

Coiseanna

The Journal of Clane Local History Group

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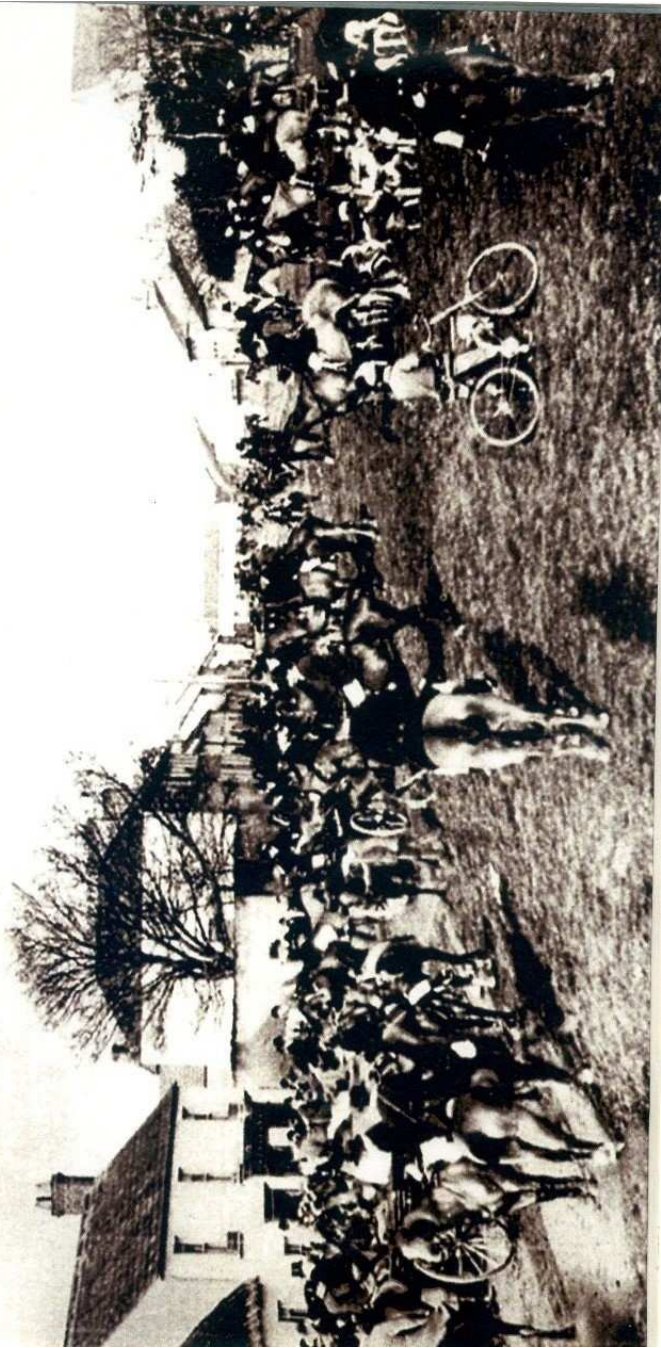
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Front cover: detail from painting *The Banks Punchestown*.

Back cover: the Wogan Tomb.

Meet of the Kildare Hunt and Harriers at Clane in 1898



EDITORIAL

We are pleased to publish this, the fourth edition of our journal *Coiseanna*.

This edition includes articles covering a range of topics. Three articles deal with the Clane area's long association with horse breeding and racing. Blackhall Stud located unobtrusively on the Sallins Road has produced a series of successful thoroughbreds; reminiscences of Punchestown over the years and the exploits of Joseph Delemere Whyte a famous nineteenth century horseman.

The Clongowes Wood College connection is featured in articles about James Joyce's time there, the tragic story of Old Clongownian Michael J Casey who was murdered by the Gestapo in the aftermath of the famous 'Great Escape' during World War II and some poetry by Andy McGann a former watchman at Clongowes who wrote a distinctive type of English doggerel.

Architectural features are addressed with articles on the restoration of the 'Abbey', the old bridge and ford over the Liffey and historic residences in the Clane area.

Articles on social history range from the rather frightening Molly Maguires to the Jubilee Nurses who provided a district nursing service in the decades before the State became involved but are now almost forgotten.

We would like to thank those who have provided articles for this fourth edition. For the Journal's continuation in future years we need a supply of articles relating to Clane and the wider area and would appeal for contributions. It is particularly important that recent social history is recorded before it passes from living memory. We urge anyone who feels that they could contribute to next year's edition or have comments on any of the articles to email jimheffernan@eircom.net or to contact any member of the editorial committee listed on the first page.

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SOME CLANE RESIDENCES AND THEIR OWNERS

Pat Given

Clane and its surroundings are rich in local heritage and in particular in the number of fine old houses which grace its pleasant landscape thus proving that today's very apt slogan of 'Clane-a nice place to live' was equally appropriate many years ago. This article seeks to bring focus on some lesser known local residences whose origins and heritage in this context deserve our commemoration.

In the seventeenth-century Clane's land ownership still retained the pattern acquired during and after the Anglo Norman period when ownership of property to the west and south west of the village was divided into two broad areas:

Clane West		Clane South-West	
Owners	Modern Townlands	Owners	Modern Townlands
Dongan Family	Curryhills Killybegs Longtown	George Fitzgerald 16 th Earl of Kildare William Sarsfield Eustace Family	Firmount Millicent Hoganswood

Lying to the west of Clane, the townlands of Curryhills, Killybegs and Longtown in pre-Cromwellian times were in the ownership of the Dongan family.¹ As Catholics they became heavily involved in the 1641 wars. Dongans subsequently lost their property to Cromwellian adventurers and so by 1659 Curryhills was owned by John Devenishe, Longtown was the property of George Carter and Killybegs was in the hands of Nathaniel Straughton.² After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, William Dongan was made Viscount of Clane and regained his family's properties. In the Williamite wars, William Dongan, a Jacobite, availed of the Treaty of Limerick

to depart for France and his property was again confiscated. His brother, Thomas later successfully reclaimed his family's property but lost it again since one of the conditions of recovery forced the Dongans to sell their property which was next purchased by the Hamilton family.³

Curryhills House

Lena Boylan has linked the building of Curryhills House with the visionary Robert Brooks and his project to bring the cotton industry to the Kildare village which he had re-named Prosperous. Brooks returned from India where he had been financially successful and in 1776 he invested approx. £18,000 in his project. His enterprise was not a success and in July 1786



Curryhills House

he was forced to dispose of his assets. He was subsequently appointed Governor of St Helena and he held that post with honour until 1801. He returned to England where he died in 1811. The land registry records in 1801 show that Curryhills House was owned by Michael Hayes who had made his fortune as a master stone-mason, building property in the village of Prosperous and later some of the locks on the Grand Canal. In

1801, Gilbert Sutcliff was tenant and by 1822 Hayes' sons had leased it to Thomas Radcliff. By the 1850s the property was in the hands of Elizabeth Turner. Elizabeth was daughter of Catherine Vincent who married Robert Stamer and who had become a widow in 1798 when he, a J.P for county Kildare, was killed at Downing's House.

Elizabeth in turn leased Curryhills to Malachy Coates whose grave is to be found in Millicent churchyard. Curryhills was then purchased by Patrick Monaghan.⁴

Longtown



Longtown House

Anthony Byrne a long-time resident in Longtown provided a history of its ownership to the Clane Local History Group in September 2011. A summary of that talk follows:

1709 Longtown passed from the Dongan to the Hamilton family

1714 John Mills leased the property from the Hamilton family.

c. 1730 John and Rev Benjamin Digby, Osberstown leased some of the property.

1752 Francis Savage and George Burdett leased the Digby interest in the property.

c. 1780s George Percy Putland became landlord of the property and leased it 'to three Prendergasts, Charles O'Neill, Thomas Guy, and Jeffrey Samuel' [sic].

1828 Putland died and was replaced by his beneficiaries, Charlotte von Wylie, Grace von Losecke (Hanover), Anna Campbell (Surrey), Catherine Hassell (Pau), Helena Offerman (Paris).

1833-4 George Burdett leased his part of the property to Michael Sweetman of Dublin. Anthony Byrne suggests that Longtown may have been built or modified by Burdett about this time.

1852 Michael Sweetman died and his son Patrick inherited the property.

1856 Patrick Sweetman together with Anne Barfoot (*nee* Digby) and Elizabeth Digby obtained a 'fee farm grant' over that part of Longtown (453 acres) which had been leased to Jeffrey Prendergast.

1858 The Commissioners for Encumbered Estates sold Longtown on behalf of Madame von Losecke (Hanover), Antonio and Helena Offerman (Paris) and Frederick Campbell (Paris) and it was purchased by Patrick Sweetman for £8,250. Jeffrey Samuel Prendergast was sitting tenant at that time.

1885 Patrick Sweetman died and Edmund Sweetman inherited the property as well as shares in the Francis Court Brewery in Dublin.

1913 On Edmund Sweetman's death, his nephew James inherited the property. James, in turn, left it to his four children Gerard, Seamus, Myra, and Denis when he died in 1939.

1948 Gerard Sweetman was Ireland's Minister for Finance during the years 1954-7. In 1970, he died tragically in a car accident.

2004 Longtown was purchased by the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and now houses the national Central Veterinary Research Farm.



The ruin of Longtown House dwarfs the house under construction to replace it

Killybegs⁵

Killybegs is the third portion of the former Dongan family property in Clane and developed around the site of an earlier Knights Hospitallers' commandery. The Knights Hospitallers were one of five military orders who participated in the early



Killybegs House

Crusades and a sister organisation, the Knights of Malta, are still an active organisation. The Knights Hospitallers came to

Ireland with the Norman invasion around 1172. In Ireland, as elsewhere, their primary duty was to provide hospitality to pilgrims and travellers, but because of the ongoing rebellion by the Irish after the Norman invasion they often acted as military outposts on the borders of the Anglo-Norman territories.

In county Kildare there were three such establishments, one at Killybegs another at Killeel, and the third at Tully.⁶ The Order left Killybegs during the Reformation in June 1538 when Nicholas Stanyhurst leased 'Kylbegge' at a rent of £10 *per annum*.⁷

As Robert Brookes accumulated property for his cotton manufacture he also sought a private residence and leased Killybegs from Charles O'Neill of Dublin.

From the photo above (kindly provided by the Curry family to Lena Boylan) it is apparent that the, now demolished, Killybegs House was brick built. Boylan talks of the interior of the house as having a large ballroom, dining room and bright airy basements which were 'so unlike their gloomy counterparts in other Georgian houses.' It is recorded that the basements 'to all areas' were ten feet high. Lena Boylan records that the stairway was reinstated in a Dublin property while the marble fireplaces went to the United States.

With the failure of Brooke's enterprise and his departure in 1788, Charles O'Neill granted the lease on the house and property to Edward Fitzgerald of Carrigoran, county Clare. Edward's son, Sir William Fitzgerald subsequently held the lease until his death in 1847. His widow, Lady Emelia Cumming Fitzgerald had her lease renewed in 1849. Her son, Sir George Cumming Fitzgerald resided at Killybegs until the property was purchased by Patrick Curry in 1919. Finding the old house too difficult to maintain, Bernard Curry, son of Patrick Curry demolished it in 1957.

Firmount House, Moatfield and Strawberry Lodge



Architects drawing of Firmount House 1878

The second set of properties runs in a linear fashion south-westwards starting from the outskirts of Clane on the Prosperous road. Strawberry Lodge [aka Viewmount] and Moatfield were all originally part of the Firmount estate but were later separated into individual properties. Firmount House is the earliest of these properties and has a history extending as far back as the fourteenth century. O'Farrell, in his *History of county Kildare* mentions the house as one of Kildare's early fortified houses.⁸ Reminders of this role are still evident in the robust structural features which remain in the basement of today's house.

With the granting of favours by William, a new townland Firmount, appeared in the Clane landscape. During the Williamite Confiscations, Firmount estate was created out of portions of those townlands formerly owned by the Earls of Kildare, the Eustaces and Sarsfield families. Initially, what we now call 'Firmount' was given the name 'Greensborough' but this was later changed to 'Firmount' on its acquisition by the Warburton family in 1707 and who continued to own it until

1855. The Warburton name appears in a decree of Chancery in February 1635 when Richard Warburton, a Dublin merchant, provided a loan of £8,000 to King Charles I. A more complete history of Firmount House may be found in my article ‘Firmount Demesne and its House’ in *Coiseanna*, III (2014), pp 67-76.

Moatfield

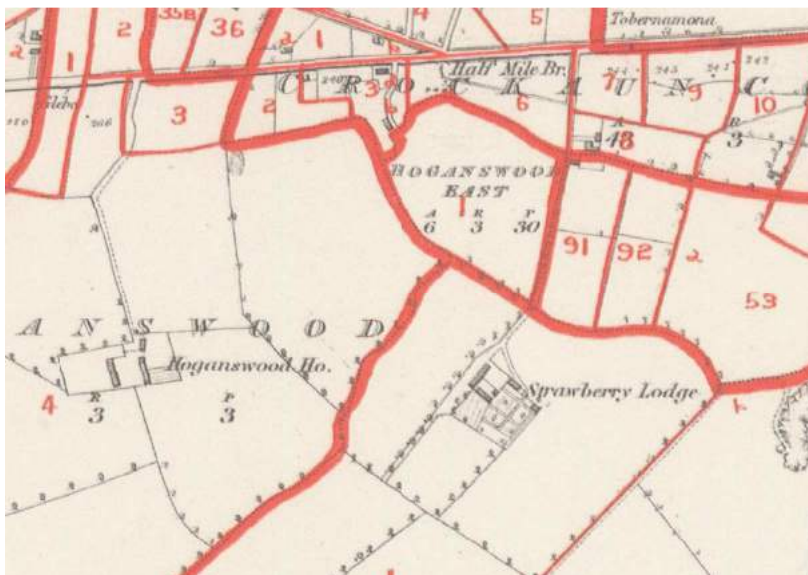
A deed signed on 8 May 1793 shows that Edward Croker, who was then in occupancy in Firmount House, sub-let that portion of the lands at Firmount known as Moatfield containing fifty acres and the ‘new dwelling house, stables, out-offices and improvements made thereon’ for a yearly rent of £113 – 15s. to Thomas Christmas of Waterford.⁹ The house is not shown on Taylor’s earlier map of 1783 so it is probable that it was constructed in the intervening ten years. In November 1855 the Moatfield property was auctioned off as part of the sale of Firmount by the Commissioners of the Incumbered Estates in Ireland. The sale of Moatfield was completed when W.H. Glennon of Harold’s Cross paid a deposit of £1,300 against the total sum due of £2,350 in February 1856. When Glennon purchased the property the sitting tenant was Stephen Carney who had leased it in 1851 for a term of fourteen years at an agreed rent of £63. An inscription to the Glennons may be seen in the Abbey cemetery Clane and when John Orme Glennon died in June 1905 the modern history of Moatfield began.

**ERECTED BY DEBORAH HILL OF WILLMOUNT HOWTH ROAD DUBLIN TO HER
MOTHER GEORGINA GLENNON D. 24TH JULY 1894;
ALSO SISTER ELIZABETH GLENNON D. 24TH APRIL 1885, BROTHER WILLIAM ORME
GLENNON D. 1865 AND JOHN ORME GLENNON (MOATFIELD, CLANE) D. 23RD JUNE
1905
THIS TOMB MARKS THE BURIAL GROUND OF DAVID EDGES MOATFIELD, 15TH APR.
1821, AGED 66**

Strawberry Lodge

In 1741, George Warburton of Firmount House entered into a number of land transactions which relate to the property known as Viewmount. Warburton had leased a portion of Firmount, known as Firmount East, and a smaller parcel of land at

Buttersteam to William Dunn. William Dunn sublet the property to Edmond Dowling a farmer of Clane. Dunn was a tallow chandler and had his place of business in Bride St. in Dublin. In a second deed Warburton agreed to Dunn's reassignment of the lease to John Eustace of the city of Dublin who had been Sovereign of Naas in 1719. The lease signed by John on that occasion does not mention any building on the property and the lease was witnessed by Lewis Coffee [sic] of Firmount who is described as a farmer.¹⁰ John Eustace died in 1769 but the lease he signed in 1741 was to continue until the 1855 sale of the property under the Incumbered Estates Court. Just eleven years after the signing of the 1741 lease, both Noble and Keenan's map of 1752 and later, Taylor's map of 1783, clearly show a house at the site of Strawberry Lodge.



Strawberry Lodge as shown in Griffith's Valuation

Strawberry Lodge first became associated with the racing industry on 3rd and 4th July 1835, when it hosted Clane Races. A grand stand had been erected near the winning post. The weather was fine and the Kildare Observer says of the last day 'Tripping on the light fantassie toe was kept up for some time with great spirit in the various tents which were erected in the

grounds...[all] prolonged the pleasures of the festive board till a late hour. A large party was also entertained at Strawberry Lodge.'

Robert Shearman, Strawberry Lodge's next tenant leased the property on 25 February 1843. Colonel Shearman held the lease from the Eustaces and he in turn had sublet it until the 1860s, when J.D Whyte a local politician with numerous other interests, occupied the property after its enforced sale under the Incumbered Estates Court. Whyte changed the name of the property to 'Viewmount' and his career as jockey is told in John Noonan's article in this edition of *Coiseanna*. In 1887 Whyte was recorded as being the vice president of Clane Athletic Sports Club and he attempted to revive horse racing in Clane when a Steeplechase course was laid out over the two adjoining properties of Viewmount and Moatfield. On 27 August 1887 the following appeared in the *Kildare Observer*:

CLANE STEEPLECHASES

**Under the Irish National Hunt Steeplechase Rules,
over Course made on the**

LANDS OF MOATFIELD & VIEWMOUNT,

**Laid out under the Superintendence of
Mr. R. M-K. WATERS.**

THE MEETING will be held on **MONDAY**, the
7th NOVEMBER, and will comprise five events,
full particulars of which will appear in future an-
nouncements.

Judge—Mr T. BRINDLEY.
Hon Starter and Hon Sec. :—Mr J. D. WHYTE,
Viewmount, Clane.
Assistant Hon Sec—Mr E. KELLY.

Although well able to pay his tax liabilities, he was evicted from Viewmount during the period of the land agitation in the 1880s and he received an apology and compensation in 1908 for the episode. A member of the Naas Board of Guardians he held the position of vice chairman for a number of years but in spite of his efforts to improve sanitary and water services in Clane he was not elected under the new Local Government Act

of 1899. Until his death in 1912 his role as an agricultural contractor meant that his steam traction engines and threshing machines with their sleeping vans for the employees became a familiar sight on local autumn roads.

The purpose of this short essay is to outline the numerous historical changes in the land ownership patterns in the Clane area. As outlined the major drivers have been the political upheavals which first occurred with the coming of the Normans and later the many land transactions of the latter half of the seventeenth century. The financial crises which the Incumbered Estate Acts of the 1840s and 1850s sought to address combined with the Land Acts of the end of the nineteenth century finally re-moulded Clane's land ownership patterns and gave it many residences which are still to be found here.

¹ 'The Parrish of Kilbeggs' in Simington, R.C., (ed.), *The civil survey, 1654-6* (10 vols, Dublin, 1931-61), viii, p.154.

² Lena Boylan, 'Prosperous-Landlords and Tenants' *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*, xvi, no.3 (1981-2), pp 241-63.

³ Pat Given, 'Viscount Dongan of Clane' *Coiseanna I* (2012), pp 71-5.

⁴ Lena Boylan, 'Prosperous- Landlords and Tenants' *JCKAS*, xvi no.3 (1981/2), pp 241-63.

⁵ **Source:** Lena Boylan, 'Prosperous- Landlords and Tenants' *JCKAS*, xvi no.3 (1981/2), p. 260.

⁶ Archdeacon Sherlock, 'Knights Hospitallers in county Kildare' *JCKAS*, vi no.1 (1909), p 92.

⁷ Rev. M Comerford, *Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin* (2nd series, Dublin, 1886), p.79.

⁸ Pádraic O'Farrell, *A history of county Kildare* (Dublin, 2003), p. 29.

⁹ Memorial of indented deed of lease, Edw. Croker to Thomas Christmas, 8 May 1793 (Registry of Deeds, Book 466. page 426, no. 290263).

¹⁰ See memorials of indented deeds of lease, George Warburton to William Dunn, 5 December 1741 (Registry of Deeds, Book 106. page 95, no. 72872) and George Warburton to John Eustace, 29 September 1741 (Registry of Deeds), Book 105, page 475, no.74376.

JAMES JOYCE'S SCHOOLDAYS IN KILDARE

Bruce Bradley SJ

In the opening pages of his semi-autobiographical novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, published in 1916, by which time he was living in Zurich, James Joyce depicts his fictional counterpart Stephen Dedalus sitting at his place in the study hall in Clongowes, counting down the days to the Christmas holidays. He looks at what he had written earlier on the flyleaf of his geography book:

'Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe'.

