

# DECIES

## JOURNAL OF THE WATERFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No. 64  
2008

Irisleabhar Cumann Seandálaíochta  
agus Staire Phort Láirge

**COMHAIRLE CATHRACH  
PHORT LAIRGE**

**WATERFORD CITY COUNCIL**

The Waterford Archaeological and Historical Society and the editor of **DECIES** gratefully acknowledge the generous sponsorship of Waterford City Council towards the publication costs of this journal.



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*Back Cover:* The Southern Lunette, Ardmore Cathedral.

Courtesy of Dónal O'Connor

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# *Decies 64*

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2008/2009

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## EDITORIAL

**B**A BHREÁ liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le gach éinne a chabhraigh liom iris na bliana seo a fhoilsiú, go háirithe coiste an chumainn agus an coiste eagarthóireachta.

Eddie Synnott typeset and laid out the current issue of *Decies* and once again he deserves the gratitude of the Waterford Archaeological and Historical Society.

However, the greatest debt of gratitude is due to the authors of the articles – the local historians. Without their dedication, perseverance and sheer love of uncovering our history and heritage no local journal would ever make it to the printers. To quote from *The Heritage* by Siegfried Lenz,

The... local historian, the gently agitating mole grubbing through our... past... he teaches me, if not awe then reverence for the eloquent relics of our early times; in the course of years of fanatical collecting, he has transformed his house into a museum of regional history, and there I learn that any understanding of the world must begin at home or end there.

To the ten ‘moles’ who have contributed to this year’s journal – mo mhíle buíochas.

I would like to point out to intending contributors that the final deadline for the submission of articles for *Decies 65* (2009) is 1 May 2009.

Articles received after that date will be held over for publication in the following year’s journal.



# List of Contributors

**Donald Brady** obtained his BA in History and English at NUI, Maynooth. He has been County Librarian in Waterford since 1982 and is particularly interested in the preservation and collation of the historical resources of the county. He was director of the West Waterford Heritage Week in 1991 and 1992, and was co-ordinator of Waterford County Council's Famine Commemoration Programme. He is editor of Handsard's *History of Waterford: Memoirs of the Lives and Characters of the Illustrious Family of the Boyles* and co-editor of *Teacht na bPrátaí Dubha: The Famine in Waterford 1845-50*. He published *A Guide to Waterford Writers* in 2006 and a new edition of Charles Smith's *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford* in 2008.

**Ger Crotty** works as a Maintenance Team Leader with Genzyme Ireland. He obtained a BA in History and Sociology in 2007 from University College, Cork as part of the Oscail programme. He served as an officer in the Reserve Defence Forces from 1993 to 2007 with twenty-eight years service in total. He has a passionate interest in military and Irish history, in particular the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He lives in Portlaw with his wife Bernie.

**William Fraher** is Curator of Waterford County Museum, Dungarvan. He has written extensively on the history and architecture of Dungarvan and contributed to *Decies* and other journals. He has recently completed studies in European Art History at University College, Cork and Museum Studies and Management at the University of Ulster. He is currently researching the country houses and demesnes of County Waterford.

**Patrick Grogan** is a native of Waterford and a retired civil servant. He is currently PRO of the Waterford Archaeological and Historical Society and a committee member of Waterford Music. He is a frequent contributor to *Decies*.

**Linda Hegarty** is an independent archaeological consultant based in Poulcarroll House, Tulligmore, Ballinhassig, Co. Cork. She carried out the archaeological excavations in Kinsalebeg as a Project Director with Headlong Archaeology Ltd. Her publications include contributions to the *Archaeology and the National Roads Authority Monograph Series*.

**Pat McCarthy** was born in Waterford and educated at Mount Sion CBS. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry and an MBA from NUI, Dublin, where he currently lives. He is employed in the pharmaceutical industry and is Correspondence Secretary of the Military History Society of Ireland. He is a frequent contributor to *Decies*.

**Niall O'Brien** is a young farmer from Ballyduff, west Waterford. He is a member of the Co. Waterford Heritage Forum. He has published a local history book in 2008 entitled *Blackwater and Bride: Navigation and Trade, 7000 BC to 2007*. Niall has also published articles in other historical journals. This is his first article in *Decies*.

**Eva O Cathaoir** is a native of Hesse, Germany, and has chosen to spend her life in Ireland. She is a historian specialising in the poor law and the Irish Republican Brotherhood and has contributed to the Wicklow, Clare and Carlow volumes in the *History and Society* county series.

**Dónal O'Connor** was Professor of Old Testament at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth until 1985 when he was appointed parish priest of Ardmore, Co. Waterford. His articles in *Decies* explore the importance of the Déise in twelfth-century Ireland: Lismore under the guidance of Bishop Malchus, as the foremost centre of Church Reform; Ardmore's achievement in architecture and figure sculpture, coinciding with its brief period of diocesan status under Bishop Eugene.

**Julian C. Walton** is a retired schoolteacher and librarian with a lifelong interest in Irish history and genealogy. He is a former editor of *The Irish Genealogist* and of *Decies*, and has written and lectured on many aspects of Waterford history. Since 1994 he has presented on WLR-FM a local history slot, 'On This Day'. He is Consultant in Special Collections at the Boole Library, University College Cork and is associated with Dunhill Multi-Education Centre. He is an avid follower of Waterford hurling.

# Archaeological and Paleoenvironmental Investigations in the Townlands of Shanacoole and Pilltown, Kinsalebeg, Co. Waterford

*Linda Hegarty, with contributions by Eoin Grogan and Helen Roche, Danielle Lyons, Susan Lyons, Dermot G. Moore and Scott Timpany*

***Dept of the Environment Registration Nos: E3566, E3567, E3568, E3569, E3570, E3571, E3572, E3573. Funded by Waterford County Council, Department of the Environment***

## **Summary**

Eight sites were excavated as part of the N25 Kinsalebeg Realignment, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. Three of these sites were of archaeological significance. Area 1 contained the remains of a possible kiln pit. Area 5 consisted of four pits containing flint, hazelnut shell and a fragment of pottery. A curvilinear feature (containing prehistoric pottery) and a small pit were also discovered in Area 5. The remains of two heavily disturbed *fulachta fiadha* were identified and subsequently excavated in Area 6.

## **Site location (Figure 1)**

The N25 Kinsalebeg road realignment comprised the construction of 2.6km of single carriageway road through the townlands of Tiknock, Shanacoole and Pilltown, Co. Waterford. This road scheme differs from the majority of other recent schemes on the national road network in Waterford and adjacent counties in that it was largely an on-line realignment (i.e. a widening of the existing road). The realignment commences at Pilltown Cross and finishes approximately 900m east of Youghal Bridge. The landscape of the route is dominated by the estuary of the River Blackwater to the southwest and west. The topography of the route generally lies on the low (8.67m-12.95m OD), south-facing slope of Shanacoole Hill. Beyond Pilltown Cross at the eastern end of the route the contours rise sharply to Knocknageragh Hill. Three unnamed streams, orientated north-south, traverse the route in Pilltown Townland.

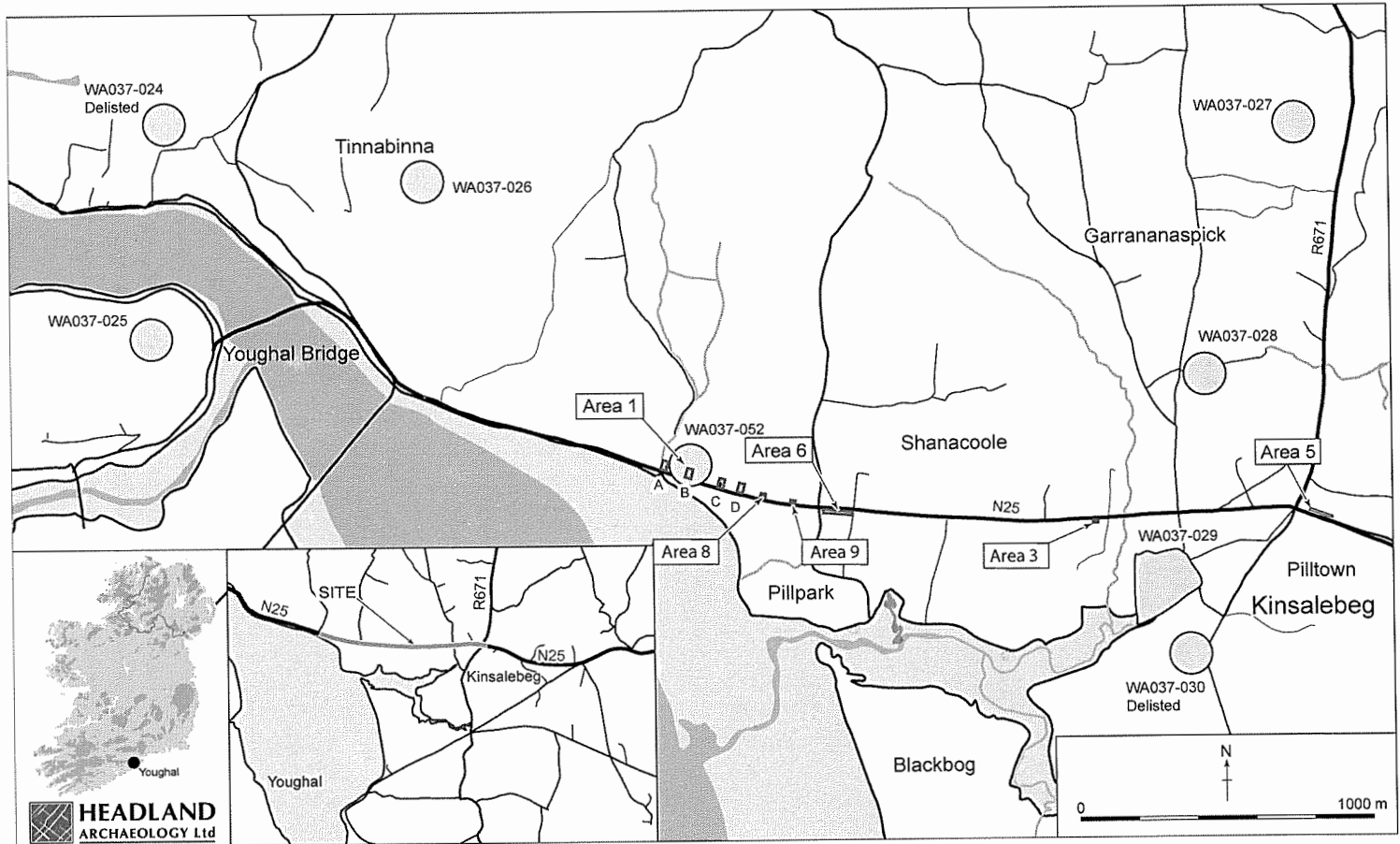


Figure 1: Kinsalebeg, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford – Site location and RMP extract.



## Background

An Bord Pleanála gave approval to Waterford County Council for the improvement of a sub-standard section of the existing N25 national primary route at Kinsalebeg, between the townlands of Tiknock and Pilltown Cross, Co. Waterford. Archaeological test excavations were undertaken in May and June 2005. Archaeological remains identified during the testing phase were resolved in advance of construction in accordance with Directions issued by the Minister for Environment, Heritage & Local Government (scheme reference no. A018/ E3566, E3567, E3568, E3569, E3570, E3571, E3572, E3573). Construction commenced on this road project during September 2005.

Test excavations were carried out along the length of the proposed realignment in advance of construction between May and June 2005. Three site-specific locations were targeted, and centreline testing with regular offset trenches was completed on all residual lands available for investigation. This work led to the identification of eight archaeological areas. An architectural survey was also carried out on two dwellings that were to be demolished during construction.

The project was funded by the Department of Transport under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and the Transport 21 strategy. The total archaeological cost was administered by the National Roads Authority through Waterford County Council. Headland Archaeology Ltd was appointed by Waterford County Council to undertake the works.

## Areas with Archaeological Significance

*Area 1 - Shanacoole, E3566, 553m<sup>2</sup> total, NGR 212500/080250*

Following the removal of the topsoil an oval shaped feature was identified and subsequently recorded. This oval feature measured 2.10m east-west by 0.54m north-south and 0.22m in depth. Surrounding this deposit on the northern and southern edges were stone-lined channels which were U-shaped in profile. They contained moderately compact black-purple sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks and moderate small and medium angular and sub-angular stones (O'Brien 2005, F4). A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal AD 405-556 came from this fill. Some of these stones were partially set in an upright position which overlay flatter stones. These flatter stones were dry built walls with two courses of irregular medium and large angular and sub-angular stone. The upper course was heat-shattered sandstone; the lower course was also sandstone but appeared less heat affected. These stones created three walls: two measuring approximately 1.6m east-west and one 0.8m east-west. They were evenly spaced 0.45m apart north-south. The cut was irregular in profile with gentle sloping sides and an almost flat base. A gentle U-shaped profile was evident on the south side. The western end was level and may have been destroyed by the road and stream. This feature may have been a kiln measuring 1.9m north-south, 3m east-west and 0.22m in depth. (Figure 2; Plate 1)

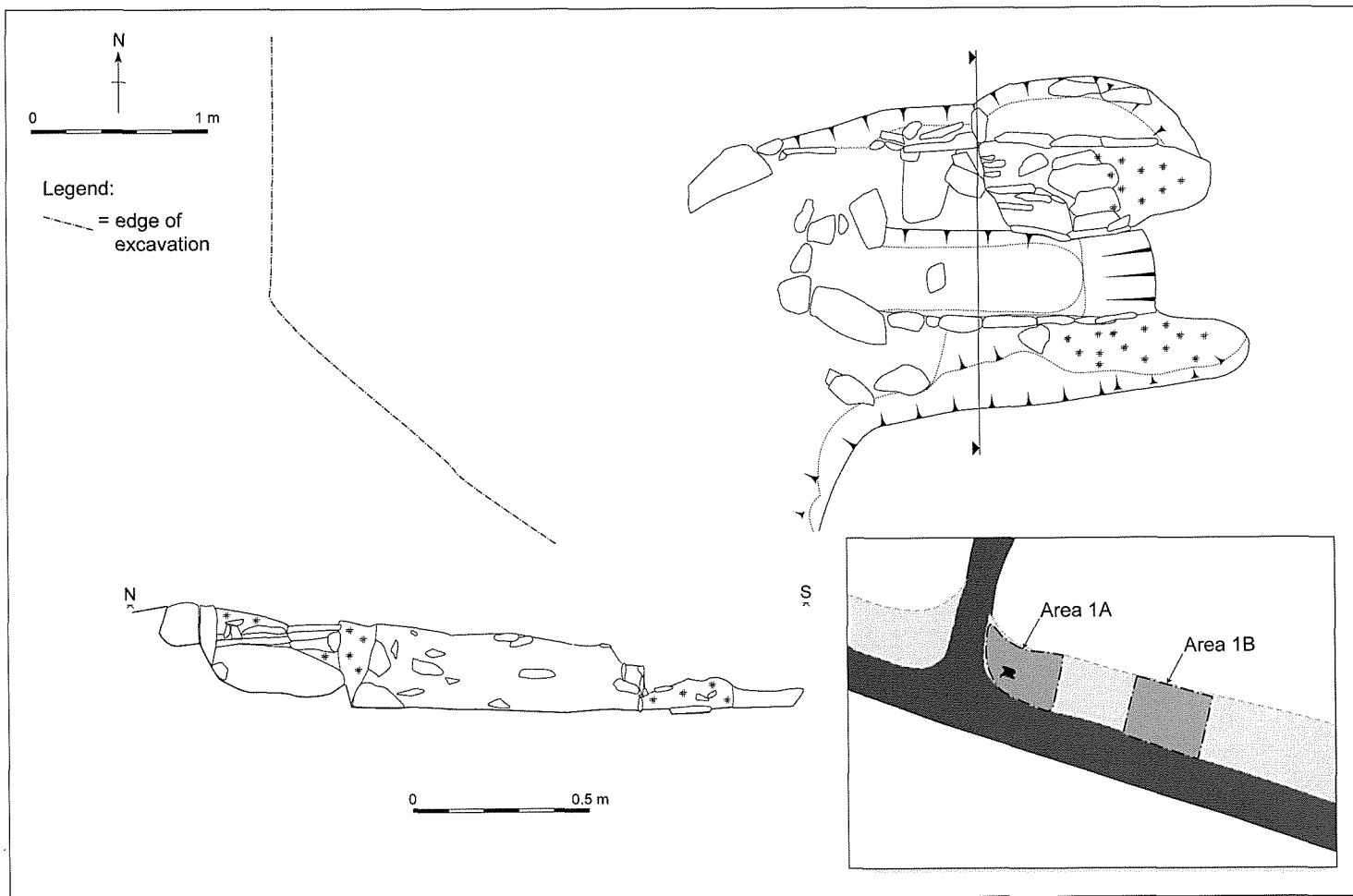


Figure 2: Mid-excavation plan, section and location of kiln.



Figure 2: Mid-excavation plan, section and location of kiln.

A similar sized structure was identified at Crobally Lower, Tramore, Co. Waterford (Tierney 2000). It measured 2.62m by 1.7m and 0.56m in depth and had a double concave base with a narrow ridge. The area between may have worked as a flue in the same way as the stone walling may have functioned in the feature above. These walls were evenly spaced (0.45m apart) suggesting a structural design in the bid to make a kiln. At Castleview, Little Island, Co. Cork a feature was uncovered consisting of 'linear stone-lined features with fills consisting of charcoal-enriched deposits and red, oxidized soil resulting from intense burning. They were between 2.2m and 4.1m long and had an average width and depth of 0.65m and 0.52m respectively.' (McCarthy *et al.* 1999).

At Kinsalebeg, cereal grains were not present within the fills of the possible kiln. No industrial waste (slag, pottery, etc.) was identified at this site which makes interpretation difficult, yet the size and shape of the structure is similar to the kilns described above. A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal AD 405-556 received from the charcoal of this possible kiln places it in the early medieval period. It may be the remains of a larger structure which was heavily truncated during the construction of the roads or by intensive agricultural practices of recent times. Evidence gained from excavation suggests that a fire was burning between the northern two rows of upright stones which created intense heat or hot air flow in the southernmost channel, causing the soil to oxidise. A large dome structure may have been present at the western end of this flue with a raised platform to dry grain, pottery or perhaps to bake, which may suggest the remains of a parallel-flue kiln (Adkins 1982, 280).

The lack of finds may be a direct result of regular cleaning and the deposits being kept away from the kiln itself. A multiple corn drying kiln site at Poundbury near Dorchester, Dorset, England may have similar parallels with Shanacoole. At Kiln 2 at Poundbury, all identifiable items were within the basal fill of the drying chamber and all the samples from the narrow stoking area were relatively unproductive, suggesting that the fuel residue was cleaned out regularly (Monk 1994). The Poundbury Kiln was aligned east-west with its drying chamber at the west, while the possible kiln flue at Shanacoole was also aligned east-west suggesting that a drying chamber may have been located to the west. This comparative analysis reinforces the hypothesis that the area has been disturbed and that any chamber has most likely been lost.

Situated approximately 1.5m northwest from this was a small circular deposit of charcoal rich silt within a ring of burnt clay, measuring 0.54m in diameter and 0.06m in depth. This was very rich in charcoal and had oxidized clay surrounding the fill and at the base. This may have been a waste deposit from a use of the kiln.

Immediately north of the possible kiln was a natural depression that may have been a natural depression filled to level the ground and improve the land. Alternatively it may be an example of a bowl furnace where the contents have been thoroughly cleared out.

Two features were identified in the third part of Area 1 and were small pits with no artifacts or datable material.

Two small pits were identified in the fourth part of Area 1. The first pit was kidney-shaped in plan with gently sloping sides and a rounded base. It measured 0.65m north-south, 0.3m east-west and 0.14m in depth. It contained lumps of heat-reddened clay and burnt stone. The second pit was a small circular shaped pit. No finds were retrieved from either of these pits.

#### *Area 3 - Shanacoole, E3568, 4m<sup>2</sup>, NGR 21300/080250*

An oval-shaped pit was discovered (O'Brien 2005, F15) measuring 0.85m east-west by 0.56m north-south. The fill was shallow (0.02m) and consisted of burnt stones and heavily charcoal-flecked clay. There were traces of *in situ* burning and no finds. This pit may be the remains of a larger pit which has been destroyed by modern agriculture, or it may have been an isolated deposit.

#### *Area 5 - Pilltown, E3569, 734m<sup>2</sup>, NGR 213500/080300*

Four pits were excavated towards the western area of the trench. The first pit was circular in plan measuring 0.7m in diameter and 0.15m in depth. This pit contained occasional flecks of charcoal and very rare flecks of what appeared to be burnt bone. However no burnt or un-burnt bone was discovered during soil sample assessment. In addition, flint and heat-shattered sandstone were found throughout the fill.

Situated immediately to the south was an irregular shaped pit which had a depression at the northeast and southwest and measured 0.9m north-south and 0.75m east-west and a maximum depth of 0.2m. This pit contained small charcoal flecks, moderate amounts of flints and heat-shattered sandstone.

A third pit, oval in plan, was situated approximately 1.3m further west. It measured 0.84m north-south and 0.6m east-west and 0.16m in depth. This pit contained moderately small charcoal flecks. Moderate amounts of flints (a mixed assemblage of debitage, primary workings, waste and naturally shattered) and heat-shattered sandstone were evident throughout. The fourth pit was very irregular in plan. It measured 0.8m north-south and 0.6m east-west and 0.2m at its maximum depth on the southern side. This pit contained two fills with moderate small charcoal flecks, flints (a mixed assemblage of debitage, primary workings, waste and naturally shattered) and heat-shattered sandstone. A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal BC 1952-1745 came from this fill. A primary fill consisted of loose light orange brown silty clay with very occasional flecks of charcoal. A sample from each of these pits was taken, producing charcoal, carbonised hazelnut shell, flint and one fragment of pottery. The four pits identified in the western half of the trench were situated in an area measuring 3m by 2m. All the pits were very similar in shape and size. The fill of the pits was also fairly similar containing a large number of flints totalling 301 pieces and 109 fragments. This assemblage represents a pebble-based industry producing small flakes with many worked into a variety of endscrapers (see Moore below). These pits may have been located on the edge of a larger settlement site which may survive in whole or in part outside the boundary of the Compulsory Purchase Order of the current scheme.

The fills of three pits contained fragments of hazelnut shell; one pit contained a minute fragment of pottery. The hazelnut shell produced a single entity AMS two sigma date of cal BC 1952-1745 placing it in the Early Bronze Age. This date narrows the broad date range gained from the flint.

The second section approximately 100m on the eastern side of this trench revealed an irregular linear feature comprising two main cuts. The first cut was roughly linear in plan and measured 3.3m northwest-southeast and 0.85m northeast-southwest. Its maximum depth was 0.5m. A ridge of natural subsoil measuring 0.25m separated the two cuts. The primary fill contained very occasional flecks of charcoal. A soil sample was taken of this fill and subsequently analysed; charcoal suitable for AMS dating and flint was identified. A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal BC 2883-2621 came from this fill. The depth of this deposit was 0.25m.

The western half of this linear feature consisted of two cuts. The first cut was semi-circular in plan and incorporated the second cut. The western section contained the second cut, around which the sides of the first cut were more gently sloped. The first cut measured 0.84m north-south, 2.2m east-west and its maximum depth was 0.5m. It was U-shaped in profile. The second cut was oval in plan with steep sides and a rounded base. It measured 0.33m north-south and 0.4m east-west. It was 0.2m deep. Several sherds of prehistoric pottery, a fragment of metal and a mixed assemblage of flint (debitage, primary workings, waste and naturally shattered) were found in this fill. The subsequent dating of the pottery to the Early Neolithic indicates that this fill had been disturbed. The curvilinear feature at the eastern side of the trench may have been the remains of a small enclosure, truncated by the construction of the existing N25 road. In this area it was difficult to

determine the difference between the natural subsoil and the fills of the features; in certain areas they appeared very similar. A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal BC 2883-2621 came from the fill of this linear, placing it in the Late Neolithic. A large volume of the topsoil was sieved on site, retrieving occasional flints. All of these features were located on a gentle south-west facing slope which would have been a favoured settlement area in prehistoric times. Therefore these features may have been part of a larger complex and may survive in the remainder of the field.

A possible post-hole was identified and was oval in plan, measuring 0.28m north-south and 0.33m east-west on the surface, narrowing to 0.12m in diameter towards the base. A post-pipe was situated in the centre reaching a maximum depth of 0.25m. Its fill contained 40% sub-angular and angular heat affected stones. A sample of this fill was kept for analysis. It contained moderate flecks of charcoal. A small worked flint flake and a stone with a smooth side were found within this fill.

#### *Area 6 - Shanacoole, E3570, 1119m<sup>2</sup>, NGR 212600/080250*

During the testing of this area two burnt mounds were identified in the northeast and northwest corners of the field. The burnt mound situated in the northwest corner was a shallow spread of heat-shattered sandstone in a matrix of grey-white silty clay (O'Brien 2005, F40). It measured 8m by 9m and its maximum depth was 0.12m. It is generally accepted that such burnt spreads required a substantial amount of water, and they were invariably located near springs, streams or in marshy areas (e.g. O' Neill 2000). The spreads at Shanacoole were no exception as a stream orientated north-south was flowing along the eastern field boundary.

The second burnt mound was situated in the eastern area of the trench and was heavily disturbed by modern interference, causing it to have been dispersed over an area measuring 8m east-west and 7.5m north-south (O'Brien 2005, F41). No trough or any type of cut feature was identified beneath the spread or within the confines of the excavation. It is possible that there was a trough on the periphery of the mound, outside the limit of excavation, and that the waste material was heavily disturbed. Alternatively the mound could represent an example where no trough was ever present. Only one pit remained undisturbed and this showed evidence of *in situ* burning. A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal BC 1606-1414 came from this feature placing it in the Early to Middle Bronze Age.

One undisturbed pit was also identified. This pit was oval in plan and measured 1.54m northwest-southeast and 0.97m northeast-southwest. Its maximum depth was 0.15m. It contained four fills; the primary fill was a very thin lens forming the base of the feature and consisted of compact pink oxidized clay. Overlying this was a very charcoal rich lens, 0.08m in depth. The upper fill contained approximately 70% heat-shattered stone. Abutting this was loose black silty clay with 45% heat shattered stone and frequent charcoal flecks. A single entity AMS two sigma date of cal BC 1606-1414 came from this fill. This feature was shallow (0.15m) and may have been the remains of a hearth. Hearths can be difficult to identify on burnt spread sites due to the waterlogged nature of the site and the later use of the land. In this case, the hearth was positioned on the top of a well drained easterly slope.

A linear feature situated 0.3m southeast of this pit was orientated northwest/southeast. This feature ran under the compulsory purchase order line (CPO) and extended beyond it. It measured 5m in length with its average width 1.2m. The northwest end widened and was almost circular in plan with steep sloping sides to a rounded base. As the feature extended to the southeast, it became more linear shaped.

*Area 8 - Shanacoole, E3572, 465m<sup>2</sup>, NGR 212600/080250*

One archaeological feature was identified (O'Brien 2005, F60) which consisted of a roughly oval shaped pit, measuring a minimum of 1m by 1.35m in diameter. Its fill contained burnt clay and charcoal. A number of stones appeared to be heat-fractured *in situ*. The feature was seen to be very shallow (0.04m). It contained occasional flecks of charcoal. It was very similar to the isolated pits identified in Area 1 and Area 9.

*Area 9 – Shanacoole, E3573, 75m<sup>2</sup> total, NGR 212600/080250*

Three pits were identified (O'Brien 2005, F70, F72, F75); two of the pits had *in situ* traces of burning. The rare flecks of charcoal found were too minute to either identify or date.

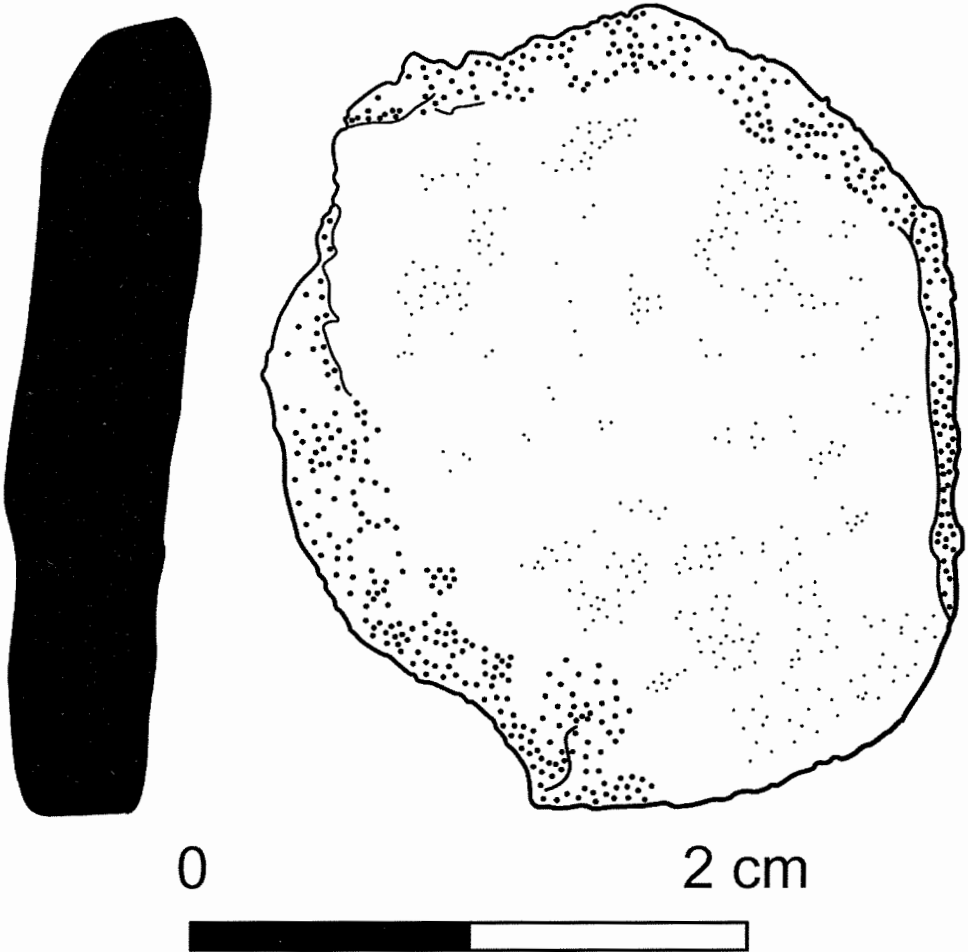
### **Prehistoric pottery**

*E. Grogan, H. Roche and D. Lyons*

This site produced a single sherd (plus six fragments) from an early Neolithic Carinated Bowl (total weight 10g) (Figure 3). This is an important discovery as it is the first record of activity of this date from the west-Waterford/east-Cork area. The sherd was retrieved from two intercutting pits and is a simple angle shoulder sherd and six fragments of brown-buff fabric with a dark brown core; the outer surface is worn and the inner, smooth. There is a medium content of sandstone and dolerite inclusions ( $\leq 2 \times 1\text{mm}$ , up to  $4 \times 2\text{mm}$ ). This material is securely dated to the period *c.*4000 to 3700 BC but has not previously been discovered in this area.

Fired clay was a new medium in Neolithic communities across Europe and is thought to have developed in response to the innovations of cereal food cooking and storage, and to the sedentary way of life that had taken root at the start of this period. The Carinated Bowl is the earliest pottery style found in Ireland and has close parallels with pottery found in eastern and northern England, Scotland and Wales. These vessels are round-bottomed with distinctive shoulders, concave necks and simple pointed or slightly rounded rims. Almost all are open bowls with a mouth diameter as great as or greater than the shoulder diameter with wall thickness of no more than 5-6mm. Decoration is usually absent in these early artefacts apart from some finger-tip indentations in the wet clay before firing. Perforations have also been noted, presumably for the attachment of cords for suspension. Firing of these vessels took place in bonfires and simple pit-kilns, at relatively low temperatures (often to less than *c.*850-1000°C), using a technology that remained

in use for several millennia. The introduction of this pottery type is very closely linked with the development of agriculture and the emergence of many new ideas concerning material culture, technology and social frameworks.



*Figure 3: Kinsalebeg Find 12 – Shoulder fragment of an Early Neolithic Carinated Bowl  
(Illustrated by Scott Harrison)*



## Lithic Assemblage

D. G. Moore

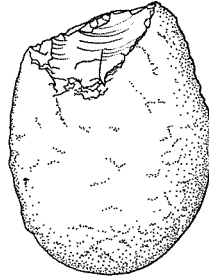
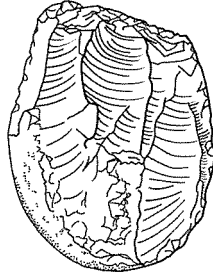
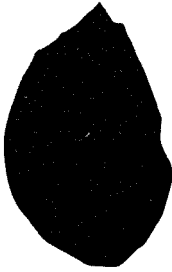
The lithic assemblage consisted of 301 pieces of worked flint and 109 fragments which represent a pebble-based industry for the production of small flakes, many of which were further worked into a range of endscrapers (Figures 4 and 5). All pieces were recovered from a series of small pits, related features and overlying topsoil. The assemblage represents a small range of simple modified flakes and scrapers in association with primary manufacturing debris in the form of cores, flakes, blades, debitage and chunks/spalls.

The assemblage was of fresh condition, showing little weathering, which indicates that at least a portion of it was formally deposited within the pits shortly after its period of use. The material likely dates to between the mid-late Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age based on the type and range of knapping techniques and the quality of the secondary worked material.

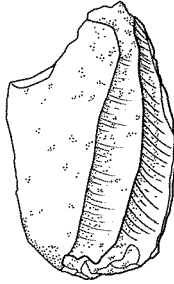
The flint assemblage is notable in three respects: the quality and condition of the raw material is very good with the apparent selection of good quality beach pebble flint; the range of material which forms the assemblage indicates that the industry consisted of the utilization of small beach pebbles for the production of a predominantly flake-based industry; and the location from which the flakes were recovered (an area approximately 6 square metres) indicates the utilization of a primary knapping and tool making area either *in situ* or as refuse material deposited within the pits.

The pebbles used likely originated from coastal beach deposits and appears to have been deliberately selected for a specific colour: grey-black, glassy, high-quality flint. Comparisons with other sites dating to the Neolithic - Bronze Age from the N11 indicate that flint of this colour is a rare occurrence.

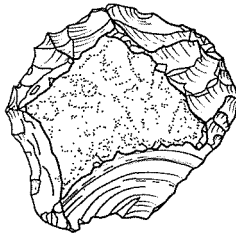
Dual platform cores predominated in the assemblage, with many being fully worked. Portions and flakes were also used to produce flakes and blades. The use of the flint indicates that there may have been a premium on good quality flint raw material. The range of flake and blade lengths corresponds well to the core sizes. There is also evidence of pre-treatment by heating on some pieces. The main knapping technique appears to be one of splitting the original pebbles and then using bipolar reduction to remove flakes and blades. In many cases, indirect percussion appears to have been the preferred method for creating the flakes and blades as shown by the pointed platforms, although many of the secondary worked material especially the scrapers had decortical platforms formed by knapping flakes directly from the original pebbles. There was no evidence of faceted platforms, common in many Neolithic flint assemblages. The predominance of scrapers (particularly small endscrapers) and thumbnail type scrapers within the secondary worked portion of the assemblage indicates that the assemblage was domestic in function, suggesting that the site was possibly a short-term primary preparation site, possibly for hides. The lack of weathering indicates that there was no long-term exposure of a chipping-floor to the elements and that the material was specifically deposited in the pits almost immediately after knapping activity in the area ceased.



Core  
Find no: 6:2



Core,  
Find no: 3:7



Flint Scraper  
Find no: 5:74



Figure 4: Kinsalebeg – Lithics (Illustrated by Sara Nylund)

The flint material recovered from Kinsalebeg represents a relatively substantial and high quality domestic assemblage probably related to some form of hide preparation which was associated with a small series of closely-set pits and related features. The range of manufacturing debris and secondary worked material concentrated within the fills indicate that four pits were the focus of the activity or the focus of deposition of at least a portion of the assemblage. This would suggest that the area and/or the assemblage itself had some special significance. Such formal deposition has been noted at a number of British sites such as at Coneybury Hill in Wiltshire (Edmonds 1995) where Edmonds links the deposition of material in a large pit to connecting the inhabitants of the site to the landscape. This can also be seen at Ballyharry on Islandmagee (Moore 1999; 2003) where lithics and ceramic debris was placed in shallow pits as a final act in the usage of the site. This significance is also shown by the initial selection of good quality flint raw material and the selection of grey-black flint for the production of implements, of which two were found.

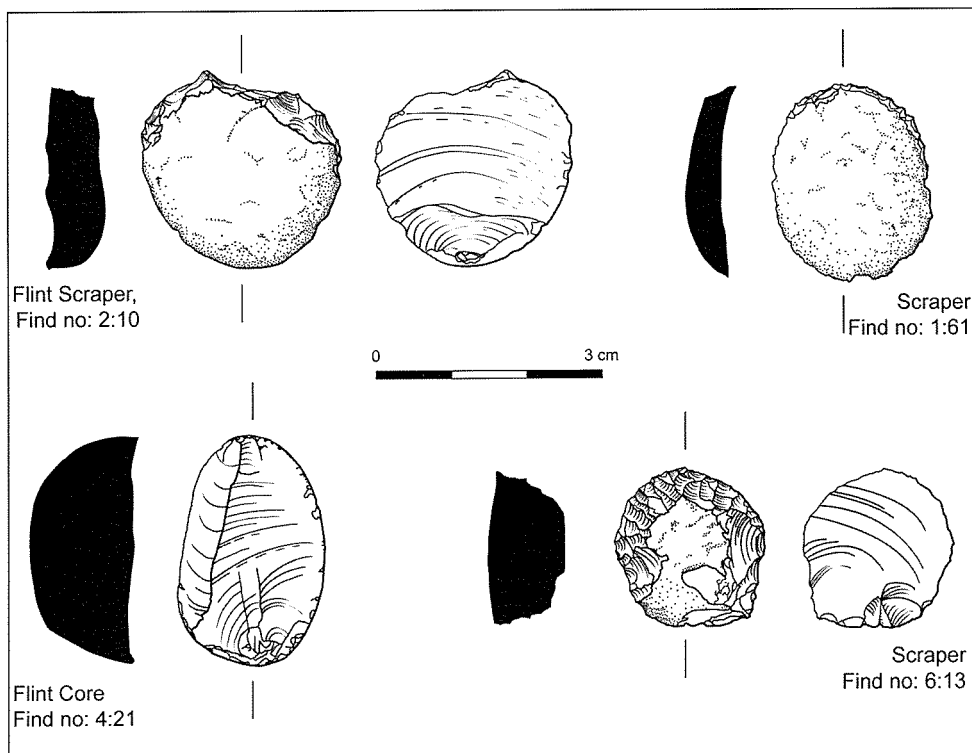


Figure 5: Kinsalebeg – Lithics (Illustrated by Sara Nylund)

## Paleoenvironmental Assessment

*S. Timpany*

A one metre monolith was taken through sediments from Area 7 (Shanacoole, E3571, NGR 212600/080250) for palaeoenvironmental assessment. The stratigraphic sequence contained within the monolith was recorded before sub-sampling for pollen and radiocarbon dating took place.

The stratigraphic sequence recorded within the monolith is a complex sequence of primarily peats and silts representing periods of stable ground surface (peats) and submergence under possible freshwater (silts). The basal layers of the monolith represent a period of stable peat development with a possible phase of inundation represented by a band of grey clay between 88-89.5cm. Radiocarbon dates from the base of this unit suggest there is some contaminating factor to the material presented for dating, with the date from extracted plant material being  $6860 \pm 35$  BP (GU-14484; 5840-5660 Cal. BC) and that from the peat being  $11910 \pm 40$  BP (GU-14607; 11930-11720 Cal. BC). The pollen data suggests that the actual date is somewhere in the middle of these two dates due to the presence of oak in the pollen records, which is generally considered to have colonised southern Ireland at around 9000 years ago (Birks 1989). Overlying this peat layer are two silt layers which are likely to represent another period of submergence. The subsequent sequence shows phases where peat layers have accumulated giving relatively stable ground surfaces and deposited silt layers (Units V, VI, VIII) representing further periods of submergence or fluvially (e.g. riverine) deposited material. A date of  $3845 \pm 35$  BP (GU-14485; 2460-2220 Cal. BC) has been obtained from Unit VII. The top layer of light grey clay indicates the submergence of the site once more, again likely to represent a period of submergence. The skeleton pollen counts from the monolith show that there is generally good preservation of grain, particularly through the peaty layers, although there is some evidence of reworking within the silt and clay layers. There is the potential to provide an environmental history for this part of the early Holocene. The plant macrofossil evidence examined from the dating samples also shows good preservation of fruits and seeds and therefore has good potential for reconstructing the local environment. Comparison of the diagram to those from Lough Ine and Ballyally Lough suggest this sequence represents the later part of the Holocene from approximately 8000 to 4000 BP therefore covering the later Mesolithic through to the early Bronze Age. Buzer (1980) produced tentative evidence for Mesolithic impact on the landscape in this part of Ireland and therefore this monolith does have the potential to investigate further for such impacts, especially with coastal areas known to be important locations for people during prehistory (e.g. Woodman *et al* 1999).

Preliminary archaeological investigations within Areas 1, 6, 8 and 9, at Shanacoole have produced evidence of probable Bronze Age activity including pits containing high concentrations of charcoal fragments and *fulacht fiadh* (Hegarty 2005; Lyons 2005). The Bronze Age period does appear to be contained within the top (35cm) of the monolith collected from Area 7 and therefore there is the potential to examine this period more closely to investigate for anthropogenic

activity in the landscape. The microscopic charcoal on the pollen slides has been observed to contain fragments with surviving structure to be able to identify them as grasses or wood, which has been burnt. Future analysis has the potential to reconstruct the fire history of the area and differentiate whether burning represents grasses (e.g. reedswamp) and/or trees (woodland).

## Discussion

Following the excavation of eight sites as part of the N25 Kinsalebeg Realignment, Co. Waterford, three sites were identified as being of archaeological significance; Areas 1, 5 and 6. The remains of a possible kiln of unknown use and a possible waste pit were recorded on Area 1. Abundant charcoal was dated to the Early Christian Period.

Area 5 consisted of four pits containing flint (a mixed assemblage of debitage, primary workings, waste and naturally shattered), hazelnut shell dating to the Early Bronze Age and a possible fragment of pottery. A curvilinear feature (dating to the Late Neolithic) containing pottery, and a small pit were also discovered at Area 5. The truncated remains of two burnt mounds (*fulacht fiadh*) dating to the Early - Middle Bronze Age, were excavated and recorded on Area 6. The sites are difficult to interpret as the areas of excavation were quite small. The three archaeological sites were evenly spaced along the route, as the route measured approximately 2km in length the sites were still relatively close to one another and may be on the periphery of a larger archaeological complex on this southwest facing slope, favoured by prehistoric settlers.

The vegetation history of the locality has been reconstructed through the analysis of the pollen core. Pollen from the lower levels of the core indicate that an open marshland environment was present into at least the Later Mesolithic Period, and was subjected to periodical flooding and/or submergence. The marsh area was most likely fringed by carr-woodland (willow, birch and oak), this sort of environment would have been attractive to wild animals, such as wild pig and deer, that could have been hunted. By the Late Neolithic the pollen record indicates that the vegetation had changed significantly, with pine, oak and hazel woodland having firmly established itself. This woodland must have been dense as it formed a closed canopy, and the makeup is suggestive of a drier location. This landscape became wetter following this, and further developed after the Late Neolithic and into the Bronze Age with oak, alder and hazel woodland dominating with sedge/reed swamp nearby.

It is clear that the archaeological remains represent a number of different phases of occupation. This is exemplified by Area 5 where fragments of an Early Neolithic Carinated Bowl were discovered in a feature close to a Bronze Age burnt mound (*fulacht fiadh*). The pottery is notable as it dates to c. 4000- 3700 BC and is the first record of activity of this date from west Waterford/east Cork. This pottery type is closely linked with the emergence of agriculture in Ireland. It is believed to have developed to facilitate cereal food cooking and storage - the vessels are round-bottomed with distinctive shoulders, concave necks and simple pointed or slightly rounded rims. They are usually undecorated.

The flint assemblage recovered from the excavation, principally from pits in Area 5, is a further indicator of the longevity of the site. The majority of flints were from high quality beach pebble flint. Typologically the tools could be dated to the period of the mid-Neolithic to Early Bronze Age, and were most probably used for the preparation of hides. There is an indication that the assemblage from the pits could represent formal deposition.

The longevity of occupation in the locality is borne out by the Bronze Age *fulachta fiadh* (Area 6) and the potential early medieval kiln (Area 1). This combined with the earlier features, particularly evident in Area 5, indicates human activity from at least the Early Neolithic to the early medieval periods. Given the restricted nature of the excavations this is a significant date span. It is likely that as yet unidentified Neolithic and Bronze Age habitation sites are located in close proximity to the excavated features, which may represent peripheral working areas. Alternatively these sites may represent sporadic, temporary or seasonal occupation by people attracted to the area due to its proximity to the estuary of the River Blackwater with its rich and diverse food and other natural resources.

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Appendix 1: Kinsalebeg C14 Certificates Chrono 14 Lab, Queen's University Belfast

**Radiocarbon Date Certificate**

Laboratory Identification: UB-7065  
 Date of Measurement: 2006-09-12  
 Site: Kinsalebeg Co. Waterford  
 Sample ID: Corylus avellana  
 Material Dated: Charcoal  
 Pretreatment: AAA  
 Submitted by: Damian shiels

$^{14}\text{C}$  Date: 1586±36  
 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ : -27.0

Corylus av

UB-7065

Radiocarbon Age BP 1586 +/- 36

Calibration data set: intcal04.14c  
 2004

# Reimer et al.

% area enclosed cal AD age ranges  
 under

relative area

probability

distribution

68.3 (1 sigma)

cal AD 428- 465

0.400

482- 534

0.600

95.4 (2 sigma)

cal AD 405- 556

1.000

**Radiocarbon Date Certificate**

Laboratory Identification: UB-7066  
 Date of Measurement: 2006-09-12  
 Site: Kinsalebeg Co. Waterford  
 Sample ID: Corylus avellana  
 Material Dated: Charcoal  
 Pretreatment: AAA  
 Submitted by: Damian shiels

$^{14}\text{C}$  Date: 3525±39  
 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ : -25.0



Corylus av

UB-7066

Radiocarbon Age BP 3525 +/- 39

Calibration data set: intcal04.14c

# Reimer et al.

2004

% area enclosed under	cal AD age ranges	relative area probability
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distribution

68.3 (1 sigma)	cal BC 1911- 1868	0.362
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	1847- 1775	0.638
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95.4 (2 sigma)	cal BC 1952- 1745	1.000
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**Radiocarbon Date Certificate**

Laboratory Identification: UB-7067

Date of Measurement: 2006-09-12

Site: Kinsalebeg Co. Waterford

Sample ID: carbonised hazel

Material Dated: Carbonised hazelnut shell

Pretreatment: AAA

Submitted by: Damian shiels

$^{14}\text{C}$  Date: 4160±41

$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ : -26.0

carbonised

UB-7067

Radiocarbon Age BP 4160 +/- 41

Calibration data set: intcal04.14c

# Reimer et al.

2004

% area enclosed under	cal AD age ranges	relative area probability
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distribution

68.3 (1 sigma)	cal BC 2872- 2847	0.159
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	2844- 2840	0.023
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	2813- 2692	0.745
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	2689- 2678	0.072
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95.4 (2 sigma)	cal BC 2883- 2621	1.000
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**Radiocarbon Date Certificate**

Laboratory Identification: UB-7068

Date of Measurement: 2006-09-12

Site: Kinsalebeg Co. Waterford

Sample ID: Betula sp.



Material Dated: Charcoal  
 Pretreatment: AAA  
 Submitted by: Damian shiels

<sup>14</sup>C Date: 3215±39  
 $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ : -28.0

Betula sp.

UB-7068

Radiocarbon Age BP 3215 +/- 39

Calibration data set: intcal04.14c

# Reimer et al.

2004

% area enclosed                      cal AD age ranges                      relative area  
 under

distribution

68.3 (1 sigma)	cal BC 1514- 1441	1.000
95.4 (2 sigma)	cal BC 1606- 1573	0.062
	1558- 1550	0.012
	1538- 1414	0.925

Site Name	Townland	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Description
Area 1	Shanacoole	231	Poss. burnt mound
		314	Poss. burnt mound
		4	Irregular shaped pit
		4	Oval shaped pit
Area 2	Pilltown	359	Burnt mound
Area 3	Shanacoole	4	Oval shaped pit
Area 5	Pilltown	734	7 pits and an irregular shaped spread
Area 6	Shanacoole	1119	2 <i>fulachta fiadh</i> type spreads and 2 pits
Area 7	Shanacoole	386	Marl deposit with angular stones and a peat lens sealed by a re-deposited clay
Area 8	Shanacoole	465	Oval shaped pit
Area 9	Shanacoole	25	Irregular shaped pit
		25	Circular pit
		25	Irregular shaped pit.

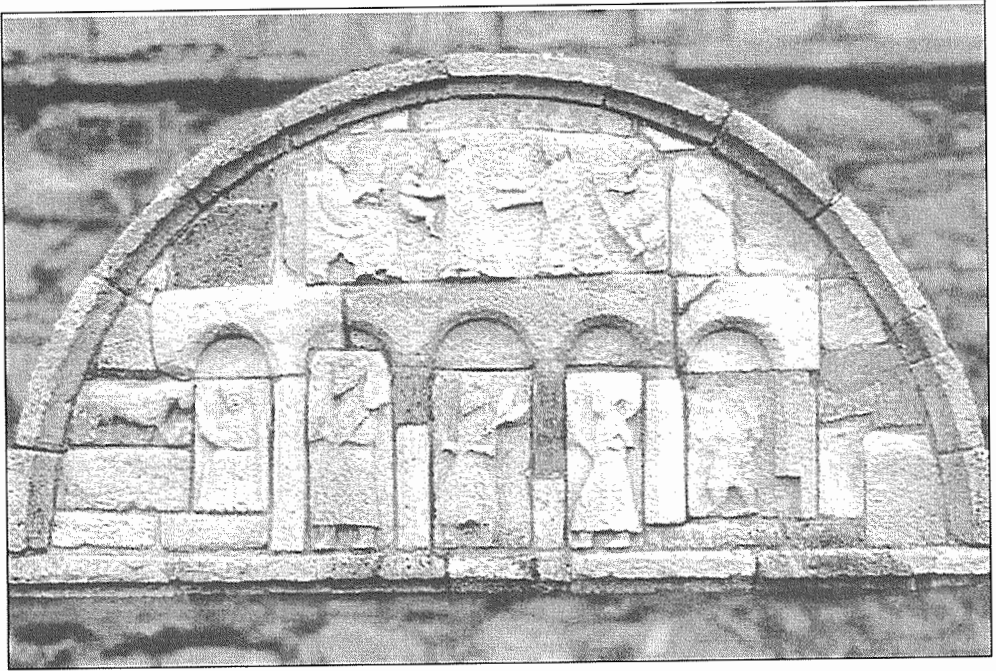
**Table 1.** List of areas archaeologically resolved.

<i>Lab No.</i>	<i>Context/Reference</i>	<i>Delta 13C rel PDB</i>	<i>Radiocarbon Age BP</i>	<i>Calibrated age ranges 1σ cal AD</i>	<i>2σ cal AD</i>
UB-7065	004	-27.0	1586±36	428-465	405-556
UB-7066	009	-25.0	3525±39	1911-1775	1952-1745
UB-7067	013	-26.0	4160±41	2872-2678	2883-2621
UB-7068	005	-28.0	3215±39	1514-1441	1606-1414

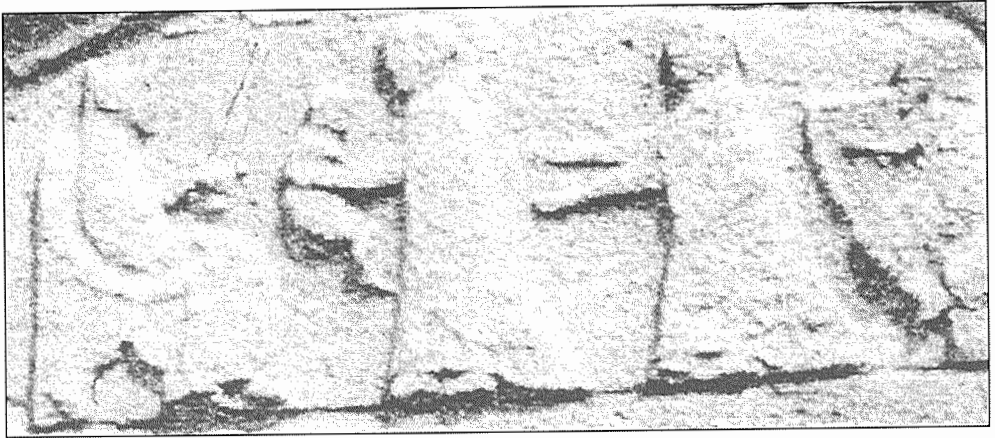
**Table 2.** Radiocarbon Dates

<b>Primary Material</b>	
Cores	33
Flakes	88
Blades	10
Chunks/spalls	51
Debitage	100
Fragments	109
<b>Secondary Material</b>	
Simple modified pieces	3
Scrapers	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>

**Table 3.** Lithic material from Kinsalebeg



*Plate 1: The Southern Lunette, Ardmore.*



*Plate 2: The Solomon Stone, Ardmore.*

# The Iconography of the Southern Lunette in Ardmore Cathedral, Co. Waterford

*Dónal O'Connor*

## Introduction

This article deals only with the southern lunette in the external west wall of Ardmore Cathedral, a building, the completion of which is recorded in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, which also records the death of its builder Mael Etáin Ua Duibhe Ratha, the *uasalshagart* (noble priest) of Ardmore, in 1203. Alongside the obituary in the same annals comes that of another important Déiseach, Art Corb Ua Faeláin, Rí na Néssi (King of the Déisi) who died the same year.<sup>1</sup> The Déisi were a people whose territory, called na Déise (in English: Decies) had, in its heyday, embraced all of the present Co. Waterford and part of South Tipperary.

These two notices, by an unusual co-incidence, point to the twin pillars of the Decies – the religious and political: the Church of Declan, the patron of the Decies, and the princely family of Ó Faoláin (to use the modern form of the name), who, thirty years after they swore fealty to King Henry II (1172), were still being honoured in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, with the title Rí. And we may surmise that their political strength was a factor that helped Ardmore receive diocesan status sometime between 1152, when Ardmore's request for a bishop was not acceded to at the Synod of Kells, and 1172 when an unnamed bishop of Ardmore swore fealty to Henry II.

So, in the final thirty years of the twelfth century the people of the Decies had their kings and their diocese. They also had a bishop named Eugene. He was a man of learning who had connections with the great centres of culture like Kells, Co. Meath, where he grew up, and with Lichfield in England where he served as suffragan bishop in 1184/85, and where his remuneration of 5s. a day is recorded in the Pipe Rolls of Henry II.<sup>2</sup> Lichfield was the see of St. Chad whose illuminated *Gospel Book* was its greatest artistic treasure. This sumptuous illuminated manuscript, dating from the second half of the eighth century, is considered to have been influenced stylistically by the *Book of Lindisfarne*.

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1 Sean Mac Airt (ed.), *The Annals of Inisfallen*, (Dublin, 1951), p. 333.

2 *Pipe Roll Society* xxxiv (London, 1913), 'Pipe Roll 30, Henry II', p. 24.

Plate 3a: Throne of Virgin and Child,  
Book of Kells.



Plate 3b: Solomon Stone,  
Ardmore.

And Eugene also took a scholarly interest in that great luminary of Lindisfarne – St. Cuthbert, as we are informed by an unnamed Northumbrian scribe who was writing a little book (*Libellus*) on the birthplace of that saint just at the time Eugene was serving in England.

This bishop presided over the Ardmore church in the final quarter of the twelfth century and, with Uasalshagart Ua Duibhe Ratha and others, oversaw the extension of the building which was completed just before the year 1203 and which is unique in Ireland for the many figure sculptures which adorn its western wall, and which may have been inserted into that wall some decades after 1203.

I have treated these two introductory topics at greater length in two articles published in *Decies*.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Solomon Stone (The Judgement of Solomon)**

The Solomon Stone is ‘unique in Ireland, the only one that can surely be identified either from the twelfth century or earlier.’<sup>4</sup>

It is also unique in that it contains both Solomon and David as part of the same scene.<sup>5</sup> The Solomon Stone in the southern lunette (Plate 2) contains five sculpted human figures – Solomon seated on a throne holding up a large sword; the child, who is facing the woman who is holding him out towards the king; the other woman with her hands extended; finally King David the Psalmist playing his harp. The presence of David is puzzling, since the biblical story of Solomon’s Judgement does not involve him. Indeed, it was only after the death of King David that Solomon ‘sat on the throne of David his father’ (1 Kings 2:12). But David was ‘greater than Solomon’; he was the founder of the dynasty, and it was to David that the Lord promised that ‘your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me’ (2 Sam 7:16). So, the throne on which Solomon sits is the throne of David, as Solomon himself acknowledges: ‘Now therefore as the Lord lives, who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father...’ (1 Kings 2:24). We may note, in parenthesis, that Luke alone of the four evangelists uses the expressions ‘the throne of David’ and ‘the house of David’. In the angelic salutation: ‘The Lord will give him the throne of this ancestor David’ (Luke 1: 61), and in the Cantic of Zachariah ‘[The Lord God] has raised up a horn of salvation for

3 Dónal O’Connor, ‘Eugenius, Bishop of Ardmore and Suffragan at Lichfield (1184-5)’, in *Decies* 60 (2004), pp. 71-90; ‘Bishop Eugene of Ardmore Revisited’, in *Decies* 63 (2007), pp. 23-33.

4 S.L. McNab, ‘The Romanesque Sculptures of Ardmore Cathedral’, in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 117 (1987), p. 66, (henceforth abbreviated as *JRSAI*).

5 Peter Harbison, ‘Architectural Sculpture from 12th Century Ardmore’, in *Irish Arts Review* (1995), p. 97.

Plate 4: Angel, Book of Kells.

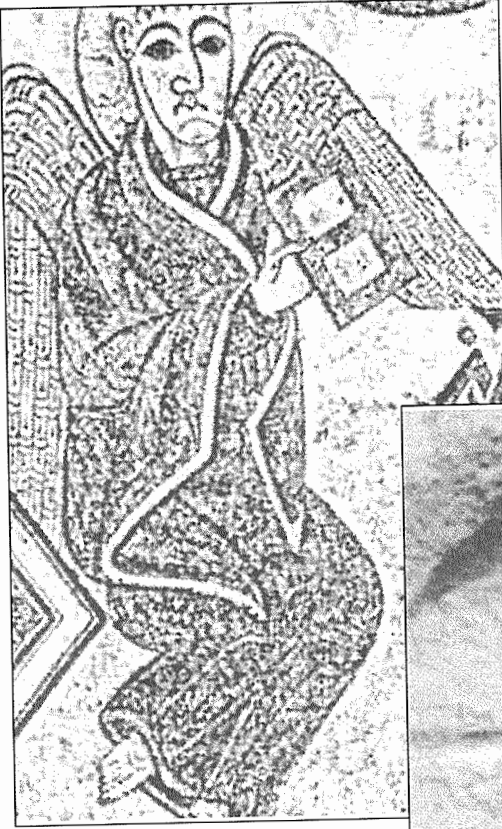


Plate 5: The Virgin enthroned and crowned, Ardmore.



us in the house of his servant David' (Luke 1:16). The importance of the throne on which Solomon sits derives not from Solomon, but from his father David. And the Ardmore sculptor acknowledges this by including the figure of David in the unique iconography of the Solomon Stone.

If we look again at the throne we can agree with the shrewd observation which Thomas J. Westropp made over a hundred years ago: it is 'a massive throne, with curved arms, bossed upright back and a trefoil arched space underneath'.<sup>6</sup> The right-hand arm of the throne curves down so as to give freedom of movement to the sitter's right arm, and then curves upwards so as to provide a hand-rest at the level of the sitter's knee.

There is an interesting similarity between the Ardmore throne and the throne of the Virgin and Child in the *Book of Kells* (Plate 3). In both cases we see the deep curve on the arm at the sitter's right, and also the high back-rest and the decorated base.

In the Solomon Stone there is a marked contrast between the massive throne on the left and the small high stool on which David is seated on the right. The seat of the stool slopes downwards and the sitter's feet rest on a foot support some inches above floor level. Whereas the sculptures of David on Irish High Crosses show him seated normally, the Ardmore stone shows him in an unusual posture not unlike that of the angel shown in the *Book of Kells* (Plate 4), seated on a slanting stool, with his legs tucked beneath him. David's feet do not touch the ground. Like the angel, he is not part of the earthly scene anymore. He is a celestial being whose throne is now occupied by his son Solomon, but whose influence spans the centuries until the birth of Christ who will inherit his throne.

### **The Son of David**

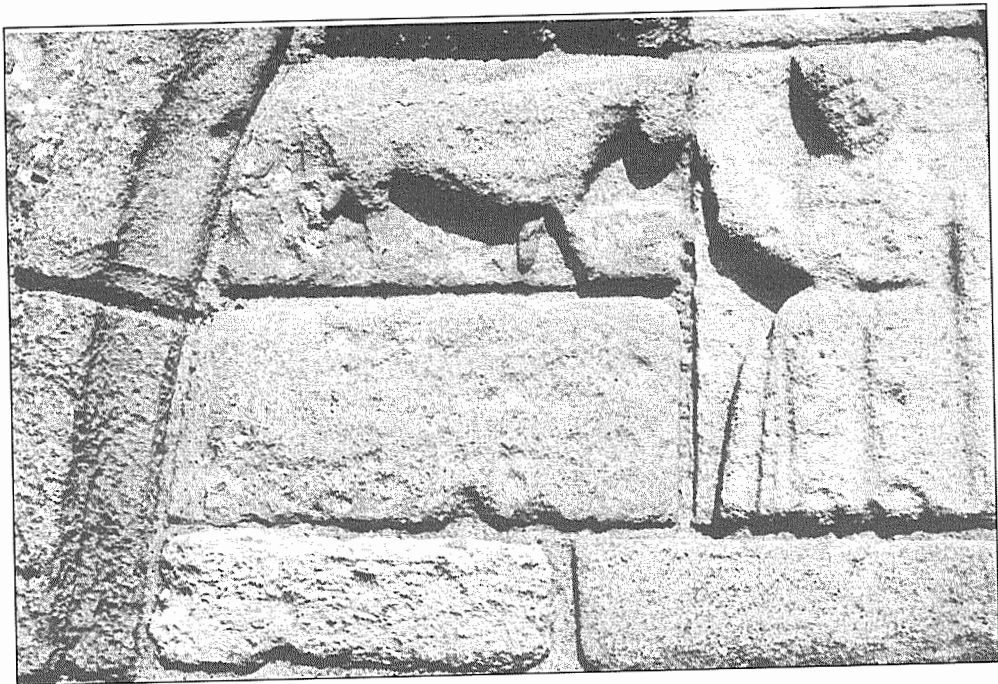
The title 'Son of David' applies not only to Solomon but also to Christ who is presented in the Infancy Narrative as the royal son of David (Matthew 1:1; 2:2). And, at this point, one may opine that the throne of David in the lunette is relevant not only to the Solomon panel but also to the throne on which the Virgin and Child are seated in the sculptures beneath the Solomon Stone.

### **The Enthroned Virgin and Child**

Ardmore has the only sculpted Virgin and Child in the Ireland of its time, showing the Virgin crowned and enthroned (Plate 5). The nearest equivalent in pictorial art is the Virgin and Child in the *Book of Kells*. The Kells image also has the crowned and enthroned Virgin with the Child on her lap, and the deep curve on the right arm of the throne.

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6 Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'Notes on the Antiquities of Ardmore', in *JRSAI* xxxiii (1903), p. 368.



*Plate 6: The calf, representing St. Luke, Ardmore.*



*Plate 7: Book of Lindisfarne.*

The Ardmore Virgin and Child is the most charming piece in the southern lunette; note the graceful folds on the Virgin's gown. It is quite small (10cm X 32.5cm). In style and scale it is closer to the Solomon Stone than to other human figures adjacent to it, sometimes referred to as the Magi, figures which are larger and older, and may have served in a different context prior to their present awkward setting in the lunette.<sup>7</sup>

Theologically the Virgin and Child panel is the companion of the Solomon Stone: both are showing a son of David (Solomon, Christ) seated on the throne of David in the harmony of the Old and New Testaments, fulfilling the promise that 'the Lord God will give him [Jesus] the throne of his father David' (Luke 1:32).

