we are now at an advanced stage of planning the complete refurbishment of the old Cinema Building in Ballymote. Work will commence on this project within the coming weeks, and we aim to have the facility up and running by Christmas.

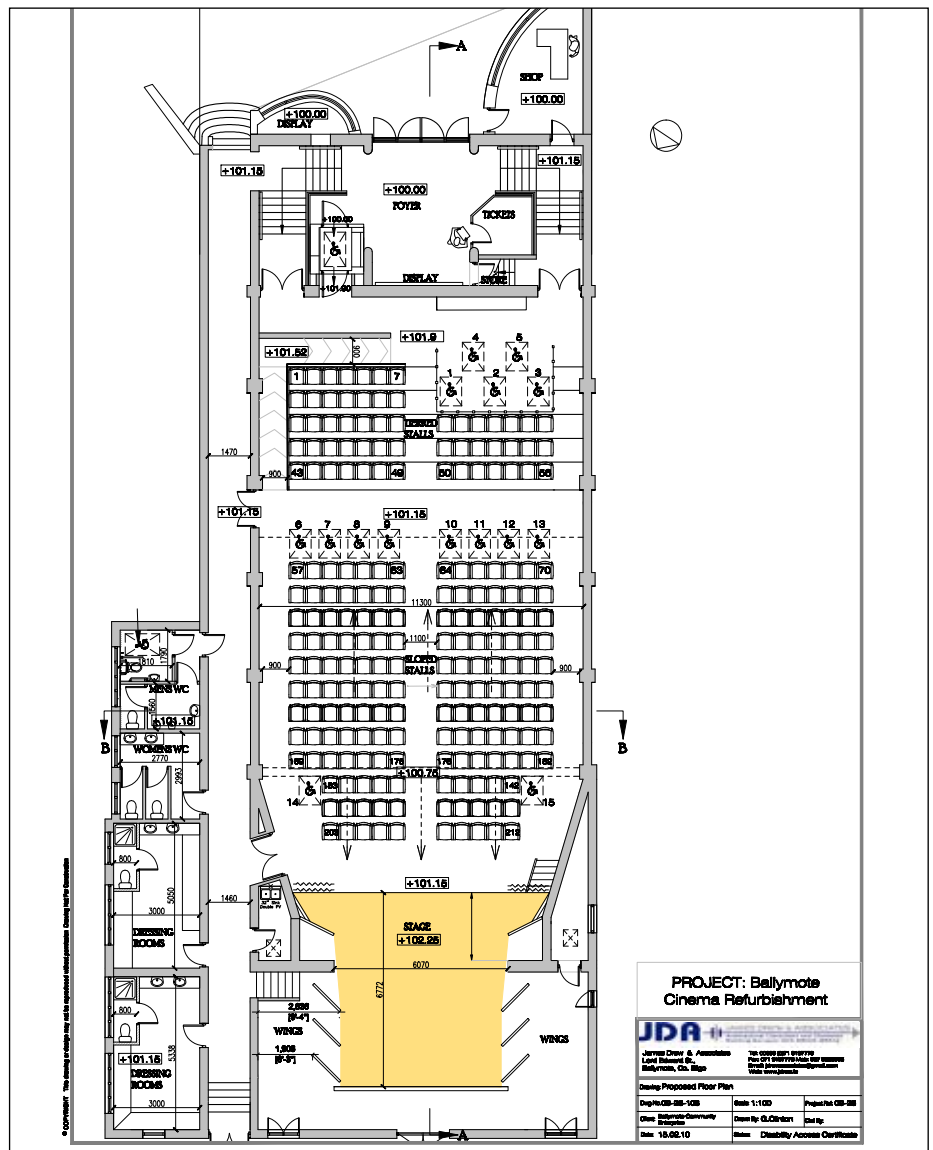
“The building will be fully restored to its original glory, in keeping with its unique charm and characteristic “art-deco” design. It will serve as a state-of-the-art theatre/performance space with the most up-to-date sound and lighting technology, as well as a cinema.

“This project will be a huge boost for Ballymote as a town. It will act as a cultural hub for the entire South Sligo region, aiding in the promotion of traditional Irish music, dance, theatre, and film. It will further enhance Ballymote’s reputation as a cultural centre as well as the tourist potential for the town.

“This 220-seater theatre refurbishment will be carried out in such a way so as to remain faithful to the original unique design, and when completed, will retain as many of the original design features of the building as possible, while still providing the most up date and modern facilities.

“One of the most unique exciting features of this venue will be the live link-up with Broadway Shows in New York. This fantastic 3-D experience will give the audience to believe that they are sitting in at a show in Broadway itself. This feature has proven to be a huge success in Dublin theatres, and will no doubt prove likewise in Ballymote.

“Built in 1947, Ballymote cinema was an “Art-Deco” design building,



“Art-Deco” was a major design movement worldwide in the 1920’s, 30’s and 40’s. The Ballymote cinema building was one of the only such buildings constructed in Ireland, and this remains the case, so certainly it is of a very unique and historical significance that these original features are retained.

“Part of the design feature of Ballymote cinema was the high quality acoustics, for which the venue was renowned. In its heyday of the 40’s 50’s and 60’s venue played host to many renowned luminaries of entertainment, such as Jimmy O’Dea and the great Maureen Potter among

others.  
 “The cinema closed down in 1975 and has been unoccupied since. But now I am very proud to be able to say that the sound of music, song, dance, theatre, and film will once again fill this beautiful building, and that the people of Ballymote and the surrounding region will have an entertainment venue of international class which will be one of the finest and most unique venues in the country. It will I have no doubt prove a resounding success, and will attract both national and international acts to perform.”

# Buildings, Owners and Occupiers of West Side of Lord Edward Street, Ballymote, Co. Sligo

Eileen Tighe and Mary B. Timoney

## West side of Lord Edward Street, formerly Market St.

This work of setting down a sequencing of owners and occupiers of the buildings of Ballymote started in the 1990s when Eileen Tighe recorded Dermot Henry's local knowledge of the town which he had heard from his mother, Mary Ann Henry, *nee* McGann, died 1998. Most buildings were traced back to the Griffith *Valuation* of the 1850s which was printed in 1857. Work on the pre-1950 rate payers was done for some of the buildings in the Valuation Office, Dublin. The Valuation Office recorded the rate-payers; these could either be the owner, owner of the lease or the tenant, depending on each contract or agreement. Both the 1901 and the 1911 Census, which listed the occupiers of the buildings, were also used. Some information was gathered from local people. The first number in our listing for each property is the number from the Griffith *Valuation*. This numbering runs from 5(a) to 23(b). Most of the dates are as from the Valuation Office records. Spelling of names is as of these records. Every effort has been made for accuracy. Any further information or corrections will be gratefully received.