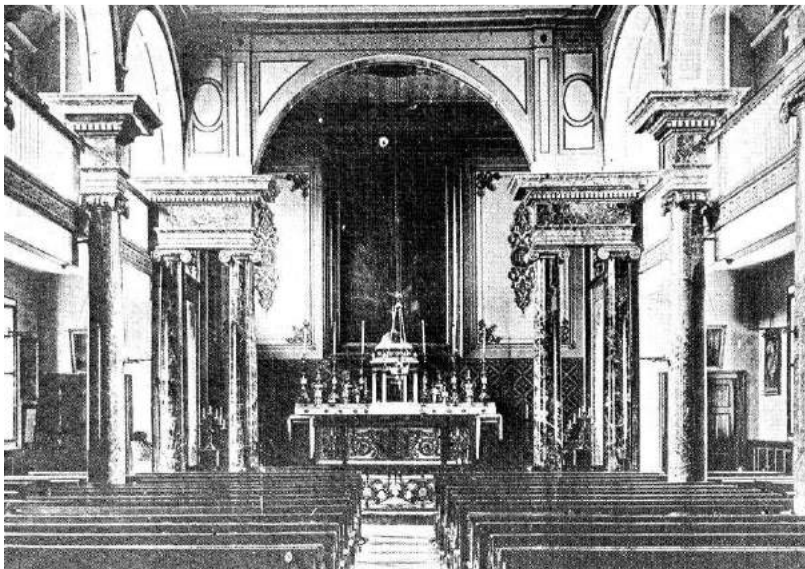
Joyce, as his later history would amply demonstrate, had a highly developed sense of place. His passage through Clongowes in the closing years of the nineteenth century will have gone completely unnoticed beyond the college gates, in Sallins (which he names in his grandiose self-identification because it was then the correct postal address), as well as a mile and a half down the road in the local village of Clane. When he arrived in Clongowes at the end of August 1888, he was a mere 6½ ('Half past six', as he told the other boys, too young to distinguish between telling his age and reading the clock – for a while that became his nickname). He was still not yet ten when he left, somewhat abruptly, never to return, three years and a term later, just before Christmas 1891. While he was actually there, like his fellow-pupils in those days he would have had little or no contact with the people of the village and they could have had no idea that a small boy destined to be one of the greatest writers of the English language was in their midst.

That is not to say, however, that Clane left no impression on *him*. By his time, the railway system, which had been developing since the 1830s - mostly under the aegis of William Dargan, whose brother's descendant, Fr William Dargan SJ, would much later be rector of Clongowes – had gradually opened up the country. Travelling by horse-drawn 'car', he would have passed through Clane on his way to and from the railway station at Sallins, some four-and-a-half miles away, where the Dublin train stopped on its way to the southwest. Few as the occasions were, with his powers of imagination and recall, he did not forget the experience or his sense of the local people he glimpsed on the way. He briefly recorded his impressions in his 1916 novel.

Stephen Dedalus thinks about what it was like for the boys when they went home for the Christmas holidays: 'The cars drove past the chapel and all caps were raised. They drove merrily along the country roads. The drivers pointed with their whips to Bodenstown. The fellows cheered. They passed the farmhouse of the Jolly Farmer. Cheer after cheer after cheer. Through Clane they drove, cheering and cheered. The peasant women stood at the halfdoors, the men stood here and there. The lovely smell there was in the wintry air: the smell of Clane: rain and wintry air and turf smouldering and corduroy'.

These were some of the same people he had earlier recalled seeing in 'the chapel' at Clongowes (what we know today as 'the People's Church', but which was then the school chapel proper). (Needless to say, and even allowing for the childish naiveté of Stephen which Joyce wishes to convey at this stage of his development in the novel, the term 'peasant' is used here purely in the French sense of *paysan*, 'country dweller', with no pejorative connotation whatsoever). He thinks of the 'cold night smell in the chapel. But it was a holy smell. It was not like the smell of the old peasants who knelt at the back of the chapel at Sunday mass. That was a smell of air and rain and turf and corduroy. But they were very holy peasants. They breathed behind him and sighed as they prayed. They lived in Clane, a

fellow said: there were little cottages there and he had seen a woman standing at the halfdoor of a cottage with a child in her arms, as the cars had come past from Sallins'.

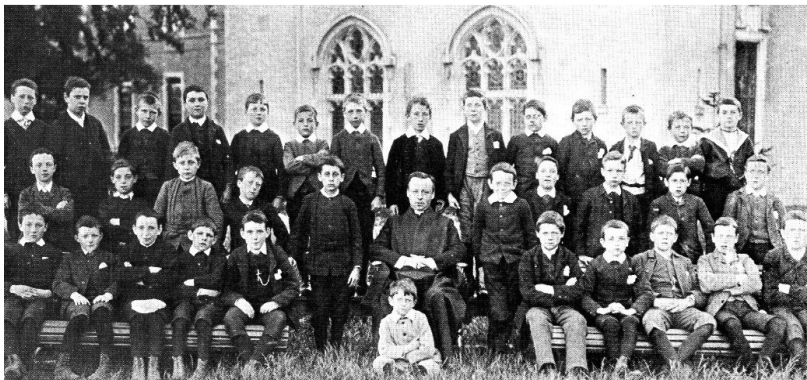


The Boys' Chapel (now the People's Church) circa 1890; in *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Joyce refers to the presence at Mass of peasants from Clane 'smelling of air and rain and turf and corduroy'.

He allows himself a moment of sensuous reverie: 'It would be lovely to sleep for one night in that cottage before the fire of smoking turf, in the dark lit by the fire, in the warm dark, breathing the smell of the peasants, air and rain and turf and corduroy'. But his feelings quickly turn to fear as he thinks of how 'the road there between the trees was dark! You would be lost in the dark'. And we are reminded that these are the musings of a very small boy in his first few weeks in a big boarding-school, where he knows nobody, lonely and far away from home.

But over time, Joyce's – and Stephen's – homesickness wore off. As a new boy, he was not alone. Thirty-seven other boys came into the most junior, 'Elements', class with James Joyce that autumn. Twenty-two of the new boys were from Dublin; two each from Antrim, Kerry, Meath, Mayo, Westmeath and

Wicklow (including Joyce himself, living in Bray at the time); and one each from Cork, Galway, 'King's County' (now Offaly) and Tyrone.



The Elements Class 1888-89; James Joyce is seated on the ground at the front

There were, of course, boys from Kildare in the school, but none in Joyce's own class. One we know of from the novel, a little senior to him, appears under the pseudonym or nickname (it is hard to tell which) of Athy, identified as Jeremiah O'Neill, who came from the town of that name. Stephen first encounters him when they are both invalids in the infirmary. Athy asks him a riddle: 'Why is the county Kildare like the leg of a fellow's breeches?' Stephen, perhaps not quite up on his local geography at this early stage, is stumped.

Friendships were formed with the likes of Dubliner Rody Kickham and, a later entrant, Tom Furlong (though none of those he was at school with at this early stage of his life seem to have remained his friends later on) and his career in the school gradually took off. The evidence and the reports of contemporaries highlight the difference (always in danger of being disregarded) between Joyce himself and his somewhat priggish, solitary literary creation, Stephen Dedalus. Although he soon emerged as a particularly able student, he also got into trouble from time to time, as the 'Punishment Book' in the college archives testifies – never an entirely bad thing for a bright boy in danger of attracting hostile attention as a 'swot'. (When he and the other smallest boy in the school got into

trouble, the joke among the boys was that 'Furlong and Joyce would not for long rejoice'. He wasn't the only one who was good at puns!) Apart from more mundane infractions listed in the register, there is a memorable entry showing that he was 'pandied' on 14th March 1889, just past his seventh birthday, for the – in his case - wonderfully prophetic crime of 'vulgar language'. The rough-and-tumble of 'gravel football', a hybrid,

Date	NAME	Punishment	Offence	Initials
	G. Gill	6	Talking in class	A. Macdon
	F. Coffey	6	Constantly talking to	"
14 th March	F. Mc Glade	2	Going out of bounds	"
"	G. Scally	"	"	"
"	J. Gill	"	"	"
"	J. Colgan	12	Bath without leave	"
"	D. Downing	10	Talking in square	"
"	C. Lawley	18	"	"
"	C. Wells	6	Romping	"
"	J. Joyce	4	Vulgar language	"
"	C. Roche	10	Constantly talking to	"
"	A. O'Kelly	4	Out of bounds	"

The Punishment Book for 14 March 1889

home-grown code which in time made way for rugby and 'socket', did not appeal to him but he was a more than usually gifted singer, who performed at concerts, and he took part in theatricals. He made his First Holy Communion and was confirmed (taking the name of the college's patron, St Aloysius) and served as boat-bearer at Benediction on Saturday evenings.

All these events took place within the – quite extensive – confines of the college itself. But the boys were not entirely restricted to barracks, as it were, and also had opportunities to explore some of the countryside around them when they went

out on occasional supervised walks to nearby villages and other places of interest in the vicinity. Straffan House, now the 'K' Club, and known to the boys in the 1890s by its owner's name, was one such destination, as Joyce recalls when he writes in *A Portrait* of 'the smell of evening in the air, the smell of the fields in the country where they digged up turnips to peel them and eat them when they went out for a walk to Major Barton's...'

The rhythms and alternations of the school year would have become second nature to him. At the end of each term (there were no Easter holidays), he made his way through Clane with the others to the railway station in Sallins and on to the train for Dublin and home. 'The train', as Stephen remembered it, 'was full of fellows... The guards went to and fro opening, closing, locking, unlocking the doors... And the train raced on over the flat lands and past the Hill of Allen. The telegraph poles were passing, passing. The train went on and on. It knew'. Home to what he calls 'his father's house'. For more than three years, this was 1 Martello Terrace, Bray, a good address in the salubrious seaside resort where Joyce had lived since he was five. Then, in October 1891, there was a change – to nearby Leoville, 23 Carysfort Avenue. It was not too far away but, despite the growing size of the family (by then there were seven children and there would be three more), it was a smaller house and the change was a harbinger of things to come.

Behind the scenes and presumably unknown to the children, even James, the eldest and his father's undoubted favourite, Mr Joyce's fortunes were in steep decline. The Clongowes fees were paid more and more slowly and eventually not at all. Some combination of this fact, a change of rector from Fr John Conmee (later benignly remembered in Joyce's novel, *Ulysses*), to the probably less amenable Fr Matthew Devitt, and the death of his father's political hero and patron Parnell at the time of the family's move from Bray, seems to have been behind the decision to withdraw James from Clongowes at the end of the Christmas term in December 1891.

In chapter two of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce writes of Stephen that 'in a vague way he understood that his father was in trouble and that this was the reason why he himself had not been sent back to Clongowes'. The fact that he was not returning to the school, meant – in the fictionalised chronology of the novel – that 'the coming of September did not trouble him'. When alternative schooling is discussed at the table in Stephen's presence by his parents, 'the mention of Clongowes ... coated his palate with a scum of disgust'. The reader is given to understand how glad he is to have left. This is of a piece with the confected portrait of Stephen as unhappy in the school, which, as noted, does not accurately reflect Joyce's own experience.

The glimpse we are given only a little earlier of Stephen 'sitting at his table in Bray', trying unsuccessfully to write a poem about Parnell, in the wake of a furious family row over the Christmas dinner-table, reveals what Joyce himself really felt in the weeks after his removal from the school. 'His brain', Joyce tells us, '.... refused to grapple with the theme and, desisting, he had covered the page with the names and addresses of certain of his classmates: Roderick Kickham, John Lawton, Anthony MacSwiney, Simon Moonan'. These were boys (given their own names, except in Moonan's case) he had just suddenly had to leave behind in Clongowes for the last time and that is what explains the moody nostalgia of the moment.

He was never to see the place, or visit Clane, again. But he did not forget the school. In the great novel of his maturity, *Ulysses*, published in 1922, but set in 1904, which was to make him world-famous, an older Stephen Dedalus is reminded of Clongowes at various points during the long 'day' of 16th June: in the Martello Tower in the early morning, on Sandymount Strand a little later, in the office of the *Freeman* newspaper at noon, at the National Library after lunch, in Holles Street Maternity Hospital (which had been founded by his fellow-Clongownian Andrew Horne in 1894) in the late evening, in

the brothel in 'Nighttown' at midnight and, finally, in Mr Bloom's house in Eccles St in the small hours.

The college is also evoked in Fr Conmee's reverie about his days as rector there in the 'Wandering Rocks' episode. Now living in the Jesuit presbytery in Gardiner St, he walks out on an errand of mercy to Artane and finds himself remembering days past: 'Father Conmee, reading his office, watched a flock of muttonging clouds over Rathcoffey. His thinsocked ankles were tickled by the stubble of Clongowes field. He walked there, reading in the evening, and heard the cries of the boys' lines at their play, young cries in the quiet evening. He was their rector: his reign was mild'. Raucously celebrated by the boys in *A Portrait* as 'the decentest rector that was ever in Clongowes', he remained part of Stephen's – and no doubt Joyce's – best memories of the place.



James Joyce aged six and a half on the day he entered Clongowes



Fr John Conmee, the Rector of Clongowes when Joyce joined

In the 1930s, as Joyce's fame grew, an American called Herbert Gorman was commissioned to write his biography. In this, with perhaps only a degree of exaggeration, Gorman spoke of how Clongowes 'continued to exist in Joyce's mind, a vivid reality of sights and scenes and impressions, of legends and dreams and broodings, a sacred place of the coming to

consciousness that would be reflected again and again, like sunlight in a shifting mirror, in all the work he would do thereafter'. He would undoubtedly have had James Joyce's imprimatur to write those words.

In 1937, in search of material for the book, at Joyce's behest Gorman paid a short visit to Ireland. Joyce wrote beforehand, in May, to his Dublin friend Constantine Curran: 'Perhaps you can show him some places, Chapelizod, Howth (if the rhododendrons are in bloom) and Clongowes Wood'. In two instances, Joyce's selection is readily understandable. Chapelizod was the setting – if such a word can be used for the strange book in question – of his last work, *Finnegans Wake*, published in 1939 two years before his death. The rhododendrons on Howth Head feature in Molly Bloom's monologue in the final episode of *Ulysses*. But Clongowes too – who would have guessed?

Gorman took the bus to Clane, having been briefed by Curran about what he should and shouldn't say when he got to Clongowes. Back in Paris, where Joyce had been living since 1920, the biographer gave an account of his travels. In July Joyce reported in turn to Curran: 'He said he had a great time in Eire'. So far so good. But then: '... at Clongowes it seems the password was "O breathe not his name"'. His disappointment is palpable: he had been hoping to find out what the Jesuits – what Clongowes - thought of 'Half past six' now, only to discover that Gorman had been warned in advance not to reveal the real reason for his visit by referring to Joyce at all. There is a muffled echo of Joyce's regret in *Finnegans Wake*, which he was writing at the time: 'Mr Unmentionable (O breed not his same!)

It is good to be able to record that, today in Clongowes, he is far from 'Mr Unmentionable'. His portrait hangs in the Serpentine Gallery, among other distinguished past pupils (none, surely, as famous as himself), side by side with his old rector, Fr Conmee. And the school library – the James Joyce Library – now contains his books and bears his name.

FIFTY YEARS AT BLACKHALL STUD

John Noonan

Mick Murphy has worked at Blackhall Stud for fifty years, the last fifteen as manager. During that time ownership changed from Lord Astor to Sheikh Mohammed and many champion horses passed through Blackhall.



Lord Astor with his third wife Bronwen on their wedding day in 1960

In June 1965 when Mick began work in Blackhall William Astor, 3rd Viscount Astor, had been the owner for fifteen years. He was a successful owner and breeder of race horses, foals were reared at Blackhall to yearling stage and the mares were sent to Blackhall if they were to visit Irish stallions. Lord Astor's principal residence was the Cliveden Estate in Buckinghamshire, England; he also owned Cliveden Stud in Taplow near Maidenhead. Most of Astor's horses were trained in England firstly by R. J. Colling, a well known Trainer and then by Major Dick Hern at West Hisley, some were trained in Ireland by John Oxx who trained for both Astor and his partners the Wernhers. The Blackhall Estate comprised 320

acres and had 200 cattle and 50-60 pigs during the summer for a few months. The purpose of these animals was to use up the horse manure.

Mick was 14 years old when he obtained summer work at Blackhall. The work involved collecting horse droppings from the paddocks and stables with a pony and cart. This was essential work as the horses were liable to pick up parasites from the manure, mixed grazing with the cattle also helped to remove parasites. Mick had planned to go to Technical School in Naas to study to be a carpenter but at the end of the summer Robert (Bob) Jeffries, who was manager at the time, asked him if he would stay on permanently. Mick who was earning money for the first time jumped at the offer but Bob Jeffries said that he should consult his mother. Mick's mother, who had 8 or 9 children in the house with only one earner agreed, and Mick who had been receiving wages of £3-10s during the summer started on a wage of £6. Working hours were 8.00am to 5.30pm weekdays, Saturday 8.00am to 12 Noon. A couple of hours were worked on Sunday morning to let out the mares and feed cattle in the winter and for a short time in the evening to bring the horses inside in the winter. The horses would be out all the time in the summer time. The workers had every second weekend off.

Mick remembers Lord Astor as a generous employer with the employees being supplied with free fuel and milk. A few cows were kept for the milk; when this was superseded by the delivery of milk by Hughes Dairies Astor paid the men more money. Electricity was free to those living on the estate and there was a water scheme with a pump hose on the Liffey with water distributed throughout the estate servicing bathrooms in the houses; drinking water was supplied from a well in the main yard.

Bill (Busty) Higgins was the stud groom; Larry Slevin was assistant stud groom; Jonnie Nevin was the head gardener and grounds man; Mick Gilligan was the main tractor man. John Connerney looked after the hunter owned by Bob Jefferies

riding out and preparing the horse for hunting in the winter; he also did most of the driving. All six staff members and their families lived on the farm. Today there are fourteen full time staff members employed at Blackhall.

Lord Astor was forward thinking and had installed a 'twilight' lighting system which was operated by a timer coming on at 7.00am in the winter. Larry Slevin who lived in the yard and Bill Higgins who also lived on the farm, fed the horses on alternate weeks.

All the old stud farms at that time had one big main yard around which everything centred in the winter with paddocks around it into which the horses were let out. The yard had a big hay barn, there was a machinery shed and a loft to store the oats. A lorry would deliver a hundred and twenty 16 stone bags which had to be put up in the loft; this was done manually and later by hoisting with a small pulley on a Massey-Ferguson tractor. Mick recalls that the older men took great pride in cleaning out the stables in those days. There was an art to installing the bedding which was built up around the walls with a 'nest' in the middle for the horses.

Lord Astor who had been a Conservative Member of Parliament before becoming a member of the House of Lords on the death of his father always visited Blackhall in the Autumn for a week or ten days with his wife and family. His mother Nancy Astor, an American born English socialite, was the first woman to take her seat in the British Parliament.

Astor and the Cliveden Estate featured in the infamous Profumo case. In July 1961 a young model, Christine Keeler, was introduced to John Profumo, the British Secretary of State for War, by Astor's doctor Stephen Ward while she was swimming nude in the heated swimming pool on the Estate. The couple began an affair. By an unfortunate coincidence the young lady also had a relationship with Yevgeny Ivanoff a Soviet spy. Profumo was forced to resign after misleading the House of Commons in March 1963 over the incident and the

Macmillan Government was fatally damaged losing office to Labour the following year. Astor was further embarrassed when Keeler's friend 19 year old Mandy Rice-Davies alleged that she and Astor had been having an affair. When it was put to her that Astor had denied this she earned an entry in the Oxford Book of Quotations by replying 'well he would, wouldn't he?' Ironically the swimming pool had been built with Astor's winnings when his horse Ambiguity won the Epsom Oaks in 1953. Perhaps if the horse had lost history would have been different! The horse was still at Blackhall in 1966 when Astor died.

On Astor's death all his mares and foals were bought by Bill Hackman and shipped to the United States. Hackman sold all the horses except for Silk Hat which he was unable to sell. Subsequently she turned out to be the best of them winning two legs of the fillies Triple Crown; unfortunately she lost an eye having got a speck of glass in it on the gallops and could not take part in the third leg.



Meld

The famous mare Meld, which was at Blackhall belonged to Lady Zia Wernher, a friend of Lord Astor. She was a great grand-daughter of Tsar Nicholas I of Russia but escaped the fate of other Russian royals in the Revolution of 1917 because her parents had been exiled from Russia after eloping to San Remo in 1891! She and her husband General Sir Harold Wernher owned a stud at Newmarket. The Wernher family fortune had been made by his German grandfather Sir Julius Wernher, a financier and mining magnate, who had made a vast fortune in South Africa in partnership with Alfred Beit. On Lord Astor's death the Wernhers who had been Lord Astor's silent partners bought out the rest of the ownership of the stud.

Meld's major wins were: the Coronation Stakes (1955); St Leger Stakes (1955); the Thousand Guineas (1955) and the Epsom Oaks (1955). Meld's win in the St Leger made her trainer Cecil Boyd Rochford the first trainer in England to win more than £1 million for his patrons. Meld was subsequently sent to various stallions and produced 6 winners of whom the most successful was Charlottown who was champion two year old in 1965 going on to have 7 wins including the 1966 Epsom



Lady Zia Wernher with Charlottown

Derby. Charlottown was bred and raised at Blackhall; his sire was the 1960 French Derby winner Charlottesvillie who stood at Ballymany Stud and was owned by the Aga Khan.

Meld had a son Donate by Princely Gift a stallion who stood at Old Connell Stud in Newbridge which is now also owned by Sheikh Mohammed; unfortunately Donate was killed on the gallops as a two year old and so he was lost. Another son of Meld's was an unraced horse that was sent to New Zealand to stand at stud where he became champion brood mare sire whose progeny was much sought after.

