

Coiseanna

The Journal of Clane Local History Group

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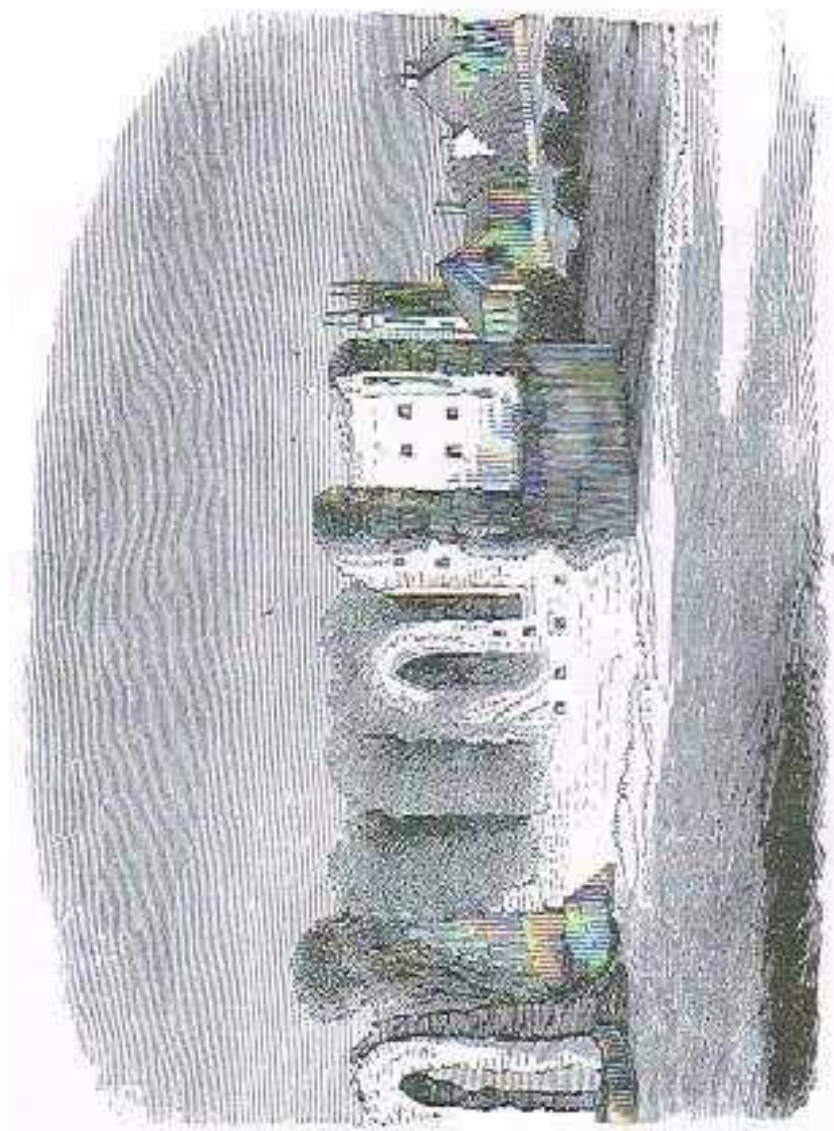
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Front cover: The Venerable John Sullivan SJ

Back cover: Headstone erected on Wolfe Tone's grave in 1945.

Page 2: Clane Friary sketched by William F Wakeman in 1874.



Abbey Ruins at Clane, County of Kildare.

EDITORIAL

The publication of this, the fifth edition of Coiseanna, concludes a successful year for Clane Local History Group. We contributed to National Heritage Week in August 2015 with two well attended events; a tour of Clongowes College and a talk on the history of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri in Clane followed by ceol agus craic. Presentations in 2015/2016 included: Theobald Wolfe Tone's family life; Kildare men in the Gallipoli campaign; a photographic presentation detailing the changes in Clane's Main Street over the previous century and a half; The history of mining in county Wicklow; an evening of music and poetry commemorating the 1916 Rising and a talk on early medieval churches in the vicinity of Clane.

The social history of the area features strongly again with the reminiscences of five of the more senior residents and an article on the Kildare Turf Scheme during the Emergency. Clongowes features with an article on its early years and some items on the Venerable John Sullivan in the Miscellany section. There is an article on the history of the Franciscans in Clane and two articles which touch on 1916 and its aftermath. A letter written in 1963 by a priest in Missouri gives an interesting insight into the glory days of Clane and Kildare football at the beginning of the last century. One of two articles on Wolfe Tone describes how his grave was located at Bodenstown and there is a very useful article on sources for local history.

The Group hold talks at 8.00pm on the third Wednesday of each month from September to April, except December, in the GAA Centre, Prosperous Road, Clane to which all are welcome.

The editorial committee wishes to thank those who have provided articles. 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 who are listed on the first page.

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DELL WELD - REMINISCING

Joan Weld-Moore

The Family

The Weld family originally hailed from England. David (Dagg) Weld was born on 12th November 1885 at Downings in Prosperous. His father was Joseph Weld and his mother was Eleanor Ireland.

In 1918, Dagg Weld married Sarah Coffey (sometimes known as Daisy) from Moate Commons in Clane. Sarah's mother was a Hubbard, from Castlebrowne. They set up home together at Blackwood Cross, where the pub we now know as Dagweld's is situated. Dagg's wife Sarah had inherited the premises from her aunt, Mrs. Tighe.



Dagg Weld

Dagg and Sarah had six children - Irene, David, Charles, Brendan, Catherine and Aidan. Irene Houlihan, David (Dell) Weld and Catherine (Kitty) Nevin are still here to tell their stories, aged 95, 94 and 91, respectively. At the age of 94, Dell must be one of the longest standing members of the local community - as such Dell's memories are valuable to us and he has been kind enough to share some of these memories with us.

The Early Years

David became known as Dell on the day of his birth when a lady who worked in the house jokingly renamed him from David to 'Victor Sylvester Dellahunt'! Dell Weld was born on 23rd October 1921 in Blackwood.

Dell's early childhood was spent in Blackwood, attending Prosperous National School, where he studied English, Irish, Maths, History, Geography and Science. Dell remembers a Science teacher whom he thought to have been ahead of his time, named Dr Holland. Dr Holland was a university lecturer who had chosen a quieter life teaching in Prosperous National School, due to ill health. He lived, Dell says, at the teachers' house in Clane (where the KARE centre is now), and later transferred to teach at Clane National School. Dell remembers using "tubes and glass, little burners, methylated spirits, scales" and the greatest memory which has stuck with Dell about his school days was weighing air with Dr Holland, "we weighed air, oh we weighed tons of it!"

Another childhood memory is of hearing about local men, who had "joined up" in Naas and went to fight in World War I. The men returning from the war fields told the locals their tales but, Dell cautions, "there were some great liars too!" One story which Dell felt was a tall tale involving the use of planks on the front lines. According to the tale, "Big Guns" were carried on planks pulled by mules and the planks were brought into the front lines by tying them to the fuselage of planes coming in. One batch of such planes was fired on, on their way in, resulting in all the planks falling on top of hundreds of Germans and killing them!

Having been born the son of Dagg Weld, an entrepreneur, Dell's outlook on life was naturally influenced by his father's trades and pastimes. Dell's childhood was spent on the land and in the pub, in the threshing mills and on the canal boats. There was a great variety of work and adventure going on for a child growing up and we can still see today, how nothing surprises or shocks Dell Weld and anything unusual is calmly regarded as "the next new thing". A great expression of Dell's, when he observes something he considers to be a bit unusual, is "Oh Mother of God, that's tidy!"

Dell speaks of his father Dagg's interest in boats and specifically canal boats with steam engines, noting that, by his recollection, Dagg was one of the first men to bring a canal boat from Dublin to Robertstown, along with a man called Jack Donohue. Jack was from Killybegs and knew about engines through his life on fishing boats and gained work on the canals, teaching others how to work an engine. These men worked night and day, they did all their loading and offloading by hand and often had to try to steer a boat in pitch black. Dell recalls that he would hear boats at three or four in the morning coming across the bog and thought this was "a rough racket".

The boats were a big part of local life, with local shops, for example in Sallins or Robertstown buying beer off them as they were on their way to Limerick. With boats travelling back and forth on the canals, the weeds didn't grow and they looked better, so Dell feels that "they should have kept one or two of them going" for maintenance purposes.

In Dagg's pub, Dell served some time pulling pints but the area was very quiet in those days so it wasn't a busy job. Sergeant Coombe from Naas was the Weights & Measures man who stamped the pint and half-pint glasses. Beer was stronger in Dell's youth, "better porter". The boat men used to find ways to get it out of the barrels, there would be a gadget they could punch into the barrel and pour some out, to help them keep warm on the boats. They got sugar out of the bags too - they

would stretch the threads and get the sugar out and put the threads all back in place. Thus it was known that, if you needed sugar, the boat men would always have some for you.



Dagwelds Pub at Blackwood Cross, it is no longer owned by the Weld family

Recalling other characters in the pub, Dell tells of Nanny, who was to collect a bottle of medicine from the dispensary for her husband, for which he gave her two shillings. Nanny spent her two shillings on four bottles of stout in the pub and filled an empty bottle with canal water for her husband. She later reported her that husband said it was the best bottle of medicine he ever got!

In 1943, Dell married Kathleen Diamond. They built a bungalow in Ballinagappa and lived there until the 1980s when they moved into a thatched house, also in Ballinagappa, inherited from the Diamond family and thought to be one of the oldest houses in the county. Dell was once chasing geese, which had escaped from the yard into the field, and noticed some people disembarking from a bus and taking a great many photographs of him, the geese and the house. When he returned indoors to his wife, he announced "there's a crowd of

lunatics outside". Kathleen explained to her husband that they were probably tourists interested in the quaint thatched roof.

The Lifestyle

Life at that time was hard in some ways, money was scarce, but for the most part, what you never had you didn't want. Farmers were really self sufficient and grew their own potatoes, cabbage and anything else they could grow. What they had, they shared - workmen who had no land of their own could get potatoes or milk from the farmers, who happily gave it out. As Dell says "that's all different now too". Dell kept pigs and killed them himself, then later down the line hung the bacon in the kitchen - a practice which he feels would be largely frowned upon today. He built a fireplace with an open hearth in the cottage and upon that hearth the baking that was done was to die for, "much better than the stuff you get now". The supermarkets these days are baffling, being so full of stuff we don't need, when all you should really need to buy is tea and sugar - maybe a bit of corn flour for special occasions.

Home-cooking changed with the arrival of electricity in '55 or '56, after which people could choose to buy an electric cooker. People were afraid to take it at first, fearing that it would set the house alight but some brave families took the lead and gradually as all the neighbours took it, everybody eventually took it. Dell recalls the initial deal to have been that you had to pay to get the house wired and then supply was free. Then, everyone had a trip switch and a plug. Soon after people got their electric ovens and washing machines, happy to replace the washboard and tub.

There have been great changes in farming over the years also, with the development of new machinery. Dell's first experiences in ploughing were with a horse pulling the plough. Later, when the tractors first came along, they were pretty scarce and there used to be a big audience for anyone pulling a plough with a tractor, and then great help with threshing and celebrations afterwards. There was always great help with threshing, people used to go to each others' threshing to help

out, so they didn't need to hire people in. No money would change hands but you'd get your dinner. It seemed you'd get your dinner no matter where you went in those days.

Of course, back then you'd have terrible trouble with rabbits, as this was before the government introduced myxomatosis to the rabbit population. The rabbits are still not the same as they were then, in numbers.



Dell Weld

The cheapest meat you could buy back then was steak - there were a lot of cattle bred and sold. The cattle used to be driven to Naas to be sold at the fair, and more cattle would be bought and they'd drive them home. Dell also used to drive cattle from

Donadea to Dublin, up to Hanlon's corner on the North Circular road, where they would be sold at the market, usually to English buyers who would ship them from the docks back to England that evening. That was 26 miles walk - three or four would go together driving the cattle with someone ahead shutting gates to try to keep the beasts out of the gardens, as there was often trouble with cattle running around the pretty flower bed gardens of Lucan. There would be no cattle to drive home so they could go home in a pony and dray - the whole experience most enjoyable for a young man.

The Entertainment

Another big change was the coming of the wireless into the home. They had Dublin, Athlone and Cork on the dial, and Daventry in England. Dell remembers it was best to have a dry battery, as a wet battery had to be charged, by Peter Wallace in Clane. The day that war broke out, Dell was listening to Chamberlain's voice with 28 other men, in the yard of a house in Newtown. The war was a bit removed from Dell and his family, so it didn't bother them too much. There were food rations but as they never had much to start with it didn't seem too bad. There was still a fear however that the Germans would invade, so the LDF put poles up in the fields to stop them landing their planes.

There was a great tradition of story-tellers around the countryside, these you might meet in a pub or in your home. They were the men that reading and television replaced. Dell always loved this type of entertainment and for the greater part of his life has been involved in drama and acting. This started with night classes at the Tech in Naas in 1938 with a teacher called Bill Trundle and these classes put on plays. He has been a member of Prosperous drama group and Allenwood theatre group, and has acted in plays in Castleblaney, Claremorris, and all over Ireland. He remembers being best actor here and there, and worst actor in other places! From there he never looked back. He misses it now, saying his memory isn't good enough any more but Dell is still a devoted member of Prosperous Drama group and does his utmost to see every play they put on.

THE FRANCISCANS IN CLANE

Fr. Pat Conlan OFM

Saint Francis died in 1226 and the Franciscan Province of Ireland was founded in 1230. The first Franciscan houses were along the coast from Carrickfergus to Cork, followed by important inland towns such as Armagh and Athlone. By 1250 two trends emerged – houses in the large cities and friaries sponsored by the new Anglo-Irish nobility who believed in having a religious centre near their castles, to fulfil their spiritual needs. They turned to the newly arrived mendicant orders - Carmelites, Dominicans and Franciscans. As the number of friaries grew the province was divided into four or five custodies for administrative purposes. Clane was in the custody of Dublin.



Clane's Franciscan Friary today

Amongst the Cambro-Norman force which arrived in Ireland in 1169 was Maurice FitzGerald whose family later played a very important role in subjugating Leinster. In line with established Norman practice, Maurice FitzGerald's son, Gerald became

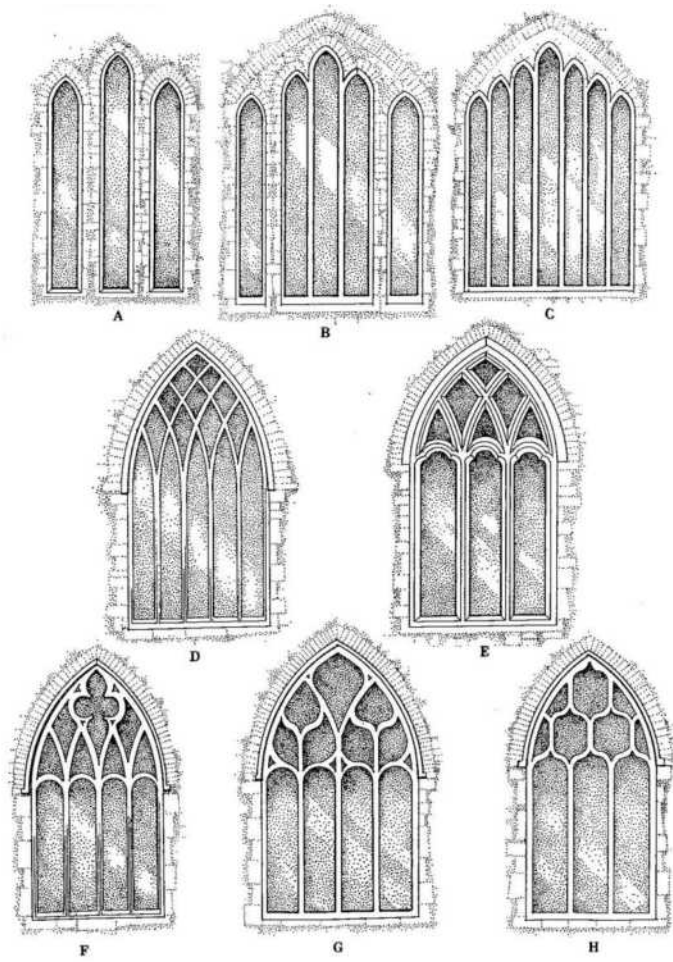
known as Gerald FitzMaurice after his father. Gerald subsequently became the First Lord of Offaly when he married Eve, the only child and heiress of Robert de Birmingham. This family, the FitzMaurice FitzGerald, Barons of Offaly and ancestors of the FitzGerald, earls of Kildare is credited with establishing the friary in Clane in 1258.

After the death of Gerald FitzMaurice FitzGerald in 1257, William de Vesey, Lord of Kildare, assumed control of Kildare. In the meantime the Franciscan friary at Clane flourished - a fact which may have influenced the design of the seal of the friary which refers to the friary as '*Hortus Angelorum*', or the Garden of the Angels. Although Gerald FitzMaurice, 4th Lord Offaly, helped finish the building of Kildare's friary, it seems that he was buried in Clane friary in 1287. The badly damaged image of a knight in Clane friary has traditionally been associated with him.

The friars in Clane led the normal life of friars, living and praying in community. They were available for people to talk to about their problems, give blessings and absolve them in confession. Gilbert of Clane (or Slane) became vicar provincial in 1266, presumably after the death of the provincial. A new provincial would have been elected at the provincial chapter in 1267. In 1313 the guardian of Clane, Stephen of Naas, brought a case for trespass against several people. This indicates that friars tended to live in their own native areas.