### 5(a): Gerry & Ester Cassidy

1858 Andrew Morrison had a house and yard total value £6-10-0, leased from Michael O'Brien. He was followed by Patrick O'Brien  
 Andrew Walsh  
 Ann Leonard  
 John Cunningham  
 1880 Andrew Walsh  
 1901 Census (17) Anne Walsh, 50, b. Gurteen, boarding house with two boarders, Gertyde McMahon, 25, telegraph, b. Westport, and Maggie Marren, 19, dress maker, b. Doocastle.  
 1911 Census (14) Anne Walsh, 72, widow.  
 1921 Darby Dowd now held 5(a) and 5 (b)  
 A Walsh man had a shoe shop here,



he later emigrated to America. There was a dressmakers upstairs where Bea Quigley, Jane Walsh, Ellie Davey and Mrs. Gordan, *nee* Supple, worked.

### 5(b): Gerry & Ester Cassidy

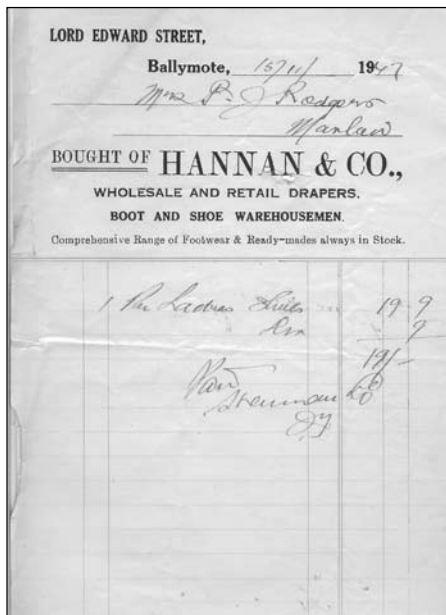
1858 Dominick Dowd house and yard valued £4-10-0, leased from Michael O'Brien  
 1871 Darby Dowd  
 1901 Census (12), Darby O'Dowd, 53, farmer, wife Margaret, sons Thomas, 26, shop assistant, John, 13, and Joseph, 12, and daughters, Mary, 24, no occupation, Teresa, 18, monitors, Katie, 16, and Maggie, 14.  
 1911 Census (13), Darby O'Dowd, farmer and widower, daughters, Mary, now 28, no occupation, Teresa, now 25, N. T., and Margaret, now 22, lace instructress. Thomas, John, Joseph and Katie not listed.  
 1924 Mary O'Dowd  
 The Hibernian Bank had temporary offices here, probably while their premises were being renovated across the road. Darby's son, Johnny O'Dowd, and his daughters, Mary and Tess, a National Teacher, had a stationary and book shop here. Then it passed to their niece, Pauline Tighe, *nee* Healy. Pauline leased it and later sold it to Gerry and

Ester Cassidy. They changed it to a grocery shop, now closed; Gerry and Ester continue to live here. Darby's son, Thomas, had a large furniture business in Ballaghaderreen. Joe worked with his brother, Thomas. Joe retired Ballymote, to Carrownanty (John Meehan's).

### 6: Tommy and Carmel Lavin

1858 Edward O'Brien house yard and office £9, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth.  
 1862 Patrick O'Brien  
 1867 Dominick Dowd  
 1882 John Brennan  
 1890 James Hannon  
 Hannon's drapery and shoe shop. John Toolan worked here. James, a brother of Matthew, married Ellen, a sister of Luke Hayden, in 1891. They lived in Gaol Street. They had 5 sons, Thomas, Walton, Leo, John and Bernard. James Hannan was member of the Irish Land League and at times held the office of Vice President and President. He was a member of Sligo County Council from c. 1899 to 1929. In 1895, he was a Justice of the Peace for the county (Hannon 2000-2001, 2-3).  
 1901 Census (11) James Reath, drayman, 28, b. Co. Louth, wife, Annie, 28, b. Co. Meath, children, Patrick, 4, John, 3, and

Mary, 1.  
 1911 Census (12) Owen Cleary, tailor, 36, his wife Mary, 32, daughters, Mary, 8, and Winnie, 2, and baby, Edward.  
 In 1901 and 1911, James Hannon had the shop and Reath and Cleary would have had the living quarters.  
 In 1959 Tommy and Carmel Lavin acquired it for a shop selling menswear and shoes. Today Tommy and Carmel live in the house and their daughter, Margaret McCarthy, runs a ladies' clothes shop here.



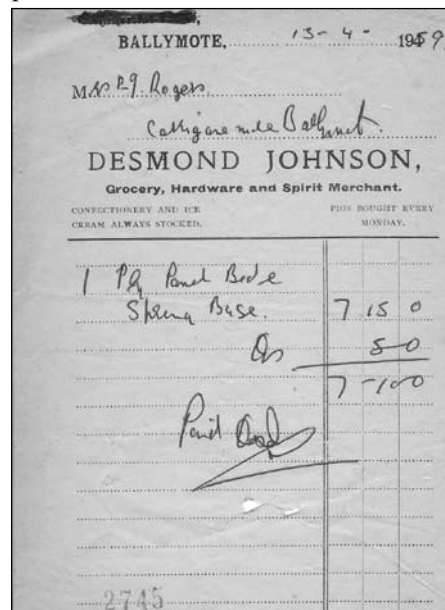
**7: Tom Johnson**  
 1858 Stuart Irwin house yard and office total valuation £14, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth  
 1873 Jane Irwin  
 1879 Stuart Irwin  
 1880 Obadeah Stewart  
 1884 vacant  
 1885 Robert L. Morrison  
 1892 Miss Heyden  
 1901 Census (10) Richard Tomplin, solicitor, 28, b. Co. Cork  
 1901 Census (10.1) Lizzie Hayden, 23, draper, b. Co. Roscommon, her sister, Nannie, 19, draper assistant, visitor, Maud Feeley, draper assistant, b. Co. Leitrim, 16, and domestic servant, Bessy McGowan, 20.  
 1909 James Hannon  
 1911 Census (11) described as a warehouse, no inhabitants.  
 1921 M.J. Kevins  
 1924 M.C. Kevins  
 Kevins bicycle shop  
 1932 John J. Begley  
 John-Joe and Margaret Begley continued

the bicycle shop.  
 1966 Vacant  
 1974 Desmond Johnson. Des Johnson had a pub here c. 1960s.  
 Tom Johnson and his wife had a gift shop here.  
**8: Tom Johnson**  
 8 and 9 became one before 1901

1858 Michael Flynn house and yard, total value £3, leased from Robert L. Morrison  
 1880 Obadiah Stewart  
 1883 Robert L. Morrison  
 William Sleator, 1892 Gore-Booth lessor  
 Robert L. Robinson  
 1901 Census (9), Harriette Morrison, 28, hotel proprietress; niece, Eva Morrison 14; boarder, Robert Gordon, 27, bank cashier, b. Co. Antrim, and servants, Margaret Dowd, 20, and William Anderson, 18.  
 1902 Susan ?  
 1903 Harriett ?  
 1905 Mathew Hannon

**9: Tom Johnson**  
 Robert L. Morrison house, office and land total value £18, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth  
 Hotel  
 1905 Matthew Hannon

9 and 10  
 1921 B.J. Flanery  
 Margaret Johnson in 1933  
 John Hogg  
 1911 (10) Census Matthew Hannon, publican, with his wife and two



children, Mary, 12, and John Joe, 10, assistants Mary Feely, John Cunnane and Edward Cunnane, visitor Margaret Nolan and a charity boarder, Pat Coyle.  
 In 1901 Matthew was in what is now Hayden's on the other side of the road. Hannon's sold the hotel and went to live in Dublin.  
 The hotel had 24 rooms in 1911 (pers. com. Keenan Johnson, Senior). Bernie Flannery and brother, Paddy, ran it in the 1930s, until it became bankrupt. Vacant, then Mrs. Margaret Johnson, in 1933, bought it. Her daughter, Martha ran it, bank officials and commercial travellers stayed in it and there was a shop and restaurant in it. Jim Hogg's wife, Molly Redican, was the first bar maid. In September 1949 lodgers were no longer taken and it was just a bar and grocery. Keenan Johnson, Senior, lived in it and had his practice here before 1947.  
 Des Johnson, Margaret and Thomas' son, ran it as a furniture store. Part was rented to Jim Hogg for a butcher's shop. Tom Johnson, Des' nephew, Kevin's son, has the furniture business there today with Joe McNulty.