Meld died in 1983 aged 31. After collapsing in her stable she was attended for some hours by a vet but had to be euthanized by injection. Mick was present when she was buried at the back of the main yard, the site is marked with a headstone.



A stone marks Meld's burial place at Blackhall Stud

Lord Astor won the Irish St Leger in 1965 with Craig House and in the same year his brother JJ Astor won the Doncaster St Leger with Provoke. So the two brothers won the St Leger in the one year.

During the Pope's visit to Ireland in 1979 Mick was in England at the Newmarket Yearling Sales with Kalagow, an unbeaten two year old, which sold for £11,500. They had three horses in that sale and two of them ran in the same Derby often referred to as 'Shergar's Derby'. Kalagow got injured in that Derby. He was knocked into and badly gashed a leg. It was thought he would never race again. However he recovered and came back as a 4 year old. In 1982 Kalagow won the Brigadier Gerard Stakes at Sandown and recorded the track record over 1 mile 2 furlongs. Subsequently he won the 'Eclipse' stakes. He then beat a very good horse 'Assert' in the King George VI and won the Queen Elizabeth Stakes. Kalagow subsequently won the Cognac Award and they got a big case of brandy! Petite Ile won the Irish St Leger in 1989.

Sheikh Mohammed of Dubai bought Blackhall in 1991 and made major changes. He didn't change the farm much but he refurbished it replacing all the fences with new ones and put in two miles of tarmacked roads. He extended the old yard which now contains 30 stables and built two new ones; the Charlottown Yard and the Meld yard each containing 31 stables.

Sheikh Mohammed has had great success winning the Epsom Oaks with Moonshell in 1995. He has had a Group One winner every year since and numerous Group Twos, Threes and Listed. There were two Group One winners in 2012 Montorosso and Hunters Life.

Sheikh Mohammed's best horse Dubai Millennium won numerous races including the Dubai World Cup but was unlucky as after only one season in stud he died of Grass Sickness, a disease we don't have in Ireland; there is no cure; it is toxic and attacks all body organs.



Sheikh Mohammed

Sheikh Mohammed's Godolphin Stables has accumulated 120 Group I wins mostly trained in England at Mouton Paddocks and Newmarket, England. Dubai is now one of the best race courses in the world. The major event the Dubai Carnival, running from February to early March, attracts race horses from all over the world.

It was once unheard of for yearlings to be wintered out but now they are left out at night in all weathers and brought in during the day for checking and feeding. Temperatures are taken regularly to identify possible illnesses such as colic. Horses are weighed to monitor progress daily for foals, weekly and later monthly for weanings. Average gain should be 15kg per month although, depending on the horse, this can vary from month to month.



John Noonan and Mick Murphy in the Main Yard at Blackhall

Sheikh Mohammed used to come to Blackhall every year; he is currently Ruler of Dubai and Prime Minister and Vice-President of the United Arab Emirates and hasn't visited here for four years. Blackhall now has 50 horses rising to 70 in the Autumn due to overlap of weanings and yearlings. Foals are on other farms as Blackhall only has yearlings. Weanings start arriving in September; yearlings are all gone by mid December. Blackhall never has stallions, mares are sent to the main farm for stallions at Kildangan which is also part of the Darly Stud organisation. The selection process is carried out in the Autumn. It used to be conducted by Sheikh Mohammed himself but now it is conducted by John Ferguson the main bloodstock adviser for the group.

In recent years Blackhall has had numerous winners including two at Group 1 level; Outstrip, winner of the Breeders Cup Juvenile Turf at Santa Anita, in 2013 and Hunters Light in March 2015.

This article is mostly based on an interview that Mick Murphy gave to the author on 19 February 2013.

JOSEPH DELAMERE WHYTE

John Noonan

Joseph Delamere Whyte of Viewmount, Clane was an accomplished huntsman, an amateur jockey, a horse owner and trainer and finally a Turf Club official. In the opinion of his peers in the mid nineteenth century, in a golden age of Irish horsemanship, he was regarded as one of the finest riders over a jumping course that had ever been produced in Ireland and there was no better trainer of steeplechasers.

Joseph was born in Kildare in 1838 and married Hannah Emily Exshaw of Hybla, Monasterevin in 1868. Her family was well known in the sporting world and she herself was a prominent member of the Kildare Hunt and Harriers.



Viewmount, the home of Joseph Delamere Whyte

The following poem written in 1875 by BM Fitzpatrick and published in his book *Irish Sports and Sportsmen* outlines Whyte's career and illustrates the esteem in which he was held by his peers.

I

*I'm not the Poet Laureate, but I sometimes make a rhyme,
I don't often try to do it its seldom I have time;
Yet just now I am at leisure and a few lines I'll indite'
And try to sing the praises of my hero JD Whyte.*

II

*Of course you have heard of him – if not its very plain
You have never been to Newbridge, to Naas Town or to Clane,
For round about that country, wherever you may go,
All classes hymn the praises of my plucky little Joe.*

III

*Now if you ever have a good one give Mr Joe the mount
I'll give you his address its Clane, his residence, Viewmount.
Of names he has full many – Walter, Dom, Nick and so
You can easily hail him, but he answers best to Joe.*

IV

*You've heard of Irish victories, beyond the Irish wave
Of the doings of Paddy Gavin at Croydon or Clonave.
He is a plucky horseman doing ever what is right,
But I think he could never give an ounce to our good friend Joe
Whyte.*

V

*For he is one of our best riders, deny it if you can
For search the island through and through, where is the better
man?
Why speak we of his victories at Galway or Baldoyle
Or laud an Irish gentleman so racey of the soil?*

VI

*When first he won at Punchestown sure I was there to see
He ran the farmer's race on a horse called NMD
A most exciting contest with Rosewood and Malone
But Joseph rode in brilliant style and landed "the ould roan."*

[Joe Whyte's first win at Punchestown was in 1866 on his own horse NMD., a grey gelding by Slinge, in the Farmers Plate (subsequently the Bishops court Cup). In an exciting race NDM beat the five year old mare Rosewood by a neck.]

VII

*When riding at Limerick he got a nasty fall
Where Alice at the Tradesman's was knocked over at the wall.
Then the Gary Castle Handicap he won at Athlone
Where he also won the Challenge cup on Red Tape for Malone.*

[In 1864 Joe was riding his mare Alice on whom he had won the Birr Stakes at Parsonstown in the Tradesman's Steeplechase when he suffered a bad fall. There were twenty runners in the event which was won by Captain Williams gelding Cheerful Boy. Joe subsequently had a bad fall at Baldoyle in the late 1870s. This resulted in his retirement as a jockey as he suffered concussion.]

VIII

*When he first gained "celebrity" and got "world wide
renown,"
'Twas when he won the Downshire on Tom Thumb at
Punchestown;
Then the "sporting scribes" all called him "the lucky Mr
Whyte,"
But good judges praised his horsemanship as was just and
right.*

[Joe won the Downshire Cup on Tom Thumb (a gelding owned by Mr Campbell) in 1867 easily beating twenty-nine others. This was an important success.]

IX

*In "sixty-eight" I think it was, folks came from far and near
To see the great cup race 'twas 'twixt Olympia and Polestar,
He donned the 'black and vertical', rode pluckily and rare,
Was only beaten by a length by Harper's little mare.*

[The 'great cup race' referred to above was the Conyngham Cup of 1868 at Punchestown. It was said that such a hard fought finish had never been seen. The favourite Olympia

ridden by Major Trock beat Polestar ridden by Joseph Delamere Whyte by a bare length after a gruelling four mile race.]

X

*But of all the races our friend Joe Delamere has ridden,
The best was for the Conyngham, on the game like little Kitten;
For miles he made the running, escaping falls and knocks
But alas “got done” just on the post by Harford on Wild Box.*

XI

*You’ve often heard of Fairyland, Gamekeeper’s greatest son,
You’ve heard, too, that at Cork Park the Grand Stand Cup he
won;
Within the bounds of “Fair Kildare” though he search each
hill and plain,
Joe Whyte can never hope to find so good a horse again.*

[Joe Whyte bred and owned Fairyland and raced him in his own colours- scarlet with a white cap. Fairyland was a chestnut by Gamekeeper, dam Birdcatcher. He made his first appearance at Baldoyle in 1870 winning the Tantivy Steeplechase. He went on to win the Downshire at Punchestown and the Grand Stand Plate in Cork. His winning run ended when, carrying 15st 1lb, he came second to Cabin Boy, carrying 14st at Cork. He later went on to win the Ballybar Steeplechase at Carlow ridden by Joe.]

XII

*Old Polestar – you remember – the lovely little black –
He won at least twelve races with Joe upon his back;
He was indeed a rare bred one (Alma Legatee);
Three cheers for Moffatt’s little horse his like we may ne’er
see.*

XIII

*I landed a “cool hundred” last May, my friends, and more,
When Joe won the Kilmoylan Stakes down south at
Curraghmore;
Like a kind friend he gave the tip “to plunge on Lady
Spencer”-
“I know the course is ugly but the mare’s a perfect fencer.”*

XIV

*When He Won the Dublin Plate in August at Baldoyle,
He charmed each sportsman true and tried who stood on Irish
soil;
For J. D. Whyte's known everywhere – north, south and east
and west –
Respected by the rich is he and by the poor he's blessed.*

XV

*The Viewmount stalls had many a crack. Ah! Who could name
them all?
Agile and Comet, Fairyland and Nicholas Mulhall;
The Kitten too and NMD, and others I could tell,
With Heller of the Juggler blood (please note the recent sell).*

[Joe won the Galway Plate on Comet in 1870]

XVI

*So here's to Ireland's second jock (for Garret Moore is there,
And he is most undoubtedly our greatest amateur);
But Joe is a "good second" - "no jealousy can brew"
Dissension 'twixt Perfection – one - Perfection Number Two.*

**[Garret Moore was the famous jockey and trainer who hailed
from the Curragh. He won the 1879 Aintree Grand National
on 'Liberator', a horse that he bought at a Dublin Auction for
£600 in 1876.]**

XVII

*So here's to Joseph Delamere more luck and length of life!
And luck and life e'en brighter to his fair and dauntless wife.
So fill your glasses all again. Success to both hurrah!
The Pluckiness of Viewmount and the sweetness of Hybla!*

The Conyngham Cup 1872



The Starter, Joseph Delamere Whyte is on the left of the painting



The Stone Wall



The Banks

On retiring as a jockey Joe had a number of horses in training one of the best of which was a mare 'Lady Superior'. When he gave up training around 1882 he was appointed starter to the turf club and started races up to a few years before his death. At least one such event was close to home. There was an advertisement in the Kildare Observer in 1887 for 'Clane Steeplechases' under the National Hunt Steeplechase Rules over a course made on the lands of Moatfield and Viewmount. The meeting held on Monday 7th November 1887 comprised five events and J D Whyte was the Hon. Starter and Hon. Secretary.

Joe was active in other local sporting events. He was Vice President of Clane Athletic Sports which conducted athletic meetings under Gaelic Athletic Association Rules in the 1880s.² He was an active member of Naas Board of Guardians up to the passing of the Local Government Act and was vice-chairman for some years.

Joseph's wife Hannah died in October 1911. The following year on 7th July, while attending 11 o'clock Mass in Clane, he became unwell and was escorted home by his son Herbert. He appeared to recover and was up and about on Sunday evening and Monday. However he passed away in the early hours of Tuesday morning 9th July 1912. He was buried in the Abbey Cemetery after Requiem Mass in the chapel.³

¹ *Irish Sports and Sportsmen*, B M Fitzpatrick, Dublin 1878, pp 369-70

² *Kildare Observer*, 23 May 1885 & 23 July 1887.

³ 'Death of Mr Whyte', *Kildare Observer*, 13 July 1912.



FLIGHT LIEUTENANT MICHAEL J. CASEY - FROM
CLONGOWES COLLEGE TO THE GREAT ESCAPE

James Durney

Flight Lieut. Michael Casey (O.C. 1927-'30)

Michael Casey came here as a very small boy and remained three years in the III Line, when he went to Stonyhurst. He was very popular and good at cricket, even at that early age. He was taken prisoner after a dramatic hedge-hopping encounter early in the war, and we learn that later, he was shot under tragic circumstances.

M. K.

The Clongownian 1946

While searching for Clongownians killed in the Second World War I came across these few lines in the school's yearbook for 1946. This entry led me on a quest to find out more about the above named Michael Casey. Little did I know that Flight Lieutenant Michael J. Casey was one of the men who escaped from Stalag Luft III in March 1944 – the Great Escape made famous in the Hollywood blockbuster starring Steve McQueen and Richard Attenborough.

Michael James O'Brien Casey was a product of the British Empire. He was born in Allahabad, northern India, on 19 February 1918, the son of Michael Lewis Casey, whose home address was given as Hollywood, Co. Kildare. Michael Lewis Casey was the Inspector General of the Indian Police Service – an Inspector General being head of the police in each province in India. Allahabad is in the northern province of Rutter Pradash. Details on Michael Lewis Casey are scarce, but it is known that he was born c.1880-1890 and died before March 1944. Michael James Casey attended Clongowes Wood College when he was nine, but it is not clear if his family were living in Co. Kildare. Mike, as he was known, remained three years at Clongowes, where he was popular and good at cricket. The 'School List' published in *The Clongowes Record* (1814-1932) gives Michael James Casey's school years as 1927-30 and his address as Bedford and Rathangan. He possibly had

relatives in Rathangan and the 1901 and 1911 census records several families with the surname Casey residing in the Rathangan area.

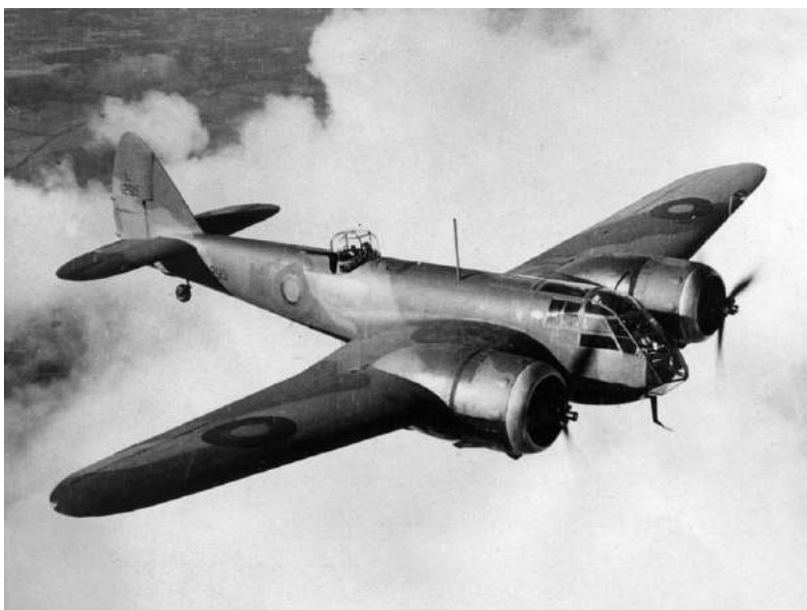
Mike Casey returned to England to further his education at Stonyhurst where, according to Jonathan E. Vance in *A gallant company. The men of the Great Escape*, he was 'popular at school, both for his athletic prowess in boxing, rugby and cricket and for his moral strength, manifested in his attention to religious duties'. Vance mentioned that Mike spoke with a 'warm Irish brogue'. In April 1932 Mike Casey enrolled in Stonyhurst College, a Catholic boarding school adhering to the Jesuit tradition, in Clitheroe, Lancashire. He passed the Lower Certificate from Grammar two years later, and then spent two years in Syntax before leaving Stonyhurst in July 1936, when he was nineteen.



Mike Casey

Mike finished school in July 1936 and applied for a 'Short-service Commission' in the Royal Air Force under the scheme then in force. Shortly before the outbreak of war in Europe his sister, Mollie, married the son of an influential and respectable Tyneside businessman, a young man who Mike had known at Stonyhurst. Through this union Mike met the young man's sister, Marjorie Jean, whom he subsequently married at Bicester, on 19 September 1939. Marjorie Jean was the eldest daughter of Dr. and Mrs. R. J. Weidner, of Tynemouth.

War had been declared between Britain and Germany in September 1939 and a little over a week after his wedding Mike's unit, 57 Squadron, was posted to France. On 16 October 1939 Mike Casey and his crew were flying a Blenheim 1 on a reconnaissance of the main road between Wesel and Bocholt, in Germany, when they were spotted by a Luftwaffe fighter plane. According to the German pilot, the Blenheim led



The pre-war Blenheims were no match for the faster German fighters

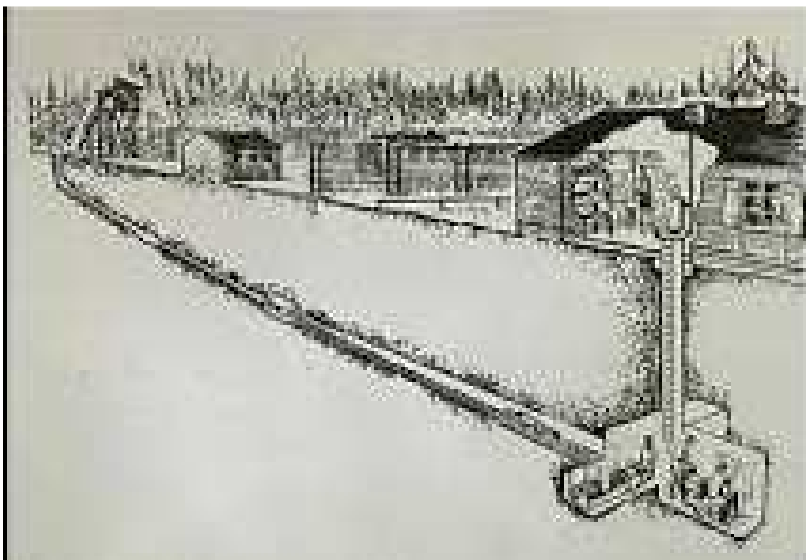
him in and out of cloudbanks before taking him on a mad pursuit across the countryside around Emden. Casey, described as a 'good, adroit and skilful airman' used every dip in the

ground, every hedge and every tree as cover, in what his German pursuer called 'an aerial steeplechase'. The Blenheim skimmed over rooftops, sometimes barely six foot off the ground, until finally the fighter's gunfire found its vitals. With no time to lower the undercarriage Mike landed the Blenheim in an open field. The crew bailed out with moments to spare as the Blenheim burst into flames. They gave a hearty wave to the German pilot circling overhead. German troops arrived rapidly and the aircrew was taken off to the first of several prisoner-of-war camps.

The Universe magazine reported that Casey 'is now safe in a German prison camp. He has been seen by a German Catholic priest and is able to hear Mass once a week'. The Catholic prisoners of war had not been able to attend Mass in this camp, but it was largely due to Mike's initiative and agitation that facilities for Mass and the Sacraments were eventually provided. In his last camp Mike attended Mass and received Holy Communion every morning. Mrs. Marjorie Jean Casey was informed of this by a repatriated officer, who not only expressed his admiration at Mike's practice of his religion, but said that he was the most popular officer in the camp with both prisoners and guards alike.

Mike Casey arrived in Stalag Luft III in 1942. Stammlager Luft, or main camp for aircrew, opened in May 1942, and was situated in the German province of Lower Silesia, near the town of Sagan (now Żagan in Poland), 100 miles southeast of Berlin. The site was selected because it would be difficult to escape by tunnelling. The camp eventually encompassed sixty acres and held 10,949 inmates – 2,500 RAF personnel, 7,500 USAAF aircrew and about 900 other Allied airmen. From April 1943 the majority of the British aircrews were situated separately in a newly-built compound, the North Compound, where the Great Escape occurred. The North Compound was a few hundred yards from the original camp, but was on the other side of the German administrative and living quarters.

The duty of all captured prisoners is to escape and as soon as they were organized the inmates began plotting to do so. The chances of getting back to Britain were slim, but if escape attempts caused the German authorities major disruption it would be considered part of the overall war campaign. The original plan was to dig three tunnels, codenamed Tom, Dick and Harry, and get as many men as possible out at the one time. However, Tom was discovered soon after it was started and it was decided to use Dick to store the spoil from Harry as it was dug. The plan was to free 200 men and priority was given to men who had the best chance – German speakers and the like. Names were drawn by lottery. One of them was Mike Casey. He was part of the Permanent Escape Committee and was strong-box treasurer and concealment officer in charge of all forged documents, filing and money.



The Escape Tunnel 'Harry'

On the night of 24-25 March 1944 seventy-six men made it out of the tunnel that ran for 348 feet from Hut 104 to the woods beyond the camp. The escape was the single greatest flight for freedom attempted by Allied POWs during WWII. Twenty-one of the escapees were British, the rest from all other Allied nations, although none of them were American. Only seventy-

six from an expected 200 men got out as the escape attempt was discovered before all the escapees exited the tunnel. Three prisoners, two Norwegians and a Dutchman, made it back to England; the rest were recaptured.