The provincial chapter was held in Clane in 1345. The friars discussed the number and composition of the custodies, perhaps following the agenda of the general chapter in Marseilles in 1343. The coming of the Black Death in 1348-50 brought fewer friars. Being in a country district Clane may have escaped the worst effects of the disaster. We next hear of Clane in 1433 when an indulgence was granted to those who contributed to the friary, which was in need of repair. This may have been the occasion when the transept was built to the south of the choir and a single aisle added to the nave. The remnants in the east wall of the choir indicate that the east window was

of three lancets, typical of the second half of the thirteenth century.



Window styles: thirteenth to sixteenth centuries

A: lancets, Waterford c. 1250. B: lancet and lancet lights, Ennis c. 1300. C: lancet-light groups, Kilkenny c. 1320. D: switch-line tracery, Askeaton c. 1430. E: switch-line-and-bar tracery, Quin c. 1460. F: switch-line with quatrefoil, Moyne c. 1470. G: flowing, Dromahair c. 1510. H: reticulated, Dromahair c. 1510.

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Examples of Franciscan lancet windows 13th-16th centuries

Source: Patrick Conlon, *Franciscan Ireland* (Mullingar 1988), p98.

In Clane the cloister was to the north of the church. Towers were often added between choir and nave early in the fifteenth

century. Unusually, there is no firm evidence for a tower in Clane.

Over the centuries there have been disputes among the Franciscans about the interpretation of the Rule of Saint Francis. Reformers known as Observants emerged around 1400. They believed in smaller friaries with more time spent in prayer. The friars would have a deeper spirituality, better able to help people. The other friars, the Conventuals, stressed big communities focused on being available for large numbers of people. The Franciscan Order was split into two in 1517. The first Observant house in Ireland was that in Quin, founded in 1433. From 1458 the Irish provincial was a Conventual with an Observant vicar-provincial. The Irish province split into two, Observant and Conventual, in 1518. Typical of a rich friary under Anglo-Irish influence, Clane remained Conventual up to the suppression of the monasteries in Ireland.

The Reformation in Ireland came from the religious policy of Henry VIII. The reasons for the suppression of the Irish monasteries are complicated, connected with a fall in population within the Pale and absentee landlords. The Suppression Bill passed through the Irish parliament in 1537. The suppression of the friaries near the Pale took place in 1539-40. A Commission of Suppression took over the friary. Then a group of local jurors evaluated it. It included three from Clane (Thomas Duff, Donald Kelly and Carbin Rewly = Reilly?) as well as three others from the county.

The jury met in Naas on 22 November 1540 and reported that the church, chancel and part of the dormitory had been destroyed and the material used by Lord Leonard Grey to repair Maynooth castle. Grey was Lord Deputy and commanded the army in Ireland. All other buildings, with a garden and close of 3 acres, two ruined messuages and 73 other acres were suitable for the farmer. The total value was one hundred shillings and two pence. The property was granted to Sir Thomas Luttrell, Chief Justice of Common Bench. He also

got the Franciscan friary in Kildare and the Dominican friaries in Naas and Kildare as well as other parcels of land. His prize catch was the hospital of St John Baptist in Dublin. The Franciscan property at Clane was let to David Sutton, a member of the Privy Council, and occupied by Gerald Sutton. The friary was destroyed by fire in 1549-50 and the friars left for the last time.

In 1617 Donagh Mooney, provincial, wrote an account of the province of Ireland based on his journeys around the country. He said that Clane was in a ruinous condition although some of the walls were still standing. He notes that the marble image of the founder could be seen on the top of his tomb in the middle of the choir. In 1629 Francis Matthews, provincial, wrote an account of old friary sites. For Clane he gives the correct foundation date of 1258 and also the date of 1549-50 for the flight of the community. He also notes that it was still vacant.

By 1600 the Irish Franciscan Observant Province was in need of reform. Individual friars had tried to live near old sites. The Council of Trent had taken place and the Counter-Reformation had begun. The restoration of the province on the basis of the new vision began with the appointment of Florence Conry as provincial in 1609. He opened the first continental college at Leuven in 1607. Well-trained priests began returning to Ireland. Old foundations were restored as more friars arrived. Clane was recorded as vacant in 1629 and 1639. The provincial and his council met in Kildare before the provincial chapter of 1641. A decision must have been taken about Clane for at the mid-chapter of 1645 it was noted that John Flatisburie would remain as president of the residence in Clane. The use of these terms means that Clane had a small community. At the chapter in 1647 it was brought up to full status with the appointment of Peter Delamare as guardian of the convent.² He had been teaching philosophy at the friary in Multyfarnham. A full list of the guardians is available from then until 1872. Many later guardians were titular, e.g. the guardian in 1872 was living in Thurles. These titular appointments were made to keep the

name of the friary alive and to give certain rights to the friar who was appointed guardian.

The 1650s were years of confusion and persecution. The friars of Clane probably went into hiding. The guardian in 1650, Peter Gaynor, re-emerged to preside at the next provincial chapter held in 1658 when he was nominated to succeed in office if the provincial became incapacitated. John Bermingham, who had been elected a provincial definitor, was appointed guardian of Clane. The guardian appointed in 1660 was the ex-vicar provincial of 1654-55, Bonaventure Mellaghlin. Clane was obviously regarded as an important friary in these years.



**A 17th Century Franciscan
Chalice from Galway**

The Banishment of Religious Act of 1698 brought more trouble. The friars had to become exiles, pretend to be diocesan

clergy or go into hiding. They decided in principle to obey the law. Many communities gave their altar vessels into safekeeping before leaving. There is no evidence that this happened in Clane. The guardian in 1703-06, Francis Walsh, lived within the parish at Rathcoffey. He was elected a definator in 1706 and custos of the province in 1709 before his appointment as guardian of Dublin in 1714.

A mist descends hiding religious life from government eyes. Ghostly figures flit in and out of the scene. A report in 1698 says that there were nine friars in Co Kildare. Presumably most were Franciscans. A report gathered in 1731 through local Church of Ireland ministers says there were no friars in Clane. The guardian in 1729-33, Michael Dormer, may have moved between Kildare and Kilkenny. He studied in the Irish Franciscan College in Prague, was ordained in 1702, lectured in theology and was guardian of the college in 1722-24. He died around 1736. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide tried to reform the religious orders in Ireland. The new legislation led to a major fall in manpower. As part of this debate a report by the provincial in 1766 gives Clane as vacant while another report of 1766 gives one friar in Clane. The guardian in 1763-67 and in 1773-76 was John Waldron. Later he ministered around Trim until his death in 1799. He may have lived around Clane. A government report in 1800 gives three friars in Kildare who were probably associated with Clane. The last friar associated with the area was Ambrose (Anthony) McDermott. Guardian of Kildare in 1804-07, he became curate in Kilcloon near Dunboyne in 1807 and parish priest from 1819 until he retired in 1830. He died in 1845. When did the friars finally abandon Clane? I am inclined to take the report of 1766. Nearly all the appointments of guardians of Clane after that date were titular, although it would take detailed analysis of all the names to be sure. A rough check indicated that all guardians named after 1800 were titular.

The last contact between the Franciscans and Clane was indirect. Founded by the friars in Dublin around 1750, the Patrician Orphan Society was managed by members of the

Third Order under the friars in Dublin. The society moved from Ballybrack to near Clane in 1815 with over a hundred boys and girls. By 1838 it was down to forty pupils but was closed by 1840.

Notes

¹ Clane's Franciscan Friary has taken on a new lease of life in recent years. One reason for this is the site's improved visibility as a result of Clane's new road system which now channels traffic much closer to its iconic ruins. Allied to this has been the work carried out by Kildare County Council's Heritage Division to undertake professional consolidation and protection of these remaining ruins. Clane Local History Group feel that an article on the history of the friary particularly if based on the archives of the Franciscan order, would be beneficial in helping our readers to understand the full significance of the heritage which is to be found in this historic site.. On 23 August 2015, an eminent Franciscan historian, Fr Pat Conlan O.F.M. spoke at a public event in Clane. This was organised by Clane's Community Council to mark the completion of the current phase of the protection work. In this edition, we are very grateful to Fr Conlan and the Franciscan order for allowing us to reproduce his address on that occasion. In our next edition we intend to bring an update on insights into the friary's probable configuration and layout arising from archaeological excavations and other modern research.

² The Franciscan order sometimes refers to their places of residence as 'convents' rather than friaries.

³ On Saturday, 7 July 1821, *The Freeman's Journal* carried the following advertisement promoting a Charity Sermon in the Chapel of Clane on behalf of the Patrician Orphan Society, as noted in Fr Conlan's address above. It should be noted also that the advertisement ascribes the building of Clane's new school to the work of the Society. (see the miscellany section)

REMEMBERING THE ‘GOOD OLD DAYS’

Bernadette Plunket

I was born in the famous ‘Good Old Days’; yes they were because we didn’t know any better! We enjoyed the freedom of climbing trees, jumping old ditches and undertaking long exploring treks across fields without fear, let or hindrance. We never worried about danger. Our games were simple, search hedges and ditches for broken cups, plates etc. so we could play house (happily known as a ‘Babby house’). Roll up old rags, tie them together with twine to make a hurley ball; our hurl was a strong stick from the hedge. We were the cream of the hurling world, the great Christy Ring was only a runner up to us, he didn’t get a look in; our football was the same, just a bit bigger ball. Of course Clane always won the All Ireland Final, who else?

I for one am glad that times have moved on, children have marvellous opportunities today, the world is their oyster. They should grab it with both hands and reach for the sky. There is nothing to stop them, more power to them! Men and women in my day got old early, they worked hard every day rain or shine; no work, no money, therefore no way to feed their family. They died young, my dad died at the age of 57 and left Nancy, my Mam, with six children. She was a marvellous woman and certainly not work-shy! She worked in the TB house in Firmount Sanatorium from 5am to 2pm and then got on her bike and went to Bord na Mona to foot turf until it got dark. That way she earned enough to feed, clothe and educate all of her children. God bless her no matter how tired she was she would always find energy to sing to us at night. My brother Jim would climb on her knee and say “sing Foggy Duple” meaning “Foggy Dew”. That was one song that we all knew and loved and never forgot. God bless her she never complained. One night when Mam was late home from the bog we watched for her through the window in the dark. She finally arrived in a terrible state; she had fallen into the Bluetown outfall. One of the men on the bagger heard her calling for help; he pulled her out and brought her down to the yard. She got on her bike,

soaked to the skin, and rode home. We thought she was going to die she looked so bad. After a wash and a change of clothes she rested for an hour and then up on her bike again and off to work. What a wonderful strong woman, not a word of complaint!



Nancy Byrne digs potatoes with grandson Brian as Anne McShane from New York, who had never seen potatoes growing, looks on.

Yes I was born in the ration book era; families were expected to exist on the basic minimum of food etc. so people had to improvise. The men of the area went net fishing in canals and lakes; everything caught was used and shared with other families. Rabbits were caught and shared. Mam got a lift to Dublin on the Castle Sand Lorries on a Saturday morning. She

went to the back door of Kelly's Bakery or Owens' and they gave her the day old bread. She got a lift back to Firmount Cross and myself and two neighbours met her and helped to carry the bread. The lorry driver got bread for his family and the rest was shared with the families of Loughanure and Butterstream. Mrs. Keena, God bless her, made sure all the babies had milk, no money was asked for. Everyone rallied around those in need. Every family had a vegetable garden, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, etc. were stored in what was called a pit and covered with sods of clay and grass to protect them from frost. Most families reared a turkey, chicken or duck for Christmas. That bird was the most pampered and watched over one in the yard. It was slaughtered and plucked with the utmost care on Christmas Eve. The feathers were used to stuff pillows; feathers were used with chaff from the farmers' threshing mills to make a mattress. Sacks were sewn together to make a big bag and filled with chaff. We couldn't wait to go to bed for the lovely soft mattress and smell of wheat. The farmer was glad to get rid of the chaff.

My mother used to tell a story about a woman who was rearing a turkey for Christmas when one night it disappeared. A neighbour's dog was blamed and feathers were found in her back yard. This lady always had the last word: no excuse or apology was accepted. Years later she died and at the wake her neighbour came up to the bed and said out loud 'now Mary Ellen you know it was not my dog that killed your turkey'. Everyone in the room held their breath in case Bidy got an answer; it was the first time Mary Ellen didn't have the last word!

Nothing was thrown away; worn collars of shirts were turned inside out and sewn back on; old jumpers were ripped out and the wool was used to make socks; if only the sleeves were worn they were taken out and the jumper became a sleeveless pullover.

Nettles were boiled and the water used as dye or a cure for chilblains on hands or feet or as a softener for corns. Nettles

were used as a stand-in for cabbage. There was no difference in taste and they were delicious when mixed with potatoes for colcannon. Nettle water was also used to cure chest congestion. Juice from raw potatoes was used to cure warts, it was then poured down a hole in the garden.

Doctors and nurses were only called in a dire emergency. Mrs Keena and my mother were called to deliver babies or lay out the dead. The midwife Nurse Leddy was on the road day and night, everybody called her, so stand-ins were needed.

When someone died the neighbours turned up with bread, potatoes, sugar and tea. Most of the men stayed right through the night; the little bit people had was shared with the family 'in trouble'. Small children were taken by the neighbours and returned after the funeral, everyone gave a hand. We were very grateful for the help given to us for my brother John. He was born with his ankle bones under his feet, they were attached to his ankles. He couldn't walk until he was eleven, he had to be carried everywhere. Mrs. Farrell, God love her, loaned Mam her wooden pram to get him around. He went into Dr Steeven's Hospital for a year and had eight operations; he walked with calliper braces, knee to ankle. The doctor told Mam that he would never walk. The doctor did not know Mam's determination. John not only walked but won a bronze medal for ballroom dancing in London where he worked and made a life for himself. My brother Paddy being the strongest did most of the lifting and carrying and also taught John how to ride a bike. There was no help in those days, the health service did not exist. Everyone helped each other, it was never thought of as charity just neighbour helping neighbour. I think we have lost that care and concern over the years, people feel they are intruding, it's such a pity!

We hear people say 'nature is not there any more'. That's not true, we are just afraid to show it in case people get the wrong idea.



Bernadette's brother John Byrne unable to walk until the age of eleven overcame his handicap to win a bronze medal for ballroom dancing

Respect for the deceased was shown by everyone, no one would pass a hearse, we stood with head bowed and said a prayer. In the house where the person died all looking glasses (mirrors) were covered for a month. Family members wore a black armband or a diamond shaped patch on the left arm for six months. No family member attended amusements of any sort for a year. The widow or widower wore black for a year; also children wore a black armband or patch. All this was natural, no one objected or complained, life just went on.

One great day the County Council lorry pulled up to our gate. Dan McCormack informed us that Loughanure was to get its very own water in the form of a pump. Digging started watched by wide-eyed children; six Byrnes, six Farrells, Lostys, Keenas and Halligans and Mary Moore from the neighbourhood. Water was a very precious item. We carried it in buckets from what was called the 'far well'; the small well was used to water animals and for washing clothes.

When the pump was installed we couldn't get used to running water, we never had a dry stitch on for weeks. I think we were the cleanest children in Kildare, a bar of carbolic soap was left at the pump for everyone to use. The fact that the water was ice cold never bothered us; at this stage we were too happy to get wet. We would gladly have paid water rates just to get clean water for drinking.

Oil lamps and candles were still in constant use, electricity was unheard of. One night my mother was filling the lamp with paraffin oil which she had in a jam jar on the floor. I crawled over while she was cleaning the globe with dry paper. I drank the oil and started to cough. My brother Paddy was dispatched to the doctor on his bike (no phones then). The doctor told him 'tell your mother not to let her near the fire, give her dry bread and milk'. Mam said that I stank of paraffin for weeks; I was kept well away from the fire.

Everyone sat around the radio to listen to 'Din Joe Takes the Floor' on a Saturday night. For years we tormented Mam and Dad to get a wireless; the answer was 'there is already enough noise around here without bringing in more'. We did have a wind-up gramophone with two records; we never got tired listening to them. Everyone in those days loved to sing or listen to singers. Songs were created from almost nothing. I remember one year the 'Cot Bog' went on fire, it burned for days; before it was extinguished a song was written about it – 'the Great Cot Fire'. These were great times and boy did we live them to the full!

SOME SOURCES FOR CLANE HISTORY: THE RENTAL OF THE BALLINAGAPPAGH ESTATE

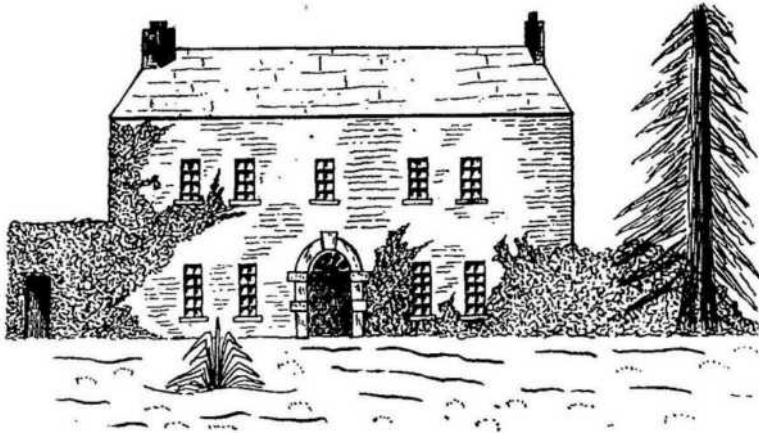
Ciarán Reilly

The ever increasing interest in local history has been greatly enhanced by the survival and accessibility of primary source material. Moreover, this quest for local history is facilitated by the fact that most, if not all, libraries and archives now have an online presence where a database of collections and manuscripts can be perused, thus making it more efficient and less time consuming for the researcher.