### **The Lucan Ox and the Gospel Book**

The bovine figure next to the Virgin and Child panel is probably the evangelistic symbol of St. Luke with its right foot touching the Gospel of that evangelist. If this is the case then Ardmore holds another rare, if not, unique, iconography in the Irish sculpture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In pictorial art the Lucan Ox is represented in the *Books of Armagh*, *Kells* and *Durrow* but without the Gospel Book, whereas in the *Book of Lichfield* (the Gospel of Chad) and the *Book of Lindisfarne* the Lucan Ox is accompanied with his book, which the right foot of the ox is touching, as also in the Ardmore sculpture..

On the Irish High Crosses there is no assured presentation of the Lucan symbol with one possible exception, the Cross of Saints Patrick and Columba in Kells, Co. Meath, where, on the head of the west face of the cross, Christ in Glory stands in the centre and is flanked on either side by an animal, each holding the book of his gospel: on the left, the winged Lion of Mark, and on the right the winged Ox of Luke.<sup>8</sup> Peter Harbison, however commenting on F. Henry's view which agrees with that of H. Roe, objects that 'neither of these carved animal shows a particularly lion or ox shape.'<sup>9</sup> But granted the small carving space available to the artist which requires that both animals are portrayed in a crouching position, this is not surprising; the presence of the book in each case is, however, suggestive of evangelistic symbolism.

7 S.L. McNab, 'The Romanesque Sculptures of Ardmore Cathedral', in *JRSAI* 117 (1987), p. 60.

8 Helen M. Roe, *The High Crosses of Kells*, (Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, 1966), Second Edition, p. 22; Hilary Richardson and John Scarry, *An Introduction to Irish High Crosses*, (Cork, 1990), p. 40; F. Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period*, (London, 1965), p. 164.

9 Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, Vol. I, (Bonn, 1992), pp. 110, 111.

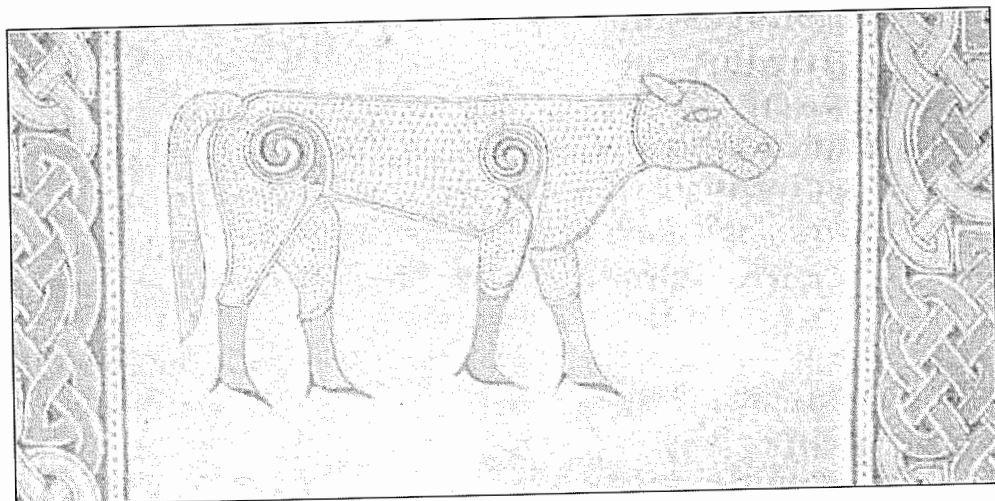


Plate 8: Book of Durrow.

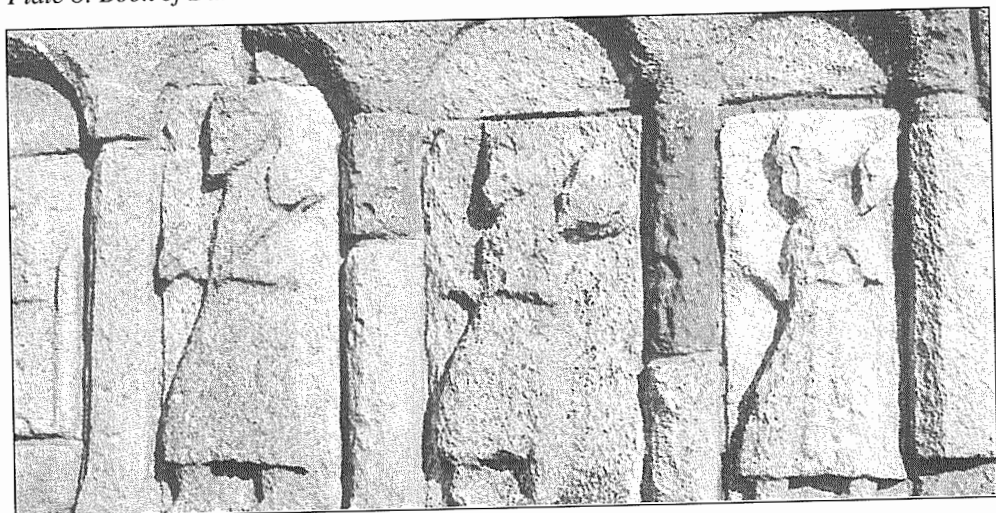


Plate 9: Ardmore.

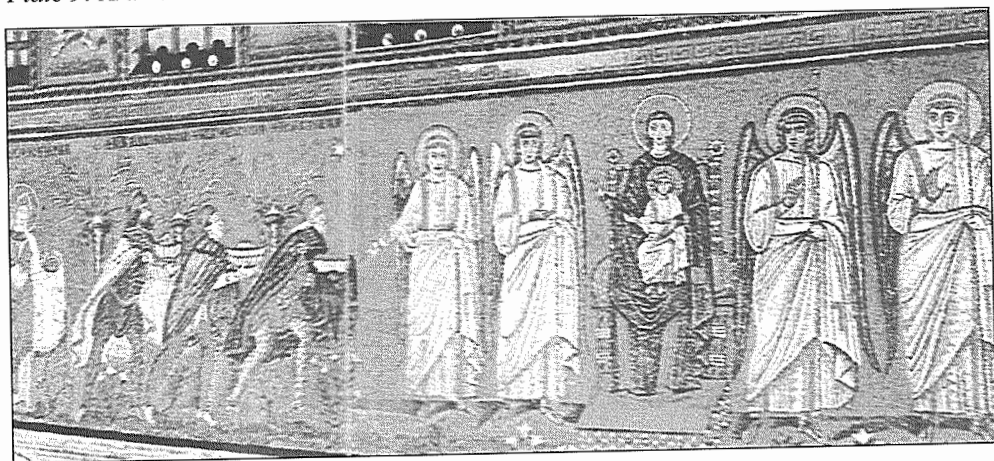


Plate 10: Sant' Appollinare Nuovo, Rome.

## The Lucan Ox

Harbison's study of the architectural sculpture in Ardmore examines all the scenes in the south lunette except the bovine sculpture<sup>10</sup> and S.L. McNab's study of the same sculptures describes this sculpture briefly: 'a somewhat bovine animal... carved in profile, facing right'.<sup>11</sup> Neither Harbison nor McNab refer to the square object in front of the animal. Tadhg O'Keeffe in both his studies of the Ardmore sculptures treats of the southern lunette's figures of The Judgement of Solomon, The Adoration of the Magi, the Virgin and Child, but not the bovine figure.<sup>12</sup>

If we look back a century earlier we find T.J. Westropp identifying the animal as 'possibly an ox', and also drawing attention to the block in front of it which 'may have been intended for the sculpture of the ass'.<sup>13</sup> Earlier, R. Brash had interpreted the animal as 'a figure of a cow, which I have little doubt is intended to symbolise some significant early Irish mythology of the Bovine Cultus'.<sup>14</sup> Another view, that of Charles Smith,<sup>15</sup> saw elements of a Jewish sacrifice in the scene, but neither Brash nor Smith received endorsement from more recent scholars.

The presence of the Lucan symbol so close to the enthroned Virgin and Child may relate to Luke being the only evangelist to refer to the throne of David: 'The Lord God will give him [i.e. the Christ] the throne of his ancestor David' (Luke 1:32). Luke's calf thus serves to link David in the top panel to Christ in the lower one. David is thus powerfully present throughout the whole lunette in a complex and subtle iconography. Both David and the Lucan symbol are not marginal ornaments but may be central to the iconography of the lunette.

Thus the animal that seems to intrude into the Virgin and Child panel is probably the calf symbolising St. Luke the Evangelist. At its front feet is the Gospel Book (Plate 6). The image of the calf is naturalistic – no wings and no halo. In this respect it is very similar to the Lucan calf to which the *Book of Durrow* devotes a whole page (Plate 8).

10 Peter Harbison, 'Architectural Sculpture from the Twelfth Century at Ardmore', in *Irish Arts Review* (1995), pp. 97-101.

11 S.L. McNab, 'The Romanesque Sculptures of Ardmore Cathedral', in *JRSAI* 117 (1987), p. 64.

12 Tadhg O'Keeffe, 'Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture at Ardmore Cathedral, Co. Waterford', in William Nolan and Thomas P. Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society*, (Dublin, Geography Publications, 1992), pp. 73-104; *Romanesque Ireland*, (Dublin, 2003), p. 370.

13 Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'Notes on the Antiquities of Ardmore', in *JRSAI* xxxiii (1903), p. 370.

14 R. Brash, *Irish Builder*, 1 April 1873, p. 90.

15 Charles Smith, *The Antient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford*, (Dublin, 1746), p. 46.

The Gospel Book is missing from the Durrow image (Plate 8), but the *Book of Lindisfarne* in its great Lucan page, shows the calf holding the Gospel Book between its front feet (Plate 7). It also shows the calf leaping over the head of the Evangelist so closely that its midriff actually dips below Luke's halo, and the same is true of the Lucan calf in the Lichfield Gospels. The suffragan Bishop of Lichfield and his retinue may have been influenced by both these books.

### **Procession of The Three Dignitaries / The Magi**

The three figures in procession have evoked a variety of interpretations. Back in 1746 Charles Smith could only say that the figures 'were so defaced that it is impossible to distinguish what they were designed for.'<sup>16</sup>

In 1898 the Rev. Patrick Power (later Canon Power) saw in them a reference to the Dedication of the Temple of Solomon and cited the biblical reference III Kings viii which related to the procession of the priests and Levites carrying the Ark of the Covenant, in the presence of the elders of Israel and the heads of the tribes, from the old city of David up the hill to the Temple of Solomon for the dedication ceremony. Patrick Power, then would seem to identify the three male figures in procession as the lay leaders of Israel attending the Dedication of the Temple.<sup>17</sup>

In 1903 Thomas J. Westropp says simply: 'The three figures with crowns and sceptres, and bearing objects in their hands are the Magi'.<sup>18</sup> In 1931, however, Canon Power returning to the subject he had treated over thirty years previously, now named the figures as the Magi, in the scene the Adoration of the Magi<sup>19</sup> but giving no reason for his changed opinion. 1987 saw the publication of a detailed study of the Ardmore west wall sculptures by S.L. McNab to which I shall return later.<sup>20</sup> Then in 1995 came an article on Ardmore sculptures from Peter Harbison,<sup>21</sup> whose monumental three volumes on the Irish High Crosses devoted detailed analysis to the scenes of the Adoration of the Magi on the High Crosses, a study which enriched his interpretation of the Ardmore sculptures when he came to them later.<sup>22</sup>

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16 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

17 Patrick Power, 'Excursion Guides II – Ardmore', in *Journal of the Waterford and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society* IV (1898), pp. 153-162.

18 Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'Notes on the Antiquities of Ardmore', in *JRSAI* xxxiii (1903), p. 370.

19 Patrick Power, *Ardmore-Deaglain: Its Founder and Early Christian Memorials*, (Dublin 1931), p. 27.

20 S.L. McNab, 'The Romanesque Sculptures at Ardmore Cathedral, Co. Waterford', in *JRSAI* 117 (1987), pp. 50-68.

21 Peter Harbison, 'Architectural Sculpture from the Twelfth Century at Ardmore', in *Irish Arts Review* (1995), pp. 97-102.

22 Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, Vol. I, (Bonn, 1992).

His article from 1995 refers with great respect to the early view of Canon Power in 1898: ‘almost a century ago Canon Power suggested that they (i.e. the three male figures) represented those attending the Dedication of Solomon’s Temple, a long-ignored identification which now deserves greater respect in view of the number of other Solomon scenes possibly present in Ardmore.’<sup>23</sup> Harbison sees traces of Solomonic themes in several of the panels in the arcades above the two lunettes and clearly he favours Canon Power’s early identification.

Part of his argument dismissing the identification of the three processional figures as the Magi is that

the front figure neither kneels nor even bends the knee in veneration before the Christ child. The Madonna and Child group towards which they walk does not belong to an Adoration of the Magi scene, as the Virgin faces us and not them, so that The Virgin and Child must have been an independent group of statutory.<sup>24</sup>

To appreciate this final point one would have to turn to Harbison’s much fuller treatment of the Adoration of the Magi scene on the Irish High Crosses, where he shows that this scene is represented by two very different types of crosses. Type I with the Magi standing behind or beside the Virgin; Type II with the Magi approaching from one side, as in Muireadach’s Cross at Monasterboice. This shows the Virgin seated in profile on the left with her face towards us and with the child diagonally on her lap, while the first of the Magi stretches out his left hand to grasp the child.<sup>25</sup> The Virgin is seated in profile and the four figures approaching her are also in profile, while she holds out the child to them. In Ardmore, on the other hand, the Virgin and the throne on which she is seated face the viewer and she is not holding out the child to the approaching figures, and this convinces Harbison that the Ardmore *Virgin and Child* is a panel not thematically linked to the processional figures, which, he thinks relate to a Solomonic theme. There is however, in Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna (sixth century), a mosaic in which the three Magi, in profile, approach the Virgin and Child who are enthroned and facing the viewer as in Ardmore (Plate 10). However, whereas the Ravenna Magi bow in a reverential posture, the Ardmore figures remain erect, lacking the reverence one expects in a Magi scene.

And so Harbison may be correct in rejecting the identification of the three dignitaries as Magi, but whether they were part of a Solomonic theme is unclear.

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23 Peter Harbison, ‘Architectural Sculpture from the Twelfth Century at Ardmore’, in *Irish Arts Review* (1995), p. 97.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, Vol. I, (Bonn, 1992), pp. 242-45.

And so too I think that S.L. McNab was correct, when in 1987 she argued that the three figures in the Ardmore sculpture 'did not originally represent an enactment of the Adoration of the Magi.'<sup>26</sup> She is correct in saying that the Virgin is rather small in scale if she is to be related to the processing figures, and her stone had to be raised to the required height by the additional plinth of the horizontal stone underneath.<sup>27</sup> Moreover the panel of the processing figure next to the Virgin is 2 inches taller than the panels of the other two and so is made to intrude rather crudely into the circular space above it.

I would suggest, however, that whoever arranged the sculptures in their present position in the southern lunette may well have been aware of the incongruities which McNab and Harbison refer to, but because of the very troubled political and religious situation at the time of Ardmore's decline may have decided to make use of the only panels available to him and so insert the horizontal stone beneath the Virgin and Child and likewise the two stones underneath the Ox, and the horizontal stone beneath the male figure on the extreme right (see Plate 1), and to use the three processional figures (making the required adjustments for the taller one), which may have originally come from a different scene, as an approximation, as it were, to the Magi.

The resulting assembly of panels beneath the Solomon Stone means that all six panels are brought into line with each other and form one continuous narrative in which the Virgin and Child are being approached from both sides, namely by the Lucan symbol on one side and the three processing dignitaries (suggesting the Magi) on the other.

He may, further, have considered the small figure on the right of the Magi to represent St. Joseph, who was 'of the family of David', and so was appropriately placed underneath his ancestor, thus completing the Throne of David theme which permeates the southern lunette.

Although this article is concerned only with the problems of the southern lunette, one may advert, in passing, to serious infelicities in the arcade of thirteen arches immediately above the lunettes, in which some of the panels are unsuitably placed – again an indication that these panels were probably inserted in the period of Ardmore's decline, perhaps several decades after the completion of the cathedral.

How a community like Ardmore, which had commissioned the magnificent round tower and fine Romanesque church (Phase II of the three phases of the cathedral) could countenance such crude arrangements of statutory on the west wall of Phase III church is difficult to understand unless this took place in the period of political and ecclesiastical upheaval in the 1200s which saw the decline of Ardmore.

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26 S.L. McNab, 'The Romanesque Sculptures of Ardmore Cathedral', in *JRSAI* 117 (1987), p. 61.

27 *Ibid.*



## Appendix

### The Decline of Ardmore

Right from the beginning of the 1200s Ardmore was adversely affected by the extension of Norman control in the ecclesiastical and political life of the Déise.

#### *The Ecclesiastical Scene*

In the ecclesiastical context the bishops of the Anglo-Norman city of Waterford tried to take over the native Irish bishopric of Lismore. Thus, in 1201, Bishop Robert I of Waterford, a friend of King John of England, banished Bishop Felix of Lismore, who appealed to the papal legate who had just arrived in Ireland. But when Felix, weary from the whole business, suddenly retired, the legate availed himself of the opportunity and appointed Bishop Robert I as bishop of the sees of Waterford and Lismore. But the clergy and people of Lismore refused to accept the legate's decision, elected one of their own. Abbot Malachy, as bishop, and appealed to Rome. But the Bishop of Waterford captured Malachy and imprisoned him. Then Malachy escaped, arrived in Rome, where Pope Innocent III had him consecrated Bishop of Lismore and set up a commission to censure Bishop Robert, who conveniently died in 1204. Malachy was left in peace in Lismore – but only for a short while because the next Bishop of Waterford – a Welshman named David, took the offensive against Lismore in 1205, but was assassinated in 1207 or 1209 by the Ó Faoláin of the Déise. The next Bishop of Waterford carried on the offensive as before and committed the sacrilege of dragging Bishop Malachy of Lismore out of his cathedral while he was conferring holy orders, stripped him of his vestments and imprisoned him in Dungarvan, where ‘Bishop Robert himself helped the smith to secure the iron fetters on Bishop Malachy’s hands and feet.’<sup>28</sup> He later escaped but was nearly assassinated soon after by an agent of the Bishop of Waterford.

These dreadful events and others are well documented and they paint a sad picture of the unholy turmoil in which the once great school of Lismore ceased to function. While one cannot condone the violence inflicted on the bishops of Lismore one must acknowledge the real grievance of the Waterford prelates: their diocesan territory was far too small. Way back in 1096, when the Norse-Irish of Waterford received their first bishop, Malchus, the bishopric of Waterford was then quite small, consisting of the walled city and its immediate environs.<sup>29</sup> But when

28 M. Sheehy, *When the Normans Came to Ireland*, (Cork, 1998), p. 77. Sheehy's *magnum opus* – *Pontifica Hibernica: Medieval Papal Chancery Documents, 640-1261*, (Dublin, 1962), gives the Latin texts of the papal documents dealing with the Waterford – Lismore disputes, and also the letter of Pope Innocent III mentioning Ardmore as a diocese (6 April 1210).

29 See Dónal O'Connor, ‘Malchus (1047-1135) Monk of Winchester, First Bishop of Waterford’, in *Decies* 61 (2005), pp. 123-50.

the Anglo Normans conquered Waterford in 1170 they extended the city walls and they acquired territory all across the Déise. The small city bishopric of Malchus's time was no longer sufficient for the newcomers. And likewise, the Normans who captured Dublin (which, like Waterford had been a Norse-Irish city) absorbed the diocese of nearby Glendalough in 1216, in order to expand their diocesan territory.

Adding further to the sorrows of Lismore was an event which took place in 1218 when an Englishman, Robert of Bedford, was elected Bishop of Lismore, and was consecrated having obtained the English king's licence. From now on we find that the English kings had a voice in the Lismore appointments, and had control of the bishop's temporalities.<sup>30</sup> This trend continued until 1363 when the last Bishop of Lismore, Thomas le Reve (who was to become Chancellor of Ireland in 1367) became bishop of the united sees of Waterford and Lismore. This union of Lismore and Waterford continues to the present day.

Where did Ardmore stand in all this trouble? Once the practice of appointing Englishmen to the bishopric of nearby Lismore started in 1218 and continued for the rest of that century and beyond, Ardmore's days as a diocese were numbered. As Aubrey Gwynn wrote: 'The new English bishop of Lismore would have no interest in the Irish Community at Ardmore, and would also be jealous of Ardmore as a church which had only recently become a bishopric.'<sup>31</sup> The last mention of Ardmore as a bishopric occurs in a letter from Pope Innocent III, dated 6 April 1210, in which 'Lismore, Ardmore and Waterford' - in that order - are listed among the suffragan sees of Cashel. There are no further references to the diocese of Ardmore in any surviving source. The diocese of Ardmore was absorbed into Lismore some time after 1210, and before 1305, when it is listed as a simple church in the diocese of Lismore.<sup>32</sup> With the coming of Robert to the see of Lismore in 1218, we need not be surprised if it was he or his successor who suppressed the diocese of Ardmore.

### *The Political Scene*

In the *Annals of Inisfallen* two obits for the year 1203 are of special interest, One is for the *uasalshagart* who died 'having completed the church of Ardmore', the other is for Art Corb Ua Faeláin, Rí na Néssi (King of the Déisi).<sup>33</sup> Here we have side-by-side, the two pillars of the Déise - the ecclesiastical and political leadership, the bonding between whom is celebrated in the twelfth-century *Life of Declan*. It was from the king of the Déise that Declan was said to have obtained

30 H. Cotton, *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae*, Vol. I, Munster, (Dublin, 1851), pp. 162, 163.

31 Aubrey Gwynn, 'Some Notes on the History of Ardmore', in *Ardmore Journal* 10 (1993), p. 16.

32 *Ibid.*

33 Sean Mac Airt (ed.), *The Annals of Inisfallen*, (Dublin, 1951), p. 333.

the gift of the land on which his community settled,<sup>34</sup> and Declan is supposed to have presented the another chief of the Déise to St. Patrick for a special blessing for the prosperity of his kingdom.<sup>35</sup> But, to move on to the twelfth century, it is most likely that the Ó Faoláin, as kings of the Déise, gave their patronage to the Ardmore community rather than to Lismore, which enjoyed the more powerful patronage of the two Munster royal families, the MacCarthys and their rivals the O'Briens. And the people of the Déise saw Lismore as the preserve of these two, with many of its abbots coming from Kerry. Ardmore, rather than Lismore, was the spiritual centre of the Déise.<sup>36</sup>

This sentiment, namely that Ardmore was the spiritual centre of the Déise is an echo of an ancient logion (attributed by Declan's twelfth-century biographer to St. Patrick): 'Declan Patraic na n-Desi, na Desi ag Declan go brath',<sup>37</sup> meaning that Declan is to the Déise what Patrick was to Ireland and that the people of the Déise belong to Declan for all time.

To St. Patrick also was attributed a prophecy which said that the young man, Fergal MacCormac, who was inaugurated as King of the Déise 'is brave in battle, and his kingdom will prosper. And so it will be with the chiefs [Latin, duces; Irish, Ríghu] of the Déisi through time. (This prophecy about the chiefs of the Déisi continues to be fulfilled)'.<sup>38</sup>

### King John's Letter

By the year 1204, however, this prophecy proved to be false, when the last King of the Déise, Domhnall Ua Faeláin, who had succeeded Art Corb Ua Faeláin already mentioned, was required by King John of England to surrender the province of Dungarvan. The king's letter, in Latin, is translated by Kenneth Nichols<sup>39</sup> as follows:

The King etc. to our beloved and faithful M. [Meyler] Fitz Henry, Justiciar of Ireland, greeting. You have informed us by your letters that Donevald Huffeld [Domhnall Ua Faeláin] has quit-claimed to us

34 Charles Plummer (ed.), 'Vita Sancti Declani', in *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, (Oxford, 1910; Repr. Dublin, 1997), Vol. II, p. xix.

35 *Ibid.*

36 F.J. Byrne, 'The Trembling Sod: Ireland in 1169', in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A New History of Ireland*, Vol. 2, (Oxford, 1987), p. 32.

37 Charles Plummer (ed.), 'Vita Sancti Declani', in *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, (Oxford, 1910; Repr. Dublin, 1997), Vol. II, p. xix.

38 *Ibid.*, p. xix. English translation from Liam de Paor, *St. Patrick's World*, (Blackrock, Co. Dublin, 1993), p. 258.

39 William Fraher, *Dungarvan Historic Guide and Town Trail*, (Dungarvan, 2004), pp. 1, 3.

one of the three cantreds that he holds of us at present, and that he retains the other two, one for life and the other to his heirs. And because it seems to our council to be much to our advantage, we order you (if you so advise, and if the said Donevald Uffeld shall give good hostages and make full security to you for observing his fidelity to us) to take one of the said cantreds into our hands, namely the province of Dungarvan, and to cause all the natives and fugitives to return, together with their chattels and their followers. The other two cantreds he is to hold as before. And when you notify us that you have done this, then we will make our charter to him accordingly as you have told us.

Witnessed by the Bishop of Norwich [John de Gray] at Geddington [in Northants], the 31st day of August 1204.<sup>40</sup>

The very disturbing situation in the Dungarvan province is clear from this letter, in that a section of the native population had already fled their homes, bringing with them their belongings in the face of the take-over by the Normans. The Gaelic ownership of the land had been transferred to Anglo Norman / royal ownership. Not only that but fugitives from outside, who had taken refuge in the province of Dungarvan, now felt they had to move further away. The justiciar is ordered to ‘compel’ them to return, because, presumably, ‘the substantial immigrant population of tenants and townsmen’ now being drafted into the Déise were not sufficient to work the land. In this situation, ‘the native aristocracy suffered worse.’<sup>41</sup>

And chief among the native aristocracy of the Déise was Donal Ó Faoláin, last ‘Rí na nDéise.’ And he died soon afterwards, 1206, and on his death the second of his cantreds passed to the crown, and his heirs were left with only one.

And this ended whatever patronage the native aristocracy gave to Ardmore.

40 Thomas Duffus Hardy (ed.), *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, Vol. I, (London, Record Commissioners, 1833), p. 6, Close Rolls, 6th year of King John [1204-5], membrane 18.

41 Adrian Empey, ‘Anglo-Norman County Waterford, 1200 – 1300’, in William Nolan and Thomas P. Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society*, (Dublin, Geography Publications, 1992), p. 136.

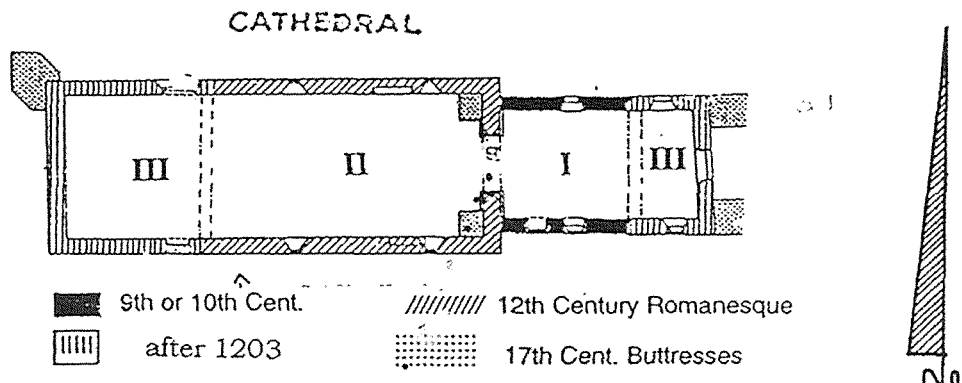


Plate 11.

### Conclusion

Ardmore's decline, outlined above occurred right from the start of the 1200s, the worst period being from 1201 to 1218.

In the year 1218 the impoverished community of Ardmore could look across the Déise and two bishoprics – one in Waterford and the other in Lismore, both ruled by Englishmen, who had little sympathy for Irish tradition. The take-over of the Ardmore diocese by Lismore probably happened shortly after 1218 with the consequent loss of cathedral status for the Ardmore church, which, in the papal taxation for the period 1302-6 is listed as 'the church of Ardmore, in the diocese of Lismore, worth 8 pounds sterling. Taxation 16 shillings.'<sup>42</sup>

Subsequent to its loss of cathedral status the Ardmore church became incorporated into the parochial system. Although when exactly this took place is not known. Fr. A. Gynn mentions some papal letters from c.1450-85 which refer to the church of Ardmore as a 'perpetual vicarage' of the diocese of Lismore, a designation given to many of the older Irish churches in the medieval period.<sup>43</sup>

If S.L. McNab is correct in dating the final phase – Phase III – of Ardmore church to the period *after* 1203,<sup>44</sup> then this extension of the former cathedral (which, in the Irish tradition, had been quite small) may have been required to accommodate the larger congregation of a parochial church.

42 Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'Notes on the Antiquities of Ardmore', in *JRSAI* xxxiii (1903), p. 360.

43 Aubrey Gwynn, 'Some Notes on the History of Ardmore', in *Ardmore Journal* 10 (1993), p. 15.

44 S.L. McNab, 'The Romanesque Sculptures of Ardmore Cathedral', in *JRSAI* 117 (1987), p. 55; Dónal O'Connor, 'Bishop Eugene of Ardmore revisited', in *Decies* 63 (2007), pp. 23, 24. S.L. McNab is the only author I know of who favours the post-1203 date for the completion of the church at Ardmore.

And the crude arrangement of the panels in the southern lunette would hardly be countenanced by the Ardmore community who had commissioned the magnificent round tower and Romanesque cathedral (i.e. Phase II) in the period 1150-1203. A date sometime in the 1200s would suggest itself for the insertion of the panels, which may have taken place years after the building of the Phase III church, and in a period in which the Ardmore church was altogether without an educated clergy.

This sad situation would be understandable if we accept Canon Power's view that Ardmore never had a regular monastery but 'an association of secular clerics'<sup>45</sup> whose training may have been neglected, especially during the great upheavals of the 1200s. We may visualise them the local laity of Ardmore trying to maintain some semblance of piety around the tomb of Declan and the church.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the Board of Trinity College, Dublin for permission to reproduce images from *The Book of Kells* and *The Book of Durrow*.

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45 Patrick Power, *Ardmore: Its Founder, Early Christian Memorials*, (Dublin, 1931), p, 13.

# The Estate of Maurice Brown of Rathmoylan: Its Origins and Descent

Niall O'Brien

## Introduction

The parliament of Richard III held in 1484 was dominated by the supremacy of the eighth earl of Kildare. He got subsidies, materials and labour for building work at his manor of Kildare and the new castle of Castledermot. General legislation saw major reform of the Irish coinage, with a new standard and provision for its acceptance across the lordship of Ireland. Other acts dealt with law enforcement and the regulation of church property. The twenty-sixth act passed concerned the county Waterford property of Maurice Brown, a citizen of Waterford city.

Maurice Brown was the son of Nicholas Brown who had died sometime before 1484. He left Maurice the three townlands of Rathmoylan, Knocknapaddin and Ballyloughbeg, along with possible other property in Waterford city. Also before 1484, Maurice received lands belonging to his cousin William, who was the son of Milo Brown. These lands were at Corballymore, Corballybeg and Ballynakill, with all their appurtenances.

In the days before the land registry recorded property, people went to their local manor court or borough corporation. As Maurice was a citizen of Waterford, he got the feoffment of William Brown written in an *inspeximus* and sealed under the mayoralty office of the city to show anybody who questioned his rights to the land. But Maurice still felt insecure with his new property. There was a need to get higher authority than the mayor and so prove his ownership beyond doubt. Maurice, therefore, sent a petition to parliament with the intention of having an act of that parliament passed confirming his title.

The first session was held on 19 March 1484 in Dublin, with the second session at Naas on the 28 June or 30 August 1484 (the statute roll is damaged and so the date of the second session is undetermined at this stage). Maurice is likely to have attended one or both sessions, as the *inspeximus* was shown to the parliament and some personal lobbying of MPs wouldn't have gone astray. The unlawful state of county Waterford was cited as the major reason for the act of parliament and Maurice feared 'that certain persons of the county will enter upon him contrary to the law'. It is possible Maurice feared some of his own cousins, as the 'certain persons' who would seek to dispose him of the lands given by William Brown. By the act a £10 fine could be imposed on any trespassers with Waterford's mayor and bailiffs judging any action of debt. For Maurice, the act confirmed himself and his heirs to the six townlands.<sup>1</sup> However, in spite of the lawless state of the area, the mayor of the city, James Rice together with the bailiffs got a licence to go on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

1 Philomena Connolly (ed.), *Statute Rolls of the Irish Parliament Richard III–Henry VIII*, (Dublin, Four Courts Press for the National Archives of Ireland, 2002), pp. 38 - 41.

The six townlands which made up Maurice's estate were situated in five divisions along a north-south corridor from the River Suir at Waterford city to the coast near Tramore. At the north end is Ballynakill, which lies alone on the south side of the Suir between the city and Little Island. To the south is Ballyloughbeg on the west side of Belle Lake, in the centre of Gaultier Barony and is separated from Ballynakill by other lands. The third division is Rathmoylan, which lies on the coast between Tramore and Dunmore East, at Swines Head. The two Corballys lie together on the east side of Tramore Back Strand and south of the Glendudda River. They are separated from Brownstown, to the south, by the townland of Lisselty. This article will give an outline history of the Brown estate before 1484, and its descent by different owners to *Griffith's Valuation* in 1850.

### **Ancestry of the Estate before 1484**

The first Brown connection with any of the six townlands was Reginald Broun with Rathmoylan in 1318. He acquired 15 acres of it without royal licence from William de Stapletoun and Robert Christofre, who had it as tenants in chief from the king. Previously, 30 acres of Rathmoylan was owned by David le Waleys in 1283 which seems to be a third of the townland. Ralph de Hampton held the other two parts which came into the king's hand owing to Ralph's death before 1302. Sometime after his appointment as sheriff of county Waterford, Robert de Stapilton acquired David de Waleys' two parts. With Robert's removal from office in 1293, the land came to the king, as the escheator of Ireland accounts for the rent from it in 1302. Later the Stapleton family got repossession of Rathmoylan and passed it to Reginald Brown, without getting a licence to do so. As a result, Reginald didn't secure title from the government for many years as the escheator still collected rent from Rathmoylan up to 1328.<sup>2</sup>

The Stapleton family could have given it to Reginald because of Robert's previous activities against the Brown family while he was sheriff. Robert held three counties (Cork, Tipperary and Waterford) when sheriff and employed a determined administration to keep all well. But some Waterford people felt Robert had more personal ambitions for acquiring wealth and they lodged a series of petitions in 1290 against him. Among the petitioners were Reginald Brown and his brother, David. According to Reginald, Robert coveted his lands, worth 100 marks, and had him placed in Dungarvan Castle until Reginald sold them for 20 marks. Robert de Stapleton's defence was that Reginald had interfered with the sheriff's business and was imprisoned as a result. Reginald's brother David owed 4½ marks to the king to which Robert de Stapleton is said to have levied 18½ marks out of hatred. The petitions were sent to the King's Council in England but they couldn't reach a judgement and so asked the Justiciar of Ireland to investigate further.<sup>3</sup> It is unclear what the outcome was. Later Reginald had mixed relations with the government,

2 Tom Nolan, 'Medieval Waterford VI: Calendar of Documents Relating to Gaultier from 1250 to 1350 from the Notebooks of Feardorcha Funnell', in *Decies* 14 (1980), pp. 61-5.

3 H.S. Sweetman, *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland*, Vol. 3, pp. 311, 313, 337.



paying fines for conspiracy in the early months of 1302 and towards the year's end delivering some debts of the county sheriff to Dublin.<sup>4</sup>

As for the other five townlands, Ballynakill was held by the heirs of Thomas FitzAnthony until 1290 and the family still paid taxes on the property in 1292 and 1296. John de Weyland acquired the rents of Ballynakill before 1290 from his father, who held them around 1260.<sup>5</sup>

The townland of Knockanpaddin was owned by Thomas de Northampton and he gave it in 1330 to his cousin, Adam, son of Henry de Northampton. It therefore can not have come to the Brown family until a later date. I have not found any information on Corballymore, Corballybeg and Ballyloughbeg. Reginald or David Brown could have owned some or all of these lands from an early date. Perhaps research in the future will throw more light on this subject.<sup>6</sup>

It is possible that by 1400, all six townlands were owned by one member of the Brown family. On his death, he could have split the estate between his two sons. If so, then Maurice and William may have been first or second cousins. Many families during the fifteenth century and after wished to keep their lands in the family, and so if William died without male issue then Maurice could have succeeded as the nearest male relative.

#### **Descent of the estate from 1484 to 1850**

Maurice Brown didn't long enjoy his new estate because within a generation, the estate began to break up. William and David Brown lived at Rathmoylan in 1536 but Laurence Dobbyn had already acquired Ballynakill.<sup>7</sup> The Dobbyn family held Ballynakill up to the Cromwellian forfeitures. The *Civil Survey* records Peter Dobbyn holding 253 acres or half a ploughland there. Peter died in 1651 and his widow, Beale Wadding (daughter of Thomas Wadding of Kilbarry), married the Cromwellian grantee, Colonel Thomas Ceely and secured the property for her son William. Thus the property stayed in the family until Hannibal Dobbyn sold it in 1788 to Nicholas Power and went to America. Nicholas' son, Nicholas Mahon Power of Faithlegg owned 1,000 acres at Ballynakill at the time of *Griffith's Valuation*. Later a cousin of Hannibal, Robert Caesar Dobbyn brought back the townland and the family lived there until the late twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

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4 *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 29, 40.

5 Tom Nolan, 'Medieval Waterford VI: Calendar of Documents Relating to Gaultier from 1250 to 1350 from the Notebooks of Feardorcha Funnell', in *Decies* 14 (1980), p. 62; Edmund Curtis, 'Sheriff's Accounts of the Honor of Dungarvan, of Tweskard in Ulster, and of County Waterford, 1261-63', in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 29 (1929-31), p. 3.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

7 Patrick C. Power, *History of Waterford City and County*, (Dungarvan, De Paor Books, 1998), p. 53.

8 Patrick Grogan, 'An Old Waterford Graveyard and the Dobbyns of Ballynakill', in *Decies* 61 (2005), pp. 173-86; Geraldine Tallon, (ed.), *Court of Claims Submissions and Evidence 1663*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2006), number 230; Henry F. Morris, 'The Principal Inhabitants of County Waterford in 1746', in William Nolan and Thomas P. Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society*, (Dublin, Geography Publications, 1992), p. 317.

The other two townlands of Maurice Brown's original estate, Corballymore and Corballybeg were divided between different owners in the sixteenth century until they came back to one owner as evidenced by *Griffith's Valuation* in 1850. Richard Archdeacon of Corballymore got a grant forever of that townland and other property in 1611. It is likely that this was more a regrant and simply confirmed Richard's previous possession. Five years later, Richard's lands were granted to Sir Adam Loftus and Sir John King as part of a general effort by a new order to usurp the old families. This new grant didn't have the desired result here as in the *Civil Survey*. Peter Archdeacon held Corballymore and lived there holding 237 acres or one ploughland. At the Cromwellian transfers, the townland passed to Sir Charles Wheeler who shortly after passed it to Henry Aland, who held it in the early 1660s. Henry's son, also called Henry died without issue and his lands passed to his sister Sarah Aland, who had married Edmund Fortescue of London about 1650 and so Corballymore came into the possession of the Fortescue family. Yet for most of the eighteenth century, the land was leased to the family of Thomas Wyse. In the early nineteenth century, Hugh Fortescue built a house there called Summerville. By 1850, Earl Fortescue held Corballymore and his family continued to do so until after the 1903 Land Act.<sup>9</sup>

Corballybeg had passed from the Brown family in the sixteenth century and according to the *Civil Survey* was in the possession of John Aylward of Faithlegg. Here he had 268 acres or three quarters of a ploughland. In the 1650s it was given to Sir Charles Wheeler. He passed on the townland in the same manner as Corballymore so that Edmond Fortescue owned it in the 1660s. He gave both townlands to his son, Edmond who took the name of Aland with Fortescue. This Edmond died unmarried in 1704 and the property went to his brother, Lord John Fortescue-Aland of Credan. John was created Lord Fortescue of Credan in 1746 and died later that year. His son Dormer became the second and last Lord Fortescue of Credan and when he died unmarried in 1780, his property passed to his second cousin, Lord Fortescue of Castle Hill. This latter gentleman was father of Hugh Fortescue, who was created Earl Fortescue in 1789. His son, Hugh succeeded in to the earldom 1841, as well as inheriting various other properties in England and Ireland. It was the second earl who owned three of Brown's townlands listed in *Griffith's Valuation* (the third being Knockanpaddin as below).<sup>10</sup>

The three townlands of Rathmoylan, Knockanpaddin and Ballyloughbeg which Maurice Brown got from his cousin stayed in the family until the mid-sixteenth

9 Matthew Butler, *The History of Gaultier*, (Waterford, 1913), pp. 64-8; R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-56, Co. of Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), p. 155; J.S. Carroll, 'Land Ownership in East Waterford, 1640-1703', in *Decies* 11 (1979), p. 38; T.N. Fewer, *Waterford People: A Biographical Dictionary*, (Waterford, Ballylough Books, 1998), pp. 54-5.

10 R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-56, Co. of Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), p. 155; J.S. Carroll, 'Land Ownership in East Waterford, 1640-1703', in *Decies* 11 (1979), p. 38; information on *Griffith's Valuation* is from [www.waterfordcountylibrary.ie](http://www.waterfordcountylibrary.ie) information of the Fortescue family from [www.fortescue.org](http://www.fortescue.org)

century when they came into the possession of different owners. Rathmoylan was managed in three divisions since 1283 and possibly long before that. James Sherlock of Gracedieu held two parts of it and got a regrant of same from King James I in 1609. He seems to have divided the townland between two of his daughters. One daughter married Peter Aylward of Faithlegg, the grandfather of Sir Peter Aylward of same. By an agreement in 1639, Sir Peter Aylward gave the Aylward third, with other lands, to his cousin John FitzMatthew Aylward and his wife, Margaret, daughter of William Dobbyn of Ballynakill, for life. The other daughter, Ellen, married the same William Dobbyn of Ballynakill and his son Peter held the other third of Rathmoylan in the *Civil Survey*. The final third of Rathmoylan was held by Thomas Wadding of Kilbarry in 1654. The Wadding family had an interest in Rathmoylan since before 1611 by the grandfather of the above Thomas, who was also called Thomas. All three parts contained 176 acres or half a ploughland and were equal in every way.<sup>11</sup>

At the Cromwellian forfeitures, the full townland passed to Sir Charles Wheeler and he gave it, like the other Brown lands, to Henry Aland. By another daughter of Henry, the property passed to the Mason family and John Mason took the Aland name to acknowledge the gift. In 1739, Aland married Elizabeth Villiers, Viscountess Grandison of Dromana, and Rathmoylan passed to their only son, George Mason-Villiers, second Earl of Grandison. George died in 1800 and when his only child, Gertrude married Lord Henry Stuart in 1802, Rathmoylan passed to the Villiers-Stuart family who held it at *Griffith's Valuation*.<sup>12</sup>

According to the *Civil Survey* Ballyloughbeg was held by Alexander Leonard of Knockeveely, containing 210 acres or one ploughland. Like all the other Brown properties except Ballynakill, it passed to Sir Charles Wheeler. But he only part held Ballyloughbeg as Richard Lynne was the other owner. By 1736 John Stephens of Drominagh held half of Ballyloughbeg and gave it as his daughter's dowry when she married Gregory Lymbery of Kilcop. Gregory took out a number of mortgages on the property and his son, John, fought a few legal battles with the extended Lymbery family which did little good for his finances. By the time of *Griffith's Valuation*, John's son, Gregory was only a tenant at Ballyloughbeg of William Christmas Ussher.<sup>13</sup>

11 Matthew Butler, *The History of Gaultier*, (Waterford, 1913), pp. 63-4; R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-56, Co. of Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), pp. 155-6; Geraldine Tallon, (ed.), *Court of Claims*, number 837; Julian C. Walton, 'The Family of Aylward, Part 3', in *The Irish Genealogist*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (1972), p. 403; Patrick Grogan, 'The Sherlocks of Waterford', in *Decies* 56 (2000), p. 86.

12 J.S. Carroll, 'Land Ownership in East Waterford, 1640-1703', in *Decies* 11 (1979), p. 40; *Burke's Landed Gentry of Ireland* (1958), p. 663.

13 R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-56, Co. of Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), p. 154; J.S. Carroll, 'Land Ownership in East Waterford, 1640-1703', in *Decies* 11 (1979), p. 40; Henry F. Morris, 'The Principal Inhabitants of County Waterford in 1746', in William Nolan and Thomas P. Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society*, (Dublin, Geography Publications, 1992) pp. 319-20.

The third townland of William Brown, Knockanpaddin, seems to have changed its name to Brownstown and was thus held by Sir Peter Aylward of Faithlegg at the time of the *Civil Survey* with its 151 acres or half a ploughland. According to Matthew Butler in his *History of Gaultier* the name of Brownstown was 'there for at least 250 years'. This would equate with the early seventeenth century when the Aylward family took over. Did Aylward call the townland Brownstown in acknowledgement of the inheritance or was the name in use by the Brown family when they had it? Such an answer awaits further research. Charles Wheeler once again got this Brown property and passed it via Aland so that Earl Fortescue held it at *Griffith's Valuation*.<sup>14</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Between 1484, and the *Civil Survey* of 1654, the six townlands of Maurice Brown came into the possession of different owners, despite securing his act of parliament. It was another act of parliament (the Cromwellian forfeitures), which caused the division of the old Anglo-Irish estates, brought most of the estate back into the possession of one owner. Thus half of Maurice's estate had one owner by 1850. Later, another act of parliament, principally the 1903 Land Act caused a lot of 'certain persons' in Waterford to own Maurice's estate. Maurice Brown had hoped by the 1484 act that he 'and his heirs may have, occupy and enjoy the said lands and tenements with their appurtenances' for a long time and may be forever. History decided that this should not be and so.

However the Brown estate of Corballymore, Corballybeg, Ballynakill, Rathmoylan, Knockanpaddin and Ballyloughbeg will live on in a Waterford history.

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14 Matthew. Butler, *The History of Gaultier*, p. 129; J.S. Carroll, 'Land Ownership in East Waterford, 1640-1703', in *Decies* 11 (1979), p. 40.

# The Lismore Papers: An Introduction

*Donald Brady*

## **Origins of the Collection<sup>1</sup>**

The Lismore Papers represent one of the largest and most complete estate archives relating to Ireland. The eminence of many of the owners of the estate in Irish affairs over the centuries makes the archive particularly important. The papers form an integral part of the estate papers of the Duke of Devonshire. The collection covers the development of the estate over five centuries under the ownership of Sir Walter Raleigh, the Boyle Family and the Dukes of Devonshire. The estates and associated titles passed to the Cavendish family through the marriage of Charlotte Elizabeth Boyle to the 4th Duke of Devonshire. She was the great-granddaughter of Richard Boyle. The magnificent portraits of her as a child and as a young woman held at Chatsworth show a radiance, beauty, and intelligence which after only six short years of marriage and the birth four children was to be tragically ended by smallpox.

Much of the material in the archive is concerned with the day-to-day running of a vast estate. Rental books and tenancy agreements are particularly prominent but correspondence on estate and general topics, as well as maps and plans are well represented.

For most of its existence the archive was held in Lismore, the administrative centre of the Irish estate. However, during the nineteenth century the collection was split. Further fragmentation followed, and the nomenclature of the collection also became confused. In detailing the history of the papers it is best to use the current naming conventions followed by the holding institutions.

**Cork Papers:** Some time during the nineteenth century a significant proportion of the papers of the Great Earl of Cork and particularly those containing his correspondence were transferred to Chatsworth House. The logic of the transfer is unknown and does not follow subject, form, or period designation. This collection is still held at Chatsworth and is available for study by scholars.

**Lismore Papers:** In October 1952 the bulk of the papers held at Lismore Castle were accepted on loan by the National Library of Ireland. The selection was largely based on a pre-twentieth century period of creation and excluded material of an earlier vintage that was considered relevant by the estate for day-to-day administration. Some significant early material was missed due to its hidden situation in the castle. A preliminary catalogue<sup>2</sup> was compiled by Richard Hayes following the deposit of the papers in the National Library.

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1 An earlier version of this article was delivered at the Youghal Celebrates History Conference some few years ago.

2 Richard Hayes, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization*, (1965).

**Lismore Castle Papers:** In 1983 Mr. Anthony Malcolmson, of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland with assistance from Professor Peter Jubb undertook the reorganization of the papers retained at Lismore Castle and the preparation of a detailed calendar. He was also assisted by Martina Kelly, who was then a member of the Waterford County Library staff. The reorganization of the collection, which was designated the Lismore Castle Papers, prompted the trustees to consider its long-term future. On the advice of Mr. Malcolmson and the Waterford County Librarian, it was decided that this collection should be re-integrated into that previously deposited in the National Library of Ireland. However it was agreed that a substantial part of the collection, being of particular local interest, would be retained by Waterford County Library. Initially all of the castle material was held locally and was subsequently transferred to the newly established County Archive in 1998. A strategy was adopted for the microfilming of the collection and some work was carried out in the 1980s but economic circumstances led to the suspension of the project.

**Residual Material:** There is related material that comprises part of the collections held in Lambeth Palace, the British Museum, the Royal Society, the Cork Orrery Collection etc. It is thought, and is most likely true, that some of this material was removed from the collection by the Waterford county historian Charles Smith when compiling his history.

The use of the collection in the past has been greatly hampered by several factors such as the lack of a detailed catalogue, the segmentation and geographic dispersal of the collection, the fragility of much of the material and problems of legibility.

As a first step in the resolution of these problems the material that had been retained at the castle, following the transfer of the collection listed by Malcolmson, was re-examined and the bulk of the papers were initially transferred to the Waterford County Archive. A restructuring of the castle papers was then undertaken. Following an examination of those papers held in the National Library of Ireland and in Waterford County an agreed redistribution led to all of the material generated prior to 1870 being held by the National Library of Ireland. In addition it was decided that for the sake of continuity all agents' correspondence and legal papers concerning fisheries generated up to 1885 would be deposited in the National Library of Ireland. With this exception, the Lismore Papers generated between c.1580 and 1870 are held by the National Library of Ireland, papers generated between 1870 and 1920 are held by Waterford County Archive Services and papers generated after 1920 remain in the custody of the Duke of Devonshire at Lismore Castle.<sup>3</sup> The designation Lismore Castle Papers is now redundant and all papers held should be described as the Lismore Papers.

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3 Stephen Ball, Collection List No. 129, Lismore Castle Papers, Accession No. 1,188, 207, p. 34.

A detailed, comprehensive and splendid calendar of the papers now held in the National Library of Ireland was completed by Stephen Ball in 2007 and is available in Dungarvan Central Library and Archive. This calendar has reconstituted the collection into eight sections viz.: Deeds; Leases; Legal Papers; Papers of the 1st Earl; Estate Correspondence; Estate Records; Public Administration and Elections; and Miscellaneous and Pedigrees. A similar calendar for those papers held in Dungarvan is being prepared by Joanne Rothwell, County Archivist, and should be available early next year. Those papers still held in Chatsworth, or the Cork Papers are the main subject of this essay and will be described later. It should be noted that related material including the papers of Roger Boyle, Lord Orrery, the Shannon Papers, and a microfilm of the Robert Boyle Papers, are held by the National Library of Ireland.

### **Richard Boyle Collection**

#### ***God's Providence is my inheritance*<sup>4</sup>**

Richard Boyle was meticulous in his record keeping. Such an approach was essential to the running of vast estates and also reflected the many official posts which he occupied during his lifetime. There was however also a motivation which sprang from his efforts at self-justification as also his attempts at self-perpetuation. How important this latter factor was can be gauged from continuous references to 'his posterity', a preoccupation which is even mentioned on his mausoleum in St. Patrick's Cathedral Dublin. That this level of record keeping and retention of letters was exceptional is attested by no less than the Lord Deputy, Thomas Wentworth who in a letter to Francis Clifford<sup>5</sup> in May 1635 stated: 'I will undertake for him he shall keep the originals, and as for his own letters he has such a collection as I am persuaded few men in Christendom have besides himself.'

As previously stated most of the Boyle material was retained in Lismore until the middle of the nineteenth century. When the Lismore estate passed to the Devonshire family in 1754 the papers were chronologically arranged,

and compiled into 33 massive unbound volumes and 3 bound volumes. In 1864, all 36 volumes were calendared in a four-volume manuscript of nearly 900 closely written folio pages.<sup>6</sup>

The calendar produced does not include the 1,067 Boyle documents listed in the recent National Library of Ireland list. It is undoubtedly a most useful source for the study of the papers and is available in microfilm form. The County Library has recently acquired a copy through the good offices of the National Library of Ireland. This work lists some 5,200 documents held in twenty-eight boxes in one main sequence, five miscellaneous Cork boxes that include two very important

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4 The Boyle family motto.

5 Clifford, Francis, 4th Earl of Cumberland (1559-1641), father of Margaret Clifford, wife of Wentworth.

6 Stephen Ball, Introduction to the Ongoing Listing of the NLI Lismore Papers.

letter books<sup>7</sup> and some letters from Robert Boyle. The letter books appear to be largely in one hand, possibly that of Boyle himself and are extremely difficult to decipher. There is in addition one box dealing with the Lismore estate accounts for the period 1930-1950 which is obviously not mentioned in the calendar. The original material is in many cases extremely fragile and would certainly not sustain significant or sustained examination without serious deterioration.

The calendar numeration follows assiduously the order in which the papers are boxed. While the original calendar was hand written, that held in Chatsworth today is in typescript form. The calendar is extremely usable, is very detailed and uses conventions close to those followed by Stephen Ball. It was from this calendar that Alexander Grosart's monumental work was compiled. While the location of a considerable portion of material at Chatsworth may cause some logistical difficulty, Grosart's work certainly helps to significantly attenuate this problem.

### **The Work of Alexander Grosart<sup>8</sup>**

Alexander Balloch Grosart was the son of William and Mary Grosart and was born on the 18th of June 1827 near Stirling in Scotland. Following his early education at Falkirk he entered the University of Edinburgh but failed to complete his degree. He became a successful Presbyterian minister but it was in the area of research that he shone. He held several ministries and was eventually assigned to one in Blackburn. He was a prodigious editor and published many editions of both secular and religious writers. Of particular interest to us is his edition of the complete works of Edmund Spenser<sup>9</sup> that reached ten volumes and was published between 1880 and 1888. Ill health compelled him to resign his ministry and he retired to Dublin, where he died on the 16th of March 1899. While his work is 'marred by egotism and grovelling deference' to his sponsors he 'conspicuously advanced the thorough study of English literature.'

7 Terence Ranger, 'Richard Boyle and The Making of an Irish Fortune, 1588-1614', in *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. X No. 39 (March 1957), pp. 257-97. In his important study Terence Ranger refers to these letter books and states that one was lost (p. 263). If this was the case then the book has now resurfaced. In this same paper Ranger outlines but does not highlight the history of the patents passed to George Isham in 1597 which were subsequently acquired by Boyle. What is particularly interesting about these is that they included the 'lands of the vicars choral of Lismore, the South Abbey of Youghal and other church lands in the area' (p. 277). Thus, Boyle's first land acquisitions in Waterford were not the Raleigh lands.

8 This biographical note has been compiled using an article written by Thomas Boston Johnstone for the *Dictionary of National Biography* and was originally published in 1901. It is less than complimentary to its subject and has a general rather than specific focus on the works. The sheer magnitude of Grosart's research portfolio as outlined by Johnstone is exemplary.

9 A.B. Grosart (ed.), *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser, With a New Life, Based on Original Researches, and a Glossary Embracing Notes and Illustrations*, (Manchester, Printed for private circulation only, 1882-1884).



Grosart's interest in the Boyle Papers was largely stimulated by work he had previously carried out on Edmund Spenser and his awareness of the relationship of Spenser's wife Elizabeth to Boyle. It is particularly noteworthy that he waxes lyrical on letters to Boyle from members of the Spenser family that confirm this relationship.

The publication of the *Lismore Papers* was divided into two series of five volumes each and was published in 1886. The first series presents a selection from the diaries of the Great Earl and is arranged in chronological order. The second series presents us with assorted documents but in the main with correspondence to and from the earl. The two series should be addressed in tandem to correctly evaluate any theme of study.

Grosart produced only 100 sets of the *Lismore Papers* and as most were pre-subscribed we could quite easily trace the current whereabouts of most of the edition. In addition a further twenty sets were produced and presented to the Duke of Devonshire.

These ten volumes comprise over 2,500 pages or in excess of a million words. The selection represents perhaps 50% of the material held in Chatsworth. In cross-checking the Chatsworth calendar with the selections made by Grosart it is now my view that his selection represents near to 80% of the most crucial or valuable material and I would also suggest that little of the material now listed in the National Library of Ireland calendar was examined by Grosart. His research was carried out in Blackburn and the material returned by him to Lismore or Chatsworth as directed.

While Grosart's work is monumental and extraordinarily valuable the accuracy of his transcription is sometimes influenced by his meagre knowledge of Ireland and particularly its placenames and personal names. The scale of the task faced by him and the lack of cross-referencing provided by him to other sources are also relevant. In addition, the direction by the Duke of Devonshire that no material which might sully the family's name should be published also influenced his choice. While the validity of his selection may have been impacted by the historical context and the historiography of his era, his work stands the test of time.

## **The Papers**

In preparing this essay I have chosen to explore and illustrate the significance of the papers by the examination of a series of related themes. In this selection I have been cognisant of other work that has been carried out on the papers. In using the material I have not substituted the Gregorian Calendar for that used by Boyle.

## **Transport and travel**

### *Land Travel*

The difficulties and vagaries of travel in the seventeenth century are totally foreign to us today. While shipping was a well-established mode of transport, roads outside urban areas were little more than tracks, virtually un-surfaced and heavily impaired by the huge forests of Ireland, the natural contours of the landscape and

the lack of bridges which rendered river fords huge significance. There are constant references in the papers to the horse. They are regularly loaned, sold, swapped and presented as presents:

I gave my cousin John Nayler a young black gelding & took back the bay gelding I formerly bestowed, for my coach.<sup>10</sup>

My daughter Sara sent me word that the bay ambling gelding I had of Sir George fflower carried her so pleasingly to Mellifont, as she would keep him for me, and ride him till I came there.<sup>11</sup>

It is when one considers the time spent on horseback and taken to traverse what were then considered long distances that these transactions can be understood.

I departed Dublin and cam to the Nasse, 25th to gawran, the 26th dongarvan, 27th home to yoghall.<sup>12</sup>

The journey to and from Dublin which regularly took three to four days is paralleled by the earl's journeys to his estates in Cork, Kerry and Limerick. The danger of these journeys was also considered a normal hazard as Boyle comments on one occasion, 'leg wounded, & Robed at whitechurche.'<sup>13</sup> Boyle in an expenses schedule for a journey from Dublin to Dungarvan taken from the 9th to the 12th of May 1613 indicates that 47s. 2d. was spent with payment for dinners being the biggest cost followed by 'cowsmeat' [perhaps food for use on the road?] and ferry transfers in Carrick and Dungarvan.

The building of bridges features regularly in the papers and their loss is well illustrated:

on Tuesday, being the xxiiijth of September 1628, the river of the broadwater did suddenly rise eight foot higher then ever was seen by the eldest man living; it carried away the bridge of Moallo, as also the new bridge that at my own sole and proper charges I built over the broad water at Fermoy, which cost me in ready money (not reckoning therein my iron, timber, and other materials) above five hundred pounds ster: it also carried away a great part of the new bridge of Cappelquin that at my own charges I built over that River, with Sir Arthur Hydes & Mr Anthony Dowdals houses, and many others, with abundance of Reeks of corn and hay.<sup>14</sup>

A fascinating insight into modes of transport is given in a note of his family's arrival at Cork House, Dublin.

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10 26 July 1621.

11 1 November 1623.

12 24 June 1613.

13 17 November 1618.

14 23 September 1628.

I cam, god be praised, safely to Dublin, and the nxt day, being Sunday, my son and his Ladie in a horslytter cam thither.<sup>15</sup>

*Sea Travel*

Holly Rood day the ferry boat of yoghall was caste awaie and about xxx persons drowned.<sup>16</sup>

The precariousness of the sailing routes to Britain is a subject frequently alluded to. However, it is the presence and activities of pirates that most vividly catches our attention. The earl in 1613 records ‘John Hardinge of yoghall marryner to paestown purposely to give Mr edward Chichester notice, that the pirates hovered on the seas to intercept his passadge,’<sup>17</sup>

His own journeys were no less frequently jeopardized:

The 21 of April 1628 I departed Lismore and stayed at Youghal till the 7th of May, and that day put to sea, and god be thanked we all landed safely at Minehead, the ninth day of May 1628, and came to London the 15th. My self, my wife, my 2 daughters Lettice and Joan, Arthur Loftus, Hodge poor, with my servants, came from Lismore to Youghal, & the 7 of May we in gods name putt to sea (in the name of god,) at the quay of Youghal this 7th of May 1628, about 5 of the clock in the afternoon, and the next day being the 8th of this month and Thursday, we were chased all day by a Dunquerker of 300 ton with Two Tier of ordinance, who in the evening near Milford in our view took the barcque wherein 3 of my footmen and three of my horses were & carried them to sea, having first in our sight and having 20 pieces of ordinance shot at them.<sup>18</sup>

A detailed account of piracy in Munster is vividly set out in a letter sent by Sir Lawrence Parsons to Boyle from Bandonbridge on the 1st of October 1620 and details the activities of the Buccaneer ‘Boorck’. In this letter he portrays events in Bantry Bay, Beerehaven Baltimore, and Castlehaven. Burke had captured one ship that Parson estimated had cargo worth about £50,000.<sup>19</sup>

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15 24 October 1635. This was ‘perhaps the earliest kind of vehicle in England... There are two long poles, bearing in centre a car of state, or palanquin, with an awning, and a fair traveller gazing out through an uplifted part of the curtain; a postillion is riding on the leading horse, into whose harness the front six feet of the poles are joined as shafts; and a second horse guided by a rider, carries the latter portion of the poles and its trappings.’

16 14 September 1616. A ‘Holy rood’, was the cross or crucifix, particularly one placed in churches over the entrance to the chancel.

17 11 July 1613.

18 April and May 1628.

19 Sir Lawrence Parson’s to Boyle, 1620.

As with land travel, the papers provide regular insights into the protracted length of journeys. An example is provided by Richard Boyle, Lord Dungarvan, in one of his letters home during his continental tour when he recounts that it had taken him a full twenty-four hours to sail from England to France.<sup>20</sup>

### Religious Persecution

Correspondence and commentaries relative to Catholicism can be read as a barometer of drift in the level of tolerance in Ireland, England and throughout Europe. This shows phased change from a level of relative tolerance and acknowledgement of the level of erudition of the clergy through to the commencement of the Thirty Years' War in 1618, and subsequent tensions in England over the possibility of a Catholic succession via the 'Spanish Match' to a final phase linked to the rise of Boyle in official circles and his obvious puritanical fundamentalism.

An early reference suggests little more than discussion and debate:

Capn goar apprehended Thomas Fitz Gerald the ffrier in yoghale, I being then at Dongarven; and when I cam home I brought him from the goale, & kept him in my own house xv daies, till th Lo Deputy sent for him.<sup>21</sup>

A similar letter written from Kinsale<sup>22</sup> in January 1629 conveys little more than a factual account of a 'priest hunt' which betrays little venom. In the following year the confiscation of some 'popish books and images' is presented without comment.<sup>23</sup> However, in 1623 we see a change in tone as in a proclamation<sup>24</sup> published that year the authors rail against the Catholic clerical attempts to 'set up and maintain a foreign power and authority within this his Majesty's dominion.' It continues to assert that the clergy are 'endeavouring to pervert the hearts of his Majesty's subjects, and to draw them to...blindness and superstition.' By 1629 Boyle is praised by Lord Dorchester 'in the matter of religion and public justice against offenders, your zeal and care of both is here rightly understood and by His Majesty well approved.'<sup>25</sup>

A note in the Earl's diaries in 1631 still appears to suggest a level of tolerance, though not necessarily by Boyle himself;

The howse of Nonnes on the merchant key in dublin was seized on by the Maior, etc. There were 16 of prime noble men & gent. daughters therin: 5 of them in their habits were brought before the Lords Justices, and councell, into the councell chamber, and there exam[in]ed, and licenced to return to their former place of residence, there to continew for one moneth, soe as in the mean tyme they did

20 25 September 1632.

21 21 April 1613.