**10: Vacant**  
 1858 John Cawley, house, office and yard total value £6-15-0, leased from Robert L. Morrison  
 1876-1878 value increased to £8-5-0  
 1901 Census (8), John Cawley pub, widower, aged 74, and his children John, 30, assistant, daughter Anne, 26, assistant, and servant Mary Towhey, 32.  
 1911 Census (9), John Cawley, 48, merchant, wife Theresa, 29, daughter, daughter, Mary Ellen, 4, and servant Kate O'Hara, 18.  
 After 1911 John and Theresa moved their business to O'Connell Street. Batty Cawley, their son, ran it as pub and grocery; today it is Aidan and Gerri Tighe's newsagency and gift ware.  
 1923 Mrs. Margaret Johnson ran a pub here for a short period. The Johnsons moved from here to Creamery Rd.  
 1924 Bernie Flannery of hotel  
 1928 John V. Kerr, chemist; he lived in Teeling St., where Vinne McDonagh lives today.  
 1952 Harry Horan chemist, wife Colette, Paddy Rogers' sister  
 Christine Lennon, chemist  
 Paddy Kearney, chemist shop  
 Vacant

**11: Closed**

Patrick McGetterick, leased from Thomas Mullen, house, office and garden total value £6-15-0  
 1862 James Mullen  
 Martin Rogers, uncle of Pat James Rogers, T.D.  
 1876 Bridget Phillips  
 1901 Census (7), Bedilia Philips, 60, publican and shop keeper, single, and her niece, Maria McGolderick, 28, shop assistant.  
 1911 Census (8), Bedilia Philips, publican, single, now 82, and Maria McGolderick, 39, niece, shop assistant, nieces, Netta, 17, and Lizzie Healy, 14, both b. Co. Leitrim, and Mary Greham, 18, domestic servant.  
 1921 Maria McGolderick  
 1931 Louis Harte, brother of Canon Peter Harte, P.P., Ballymote  
 1940 Thomas Keenan  
 1974 Michael Gannon  
 Tommy Keenan's pub; his brother, Henry, lived with him in the 1930s.  
 Michael Gannon and wife, Mary.  
 Phil Davey  
 Johnny Davey  
 Eugene Irwin, Hugo's bar  
 McNulty  
 Closed

**12: Siobhan's hairdressing salon**

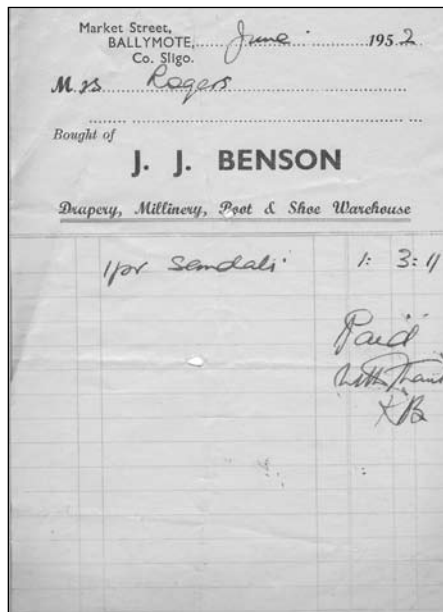
1858 Edward G. Hunt, house, office and yard total value £3, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth

**12(a): James Cregg leased from William Reddican**

1873 - Cawley  
 1874 Charles -  
 1879 Michael Preston  
 1884 Vacant  
 1886 James Henderson  
 1901 Census (6), James Henderson, bootmaker, 50, his wife, Charlotte, 36 and sons, Abraham, 15, and James, 8, daughter, Maggie, 16, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Sleator, a postman.  
 1904 Hayden  
 1905 James McGovern, butcher  
 1907 Margaret McGovern  
 After James' death Maggie McGovern married Thomas Carrol.  
 1911 Census (7), Thomas Carrol, 50, butcher, b. Co. Leitrim, wife, Maggie McGovern, 36, stepdaughters, Winnie, 15, and Josie, 5, stepson, Paddie, 13, lodger, Celia P. Egan, 26, shop assistant,

and general servants, William O'Harrr, 62, and John Meehan, 15.

1920 John Benson  
 John Benson, drapers, wife, Jane Walsh, a dress maker; they had four children, Annie, Maisie, Kathleen and Johnny. Lizzie Brady served her time here. Kathleen married Dan Coleman, Maisie married Paddy McGovern, son of James and Maggie (above 1905 and 1907) Paddy McGovern went to America and on returning bought Roscrib House.  
 1974 Kathleen Coleman  
 John and Kathleen Hogge  
 Sharon Ford, now Perry, hairdresser  
 Joe McNulty rented it to Margaret Lavin  
 Vacant  
 Siobhan's Hairdressing Salon



**12 (b): Sheila Johnson**

Michael Fox  
 1873 John -erins  
 1879 Patrick Hoey  
 1886 Henderson  
 Vacant  
 1887 Christopher Smith  
 1901 Census (5), Christopher Smith, 38, leather merchant, wife, Margaret, 35, daughters, Elizabeth, 9, and Marjorie, 5, and sons John, 7, Edward, 3, and Christopher, 1, shop assistant, James Girvan, 14, domestic servant, Mary Finnegan, 18, nurse servant, Mary Lenehan, 14, and messenger Michael McFadden, 14.  
 In 1911 Census Christopher Smith, a general merchant and J.P., now 49, lived in 22, Gaol St, with wife, Margaret, now 47; children born since 1901: Lewis,

7, and Margaret, 4. His niece, Lillie Smith, 18, a shop assistant, and two boarders William Beresford, 29, a bank official, and William Watson, 26, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Custom and Excise Officer, were in the house on the night but not their children, Marjorie and John. This is Perry's Supermarket today.

1905 Kate O'Rorke  
 1907 Sarah Wilson  
 1910 Miss McGowan  
 1911 Census (6), Jane McGowan, 56, shop keeper, single; niece, Annie Connolly, 12, b. Glasgow; lodgers, Winnie Condon, 20, scholar, Marlen O'Connor, 35, b. Co. Clare, examiner Ordnance Survey, married, and Keady Flynn, 41, b. Sligo, civil servant Ordnance Survey, single, and domestic servant, Kate Davey, 25.