For example, a glance at the National Library of Ireland's online catalogue, *Sources*, reveals a number of documents relating to Clane and its environs. These include for example, the 'Sale by George Murry of Dublin to Mathew Murphy, of lands in Clane, Co. Kildare, June 29, 1793 and a "Photostat" copy of a survey of the lands of Castlekeely, barony of Clane, Co. Kildare, the estate of John Mansfield, by John Longfield. This document, which dates from 1816 contains a list of tenants and is an invaluable source for local and family historians.

The National Archives of Ireland has a number of papers which relate to the Clane area. For example, a list of leases issued by Sir Gerald Aylmer in the early nineteenth-century (M. 6921) would surely be of local interest as would the 'Copy will of Patrick Hewetson, Betaghstown, Co. Kildare, 7 April 1703'; Copy disclaimer of John Healy, Firmount, Clane, Co. Kildare re. will of John P. Keogh, 25 June 1903 and the baptismal record of Fleetwood Rynd, Mount Armstrong, Clane, dated 1 May 1850. Piecing together landownership in a particular townland is also possible through a variety of leases in the National Archives. For example, an examination of the townland of Hodgestown in the 1780s reveals that a number of Dublin merchants and land speculators owned much of the land there. They include the 'Renewal of a lease for lives by Samuel Russell, The Coombe, Co. Dublin to John Bury, Dublin City of Hodgestown, Co. Kildare, 30 Aug. 1788'; 'Release for lives by

John Bury, Dublin City to Patrick McDermott, Hodgestown of Hodgestown, 5 Feb. 1796' and 'Release for lives by Thomas Hoowe, Edenderry, King's Co. to Sarah Wyly, Edenderry of Hodgestown, 18 Nov. 1805'.



The original Hewetson Endowed School at Betaghstown Demesne

Documents relating to the history of Clane and environs survive elsewhere. For example in London, in the Parliamentary Archives there is 'An Act for inclosing Lands in the Parishes of Clane and Manheim in the County of Kildare, 1819', while the British National Archives at Kew holds a record of the individual petition of James Toole convicted at the Dublin Assizes in May 1824 for the manslaughter of Richard Benigan. The National Archives at Kew also holds a 'Will of Constance Hunt otherwise Hewetson, Wife of Clane, Kildare, 3 January 1771' and records of Clane natives who enlisted in the British Army and Navy throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. These included Andrew Ennis, born in Clane in 1820, a soldier in the 65th Foot Regiment from 1838-44 and David Belford, who enlisted in the Scots Brigade c1796. Of course, military service was not confined to the British Army.

The Maynooth University based *Irish in Europe* project (see <http://irishineurope.ie/vre/index>) contains descriptions of those engaged in military activity in the French and Spanish armies,

mainly in the eighteenth-century. They include, Richard Ronny of 'Donneday' who served from 1736 until his death in 1741 in the Berwick Regiment in France. At inspection he was described as aged forty-six; five feet and two inches tall; brown eyes and brown hair. This dispersal of people across the European mainland might suggest why documents relating to Clane are located in the Huntington Library in San Marino. These papers concern the arrest of Sir Christopher Preston in Clane in 1418.

Primary sources are often to be found hidden in landed estate collections, perhaps deposited with papers which appear to have no direct connection to the area. This occurs for a number of reasons, but it is always useful to consider who the local land agent was at a particular time and what other estates did he administer. Likewise, marriages meant that papers were often dispersed. In the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast documents relating to the building of the new road from Clane to Tullamore in the 1750s are to be found in the Blundell (Edenderry) family papers. These documents give an insight into the topography of the area at the time. Despite the renewed appreciation and interest in the study of landed estates and country houses, their collections remain greatly under used in terms of local history.

The rental of the Ballinagappagh estate (and part of Loughanure), the property of a Miss Kane, in Clane for 1907 provides an excellent insight into the locality at the turn of the twentieth century. Deposited in the National Library of Ireland, the rental was drafted in 1907, but does include information about tenancies as far back as the 1860s. In trying to understand the contents of the rental, the land agent was advised that G.O. Wilson's estate map be consulted. However, unfortunately, this map does not survive with the rental. The estate amounted to 740 acres and had been bought in the Landed Estates Court in May 1865 for £10, 525. Not all of the land was tenanted, as the table below illustrates. With regard to tenure, many of the leases which had been granted on the estate were for thirty-one years or the lifetime of a named individual.

For example, in the case of the Farrell lease it was for the 31 years from 25 March 1848 or the life of Patrick Farrell. In this instance the lease extended to the Famine times, indicating a level of continuity and harmony which existed in the Clane area.

Besides details of annual payment and arrears, estate rentals provide a host of information about tenants. For example, in the Ballinagappagh rental the agent has recorded that the tenant named Dunn's only son died in September 1898 and so as he does not appear on the 1907 rental, we can conclude that he has died himself. In other instances, the agent provides commentary on tenants and their family. In the case of Christina Diamond's son he notes that he has returned from Australia and that he is a 'good man but neither goes to mass or meeting! And will not allow the priests to get up on his back'. The agent also notes that she has two other sons in America. The rental also details the many problems which existed in nineteenth century Ireland in relation to the landholding system with tenants frequently swapping holdings and subletting land, all of which created chaos for the agent concerned.

Surprisingly, there are no notes of political involvement or of eviction regarding the tenantry. Indeed, the opposite is very much the case. In a number of instances the clemency of land agent and landlord abounds. For example, Sylvester Hannigan was forgiven his arrears of £7 6s following the 'loss of a very fine cow'. In addition, the rental points to the punctual payment of rent over a long period and also of the various other charges including county cess and river drainage schemes which tenants paid.

In 1907 the decision was taken to sell to the tenants their holdings at twenty-two years purchase plus the last years rent (1906). Interest at 3 ½ percent was to be paid until all the purchase money had been paid. The sporting rights were to go to the tenantry but no provision was made for turbary, despite the presence of a number of acres of land which were used for such. Only one tenant, Andrew Kenna, was listed as having

Table 1: Tenants listed in the 1902 rental

Name	Acreage
Peter Diamond	11
Sylvester Hannigan	14
Andrew Kenna	32
Mrs Coffey	6
Mrs Losty	19
Henry Mitchell	10
James Conneff	23
Thomas Maloney	3
James Brien	27
Thomas Losty	16
Ellen Connolly	9
Michael Healy	7
Henry Farrell	192
Henry Farrell	19

refused. By 1907 a number of holdings had obviously changed hands and among those now listed on the rental included Gerald Dunne, James Bryan, Thomas Mallowney and Daniel Sullivan. A note in the 1907 rental also highlighted that ‘the late Eliza Hannigan’ and that Edward Losty was living at Firmount.

Notes

¹ Using the names included on the rental and following them in other sources is rewarding - Michael Dunne, mentioned above was the sole recipient of the will of Anne Byrne who died in 1873. *See Freeman's Journal*, 19 March 1873.

² The rental also includes details of land owned at Drehid in Carbury. Interestingly, tenants at Carbury included people from Dunboyne in county Meath who had rented land for grazing.

CLONGOWES WOOD COLLEGE: THE EARLY YEARS

Brendan Cullen

The Beginning

On 4th March 1814 Fr. Peter Kenney SJ purchased Castle Browne and the Demesne of 219 acres, located near Clane, Co. Kildare from the Wogan Browne family with a view to converting it to a boarding school for the children of middle-class Catholic parents of the time. He immediately changed the name back to the original Irish of Clongowes Wood.

On May 18th 1814 the first pupil, James McLorinan from Dublin was admitted to the college. His parents were drapers and belonged to the emerging prosperous class of Catholics who were willing to take advantage of the classical education which Fr. Kenney proposed to offer. The annual fee was 50 Guineas; the boys spent 11 months in the school with the annual holidays confined to the month of August. Of the first 21 students who entered Clongowes between May 18th and June 30th, 13 were from Dublin, 4 from Cork and 1 each from Waterford, Clare, Meath and Kildare.

By 1815 there were 110 pupils enrolled. This figure rose alarmingly in 1816 to 201. It's difficult to ascertain where such a large number were accommodated because apart from the internal reconstruction of the castle there were no new buildings constructed at this time. Various suggestions include in the castle itself and in the castle yard where the Wogan Brownes' stables, out-houses and offices were located. One thing was certain, the school was overcrowded.

1816 proved a disastrous year weather-wise. In that year excessive rainfall and cold weather ruined both the grain harvest and the potato crop. Even the cutting and drying of turf proved impossible. Fr. Charles Aylmer, then Minister, alluded to this situation in an entry in the Minister's journal when he wrote:

The season has been so wet that much of the corn has not been cut and is rotten on the ground. The meadows in many places are in the same sad state and much of the hay is not made up. Wheat everywhere is bad and dear. Potatoes very thin in the ground. The poor almost lost for want of fuel.

1817 was also a disastrous year but for a different reason. From March typhus spread extensively in Ulster, Munster and Connacht. By September it affected Leinster and had reached epidemic proportions everywhere. It persisted until the latter part of 1819. Over a million people were affected by it and some 65,000 are thought to have died. In 1819, five years after it opened, Clongowes 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, now 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.

Mrs. Mary O'Connell.

We are fortunate in having a series of letters written by Mrs. Mary O'Connell to her youngest son Danny when he was a student in Clongowes in the early 1830s. Like all mothers of sons living away from home she expressed an interest in all of his school activities, in his religious formation, in his academic progress and in a special way in his health and general welfare. She frequently encouraged him to attend Mass, she corrected his spellings in his letters to her and she constantly berated him regarding his poor personal appearance and his lack of acceptable personal hygiene. She was also concerned that he was well fed and many of her letters refer to the tuck she sent to him to supplement his college diet. In November 1831 she wrote:

I think it will be better for you to get the basket on Sunday next by your cousin Morgan John who is going with some friends of his to visit the Jesuits. I shall send you a roast Roscommon turkey, some cold ham, bread and a bottle of raspberry vinegar. I shall also send the candles which Hanna forgot to send the last time and your pencils and peppermint you forgot.

Anxious to know how Danny enjoyed the food she wrote to him a couple of days later:

How did you like the turkey and ham? Did the bottle of raspberry vinegar go safe? She then articulates the preoccupation of every Irish mother in relation to their sons' health when she wrote; "How are your bowels?" This concern for his bowels she expressed several days later in a follow-up letter; "Let me know if you got the basket safe. How are your bowels? If they still continue delicate you ought not to take any of the raspberry vinegar or any fruit or sweetmeats. Let me hear from you in reply to this.

Unfortunately, we have no copy of a reply from young Danny but these short excerpts from his mother's correspondence give us a valuable insight into the medical complaints that concerned the students' parents at the time. It appears that the two main everyday ailments experienced by the students were indigestion, hence Mrs. O'Connell's mention of peppermint, and constipation, hence her expressed anxiety about his bowels. According to the medical journal preserved in the Clongowes archives the remedy for constipation was a "draught" prescribed by the college doctor and administered by the resident nurse. Thomas Francis Meagher (1833-39) recalls rather humorously the college doctor Dr. O'Flannigan visiting the school once a week to look after the health of the students. Meagher wrote:

His invariable prescription (for all ills) was senna and salts. The boys called it 'black draught.' It made no difference what ailed you, the dose was prescribed. Toothache, neuralgia, constipation, scarlatina, pleurisy, lumbago, ringworm,

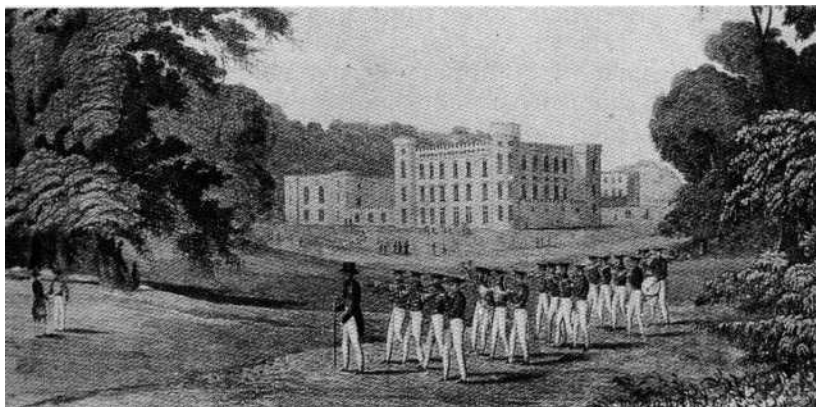
lockjaw, or softening of the brain- for everything, the most trivial or most desperate, that 'black draught' was Dr. O'Flannigan's corrective.....Judy (the nurse) always administered the dose. She mixed it, stirred it with a teaspoon, forced it inexorably on the patient, piously exclaiming 'Take it now for the poor souls in Purgatory!'

Daily Life

From various accounts in the Clongowes archives we can reconstruct a fairly accurate picture of daily life in the school. A loud rattle woke up the students at 5.30am in the summer and at 6am in the winter. Having grabbed some soap and a toothbrush they made their way to the wash room which had a stone floor and tanks of water all round the walls, complete with taps but no basins. After morning prayers and Mass they had study until 8am. Breakfast consisted of a bowl of hot or cold milk and dry bread. At midday they had small beer and dry bread. Dinner consisted of roast meat and potatoes. Supper was similar to breakfast. On feast days the fare was much better e.g. on the feast of St. Michael roast goose with apple sauce was served. On Christmas Day 1828 the boys had roast beef, rabbits with onion sauce and plum pudding. Normally, on ordinary days there was reading during dinner and supper. There was a rostrum on each side of the refectory facing each other midway. The readers were rewarded by special fare after the meal. Most of the school day was occupied with classes and study periods. Night study was restricted because of poor lighting in the study hall in the evening especially in Winter. All assembled in the chapel for night prayer and retired afterwards at 8.45pm. One student in later life recalled the bedtime routine. He wrote, "When we were in bed a prefect (a Jesuit) walked through the dormitory repeating the "De Profundis" in Latin, the boys responding."

Games were not strictly organised leaving the boys the freedom to occupy themselves during recreation times. The exception was gravel football which was the dominant game at Clongowes for most of the 19th century. It was played on the gravel area behind the castle. It was played during the winter

months, the season lasting from September to St. Patrick's Day. Originally, the ball was 'inert' and was made in the shoemaker's shop in the college. The goals consisted of tall uprights, placed about nine feet apart but with no crossbar. The only score was a goal and that was registered when the ball passed between the uprights. The ball was played only with the feet. Players were not permitted to catch the ball but they could punch it with a clenched fist. The staging of a 'Colours' match on St. Patrick's Day marked the end of the gravel season. Other games played were marbles, peg-tops, handball and a primitive form of cricket. Senior students were allowed to keep greyhounds and all students went on long walks on playdays which were supervised by a priest. Among the gentler pastimes were fishing on the nearby Liffey, nature study and gardening, while cards and reading were the main indoor pastimes. Debating did not begin until 1837 when the Clongowes Historical Debating Society was founded.



The Clongowes band from an engraving

The following letter was written home by Joseph Woodlock, the younger of two brothers, who attended Clongowes in the early 1830s. The letter illustrates some of the main aspects of Clongowes studies and gives a very good impression of the frantic and crowded nature of the daily schedule. It's dated September 27, 1833.

Bart is in first grammar, and I am in second. Mr. Rorke is Bart's master and Mr. Barret is mine: he is very kind to me. We get up about six, and when dressed go to the washing room. Then we go to the chapel, and Mr. Ryan reads morning prayers, and after them some pious book.... After that we hear Mass. Then we go to the study for an hour, when we have breakfast at eight o'clock, bread and milk, warm or cold or, if we like, both. After breakfast, we go to writing and arithmetic until a quarter to ten. Then we go to play for three-quarters of an hour, then we study for half an hour, then we go to Classical Schools from eleven until a quarter after one. Then we go to wash, and then to dinner. After dinner we go to play until three o'clock every day. Then we go to French until half past four, and then play until a quarter after five. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we say no French, and then continue until a quarter after five. Then we go to Chapel for a quarter of an hour, to say any prayers we want to say, and then we study until seven o'clock. Then we go to supper, and then to play until about a quarter before nine, then to Chapel for night prayers and then to bed. I sleep very comfortably and never fall out of bed. Bart desires me to tell you to send down his writing desk by the first opportunity, and to send him a pack of cards.