22 Peregrine Banaster to Boyle, 15 August 1616

23 Popish Books, images etc. seized, 1617.

24 Proclamation against Priests and Jesuits, 1623.

25 Dorchester to Cork, 15 March 1629-30.

put in good security never to reassemble conventually together in this kingdom, & to appeer at the Table, if at any tyme within 3 monethes their apearance should be required of any of their suerties. And as those 5 nonnes were brought to the castle on foot, soe it was without my consent or privity that they were sent thence in a coach, wherby too much grace and countenance was given to such delinquents, and contempners of aucthorety.<sup>26</sup>

The following year one of the Earl's most infamous official acts, the destruction of St. Patrick's Purgatory is noted:

The L. chancellor and I took an order & signed it, that Mr James Mc cragh should enter into a bond to the clearck of the councell, to his Mats vse of one thowsand pownds ster: to pull down and utterly demolish that monster of ffame called St patricks purgatory, with St patricks bedd, and all the vaults, celles, & all other howses & bwyldings; and to haue all the other supersticious stones & materialles caste into the logh, and that he should suffer the supersticiows chapple In the Iland [to be] puld down to the grownde, & no boat to be there, nor pilgrimage vsed or frequented during James Mc grathes lyffe willingly or wittingly.<sup>27</sup>

By the time of the rebellion all semblances of tolerance and compassion has disappeared and one of the most horrific events recounted is recorded in gory detail in 1643:

...The friar was adjudged by the Council of War to be hanged, which was accordingly done by the Provost Marshall (as he thought). The very night he was brought from the gallows to a house in this city, in or about midnight, the friar began to groan and sigh. The people there upon that watched his corpse made search and found some life in him, and would have recovered, but that some came to the Provost Marshals hearing, who presently repaired into that house and found the friar alive, and so hanged him the second time in the house.<sup>28</sup>

On a lighter note, the following is an extract from a verse found amongst the papers:

Heigho Ile tell you news  
the Pope is jacke adandie;  
His head is shorne, his arse is torne,  
oh that's as good as can be.  
.....

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26 22 October 1631.

27 8 September 1632.

28 William Thyrrye to Cork, 17 July 1643.

But as for Gondomar<sup>29</sup>  
and all that Cursed Crewe  
both Spain and Poape I wish a rope  
unlesse they become newe.<sup>30</sup>

### Banking

In the area of financial management and banking the Lismore Papers offer us a fascinating insight into why Boyle became 'the richest man in Britain and Ireland.' A central parameter to economic life in the seventeenth century was the lack of any significant or regular banking service and the paucity of official 'paper money.'<sup>31</sup> The Bank of England was only founded in 1694 and its building erected at Threadneedle Street in 1734 was the first purpose built bank in the country. It was not until 1783 that a Royal Charter established the Bank of Ireland and it was in 1803 that it acquired its equally famous premises which previously hosted the Irish Houses of Parliament. The seventeenth century was still an era when gold and silver reigned supreme. Security of movement and transfer of resources were further issues which rendered the IOU an extremely important transaction medium and such paper was regularly passed on to others in redemption of debts. It is in this context that we encounter, and should understand, the presence side by side of transactions for vast and paltry amounts. It is in the light of this that the recording of virtually every transaction was carried out and is available in the papers. One of the hundreds of examples will more than suffice to illustrate this theme:

Lent Joseph Boyle Son to my Cozen Richard Boyle, the bookbynder  
xxs & Released him out of prison, for wch I paid vli, & gave my bill  
for other vli to be paid the first of the next Michalmas tearm; wch xjli  
I assigned my cozen Wm parsons to receive & pay for me in London:  
but he neither received the money nor returned me the bill of debt.<sup>32</sup>

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29 Diego Sarmiento de Acuna, Conde de Gondomar (1567-1626) was born in Gondomar in Galicia, Spain. He was a mariner and soldier of note having withstood Sir Francis Drake's attacks in one campaign. He served two periods as Ambassador to the English Court from 1613 to 1618 and later from 1619 to 1622. He was particularly detested in England because of his contribution to the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh and his unstinting promotion of the 'Spanish Match' in the era of the Thirty Years War.

30 Song against the Spanish Match, 1623.

31 It is easy to understand the preponderance of paper transactions when one considered the alternative. In the middle of the seventeenth century £450 Sterling was the equivalent of approximately 1 stone or 6.3 kg in gold. As the principle transaction medium was silver the equivalent amount was 10 stone or 63kg of silver.

32 8 March 1613 and 1614.

A further interesting facet recorded in at least three notes and is on the first occasion particularly intriguing

given the lady fenton an angell in gold, for wch she is to paie me 3li ster: if she live till any two trees at Kilbree now planted do bear fruyt.; wch I hope in god she shall see and pay for.<sup>33</sup>

The angel was in fact a gold coin valued at about 10s. originally given by a king or queen in a ceremony called the 'royal touch' during which the monarch was reputed to have had the capacity to cure the 'King's evil', or scrofula a form of TB. The fact that these angels were given by Boyle in the context of illness or its prevention suggests that he may have been drawing parallels to his 'realm.'

A further interesting note, which requires no comment dates from the period when Boyle was Lord Treasurer in 1632:

The cownterfettters of the ffarthing tokens were by my order apprehended in Dublin with very many of their tokens & their tooles & near 200li ster: in good golde & silver coyn in the Trunck of Tomas wheat & Jane his wife brought vnto me by Robert Gilbert; they dwelt at Ripley in Yorkshire.<sup>34</sup>

It is worth pointing out that Copper Alley near Dublin Castle and adjacent to the site of Cork House was so named as money was minted there in 1608 by Lady Alice Fenton, the mother-in-law of Boyle.

### **Conflict and War**

The years of Richard Boyle's life in Ireland were, perhaps, the most violent and formative period in the entire history of Ireland. The native population was, in the era from the accession of Henry VIII to the death of Oliver Cromwell, not only displaced from its position of primacy in land holding but its entire culture was supplanted and the leadership class largely politically emasculated or forced into emigration. The religious and ethnic context of this conflict should be set against parallel developments on the Continent and specifically the Thirty Years War (1618-1658), which confirmed the re-alignment and establishment of the modern political landscape of Europe.

The direct causes of the conflict in Ireland are complex but from a Gaelic perspective they were in simplex form set out in a document<sup>35</sup> held within the papers which was apparently prepared by Confederate forces in 1641 and called for, 'freedom of religion... restitution of all plantation lands that were unjustly seized upon... rents and proffits which have been hitherto in the Protestant clergies hands, leaving the Catholic clergy unto their lives as hitherto' and finally in reference to compulsory military service it sought :

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33 5 February 1611.

34 6 September 1632.

35 'Certain Considerations wch the Rebels propounded amnongst themselves', Vol. xii, No. 88\*.

...severe punishment for the breach thereof; and [to] settle a certain number of soldiers, according [to] the exigency of every part of the kingdom, and that no more should be levied that should consume more means then necessity should require.

From the alternative viewpoint factors in England including the proposed 'Spanish Match' and the motivation for the preservation in Ireland of the 'advances' made in the previous fifty years were undoubtedly pervasive. It is useful to reflect that despite her status as the *bête noire* of this period Queen Elizabeth was not the chief promulgator of the conflict but rather it was her father Henry VIII who was its principle architect and James I its chief executor.

The outbreak of the war in 1641 appears to have been totally unforeseen by the authorities and in his correspondence Boyle comments:

This rebellion came as suddenly upon us as lightning. No man foresaw nor suspected it; nor had munition, nor anything provided for it...<sup>36</sup>

He later anticipates no difficulties with his own tenants,

I cannot observe, that the people hereabouts express any ill affection to the peace of the country, but they all outwardly seem to desire peace and quietness,<sup>37</sup>

Once battle was joined resources of both manpower and money were central to the course of the war. While lack of resources is regularly cited by both St Ledger, the Lord President of Munster, and Boyle himself:

.... for I have no more than 200 men of my own English tenants here in garrison, & 100 at Lismore, & 100 at Cappoquin, and to every of them I am inforced to give billet, and to pay them by poll 3s 6d a week a piece in ready money out of my own purse....<sup>38</sup>

The arrival of support from England was overwhelming:

...my Lord Liutenant himself is coming over speedily with 6000 foot and 2000 horse and 50000li in money, which will be a very good supply...<sup>39</sup>

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36 [date torn] 1641, 'The copy of my letters to Mr wm Perkins touching the 250li I have ordered Mr Thornbury to pay him for my two yongest sonns quarters allowance beginning the first of march next', Vol. xxii, No. 138.

37 Earl of Cork to the Lord President, Lismore, 17 November 1641.

38 [date torn]1641, 'The copy of my letters to Mr wm Perkins touching the 250li I have ordered Mr Thornbury to pay him for my two yongest sonns quarters allowance beginning the first of march next', Vol. xxii, No. 138.

39 'For your Lordship,... 17 November 1641. ffrom the Lord President of Mounster, touching the Lord Lieutenants preparacon for his Speedy Coming over, and the Earl of Ormonds being made lieut Generall of the Army', Vol. xii, No. 889.



Here is a brave proposition made by some of the City of London that 2000 of this town will lay down 500li a man and will undertake to pay the 1500 foot and the 2000 whole English and the 10000 Scots, and their 700 horse, and send 10000 English more to dispatch your war all this socuer, if they may have out of the rebels lands 1000 acres of land for every 200li in Ulster, and in Munster for every 400li 1000 acres out of the rebels lands; and will plant it all with Protestant tenants.<sup>40</sup>

The wars were conducted with great savagery and utter ruthlessness on both sides as is clearly evidenced during the Nine Years War:

...there were some of the Irish taken prisoners that offered great ransoms<sup>41</sup> but presently upon their bringing to the Camp they were hanged,<sup>42</sup>

and confirmed during the 1641 hostilities:

Many of the rebels have been taken by our horsemen and caused to be hanged by my Lord of Kinalmeaky, and yet seem to be naught diminished, but rise up like hydras heads and assemble together in great numbers...<sup>43</sup>

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- 40 ‘for my noble brother the Earl of Cork at Youghal, in Ireland,...19th Martij 1641. ffrom the Earl of Warwick’, Vol. xxii, No 154\*. It is of particular interest that the number of Scots mentioned is enormous. While support for their fellow Scots and co-religionists in Ulster could be anticipated there is little doubt that King Charles who had considerable difficulties with their forces earlier and the Parliamentary forces who had problems later, were delighted to see them removed from the likelihood of incursion into the English arena. One should note that Cromwell’s last military campaign was against the Scots.
- 41 In early warfare prisoners were either killed or enslaved. Enslavement of prisoners declined through the Middle Ages but even well into the 17th Century ransoming of prisoners to pay for campaigns or for individual profit was still a regular practice. In his seminal work, *On the Law of War and Peace*, (1625) Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) explored in some detail the concept of the ‘just war’. He supports the concept of ransom for prisoners and states, (p. 347),
- Though it is still the practice among Christian powers to detain prisoners of war, till their ransom be paid, the amount of which depends upon the will of the Conqueror, unless it has been settled by express treaty. The right of detaining such prisoners has sometimes been allowed to the individuals, who took them...
- 42 ‘A true Relation of our aproaches skirmish and overthrows we gave the foreign & domestic enemy on the 24th of December 1600’, Vol. I, No. 53.
- 43 ‘To my most honored Lo. & master Richard, Earl of Cork, Lord high Threser of Ireland & one of the Lords of his Maties most hoble privie Council of bothe Kingdoms, these humbly psent,...50 febr. 1641, from Mr John Langton touching my sonn Kynalmeaky and the state of those parts’, Vol. xxii, No. 144.

There was even an economic and Malthusian logic propounded for the disposal of prisoners:

... my Lord Dungarvan has a power of martial law in his Commission for Youghal, by which he may be pleased to dispatch them out of the way, and disburden the jail of them.<sup>44</sup>

It would not be correct to suggest that the suffering and savagery was one sided:

Lismore 6 a klok this morning: 26 January.

My most honored lord, ...Here is Tom Downinge whose wife has been most barbarously killed and whose children he fears are so, continues here but without [any] of money and clothes, that it pities me to see him...<sup>45</sup>

There is expressed within the context of 'revenge' attacks carried out by Boyle evidence of an early form of 'scorched earth policy',

I do likewise approve of your lordship's design for burning the houses and corn in your letter mentioned, & am very sorry it took no better effect, being of opinion that those employed by your lordship do deserve severe punishment for non observance of your directions.<sup>46</sup>

As with all wars civilians were hugely affected. While the number of deaths was great, departures by family members to England were endemic. In a letter from the Mayor of Youghal to Boyle on 25th November we are provided with an evocative description:

my service always remembered on this very day I was advertised that divers women both married and widows of good note without south gate and the abbey of this towne are resolved to embarque themselves together with the best part of their goods and chattels and their children also for the Kingdom of England...

And this situation is echoed in a letter sent on 28th January from the Mayor of Waterford, when on behalf of the citizens of the city he seeks in a 'plain suite a shipe for their passadge for England.' We also have expressions of logic in their departure:

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44 'for your Lordship,..5 Januarij 1641 ffrom the lo President touching the Billeting of Soldiers in Youghal: a Commission of Martiall law for Ensigne Croker, and to send 3 Barrells of povvder to duncannon fort', Vol. xii, No. 122.

45 '26 Januar 1641 ffrom my sonn Broghill', Vol. xxii, No. 137.

46 'for your Lordship...1° ffebruar 1641. ffrom the Lord President touching my sonn Broghills Commission the posture of the enemie, and to have a port open at Cork for his Lordships retreat', Vol. xxii, No. 143.

It were a work of great charity done by the Lord President and state to press some ships or barks to transport all these poor women and children into England; for they are unnecessary mouths and will endanger the places where they are, especially this town, where they abound...<sup>47</sup>

Nor were the families of the principle protagonists exempted from the impact and general exodus as illustrated in a letter from Boyle's daughter Joan Fitzgerald:

I and my five poor children are come into England and my sister Loftus and her three children...<sup>48</sup>

Treachery and espionage were, as in all wars a significant factor: as exemplified in the Nine Years War:

...on the 23 of December late in the night Captain Taffe informed the Lord deputy, that one of the rebels that had been sometimes belonging to him sent him word and confirmed it by a solemn oath to the bearer, that the resolution of the rebels was either that night or between that and the next to enterprise their uttermost for the relief of the town...<sup>49</sup>

The 1641 conflict was conducted along contemporary European lines with sieges and brief skirmishes being more prominent than pitched battles. In this regard a list of the Lismore garrison in April 1642 offers us a fascinating insight into the military organisation of the time. The force was commanded by a Captain with Lieutenant Beecher as second in command. There were two sergeants, three corporals, two drummers and 126 soldiers with five 'Mocollop warders'. Of the names listed twelve are repeated and in precisely the same order and with precisely the same arms. However, the total number billed is per the total list and whether this was for accountancy or other purpose remains to be investigated. Of this force some twenty-seven soldiers bore Irish names including a John O'Flynn. Their armaments are listed, with sword and pike being the general arms and with several holding muskets and some other arms yet to be deciphered. The weekly cost for the force was £19, a very considerable cost for a relatively small defensive group.

Casualty lists are notoriously inaccurate and accommodate layers of propaganda, as an account from one segment of the Battle of Kinsale lists figures in excess of those for the entire battle:

...there were of the Irish rebels about 1200 dead bodies left in the place, and as we heard from themselves about 800 hurt, whereof many of them died that night: they left about 2000 Arms, their

47 'To my most honored Lo. & master Richard, Earl of Cork, Lord high Threser of Ireland & one of the Lords of his Maties most hoble privie Council of bothe Kingdoms, these humbly psent,...50 febbr. 1641. from Mr John Langton touching my sonn Kynalmeaky and the state of those parts', Vol. xxii, No. 144.

48 '8° ffebruary 1641, ffrom my daughter Kildare. Received 23rd ffebruary 1641', Vol. xxii, No. 146.

49 'A true Relation of our aproaches skirmish and overthrows we gave the foreign & domestic enemy on the 24th of December 1600', Vol. I, No. 53.

powder drums and 9 Ensigns, which was more than ever they had together before: of our side only Sir Richard Greames coronett was killed, Sir Henry Dauers hurt, with a sword slightly in the foot, Sir William Godolphin a little razed on the thigh with a halbert, Captain Crofts the scoutmaster with a shot in the back, and not above five or six common soldiers hurt...<sup>50</sup>

The financial impact sustained by the country and by individuals can be elicited from the losses scheduled by Boyle:

...the 18th of October when I landed in Ireland, I did not owe five pounds in the kingdom, and my revenue was about 20000li a year; And if the rebellion had not broken out so suddenly & universally, but had given me respite to have gotten up my half years rents due at All Hallowtide following, or within 40 days after, I should have had sufficient to maintain myself & my children, & to have paid all my debts in England with this half years rent.<sup>51</sup>

Finally it is interesting to note that the Old English were sometimes seen, presumably due to ethnic interlinks or religious background, in a different light to the more recent arrivals as evidenced in a letter from Joan Fitzgerald:<sup>52</sup>

Upon Friday last was month, they took our house at Maynooth, but before they took the house they were in the town of Maynooth a fortnight, and sent many times to my Lord to desire him to come and live amongst them, and they would put him in possession of all his lands, that were taken from him and kept from him. I must needs say they used my Lord with all the civility in the world and when we would send to Maynooth for provision they would let our servants pass up and down when they would suffer no others, and would say if his provision were all gold nobody should touch it.<sup>53</sup>

## Family & Social Life

### *Significant Events*

Boyle was punctilious in recording the major life events of his family and friends. Births, deaths, marriages and christenings are fully recorded. In the case of Robert, this information is of huge importance:

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50 'A true Relation of our aproaches skirmish and overthrows we gave the foreign & domestic enemy on the 24th of December 1600', Vol. I, No. 53.

51 [date torn] 1641, 'The copy of my letters to Mr wm Perkins touching the 250li I have ordered Mr Thornbury to pay him for my two yongest sonns quarters allowance beginning the first of march next', Vol. xxii, No. 138.

52 The validity and veracity of this myth was to some degree confirmed by Lord Edward Fitzgerald United Irishman and great-great-grandchild of Joan Boyle.

53 '8° ffebruary 1641, ffrom my daughter Kildare. Received 23rd ffebruary 1641', Vol. xxii, No. 146.

My seventh son Robert Boyle was born at Lismore on Thursday, about three of the clock in the afternoon, it being the five and twentieth day of January 1626 and the sign then in libra. He was Christened in my chapel at Lismore by my chaplain & kinsman Mr Naylor the eight day of February next following A° dom 1626. His godmother the Countess of Castlehaven: His godfathers my son in law the Lo Robert Digby Lo Baron of Geshill: His other godfather Sir Frances Slingsby Knight, one of the Commissioners for the government of Munster. The god of heaven bless the child, & make him long lived and fruitful in children, and in good works.<sup>54</sup>

The mode of seventeenth-century expression in these records is frequently archaic but interesting:

Worthy cousin, ...I hear my Lady Cousin your wife is full of a rich Treasure, which I pray God with her were safely and to your comfort she may by his helping hand be made a Joyful mother.<sup>55</sup>

What is also remarkable is that in the case of his later children and his grandchildren he regularly records the astrological star under which they were born, an unusual preoccupation for such a staunch puritan.

In the case of deaths his records appear in the main cold or perhaps stoical and one is drawn to Kipling:

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same.<sup>56</sup>

There are two notable exceptions to this. The first is in his reaction to the death of his wife:

It pleased my mercifull god, for my manifold syns, this daye being the xvjth of ffebruary, 1629, between three and ffour of the clock in thafternoon of the same day, to translate owt of this mortall world, to his gloriows kingdome of heaven, the sowle of my deerest deer wife, who departed this world (to my vnspeakable greef) at the Lorde Calfeyls howse in dublin: ffor which heavy visitacon, god make me, and all myne, paziently thanckfull as becometh religeous christians, seeing it was none, but my own all knowing god that did it.<sup>57</sup>

The second is recorded on the death of his daughter Sarah following post-natal complications, wherein he describes the day as 'lamentable.'<sup>58</sup>

It was at New Year rather than Christmas that gifts were given to family and friends. Illness and medical complaints are often recorded and some examples are particularly evocative:

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54 25 January 1626.

55 Sir Richard Weston to Boyle, 28 June 1603.

56 Rudyard Kipling, *If*.

57 16 February 1629.

58 9 July 1633.

We have this afternoon buried Ned Jones, who ended the miseries of this life yesterday: and opening of him for the discovery of the infirmity, there was found a great impostume in the liver, not broken but ripe as at the touch thereof to break: his spleen quite consumed, his lungs corrupted, and his left side filled with more corrupt water than it might be thought that a man's body could in all the parts thereof contain.<sup>59</sup>

Of much more significance are two references to Robert Boyle concerning his speech defect, one of which I will quote

... I perceive some corroboration in his tongue (specially when he speaks French or Latin) yet then for half a quarter of an hour he did stammer and stutter so much that Mr. Francis and I could scarce understand him and scarce forbear laughing.<sup>60</sup>

### *Games & Leisure Pursuits*

We get a grasp of the sporting pursuits of the wealthy from the papers. It is apparent that falconry was the most popular leisure activity followed by hunting, horseracing and the breeding of Irish wolfhounds. These activities were in the main reserved to the males but in the playing of 'dice' ladies held their own. At one session Lady Katherine Boyle is recorded as loosing over £20 in one night. Which was equivalent to the then annual salary of the school-master in Lismore. As today, gaming could evoke fiery passions:

My Lo: Barry (though it were Sunday) upon an untimely falling out at Dice, wounded Malperos the usher of my Hall very dangerously with the fire fork: I pray god he may recover, and that the example hereof may teach my lo: better temper & carriage, & neither of them both hereafter may presume to play upon the Lords day.<sup>61</sup>

The harp was one of the most popular musical instruments of the age and Boyle records with pride his possession of one. Children were not excluded from these leisure activities and Boyle was wont to indulge them:

Geven the children vli for their mask, wherof I paid them out of my own purse iiiijli. xvijs, & gave order to Mr walley to ad lijs to mak up the 5li.<sup>62</sup>

### *Food and Drink*

There are surprisingly few references to food and drink in the papers. However it is obvious that venison was the favoured meat. I have encountered few references to cattle. The Irish whiskey industry can quote Boyle's records to prove its longevity:

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59 J. Walley to Boyle, 20 January 1616.

60 F. Marcombes to Boyle, 25 February 1639.

61 30 December 1621.

62 24 October 1620.

John Nogle of Dungarvan sent me to North hall by his son Michael a small Renlett of usebagh, and ffrize for my winter suit, & I gave him in reward xs.<sup>63</sup>

‘M Wiseman sent me a Ronlet of Uscebagh, which I sent my Lo Totneis.<sup>64</sup>

A Rundlet was an old liquid measure equal to approximately 15 gallons. There is significant correspondence between Boyle and William Greatrakes one of his tenants who lived at Affane. William was the father of Valentine Greatrakes (1628-1683) the famous ‘stroker’ and was renowned as an earlier instigator and proponent of cider-making in Ireland.

One letter in 1627-8 from the man licensed to brew beer in Lismore sets out complaints about his licence being ignored by ‘Tallowes men’ and subsequently ‘the whole town doth brew beer’ and in consequence he ‘serves but two in the whole town.’

### **Boyle’s Daughters**

Several studies of Boyle have suggested that his treatment of his daughters was objectionable. It has been proposed that he saw them as little more than devices for the solidification of his social aspirations by their marriages into the nobility.

The truth of these assertions is manifestly proposed by the early age at which they were bethrowed and in the fact that they were given no choice in the selection of husbands. In this regard Mary, the only daughter who insisted on her own choice of partner, subsequently eloquently expressed her remorse for defying her father.

The interpretation of the motivation and feelings of Boyle is, I believe, largely disproved by the fact that all of his daughters subsequent to their marriages spent long intervals in the Boyle household and indeed quite a few of their major life experiences occurred while under his roof. Sarah and Joan both bore two children in Cork House. Sarah’s last child was born prematurely there and both mother and child died shortly after the christening of the baby.

Boyle was also instrumental in restoring the fortunes of the virtually bankrupt Earl of Kildare who had married his daughter Joan. His treatment of his wayward and useless son-in-law Lord George Goring, husband of Lettice, is exemplary in tolerance and indulgence:

George goring arrived heer the xxijth of May, 1631, and after I had promised to lend his ffather 2000*li* ster:, for the payment wherof I haue sent direction to Mr georg Hooker, I also promised to lend George another thowsand pounds to be repaid me when he should be able, yet he departed from me the 14 of this moneth without once taking leav of me, & lefte his wife and servants heer, and posted through Scotland into England, on the choice gray gelding I bestowed vppon

63 10 August 1628.

64 31 December 1628.

him, called gray Brown; whose sodden & vnknown departure hath much disquietted me, his wyfe, & friends.<sup>65</sup>

Boyle continued to support Goring despite the Goring family's treatment of Lettice.

Lord and dearest Father, ...

...for my Lord Goring,... but this I may truly say he is to me the cruelest man living: ... my Lord Goring is so far from caring me over, that neither he nor his Lady nor any of his daughters did so much as bring me one foot of the way, which all the tone and court wondered at; and what I suffered in their house god only knows...<sup>66</sup>

Lord George Goring, Lettice's husband was the son of the first Lord Goring and the family's residence in London, Goring House, afterwards became part of the site of Buckingham Palace. A view of the house in 1632 shows an impressive façade with extensive landscaped gardens all around. This land had had an extensive monastic settlement prior to the dissolution of the monasteries.

Mary Boyle steadfastly opposed her father's attempts to marry her off, initially to Mr. Hambletone son of Lord Clandeboyes, later Earl of Clanbrasell, and subsequently to several other suitors. She finally married Charles Rich younger son of the Earl of Warwick. In her diaries she acknowledges that her father's reservations were somewhat matched by her own:

... and besides I considered my mind was too high, and I too expensively brought up to bring myself to live contentedly with Mr Rich's fortune, who would never have, when his father was dead, above thirteen or fourteen (at the most) hundred pounds a-year..<sup>67</sup>

The death of her husband's older brother resolved this concern and also Richard Boyle's reservations. Mary had two children, a daughter who died very young and a son who died in early adulthood. These tribulations led to major tensions between the parents and are eloquently set out in Mary's writings. She became a central figure of puritan intellectual expression and her diaries are sited as an example of how for women of her era 'the keeping of a diary emerged as one significant strategy for establishing and sustaining the writer's identity and status. It was an ideological practice, subtly connected to the maintenance and justification of its practitioner.'

Mary Boyle's status is indicated particularly well in a piece by Anne Laurence:

The activities represented are real activities, taking place in real space, but space that the reader has to imagine. Other kinds of space

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65 14 October 1631.

66 Lettice Goring to Boyle, 11 April 1634.

67 Mary Boyle, 'Some Specialities in the Life of M. Warwick, (Diary, 1666-1673)', in Charlotte F. Otten (ed.), *English Women's Voices, 1540-1700*, (University Press of Florida, 1991), pp. 158-67.



are mentioned in these godly lives. Mary Boyle, Countess of Warwick (1625-78), another great Puritan patron, fed the poor at the gate of her London house, where ‘she built a convenient receptacle for them...to shelter them from the injury of the weather till they received their dole.’<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, her importance was emphasised at her funeral ceremony when the preacher, Dr. Anthony Walker, attributed to her an excess of charitable zeal and his text was subsequently published in *The Virtuous Woman Found*.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, according to her biographer, Mary E. Palgrave, ‘there is no record of her on the Rich monument in Felsted Church.’<sup>70</sup> It is easy to believe that this was no accident, but was in fact Mary’s own choice. A further biography by Charlotte Fell Smith has as its primary focus inter-family relations.<sup>71</sup>

### Conclusion

In this article I have endeavoured to give a flavour of the magnificent collection that is the Lismore Papers. The key source is Grosart’s work allied to Stephen Ball’s calendar and the archive of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth.

All ten volumes of the Grosart publication have now been transferred to computerised form, but some significant work still remains to make three of the volumes fully useable. Having reviewed Grosart, firstly against the 1864 Chatsworth calendar and then the new listing produced by Stephen Ball, I believe that the collection can stand on its own as a valid and largely accurate selection. The lack of significant cross-over between the National Library of Ireland material and that held in Chatsworth means that the former material should receive parallel treatment to that made by Grosart. It is my earnest hope that a new fully annotated, corrected and verified edition of the Lismore Papers can be published and to this task it is my intention to now direct my attention.

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68 Anne Lawrence, ‘Women Using Building in Seventeenth-Century England: A question of Sources’, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 293-303.

69 Anthony Walker, DD, Rector of Fyfield, 1622-1692, *The Virtuous Woman Found, her loss bewayl’d, and character exemplified in a sermon preached...at the funeral of...Mary Countess of Warwick...With so large additions, as may be siled the life of that...Lady, to which are annexed some of her pious...meditations*, (London, 1678).

70 Mary E. Palgrave, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, and her Father, the Earl of Cork*, (Dent, 1901).

71 Charlotte Fell Smith, *Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, 1625-1678: Her Family and Friends*, (Longman Green & Co., 1901).

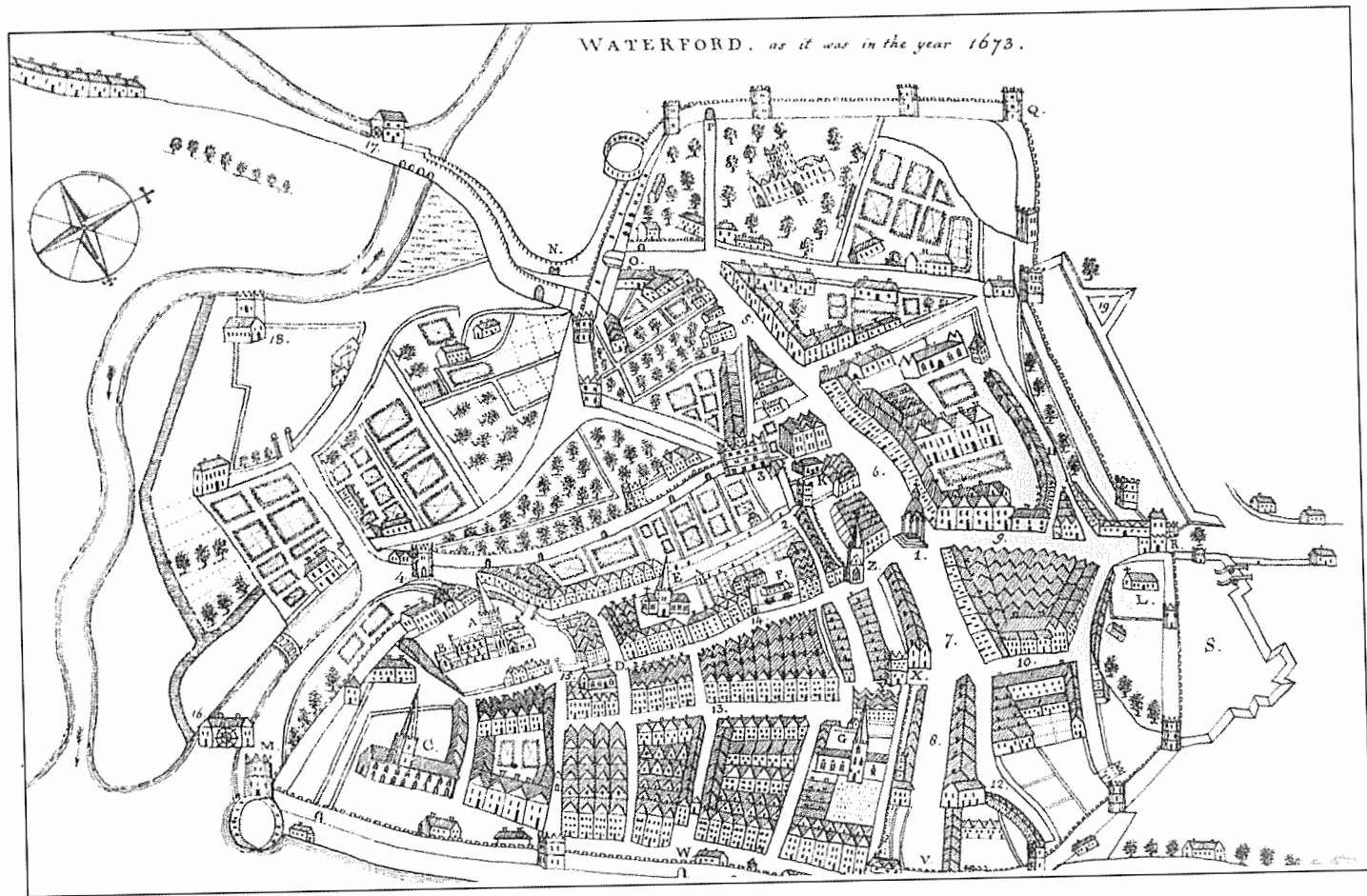


Figure 1: Map of Waterford, 1673.

# *Rus in Urbe: Samuel Barker's Waterford City Garden*

*William Fraher*

**C**HARLES Smith's *Antient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford* published in 1746 is an invaluable source on the history of the city and county.<sup>1</sup> It is of particular interest for its topographical descriptions. Smith also provides important information on country houses and their demesnes. He includes descriptions of the elaborate formal gardens which existed at Curraghmore, Ballinamona, Dromana, and Whitfield. These contained features such as canals, basons, shell houses, cascades, deer parks and wilderness areas. It has been suggested that Smith exaggerated in his descriptions in order to flatter his hosts and omitted places where he did not receive a hospitable welcome. I do not think there is much evidence for this. His description of the elaborate garden at Dromana has been confirmed by the discovery of a detailed map by Henry Jones executed in 1751.<sup>2</sup>

This article will concentrate on Smith's description of the surprisingly elaborate Waterford city garden of Samuel Barker (1707- 1769).

In the early eighteenth century Waterford was undergoing a transformation and the city was expanding beyond the old city walls. New streets were created behind the quay frontage such as King Street (present-day O'Connell Street) and Hanover Street. How much the city expanded can be seen in a comparison of a 1673 map (Figure 1) with that of the 1764 map by Richards and Scalé. (Figure 2) On the 1673 map only a few properties are shown on what was to become the site of new streets and Samuel Barker's garden.

## **The Barker Family**

According to Henry Morris<sup>3</sup> the Barkers originated in Berkshire and first appear in the Waterford records in the late seventeenth century. Samuel was born on 10 April 1707. His father and grandfather had both been mayors of Waterford. It is unclear how the family made their fortune. It may have been from selling and leasing property in and around the city. Members of the corporation were given leases on good terms. As Kenneth Milne has observed 'Those to whom the lands were leased were in many cases influential members of the corporation, and, in particular, protégés of the leading families who held property from the city on very favourable terms.'<sup>4</sup>

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1 Charles Smith, *The Antient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford*, (Dublin, 1746). Samuel Barker is listed as a subscriber taking six copies.

2 Irish Architectural Archive, 94/73, Dromana Estate Map 1751 by Henry Jones.

3 H.F. Morris, 'The Barkers of Waterford', in *Decies XVII* (May 1981), pp. 17-28.

4 Kenneth Milne, 'The Corporation of Waterford in the Eighteenth Century', in Willie Nolan and Thomas Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society*, (Geography Publications, 1992).

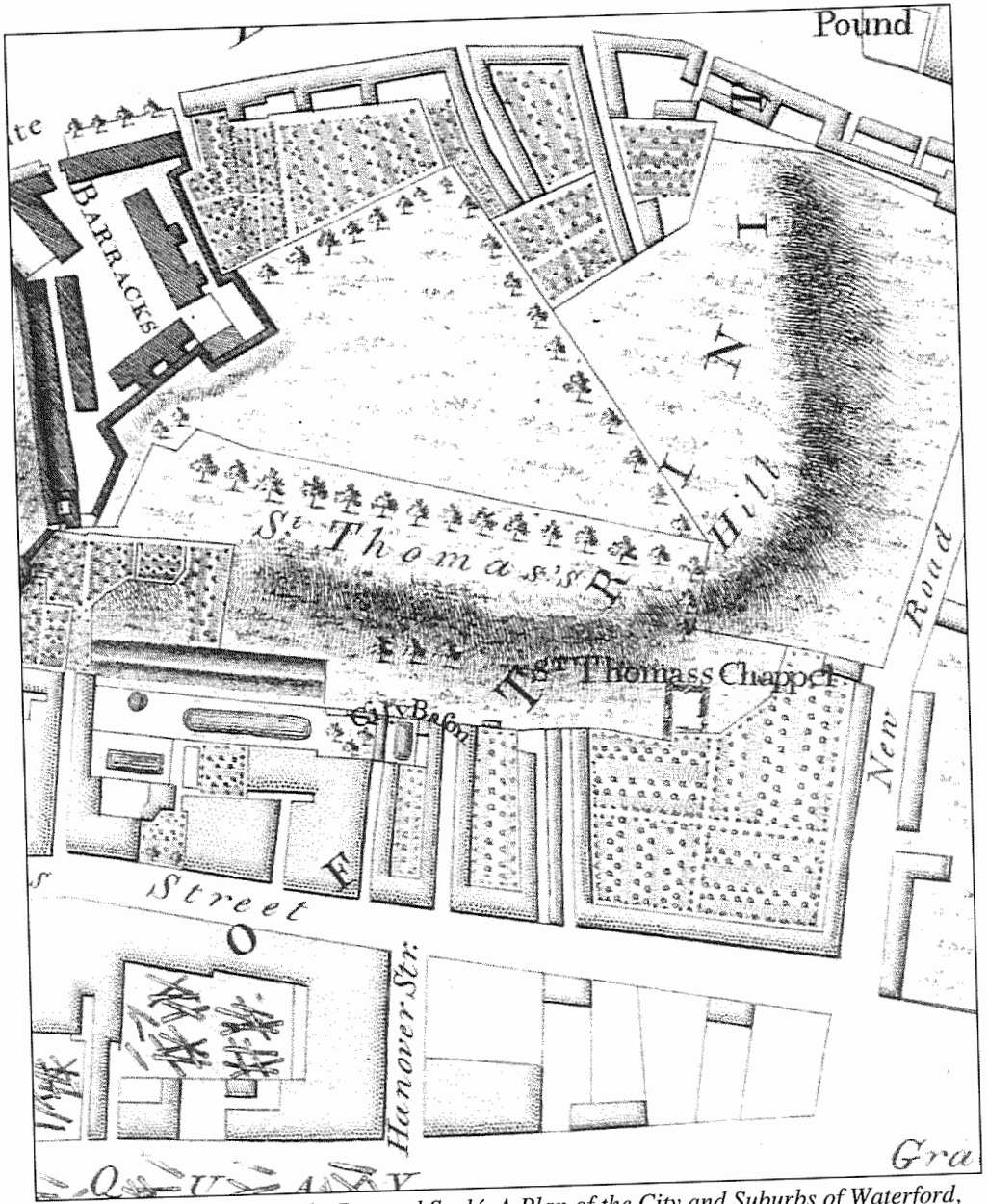


Figure 2: William Richards, Bernard Scalé, A Plan of the City and Suburbs of Waterford, (1764).  
Courtesy of Donal Moore, Waterford City Archives.

The Barkers constructed ‘a large well built house’ in King Street. It has been assumed that it is the building now occupied by Garter Lane. However, Ian Lumley has stated that this is a late eighteenth-century house and that the adjoining properties numbers 3 and 4 were once a single house and because of their age are more likely to be the Barker residence. According to Dan Dowling the first houses in this street were erected around 1725.<sup>5</sup> Charles Smith noted that there were ‘several fine pieces of painting’ in the house. These included a painting of Saint Margaret - ‘It is said that this piece was painted by the great Raphael. The folds of the dragon twined about the saint are so nobly shaded, that they seem to project from the canvas.’ He attributes another painting *The Saviour with the Virgin and St. John* to Annibile Carracci.

Samuel’s father Francis (d.1746) had leased ‘three parks’ in this area in May 1693 from the corporation at £5 per annum.<sup>6</sup> The land extended from Ballybricken down a sloping site towards the river. One of the main water supplies for the city was situated there. This proved useful for Samuel in planning the water features in his new garden. Water features were rare in eighteenth century urban gardens.

In 1736 the corporation purchased an important topographical painting of the city by Willem Van der Hagen (1675-1745) and Samuel was entrusted with £5 in order to purchase a frame for it.<sup>7</sup> The following year Samuel established a bank with Ambrose Congreve. The bank advanced money to Waterford merchants Edward and Richard Weekes. The latter went bankrupt in 1738 and they absconded. Barker and Congreve had control of their ships and assets and ‘made more out of the bankrupts than they were owed.’ The Weekes other Waterford creditors who had not been paid petitioned the government to investigate Barker and Congreve but no further action was taken.<sup>8</sup>

In 1740 the corporation decided to take down the city gate at Newgate and Samuel offered to demolish it on condition that he could retain all the stone and other materials. Perhaps he used these in the construction of the new garden.<sup>9</sup>

In 1744 the corporation made a deal with Barker that if he surrendered the lease of the tythes of Rosbercon in return for allowing access to ‘the water course that runs through his ground’ they would reimburse ‘the fine by him paid this board for said tythes’.<sup>10</sup>

We don’t know exactly when Samuel began work on the creation of the garden. The site was a difficult one with a steep slope towards Ballybricken and sections of exposed natural rock. It is worth quoting in full Charles Smith’s 1746 description of the garden:

5 Daniel Dowling, *Waterford Streets Past & Present*, (Waterford Corporation, 1998), p. 103; Ian Lumley, 'The Georgian Townhouses of Waterford', in *Decies XXXIV* (Spring 1987), pp. 52-3.

6 H.F. Morris, 'The Barkers of Waterford', in *Decies XVII* (May 1981), pp. 17-28.

7 Edmund Downey, *The Story of Waterford*, (Waterford News, 1914), p. 312.

8 *History of the Irish Parliament 1692-1800*, Vol. III, (Ulster Historical Foundation, Dublin, 2002), pp. 133-4.

9 Edmund Downey, *The Story of Waterford*, (Waterford News, 1914), p. 319.

10 Waterford Corporation Minute Book, 29 June 1744.

As a sample of the elegant tastes of the citizens, I shall mention the beautiful improvements of Alderman Samuel Barker, which for the delicacy of their taste, rarity, and uncommon situation in a city can hardly be equaled, and may justly assume that inscription placed on the back front of Buckingham House, *Rus in Urbe*. This gentleman's house is in King Street...behind which we are agreeably surprised, with a large hill beautifully cut into slopes and terras-walks, at the bottom of which is a handsome canal with other reservoirs higher up. In the lower canal are fountains which play to a considerable height, the side of which is beautified with statues standing in niches. Higher up is a terras adorned with statues, and among others, that of a Mercury deserves our notice, being done in good proportion, and finely poized. The end of this terras is beautifully terminated by a fine ruined arch, being the remains of a Gothic structure called St. Thomas's chappel, and which also gives name to the hill on which these improvements are made. From this walk we have the natural representation of a Dutch landscape. Here one sees not only a part of the country, but also a prospect of the city. The elegant improvements of this beautiful spot are finely blended with a view of rough rocks, and wild uncultivated hills, which are seen from the opposite side of the river. The flags and streamers of the shipping, of which we have here a prospect, together with the houses of the city, afford a very pleasing contrast.

The other end of this terras is terminated by an aviary, filled with several kinds of singing birds. Higher up is a little Deer-park stocked with deer of several colours, a curiosity no less rare than remarkable in a city; and the reservoirs before mentioned are also stocked with carp and Tench. On top of the hill is placed an obilisk, which is seen from the house to advantage.

In an adjacent garden are some curios exoticks, among which are some fine plants of the Aloe of several kinds. The *Geranium Affricanum frutescens*, *Malvoe fol. Odorato instar Mellissoe flore purpurassente*, as described by miller, being a species of Crane's Bill, several kinds of cypres, and a plant called the caroub or locust of St. John. The whole of these improvements have been cut out of a very barren rock, of which there are still some remains, and carried on at great expense.<sup>11</sup>

The statue of Mercury was very popular in gardens of this period in England and Ireland. It was very apt in this case as it represented the Roman God of Commerce. One might ask where did Samuel acquire his statuary. By this period there were suppliers in Dublin and Cork who were importing garden ornaments

11 Charles Smith, *The Antient and Present State of the County and City of Waterford*, (Dublin, 1746), pp. 195-196.

from England.<sup>12</sup> Ideas for garden design could be gleaned from engravings of English gardens which were being made widely available from around 1740. Richard Boyle (1674-1753) 3rd Earl of Burlington and 4th Earl of Cork re-designed his garden at Chiswick between 1729 and 1732. This garden had a great influence on garden design of that period. Alexander Pope wrote his famous *Epistle* to Lord Burlington in 1732. In it Pope praises the tasteful naturalistic (as they viewed it) approach of Burlington in contrast to others who spent large sums of money on designs intended to subdue and control nature. Pope and Burlington's idea of natural landscape would not accord with our concept of naturalistic. Their gardens while departing from the formal rigid Dutch style were still very contrived.

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,  
To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,  
To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot,  
In all, let Nature never be forgot.

However, while the fashion in country estates was for a more naturalistic look town gardens were still being created in the old Dutch tradition. As Roy Strong has commented: 'Town gardens throughout the eighteenth century remained resolutely, one might add, inevitably, formal, ensuring a continuity of the tradition until its rediscovery after 1800.'<sup>13</sup>

Samuel Barker probably had access to a number of books on gardening such as Stephen Switzer's *Ichnographica Rustica* which was popular in Ireland as was Philip Miller's *The Gardener's Dictionary*, published in London in 1732 which had many Irish subscribers. Thomas Fairchild's *The City Gardener* published in London in 1722 was the first book to be published on gardening in an urban environment. Fairchild recommended the following plants which he felt were capable of withstanding the city environment: lilac, lime trees, figg, Virginia creeper, lilies, mulberry, marygolts, sunflowers, honeysuckle, wallflowers, gilder rose etc. The main obstacle to growing plants at this time in cities was the presence of soot from the thousands of domestic fires.<sup>14</sup>

In 1752 the Rev. Richard Pococke commented that 'Mr. Barker's hanging gardens are very beautiful' but does not elaborate further.<sup>15</sup> In the corporation minutes of 1753 we find the following entry –

Ordered that Samuel Barker Esq., shall have a lease of the premises whereon his house and gardens and improvements stand for the term of 999 years from this day as also leases for 99 years from this day of several premises held by him under the corporation at and under the present rents.<sup>16</sup>

12 Patrick Bowe, 'Garden Statuary in Ireland', in *Irish Arts Review* (1989-1990), p. 194.

13 Roy Strong, *The Artist and the Garden*, (Yale University Press, 2000), p. 181.

14 T.L. Gowan, *The London Town Garden*, (Yale University Press, London, 2001), p. 19.

15 Rev. Richard Pococke, *Pococke's Tour in Ireland 1752*, edited by George T. Stokes, Dublin, 1891, p. 134.

16 Waterford Corporation Minute Book, 29 September 1753.

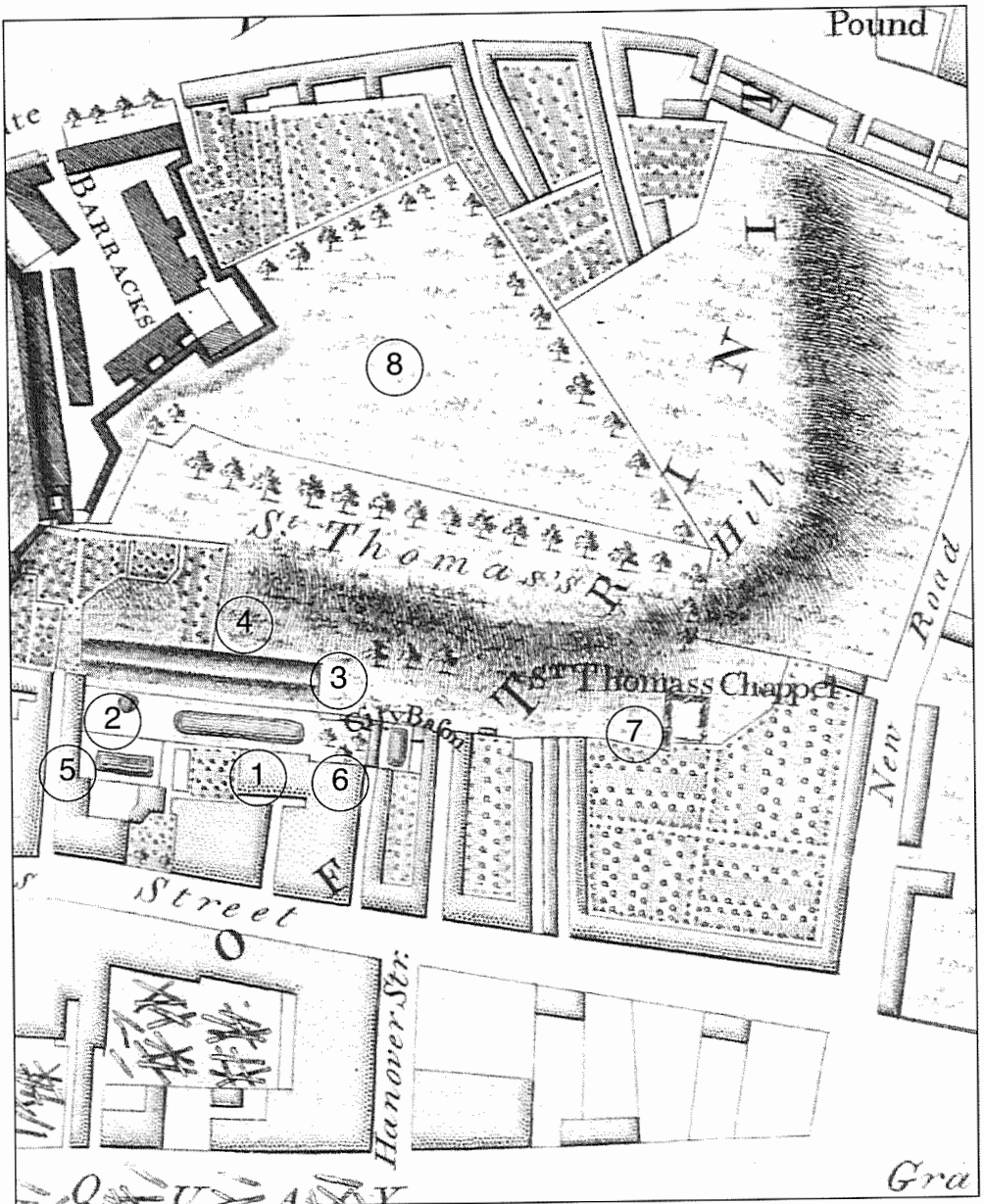


Figure 3: Area of Barker's garden, Richards and Scalé map (1764).

Courtesy of Donal Moore, Waterford City Archives.



The last published reference to the garden appears in Luckombe's *A Tour Through Ireland* published 1780.<sup>17</sup>

No artist's impression of the garden survives so we must rely on a single map to ascertain the layout. Richards and Scalé produced a map of Waterford in 1764<sup>18</sup> which was published twenty years after Charles Smith's description. The map appears to show a number of the features described by Smith. The measurements used are based on the scale given on the map. (Figure 3)

1. A long pool or canal with curved ends about 110 feet in length and 20 feet wide. Could this be Smith's 'handsome canal'?
2. A circular feature (pond?) situated about 30 feet west of the canal.
3. Above these two features are a series of terraces about 200 feet in length. Smith's 'terrace adorned with statues'?
4. Above the terraces is an enclosed area with pathways which adjoins the barrack walls. This is probably the area referred to by Smith with the aviary and curious exotics.
5. Below the circular feature (2) is a rectangular pool about 50 feet by 20 feet.
6. To the east of the canal (1) a small grove of trees is marked. To the west of these is the city basin.
7. The ruin of St. Thomas's Chapel<sup>19</sup> 'beautifully terminated' is shown about 300 feet from the terraces (3). The ruin of the church provided Samuel with an instant antiquity which he was able to use as a key feature in the garden. (Fig. 4) At the other end of the terraces was the backdrop of a D-shaped tower and the city wall.
8. Above the terraces and the church ruin was St. Thomas's Hill. In this area the map depicts a triangular shaped area with trees around its perimeter. This is obviously Smith's 'little Deerpark'.

Samuel Barker died unmarried in 1769 and his estate was inherited by his three nieces.

Unfortunately no account of his will has survived. What happened to the hanging gardens?

Waterford was expanding and the garden land became valuable building ground. After Richard and Scalé's map was published in 1764 no other map of the city was produced until the early nineteenth century. According to Dan Dowling the land on which the garden and deer park were situated began to be redeveloped around 1805.<sup>20</sup>

17 Philip Luckombe, *A Tour Through Ireland*, (London, 1780), p. 39.

18 William Richards, Bernard Scalé, *A Plan of the City and Suburbs of Waterford*, (1764).

19 *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (1912), pp. 265-6.

20 Daniel Dowling, *Waterford Streets Past & Present*, (Waterford Corporation, 1998), p.p. 25, 187.



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M.DCCCLXXV.

Figure 4: Miller, 'The Gardner's Kelendar'.

By the time Leahy's map of 1834 was published the entire of Samuel Barker's garden had been built over. The following streets were constructed on the site – Meeting House Lane, Barker Street, Thomas's Hill, Goal Street, Henry Street, and Francis Street. Barker Street is now the only reminder to us of the existence of this once celebrated and unique city garden.



*Figure 5: Detail from Willem Van der Hagen's View of Waterford in 1736.*

Courtesy of Waterford City Council.



Figure 6: St. Thomas' church prior to its demolition in the 1960s.

# Ballygunner Temple

*Patrick Grogan*

## **Introduction**

In the Barony of Gaultier, southeast of Waterford, lie the remains of the church of Ballygunner Temple, one of the ancient parishes of the Diocese of Waterford. Taking its name from the townland, rather than from a saint, it is one of the few land names which commemorate Danish occupation. The large townland of Ballygunner (town of gConary's son), is divided into three parts: Ballygunner More, Ballygunner Castle -containing the castle and the modern Roman Catholic chapel and burial ground, and Ballygunner Temple - containing the medieval church ruin and burial ground. According to Canon Power:

This church, it is evident from Theiner, was originally dedicated to a St. Mochorog, Confessor, whom we may safely regard as its founder. Mochorog, like many of the early church founders of our eastern and southeastern seaboard, appears to have been a Briton and son of Branchan, a British prince. At any rate, such was the reputed nationality and parentage of the Saint Mochorog, who is also honoured at Delgany, Co. Wicklow. This Mochorog of Delgany is stated to have assisted St. Kevin of Glendalough, when the latter lay dying in 618 AD.<sup>1</sup>

Ballygunner Temple is one of a number of ancient burial grounds which ring the city, but no longer in use, such as Kill St. Laurence and Kilbarry both of which are totally overgrown and derelict and at Killure, the small graveyard has been filled over with rubble in recent years. Drummannon, near Tramore, where many Waterford citizens were laid to rest long ago, is equally overgrown. In contrast, Ballygunner Temple presents a very different picture. The church may be in ruins but the graveyard is kept neat and tidy by an energetic local committee, and where an annual Mass is celebrated in July in memory of the dead.

## **Location**

The burial ground and ruins are located on the east side of the main Dunmore Road about 500 metres from the Passage East junction and where a signpost points to a narrow boren on the left.

## **The Church Ruin**

Canon Power described the church as follows,

Ballygunner old church, [popularly Ballygunner Temple], stands in its ancient cemetery, a mile to the east of its modern successor. The walls, apparently of no great antiquity, are still nearly perfect, but they

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1 Patrick Power, *Place Names of the Decies*, (Waterford, 1937), pp. 185,186.



*Plate 1: North wall of the church.*



*Plate 2: South wall of the church.*



are buried now to nearly half their original height in the earth, which has been raised around them by interments over the centuries. The church, of plainest style, was of very small size - only 36 feet externally by 20 feet 3 inches. On the summit of the west gable is a small single belfry and on the east gable a small rude cross. It is pretty evident that the present ruin occupies the site of a more ancient church. Ballygunner, in fact, is an old or native, Irish religious foundation, as appears from its original dedication or name, St. Mocuarog's [*Theiner Monumenta*].<sup>2</sup>

A visit to the site today will reveal crumbling walls, window openings have disappeared and there is no sign of the belfry, although this writer has a memory of seeing it standing about twenty-five years ago.

### A Chronological History

There are interesting glimpses of Ballygunner Temple in recorded history through the centuries.

**1302-1306:** In the Ecclesiastical Taxation Lists of Waterford Diocese, during the reign of Edward 1 (1272-1307), the 'church of Ballygennore, with vicarage' was valued at 11 marks with taxation of 14s. 8d.<sup>3</sup> This tax would have been for the maintenance of the Dean and Chapter of Waterford Cathedral.<sup>4</sup>

**1459:** Canon Power's reference to Theiner's *Monumenta* in regard to Ballygunner is of interest. Augustin Theiner (1804-1874), a German theologian and historian was appointed prefect of the Vatican Archives in 1855 by Pius IX. He collated and published collections drawn from the archives relating to the Catholic Church in Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Scotland and Ireland. His *Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum*, of 1864, is translated as follows with reference to Waterford Diocese:

Pius II sent this document from Siena on 31 March 1459 to three ecclesiastical judges, the Bishop of Ferns, the Prior of the Convent of St. Catherine near Waterford, and the Archdeacon of Ferns, so that they could confirm in his name, a grouping or joining together of certain parishes, which the Bishop of Waterford had already established. The purpose of this was to make these mensal parishes of the Cathedral, and that the revenue from these parishes should go to the upkeep of the Dean and Chapter of Canons of Waterford. The

2 *Ibid.*, p. 309; see also Michael Moore, *Archaeological Inventory of County Waterford*, (Dublin, Government Publications, 1999), p. 166.

3 A mark is a denomination of weight, usually 8 oz., for gold and silver, but for Sterling it became 160d. [after the Conquest].

4 Bateson (ed.), 'Irish Exchequer Memoranda of the Reign of Edward I', in *English Historical Review* (July 1903), and quoted in Tom Nolan, 'Medieval Waterford VI: Calendar of Documents Relating to Gaultier from 1250 to 1350 from the Notebooks of Feardorcha Funnell', in *Decies* 14 (1980), p. 63.

parishes thus united were, Blessed Mary of Kilmeaden, Blessed Mary of Reiske [a pre-reformation parish now part of Dunhill], Saint Morahok, Confessor of Ballygunner, and Paltomartyne, also known as Ballyadam,[Adamstown, in parish of Kilmeaden], and Ballyglasshen [Ballycashin].<sup>5</sup>

The Pope, in order to foster divine worship, especially in the Cathedral Church, is anxious that the persons residing there would receive material support, and he therefore supports the petition of the Dean and Chapter to this end. Bishop Robert [Robertus Poer, 1471-1474] of the Dioceses of Lismore and Waterford, canonically united, has given persuasive reasons which such a union of parishes should take place, and is supported in this by the Archbishop of Cashel, the Metropolitan. The amount of the annual contribution from each of the above-named parishes is calculated as follows: 2½ marks sterling, except for Ballyglasshen, [Ballycashin], from which, 2 marks.<sup>6</sup>

**1615.** A Post-Reformation reference to Ballygunner occurs in the Ecclesiastical Visitations of 1615, where it was recorded that in 1609 the parish was joined to Ballinakill as a chapel-of-ease, and designated St. Mary's Chapel.<sup>7</sup>

**1654.** In the Down Survey of County Waterford, compiled by William Petty, prior to the forfeiture of lands at the Cromwellian Plantation - 'There is at Ballygunner Temple a Church in Repaire and a Thatched House'.<sup>8</sup> The 235 acres of profitable [and forfeited] lands in the townland of Ballygunner Temple, is listed as being in the possession of 'The Lord Powre', with 7 acres of glebe.<sup>9</sup>

**1704.** An echo from the times of the Penal Laws is recorded in the list of names of the 'Popish Parish Priests', as they were returned at a General Quarter Sessions, held at Tallow for the county of Waterford on 4 July 1704:

5 See Corpus Christi College Cambridge, MS 405, folios 11r to 16v, Irish Liturgical Calendar of Saints, Thirteenth Century. *Sancti Mochemoc, confessoris* is listed for 13 March. This calendar was reputedly brought to Waterford from Winchester by its first Bishop, Malchus, [Máel Isu Ua hAinmere], in 1096, and is known to have been used at the preceptory of Kilbarry by the Knights Hospitaller of St. John. (Information courtesy Dr. Niall Byrne).

6 A. Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum*, (Rome, 1864), Folio DCCXC, pp. 416-17. Translation from the Latin by Rev. Dr Donal O'Connor.

7 John Mulholland, 'A Checklist of Church of Ireland Places of Worship in Co. Waterford', in *Decies* 14 (1980), pp. 43-4, quoting from National Archives MS, Ecclesiastical Visitations of 1615.

8 'The Down Survey of County Waterford, in *Decies* 44 (1991), pp. 17-38.

9 John Mulholland, 'A Checklist of Church of Ireland Places of Worship in Co. Waterford', in *Decies* 14 (1980), pp. 43-4. The 7 acres of glebeland was actually in Ballygunner Castle townland; see also R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey County A.D. 1654-56, Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), p. 207.



Thomas Clansy, 59, living at Passage, was ordained 30 years ago by John, Bishop of Angers in France. He pretended to jurisdiction in the parishes of Crooke, Kill St. Nicholas, Killea, Killmamand, Ballygunner and Fathlegg.<sup>10</sup>

**1745.** A list of the Established Church of Ireland property, taken during the incumbency of Bishop Charles Este (1740-1745), includes Ballygunner [Temple], 'Consisting of the Vicarial Tythes. The Rectory is part of the estate of the Dean and Chapter. Value about 9l. Taxed in the King's Book at 13s. 4d. About 4 acres of Glebe'.<sup>11</sup>

**1841.** The noted Irish scholar and antiquarian, John O'Donovan, gave a description of Ballygunner Temple in the *Ordnance Survey Letters*,

The present ruin of the old Church at Ballygunner is of no antiquity, as is obvious from the style of the masonry. It has a doorway with timber lintels on each side wall and an arch of brick in the west gable. The walls are plastered on the inside and rough-cast on the outside. This building was in use till very lately.<sup>12</sup> It is only 33ft in length, 16ft 4 inches in width, and its walls 10ft in height and 1ft 9inches thick. It stands in a large graveyard which evidently belonged to a far more ancient church than the present.<sup>13</sup>

### The Burial Ground

The burial ground today around the church ruin, is crowded with a large number of stones, and with portion of a retaining wall within an apparently enlarged cemetery, where there are relatively less burials in evidence. There are a number of plain marker stones in addition to the inscribed headstones and slabs, and the burial ground was closed by Ministerial Order dated 1963, as follows:

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10 Matthew Butler, *The History of Gaultier*, (Waterford, 1913), pp. 119-20. This Ballygunner, of course, was the thatched chapel of the Roman Catholics on the site of the present St. Mary's, which was erected in 1820.

11 Charles Smith, *The Ancient & Present State of the County & City of Waterford*, (Dublin, 1746), pp. 38, 41.

12 This statement of O'Donovan can hardly be correct, as there is a box tomb within the church for the Cashin family dated 1807, a ledger slab for the Wyse family dating from 1734, and a massive box tomb without inscription, which together occupy much of the space.

13 M. O'Flanagan (ed.), *Containing Information Relative to the Antiquities of the County of Waterford*, Collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1841, (1929), *The Parish of Ballygunner*, folio 13, 4 June 1841.

**Department of Local Government.  
County of Waterford.**

The Minister for Local Government in exercise of the powers vested in him by section 163 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, hereby orders that on the 1st day of October 1963, burials shall be discontinued and thereafter they are hereby prohibited in Ballygunner Temple Burial Ground, in the County Health District of Waterford, subject to the exception that there shall be reserved to the person named and described in the Schedule to this Order, to the right of sepulture or interment in his family vault or grave in the said Burial Ground.

Schedule.

<u>Claim No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address.</u>	<u>Age at Inquiry</u>	<u>Condition.</u>
1.	James Flynn,	Cross, Halfwayhouse, Co. Waterford. <sup>14</sup>	71.	Widower.

Given under the Official Seal of the  
Minister for Local Government this  
Ninth day of September,  
One Thousand Nine Hundred & Sixty-Three

Neil T Blaney,  
Minister for Local Government.

This Order is inscribed on a plaque erected by Waterford County Council at the gate.

Many family names still to be found in the Barony of Gaultier, and in the city of Waterford, are represented on the gravestones, but two graves here have been associated with tragedy – Nicholas Devereux of Waterford, and John Moore of Ashbrook, Straide, Co. Mayo, and the builder of Moore Hall, Lough Carra, Co. Mayo in 1792.

**Devereux**

The Devereux family were among the Anglo-Normans that came to Ireland in the twelfth century. Like the Waddings, they settled in Wexford but some came to Waterford. There are numerous mentions of the Devereux name in the civic life of the city. Nicholas Devereux was bailiff in 1452<sup>15</sup> and 1457<sup>16</sup> and mayor in 1468<sup>17</sup>

14 There is no gravestone recording the death of James Flynn; see list of gravestone inscriptions of 2007 appended.

15 Niall J Byrne (ed.), *The Great Parchment Book of Waterford: Liber Antiquissimus Civitatis Waterfordiae*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2007), p. 233.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

and again in 1479.<sup>18</sup> There are six references to members of the family being admitted as freemen in the period 1553 to 1626,<sup>19</sup> also indicating prominence in the business life of the city of Waterford.