1927 Thomas Johnson. The Johnsons moved here from Creamery Rd.

1928 Mrs. Margaret Johnson, newsagency, books and fancy goods. She changed it to a chemist shop with Mr. Wrixon, chemist, from Cork. He lived in Ballymote, where David Mulaney auctioneer is today, he later went to Collooney in 1930s.

Richard Molloy. Richard married Margaret Johnson's daughter, Martha, and the Molloy's ran a chemist shop here. They later moved across the road to run a drapery and pub.

Sheila Johnson had her chemist shop here. She closed the shop in the 1980s and continues to live here.

**13: Rochford and Gallagher, Solicitors.**

1858 John McElroy, house, office and yard total value £3-17-0, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth

Richard Sharkett  
 1879 Patrick Dawson  
 1901 Census (4), Patrick Dawson, Publican, 58, b. Co. Mayo, and wife, Mary, 30, son, Michael, 10, daughters Delia, 11, Nora, 8, Lillie, 6, and Gertie, 3, sister-in-law, Lizzie Anderson, 19.

Mary and Lizzie were sisters of Charlie Anderson, Mill Street.

1911 Census (5), Patrick Dawson, spirit merchant, 70, b. Co. Mayo, wife Mary, 42, Delia, 21, shop assistant, Nora is listed as Norrie and is a shop assistant and Gertie as Gilly, 18.

1916 Maria Dawson  
 1931 Delia Dawson. She lived here



with her sister, Gertie.  
 1950 Thomas Rogers  
 1950 Tommy Rogers and wife Bridget, Garda Sergeant in Co. Offaly(?), brother of Pat James Rogers, T.D. She ran it as a pub.  
 Rented to A.I.B.  
 Closed  
 Rochford and Gallagher

**14:** Ballymote Pharmacy  
 It became one house with 15 before 1911.

John Dyer, house, office and garden total value £9, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth  
 1879 Catherine Dyer  
 1907 George Morris  
 1910 Vacant  
 1915? Temporary Barracks, now surrendered  
 1911? Francis Dyer  
 1921 James Rogers  
 1924 J. McAndrew  
 1926 Michael McAndrew  
 1928 Mrs. Margaret Rogers  
 1952 Michael McAndrew  
 P. Downey, (Alfie), rented as a butcher shop  
 In 1950s Charlie Dyer sold sweets here  
 1975 Scanlon and Irwin

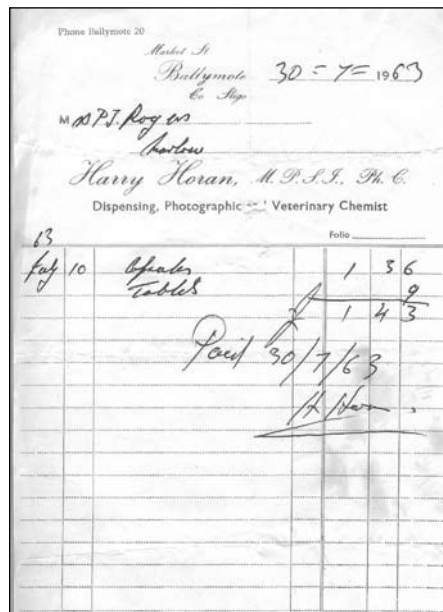
Closed, McAndrews joined it to their drapery shop, next door.  
 John Joe Kielty, printer  
 Andy Robus photocopying, computers, son-in-law of Peter O' Connor, photographer.

Siobhan Hair Salon  
 Ballymote Pharmacy  
 This became one with No. 15 at different stages; in both 1901 and 1911 Census and during McAndrew's time.

1901 Census (3) Francis Dyer, 50, grocer, single, his sister, Brigid, shop assistant, 55, niece, Margaret Sheridan, shop assistant, 25, and servant Mary Gannon, 47.  
 1911 Census (4) Francis, now 63, sister Brigid, now 73, niece, Margaret Sheridan, 35, shop assistant, and servant Mary McGuin, 16.

**15:** Ballymote Pharmacy  
 James Dyer, house and garden, total value £1-15-0, leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth  
 1897 Vacant  
 1896 Francis Dyer with new total value of £7  
 1911 Vacant

1921 James Rogers  
 1923 Michael McAndrew  
 1925 P. Flannery  
 1927 John V. Kerr,  
 1928 Michael McAndrew, drapery, with his wife, Kate Sheridan. They had four children, Michael, Margaret, John and Noel.  
 Michael, son of Michael McAndrew, with his wife, Sarah Coleman. They had four children, John and Catherine, Declan and Raymond.  
 Closed  
 Ballymote Pharmacy



**16:** James Duffy  
 George Bell house, office and garden total value £4-10-0, leased from Joseph Loughhead, M.D.

James Kearns  
 1873 Michael Keenan from Gore Booth 1896.  
 1901 Census (2), Michael Keenan, 68, shopkeeper, wife, Anne, 54, sons, John, 26, and Patrick, 20, shop assistants, 20, daughters Kate, 23, N.T., later married Lipset, and Margaret, 18, telephonist.  
 Anne was Anne Wims and she was aunt to Canon Pat Wims. Kate was a teacher in Drumcormac National School. She married Willy Lipset and they ran M Ó Cianain photo shop, now Droughton's Teeling Street. Their daughter, Nuala, married Sean Droughton, a custom and excise officer. Margaret married Tom Johnson, Post Master, they had six children, Keenan, Kevin, Des, Shelia, Martha and Monica.  
 1911 Census (2), John Keenan, 40, shopkeeper, wife Elizabeth, aged 29,

recently married.  
 1912 John Keenan  
 1926 Mrs. Margaret Johnson, *nee* Keenan, lived here with her husband, Tom Johnson. They moved to Johnson house, Gurteen Rd. and back again. They also lived where Sheila Johnson is today (no. 12).  
 1929 Pat Cawley  
 Paddy Cawley, drapery and confectionery; he had been assistant in Joe Healy's drapery shop. He married Annie Durcan. They had six children, Gerry, Maura, Aidan, Liam, Eamonn and Carmel. Eamonn was killed, by a fall, on Keash hill on Garland Sunday (1954?)  
 Closed  
 James Duffy, Keash, farm accountant.

**17:** Closed  
 John Fox house, office and garden total value £5, leased from Joseph Loughhead, M.D.

1879 Eliza Fox  
 Patrick Barlow, in 1890 he also held 6 acres of land in Camros  
 1901 Census (1), Patrick Barlow, 43, publican, wife, Brigid, 41, daughters, Mary, 9, Ellen, 7, Brigid, 6, and Kate, 4.  
 1911 Census (1), Patrick Barlow, publican, now 56, wife Brigid, 52, three daughters, Mary not here.

1933 Kathleen McCarron, (Kate), married Bernard McCarron and they had a daughter, Mary B.  
 1938 James McGetterick  
 Pub Jim McGetterick; he married in, she was Katie O'Gara; May, their daughter married Michael Donlan.

Closed  
 Sheila O'Neill, cafe  
 Yvonne McGowan and her sister Michelle had the cafe and James Drew offices upstairs.