A huge manhunt involving troops, police, Gestapo, Home Guard and Hitler Youth was launched to recapture the escapees. At first Adolf Hitler had ordered that all the escapees were to be found and shot, but he was persuaded by Herman Goering to reduce this number of deaths to fifty, otherwise their guilt in the murder of prisoners of war would be impossible to conceal and might encourage reprisals against German POWs held by the Allies. Eventually Hitler calmed down, but still insisted that an example had to be made: fifty were to be shot and cremated. General Nebe, head of the Kriminalpolizei, selected the fifty to be shot, but it was not known how they were picked. They were driven singly or in small parties to quiet locations and shot. The deaths were explained away as shot 'while attempting to re-escape.' All the official reports stated that the prisoners were shot as they dashed for freedom while their guards allowed them to relieve themselves.

Mike Casey headed south with another escapee. Both were dressed in civilian clothes and posing as foreign war workers. When stopped near Gorlitz by police their papers did not stand up to scrutiny and they were arrested and held with other recaptured escapees in the town jail. On 31 March 1944 six recaptured prisoners, including Mike Casey, were taken from Gorlitz Jail to a nearby wood. According to Gestapo agent, Scharpwinkel, another agent, Lux, informed them that they had been sentenced to death by order of the Supreme Military Commander, Adolf Hitler. Lux asked the prisoners some questions if they were married, or had they children? Scharpwinkel said the prisoners showed considerable calm as they stood next to each other in the wood. Lux gave the order to shoot and the detachment of accompanying troops opened fire. Lux also fired. By the second salvo all were dead. The official byline was that the prisoners were 'shot while resisting

arrest' and some in 'the course of a new attempt to escape after capture'. The remains were ordered to be cremated at Gorlitz.

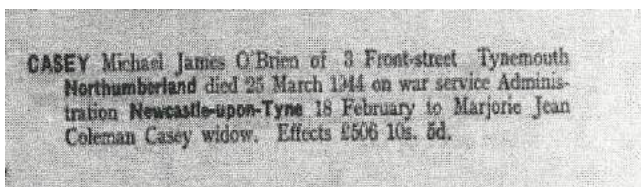


Map showing the location of Stalag Luft III and Gorlitz

When news of the murders was announced the entire prison camp was horrified. Many of the Luftwaffe guards were also horrified and tried to distance themselves from the murders, insisting that it had nothing to do with them and was the work of the Gestapo. To allow an outlet for the festering bad feelings the camp authorities allowed the prisoners to build a memorial for their dead comrades and urns containing the ashes of the fifty murdered prisoners were placed in a special mausoleum. The memorial was designed by Squadron Leader Hartnell-Beavis, a former architect, and a working party under parole with an armed escort, built it in the local cemetery. (In 1994 all the ashes were transferred to the Old Garrison Cemetery at Poznan, Poland.)

Word eventually filtered back to the UK, and later Ireland, that the recaptured escapees had been brutally murdered by the German Gestapo. After the end of the war the hunt for the killers of the escapees revealed that Gestapo agent Lux had been killed in the fighting in 1945. Agent Scharpwinkel was interviewed in Russian custody in 1946 by British officers who requested he be handed over to them. He claimed he was an 'observer' to the killings and that Lux had participated in most of the killing. British investigators did not believe this, but Scharpwinkel 'disappeared' in the Soviet zone and was never heard of again. Thirteen Gestapo agents were found guilty of murder and were hanged at Hamelin Jail, Hamburg, in early 1948.

In March 2009, on the 65th anniversary of the Great Escape, twelve former inmates of Stalag Luft III returned to the site of the camp and tunnel. Bill Fripp (then aged ninety-five) returned with eleven other veterans to mark the anniversary. He had helped in the escape through his job in charge of collecting Red Cross parcels from a depot in a nearby town by 'liberating' numerous items for the tunnellers, such as wire cutters, files and other tools. Bill Fripp was a crew member of the Blenheim in which Mike Casey was the pilot. He said, 'When I saw the site of 'Harry' the tunnel, I thought of Mike and said a prayer for him.'



MRS HANDY'S CAROL SINGERS

Des Marron

The KARE Association was founded by Carmel and Maurice Shortt in Clane in 1969 and became one of a number of branches installed all over Kildare and West Wicklow. You can imagine that in those early years there were no facilities to help the mentally and physically handicapped in the county. Over the last 40 years fundraising has been so successful that they now have two schools on the Curragh and in Kilcullen, adult houses in many towns including Athy and Kildare and a factory in Newbridge. It is now a million euro business.

Around the early 1970s Archdeacon Handy's wife said to me, "wouldn't it be a good idea to go to some of our parishioners' houses and sing carols for KARE". With the assistance of her husband, the Archdeacon we sallied forth. You wouldn't believe the number of titled dignitaries living in the Clane area at that time. We sang at Colonel Darley's at Bodinstown, Major Harvey in Loughenure, Bob Jeffers at Blackhall Stud, Bert Firestone of the famous Tyre company at Kilcullen, Frank O'Reilly of the Glebe in Punchestown, Naas, the Guinness family in Straffan, Mrs Woulffe in Kill, and Mrs Moore in Yeomanstown. We also sang for Kevin McClory (yes! the James Bond producer himself) in his house in Staffan which later became the K Club.

There are many stories which occurred during those forty years of singing. On one afternoon as we drove in on Colonel Darley's drive there must have been ten cars of carol singers. The colonel appeared with his dogs and waving a huge stick he struck Mrs Handy's car shouting "Bloody IRA get out of here"! Mrs Handy with her leg half out of the door said "Colonel we are carol singers" to which he replied "I'm terribly sorry, please sing". We were half way through 'Good King Wenceslaus', which Mrs Handy had told us was the Colonel's favourite, when he shouted 'that's rather dull, have you another?' From the mid 1970s onward Michael Weedle

had taken over as our trainer and conductor and he carried us through until his death thirty years later.



Michael and Máire Weedle after conferral with Bene Merente medals in recognition of thirty four years of providing music to the Church

For over forty years we sang in public houses all over North Kildare. We had the marvellous assistance of at least five Presentation Convent nuns including Sr. Perpetua, Sr. Louise, Sr. Joan and Sr. Dominica. They were marvellous sports and had no problem singing in packed pubs and being leered at by half drunken patrons! Our money collector for the private houses was Charlie O'Neill Snr. One night on the way home from Frank O'Reilly's of Punchestown, he being the then Chairman of Irish Distillers, we had all imbibed copious amounts of whiskey. We left Charlie behind while we proceeded on to Guinness's in Straffan where our singing was more robust than usual due to the whiskey! On returning to Clane around midnight I had to go down to Charlie's wife Muddie O'Neill, to confess that I had lost her husband. When I returned to my own home in Carrigeen my wife Kay insisted that I had to trace my steps back to find him. I took the back road to Kill and at one of the bridges I stopped the car and at the top of my voice I shouted Charlie's name! If anyone had seen me at this stage they would have sent for the men in white

coats! Eventually I returned home unsuccessful, but thank God Charlie rolled into his own home at about 2.00am.

Although Charlie collected in the private houses that we sang in, when we went to the public houses Carmel and Maurice Shortt were the main collectors. However if it was a big pub any member of the choir would do it.

On another night, we arrived at the Dew Drop Inn at about 11.00pm. The owner said that he didn't want us to sing but would add to our collection. We said ok and settled for a late drink. Sometime later he said that we appeared to be a decent bunch and that he would like us to sing and collect. So it was the first time we were "paid not to sing" and then "paid to sing"!



Des Marron presents a cheque to Jim McMahon of KARE

The Keadeen Hotel in Newbridge contacted us to see if we would sing at their Christmas banquets for a set fee with no

collecting for seven nights. We were the second last act every night with the famous Brendan Grace the final act on the night. While this arrangement was quite profitable it meant that we had to be there on time and ready to go in very neat dress!

The next season I contacted Frank Fallon of the Red House Hotel and he said he would be delighted for us to sing on all his function nights. He had three dining rooms and we sang in all three leaving the Ballroom until the last. If we were lucky Des and Billy Hopkins would be playing in the Ballroom and would back us, this gave us the chance to penetrate the huge noise of the revellers. This was easily our most profitable venture and we averaged £5,000 every season for up to twenty years.

As you can imagine this intensive singing put an enormous amount of pressure on choir members, particularly those who had also to get everything ready for Christmas. They never let me down and both I and KARE owe them an enormous amount. We have now tailed it down to just one house, Andrew and Joan Rynne of Downings House Prosperous. The Rynnes continue to gather a huge crowd of friends. Andrew and his wife Joan provide food and drink for the night and we still collect £2,000 for our thirty minute concert.

I know there are many more stories I should be able to relate but the old brain cells are getting tired. In conclusion I know that we brought festive cheer to every house that we sang in and many said “Christmas truly began with the arrival of the Carol Singers”! I will sign off with enormous thanks to all the drivers who drove us to all the venues and never took a penny in petrol expenses and to all the faithful singers. Thank you all for being with me throughout our incredible journey.



A WHISTLER REMEMBERS PUNCHESTOWN

Mick Mulvey

Early History

The book “Peerless Punchestown” written by local historian Con Costello and journalist Raymond Smyth tells us that there has been racing at this location for many years dating back to the early 1800s. The first recorded meeting was in 1824, there was a four day meeting in 1827, a five day meeting in 1828 and a one day meeting comprising five races in 1833. The first Kildare Hunt Cup Steeplechase was won by Zephyr in 1837 and owned by a Mr. Lynch. However 1849 was the first year that a proper racecourse was laid out over the lush grasslands of Punchestown.

For the 1858 meeting, “The Grand National Hunt Steeplechase” had thirty two horses on the card with twenty six starting. Among the runners were five from Tipperary and Dublin, three from Kildare, two each from Meath and Cavan, one each from Cork and Kings County (Offaly) and a trio from Scotland. Punchestown was now established as the premier racecourse in the country. In words taken from Peerless Punchestown, “the racecourse overcame all vicissitudes to win undisputed recognition as Ireland’s National Hunt Festival and is now affectionately referred to as “the Irish Cheltenham”.

The Grainger Family

Synonymous with Punchestown is the name of the Grainger family. While racing at Punchestown has been going on for well over one hundred and fifty years the local Grainger family from the parish of Eadestown, the same parish which holds all of the racecourse, can claim a long association with the course extending over several generations.

Mick Grainger senior was the first member of this well known family to be part of the management structure of the racecourse. He was the first foreman and was then succeeded by his son, Johnny, who was employed there from 1879 to 1929 and who died at the ripe old age of eighty eight in 1963.

His nephew Mick worked at the course for forty seven years. He in turn was followed by his nephews, brothers Jim, Dick and Murt and whose father Stephen was also associated with the course for many years.

Christy Grainger is currently an employee and maintains that continuous line of Graingers connected with this world famous racecourse. To coin an old phrase, “There is always a Grainger at Punchestown”. It is noteworthy that 1950 was the only time the racing was cancelled due to a heavy fall of snow and on that day Mary Byrne, Rathasker Road, Naas was attending Punchestown for a record seventy fifth consecutive time.

The Catering Queen of the Races

As the years progressed and attendances got bigger and bigger, the demand for food and beverages grew to enormous proportions and there was a shortage of providers and suppliers. One extraordinary woman rose to the occasion and became a legend in her own lifetime. Bridget Lawlor single handedly and without any formal training in the catering business became the largest catering company in the country and was known throughout Europe as well. No journey was complete without a stop at Lawlors of Naas and she catered not only for Punchestown but for many events all over the country including the Dublin Horse Show, the Spring Show, the Galway races, the Naas Hunt Ball and many hunt balls in places like Tipperary, Waterford, Thurles, Longford, Limerick and many more.

I vividly recall attending the Punchestown venue in the mid 1950s. There were two areas where you could get your food and drink requirements. The “Inside” and the “Outside”. There was an enormous difference with the “Inside” being much more expensive. The “Inside” was the reserved enclosure catering for the badge holders, trainers, owners, their guests and wealthy members of the public. Dining and bar facilities were provided under the stands and in deluxe marquees with comfortable surroundings. The dining tables were covered with crisp white Irish linen tablecloths, each table had a vase of

freshly cut flowers, the napkins were also of Irish linen, the cutlery was silverware and the crockery was a willow pattern designed exclusively for Lawlors.



Mrs. Lawlor in old age reading to her grandchildren

The “Outside” catering was on a different scale and there were a number of bars and marquees for this purpose. These were run by a number of local publicans including Murtaghs of Naas, Paddy Higgins of the Arch bar in Newbridge (Paddy was from nearby Ballymore Eustace), Orfords of Kilcullen, Billy Timmons of Baltinglass and a Mrs. Bolger from Tallaght provided hot meals. Lawlors had a large marquee serving tea, coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches and cakes.

A lot of patrons of the races preferred to have picnics which were held in the car park areas and in a large open space between the enclosure and the last jump. Dozens of hawkers selling fruit, sweets, bars of chocolate and soft drinks completed the provision of the outside catering facilities. Mrs Lawlor moved to live in the Mill House which was formerly the Naas Carpet Factory and the famous Millhouse racehorse

was named after the house. The horse was born and reared at the Keely farm, Bawnogue Punchestown, the birth place of Mrs Lawlor (nee Keely). The horse Nás na Riogh was another horse to come out of the Keely stable.

The Resident Farrier

Joe Callan came to Naas as a very young boy, his father coming from County Louth to take up employment in Foynes' Gents' Outfitters (now Richie Whelan's Menswear shop). At the age of thirteen young Joe was apprenticed to a Mr Cross of Rathangan as a Blacksmith/Farrier. He cycled from Naas to the West Kildare village six days a week which was a round trip of twenty eight miles every day. At the age of twenty he left the employment of Mr Cross and set up his own workshop on the Rathasker Road and soon developed a reputation for the high quality of his work. A lot of his work was with the racing fraternity and his reputation and the high standard of his work grew in stature with the horse owners and trainers. This led to Joe being appointed as Farrier in residence at Punchestown Racecourse where he became renowned as the master of his craft.

Among other things Joe was an excellent singer and in great demand to perform at weddings and concerts. A founder member of the Naas Choral Society he sang a duet with the famous virtuoso John Count Mc Cormack at the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in the Phoenix Park. Joe had a great love of horses and was an excellent pony rider competing in local events and winning many trophies. He remained resident Farrier at Punchestown for thirty years.

Royalty at the Races

Royal personages made several visits to the races at Punchestown with arguably the most important being the visit of King Edward VII in 1904. This of course was not the first visit he had made as he was in attendance in 1868 as the then Prince Regent whilst he was in military service.

In 1904 King Edward attended with Queen Alexandra on both of the days, April 26th and 27th which witnessed the biggest crowd since 1868. The royal party travelled by train from Kingsbridge Station to Naas and from there to the races by horse drawn carriage. The Urban District Council ensured that he did indeed have a welcome fit for a king with the town of Naas extensively decorated with Union Flag bunting and garlands of flowers everywhere. Switzers of Dublin were



Main Street Naas decorated for the King's visit to Punchestown in 1904

contracted to supply and arrange the decorations which were paid for by Mr William Staples Chairman of the U.D.C. and proprietor of the Celebrated House of Naas which later became my home after being bought by my late father Michael Mulvey.

A Great Social Occasion

During the occasion lavish parties were held in the Big Houses of the gentry and landowners in North Kildare: Straffan House (Bartons), Harristown (La Touches), Palmerstown (Lord & Lady Mayo), Kerdiffstown (Aylmers), Gowran Grange (De

Robecks). The champagne flowed after feasting on food par excellence till the early morning. The Hunt Ball was a glittering occasion in the Naas Town Hall with its eleven course supper being the order of the day or evening and revellers were carried home in horse drawn carriages.

When the Hunt Ball moved to Lawlors Hotel in 1932 dancers took to the floor of the Town Hall to the music of the Ritz Melody Makers from Sallins. Socialising went on at the course on race days and “Walking Sunday” was a great opportunity for the public to get their first taste of the festival to come. A highlight of Walking Sunday was the Millbrook Cup cross-country race run over six miles around the racecourse with the winner receiving the coveted Millbrook Cup.

Although socialising took place in the bars and food marquees many other social activities took place outside in the open. There were Punch and Judy shows, swing boats and a galaxy of entertainers, blind fiddlers, banjo players, singers, accordion players. Such music luminaries as Pecker Dunne, Dolly Mc Mahon and Ted Fury to name a few attended the event for many years and all the fun of the fair was at Puncchestown. There was the busting of balloons by kicking footballs, the wheel of fortune, rifle range, fortune tellers, fat ladies and giants. One of the star attractions was “Prince Monolulu” a native of the West Indies who attended on many occasions. He was attired in tribal regalia with long white silk robes buttoned with jewels. The Prince’s turban had a long peacock feather sticking up at the back and a very large diamond at the front that on a sunny day reflected the rays of the sun. He towered above all at Peerless Puncchestown. There were the Hawkers shouting “get your apples and oranges”, ice cream sellers, three card tricksters and the miracles at Puncchestown when blind fiddlers got to see and cripples to walk. Schools, factories, local government offices etc. were all closed for the race days in Naas and some other towns and villages in the surrounding area. Festivities began in advance of the race days. Generally on the Saturday before the races the men and women who had emigrated to England, Scotland and Wales “came home” to

partake in the pilgrimage to Punchestown. Homes were all spruced up to welcome son, daughter, brothers and sisters and friends and neighbours chipped in to solve any accommodation problems.



Hawkers at Punchestown

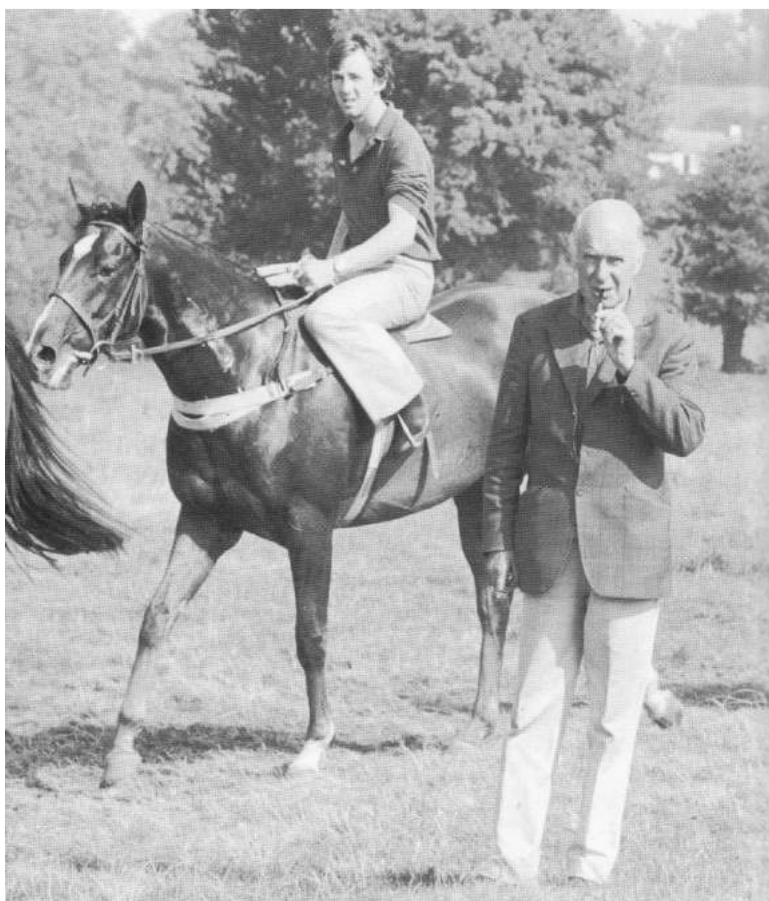
Special travel arrangements were put in place by the local authorities and the police. The travelling community, itinerants and gypsies arrived approximately a week before the races and parked their wagons on the Caragh Road and at “Beggar’s End”.

Two Heroes of Punchestown

The heroes we refer to were two County Wicklow men who reigned supreme in County Kildare racing circles and particularly at Punchestown. The first was Joe Osborne, a native of Ballyknocken in West Wicklow. Mr Osborne was regarded by his peers, racing supporters, journalists of the Irish and the United Kingdom media as the supreme horse man of his time. He was an owner, a breeder and a jockey, a feat few people have done with any rate of success. His courage was a byword and his horsemanship won him a legion of admirers

among the general body of keen judges of national hunt racing. Space does not permit us to list even a fraction of his successes. One feat alone singles him out and ensures him a lasting place in the annuals of Punchestown. Joe rode the winner of the Kildare Cup on three consecutive occasions, 1925, 1926 and 1927 on a mare bred and trained at Craddockstown.

Mr Osborne was granted a training permit originally in 1920 and combined both training and riding for many years. Joe Osborne and his three time winner of the Kildare Cup, Alice Whitethorn, will be remembered as one of the greatest feats of national hunt racing ever. What a hero!



Paddy Sleator with his son Michael

Our second Wicklow hero is Paddy Sleator of Grangecon near Dunlavin in the Garden County where he was commander in chief and from where he planned his annual assault on the Punchestown Festival. In a fourteen year period he trained thirty two winners. On two occasions he had five timers and on one of those occasions in 1958 Francis Flood, one of the great national hunt jockeys of his time, had four of the five winners. Paddy Sleator was an excellent amateur jockey in his day and on three occasions he was top rider in 1934, 1936 and 1937 sharing the honour with Tim Hyde.

Racing Dynasties

The name Beasley cannot be separated from Punchestown or horse racing for that matter and is an iconic name in the racing world. The story begins with the ageless Harry Beasley who rode six horses to success in the Conyngham Cup and who was still riding and winning at the ripe old age of seventy two. In 1885 he was inspired to ride a double in front of the Prince of Wales including the Bishops court Cup. He had few equals and was one of the great horsemen to ride at Punchestown.