In the Civil Survey (1654-6), taken as a preliminary to rewarding the adventurers and soldiers of the Cromwellian conquest, the index of proprietors in 1641 for the city of Waterford included the following names:

Deverex & Wm. Cleere: St. Peter's Streete, [1] A dwelling house to the streete, A brew house, A yard, value £115.4.0. Owner in 1656: Christopher Treniman. [2] A dwelling house to ye streete at ye end of Trinity Lane, value £56. Owner in 1656: Joseph. Davis.<sup>20</sup>

Deverex of Ballymagir<sup>21</sup> & John Gerreldin: High Streete, A dwelling house to ye streete, A kitchen backwards, A small tennemt now a shope frontinge to ye Key street, etc, value £180. Owner in 1656: John Haven.<sup>22</sup>

The last Abbot of Dunbrody, Co. Wexford, was Alexander Devereux at the dissolution of the abbey on 6 May 1536.<sup>23</sup> He received an annual pension of £15, and the principal tenants of the lands of Dunbrody at the dissolution were members of his family and so remained under Sir Osborne Etchingham of Suffolk, a fourth cousin of Anne Boleyn, who was granted the estate. Alexander Devereux became the first post-Reformation bishop of Ferns diocese and is buried at Fethard.<sup>24</sup> During the Confederate War of 1641-9, Tintern Abbey, held by Major Ashton with thirty soldiers from Duncannon Fort, was attacked by a troop of Confederates led by Colonel John Devereux. After a siege of two weeks, the castle surrendered, the Colclough owners having previously fled to England.<sup>25</sup>

During the 1798 Rebellion, United Irish activity in the south Wexford area was focused on the Dunbrody and neighbouring Loftus estates under the leadership of Michael Devereux of Battlestown and the Devereux brothers of Dungulph Castle. After the defeat of the rebels at Vinegar Hill on 21 June 1798, the military searched unsuccessfully for the brothers and burned the castle of Dungulph.<sup>26</sup> In July as the rebels fled in defeat, Walter Devereux of Carrigmenan, one of those accused of having been involved with the massacre of innocent women and children at Scullabogue on 5 June, was captured in Cork as he tried to make his way to America, and summarily hanged there.<sup>27</sup>

18 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 279.

20 R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-56, Co. of Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), p. 224.

21 Ballymagir, is in the Barony of Bargy, Co Wexford.

22 R.C. Simington, *The Civil Survey, AD 1654-56, Co. of Waterford*, (Dublin, Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1942), p. 230.

23 Billy Colfer, *The Hook Peninsula*, (Cork University Press, 2004), p. 61.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 82

25 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 161-2.

27 D. Gahan, *The People's Rising 1798*, (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1995), p. 297.

Meanwhile there are some scant references to the Devereux family in Waterford, mainly from *Griffith's Valuation* of 1851. John Devereux was the owner of twenty small houses with a valuation of £2. 5s. each, at Ferrybank, of which thirteen were vacant.<sup>28</sup> James Devereux had six small houses at South Parade with a valuation of £1. 5s., likewise thirteen small houses on east side of Johnstown, with a valuation of £2 each, but more interestingly he leased No. 4 Johnstown to the Waterford Board of Guardians as an auxiliary workhouse. It had a valuation of £23. He lived himself at No. 5 Johnstown, where he had a shop and bake-house.<sup>29</sup> At 17 the Quay, a John Devereux was the tenant of a premises owned by Rev. Edward Butler, valuation £23. In Slater's *Commercial Directories* of 1846 and 1856,<sup>30</sup> John Devereux is listed at 21 Merchants Quay, among the 116 public houses in Waterford. I am assuming that this is the same premises.

To return to the story of the Devereux family grave at Ballygunner Temple, the *Waterford Chronicle* of 10 September 1822 reported as follows:

### **Most Distressing Calamity**

On Sunday Captain Richard Devereux of the ship *Success* of London, Mr Henry Smith Jr., son of Mr. Henry Smith of Rose Lane, Corn Merchant, Mr. Moses Devereux of Rose Lane, Attorney, and his brother Mr. Patrick Devereux, a youth of about 17, with a lad named Thomas Furlong, belonging to the *Success*, in that vessel's yawl, departed on an aquatic excursion down the river as far as Duncannon. On their return, they touched at Ballyhack, from whence, after a short stay, they set out at about seven o'clock in the evening. Having stood over to the Co. Waterford shore, a little above Passage, the boat tacked, and was stretching again towards the Co. Wexford side, when being about two thirds of the distance over, a sudden squall caused the boat to heel so much to leeward that she filled at once and went down.

As soon as the dreadful accident was observed, several boats put off towards the spot, to render assistance if possible, but unfortunately the distance prevented their coming up in time, and the only person saved was the sailor lad, who was picked up a boat from the *Vine*, from Sicily, performing quarantine above Passage, on board of which he was conveyed. The melancholy loss of these excellent and amiable young men, snatched from life in the full enjoyment of health and vigour, has diffused one universal feeling of sympathetic regret throughout all classes in this city, where they were severally esteemed and beloved by an extensive and respectable circle of friends. We regret to add that none of the bodies of the unfortunate sufferers had been recovered up to a late hour yesterday'.<sup>31</sup>

28 *Griffith's Valuation Lists, Union of Waterford*, (Dublin, HM Stationary Office, 1851), pp. 1,2.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 25,26.

30 *Slater's Commercial Directory of Ireland*, (1846, 1856), pp. 246, 275.

31 *Waterford Chronicle*, 10 September 1822.

### 'The Late Dreadful Disaster on the River'

The *Waterford Chronicle* of Thursday 12 September reported:

The bodies of two of the much-lamented sufferers in the melancholy catastrophe on Sunday 8th have been picked up. That of Captain Devereux of the *Success* was found on Tuesday, near the place where the accident happened, and was conveyed to Ballyhack, where it was removed yesterday removed for interment to Wexford, the place of his nativity, where his widowed mother, his sisters and other relatives reside. The body of Mr. Henry Smith was taken up yesterday, near Cape Cooneen, and brought to the residence of his afflicted parents in Rose Lane. The sorrowing relatives of Mr. Moses Devereux and his brother, are still without the melancholy consolation of recovering their remains, but from the exertions making, it is hoped that they cannot long remain undiscovered.

Many of our fellow-citizens have expressed an intention of manifesting their respect for the memory of these deeply-regretted young gentlemen, and their sympathy for the agonised feelings of their families, by attending their respective funerals in hat-bands and scarves. The remains of Mr. Smith will be taken out for interment at five-o'clock this afternoon'. The *Chronicle*<sup>32</sup> of Tuesday Sept 17th continued the story: 'The body of the lamented Mr. Moses Devereux was found yesterday at the Co. Wexford side of the river, nearly opposite Cape Cooneen, and was brought in the evening to the residence of his mourning family in Rose Lane, from whence it will be removed, this day at twelve o'clock for interment at Ballygunner. The public feeling so strikingly evinced at the funeral of his unfortunate fellow-sufferer Mr. Henry Smith, will no doubt be similarly manifested on this sad occasion. The remains of Mr. Patrick Devereux are still undiscovered.'<sup>33</sup>

The following week the *Waterford Mirror* reported further:

On Monday about noon the body of Mr. Moses Devereux who was drowned on the previous Sunday week, was found a little north of Ballyhack. It is worthy of remark that the ship *Nasius Grossard*, then off Ballyhack, but since sailed for St. Andrews New Brunswick, fired three discharges of cannon with a view to bringing up the body, naturally supposed to be approaching buoyancy, and likely to be hastened by a concussion in the water. We pronounce not upon the connection between cause and effect, but about five minutes after the firing the body rose to the surface near to where the firing took place.<sup>34</sup>

32 *Ibid.*, 17 September 1822.

33 *Ibid.*, 12 September 1822.

34 *Waterford Mirror*, 18 September 1822.



*Plate 3: Church interior.*



*Plate 4: West wall. John Moore slab in the foreground.*

The body of Patrick Devereux had not been recovered by 24 September 1822 nor did subsequent issues of the *Waterford Chronicle* in October report the finding of the body.

### **A Family Decimated**

Aside from the references to the Devereux name in Waterford mentioned above, the family at Rose Lane were not recorded in *Griffith's Valuation*. The sons of Nicholas and Margaret Devereux, Moses and Patrick, drowned in September 1822, their daughter Ellenor died June 1823, aged twenty, their mother Margaret died March 1827, aged fifty-four, and Nicholas, their father died August 1830. Also commemorated on the gravestone are two other daughters, Mrs. Mary Ronayne, and Catherine Devereux, with no dates of death inscribed, and sons John and Henry, who died young.

### **John Moore**

The death and burial here of John Moore bears retelling. His grave at Ballygunner Temple, a ledger slab near the west doorway, is inscribed with the Cross and the family Crest and Motto.

Here is the Body of John Moore Esq.  
Of Ashbrook in the County of Mayo  
Who died in the City of Waterford  
On the 6th Day of December 1799  
Aged 36 Years.

Requiscant in Pace Amen

The Moores had come to Ireland in the seventeenth century as a Protestant family, and acquired their first small property at Ashbrook by purchase. John's grandfather George, turned Catholic on marriage into one of the Old English families of Galway, the Lynch-Athys, migrated to Alicante in Spain, made his fortune but maintained his links with Mayo. He is recorded as having taken the oath of allegiance to the Crown on 12 December 1780. This admitted him, although a Catholic but a substantial landowner to certain privileges. His son John, born in Alicante, was educated at Paris and later in London, with his younger brother George, where they studied law. He had an expectation of being called to the Irish Bar, but there is no record of his ever practising there.<sup>35</sup>

### **1798 Rebellion**

When the French General Humbert and a small army landed at Killala on 22 August 1798, John Moore was at the family seat of Moore Hall. Local belief, but nothing proven, was that he put himself at the head of a body of his father's troop, joined the rebels and fought in the engagement known as the Races of Castlebar, where government forces were put to flight. He certainly impressed General

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35 Grattan Freyer and Sheila Mulloy, 'The Unfortunate John Moore', in *Cathair na Mart: Journal of Westport Historical Society* Vol. 4 No. 1 (1984), p. 51.

Humbert, who, probably due to his high local standing, named him in a proclamation from his headquarters in Castlebar: 'Citizen John Moore is named President of the Government of the Province of Connaught, he is specially entrusted with the nomination and reunion of the members of the Government'.<sup>36</sup>

Following the arrival of fresh government forces, Humbert evacuated Castlebar, the town was re-taken by Colonel Crawford and John Moore was arrested. He told his captors that he had accepted the commission of President merely to preserve the property of his father, who had an estate worth £4,000. A number of respected local citizens had collaborated with the French in maintaining order, but Humbert's Act of Commission as President found on Moore placed him in a difficult position. He pleaded innocence in taking part in any bloodshed in a memorial from prison to Lord Cornwallis, Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief, and claimed that his part in the Rebellion was the maintenance of law and order in Castlebar, and the prevention of looting by the rebels of his father's and other's properties.<sup>37</sup>

### High Treason

The family lost no time in hiring an attorney, Alexander McDonnell, for his defence against the charge of high treason. McDonnell's detailed attorney's account for attending John Moore, from 5 September 1798 to 1 May 1799, preserved among the Moore Papers in the National Library is the source of what happened from his arrest and as he was moved from Castlebar to Athlone to Dublin.<sup>38</sup> As Moore had not been taken under arms there was doubt about how he should be tried. His legal team obtained a writ of Habeas Corpus to have him tried at Castlebar, to whence he was returned. He was tried eventually at civil court in Ballinrobe and sentenced to transportation.<sup>39</sup> McDonnell's accounts detail expenses for three physicians attending to Moore while in prison, which testifies to his poor health. The *Freeman's Journal* reports his arrival in Waterford on 16 November 1799:

John Moore Esq., two R.C. clergymen of the names of Cannon and Molloney, a frier named Killeen, Valantine Jordain a respectable farmer, all from the vicinity of Castlebar, and Fergus, an innkeeper from Westport, were brought in here with eight others by a party of Hompesch's cavalry. Those whose names are above mentioned were permitted to lodge at the Royal Oak tavern, with guards placed on the room they were in. They have entered into recognizance to transport themselves from His Majesty's dominions which measure they prefer

36 *Ibid.*, p. 52.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

38 *Ibid.*, Appendix 3: McDonnell's bill, for the period 5 September 1798 to 1 May 1799 was for the colossal sum of £2,281.19s. 4d. but in a postscript to the account reduced after an appeal, he claimed that he was in attendance on the now 'deceased Mr. Moore' for 'nearly twenty months'. The reduced sum of £1,353. 0s. 9d. was paid by John's younger brother George, their father George also having died in 1799.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 54.



to the risk of a trial. Moore was so emaciated that his attendants were obliged to carry him from his carriage to the tavern.<sup>40</sup>

### Death and Burial

The inevitable end of John Moore was recorded in the *Freeman's Journal* of 17 December 1799:

On Friday last Counsellor John Moore died at the Royal Oak Tavern, Waterford, of a lingering and obstinate disorder. His remains were privately interred at Ballygunner. Mr. Moore, among many thousands who had justly forfeited their lives, experienced from government the most signal clemency. He had been some few weeks here since on his way, with other prisoners, to Duncannon fort, but being taken ill at the Royal Oak, he was not only permitted to remain there, but received all possible medical assistance, and every other indulgence compatible with his safe keeping. The unfortunate gentleman was struck with the lenity and humanity he met with, so that his in his last moments, he prayed most fervently for the King, and for the conversion of his enemies.<sup>41</sup>

### The Twentieth Century

Possibly the first local mention of John Moore's name in over 130 years, was in the *Waterford News* of July 19 1935, which published a note requesting 'information as to the tombstone said to have been erected over the grave of a Connaught gentleman, John Moore, a '98 leader, who died in Waterford and was buried at Old Ballygunner'.<sup>42</sup> The reply from Senator Colonel Maurice Moore,<sup>43</sup> a descendant of the Moore family, appeared in the *Waterford News* of 2 August, wherein he quoted from the *Freeman's Journal* pieces mentioned above, about his famous forebear. In the same issue of the *Waterford News*, a letter from the noted local historian Matthew Butler appears, with additional information on John Moore:

I have just seen the note from Dr. Hayes to Senator Maurice Moore, published in the *Evening News* of July 29th; that note definitely establishes the location of the 'Royal Oak' as being in the City of Waterford [where John Moore died on 6 December 1799]. I used to think the 'Royal Oak' near Leighlinbridge was meant. It is obvious from the

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

42 *Waterford News*, 19 July 1935.

43 H. Pyle, *Cesca's Diary, 1913-1916*, (Woodfield Press, 2005), p. 87. Col. Maurice Moore, brother of novelist George Moore of Moore Hall, joined the Connaught Rangers in 1875, served in the Kaffir, Zulu and Boer Wars, was major figure in the organisation of the Irish Volunteers and a member of the Provisional Committee. After the 1914 split, he continued in prominence in the National Volunteers, as the followers of Redmond were called. He wrote his own account of the force, *Tús agus Fás: Óglaigh na hÉireann 1913-1917*, (1936), when he was a Senator.

note dated December 14th 1799, sent by Dr. Hayes, that John Moore had been buried in Ballygunner on the previous Sunday, December 8th 1799. It is further stated that his remains were interred privately, which means that no-one except British soldiery were in attendance, and hence the difficulty in locating his exact resting place.

The distance of Ballygunner from Moore Hall may have precluded any of his own relatives erecting a lasting memorial to his memory. Moore Hall is some 12 to 15 miles south-east of Westport, the times were dangerous, travelling was slow and difficult, and hence the doubt if any tombstone marks his resting place. Local people would hardly know who he was. It is doubtful if those prisoners were being taken to Duncannon Fort: the usual place for the embarkation of prisoners at that time was Geneva Barracks.

Dr. Poole was the medical attendant to the British forces in Waterford at that period, and it may have been the same man who rendered the necessary medical assistance to the dying prisoner. John Moore was one of the few gentry of that day who supported the movement for the independence of Ireland: fully 90% of the gentry came out strongly and loudly in favour of the continuance of English domination of the country. That John Moore forsook the usual views of his class and colleagues to stand wholeheartedly on the side of Ireland, is a test of his sincerity and devotion to his motherland'.<sup>44</sup>

In the same issue of the *Waterford News* is a column entitled 'Consecrated Ground' wherein was written: 'A News representative who happened to be cycling in the vicinity of Ballygunner old cemetery this week made a short search for the John Moore tomb there'. Describing the overgrown graveyard and crumbling church, he came away without discovering the grave of Moore, and thought that the Board of Works should do something 'to put this ancient place, containing the remains of Waterford families of distinction, as well as humbler folk, in good order'.<sup>45</sup>

It is probable that George, the brother of John Moore, if he was unable to travel to Waterford, commissioned the very fine ledger, complete with family coat-of-arms, which covers the grave. There is now a certain irony of circumstances, in that the remains of the unfortunate John Moore are no longer under the gravestone, having been exhumed with fitting solemnity in 1961.

### **A Patriot Honoured**

Following representations from Dr. J Langan, chairman of the John Moore Memorial Committee of Castlebar, and liaising with the County Waterford National Monuments Advisory Committee, details in connection with the exhumation of John Moore were given by Chairman Nicholas Whittle at a press

44 *Waterford News*, 2 August 1935.

45 *Ibid.* See also *Munster Express*, 2 August 1935.

conference in the Council Chamber at City Hall, Waterford, and reported in local newspapers of 4 August 1961.<sup>46</sup> The exhumation took place on Friday 11 August. Work was carried out under the direction of archaeologist and historian, Dr. Philip O'Connell, Ph.D, of Clonmel, and Dr. J.P. Twomey, of Tramore, the Garda Síochána doctor. There was present, a large and representative attendance from Castlebar and Waterford, including two grand-nephews, Mr. Peter Moore of Paris, and Mr. Maurice Moore, Santa Barbara, California, son of the late Colonel Maurice Moore. The remains were enclosed in a polished oak coffin supplied by Mr. P. Whittle, undertaker, Ballybricken, with a breastplate inscribed: 'John Moore, President of Connaght, 1798-99. Died at Waterford, Dec.6, 1799, R.I.P'.<sup>47</sup>

Dr. O'Connell later reported on the condition of the remains. He said that due to the very dry nature of the soil, and the fact that the grave had been covered by a massive stone slab, helped to preserve the remains and far more of the body than expected, had been recovered. He said that the patriot had been buried carelessly at a depth of about 4 feet. No trace of the gold ring bearing the family coat of arms, which Moore was reputed to have been wearing at the time of death, had been found.<sup>48</sup>

An impressive ceremony took place after exhumation. The oak casket, draped in the Tricolour, was placed on an army Matador lorry. A guard of honour of army officers with drawn swords accompanied the cortege on a 300-yard slow march along the roadway lined by ninety soldiers drawn from the 9th Battalion, Waterford and Kilkenny, and the 21st Battalion, Bray. At the Mall, Waterford, the cortege was joined by members of Waterford Corporation and County Council, National Graves Association, Slua Muirí, Old IRA, Organisation of Ex-Servicemen, and other bodies. The white flag of mourning was flown by the Cardiff-based minesweeper, *St. David*, which was paying a courtesy visit to Waterford.<sup>49</sup>

Headed by St. Patrick's Brass Band playing the *Dead March* from Saul, and led by bandmaster Fintan O'Carroll, the cortege passed along the Quay, lined by large crowds, to the cathedral. The remains were received by Very Rev. R. Coady, Administrator, and in attendance were, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Dean Barron, PP, VG, Ballybricken, representing Most Rev. Dr. Daniel Coholan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Very Rev. Terence O'Donoghue, OP, Prior, St. Saviour's, Rev. Fr. Aloysius, OFM, V Rev. Raphael Power, Administrator St. John's, Rev. T. Ahearne, CC, Rev. C. Lawn, CC. The prayers were recited in Irish by Fr. Coady and the remains lay in state on a catafalque in front of the high altar. Wreaths were placed on the casket with the inscriptions: 'In honour of the gallant Frenchmen who died for Ireland in 1798'; 'In proud and loving tribute to President John Moore, from the people of Connaght'; 'In tribute to our age-old ally Spain, which gave us John Moore, First President'.

46 *Waterford News*, 4 August 1961.

47 *Ibid.*, 15 August 1961.

48 *Munster Express*, 25 August 1961.

49 *Waterford News*, 15 August 1961.

A plaque erected by Bord Fáilte on the premises in George's Street, which was the site of the Royal Oak Tavern wherein John Moore died, was unveiled by Dr. J. Langan of Castlebar, and in the presence of Cllr. John Griffin, Mayor of Waterford. Dr. Langan said he wished to express, on behalf of the people of Mayo and Connacht, their most warm thanks for the magnificent tribute which the people of Waterford had paid to the memory of Moore. The fact that Waterford shared him with Mayo constituted a bond between the two counties which was 'unique in the history of our country, in that they both shared in the honour of Ireland's first President [*sic.*]'. The time had come, he said, 'when the remains of Moore would be returned home in triumph with all the ceremonial pageantry and honour due to his rank and sacrifice. They would be brought by Irish soldiers back over the roads through which he had been driven a shackled and barefooted prisoner.'<sup>50</sup>

Following solemn Requiem Mass at the cathedral on Saturday 12 August, presided at by Right Rev. Msgr. Dean Barron, PP, VG, and celebrated by Very Rev. Richard Coady Adm, in the presence of Rev. R Keane, bishop's secretary, V Rev. Raphael Power, Administrator, St. John's, Rev. J Morrissey, CC, St. John's, Rev. Fr. Aloysius OFM, Rev. Fr. William, OFM, Very Rev. T O'Donoghue, OP, Prior St. Saviour's, Rev. T Ahearne, CC, and Rev. C Lawn, CC, military honours were again accorded when the remains were conveyed from the city to Castlebar. The army truck containing the casket was preceded by a contingent of Military Police and the FCA.<sup>51</sup>

In Castlebar, President De Valera delivered the graveside oration, when John Moore was re-interred at the foot of the 1798 memorial on the Mall, the casket having made the last part of the journey on a gun-carriage. The distinguished attendance included An Taoiseach, Mr. Sean Lemass, members of the Government and Diplomatic Corps, the French and Spanish Ambassadors, Mr. Peter Moore, Paris, Mr. Maurice Moore, Santa Barbara, and representatives of the National Monuments Advisory Committee to Waterford Co. Council.<sup>52</sup> The monument over Moore's new grave is inscribed in Irish and English:

50 *Ibid.* The plaque erected by Bord Fáilte probably disappeared during the demolition of upper George's Street, and a small modern limestone plaque is erected on the premises of 'Lifestyle', commemorating Moore's demise: 'In memory of John Moore 1763-1799, first President of Ireland. He was held prisoner here. Erected by Cumann Sean Óglaigh / Fianna Éireann'.

51 *Munster Express*, 25 August 1961.

52 *Waterford News*, 15 August 1961.

FORTIS CADERE CEDERE NON POTEST.<sup>53</sup>

Pray for the soul of John Moore of Ashbrook and Moorehall, County Mayo, Ireland's First President and descendant of Saint Thomas More, Who gave his life for his Country in the Rising of 1798. Born Alicante, Spain, 1763.

Died a prisoner awaiting transportation in the City of Waterford 6-12-1799. By the will of the people exhumed and re-interred Here with all honours of Church and State, 13-8-1961.<sup>54</sup>

The date of birth given above is probably in error. In a letter to his parents dated London, 10 January 1794, John Moore describes himself 'at the age of nearly 27', which would mean a date of birth in 1768.<sup>55</sup> In addition his birth date is given as 16 March 1768 in his King's Inns Admission Papers.<sup>56</sup> It is also incorrect to describe Moore as 'First President of Ireland', being named by General Humbert as 'President of the Government of the Province of Connaught'.

Despite the honour paid to the memory of John Moore 162 years after his tragic death, unfortunately there is nothing in the historical record to confirm that he was a leader in 1798 of the calibre of the liberal landlords of Co. Wexford who joined and led the United Irishmen, such as Bagenal Harvey of Bargo Castle, Cornelius Grogan of Johnstown Castle and Anthony Perry of Inch - all Protestants, and who all paid the ultimate price on the gallows of Wexford bridge.<sup>57</sup>



Plate 5: Devereux box tomb with railings against the south wall.

53 'The brave may fall but cannot yield'.

54 Grattan Freyer and Sheila Mulloy, 'The Unfortunate John Moore', in *Cathair na Mart: Journal of Westport Historical Society* Vol. 4 No. 1 (1984), p. 51.

55 *Ibid.*, Appendix 1, p. 58.

56 *Ibid.*, footnote 2, p 55; E. Keane, P. Phair and T. Sadlier (eds.), *Kings Inns Admission Papers, 1607-1867*, (1982).

57 Daniel Gahan, *The People's Rising, Wexford 1798*, (Dublin, Gill & Macmillan, 1995), pp. 8, 359, 363.

## Ballygunner Temple: Gravestone Inscriptions

1. AYLWARD: 3 ½ ft., limestone, + IHS in sunburst.  
Here lieth the Body of Mark Aylward who died the 20th [?] 1773 aged 71 years Also the Body of his wife Joany Aylward als Quilty [?] Who depd this life March the 19th 1771 aged 75  
  
BERTHON: See Power, No. 38.  
  
BOWERS: See Gaffney, No. 19.
2. BOWMAN: 3 ½ ft., limestone.  
In loving memory of Catherine Bowman, 99 Ballytruckle. Died 4th Jan. 1960 aged 71 years, also Baby Mark Holness, died at birth.
3. BROWN: Ledger in front of church, + IHS.  
This stone was erected by Patrick Gaffney of the City of Waterford, Carpenter, in memory of the Revd Mr William Brown, Parish Priest of St. John's and the united parishes, who departed this life March the 10th 1788 aged 71 years, and his son William Gaffney who died March the 8th 1839 aged 55 years. Also his nephew Patrick Dunn who departed [illegible]  
  
BRYAN: See Moran, No. 28.  
  
CARBERRY: See Delany, No. 6.
4. CAREY: + IHS.  
Erected by Patrick Carey in memory of his wife Mary Carey, who departed this life the 29th December 1819 aged 63 years.
5. CASHIN: Box Tomb within church.  
Erected by Roger Cashin of the City of Waterford, wherein are deposited the remains of his son Edmund Cashin Esq. who departed this life the 31st July 1816 aged 42 years. Also Roger the son of the said Edmund who died in the year 1807 aged 10 months.  
Requescant in Pace Amen. Mattw. Carew fecit. [There is a redbrick-lined vault beneath this box tomb, with evidence of bones.]  
  
DALY: See Fennelly, No. 9.

6. DELANY: Refurbished 4 ft., limestone, east of church, + I H S in sunburst. Here lieth the Body of James Delany of Balinabowly, who depd this life 17th of July 1809 Aged 70 years. Also 5 of his Children who died young. Also Ellen Dunne nee Delaney, Died 24th Nov. 1919 Aged 74. Her Grandniece Ellen Carberry nee Ryan, Kilmeaden and formerly of Ballytruckle. Died 9th Nov. 1938. Aged 29. Requiescant in pace, Amen

7. DEVEREUX: Large box tomb with rusted railings against south wall of church, lettering weathered, crest with coat of arms and motto.<sup>58</sup> Erected in year of our Lord 1823 in memory of Moses & Patrick H Devereux, Attorneys at law, Sons of Nicholas Devereux of the City of Waterford, Merchant, who were drowned between Passage and Ballyhack in Company with Captain and Mr Henry Smith in a pleasure boat the 8th Sept 1822. And here also the Remains of their two Brothers John and Henry who died young. And their two sisters Mrs Mary Ronayne and Catherine Devereux. [24 line poem follows, lettering weathered] Also to the memory of Miss Ellenor Devereux who departed this life on the 11th June 1823 aged 20 years. Also Mrs Margaret Devereux who departed this life on the 23rd of March 1827 aged 54 years. Also Mr Nicholas Devereux Senr. who departed this life on the 14th August 1830 aged 71 years.  
Bolton & Bergin fecit. *Peace be to them. Amen.*

DUNN: See Brown, No. 3.

DUNNE: See Delany, No. 6.

DUNPHY: See Fewer, No. 10.

8. FENNEL: Large lichen-covered limestone, + IHS in sunburst. Erected by James Fennell of the City of Waterford in memory of his Father James Fennell who depd this life May 6th 1789 aged 45 yrs also the body of Wilm Fennell, who depd this life Sept 6th 1794 aged 47 yrs. Also the body of his wife Honor Fennell who depd this life March 19th 1796 aged 60 yrs. Also the body of Catherine Fennell who depd this life Novbr 20th 1806 aged 40 yrs.

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58 Crest: 'Out of a ducal coronet or a talbot's head argent', (species of hound). Motto: *Basis Virtutem Constantia* (The foundation of virtue is constancy).

9. FENNELLY: 2 ½ ft., plain stone.  
Roseanne Fennelly, died 13 August 1946 aged 4 ½ months.  
'Softly in the evening, you heard a gentle call, You took the hand God offered  
And quietly left us all'. From your loving family.
10. FEWER: 3 ½ ft., limestone, + IHS, 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo'.  
Erected by Martin and Elnor Fewer in memory of their Father and Mother. Here is the Body of Patrick Dunphy who depd Aug 1757 aged 63. Also the Body of his wife Joan Dunphy alias Fewer? who depd Sept 14 1752 aged 55 yrs. With a child of Martin Fewer who died young. Also a child of Michael Power ,Smith, who died young.
11. FINUCANE: Limestone, + IHS.  
Erected by Timothy Finucane in memory of his wife Ann Finucane and who depd this life July 28th 1809 aged 56 years. Also the body of the above named Timothy Finucane who departed this life October the 17th 1816 in the 75th year of his age.
12. FLAHERTY: Fragment, + IHS in sunburst.  
Here lieth the body of Owen Flaherty who... June the 24th 1796.
13. FOGARTY: Against outside east wall.  
Erected by John Fogarty Half way house. Here lieth the Body of his Father Thomas Fogarty also his Mother Catherine alias Conway His brother Daniell Fogarty his wife Mary Fogarty alias Flinn also 4 of her children.  
The above named neath this stone do lie  
We hope in God and heaven.  
Their Souls He will invoy?
- FLINN: See Fogarty, No. 13.
14. FLINN: Large limestone, with cross, Passion symbols, motto: Gloria in Excelsis Deo.  
Erected by Andrew Flinn and Mary Flinn in memory of her husband William Flinn of Ballinamona who departed this life July the 9th 1800 aged 76 years. Also six of his children who died young.
15. FLING: Broken stone with Passion symbols.  
Here lyeth the body of Daniel Fling of Calahan. He departed Janry 25th 1767 aged 22 yrs.
16. FLING: 4ft., limestone, + IHS.  
This stone was erected by John Fling of Harristown [the rest eroded and flaked]



17. **FLING:** Broken limestone on ground, + IHS.  
Here lyes the body of Maurice Fling. He departed this life May 6th 1763 aged 75 years. Also the body of his son John Fling who died Novbr 6th 1768 aged 46 years.
18. **FLYNN:** Limestone, + IHS.  
Here lieth the body of Mr. Edmond Flynn who departed this life on the 7th of December 1819 aged 79 years.
- GAFFNEY:** See Brown, No. 3.
19. **GAFFNEY:** Stone with cross.  
Erected by Ann Flynn in loving memory of her mother Catherine Gaffney, age 59 years. Also her grandmother Mary Bowers aged 70. Also her sisters brothers Mary Gaffney aged 14 yrs her brother Thomas age 11, and John, William? Bridget, Elizabeth died who young.
- GOFF:** See Phelan, No. 37.
20. **GOODCHILD:** 1 ½ ft., limestone, 'open book'.  
In memory of John Goodchild died June 12th 1897 aged 32 years.
21. **GUY:** 6 ft., limestone surmounted by incised floral cross.  
Sacred to the memory of Catherine Guy, wife of the late Capt. Guy, who died June 26th 1880, aged 43 years. This monument has been erected by her affectionate children.
22. **HAYES:** 6ft., stone, + IHS. In curve at top:  
In memory Thomas Patrick Hayes.  
Sacred to the memory of his children Edward died 1872 aged 5 years and Mary Jane Hayes died 1880 aged 10 years and of his people in law, John Phelan died 1866 aged 70 years and Catherine his wife died 1863 aged 65 years and their children, Dora died 1849 aged 14 years and Michael Phelan died 1861 aged 32 years.  
This stone piously raised by Thomas Hayes, John St. Waterford 1881.  
Also the above Thomas Hayes died Sept 24th 1893, aged 53 years, and his wife Mary Ann Hayes died 20th March 1916 aged 79 years.  
John Hayes died 13th July 1919 aged 65 years, his child Johanna died 23rd March 1919 aged 12, his daughter Agnes O'Connor died 8th April 1936 aged 25 R. I. P.

23. HEARON: 4 ft., limestone, + IHS in sunburst.  
Motto: Glory to God on High.  
Here lieth the Body of Thos Hearon of Bally Brickin who departed this life March the 6th 1777 aged 74 years Also the Body of his wife Mary Hearon alias Power who [rest of inscription beneath ground].
24. HEARON: 3ft., cross with incised Passion symbols.  
Here is the Burial Place of Maurice Hearon 'deceased'. Here lyeth the Body of his Son Thomas Hearon who departed this life the 22nd of May 1763 aged 58 years. Likewise [?] the Body of his Son Maurice who departed this life the 12th [the rest buried].
- HOLNESS: See Bowman, No. 2.
- IVERY: See Walsh, No. 48.
25. KAVANAGH: 3ft., limestone, + IHS, in front of church.  
Erected by John Kavanagh in memory of his Father William Kavanagh late of Bally Canvin, who depd this life July the 13th 1812 aged 75 years. Requiscant in Pace, Amen.
26. KENNEDY: Broken Celtic Cross.  
This memorial was erected as a mark of respect by the friends and companions of Andrew Kennedy who died June 10th 1905 aged 30 years.  
We have loved him in life, let us not forget him in death.
27. KERNEY: IHS, curved top.  
Erected by Edmd Kerney in memory of his Son Thos who died Jan 9th 1791 agd 46 yrs.
28. KING: 3 1/2 ft., limestone, cross with brass plate, + IHS.  
In loving memory of Margaret King who died October 18th 1893 also her daughter Maggie who died June 28th 1913 and their deceased relatives. R. I. P.
29. KIREWAN: 3 ft., limestone, rounded top with cross and Passion symbols.  
Here lieth the body of Patrick Kirewan who departed this life 10th Febry 1773 aged 29 years. Requiscant in Pace Amen.
30. MOLONEY: Iron cross with inscriptions on arms and circle:  
In remembrance Edward Moloney died June 16 1881, Ann Moloney died Dec. 15 1892, John Moloney, Waterford, died June 24 1893.

31. MORAN: + IHS in sunburst, 'Gloria in Excelsis Deo'.  
Erected by Michael Moran of the City of Waterford in memory of his sister Mary Bryan alias Moran who departed this life 5th February 1819, aged 78 years. Also the body of his daughter in law Margaret Moran who depd this life 14th June 1819 aged 47 years. Here lies the body of Michael Moran who departed this life on the first day of March 1822 aged 74 years. Requiscant in Pace.
32. MULOWNEY: 6ft., limestone, + I H S, with Passion symbols.  
This stone is erected by James and William Mulowney to the memory of their father Rich. Mulowney who departed this life Feb 1st 1776 aged 76 also of his grandchildren also the body of his wife Catherine alias Welsh who depd this life June 1791 aged 79.
33. MOORE: Ledger slab, 12 ft. from church entrance, with family crest and motto.<sup>59</sup>  
Here is the Body of John Moore Esq. of Ashbrook in the County of Mayo who died in the City of Waterford on the 6th Day of December 1799 aged 36 years.  
Requiscant in Pace Amen.
34. MURRY: 2 1/2 ft., limestone with curved top, no cross inscribed, in front of church.  
In memory of Margaret Murry died March 31 1894 aged 50.  
  
O'CONNOR: See Hayes, No. 21.
35. O'SHEA: 3 ft., limestone, cross detached.  
Erected by James O'Shea of Waterford, In loving memory of his Mother Johanna who died June 19th 1908 aged 76 and his Father Edward died Nov 20th 1876 aged 56. RIP  
O'Keeffe & Sons.
36. PARKER: 4 ft., limestone, curved top, no cross.  
This stone was erected in Friendly Remembrance of Francis Sherley Parker who departed this life Feb the 27th 1787 in the 21st year of his age.  
'How loved, how valued.....avails thee not?  
To whom related.....?.  
A heap of dust remains.....?  
Tis that thou art and all the proud shall be'.

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59 Crest: Moore of Moore Hall, Co Mayo: 'A Moor's head and shoulders proper in the ear an annulet'. Motto: *Fortis Cadere Cedere non Potest* (The brave may fall but cannot yield); see also James Fairbairn, *Fairbairn's Book of Crests of the Families of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London, 1984), p. 396.

37. PHELAN: Ledger slab in front of church, + IHS, 'In hoc signo vinces'.  
The burial ground of M Phelan of Ballygunnercastle. Interred herein three of his daughters, Elizabeth who depd this life in May 1793. Catherine the 17th of May 1797, Mary Goff the 16th of May 1800 and her daughter Mary Ann. Also interred beneath this stone the remains of the above named Matthias Phelan who died 9th of May 1810 aged 91 years and his son Walter Phelan of the City of Waterford, Solicitor, who departed this life the 1st day of March 1856 aged 56 years.  
Requiscant in Pace.

PHELAN: See Hayes, No. 21.

38. POWER: Ledger slab within church.  
Here lieth the body of James Power late of Knockboy who depd this life Feb 1815 aged 69 yrs also his son Joseph who depd this life April 25th 1795 aged 12 years.

39. POWER: 3ft., cross with Passion symbols.  
Here lieth the Body of Mary Power alias Welsh who depd this life December ye 26th 1758 aged 53 yrs also her granddaughter Mary Meade who parted August ye 23d 1759 aged 3 yrs. Erected by her husband John Power.

40. POWER: Limestone altar table in front of door opening.  
In loving memory of Joan Pauline Power nee Berthon. Born February 4th 1900.  
Died August 1st 1959. R I P.

41. POWER: Limestone, + IHS.  
Erected to the memory of Thos Power son of Maurice Power of Killcaragh who departed this life 27 of Decbr 1778 aged 26 years. Requiscant in Pace.

42. POWER: Small stone inside church against west wall, + IHS.  
Here lyeth Body of Richard Power son of John Power of Williamstown who depd this life 16th May 1740 aged 19 years.

QUILTY: See Aylward, No. 1.

REVILLES: See Walsh, No. 47.

RONAYNE: See Devereux, No. 7.

RYAN: See Delany, No.6.

SMITH: See Devereux, No. 7.

43. STRANG: Lichen-covered stone, + IHS.  
Edmond Strang. Also the bodys of two of his children Margaret Strang, depd Decmr 24th 1794 aged 8 years, Bridget who died young.
44. SWEETMAN: Deeply incised limestone cross with Passion symbols and representation of Temple.  
Here lieth the body of John Sweetman who departed this life Decr 4th 1776 aged 78 years, also his wife Johanna Sweetman alias Galgey who depd ? 17786 aged 74 yrs also Margaret her daughter [remainder of inscription buried].
45. TUBRID: Limestone, + IHS.  
Erected in memory of Walter Tubrid of Bishops court who departed this life July 9th 1794 age 70. Also his wife Mary Tubrid. Edmond and Anastatia , grandchildren died young.
46. WAIDE: Ledger slab left front of church.  
Here lieth the Body of James Waide of Cross Bog who depd this life June the 9th 1786 aged 65 years. Also his wife Alice Waide who depd this life April the 3rd 1788 aged 72 yrs. Also their son Michael Waide who depd this life Mar the 15th 177? Aged 11 years. Also Ann Waide who depd this life April 15th 1800 aged 35 years. Also her daughter Alice Waide who depd this life Nov 16th 1812 aged 14 years.  
Requiscant in Pace Amen
47. WALSH: Celtic Cross:  
Erected by James Reviles Slievekeale in memory of Walter Walsh who died 1889 aged 59. His wife Mary Walsh died 1891 aged 64 years and his uncle James Walsh died 8th October 1945 aged 85.
48. WALSH: Ledger slab, right front of church.  
'In Hoc Signo Vincet'. Erected by Richd Walsh of Knockhouse in memory of his wife Elenor Walsh alias Ivery who depd this life June 27th 1803 aged 36 years. Also two of her children who died young. Also the Body of Robert Walsh who depd this life the 11th of March 1828 aged 32 years. Requiscant in Pace Amen.
49. WELSH: Limestone, + IHS, Passion symbols: ladder, spear, heart with nails.  
Here lyeth ye Body of Richard Welsh, Father of Edmond Welsh of the City of Waterford, and 3 of said Edmd Welsh's children., 1741?

50. WYSE: Ledger in centre of church, + IHS.

Here lies the Body of Thomas Wyse of Tycorr near the City of Waterford who died December 7th 1754 aged 75 years. The Body of Ellen Wyse alias Conner his wife April ye 27, 1747, Aged 60 years. The Body of Catherine Wyse their elder Daughter Anno 1734 aged 26 years, The Body of John Wyse their eldest son Anno 1739 aged 22 years. Requiscant in Pace Amen.

Fragment on ground:

Departed.....1750 aged 20 years.

There are also about twelve rough marker stones of various sizes scattered about the burial ground with no discernable markings, and a number of gravestones which this writer was unable to decipher.

# Kilmacthomas Union: The Administration of Poor Law in a County Waterford Workhouse 1851-1872

*Ger Crotty*

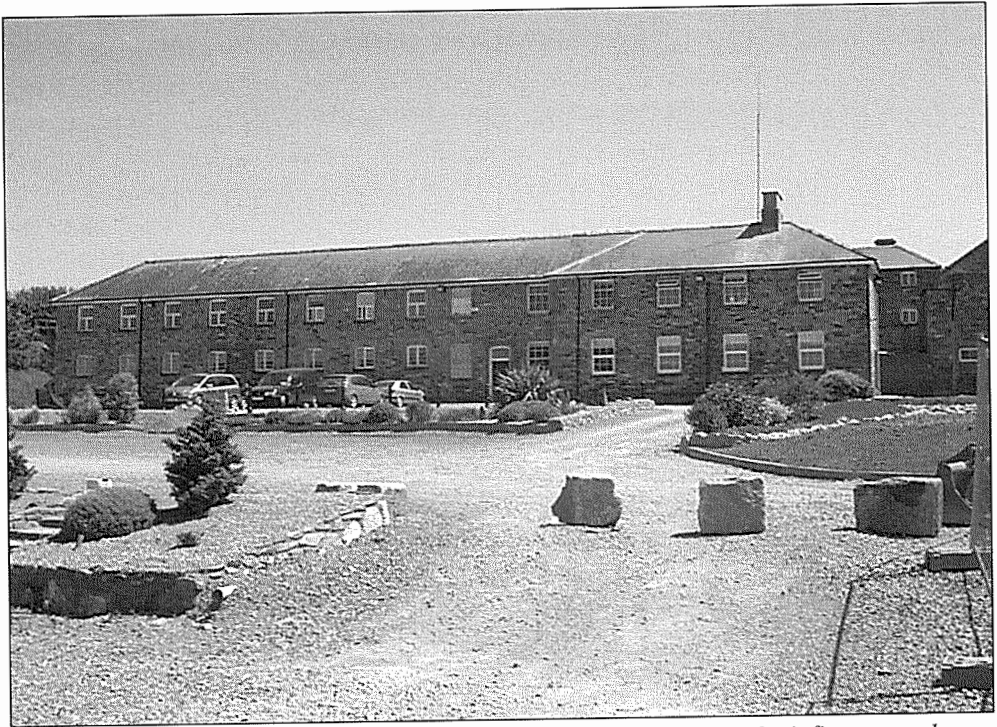
## **Introduction**

This paper examines Kilmacthomas Union in the period 1851 to 1872, presenting an opportunity to study the workings of the poor law administration outside the period of the famine. The principal argument of this article will centre on the implementation of the poor law and the way in which the workhouse moved from a narrow workhouse base to becoming the major provider of the statutory social services which came about as a direct result of the legislative changes in the poor law in the period following the famine. The minute books provide us with the opportunity for detailed analysis of how the poor law impacted on the administrators, ratepayers, officials and inmates. The geographical area of the union covered sixteen electoral divisions with a population of almost 25,000 in 1851. The spatial aspect will primarily focus on the workhouse and will reference the actual townlands in the context of the administration of the union, outdoor relief and the administration of the dispensary system established by the Medical Charities Act of 1851. Analysis of assisted emigration, disease control and the changing role of the poor law in the provision of fledgling social services at local level gives a picture of the changes brought about by legislation such as the Sewage Utilisation Act of 1865 and the Sanitary Act of 1866. By examining the union as a community as defined by Hoskins and Finberg, we can view it as a 'distinct and fundamental entity and organism with a continuous, ordered, coherent life of its own'.<sup>1</sup> The union provides a local view of the political, economic, social and cultural life of a rural workhouse against a national backdrop. As Kinealy points out the poor law system can only be worked out through detailed examination of its implementation at local level.<sup>2</sup>

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1 *History 6*, (Oscail, Dublin City University, 2006), p.1-9.

2 Christine Kinealy, 'The Workhouse System in County Waterford, 1838-1923', in William Nolan and Thomas Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, (Dublin, Geography Publications, 1992), p. 579.



*Plate 1: Renovated infirmary building, deaths, as well as numbers in the infirmary and fever hospital.*



*Plate 2: Renovated gate lodge.*



## The Formation of the Union

The Amendment Act of August 1849 provided the basis for the formation of new poor law unions resulting in the Poor Law Commission becoming one of the largest and most powerful government agencies in Ireland.<sup>3</sup> The Union of Kilmacthomas in County Waterford, one of the final eight formed,<sup>4</sup> is surrounded by the Unions of Waterford, Dungarvan and Carrick-on-Suir. The workhouse buildings are located on the main Waterford-Cork road approximately 12 miles from Waterford and 1 mile from Kilmacthomas in the townland of Carriganonshagh in the electoral division of Kilmacthomas.

The site consists of a dining hall, chapel, two-storey male and female hospital buildings, three-storey male and female dormitory buildings and two single-storey buildings at the site entrance. The mortuary is still intact and three of the rooms retain original limestone laying out slabs.

The union consisted of sixteen electoral divisions, with a population of 24,735 at formation in 1851, and covering more than 64,000 statute acres.<sup>5</sup> Most sources quote Kilmacthomas as having opened in 1851 and the first minute books are for October 1851 although it did not actually admit paupers until 1853.<sup>6</sup> The date on which the declaration of the new union took effect was set at 7 June 1850<sup>7</sup> with the first election of guardians set for the 30 July 1850.<sup>8</sup> The date of acceptance of the site for the workhouse was recorded in the *Fourth Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* as 11 October 1850 with the advertisement for tender issued on 18 February 1851 and tender accepted in April.<sup>9</sup> The minute books for 1851, 1852 and 1853 hide this fact as the observations section of the weekly reports were badly damaged by water prior to their storage in the County Archive. These were

3 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 78.

4 George Nicholls, *A History of the Irish Poor Law*, (London, 1856, Reprint, New York, 1867) p. 373; see Christine Kinneally, 'The Irish Poor Law, 1838-62: A Study of the Relationship Between the Local and Central Administrators', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dublin, 1984, p. 252 for detail on Kilmacthomas as one of the final eight unions formed as a result of the changes which came about in the aftermath of the famine.

5 G.B. Handrahan, *Townlands in Poor Law Unions: A Reprint of Poor Law Union Pamphlets of the General Register's Office*, (Massachusetts, 1997), p. 275.

6 *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* (1854), p.30. The report of George Wilkinson on building and erection of new unions in the Fifth Annual Report (1852) states 'work in progress and in a very advanced state.' *The Seventh Annual Report* refers to Kilmacthomas as one of twenty-seven new unions which were completed and in occupation.

7 *Fourth Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1851), p. 194.

8 *Ibid.*, Table I, p. 2. The *Waterford Evening News* for 8 November 1850, reporting on the proceedings of the Waterford Board of Guardians, quotes the chairman as seeing it as 'a good time to seek some of their money from the Kilmacthomas Union as he had heard they were now collecting in their own funds.'

9 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Table 1: Kilmacthomas Union Electoral Divisions.

Electoral Divisions			
Ballylanean	Fox's Castle	Knockmahon	Georgetown
Carrigcastle	MountKennedy	Kilmacthomas	Gardenmorris
Comeragh	Stradbally	Annestown	Newtown
Fews	Tinnasaggart	Dunhill	Kilbarrymeaden

Source: G.B. Handrahan, *Townlands in Poor Law Unions: A Reprint of Poor Law Union Pamphlets of the General Register's Office*, (Massachusetts, Higginson Book Company, 1997).

Table 2: Kilmacthomas Children in Dungarvan Minute Books June 1852.

Date	Class	Number of Pupils
26 <sup>th</sup> June 1852	In Girls School	210
June 1851	In Girls School	253
26 <sup>th</sup> June 1852	In Infants School	144
June 1851	In Infants School	212

Source: William Fraher (ed.), *Desperate Haven: The Poor Law, Famine, and Aftermath in Dungarvan Union*, (Dungarvan, 2001), p. 143.

Table 3: Relief in County Waterford during the Famine.

Total number of people relieved both in and out of workhouses in county Waterford						
Type of Relief	Union	Year End 29 Sept 1847	Year End 29 Sept 1848	Year End 29 Sept 1849	Year End 29 Sept 1850	Year End 29 Sept 1851
Indoor	Dungarvan	3,788	7,721	11,884	6,220	4,656
Outdoor	Dungarvan	-----	12,592	7,086	183	-----
Indoor	Kilmacthomas	-----	-----	-----	735	1,520
Outdoor	Kilmacthomas	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Indoor	Lismore	2,001	4,224	6,628	5,132	3,656
Outdoor	Lismore	-----	4,500	552	605	-----
Indoor	Waterford	6,393	6,614	12,313	10,859	13,550
Outdoor	Waterford	-----	8,998	7,528	973	144

Source: Compiled from the *Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1848-1852*. Table reproduced from Christine Kinealy, 'The Workhouse System in County Waterford, 1838-1923', in William Nolan and Thomas Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, (Dublin, 1992).

the sections containing the entries regarding the number of inmates resident in neighbouring institutions.<sup>10</sup> (see Table 1)

The board resolved on 12 June 1852 that the clerk contact the Poor Law Commissioners for plans of the furniture required for Kilmacthomas workhouse.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after the opening of the workhouse the plans for the fever hospital were approved with the board accepting the tender from Mr. Terence O'Reilly for the erection of a fever hospital.<sup>12</sup> The fever hospital was reported completed on 9 December 1854 although the male probationary ward was still being used as a temporary fever ward.<sup>13</sup> There are references found in newspaper accounts and the minute books which give us the first clues to the relationship between Kilmacthomas and the neighbouring unions of Waterford and Dungarvan. There is an account in the *Waterford Evening News* for 8 November 1850 reporting on the proceedings of the Waterford Board of Guardians which quotes the chairman as seeing it as 'a good time to seek some of their money from the Kilmacthomas Union as he had heard they were now collecting their own funds.' He described it as a great hardship on Waterford Union to be supporting Kilmacthomas Union paupers and 'could see no honesty in their dispositions. We have a right to make them honest even if they have not a mind to do so'.<sup>14</sup> There is a letter from the clerk of Waterford Union sending the statement of account for the half-year ending 29 September 1851.<sup>15</sup> An entry in the Dungarvan minute books notes that of the children in the workhouse in 1852, half belonged to Kilmacthomas Union.<sup>16</sup> (see Table 2) There is still a record of two paupers from Kilmacthomas in the Waterford

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- 10 *Ibid.*, Table II, p. 6. The Reservation Order dated 9 July 1850 and issued under Section 3 of 12 & 13, Vict.c.104 records accommodation reserved in the neighbouring unions until the building was completed. Waterford reserved 424 spaces and Dungarvan 239.
- 11 Waterford County Archive Service, (henceforth abbreviated as WCAS), BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 12 June 1852.
- 12 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 18 February 1854. The Poor Law Commissioners sent a sealed order in July authorising the borrowing of £1,400 to defray the cost of erecting the fever hospital (BG/KILTHOM/5, 22 Jul 1854). However, the loan was turned down by the commissioners on 16 September. Due to the difficulty getting a loan the board set up interest payments to Mr. O'Reilly. The loan was eventually paid off in January 1861 when the new master advanced a loan to pay O'Reilly at 4% interest (BG/KILTHOM/12).
- 13 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 9 December 1854.
- 14 *Waterford Evening News*, 8 November 1850. It was reported in the same newspaper on the 19 November that the clerk 'had received a cheque for £250 from the Kilmacthomas Union as part payment for the support of their paupers to which Mr. Meagher MP (father of Thomas Francis Meagher) commented "This is their first money", and which was accompanied by laughter from the rest of the board'.
- 15 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 25 October 1851.
- 16 William Fraher (ed.), *Desperate Haven: The Poor Law, Famine, and Aftermath in Dungarvan Union*, (Dungarvan, 2001), p. 143.

workhouse on 4 February 1854, reducing to one two weeks later while the week after records no paupers in the other workhouses.<sup>17</sup>

### **County Waterford and Kilmactomas: The Effects of the Famine**

In 1841 County Waterford contained 10,729 land holdings of above 1 Irish acre in extent. Some 42% of farms in Waterford were over 15 Irish acres and operating commercially and should have been better equipped to weather the coming storm. These strong farmers were well integrated into the market economy and well tuned to fluctuations in the demands of the market. They also increasingly assumed leadership roles in the political, religious and social spheres. The remainder were smallholdings with small farmers and cottiers. These classes along with the large number of labourers and spailpkins, would be the ones most affected by the famine. Burtchall uses data to support his argument that Waterford had the most commercially viable farming structure of any county in Ireland. Compare this with the bottom of the scale where Mayo had only 2% of holdings above 30 Irish acres.<sup>18</sup> With more potatoes per capita and a well-established farming structure, the county seemed to be better positioned than most others to survive the potato blight of the late 1840s.

It is within this context that we can look specifically at the area making up the Union of Kilmactomas. The union is flanked to the north by the Comeragh Mountains and to the south by extensive coastline. To the south of the Comeraghs the land declines in approaching the sea and 'presents a large alluvial tract, highly cultivated and fertile'.<sup>19</sup> Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary* describes many 'teeming townlands along the coast in cottier/fishing communities such as Knockane, Dunabratton, and Tankardstown, to Ballyvoyle.' The copper mining activities at Knockmahon concentrated population in Knockmahon itself and the neighbouring townlands of Rathquage, Kilduane, Templeyvrick and Ballynarrid. With the exception of the Bonmahon area, gross overpopulation was an isolated phenomena in east County Waterford.<sup>20</sup>

Prior to the opening of the Kilmactomas workhouse paupers were sent to the neighbouring workhouses of Waterford and Dungarvan. The distance between the electoral divisions and these workhouses sometimes resulted in sick paupers

17 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmactomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 25 February 1854. Entries in BG/KILTHOM/4 record the final close out of accounts for Dungarvan on 4 March 1854. The Final Adjustment Order of £200 for Waterford was drawn on the 17 July 1854.

18 Jack Burtchall, 'The Demographic Impact of the Famine in County Waterford', in Donald Brady and Des Cowman (eds.), *Teacht Na bPrataí Dubha: The Famine in Waterford 1845-1850*, (Waterford, 1995), p. 267.

19 Samuel Lewis *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, (London, Lewis & Co., 1835), Vol. II, p. 677.

20 Jack Burtchall, 'The Demographic Impact of the Famine in County Waterford', in Donald Brady and Des Cowman (eds.), *Teacht Na bPrataí Dubha: The Famine in Waterford 1845-1850*, (Waterford, 1995), p. 272.

travelling a distance of over 20 miles.<sup>21</sup> Immediately prior to the famine the pauper population was quite small in the workhouses and up to 1845 the poor law system was reasonably effective in relieving distress.<sup>22</sup> The second failure of the potato crop resulted in severe strain on the workhouses in County Waterford and also saw the collapse of the public works system.<sup>23</sup> During the period of the famine there were three temporary and generally ineffectual relief acts leading to a separate and independent Irish Poor Law Commission formally created by the Poor Law Relief (Ireland) Amendment Act of 1847.<sup>24</sup> One of the chief features of the crisis was that despite the increased collection of local rates they were totally insufficient to deal with the level of destitution.<sup>25</sup> Kinealy argues that by 1849, and despite widespread emigration, the entire fabric of the poor law system was disintegrating.<sup>26</sup> The county had a high mortality rate similar to rates shared by western counties such as Cork and Kerry - running at 3% to 4% of its population.<sup>27</sup> The death rate for County Waterford has been estimated at between 20.8 and 30.8 per 1,000 excess deaths as compared to between 58.4 and 72.0 per 1,000 for Mayo and 1.7 to 6.6 for Wexford.<sup>28</sup>

The census returns for 1841 put the Irish population at 8,175,124. By 1851, as a result of famine, disease and emigration, it had fallen to 6,552,386. The fall in population varied by province with Connaught dropping by 29% while Munster dropped by 22%. Ulster and Leinster followed losing 16% and 15% respectively.<sup>29</sup> Overall the population drop for Kilmacthomas Union was 26% over the period of

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- 21 William Fraher (ed.), *Desperate Haven: The Poor Law, Famine, and Aftermath in Dungarvan Union*, (Dungarvan, 2001), p. 73.
- 22 Christine Kinealy, 'The Workhouse System in County Waterford, 1838-1923', in William Nolan & Thomas Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, (Dublin, 1992), p. 582.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 587.
- 24 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), pp. 64,78. Cassells argues that this act resulted in the Poor Law Commission becoming one of the largest and most powerful government agencies in Ireland.
- 25 Christine Kinealy, 'The Workhouse System in County Waterford, 1838-1923', in William Nolan & Thomas Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, (Dublin, 1992), p. 587. See R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, p. 65 for a discussion on the impact of increased rates on the medical charities, which relied on the upper and middle classes for support. The 6d. in the pound and a further 2d. in the pound in December 1850 saw the funds available from this source reduce dramatically.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 587.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 588.
- 28 Jack Burtchall, 'The Demographic Impact of the Famine in County Waterford', in Donald Brady and Des Cowman (eds.), *Teacht Na bPrataí Dubha: The Famine in Waterford 1845-1850*, (Waterford, 1995), p. 268.
- 29 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 63.

the famine while there were significant variations within the electoral divisions. While the average was in the mid to low twenties, Kilmacthomas lost 39% of its population while Comeragh was as low as 10%.<sup>30</sup>

### The Guardians

The workhouse was administered by a board of guardians, a position on which only ratepayers and therefore those with property could sit with the system supported by the payment of rates.<sup>31</sup> Much of the day-to-day business involved dealing with requests from the Poor Law Commissioners for returns on rates, issues around chargeability, auditing of union accounts and elections.<sup>32</sup> The administration was carried on in a very business-like manner and it is only rarely that there is any mention of the condition of the paupers. The focus of the guardians often rested on saving money and keeping rates down. On the 21 January 1854 the board called on the schoolmaster and agriculturalist to resign so that they could appoint one Mr. Coffey to take up the joint position.<sup>33</sup> In a visit to the house in December 1859 Mr. Hamilton, poor law inspector, suggested warmer clothing for the children for the winter.<sup>34</sup> However, the following week the guardians examined the clothing and deemed it sufficiently warm.<sup>35</sup> When differences of opinion did occur and the board refused to comply with the commission's wishes, the latter resorted to sealed orders with invariable success.<sup>36</sup> The appointment of the workhouse doctor in

30 *The Irish Census: Comparative View of Census of Ireland, 1841-51*, (1852), p. 357.

31 Christine Kinealy, 'The Workhouse System in County Waterford, 1838-1923', in William Nolan and Thomas Power (eds.), *Waterford History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, (Dublin, 1992), p. 579. Kinealy argues that because 'all ratepayers were entitled to vote in annual poor law elections, the concept of local self government was well established in Ireland long before the 1898 Local Government Act.' When considering the setting of rates it is important to note that guardians often had vested interests. For example, both the Uniacke family and Lord Waterford had interests in the mining company in Knockmahon and were happy for the rates to be spread over the ratepayers rather than have high rates against the mining company property.

32 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 6 Mar 1852. The level of involvement of the Poor Law Commissioners extended down to detail such as the direction of the drains leading from the workhouse. See R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, p. 78 for an examination of the powers of the Poor Law Commission over taxation, poor law property, and supervision of the guardians.

33 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 21 Jan 1854.

34 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 10 December 1859.

35 *Ibid.*, 17 December 1859..

36 *Ibid.*, p. 81. In R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, p. 80 the role of the commissioners in supervising the work of the guardians is discussed. The minutes of each weekly meeting were read and compared to the detailed evaluations contained in the inspector's reports.

March 1854 caused a level of disagreement between the board and the commissioners. Following his resignation he reapplied for the position and was approved by the guardians but the commissioners refused to sanction his appointment.<sup>37</sup> The issue was finally resolved when Dr. Coughlan resigned at the end of June,<sup>38</sup> and a new doctor was appointed in early July.<sup>39</sup>

An example of the ongoing concern of the guardians regarding rates (see Table 4) is clear in the entry for March 1854. There was a four-page account outlining the reason for the high rates in Knockmahon, which was due to people flocking to the mines for work. The result was that the ratepayers were bearing the high cost of maintaining the destitute families of miners who resided in the area.<sup>40</sup>

The level of concern with costs is evident in a request minuted on 8 September 1855 from the chairman of the South Dispensary District requesting the clerk to provide the dispensary with a sweeping brush.<sup>41</sup> Despite a request for consideration by Mr. J.B. Franks, Esq. RM, in the case of a destitute child found at the side of the road the board refused to accept any liability for 3s. incurred by the person who took charge of the child and referred the case to the commissioners noting that the mother was in jail.<sup>42</sup>

The guardians did not operate in isolation despite the strict controls of the commissioners. The boards could be highly political in terms of protecting their own interests and petitioned each other on various issues.<sup>43</sup> The commissioners noted in their *Tenth Annual Report* in 1857 the responses to calls for the amalgamation of unions. The answer from the unions 'was generally an unfavourable one, the

37 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 25 March 1854.

38 *Ibid.*, 24 June 1854.

39 *Ibid.*, 8 July 1854. There is a hidden reference to the relationship of some of the inmates with Dr. Coughlan in the master's report for 15 July 1854. Some of the female inmates in the hospital abused all those they felt had not supported Dr. Coughlan including some of the board members.

40 *Ibid.*, 18 March 1854, following on from an earlier discussion on the re-valuation of the mines at Knockmahon based on the company's half-year profit reports. The 1871 census returns showed the population increase from 339 in 1841 to 480 (1851), 584 (1861) and drawing back to 479 in 1871.

41 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/6, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 8 September 1855. On 3 November 1855 the medical officer 'requested warm socks for pauper boys of the institution throughout winter months to prevent their feet from being affected by sores or chilblains as last winter there were a large number of them in the infirmary with bad sore feet from the cold weather.' The board so ordered. Entries of this nature outline the harshness of workhouse life.

42 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/15, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 29 March 1862.

43 See Appendix 2 for examples. An example of political awareness is evident in an entry in the minutes for 28 December 1861 when the board sent a message of sympathy to Queen Victoria on the death of her husband, Prince Albert the Prince Consort, and assuring Her Majesty of their devoted loyalty.