**18:** John Keenan house, office and yard with a total value of £5 leased from Joseph Loughhead, M.D.  
 Michael Keenan  
 1879 leased from Bartley Coghlan  
 1884 Vacant  
 1889 Police Barracks  
 1901 R.I.C.  
 1902 lessor Kate Coghlan  
 1908 Martin Beirne  
 1920 R.I.C. Barracks burnt one night in

August 1921

1923 Commissioner of Public Works, Ruins

1934 Munster and Leinster Bank

Becomes one with 19 at some stage, possibly as a barracks

**19:** Robert Clarke house, office and garden total value £5, leased from Joseph Loughhead, M.D.

1862 Patrick McGetterick

1879 Vacant, lessor now Bartley Coghlan

1889 Margaret Coghlan

1902 Kate Coghlan

See 18 Bank Munster and Lenister Bank

1941 Garda Barracks

Vacant

1901 Census and 1911 Census, only gives the initials of the constabulary, and occupation of their fathers, e.g., farmer's son.

**20 & 21:** Market House, Market-house and yard, tolls of markets, and garden held by Sir Robert Gore-Booth

1901 Census (27) Isabella Steele, weigh mistress, widow, daughter, Isabella, 28, teacher, and servant, Sara Jane Flaherty, 18.

1911 Census (28) Isabella Steele, weigh mistress, widow, 72, daughter Lily, 38, and servant, Maggie Kevins, 17.

Mrs. Steele lived in the Market House. A Mrs. Steele, Ardcar, Sligo, was buried in Emlaghfad graveyard in April 1920 (Emlaghfad Parish records).

1919 Congested District Board

1923 Ballymote Electric Lighting Co. and Town Improvement Committee

The building was called the Power House, run by Town Improvement Committee, some of its members were Frank Sharkey, Owen Brehony, Thomas Regan, Tom Johnson and Patrick Rogers.

1947 Town Improvement Committee owned Market House, Fair Green collected tolls on Fair days.

Thomas James Gallagher, Marren Park, son of Hughie who worked in Mill, was caretaker of Power House and did the weighing, followed by Tim Healy, big Jim Reynolds and then Dermot Henry just weighing.

It became Youth Centre c. 1960, funds

raised by Bingo in Loftus Hall, some of the directors were Paddy Mullen, John Meehan, Eamon Gannon, Tommy Lavin, John McMenimen Garda, Gerry Cassidy, Neal Farry and Tom McGetterick.

Sheds at back, Dan Brennan, sadlier, Des Johnson for weighing pigs and ESB office and a Magee man, cobbler who lived in a room upstairs in main building.

Reconstructed under an ANCO social employment funded scheme

Ballymote Community Centre

Northwest Health Board

Health Service Executive

The weighbridge was situated in front of the Market House. Today the cover of it has been placed near its original position. Hay and cattle were weighed outside and turkeys and wool inside the Market House.

John Diamond displayed headstones along the side of the Market House and he came out from Sligo for orders on Market Day.

Ballymote Credit Union

In 1947 Keenan Johnson, senior, bought a site, part of the Market House land and built a solicitor's office, with living quarters upstairs which were rented.

Tommy Tighe bought the building and practice. Keenan Johnson, junior, served his apprenticeship with Tommy here, and he bought both back c. 1984. Ballymote Credit Union in 1990s.

**22:** Post Office

Exemptions Police Barrack, office and yard leased from Sir Robert Gore-Booth

1889 John Coleman

1901 Census (16), John Gorman, Ch. of Ireland, 54, wife, Elizabeth, 51, sons, Joseph, 22, Candidate B.A. T.C.D., Francis, 20, clerk and telephonist, John, 15, Arthur, 13, and Frederick, 9, John Craven, P.O. assistant, 20, and Bridget Duffy, servant, 21.

1905 John Gorman Postmaster

1911 Census (29) Elizabeth Gorman with her son, Francis, Bridget Duffy, servant, 30, and boarder, Robert Wright, 24, Two Day Custom and Excise Officer, b. Co. Down.

1926 Elizabeth Gorman

Dowling

McElroy

Tom Johnson

Sid Ruddy

Paddy McElvanny

Paddy Mullen

Jerry Callaghan

Elaine Harrison

Dwelling until Paddy McElvanny's time

**23(a) and (b):** Ulster Bank

Henry Williams house, (a) offices and garden total value £18 and (b) land just over two acres total value £3-5-0

Ulster Bank from Sir Robert Gore-Booth

1870 Ulster Bank

1873 John Corry

1875 James C. Tew

1901 Census (26) Joseph Tew, bank manager, 58, wife, Harriet, 48, step-daughters, Winifred, 20, Kathleen, 17 and Gladys, 15, and servant, Brigid Higgins, 68.

Ulster Banking Co.

1911 Census (30), William Adams, bank manager, 41, wife Agnes, 34, daughters, Muriel, 5, Emily, 3 and baby Elsie, and domestic servant, Belinda Heaver, 18.

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Timoney, Catherine, and Cryan, Orla, 1999-2000: "Ballymote Street Furniture", *The Corran Herald*, 32, 46-47.

Griffith *Valuation*, otherwise known as *The Primary Valuation*.

Valuation Office records

1901 Census

1911 Census

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We thank Dermot Henry, Keenan Johnson, Senior, Tommy Lavin and Gerry and Ester Cassidy for filling out many details in the sequences.



# Ballymote Handball Alley 1910 - 2010

David Casey

Handball has a long and distinguished history in the Ballymote area. An ordnance survey map of Ballymote - 1837 - shows a ball-alley on or near its present location. *The Sligo Champion* reported in January 1890 that a meeting was held in the National school room, Ballymote, for the purpose of building a ballcourt in the Fairgreen, Ballymote. The site was given by Sir Henry Gore Booth. A committee was appointed: President, Rev. P J O'Grady, CC ; Treasurer, James Flanagan; Hon. Sec. John Cogan ; Committee: Bernard Cogan, James Frazer, Patrick Dockery, James W Gaffney, Matthew Hannon, James Hannon, Michael McGlynn, and Patrick Coghlan. It was decided to hold a collection to raise funds and to have a concert if more funds were needed. The report concluded: 'For many years this project has been contemplated, but now the young men of the town, having no other amusement during the summer evenings, have determined that it shall succeed with the success it deserves. The meeting shortly afterwards adjourned.'

The present ball-alley was built 100 years ago in 1910.

Progress report:

1910 Original alley built.

1953 One side wall leaning dangerously, removed and rebuilt; side walls raised, followed by new back wall and new floor. Total cost 500 pounds.

1955 Gallery, with dressing room, added. Cost 300 pounds

1957 1<sup>st</sup> All-Ireland Semi-Final.

1964 Side walls raised to standard 24 feet, gallery extended and raised. Cost 200 pounds.

1967 New roof installed. Contractors - Keenan Bros., Ltd. of Muine Bheag. Total cost 1,400 pounds .

1968 Wiring and lighting for night play, installed and interior snowcemed. Cost 150 pounds.

The sources of above funds were town collections, raffles, dances, 25 drives, members' fees, gates, grants from G.A.A., and balance raised by way of loan.