Harry had five sons and four of them were successful over the fences at Punchestown. It is interesting to note that all rode in the 1889 Grand National at Aintree and space would not allow us to list all their achievements but Tommy for one rode winners in 1880, 1887 and 1889.

There was in more recent times the one and only Henry Robert Beasley, affectionately known as just “Bobby” to distinguish him from his illustrious grandfather and Harry Junior his father who maintained the family tradition of horse riding but preferred the flat. Bobby won the Aintree Grand National on Nicholas Silver and on which I was lucky enough to have a few “bob”, the Gold Cup on Roddy Owen and again won the Gold Cup on Captain Christy to the echoes of “Danny Boy” from the crowd. Not bad for a recovering alcoholic.

We cannot finish the story of Punchestown without keeping the best wine to the last and talking about the Cash family from Clane. Ned the father was a legend in his own lifetime and together with his sons and grandson they acquitted themselves well in the racing world. Ned was a breeder, trainer and horseman, the sons and grandson riders of horses. In the 1950s the racing achievements of the Cash brothers were legendary. Jim won the Bishopscourt Cup at the age of 14 riding *You Mind Me*; a record that will never be broken as the minimum age was raised to 16 shortly afterwards. It was said “that Cash lad could go through the eye of a needle”. All Jim’s brothers, Ned Jnr., Mick, Bill, and John, were well known for fearless riding on the race course. Ned Jnr. went on to ride twice for Ireland in the Aga Khan Cup.

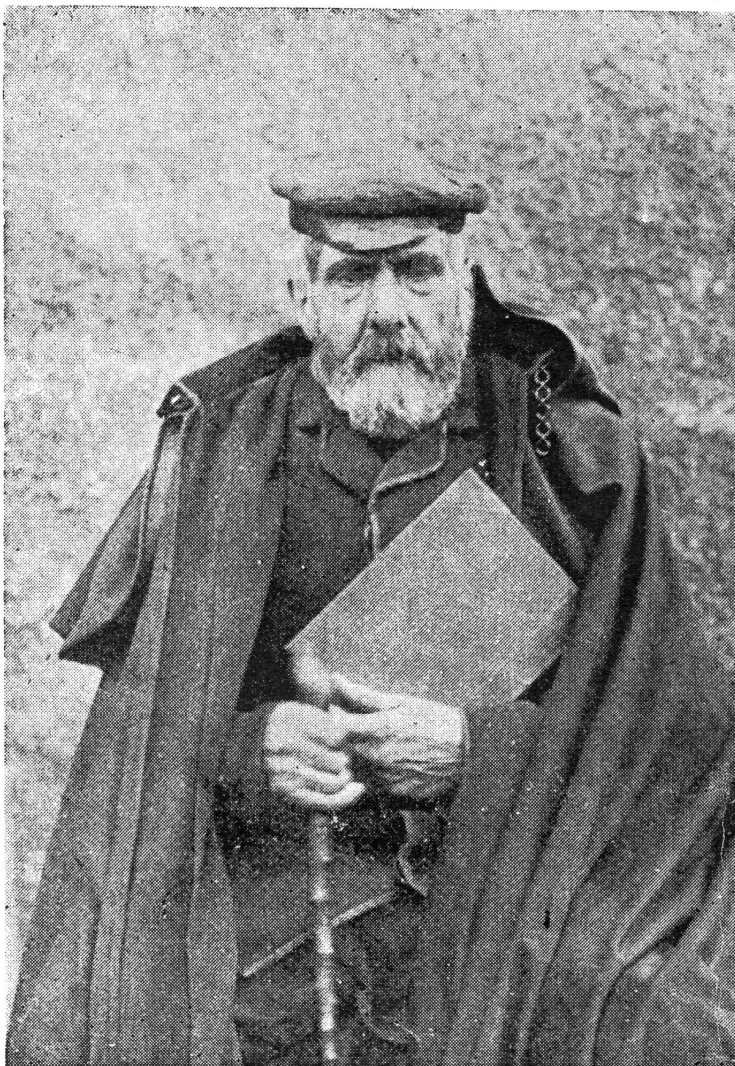


Jim Cash (on right of the picture) jumping the ‘Banks’ at Punchestown.

To finish I must mention Charlie O’Neill whom I went to school with in the C.B.S. in the early 1950s. He was an amateur rider at Punchestown and his first cousin Bobby Coonan rode many winners, a lot of them for the great Paddy Sleator.

ANDY MCGANN – A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Brendan Cullen



Andy McGann - 'The Above Mentioned'

Andy McGann was the night watchman in Clongowes Wood College for most of the second half of the 19th Century, probably from the early 1860s to the 1890s. He patrolled the corridors and the stairways when John Redmond (1868-74) and James Joyce (1888-91) were students in the college. During his

nightly rounds he frequently visited the Infirmary and regaled the indisposed students with fantastic tales of the Great Comet (Coggia's Comet) and entertained them by reciting endless verses of his unique and eccentric doggerel (poetry), which helped the youngsters to while away the hours of darkness until the dawn broke when he would disappear.



The infirmary which McGann would visit on his nightly rounds to regale indisposed students with his eccentric poetry

His poetry was published in a small booklet called “Voices of the Night” in 1897. He is described on the title page as, “Sometime Night Watchman, Star Gazer, Comet Observer and Astronomer Royal at Clongowes Wood”. He always referred to himself as, ‘The Above Mentioned’

The four poems presented here are from “Voices of the Night”, by “The Above Mentioned” Andy McGann. The text has not been edited to retain authenticity. However, some words are difficult to recognise, so hopefully this following small key will help:

ere - air;
thies - these;
hie - he;
the - they;
pies – pious;
commicend – commissioned.

Autobiography of the 'Above Mentioned.'

*There is a man called a A. M'Gann
He lives at Clongowes Wood
Of poet love he has a store
And all that's great and good.
There he's at home where he does rome
All night through regions dark
When he's not staying all day preying
In retreat at Mill town park.
Though bent with years he tells careers
Of men long passed away
In poems old with measure told
He warbles all the day.
He tells of Dan that nobel man
Who faught a brilliant fight
For Erin's cause genst penal lawes
For Ireland's long saught rite.
He tells of boys whom midst their joys
He cought in mid night row
And how his cane gave so much paine
They sleep like babies now
And for this "fate" performed first rate
He got ten shillings pay
In Dublin town by Father Brown
Was sent to spend the day.
He tells of Claine and Neddy 'Bane
And all his old friends there
Of Straffan too so grand to view
Where first he sniffed the ere
Quite near that town in Cassell brown
For thirty years and more
He wawked and preyed and curling strayed
Where Liffies torents rore.
And of thies Halls thies hallowed wals
Full meny a tail he tells
Composed at night neate moone bames bright
That glitteres ore the dells
How proud is he how glad to be
Conected with that spot*

*Whence men have gone, in lerning shon
And there there lerning got
And oft he preys when ere he strays
By Anna's loanley wave,
That here hie Rest for ever blest
That here hie find his grave
We now conclude thies rimeng rud
No more we have to say
Wee wish this man by name McGann,
Long life for many a day.
Deo Gracies – Thanks bit to God.*

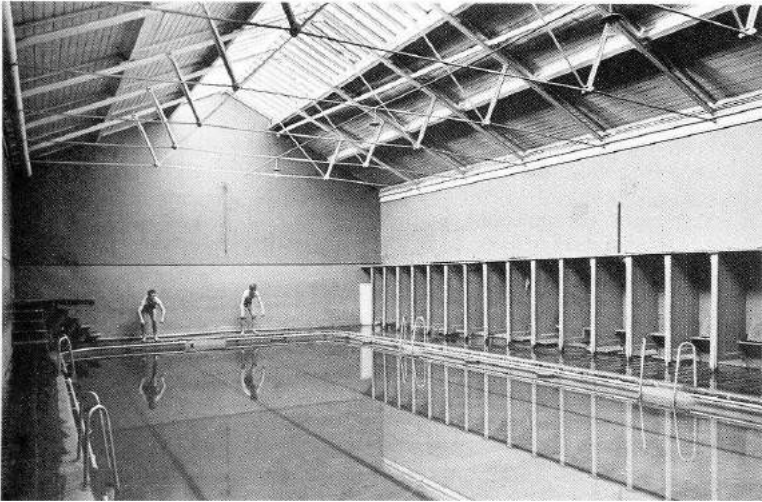
The Commet

*Now comes the commet and he performing his
largest rounds
With softer beams and milder glory crouned
A friend to mankind he glitters from A far
Now the bright evening now the commet star
Then Father Redmond the hed prefect; tis
through
Brought out his coajuter this commet for to
view
I put up my hand and crost myself and that
with pies care
And never thought the minute lost that I
spent in that Small Prayer
I then thought on Filosiffy and then on Estro-
nomy too
That it foretold the commet that we had now
in view
This commet is now commicend by the
Almighty hand
To go round the plannets all at his command
This clymet now is warmed by this commet
passing by
And now its gone to others to give them a
supply
This scenes now it happened in the year of
seventy-fore*

*And this I will remember until my life is then
no more*

The Bath- House¹ and “Suburbs.”

This Engen it is splendit and conducted now this way
From Dublin down to Clongows in tandem here that day
The conductor he is nobel for he opened out the way
And delivered now the Engen In Clongows here that day
The conductor now from Engen is about fifty feet now high
Standing most magnificen up now in the sky.
The pond is now created and bath-house here to view
And the Engen he is working and see what superies do
The baths the are now ready to heathe now here each day
And the rector he is redy to give them a great day
The measons the are working and the plummers now
each day
And the peanters the are painttng and so is Mr. Fay.
The houses now for summer the are standing in the
rere
With the lovely South wind Blowing giving them gud
ere.
The study it is splendit and the refetery too
And to describe there buty I am not Eble for to do.
The cassell now here standing and cricket grown in reare
With the luvly wind there blowing connected with the Ere
The tents the are most splendit and the flags O how
they fly
And the peopel the are smiling as the ere passing by.
The wood is now serounding and rode so grand and
faire
And chappel here convenent for Holy mass and
prayer.
So now my thime is ended, and I have no more to say.
Only the buty now of Clongowes and improving every day.



The college swimming pool remains much as it was in 1887

How the Photograph was taken²

Mr. O'Leary and agen Mr. Doyle

This two good Religes has worked in great stile,

The put me then sitting in a eligent Chare

And a great cloke around me to keep out the ere

They set then the Fotegraft

And takes me at hand,

For some people calls me

Breave Capten McGann.

For I went round the serkets

In the ded of the knight

To see if the young gentle men

Was sleeping all rite.

Next i did padroll the house

Fearing robers would come there at knight.

But my days now are ended

And i have no more to say,

But i will defer now my Subject

Till the last a-counting Day.

¹This poem refers to the opening of the swimming pool in 1887. The study hall and the refectory were rebuilt also in 1887 following a fire.

²This poem refers to the photograph of "The Above Mentioned" Andy McGann which is included in this article.

THE OLD BRIDGE AND FORD AT CLANE

Tony McEvoy

The Alexandra Bridge across the Liffey at Clane was built in 1864. It replaced at the time a very old bridge with seven arches which had been approved in 1391. Had it not been replaced in 1864 the old bridge would have celebrated its 600th birthday in 1991! The photograph below was taken from a painting done prior to 1864 and now in the possession of Sr. Mary Dunn, a Loreto nun, originally from Clane but now living for many years in Madrid. The painting was sold at auction when Geoghegan's Pub closed around 1949. The writer was ten at the time and bid half a crown but the painting sold for 10 shillings. Sr. Mary Dunn left the painting for minding with a friend who lived in Clane. She is now deceased but some years ago, with the permission of both, I was able to take the photo below as well as some others from the painting.



The old Clane Bridge viewed from Carrigeen Quarry

With regard to the bridge of 1391, Comerford provides the following quotation in his *History of Kildare and Leighlin*¹. 'From the rolls we find that on 14th March 1391 the King granted the Provost, Baliffs and Commonality of the town of

Clane, that for seven years they may take custom of goods coming to the town to build anew a certain bridge of the said town over the waters of the Analiffey' The wording strongly suggests that there was in fact an even older bridge in existence prior to 1391! The lack of overall symmetry and the mixed styles of the arches of the bridge seen in the picture above support the view that the bridge was rebuilt or 'built anew'.

A bridge of this antiquity indicates that the Liffey at Clane was difficult if not impossible to cross in ancient times. If the ford was in the position of the present weir it might have been accessed from the Millicent Road via the Moat Commons lane, a branch of which ran directly to the river at this point. The ford would have led obliquely from this point to the townland of Blackhall where the present and previous bridges make their landfall (see the map of 1838 below). There is a very broadly based swell in the river bed beneath the weir which would

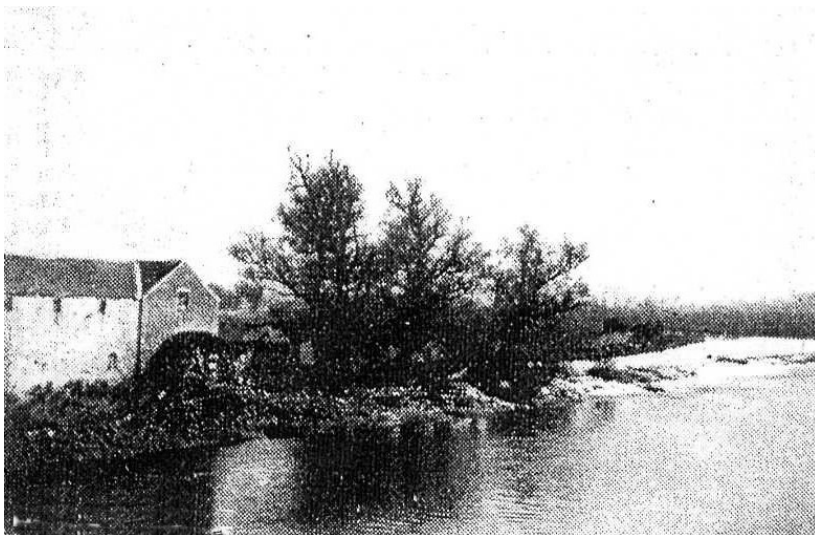


The weir from the left bank. The middle is covered with vegetation

support this suggestion. This in all probability is an extension of the sloping limestone outcrop at the Carrigeen Quarry area

which sloped in this direction. The quarry was in-filled in the 1970s. The weir was apparently built along this otherwise smooth swell with loosely strewn angular stones which were quarried close to hand. The ford would have been 230 yards long with quite a strong cross-flow. Its exact depth is hard to establish as in the absence of the weir the depth would have been lower. Water levels would rise in times of flood but otherwise horses would have been able to wade across. It merges quite smoothly with the river bank levels at each end. It is possible that people could have waded across on foot. The writer recently waded about one third of the way wearing rubber boots stepping in the gaps between the rocks which were used to construct the weir. The surface underfoot is smooth, hard and lightly covered with sand. The middle section is now impassable due to the dense growth of willows and other vegetation.

Archdeacon Sherlock writing, in July 1910, on fords and bridges over the River Liffey, makes the following point regarding Clane:



The weir can be seen here viewed upstream from Alexandra Bridge

The importance of this ford arose from its leading direct from Meath into the fertile heart of Kildare. The old ford probably crossed the river a little above the present weir, where a narrow laneway still comes down. So important a passage had to be guarded and a castle was built at the head of the ford. Some of the remains of this are seen in the stable-yard of Blackhall.²

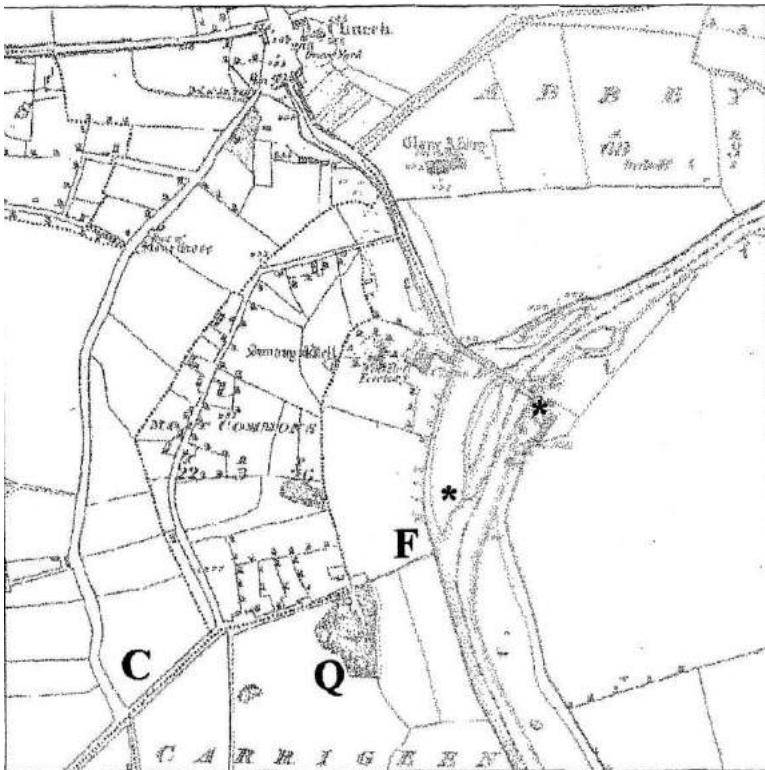
The words *a little above the present weir* and *at the head of the ford* have to be questioned as there is no other feasible location between the weir and Blackhall Castle or indeed below Castlesize. At all points the river is deep with steep banks on both sides. The words *a narrow laneway still comes down* actually reinforce the suggestion that the ford was at the site of the present weir.

The suspicion that the ford at Clane may not always have been easily crossed is supported by the fact that instead of turning left off Millicent Road towards the weir through Moat Commons one can continue straight on the lane past Mahony's yard. The map of 1838 shows that this lane continued in a direct line towards Castlesize where there was a well established fording point. Eamon Mahony recalls that in his father's time there was a tradition of an occasional person walking down the lane with the intention of crossing the Liffey. The residents of Millicent House which is beside the ford would probably have discouraged the use of this route when the house was built in Georgian times. Conor O'Brien whose family once lived in Clane having previously lived in the Gardener's House at Millicent Demesne recalls an incident when his father observed a light at night presumably carried by poachers crossing the ford.

Having crossed the bridge the original road to Naas ran for a few hundred yards close to the river bank. It then diverged at an angle of forty-five degrees slightly beyond where the Land Commission road comes out from Rathmore, possibly leading towards the stable yards and castle ruins. When travelling past Blackhall, Bodenstown and Sallins high lands can be seen to

the east. A very old esker road came from Naas/Johnstown to Blackhall and Clane along this horizon with a branch towards Straffan. The castle at Blackhall would have been strategically well placed to manage movement along this road. The road by the Liffey via Bodenstown and Sallins replaced this road at some stage.

The building of the old Clane Bridge in 1391 may have been due to the need to replace an earlier bridge. In 1380 a timber structure, which was at that time the only bridge across the Liffey in Dublin was swept away in a flood³ and the predecessor of the old Clane Bridge may have suffered a similar fate requiring a bridge to be 'built anew'. According to Phillips and Hamilton it was common for religious communities to take on such tasks.⁴ The Dominicans and the Franciscans were two powerful and influential orders who



Ordnance Survey 6in map 1838

came to Ireland in the Norman era. The bridge in Clane was literally in the 'back yard' of the Franciscans who came to Clane in 1258. Until the extension of the graveyard outside the ruins of the Franciscan Friary in 1915 these ruins stood in the middle of an open field of 15 acres. The entire townland of Abbeylands which extended from the drive which led up to Abbeylands House (the Old Rectory) all the way to the banks of the Liffey contained some 63 acres in all. Interestingly Abbeylands House itself and all the lands attached to it including the drive are in the townland of Clane.

The 1391 bridge is shown in the above 1838 map. It was in the same position as the present Alexandra Bridge just downstream from the industrial weir which powered mills on both sides of the river. 'C' marks the crossroads which linked the Millicent Road with the Clane ford as well as providing a route southwards towards the ford at Castlesize. The lane to the Clane ford passed Carrigeen Quarry 'Q' towards the weir. 'F' marks the point where the lane from 'C' reached the river bank. The old mill race has long been filled in. The three islands, one of which extends as far as the bridge while the other two are beyond at the top right hand corner of the map, are no longer in existence. The weir no longer goes all the way to the bridge but stops at the site of the old corn mill (Slevin's Mill). The two *s mark the two original ends of the weir and presumably the ford.

¹ Comerford, *History of Kildare and Leighlin*.

² Archdeacon Sherlock, 'Some notes on the fords and bridges over the River Liffey', *Journal of Kildare Archaeological Society*, Vol. vi, July 1910, pp. 293-205.

³ M Phillips & A. Hamilton, *Project History of Dublin's River Liffey Bridges*.

⁴ Ibid.

THE IRISH AT WAR – ARBOUR HILL

Larry Breen

Although mostly known as the resting place of the executed leaders of the 1916 Rising Arbour Hill has a much wider military story to tell. Its military history began with the British Army presence around 1700 followed by the 1798 Rebellion, the Fenian Rising in 1866-67, the 1914-18 World War 1, the 1916 Easter Rising, the IRA troubles of the 1940s and nowadays the Irish U.N. Veterans Association.