*Table 4: Rates struck showing general trend over twenty-year period.*

Electoral Division	1857	1859	1860	1862	1865	1871	1872
Ballylaneen	10d	6d	1s	1s8d	1s	1s 2d	1s4d
Carrigcastle	1s4d	9d	1s	1s2d	1s2d	1s10d	2s
Comeragh	1s	1s	1s2d	1s10d	10d	1s4d	1s
Fews	1s	8d	1s	1s5d	10d	1s4d	1s4d
Fox's Castle	1s2d	10d	1	1s7d	1s	1s4d	1s8d
MountKennedy	8d	9d	1s4d	1s5d	1s3d	1s 2d	1s2d
Stradbally	1s	10d	1d	2s3d	1s4d	1s 2d	1s8d
Tinnasaggart	6d	8d	8d	1s3d	9d	1s10d	1s
Knockmahon	1s2d	10d	1s6d	1s11d	1s9d	3s 6d	3s
Kilmacthomas	2s	1/-1d	1s	2s2d	2s3d	1s10d	2s2d
Annestown	1s	11d	1s2d	1s8d	1s	1s 2d	1s
Dunhill	1s	8d	1s2d	1s4d	9d	1s 2d	1s4d
Georgestown	1s	9d	1s	11d	10d	1s 2d	1s2d
Gardenmorris	8d	1/-2d	8d	1s6d	1s10d	2s6d	3s
Newtown	1s	1/-3d	1s6d	2s2d	10d	1s4d	1s
Kilbarrymeaden	1s6d	1/-4d	2s6d	2s1d	2s6d	1s6d	2s6d

**Source:** WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 1851-1872.



exceptions being those that wished to extend their unions areas.<sup>144</sup> On 19 June 1865 the board ordered that the clerk summon a special meeting for the following Tuesday to take into consideration a copy of a resolution received from Limerick Board of Guardians regarding the Catholic Pledge.<sup>45</sup>

### The Officials

The lives of the officials along with the paupers were strictly regulated. The officials were employees of the union and this is very evident in the primary materials. However, some of the officials, such as the relieving officers and doctors, were also ratepayers with land in the area. Others were related to members of the board and both can be found renting accommodation for the dispensaries and supplying goods to the workhouse. There were a number of entries in the early years of the workhouse which showed the difficulty which accompanied the setting up of the workhouse, with complaints made on occasion against the officials. There were ongoing issues with one of the collectors, Henry Langley, over discrepancies in his accounts. An entry for 31 January 1852 records a request from the board for Henry Langley to furnish his books for inspection by the clerk as there were issues with 'no monies being lodged.'<sup>46</sup> In March 1854 the board resolved that the Poor Law Commissioners should be asked to reconsider the case of Andrew Kearney, late relieving officer, to have him reinstated as no bills had been found against him at the assizes.<sup>47</sup> The commissioners agreed to his reinstatement in a letter on the 25 March 1854.<sup>48</sup> Five months later, following an altercation between the master and some boys wanting admission, the commissioners recommended that the master should use his discretion in admitting cases of sudden and urgent necessity under the workhouse rules and such relief not to be limited.<sup>49</sup>

44 *Tenth Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1857), p. 9. Of all the thirty-two newly formed unions they either remained silent or expressed an objection to the proposal as it was recognised that the move would only suit larger unions that were left with spare accommodation in the wake of the famine.

45 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/19, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 19 June 1865.

46 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 31 January 1852. There was constant weekly communication between all the parties including the threat of legal action by the Poor Law Commissioners until he finally attended on 29 May 1852 and, while there were still some issues with the books, the account was closed in June.

47 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 4 Mar 1854.

48 *Ibid.*, 25 Mar 1854. There is no reference to the reason for his arrest. BG/KILTHOM/3 is badly damaged and cannot be referenced.

49 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 5 August 1854. The master was reminded again on 18 April 1857, of the powers which he possessed in relation to three boys he turned away from the house (BG/KILTHOM/8, 18 April 1857).

In a letter entered on 22 July 1854 the Poor Law Commissioners called for the resignation of the porter, Nicholas Power, for being drunk. The board argued that, while the porter was under the influence of alcohol, he had returned a day earlier than his leave of absence had expired. They also highlighted the heat of the day as having affected his alcohol intake.<sup>50</sup> At the same time the infirmary nurse was also called on to resign to which she replied that 'she was afflicted by tyranny of the Master and Matron.' The board deferred calling on the nurse to resign as it was felt that the master had not told the full story.<sup>51</sup> The following week the porter sent in a letter further criticising the master and stating that he felt he would not get a fair hearing as the master 'had too many friends on the board.'<sup>52</sup> In September the master was reprimanded by the commissioners for giving keys to paupers and warned 'not to give grounds for suspecting him of drinking.'<sup>53</sup> In June of the following year there was an ongoing dispute between the master and the schoolmaster, John McCaffrey, which resulted in the schoolmaster being accused of being under the influence of drink and of 'accosting young girl inmates more than once.'<sup>54</sup> The porter also ended up in dispute with the master and was forced to resign. The culmination of the dispute was that Mr Hamilton recommended that it was necessary to dismiss all the officers.<sup>55</sup> John McCaffrey, Mrs. McCaffrey and Nicholas Walsh, Porter, all resigned.<sup>56</sup>

The master and matron again appear in difficulty in 1860 with the board receiving a letter from the commissioners regarding a visit from the poor law inspector, Capt Hamilton, who had visited the house on 22 March 1860 and found both missing, the doors unlocked, the infirmary wards dirty and 'the inmates not clean in their person.' The Poor Law Commissioners called the attention of the board to the actions of the master and matron being unsatisfactory and questioning whether it was in the interest of the union to retain such officials. In reply the master pointed

50 *Ibid.*, 22 July 1854. This dispute ran into counter argument with the porter accusing the master of inappropriate behaviour. The commissioners did not sway and there is an entry for 2 August 1854 appointing a new porter, Thomas Murray, at £8 per annum. It was also decided to alter one of the buildings to provide a gate porter's lodge.

51 *Ibid.*, 22 July 1854. When the position of infirmary nurse was advertised at £12 per annum the nurse reapplied for her position and was appointed on trial at her old rate of £9 per annum on condition she withdraw her accusations and resolved to 'tender respectful obedience to the Master and Matron.'

52 *Ibid.*, 29 July 1854.

53 *Ibid.*, 9 September 1854.

54 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/6, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 7 June 1855. In another entry for 8 December 1855 the board received a letter from the Commissioners for National Education withdrawing the grant of salary from Robert McGrath, the new schoolmaster, it appearing that he was addicted to intemperance and that he should not be again recognised.

55 *Ibid.*, 7 July 1855.

56 *Ibid.*, 18 August 1855. The board respectfully asked the commissioners to give the master and matron another chance to which the commissioners agreed on 18 August 1855.

out that himself and his wife had been in office for the last seven years and had carried out their duties faithfully.<sup>57</sup> However, within the next few weeks they were both dismissed from their posts due to this and unexplained discrepancies in stock.<sup>58</sup> Entries for 29 July 1871 note a 'charge of scandalous and immoral conduct' against Richard Power, relieving officer which culminated in his resignation on 4 August.<sup>59</sup> The principle trend in the early years of the workhouse in Kilmacthomas is marked by a degree of instability, petty bickering and controversy in the actions of many of the officials. However this stabilised and some of the official's names appeared in entries for 1851 right up to 1872.<sup>60</sup>

### The Paupers

The paupers themselves were from the area and shared information on opportunities for getting work or nursing out children. It is interesting to see how the paupers used the workhouse to their own advantage moving in and out as needed. The records show that the average stay at certain periods was around eighty days and peaked during the 'hungry months' around May, June and July when the old crop of potatoes was used but the new crop was not yet ready.

In 1851 national statistics on admissions showed that 34.5% of workhouse inmates were able-bodied men and women and another 44.4% were children under fifteen, while only 6.8% were listed as aged and infirm. However, the pattern altered in the next two decades. By 1871 the first two categories had declined to 19.9 %and 26.6% respectively while the figure for aged and infirm had climbed to 24.3%. In 1851 only 14% of the workhouse inmates were admitted in sickness while by 1871 the figure had ballooned to fully 32.2%.<sup>61</sup>

There were significant increases in the numbers in the workhouses during the 'hungry months'. In line with national trends the Kilmacthomas minute books clearly show how vulnerable women and young children were simply by analysing the ratio of men to women. In all the records examined women clearly outnumbered men in terms of workhouse population. The records for 1851 should be taken in the context of the end of the famine period. The entry for 1 October 1851 showed sixteen able-bodied men and four males over fifteen but not working. This could be compared to sixty-nine able bodied and nineteen females not working. This presented a ratio of more than four to one female inmates to every male, with

57 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 31 March 1860.

58 In an entry for 19 June the clerk was directed to summon the late master in order to settle the claim of the union for £27. 6s.7d. against these deficiencies.

59 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/27, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 29 July 1871.

60 William Hunt served as clerk and carried out his duties in a reliable and efficient manner apart from some periods of illness up to his death which was recorded in an entry in BG/KILTHOM/28 for 2 March 1872. Dr. Walker and Dr. Coughlan served as dispensary doctors over the period of this study.

61 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p.103.

children making up the remainder of the 235 inmates.<sup>62</sup> Following the famine period the numbers in the workhouse dropped due to different factors, although there would be periodic rises due to various contributing factors.

Even within the workhouse itself the paupers showed solidarity with each other, an example being a young boy, Pat Lanigan, who tried to hit the agriculturalist with a shovel while working in the field.<sup>63</sup> Discipline was harsh within the workhouse and is evident in entries such as a reference to the Punishment Book. Four boys, including Pat Lanigan, were confined to the house in April for insulting the agriculturalist. The master was informed that he could not inflict severe punishment without the medical officer's certificate.<sup>64</sup> In May 1854 two inmates guilty of assault were committed to jail for one month. There are also numerous cases of inmates absconding with clothes received in the workhouse. In May 1854 of the same year two boys absconded with clothes and were caught in Portlaw having sold one of the pairs. They were arrested and summoned to appear in front of the magistrate.<sup>65</sup> Four boys, aged between fifteen and twenty, were arrested in November 1854 for begging, threatening and damaging the gate with stones.<sup>66</sup>

Paupers did not confine themselves to the territorial confines of particular unions but showed high levels of mobility, a feature which caused great concern to the Poor Law Commissioners and individual boards of guardians.<sup>67</sup> However, there are other examples such as the entry for 20 December 1851 regarding two women, Mary Carlin and Mary Harrington, who had entered the Kilmacthomas workhouse under false pretences. Within a short time of entering Kilmacthomas it transpired that the women had also entered Dungarvan and Waterford under fictitious names and it was recommended that they be 'prosecuted for their criminal actions'.<sup>68</sup>

## The Diet

There is much discussion over the years on the dietary scale in place in the workhouse. The food was meagre and was continually criticised by the medical officers. The workhouse inmates were given a diet which was not superior to that of independent labourers.<sup>69</sup> The commissioners issued a circular in April 1854 outlining the risk of cholera and drawing the board's attention to the quality of the dietary

62 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 1 October 1851.

63 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 4 February 1854. Despite the fact that there were other inmates in the fields there were no witnesses to the alleged attempted assault.

64 *Ibid.*, 29 April 1854.

65 *Ibid.*, 20 May 1854.

66 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 4 November 1854.

67 Dymphna McLoughlin, 'Workhouses and Irish Female Paupers, 1840-1870', in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy (eds.), *Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, (Dublin, 1990), p. 117.

68 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 20 December 1851.

69 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 160.

during their visits.<sup>70</sup> In particular they focus on the quality of the milk in the event of a cholera outbreak as 'the Medical Officers appear sometimes to rely on an increased quantity of milk, as conducive to the preservation of the health of the inmates.'<sup>71</sup> The commissioners took a concentrated approach to the cholera outbreak by notifying the boards and enforcing the Nuisances Removal and Diseases Prevention Acts,<sup>72</sup> even going as far as threatening to prosecute any suppliers who violate their contracts in terms of quality in the event of the guardians declining to do so.<sup>73</sup> The diet was seldom satisfactory and in September 1854 the agriculturalist requested increased diet for the boys reaping as they were working extra hours and which the board allowed.<sup>74</sup> The dietary table (see Table 5) gives a good indication of the food available to the inmates by 1859.

The master's report for 6 August 1859 draws attention to the issue of spoiled beef which was delivered to the workhouse during the previous week. Rather than waste the meat the master removed the spoiled portions and prepared the remainder with vegetables for the healthy inmates.<sup>75</sup> There are numerous accounts in the minute books of the medical officer requesting changes to the diet either as a result of shortages of particular foodstuffs or due to extremes of weather. On 17 October 1868 the medical officer requested that 'the healthy inmates to get vegetable soup three or four times a week for dinner instead of buttermilk during winter months same as formerly used.'<sup>76</sup> The following year the doctor recommended vegetable soup should be given with bread for dinner to the healthy inmates in lieu of buttermilk.<sup>77</sup> An entry for 27 May 1871 reports that the poor law inspector, Capt Hamilton, visited and was pleased to see inmates eating potatoes.<sup>78</sup> The diet improved gradually over the two decades and is evident in the increased use of meat.

70 WCAS, BG/WTFD/114, Circular.

71 *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1854), p. 24.

72 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p.108 where Cassells argues that by implementing Clause 19, which made the Poor Law Commission responsible for implementation of the act, state intervention became more effective in Ireland over the next two decades than in any other part of the British Isles.

73 *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1854), p. 24.

74 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 2 September 1854.

75 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 6 August 1859. On occasion the contract was cancelled if the meat was of poor quality over a constant period (BG/KILTHOM/13, 11 May 1861).

76 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/30, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 17 October 1869.

77 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/24, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 16 October 1869.

78 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/27, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 27 May 1871.

Table 5: Workhouse diet.

**Table 5. Dietary Scale 12 July 1859**

Class	Breakfast	Dinner	Supper
1 Able Bodied Males	8oz Indian Meal 1pt Buttermilk	16oz White Bread 2½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	8oz White Bread 1oz Cocoa 1oz Sugar 1/16qt Sweet Milk
2 Able Bodied Females	8oz Indian Meal 1pt Buttermilk	16oz White Bread 2½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	8oz White Bread 1oz Cocoa 1oz Sugar 1/16qt Sweet Milk
3 Male Aged/Infirm above 15 years not working	7oz Indian Meal 1pt Buttermilk	12oz White Bread 2½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	6oz White Bread 1oz Cocoa 1oz Sugar 1/16qt Sweet Milk
4 Female Aged/Infirm above 15 years and not working	7oz Indian Meal 1pt Buttermilk	12oz White Bread 2½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	6oz White Bread 1oz Cocoa 1oz Sugar 1/16qt Sweet Milk
5 Boys and Girls above 9 and under 15 years	5oz Indian Meal 1pt Buttermilk	8oz White Bread 2½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	4oz White Bread 1/2 oz Cocoa 1/2 oz Sugar 1/16qt Sweet Milk
6 Children above 5 and under 9 years of age	4oz Indian Meal 1pt Buttermilk	6oz White Bread 2½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	4oz White Bread 1/2oz Cocoa 1/2oz Sugar 1/16qt Sweet Milk

**Children under 5 had a lower dietary scale**

7	4oz Indian Meal 1/2pt Buttermilk	4oz White Bread ½oz Oatmeal with vegetables	4oz White Bread 1pt Sweet Milk
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**Source:** WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11 Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 12 Jul 1859

## Medical Charities Act

In the late stages of the famine and in the immediate post-famine period the poor law administration became increasingly concerned with the provision of medical relief in Ireland. The dispensary system was established by the Medical Charities Act of 1851, combining medical relief and public health powers in the Irish Poor Law Commission<sup>79</sup>. One of the key provisions of the act was the appointment of a medical commissioner to the Poor Law Commission and the addition of medical personnel to the poor law inspectorate.<sup>80</sup> The Medical Charities Act marked the move to state provision of healthcare although it must be recognised that it was far from satisfactory. However, the act and the legislation which followed turned a largely uncoordinated approach to medical care into a nationwide system providing the most comprehensive free medical care available in the British Isles.<sup>81</sup> In 1852-53 the system cost £88,440 and rose to £127,362 in 1871-72.<sup>82</sup>

At a meeting in November 1851 the board resolved that the union be divided into two districts - North District and South District (see Table 6). As a rule the boards preferred fewer districts in order to keep costs down.<sup>83</sup>

This meeting also resolved that the salaries of the doctors be set at £100 per annum.<sup>84</sup> A change in legislation would later come into operation in 1867 defraying half of the medical officer's wages out of the Consolidated Fund, an arrangement already in place in England.<sup>85</sup> The efficiency of the board is noteworthy as they implemented the directive at a meeting on 2 December recommending that 'the

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79 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 78. Over the next two decades the poor law system was transformed into something like a national board of health.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 87. Each district was run by a committee answering to the board of guardians and ultimately to the poor law administration. The commissioners had ultimate authority and supervised the actions of the dispensaries through its inspectors.

84 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 29 November 1851. Nationally salaries averaged less than £80 annually by the mid-1850s. Some were over £100 but many were much less. The salaries, set by the commission itself, were calculated on the basis of the size of the dispensary district, both in terms of area and population, and the prospects the medical officer might have a private practice; see R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 98.

85 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, p. 98. This is first mentioned in BG/KILTHOM/19 for 25 Mar 1865 when Thomas Power resolved a motion of thanks to those members of the House of Commons who voted for Mr. McIvor's motion for a grant of half the cost of the medical officers' salaries in poor law unions in Ireland and 'that the board regret the absence of many Irish members from that important division in consequence of which the motion was lost', (BG/KILTHOM/19).



Plate 3: Internal view of the male dormitory. The mullions are clearly visible on the left hand side which held up the supports for the floors.

Table 6: Kilmacthomas Union Dispensary Districts.

North Dispensary District		South Dispensary District	
Electoral Division	Area (Statute Acres)	Electoral Division	Area (Statute Acres)
Kilmacthomas	5,450	Knockmahon	3,059
Newtown	5,458	Dunhill	2,629
Tinnasaggart	3,474	Annestown	4,764
Fews	4,834	Carrigcastle	2,314
Mount Kennedy	6,447	Georgetown	2,315
Fox's Castle	5,100	Gardenmorris	3,330
Stradbally	4,164	Kilbarrymeaden	3,059
Comeragh	5,912	Ballylaneen	3,835

**Source:** Extract from BG/KILTHOM/1BG/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 29 Nov 1851 and G.B. Handrahan, *Townlands in Poor Law Unions: A Reprint of Poor Law Union Pamphlets of the General Register's Office*, (Massachusetts, Higginson Book Company, 1997).



formation of the Dispensary Districts... take effect the 1st day of January 1852',<sup>86</sup> although the first meeting did not take place until 17 February 1852.<sup>87</sup>

The Medical Charities Act ended the contract vaccination system in Ireland and required the dispensary medical officers to vaccinate, free of charge, all those who applied at the dispensaries.<sup>88</sup> An inspection by Mr. Hamilton, poor law inspector, in October 1854 criticised the medical officers because records of sickness and mortality were not properly kept and that paperwork was not in order for the Northern District.<sup>89</sup> An entry for 17 September 1859 showed the commissioners were not beyond withholding payments because of improper filling out of requests under the Vaccination Act.<sup>90</sup> The Births and Deaths Registration (Ireland) Act and the Compulsory Vaccination (Ireland) Act proved more effective in Ireland than similar measures implemented in other parts of the United Kingdom and provided the authorities with detailed patterns of illness and mortality rates.<sup>91</sup> Again in early February 1869 Hamilton questioned the neglect of duty by Dr. Coughlan in relation to the Form G.<sup>92</sup> The issue dragged on into March and on 13 March Dr. Walker reported that all defaulters in his area had been summoned to appear in court. Coughlan was still on the defensive and wrote a detailed letter pointing out that he had not one defaulter and also taking the opportunity to point out the deficiencies in the Act. In particular he highlighted issues with carrying out vaccinations during the 'difficult seasons'.<sup>93</sup>

An essential feature of medical relief provided by the dispensary system was the provision of free drugs to the holders of the black and red tickets. (see Table

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- 86 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/1, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 1 January 1852.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 17 February 1852.
- 88 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 120.
- 89 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, October 1854.
- 90 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 17 September 1859.
- 91 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 125. Cassell argues on page 128 that the primary reason appeared to be the Irish dispensary system. While medical officers continued to be public vaccinators, they were the births and deaths registrars also.
- 92 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/22, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 13 February 1859. Form G was the Vaccination Register and contained name, age, date(s) of vaccinations. It also contained the residence, names of parent(s) if a child, the number of the entry on the births register and the medical officer's signature; See R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, p. 92 for a discussion on the increased paperwork which would be a source of continuing grievance to the medical officers.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 13 March 1869. On 20 March it was reported that Dr. Walker's defaulters had been prosecuted.

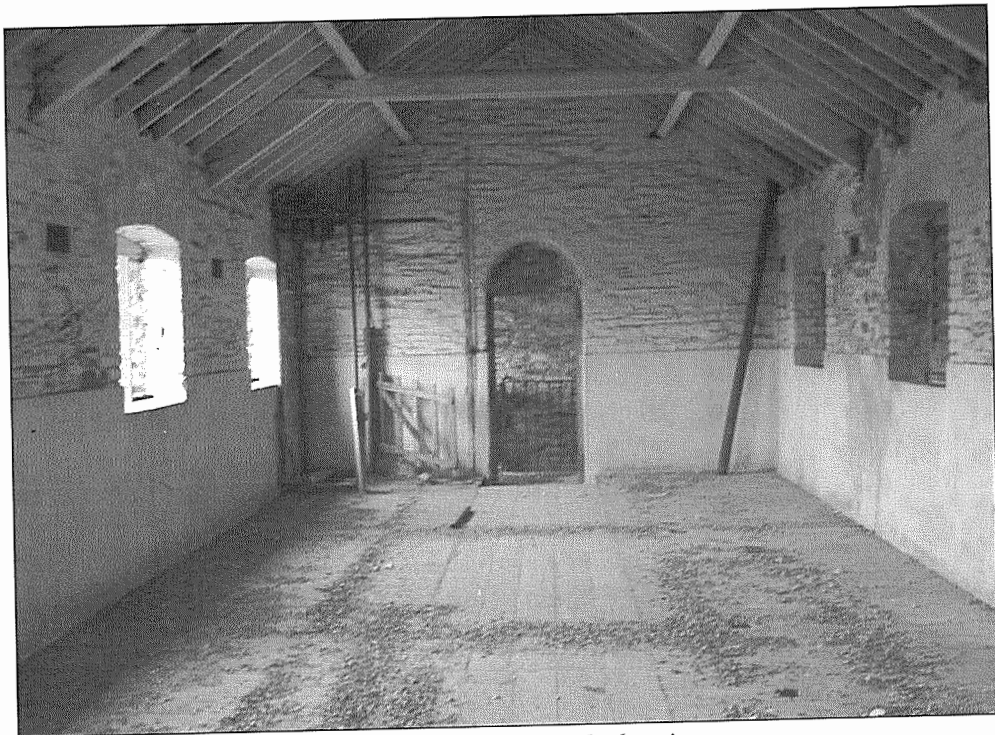


Plate 4: View from the stairway from the upper female dormitory.

Table 7: Dispensary and Vaccination Tickets 1852-56.

Type	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856
North Dispensary District					
Dispensary Tickets	802	1308	1244	1486	1472
Vaccination Tickets	88	151	115	30	358
South Dispensary District					
Dispensary Tickets	-	592	1222	1320	1457
Vaccination Tickets	-	54	311	11	163

**Source:** WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/8, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Books, 1 November 1856.

7)<sup>94</sup> Ticket abuse occurred generally as a result of carelessness rather than premeditation, and the medical officers were required under the legislation to honour the tickets regardless of their suspicions. However, they could later appeal to the committee for cancellation.<sup>95</sup> While there is evidence nationally of abuse there are very few recorded cancellations in Kilmacthomas, averaging only three or four per year.<sup>96</sup>

The Sewage Utilisation Act (1865) and the Sanitary Act (1866) consolidated public health legislation and broadened the role of the boards of guardians outside the workhouse.<sup>97</sup> These acts gave the guardians control over sewers and the protection of water supplies and the prevention of disease.<sup>98</sup> The board received a circular from the Poor Law Commission on 26 August 1865 explaining the Removal of Nuisances Act which resulted in the board instructing the relieving officer to implement the Nuisances Act rigidly.<sup>99</sup> One of the most important developments brought about by the Sanitary Act was the introduction of a new type of official into the system, the sanitary inspector.<sup>100</sup> In some unions the relieving officer was able to combine his office with that of sanitary inspector, an approach taken by the Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians.<sup>101</sup> There was constant communication between the commissioners and the guardians regarding the outbreak and response to cholera.

- 94 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 248. The issue of a black ticket entitled the recipient to care at the dispensary and the red ticket to care in the home.
- 95 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 99. It is recorded under the Medical Charities Report in the minute books for 16 June 1860 by the Dispensary Committee for the South District that tickets 583 and 621 'be cancelled and that Mr. Hughes of Annestown be informed that the committee do not consider him entitled to dispense relief', (BG/KILTHOM/11, 16 June 1860).
- 96 The source for this information is the *Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners*.
- 97 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 275. The Sewage Utilisation Act gave the board of guardian's responsibility as the 'sewer authority' in towns which did not have any other governing body.
- 98 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/20, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 1 September 1866. By 1866 the sewer authorities were actively engaged in taking steps to supply water to towns such as Stradbally.
- 99 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/19, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 26 August 1865. The cholera epidemic of 1865-66 saw mortality down from the earlier outbreak in 1854-55. This compared favourably with England which was hard-hit by the epidemic. Removal of nuisances was central to the campaign.
- 100 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 276. See R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 117 for a discussion on the increased powers of the poor law system.
- 101 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/20, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 2 February 1867, relieving officers, Lenehan and Power empowered to act as sanitary inspectors in their respective districts.

The sanitary officer's report highlights seven cases of nuisance in the entry dated 23 June 1869, some of which had been removed and some of which were still outstanding.<sup>102</sup> The sanitary officer's reports for 8 April 1871 gave an indication of the issues dealt with; in the No. 1 District under Lenehan there were three cases of nuisances and three cases of scarlatina. Notice was also given to defaulters under the Vaccination Act. Richard Power, the sanitary officer for the No 2 Southern District reported two cases of fever visited by Dr. Walker and the houses were lime washed.<sup>103</sup> The sanitary officer's report for 2 November 1872 included the names of five people who had pools of stagnant water in the yards and outlined the legal steps being taken against them. It also reported on two men keeping pigs in their houses who had notices served on them. There were reports of scarletina in the dispensary house in Lemybrien.<sup>104</sup>

The two decades following the formation of the union saw the dispensary system expand its facilities and services and also saw a steady expansion of state control of healthcare. The issues which affected the officials and guardians nationally also affected Kilmacthomas. The unions changed from the role it had held before and during the famine, with those who entered increasingly made up of the old, *infirm and the sick*. The entries throughout the minute books clearly show the transition and composition of the workhouse population change as the numbers of able-bodied inmates declined and numbers using outdoor relief and the dispensary system increased.

### **Workhouse Infirmary**

The hospital was an integral part of the workhouse and was administered by a workhouse doctor appointed separately to the dispensary doctors. Prior to his resignation in February 1854, Dr. John Coughlan's report for 14 January 1854 described the hospital as overcrowded with healthy children being accommodated with children suffering from hooping cough. His report goes on to state that the infirmary 'is in fact used as a district hospital.'<sup>105</sup> The conditions prevalent in the hospital were evident in the reports of Dr. Coughlin's successor who highlighted the outbreak of fever in March within the hospital. He also reported that he had

102 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/22, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 23 June 1869.

103 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/27, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 8 April 1871.

104 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/30, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 2 November 1872. Scarlatina was a highly infectious disease which attacked red blood cells. The symptoms were sore throat, high fever and a punctuate rash.

105 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 14 January 1854. In the *Ninth Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1856) the commissioners refer to the changing nature of the poor law system. The medical officers of Kilkenny Union drew attention to the number of sick in the hospital as being 'markedly disproportionate' to the number of healthy inmates. The commissioners viewed the numbers in reference the population of the whole union rather than the workhouse population.

asked the matron that the bedclothes of the fever ward should be especially marked and washed separately but found that they were mixed with other clothing and given to healthy inmates.<sup>106</sup>

By the mid 1850s the guardians began to allow the admission of accident cases and non-contagious disease patients to both kinds of institutions, with the commissioners generally overlooking the practice. There is reference in March 1857 to Dr. Greene requesting permission to get a second doctor to help in the amputation of a leg<sup>107</sup>. The boy, Michael Norris, is further referred to in the medical report of 16 May when he requested that he be allowed go home and also requested an artificial leg at a cost of £1. 10s.<sup>108</sup> This can be viewed in the context of a letter in early 1861 from Dr. Greene requesting the board to increase his salary from £70.<sup>109</sup> The salary of the workhouse doctor was always lower than the two dispensary doctors throughout the period of this research. It is worth noting that the medical officer was expected to carry out a variety of medical functions.

In the hospitals of the larger workhouses and in all the fever hospitals 'salaried' nurses were employed, 'assisted by the most eligible of the female inmates.'<sup>110</sup> This eligibility was conditional as evident in a letter from the Poor Law Commissioners regarding the appointment of Mary Kiely as nurse of the fever hospital in February 1861. The circumstances of her having a child as a pauper in the workhouse was not compatible with her holding paid office in the union.<sup>111</sup> She was finally accepted when she agreed that she would use her salary to support her child outside the workhouse.<sup>112</sup>

106 *Ibid.*, 11 March 1854.

107 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/15, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 7 March 1857.

108 *Ibid.*, 16 May 1857.

109 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/13, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 26 January 1861. The board passed the increase on 9 February but it was rescinded at the meeting of 16 March 1861 after the Poor Law Commissioners requested that the board reconsider their decision. Dr. Greene's letter gives an insight into the changing nature of the workhouse as the 'workhouse is gradually assuming more the character of a hospital, a large proportion of those admitted come in to the house as medical relief.' The letter also gives a view of the dangers faced by those who worked in the workhouse drawing attention to the risks faced from fever and infectious diseases. This is amply demonstrated in his own experience of contracting typhoid fever in 1856 to which he nearly succumbed.

110 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 262.

111 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/13, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 2 February 1861.

112 *Ibid.*, 30 March 1861. She did not take the position at £6 per annum and the clerk was directed to advertise the position at £10 per annum which she finally accepted on 30 March 1861.

Those who were able to pay for services were expected to. In May 1861 the son of a local police constable was admitted with fever and the constable agreed that he would pay for the treatment and this was approved by the guardians.<sup>113</sup> The following week a child was admitted whose legs had been injured by machinery at Knockmahon mines in Bonmahon. The manager of the company requested that the union to 'take every care of the little thing' and that they would gladly pay for this care.<sup>114</sup> The workhouse did not have the facilities to deal with all cases which came to their doors. While the Relief of the Destitute Poor in Ireland Amendment Act 1862 opened the workhouse hospital to sick people who were not destitute, it also gave the board of guardians the authority of the parent and the right to place children out to nurse.<sup>115</sup> This must be considered in the context of the high death rate among the young children in the workhouses. In December 1854 the board resolved 'that the Poor Law Commissioners sanction be requested to have three orphan children named Thomas Wade, Mary Hayes and Margaret Baldwin and who are now over the age of 5 years and have been out at nurse continue at nurse until they attain 8 years.'<sup>116</sup> The Commissioners directed that children should only be left out to nurse over the age of five years on grounds of health.<sup>117</sup> The minutes for 16 September 1854 report an eight-year old child sent to the Deaf and Dumb School under the provisions of the legislation in place.<sup>118</sup> Ellen Power was to be sent to Dublin for an eye operation on 13 January 1866.<sup>119</sup> The medical report for 21 November 1868 shows how inadequate the facilities were in terms of dealing with 'lunatics' and the mentally ill with an account of the necessity for restraining a violent female inmate who was then sent to the Lunatic Asylum.<sup>120</sup> An entry as late as 31 November 1872 shows that despite the changes in the poor law and the growth of services the workhouse was not viewed with any great affection. The relieving officer's report stated that:

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113 *Ibid.*, 11 May 1861.

114 *Ibid.*, 18 May 1861. There are a number of references of this type. On 9 April 1870 there is reference to receiving 9s. from a Mr. Langford on account of maintenance in hospital for fourteen days, (BG/KILTHOM/25).

115 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 226.

116 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/22, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 19 December 1868.

117 *Ibid.*, 9 January 1869. Following the medical officer's report on the three children (BG/22, 23 January 1859) the commissioners sanctioned that only Thomas Wade could be left out to nurse for health reasons for one extra year (BG/22, 30 January 1869).

118 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 16 September 1854. This was a recurring theme throughout the years.

119 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/19, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 13 January 1866.

120 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/22, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 21 November 1868.

a beggar woman is very ill at Carrigachilla. She is not fit to be removed and she requires wine and beef tea. A man in the neighbourhood has £6 belonging to her and says he will give it to me [relieving officer] but she refuses to allow any of the money be given for her support and states that if anything is bought for her she will not use it. She wants the money to bury her.<sup>121</sup>

## Religion

No study of nineteenth century Ireland would be complete without taking in to consideration the religious friction at work in all parts of Irish society. As a result the commission was required to appoint religious chaplains and see to the regulation of religious services for the inmates.<sup>122</sup> One of the earliest entries of a religious nature comes from the master's report of 28 January 1854 when he stated 'that the members of the Protestant faith who go to church from here on Sundays are in the habit of going to Kilmacthomas before and after the prayers and on two occasions lately had attempted to convey tobacco in their shoes.' The board resolved that a separate service would be required in the workhouse if it continued.<sup>123</sup> Shortly after the workhouse opened the Roman Catholic chaplain 'drew attention to want of accommodation for performing divine service.' The board resolved that tenders for the erection of an altar be sought. On the same day the Poor Law Commissioners requested a return of the number of paupers members of the Established Church to which the board returned an account of nine.<sup>124</sup> When the Catholic chaplain saw the timetable for the boys' schooling and farm work he complained that there was not enough time set aside for religious instruction. He requested that the time be taken from the farm work rather than schoolwork and the board so ordered.<sup>125</sup> It is significant that there were reports that the chaplain interfered with the election of guardians in the union along with a resolution of strong disapproval. However, it is interesting to note that the resolution was defeated soundly and along the lines of religious and political loyalties.<sup>126</sup> However, the Catholic chaplain, Rev. Roger

121 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/30, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 31 November 1872. The board was not quite sure how to deal with this problem and decided to leave it to the discretion of the relieving officer.

122 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p. 80. Cassells discusses in detail how this duty required careful consideration in the context of differences which could arise between guardians of different religious and political backgrounds. The salaries for the Catholic and Protestant chaplains were set at £40 and £20 respectively (BG/KILTHOM/8, 15 Nov 1856).

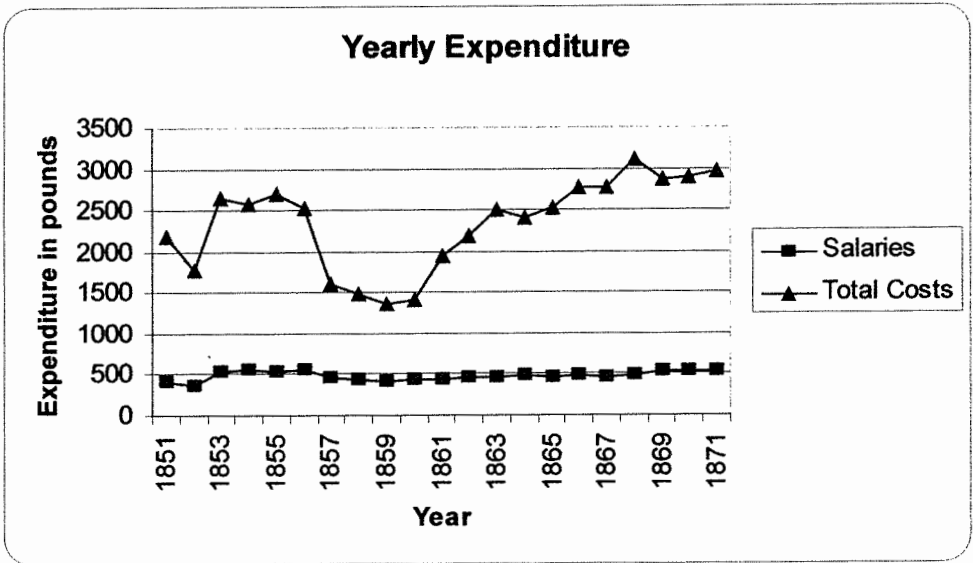
123 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 28 January 1854.

124 *Ibid.*, 04 February 1854.

125 *Ibid.*, 18 February 1854.

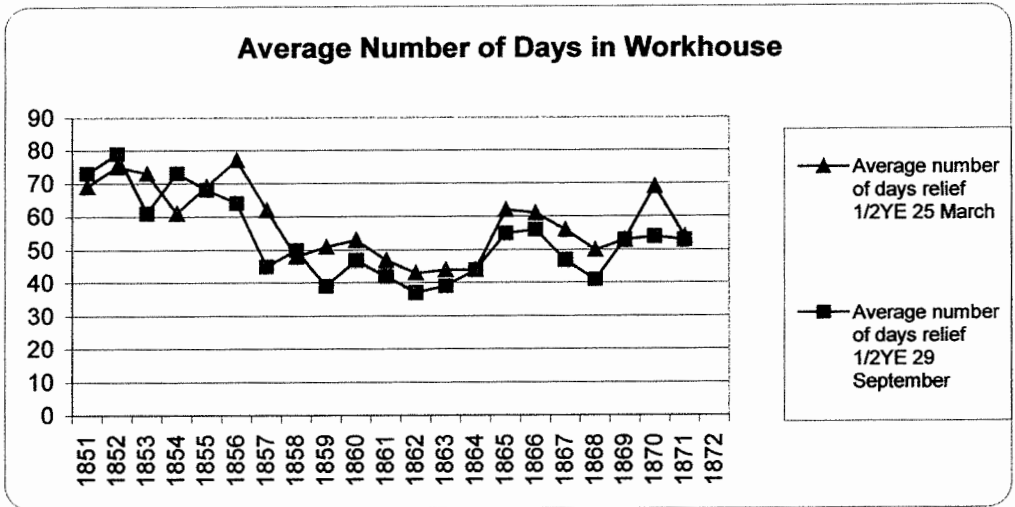
126 *Ibid.*, 25 March 1854. See R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997) for a discussion within the context of the political changes which followed the Catholic Emancipation and Repeal campaigns and the increasingly politicised nature of public bodies.

Figure 1: Yearly Expenditure 1851-1872 (excluding Dispensary Districts).



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1851-1872.

Figure 2: Average number of days in the workhouse.



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1856-1872.



Power, resigned on 13 December 1856 in a dispute over his salary as he had originally agreed on £50 per annum.<sup>127</sup> In an unrelated entry for 13 June 1857 the master reported that a baptismal font was required in order to avoid sending infants to Newtown Chapel for christening.<sup>128</sup> The master received the reply from the new chaplain, Rev. Shanahan, stating that he was happy to organise a font but must apply to the bishop for permission to baptise in a private chapel.<sup>129</sup> In October there was particular controversy when it was learned that the Catholic chaplain had baptized a three to four week-old infant left at the gate of the workhouse. Following a ruling by the board of guardians, based on advice from the commissioners, the Protestant chaplain stated his intention to take the child and baptise it in the Protestant faith.<sup>130</sup> In June 1859 Mr. Edward Elliott, secretary of the Protestant Orphan Institution sent in a request to be informed if there were any Protestant children in the workhouse.<sup>131</sup> The 1862 Amendment Act went a long way to removing much of the religious acrimony from the workhouses by overruling Blackbourne's controversial judgement that all foundling children in the workhouse be reared as Protestants.<sup>132</sup>

### Outdoor Relief

The first official record of outdoor relief is found in an entry for 14 July 1855 when 1s. outdoor relief was given to a woman on the order of Dr. Walker and was sanctioned by the board as 'a very rare occurrence.' Indeed it was so rare that the union did not possess a set of outdoor relief books. The board proposed that they would not get books as outdoor relief 'is not calculated to exceed a few shillings a week.'<sup>133</sup> In September 1865 the medical officer reported that an inmate with a fractured leg be given outdoor relief.<sup>134</sup> There was a steady but significant growth in

127 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/15, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 13 December 1856. He also made an allegation against the master on 10 January 1857 that he had made one of the female pauper inmates pregnant.

128 *Ibid.*, 13 June 1857.

129 *Ibid.*, 20 June 1857.

130 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/9, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 7 November 1857. The Catholic chaplain warned the master not to compel any of the inmates to bring the child to the Protestant church against their religious convictions. The following week a vote was taken by the board in favour of baptising the child Roman Catholic. The commissioners ruled on 28 November 1857 that the child must be registered as a Protestant and deemed it serious that any officer would go against the law.

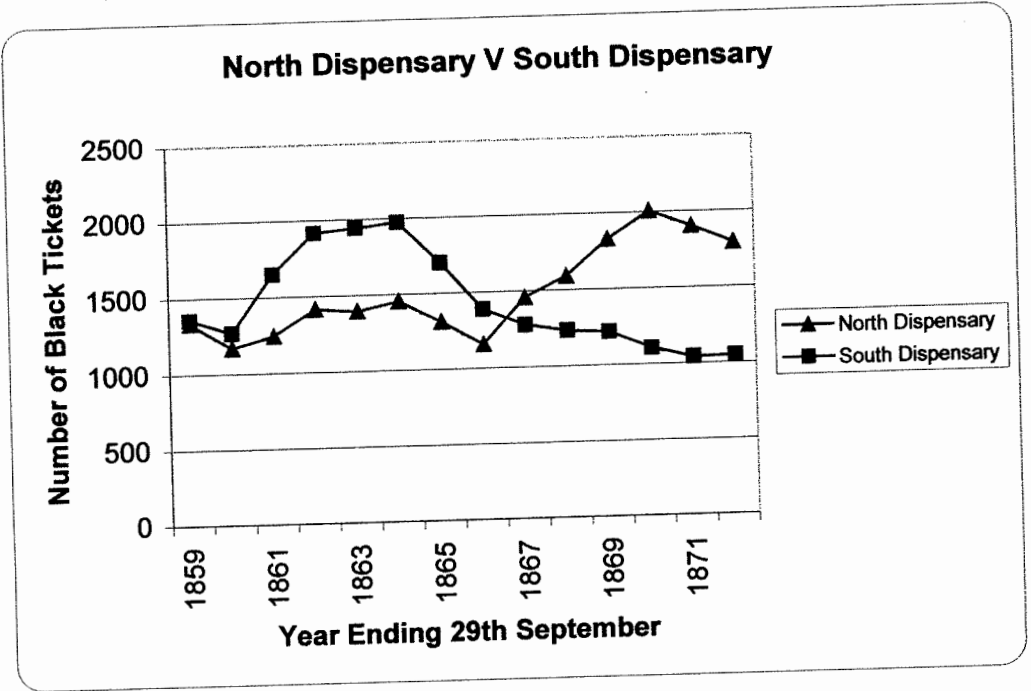
131 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 11 June 1859.

132 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 226.

133 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/6, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 14 July 1855. However, the commissioners directed that they did not have the power to dispense with such books and as a result the board ordered the books (BG/6, 21 July 1855).

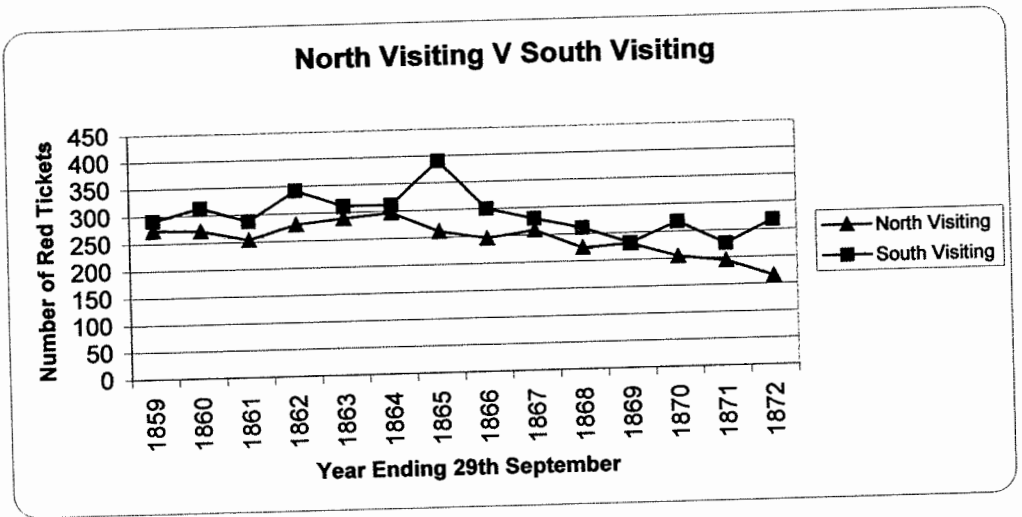
134 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/19, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 16 September 1865.

Figure 3: Issue of Dispensary Tickets 1859-72.



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1859-1872.

Figure 4: Issue of Visiting Tickets 1859-1872.



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1859-1872.

outdoor relief over the period from 1858 to 1867. The figure of six people getting outdoor relief in 1858 must be taken in the context of forty in total receiving outdoor relief in the whole of the province of Munster and with only two other unions giving outdoor relief. The pattern is the same for 1859 and 1860. In 1862 there was a significant growth, almost 60%, in outdoor relief in Munster although the Kilmacthomas figures showed no growth and the union also remained the only one in County Waterford giving outdoor relief.<sup>135</sup> Cassells argues that the figures for outdoor relief are misleading as they do not take into account the medical relief administered by the dispensaries.<sup>136</sup> Figure 6 shows how the level of outdoor relief for Kilmacthomas increased with a greater reliance on outdoor relief by 1872.

The Commissioners were meticulous in their accounting of outdoor relief and its provisions. In cases where relief was given illegally the auditors were required to investigate.<sup>137</sup>

### Female Paupers and Young People

When the entries in the minute books are examined there are many references to women staying in the workhouse for years along with their children. It is interesting to note that young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty who were unmarried also tended to stay longer than the average. An example of the seriousness of this for the Poor Law Commissioners was a request from the commissioners to the Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians in July 1859 for returns specifying the number of inmates between fifteen and twenty years of age and their length of stay. They also requested the cost of keep and clothing for these inmates.<sup>138</sup>

Despite the abject poverty in which women found themselves, middle-class standards were applied to the classification system within the workhouse with inmates defined as either 'deserving' or 'undeserving'. An entry for 13 August 1859 'ordered that Bridget Walsh be discharged from the workhouse as the Guardians did not consider her as destitute, she being in good health and able to work.'<sup>139</sup> Another request by an inmate Mary Walsh, who had been admitted the previous

135 *Return of Number of Able-Bodied Persons who Received Provisional Outdoor Relief in Cases of Sudden and Urgent Necessity in Poor Law Unions in Ireland, 1858-67*, (1867), pp. 1-21.

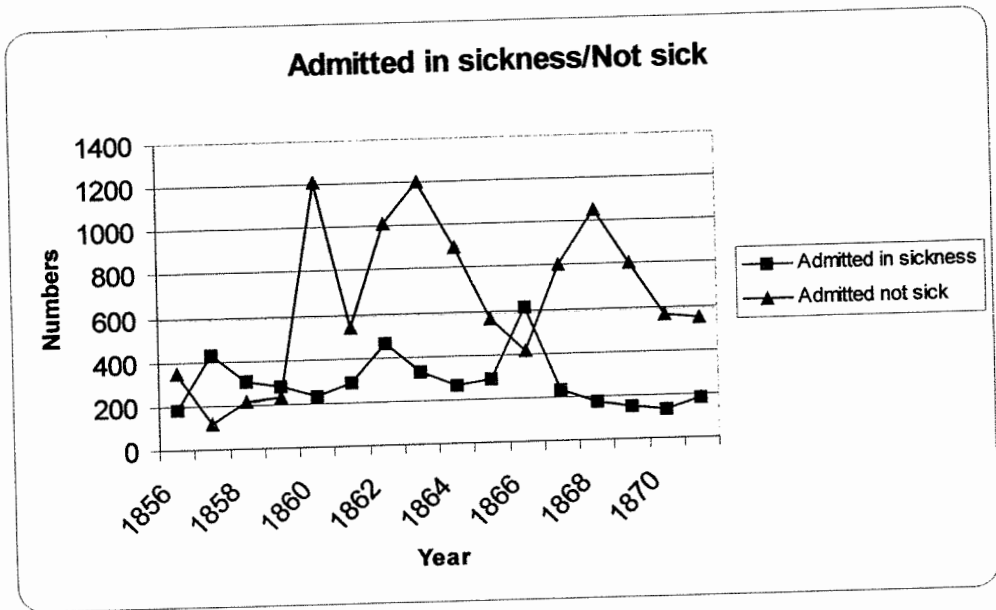
136 R.D. Cassell, *Medical Charities, Medical Politics: The Irish Dispensary System and the Poor Law, 1836-1872*, (New York, 1997), p.102.

137 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/22, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 30 January 1869. The auditor was not happy with the extent of the investigations carried out by the relieving officer into the state of the health of applicants, their ability to work and their previous earnings. He also drew attention to the unsatisfactory accounting methods used by the relieving officer. The board instructed Lenehan to carry out the auditor's instructions but were unhappy with his ruling that 'the sum of illegal monies issued to the relieving officer be charged against the guardians who signed the order.'

138 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 23 July 1859.

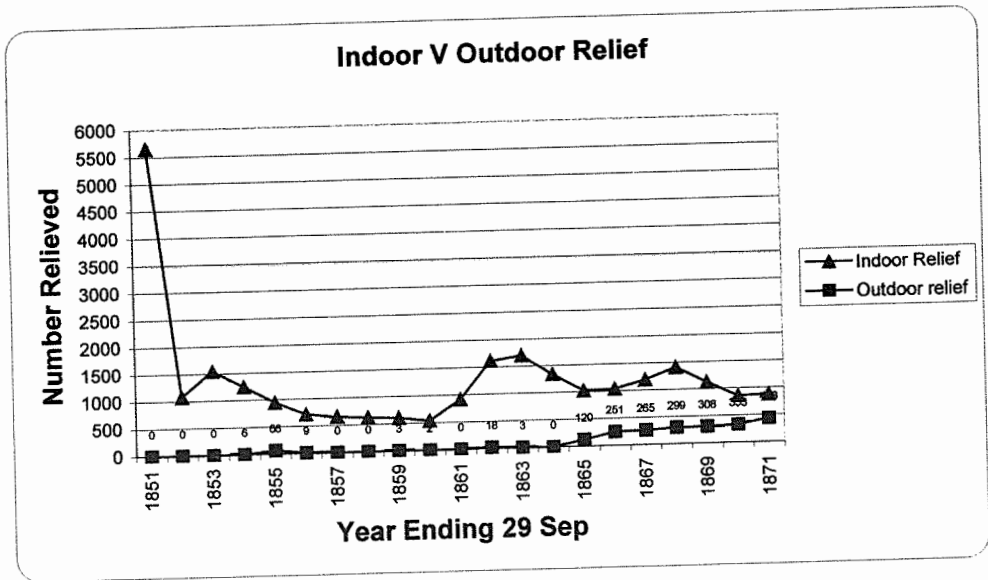
139 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 13 August 1859.

Figure 5: Comparison between those sick and not sick entering the workhouse 1856-1871.



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1856-1871.

Figure 6: Indoor V. Outdoor Relief.



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1851-1872.

February, for a 'suit of clothes for her infant born in the house and a few articles for herself as she is about leaving' saw her receiving 15s. worth of clothing for the child but her own request was denied.<sup>140</sup> An entry for 12 November 1859 by the chairman of the board of guardians dealt with the nurse in the workhouse hospital. The entry states that he 'begs to inform the Guardians that the infirmary nurse Mrs Dee, having been confined within the last week, requests permission to keep her infant in the house to nurse. I consider as she has hitherto been an efficient and active nurse this permission will not prevent her being as diligent as hitherto.'<sup>141</sup> Another example of the attitudes towards women is found in an entry for 10 December 1859 concerning the results of an inspection carried out by Mr. Hamilton, poor law inspector. He suggests the porter be removed to the house at the lower gate to provide accommodation for the kitchen women who were sleeping on the kitchen floor, 'a source of particular hardship during the winter months.' However, the board did not consider it appropriate to ask the porter to move and the women were left in the kitchen.<sup>142</sup>

On the other hand where inmates were seen as deserving the board was more compassionate. The case of Fanny Morrissey, a weaver's widow, found her in the position of being unable to pay hospital expenses. The board ordered that due to the 'indigent circumstances in which she found herself through no fault of her own she is forgiven and her expenses paid.'<sup>143</sup> Entry to the workhouse involved separation even where desertion or emigration was not an issue. An entry for 6 May 1871 refers to a 'Margaret Holohan, an inmate with five children, who had two persons calling from her husband who is working at Bonmahon Mines. As her children's clothes are bad she requests help to get her to her husband'<sup>144</sup> There are many references in the minute books concerning the chargeability of female paupers. There are numerous requests throughout the minute books of women, both single and with children, requesting help with clothes or shoes in order that they could leave the house in order to take up employment. An entry for 3 June 1871 refers to a woman, Bridget Condon, with four children who wanted to leave to get employment following five years in the house.<sup>145</sup> Another entry for 4 July refers to an Ellen Kiely who had been in the house four years and Mary Donnell, 'a woman in the house eight years.'<sup>146</sup> There is also a report by the relieving officer regarding one Edmond Heffernan who got a month's imprisonment for not supporting his wife. His wife was ill in the workhouse and the relieving officer was directed to

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140 *Ibid.*

141 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/15, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 8 March 1862.

142 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/11, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 10 December 1859.

143 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/27, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 20 June 1871.

144 *Ibid.*, 6 May 1871.

145 *Ibid.*, 3 June 1871.

146 *Ibid.*, 4 July 1871.

Table 8: Return of the Number of Unmarried Male & Female Inmates in County Waterford on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1859.

RETURN RELATING TO POOR LAW UNIONS (IRELAND).

3

NUMBER of Unmarried Male and Female Inmates of each Workhouse in Ireland on 23d July 1859, &c.—continued.

UNIONS.	Number.			Average Time of Residence in Workhouse.						Average Cost per Head per Annum for In-Maintenance and Clothing.
	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.	Males.			Females.			
				Years.	Months.	Days.	Years.	Months.	Days.	
COUNTY OF WATERFORD:										
Dungarvan - - - -	4	7	11	2	6	-	4	6	-	5 12 8
Kilmacthomas - - -	2	5	7	4	-	-	3	-	-	4 - -
Lismore - - - -	1	10	11	10	-	-	4	-	-	6 1 4
Waterford - - - -	44	75	119	1	1	8	1	9	14	5 5 1
TOTAL (MUNSTER) -	538	1,048	1,576	3	7	20	3	4	13	5 9 5

Source: Return of Numbers of Unmarried Male and Female Inmates of Poor Law Unions in Ireland, between Ages of Fifteen and Twenty Years, 1859 Session 2, PP1854 (189), xix p. 765.

Table 9: Numbers of Illegitimate children in County Waterford workhouses on 1<sup>st</sup> day of January 1854.

Union	Number of Births	Illegitimate	No. of women with illegitimate children	Total Number of illegitimate children	Total No. of women in workhouse
Kilmacthomas	8	7	14	18	68
Dungarvan	6	4	32	32	199
Lismore	4	2	15	17	191
Waterford	28	17	35	48	387

Source: Return of Number of Females with Illegitimate Children in Workhouses in Ireland, January 1854; Number of Children born in Workhouses in Ireland, 1853, PP 1854 (183), Iv, p. 747.

Table 10: School Timetable February 1854.

Timetable	Description
0600-0830	Wash, clean schoolroom, read prayers followed by breakfast.
0900-1100	School
1100-1430	Farmwork
1500-1530	Dinner
1530-1630	School
1700-1830	Farmwork
1900-1930	Supper
1930	Prayers
2000	To dorms

Source: WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/4, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 11 Feb 1854

prosecute Heffernan 'as soon as the Medical Officer considers his wife fit for discharge from the hospital.'<sup>147</sup>

Under the Irish Poor Relief Act of 1838 the unmarried mother was liable for the support of her illegitimate child up to the age of fifteen with the natural father having no liability under the provisions of this act. Burke uses statistics showing that of the 24,008 adult women under fifty years of age on 1 January 1854, 2,796 (or 11.6%) were mothers of illegitimate children.<sup>148</sup> (see Table 8) Another aspect of this issue relates to the issue around moral classification. *The Fifteenth Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* outlines the concerns of the commissioners in terms of 'separating females of notoriously profligate character,' another way of describing prostitutes, from ordinary female inmates. In the abstract on this issue Kilmacthomas reported that there was 'no arrangement at present but that the guardians consider such an arrangement would be most desirable,' as regards workhouse accommodation and treatment.<sup>149</sup> An entry for 13 July 1861 refers to a woman of no fixed abode who was admitted on that day and who gave birth within one hour of entry.<sup>150</sup>

The guardians were focused on this issue to the extent that a solicitor was appointed in September 1862 to conduct a 'prosecution on their behalf against the fathers of illegitimate children' and that the clerk instruct the clerk of petty sessions to summons those men.<sup>151</sup>

## Work

The paupers were expected to work for their keep or at least those able-bodied and old enough. At Kilmacthomas the men worked on the workhouse farm and the women were engaged mostly in providing clothes for the inmates. The return for Kilmacthomas farm for 1853 reflects the fact that it is only in this year that the inmates start to populate the workhouse. The return shows that there were six persons above fifteen years of age and twenty-five under that age employed on the farm. In the observations column it is noted that the land was not under crops and that the thirty-one persons were 'employed in sub-soiling, and preparing it for

147 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 2 December 1854.

148 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 191. The vulnerability of the unmarried mother in nineteenth-century Ireland is illustrated by the number who relied on the cold comfort of the workhouse.

149 *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners*, (1862), p. 86. It is interesting to note that Waterford had a classification system in place but neither Dungarvan nor Lismore had any system other than normal classification, see pp. 84-90. The board issued an order issued for 26 October 1861 that a separate room be made available to separate mothers with illegitimate children from the rest of mothers (BG/14).

150 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/13, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 13 July 1861. On 29 March 1862 the board converted the former nursery and secured the windows and doors to prevent contact with other females in the yard.

151 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/16, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 13 September 1862.

turnips.<sup>1</sup> There were no inmates employed in manufacturing and trades. The difference the following year is evident with over 12 acres of land cultivated and twenty-four working the farm.<sup>152</sup> The board directed that the relieving officer Richard Power, on behalf of the guardians, was to summons Patrick Mahony to Stradbally Sessions for the wages due to a child pauper named Mary Walsh who was hired to him from the board the previous July.<sup>153</sup>

The union, and in particular the workhouse, were a vital and integral part of the local economy. Shortly after the opening of the workhouse the maintenance of the site began and this impacted on many businesses in the surrounding district. Mr. Cummins took on the maintenance of the pump.<sup>154</sup> John Smith, the workhouse baker resigned on 9 September and in the same entry in the minutes it is recorded that he was granted the contract for bread for the next three months.<sup>155</sup> There are tenders for local business people; provisions, shoe tacks, sweeping brushes, lime brushes, tin platters, books and forms, glass, chimney sweeping, etc.<sup>156</sup> The agriculturalist's report for 28 October 1854 gives a good indication of the impact of famine and emigration on the inmates. Of twenty-nine boys working on the farm in the period of the report twenty-eight were in the category aged between nine and fifteen, and one between aged between five and nine. Thirteen of the boys had parents in America while six had both parents dead and two had one parent dead.<sup>157</sup>

## School

The commissioners outlined their interpretation of the duties of the schoolmaster and mistress of the workhouse in a circular issued on 17 September 1853 and included in the *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*. They saw them not just as teachers but as being in *loco parentis* and cautioned the unions against frequent changes of teachers as it destroyed the parental relationship. The commissioners went on to caution against the approach of some boards of guardians of underpaying teachers.<sup>158</sup> There is extensive communication with the National Board of Education throughout the minute books. The returns for 11 April 1854 show that Kilmacthomas was one of 142 'Unions that have their Schools in connexion with the National Board.'<sup>159</sup> In the *Seventh Annual Report of*

152 *Return from Unions in Ireland of Workhouse Farm and Manufacturing Accounts, 1853-54*, (1855), pp.1-29.

153 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/22, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 6 February 1869.

154 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 2 September 1854.

155 *Ibid.*, 9 September 1854

156 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/8, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 11 April 1857.

157 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/5, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 28 October 1854.

158 *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1854), p.18.

159 *Return of Names of Poor Law Unions of Ireland, Distinguishing those that have Schools in Connection with National Board*, (1854), p.1.



*the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* the commissioners referred to the method of agricultural instruction (in unions which had no skilled agriculturalist), both in the school rooms and field, which 'devolve on the schoolmaster, who should devote a portion of his time to these objects without sacrificing the three hours in school prescribed by Article 23 of the workhouse rules. In ordinary circumstances it has been found sufficient to devote one hour before breakfast, and three before dinner, to literary instruction, and to devote from two to five to the farm.'<sup>160</sup> The master recorded an entry in that the children requested that they be allowed one week's vacation which was granted.<sup>161</sup> There are constant references throughout the minute books to inspections by the poor law inspector and assessment of the schoolteachers. (see Table 10)

## Emigration

Emigration was not a new concept in Ireland having been seen in the pre-famine period as a solution for Ireland's economic and social problems. Kinealy highlights the opinion of economists such as Malthus and Nassau Senior who saw emigration as a means of social improvement.<sup>162</sup> During the period 1852 to 1872 the poor law authorities were directly involved in assisting some of the inmates of the workhouses to emigrate as a means of relieving distress.<sup>163</sup> In the immediate post-famine period emigration dropped off, and while the boards assisted many, it is important to note that the majority of fares were provided by the emigrants themselves, their friends or family members. Throughout the minute books there are references to the board assisting pauper inmates to emigrate after they had received money or passage, with the poor law making up the balance required.<sup>164</sup> It is worth noting that Mr. W. Hamilton reports in the *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* that emigration had reduced the numbers in the workhouse and that for most of those who remained work was constant.<sup>165</sup> As with all other aspects of the poor law administration the commissioners had the final sanction of any monies or assistance given to paupers.<sup>166</sup> Women with children were seen as a particular burden on rates and tended to be encouraged when they left to find work or to emigrate. Assisted emigration has been estimated at rates up to four to five

160 *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners*, (1854), p.19.

161 WCAS, BG/KILTHOM/27, Kilmacthomas Board of Guardians Minute Book, 1 April 1871. BG/KILTHOM/25, 20 August 1870 has a similar request. Leave was granted on both occasions and reflects the changing nature of workhouse.

162 Christine Kinealy, 'The Irish Poor Law, 1838-62: A Study of the Relationship between the Local and Central Administrators', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Dublin, 1984, p. 300.

163 Helen Burke, *The People and The Poor Law in 19th Century Ireland*, (West Sussex, 1987), p. 31.

164 See Appendix 4.

165 *Seventh Annual Report* 1854, 20 April 1854. This points to the improving situation in terms of employment which resulted from the population drop following the famine.

166 There are a number of cases of monies claimed back from the guardians by the commission.

females to every one male during certain periods. There are references throughout the minute books to women and children leaving the workhouse to emigrate either through assisted emigration or as a result of passage tickets arriving from America. However, the pattern outlined in Figure 8 in terms of male to female ratio is not evident. It is only by looking at the minute books that we see the pattern which was in place within the workhouse in particular. There are very few instances of males being assisted to emigrate in comparison to the numbers of females, many of them with large families.<sup>167</sup> The underlying message behind the entries in the minute books reflects the misery and unhappiness of separation behind many of the human stories which made up life in the workhouse.

The fluctuations which occurred tended to reflect the periodic subsistence crises which occurred. The high rates of female emigration and their use of the workhouse as a means to achieve it shows women were not entirely passive in their use of the union. The 1871 Census records during the period from 1 May 1851 until 31 March 1871 give a good indication of the levels of emigration showing a total loss to County Waterford of 58,064 persons through emigration.<sup>168</sup>

### **Mortality** (see Figure 9)

Prior to and during the famine the two greatest threats to public health were cholera and typhus. Cholera had a high death rate and was no respecter of class. While the figures for cholera were low by contemporary standards in 1854-55 and 1865-66, cholera had swept the country during the height of the famine.

In the *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* the commissioners point to the mortality rates slightly exceeding the previous year but point to the workhouses assuming 'to a certain extent, the character of hospitals.' The report also refers to an increase in the proportion of inmates in the hospital from 3 January 1852 to 1 April 1854 from 15% to 23% despite 'the country being peculiarly free of epidemic disease.'<sup>169</sup> The principal cause of deaths in County Waterford was as a result of debility caused by poor nutrition, bronchitis and many other ailments caused by poor living conditions.

### **Conclusion**

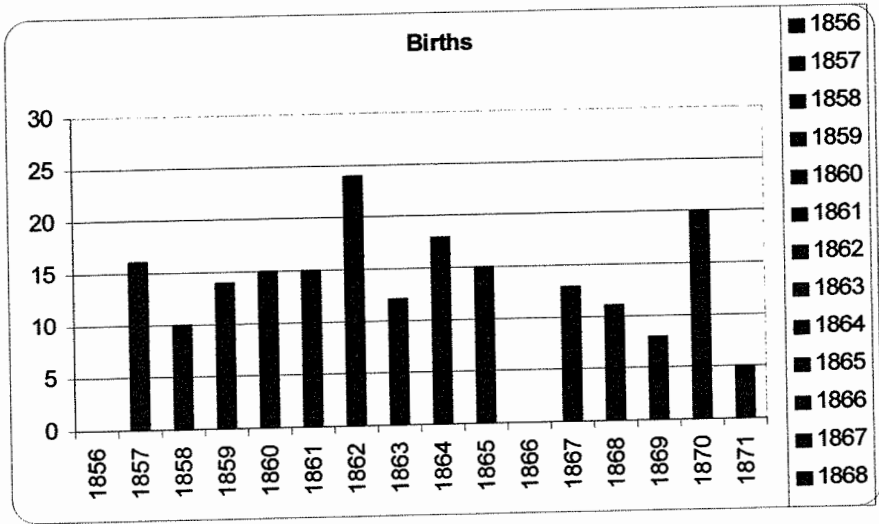
The visible face of the Kilmacthomas Union, the workhouse, is an impressive structure and provides us with a link to our past. This research has provided a view of the poor law at a local level and, as such, is essential if a full understanding of national trends and events are to be understood. Research of this nature provides an important link to historians who have dealt with the workhouse system in County Waterford. By the time the Kilmacthomas Union was formed the county had seen the worst of the famine and the situation was improving although there were still high levels of disease, mortality and emigration. The impact of

167 See Appendix 4.

168 *Census of Ireland 1871*, Table XLI, Emigration from the County of Waterford during each year, from the 1st of May, 1851, to 31st March, 1871, to 31st of March, 1871.