The labour was all voluntary except for the roofing contractors.

**The following piece was written by the late John Benson for the souvenir programme in 1970:**

## *Ballymote's Handball Past*

'Visitors to the recently reconstructed ballcourt in Ballymote will have just cause to marvel at the amazing transformation that has been wrought on the old open court that has served many former generations of handballers. The new alley serves as an imposing monument to the boundless zeal and never ceasing endeavour of Michael Hannon and his small band of loyal and industrious co-workers. To those men all credit is due for not alone keeping alive a game that had all but died but for putting it on a new plane to an extent where Ballymote is now looked upon as one of the key handball strongholds in the country at the present time.

'All this has not been accomplished by the touch of a magic wand however, for many obstacles had to be surmounted before the dream eventually became a reality. It is therefore opportune at this juncture to journey back, in retrospect, over the years to a period approximately 60 years ago, at which point handball activities in Ballymote began to be recorded. The old handball alley was built in about the year 1910 by a man named Thomas Anderson of Marlow, on the site of the present alley, leased by Sir Jocelyn Gore-Booth. Among the players who frequented the alley in those early years were Michael Egan of Carrownanty and Thomas McManus (senior), and this pair we learn, are credited with having won the first tournament sponsored by the local club. Other prominent exponents of the period were John Barnes, N.T., Tommy Doddy, Thomas McManus (junior), Michael Morrison, the Spellman brothers of Moygara, John Hannon of Grattan St., John Andrew Dockery, John Joe and James Dockery, John Joe McEniff, Paddy McGovern, Owen Cunnane, Batty Healy, John Joe Lane of Ballintogher, Vincent Cunningham, Dick McNulty and Jim Hunt of Gurteen, also Paddy

McCormack of Swinford.

'The records also tell us that the first committee elected to administer the affairs of Handball in Ballymote was composed of the following- Michael Walsh of O'Connell St. (chairman), Joseph Healy of Main St. (Secretary) in addition to Frank McDonagh of O'Connell St., Batt Henry, N.T., Tom McManus, William Lipsett, Thomas Regan and James Fraser. Also Tom Scully and John Albert Farry, who was secretary for fourteen years.

'All the above and possibly many others were associated, in one way or another, with the handball game in the early stages and can be said to be the early pioneers of the game in the district. With the passage of the years younger blood was introduced to the game. One has nostalgic memories of the stirring challenge games that were a feature of the sporting life of Ballymote in the twenties and thirties. Who can forget those exhibition games on Sundays when such worthy exponents as the Hannon brothers, Michael, Patrick and Luke battled against the equally famous Regan family, John Thomas, Michael Joe and Vincent.

'Others who made quite an impression in the handball code around this period were Gardai Kilmuray (now retired in Dundrum Co Dublin) and T. Lowry (at present in Galway), Patsy Gallagher, Jack Meehan, Johnny Price, Jack Hoey, and also the Donegans who enthralled us with some stylish exhibitions. Val Henry N.T., has continued to play the game right down the years and his sons, Justin, Marcus, Raymond and Dermot have added lustre to the game in the Ballymote and Sligo colours. Another fine handballer of this era was Mickey Price of Keenaghan, who also featured much in college handball spheres.

'Let us now move on to the early forties when the shadows of war disrupted sport of all kinds. Handball was no exception and for about ten years hardly a ball was played in the fast-decaying alley. It then appeared that a game, that had for so long been synonymous with sport in Ballymote, was quickly dying. And well it might have been but for the

unflagging and unyielding enthusiasm of Michael Hannon who rallied to the cause. Michael gathered around him a small band of enthusiasts that included Mickey Cunnane, Tim Daly, the late Mickey Scanlon of Teeling St., Miko Hannon, Eamonn Hannon, Michael F Hannon, John P Hannon, Des Walsh, Jim Finn, the Cassidy family of Emmet St., Paddy Reynolds, Fonso Sheridan, and others.

‘These men set to work to raise funds for the new project and gradually the work took shape. The late Frank King engineered the venture. Great credit must also be accorded to the following local tradesmen who gave much of their time and labour to the building of the new alley- Mick Gildea, Tommy Duffy, Joe Flannery, Paddy Egan, Pat Scanlon of Carrigans and the late Pat Mullen of Teeling St.. Tim Daly supervised the electrical installation and all through gave unstintingly of his time and labour as he had done in other sporting activities in the town from the time of his arrival here in the mid forties.

‘Mention must also be made here of good work rendered by such as Alfie Banks, Leo Hannon, Johnny Kilcoyne, Noellie and Michael Healy, Alo Ward, Alfie Scanlon, John J. Gorman, Michael McGettrick, Gerald Murtagh and Mick Hever. To bring the alley to its present imposing state took many years of hard work but all those involved in the venture have the satisfaction of seeing a most edifying and fruitful conclusion to their labours.

‘Let us turn now for a brief moment to the game of handball itself and see what strides have been made in that direction down the years. Successes at county, provincial and national level have been numerous. Harking back to 1947 we have the pleasure in recalling Sligo’s first and only success in Senior Softball doubles championship when Joe Bergin and Jim O’Rourke of Ballisodare won through.

‘Then we had to wait until Des Walsh of Collooney won for Co. Sligo the first Junior singles in 1961. By this win Dessie had set a very high standard for Sligo handballers to maintain. But in later years the Sligo star won even greater honours and esteem until finally in 1966 he won the Co. Handballer of the year award. Also Dessie’s two brothers Paddy and Raphael, gave honourable service

to the county while the Hannon brothers Michael (Junior) and Joey, won honours for the Ballymote club at County and Provincial levels. Minor All-Ireland honours in softball singles were won by Marcus Henry in consecutive years while the same player, partnered by John Gaffney, won the National doubles title in Junior Softball in 1967. National League honours came to the Club in the previous year and those involved in this fine victory were Des Walsh, Jim Finn, Marcus Henry, Frank Cawley and the redoubtable Eamonn Hannon. The following year the club was beaten in the National League final by Wexford. Then in 1969 the Club won the All-Ireland Club Championship, the players responsible for this were Des Walsh, Marcus Henry, Eamonn Hannon, and Josie Mattimoe. Those are but a small fraction of the successes achieved by the Ballymote handballers down the years and, if one is to judge by the present dedication shown by the younger members, the future seems to hold even greater promise for handball in this area. The installation of lights a few years ago has enabled players to get in many extra hours of practice while the new roof has made the game independent of weather conditions. Handballers come regularly from such places as Collooney, Charlestown, Boyle, Gurteen, Sligo, Kilaville, Tubbercurry, Curry, Tulsk, etc. Special mention must be made here of the contribution being made to the club by G.W.I., Collooney, many of whose employees are valuable members of the club.

‘In conclusion, we would appeal to all the young boys in the locality to interest themselves in what is fast becoming one of the most popular games in the world. Far beyond our shores, in such regions as Canada and the U.S.A., handball is played even more widely than is the case here at home.

‘N.B. In chronicling the names of the many people who in one way or another were associated with Ballymote handball, it is quite possible that memory has lapsed in the case of some and, if such be the case, we humbly apologise to those whose names we have omitted.’