What of the boys' behaviour? It appears that the standard of manners varied considerably from boy to boy. Quite a number of them were considered to be somewhat crude, even uncouth. Mrs. O'Connell was very disappointed with the bad manners picked up by her two sons Maurice and Morgan who were at Clongowes from 1815 to 1819. She remarked:

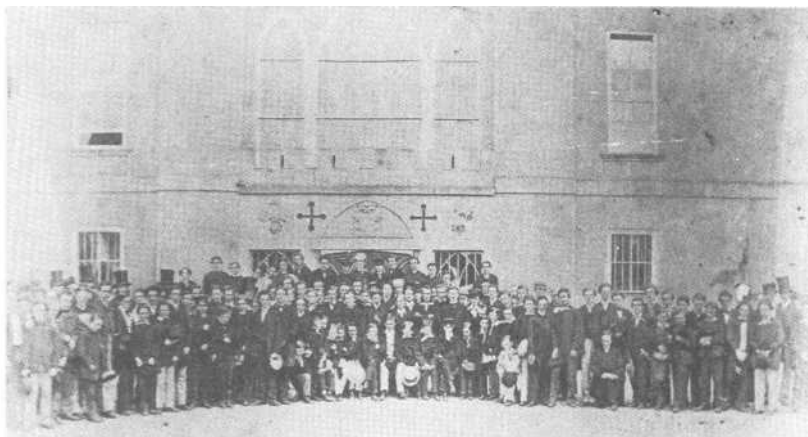
What nice mannered boys Maurice and Morgan were when they went to Clongowes. It is almost impossible to get them to divest themselves of the vulgarity they acquired at that college.

There were frequent breaches of discipline from time to time with things getting out of hand occasionally. The study hall was a prime target for pranks with bedlam and uproar occurring every now and then. Throwing stones in the dormitories was quite common while slovenly and

disrespectful behaviour in the chapel (neglecting to genuflect reverently, sprawling on the seats) was widespread. More serious outbreaks occurred at Christmas time probably because of the festive season. At supper on St. Stephen's Day 1827 the Rhetoric (senior) boys entered the refectory in a rowdy mood and whistled and sang during grace. Then several boys roamed around the refectory banging their plates with their forks; then another started rolling his plate along the flags and was followed by others rolling and smashing plates and bowls on the flags. When they had quietened down the Minister ordered a discipline for the four ringleaders, and penal studies for the others involved instead of the usual play day.

Golden Jubilee 1864

When Clongowes re-opened in September 1819 after the typhus outbreak, the numbers had dropped to just over 100, despite the students returning to upgraded and enlarged accommodation. However, the numbers did increase slowly in the following years and by 1860 there were about 150 students in residence. A pupil who entered Clongowes in 1865 noted that: *the school was a full one, quite full for its then capacity, and there was not a number vacant below 152, for that was mine in the Magazine.*

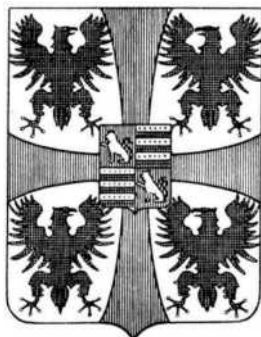


The earliest surviving photograph of Clongowes students (1860)

On July 21st 1864 Clongowes celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its foundation in 1814. Hundreds of parents, past-pupils and dignitaries from all walks of life were invited to the college to celebrate this great occasion. The special train reserved for the invited guests left Kingsbridge station at half-past nine and on arrival at Sallins station was met by numerous jaunting cars and carriages which conveyed the visitors to the college. The celebrations continued throughout the day and into the evening. The conclusion of the festivities signalled not only the end of another successful academic year but also the completion of fifty years of extraordinary educational achievement. The end of a memorable day also heralded the onset of the summer holidays for the students. Having celebrated the Golden Jubilee, on leaving the campus all participants could look back with justifiable pride and look forward to the future with confidence and optimism and to the continuance of the great tradition of Jesuit education in Clane, Co. Kildare.

A short extract from an article in the Freeman's Journal of July 22nd 1864 illustrates the esteem and admiration in which Clongowes was held at the time of the Golden Jubilee:

Looking back through the fifty years how sublime did the old College of Clongowes appear, how incalculable were the blessings it bestowed, and how priceless were the treasures which it conferred on, not only those who were trained within it but upon all over whom they exercised an influence in the various positions in which Providence had placed them.



AETERNA NON CADUCA

OUR YEARS IN LANDENSTOWN 1966 – 2005

Peter Schmelter

In October 1966 I arrived in Ireland as Farm Manager for Landenstown Estate Sallins and for Baronrath Stud Farm near Kill. Landenstown Estate was formerly owned by the Digby and then the O'Kelly families. The O'Kellys sold Landenstown to the Beckmann family who lived there until 1960 and then sold it to a German owner. Baronrath Stud was formerly owned by Bobby Kennedy of Bishops court, Kill. My main task was to run herds of suckler cows on both farms, keep sheep in Landenstown, and grow tillage and hay on both farms. At one time I had 250 – 280 animals to look after, with the help of John Keogh the Herdsman, Mick Connolly and Pat Tracy. All of them were very loyal to me until the end. The forest in Landenstown required quite a bit of attention too and over the years we managed to replant a fair number of trees.

The house before I came was not occupied from 1960 – 1967, and when I arrived I had to renovate the house from top to bottom. There was no electricity or water in the house, everything was out of date or non-existent. The kitchen was located in the basement and it was well past being practical, so I decided to move the kitchen to the ground floor into the former “Maids Quarters”. Water and electricity had to be laid, plus all the piping for bathroom, kitchen etc. The telephone was operated by a handle, Robertstown 4 was our number. Baronrath Stud already had an 01 number and was automated, so it was easier for me to call the Vet and do business on that phone. At that time I was engaged to Christiane, she was still in Germany and to call her from Landenstown was a 3 – 4 hour undertaking. I would book a call and then a couple of hours later the foreign exchange would call me back with the connection.

In late December of 1966 Christiane and I got married in Germany and we arrived in Ireland on the 4th of January 1967 and we moved into Baronrath Stud for a couple of weeks. But the first shock for us and in particular for my wife was the fact

that the farmers were on protest soon after our arrival and had blocked all the roads, bridges and cross-roads. That day nobody went anywhere and Christiane felt marooned in a very strange country! In early February we moved into Landenstown House which was kind of habitable by then, but over the years we improved the house a lot and made it more comfortable. Initially we had no central heating but in 1971 after our son Christian was born we installed central heating, a job that took about 3 months to finish.

The first car that I bought shortly after I came here, was a Renault 4 – I bought it from Smith's in Naas for £ 300.00. It served me well, calves were transported in it and several farm machinery parts and tools. Christiane eventually had an old VW Beetle which was a great car and sometimes that car had to carry an animal as well. Animals always played a great role in our lives, we always had dogs and lots of cats. The cats were famous, they never at any stage left the Estate, they were called the Digby cats, their line going back to the first owner of Landenstown. Some were feral, more were domesticated and we fed the lot and befriended all of them. In later years we had hens and a mad rooster who tried to pick a fight with our son whenever the fancy took him. But unfortunately the foxes around Landenstown got the better of them. The Estate also had a fairy tree behind the house, Raymond McEvoy our neighbour told me early on never to cut it down. I followed his advice, but unfortunately this tree was cut down in 2006 after I had retired and from then on Landenstown changed totally.

Summertime was always great and very busy with hay making and harvesting. We also had a lot of visitors each summer, relations from Germany who would spend at least 2 weeks with us and their children often stayed longer. They often helped with the hay making, or bringing in the straw from the harvest. The house was lovely and cool during the hot weather but proved to be cosy and warm during the winter, of course with the heating in the background. The house had a life of its own in a way. When we moved in, it appeared to be a foreboding place. There were 18 rooms over basement altogether, so we

only occupied half of the house. The other half – the right wing – was left empty. Right from the start in February 1967 we would hear noises in the house, noises we couldn't find out where they came from. So they remained unexplained and we put it down to the house getting used to new life again. But when our son was born in June of 1971 and Christiane came home from hospital, a real noisy time at night began. And this didn't just come from the baby. The “noises” became more distinct, like steps up and down the staircase every night. This would happen between the hours of 11 pm and 1 am and it was witnessed by Christiane’s sister who was visiting us and the poor woman was rigid with fear. We often stood in the hall listening to the footsteps on the stairs and yet we saw nothing. All very strange but Christiane and I never had the feeling of fear or panic. It went on for about 2 weeks and then it stopped.



**Mrs Rosemary Lucas, Tatjana and Christian Schmelter at
Landenstown House, Summer 1980**

There were always bats in the attic and many a time a visiting child would ramble down the main stairs in the evening and a bat might swish by its head. This was followed by screams and tears depending on the age of the child. We also had a nest of barn owls not too far from the house. They lived in an old elm

tree and the noises they made at night were extremely eerie. After a very big storm in the 1980's the tree was blown over and this unfortunately was the end of our barn owls.

One of the yearly highlights was the Hunt in the autumn in Landenstown. Charlie O'Neill of Abbeylands at that time was a very colourful person and we exchanged endless stories about times past and of all the locals, too many to mention here. And this brings me to our good neighbours who were always there when needed and I hope they would say the same about me. I mentioned the late Ray McEvoy before, there was also the late Johnny Carey who knew everything about Landenstown there was to know. The Murphy Family at the Lock, the Keoghs and the Dunnes of Ballysize, all proved to be always welcoming and helpful. Then there was Paddy Walsh of Digby Bridge who supplied me with many a calf and not to forget Jimmy Kealy our neighbour beyond the "Rounds". The late John Keogh, the Herdsman deserves special mention, a gentleman if there ever was one who worked all his life on that farm. The Ven. Archdeacon Brian Handy and Mrs. Handy of Clane Union of Parishes came to visit us very soon after we moved in and introduced us to a lot of people in the years to come. Last but not least I also like to mention our Vet Michael Roe from Naas. He was our "James Herriot" and he was always available no matter what time of day or night it was. He was instrumental in helping me with the welfare of all the animals in Landenstown and after a job was done in the yard, he would often make time for a cup of tea and then I loved listening to his stories. Sadly those days will never come back again, but we feel very lucky to have experienced them. There were good times and there were bad times too, illness, bad harvests, sickness amongst the animals, loss of livestock and bone breaking work in the worst weather. It was "life" and it was never boring in that once wonderful house called Landenstown.

TOM HARRIS AND THE 1916 RISING

James Durney

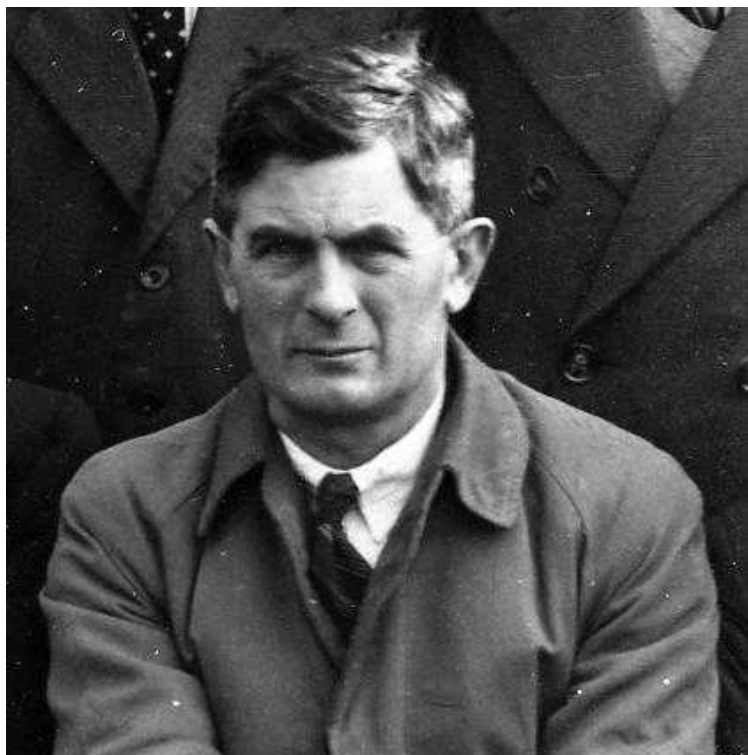
Tom Harris was born in 1895, the second eldest of seven children. He lived at Cloncurry, near Kilcock, Co. Kildare, until he was ten years old. When his parents and grandmother died within six weeks of each other Tom moved to the village of Prosperous to live with his aunt, Elizabeth Tierney. As a young man he was interested in his native language and Irish culture and joined the Gaelic League and later the secretive Irish Republican Brotherhood. He recalled:

About 1913 we had an Irish teacher named Sean O'Connor ... He began by bringing Irish Freedom and other national papers to his classes. We would read these papers in the classroom and discuss the political situation of the time. In this way we became more absorbed in political discussion than in our pursuit of the language.

Shortly after the establishment of the Irish Volunteers Tom Harris formed a Volunteer company in Prosperous, which had a complement of fourteen men. Arms were scarce. Harris had a 'point 32' automatic pistol, while the rest of the men had 'small arms of some different types and a very limited amount of ammunition'.

In early 1916 a meeting was held in the home of the *Leinster Leader* editor, Michael O'Kelly, at Gleann na Gréine, Naas, where preparations were made for local action as part of a planned national uprising. Present were Tom Harris, Prosperous; Domhnall Ua Buachalla and Patrick Colgan, Maynooth; and Michael Smyth, Athgarvan. Instructions had been received from Irish Volunteer GHQ that the Kildare units were to be 'used as outpost groups between the Curragh Camp and Dublin when the outbreak took place'. The Kildare Volunteers had been assigned the crucial task of preventing British troops from the Curragh reinforcing Dublin by destroying the railway bridge over the canal outside Sallins. The RIC barracks at Sallins and Kill were also to be attacked,

but as there were only five under-strength companies in the area, that plan had to be abandoned. GHQ expected the Kildare Volunteers to provide 100–150 men to demolish railway lines, roads, telegraph and telephone wires between Dublin and the Curragh. Once these objectives were completed the Kildare Volunteers were to march to Dublin to join the insurgents.



Tom Harris

Captain Tom Byrne, known as ‘The Boer’ because of his South African war experience, had arrived in county Kildare earlier in the month to help in organising the rebellion. Lt. Ted O’Kelly, from Maynooth, was appointed his second-in-command. Capt. Tom Byrne arrived at Harris’s home in Prosperous, on Holy Thursday. On Easter Monday Tom Harris, Ted O’Kelly and Tom Byrne picked up gelignite which had been brought down from Dublin by a Cumann na mBan member and stored in the Dominican College, Newbridge. They went to Bodenstown as planned and when no other Volunteers arrived they disposed of

the gelignite by putting it into rabbit-holes in a field, and cycled to Maynooth. Despite Eoin McNeill's countermanding order calling off the rising the Maynooth Company had mobilized in the yard of Domhnall Ua Buachalla's hardware store. From the yard, off Main Street, the Volunteers walked to Maynooth College where Monsignor Hogan, despite his opposition to their actions, gave the men his blessing. They were joined by Oliver O'Ryan, a College employee, bringing the total number of Volunteers to fifteen. From the College the group proceeded to Dublin by the railway lines. It was approximately 2 a.m. when they reached the Tolka river which they waded across and made their way into Glasnevin Cemetery, where they hid their arms and waited for first light. Then the little band of men made their way into the city proceeding in formation down Berkeley Road, into Blessington Street and past the Parnell Monument. They were greeted at the door of the GPO by the Irish Citizen Army leader, James Connolly who remarked that it 'didn't matter a damn if we were wiped out now as we had justified ourselves.' Tom Harris said, 'I thought this was a bit rugged.' In the GPO, on Tuesday morning, shortly after their arrival, Tom Harris recalls:

We had not much time to rest, however, for soon after we were ordered by James Connolly, the commanding officer, to fall in with another party of the Hibernian Rifles and marched to Parliament Street to occupy a position there. We were issued with two canister bombs each and instructed how to strike a match and light the fuse and then fire them. We went down Liffey Street out on the quays and across the Halfpenny Bridge. The toll man demanded a halfpenny.

Lt. O'Kelly drew his revolver, which turned the argument in his favour and the men were allowed free passage. Their objective was to relieve the Citizen Army volunteers who were surrounded in the *Daily Express* office in Parliament Street. The Maynooth men first broke into No. 12 Parliament Street and then quickly seized the nearby Exchange Hotel. According to Tom:

When we established ourselves there we next effected an entry into the Exchange Hotel adjoining. We put the premises into as good a state of defence as possible and then occupied positions on the roof. We were distributed all over it, putting up barricades, etc. I do not know how many hours we were there. Byrne used to take runs out to scout outside. I believe [Pat] Colgan left it with a dispatch. It was a position we did not think we could maintain and we also did not think we could get out of it. We were there probably for four or five hours. There was a bit more of a scrap there with some British troops and a number of them were killed – I do not know the number of casualties. We were sniped, probably from the Castle. While we were there one of our party, an elderly Dublin man, who belonged to the Hibernian Rifles, was wounded by a bullet from an enemy position, and later died in hospital. At this time we had become heavily engaged and soon an intensive rifle fire was concentrated upon us from different enemy posts in the district so that at length we were in danger of being completely surrounded and cut off from the Republican forces.

Pat Colgan was ordered to return to the rebel HQ at the GPO to inform James Connolly that only Domhnall Ua Buachalla was armed with a rifle at their position and they were in danger of being surrounded. Colgan returned with Connolly's orders, which were to lie low until an attempt could be made to rescue the garrison at dusk. Tom Harris recalls:

In this extremity the experienced leadership of Tom Byrne was displayed, for not only did he succeed in extricating us and retire again to the GPO without further loss. We were called back to the Post Office that evening. We evacuated the hotel completely.