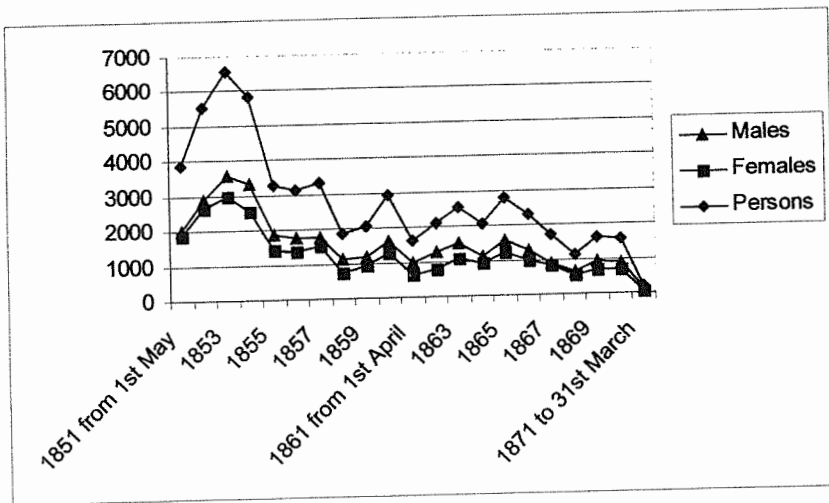
169 *Seventh Annual Report of the Irish Poor Law Commissioners* (1854), p. 4-6.

Figure 7: Births in Workhouse 1856-1871.



Source: Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1856-1871.

Figure 8: Emigration from County of Waterford 1851-1871.

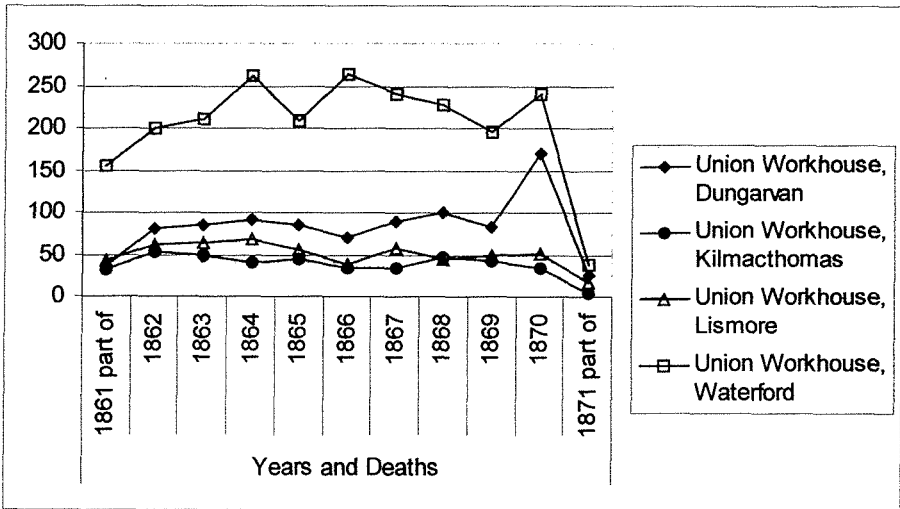


Source: Table XLI, emigration from the County of Waterford during each year, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1851, to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1871, to 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 1871; compiled from the Returns of the Registrar-General, Census of 1871.

legislation such as the Medical Charities Act at the local level provides corroboration of studies of national trends by historians such as Cassells. The twenty years following the passage of the Medical Charities Act comes across clearly as a period during which there was a rapid increase in the provision of state controlled medicine. This had resulted in a decline in the ravages of cholera, smallpox and other contagious diseases. By 1872 state medicine, as it was understood by the commission, was firmly established in Ireland along with the government's acknowledgement of a basic responsibility for the health and welfare of those at the bottom of the scale. While this healthcare would fall short of twenty-first century expectations it must be viewed in the context of its time.

The workhouse is one of the most visible features which still exists of the hardship and destitution which was part of nineteenth-century Ireland. As such it is inextricably linked with the history of our people and worthy of study. In the words of Gillespie and Moran local communities are 'the building blocks of nations... groups of men and women who lived within a well-defined geographical area and shared common bonds and assumptions.'<sup>170</sup>

Figure 9: Mortality rates for workhouses in County Waterford 1862-1870.



Source: *Seventh Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners.*

170 *History 6*, (Oscail, Dublin City University 2006), p. 1-9.

## Appendix 1

### *Index and Status of Minute Books*

1. 7 October 1851-29 June 1852.
2. 13 July 1852- 16 June 1853 (badly damaged and of limited value).
3. 23 June 1853- 10 January 1854.
4. 17 January 1854- 18 July 1854.  
25 July 1854- 17 April 1855.  
24 April 1855- January 8 January 1856.
- [7] January 1856- October 1856 (missing).
8. 28 October 1856- 28 July 1857.
9. 4 August 1857- 4 May 1858.
10. 11 May 1858- 31 May 1859 (missing).
11. 7 June 1859- 26 June 1860.
12. 3 July 1860- 8 January 1861.
13. 15 January 1861- 23 July 1861.
14. 30 July 1861- 4 February 1862.
15. 11 February 1862- 19 August 1862.
16. 2 September 1862- 14 February 1863.
- [17] 21 February 1863- 22 March 1864 (missing).
18. 29 March 1864- 21 March 1865.
19. 28 March 1865- 28 March 1866.
20. 4 April 1866- 2 April 1867.
- [21] 9 April 1867- 6 October 1868 (missing).
22. 13 October 1868- 30 March 1869.
- [23] 6 April 1869- 5 October 1869 (missing)
24. 12 October 1869- 29 March 1870.
25. 5 April 1870- 4 October 1870.
- [26] 11 October 1870- 28 March 1871 (missing).
27. 4 April 1871- 3 October 1871.
28. 19 October 1871- 25 March 1872.
- [29] 2 April 1872- 8 October 1872 (missing).
30. 15 October 1872- 1 April 1873.

**Appendix 2. Contacts with other Unions.**

TABLE SHOWING EXAMPLES OF CONTACT WITH OTHER UNIONS

Name	Date	Source	Comment
Lord Stuart de Decies	11 Nov 1854	BG/5	Lord Stuart de Decies requested the cooperation of the Board in collecting subscriptions in aid of the Patriotic Fund. Lord Waterford started off the collection with a subscription of £100. On the 25 November it was agreed that each guardian would be responsible for collecting the Patriotic Fund in their own electoral division and the subscription list would be published by the clerk.
Oldcastle Union	17 Jan 1857	BG/8	A letter came in from the clerk of Oldcastle Union requesting that a deputation be sent to a meeting in Dublin on the 30 January 1857 for the purpose of discussing the amalgamation of unions.
Unspecified	24 Jan 1857	BG/8	The board received a request for support for their amendment of the "existing laws relating to the removal of Irish poor from England."
Enniscorthy and Cashel	24 Jan 1857	BG/8	There is also correspondence with Enniscorthy and Cashel union on the price they are paying for bread and milk
Rathdrum Union	01 Oct 1859	BG/11	The board received a letter from Rathdrum union requesting the cooperation of the board in petitioning parliament to introduce a clause in the contemplated Poor Law Amendment act in order to compel parents to support their illegitimate children
Dungarvan Union	14 Apr 1860	BG/11	Letter received from Dungarvan union in relation to a petition to parliament on the appointment of rate collectors and hospital inspections by Medical Inspectors
Poor Law Commission	28 July 1860	BG/12	Letter addressed to New Ross Union from Mr. Buchanan, Emigration Agent at Quebec on case of infirm paupers sent out and that in future such persons would not be supported

Appendix 2 (continued). *Contacts with other Unions.*

			in Canada.
Limerick Union	19 Jun 1865	BG/19	The board ordered that the clerk summon a special meeting for the following Tuesday to take into consideration a copy of a resolution received from Limerick board of Guardians regarding the Catholic Pledge

Source: Waterford County Archive, BG/KILTHOM/.

Appendix 3. *Numbers admitted to workhouse and categories.*

Abstract showing numbers admitted Year Ending 29 September for Kilmacthomas Workhouse	Suffering under Fever and other contagious diseases	Suffering from other diseases	Suffering accidental injury	Total number admitted in sickness	Number admitted not sick	Total Number admitted	Number of births in workhouse	Number of Deaths in Workhouse during year
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1855	No breakdown of figures available							
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1856	37	140	4	181	349	530	N/A	40
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1857	106	320	6	432	116	548	16	30
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1858	52	257	-	309	216	525	10	16
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1859	45	232	3	280	236	516	14	22
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1860	81	153	2	236	1208	1444	15	56
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1861	74	211	7	292	536	828	15	35
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1862	118	333	11	462	1007	1469	24	61
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1863	145	175	8	328	1203	1531	12	46
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1864	70	190	1	261	892	1153	18	46
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1865	70	216	6	292	564	856	15	43
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1866	199	410	6	615	413	1038	N/A	N/A
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1867	94	129	7	230	805	1035	13	39
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1868	44	121	8	173	1053	1226	11	45
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1869	39	108	5	152	806	958	8	46
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> sep 1870	35	88	7	130	563	693	8	32
YE 29 <sup>th</sup> Sep 1871	57	122	4	183	543	726	5	23

Source: *Annual Reports of Poor Law Commissioners 1856-1872.*

There was no column in the annual reports for births until 1857. The entry for 1866 did not break down the data for births and deaths in the 'Abstract of Returns from Clerks of Unions' showing the total numbers admitted, those admitted in sickness, births and deaths in the same manner as previous and subsequent reports. Much of the additional data in the *Twentieth Annual* report related to the cholera epidemic.

Appendix 4. *Examples of Assisted Emigration.*

Name	Date	Source	Comment
Not known	13 May 1854	BG/4	A woman received £5 from America and wants to emigrate with her three children
Paupers	08 Jul 1854	BG/4	£45 drawn in order to send paupers to America
7 paupers	26 Aug 1854	BG/5	Seven paupers wanted to emigrate to Quebec and provided £5 themselves. Board sanctioned £49-11-3 and charged to Electoral Division of Mount Kennedy
Mary Lanigan	02 Sep 1854	BG/5	Received money from her brother Pat in America. Ordered that the money be kept with the rest of the passage money previously sent
Mary Connors	15 Sep 1854	BG/5	Woman and four children receive letter and money from husband with ticket of passage to America on "Jerimiah Thompson" leaving Liverpool. Sanctioned £8 and cleared by Medical Officer.
Mary Power	09 Dec 1854	BG/5	Mary Power received £4 to pay passage for herself or her sister
Honora Harrington and Bridget Veale	27 May 1865	BG/19	Both women, each with a son and daughter, received passage to Toronto and requested clothes to emigrate.
Mary Power and Ann Hayes	03 Jun 1865	BG/19	Both women, each with one child, embarked at Queenstown.
Nora, Mary and Julia Ryan	17 Jun 1865	BG/19	Passage paid to New York
Mary Morrissey	24 Jun 1865	BG/19	Recorded that along with her seven children she received passage from her husband. On the 22 July recorded cost to union at £4-12-6
No name	22 Aug 1865	BG/19	Woman and three children request help to emigrate. Permanent wards of union. Initially sanctioned by Commissioners but changed decision as they had been deserted by husband.
Ellen Donnell	01 Sep 1865	BG/19	Woman and two children received passage. The auditors examination of Ellen Donnell and her two children's case resulted in a judgement of illegal payment under



Appendix 4 (continued). *Examples of Assisted Emigration.*

			26 <sup>th</sup> section of the 12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> Vic.c.104 and “in pursuance of 94 <sup>th</sup> section of 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vic.c.56 “the payment charged to named guardians who authorised payments (BG/19, 17 Feb 1866). The guardians responded by stating the reason for the payment was not to lose the passage for the woman as it was an urgent case (BG/19, 24 Feb 1866). The final resolution is noted as the Board resolving that the full letter of the law be followed which the Commissioners accepted (BG/19, 10 Mar 1866).
No name	17 Oct 1868	BG/22	Sum of £5 allowed to assist a woman and her child to emigrate
No name	24 Oct 1868	BG/22	A woman with two children receives a passage certificate from her husband in America. The board allowed her and the children clothes for the journey.
Ellen Power	09 Sep 1871	BG/27	“Sum of £3 be allowed to assist Ellen Power and six children to emigrate to America” having received a passage certificate for them all



# Denis B. Cashman: The Fenian Years

Pat McCarthy

**J**OHN O'Mahony, leader of the Young Ireland Movement, Gaelic scholar and founder and head centre of the Fenian movement in America died in poverty in a New York tenement house on 6 February 1877. It seems that only in death was his true greatness recognised. His obsequies a week later were the occasion for a massive gathering of Irish nationalists in America as 20,000 of them marched behind his coffin to the waiting steamship that carried it to Ireland. Pride of place in the procession went to his Fenian comrades who acted as pallbearers. Among the list of twenty was a Waterford man, Denis B. Cashman.<sup>1</sup> In its own way it was a fitting acknowledgement of Cashman's Fenian years and of his suffering for the cause of Irish freedom.

## Early Years

Little is known of the early life of Denis Cashman. He was born in 1842 in Abbeyside, Dungarvan and judging by his career as a legal clerk and as a journalist he seems to have got a good education. By 1860 he was employed by the prominent legal firm of Dobbyn and Tandy at their premises in Colbeck Street Waterford city. A tradition cited in an article in the *Waterford News* in 1936 says that he quickly became chief clerk to the firm, that his work took him frequently to Dublin and that this is how he came into regular contact with James Stephens.

On 22 January 1862 he married Catherine (Kate) Veale at the Church of the Holy Trinity Without or, as it is commonly referred to, Ballybricken Church. The celebrant was Fr. Dunphy and the witnesses were James Shelton and Brigid Meany. Just over a year later the same group returned to Ballybricken Church for the baptism of the couple's first son, William Patrick on 15 March 1863. James Shelton and Brigid Meany sponsored the young William Cashman. Two more sons were to be born to Denis and Kate, Arthur in 1865 and Denis who was born on 12 January 1867 – the day on which his father was arrested. For his marriage Denis gave his address as Ballybricken. They later moved to nearby Francis Street and again, just around the corner to 22 Barker Street.

When the firm of Dobbyn and Tandy was asked by the Royal Irish Constabulary for a reference for Cashman in 1867 (see below), Charles Dobbyn said that he had no fault to find with Denis Cashman save 'his becoming a fenian for which he dismissed him'. If this is so, it might explain why Cashman was willing to leave his wife and family and go to work in Dublin as a full-time Fenian agent for James Stephens in 1865. If indeed he were dismissed for Fenian activities it would be unlikely that he would find similar employment among the small

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Irish American*, 24 February 1877 for a full account of the funeral of John O'Mahony. There is a short biographical essay on John O'Mahony by Desmond Ryan in T.W. Moody (ed.), *The Fenian Movement*, (Cork, Mercier Press, 1968).



*Plate 1: Denis Cashman.*

Courtesy National Archives.

and conservative legal circles in Waterford. Whether voluntarily or through force of circumstances, Denis Cashman arrived in Dublin where his main Fenian activities and their denouement were to take place. In 1864 James Stephens during the course of a fund-raising tour in the USA had declared that 1865 would be the 'year of action'. This ringing declaration had galvanised Irish-American circles and led to a massive increase in the flow of funds to the Fenian leadership in Dublin. Thus Stephens was in a position to pay a number of full-time organisers such as John Devoy and, it seems, Denis Cashman.

### **1858-1863: The beginnings of Fenianism in Waterford**

The Young Ireland movement collapsed with the fiasco at Ballingarry in July 1848. Militant Irish nationalism briefly flickered into life with attacks on constabulary barracks at Portlaw (September 1848) and Cappoquin (September 1849) before appearing to die out completely. George Gavan Duffy, one of the leaders of the Young Ireland movement, gloomily announced that Ireland had 'less life in it than a corpse on a dissecting table' before departing for Australia. Not all of the Young Ireland leaders were so pessimistic. From their various exiles in France and America many of them began to dream and to plan for a new movement. Foremost among these was James Stephens.<sup>2</sup>

Stephens, a Kilkenny man, had escaped to Paris after Ballingarry, in which affray he had been wounded. After seven years in exile, a period in which he claimed to have taken part in several continental revolutionary movements, he returned to Ireland in 1856 to see, in his own words, 'had the time come for a revolutionary organisation'. For two years he toured the country meeting many of his former comrades in Young Ireland including Joseph Denieffe who had returned from the USA for the same purpose. On St. Patrick's Day 1858 Stephens, Denieffe, Thomas Clark Luby and Peter Langan met in the latter's timber yard in Lombard Street, Dublin and swore each other into the new movement – the Irish Revolutionary (later: Republican) Brotherhood (or IRB). Each man swore:

I... do solemnly swear in the presence of Almighty God that I will do my utmost, at every risk while life lasts to make Ireland an independent democratic republic; that I will yield implicit obedience, in all things not contrary to the laws of God, to the commands of my superior officers.

The parallel movement in the United States, led by John O'Mahony and Michael Doheny was known as the 'Fenian Brotherhood' but both terms soon became interchangeable.

Drawing from his experiences on the continent, Stephens designed a cellular structure for the movement to minimise the potential damage of informers. A Fenian regiment, or circle, comprised 820 men as follows:

2 Stephens has been the subject of two major biographical studies, Desmond Ryan, *The Fenian Chief*, (Dublin, Gill & Son Ltd., 1967), and Marta Ramon, *A Provisional Dictator: James Stephens and the Fenian Movement*, (Dublin, UCD Press, 2007).

- 1A - Centre or Colonel
- 9 Bs - Captains
- 81 Cs - Sergeants
- 729 Ds - Privates

In theory, each man knew only his immediate superior and the nine men Bs, Cs or Ds that he himself recruited. While it was initially very successful in preserving secrecy, the system was diluted in 1864 and 1865 when the movement expanded rapidly and in some areas at least became a semi-open one.

Given the provenance of the leadership of the new movement, it is hardly surprising that the first organising trip was to the South East, heartland of Young Ireland. Joseph Denieffe described Fenianism in Waterford and Cashman as follows:

Stephens and I went on to Waterford. At that time we did not make much headway in the City of Waterford but it afterwards became a stronghold of national activity. John Dillon, who kept an extensive wheelwright business, became one of the leaders and for many years was the 'centre' of the city. He was a most prudent and conservative man but, at the same time, an intense nationalist, and carried on his work with such secrecy and precision that the Government remained completely in the dark regarding the existence of the reorganisation until towards the close of the movement.

Denis B. Cashman was another of the leading spirits in Waterford. He was chief clerk for a legal firm and had a wide circle of friends, among whom he instilled his patriotic principles. W.A. Hearn, Terence Kent, John Kenny, John Tobin and P.J. Donogue were also prominent in Waterford.<sup>3</sup>

In his unpublished memoirs, Thomas Clarke Luby gives more details of an early organising trip to Waterford:

Leaving Carrick and our own poor mouth – we went on to Waterford City, where the Captain (James Stephens) directed me to find out and bring to him an iron-master (I think he was) named Condon; to whom he had no introduction save that he knew him to have been a friend, or at least a warm partisan of T.F. Meagher. This man, quite willing, went with me at once to the hotel where sat the great magician or conjurer. I must own, I was astounded at his success. He said no word that seemed to me preternaturally wise or forcible. Yet the man was in a twinkling after which we quaffed a social glass to 'the cause'.

As things turned out, however, this facile recruit, though I believe perfectly sincere, did little or nothing for us, at least as far as I know. If, later on, we had strength in Waterford City, 'twas (I am next to

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph Denieffe, *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood*, (New York, 1906), p. 28.

certain) the work of other hands. Condon seems to have been a dreamer, not a worker, at all events, not in a conspiracy like ours. After settling Condon (remember all this in early summer of 1858) we next travel from Waterford City by a stage-coach of the old fashion to Dungarvan.<sup>4</sup>

Given that the early recruiting efforts were focussed on contacts from the Young Ireland movement and Cashman's youth that summer, he was only sixteen in 1858, it is unlikely that he was recruited on that, the first of Stephens' organising trips. There is an oft-repeated story that Cashman's first involvement with Fenianism came in 1858 when the Fenian leader, Captain Lawrence O'Brien sheltered in the family home after his escape from Clonmel Jail. However, O'Brien had been brought to America in 1850 at the age of eight and did not return to Ireland until 1865 when he did so as part of the influx of experienced American soldiers in anticipation of a rising. He was arrested in March 1867 and lodged in Clonmel Jail.<sup>5</sup> A month later he escaped at which stage Cashman was himself a prisoner in Millbank Prison, London. It is extremely unlikely that they ever met before the 1870s when both were in the United States, their active Fenian days over. O'Brien may have been sheltered in the Cashman family home in Dungarvan after his escape but he did not meet Denis there.

Growth in Fenianism in Waterford as in the rest of the country was slow from 1858 to 1863. Luby would later reflect, 'how little the Fenian work done from 1858 to 1863 (inclusive) seems as compared to the expenditure of labour and the monetary expense.'<sup>6</sup>

This lack of progress is reflected in an almost complete absence of references to Fenianism in the local newspapers and in the police records.

In June 1863 John O'Mahony, head of the Fenians in America, landed a noticeable catch when T.F. Meagher was inducted into the brotherhood at his headquarters at Ann Street, New York. He swore:

I, Thomas Francis Meagher, solemnly pledge my sacred word of honour as a truthful and honest man that I will labour with earnest zeal for the liberation of Ireland from the yoke of England and for the establishment of a free and independent government on Irish soil.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this pledge, Meagher does not seem to have been very active in the movement. However, news of the catch reached Ireland and in October of the same

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4 National Library of Ireland, (henceforth abbreviated as NLI), Thomas Clarke Luby MS 331.

5 The fullest account of the life of Captain Lawrence O'Brien and of his Fenian involvement is given in his obituary in the *Gaelic American*, 13 January 1923.

6 NLI, Thomas Clarke Luby MS 331.

7 For a full discussion on Meagher and Fenianism see the essay by this author, 'The Lost Leader? Thomas Francis Meagher and the Fenian Brotherhood', in John M. Hearne and Rory T. Cornish (eds.), *Thomas Francis Meagher: The Making of an Irish American*, (Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2006).

year Stephens took the opportunity to reflect on the lack of progress in Waterford and in a letter to O'Mahony wrote:

Waterford City is the most backward spot in Munster – I mean of the towns, for a few urban districts, are still backward enough even in Munster. As General Meagher is so desirous of forwarding the work, it struck me that a spirited address to the manhood of his native city would have a good affect, and so while last week there I asked my friends if such were the case. They were quite of my way of thinking. The address, then, I am desirous of having at the General's convenience. It would be best in the form of a private letter, addressed to a third party, in which the General might express his wonder and regret at hearing how dull his townfolk are, at the very time there is such reason for faith and activity. The reason for this faith and activity he could give with effect, by stating the numbers willing and bound to come over at the close of the war. There should be nothing about a war with England: the people should be taught to look to our own race and efforts solely. Of course you will show this to the General. Mind it would not do to publish an address from the General to his townsmen, that while stirring up a few, would certainly restrain the efforts of many more. Should the General make me the recipient of his address I shall look on it as a favour ... .

Meagher does not seem to have responded to this invitation. Nevertheless Fenianism was about to enter a period of growth, and entered a boom period from 1864 to 1865.

A key factor in this boom was the publication of the newspaper the *Irish People*. Staffed by a coterie of gifted writers such as John O'Leary, Charles Kickham and Thomas Clarke Luby, it had the same effect as the *Nation* during the 1840s in arousing a new generation of militant nationalists. In the words of Richard Pigott:

The aim of the *Irish People* was to impress upon the people that freedom could only be won 'by the sword', that it was possible so to win it; that the American War showed that as Irishmen had, by their genius and courage, helped America to win battles, so had they the same ability to conquer the independence of their own country.<sup>8</sup>

Sometime in the early 1860s Denis Cashman was sworn into the Fenian brotherhood in Waterford. Given the profile of the membership, some 12% of Waterford Fenians were classified as clerks, it is likely that he was recruited by some friend or colleague in the legal firms of the city. Even though Cashman is often referred to as the 'centre' of the Waterford Fenian circle that position was held by John Dillon, a blacksmith. Dillon, aged thirty-seven, was the first to be arrested when

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8 Richard Pigott, *Recollections of an Irish Nationalist Journalist*, (Dublin, 1883), p. 131.



Habeas Corpus was suspended in February 1866. According to police files he was succeeded as centre by Edward Kenny, a pig-buyer of Francis Street.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, Cashman must have been very prominent among the Waterford City Fenians to have come to the notice of James Stephens. According to the police files, it was at the latter's express request that Cashman left his employment and moved to Dublin in late 1864 or early 1865 to become a full-time Fenian agent.

### **1865 – Cashman in Dublin<sup>10</sup>**

Fenianism was largely an urban movement and it is no surprise that the cities of Dublin and Cork were its main centres. Apart from being the location of its leadership under Stephens and the home of its newspaper, the *Irish People*, Dublin had a total of seventeen centres ranging in size from those of Hugh Brophy and William Roantree each of which claimed more than 2,000 sworn adherents to that of Edward O'Donovan which had only 200 members. O'Donovan, son of the noted Gaelic scholar, John O'Donovan, was a student at Trinity College and his circle concentrated on the manufacture of ammunition. There is no evidence that the Fenians ever considered trying to manufacture firearms, preferring to import them from England where a Lee Enfield rifle could be bought legitimately for about £2. Dublin was also the centre of the concerted efforts to enrol members of the British Army into the conspiracy. By 1865 John Devoy was the chief organiser of the Fenian soldiers. The strength of the garrison in Dublin city in December 1865 was 135 officers and 4,643 men. According to Devoy 'the majority of whom were Irish and among them we had 1,600 members'.

To counter Fenianism in the city, the Government relied on the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP). Founded in 1837, it was modelled on the London Metropolitan Police and had a strength of about 1,100 all ranks. It was commanded by two Commissioners who were appointed by the Chief Secretary of Ireland. In the 1860s the two Commissioners were Lake and O'Ferrall. Operational control lay with a Chief Superintendent and seven Superintendents, each of whom had a responsibility for a division. There were six divisions, A to F for different parts of the city. There were two crucial differences between the DMP and the Irish Constabulary which policed the rest of the country. The DMP was an unarmed force which gave it a greater public acceptability. Secondly it had a specialised detective force. In 1843 a seventh division, G Division was set up as a central detective unit. From 1864 on its main focus was on Fenianism and on all subsequent republican conspiracies. This political focus eventually led to the G Division being the primary target for Michael Collins's 'Squad' in the War of Independence

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9 National Archives of Ireland, (henceforth abbreviated as NAI), Chief Secretary's Office, (henceforth abbreviated as CSO), Fenian Papers, HCSA Suspension Act, Abstract of Cases.

10 The sources for this section are the NAI-CSO Fenian Papers and the DMP Crime Branch Special Papers, A and B Files also in NAI. The reports of Superintendent Ryan are of particular importance.

from 1919 to 1921. In the 1860s G Division was commanded by Superintendent John Ryan. Ryan had been a detective in the division since its establishment and his success against Fenianism was to lead to his promotion to Chief Superintendent in 1869. The strength of the division varied, but in the 1860s a typical establishment comprised:

- 1 Superintendent
- 1 Inspector
- 13 Acting Inspectors
- 4 Sergeants
- 4 Acting Sergeants
- 19 Constables

Ryan was noted for being assiduous in collecting and collating information from his officers and a large number of informers. Most, if not all, of his Fenian informers seem to have been at a low level in the organisation, i.e. 'Cs' and 'Ds'. He appears to have had no 'A' or 'B' informants, at least initially. It is from the files and correspondence of Ryan and the G Division that we can gain a shadowy picture of Cashman's Fenian activities in Dublin.

According to Ryan, Cashman came to Dublin at the latter end of 1864 or early in 1865 at Stephens' request. His first task seems to have been a full-time organiser but he initially came to the notice of the DMP when in 1865 he was suspected of being engaged in the manufacture of rifle cartridges. This might indicate that he was initially attached to the O'Donovan circle.

The same police reports stated that Cashman was being paid £2 per week by Stephens as a full-time Fenian. However, following the seizure of the *Irish People* and the arrest and flight of Stephens this income ceased. Cashman was forced to find employment and resumed work as a legal clerk being employed by John Smyth, Law Agent of Dublin Corporation.

The police swoop on the officers of the *Irish People* in September 1865 and the wave of arrests that followed the suspension of Habeas Corpus in February 1866 seemed to deal a fatal blow to the Fenian leadership especially in Dublin. Of 1,034 suspects detained under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, 475 were arrested in Dublin, reflecting both the strength of Fenianism in the capital and the high quality of the information gathered by the DMP. But no sooner was one set of Fenian leaders arrested than another group emerged. Prominent among the new wave of local leaders in Dublin was Dr. Edmund Power.<sup>11</sup>

Edmund Power, variously described in police files as an apothecary, a surgeon or a medical doctor was centre of the most active Fenian circle in Dublin in 1866. Power is not among a list of fifteen Dublin centres in the Devoy papers dated September 1865 but is included in a list of seventeen centres dated February 1866. He had eight 'Bs' as follows:

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11 For the importance of Dr. Power and his circle see S. Takagami, 'The Dublin Fenians, 1858-79', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1990.

Michael Stanley  
Laurence Clancy  
William Stack  
Denis Cashman  
George Brown  
John Bennet Walsh  
Edward St. Clair  
Edward O'Regan

As a professional person, Power was certainly in a minority among the Fenians. Of the sample of 474 Dublin Fenians, only six (1.3%) were professionals and 59% were artisans. He owned a house at 3 Upper Temple Street which when raided by the police was found to be 'devoid of furnishings' and obviously used solely for drilling.

Power and his circle set out to import arms on a systematic basis. Arms were purchased in England using funds that were raised on a regular basis in public houses. Cashman was among those who collected the money. Michael Stanley and Laurence Clancy were very active in importing the firearms. Stanley was in some position of trust in the shipbuilding firm of Messrs. Walpole, Webb and Bewley at the end of the North Wall – ideal employment for smuggling of weapons without arousing police suspicions. Clancy was a department head in the drapery establishment of McSweeney, Delaney and Company, Sackville Street and he imported guns under the cover of drapery goods. Once imported, the guns were distributed around the city by a cab owner named Dennis Gillespie. The arrest of Gillespie and the seizure of nine rifles in early December 1866 may have been the first penetration of the Power circle.

Another area in which Power was extremely active was in the suborning of Irishmen serving in the British Army. After the arrest of John Devoy in February 1866 this work seems to have been left to the individual initiative of other centres. Power concentrated on a single regiment, the 85th Infantry using one of his 'Bs' William Stack and, in contrast with Devoy, seems to have intended to integrate the soldier Fenians of this regiment into his circle. Devoy had scrupulously kept the structure of the soldier Fenians completely separate from other Fenian structures. Ryan estimated that about two-thirds of the six hundred members of the 85th stationed in Dublin had been sworn into the Fenian brotherhood by Power. This activity continued throughout 1866 and, according to Ryan, Power had personally sworn in thirty-six members of the regiment on the Saturday night before he was arrested. According to Patrick Foley of the 4th Dragoon Guards, the state's chief witness against the soldier Fenians, the 85th was the most infiltrated regiment after the 61st Infantry and the 4th Dragoon Guards.

Power also had a number of deserters on his payroll. James McGough, a deserter from the Military Train, drilled Stanley and his men at 24 Luke Street, another property of Dr. Power. Two other deserters, Kavanagh and Simpson were used for drilling purposes and also to make contact with likely converts in the army.

However, Ryan and his men were closing in. On 3 December Power was arrested. The established Fenian system of designated successors immediately took over. Power was succeeded as centre by Stanley who was arrested on 15 December. Two days later his successor, Clancy was arrested in turn. Cashman was now centre but his stay at liberty was short. On 12 January Cashman was arrested. His importance is reflected in the detailed report that Ryan submitted to the Commissioners on the day of the arrest:

I have to report that in the course of enquiry recently made, it became quite apparent to me that among the most prominent fenians in the city were Denis Cashman residing at No. 5 Preston Street, and William Joseph Smith who lodged at 27 Summerhill; and became convinced that their arrest would have a very beneficial effect, I made arrangements to have them arrested, and succeeded in capturing them in their beds at their lodgings, as above between 7 and 8 o'clock this morning after which they were removed to Sackville Place Police Station until the pleasure of his excellency (The Ld. Lt.) shall be made known.

Denis Cashman is a law clerk, and a native of Dungarvan, in the County of Waterford, in which place he is said to have acted as a fenian centre. It has been stated to me, and I have no reason to doubt it that in the latter end of 1864, or early in 1865 he came to Dublin at the express wish of James Stephens, from whom he received £2 per week for his services in organising for a considerable time but when the funds were getting low, and about the time the *Irish People* was seized, Stephens induced him to take a position. He lodged first at 170 North King Street, and in September 1865 it was stated that if he were got hold of he could tell a good deal. However, at the time there was not sufficient evidence to justify this arrest on ordinary informations. However, he eluded the police on the occasion, but after a time I traced him to 33 Summerhill and during his stay at that place I learned that he was actively engaged in manufacturing rifle cartridges, and that he was by no means the man who might be expected to give information to the police.

I contemplated arresting him after the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. However, as I could not reach all at the same time, Cashman escaped for that time. He changed his lodgings and kept shifting about from place to place until the time had arrived when I did feel it expedient to interfere with him as matters had settled down. At the same time, I was satisfied he was continuing his old game. When Dr. Power of 3 Upper Temple Street came under my notice I discovered that Cashman was one of his 'Bs' and when that gentleman was arrested, Cashman's name appeared on a slip of paper found with him.

It also appeared in a memorandum book containing names found at the residence of William Moore Stack, 17 Portland Street, and he had only a hairs-breadth escape of being arrested in Stack's house as he passed by just as the police went in there; and the information that I had previous to the meeting was that Cashman, Stanley and Clancy would be there. Now to my certain knowledge, Cashman and Clancy came to the place, and observing the police there before them, they made their escape and communicated with Stanley at the residence of his father, and so all escaped for the time.

The Superintendent's report went on to state that after the arrest of Stanley and Clancy, Cashman was nominated and appointed centre,

and he did not decline the honour conferred on him by his brethren, and at the time of his election it was also decided who his successor would be in the event of his arrest. Cashman was in direct communication with [Edward] Duffy and recently when the funds became strong, he was authorised to pay away certain moneys. Nothing of importance was found in his lodgings. He seemed to be expecting to be arrested, and was prepared for it and when brought to the police station where he met William Smith, he recognised him and friendly conversation passed between them that indicated that they were old acquaintances and laboured in a common cause.

William J. Smith was a native of Pennsylvania and a brother of James Smith who had been arrested at 64 Phibsboro Road on 17 February 1866 and discharged on condition of returning the America.

Apart from those mentioned above, all of the other 'Bs' in the circle were arrested in December and January. The rapidity of the arrests suggests the work of a well-placed informer.

### **Imprisonment and Trial**

Following his arrest, Cashman was detained in Kilmainham Jail. On 24 January he sent a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant asking to be released. In his petition he admitted that he had been a member of the Fenian movement, a fact which he acknowledged with regret but declared that he gave it up when he became aware of its objects; that he had a wife and three children solely dependent on him, and giving the name of his employer, John Smyth as a character reference.

Use of such petition was commonplace by Fenians detained under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act. Edward O'Donovan managed to have himself released twice before he was arrested for a third time as 'a most incorrigible conspirator'. Cashman had no such luck. The memorial is stamped with the single word 'detain'.

In February 1867 Denis Cashman appeared before the Special Commission along with Power and the other 'Bs' from that circle and other prisoners including John Devoy. Since he pleaded guilty, the only evidence adduced was that of identification and of arrest.

Acting Inspector John Smollen of G Division gave evidence as to arresting Cashman at No. 5, Preston Street, off Amiens Street. However, an examination of the Crown brief against Cashman gives an insight into the prosecution case.<sup>12</sup> The main evidence was the sworn statement of James McGough, who when arrested had turned Queen's evidence and his sworn testimony was one of the main planks in the case against the members of Dr. Power's circle. In his statement on Cashman, McGough deposed:

I met the prisoner Whelan in his own house in Marlborough St.; he keeps a public house; he told me himself that he has belonged to the Fenian Brotherhood for about three years; I saw him at a meeting in his own house in November last for the purpose of collecting money for arms and ammunition; I saw him give money to Mr. Cashman, who was present; he said the fight would soon take place in Ireland for the liberation of the country.

I saw Denis Cashman, now present, about four times in Whelan's; on each occasion there was a meeting for collecting money for arms and ammunition, I heard him state that he was doing duty for Dr. Power; it was he collecting the money.

He also referred to a conversation with Edward McCahill, also in prison, I asked McCahill why he came over from America; he said he came over to fight for the Fenians for the liberation of Ireland; he said it was Colonel Kelly who sent him over and that he was directed to Dr. Power here, but that on his arrival he found Dr. Power was arrested; he then asked if I knew if any one was appointed in Power's place; I told him Cashman was.

When the statement was read to Cashman, he replied simply:

I deny all his assertions with the exception of meeting him a couple of times in the house he mentioned.

There is no mention of his Fenian activities in Waterford in the prosecution papers.

Having pleaded guilty Cashman was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. The importance of Dr. Power's circle and the success of Superintendent Ryan in smashing it may be gauged from the severity of the sentences handed down:

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12 NAI, CSO, Crown Briefs 3/714/1.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date of Arrest</i>	<i>Sentence</i>
Edmund Power	3 December 1866	15 years' penal servitude
Michael Stanley	15 December 1866	10 years' penal servitude
Laurence Clancy	17 December 1866	Discharged on bail 15/01/1987
Denis Cashman	12 January 1867	7 years' penal servitude
George Brown	22 January 1867	10 years' penal servitude
John B. Walsh	11 December 1867	7 years' penal servitude
Edward St. Clair	22 February 1867	7 years' penal servitude
Edward O'Regan	4 December 1866	7 years' penal servitude
William Stack	10 December 1866	10 years' penal servitude

In all, more than a thousand suspects were arrested and detained under the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act and 169 who were deemed to be most prominent in the Fenian conspiracy were placed in the dock. Of these, seven were acquitted, fifty-two convicted and 110 pleaded guilty. Eight men were found guilty of high treason and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered – all of these sentences were later commuted to penal servitude for life. Of the others, twenty-five were sentenced to penal servitude and the others to imprisonment. It is a measure of the importance of Denis Cashman in the Fenian movement, at least as viewed by the Government, that he was among the relatively few sentenced to penal servitude. He fully earned his place of honour at O'Mahony's funeral.

### **Penal Servitude**

After being sentenced, Cashman and the others were removed to Mountjoy prison where they were dressed in prison garb. On 28 March they were all moved to English prisons to begin their sentences with six months' solitary confinement. Cashman was sent to Millbank and there he spent the first six months in his cell picking oakum and without any contact with his family, friends or even his fellow prisoners.

Even though Cashman would not have known it, his wife Catherine was trying to plead with the authorities for some relaxation of his sentence. On 13 July she sent a formal petition to the Lord Lieutenant as follows:<sup>13</sup>

To His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland.

The humble memorial of Catherine Cashman of Francis Street in the City of Waterford, wife of Denis Cashman, writing clerk now a prisoner in Millbank Prison in England under sentence for 7 years penal servitude. That your memorialist intermarried with the prisoner on the

13 NAI, CSO, Fenian Papers.

22nd of January 1862 he being then in the employment of Messrs. Dobbyn and Tandy solicitors Waterford as a writing and law clerk and in receipt of a considerable salary in their office and possessing their confidence with such prospects your humble memorialist was induced to marry and left her father's home and married the prisoner, that your memorialist has had 3 children since of such marriage aged respectively 4 years, 2 years and 6 months the latter being born on the day of the prisoner's arrest in the month of January last at Preston Street in the City of Dublin and from fright and anxiety your memorialist was confined immediately after on the same day and has from then with her infant children suffered severely. That the prisoner pleaded guilty in the month of March last fully admitting his folly but not to the extent that was alleged or sworn against him. That the prisoner and subsequently previous to his trial has again and again stated to your memorialist the folly that he was guilty of, how duped and misled and his determination to give up all connection with the matter so soon as he safely could without danger to his life and your memorialist begs to refer to the memorial of the prisoner Denis Cashman and certificate of character which he forwarded to your excellency previous to his trial and when a prisoner. That your memorialist has actually pledged or pawned her small stock of clothing to feed her infant children, that having been reared with love and fairly educated your memorialist feels more acutely her wretched position either starvation for herself and infant children or the workhouse with all its... horrors. Your humble memorialist asks a mercy that your excellency will be pleased in your clemency to take my wretched position into consideration and remit the unexpired portion of the sentence of my unfortunate husband who has hard learned a lesson that will ensure his being truly penitent for the past and as a loyal subject for the future and your memorialist will ever and ever pray.

Catherine Cashman,  
Waterford.

July 13, 1867.

Although couched in the florid and legal prose that was used in such petitions, one can feel the anguish of the young wife left destitute with her three infant children. Upon receipt of the petition, the office of the Lord Lieutenant asked Superintendent Ryan of the DMP for comment. In a lengthy and favourable report (see Appendix), Ryan concluded:

It would be a positive charity to this man and his tender family to mitigate in some measure the punishment inflicted on him.

Ryan also wrote to Sub-Inspector Maurice Elrington his counterpart in Waterford City who sought a character reference from Cashman's erstwhile employers Dobbyn and Tandy. On 13 August, Elrington wrote to Ryan:



I beg to say that I have seen Mr. Dobbyn and he states that he had no fault to find with Denis Cashman save his becoming a Fenian for which he dismissed him. His character in other respects was very good.<sup>14</sup>

When consulted, the trial judges were adamant that no new evidence had come to light and insisted that the law must take its course. A note added to the file stated:

According to Inspector Ryan's report, he (Cashman) is a prisoner of more than ordinary intelligence and education which in my opinion adds to his guilt.<sup>15</sup>

With that conclusion poor Catherine's efforts had been in vain.

All of Power's 'Bs' were arrested between December 1866 and February 1867 and with the exception of Clancy, all received lengthy sentences of penal servitude. Indeed Power, Brown and St. Clair were not included in the amnesty of 1869 and had to spend two further years in prison before being conditionally pardoned.

When the 1869 amnesty list was being prepared, a note was added to Cashman's file stating

An Attorney's clerk – one of the Edward Power circle. An intelligent young man of considerable influence in the conspiracy. He pleaded guilty under the erroneous impression that he would be leniently dealt with. There are grounds for taking a favourable view of any application on this prisoner's behalf.<sup>16</sup>

All of this, however, was in the future as Denis Cashman was led from the dock to begin his grim sentence of seven years' penal servitude.

On Tuesday 24 September, just as he completed his six months of solitary confinement, he was called to the door of his cell to be informed that he was to be transported to Australia.

### **The Prison Ship *Hougoumont***

Transportation of convicts to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) stopped in 1853 leaving the remote arid colony of Western Australia as the sole penal establishment for transporters. Pressure from penal reform groups was growing, however, and in 1867 the British Government announced that transportation would cease by the end of that year. In September the sailing vessel *Hougoumont* was chartered to carry the last shipment of convicts, sixty-two Fenians and 218 other male prisoners.

The basis on which particular Fenians were selected for transportation is not clear. Seventeen of them were soldier Fenians who had been sentenced for mutiny. Some had life sentences while others faced varying periods of penal servitude.

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14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

John Boyle O'Reilly welcomed the prospect of transportation but Cashman recalled the news of his selection with great bitterness. On 30 September, Cashman with thirty-six other Fenian prisoners were roused from their solitary cells and taken by tender to Sheerness where the *Hougoumont* waited. After picking up more convicts at Portsmouth the convict ship headed for the open sea at 2.55 p.m. on 12 October. Three days after the *Hougoumont* sailed, Cashman began a diary retrospective to the day on which he was informed that he was to be transported.<sup>17</sup>

On Tuesday 24th September, whilst very busily employed at the (to me) very disagreeable occupation of picking 'coir', I heard steps approaching along the corridor and halt opposite my cell door; instantly, the iron gates, and the massive wooden door of my cell were flung open and the order 'Stand at ye gate' given. I, glad of anything that would even for a moment thwart the monotony, or break the wretched grave-like silence of the place, immediately came to 'attention' at the door, and found that my visitors to be Head Warder 'Handy' and some warders of lower grade.

Then for the first time I learned that I was to be sent to Australia. I received the news with a very bad grace and protested in the strongest terms against being sent; but recollecting that I had no voice in the matter, and that go I should, I strove to make the most of it, and drown the bitter feelings which filled my breast, by fiercely working at, or rather teasing the tough coir – I really felt wretched – the thought of being sent 14,000 miles away from my dear wife and children – from all that I loved on earth; with the fact staring me in the face, that I should not again for years see them caused me to feel an acute agony that I never before felt; and plunged my whole being into the deepest melancholy.

Imagination used to conjure up before me the tearful eyes and sorrowful face of my dear Kate – gazing at our dear children, who want her to tell them 'why pa does not come home' – while she, picturing to herself the terrible distances which divides us, in her bitter sorrow kisses back the answer she would not (even to herself) dare to speak, fearing to look the dread reality in the face.

That evening Cashman was allowed to write one letter and three days later he got a reply from his wife. Kate wanted to leave immediately for London in the hope of one last visit. However, Cashman was not allowed to write back and even the fleeting pleasure of a visit from his wife was denied him. At first he was under the impression that Stanley, Power, etc. (all fellow members of the same Fenian circle in Dublin) would be transported with him but when the situation was clarified, most of his friends were left behind in various prisons in London.

<sup>17</sup> Cashman's prison ship diary has been edited and published, see C.W. Sullivan (ed.), *Fenian Diary: Denis B. Cashman on board the Hougoumont, 1867-1868*, (Dublin, Wolfhound Press, 2001). Students of Fenianism and of Cashman owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Sullivan for making this valuable work available to the public.

When the *Hougoumont* sailed it had a total of 431 passengers on board: 280 prisoners; forty-two crew; forty-four guards; eighteen guards' wives and their twenty-five children; four warders, their wives and nine children and four others including a priest, Fr. Delaney. The Fenians were housed separately amidships and allowed to socialise fairly freely. Fr. Delaney soon befriended them and provided Cashman with the pens and paper with which he kept his famous prison ship diary. It gives a vivid account of the voyage, of the day-to-day tedium as the ship slowly made its way south.

Boredom and monotony were the main problems. The Fenians tried to fight this in a variety of ways, as his diary records:

24 October:

An exquisite sunrise this morning. We had a debate today as to the best means of killing time and amusing ourselves during the voyage. I proposed theatricals; it was agreed to but in consequence of not having sufficient room for a stage, we abandoned the project. To substitute which I drew up a programme for a concert.

That night they had the first of a series of concerts. Cashman himself must have had a good singing voice for he features in all the concerts either singing solo or else in a duet with Joseph Noonan. A further diversion was the production of a newspaper:<sup>18</sup>

5 November:

We held a meeting today to see if we could start a newspaper. The meeting was composed of Con Mahoney, J. Flood, Duggan, O'Reilly, Coady, Casey, Noonan and self. We passed resolutions, appointed a chairman and finally settled to start if we get paper. J. Flood appointed editor, O'Reilly sub., Keely manager.

Through the good offices of Fr. Delaney, paper and ink were obtained and the committee reconvened:

7 November,

We had a meeting and debate as to what our paper should be called when finally we resolved to call it the 'Wild Goose' (Kelly's suggestion), several beautiful names were suggested. The first number is to appear on Sat. the 9th, so I must go at the heading (a wreath of shamrocks with the name peeping thro it. I expect to be rather busy for the voyage at it.

O'Reilly later recalled:

We published seven weekly numbers of it. Amid the dim glare of the lamp, the men at night would group strangely on extemporised seats. The yellow light fell down on the dark forms throwing a ghostly glare on the pale faces of the men as they listened with blazing eyes.

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18 For the background to, and a discussion of this unique piece of journalism see Walter McGrath, 'Convict Ship Newspaper: The Wild Goose Rediscovered', in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 74 (1969), pp. 20-31.

The paper was an instant success, as Cashman records:

9 November: The Wild Goose made its appearance this evening.

10 November: The Goose greatly liked last night – it was read by O'Reilly...

22 November: I have been hard at work preparing the Goose for tomorrow, it promises to be a good number; this occupation pleases me very much.

6 December: Hard at work all day in the Goose...

18 December: Up to my eyes in paper to-day... weaving wreaths of holly and ivy and shamrock for the Christmas number of Goose...

Although he did contribute one poem to the paper, to the fifth issue on 7 December, Cashman's main work was on designing and drawing the ornate title that headed each issue and in copying the work. For the last few days he was keeping busy copying, the Captain of the ship was so impressed by the publication that he asked for a complete set of copies. Cashman finished this as the ship approached Fremantle.

Although the *Wild Goose* succeeded in its primary task of helping to pass the time, there is an underlying sadness in Cashman's diary as he thinks of his beloved Kate and his sons. On 7 January as the ship nears Australia he resolves 'when we are to regain our liberty... my only hope is to earn money with as much expedition as possible and have my dearest K and dear boys with me wherever I may pitch my tent as quickly as I possibly can. God grant that my fervent wish may be accomplished'. With a relatively short sentence prospects of a return to society and being reunited with his family obviously took precedence in Cashman's mind over further Fenian plans.

The *Hougoumont* came within sight of Fremantle on 9 January and at 9.30 a.m. it was met by the pilot-boat. A few hours later the ship cast anchor and, while the captain went ashore to complete the paperwork, the prisoners settled down for their last night aboard ship.

### **Penal Servitude in Australia**<sup>19</sup>

Early in the morning of 10 January 1868 the prisoners were roused from their bunks and transported ashore to the vast prison which dominated the small town of Fremantle. The total population of the colony of Western Australia was about 20,000 and almost 20% were convicts or convicts on parole. After two days' rest the prisoners started their work of stone breaking and road making in the heat of the Australian summer on the outskirts of the little town. Shortly afterwards many of them were dispersed to work gangs in the bush. Towards the end of January the convicts were allowed to write home once every two months but this privilege could be withdrawn for even the slightest infringement of the prison rules. These

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19 The most comprehensive account of the prison experience of the Fenians in Australia is given by Keith Amos, *The Fenians in Australia, 1865-1880*, (New South Wales University Press, 1988).

letters reached Ireland toward the end of March and extracts from some of them were published in the strongly nationalist weekly, the *Irishman*. One such letter from Cashman describes his first days in the colony:

We were not asked to work for three days after our arrival, with the exception of pumping some water, the last of the three days being Sunday. We all had the happiness of receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and on Monday morning we were all marched off to the bush to make a road. I handled the pickaxe, dug and broke stones with the boys during this day and part of the next. The soil for some twenty miles inland and along the coast is composed of fine sand which nevertheless is very productive. During our two days work on the bush we killed several large reptiles.<sup>20</sup>

However, Cashman's career as a stonebreaker did not last long. Along with five others, including John Flood and John Boyle O'Reilly, he was assigned to indoor duties in the prison. In his case he was appointed assistant clerk to the clerk of works and also helped in the kitchen. He could thus joke to Catherine, 'By Jove, won't I know how to perform a bit of housework for you when I get out of jail. Washing, scrubbing, pumping and scouring with a 2,000 etc!'

Although now more closely confined compared to life in the work camps in the bush, Cashman and his colleagues would have been spared the backbreaking work in the summer heat. The daily routine he describes was monotonous but not too hard:

The bell to rise is heard at 4.30 a.m. each morning, when we get up, wash, clean our cells, and have breakfast served at 5.30. We go to chapel at six, where prayers are said by Father Lynch, an Irishman, and a good priest. At 6.30 we form on parade in the prison yard for inspection, after which I, with others, go into a yard where I can read or otherwise amuse myself till nine o'clock, at which hour I go to business till 11.50, when we again parade and retire to dinner to our cells. I then dine, smoke, read, or talk with my friends until two o'clock p.m., when I again go to business till five, parade again at six p.m., after which tea is served, and after thither half hour I attend school as a monitor till nine o'clock; and returning to my cell, where four of us are located, I soon become oblivious in the arms of Morpheus.

Cashman's letters, and the others, were of course subject to censorship. Nevertheless one senses in all of the letters that were published in the *Irishman* a determination to maintain a cheerful outlook and to lighten the burden on their families left behind them. What Cashman could not have known as his first letter was in transit, was that poor Catherine had had to bear further tragedy. On 6 March 1868 her youngest son, Denis died of measles aged just fourteen months. We do

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20 Sean O Luing, *Fremantle Mission*, (Tralee, Anvil Books, 1965), p. 38.

not know if Denis even saw his youngest child and namesake. Two days later, the second son Arthur also died of the same disease. The entries into the Registry of Deaths noted for both that there was no medical attendant and that the duration of the illness was uncertain - reflecting perhaps Catherine's straitened circumstances. Catherine now had just her eldest child William Patrick to comfort her while Denis faced a further six years of penal servitude under the burning sun of Western Australia.

Apart from the confinement, work within the prison complex had one major disadvantage – it severely limited one's chances of escape. On 11 February 1868, O'Reilly, possibly as part of his escape plans, was transferred to a work party. Many years later Cashman recalled his feelings as they parted:

We waved him adieu as we were bustled through the gates. Our hearts were heavy; we could not speak. A tear - well, no matter. Flood, whom Reilly loved, never saw him again.<sup>21</sup>

A year later in February 1869, O'Reilly escaped and was soon safely on board an American whaling ship bound for freedom.

Cashman appears to have harboured no such thoughts of escape. Instead he concentrated on serving his time with minimum problems. Unlike O'Reilly who had a life sentence, he could look forward to release in 1874. In this he seems to have been largely successful with just some minor clashes with the prison authorities.

On 4 May he was sentenced to three days bread and water for 'mutinous conduct and insolence' to the Superintendent of Fremantle Prison. He also had some of his correspondence, both letters which he had written and some addressed to him confiscated. In November Cashman and two other prisoners were brought before a magistrate on a charge of writing clandestine letters to a fellow convict Reardon. While his companions received the standard punishment of three days bread and water, Cashman tried to argue his case and had his punishment doubled! A week later he was before the magistrate again charged with not saluting the Superintendent. Surprisingly the charge was dismissed. There are no other charges on his prison file and as the year 1869 dawned Cashman must have been thinking 'Two down, five to go' but relief was at hand.

### **Freedom and Fresh Problems<sup>22</sup>**

In the general election of 1868, Gladstone and the Liberal Party were swept to power. A key element of his policy was a commitment to pacify Ireland, through a series of conciliatory measures such as Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland and a review of the sentences of the Fenian prisoners. In February 1869, he announced that forty-nine Fenian convicts would be granted free pardons – fifteen from English prisons and thirty-four from Fremantle. Some ten weeks later formal orders reached the prison governor and on 15 May the chosen prisoners including Cashman were released. Any elation that they would have felt at their unexpected

21 Keith Amos, *The Fenians in Australia, 1865-1880*, (New South Wales University Press, 1988), p. 147.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 174-99.

freedom would have been tempered by consideration of their current plight. Released in a strange land with only the clothes they wore and no money their first priority was to try to earn a living and to survive. The Irish colonies in Victoria and New South Wales were weeks of travel away by coastal boat. While they could reasonably expect help from their fellow countrymen, the question was how to make contact. They had no money for the boat fare and in addition these states had local laws which prohibited released convicts from entering them under pain of arrest and imprisonment.

The prisoners nominated John Kenealy to represent them and with a loan of £25 from Patrick Moloney, Irish-born proprietor of a Perth boarding house, he set off on 25 June to travel 300 miles overland to Albany where he hoped to board a steamer for Melbourne. In the meantime, two other ex-prisoners with building experience, Hugh Brophy and Joseph Noonan, formed a building firm. They won a contract to build a bridge over the river Swan which gave employment to many of their comrades. The others found whatever menial work was available in the colony while they waited for the help which they knew would be organised.

At Albany Kenealy met Fr. Delaney, a friend of the Fenians from their *Hougoumont* days and the priest gave him £5. By this time news of the prisoners' plight had reached the Irish who were working in the gold fields of Victoria and New South Wales and fundraising was in full swing. Kenealy arrived in Melbourne in early July. He made no effort to conceal his identity and was soon detained by the police. His arrest and subsequent court appearances made him a *cause celebre* and the publicity helped the fundraising drive enormously. By the time he was released to return to his comrades the released prisoners' fund totalled £5,000 (equivalent to about £500,000 by today's standard).

With the return of Kenealy the prisoners prepared to leave Western Australia. Nine opted to stay and to carve out a new life with their share of the fund. The other twenty-five, including Cashman, travelled by specially chartered steamer to Sydney. The boat stopped *en route* at Adelaide and at Melbourne. Although they were not at liberty to land at either port, local sympathisers organised huge receptions for the ex-prisoners. At Sydney they were allowed to come ashore where a rousing reception awaited them. Each one had to decide where to go with the money that had been given them. Ten decided to return to Ireland. Denis Cashman and fourteen others opted to sail to San Francisco on board the *S.S. Baringa* from which the montage shown here was assembled.

### America – A New Life<sup>23</sup>

Cashman was now ready to begin a new life in America. Reunited with Kate and William in Boston and conscious of the need to support his family, he sought employment. His friend and fellow ex-convict John Boyle O'Reilly was ready to help. Through O'Reilly's influence, Cashman obtained a position in the wholesale department of the book and publishing section of the *Boston Pilot* to which paper

23 Details of Cashman's life in Boston are drawn from George Ryan, 'Dennis [*sic.*] B. Cashman: Warmly Devoted to his Native Land', in *Bulletin of the Eire Society of Boston* (1983).

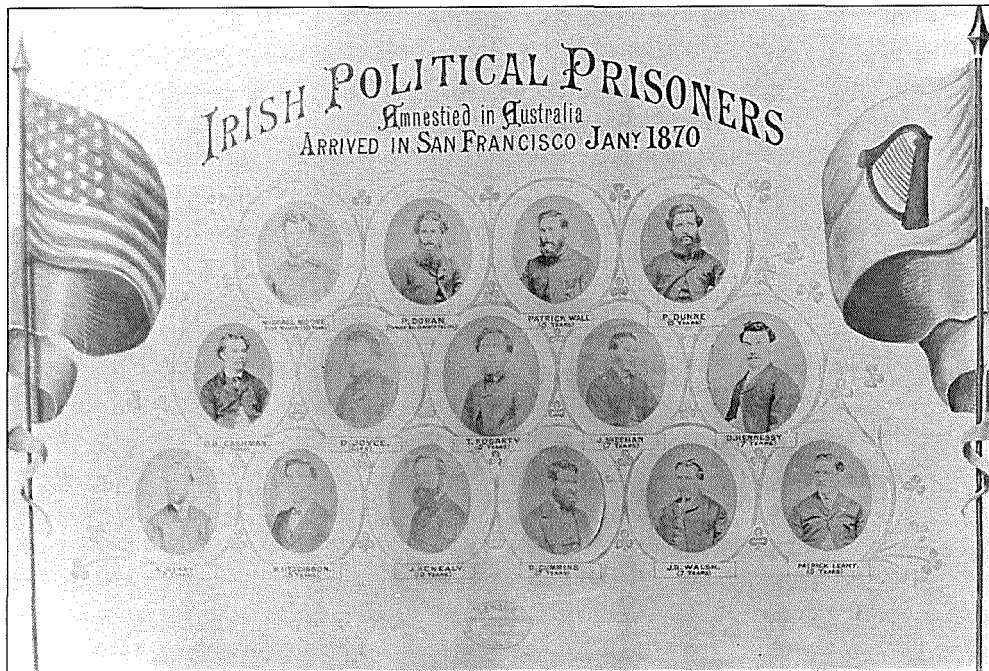


Plate 2: Irish Political Prisoners.

he also contributed. The Cashman family initially lodged at 159 Sumemr Street before moving to a house at 198 H Street in South Boston. The great Boston fire of 1872 destroyed both the editorial office and the printing plant of the *Pilot*. According to his obituary 'Cashman assisted materially in reorganising the firm's wholesale book department' before being named as business manager of the paper. He also changed address at first to 728 East 8th Street then to 3 Beech Glen Avenue, Roxbury. In 1876 he left the *Pilot* becoming Superintendent of Inspection and Waste, Water Department, City Hall. A daughter, Kathleen T. was born to Denis and Catherine in Boston.

Although he does not seem to have been active in Clan na Gael, the successor to the Fenian movement in the United States, Cashman never forgot his past and was ready to help nationalist movements when called upon. In 1874 John Devoy, the spiritual leader of militant Irish republicanism in America persuaded the Clan na Gael executive that there was a moral obligation to rescue the remaining Fenian prisoners in Australia. Once he had approval, Devoy set to with characteristic energy to develop a viable plan and to raise the necessary funds. One of his first calls was to O'Reilly. They met on 1 February 1875 in O'Reilly's office and Cashman was present. Throughout the day and later that evening in O'Reilly's house the three conspirators refined their plan, and it was through O'Reilly's contacts that they recruited Captain Anthony to command the rescue ship *Catalpa*.<sup>24</sup>

24 The story of the *Catalpa rescue* has been told many times most notably in Sean O Luing, *Fremantle Mission*, (Tralee, Anvil Books, 1965), and by John Devoy himself in the pages of his own newspaper the *Gaelic American* in 1904. The latter account and the ship's logbook have been edited and published, see Philip Fennell and Marie King (eds.), *John Devoy's Catalpa Expedition*, (New York University Press, 2006).



In 1880 Cashman was called upon again. From May to November Michael Davitt toured America to raise funds for the Land League. In every city that he visited a committee of prominent Irish Americans was established to promote his visit and to co-ordinate fundraising. He visited Boston on 18 and 19 June. Cashman was one of the organising committee and shortly after Davitt's visit, a visit highlighted by a powerful and moving speech to a packed audience in the Music Hall, Cashman began writing the book by which he is best remembered, *The Life of Michael Davitt*. It was published the following year by the Boston firm Murphy and McCarthy. The title is misleading. It is in no sense a traditional biography but is an edited collection of speeches by Davitt, largely extracted from newspaper reports and also quotations from Davitt's first pamphlet *The Prison Life of Michael Davitt*. A second and enlarged edition was published in 1882 with the extended title *The Life of Michael Davitt and the Secret History of the Land League*. Despite its unusual structure the book is a mine of useful information about Davitt and in particular his evolving policies on land ownership and other topics.

### **The End**

In 1890 Cashman suffered the loss of his close friend John Boyle O'Reilly. Overworked and exhausted from looking after his chronically ill wife, O'Reilly died from an accidental overdose of chloral which he had been taking to combat insomnia. Cashman was among those who bore O'Reilly's body to its grave in Holyhood Cemetery on 13 August. His own end came seven years later on 8 January 1897. As his old paper recorded, 'The well-known Irish nationalist died suddenly at his home in Worcester Street. Mr. Cashman was a man of large heart and generous impulses, warmly devoted to his native land, and firm in the friendships which he made during the common struggle for liberty in the old Fenian days'. Three days later, on 11 January, he was interred near his old comrade, O'Reilly.

Together they had shared the prison ship *Hougoumont* and that unique exercise in journalism 'The Wild Goose'. It was fitting that they were buried close to each other. He died intestate, survived by Catherine, William and Kathleen, and is now mainly remembered as author of that book on Michael Davitt. Like most of his Fenian colleagues, his sacrifices and work have been forgotten – he deserves better.

## Appendix

### **Dublin Metropolitan Police Superintendent's Office, G Division, 31 July 1867**

I have to report in obedience to the Under Secretary's minute on the attached file in connection with the memorial on behalf of Denis Cashman now a prisoner in Millbank prison, England, that the statement of acts set forth in the memorial by Catherine Cashman, wife to the prisoner, is fairly and truthfully made. She is a woman whom I have reason to believe was tenderly and respectably reared, and it is the pitiable fact that, the poor creature, thro fright and over anxiety on the occasion of her husband's arrest, was confined on that same day.

The prisoner is a man differing in many ways from the generality of those apprehended for Fenianism. He is evidently a man of respectable parents, and one whose education was attended to. He filled respectable situations both in Waterford and Dublin, and in the latter city he was clerk to Mr. Smyth, law agent for the Corporation, who held him in the highest estimation and would have gone any amount of security for him at the time of his apprehension, incredulous that one of such excellent character, as was Cashman, could have any connection with the Conspiracy, and, indeed, as far as being faithful in the discharge of the duties of his position in life, none, I believe deserved better of a good character.