**Handball in Emlaghnaughton** was the subject of an article by the late Val

Henry in the Souvenir programme for the official opening and blessing of Ballymote ball-alley in 1970. The article was titled *Elmnaghnaughton – A Nursery for Handballers*. Batt Henry along with a small group of handball enthusiasts built a handball alley at mlaghnaughton in 1923. Then in 1926 Batt and the local handball committee replaced this ball-alley with a modern full sized regulation ballcourt. This was the first back-walled court to be built in Co. Sligo and it was a venue for inter-county championship games for many years.

### Handball in 1970s

Looking back to 1970 and the following years, there were many people playing handball both young and old. The facility of the roofed and floodlit ballcourt was a great boost to the game in the region. The late Michael Hannon and the handball committee gave great encouragement to the younger players. There was a lot of sport in playing, even if it was only a game of side-alley. There were often two or three such games going on at the same time with others waiting to come in to play. Many of the young players learned how to play handball in this way and practiced anywhere they could, against a wall at school etc. The organisation of games by the club fostered an interest in handball in the young players.

There were many successes in the handball court in the years following the official opening in 1970. Eamon Hannon (RIP) and Paddy Walsh won the All-Ireland Junior Softball Doubles championship in 1974. The Minor Hardball Doubles All-Ireland went to Francis McCann and Michael Porter in 1976.

Colaiste Mhuire, Ballymote won the All-Ireland colleges handball championship in 1976. The members of the victorious team were Francis McCann, Michael Porter, John Cawley, Pdraig Hurley, Jim Dockry and Colm Conway.

In 1977 the Colaiste Mhuire Ballymote team, Pat Dockry (RIP), Pdraig Hurley, Jude Cassidy, Jim Dockry, Francis McCann, Tommy Connell, John Cawley were winners of the All-Ireland Senior Singles, Senior Doubles, Junior Doubles, and runners-up in Juvenile Doubles. Trainer Michael Hannon (RIP). Teachers Tommy Kelly and

Brendan McLoughlin.

Ballymote Community games handball team in 1977 was Pat Egan (RIP), Martin Golden, Tommy Connell, Pdraig McCann and Jude Cassidy.

Francis McCann and Michael Porter were winners of the U21 Handball Doubles All-Ireland in 1979.

### Handball in the 1980s and 1990s

The 1980 Vocational schools All-Ireland Singles title was won by Pdraig McCann. In the Senior Doubles, Pdraig McCann and Pdraig Cawley were winners.

The 1981 Junior Softball Doubles All-Ireland was won by Francis McCann and Michael Porter.

In 1982 Pdraig McCann and Jude Cassidy were members of the Sligo Regional Technical College team which won the All-Ireland Higher Education Colleges Handball Championship and League double. The other members were Joe Melvin, Ballaghaderreen, and Conor O'Donnell, Bundoran.

Martin Sweeney was the winner of the All-Ireland Junior Softball Singles in 1983. The GAA Yearbook, 'Gaelic Stars' selected Pdraig McCann as a GAA Sports star of the year in 1983.

Martin Casey (RIP) was a member of the University College Galway teams which won the Irish Universities Colleges Handball championships in 1983 and 1984.

In 1987 Francis McCann and Simon Davey won the All-Ireland Junior Handball Doubles championship.

In 1991 Francis McCann won the 40 by 20 Junior Singles All-Ireland Championship. Brian Meehan and Francie Cawley won the Golden Masters Doubles All-Ireland title in 1996.

Sligo defeated Galway and Mayo in a special one-off Team of Ten competition which celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Handball Council in 1999. The members of the Sligo team were Shane Bruen, Kevin Meehan, Francis McCann, Michael Porter, Jude Cassidy, Simon Davey, John McLoughlin, Vincent McKeown, M J Shiels, and Peter Davey. Also in 1999 Gary McTernan and Colm Henry won the boys Under-17 Connacht championship.

### Since 2000

Dermot McTernan won the boys Under-15 singles Connacht 'A' title in 2000

and Francis McCann was the winner of the Masters 'A' All-Ireland Singles title in the same year.

The 2002 Masters 'A' Doubles All-Ireland winners were Francis McCann and Michael Porter. Also in 2002 Michael Porter won the Master 'A' Singles All-Ireland.

In 2005 Martin Golden won the Masters 'B' All Ireland Singles championship. Seamus Duffy and Pat Sullivan of St Mary's club were winners of the Emerald Masters 'B' All-Ireland Doubles 40 by 20 in 2005.

In 2006 Seamus and Pat won the 60 by 30 All-Ireland title.

Paddy Walsh has won many All-Ireland Masters handball titles in singles and doubles including 3 consecutive Diamond Masters 'A' Doubles titles with Mick Kelly.

Paddy Walsh and Pauric May won a Masters Doubles in 2009. Paddy Walsh also received the Special Achievement award at the National Handball Awards in December 2009. The Annual Michael Hannon memorial cup in 2009 was very well supported and was won by the Sligo-Leitrim combination of Seamus Duffy and Jamie Murray. Eamon Tighe and Mathew Davey won a 60 by 30 Under-16 Connacht title in 2009.

This is a brief look at handball in Ballymote and Ballymote ball-alley in the past 100 years. There are many others who have participated in handball by playing the game, and supporting the club over the years.

Ballymote ball-alley has continued to host championship games in the 60 by 30 game. In recent years the Ballymote was one of the venues in Co. Sligo for the One-Wall handball championships between 1999 and 2008.

The Ballymote handball committee have worked hard to keep the game going and keep the ball-alley up to standard. A new floor was built in some years ago and new dressing rooms installed, and other maintenance works have to be done regularly.

### Tony Hannon President of the Irish Handball Council

In 2008 Ballymote born Tony Hannon, son of the late Michael Hannon, became President of the Irish Handball Council. Tony who is based in Roscommon

played handball for Ballymote and Co. Sligo for many years. Tony and Martin Meehan won a Co. Sligo minor doubles championship.

Tony was Secretary of Ballymote Handball club. He was also secretary of Sligo County Board for three years. In 1996 he became club Secretary of St. Comans in Roscommon, a position he held for 10 years. Tony also served as Roscommon County Chairman and on the Ard Comhairle of the Irish Handball Council. He continued his playing career with Roscommon and won an All-Ireland Masters doubles 60 by 30 title with Mickey Walsh. He won three more All-Ireland titles with Stephen French in the Masters 40 by 20 'B' doubles, with Martin Bruen in the Masters 60 by 30 'B' doubles, and P.J. Moran in the Golden Masters 'A' doubles. Tony also won a number of Garda national titles. Every good wish to Tony in his tenure as President of the Irish Handball Council.

### Grateful thanks to:

Peggy and Dessie Walsh  
Jude Cassidy and Gerry Cassidy  
Martin Golden  
Francis McCann

### Sources:

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Back Row L/R: Michael Hannon, Paddy Walsh, Raphael Walsh, Eamonn Hannon RIP, Tony Grey, Seamus O'Donnell, Mickey Cunnane, Dessie Walsh, MJ Gallagher RIP, Michael Hannon RIP, Alo Ward RIP, Leo Hannon RIP, Mickey Scanlon RIP (Group from Collooney, Kilmacteigue and Ballymote at Ballymote handball alley, August 1959)

Front Row (L/R): I Scully, Sean Duffy, Michael Healy, Tony Hannon, Jim Hannon, Mattie McNulty.