Back at the GPO the Maynooth Volunteers were allowed to rest until midnight and were then assigned positions in the building overlooking Prince's Street. While Pearse and Connolly addressed the garrison telling them of the continuing success of the Rising on all fronts, the British brought up an 18-pounder artillery piece to Great Britain Street, where it fired

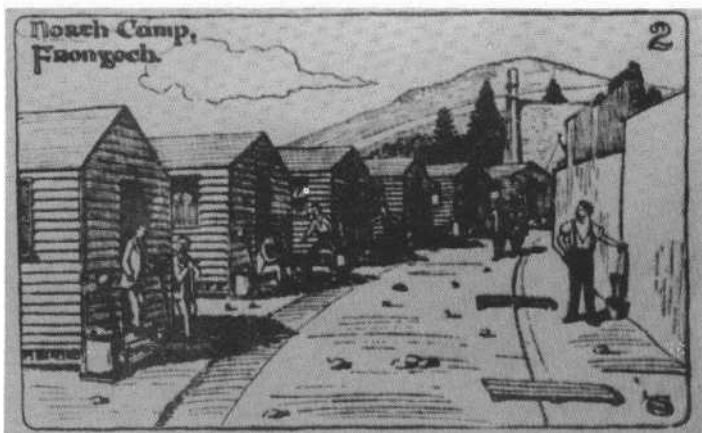
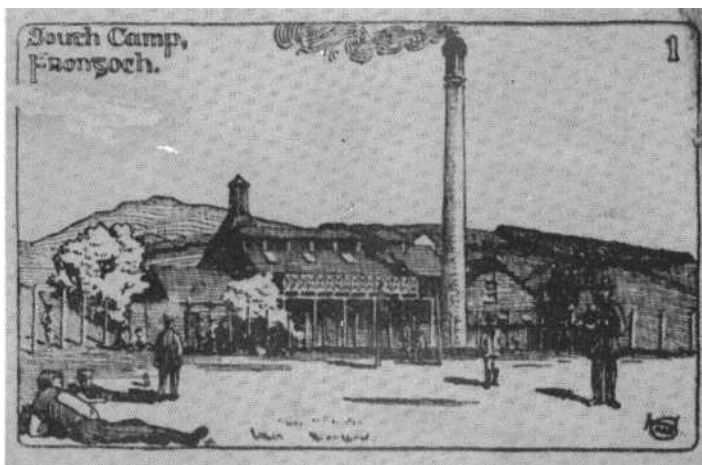
upon Arnott's drapery store to the rear of the GPO. At the same time the British artillery in Westmoreland and D'Olier streets began to fire on Sackville Street. It was at this stage that the rebel garrison realised the British were not intending to make a frontal assault. 'They were going to pound the GPO into dust' Tom Harris said.

As the weekend approached the continued occupation and defence of the building became more difficult and at length became more impossible owing to the heavy bombardment to which it was subjected by the British guns. The incendiary shells converted it into a blazing furnace and evacuation and surrender became inevitable.

As Tom Harris and Lt. Ted O'Kelly helped distribute the rations prior to the evacuation a Volunteer accidentally dropped his shotgun which let off a round, wounding both men. Tom Harris took most of the blast in the foot. The rebel garrison left by the Henry Street exit, heading across the street and into the warren of alleyways and lanes between it and Great Britain Street. A wounded Tom Harris was carried on a stretcher into Henry Street and down Moore Lane, which was under fire. He and several other wounded Volunteers spent the night in a stable in Moore Lane.

The following day the rebels surrendered and Tom Harris and other wounded Volunteers, including James Connolly, were brought to a military hospital in Dublin Castle. Harris was there for three months until his wounds healed and he recalled that he was well-treated. In July he was deported to Britain and interned in Frongoch Camp, in Wales until 3 August 1916, when he was released and returned to Ireland.

On the reorganization of the Irish Republican Army in 1917 Tom Harris became Vice-Commandant of the North Kildare Battalion. He was jailed during the War of Independence and again during the Civil War when he took the anti-Treaty side. He later joined Fianna Fáil and was first elected to the Kildare constituency in a by-election in July 1931 caused by the death



Drawings of Frongoch Internment Camp near Bala in North Wales by Eoghan O Briain who was a prisoner there. The South Camp was a former distillery.

of Labour Party TD, Hugh Colohan. He served as a member of Dáil Éireann for the next twenty-six years representing Kildare from 1931-1937, Carlow-Kildare from 1937-1948, and Kildare again from 1948-1957. He lost his seat at the 1957 general election and retired from politics. Tom Harris died at his home in Caragh, on 8 February 1974, aged seventy-eight.

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FROM CLONGOWES TO CAPE TOWN: IRELAND'S FIRST AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH AFRICA

Ciarán Reilly

In January 2015 Dr Harman Murtagh's book, *Clongownians of Distinction* was launched by former Taoiseach and President of the Clongowes Union, John Bruton. One of the 100 famous Clongownians included in the publication was Patrick John Little. Born in Dundrum, county Dublin to Canadian parents of Irish descent (his father Philip (1824-97) had served as the first premier of Newfoundland before settling in Ireland) Little was editor of the newspaper, *New Ireland* and a vital player in the Sinn Fein propaganda machine between 1916 and 1922. Equally gifted with the pen or speaking on a public platform, P.J. Little was an integral part of the struggle for Irish independence. It was at Clongowes that Little harnessed his powerful oratory skills, which he would use with great effect in South Africa almost twenty years later. Interestingly, Little attended Clongowes between 1895-1902, a period which also coincided with the Second Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) and when the country first came to popular public attention in Ireland. No doubt pro-Boer sentiment lingered in the hallways of Clongowes which he would come to use with great effect later. After leaving Clongowes he attended University College Dublin and qualified as a solicitor in 1914. He was elected as a member of Dail Éireann representing Waterford from 1927-1954 and served in a number of cabinet posts in Fianna Fail governments, most notably as Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. Little died in 1963 and his obituary is in the 'Clongownian' of 1963 on page 38. Most accounts of Little offer no insight into his role as Ireland's first envoy to South Africa in 1921, now largely forgotten.¹

In 1921 the visit to South Africa of Patrick John Little (1884-1963) coincided with the zenith of the short-lived Irish Republican Association of South Africa (IRASA). With thirteen branches of the association scattered throughout the country, the IRASA played a crucial role in pushing the 'Irish Question' into mainstream South African politics, albeit

briefly, in the early 1920s. Despite this, the role of the association in Irish historiography has been largely overshadowed by the influence of organisations in the USA, Britain and Australia.



Douglas Hyde in June 1938 having been returned unopposed as President of Ireland; P.J. Little, then Parliamentary Secretary to Eamonn de Valera, is standing behind him third from the left of the picture.

That South Africa played a significant role in the development of the Irish War of Independence is somewhat surprising, for, as Donal McCracken argues, the Irish were only ever ‘a minority within a minority’.² However, in relation to their numbers, which never exceeded more than 11,000 people, the Irish were mostly concentrated in certain professions and trades such as the colonial police, the railways, the mines and the retailing stores. For example, one third of Cape governors during British rule were Irish, something which was said to have disgruntled the native population, while at least thirty newspapers were edited by Irishmen. Naturally, centres such as Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, East London and Durban had sizeable Irish communities, but they were to be found elsewhere; from Brakpan to Bloemfontein,

and from Craddock to Oudtshorn. Indeed, as Little later reminisced, even in some places where ‘only a few Irishmen were in a village, they would be men of such energy that they would be bossing the whole place’.³

In early March 1921 President of Dail Éireann, Eamon de Valera informed Little that he was to be sent to South Africa as a representative of the Provisional Government. Given £500 in single notes and informed that a boat, the ‘Kennilworth Castle’, would sail from Southampton within a week, the trip took three weeks at sea during which time he made notes for future speeches. Arriving in South Africa, Little made initial contact with Benjamin Farrington, a lecturer of Greek at the University of Cape Town, himself a noted journalist.⁴ Indeed, Farrington played an integral role in the formation of the IRASA and as editor of the association’s periodical, *The Irish Republic*, he also contributed to a number of other African journals on Irish affairs.⁵ Quickly wasting no time in Cape Town the pair set in place a lecture tour across the vast terrain and climate of South Africa, the hazards of which were best illustrated by Little who noted that he had ‘found the going very severe’.⁶ One of the early actions of the IRASA was to discuss the possibility of sending a deputation to meet with South African Prime Minister, Jan Christian Smuts before he left for the Imperial Conference in London in 1921. Anxious to assert his authority over them, Little reported to Dublin that he would ‘describe myself as the accredited emissary of Eamon de Valera, a description which gives weight and gives no technical excuses for hostile action’.⁷ When he reached Johannesburg he commenced working with the IRASA committee. There, three sub-committees were appointed to implement the following policies: a) establish trade between the two countries; b) organise the Irish Diaspora in South Africa and c) draft a memorandum and arrange a deputation to meet with Smuts. It was decided that the deputation to visit Smuts would be a private one, so not as to upset his negotiations in London. Throughout South Africa Little found a flourishing IRASA where branches had been formed in 1919, and in some cases replacing earlier Sinn Fein clubs and branches of the Irish

National Foresters⁸ These groups had been active in 1916 when money was raised for the dependents of those involved in the Easter Rising. According to J.J. Moran ‘branches were formed wherever there were Irish’.⁹ Little estimated that the total membership of the association was about 1,000 people spread over thirteen branches.

The association’s periodical, *The Republic*, was a key proponent in the propaganda war, particularly in opposition to the *Cape Times*, South Africa’s widest selling newspaper which was firmly pro-British. Published weekly, by April 1921 *The Republic* had a circulation of about 2,300 copies.¹⁰ Replacing the Craddock-based periodical, *The Dawn*, it was quickly banned because of overt anti-British stance.¹¹ One of the first actions of the newly formed association was to oppose any form of royal authority in South Africa. The first edition of *The Republic* coincided with the visit of his Royal Highness, Prince Arthur of Connaught, Governor General and High Commission for South Africa in 1920 to which the IRASA noted that they had ‘no welcome for one who comes dressed in the Imperial name and authority’.¹² Fortuitously for the periodical, the first edition also coincided with death on hunger strike of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney (1879-1920), thereby swelling its sales and increasing its membership. However, given the scattered nature of the branches, filling the columns was often a hard task, especially when reports from Ireland were slow and in some cases non-existent. The paper relied heavily on its own members to contribute news and stories of Irish interest. Among the features which the editor chose to run were ancient Irish sagas, major events in Irish history, and of course, the story of 1916.¹³ Throughout South Africa Little met with a receptive ear. At Durban, for example, where T.F. Tyndall and J.J. Moran provided the welcome, the branch was described as ‘vigorous and earnest’.¹⁴ In Johannesburg, under the guide of George Mulligan, a Protestant barrister from Belfast, the hall was lined with hurley carriers. There, supported by a Labour leader from the gold mines, named Dunne, Little kept the crowd enthralled for over two hours. At Kimberly a prominent Irishman named

Collins was the chief organiser; at Pietermaritzburg, a Professor Lyons, later professor of Agriculture at Cork University was amongst the organisers, while in Oudtshorn, a peach farmer named McAllister was described as a 'strong supporter'.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, a number of Catholic priests played a prominent role in the association and in providing the Irish envoy a welcome. These included Fr. Curtis in East London and Fr Thomas Cullinane in Craddock. Probably owing to his overt Catholicism, Little was invited to a number of convents and schools run by Irish nuns and priests including the Nazareth, Dominican, Mercy and Charity convents and the Marist and Christian Brother schools. However, the broad religious spectrum of the movement meant that Little could count on support from Protestants, particularly those from Ulster. At Krugersdorp, for example, Mr Findlay, who, in a careful and eloquent speech, appealed to ex-Serviceman and Ulster Protestants like himself to join in 'this great struggle for the freedom of a small nation'. Little's religious conviction did not deter or stunt his mission in anyway and many meetings were held in Lutheran buildings and Protestant owned premises. These premises were supplied by a number of supporters including W.C. Brown, the self-titled 'Monaghan Presbyterian' who called for unity between Irishmen in South Africa when he wrote: 'Shame to the man who is so self-deceived by his religious bigotry as to disown his country!' Such sentiments were reiterated by Rev. McGahey, a Wesleyan clergyman at Colesberg who was described as 'one of the most devoted of Ireland's sons'.

As he moved throughout the country Little's lectures generated considerable interest outside the Irish population. In the university town of Stellenbosch, for example, Little was given a great welcome and all the student body quit their classes. In total, he held thirty-six meetings and at thirty-one of those the attendance passed the resolution in favour of an Irish Republic. Unsurprisingly, the largest branch and meetings were centred on Cape Town, attracting Irish men and women from

across the Western Cape. In Cape Town the promotion of educational programmes where people could learn the Irish language, music and customs was the overriding objective of the group. But there were also social occasions such as strawberry fetes and concerts where members gathered for entertainment. As the association grew, meeting rooms were purchased and in Cape Town the branch took over the premises of the Ancient Order of Hibernians at Whitehall in Greenmarket Square where they established a library and a reading room for members. The IRASA also encouraged members to publish texts relating to the situation in Ireland. However, it was the Bloemfontein branch who were deemed to be the most progressive, proposing in April 1921 that an Irish Race conference should be held to bring the diaspora together. This conference later took place in Paris in 1922, but owing to the onset of the Irish Civil War, the congress floundered, as delegates widely questioned its purpose.¹⁶ Nearing the end of his tour, at Malmesbury, Smuts' home town, Little used the forthcoming Imperial Conference as the pretext to draw the South African premier. He denounced Smuts' proposal that partition was a viable solution for Ireland. Accompanied by Hugh Boyd, Little was lucky to escape from the hostile crowd. In other venues, including Durban, support existed amongst a large Indian population, who saw the parallels of colonial aggression in both countries. Indeed, Durban based newspaper *Indian Opinion*, established in 1903 by Mahatma Gandhi, regularly carried articles on these parallels.¹⁷

Patrick Little's mission met with receptive and welcoming ears in South Africa and his presence was said to have 'decidedly advanced' the 'Irish Question' in the country.¹⁸ Indeed, *The Republic* claimed that 'no Irish envoy could have accomplished what Little has been able to achieve in a few weeks'.¹⁹ Today, the diplomatic mission of Patrick Little, is all but forgotten despite its importance in terms of the Anglo-Irish settlement. Evidently Little's mission helped in the overall story of the Irish War of Independence, forcing as it did the involvement of Jan Smuts in the early stages of the Anglo-Irish treaty negotiations. It also strengthened the IRASA and engaged the

Irish Diaspora with the situation in Ireland. Travelling through the open and unknown countryside of South Africa (the veldt) in 1921, Little achieved great success. It was in many ways a long way from his school days in Clongowes College in Clane and the plains of Kildare where he had first heard of South Africa.

Notes

¹ For more on the role of P.J. Little and Colonel Maurice Moore in South Africa in 1921 see Ciarán Reilly, 'The Magna Hibernia' Irish Diplomatic Missions to South Africa, 1921' in *South African Historical Journal*, 67:3 (2015), pp 255-70.

² D.P. McCracken, 'A Minority of a Minority of a Minority: the Irish in South Africa', in M. Klemencic & M.N. Harris (eds), *European Migrants, Diasporas and Indigenous Ethnic Minorities* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2009), 157-77.

³ *Irish Independent*, 16 May 1922.

⁴ For more on Farrington see Baruch Hirson, *The Cape Town Intellectuals: Ruth Schechter and Her Circle, 1907-1934* (Witwatersrand, 2000).

⁵ See J. Atkinson, 'Benjamin Farrington: Cape Town and the Shaping of a Public Intellectual', *South African Historical Journal*, vol 62, issue 4 (2010), 671-92.

⁶ 'P.J. Little, Bureau of Military History Witness Statement, 1769' (NAI).

⁷ Summary of reports by Patrick J. Little from South Africa (Copy) Cape Town, 14 April 1921 & Johannesburg, 20 April 1921 (NAI), DE 2/526).

⁸ See D.P. McCracken, 'The Irish Republican Association of South Africa', *Southern African-Irish Studies*, vol 3 (1996), 46-66.

⁹ 'J.J. Moran, Bureau of military History Witness Statement, 1492' (NAI)

¹⁰ 'Summary of reports by Patrick J. Little from South Africa (Copy) Cape Town, 14 April 1921 & Johannesburg, 20 April 1921' (NAI), DE 2/526).

¹¹ *The Republic*, 1 January 1921.

¹² *Ibid*, 20 November 1920.

¹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 16 January 1921.

¹⁶ See G. Keown, 'Irish Race Conference, Reconsidered', *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 32, no. 127 (May, 2001), 365-76.

¹⁷ See for example *Indian Opinion (Durban)*, 9 September 1921.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ Robert Brennan to Patrick J. Little (South Africa) 28 July 1921 (University College Dublin Archives, P150/1897).

THE KILDARE SCHEME AND THE TURF CAMPS

Maureen Gill-Cummins

The first real progress with regard to utilising the bogs took place in 1933 when C.S. “Todd” Andrews became an official of the Department of Industry and Commerce and established co-operative turf societies on a county basis to promote the production and harvesting of hand-cut turf, and facilitate its direct sale by the producers. In that year 33 societies were registered, followed by another 124 the following year. The societies met with varying degrees of success, but by 1940 134 which had failed to make their returns were cancelled. In 1934 the Turf Development Board (TDB) had been set up to take charge of the societies. The new company was financed by grants and worked under the general direction of the Department of Industry and Commerce. Two events however occurred in 1935 which were to have a decisive influence on future bog development policy. Turraun peat works in West Offaly, which had been established in 1924 to produce machine turf, was handed over to the TDB by its founder, Sir John Purser Griffith, for the estimated value of its fuel stocks (£6,500). At the same time a delegation was sent to the Continent to study German and Russian methods and its report recommended that the German method of machine turf production (similar to that employed at Turraun by Purser Griffith) be adopted, whilst the methods used in Russia should be kept under observation.