Whilst Cashman was confined in Kilmainham Gaol previous to being tried, he expressed a wish to see some person in authority to whom he could make a statement and I have been directed by the Attorney General to attend to him. I had an interview with him in the prison, the result of which I communicated in a report bearing date 9 Feb. 67, from which it may be seen that, he desired to impart information of a general nature, but said that, not for the value in gold of the British empire would he become an informer. His motives in being desirous to impart general information on the subject of the Conspiracy were, quoting from my report of 9 Feb: - 'He would be very glad for sake of those who have been misled to give the Government such information as would enable them to get at the root of the Conspiracy, and deal a death-blow to it; and he would do so if the Government would deal leniently with him, at the same time, he does not say this as an inducement to the Government to deal leniently with him, but from a sincere conviction that he would be doing a very philanthropic act by adopting such a course'.

Stephens it was who induced Cashman, whilst in Waterford, to join the Conspiracy on the promise that he should have £2 per week, but which he never got. He came to Dublin on the continuation of the same promise, but sounding its hollowness sought employment, and found it, under Mr. Smyth. Having got himself entangled

in the meshes of Fenianism, considerations for his personal safety prevented him even attempting his extrication until the strong arm of the law accomplished it for him, and found for him a sanctuary within the prison walls.

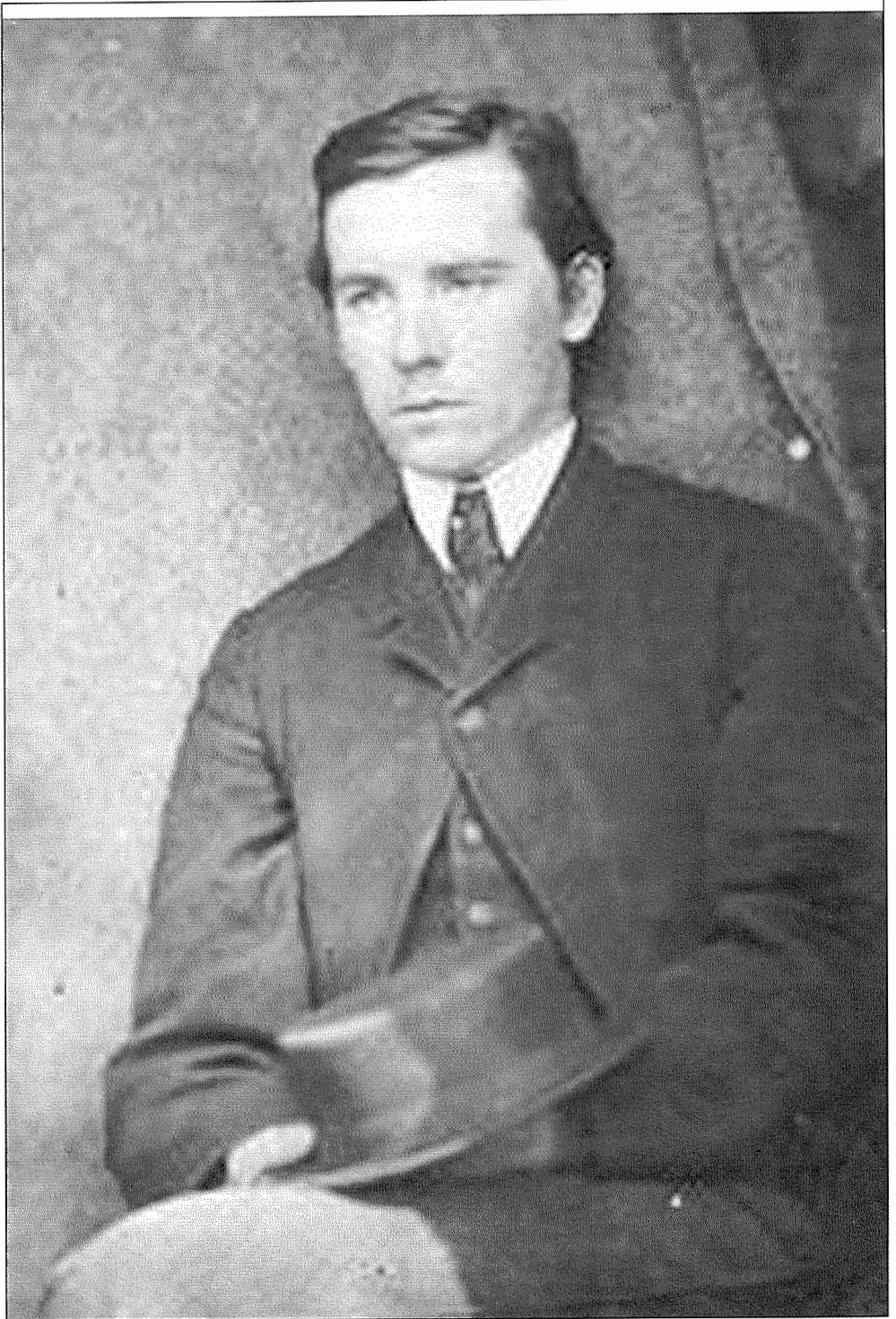
That this man sincerely and heartily repented his connection with the Brotherhood I have every reason to believe, tho that repentance, unfortunately, came too late, and when he had come within the grasp of that power which he had defied and endeavoured to subvert. Yet, this man was not like the generality of his co-conspirators in his character, his disposition, or his conduct. There was a certain refinement about him (no doubt the result of some attention having been paid to his education), rarely to be met with amongst them, nor was he possessed of their rabidness in their dark machinations against the Government of the country. And if his pleading guilty be accepted as a pledge of his sincerity of repentance, then it was sincere, and he told me on the occasion of my interview with him that, he would not put the Crown to any trouble in trying him, but would plead guilty. I shall quote upon this point, a portion of my report of 9 Feb. which refers to it. *Viz* – 'he purposes to plead guilty at the Commission, if brought for trial, but will not join in his challenge with the others, as it is his ambition to disconnect himself from them. He knows he has erred, and deserves punishment but then, he says, there are mitigating circumstances, and he will rely on the clemency of the Crown. He appears to be earnest and straight-forward in all he says.'

The mitigating circumstances to which he alludes, I think, in my opinion – judging from my interview with him and the knowledge I possess of his case – to be, the manner in which he was induced to join the Conspiracy – his entanglement therein and his inability to with-draw – his subsequent utter contempt for it, and readiness to impart information to aid in its suppression for the benefit of those others who had been misled – his regret and acknowledgement of his folly, and his proof of regret by a plea of guilty – his wife, and the painful effect of his arrest upon her – his children of tender years and their many wants, in their now desolate, fatherless condition.

The Clemency I consider he refers to is, he held the opinion, that, by pleading guilty, the Crown would have taken the mitigating circumstances into account and have only inflicted the lesser punishment of Imprisonment, and not that of Penal Servitude, which would, in a comparatively short time have restored him once more to the bosom of his family, a sadder, but wiser man.

On the whole case I have to say, and I assert it boldly that, if it would be at all consistent with sound policy, and not the establishing of an awkward and embarrassing precedent, it would be a positive charity to this man and his tender family to mitigate, in some measure, the punishment inflicted on him.

*Daniel Ryan,*  
*Superintendent.*



*Plate 1: Edmond O'Donovan under arrest.*

# Edmond O'Donovan, Fenian and War Correspondent, and his Circle

*Eva O Cathaoir*

JAMES Stephens founded the Irish Republican Brotherhood on St. Patrick's Day 1858 in Dublin; 2008 marks the 150th anniversary of this event. Among the small group, which took the IRB oath with Stephens, were Thomas Clarke Luby, a radical journalist, and Joseph Denieffe, a Kilkenny-born tailor. Stephens had been promised regular financial support from the Emmet Monument Association, whose leaders John O'Mahony, Michael Doheny and Captain Michael Corcoran raised subscriptions among fellow exiles in New York. From 1841-51, at least one million Irish people had fled to the USA, driven by economic necessity. Those remaining in Ireland were marked by their Famine experiences and the ongoing population drain. Some, like Charles Kickham or Joseph Denieffe, feared for the survival of the Irish at home. They decided that Wolfe Tone's solution 'to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils' was their only viable option, after the failure of constitutional efforts, which ended with Charles Gavan Duffy's departure for Australia in 1855. The IRB's American auxiliaries, the Fenian Brotherhood presided over by O'Mahony, were to support the proposed insurrection by invading Ireland at the conclusion of the American Civil War. The exiles' continuing contribution was vital to the brotherhood's organising and drilling at home, as it lacked modern arms. During the 1860s, the IRB expanded into a mass movement, which contained the potential of becoming a formidable threat to the British Empire. Although some Fenians were to falter under pressure and became informers, it is this writer's contention that the typical second tier IRB leader was a talented individual, who would have not come under police observation, had political and social conditions in Ireland been satisfactory. Young men, among them Edmond O'Donovan, his brothers and their friends, demanded political change and a meaningful role for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

John O'Donovan (1809–61), the groundbreaking Irish scholar and father of local studies, married Mary Anne Broughton, a farmer's daughter from Kilderry townland, Broadford, County Clare.<sup>2</sup> Six of their sons survived infancy: John, born in 1842, Edmond, born on 13 September 1844, William in 1846, Richard in 1848 and Henry and Daniel in 1853 and 1856 respectively.<sup>3</sup> In a class-conscious age, O'Donovan senior, the landless son of a tenant farmer, was handicapped by his

1 The spelling 'Edmond' was the one used by the subject of this essay, as well as his mother, and has therefore been retained.

2 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806–1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 23. The Broughtons were of Cromwellian descent.

3 *Ibid.*, see genealogical table.

lack of academic qualifications. Although ‘his studies helped to recover the spirit and tradition of Ireland’s past,’<sup>4</sup> his employment remained arduous, insecure and ill-paid and he was anxious to provide his sons with a university education as a springboard to a professional career.<sup>5</sup> The young O’Donovans were brought up in a home, which kept both the *Nation* and the *Irishman* newspapers. The former seminal enterprise was started in 1842 by Thomas Davis, Charles Gavan Duffy and John Blake Dillon. Its mission was to bring a soul into Ireland. The *Irishman*, too, appealed to a nationalist readership, while the boys’ home tutor, Captain Paddy Kelly, had been a veteran of 1798.<sup>6</sup> Their parents made considerable sacrifices to ensure the best possible education, which meant that the boys attended the O’Connell Schools in Dublin, while Edmond followed his eldest brother to Belvedere College in 1857.<sup>7</sup> A contemporary described Edmond O’Donovan at Belvedere as:

of a shy and taciturn disposition, almost unsociable in fact, characteristics which he retained to the end.<sup>8</sup>

His academic record was not outstanding, but ‘he was capable of great concentration of mind in subjects that interested him’.<sup>9</sup> John O’Donovan was proud of his lively sons and their obvious academic promise:

My eldest son John got the prize for chemistry in the Museum of Industry here, which was a great effort for him, being just turned off seventeen and having to contend with all the practical young chemists of Dublin.<sup>10</sup>

Edmond’s youthful interests consisted of chemistry, military engineering and heraldry.<sup>11</sup> Although his father objected to the latter as an obsolete science, Edmond persisted in it. He also assisted his father with his genealogical studies, while his brother John accompanied him on a research trip to Oxford in 1859.<sup>12</sup> John O’Donovan senior, however, considered that

my third son, William, is the cleverest of all, and is likely to become a Jesuit or a Passionist.<sup>13</sup>

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4 *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv; p. 119.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

7 *The Belvederian*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 18.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

9 Frank McEvoy, ‘Edmond O’Donovan (1844–1883)’, in *Old Kilkenny Review* Vol. 2 No. 5 (1983), p. 457.

10 Diarmuid O’Donovan Rossa, *Rossa’s Recollections 1838–1898*, (Shannon, 1972), p. 371.

11 John Augustus O’Shea, *Leaves from the Life of a Special Correspondent*, (London, 1885), Vol. I, p. 80.

12 Diarmuid O’Donovan Rossa, *Rossa’s Recollections 1838–1898*, (Shannon, 1972), pp. 371, 359.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 371.

Richard, the fourth boy, shared his brothers' linguistic talents and had a keen interest in geography and statistics:<sup>14</sup>

He knows more of European statistics than any boy of his age in the world... but he is wicked and selfish and will be very lucky if he is not yet killed fighting against the niggers.<sup>15</sup>

The young O'Donovans were made aware of their distinguished ancestors, for instance, William, Count Gall von Bourckh of the German Empire, who died in 1655, Thomas Gall de Burgo (1636) of the Austrian army and Patrick Gall de Burgo in the service of Spain.<sup>16</sup> While they studied Latin and Greek, Irish, although spoken by both parents (Mrs. O'Donovan was considered a Gaelic scholar in her own right), was not transmitted to the next generation.<sup>17</sup> The boys were articulate, rather boisterous and interested in politics, even as teenagers. On the subject of the Pope's temporal power versus the claims of a united Italy, O'Donovan senior wrote in 1860:

My faction of boys are divided into two deadly political enemies to each other on the subject, and I can hardly keep them from fighting on the subject. One party is for our holy father the pope and his temporal power, and another for ceding him his spiritual power only.<sup>18</sup>

### Friendship with O'Donovan Rossa

In 1854, O'Donovan *père* began corresponding with Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa of Rosscarbery on the Irish language and the genealogy of various O'Donovan branches, which led to Rossa being invited to his kinsman's Dublin home. In 1858 Rossa, as a leader of the Skibbereen Phoenix Society, which had recently joined the IRB, was arrested on suspicion of treasonable conspiracy, but eventually discharged. Rossa continued his IRB involvement and also his friendship with John O'Donovan, who, if the former is to be believed, was sympathetic towards the Fenian movement. In later life William O'Donovan recalled how the three older boys became acquainted with Rossa during these visits, when they fetched books for their father, while the West Cork man would slip them a little pocket money. Rather irresponsibly, Rossa swore these youngsters into the IRB.<sup>19</sup> After John O'Donovan's death, when Rossa became business manager of the Fenian *Irish People* newspaper, contact resumed:

I fear that my early acquaintanceship with those boys had something to do with disturbing the serenity of their lives in after years; because

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14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806–1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), see genealogical table.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 127.

18 Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, *Rossa's Recollections 1838–1898*, (Shannon, 1972), pp. 370–1. William was among those favouring the Pope's temporal powers.

19 'William O'Donovan', obituary by John Devoy, *New York Times*, 3 May 1886.

when I came to live in Dublin in 1863 I used to visit their house, and they used to come to the *Irish People* office to see me. They got initiated into the IRB movement, and got into prison the time of the arrests.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, four of the six sons became members of the Fenian organisation.

### Dublin Castle Patronage

John O'Donovan's health was often indifferent and had been undermined by his demanding fieldwork for the Ordnance Survey. When he died in 1861, despite his intention of accumulating savings towards his sons' college education, the family was left almost penniless. O'Donovan, however, numbered leading officials and intellectuals among his friends and the Royal Irish Academy assembled a fund, which led to the purchase of a small farm in county Clare.<sup>21</sup> The energetic Sir Thomas Larcom, John O'Donovan's friend since their work on the Ordnance Survey, became the boys' guardian. As Permanent Undersecretary, Larcom headed the Irish administration and his patronage almost guaranteed his wards' professional success. An oft-repeated phrase illustrates the Undersecretary's influence:

There was a saying at the period that Larcom and the police represented the British constitution in Ireland.<sup>22</sup>

Naturally, the English-born official had no sympathy with revolutionary activities, but was to prove a true friend to the O'Donovan family. John, the eldest, had entered Trinity College to study medicine in November 1858 'and was admitted to contend for mathematical honours. He feels himself like a fish out of water among the Tory Protestants,'<sup>23</sup> his father wrote to O'Donovan Rossa. Edmond and William followed him to TCD, where the librarian, Rev. Dr. James Henthorn Todd, was a prominent scholar of early Irish culture. He had promised John O'Donovan on his deathbed that he would pay Edmond's college fees and promote his welfare. Dr. Todd had employed the young man as a secretary at £50 *per annum*, while Edmond also assisted Sir Bernard Burke, Ireland's chief heraldic officer, at the installation of the Duke of Connaught, a son of Queen Victoria, as a knight of St. Patrick.<sup>24</sup> His brother Willy, when still under twenty, had been appointed to a clerkship worth £200 *per annum*.<sup>25</sup>

20 Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, *Rossa's Recollections 1838–1898*, (Shannon, 1972), p. 240.

21 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806–1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 121.

22 John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (London, 1892), p. 4.

23 Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, *Rossa's Recollections 1838–1898*, (Shannon, 1972), p. 358.

24 'O'Donovan's fate', *New York Times*, 24 December 1883.

25 'William O'Donovan', *New York Times*, 3 May 1886.



## The O'Donovans as IRB Activists

The O'Donovan sons, however, continued with their endeavours to promote 'the Irish republic, virtually established'. John junior had founded a Fenian 'circle' in Trinity College, which Edmond expanded to over eighty members, including their first cousin John O'Curry.<sup>26</sup> Edmond was a leading member of the IRB engineering school in St. Stephens Green, Dublin. He and his brother John were close friends of Joseph Denieffe, an eager participant in their military studies, and frequented his home, which was one of Stephens's unofficial headquarters.<sup>27</sup> Edmond O'Donovan became an arms' expert and wrote a handbook on the rifle, which James Stephens had circulated among his men. The farm purchased for the family near Broadford was intended to supply work for some of the sons, but Edmond and Richard used it as a base for gun running, while holidays with their Broughton relations were treated as recruiting opportunities.<sup>28</sup> The constabulary believed that Edmond had been most active in introducing Fenianism in east Clare. He was in possession of funds 'and did immense mischief at O'Callaghans Mills, Scariff, and other places'.<sup>29</sup> The authorities were convinced that John, Ned and Willy preferred travelling throughout Ireland, 'running a sort of military school' to pursuing their university courses. However, due to the IRB's chronic shortage of rifles, their cartridge making lessons were of limited value.<sup>30</sup> The informer Nagle also suggested that Edmond contributed articles to the Fenian newspaper, the *Irish People*.<sup>31</sup> As the 'centre' or colonel of the TCD 'circle', Edmond was present in December 1865 and February 1866 during the discussions between Stephens and leading IRB officers, when the rising was postponed after 'the captain's' escape from the Richmond Bridewell.<sup>32</sup>

26 John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), pp. 363 -4. Son of Eugene O'Curry and of an older sister of Mrs. O'Donovan, *née* Broughton. He was an active IRB member in Dublin, but later emigrated to the Argentine, where he joined the British expatriate colony.

27 Joseph Denieffe, *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 78.

28 John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), pp. 363-4.

29 HCSA Abstracts 1 (2), p. 301. A more detailed account of O'Donovan's activities in Clare features in E. O Cathaoir 'The Irish Republican Brotherhood in Clare', in *Clare: History and Society* (forthcoming).

30 Larcom Papers, MS 7593; John Sarsfield Casey, *The Galtee Boy: A Fenian Prison Narrative*, p. 28; 'Ireland (from our own correspondent)', *The Times*, 10 November 1865; John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, (London, Downey & Co., 1896), Vol. II, p. 237; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), pp. 363-4.

31 *The Belvederian*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 20.

32 John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), pp. 93-4, 364



*Plate 2: O'Donovan as special correspondent in Merv: Illustrated London News, 27 January 1882.*

Courtesy of British Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

## Repeated Arrests

John O'Donovan junior had evaded arrest in Cork City during the seizure of Bryan Dillon, John Lynch and John Sarsfield Casey, leaders associated with the *Irish People* intellectuals. He was formally detained in Dublin on 8 November 1865. In his suspect photograph he greatly resembles his father; he is described as a TCD student, with hazel eyes, brown hair and a fair complexion, 5ft 7in tall and of slim build.<sup>33</sup> His continued detention suggests that his activities must have attracted considerable police attention. He was released on 22 August 1866, on condition of emigrating to America. The constabulary escorted him (like many other suspects) to the ship to witness his departure.

Dublin Castle suspended Habeas Corpus in February 1866, which allowed for the indefinite imprisonment of suspects without trial, while the police compiled lists of Fenian suspects. Although William eluded capture, Edmond was repeatedly detained. Edmond's file describes him as a medical student of 'slight make, 5ft 9½in. No marks on person, fair hair, brown eyes, ordinary features and round visage', whose relatives lived in Dublin and Clare. He was detained in Mountjoy Prison from 26 March to 25 September 1866 and released on condition of emigrating to America.<sup>34</sup> Rumours of an imminent rising persisted in late 1866, in the US many Civil War veterans remained ready to travel to Ireland. The O'Donovan brothers were unwilling to accept that the IRB's revolutionary plans had been fatally disrupted by the Habeas Corpus arrests and that there were too few arms and trained officers for a successful outcome. They returned to Ireland for an ill-starred attempt at insurrection in 1867. Edmond was arrested in Limerick in February 1867, probably intending to participate in the Fenian rising in that region.<sup>35</sup> He was sentenced to six months for possession of a revolver in a proclaimed district. His mother disapproved of Fenianism, but in common with the families of many others detained, pleaded for his release.<sup>36</sup> Sir Thomas Larcom had admonished him and authorised his release previously. On the second occasion, he was disinclined to intervene, but relented in August. The Undersecretary 'was like an old hen having charge of a brood of ducklings, who could not be kept from the waters of Fenianism.'<sup>37</sup>

An informer claimed that Edmond and John had acted as assistants to General Halpin, who commanded the Dublin region, by drawing maps of Dublin Castle and the Phoenix Park magazine, in preparation for the rising. Edmond went to England afterwards and featured in a secret report as demonstrating to the London IRB how to manufacture a white phosphorus compound known as 'Fenian fire', an explosive much feared in the contemporary press. This chemical weapon was first used by Irish revolutionaries in the nineteenth century - O'Donovan was said to

33 *Ibid.*, p. 400.

34 Fenian Files, FP 398.

35 'Arrests in Limerick', *Freeman's Journal*, 16 February 1867.

36 Larcom Papers, MS 7593; Mrs. O'Donovan retired to her native Broadford, where she was still living in 1886.

37 John Denvir, *The Life Story of an Old Rebel*, (Shannon, 1972), p. 163.

have pioneered it.<sup>38</sup> Edmond was at one stage a member of the London IRB unit, which tried to spring Colonel Ricard O’Sullivan Burke from the Clerkenwell House of Detention on 13 December 1867. This failed attempt cost the lives of twelve English working class people in a district which had shown great sympathy towards the Irish cause. An informer added that O’Donovan, a ‘clever fellow’, had been previously arrested, but was released through the influence of somebody high up in Dublin Castle.<sup>39</sup> This was highly embarrassing for Sir Thomas Larcom. Edmond, however, was not involved in the Clerkenwell explosion, being imprisoned in Dublin by 15 November 1867.<sup>40</sup> This was his third arrest and by now, neither Sir Thomas Larcom nor Dr. Todd believed Edmond’s promises to retire from revolutionary activity. Sir Thomas had been informed that his ward was ‘one of the most active and determined of the Fenian agents, enjoying the fullest confidence of the leaders of the brotherhood.’<sup>41</sup>

The Dublin Castle undersecretary and the Trinity librarian also agreed that it was a blessing in disguise that Eugene O’Curry was dead, otherwise ‘he would have been in the midst of all this Fenianism’.<sup>42</sup>

### Exile and Death

Edmond was released on 19 May 1868, after having sampled Kilmainham and Mountjoy jails. He had resisted release on ‘dishonourable terms’ (presumably the standard undertaking to relinquish Fenianism), but when his health began to decline, he agreed to leave for America.<sup>43</sup> The disorganised, insignificant 1867 rising, after which the IRB declined in size, never again regaining its 1860s mass membership, had a depressing effect on the brothers, for ‘all three had flung personal considerations to the winds and threw themselves into the work of the conspiracy with all the zest and the enthusiasm of youth.’<sup>44</sup> It meant abandoning their Trinity studies and a privileged career path for exile abroad. John O’Donovan, the eldest, had a reputation of being ‘a little wild’, for instance, in 1864 he attempted to uncouple a railway carriage as a prank, when returning from a Fenian outing to Kilkenny.<sup>45</sup> In an incident in November 1865, which resulted in his arrest, O’Donovan mistook a builder in a public house for a plainclothes detective. He threatened to shoot him with his (unloaded) revolver, denouncing the Dublin police as ‘b—y Irish slaves’.<sup>46</sup> Constables arresting O’Donovan discovered a memorandum book with headings, such as, ‘how to destroy a bridge’ in his possession. Although the police pressurised his intended victim to prosecute O’Donovan,

38 ‘Release of Political Prisoners’, *Irishman*, 23 May 1868; HO 12/ 179/ 81780, Statement of Patrick Mullany, 24 January 1868.

39 HO 12/179/81780, Statement of Patrick Mullany, 24 January 1868.

40 Fenian Files, FP 398.

41 Larcom Papers, MS 7593.

42 *Ibid.*

43 ‘Release of Political Prisoners’, *Irishman*, 23 May 1868.

44 ‘William O’Donovan’, *New York Times*, 3 May 1886.

45 John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), pp. 50 -1.

46 ‘Arrest of a supposed Fenian’, *Irishman*, 1 November 1865.

the builder refused, believing that ‘the prisoner did it only in a drunken freak’. John O’Donovan probably benefited from a belief among working people that giving evidence in favour of Dublin Castle came close to informing, for the man had been badly frightened by having a gun pointed at his head.<sup>47</sup> These two incidents hint that O’Donovan may have had a problem with alcohol. He found starting afresh difficult and returned ‘to America, broken in spirit and with his ambition gone’ in the autumn of 1866.<sup>48</sup> Career expectations diminished to teaching in Catholic schools in New York, which was ill paid, restrictive and accordingly disliked. Briefly reunited with his mentor O’Donovan Rossa and his friend Devoy on their arrival with the amnestied ‘Cuba Five’ group in New York in 1871, John O’Donovan migrated to St. Louis, Missouri, where he became a classics tutor in the La Salle College. He was drowned in a swimming accident near the school in 1873, aged thirty-one.<sup>49</sup>

### **Edmond’s Continuing IRB Involvement**

William was familiar with Paris since 1866, when Stephens had sent him to act as interpreter for the IRB couriers and to distribute funds along with John Mitchel and Edmund O’Leary.<sup>50</sup> Using the name ‘William Hamilton’, he gained a foothold as a journalist after many adventures and considerable hardship. He socialised with Alexandre Dumas and the Italian nationalist Orsini, whose brother had attempted to assassinate Napoleon III.<sup>51</sup> Edmond joined Willy in Paris, which he used as a base, as he had not yet relinquished his active IRB involvement.

In 1869 the imprisoned O’Donovan Rossa and Charles Kickham, recently released, had been nominated as candidates for a Tipperary by-election. Conceived as a publicity ploy to focus attention on the plight of the Fenian prisoners, Rossa’s success and Kickham’s strong showing influenced the new IRB leadership towards a more pragmatic approach by edging towards parliamentary politics.<sup>52</sup> When the former Young Irelander, John Martin, stood for Longford against a landlord candidate with Catholic clergy backing, a broad-based nationalist coalition supported him. A.M. Sullivan and the sons of the late John Blake Dillon agitated alongside a strong IRB element under John Amnesty Nolan, Edmond O’Donovan and James J. O’Kelly. While O’Donovan failed to distinguish himself as an orator, his efforts

47 *Ibid.*; See also *Irish Times*, 10 November 1865.

48 ‘William O’Donovan’, *New York Times*, 3 May 1886.

49 John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 363; ‘William O’Donovan’, *New York Times*, 3 May 1886. Boyne gives a different account: John O’Donovan jun. qualified as a doctor in both Ireland and America and was professor of natural science and languages in St. Louis at the time of his death.

50 Edmund, born 1843, was the half-brother of John O’Leary, editor of the *Irish People*.

51 John Augustus O’Shea, *Leaves from the Life of A Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. I, p. 95.

52 G. Moran ‘The Fenians and Tipperary Politics, 1868–1880’, in *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1994), p. 77. Rossa, as an undischarged felon, was disqualified from taking his seat and Kickham was then nominated. The latter was opposed to constitutional politics, did not campaign and lost by a few votes.

during the electoral street fighting were highly successful.<sup>53</sup> His friend John Devoy commented that,

Edmond was a very mild mannered man whom nobody who didn't know him well would suspect of being a fighter, but his courage was dauntless and he was also endowed with great penetration and all-round ingenuity.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, the Catholic clergy's candidate defeated 'honest' John Martin.<sup>55</sup>

Sometime between 1868 and 1872 Edmond O'Donovan worked as IRB organiser for the north of England, was involved in efforts to reunite IRB factions and travelled to the US several times. John Denvir of Liverpool, the veteran Fenian and later Parnellite organiser, described him at this time:

He was slender of figure and had a handsome, oval face. In speaking, whether in private or before an audience, he had an animated and expressive manner, with a good deal of gesture, such as a Frenchman or Italian would use. I've heard him singing songs like 'Clare's Dragoons' with much fire and fervour, throwing his whole soul into it in a way I can never forget.<sup>56</sup>

During the winter of 1868-9, O'Donovan participated in conferences with George Henry Moore at Moore Hall, when John O'Connor Power and James O'Connor proposed a new nationalist movement, uniting constitutional and revolutionary elements. These efforts foreshadowed the New Departure, but collapsed with Moore's sudden death in 1870.<sup>57</sup> Edmond O'Donovan also spent time in his mother's home in County Clare. Patricia Boyne's claim that he organised Connacht with O'Donovan Rossa sometime after May 1871 must be discounted, however, as Rossa was then in exile in the US. When arrest once again threatened, O'Donovan returned to Paris.<sup>58</sup> Having abandoned his medical ambitions, Edmond began to study Arabic:

53 John Augustus O'Shea, *Leaves from the Life of A Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. II, p. 161; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 366-7.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 367.

55 Greville-Nugent was unseated on petition, however.

56 John Denvir, *The Life Story of an Old Rebel*, (Shannon, 1972), p. 164.

57 Previous advances had been made to Moore in 1864, but were blocked by James Stephens. This distinguished Mayo MP was the father of the novelist George Moore. James O'Connor, a native of County Wicklow, had been a book keeper in the *Irish People* office, was imprisoned, helped to reorganize the IRB and later joined the Irish Parliamentary Party. John O'Connor Power rose to membership of the IRB Supreme Council and the Irish Parliamentary Party from a modest background due to talent and determination, but was eventually ejected from both. W. O'Brien and D. Ryan (eds.) *Devoy's Post Bag I* (Dublin, 1948), p. 75.

58 'William O'Donovan', *New York Times*, 3 May 1886; T. M. Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, (London, n.d.), Vol. I, p. 117; Diarmuid O'Donovan Rossa, *Rossa's Recollections 1838-1898*, (Shannon, 1972), pp. 372-3; Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 119; Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 123.

The study of Arabic was Edmond's passion... He used to absolutely take the grammar to bed with him, read himself to sleep poring over its pages, and re-open it when he turned on his pillow in the morning.<sup>59</sup>

The brothers made friends with John Augustus O'Shea, an eminent Victorian journalist from Nenagh, who enjoyed great popularity in Ireland. O'Shea was a nephew of radical agitator and journalist Peter Gill. Uncle and nephew counted the redoubtable Fr. Kenyon of 1848 fame among their friends and were acquainted with leading IRB members.<sup>60</sup> O'Shea, who called himself the 'Irish Bohemian', belonged to that school of journalists 'who affected the mood of gaiety and irresponsibility expressed by the word "Bohemianism"'.<sup>61</sup> This attitude suited William and Edmond, who feature prominently in O'Shea's memoirs. In Paris the O'Donovan brothers were reunited with other exiled Fenians, whom they had known in Dublin.<sup>62</sup>

### Careers in Journalism

While living in Paris, Willy O'Donovan decided to master German with the help of native speakers and taught himself Spanish to become employable as a foreign correspondent; O'Shea subsequently assessed his knowledge of languages:

He knew German, not as the waiter or dragoman knows it in its colloquialisms, but as the scholar familiar with the beauties of Goethe and Schiller, and competent to appreciate them. He was a linguist by race, and earned a competence by concocting a spicy epitome of Paris gossip every week.<sup>63</sup>

The young O'Donovans worked with their father's intense, patient concentration, which Willy, in particular, exhibited.<sup>64</sup> They had also inherited from him 'an agile pen, a keen eye for detail, a passion for accuracy and a puckish sense of humour,'<sup>65</sup> which helped them to become 'special correspondents'. Alongside O'Shea, Willy covered the fall of Napoleon III and the Prussian army's advance during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1. They endured the hardships of the

59 John Augustus O'Shea, *Leaves from the Life of A Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. I, p. 81.

60 O'Shea had been born in Nenagh in 1840, John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 365; John Augustus O'Shea, *Leaves from the Life of Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. I, pp. 14, 78.

61 'Obituary', *The Times*, 14 March 1905.

62 Joseph Denieffe, *A Personal Narrative of the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood*, (Shannon, 1969), pp. 78-9; John Augustus O'Shea, *Leaves from the Life of a Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. I, p. 79.

63 John Augustus O'Shea, *Leaves from the Life of a Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. I, p. 82.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

65 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. xv.





Plate 3: Fig. 3 The traveller, O'Donovan of Merv: Frontispiece in Edmond O'Donovan, *The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian During the Years 1879-80-81*, (New York, 1883), Vol. I.



siege of Paris, getting journalistic dispatches out by air balloon occasionally.<sup>66</sup> William O'Donovan had succeeded O'Shea as Paris correspondent of the *Irishman*.<sup>67</sup> Edmond volunteered for the French foreign legion as 'Lieutenant Elliott' and was put in charge of the Irish volunteer contingent. Wounded and taken prisoner at the battle of Orleans, O'Donovan was held in Bavaria and began to smuggle out press reports.<sup>68</sup> According to Dublin Castle 'the hardships of the French war have completely changed his appearance' and his face had become thinner and weather beaten. He also had 'a wound on the crown of his head received from the explosion of a shell...'<sup>69</sup> After the war, the amnestied John O'Leary moved in literary circles in Paris and became close friends with Edmond and Willy.<sup>70</sup>

The Victorians were fascinated by penetrating the last unknown corners of the world. By the 1870s a second wave of empire building had begun. Attention was focusing on central Asia as a conflict zone between the Russian and British Empires.<sup>71</sup> Stirring travellers' tales, for instance, Frederick Burnaby's *A Ride to Khiva, 3000 Miles Through the Russian Steppes in Winter*, (1876), and *On Horseback Through Asia Minor*, (1877), when Burnaby fought against the Russians, became bestsellers. Explorers presented themselves to the public in elaborate poses in native costume. Edmond O'Donovan's prison photograph shows a well-dressed, rather shy young man. By 1882 he had transformed himself into a self-possessed writer in oriental robes complete with 'hubble bubble pipe'. (See Plate 3) His linguistic, military, medical and sketching skills, complemented by quick thinking and a vivid imagination, eminently qualified him as a 'special correspondent'.

The contemporary thirst for knowledge created the new profession of war correspondent, who for the first time gave an immediate, unvarnished picture of the reality of war, underpinned by the use of the telegraph and photography, which was cutting edge technology by the 1850s. The immensely influential position of war correspondent was pioneered by Irish-born William Howard Russell (1820-1907), whose dispatches from the Crimea alerted the public to horrific deaths due to mismanagement and lack of medical care.<sup>72</sup> By the 1870s, however, the pace had accelerated, and, although well paid, the 'special correspondent' was expected to file his copy by telegraph, dodging combatants, providing a thorough knowledge of military matters and enduring considerable hardship.<sup>73</sup>

66 John Augustus O'Shea, *An Iron-Bound City or Five Months of Peril and Privation*, (London, 1886), pp. 85, 87; John Augustus O'Shea, *Leaves from the Life of a Special Correspondent*, (1885), Vol. II, pp. 311-3.

67 'Edmund O'Donovan' [*sic.*], *Irish Times*, 31 December 1883.

68 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 123; Richard de Loughry, *Old Kilkenny Review* (1972), pp. 18, 21.

69 CSO/ICR/16: descriptions and photographs of Fenian suspects, 1866-1880.

70 Marcus Bourke, *John O'Leary: A Study in Irish Separatism*, (Athens, 1967), p. 138.

71 Fitzroy Maclean, *A Person from England and Other Travellers*, (London, 1958), p. 15.

72 A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, (London, 2002), p. 175.

73 James Melvin Lee, *James Luby, Journalist*, (Washington, D.C., 1930), pp. 18-9.

In 1873 Edmond O'Donovan covered the Carlist insurrection in Spain for *The Times*, which resembled a family reunion, with William representing the *Irish Times*, while younger brother Henry supported the insurrectionists as a medical orderly.<sup>74</sup> During this campaign, Edmond was mistaken for a chief engineer of the Spanish Royalists and marched to San Sebastian as a prisoner, before his credentials were established. Henry, on the other hand, 'was imprisoned by the Royalists for an indiscreet profession of Republican principles'.<sup>75</sup>

There can be no mistake about this, as it was I who applied to Cardinal Cullen and the present Bishop of Ardagh, then rector of the Dublin Catholic University, to intercede on behalf of Henry,<sup>76</sup>

William O'Donovan commented subsequently.

Back in London the following year, Edmond wrote for a number of leading papers until the *Daily News* commissioned him to cover the uprising against the Turks in Bosnia and Montenegro in 1876.<sup>77</sup> On his return the newspaper 'hailed him as the foremost war correspondent of the day' and presented him with a cheque for £1,000.<sup>78</sup> The *Daily News* had begun to eclipse the writers employed by *The Times* and O'Donovan, 'endowed with a marvellous memory, a stubborn perseverance and a restless impulse towards adventure',<sup>79</sup> became a major contributor.

### 'O'Donovan of Merv'

One of Edmond O'Donovan's ambitions was to explore Tibet, then a most remote location, but due to professional commitments, this was postponed.<sup>80</sup> Instead, in 1879 he travelled to central Asia to report on the conflict between the Tekke Turkmen and the Russian Empire. As the Czarist generals restricted his access to information, O'Donovan decided to change sides. Anticipating an attack on Merv, the last important Turkmen position, he rushed off, following his 'enthusiastic nature which invariably led him to press on regardless of the consequences'.<sup>81</sup> This resulted in the Russians believing him to be a British spy.

74 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806–1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 123; Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 119. Don Carlos, pretender to the Spanish throne, fought Queen Isabel.

75 'Edmund O'Donovan', *Irish Times*, 31 December 1883.

76 *Ibid.* Cardinal Cullen was zealous in promoting Catholicism in Ireland and well-known for his opposition to the Fenian leaders, while sympathetic towards their 'dupes'.

77 Fitzroy Maclean, *A Person from England and Other Travellers*, (London, 1958), p. 221.

78 *Baptist Quarterly Review*, (New York, 1884), p. 462; Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806–1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 123. This represents about €80,000 today.

79 John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), p. 5.

80 'O'Donovan's Fate', *New York Times*, 24 December 1883; Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 120.

81 Fitzroy Maclean, *A Person from England and Other Travellers*, (London, 1958), pp. 219–21; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 366.

O'Donovan departed from Trabzon on the Black Sea for Tbilisi, travelled to Baku, now in Azerbaijan, and crossed the Caspian Sea to Krasnavodsk and on to Tehran, where he received permission from the Shah's officials to proceed to the north-eastern frontier of what was then Persia. Amidst difficulties of finding servants and transport in a war zone, O'Donovan rode to Mashhad, in modern-day Iran, and continued to the southern Kara Kum desert. During his two years of travel, he took copious notes of people and customs, for instance, when describing the nomads near Krasnavodsk:

Glimmering camp fires shed fitful gleams upon the swarthy features and strange tuft-like hats of the Turcoman escort, bringing out all kinds of Rembrandt-like effects as they sat conversing around... or indulged in smoking after the curious fashion which they adopt on such expeditions... An oblong steep-sided hole is dug in the ground, some five inches wide, and a foot deep. Some red-hot charcoal is taken from the camp fire, and placed in the bottom of the cavity. A handful of *tumbaki*, a coarse kind of tobacco used in these regions, is thrown in, and the smoker, kneeling beside the hole, places his extended palms on either side of his mouth, stoops over the orifice, and inhales the fumes of the tobacco, mingling with air. Three or four whiffs from this singular smoking apparatus seem quite sufficient for the most determined smoker among them, and I am not surprised at it. I nearly choked myself with the first when I tried it.<sup>82</sup>

He depicted the vicissitudes of Asian travel, such as bandits, long delays and lack of medical aid, when he became ill from insect bites on his way to Mashhad:

At four o'clock in the morning my arms and legs were covered with the tumid bodies of these pests. Two days later, virulent-looking pustules marked the bitten spots... a high fever resulted. It had typhoid symptoms, all of which were aggravated by the foul air of the caravanserai, the bad food and water, and the anxiety of mind about my coming journey. For two days and two nights I was delirious.<sup>83</sup>

A desperate O'Donovan 'sent for opium... the effect was magical so far as the pain was concerned', but he disliked his hallucinations, during which 'I became chairman of a Russian Nihilistic society'.<sup>84</sup> Recuperating in the holy city of Mashhad, close to the border with Turkmenistan, Edmond O'Donovan saw the Iman Riza mosque, the burial place of Haroun al Rashid of the *Thousand and One Nights*, 'yes, here he rests amid a crowd of forgotten sovereigns', O'Donovan reflected, 'remembered only by the passing Western stranger'.<sup>85</sup> He continued his musings for some time:

82 Edmond O'Donovan, *The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian During the Years 1879-80-81*, (New York, 1883), Vol. I, pp. 80 -1.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 454.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 455.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 494.

I stood gazing so long at the front of the great Mussulman shrine, that the sunlight gradually faded away, leaving it and the gilt minars in cold shadow. The change was magical. It was as when the limelight dies away from the figures of some theatrical fairy scene. All in a moment is dull and commonplace. The glittering pile degenerated into a cold pagoda-like structure surmounted by a great brass tin can. Never was pantomime transformation scene more rapid in its changes than this from gem-like beauty to a chill, rigid crockery-ware appearance.<sup>86</sup>

Merv, his ultimate goal, in an oasis in the Kara Kum desert in modern Turkmenistan was then a strategic key to the British position in India, but no European had entered it in forty years:<sup>87</sup>

Men risked their lives to get there. Not many succeeded and not all of them returned to tell the tale.<sup>88</sup>

The Turkmen were intensely suspicious of outsiders and initially treated O'Donovan as a Russian spy. These nomads were wary of his habit of taking notes and, when caught, he was threatened with execution. Nevertheless, he managed to scribble down some first impressions under his sheepskin robe.<sup>89</sup> Its ruling council decided to put Merv under British protection, and despite O'Donovan's protests that he had nothing to do with Queen Victoria's government, the Tekkes made him 'the representative of the English Padishah'.<sup>90</sup> He addressed their council and was inaugurated as one of the Turkmen triumvirate of rulers and 'a crimson silk banner was hoisted' over his hut.<sup>91</sup> When asked to provide the British Army brand for their horses, O'Donovan invented one on the spot, as his situation mixed the privileges of a ruler with the restrictions of a hostage. He was also ordered to repair and command the decrepit Turkmen artillery in case of a Russian attack.<sup>92</sup>

The Merv Oasis lies on one of the ancient silk roads that traversed half the world and contains the extensive ruins of several historic cities. Erk Kala, the first of the walled cities of Merv, developed during the fifth century BC as part of the Achaemenian Empire, which stretched from Turkey to India and from Central Asia to Egypt. Hellenic influence came with Alexander the Great. His eastern territories became part of the Seleucid Empire and massive development began - Erk Kala was turned into a citadel and Antiochia Margiana, a vast walled city, which is today called Gyaur Kala, was laid out. It flourished for a thousand years before

86 *Ibid.*, pp. 495 -6.

87 Fitzroy Maclean, *A Person from England and Other Travellers*, (London, 1958), p. 221.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

89 *Ibid.*, pp. 230-1.

90 *Ibid.*, p. 261-2; F. Lauriston Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents*, (Boston, 1914), p. 241.

91 'The special correspondent of the *Daily News*', *Irish Times*, 28 November 1881.

92 Fitzroy Maclean, *A Person from England and Other Travellers*, (London, 1958), pp. 262, 239.

Muslim influence took over. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century, the Seljuk period, Merv was one of the largest cities in the world with a distinctive Muslim architecture. It was known as Sultan Kala and had at its centre the spectacular mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar with its famous dome covered in turquoise tiles. Travellers knew they were a day's camel ride from Merv, when they could see the sun glinting on this dome. Merv became one of the most important cultural centres in the eastern Islamic world and housed several major libraries. Among its outstanding scholars was the poet and astronomer Omar Khayyam. But by the early thirteenth century trade became severely disrupted by the rising Mongol Empire and in 1221 the Mongols sacked the queen of cities and massacred its inhabitants; eventually it was abandoned. Although Merv was the best preserved of the oasis cities of central Asia, for six hundred years its magnificence was almost forgotten in the western world until Edmond O'Donovan succeeded in reaching it.<sup>93</sup>

The Turkmen settlement in its vicinity consisted of miserable huts. The tribe, believing ancient Merv haunted, resisted O'Donovan's efforts to visit the site. Approaching the historic ruins once known as 'the queen of the world', he wrote:

I caught my first glimpse of the old cities of the plain – the ancient capitals of Margiana. A long line of walls and turrets, dominated by some towering domes, broke the line of the horizon... I could scarcely express my anxiety to proceed there and then to this mysterious spot, concerning which so much has been written and so little known.<sup>94</sup>

O'Donovan Khan made a valuable survey of the extensive archaeological remains, describing the central tomb:

The tomb of Sultan Sanjar is a place of pilgrimage, and no Turcoman ever passes this spot without paying homage to the sanctity of the departed potentate. The tomb itself is of commanding size. It cannot be less than 60 feet to the summit of its cupola... within the walls still preserve a large portion of the stucco and the white plaster with which they were formerly coated, and on which still remain, in many places, blue and red arabesques upon a white ground.<sup>95</sup>

His efforts were, however, beset with frustrations: his escort could offer few explanations regarding Merv, but performed lengthy devotions at the various tombs; afterwards, they galloped about, firing guns, staging mock fights and attacked villagers.<sup>96</sup> Their arrack drinking and opium smoking sessions also grew tedious, while O'Donovan got into trouble for disputing that Alexander the Great

93 'Mr O'Donovan's Lecture on Merv', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 March 1882; Tim Williams 'Ancient Merv', in *World Heritage Review* No. 24; <http://www.worldheritagereview.org/>.

94 Edmond O'Donovan, *Merv: A Story of Adventures and Captivity*, (London, 1883), p. 216.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

96 *Ibid.*, pp. 246-7; pp. 249-50.

had been a philosopher.<sup>97</sup> A European being a singular sensation among the Turkmen, O'Donovan was constantly intruded upon, necessitating police protection:

During the first month of my residence at Merv I might be said to have lived in the interior of a much-patronised peep-show, in which I was the central – and, indeed, the only – object of attraction. At first the effect was maddening, but I afterwards fell into a kind of comatic stupor, and began to feel under mesmeric influences. One could not make a move but it was commented upon.<sup>98</sup>

He also noted similarities between the architecture, nomenclature and manners of these nomads and the early Irish and claimed that he had taught the Turkmen tribe 'the two essentials of civilisation - the arts of manufacturing gunpowder and whisky.'<sup>99</sup> As it became obvious that he could do little to improve the situation on the ground, O'Donovan decided to explore the district and 'then to get out of the place as quickly as possible.'<sup>100</sup> After five months in Merv, he was allowed to depart following the intervention of the British minister in Persia, who had been alerted by Sir John Robinson of the *Daily News*.

O'Donovan had managed to send occasional reports to London, which created an international sensation, causing the *Sporting Times* to comment that,

his brilliant letters read more like a page of Elizabethan travel than the doings of a newspaper man of the nineteenth century.<sup>101</sup>

On reaching Tehran in a state of advanced exhaustion, he was presented with a bundle of fragments, the remains of recent reports for the *Daily News*, which had left Merv by a courier, whom the Kurds subsequently killed.<sup>102</sup> Arriving in Constantinople via Odessa, the explorer became a welcome source of information for the British ambassador, but having been entertained by Lord and Lady Dufferin, O'Donovan repaired to a coffee house.<sup>103</sup> Possibly intoxicated, but at any rate averse to boredom and inclined to pranks, the traveller listened to pseudo-revolutionaries whining about oppression:

Some devil possessed me, and I got up on a bench and harangued the crowd... that the only plan for emancipating Turkey was to get rid of the infernal tyrant who mis-ruled the country. I suggested that the

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97 *Ibid.*, pp. 228, 314, 243.

98 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

99 Edmond O'Donovan, *The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian During the Years 1879-80-81*, (New York, 1883); T. M. Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, (London, n.d.), p. 118.

100 Edmond O'Donovan, *Merv: A Story of Adventures and Captivity*, (London, 1883), p. 201.

101 As copied in, 'The *Daily News* special at Merv', *Irish Times*, 25 July 1881.

102 'O'Donovan the Triumvir', *New York Times*, 3 January 1882.

103 Frederick, first Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (1826–1902), a descendant of Sheridan, whose previous ambassadorial posting had been to St. Petersburg, was known for his tact and charm.

proper way to set about this holy work was not to sit mouthing in cafés, but to go out like men, storm the palace and cut the Sultan's head off.<sup>104</sup>

Not unsurprisingly, O'Donovan was arrested and held in a Turkish prison, but ultimately deported to Marseilles on a British gunboat, thanks to the ambassador's intervention. The Fenian, breathing a sigh of relief, commented: 'Lord Dufferin acted like a brick'.<sup>105</sup>

On arrival in London in 1882, O'Donovan, in his role of 'ambassadeur d'Merv' appeared at 10 Downing Street requesting 100,000 rifles for the Turkmen defenders, according to the not always reliable Tim Healy. O'Donovan Khan believed that he could defeat Russia's advance into Asia, but, unsurprisingly, his plans were not entertained by Whitehall.<sup>106</sup> (As the British had abandoned Qandahar, they were unlikely to take on the defence of Merv, which was occupied by the Russians in 1884.) O'Donovan's letters from central Asia had added greatly to the *Daily News*' reputation for journalistic enterprise and his return to London received wide coverage.<sup>107</sup> After lecturing on his discoveries to the Royal Geographical Society, O'Donovan settled down to write in a Bloomsbury boarding house, surrounded by exotic pets and oriental souvenirs. Among the former was a diabolical parrot who spoke several languages and a white rat with pink eyes, which drank diluted spirits. He also liked reptiles.<sup>108</sup> O'Donovan's rooms soon resembling a cross between a laboratory, an arsenal and a zoo. To keep awake for his travelogue of a thousand pages, he wrapped wet towels around his head and hired street singers to perform for him during intervals of relaxation.<sup>109</sup> As a matter of necessity, O'Donovan was an excellent shot and swordsman. After practising with an airgun in his lodgings, however, his landlady advised him to leave, as 'this is not a private mad-house'.<sup>110</sup> His peculiarities were treated more sympathetically at an Irish inn in Holborn, where his large pet monkey on one occasion took possession of the kitchen with a red-hot poker, keeping the servants at bay.<sup>111</sup>

### O'Donovan's Secretaries

O'Donovan also had a foible for keeping secretaries. Whenever he met a financially distressed Irishman, the well-paid 'special correspondent' appointed him his secretary. This was usually a sinecure, 'but the real and ideal secretary was a man

104 Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 130.

105 *Ibid.*, pp. 130-1; *Baptist Quarterly Review*, (New York, 1884), p. 472; O'Shea *Roundabout Recollections*, (London, 1892), Vol. I, p. 6.

106 T. M. Healy, *Letters and Leaders of My Day*, (London, n.d.), p. 118.

107 *Baptist Quarterly Review*, (New York, 1884), p. 470; *New York Times*, 3 August 1881; 'Our correspondent at Merv', *Daily News*, 26 August 1881; *Ibid.*, 'Last Days at Merv', 10 January 1882.

108 John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, p. 21.

109 'Mr O'Donovan and the Royal Geographical Society', *Daily News*, 28 March 1882; John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, p. 15.

110 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-7.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 22; Edmund Downey *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 138.

after O'Donovan's heart – Frank Power', who assisted, alongside a shorthand writer, when he was writing the *Merv Oasis* in London, Gloucestershire and Dinan, France.<sup>112</sup> A fellow Belvederian and journalist, 'Ghazi' Power's nickname denoted a holy man on a jihad, ironically meant in this case, or translated into 'Gassy', the teller of wild tales in Belvedere College.<sup>113</sup> Power had

the reputation of being the most charming liar in Leinster – which is saying a good deal. No one could ever tell how much or how little truth was mixed up in his narratives of personal perils, but his love of adventure and of ridiculous exploits was as strong as O'Donovan's.<sup>114</sup>

These included a bet that O'Donovan would 'run amok' down the Strand, which he won, dressed in Turkmen costume, successfully terrifying the crowd. On another occasion the explorer and his secretary disguised themselves as Arabs and exhibited white rats to the London throng, while playing 'oriental' music and collecting donations.<sup>115</sup> In Edmond's case, too, there is a suspicion that alcohol may have been a negative influence. Edmund Downey relates an incident in which O'Donovan met an Irish journalist, now apparently reformed and sober, but cajoled him into having a few drinks. Afterwards the pair went to a Parisian fête and climbed to the top of some poles, where they fired their revolvers into the sky, causing general panic; both were arrested. It was no wonder that, quite apart from political considerations, O'Donovan was unpopular with most European police forces.<sup>116</sup> John Augustus O'Shea excused his friend's exploits as 'escapades indulged in through the natural exuberance of a joyous spirit'.<sup>117</sup> Challenged about his invariably dramatic tales, O'Donovan commented, 'Don't say I'm telling lies, I may be guilty of a slight exaggeration of the truth but of lies certainly not.'<sup>118</sup>

While staying in London, the famous explorer remained under police observation, as 'he is a thorough Fenian still'.<sup>119</sup> O'Donovan was said to be associating with a suspected gun runner, while the authorities believed of one of his secretaries, 'he also is a Fenian'. Trips to Ireland were said to involve seditious purposes and visits to his brother Richard in England were taken note of.<sup>120</sup>

112 *Ibid.*, p. 139; John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, p. 15.

113 *The Belvederian*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 23.

114 Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 139. According to T. Healy, in 1881 Power had assured his boss, E. D. Gray of the *Freeman's Journal*, and C. S. Parnell, that he had been shot at and wounded in a skirmish with extreme nationalists in Clontarf. A surgeon examined Power and pronounced the 'wound' a boil, but the latter persisted in claiming that rebels were marching on Dublin.

115 *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40.

116 *Ibid.*, pp. 132–3.

117 John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, p. 19.

118 R. de Loughry, *Old Kilkenny Review* (1972), p. 23.

119 Frank McEvoy, 'Edmond O'Donovan (1844–1883)', in *Old Kilkenny Review* Vol. 2 No. 5 (1983), p. 464.

120 *Ibid.*



Essentially a shy man, Ned O'Donovan preferred Irish friends, especially John Augustus O'Shea, Edmund Downey, the Waterford-born publisher, and Dr. Edmund O'Leary. The latter was also an IRB man and had known his brother William since 1866.<sup>121</sup> Downey described O'Donovan as a rather silent and melancholy figure on first acquaintance, but once his attention was caught, the weariness vanished:

His eyes flashed electrically, and almost without a word of preface he gave us a lurid account of the vicissitudes of a great funeral caravan which he had accompanied across the desert to Tehran. His narrative – a sufficiently ghastly one – was told with extraordinary vividness.<sup>122</sup>

*The Merv Oasis: Travels and Adventures East of the Caspian During the Years 1879 -80 -81* was published in 1882, enthusiastically received and translated into several European languages. *The Times* reviewer felt

sure that the almost unanimous opinion of the general reader will be that he has seldom taken up a more graphic or original book of travels than this,<sup>123</sup>

and concluded O'Donovan 'has written one of the most interesting and attractive books of travels in Central Asia.'<sup>124</sup> Even the usually hypercritical John O'Leary described him as 'a very considerable writer'.<sup>125</sup> His Irish background shone through, for example, when he compared Muslim minarets to round towers. The acclaim, which greeted the *Merv Oasis*, confirmed its author as a celebrity, who went on an English lecture tour to replenish his finances.<sup>126</sup> A condensed British edition and an American edition followed in 1883, but O'Donovan was not to enjoy the fruits of his success for long.

### The Campaign Against the Madhi

In 1882 a nationalist uprising in Egypt, led by Arabi Pasha against the Khedive, was defeated due to British intervention; Egypt became an unofficial colony.<sup>127</sup> At the same time, a Muslim prophet, El Madhi, had appeared and called for holy war in the Sudan, then a remote region ruled by Egypt. Gladstone did not want to commit himself to an imperial expedition and in 1883 General William Hicks was chosen to suppress the Madhi's revolt. The Khedive despatched the largest modern

121 Edmund O'Leary died unexpectedly in June 1883, while O'Donovan was in transit to Egypt.

122 Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 123.

123 'The Merv Oasis', *The Times*, 30 December 1882.

124 *Ibid.*

125 John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, (London, Downey & Co., 1896), Vol. II, p. 237.

126 O'Donovan's portrait was exhibited in the Royal Academy; Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 141; John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, p. 13.

127 Lady Gregory, the future Abbey Theatre co-founder, was among Arabi's supporters; Colm Toibin, *Lady Gregory's Toothbrush*, (Dublin, 2002), pp. 17-8.

army ever sent into the interior of the Sudan with 10,000 men and 6,000 camels.<sup>128</sup> On paper the Egyptian army was a superior force and should have recaptured El Obeid, the capital of the rebellious Kordofan province, without undue difficulties. General Hicks was courageous, but had never held a major command and had little Sudanese experience. At first all went well. Hicks held Khartoum against an attack of the Madhi's 'holy men' or dervishes.<sup>129</sup> He was under pressure to prove himself, while the Khedive wanted to demonstrate that he could rule by re-conquering the Sudan. Britain, on the other hand, hoped that Egyptians under British and Turkish officers would halt the spread of Muslim fundamentalism.<sup>130</sup>

The *Daily News* selected O'Donovan to accompany the Hicks Pasha expedition. Having paid a farewell visit to Richard in Liverpool, Edmond was not in good spirits during a final dinner with his Irish friends in London: 'I have an uneasy feeling that this will be the last little go'.<sup>131</sup> Some believed that his previously sparkling sense of adventure had faded.<sup>132</sup> He sailed from England on 17 May 1883 with Frank Power, whom he had sponsored and who was to cover events for *The Times*.<sup>133</sup> The latter reassured his mother in Dublin's Merrion Square: 'O'Donovan presented me with the best rifle London could produce.'<sup>134</sup> They were delayed in Cairo, as Edmond had fallen ill, finally leaving Suez on a Red Sea boat with 2,000 pilgrims bound for Mecca.<sup>135</sup> Power commented:

The heat all the time was fearful; iron exposed to the sun burned you to the bone if you accidentally touched it.<sup>136</sup>

After recuperating in Jedda, Saudi Arabia, they continued to Suakin, obtaining camels and a guide for the twelve-day ride through desert and mountains to Berber, tormented by scorpions and tarantulas. In the desert their water was derived from mud, the consistency of custard, which they scooped into skins. From Berber their 'wretched antiquated dirty tug-boat' took a month to reach Khartoum. Arrived at the junction of the Blue and the White Nile, General Hicks accommodated them with his officers.<sup>137</sup>

Among the press corps was Frank Vizetelly, a veteran 'special artist', who had covered Garibaldi's campaign in Italy and was a friend of John Augustus O'Shea,

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128 Michael Asher, *Khartoum: The Ultimate Imperial Adventure*, (London, 2005), p. xxiii.

129 *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

130 *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

131 Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 146.

132 John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, p. 25.

133 Frank Power, *Letters From Khartoum Written During The Siege*, (London, 1885), p. 7; John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), Vol. I, pp. 26 -7.

134 Frank Power, *Letters From Khartoum Written During The Siege*, (London, 1885), p. 9.

135 *Ibid.*, p. 12

136 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

137 *Ibid.*, pp. 16-8.

which recommended him to O'Donovan.<sup>138</sup> Hicks was horrified by the latter's conduct:

Mr. O'Donovan, the *Daily News* correspondent, arrived four days ago and ever since he has been drunk, violent, and using inflammatory language to the natives in the bazaar. He laid about, on his back, in the public streets in Khartoum for 48 hours in the most disgusting condition.<sup>139</sup>

The general threatened to banish Frank Vizetelly from Khartoum, as he had, joined O'Donovan in his drinking – they armed themselves with revolvers and threatened people's lives and did everything outrageous, bringing the English in contempt and disgrace. O'Donovan's behaviour was most dangerous in the present state of the fanatic native mind. Had he been murdered in a row it might probably have given rise to an attack on and massacre of all the Christians. Thank God at last he is lying down - he has eaten nothing for four days and has drunk himself into a half state of delirium tremens.<sup>140</sup>

The commander-in-chief concluded his ineffectual lament:

I took his weapons yesterday. He then went off, quite drunk, with a slave dealer – however he was brought back. And this is the man I have to put up with for the duration of the campaign.<sup>141</sup>

The Egyptian force consisted of men coerced into serving the Khedive, after having fought against him under Arabi Pasha. Frank Power became convinced that their machine guns would not deter the Mahdi and that, in certain circumstances, fifty determined men could defeat the Egyptian column.<sup>142</sup> General Hicks expressed similar sentiments in letters to his wife.<sup>143</sup> His difficulties included widespread official corruption, lack of promised funds and incompetent officers. Power and O'Donovan had hoped that this expedition would provide material for a book, but by September the former looked forward to it 'with the greatest gloom'.<sup>144</sup>

138 F. Lauriston Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents*, (Boston, 1914), p. 267.

139 M. W. Daly (ed.), *The Road to Shaykan: Letters of General William Hicks Pasha Written During the Sennar and Kordofan Campaigns, 1883*, (Durham, 1983), entry for 4 August 1883.

140 *Ibid.*

141 *Ibid.*

142 Frank Power, *Letters From Khartoum Written During The Siege*, (London, 1885), p. 22.

143 M. W. Daly (ed.), *The Road to Shaykan: Letters of General William Hicks Pasha Written During the Sennar and Kordofan Campaigns, 1883*, (Durham, 1983), entry for 2 March 1883.

144 Frank Power, *Letters from Khartoum Written During The Siege*, (London, 1885), p. 20.

During the march towards El Obeid, Frank Power became delirious from the effects of heat and dysentery and had to be sent back to Khartoum.<sup>145</sup> Vizetelly was still sketching for the *Graphic*, while Edmond O'Donovan 'became drunk again yesterday and I hear has bought a quantity of poisonous brandy for the march', which General Hicks intended to have destroyed 'by accident on purpose'.<sup>146</sup> Bearing in mind the stress of a Victorian war correspondent's life, its lack of hygiene and effective pain relief, the overwrought Hicks was perhaps rather puritanical in his judgment.<sup>147</sup>

It would have been wiser to operate within a reasonable reach of Khartoum, where the column's poor morale could not have been exposed so mercilessly, but marching from Dueim to El Obeid Hicks was forced into abandoning communication. In his last letter to Sir John Robinson, Edmond O'Donovan deplored the terrible risk of advancing into virtually unknown territory, 230 miles from Khartoum.<sup>148</sup> 'The brightest and bravest of Bohemians' commented on their march into the arid interior:<sup>149</sup>

I am writing this under circumstances which bring me almost as near to death as is possible to be without being under absolute sentence of execution or in the throes of some deadly malady. However, to die out here, with a lance head as big as a shovel through me, will meet my views better than the gradual sinking into the grave which is the lot of so many.<sup>150</sup>

Fatally, Hicks did not insist on following his instincts, but was manipulated into using a route through scrub forest, where his unwieldy army could not keep formation. Without a line of supply with his base, his men found the wells poisoned, large numbers of their camels died and guns had to be abandoned. When an officer asked Edmond O'Donovan where he thought they would be by next week, the Irishman replied: 'In kingdom come'.<sup>151</sup> O'Donovan's Prussian-born orderly, a holder of the Iron Cross, deserted to the Madhi, his information contributing to the imminent disaster. The *Daily News* correspondent noted in his journal: 'What must be the condition of an army, if even a European servant deserts to the enemy?'<sup>152</sup>

145 *Ibid.*, pp. 27 -8; M. W. Daly (ed.), *The Road to Shaykan: Letters of General William Hicks Pasha Written During the Sennar and Kordofan Campaigns, 1883*, (Durham, 1983), entry for 24 September 1883.

146 *Ibid.*

147 This is supported by the *Irish Times* travel supplement of 12 April 2008, which recommends a daily 'nip of brandy' as a precaution for tourists in Egypt.

148 'Africa's Long Death Roll', *Brooklyn Eagle*, copied from the *Daily News*, 31 December 1899.

149 Edmund Downey, *Twenty Years Ago*, (London, 1905), p. 151.

150 F. Lauriston Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents*, (Boston, 1914), p. 231.

151 *Ibid.*, p. 270. For O'Donovan's further misgivings, see *New York Times*, 24 December 1883.