Arbour hill

As already referred to the first military presence was the British army who were stationed in what is now Collins Barracks and is currently home to the National Museum of Ireland. It was originally called the “Royal Barracks” and housed the British garrison in Dublin. Built around 1700 to the design of architect Thomas Burgh it still remains a building of significant architectural merit. It was handed over to the Irish State in 1922 and renamed Collins Barracks in 1990. It is not generally known but it has the distinction of being the oldest barracks in Europe.

It is interesting to note the strong Kildare connection with the barracks as it was designed by the famous architect Thomas Burgh. Thomas was one of the De Burgh Family of Oldtown Naas. Born in 1670 he served with King William in Holland before becoming surveyor general of Ireland. He started buying land around Naas in 1695 and built Oldtown. His older brother built Bert near Athy and the Hussey Burghs lived in Donore.

Perhaps it was the nature of the area and its proximity to the Royal Barracks which suggested Arbour Hill as an ideal site for a military hospital and provost prison, the building of which was completed at the end of 1797. The hospital which stood on the site of the present St. Bricin's Hospital was originally known as Arbour Hill Hospital. It was rebuilt and renamed the "King George V Hospital" in 1912. The prison and Provost's House stood to the south of the hospital in an area between the present Detention Barracks and St. Bricin's. It should be understood of course that the Provost Prison was used for the detention of persons subject to military law. Thus throughout its history most of those incarcerated there were either members of the army or were taken prisoner during periods of martial law.

The rising of 1798 was put down with a ferocity and ruthlessness seldom paralleled in Irish history. The prowess of the Yeomen was estimated by the number of prisoners and mutilated bodies brought in. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Cornwallis, writing to the Duke of Portland said that "any man in a brown coat who was found within seven miles of the field of action was butchered without discrimination". Everyday saw prisoners brought into the city and it was not unusual to see a procession of carts in which were piled the mutilated bodies of the peasantry. All these and those executed at Arbour Hill were flung into a mass grave outside the Royal Barracks. The area in which their burial site was situated extended down to the river and was then a wasteland and covered with every description of filth. This uncovered burial ground subsequently became known as "Croppies' Acre". It is now mostly covered by the Esplanade and the roadway on the

north side of the river. A sensitive young patriot (who five years later suffered execution in Thomas Street) appalled by the atrocities he had witnessed penned the following lines in one verse of his poem.

*No rising column marks this spot,
Where many a victim lies;
But, Oh! The blood that here has streamed,
To heaven for justice cries.*

Robert Emmet

On the 8th November 1798, a prisoner was conveyed from Derry Jail and taken to Dublin Castle. He was dressed in a French uniform, wearing a great coat and gold laced hat and held the rank of Adjutant General of the French Forces in Ireland. This was Ireland's first and greatest republican, Theobald Wolfe Tone. St Bricin's Hospital NCO's Mess is on the site of the former Provost Prison where Wolfe Tone died and the former prison can be seen in the white contrasting lower halves of the upper floor windows. Preparatory to being removed to Arbour Hill, he was placed in irons, an action which infuriated Tone. His protestations being unheeded, he ripped off his French uniform, declaring that it would not be disgraced by such indignity. The question of the trial, sentence and execution of Wolfe Tone has been, and always will be, clouded in controversy and argument. Whether he was murdered or committed suicide will probably never be known with absolute certainty, but of one thing he is assured, a place in the heart of every Irishman. It is only fitting that near where he died there now rests the remains of his successors who proudly avowed the influence and inspiration that Tone had been to them. Around the same time two other notable prisoners arrived at Arbour Hill and were court-martialled on a charge of treason. One of these was Wolfe Tone's brother Matthew and Bartholomew Teeling both of whom were sentenced to death and hanged at Arbour Hill. Both Matthew Tone and Teeling are buried in Croppies' Acre.

We must not forget Wolfe Tone's connection with County Kildare and in particular Clane. Although Tone was born in Dublin on 20th June 1763 his father Peter Tone, a coachbuilder, lived in the Blackhall Estate near Clane where he was a tenant farmer before moving to Dublin. Tone actually got his name from the landlord of the estate, Theobald Wolfe. The Tone family came back to live at Blackhall in 1788. Wolfe Tone is buried in the family plot of his grandfather in Bodenstown Graveyard again near Clane in County Kildare.



The Wolfe Tone Monument at Bodenstown

The next major changes to the Arbour Hill area took place in 1845. At this time the grounds for development were enclosed and separated into three areas that consisted of a prison yard, the schools and the cemetery. The work on the new detention barracks and the adjoining church commenced in 1845 and was completed in 1848. The garrison cemetery is where many British personnel and their families were buried in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

During the years 1866/67 the new prison was extensively used by the military authorities for detention of soldiers arrested, some of them on suspicion only, of being implicated in the

Fenian Movement. A group of soldiers from the 85th Regiment, James Kavanagh, Phillip Murtha, Michael McCarthy and P.J.O'Brien were the first arrested for Fenian activities. Unfortunately, the curse of all Irish revolutionary movements, the informer, soon made his appearance. McCarthy to save himself informed on the others who received long prison sentences. During a raid on Pilworth's public house in Dublin a number of soldiers were arrested and included in those was John Boyle O'Reilly then serving in the army and a very active Fenian. After a long period of detention in Arbour Hill, O'Reilly was sentenced to penal servitude for life which was later reduced to twenty years and he was transferred to Milbank Prison in London. Almost one hundred years later, when Ireland's most distinguished guest of the 20th Century, paid a special visit to Arbour Hill, a strange link was forged. For President John F Kennedy was an ardent admirer of John Boyle O'Reilly and quoted extensively from his writings.

Despite Arbour Hill's long connection with the tragic history of our country since 1798, it is best known to-day because its grounds contain the graves of the leaders executed in 1916. When the grounds were enclosed in 1848 they were laid out in three separate plots. The one immediately to the rear of the church was a garrison cemetery for deceased soldiers and members of their families. Some of the graves can still be seen, though the majority of headstones have been moved back to the prison wall. To the north of the graveyard and separated from it by iron railings a second plot was allocated as a playground for the children attending two small schools situated in the playground. Behind the Detention Barracks and adjoining the playground but separated from it by a high wall was the third plot and this was used as an exercise yard for the prisoners. On April 30th 1916 Padraic Pearse was brought to Arbour Hill prison and lodged in a cell. It was from this cell that he informed Richard Mulcahy, an emissary of Thomas Ashe's Fingal men still in action in North County Dublin, that the struggle was over and that they were to lay down their arms. On May 3rd 1916 a grave was prepared in the north east corner of the exercise yard. That evening a horse drawn ambulance

brought to Arbour Hill the bodies of three men who had been executed earlier that day at Kilmainham Goal. The unconfined



The author addressing North/South Federations at the 1916 plot

bodies were placed in the newly opened grave and covered with quicklime. On succeeding days, the bodies of a further eleven executed men were also buried there. There is an intriguing story in relation to the order of interment of the executed men which would not generally be known. The Prison sergeant-major, whose duty it was to have the grave prepared for the interments, placed a numbered brick at the head of each of the fourteen men in the order of their burial and kept a corresponding record of the names. To this sympathetic gesture we are indebted for our knowledge of the order of interment of the leaders of the 1916 insurrection. Reading from the north wall they are:

2. Thomas McDonagh	3 May	9. Con Colbert	8 May
3. P H Pearse	3 May	10. Eamonn Ceannt	8 May
4. Edward Daly	4 May	11. Sean Heuston	8 May
5. Michael O’Hanrahan	4 May	12. Michael Mallin	8 May
6. William Pearse	4 May	13. James Connolly	12 May
7 Joseph Plunkett	4 May	14. Sean McDermott	12 May

With the end of the British administration in Ireland in 1922 Arbour Hill was taken over by the National Army. During the subsequent Civil War, some notable prisoners there included President Eamon de Valera who on a return visit in later years was able to point out cell number 113 on the west landing where he was held. In the 1940s its doors were again opened to an influx of offenders against special legislation and included among those was the ebullient, irrepressible Brendan Behan. The Detention Barracks continued in use as a military prison until 1964.

The first suggestion of a memorial to the executed leaders came from the poetess, Dora Sigerson but nothing happened until a memorial in the form of a beautiful set of stained glass windows was erected behind the High Altar in the Church of the Sacred Heart, Arbour Hill. The graves were not open to the public except for the annual commemoration day until they were opened permanently to the public in 1936. The Department of Defence suggested that a suitable memorial should be erected at the grave site. A plan was agreed and in 1955 at a cost of £20,000 a contract for the memorial was signed. The memorial is impressive. It comprises a curved ashlar wall on which the Proclamation of the Republic is incised in Irish and English with a cross in the centre. There are three paved terraces connected by broad flights of stone steps and a paved area for the deployment of troops during ceremonial occasions. The grave plot is covered in a green sward in a gently curved mound surrounded by a limestone kerb on which the names of the leaders are carved in Irish and in English at the foot. Tall trees surround the grave area, ornamental shrubs and flowers decorate the scene and somehow, there is a quiet dignity that is both moving and inspiring. The Irish nation owes them this dignified memorial. Subsequently another plaque was erected which is inscribed with the names of all those who died and was unveiled by President de Valera in April 1966.

It would be remiss when considering the fighting Irish not to include the nearby Irish National War Memorial Gardens at

Islandbridge. This beautiful memorial is dedicated to the 49,400 Irish soldiers who died in the First World War. It is ironical that Irishmen fought both alongside their British allies on the fields of Flanders and against the same British army on the streets of Dublin during this period. Although shrouded in controversy for many years there is now a much more understanding attitude adopted by all concerned towards Ireland's participation in World War 1 and what it has meant for the Irish men who fought and died in foreign lands. In 1966 the then Taoiseach Sean Lemass, a one time critic of remembrance ceremonies in Ireland acknowledged that Irish men who had enlisted in the British Army during World War 1 *"were motivated by the highest purpose and died in their tens of thousands in Flanders and Gallipoli believing they were giving their lives in the cause of human liberty everywhere, not excluding Ireland."* The gardens were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and are characteristic of his style of simple dignity.

The military tradition still lives on since the headquarters of the United Nations Veterans Association are located at Arbour Hill. They are sited in the Headmaster's House of the old school used by the British Army during their time there. They also have an impressive museum with many artefacts from their campaigns with the United Nations Peace Keeping forces in various parts of the world. There is also a plaque in the Church at Arbour Hill commemorating officers and men of the defence forces who died while serving with the United Nations Forces in the Congo. When the remains of Roger Casement were repatriated in February, 1965 the coffin lay for some days in the Arbour Hill Church of the Sacred Heart before interment in Glasnevin.

That is the story of Arbour Hill and the fighting Irish which is now enshrined in the hearts and affections of the Irish people. From Tone to Pearse they stretch in a line of heroes some famed, most of them unknown, but all united by the sacrifices they made.

‘JUBILEE NURSES’ IN CLANE 1932-1959

John Noonan & Jim Heffernan

Older residents will remember the ‘Jubilee Nurse’ who visited households long before the advent of an organised public health service. The name of the service, which was established for Great Britain and Ireland in 1889, originates from the celebrations around the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1877. To commemorate the Jubilee ‘the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses’ was set up by private subscription. The Institute’s nurses, officially ‘Queen’s Nurses’, were invariably referred to as ‘Jubilee Nurses’.

The Irish branch of the Queen’s Institute arose from contacts between William Rathbone, a Liverpool philanthropist, and like-minded people in Dublin. A Dublin office was set up in 1889 at 14 Nassau Street and an Irish sub-committee was set up in 1891. The office eventually moved to Leeson Street. In its early years the Irish branch was administered and funded from London under the supervision of an Irish Advisory Committee whose members were nominated from the elite of Irish Society. On the foundation of the Irish Free State the administration of district nursing in Ireland changed. The Irish Advisory Committee was replaced by an Irish Executive Committee which was completely independent of London and responsible for its own funding.

The Institute trained its own Nurses who were expected to remain single and were required to resign if they got married. There was some flexibility as married nurses were sometimes allowed back on a long term ‘temporary’ basis but in no circumstances could a nurse who married receive a pension. Most women recruited by the Queen’s Institute were already established nurses and received six month’s training in one of the Institute’s nursing homes to adapt their skills to the circumstances of district nursing.¹

Apart from a month’s holidays per annum the nurse was on call at all hours and could be called out at any time. The nurse’s

bag which was often carried in the carrier on the front of a bicycle contained dressings, iodine, forceps and bowls which had to be boiled in the house where the patient was. The bag also contained syringes and needles which were often blunt from reuse and boiling. The days of the Jubilee Nurse were over before disposable gloves, syringes and needles arrived!² As well as their daily round of visits nurses were required to keep records including; a general register, a time book, a daily visit book, the Queen's Institute midwifery register, the local authority midwifery register, the TB register, the child welfare cards and the donations book.³ The Jubilee nurses were paid monthly, usually in cash by a member of the local committee. When they were transferred to the public health system they were paid by a cheque in the post which many found less humiliating.⁴

The backbone of the Jubilee Nurse system was a network of District Nursing Associations.⁵ These voluntary local committees, which were generally made up of prominent local ladies, received little or no government funding and had to resort to fundraising to provide the nurse with her salary and the essentials of a cottage to live in and a bicycle to carry out her duties. Contact with the Queen's Institute was by an annual or biennial inspection and an affiliation fee was paid annually.

A total of 327 District Nursing Associations were established in Ireland in the first half of the 20th Century. The first association to be set up in Ireland was in 1891 the last in 1958. There were 170 local District Nursing Associations in operation in 1935. An association's core function was to provide a domestic nursing service for its local area. A newly formed association would apply to the Queen's Institute for a nurse undertaking to provide her with a salary and a cottage. The association would pay an affiliation fee and be subject to an annual inspection by the Institute.⁶ Many district nursing associations lasted over fifty years others, only a year or two. The longest functioning association in County Kildare was that of Naas, founded by Lady Geraldine Mayo of Palmerstown House; it lasted from 1891 to 1965.⁷

The system of local Dispensary Doctors dated from 1851 and there was generally a good working relationship between Jubilee Nurses and the local doctors. Often the doctors or their wives served on the local committees. Most dispensaries had a midwife of some sort. It was up to the local association to decide whether midwifery was to be offered in which case the nurse received appropriate training. In 1935 only 72 of 170 Queen's Institute districts provided midwifery. The local association also decided whether to charge a fee or not.

Clane District Nursing Association, of which Mrs. Boylan of Millicent House was President for a long period, existed from 1933 to 1959.⁸ A total of eleven Jubilee Nurses served in the Clane area over the years.⁹

Margaret Grace was the Jubilee Nurse with the Clane District Nursing Association from May 1944 to December 1946. From the Rower in County Kilkenny Margaret had emigrated to England around 1930 and trained in nursing and midwifery. She served as a staff nurse at Rochdale and Nelson Hospital before returning to Ireland on the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. She completed District Nursing training at St Laurence Nursing Home in Dublin. Before coming to Clane she worked as a locum health nurse in County Mayo¹⁰ and subsequently had a permanent post with Carbury District Nursing Association from 1940 to 1944. Nurse Grace was appointed to replace Nurse Saunders at a meeting of Clane District Nursing Association Executive Committee on April 14 1944.

In December 1946, on her marriage to a local farmer Dick Coffey, she resigned her post as Jubilee Nurses were required to do on marriage. This did not end her association with Clane District Nursing Association as she served on the committee for many years afterwards.

The minutes of Clane District Nursing Association during the period that Margaret Grace was its Jubilee Nurse give an

insight into the day to day issues which it addressed. These revolved around the need to raise funds to meet its obligations including the payment of its nurse, the provision of her accommodation and equipment and financial obligations towards the Institute and related bodies. Rev Handy, Fr Kehoe and the dispensary doctor Dr Walsh were prominent members of the committee during this period.

The nurse reported to the Committee at quarterly intervals. At the meeting of the executive committee on 1 December 1944 Nurse Grace reported that she had carried out the extraordinary number of 3,204 visits during the previous quarter. On 12 October 1945 the Committee heard that Nurse Grace had paid 1,447 visits in addition to carrying out the work of the midwife who was absent on a post graduate course. On 31 January 1946 the nurse reported a total of 2,309 visits and her request for four pillow cases and four face towels was sanctioned by the committee.



Peg Coffey née Grace with her husband Dick

On the 5 July 1944 the Hon, Treasurer informed the AGM that funds stood as follows: £110-12-8 in the Deposit Account, £22-2-8 for the Samaritan Account which was for the benefit of the

needy but the Current Account was overdrawn. However a card drive which had been run by Mr O'Neill and Mr Farrell had raised £52-13- 6 which would enable the Samaritan Fund to be put on a sound footing and money to be put in the Current Account. The collectors were praised for the fact that subscriptions were £30-4-8 for the year. On 1 December it was reported that a grant of £5 had been received from the National Health Insurance Society towards the nursing of insured persons. A letter had been received asking for a subscription to the Countess of Kenmare's Memorial Fund for Retired Nurses and £10 would be taken from the Deposit Account for this. The President appealed for old linen for dressings and it was decided to hold a céilí in September 1945 and offer a calf for raffle. A decision was taken to seek permission from the county council to erect a garage at the nurse's cottage. A grant of £100 had been received from the Mulligan Trust due to the good offices of Senator Sweetman. An air-ring, a back-rest, a bed-rest and a bedpan and a waterproof sheet had been acquired. Because of demands on the nurse's time due to the filling in of and delivering child welfare cards the nurse was allowed the hire of car from Woods' Garage at one shilling per hour.



The former Jubilee Nurse's Cottage at Firmount

A cottage had been made available for rental by the County council through the intervention of Father Keogh. Rental and rates were payable. Between 1943 and 1959 a scullery and a garage was built at the cottage and a replacement fireplace and a Stanley Cooker were installed and the cottage was wired for electricity. In 1954 the Association raised the possibility with the County Council of purchasing the cottage but they were informed that they could not do so as they were not agricultural labourers!

At an emergency meeting on 6 December 1946 Nurse Cummins was appointed to replace Nurse Grace who had left to get married. A grant was being received for public health work but Nurse Cummins subsequently resigned due to an excessive work load which resulted. She was succeeded by Nurse Cunningham and then Nurse Doyle. The former Nurse Grace, now Mrs. Coffey, was elected to the Committee on 3 December 1948. Father Doyle who had joined the committee following the death of Father Keogh became Chairman in 1953 replacing Mrs. Boylan who had stepped down because of ill health.

There were developments in the latter half of the 1940s which would ultimately result in the demise of voluntary district nursing. In 1946 the Irish Government aspired to the setting up of publicly funded community health services. Growing concern about the bill before Dáil Éireann which would become the 1947 Public Health Act is evident from the minutes of the Clane DHA. On 22 March 1946 the committee requested Mrs. Boylan to write to the Leinster Leader expressing the hope that the forthcoming Public Health Act would not bring about the abolition of the Local Nursing Associations. Rev. Handy undertook to discuss the issue with Senator Sweetman. However in the short term at least the Government was happy with the provision of voluntary services which they could not provide at the time and were seen as cheap and efficient. Grants became available through the County Councils, payable at the County Manager's discretion, towards the cost of what was now seen as work on behalf of the State.

Over time, pressures built up on the finances of the Association. At the Executive Committee meeting of 13 October 1950 difficulties in raising funds were explained by the fact that many people saw that there were public health nurses in adjacent areas where consequently no fund raising was needed and were not expecting the Jubilee Nurse to remain. Throughout the first half of the 1950s finances were problematic and the Association regularly sought grant increases with little success.

A circular from the Department of Health, indicating that in future midwifery and district nursing were to be combined, which was received in September 1956 marked the beginning of the end. The Executive Committee felt that the workload would be too big for this and that in any case the grant aid was already inadequate. On receipt of a letter from the Irish Nurses Organisation demanding that Jubilee Nurses should receive the same pay and conditions as the State's Public Health Nurses the Association wrote two letters to the County Council



Nurse Leddy the last dispensary midwife in Clane

seeking increased funding to meet these demands, neither letter received a reply. The maternity issue was brought to a head by the impending retirement of the Dispensary Nurse, Nurse Leddy. The Superintendent of the Queen's Institute in Ireland, Miss F H Aylward, encouraged the Association to take on the maternity work and arranged for the transfer to Birr of the existing nurse, Nurse McEvoy, who felt unable to undertake the additional work. A new nurse, Nurse Brennan, was appointed to Clane but the question of adequate funding remained an issue. On 17th October the Executive Committee met to decide their response to the County Council's final offer of a £100 increase with an additional payment of 3 guineas for each maternity case over 25. Disappointment was expressed that the Council appeared to have gone back on an earlier suggestion of an increase of £150 possibly £200 but it was agreed to undertake the work on a trial basis until September 1959 when Nurse Brennan's contract expired.

However the financial situation did not improve. At a meeting of the executive committee on 5th October 1959 fruitless approaches to the Department of Health and Kildare County Council were reported. It was decided there was no alternative but to close down and that a public meeting be called for 17th October to announce this. However it was decided that there would be a final letter to the County Council summarising the financial position: annual expenditure £530, present grant £265¹¹, subscriptions £123, deficit £140. This was the last recorded meeting of the Executive Committee¹².