On the basis of these recommendations the TDB acquired two Midland bogs in 1935 – a raised bog of some 4,000 acres at Clonsast in County Offaly and a small mountain blanket bog at Lyreacrumpane, in County Kerry. These bogs were cleared and drained and provided with workshops and offices. In January 1937 the Irish Press extolled the operations of the turf development at Clonsast, predicting that eventually one hundred thousand tons of machine turf would be obtained from there by a regular workforce of 600 men. The same report noted that the government was determined to develop Irish resources until the nation would not have to depend on outside

sources for its fuel supply. The readers of the Irish Press could hardly have realised that soon this policy would become a necessity.

Labour supply, wage rates, hidden timber and sinking machines were some of the problems which were being encountered and overcome by the TDB when World War II broke out in 1939. By that time Clonsast Works had only received half of its complement of turf cutting machines from its German suppliers but nevertheless turf was produced at Clonsast, Turraun and Lyreacrumpane throughout the war years.

As well as making the purchase of machinery impossible, the war hindered the large-scale expansion of machine turf output. Imported fuels were virtually unobtainable, so the energies of the TDB were devoted to overcoming the fuels shortage by producing large quantities of hand-won turf for distribution in Dublin and eastern counties. The most concentrated effort to exploit the resources of the bogs took place during this period; thousands of acres of bog were purchased by the TDB and by 1941 around 1,000 bogs were being worked in every county in the Republic. In 1941-42 a new element was introduced in the self-sufficiency campaign, known as the "Kildare Scheme".

The scheme was set up to supply Dublin with fuel from an area covering 250 square miles situated between Enfield, Edenderry and Newbridge. One of the major problems was an inadequate labour supply in these areas so the answer lay in attracting workers from all over Ireland and offering them accommodation. Fourteen residential camps, each with a capacity for 500 workers, were built by the Office of Public Works and equipped with catering, sanitary and recreational facilities. The camps set up in North Kildare and East Offaly were located at Kilinthomas, Shean, Lullymore, Lodge, Allenwood, Corduff 1, Corduff 2, Corduff 3, Robertstown, Newbridge and Edenderry. Todd Andrews described the firm of caterers which had been hired to handle the food supply as being hopelessly inadequate and the TDB was forced to take on

the job of providing 12,000 meals daily without any knowledge of what was involved. Guidance was sought from the army but their advice was unhelpful and Andrews remarked that “the daily rations of a soldier were no more than a daisy in a bull’s mouth to men doing eight hours a day of heavy bog work”.



Cutting turf with a Sleán

After a few months of occupation the camp buildings were reduced to a condition more typical of refugee camps, due mainly to the lack of regulations and internal camp discipline. With the appointment of Bill Stapleton, a man who had experience of this type of industrial colonisation, radical improvements took place. As chief hostel supervisor and catering manager Stapleton set about organising the running of the camps on more socially acceptable lines. Rations were virtually doubled, trained cooks and kitchen staff were hired and orderlies were appointed to serve meals, make beds and clean up generally. A proper medical service was provided, with a medical orderly based at each camp, concerts were

organised together with theatre and football competitions, and each camp was provided with its own library. Fear of ecclesiastical disapproval prevented the TDB from employing female help in the camps for a number of years. However due to the type of outdoor work in the turf industry, women workers were always very much in the minority.

In the summer of 1942 agricultural and turf workers both received thirty-three shillings a week, but following a series of strikes by turf workers in 1942, Hugo Finn, the Turf Controller increased their wages in 1943 to thirty-eight shillings. As turf workers were often on piece-rates they could earn extra money and have more free time than agricultural workers, so many labourers preferred to work on the turf schemes. The work was very strenuous however, and the men earned their money by the sweat of their brow, draining the bog and hand-cutting the turf. A report in the Leinster Leader in May 1942 tells of 140 workers from Dublin arriving in Edenderry in five GSR buses on a Monday morning and they were cheered through the streets as they made their way to the camp, formerly known as the Edenderry Union. Men from Galway and Mayo were already living there. Nine of the Dublin men, after experiencing about an hour's work on the bog, gathered their belongings and started walking back to the city on Tuesday, a journey of 37 miles, and seventy-five left the following Wednesday.

Workers received free travel vouchers to come to the camps, but if they left of their own accord, or were dismissed, they had to find their own way home. The remainder of the Dublin workers, as well as the men from Galway and Mayo, gave notice of their intention to leave at the end of the week unless conditions improved. The sample day's ration, which was displayed in the Oireachtas restaurant that Wednesday was as follows:

Breakfast: two rashers, one egg, two large potatoes, six slices of bread and butter

Lunch: Slice of beef, one egg, six slices of bread and butter

Dinner: a chop, vegetables, and eight potatoes

Reporting on the Dublin men still in the camp, the TDB engineer said that he thought the majority of them were willing workers but very unfamiliar with bog work and that it would be some weeks before anything like an economic output could be expected from them.

At Newbridge the military barracks, which for over a century had housed the cavalry and artillery units of the British Army, was leased by the Board of Works to the TDB for use as a workers' camp. Newbridge housed and fed about 600 men who were transported to and from their work at Ballyteague, Allen, Clongorey or other neighbouring bogs by lorry each day. The accounts staff which was needed to deal with the large workforce, not only in Newbridge but in the other Kildare camps was housed at the barracks and dances and parties were occasionally held in what were the old artillery dining halls. All the bog tools such as the shovels, sleáns, and rubber boots were stored in the old barracks prison and sports competitions were held each year on what was formerly the barrack parade ground. By 1948 both the workers and office staff at Newbridge were transferred to new works hostels which had been built at several of the local bogs and the main barrack blocks were demolished in two stages during 1948-49 and later in 1975.

Not all the camps were located in existing buildings, some were purpose-built such as the one at Corduff South in County Kildare (later called Timahoe South), built in 1942. It comprised twelve billets; six on either side of a field which was used as a playing pitch. The camp contained a cookhouse, dining hall, recreation hall, kitchen and orderly staff billets, a camp office, a superintendent's quarters and a small mess room. There was also a shower room and a drying room which consisted of a billet with a couple of large stoves and shelving where the men could dry their clothes. In each billet there were 24 beds with army-type trestles and bed boards, a mattress, four blankets and a pillow. There was a stove in the centre of each billet, principally for heating, but it could also be used for

making a can of tea or frying a pan of sausages and rashers. These snacks were necessary as there was a strict rationing system maintained in the camps because of the emergency regulations.

The TDB magazine *An Sleán*, provides an insight into life at the camps and the interaction between the various camps and the local towns. Tug-o-War and inter-camp races were prevalent as were football and hurling matches with local teams. An annual turf cutting competition was held between the camps and this was a big occasion since great rivalry existed between the different camps and winning this title was held in great esteem.



Collecting sod turf on Bord na Mona's railway

Improvements in general conditions , like replacing the old bed boards with spring mattresses, refurbishing the recreation halls, and the provision of a mobile cinema, were described in the magazine in glowing detail. Accounts were also given of the other forms of recreation available in the camps. These include, for example, the Radio Éireann Question Time Competition which was broadcast from the Odeon cinema in Newbridge in

1944. Two teams of six people – representing Newbridge and the TDB, took part; the eventual winner was one of the Newbridge contestants. Irish classes were organised in the camps where it was decided that simple everyday phrases should be taught and that grammar should be introduced gradually. Sufficient textbooks were purchased to enable the distribution of one book between two men.

Interaction between the camp residents and the local communities was quite developed. In December 1945 the *Leinster Leader* carried a report of how the Rathangan dramatic society staged their play, ‘Paid in His Own Coin’ to a capacity audience at Allenwood turf camp, and in June 1946 the TDB Players were the winners at the Droichead Nua Drama Festival with their presentation of ‘the Down Express’ and they later brought their play on a successful tour of the camps. Dances were often held in the camps: *An Sleán* carries an account of a dance held in Corduff Camp where: *the fair sex was very well represented – some coming from as far away as Sallins, Clane and Naas*. Many of the workers frequented the local bars at weekends and during periods of bad weather. A story appeared on the *Leinster Leader* about two Kerry men who had consumed a quantity of drink and on their return to the Robertstown camp for their evening meal objected to the food and caused a minor riot. Potatoes were thrown about, furniture upset, windows were broken, the tables went up into the air and the Gardai were called in to restore order.

The Kildare Wartime Emergency Scheme ended in 1947 and despite initial labour and organisational problems it worked well. Between 1942 and 1947 over a half million tons of hand-won turf were delivered to Dublin. This turf was transported partly by canal, partly by train and partly by army lorries and stored in what used to be called the ‘Long Straight’ (from the Grand Prix racing days) in the Phoenix Park. The Long Straight then became known as “the new bog road”.

A LETTER FROM MISSOURI

John Noonan

In January 1963, prompted by the news of the death of ‘Hussey’ Cribben, the Reverend James Stanley a native of Blacktrench near Caragh, County Kildare and brother of Larry Stanley the captain of Kildare’s 1919 All Ireland winning team wrote the following letter to Bill Merriman one of the few survivors of the great Kildare and Clane teams of the beginning of the 20th Century.



St Anthony of Padua Parish

Folk' Missouri

18th January 1963

Mr. W. Merriman

Of the 'All White Immortals' 1905

Dear Bill,

In a recent letter Larry tells me that another of the 'Immortal 17' "Hussey Cribben" has been called home to God. That leaves only yourself and Matty Donnolly as the only survivors in Ireland, as Steel is the only one of that incomparable team alive this side of the water.

Before it is too late I must send you a few lines that will be my testimony regarding yourself and the other sixteen men who made history, and established the game of Gaelic football in the first decade of this century. I was ten years old when this century dawned and I consider myself well qualified to testify to the excellence of the men who standardized the Kildare style of football in the early 1900s. I remember well hearing my father tell of the astounding feats of the famed Clane team. I listened open-mouthed to the recital of what Clane men did on the football field every day – turf men from the Bog of Allen. Clane must be the greatest spot in Ireland to have so many famous men – years later when I saw Clane village I wondered that such a small place should raise so many great men.

The first time I saw Clane play was in a tournament match in Moorefield against Roseberry. You played on the right wing either at Midfield or half forward; you were tremendous. You catapulted yourself towards the sky, came down with the ball and drove it 60 yards or more goal-wards. I recall Dick O'Brien's rallying cry "In along the floor!" He wasn't much of a player but he was a great skipper – Jack Dunne caught the eye with his fabulous speed, his sure fielding, and his bullet like shots at goal. Jack Murray on the home team was spectacular. Time and time again he defended his lines; sent towering kicks to midfield, but no individual can stave off defeat with his lone efforts. Clane won by 1 goal 3 points to 4 points – the same number of scores but Clane's were more valuable. It was always Clane's strategy to score at least one goal in every match, and always in the first half. It gave Clane the advantage and put their opponents in the hole.

Ever since I saw Clane play for the first time I was impressed by their positional play. Every man knew what to do and did it. There was no wasted effort. It was 30 years later that I found out the reason for this perfection of the Clane team. 'Steel' told me in New York that a Soccer trainer in Clongowes Wood College schooled you in combination play. And history shows how well the Clane men learned their lesson. The same style was adopted as the Kildare hallmark and hundreds of thousands of spectators thrilled at the

cohesion, understanding, skill and stamina of the 'All Whites' on the football field.

In those times when Clane ruled the Gaelic world in Kildare people wondered if they would ever be beaten. Maynooth, Monasterevan, Kilmoney – all tried and failed. Then Newbridge tried its hand with two teams – Roseberry and Moorefield. There must be a tremendous crop of athletes around if you can get seventeen top notch players. Even Clane had some passengers on their team. Roseberry had about ten good men but that is not enough on a team of seventeen. Moorefield had half a dozen good players. There were just not enough players for two teams, so after a few years Moorefield disbanded and Scott, Mick Kennedy, three Fitzgeralds, Jim Farrell, 'Stim' Kelly and others joined Roseberry. Even then that team was not good enough to dislodge Clane from the top spot in Kildare, till Joe Raferty changed his allegiance, left Clane and joined Roseberry. The margin of victory was only one point!

In the first years of this century Kildare competed in the Leinster Championship. But they never got far in that competition because the method of selecting the team was haphazard. Sometimes not enough men would travel, and they would have to draft men from the side line. When the County Champions began to select the County Team things began to happen. And the GAA world knew about it. Dublin was supreme in Leinster. Any team that could beat Dublin would be Leinster Champions.

The competitions then were two years behind schedule. So the 1903 championship was played in 1905. I saw one match in the Leinster championship in that year – the one versus Queens County in Maryboro. The Petticoat County representatives were all big men. In comparison the Kildare team looked like school kids. But when the match began, the Queens County men must have thought they were caught in a blizzard in the Arctic Circle. They saw football played in a way they had never seen it before in their life. The next match I saw was the All Ireland Final in Tipperary. Kildare that day were masters of Kerry, leading all the way, until a few minutes before time, a Kerry blackguard grabbed the green flag and

waved it to show that Kerry had scored a goal. The ball at that time was at midfield. I met a Tipperary man in New York in 1932 named Phil Butler who was present at that match. He said, what I already knew, that the ball was not within ten yards of the goal when Jack Fitzgerald kicked it up the field. The referee, Pat McGrath of Tipperary, should have consulted with the umpire to know who had raised the flag; and when he found that no official but a spectator had done so he should have started the match again and finished it. But no, like the dishonest man he was he saw the chance of another big gate, so he pretended the match could not be finished that day. True to form the Kerry men do the same today. Win by fair means or foul but win anyway. Two years later the 'All Whites' asserted and proved their superiority by literally kicking Kerry out of the Sportsfield Thurles, County Tipperary. For six years afterwards Kerry sweated blood every time they faced the 'All White' team.

The greatest disaster that happened to the G.A.A. was the dismantling of the 'All White' machine by the emigration of "Steel" Losty, Jack Connolly, Mick Murray and Jack Gorman. "Thigheen Roe" himself lamented the loss, and said that it was as bad for Ireland as the Flight of the Earls. It might have been possible to replace one of these star performers, but it was absolutely impossible to replace all four. If they had stayed at home Kildare had a team that was good enough to win six All Ireland championships. At that time there were juniors coming along that in time would fill the places of those that were getting on in years. In Caragh, Allen, Naas there were players who were promising material for senior ranks in the course of time. There were three Spooners, Caragh, Ned Grogan, Tom and Mick Milligan in Allen that were inter county class. So were Peter Daly, Tom Donnolly and my Brother Pat – a better all round player than Larry ever was. If he had not emigrated he would surely have made the Senior Team. In Naas there was Kit Donohue who was a stone wall full back here in New York. Pete Conlon and Joyce Byrne who came out here would have been on the 'All Whites' at home for years.

How did the exiles perform out here? When you want to find out how good a player is you ask another player who

played with him. 'Steel' Losty told me that he never saw as good a place-kicker than Mick Murray. Anywhere from midfield Murray could score any free. Big Frank Conlon, the Kildare goalkeeper in New York, told me that in one match Mick Murray fielded Frank's kick-out six times and scored each time. I do not know if anyone ever did that before or since on a Gaelic football pitch. Murray often told me that you would have to see 'Steel' on a field to believe that anyone could do what he did with a football. He said it took three men to mark 'Steel'. He saw him completely surrounded by opponents and he got away with the ball at his feet. I saw 'Steel's' shins, they were black and blue from the kicks he got on the football field. What a murderous thing it was to coax such men to the U.S.A., on the plea that they would be paid for playing Gaelic football. Mick Murray told me often that all he ever got for playing Gaelic football in New York were hard knocks. He told me how lonesome he was for years. But he did not like to leave his friends here and return. 'Steel' and Mick were very close friends. They worked on the same job nearly all their life and it is hard to break a bond like that. Poor Mick took his brother John's death very much to heart. He could never speak of anything else for over 25 years, from the time John died until his own death in 1960. There was a law suit pending when John was killed by a truck and then the case lapsed, he got no damages because he wasn't there to plead his case. 'Steel' is the same as ever. But his wife is dead, and his son is married. Years bring loneliness on us all. Friends die and we are left alone. That is what makes life hard in a foreign land.

You are the last living member of a great team – a team that I consider the greatest that ever played Gaelic football. And I make that claim not because they were all Kildare men – though I am particularly proud that they were but because I have seen or read about the best teams that have played Gaelic football, and no other combination had the all round excellence, the athletic prowess, and the incomparable sportsmanship of the 'Immortal 17' who captured the All Ireland honours in 1907 for the championship of 1905 in the Sportsfield at Thurles. For 50 years I have looked for a team to replace the 'All Whites' of 1905-'07, and I have not seen a

single player who could fill the place of any individual of the team that brought fame to the 'All White' colors in that year of glory. Merry, you and your fellow team members may die happy in the thought that as far as man can see there will never be a team like the men who carried Lord Edwards's Lily White colors to immortal glory in 1907.