152 'Africa's Long Death Roll', *Brooklyn Eagle*, copied from the *Daily News*, 31 December 1899.

O'Donovan's journal concluded: 'I make my notes and write my reports, but who is going to take them home'.<sup>153</sup> Hicks's exhausted army was subjected to probing attacks from the Madhists on 3 and 4 November. Encamped near Shaykan for the night, the main confrontation came on the morning of 5 November 1883, during which the Egyptian army was speedily annihilated. William Hicks is said to have led a final charge of the European survivors and died bravely. Information about the fate of his army was slow to reach Cairo; O'Donovan and Frank Vizetelly were never heard of again, despite later searches.<sup>154</sup> O'Donovan's friends clung to the belief that he had set off to join the Mahdi to get his side of the story. Hopes were raised by occasional sightings of a European fighting alongside the Sudanese.<sup>155</sup> His former orderly, however, now a prisoner of the Madhi, searched the battlefield and was in no doubt of Edmond O'Donovan's fate:

After a while he observed a leather case in a bush which he recognised as his old master's and in it were his manuscripts, spattered with blood. Searching further he found pieces of his body torn by hyenas and beside them was his blood stained macintosh.<sup>156</sup>

### **Frank Power in Khartoum**

When the annihilation of the Hicks Pasha expedition had been confirmed, Britain decided that Egypt should abandon the Sudan. In response to popular clamour, General Charles Gordon, a mystic and anti-slaver, was sent to evacuate Khartoum, but decided to defend the city in hopes of a relief force. Frank Power had remained in Khartoum, telegraphing his reports to *The Times*, the British government's solitary line of information. He became Gordon's admiring supporter and was appointed Britain's acting consul in Khartoum.<sup>157</sup> Gradually the noose tightened and twenty-seven year old Power's last message ran: 'Gen. Gordon is quite well... I am quite well and happy'.<sup>158</sup> In reality, the ebbing waters of the Nile made their position ever more vulnerable and a successful attack on Khartoum's crumbling walls by the Mahadi's dervishes was imminent. Frank Power was among a small group of Europeans lured into a trap and killed 'whilst endeavouring to pass through the enemy's country to open communications with the British forces then advancing to the relief'.<sup>159</sup> His memorial tablet concludes: 'His remains were never recovered'.

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153 *Ibid.*

154 A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians*, (London, 2002), p. 467; 'Tale of a Refugee', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 29 January 1884.

155 Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 125; John Augustus O'Shea, *Roundabout Recollections*, (1892), p. 8; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 368; *New York Times*, 24 December 1883.

156 Richard Hayes, 'Famous Irish War Correspondents', in *Studies xxxvi* (1947), p. 47.

157 Frank Power, *Letters From Khartoum Written During The Siege*, (London, 1885), pp. 55, 96.

158 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

159 Memorial tablet in St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row, Dublin.

It is ironic that an IRB officer, whom O'Donovan Rossa described as 'Edmond O'Donovan was one man who would never let the flag down as long as he lived', should die at the hands of Islamists seeking their own state and be commemorated in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, which is a shrine to the British Empire.<sup>160</sup> In June 1888, the African war correspondents' memorial, the first monument honouring journalists, who had died in the execution of their duty, was unveiled. Erected with the subscriptions of British journalists, it commemorates seven fallen colleagues:

In memory of the gallant men who in the discharge of their duty as special correspondents fell in the campaigns in the Soudan, 1883–1884–1885. Edmond O'Donovan "Daily News." Kashgil, November 1883. Frank Vizetelly, Artist. Kashgil, November 1883. Frank Power "Times." Ekamar, October 1884.<sup>161</sup>

Some relatives were present at the unveiling, but none of the surviving O'Donovan brothers attended to hear an address by Sir Garnet Wolseley, while Tipperary-born Sir William Butler and Sir Evelyn Wood represented the British Army.

Edmond O'Donovan's life was, however, more complex than this suggests: he had joined the Fenian movement as a teenager and, like his brothers, remained on excellent terms with its leaders.<sup>162</sup> Meeting William O'Brien in the House of Commons in 1882, O'Donovan had commented: 'Here is the bloody old British empire plundering away the world as usual'.<sup>163</sup> Edmond's political convictions had not changed, but 1880s Ireland belonged to Parnell and his party; the time was not opportune for insurrection. The anti-Fenian author of the 'Repeal of the Union Conspiracy' publication maintained that O'Donovan was 'the most earnest and sincere believer in the righteousness of the Fenian cause', who had never profited from his involvement.<sup>164</sup> Before leaving London, the explorer, said to have earned £1,200 from the *Merv Oasis*, had made a will in favour of three of his brothers, Richard being named as executor. Rather inexplicably, his fourth brother was ignored. Probate was granted in spring 1885; Edmond's estate amounted to £715.<sup>165</sup>

160 Rossa in conversation with John O'Leary in Portland prison in 'The Fenian Movement', *Brooklyn Eagle*, 19 July 1885.

161 It is situated on the wall opposite the chapel to the order of the British Empire, Nelson and Wellington's tombs are at the other end of the crypt.

162 In 1877, when the Clan na Gael was seeking alliances with likely enemies of Britain, James J. O'Kelly urged Devoy to authorise Edmond O'Donovan to act as the Clan's envoy to Russia; W. O'Brien and D. Ryan (eds.), *Devoy's Post Bag I* (Dublin, 1948), p. 278. In his *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, (London, Downey & Co., 1896), O'Leary praised the lasting commitment of the O'Donovans.

163 Frank McEvoy, 'Edmond O'Donovan (1844–1883)', in *Old Kilkenny Review* Vol. 2 No. 5 (1983), p. 467.

164 Richard Hayes, 'Famous Irish War Correspondents', in *Studies xxxvi* (1947), p. 48.

165 Frank McEvoy, 'Edmond O'Donovan (1844 – 1883)', in *Old Kilkenny Review* Vol 2 No. 5 (1983), pp. 465 -7.

The 'Repeal of the Union Conspiracy' writer believed that earnings from the *Merv Oasis* were held in trust for the IRB.<sup>166</sup> Given O'Donovan's unconventional character and thirst for adventure, earning his living as an explorer and 'special correspondent' was an ideal position for a man, whose presence in London had been compared to 'a Red Indian in patent leather boots'.<sup>167</sup>

### William O'Donovan's Death

William wrote to the Boston *Republic* after the news of Edmond's disappearance had broken 'I by no means as yet give him up for lost'.<sup>168</sup> He had been promoted to Paris correspondent of the *Irish Times* during the 1870s and later returned to Dublin as a leader writer, before joining Parnell's *United Ireland*. Devoy summarised his politics: 'he remained a Fenian to the last, but was a strong supporter of Parnell'.<sup>169</sup> When that paper was seized and the staff arrested during the height of the Plan of Campaign, O'Donovan fled to New York, where he became Devoy's assistant on the *Irish Nation*:

I could always go away and leave the paper in his hands, sure that what I wanted would be done, except on rare occasions when he went on a spree. Then he would disappear...<sup>170</sup>

Devoy enjoyed Willy's extensive learning and humorous tales of politics and journalism, but regretted that he failed to become a writer.<sup>171</sup> In November 1883, O'Donovan wrote to Devoy concerning Edmond's disappearance:

I have put in the *Herald's* obituary of poor E., but somehow or other I can't bring myself to believe that he has made his last exit. Doubtless before publication day something more will turn up on the subject. Just as in the case of John I find it very hard to realise the idea of E.'s death on account of having been so long separated from him – close on ten years.<sup>172</sup>

His friend replied:

Every new item of news from the Sudan gives me hope that Edmund may be alive. He had at least as good a chance as that English officer who has telegraphed to the Khedive. If he gets through this ordeal it will be the most famous story yet.<sup>173</sup>

166 Richard Hayes, 'Famous Irish War Correspondents', in *Studies xxxvi* (1947), p. 48.

167 F. Lauriston Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents*, (Boston, 1914), p. 231.

168 As quoted in 'Edmund O'Donovan' [sic.], *Irish Times*, 31 December 1883.

169 John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 371.

170 *Ibid.*

171 *Ibid.*, p. 369; *New York Times*, 3 May 1886. J.A. O'Shea, e.g., published several volumes of memoirs. The famous American journalist J. MacGahan's *Campaigning on the Oxus and the fall of Khiva* caused a sensation when published in 1874.

172 W. O'Brien and D. Ryan (eds.), *Devoy's Post Bag II*, (Dublin, 1953), pp. 225-6.

173 *Ibid.*, & p. 228.

Due to a libel case, the *Irish Nation* folded and William, who had developed health problems by late 1883, had to depend on casual work. When Willy, who had not adapted to America and preferred living in the French quarter of New York, died in hospital on 25 April 1886, he was penniless. His corpse lay in the morgue, while his Fenian friends were unaware of his death.<sup>174</sup> John Devoy rose to the challenge and pressurised the press club into sponsoring his funeral, while one of the early Dublin Fenians, now settled in New York, made his family grave available.<sup>175</sup> Few attended O'Donovan's funeral to Calvary Cemetery, the Celtic necropolis overlooking the East River. The conservative *New York Times* slanted Devoy's copy on the three brothers as a useful object lesson for young men; his obituary proclaimed: 'William O'Donovan, his eventful life, lonely death and strangely assorted pall bearers.'<sup>176</sup> Due to the Skirmishing Fund controversy, Devoy and John Breslin, representing Clan na Gael, were not on speaking terms with their fellow pallbearer O'Donovan Rossa, who wept as the last of these three promising brothers was buried.<sup>177</sup> Thomas Clarke Luby, who had been summoned to lend his support as one of the earliest IRB leaders, missed the obsequies, but concurred that 'the whole business, both about him and the fate of his two brothers, is melancholy beyond all expression.'<sup>178</sup>

The *New York Times* concluded: 'It was a scene possible only at the funeral of an "exile of Erin."'

### Richard O'Donovan

Richard O'Donovan had also felt compelled to leave Ireland by 1875. On his way to become a Christian Brother in St. Louis, Missouri, he met with William Horan, a family friend and former arms smuggler, who was based in Birmingham.<sup>179</sup> This ex-IRB organiser helped Richard to find modestly paid work as an insurance translator in Liverpool. Richard and Daniel O'Donovan eventually retired to Wales, while their brother Henry, who had never qualified as a doctor, died as a medical assistant in York in 1905. Richard O'Donovan was the sole member of the family to marry, but his only child died without issue. He remained on friendly terms with John Devoy and became known in Prestatyn, where he died in 1939, as the solitary 'old gentleman with the little dog'.<sup>180</sup>

174 'William O'Donovan', *New York Times*, 3 May 1886.

175 'Our Irish graveyard in America', *United Irishman*, 8 May 1886. O'Donovan was buried in the Hayburne family plot in 1st Calvary Cemetery, New York; no headstone has been erected to date. The author visited his grave in 2007.

176 'William O'Donovan', *New York Times*, 3 May 1886.

177 *Ibid.*; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish Rebel*, (Shannon, 1969), p. 371.

178 W. O'Brien and D. Ryan (eds.), *Devoy's Post Bag II*, (Dublin, 1953), pp. 282-3.

179 In some reminiscences and in Dublin Castle files his name is spelt 'Hogan'.

180 *Devoy's Post Bag II*, pp. 293, 550-1; Patricia Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861), A Biography*, (Kilkenny, 1987), p. 126.



### **The inspiration of *The Merv Oasis***

Edmond O'Donovan's fame as a war correspondent survived until the early twentieth century. In his capacity as an explorer, however, his work is very much alive - the *Merv Oasis* has stimulated archaeological excavation and conservation of 'the queen of cities'. Even today, the Ancient Merv Project of University College London begins its report by quoting him; other specialist groups pay tribute to his inspired diligence on the world-wide web.<sup>181</sup> O'Donovan's great achievement, reprinted in 2001, also features under the auspices of UNESCO, which made Merv a world heritage site in 1999.<sup>182</sup>

### **Acknowledgements**

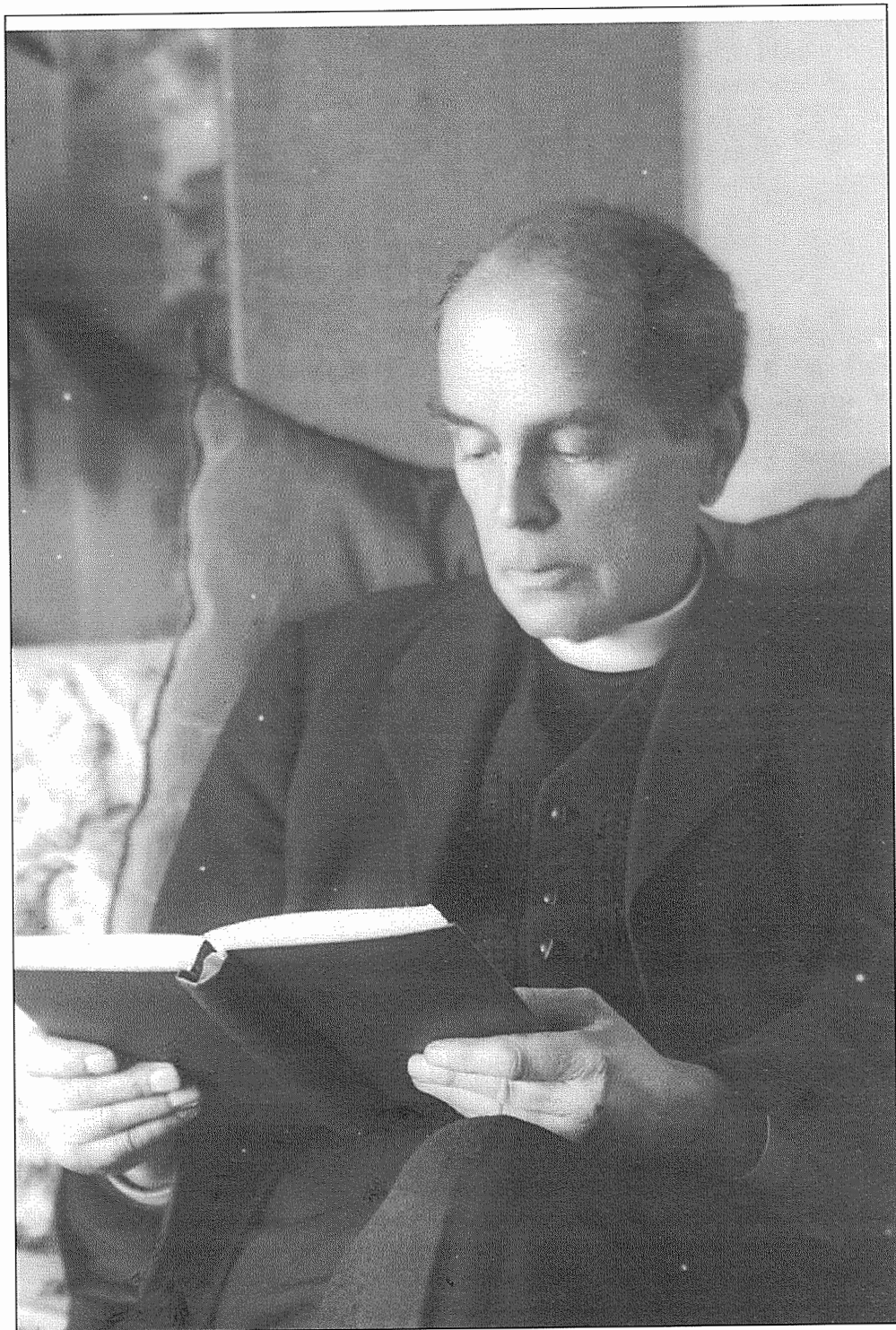
I am grateful to the staffs of the National Library of Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland, the National Archives of England and Wales, Kew; the British Library, the British Newspaper Library, Colindale; Calvary Cemetery, New York, and the Bray Public Library for their assistance.

Thanks are also due to Jim Walsh, Éigse Sliabh Rua, who energised me into writing this essay.

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181 [www.ucl.ac.uk/merv](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/merv).

182 Elibron published a facsimile of the London original of 1882. Tim Williams 'Ancient Merv', *World Heritage Review* No. 24; <http://www.worldheritagereview.org/>



*Plate 1: The Rev. Canon W.W. Flemyng, Rector of Portlaw.*

Courtesy of Willie Power, Portlaw.

# Father Ted Comes To Portlaw: Letters of The Rev. Edwyn Thomas, 1914-1915

*Presented by Julian C. Walton*

## **Prologue**

The Rev. Edwyn ('Teddy') Francis Heaton Thomas was born in Dublin in 1874. He belonged to a family with strong Church of Ireland associations, producing seven clergymen in six generations. 'Teddy's' father temporarily broke the mould, becoming a major in the Bengal Light Infantry and, after early retirement, training as a barrister. In 1872 he married Frances ('Fanny') Banks, of Ryde in the Isle of Wight, and settled at Killoshokane Castle near Borrisoleigh in north Tipperary (his father, the Rev. Francis Heaton Thomas, was rector of the local parish of Kilfithmone). In addition to 'Teddy' they had two daughters, Frances ('Cesca') born in 1873 and Lydia ('Min' or 'Minnie') born in 1875.

The Bankses had a long tradition of service in the Royal Navy, and close by at Castle Fogarty, Ballinlonty, lived their cousins the Fegens, another naval family (Captain Fogarty Fegen was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 1940 and was mentioned in Churchill's famous victory speech of 1945).<sup>1</sup>

The family's pleasant life in their Tipperary castle was abruptly cut short by the death of Major Thomas in 1878. His widow removed herself and her three young children to County Dublin and settled at Sandycove, calling their house Ballinlonty after the Fegen residence. 'Cesca' trained as a nurse in Dublin; Lydia, after a few years' residence in France, returned home to care for their mother, who died in 1918. Teddy was sent to a small private school in Exmouth at the age of nine, but was subsequently educated locally in Dublin. After a brilliant career at Trinity College, where he won many awards including the Vice-Chancellor's Gold Medal for English Verse, he was ordained by the Bishop of London in 1901.

He spent the next two years as a curate in Cricklewood, then taught for three years at Kelham Hall Theological College. Kelham belonged to the High Church or Anglo-Catholic tradition within the Church of England, which sought to revive the richness of Catholic worship which had been rejected by the sixteenth-century reformers. The Eucharist was celebrated with elaborate ceremonial, clergy were

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1 'I do not forget ... Captain Fegen, VC, and other Irish heroes that I could easily recite, and all bitterness by Britain for the Irish race dies in my heart.'

regarded as priests rather than ministers and were addressed as ‘Father’, and there was a revival of interest in the saints. All this was in stark contrast with the Low Church tradition prevalent in the Church of Ireland. At the same time, papal authority was firmly rejected. Relations with Rome received a setback in 1896 when Pope Leo XIII declared Anglican orders to be invalid, and were further complicated by the intransigence of his successor Pius X.

From 1907 until 1913 he served as Anglican chaplain at Marsala in Sicily, during which time he married Helen, née Orpin, widow of Robert Norman-Thompson. Helen had several children by her first marriage, including a daughter Florinda, who in 1923 became the wife of Francis Kingdon-Ward, the famous explorer and botanist. Helen’s second marriage was destined to be brief; beset by illness, she remained at the family home of Kendlestown House, Delgany, Co. Wicklow, and died in 1915.<sup>2</sup>

From September 1913 to May 1914, now back in Ireland, ‘Teddy’ served as curate in Ballina, Co. Mayo. Then, at the beginning of December 1914, he became curate at Portlaw, Co. Waterford – hence his appearance in these pages.

Portlaw in 1914 was in a sorry state. The days of the Malcomson cotton empire were a distant memory. The cotton factory had finally closed in 1904, crippled by the imposition of exorbitant tariffs. Life would have been grim indeed for the mill workers and their families had it not been for the charitable works set up by the Marchioness of Waterford.

The rector under whom Teddy Thomas served was William Westropp Flemyng. Ordained in 1881, Canon Flemyng spent his entire clerical life in Portlaw, until his death in 1921. A classical scholar, he contributed translations of verses to the journal *Kottabos*. He was a keen naturalist, and contributed about thirty articles to *The Zoologist*, *The Irish Naturalist*, and the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*. His researches were an important influence on the work of R.J. Ussher and Lionel Bonaparte-Wyse, and he deserves to be better remembered for his contribution to the history of Irish wildlife.

Throughout his life, from prep-school days until just before his death, ‘Teddy’ Thomas was an unstoppable letter-writer, never failing to provide his mother and sisters with a colourful (if one-sided) account of his experiences. During his two months in Portlaw he dispatched home ten letters and one postcard, which we publish in full below (apart from the omission of one brief outburst in defence of Nietzsche).

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2 In 1925 Kendlestown was bought by Dr Jim Ryan, Fianna Fáil politician and a key minister in de Valera’s cabinets.

## The Letters

(1)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
5.xii.14

My dearest Mother,

I got here at midday today – by *train*. I left Kendlestown<sup>3</sup> at 6 a.m. & caught the mail. No one at Greystones station to give me a ticket. Pitch dark night. No lights in the train. I myself the sole traveller. It was a local to Wicklow where I got on to the mail proper, as the latter does not stop at Greystones. I got my ticket at Wicklow, third class, & travelled to Waterford luxuriously reclining in the first class restaurant car. Such are the fruits of belonging to a pious nation. I had five minutes (per timetable) to catch my train here at Waterford. I missed it by three quarters of an hour. What to do? The next train did not leave for six hours. I resolved what to do. Got my luggage registered on by itself & rode here on the bike – not the motor one, but the other. Which reminds me. They were choice days, yesterday & the day before, for motor bicycling. Discretion guided me & I left the bike (= motor bike) behind, *encore une fois*.

I am habited in two immense draughty rooms, looking north. Excellent for a studio if coal were not so dear. As Canon Flemyng's coachman says, this is a very rejected-looking place. My landlady is genteel & depressed, very unlike the hearty plain-spoken Mrs Speer.<sup>4</sup> Mrs Harvey is a connection of a certain Dr Harvey of Baggot Street, "that is the branch of the family that we belong to". People shouldn't be allowed to give away relationships like that. She is the postmistress & is understood to read nothing but the letters. Perhaps she will read this & put poison in my tea tonight.

The mountains are covered with snow, the wind howls & the rain obeys the laws of gravitation. In fact, "business as usual". I bought a copy of *Irish Freedom* half an hour before it was suppressed by the military authorities. It is nothing like Carson's speeches for full-blooded sedition.<sup>5</sup>

B.L. [best love]

Ever your loving son

T. [Teddy]

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3 The home of Father Edwyn's wife, Helen (see Prologue).

4 The landlady in Ballina, his previous parish.

5 Republican periodical founded in November 1910. Suppressed in December 1914 on account of its increasing radicalism and opposition to Irish participation in the Great War.

(2)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
7.xii.14  
My dear Min,

Your letter has just come. It was good of you to write so soon. Certainly poor old Flemyng is a footler. On Saturday I had my luggage sent by train from Waterford while I myself cycled against a head wind and along a most villainous road – but that is neither here nor there. Canon Flemyng said he would send to the station for my traps, but when ten o'clock at night arrived a note came from him to say that there were no things of mine at the station. He had sent, of course, to the wrong station though I had told him the right one. Result, no luggage at all for me yet; the folk in this house were very decent & lent me things, but I really think the poor Canon must be a bit dotty.

I had an awful walk yesterday morning to take a service at a church 3 miles away.<sup>6</sup> The road was up a steep hill all the way, facing the gale from the S.W. I arrived soaked through & through. Number of congregation, *two*. I hurried home & am none the worse. Did you ever know such a week as it has been? Of course I did not bring the motor bike. I brought my old bike by train & am sorry I did; riding it has not a very good effect on me.

This letter seems rather gloomy, but indeed the air here affects one in the opposite way from that of Ballina. I am full of vague forebodings which I cannot shake off. Yet things on the whole are quite pleasant. The landlady is kindness itself, the cooking very much better than Mrs Speer's, & the Canon a charming old footler who overwhelms me with compliments on my voice & elocution & preaching. But that sort of thing never pleases but only worries me; it is so hard to live up to it! As for churchmanship, I doubt if he really has any; does it exist in Ireland? I know not.

Best love & many thanks for your letter.

Your ever loving brother, E.T.

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6 St John's Church, Guilcagh.

(3)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
9.xii.14  
My dear Min,

Yesterday was bright & fine & I went for a prowl over the hill beside Curraghmore. On the map a disused church<sup>7</sup> was marked & I wanted to see what it was like. The road, a rough track, was uphill & incredibly steep all the way, & lay between fine old beech woods. The views backwards over the Suir towards Waterford were beautiful. After nearly three miles of a walk I reached my goal. It was just over the hill, facing west. Imagine a very steep hill crowned with woods; a couple of hundred feet from the top the woods stop & pasture begins. Just where the wood breaks off stands the old church. From the altar one looks out through the west door, across a semi-circular sweep of grass bounded by a low parapet, & then over five miles of park down below, to where the Comeragh mountains stand up against the evening sun. It was like S. Miniato at Florence.<sup>8</sup> Quite the most beautifully situated church I have ever seen.

The building itself is mid-eighteenth century, stiff & ugly enough. The pews are arranged in collegiate fashion,<sup>9</sup> & there are many notable monuments as it is the domestic chapel and family burying-place of the Beresfords – a bad, black-hearted lot. But the beauty of its setting! It was a clear bright evening, with a large star or two shining through the beech tops; far down below, the widening stretch of darkening park; beyond, the strange outline of the Comeraghs clear against the glow of the sunset.

The custodian was the most voluble and disconnected speaker I have ever come across. She was a black Protestant from County Cavan, who always dropped her voice (they always do, in the north) to a mysterious whisper when controversial subjects were toward. But she gave the Beresfords a pretty black character, as everybody else does who knows anything about them.

I find that Canon Flemyng has been in Portlaw ever since he was ordained. Poor man, no wonder he is moss-grown. No one has a good word for him; he is a trifle “Pimmy”, full of hollow suavity and a good deal of a snob. But thirty-five years, from twenty-three to sixty, in one place with little or nothing to do, would destroy any man’s character.

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7 Clonegam Church.

8 Renowned monastery and pilgrimage site, on top of a hill outside Florence.

9 i.e., the two sides facing each other rather than the altar.



*Plate 2: The Rev. Edwyn Francis Heaton Thomas (1874-1923).*

Copyright, owners of the Thomas Papers.



In Ballina there was a great deal of genuine Irish feeling, but here one could cut the flunkeyism<sup>10</sup> and anti-Irish bitterness with a butter-knife. Better for all concerned that the whole crew of shoneens were out of the country for good.

11.xii.14

O Lord! O Lord! I am just escaped, barely with life, from a Choir Practice. I went with a bad headache. I return with a worse one, and a heart full of bitterness and a mouth full of cursing.

A woman conducted – not the poor little frightened scrap of an organist-schoolmistress, but a great creature with a presence & an oaken baton & a powerful arm with which she smote the baton against the church furniture, & a complete absence of tact, feeling, religion, music, or humour. I was stunned & numbed. A most monstrous Regiment of Women.<sup>11</sup> Her qualification is that she is the richest woman in Portlaw. Worthy, no doubt, but an anachronism, an incubus, a bye-word, a hissing,<sup>12</sup> an offence. Other women were there also, haughty & walking with stretched out necks, walking & mincing as they went, with chains & bracelets & nose jewels & changeable suits of apparel & crissing pins.<sup>13</sup>

10 i.e., subservience to all things British.

11 An allusion to the tract published in 1558 by the Scots Calvinist preacher John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment [i.e., regime] of Women*. Knox's bile was directed against the Catholic queens Mary Stuart of Scotland and Mary Tudor of England. His pamphlet backfired on him almost immediately when Mary Tudor was succeeded by the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I.

12 An insult favoured by the Old Testament prophets, e.g., Jeremiah 51, v.37: And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.

13 Father Edwyn is reminded of a colourful passage in the book of Isaiah (3, v.16-26) in which the prophet denounces the wealthy women of Jerusalem and gleefully anticipates their punishment by Yahweh:

Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet:

Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts.

In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the

Good man Isaiah! I'm sure he must have written his third chapter after returning from a Choir Practice. Ha! "Instead of well set hair, *baldness*"; good, only most of them are bald already under their transformations; "instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth"; a stomacher sounds unpleasant, but O Lord! Let the sackcloth be exceeding rough & coarse!

If I had been the poor little organist – so bullied was she – I should either have cried or foamed. The first time I have ever simultaneously pitied and admired an Ulster Protestant; for she did neither, but struggled on with trembling hands & blazing cheeks. Let me consult Isaiah again: "burning instead of beauty"; Miss Morley hasn't any beauty, but she will certainly burn unless she amends. "Seven women shall take hold of one man" – heaven forbid that I should be that man if Miss Morley or any of the choir are found among the seven.<sup>14</sup>

It behoves me to cease; I perceive that Isaiah has biting things to say of the Eloquent Orator.<sup>15</sup> Seriously, it was an awful business, which I shall certainly abstain from in future.

Best love to all. Please thank Mother for her letter & Ces for her card.

T.

Why are you not on the Halpins' Committee? Please send information about that cocoa preparation you all drink. It would be better for supper than tea.

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earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.

And it shall come to pass, that in stead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and in stead of a girdle a rent; and in stead of well set hair baldness; and in stead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning in stead of beauty.

Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground.

14 Isaiah 4, v.1: And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

15 Isaiah 2, v.1-3: For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

(4)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
17.xii.14  
My dear Min,

Though a trifle premature, this is to wish you many happy returns of the twenty-first.<sup>16</sup> The day, as I write, is dismal in the extreme, a howling wind, drenching rain, muddy roads, and an unspeakably squalid outlook upon rows of jerry-built houses in a state of premature decay. Depression & dark decay have weighed upon me ever since I came here. I am convinced that these rooms are haunted by a suicide. Every night I dream again long-forgotten dreams of horrible dread presences – nothing seen or heard, but a far more awful experience of an imminent, closely-approaching horror. The last three Marquises of Waterford committed suicide; perhaps it is in the air.

Canon Flemyng is developing weak points in the most alarming way. His ecclesiastical habits & customs are nothing like as good & seemly as Nash's,<sup>17</sup> & he has the mind of a narrow elderly spinster. There is nothing of the man about him at all. I was discussing some Biblical question with him the other day & said by way of illustration of my point:

“The two things are not comparable. One might as well try to compare the Equator with a pot of marmalade.”

He stunned me by crying out in a shocked voice:

“Oh! I really can't have this! You must *not* bring such subjects as *marmalade* into a discussion on holy things (i.e., the character of Cornelius).<sup>18</sup> I cannot listen to such unbecoming language.”

What *am* I to do with a mind like that?

My stay, I perceive, will be exceedingly brief, here, and it will be put down to the instability of my character, perhaps rightly. But as I read myself, the trouble is that I am institutionally a prophet, true or false, who looks to principles & broad views, & is intolerant, like all prophets, of what seems to me petty & false & sham & make believe. Now, practically the whole of the average parson's weekday life is either petty or false or sham or make believe. His gossipy parish visits to “better class” people, his pious platitudinous patter to the poor, his

16 Lydia Thomas was born 21 December 1875.

17 The rector in Ballina.

18 Roman centurion, considered by Christians to be the first Gentile to convert to the faith, as related in Acts of the Apostles.

feeble catechising of the children – sham, and ineffective sham at that.

I was talking to the rector of a neighbouring parish yesterday, a youngish man called Greene.<sup>19</sup> He agrees with me that in the country parts of Ireland, at any rate, the sooner the Church of Ireland expires, the better. Going from his parsonage to his church of a Sunday morning, he said, he passes hundreds of Catholics, on their way to Mass, wet or fair. In his own church 20 is a large congregation, & their attitude is always one of gloomy suspicion. How can one be a real priest to a parish like that – or like this? They *want* the sham. Well, teach them to want something better, you say. True enough, one could try to, in a parish of one’s own, & risk the poor house. But here one is fettered by the powers that be, and who can overcome their inertia?

Canon Flemyng has the schoolchildren to the church every Wednesday at 11.30 to catechise – a most laudable custom. But where does he put them? Into the choir stalls, the littlest at the back, behind a screen of solid oak as high as my chest when I am standing. I quietly suggested putting the children in the front pews of the church where they could see & be seen. He was frantic:

“Those are Lady Waterford’s pews & she wouldn’t like dirty children put in them.”

“Then the children’s welfare is in this to be sacrificed to Lady Waterford’s wishes?” I could not help retorting.

But I could not gain my point & I have to catechise totally invisible children, as he has been doing complacently for years. A poignant example of cleansing the *outside* of cup & platter.<sup>20</sup>

The Canon is one of those curious people who never think for themselves, but always have second hand opinions – not those of the *last* person they have met, like Staines,<sup>21</sup> but rather of the *first* who has expressed himself strongly; thereafter their minds are impenetrable to fresh judgements. I sometimes profanely wish that I was like

19 Rev. George W. Greene, vicar of Kilmeaden, a former barrister. He became Dean of Lismore in 1919 and died in 1930.

20 St Matthew XXIII.25: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

21 The writer’s first cousin, the Rev. Edwyn Francis Staines Daniell, chaplain to the 2nd Viscount Halifax. Lord Halifax was for many years president of the English Church Union and a leader of the Anglo-Catholic movement. He was also a celebrated compiler of ghost stories. Staines lived in the chaplain’s residence near Hickleton Hall, Doncaster, the Halifax family seat, where he died 22 April 1920.

Staines or the Canon; life would be so very much easier. But their attitude is wrong, wrong, wrong, even if it is easier; and mine is right, even if it involves me in continual conflict – to have a rational, reasonable explanation for what one does, & not a mere foolish imitating of someone else.

This is a frightfully egotistical letter & I had better stop. Again, every possible good wish for your birthday.

Best love to all from

Ever your very loving brother T.

(5)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
23.xii.14

My dearest Mother,

This is to wish you a very happy Christmas & New Year. We have had a continuous frost here for four days and there is no sign of a change yet. The roads are like glass and there have been several pretty bad accidents from falls. The poor horse broke both its forelegs and had to be shot.

There are three cats in this house, the grandmother a huge Persian, her daughter an ordinary tabby, & the granddaughter, a small skinny black with light yellow eyes. The Harveys, the people of the house, improve a good deal on acquaintance. They know Frank Nevel well & often had him to stay when he was a boy at school in Waterford. Also there are people here called Malcolmson [*sic.*] – it was their grandfather who founded the mill here – and they are cousins of the Woodhouses. The doctor, Walker by name, is an old Bensonite<sup>22</sup> & was at the school with Jack Harden.<sup>23</sup>

The scenery all round is extraordinarily beautiful & the hills are covered with regular forests of trees. In the summer it must be quite delightful, but beyond question it is a very relaxing place, shut in among the hills & the damp woods. It would be quite ideal for a short summer visit.

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22 i.e., a former pupil of Rathmines School. The headmaster from 1859 to 1899 was the Rev. Charles W. Benson. Author of *Our Irish Song Birds*, (1901), he was, so to speak, a noted ornithologist – a link with Canon Flemyng!

23 The Rev. John Mason Harden (1871-1931), a distinguished religious scholar; Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry 1928-1931.

I must stop now. Once more a very happy Christmas. Best love to you all from your very loving son

E.T.

Please thank Minnie for her letter. I shall write to her soon.

(6)

Portlaw,

Co. Waterford.

28.xii.14

My dearest Mother,

Thank you very much indeed for all the things you sent me. I don't know whom I have properly to thank for what, but at any rate everything in the parcel, which came yesterday morning, was just such as I would have bought for myself; at last I have my long wished-for blotter; the book I have not read, but want to; the copy of the *National Student* was the finishing touch; I have been greatly entertained by it. Thank you all again for remembering me. I sent no presents myself – *not* “because of the War”, a plea I hate as much as you do! – but chiefly because there are literally no shops here at all.

I got an awful soaking going over the mountain to Guilcagh on Christmas morning. It was a terrible day, blowing a gale and drenching rain at the same time. However, I am none the worse. I had dinner with the Harveys, who are really an awfully good sort.

The rain coming down this minute beats anything I have ever seen; it is a real deluge.

As to plans for the immediate future, I am undecided (a hateful state of mind). I am corresponding with O'Rorke's<sup>24</sup> commissary in England about Accra, but nothing is possible there till the war pressure is eased a little. Meanwhile I find that here my income will fall below expenditure by £1 per annum.

Very best love & renewed thanks from

Your very loving son        T.

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24 The Rt Rev. Mowbray Stephen O'Rorke, Bishop of Accra, 1913-1924. Renowned for his Anglo-Catholic views, he was instrumental in promoting the cult of Our Lady of Walsingham during the twenties and thirties.

(7)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
29.xii.14  
My dear Min,

Very many thanks for your share in the parcel which arrived safely the other day. I had a very quiet and on the whole pleasant Christmas Day. I got drenched going to Guilcagh in the morning but after changing I was all right & had an early dinner with the Harveys, & talked books & music with the daughter till tea time.

*Mar gheall ar an bhfear úd, i Lorcan; ná bí ag cur tré chéile aigne ort i n-aon chor. Tá fhios agam go maith go bhfuil sé níos fusa d'á rádh ná d'á dhéanamh. Ach mar son féin, déin rud orm.*<sup>25</sup>

Thank you for Molly Barlee's letter. I am writing to K. and hope to get some sort of answer this time. What ages they have been in England!<sup>26</sup>

I have several "literary" ideas in my head and partly on paper. The worst of it is that one gets so sick of what one has done, that the temptation is strong to leave it all unfinished. I used to feel just the same about written sermons. It is quite different with my later "extempore" ones; when I look over an old one with a view to using it, it often stirs me like anything. Queer, isn't it?

Months ago, I sent that little "sketch" I showed you to the *Westminster*,<sup>27</sup> with stamped & addressed envelope for return. Since then I have heard nothing good or bad – which look unhealthy. Yet I fully believe I can write as good stuff as half the folk who make a respectable living by it.

I pity you & Mother having to tramp all that way to the Boxwells.<sup>28</sup> They always have a most gloomy effect on me. I heard from Ethelwyne Rowan Hamilton the other day. She has become a Roman Catholic, like her sister.<sup>29</sup> Terrific consternation among her

25 A cryptic reference to a private problem! Roughly translates as, 'As for that fellow Lawrence / Larry, don't worry about him at all. I well know that's easier said than done. But at the same time, be said by me.'

26 Sir Kenneth and Lady Barlee, old family friends. Sir Kenneth was a judge in the Bombay High Court. They remained in England!

27 *Westminster Gazette* (1893-1928), a liberal newspaper known for publishing sketches and short stories.

28 Family friends who lived in Blackrock.

29 They were great-great-granddaughters of the United Irish leader Archibald Hamilton Rowan. Ethelwyn later became a nun.

Pottaw, Co. Waterford  
9. 1. 15

My dear Miss,

I saw about P. W. G. & wrote a congratulatory letter to S. J. Senior, no reply yet, though. It was very fine of him & just what one would have expected. I enclose a picture which you may not have seen.

Yesterday the Canon took me to see the servants & other menials at Curraghmore. The buildings are peculiar. Imagine a fine though rather gloomy mansion standing in a splendid park. Thus A is the house, B the front door, C, C, two long rows of workman's houses, hideous in design & naturally not too tidy. D is a huge gravelled empty courtyard, bounded at E by a common, very common iron grille, in the middle of which is a common iron farm gate, the principal & only approach to the house. I never <sup>was</sup> saw such a curious & unbeautiful combination. It was exactly as if one should put the buildings at Glasnevin on each side of Bunderstown right out to the town's ground, & have the lawn turned into a bare gravelled playground & grassy ground for the hounys & fawnings, young & old. Of course the lawn

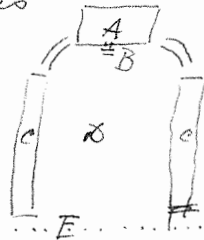


Plate 3: 'Teddy' visits Curraghmore: Excerpt from letter dated 9 January 1915. Copyright, owners of the Thomas Papers.



kinsfolk & acquaintance, especially Helen who hints dark malign Jesuit influence.

Ever your very loving brother T.

I have not heard from Staines at all. Usually he sends a greeting of some sort at Christmas.

(8)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.

9.i.15

My dear Min,

I saw about P.W.J. and wrote a congratulatory letter to W.J. senior. No reply yet, though. It was very fine of him & just what one would have expected. I enclose a picture which you may not have seen.

Yesterday the Canon took me to see the servants & other menials at Curraghmore. The buildings are peculiar. Imagine a fine though rather gloomy mansion standing in a splendid park. Thus A is the house, B the front door, C-C two long rows of *workman's* houses, hideous in design & naturally not too tidy. D is a huge gravelled empty courtyard, bounded at E by a common, very common iron grille, in the middle of which is a common iron *farm gate*, the principal & only approach to the house. I never saw such a curious & unbeautiful combination. It was exactly as if one should put the "buildings" at Glasthule<sup>30</sup> on each side of Kendlestown right to the tennis ground, & have the lawn turned into a bare gravelled playground & gossiping ground for the Downeys & Gunnings, young & old. Of course the Canon considers it all perfect – did not the Waterfords design it? - & was seriously annoyed with me for not agreeing with him.

We went to the housekeeper's room & the menials were brought in in batches. It would be hard to imagine anything more ludicrous. Two red-cheeked English kitchen wenches enter, young & bursting with a mixture of shyness, forwardness, & giggles insufficiently suppressed. Laboured handshakes all round. Blank & awful silence. The Canon painfully struggles to bring a suitable thought to birth. The girls begin to writhe after the manner of their kind & chew the hem of their aprons. I stand grim in the background.

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30 Suburban village on Dublin's east coast, between Dun Laoghaire and Dalkey. Close to Sandycove, where the Thomas family lived.

At last the Canon says:

“I hope you come to Church regularly?”

“Oh! Yes, sir.”

“I hope you don’t find it too far?”

“Oh! No, sir.”

“I suppose you work pretty hard?”

“Oh! Yes, sir.”

“I hope you don’t work too hard?” (suspicion of jocosity here; the girls explode, as at one of Harry Lauder’s choicest).<sup>31</sup>

“Oh! No, sir.”

Exeunt.

Positively that is just how it happened. Others were marshalled in with the same grievous result. We departed, warm with a sense of duty well done. Isn’t it all terrible? No wonder parsons are taken for fools. No other professional man – priest, doctor, lawyer – puts himself into such a uselessly ineffective & undignified position.

I got a letter the other day from the Edwards children<sup>32</sup> thanking me for Christmas books. It had a large printed paper pasted on the back, “Opened by the Censor!” What a jar he must have got when he found out what it really was. But I can’t think that they open all the letters from Italy & other neutral countries,<sup>33</sup> probably it is only those directed to Ireland, which is at present under martial law, the Constitution having been suspended, according to the *Times*.

Did I tell you that Ethelwyne Rowan Hamilton has become a Roman Catholic? Great consternation & grief. It is now alleged “that she was always a bit weak in the head, poor thing.”

New Year’s Day is one of the quarterly pay days in the Church of Ireland. I got the usual cheque from the Representative Ch. Body today & find that I am getting even less than I expected. I am not yet licensed, so I get £2 a week, less £8 a year Widows & Orphans Fund & full income tax, which latter I cannot recover as Helen is liable for it & so, according to the rules, am I. Result, £104 per annum, minus £8 + £14 = £82; expenses of living here = £104 per annum. Dead loss of £22 per annum. Not good enough. I must make tracks.

Best love to you all.

Ever your very loving brother            T.

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31 Sir Henry McLennan Lauder (1870-1950), renowned Scottish song-writer and entertainer.

32 At Marsala in Sicily, where Fr Edwyn had been Anglican chaplain before returning to Ireland.

33 Italy was neutral until 1915, when she joined the war on the allied side.

(9)

[Post card to Lydia, stamped 10.i.1915]

Another week gone and I have not written to you. However, bear up! I'll write if possible tomorrow. Many thanks for yours. The weather is grand here but very cold. Poor old Mrs Orpin<sup>34</sup> is very ill, given up by the doctor [she] says. But this may be a slight exaggeration. She is over 84 but extraordinarily hale; never had an illness before.

B.L. [best love]    Yrs    E.T.

(10)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.  
18.i.15

My dearest Mother,

I fear I have been very slack about letter writing this week – not, indeed, because I have had anything better to do; idleness begets idleness. I paid my first visit to Lady Waterford at Curraghmore on Thursday. (N.B., for Minnie's information, my former visit was to see the servants only, with the Canon. The present Lord Waterford, also, is a boy of fourteen.) I found her playing racquets with the second boy. She is a pleasant little creature, very dark, looks about twenty-five but must be ten years older, and has what I can only describe as a "Thomas manner", to wit, a cheerful friendliness & vivacity & wish to please, combined with a tongue of a sharpness, but of a sharpness! Altogether a fascinating little person. I felt at home at once, & we swapped stories & experiences with great eagerness for a couple of hours. It is hard to realise that Lady Waterford is a daughter of that pompous noodle Lord Lansdowne,<sup>35</sup> but so it is.

Lady Susan Dawnay, sister of the late Lord Waterford, was there too. She is a decent homely sort with no pretension to anything save a rather untidy kind of good nature. Her husband was killed at

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34 His mother-in-law (see Prologue).

35 Henry Petty-FitzMaurice, 5th Marquess of Lansdowne (1845-1927), Irish landowner and British statesman. At this time he was leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Lords. In 1917 he courageously circulated the 'Lansdowne Letter'; this called for a negotiated peace with Germany and an end to the war which, he believed, would 'spell ruin for the civilised world, and an infinite addition to the load of human suffering which already weighs upon it'. Its publication in the *Daily Telegraph* ruined his political career.

the war a couple of months ago, and she has been staying ever since at Curraghmore with her four children; these, with the six young Waterfords, make up rather a housefull, I should imagine.

I had a really pleasant afternoon; we agreed cordially about tales of German atrocities and the common (in some quarters) ungenerous ignoring of the French & undue laudation of the English; we were even at one on the subject of Irish recruiting.

Practically no young men are left in Portlaw. And now the police have given notice that a raid is expected tomorrow, as 30 German ships have escaped into the Atlantic. Minute directions are given as to the roads to move along inland. Farmers are ordered to drive before them all cattle & horses, to burn all ricks of hay & straw, to bury or throw into rivers or lochs all implements of steel or iron or brass. It's just like Goethe's *Hermann & Dorothea*.<sup>36</sup> The poor Harveys are in an awful state of terror, but there is really nothing to be afraid of.

Please thank Minnie very much for her letters. I shall write to her soon. Best love to you all.

Ever your loving son,           E.T.

(11)

Portlaw,  
Co. Waterford.

l.ii.15

My dear Min,

Last night was of the most beautiful – full moon, still, clear. Today all is mud and driving mist & oozing moisture. I preached last night & had a sort of minor triumph; there were ten more people in church than at the morning service, and Lady Waterford turned up – a thing unheard of in the evening. Fortunately I did not see her or it might have made me self-conscious; the sermon “went” well & was real fine. This sounds all very conceited, but you know it isn't that, really. A thing superlatively well done pleases me, even when I do it myself.

Canon Flemyng gets worse. He told me roundly the other day that I had no business to discuss parish affairs with him or to make any suggestions. He is quite intolerable. Enough of him!

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36 Mock-heroic epic by Goethe (1798) depicting the disruption of civilian life by invading armies, based on the author's experiences during the French revolutionary wars.

I am wallowing in Nietzsche just now. What a flock of silly sheep the newspaper writers are. I don't believe that one of them has done more than read *about* him, to listen to the way they misrepresent his teaching. He is just like Fr Kelly – but wise & profound, a master of epigram & biting phrases & wide expanses. I am reading him in French & I am sure that language suits him better than his own more ponderous German or commonplace English. The silly newspapers attribute the German atrocities to his teaching; but *Bon Dieu!* They might as well attribute them to our Lord. Nietzsche detested & despised the Germans & especially Prussian militarism. His *Superman* hasn't the slightest resemblance to Wilhelm II or to General von Kluck ...<sup>37</sup>

Well, the war has come near enough to you, at all events, though I suppose you did not know of the submarine till it had scooted. I wonder what the next move will be. What you say about affairs at Ryde<sup>38</sup> is very disquieting; the dread of things going wrong there has half-paralysed me almost all my life – not of course on my own account, for I don't "come in", but for Mother's sake.

Even in this benighted spot some good can be done. The small boys, after the manner of their kind, pestered me for money "for a football" – edible, no doubt. I hit on the device of refusing any till they asked in Irish. Now I find that most of their mothers speak it well, & by constantly rubbing it in that they are only English unless they know Irish, the children are getting quite keen. One youth of nine told me personally today that his mother now teaches him his prayers every night in Irish. I was doubtful & asked for proof; he stated away quite fluently. When I came here, he literally had not one word & thought it all a sort of joke. Now, every Catholic child in the village, almost, boys & girls alike, greets me in Irish; it is all most of them can do, but it's better than nothing, & at least they see now that it is something real & *not* a joke.

Very best love.

Ever your loving brother,

E.T.

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37 The remainder of the paragraph, containing quotations from Nietzsche, is omitted.

38 Home of their mother in the Isle of Wight, where she had inherited property.

## **Epilogue**

Teddy Thomas's prediction that his time in Portlaw would not be long proved correct. His next letter home was written on 18 March 1915 from Birmingham, where he served as curate until January 1916. He spent the following year on the Anglican mission to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in West Africa, an adventurous time which was to prove the high point in his career. On his return he spent six months at Lixnaw in Co. Kerry, his third Irish parish.

On returning to England in April 1918, he spent the next few years in a number of locations, increasingly frustrated that he could not get a parish of his own, or even a permanent curacy. But his obvious merits – his restless energy, his dedication to the job in hand, his easy relationship with most parishioners – were offset by his outspoken dislike of ecclesiastical authority, his unconcealed contempt for snobbery, and his Irish nationalism.

By the end of 1922, however, his career seemed to have stabilised. He had his own parish at Newtown on the Isle of Wight, not far from his mother's old home at Ryde; his residence, the Lamb's Cottage, provided an idyllic home; he was again married, this time to an English Roman Catholic named Juliet Severn, and was the father of a baby daughter, Frances Juliet Peggy ('Pegeen').

But his year in West Africa – the 'White Man's Grave' – had left its mark upon his health. On 7 July 1923, not yet forty-nine years old, he died.

## **Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge with thanks permission of the owners of the Thomas Papers to publish the letters of the Rev. Edwyn Thomas written from Portlaw, together with a photograph of the writer and part of one of his letters.

We are also grateful to Mr Michael O'Meara for information on Canon W.W. Flemyng and to Mr Willie Power of Portlaw for providing a photograph of the Canon.

## Book Reviews

*The Irish General: Thomas Francis Meagher*, by Paul R. Wylie: University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 2007. Hardback, pp. 404 £17/\$29.

Thomas Francis Meagher was a man of and for his time. Tempered in the cauldron of nineteenth century Irish political agitation, shaped by a classical Jesuit education and—as if in preparation for his destiny—inculcated in the ideology of the constitutional nationalism of Jacksonian democracy, Thomas Francis Meagher's short life suggests a fiction from the quintessential era of European Romanticism. Characterised by familial conflict, failed revolution, exile and escape from a penal colony, his arrival in the young American republic not only led to his involvement in the American Civil War but to a later mysterious death. It was these ingredients that ensured that Meagher's life was resonant of nuances and complexities as each phase meant a new redefinition as political and military ambitions inevitably surfaced, instigating the pursuit of novel adventures and a revised self-image.

In a lively, well-paced well-written and handsomely illustrated biography, Paul R. Wylie's, *The Irish General: Thomas Francis Meagher* adds to an ever-growing corpus of Meagher monographs written since the beginning of this century. Moving effortlessly through the many phases of his life this biography falls into three sections; Meagher as idealistic rebel, his trial and subsequent escape to New York city; his career in the United States through to the end of the Civil War, and his western adventure in Montana until his unexplained death in July 1867. One of the more interesting aspects of this monograph is that the images and photographs of Meagher tell their own story. From the engraved dandy of 1849 (62) and 1850 (10) to the photograph of the weary and disillusioned, if not dissolute, ex-soldier politician of 1867 (273) it is clear, as Wylie correctly asserts, that by 1867 'Drink, recklessness and politics had seemingly brought him to a dead end' (305). However, while Wylie's knowledge of the dynamics of post-civil war Montanan politics is relayed with refreshing clarity, it is evident from early in this book that his grasp of nineteenth-century Irish politics is, at best, superficial. This is disappointing, especially as his interpretation of the relationship between Young Ireland and Daniel O'Connell was much more nuanced (34) and Meagher's 'sword speech' more complex (36-40) than is outlined in this narrative.

These interpretative deficiencies are also evident in Wylie's discussion of the Daly - Meagher rift (136-7) and of Meagher's flirtation with Fenianism. The real issue was not Meagher's canvassing for leadership and ultimate appointment as Brigadier-General of the Irish Brigade, but the fact that he was not a Fenian! Failure to understand this critical fact or to comprehend the forces driving the ambitious Meagher, and that in reality there were many facets to Meagher's career, makes a definitive biography of this transatlantic republican, irrespective of the present author's claim, difficult. If this is a shortcoming in the present work so are the many errors. The Henry Meagher who 'held a high position in the Vatican' and who visited New York City in 1853 (90, 93) was not Meagher's uncle (he died in

1838), he was his brother. Stating that ‘Only Meagher and his year-old sister, Christine Mary, survived childhood’ (19) is clearly factually incorrect. Stonyhurst is in Lancashire not Yorkshire (24) and the ‘plantation in Alabama’ jibe by Mitchel was in fact aimed at Hughes (93)! Moreover, Meagher did not fight as a colonel at the first Battle of Bull Run (5) nor was he wounded at Fredericksburg (175).

It is when the author addresses Meagher’s irruption into Montana politics that he excels. Here Wiley is surefooted, penetrating and erudite. He untangles the intricacies of the territorial legislatures with a lawyer’s incisiveness and brings clarity to this complex episode. The crucial roles played by Edgerton (249-51) and Green Clay Smith (262) in the territorial legislatures are explained succinctly, as is Munson’s role in the Daniel’s affair (263-4). While his misinterpretation of Elliott West’s article regarding ‘Meagher’s Bar Bill’ is unfortunate (258), his conclusion pertaining to Meagher’s death is unconvincing and a little disappointing. However, these should not deflect us from acknowledging the impressive and at times groundbreaking research undertaken by the author.

Wiley’s Meagher is, however, one-dimensional, devoid of the complexities and paradoxes that characterised his multifaceted life. As perhaps the most assimilated of the Young Ireland leaders, Meagher’s commitment to national self-determination and republican principles would eventually smooth the uneven path of assimilation and make it passable for later waves of Irish Americans. Thus, his story is not just one of the Irish in America, but one of the growing duality of what it meant to be an Irish American in the nineteenth century. As such, an analysis of Meagher within the broader context of the Irish diaspora where he often came to represent the protean spirit of the nature of the diaspora itself would have been more productive. Until a biographer grasps this concept the definitive Meagher biography will elude us. Nonetheless, Paul R. Wiley has at least brought us one step closer.

*John M. Hearne*



*The Great Parchment Book of Waterford: Liber Antiquissimus Civitatis Waterfordiae*, edited by Niall J. Byrne: Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, Hardback, pp. 300, €50.

This remarkable manuscript gives a unique insight into the progress of a late-medieval Irish city and has been edited, translated and transcribed for the first time by Dr. Niall Byrne. The work contains a total of 223 folios of velum and with sections in Norman French, Latin and English. In fact Waterford's *Great Parchment Book* is the first of the Irish municipal records to make use of the English language.

The importance of Dr. Byrne's scholarly work cannot be over-emphasised, as he has made accessible a myriad of detail about the organization, taxation and urban infrastructure of late medieval Waterford, during the period when the city was, after Dublin, the second most important in the country.

This edition will be of inestimable benefit to socio-economic historians in particular. Although this manuscript deals primarily with the period from after the middle of the fourteenth century, there is a long and important section (folios 13-20) in the early part of the *Liber* which deals with the 'economic war' fought between Waterford and its near neighbour, New Ross, for control of the profitable trade and commerce of Waterford Harbour and the Suir, Nore and Barrow river systems, whose origins are to be found in the early thirteenth century.

A most remarkable feature of the *Liber* is the record of the precise figure (2,256) of the number of people killed by the plague in the year 1604 (folio 164r). Dr. Byrne correctly suggests that the compiler probably had access to a register of mortality. Details such as this and an outline of the relief measures taken in combating the plague outbreak are very rare in Irish manuscript sources from the period. Interestingly the compiler goes on to apportion the blame to the soldiers of the garrison for the spread of the plague in the city.

Many of the lavishly illuminated pages from the *Liber* have been reproduced. Of particular interest is Folio 61, which records the mayoralty of Peter Aylward in 1556 and has the most elaborate decoration of the entire manuscript. This page also provides a unique insight into the religious, social and political tensions in Waterford during a period of profound upheaval. A representation of the Last Judgement as well as an image of the Virgin Lactos and the beautifully-executed portrait of the young Queen Elizabeth without any of the accoutrements of power all appear on this page – with the 'loyal' port of Waterford in the background. Apart from the *Book of Kells* this is the only Irish manuscript to show an image of the Virgin.

Although Waterford's *Great Parchment Book* has been known to scholars for many years, it has not been readily accessible until now. Gilbert, the eminent historian examined the manuscript in Waterford City Hall in the late nineteenth century for the Historical Manuscripts Commission and although he described it as one of the most important sources for the study of Irish municipal life in medieval times he only published a few short extracts from it and he did not undertake the mammoth task of translating the entire manuscript.

Now however, as a result of the dedicated and painstaking scholarship of Dr. Niall Byrne this unique historical source has finally been made available to scholars, students and researchers for the first time. It is a unique source for the study not only of Waterford but of medieval Ireland.

*Professor Terence Barry, Trinity College, Dublin.*

# CONSTITUTION OF THE WATERFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1. **Name:**  
The Society shall be called - "The Waterford Archaeological and Historical Society" (formerly The Old Waterford Society).
2. **Objects:**  
The objects of the Society shall be:
  - (a) to encourage interest in history and archaeology in general but with particular reference to Waterford and adjoining Counties;
  - (b) to promote research into same;
  - (c) to arrange for the further informing of members of the Society by way of lectures on appropriate subjects and visits to places of historical and archaeological association;
  - (d) to issue a periodical publication; and
  - (e) to engage in such other activities as the Committee may consider desirable.
3. **Membership:**  
The Society shall be composed of all persons who are members at the date of the adoption of these Rules together with those who may subsequently be admitted to membership by the Committee. Honorary Members may be elected at any Annual General Meeting.
4. **Government:**  
The Society shall be governed by a Committee, consisting of a Chairman, Vice-chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Editor and Hon. Press Officer together with not less than six nor more than eight other members, one of whom may be elected as Hon. Outings Organiser. In addition to those members elected as provided above each officer, on relinquishing office, shall become an ex-officio member of the Committee and shall remain such for one year.
5. **Election of Officers and Committee:**  
The election of the Officers and Committee of the Society shall take place each year at the Annual General Meeting. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Editor and Hon. Press Officer shall first be elected individually and in that order, following which the additional members shall be elected beginning with the Hon. Outings Organiser. In the event of there being more than one nomination for any office or more nominations for the Committee than there are vacancies, as provided by these Rules, then the election shall be carried out by secret ballot.

No member of the Society who is absent from the General Meeting shall be eligible for nomination as a prospective member of the Committee unless he or she shall have previously intimated in writing to the Honorary Secretary his or her willingness to accept nomination.

The Committee shall have the power to co-opt additional members. Such co-options shall be effective only up to the date of the next ensuing Annual General Meeting.

A Chairman who has held office for three consecutive years shall not be eligible to seek re-election as chairman or vice-chairman until a period of two years have elapsed after his relinquishing office. For the purpose of this Rule the word "year" shall mean the period elapsing between successive Annual General Meetings.

6. ***Provision for Trustees:***

If it should become desirable at any time to register the Society with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, or to appoint Trustees, such registration and such appointment may be authorised at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose. Such Trustees as may be appointed shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.

7. ***Duties of the Chairman:***

The primary duty of the Chairman shall be to preside at all Committee and other meetings of the Society. It shall also be *his* duty to represent the Society at any gatherings where representation shall appear to be desirable.

8. ***Duties of the Honorary Secretary:***

The Honorary Secretary shall:

- (a) record the minutes of Committee meetings and of the Annual General Meeting of the Society;
- (b) maintain files of the correspondence relating to the Society;
- (c) arrange for such meetings, lectures and outings as the Committee shall direct, and notify members accordingly;
- (d) arrange for notice of Annual General Meeting of the Society to be sent to all members; and
- (e) submit a report to the Annual General Meeting on the activities of the Society since the date of the last such Meeting.

9. ***Duties of Honorary Treasurer:***

The Honorary Treasurer shall:

- (a) receive and disburse monies on behalf of the Society, as directed by the Committee, and shall keep accounts of all receipts and expenditure, together with supporting vouchers;

(b) prepare an annual statement of accounts recording the financial transactions of the Society up to and including the 31st December of each year, which statement shall, as soon as may be after said date be submitted to the Society's Auditors for certification;

(c) present the audited statement of accounts to the next Annual General Meeting; and

(d) maintain an up-to-date list of subscribing members.

10. ***Annual General Meeting:***

The Annual General Meeting shall be held, not later than the 30th April, at such venue, on such date and at such time as the Committee shall decide. Each member shall be given at least seven days notice of the date, time and place of the Annual General Meeting.

The quorum for an Annual General Meeting shall *be* fifteen members.

11. ***Special General Meeting:***

A Special General Meeting of the Society shall be convened if:

(a) any fifteen members of the Society request the Honorary Secretary in writing to do so, stating at the time of such request the reason why they wish to have the meeting convened; or

(b) it shall appear to the Committee to be expedient that such a meeting should be convened.

In convening a Special General Meeting, the Honorary Secretary shall give at least seven days notice to each member of the Society, stating in such notice the intended date, time and place at which such meeting is to be held and the purpose of same.

The quorum for a Special General Meeting shall be fifteen members.

12. ***Quorum for Committee Meetings:***

The quorum for a Committee Meeting shall be five members.

13. ***Annual Subscription:***

The annual subscription shall be such amount as shall be decided from year to year at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting held for the purpose of fixing the amount to become due as from the first day of January next following the date of such meeting. The subscription year shall coincide with the calendar year. *Any* member, other than a new member who has not paid his or her subscription before the 31st December in any year shall be deemed to have resigned.

Subscriptions of new members accepted between 1st September and 31st December shall be deemed to be in respect of the ensuing year and shall be at the amount applicable to that year.

14. ***Rules not to be altered:***

These Rules shall not be altered except by resolution passed by a single majority of those present at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting.

15. ***Rules to be printed:***

The Rules of the Society shall be printed and re-printed as often as may be necessary. A supply of copies shall be held by the Honorary Secretary who shall make them available to all applicants subject to a charge based on the cost of producing them. Each new member shall be provided with a free copy of the Rules.

16. ***Earlier Rules repealed:***

These Rules supercede all previous Rules or Constitution of the Society.

The adoption of these Rules was resolved at the AGM of the Society, held on March 23rd 1979, such resolution having been proposed, seconded and passed by a majority of the members present.

# WATERFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## MEMBERSHIP 2008

(Up to September 30th 2008)

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Abbeyside Reference Archives, Parish Office, Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Allen Public County Library, P.O. Box 2270, 900 Webster Street, IN 46801-2270, USA.

Arthur, Rev. R., Cappoquin, Co. Waterford.

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Mary Immaculate, College Library - Journals Dept., South Circular Road,  
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Mount Melleray Abbey, The Librarian, Cappoquin, Co. Waterford.  
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- National Museum of Ireland, Ref: Enda Lowry, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street,  
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Newberry Library, 60 Walton Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610, USA.  
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- Patrick Power Library, St Mary's University, B3H 3C3, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- Payet, Ms B., 22 Barker Street, Waterford.  
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Periodical Division Main Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, PO-4144, AIB 3YI, St John's, New Foundland, Canada.  
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Royal Irish Academy, The Librarian, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.  
Royal Society of Antiquaries, Miss Nicole M. F. Arnould, Librairian, 63 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.  
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- Serials Acquisitions, University of Notre Dame, S-48278 122, Hesburgh Library, NOTRE DAME -46556-5629, USA.  
Shipsey, Mrs. Ita, Island Lane, Ballinakill, Waterford.  
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St. Patrick's College Library, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.  
Sweeney, Dr M. , 'Sonas', Kilgobnait, Co. Waterford.  
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Thos. P. O'Neill Library, Serials Dept., Boston College, Chestnut Hill, 02467-3800, Mass., USA.  
Tipperary Libraries, Castle Avenue, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.  
Tipperary SR County Museum, Parnell Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.  
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Waterford County Library, West Street, Lismore, Co. Waterford.

Waterford Heritage & Genealogical Services, Jenkins Lane, Waterford.

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