The Queen's Institute ceased operations in Ireland on 30 June 1968. Its ultimate demise was due to the lack of new nurses; negotiations with An Bord Altranais, which had been set up under the Nurses Act 1950, for a jointly recognised training course failed meaning that Queen's Institute trained nurses who sought employment in the public sector had to undergo further training, a prospect which discouraged potential recruits.



A Jubilee Nurse wearing her uniform and medal. This photograph was taken by Peg Coffey the former Nurse Grace. Peg subsequently served on the committee of Clane District Nursing Association so the nurse in the photograph is probably one of her successors who served between 1946 and 1959. Perhaps one of the older residents may recognise her.

After the Closure of the Queen's Institute in Ireland in 1968 nurses who had completed the training period as Queen's nurses and who had more than five years' work in districts were automatically registered by An Bord Altranais as public health district nurses. Those with less than three years' service were brought to *An Bord Altranais* headquarters in Fitzwilliam Square for an eight week course before being sent back to their districts.¹³ Thus a body which, for decades had provided a service, before the Irish State or its predecessor had provided to the community faded into oblivion.

¹ Elizabeth Prendergast and Helen Sheridan, *Jubilee Nurse - Voluntary District Nursing in Ireland, 1890-1974*, Dublin 2012, pages 93-113.

² *Ibid*, pages 52-54.

³ *Ibid*, page 39.

⁴ *Ibid*, page 23.

⁵ Officially District Health Associations but they appear to have been more usually referred to as District Nursing Associations and this terminology is used throughout this article.

⁶ Prendergast & Sheridan.

⁷ Jubilee Nurse – the forgotten heroine of Ireland's public health service, Liam Kenny, Co Kildare Online Electronic History Journal.

⁸ Clane District Nursing Association Minute Book 1943 – 1958.

⁹ Prendergast & Sheridan, page 274.

¹⁰ In this instance Margaret would have been employed by 'Lady Dudley's Scheme' founded by the wife of the Viceroy Lord Dudley (1903-1908), a sister organisation which shared its headquarters premises with the Queen's Institute in Nassau Street but had a separate staff. It was set up to cover the poverty stricken western coastal counties which did not have the resources to support district health associations. Its nurses were Queen's Nurses the same as the Jubilee Nurses but reported to a central body which raised funding centrally.

¹¹ The grant amounted to 50% of the Clane District Health Association's expenditure, at this time County Councils were entitled to give grants of up to 85% at the discretion of the County Manager.

¹² CDNA minutes, 5 October 1959.

¹³ Prendergast & Sheridan, page 13

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE 'ABBEY' 1982-1985

Ted Murray

In the middle of Clane there stands a beautifully restored church which now serves the community as a hall for music, drama, dance, art and various club activities, latest of which is a boxing club. This was not always so since not so many years ago (thirty), the "Abbey" as it is referred to, stood tall, dark and foreboding as a ruined church and graveyard left open to the elements for decades. It was the ruin of the old Church of Ireland church which had been built on the site of the ancient Celtic monastery of St Ailbe. Damaged by the fighting in Clane during the 1798 Rebellion it continued to deteriorate until it was abandoned when the church of St Michael and All Angels, which was built at Millicent, was consecrated on 29 September 1883. Visible for miles around it was not a pretty sight with trees and scrub growing inside and outside of its remaining walls and also from its steeple.



The roofless ruin of the 'Abbey' in the centre of the photo circa 1980

The steeple was refurbished in the seventies by the Community Council with a local builder, providing the skills and labour. This was to prevent it falling into ruin and becoming a further

eyesore in the village. The Green and the Stream Park were developed around this time also by the very active Clane Community Council. These were huge projects for the fledgling Community Council and improved the local environment immeasurably.

As a central focal point in the village the Abbey was deteriorating in front of our eyes. Trees were growing out through the openings and a considerable amount of debris had accumulated inside. Something had to be done, but it would require major resources, financial and labour to make any impression on the structure, never mind reconstruction of the entire building.

Decision time for the Community Council.

Several options were looked at from just pointing the stonework to preserve what was still standing to completely rebuilding and reroofing the Abbey. It was decided in 1980 to carry out a major rebuilding project and this was launched around 1982. It was no coincidence that Fr. Bob Thompson S.J. was active in the parish at that time. Peter O’Riordan Chairman of the Community Council investigated similar religious buildings of that era and produced plans and proposals for the rebuilding project. A project management plan was agreed based on the potential finance available.

Project Abbey

We commenced an ANCO Project in 1982 and over the next three years trained in excess of two hundred young people on all aspects of building work.

Andy Fitzgerald was appointed foreman and revelled in the task of passing his wealth of building experience on to the youth of Clane. Tom Carroll was the ANCO coordinator. Between them they engaged the trainees in the various trades required to take the building from an unsafe shell to the finished article that you see today. All facets of building were experienced from ground-works through masonry, plastering, and plumbing to roofing and all in between; this was an

educational process that increased the skills level of Clane workers and introduced many participants to the building trades where a number of them make their living today.



The ‘Abbey’ today

Anecdotes from the Site

Many stories emerged over the course of the building and many life lessons were learned from working with the team. Punctuality was key and very novel penalties were applied for lateness, mainly the penal servitude of rock breaking and crushing for the granite window sills.

As this was a historic building with several battle sites nearby, much care was taken in the excavation of the accumulation of soil and materials from the inside of the structure. When a large metal object was struck by a pickaxe the anticipation of a “find” was high. Metal rod feelers indicated that it was man-size and felt like a suit of armour. Cautious archaeological excavation ensued to reveal a Caltex petrol pump!

The Roof

This was the subject of much debate as, ideally, a traditional cut timber roof with oak beams and slates, would have completed the project in true church style. At the roofing stage we were seriously in debt and prudence dictated that we go for the cheaper option with a view to doing the proper job in years to come. That time is now here in my opinion.

The Windows

The windows were copied from a similar building in Clara and were known as “Mater Maria” church windows because of the two entwined letter “M’s” incorporated in the frames.



Front Door

The front door was donated by Bobby Frayne and has its own history.

Balanced Flue

At about a foot below ground level there was a soot-lined trench leading from the back wall, the length of the building in the middle of the floor, to half way up the steeple. Experts reckon that this was a balanced flue underfloor heating system typical of old abbeys.

The Floor

The present floor is of the finest maple and had a previous life as a portable dance floor used for an attempted revival of crossroad dancing by the Community Council in 1982. It became too heavy to be really portable and was ideal for recycling into the perfect “sprung” floor for the Abbey.



Members of Clane Musical and Dramatic Society meeting in the ‘Abbey’ to discuss their next performance. The plaque to the right of the window marks the tremendous contribution of the late Father R Thompson S.J. to the locality between the years 1977 to 1987.

The Graves

The headstones were falling over and some were dangerous. The Clane Community Council decided to save them and repositioned them around the walls. This was done in accordance with legal requirements and with permission from families where possible. The present layout provides a lovely quiet place of rest for the deceased and a garden of remembrance for the rest of us.



Headstones relocated to the walls

The Green Room

This was an afterthought and a solution to a number of problems that the Community Council was experiencing at that time. It became a home for the “Evergreens” who still use it to this day.

The Debt

Very strong personalities with very definite views on how the Community Council was spending its money emerged at this time. Community Council meetings were certainly not dull and several innovative fundraising schemes were hatched in the Green Room. At its maximum the debt was £80,000. The community focused on getting the debt paid and achieved this, to their credit, within five years. Every possible method of fundraising was employed during this period.

The Leinster Ladies’ Mini Marathon was held twice and each time had an entry of over 800 ladies who trained for weeks for this great occasion. 2015 will be the thirtieth anniversary of the great run from Clane to Mondello. Everybody in the parish

turned out for these events. Clane showed what community spirit was all about during these years.



The ‘Abbey’, a prominent feature in the village

2015

The Abbey is now part and parcel of the community life in Clane. It takes pride of place on its elevated site overlooking the hustle and bustle of modern life in the village.

It stands as a monument to the community, to the Community Council and to all the men and women who worked so hard to get rid of the eyesore and replace it with a place of enjoyment and relaxation for the community.

Addendum

If this article has evoked memories for those who worked in any way to achieve this project and have a related story to tell, please share them with the author for a future article, we would like to hear especially from the ladies who participated in the Leinster Ladies’ Mini Marathon.

CLANE'S HIDDEN GEMS

Brendan Cullen

A few years ago I submitted a number of items relevant to the Clane area for publication on the Hidden Gems Forgotten People Website (<http://www.hidden-gems.eu>). Some are reproduced below:

The Bullaun Stone

Located in the retaining wall bordering the Butterstream, a managed stream, on the Sallins Road, Clane, opposite the old Franciscan friary, is a little known relic of ancient times, called the Bullaun stone. The Bullaun stone consists of a large rectangular block of weathered limestone with a deep bowl-shaped depression, hollowed out of its upper side. It is believed locally to be of pre-Christian origin and is probably the oldest man-made artifact extant in Clane. It may have been used in



The Bullaun Stone

pagan worship with perhaps offerings of milk, grain or even blood deposited in the bowl. It is intimately connected with the

legend of the First Century local King Mesgegra and his untimely death at the ford of Clane.

Tradition has it that Mesgegra was confronted by his enemy Conall Cearnach, an Ulster hero, at the ford in the river (now the Liffey) at Clane. After a fierce duel Conall defeated Mesgegra, severed his head at the Bullaun stone and then placed it in the bowl-shaped hollow. It is believed that Mesgegra was buried under the large Moat near the present Alexandra Bridge at the river crossing and that his head was buried along with his wife Queen Buan (who died of shock at the sad news), under the mound at nearby Mainham. Locals refer to the Bullaun stone as a “wart stone” and attribute healing powers to the rain that collects in the bowl-shaped hollow.

Effigy of Gerald Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald



Remnant of the Fitzgerald Effigy

Few locals from the village of Clane are aware of the existence of a small stone fragment in the ruins of the 13th Century, ivy-

clad, Franciscan friary located on the Sallins Road. It appears to be the remains of a statue of a torso carved in limestone without its upper chest and legs. Even though most of the figure is missing it is recognizable as a piece of an effigy. It consists of just the waist of the figure with the tops of the thighs covered by a small piece of mail and the outline of a belt and a diagonal sword scabbard. Evidently the effigy has lain in a recess at the base of the friary wall for many years. Unfortunately, in modern times it is open to the elements and is in danger of being vandalised. Most historians are of the opinion that the figure is the remains of the effigy of Gerald Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald, 4th Baron of Offaly, who founded the Friary in 1258 AD and who died in 1287AD. One wonders what will become of such a historical piece of sculpture if it is left exposed to the vagaries of the Irish weather much longer. Would it be too much to ask the local Council to bring it indoors and to save it for posterity?

The ‘Bird Bath’

As one approaches the entrance to the Catholic Church in Clane from the Main Street one is struck by the presence of a large stone bowl-like basin mounted on a rectangular block of granite and situated to the right of the forecourt on the Convent side. Many parishioners are puzzled by its presence and are unaware of its history.

In 1935 Miss Caroline Aylmer, the last resident of Donadea Castle, died. In June 1936 the contents of the castle were auctioned. Fr. Keogh the Parish Priest of Clane attended the public auction at Donadea Castle and bought the basin for two pounds. It was listed in the auction catalogue as a “bird bath”. However, Fr Keogh believed it was originally a baptismal font from the private Catholic chapel that was in the castle since its construction. This chapel was located in the oldest part of the castle which pre-dated the Donadea Aylmers conforming to the Established Church.



The “bird bath”

The “bird bath” is oval in shape and the date on the base is 1625. Fr Keogh had it erected outside the front door of the Catholic Church in Clane, filled it with water and blessed it. It remained there until the early 1970’s, when due to an upgrade of the forecourt it was moved to the right where it still stands

The Wogan Tomb

The family tomb of the Wogans of Rathcoffey, Co. Kildare is located in the graveyard of the ‘Abbey’ off the Main Street in Clane. It is an altar tomb surmounted by three stone plaques. The uppermost plaque bears a plain shield and the date 1618. The next plaque bears the date 1716 and contains the arms of Wogan and those of O’Neill. This refers to the marriage of Nicholas Wogan, who was then living at Rathcoffey, to Rose, the daughter and heiress of Sir Neill O’Neill of Killileagh, Co Antrim. The lowest plaque is perhaps the most interesting. It bears the following inscription in raised letters:

Here lieth intombed the body of William Wogan of Rathcoffie Esquire who deceased the last day of December in Anno Domini 1616 being of the age of XXVII years.



The Wogan Tomb

On the front of the altar there are representations of six human figures, three males and three females. The males are on the left. Over each are the initials; NW. IW. WW. EW. MW. IW. These refer to his children. Unfortunately, the sculptor left the tomb unfinished as only one of the figures, a female, is completed, the rest are only blocked out.

The Browne Mausoleum at Mainham

This mausoleum was built by Stephen Browne in 1743 who erected it just a couple of feet outside the graveyard at Mainham. Browne wanted to build it in or adjoining the church nearby but quarreled with the Protestant Rector of Clane, the Rev. John Daniel who wanted to charge Browne five Guineas for the privilege of doing so. Browne refused to pay the money and built the mausoleum on his own land just several feet outside the graveyard wall. The stone slab over the entrance on the outside tells the story:



The Browne Mausoleum

*The within monument was prepared by the direction of Stephen Browne, Esq., the day it bears date, which he designed putting up in the opposite church, or adjoining to it, and said Browne applied several times to his parish minister, the Revd. John Daniel, for his consent, which he refused him unless said Browne would give him five guineas for so doing. A gentleman whose character is remarkably well known, as well as his behavior on several occasions to said Browne, and the only clergyman in the diocese whose passion would prevent their church to be embellished or enlarged, and to deprive themselves and their successors from the burial fees; and he has been the occasion of obliging said Browne to erect said monument here on his own estate of inheritance, which said Browne thinks proper to insert here to show it was not by choice he did it.
May the 1st 1743.*

MOLLY MAGUIRES IN KILDARE!

Brian McCabe

Every local historian and researcher will probably have had the experience of working on a particular subject only to be distracted by spotting something else of interest, in the publication or source being consulted, on a different topic or relating to a different place.

This is what happened me some years ago when researching in the 'Anglo Celt' provincial paper, when I unexpectedly came across an item relating to County Kildare.

The 'Celt' (as it is affectionately known) is nowadays regarded as the local paper for county Cavan but it is, in fact, one of the oldest provincial papers in the country (founded in 1845) and, at its inception, carried news items relating to surrounding counties and even further afield.

The item related to the “State of Kildare” and went on to refer to the spread therein of “Molly Maguireism”.

For most of us of a certain age, the mention of 'Molly Maguires' will conjure up images from the iconic 1970 film of the same name, set in the 1870s Pennsylvania coal mines and starring Sean Connery and Richard Harris, with its themes of labour struggle, hardship, conspiracy and betrayal.

The origins of “The Mollies” can be found much earlier in agrarian unrest in Ireland and some would trace their roots back to organisations in the 18th and early 19th centuries such as 'The Whiteboys', 'Peep of Day Boys' and 'Ribbonmen'. This unrest was largely a result of grievances arising out of changes in land usage, as landlords attempted to replace traditional socio-economic practices such as potato cultivation with fencing and pasturing of land. Resistance often took the form of fence destruction, night time ploughing of croplands which was being converted to pasture, or the driving off, mutilation or even killing, of livestock. In areas where the land had always

been dedicated to small scale, growing season leases of farmland, opposition was conceived as “retributive justice” which was intended “to correct transgressions against traditional moral and social codes”. The 'Mollies' claimed to be carrying out a just law of their own in opposition to the inequities of landlord law, the police and court system and the transgressions of “land grabbers”. Their reaction to these land grabbers (surreptitiously digging up the land to render it useful only for conacre) echoed similar practices by the 'Whiteboys' in the 1760s, and another group called the 'Terry Alts' in the 1820s and early 1830s.

The 'Mollies' seem to have acquired their nickname from the fact that they dressed up in women’s clothing. This, according to some experts, was both as a disguise and as a form of social transgression. They were known to have worn women’s dresses and also blackened their faces with burnt cork. Parallels have been drawn with the later – but more harmless - traditions of “mummers” in some parts of the country.



The “Mollies” roots can be traced back to 18th and early 19th Century secret agrarian societies such as the Whiteboys and the Ribbonmen

In any case, the extract which caught my attention is taken from the Anglo Celt issue of February 20th 1846 under the heading “State of Kildare” and the 'Molly' notice referred to in

it, provides a good illustration of the strong feelings and concerns of small tenants at the time. The extract, in its entirety, reads as follows:

“Molly Maguireism is on the spread in this hitherto peaceful county, which must be placed under the Coercion Act when passed into law, as it will be without delay.

On Thursday we expressed the hope that the peasantry of Kildare would realise the expectations of the magistrates of the Carbery district who met on 9th instant to consider the best mode of bringing to justice the perpetrators of the outrage on Whelehan and his wife near Enfield on 28th ultimo. The magistrates and other authorities must be on the alert to protect themselves and their neighbours.

The following notice has been served upon a person named Cosgrave, a County of Meath man who recently took a mill and some land from that respected and much-loved gentleman Peter Wolfe Esq of Blackhall, Clane, to whom the Mr Rynd, mentioned in the audacious document, is agent. We do most heartily desire that the hand writing of the notice may be traced. The composition is not that of an ignorant peasant. The bad spelling of a few words is a blind, a trick to direct attention from the person who has resorted to the threat.

Sir, I understand you took the mill and lands of Clane when you should leave it to some of the men of Kildare as there was plenty of them to take it. So excuse me for not warning you about it in time before you paid your money but it is better nor when harm will be done. Give it up immediately or prepare your burying place and I will see you paid your money for you have a gentleman to do with and if he does not give it to you I will see you paid or Rynd may prepare his coffin as well as you. No more at present but do not delay in going to Rynd suddenly and see what he will say as I cannot delay.

*I have no more to say. I am one of the Molly Maguires, a sure shot and no mistake. I have no objection to Rynd holding the mill himself and land but by you there will be nothing gained. Inform Rynd as soon as possible for I am in a hurry and give it up”
February 10 1846”*

The family of the landlord referred to, Wolfes of Blackhall (Forenaughts, Baronrath etc) is well known and much has been written about them. The agent, Rynd, is obviously, less well known. One wonders if the Mrs W. W, Rynd, who sponsored a church window light in the Church of St Michael & All Angels in Millicent (in memory of her husband who died in 1884) or the Major R.F Rynd, of Blackhall, who is listed as a member of the Kildare Archaeological Society in 1895, were related?

Editor’s note:

On reading Brian’s article I thought that our readers might be interested in other reports on this subject. In a report on the proceedings of the British House of Commons on 27 February, 1833, I noted some coincidental relationships between incidences of land agitation and some references to persons in other articles in this issue of *Coiseanna*. In that debate, some thirteen years before the incident recounted by Brian McCabe, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Edward Stanley, used the report of the Chief Constable for Kildare to illustrate the frequency of such ‘outrages’ at that time. In all, Stanley used nearly thirty incidents from Kildare where he stated ‘the outrages’ were not typical being ‘comparatively light.’ From the examples quoted by Stanley the following are two with links to articles in this issue. Also cited are some other examples which may be of interest to our readers.¹

At night, a horse the property of Capt. Radcliffe was stolen from the lands of Curryhill, barony of Clane. [See Pat Given’s article on ‘Some Clane Residences and their owners’ in this issue.]

At night, a rick of hay, the property of Mr. Holt, of Sallins, was maliciously set fire to; but being timely discovered, the fire was extinguished before any serious damage was done.

About seven o'clock in the evening, the driver of one of the steam navigation boats, on arriving near Sallins, from Dublin, was fired at by a party, fortunately without effect, the driver having run off, these fellows cut the horse and also the harness.

About nine o'clock at night, the houses of one Bernes, and a widow Dobbyn, near Sallins, were entered by an armed party, who robbed the former of a gun.

At night, an armed party visited the house of one Brahin, at the Cochbridge, barony of Clane; but not succeeding, they swore him as to whether he had arms or not.

Between the hours of seven and eight o'clock, as Miss Chamberlain was on her way to Maynooth, she was stopped by five men, within a mile of the town, who dragged her off the jaunting-car, and searched her pockets for money.

Two young lads went to the house of Mr. Exshaw, at Hybla, near Monastereven, (who was sick at the time), and on demanding his arms, they were handed a gun, a blunderbuss, and a pistol, by his steward. [See John Noonan's article on 'Joseph Delamere Whyte' in this issue.]

¹ House of Commons Debates, 27 February 1833, Hansard's Parliamentary debates, third series, vol 15, cc 1261-66.