Before I conclude this letter I will tell you what happened in New York in 1926, when the Kerry team was playing a New York selection. At that time Dick Fitzgerald, the captain of the old Kerry team, asked 'Steel' Losty: "Billy how does the Kerry team on the field compare with the team of 1907"? 'Steel' looked him in the eye and said pointing to the men on the field "These fellows out there aren't footballers, they cannot pass, kick or run. If I had the two Murrays, Scott, Merriman and myself we would beat the pick of both teams on the field." Dick said: "You are right Billy. The present team isn't fit to carry the togs of the old timers." 'Steel' told me that story the first time I met him in 1928, just two years after it happened.

Some years ago Joe Stynes visited Ireland and on his return I asked him how things were in the G.A.A. over there. Joe said "They have improved everything except the players". That is what I suspected. I couldn't imagine any players however good piling up modern scores against the defenders of 50 years ago. In the greatest match ever played, the Railway Cup of 1907 the score was: Leinster 3 points, Munster 1 point. There was no foul committed in the whole hour. Leinster scored two 50s which Jim Scott converted. Joyce scored the other point from play. Such a game was never seen.

In the last All Ireland final there were 39 fouls committed. Why Bartle Smullen's 'Knock-im Stiffs' (that was the name he gave the old Caragh team in 1903) would not have committed as many fouls as that. What a spectacle for gods and men! The best teams of today play like street rag-a-muffins in a back alley. And the reporters of these matches are to blame. Instead of giving such blackguardly conduct the criticism it deserves they slur over it as if it was not a blot on the national character. They seem to follow a lot of bad American ways in the papers over there. The writers deliberately arouse

enthusiasm and interest in matches the result of which is a foregone conclusion. The policy is to get the people out to spend money they would enjoy much better listening to Michael O'Hehir.

Another very foolish All-American piece of bunk is selecting the player of the year. The next thing will be prizes for the M.V.P (most valued player in a match) such as the current idol Mick O'Connell. Because he scores a few frees and Kerry win an All Ireland the scribes go overboard and proclaim him the greatest thing in football since Adam. How foolish can we get? If America wants such nonsense let us not think Gaelic football wants such a shot in the arm to survive. Recently in the Sunday Press the sports writer was in favour of selecting the all time, all star team. Who were these selectors? A few moderns who never saw really great men play. How can anyone judge the merits of a player who has not seen all men play, so that such a proposition is sheer folly, and these 'selectors' would not have seen games more than thirty years ago.

However since on the subject I will indulge in a little 'star selection' of a Kildare team of Juniors in 1907/08 who would knock the daylight out of any of the Senior teams of the past forty years and drawn from two teams Caragh and Allen:- Mick Casey(C) goal, Jack Murphy(C), Paddy Mullhall(A), Mick Treacy(C), Peter Daly(C), Tom Donnelly(C), Tom Gilligan(A), Pat Stanley(C), Charlie Spooner(A), Tom Spooner(A), Ned Grogan(A), Sam Spooner(A), Jimmy Treacy(C), Paddy Regan(A), Billy Mulhall(A).

*I hope you enjoy reading this letter
Sincerely and Affectionately
(Rev) James Stanley S.M.A.*

Fr. James wrote again in September of that year expressing his delight at Clane's first victory in the County Final for 43 years!



WOLFE TONE – FAMILY MAN

Larry Breen

Introduction

Most if not all of us are familiar with the name Theobald Wolfe Tone, who he was and the contribution he made in the course of Irish history. Described by Pearse as the “greatest of all republicans” it is easy to become immersed in his political and military career and forget about the man himself. This is a brief look at the man and his family.

Tone Family History

The Tone family were French Huguenots from Gascony who fled their homeland as a result of religious persecution. They moved to England in the latter part of the 16th Century. A branch of this family moved to Ireland (Dublin) in the early 17th Century (1600s). By the mid 18th Century, Wolfe Tone’s grandfather, William, held a leasehold in the Bodinstown area and lived in Blackhall near Clane. The Wolfe family were the largest landowners in the area and were in fact freeholders of the section of land leased to the Tone family. Wolfe Tone’s father Peter Tone was the eldest son.

Peter, Margaret Tone & Family

Peter Tone married Margaret Lamport in 1762. Margaret worked at the Wolfe household in the capacity as personal companion to Mrs Wolfe. She was the daughter of a sea captain who hailed from Drogheda. After they married they moved to Dublin originally living at number 27, Bride Street, before moving to Stafford Street (Wolfe Tone Street). They had six children, namely, Theobald, William, Matthew, Mary, Arthur and Fanny. Fanny died very young and there is little that can be said about her. Theobald is the subject of this article. William born in 1764 saw service with the East India Company in St Helena, later in India and was killed fighting in the Mahratha War in 1802. Matthew born in 1771 after seeking his fortune in America and the West Indies joined the French Army. He landed with Humbert in 1798, was captured, court martialled and hanged at Arbour Hill in the same year.

Mary born in 1774 was a very spirited girl and accompanied the family to America in 1795. On the return journey to France she met a Swiss Merchant named Giaque, fell in love and married him in Hamburg. They later went to San Domingo where both died of yellow fever. Arthur born in 1782 sailed for the East Indies at the tender age of eighteen as an officer in the Dutch Navy and was never heard of again.



St Mary's Church, Mary Street, Dublin where Theobald Wolfe Tone was baptised. His godfather was Theobald Wolfe of Blackhall, Clane.

Wolfe Tone's Courtship/Marriage

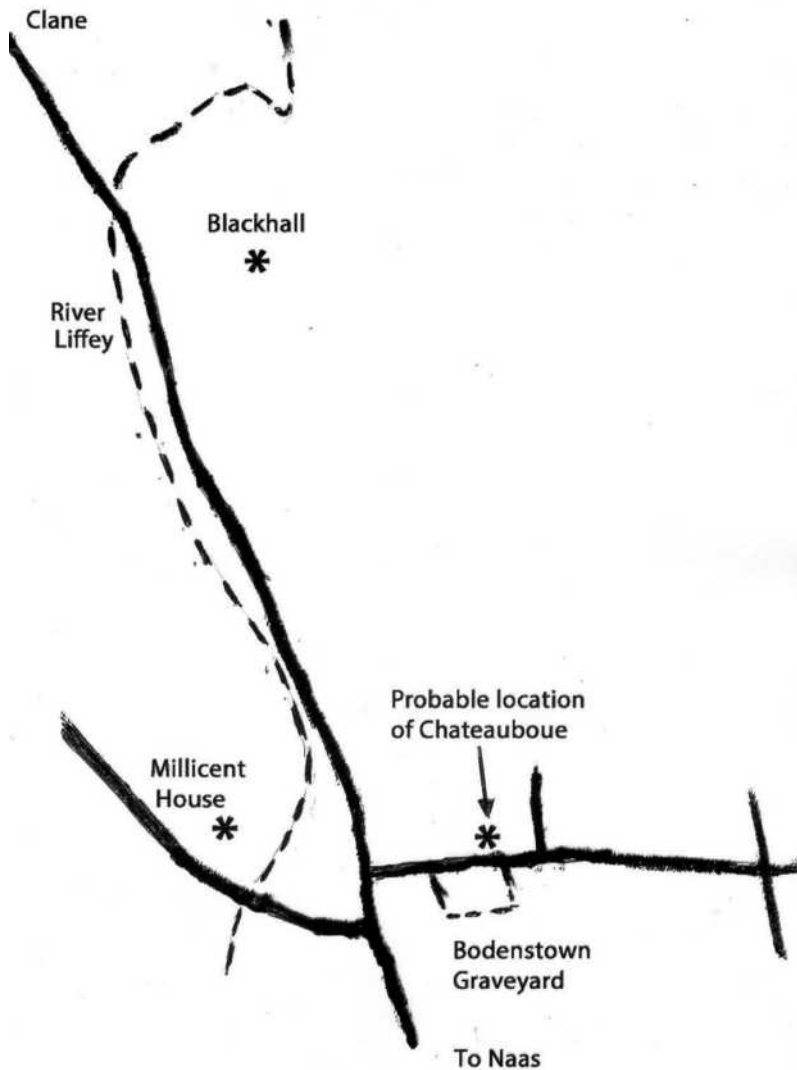
Just before we look at Tone's courtship and marriage to Matilda it is interesting to note that he did have one other relationship with the fairer sex. This relationship with the wife of Richard Martin M.P lasted two years but came to nothing. It was in 1785 when Tone was 22 years old that a remarkable woman entered his life in the person of Martha Witherington (Matty). It is an old cliché but their relationship was love at first sight. The courtship makes very interesting reading. The Witheringtons lived above their premises, a wine shop in Grafton Street. Martha would sit sewing at the sitting room

window above the shop and as it were watch the world go by. She would gaze at the carriages, the sedan cars, the gentlemen on horseback and the humble pedestrians. She was constantly chastised by her mother and grandfather for this apparent lack of modesty. Her reply was, “sure no one ever notices me up here”. But one spring evening someone did notice her. Her fate walked up Grafton Street in a college gown and glancing up at the window of number 69 saw a girl’s face looking down. It was a lovely face he saw, with arched brows and a sweet sensitive mouth, brown waves of hair above a smooth forehead and a look of serious sympathy for everything under her eyes. “That”, he said, “is the loveliest face I have ever seen.” Tone managed to gain entry to the Witherington house through an acquaintance with her brother Edward. After a short courtship they decided to get married. Martha was 16 and Tone was 22. Martha was very impressed with Tone’s love of the theatre, his interest in music and literature but also the fact that unlike many men of his time he frequently asked for and valued her opinion. This she felt set him apart and he seemed to draw light and wisdom from her views. The engagement was secret and they were married on 21st July 1785 in St Anne’s Church in Dawson Street by the curate Edward Ryan. They then went by chaise to lodgings for a honeymoon in Maynooth. This they felt would let the Witheringtons get over the shock. The week together only strengthened their bond and it is said that their love had grown twice in stature since the wedding day. It was at this stage that Tone asked Martha (Matty) if she would consent to change her name to Matilda. This she gladly did and when asked what the name meant, Tone, replied “Mighty battle-heroine”. It is obvious that Tone and Matilda had a very special love/relationship with each other, which never faded. There was a making up with the Witheringtons but unfortunately it did not last too long due to the intervention of Matilda’s brother Edward. Because of this they had to leave Dublin and came back to the parents’ house in Blackhall in 1786. Matilda was well received by the Tones and immediately formed a close friendship with Tone’s sister Mary (Molly) which was to be an enduring friendship. Then their first child, Maria, was born and it exemplified the love and affection that

Tone was to show towards his children. Quote: “He showed no awkwardness or fear of the child and was always finding new charms in it.” Tone’s mother Margaret remarked, “I never dreamed he could be such a father”. The two years that Tone spent studying law in London were difficult for Matilda who was at home with the baby Maria. Having been shunned by her own family at this stage it was the love and affection shown by Peter and Margaret Tone that helped sustain her. Tone returned from London, there had been a reconciliation with the Witheringtons so Tone and the family moved back to Dublin. It was with great sadness that Matilda was leaving Clane as she had really grown to like the Tone family and all the neighbours she had met who had shown her so much hospitality and kindness. She talked about the Griffith family of Millicent, the humble Ennis family whose son had been Wolfe Tone’s playmate at the big house and many others. Matilda was heard to say, “no one but you takes any notice of the papists, but the poor papists are really the Irish people. I learned that from my living at Blackhall and knowing them there.”

Family & Family Life – Chateauboue

Tone and Matilda had four children, namely, Maria (baby), William and Francis (Frank). Richard died in infancy. Tone’s uncle Jonathan who had previously acquired the family lands at the expense of Peter died and left Tone his country cottage opposite Castlesize near Bodinstown. The time they spent together at the cottage in Clane as a family was a happy one. It was now 1793 and that year Matilda had another son, Francis and they moved from Dublin to the cottage in Clane. Tone christened the cottage “Chateauboue” meaning Mud House. It was described as a dear little house, one end fronting the road just before the turn to Sherlockstown, a grove of trees at the back and the garden at one side. They furnished it simply, the only luxuries being masses of books, Matilda’s harp and Tone’s flute. They were both accomplished musicians and sister Mary was a good singer. The children referred to Tone affectionately as “Fadoff”. Maria was called Baby. These were happy days for the family at Chateauboue. Scarcely an evening



The probable location of Chateauboué; a house was recorded on the site indicated on the 1837 Ordnance Survey map but it no longer exists

passed at the cottage that music of harp, flute and voice was not heard from its windows – Irish airs and Italian and French music as well. Sometimes a quiet group would gather on the road to listen. Tone very much played his part as an attentive and caring father whilst they were at Chateauboué. One of his favourites was to play horses with Willie.

However the political situation had worsened and Tone was forced to look for exile in America. They travelled as a family to America, then to France where Tone continued to pursue his political and military activities.

Children

Richard died in infancy so there is not much to say. Maria (Baby) died in 1802 with tuberculosis at the age of sixteen when the family were in France. Francis (Frank) the youngest died in 1805 again with consumption and with the family in France. William was the only one of the children to survive beyond his teens. Educated at the prestigious Imperial French Military Academy he was commissioned a Lieutenant in the 8th Chasseurs in the Grand Army. Shortly after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo he surrendered with the rest of the defeated French Army. When he went to America with his mother he was commissioned an officer in the American army, served in the War Department where he wrote treatises on cavalry and artillery tactics. In 1826 he and Matilda published a biography of Wolfe Tone to ensure that Tone's memory and the ideals he lived and died for lived on. William married Catherine Sampson and they had one daughter, Grace Georgiana Tone. He died in America in 1828.

Tone/Matilda

Some people maintain that Tone was selfish in the pursuit of his ideals and beliefs to the detriment of his wife and family. There may be some merit in that belief but he was the man that he was and it is important to understand that Matilda never criticised, interfered or resented his involvement with politics. She accepted this as their destiny and her support and love for Tone never wavered. There are many accounts of expressions of love and fondness between them but this one on their final parting is powerful. Tone said, "most likely my life is gone my love but executed I will not be. If I do not die fighting, I'll take my own way out. But I'm leaving the hard work to you; to live for the children and fight the world for them, - and if it were turned about and you should die, I could not do it. I could not

live after you. But you are worth fifty of me, Matty. We belong together, no death can ever separate us forever”.

Matilda/Aftermath

Matilda Tone by any standards comes over as a remarkable and extraordinary person. She was a very loving, understanding and compassionate person. A woman of remarkably strong character when you consider the many trials, tribulations and great heartaches she experienced in her life and all of which she endured. The ever changing antipathy of her own family, the times she had to endure with the children alone both at home and abroad in foreign lands, the constant worry for the safety of Tone, the eventual loss of her husband and the children one by one. She did marry again, to a Scots man, Thomas Wilson who hailed from Dullatur in Dunbarton, Scotland. He was a family friend, confidant of Tone and proved to be a great support to Matilda after Tone's death. During her time in Paris, Matilda had rubbed shoulders with the elite in the French government including Napoleon and many of his ministers.

Final Chapter

Matilda, Wilson and William left France in 1817 to travel to America for a new life and settled in New York. They first lived at 21, Hudson Street, in New York City. William then took up employment in Washington and Matilda and Wilson joined him there. Unfortunately another blow for Matilda came when Wilson died suddenly in 1824. William married Catherine Sampson who was the only surviving child of Belfast United Irishman William Sampson and who had a law business in the city. William and Catherine moved in to the Tone household in Georgetown. It was during this period that Wolfe Tone's revolutionary memories were prepared and published by William and Matilda. William died in 1828 and once again Matilda was left alone. She lived on in Georgetown until she died in 1849. She was originally buried in the Old Presbyterian Cemetery in Georgetown, then a suburb of Washington DC. When the cemetery was sold in 1891, Matilda's great grandchildren had her remains transferred to

the Maxwell family plot in Green Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. William's only child and Matilda's only grandchild, Grace Georgina Tone had married Lascelles E Maxwell. The white marble monument that marked the grave in Georgetown was re-erected in Green Wood Cemetery.



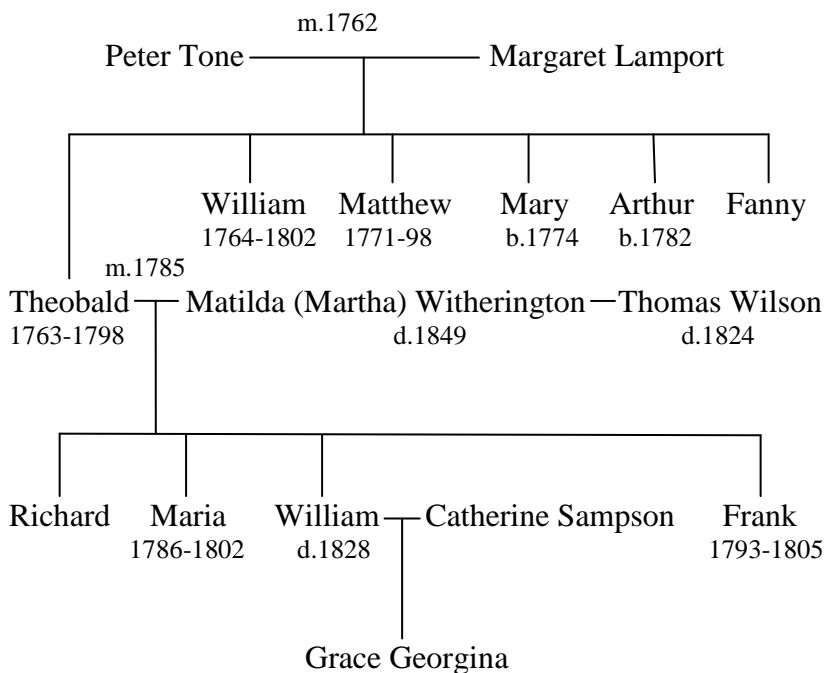
Matilda's Headstone at Green Wood Cemetery Brooklyn

To celebrate the legacy of 1798 the New York Irish History Roundtable and Irish American Labor Coalition restored the monument. This was done in the summer of 1996 by Sean Webster, a fine arts sculptor and painter who restored the monument and added a new inscription:

In memory of Matilda, widow by her second husband, Thomas Wilson, born 1769, died March 18th 1849, revered and loved as the heroic wife of Theobald Wolfe.