*Picture courtesy Dessie and Peggy Walsh*



At the official blessing and reopening in May 1970 after the roof and floodlighting had been provided.

*Sligo Champion photo*



At Convent National School, around 1949.

**Front Row L/R:** Tommy Healy, Hubert McDermott, Sam Reid (?), Gerry Mattimoe, Paul Galvin, Noel Gardiner, Pat Rogers, John Cassidy, Hugh Scanlon, Ivan McNulty

**Second Row L/R:** Patricia Mattimoe, Nell Chambers (?), Eileen Meehan, ? Brady, --, --, Angela Scully

**Third Row L/R:** ? Charlie McGarvey, Tommy Wims, ? Quigley, --, Etta Healy, Sheila McCloskey, --, --, Imelda Egan, Tommy Haran, Gerry McDonagh,

**Back Row L/R:** ? Scott, Paddy Prior, Brendan Benton, Jimmy Healy, Patrick Hunt, Raphael Cassidy.

*Photo courtesy Frances Heneghan and Dr Ivan McNulty*



**Scoil Mhuire gan Smál First Communion 2010**

**Back Row (L/R):** Ms Áine Davey (Class Teacher), Chloe Healy, Luke Tarmey, Amy Scanlon, Aaron Keenan, Shauna Anderson, Kevin Woods, Leah Reynolds, Fr James McDonagh CC Ballymote, Fr Gregory Hannan PPballymote.

**Second Row from Back (L/R):** Jason Dwyer, Megan Scanlon, Darragh McSharry, Laura Healy, Dylan Coggeran, Casey Cullen, Conor Finn, Ms Dolores Taheny Principal Teacher.

**Second Row from Front (L/R):** Eoin Mitchell, Ewan Murrin, Thalia Kelly, Zak O'Dowd, Aisling Golden, Mark Conlon.

**Front Row (L/R):** Nicola Redican, April McGuinn, David Gardiner, Katie Hogge, Ryan Walker, Aoife Loughlin, Nathan Egan, Michaela Kieltly





**Scoil Mhuire gan Smál 5th Class Confirmation 2010**

Back Row (L/R): Fr James McDonagh CC Ballymote, Patryk Gwizdz, Ms Kathleen McCann Class Teacher, Mrs Kearins, Conner Murtagh, Fr Gregory Hannan PP Ballymote.

Second Row from Back (L/R): Stephen Mulligan, Niamh Quinn, Aisling Durey, Amy Kerins, Ciara Davey, Shauna Conlon, Sophia Cogan, Paddy Creegan, Ben Gorevan, David Woods.

Second Row from Front (L/R): Kelly-Ann Gardiner, Siobhán Tighe, Martin Nally, Gabriel Rafferty, Jude Perry, Jonathan Mulligan, Mikey McGuinn, Emily Redican, Ciara Keenan, Saoirse O'Dowd, Seamus O'Donnell-Gavaghan, Darragh Ward.

Front Row (L/R): Kevin Conlon, Jack Hever, Emma Devlin, Ashleigh Egan, Emma Downes, Most Rev Brendan Kelly Bishop of Achonry, Rebecca Downes, Shauna Byrne, Soni Underwood, Caolan Gallagher, David Quinn.



**Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Sixth Class Confirmation 2010**

Back Row (L/R): Fr James McDonagh CC Ballymote, Patricia Hunt (Class Teacher),

Children: Michael Rafferty, Ella O'Dowd-O'Doherty, Saoirse Tony, Emma Hever, Mikey Finn, Jane Finn, Ciara Dolphin, Molly Finn, Carla Benson, Fr Gregory Hannan PP Ballymote

Middle Row (L/R): Aimee Ford, April Devlin, Keith Golden, Cathal O'Dowd, Matthew Cunnane, Malachy Healy, Ruairi Kilgariff, Shannon Kerins, Laura Woods.

Front Row (L/R): Jonathan Devaney, Diarmaid Collis, Shauna Healy, Chelsea McGowan, Most Rev Brendan Kelly Bisop of Achonry, Eva Finn, James Hannon, Conor Booth, Eoghan Doyle, Lee Muldoon.





**Knockminna N.S. First Communion 2010**

Back Row (L/R): Mrs Louise King Principal Teacher, Fr James McDonagh CC Ballymote, Mr Brian Henry Class teacher.  
Middle Row (L/R): Seamus Hailstones, Daniel Breslin, James Waters, Brendan Hailstones, Annie Spearman (Server).  
Front Row (L/R): Jamie Hannon, Philomena Nally, Lisa Hunt, Rebecca Cunnane, Leyla McGlynn.



**Knockminna N.S. Confirmation 2010**

Back Row (L/R): Fr James McDonagh CC Ballymote, Cathal McNulty, Mrs Louise King Principal Teacher, Brendan Muldoon, Shannon Taylor, Fr Gregory Hannan PP Ballymote  
Middle Row (L/R): Darragh Hailstones, Deirdre Kerins, Claire Tansey, Roisín Cawley, Niamh Kerins, Roisín Faughnan, Kerrie-Ann Murtagh.  
Front Row: Most Rev Brendan Kelly Bishop of Achonry.

# Heritage Group 25th AGM

An encouraging, successful and landmark year was reported at the 25th Annual General Meeting of Ballymote Heritage Group which was held in Fawltly Towers, Ballymote, on Monday November 9th, 2009. At the Heritage Weekend, held in the Coach House Hotel, Ballymote, the Group had proudly celebrated a quarter century of its own existence and the existence of *The Corran Herald*, as well as twenty years of Heritage Weekends. The Weekend itself had lived up to all expectations and its lectures and outings were much appreciated and enjoyed by the large audiences. The 25th anniversary edition of *The Corran Herald*, with its 84 pages of its usual broad range of articles and photos, had sold extremely well.

After the meeting and its elections, the Officers and membership of the Group are as follows:

President: Eileen Tighe

Vice-President: Ann Harrison

Chairperson: Des Black

Vice-Chairperson: Carmel Rogers

Secretary: Betty Conlon

Treasurers: Pam Benson and Mary Martin

PRO and Editor of *The Corran Herald*: James Flanagan

Olive Beirne, Mary Black, David Casey, Matilda Casey (Patron), Gerry Cassidy, John Coleman, John Conlon, Anne Flanagan, Brenda Friel, Noreen Friel, Paddy Horan, Gerry Keaney, Jack Martin, John Perry TD, Marie Perry, Nuala Rogers, Michael Rogers.

## Sponsors

Ballymote Heritage Group gratefully acknowledges the generous sponsorship of the Heritage Weekend provided by the following:



Sligo Co Council Community Heritage Grant Scheme 2010

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Tighe's Newsagents

Matilda Casey

Michael and Carmel Rogers

Elizabeth Gilhawley

Jack Martin