MISCELLANY

Dog licences taken out in the Barony of Clane for the year ending 31 March 1884

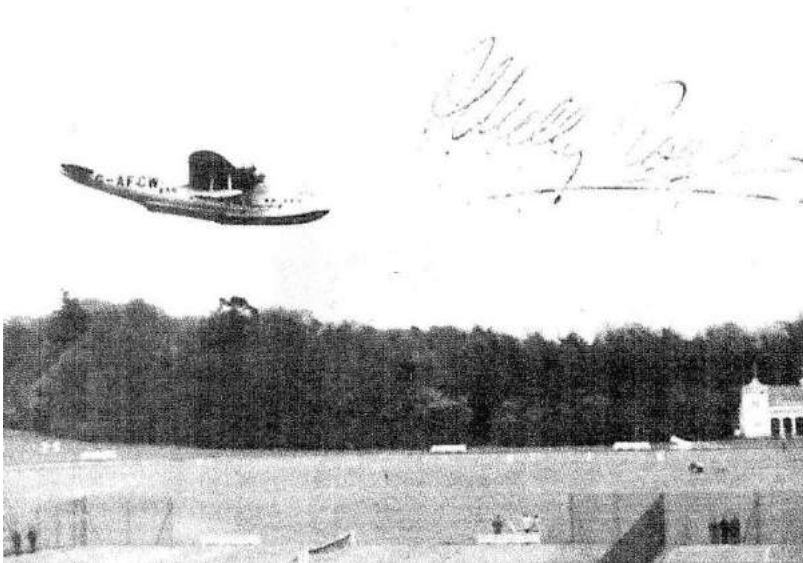
Pat Given

Dogs first required a licence in Ireland in 1865 when Queen Victoria's government introduced the Dogs Regulation Act. A dog licence cost 2 shillings each together with a fee of 6 pence. They were renewed annually at the District Petty Sessions. Today the Petty Sessions records and the dog registers may be consulted at the National Archives, where apart from owners' details the dogs' breed, colour and sex are recorded. Sometimes even the dog's pet-name is given. The following is a transcription of summary details available for Clane in 1884.

Names and Townlands	No. of Dogs	Names and Townlands	No. of Dogs
<i>Aughpaudeen</i>		<i>Castlesize</i>	
McDonald, James	1	Walsh, Michael	1
Walsh, Patrick	1	<i>Clane</i>	
<i>Butterstream</i>		Archer, Michael	1
Donohoe, Eliza	3	Bernes, Christopher	1
Toole, John	1	Brennan, Sarah	1
<i>Ballinagappa</i>		Cormack, Patrick	1
Dunne, Maryanne	2	Cribbin, Thomas	3
Farrell, Henry	1	Coates, Thomas	1
Murphy, James	1	Cooke, Rev. A.	2
<i>Barretstown</i>		Coffey, Richard	1
Walsh, Maria	2	Dunne, Edward	2
<i>Boherhole</i>		Donohoe, Peter	1
Byrne, Henry	2	Garvey, Thomas	1
Nugent, Laurence	2	Hoystead, Peele	1
<i>Betaghstown</i>		Hanlon, James	2
Fegan, Andrew	1	Hennessy, John	1
<i>Capdoo</i>		Kearney, John	2
Arthurs, John	1	Kenny, John,	1
Cullen, Thomas	1	Leeson, Edward	2
Deegan, Nicholas	1	Losty, Patrick	1
Reddy, Joseph	1	McKitrick, Thomas	1
Rorke, John	1	Mannin, Michael	1

Names and Townlands	No. of Dogs	Names and Townlands	No. of Dogs
<i>Clane (cont.)</i>		Farrell, John	1
Manning, Henry	1	Kearns, Hugh	1
Mahony, Thomas	1	Murphy, John	1
O'Neill, James	2	<i>Loughanure</i>	
O'Connor C.J., M.D.	4	Bernes, Esther	1
Reddy, Patrick	3	Caffrey, James	1
Turner, Rev. P.	1	Fitzgerald, Patrick	1
Tierney, James	1	Gray, Martin	1
White, Joseph	1	Hyland, Thomas	1
Walsh, Thomas	1	<i>Loughbollard</i>	
Wallace, Laurence	1	Salmon, Maurice	2
<i>The Cotts</i>		<i>Loughtown</i>	
Hannigan, John	1	Brady, Edward	1
Mullally, James	1	Carey, William	1
Cruckawn Commons		Delaney, John	1
Connell, Christopher	1	Healy, Thomas	1
<i>Curryhills</i>		Healy, Edward	2
Cribbin, Laurence	1	Sweetman, Patrick, Esq.	2
Cribbin, James	1	<i>Millicent</i>	
Murphy, John	1	Brien, Christopher	1
O'Toole, Michael	1	Dunne, Ambrose	2
<i>Downings</i>		Fox, John	1
Dunne, James	1	Tierney, Mary	1
<i>Fleshtown</i>		Trench, Thomas C. Esq.	2
Gaul, William	1	<i>Prosperous</i>	
<i>Firmount</i>		Byrne, Michael	1
Cullen, Michael	1	Butler, James	1
Colgan, Patrick	1	Gibbey, Thomas	1
Harrington, William	1	Gallagher, John	1
Henry, Hugh Esq.	2	Hanlon, Dorah	2
Healy, Philip	2	Hanlon, Matthew	2
<i>Hoganswood</i>		Healy, Peter	2
Campbell, Edward	1	Mangan, John	1
<i>Killibegs</i>		O'Regan, William	1
Fitzgerald, George C.	2	Larman, Christopher	1
Fennell, Thomas	1	Seery, Michael	1
Fitzpatrick, William	2	Tierney, Richard	1
McKay, Matthew	1	<i>Stickens</i>	
Whaley, Bridget	1	Byrne, Thomas	1
<i>Landenstown</i>		<i>Waterstown</i>	
Digby, Miss	3	Ennis, John	1
Dunne, James	1		

A Flying Boat Over Clongowes



The Photograph above, which was taken by Fr. Patrick McGlade SJ, appeared in the Proceedings of the Blackrock Historical Society in 2004. It shows *Connemara*, an Empire flying boat belonging to Imperial Airways, flying low over the cricket pitch at Clongowes Wood College circa 1940.

The pilot was Captain John Kelly-Rogers a past pupil of Clongowes who attended the college from 1916 to 1919. Born in Dun Laoghaire in 1905 he joined the Royal Navy, aged 14, as a cadet aboard the frigate HMS Conway. In 1927 he joined the Royal Air Force and in 1935 he joined Imperial Airways (later BOAC) where he became commanding officer of its fleet of flying boats flying to South Africa, Australia and America. In 1939 he made the first scheduled westbound and eastbound airmail flights across the Atlantic being met at Foynes by President Eamonn De Valera. In January 1942 he flew Winston Churchill from Virginia to England via Bermuda on the Boeing 314 flying boat Berwick following his meeting with President Franklin D Roosevelt. After the war he joined Aer Lingus as



Captain John Cecil Kelly-Rogers 1905-1981

Chief Pilot and subsequently became Deputy Director General and ultimately a director of the company.

Travel in the 19th Century.

Fr. Bartholomew Esmonde SJ, the third Rector of Clongowes Wood College wrote in an old Clongowes diary of a journey he undertook to Wexford on December 12th 1826.

Having to preach a Charity Sermon in Wexford on next Sunday, I went to town this evening in the boat and thence in the coach on Thursday morning to Ballinistra, from whence Sir Thomas (his brother) took me in his gig on Saturday to Wexford, where I was detained till Tuesday morning. On Friday night the caravan brought me back to Dublin, and the 7 o'clock boat next morning to the 19th lock near Sallins where I met the gig.

Excerpt from the Clongownian 1933 page 22.

Brendan Cullen.

Fr. John Sullivan SJ

Pope Francis declared Fr. John Sullivan SJ 'Venerable' on November 7th 2014 much to the delight of the people of Clane where he spent most of his priestly ministry. This constitutes a major step on the road to his canonisation. The following is a short extract from the 'Irish Jesuit' by Fr. E.J. Keelaghan SJ.

For nearly all his years at Clongowes, he acted as Spiritual Father to the boys. They recognised his holiness, were grateful for his interest and affection, and brought him their troubles.....Not only the schoolboys, but the ordinary people in and around Clongowes recognised his holiness and came to him. Much of his activity was centred round the public church at Clongowes, commonly known as the People's Church. He heard confessions constantly, he interviewed in the porch those who had come to see him. He constantly visited the poor, the distressed and the sick. He ran small accounts in the local shops to provide necessities like tea and sugar and other groceries for the needy. He visited in homes and in hospitals. He was a familiar sight on the roads round Clongowes and farther afield, trotting at a brisk pace, or cycling on a dilapidated bicycle to visit some unfortunate who needed him. On one occasion – and probably many others of

which we don't know – he walked 14 miles to visit a sick person and 14 miles home again to Clongowes. Even in his sixties, he cycled the twenty odd miles to the city, and back again the same day, to pray with a patient in a Dublin hospital.

Brendan Cullen

Typhus at Clongowes Wood College

In 1819, five years after it opened, Clongowes Wood College encountered its first major setback. The reputation of the college had spread rapidly and due to its academic success the number of students entering increased alarmingly until the original castle and out-houses became unsuitable for numbers in excess of two hundred. This overcrowding combined with poor quality drinking water led to a major outbreak of typhus in the college in early 1819. Fr. Charles Aylmer, (from nearby Painstown House) the Rector, was concerned and in response to medical advice and the wishes of the parents, he closed the school in March 1819 and sent the students home until the following September.

There appears to be no deaths associated with this outbreak registered in the college archives, but remarkably there is a large flat gravestone in the north-west corner of the old church ruin in Mainham cemetery, on which a lengthy inscription records the death of a pupil, Francis Llanos, from Trinidad who entered the college as a fifteen year old in 1818 and died there in January 1819. The date of his death coincides with the date of the typhus outbreak and occurred just over a month before Fr. Aylmer sent the students home for six months. The inscription on the gravestone reads as follows:

Beneath this stone is interred the body of Francis Llanos who was born in Caracas in the province of Venezuela on 5th July 1803 and having been sent by his parents to Clongowes Wood College for his education from the island of Trinidad, he departed this life on 23rd January 1819. He was endowed by nature with amiable, innocent and dutiful disposition, and of great study and promise for his tender years. His disconsolate

parents in a distant climate ordered this stone to be placed on his grave to preserve his memory.

Is it possible that the death of Francis Llanos was caused by his contracting typhus in the outbreak of early 1819 and was it this tragedy that motivated Fr. Aylmer to send the students home on extended leave? Was Francis Llanos the only student to die or were there others? In the absence of documentation we can only guess.



Gravestone of Francis Llanos in the old church ruin at Mainham

Brendan Cullen

A Clane eviction - the case of James Hanlon

The debates of the British Houses of Parliament are published in a series of volumes under the superintendence of Messrs Hansard. The records cover the period from 1804 to the present and a separate series covering the Northern Ireland parliament is also available. The following item which has been extracted from the debates of the House of Commons of 21 November 1884 provides an insight into some of the personalities involved in the Irish Land Wars of the period.

Rev P. Turner was Catholic Parish Priest in Clane from 1872 to 1889 and during his tenure he was responsible for the erection of the village's church of Saints Patrick and Bridget in 1884. James Leahy, a Tipperary man, had been elected to the British House of Commons in the general election of 1880 as a Home Rule candidate for Kildare and he later remained a staunch supporter of Parnell. The *Leinster Leader* had been established in 1880 and it supported Home Rule and Land Reform for Ireland. Campbell-Bannerman, a Liberal M.P. was born in Glasgow and was later to become British Prime Minister. In 1884 he was Chief Secretary for Ireland in the British cabinet. Knowing this background, the following extract becomes much more interesting.

EVICCTIONS (IRELAND)-CASE OF JAMES HANLON, LORD CLONCURRY'S ESTATE

Hc Deb 21 November 1884 vol 294 c131

MR LEAHY asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his attention had been drawn to a letter in the *Leinster Leader* of the 1st instant, from the Rev. P. Turner, P.P. Clane, county Kildare, stating that James Hanlon, of Kilmurry, held two farms from Lord Cloncurry, on one of which himself and his ancestors lived for three generations, and from which he was evicted on the falling out of the lease because he exercised his right to go to the Land Court to have a fair rent fixed for the second farm of forty acres; and, is it true, as stated in the letter, that he having built a hut on this forty acre farm for the shelter of himself and his family after being evicted from the other, his landlord compelled him to remove it by the process of Law, and himself and his labourers are now obliged to travel three miles from the village of Clane to till that farm; and, if so, can he take any steps to remedy the state of the Law which permits the appeal made by the tenant in one case to be used against him in another?

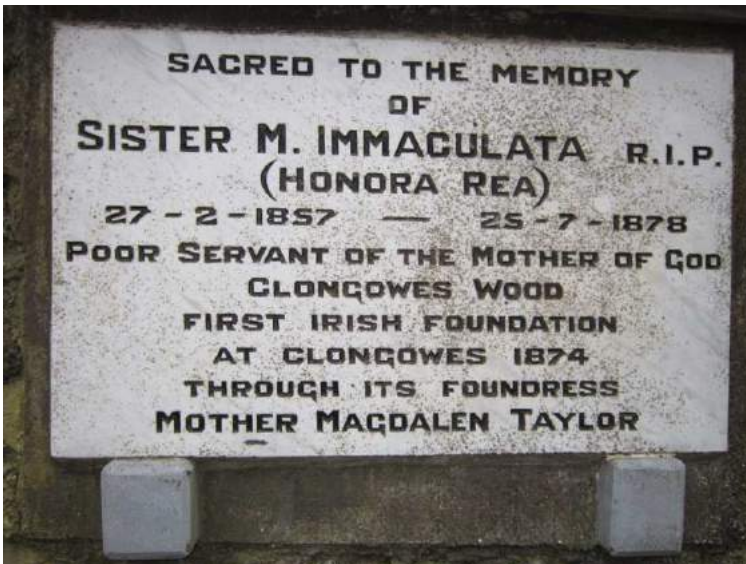
MR CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN in reply, said that he was informed that James Hanlon held two farms from Lord Cloncurry, that he was evicted from one by reason of a breach of agreement, and that he got a fair rent fixed in respect of the other. He believed the statements of fact in the second paragraph of the hon. Member's Question, as to James Hanlon's having to remove, were substantially correct but he had no information to show that the motive for the landlord's action were as suggested.. He was advised that Lord Cloncurry appeared to have acted within his legal rights.

Pat Given

The Poor Servants of the Mother of God (SMG)

Visitors to the old church ruin in Mainham cemetery may be puzzled by the presence of a marble memorial tablet to Sister Mary Immaculata of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God, Clongowes Wood, on the west wall of the old church. How did this congregation of nuns find themselves in Clongowes in the first place?

In 1874 the Jesuit Provincial invited the nuns of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God (or SMG for short), to take charge of the laundry and dormitories in Clongowes. They would look after the laundry needs of over 150 people. Nine sisters arrived and they were eventually helped by four women from the locality. Later five trainee nuns came and joined the workforce. Mother Magdalen Taylor was the superior and foundress of the congregation. The nuns were to be paid £90 per annum in four quarterly payments. However, the bursar was not very prompt in paying the sisters and so a certain amount of uneasiness developed between the sisters and the Jesuit community.



Tablet commemorating Sr. M. Immaculata at Mainham

The nuns attended Mass in the upstairs gallery of what is now the People's Church. Because of their heavy laundry work and their prolonged kneeling during Mass many of the sisters suffered from bad backs. When Dr. O'Connor, the college doctor, visited the sisters who were ill he concluded that their living conditions were unhealthy and unsuitable for their needs. One member of the congregation, Sr. Mary Immaculata, died in 1878 at the very young age of twenty-one. She was interred in Mainham cemetery. The Mainham Cemetery Committee erected a marble tablet to her memory in June 1995 on the west wall of the old church.

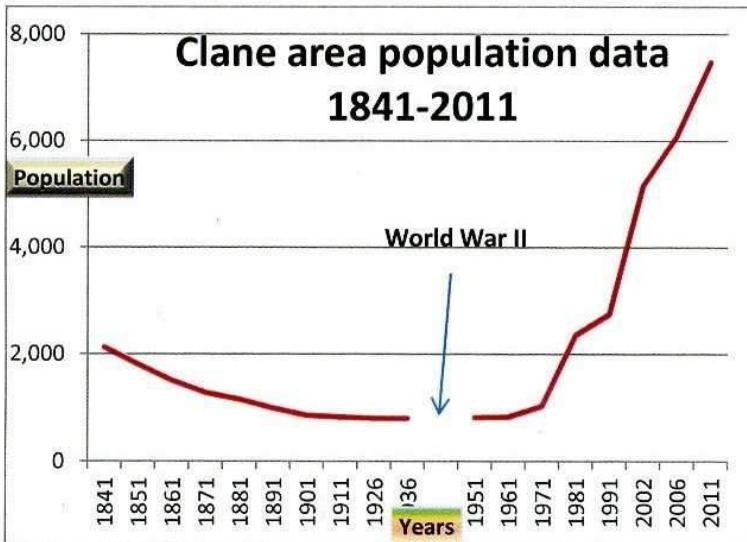
The sisters of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God ended their sojourn in Clongowes on September 29th 1880, thus bringing to an end the uneasy relationship between the nuns and the Jesuits.

Brendan Cullen

Clane population data 1841-2011

Official archives are universally considered rich repositories for the colourful background information which can enrich our understanding of local history. In Ireland however, we frequently find that the provision of this valuable back-story is made more difficult by the disastrous fire which engulfed the Public Record Office at the start of the Civil War in 1922. In spite of this, diligent research can occasionally yield unexpected alternate sources such as the historical records relating to historical population trends which are to be found in the extensive records held by an organisation known as AIRO. This is both a research unit and spatial data portal managed by NIRSA and the Central Statistics Office and maintained at the University of Maynooth with the objective of improving evidence-based planning in Ireland. For that purpose, AIRO maintains the valuable archive of records including the extensive population data sets from which the information regarding Clane's population trends presented below was collected. A word of warning is opportune about the tabulation since it remains to be confirmed that the territory encompassed

Clane Population Data -1841 to 2011	
Year	Population
1841	2160
1851	1842
1861	1533
1871	1304
1881	1185
1891	1016
1901	885
1911	846
1926	820
1936	821
WW II	-
1951	840
1961	850
1971	1052
1981	2385
1991	2775
2002	5179
2006	6106
2011	7492



in the Clane area remained constant over each census period. Due to the War of Independence there was no census in 1921 while the first census of the newly formed 'Irish Free State' was taken in 1926 and the census of 1976 was cancelled for economic reasons. Nevertheless the information provides much food for thought.

Pat Given

Whistler

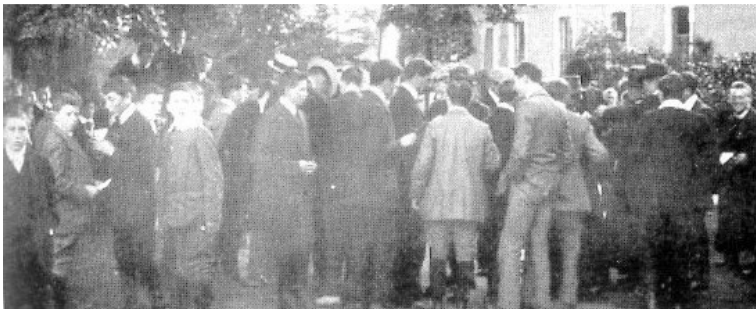
We are probably all familiar with the terms, blow-in or runner which usually means a person who migrates from their place of birth to take up residence in another location. I myself migrated in June 1950 from a small village in West Offaly to the town of Nás na Riogh (Naas), County Kildare along with our whole family. Myself, my parents, my sister and brothers soon became known as “whistlers” even though on a few occasions the term blow-in or runner was also used. I settled into my new schools, firstly on the Fair Green School (now Gouldings Hardware Shop) and the Moat School (now the Moat Theatre). I was not the only “whistler” among the student population, in fact all the teachers in both schools were migrants of one kind or another. The explanation of the term whistler goes as follows, when the British soldiers of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers came to the military barracks in Naas for six months training they travelled by train from Kingsbridge railway station in Dublin (now Heuston Station) to the then Naas railway station on the Dublin Road (now Tesco/Penneys). They then proceeded to march to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Barracks (now Devoy Barracks) on the Newbridge Road. The soldiers whistled as they marched along thus inspiring the onlookers on the town streets to say “here come the whistlers”. On completion of their training after the six months the soldiers marched again from the barracks on the Newbridge Road back to the Naas railway station on the Dublin road again whistling as they marched. This time the onlookers said, “there go the whistlers”. Thus the term whistler was born.

Mick Mulvey

Australian cricket team visits Clongowes

The Australian Cricket team which came to Ireland to play a match at Woodbrook visited Clongowes on 19th September 1909. According to the Clongownian of 1910;

The morning passed slowly enough till the arrival of the Australian team. These genial giants arrived about one o'clock, and after a rousing reception on the gallery, (corridor) adjourned for lunch. After lunch they submitted with surprising good humour (and we may add pluck) to the ordeal of getting mobbed by the enthusiastic autograph hunters, who gave them a busy half-hour. An exhibition of batting by Messrs. Armstrong, Bardsley and Roger Hartigan followedMr. Frank Laver, the jovial manager got the house off study, and the three cheers that followed conveyed but feebly our hearty gratitude to himself and the rest of the team for their extreme kindness and courtesy.



Autograph hunters

Contrary to the legend which grew up subsequently, the Australians did not play a match in Clongowes.

After lunch, to the supreme delight of all, a number of the visitors very kindly consented to 'have a hit' on the Higher Line (senior) oval. Mr. Armstrong, in very short time, knocked up ten fours off our best bowlers, while Mr. Bardsley, for a few moments, gave a display of his inimitable strokes.....Mr. Hopkins saw what the 'gallery' of youngsters wanted, and very good-naturedly showed them how sixes were negotiated.

Brendan Cullen