It was unveiled by Ireland's President, Mary Robinson on October 8th 1996.

Partial Tone Family Tree



PAT LYNCH REMEMBERS

Pat Lynch

It was the 30th June 1965 a ‘short’ 50 years ago that I first rounded Manzor’s Corner on my way to Timahoe where I would work as a teacher. Clane village was very rural in appearance. A small thatched-roofed shop occupied the site where Londis now stands. Dunne’s and McEvoy’s, both on the left, have long since closed their doors to the public. A few cows, owned by Fr. John Doyle P.P., sauntered down the Prosperous Road, took a left turn at the Corner House and veered right to the rear of the old Presbytery. Later I would witness Cash’s and O’Neill’s horses in droves passing by, no heavy traffic to hinder them. A handball alley occupied the site of Tom Gough’s butcher’s shop, the Garda barracks close by, presently a jeweller’s shop.

On the 6th of May 1966 I was appointed Principal at the old Boys’ School on the Dublin Road, presently the property of KARE. The school, named after St. Sencell, an abbot of Clane’s early monastery at the Naas end of the village, had served the families of Clane since 1839, a period of 127 years. Like all old rural schools the conditions belonged to that era.



The old Boys’ School on the Dublin Road, now occupied by KARE

Heating was minimal. Turf stoves ignited at 8.30 am had often refused to function by 9.00 am. A further stoking might result in a little heat by 11.00 am. Insulation belonged to the future. Outside the green grass areas that surrounded the building would change to a mucky black hue before Christmastide. The white surface of the floor in the room adjacent to the main entrance felt the effects. On the day after an election, the room being used for polling purposes, a boy stood up in the class and exclaimed 'this floor is a disgrace'. How right he was! Those were the days before caretakers, secretaries, Boards of Management. There were no tarmacadam surfaces. Some local families passed by on their way to other primary schools in Naas and Prosperous. A blocked sewer, a broken window pane, the widening of a footpath, concrete mixed by hand, could test the skill of a teacher.

Electrification had reached rural Ireland the previous decade, a time when most Irish males would not wheel a pram, change a nappy or iron a shirt. This was about to change, a new breed of fathers emerging. There were four telephones in Clane. The Post Office was 'Clane 1' and the Garda barracks was 'Clane 2'. Fridges had just arrived in homes. In a classroom of 35 pupils one family owned a television. Take-home pay for a single teacher amounted to £11 per week. When a male teacher married, his wages increased. Full board, consisting of bed, breakfast, lunch and dinner cost £4 per week. A new Morris Minor car cost £460.

At lunchtime, on my first day in Clane, a boy re-entered the classroom. "Sir can we play football" he said. "Of course" I replied. He jumped far above eye level and roared. A louder cheer arose from his peers waiting at the door. The reason for the rule prohibiting football soon became evident. Four cows, with great round horns, grazed contentedly in the half-acre at the rear of the school, site of the present tennis club. It did not seem appropriate that those cows should usurp the place that should echo to the sound of children at play. The cows had to go. They did. Goalposts were erected. Leagues would be organised for classes from 2nd to 6th. Leagues were new. An

announcement, later that year, that we would have a sports day on Friday was greeted with the response “what are sports?”. The days before TV! The bounce of a football made teaching and learning so much easier, boys willing to learn. The approach roads to Clane would witness children walking to school, football boots tied together by the laces, swinging over shoulders, a boot at the front, the other at the boy’s back, little togs packed into one, a pair of socks in the other, no carrier bags as yet. A Primary Certificate Exam in which children were examined in Irish, English, Written and Mental Arithmetic was finally abandoned in 1967.

Clane had three organisations viz a table tennis club, the ICA and the then G.F.C., Gaelic Football Club catering for the social needs of the people, all of whom were natives – a friendly people. Everybody knew everybody else, saluting all, no downcast eyes such as one experiences in larger communities. Clane had three teams – senior, junior and minor football. Schools in the county organised Under 14 Football. There was no hurling. Ladies played camogie. The 40 plus teams of today would emerge over time. Clane boys won the under 14 Football Parish Tournament in 1966 and the under 14 County Football Competition in 1967.

In the 1960s Pa Connolly was the local hero – referred to simply as ‘Pa’. His mighty deeds on the playing fields of Kildare and Ireland would earn him such titles as ‘a giant of a man’ and ‘like a wall across the field’. His 75 yard kicks, his high fielding skills, his encouragement of others ‘a joy to behold’. People spoke of Clane’s long football famine – 47 years without a Senior Football Championship since 1916. In 1963, club officials, displaying a rare sense of vision, took the players to London for a weekend, a bonding experience. Was it the first of its kind for a club in Ireland? We heard that on the return journey, in the boat, Chairman Joe and Captain Pa entered into an agreement. ‘We will do everything in our power to win the Senior Championship this year, 1963’.



Pa receiving the Cup from Bill Merriman who played on the 1916 team

Natives will recall how bonfires blazed in Clane on the evening of that County Final. The feat has been repeated eight times since then! On the evening of the 1963 final win a supporter commented to Mrs. Kitty Connolly 'it's a pity you hadn't a few more like them' (Pa had three other sturdy brothers on the team). 'Do you want to eat me out of house and home?' she replied. When teams of the past 50 years or Teams of the Century were being announced Pa's name was not recorded, a fate experienced by thousands of other great players who graced the playing fields of Ireland. Some would suggest that such undertakings are an exercise in futility, though often a source of much discussion, often heated.

Soon the football club would sell their 4¹/₂ acre pitch in Blackhall. The guide price was £2,500; it sold at auction for £6,200 to the delight of all. Retired local sergeant, Peter Marron drew the attention of the club to a tract of land convenient to Clane village. A new premises and pitches would be developed on the Prosperous Road. The area was quite wet, marshy in places; £6,200 would "scratch the surface". Serious

fund raising would be undertaken by the willing local community. Those who lived through that period will never forget the work that was invested in Conneff Park. The club ran carnivals from 1968 to the late 1970s. Joe Bracken, who would be chairman for 25 years, and Seán Cribbin, secretary, leading from the front, as they had done since their playing days from the early 1940s. A large committee of serious people joined in to help. A ladies committee, the first in the G.A.A. was formed in 1968. Those ladies made a mammoth contribution.

In a marquee, in excess of 1,000 patrons danced the night away until 2 am, three nights per week, to the music of top show bands. The local men acted as security, the ladies serving tea, sandwiches and minerals. Carnivals lasted for five weeks each summer. Fund raising was an immense undertaking, the manual labour, the draining and piping of the grounds, the drawing in of thousands of tons of soil, the late nights, the Field Days, the Pony Races, the Donkey Derbies, where Ottomy Estate now stands, the ploughing, the harrowing, the picking of tons of stones off the surface of the new pitches, the building of dressing rooms and the pavilion. On a Saturday morning in 1975, Pa Connolly's lorry arrived with five loads of gravel. The concrete for the floor of the hall was mixed by 20 volunteers that morning to install a floor 60 feet long, 60 feet wide and 6 inches deep. The ladies provided a large pot of stew. One can never forget the work of the twenty-strong Ladies' Committee during those years. They collected so many one shilling and two shilling pieces. Conneff Park was truly a community effort.

Back at the old Boys' School on the Dublin Road, three classrooms became ten, seven prefabs added and eventually a mobile home to provide accommodation. The only housing estate in the mid 1960s was St Brigid's Terrace with its twelve houses. As prefabs were built at the school play space for children became less, resulting in more injuries, more trips to Dr. Rynne and Dr. Flanagan.

On 16th June 1982 I locked the doors at the old school. The staff of eleven teachers marched 360 boys through the village where we were met by the same number of girls as we headed for the ‘palaces’ that would be Scoil Phádraig and Scoil Bhríde. It is important to record that the sites for those schools had been sourced by the Presentation Sisters, who, led by Sr. Perpetua and Sr. Lucy, purchased a whole farm on the Prosperous Road. The parish community purchased the sites for the primary schools from the nuns at a reasonable price. Men and women went from door to door for ten years collecting envelopes and weekly contributions to pay the building costs. The local contribution was £140,000. Many families brought their envelopes to Mass on Sundays.



Pat locking the door of the old school for the final time

In the mid 1960s a mere 3,500 students throughout Ireland sat their Leaving Certificate. Today that number has swelled to 60,000. In the mid 1960s many children were waiting to reach the age of 14 to leave school. The Presentation Sisters brought post primary education to Clane. At present rumour has it that the 'palace' that was Scoil Phádraig is to be levelled to the ground, not fit for purpose, a new and bigger version to replace it. Guess who will not be present when it comes tumbling down. Scoil Phádraig you served many so well, if your walls could only speak what a litany of happy memories you would recall for so many boys who enjoyed your playing fields, your interior. The school pitches were developed in 1982 at a cost of £4,000 collected via an auction in the yard of the old Boys' School; parents were so generous. One parent donated a calf, another a sheep, 150 bales of hay and seven hens.

“Do you remember that goal I scored so many years ago?” said the man once a boy. “You said it was the best goal you ever saw when you entered the dressing room that day, which foot did I use?” he said. “You were a left footed player it must have been your left” I replied. “No” he said “I scored it with my right!” What a goal! What a memory!

What a difference fifty years makes. A wise one once said “the only thing that never changes is change itself”. During my 35 years as Principal, finishing at Scoil Phádraig in the year 2000, I had the privilege of meeting almost two thousand boys, see them grow and develop, great times, great parents, great memories.



CLANE'S ROLE IN PRESERVING WOLFE TONE'S GRAVE

Pat Given

Wolfe Tone never rejected his strong Kildare connections. This is in spite of the fact that he was born in Dublin and lived for very substantial periods of his life in that city. His home in Bodenstown county Kildare, the subject of another contribution in this journal was 'the only permanent home which he had after beginning his career.'¹ From his diaries, it is evident that Tone enjoyed his time in Bodenstown while Matilda found tranquillity and freedom there.² The 1798 Rebellion, which occurred three years after Tone had sold his home to Matthew Donnellan of Clane in 1795 did not cause any change to Tone's identification with his native county.³ Tone played no active part in the rebellion since he was in France seeking military aid at the time. None the less, the pivotal rebellious actions played out in the very locations where he had once lived and his earlier and sometimes close familiarity with some of the personalities who were involved in both sides of the event, provided him with opportunities to declare his continuing allegiance to the county.

The 1798 Rebellion is generally considered to have commenced in the early morning of Thursday 24th May when the newly billeted City of Cork Militia were attacked and burned out of their barracks at Prosperous. With their leader Captain Swayne they had arrived in Prosperous the previous Sunday but after that early-morning rebel attack on the following Thursday, approximately forty militia, including Swayne lay dead. As the summer sun rose that Thursday morning it slowly illuminated scenes of widespread rebellion in numerous towns and villages in Kildare and Wicklow.

In near-by Clane, for instance a particularly bloody action had taken place earlier that morning. The skirmish is notable both for the rebel casualties which had occurred on the occasion and also for the circumstances surrounding the participation of two

major local landowners. Chambers tells us that both were members of a group involved in county Kildare politics until about 1797 and whose members were of unusually liberal views.⁴ Richard Griffith of Millicent commanded the local Clane yeoman cavalry and was responsible for suppressing the Clane rebellious outbreak. Another near-by landowner, Dr Esmonde of Osberstown a lieutenant in the Clane cavalry had actively participated with the rebels in the earlier Prosperous attack. In retaliation Griffith had Esmonde arrested, tried and subsequently hanged on Carlisle Bridge in Dublin. Later, while still in France and on learning of these Irish events, Wolfe Tone noted in his diary for 18 June 1798 that Naas, Clain [sic], and Prosperous were ‘in my ancient neighbourhood’.⁵ It is thus entirely natural that Tone’s mortal remains should now lie in the same Kildare townland which once formed part of his family’s inheritance, and it is even more appropriate that his final resting place is in that ruined churchyard adjacent to the site of his once happy home at Bodenstown.

Today, we are all familiar with the media reports of annual pilgrimages to the site of Wolfe Tone’s grave but it may come as a surprise to learn that although Wolfe Tone died in November 1798, his grave received little organised public recognition until 1873 and C. J. Woods recounts that before 1873 there had been mainly recreational visits to Bodenstown.⁶ In 1869, for instance he references a police report of a picnic near the grave.⁷ But Woods suggests that all this was to change soon after that, when a letter in *The Nation* on 3 August 1872 inspired the organisation of a public ceremony to commemorate the laying of a new grave slab. But the events around that ceremony had their origins very much earlier as the following account outlines. Since many long established families of Clane played an important part in ensuring the subsequent preservation of that sacred site the story of how the grave was re-discovered and respectfully protected is worth revisiting.

On Saturday September 20, 1873, *The Nation*, an Irish weekly newspaper founded by Thomas Davis and other Young

Irelanders in 1842, republished an article which appeared earlier that week in *The Freeman's Journal*. The article was written to publicise the fact that on the previous Sunday, 14th September 1873 a replacement slab had been unveiled at the site of Wolfe Tone's grave.

It stated that, the previous simple slab which marked the grave had:

*...from the wear of time, and...from the fact that that portions of it were being constantly removed as souvenirs [sic] of the spot, become utterly unworthy of the object for which it was erected. It was left to the gentlemen who compose the Dublin Wolfe Tone Band to initiate a movement to have the slab replaced by one which would be a more fitting monument to the hero whom it covered. To their honour be it said that in an inconceivably short time the requisite funds (£25) were at hand and today the ceremony of depositing the tombstone took place.*⁸

The account describes the arrangements and organisation of that occasion which portray an iconography that continues without any major change, even to this day. The Dublin contingent had travelled by the 'half past nine o'clock train from King's Bridge'. The Dublin Wolfe Tone Band proceeded to Sallins 'accompanied by a large concourse of well dressed people of both sexes, and thence walked to Bodenstown carrying flags and bannerets and everyone displaying a ribbon or rosette of the national colour.' There, the old slab was removed and replaced by a new one, sculpted by Thomas Dennehy of Glasnevin. After speech making and 'a touching and elegant recital by the band the very large crowd dispersed in a most orderly and quiet manner'. The writer of the article stated that 'it was gratifying to know that the extra force of thirty constabulary which was drafted to Sallins for the occasion was in no way required.' The article was accompanied by a list of people in New York who had subscribed to the costs of arranging for the replacement slab. Finally the article concluded with a letter signed simply by

‘J.G.’. That article and letter in question are now accepted as having been written by Sir John Gray, [sometimes written as ‘Grey’]. Although a protestant, Gray was a staunch supporter of Daniel O’Connell. Born in Claremorris, county Mayo, and although a politician, he was also an eminent Irish physician, editor and a very successful owner of *The Freeman’s Journal*.⁹

Of special interest to those involved in Clane history was Gray’s letter which accompanied the article and which contained an intriguing account of the earlier re-discovery of Wolfe Tone’s grave in the Anglo-Norman churchyard situated close to the village of Sallins.¹⁰ Initially Gray indicated that he wished to correct any erroneous impression with regard to the ‘original’ tombstone which marked Tone’s grave and which was referred to in the article. He stated that this slab was now broken and distributed over the nations in which the ‘Exiles of Erin’ find shelter. More importantly he wished to clarify that this latter tombstone had not been erected contemporaneously with the time of Tone’s interment in Bodenstown but was added much later.

Most readers of that interesting account of the restoration would conclude that the tomb of Tone, unlike that of Emmet, was not ‘un-inscribed’ and that the tombstone on which were engraved the dates of his birth and death was nearly coeval with the latter period. This is not so. Tone’s grave was for many years known only to very few, and the *locale* [sic], but not the grave was in fact discovered by the laborious and loving research of the learned author of the ‘Lives and Times of the United Irishmen’.¹¹

The letter proceeds to say that after his death in 1798, Tone’s remains were removed to a house in High Street and the person who had the responsibility of guarding the body during that ‘dark night in High Street’ later communicated the information to Dr. Madden. The informant also advised Madden that Tone’s body was subsequently buried in ‘Bodenstown – a churchyard not very far from Sallins’.

Over forty years later, 'in 1843 or 1844' these facts were passed on by Madden to Thomas Davis and 'the writer of this note' [Gray] amongst others. These members of the Young Irelanders then resolved to find the location of the grave and furnished with an ordnance survey map, the pair, Davis and Gray set out by canal boat for Sallins. At Bodenstown their search proved fruitless, 'since no grave stone bore the name of Tone'. 'Tone was a Kildare man' said one of the pair. 'We are near Millicent' said the other 'let us inquire there!' However realising that the Tone lands at Millicent were now in new ownership, the pair decided to enquire with 'the blacksmith at the crossroads' who they decided was a 'likely' man to know the gossip of the district. The blacksmith, now known as Mr Reddy, was approached by Davis and Gray and as might be expected he was extremely reserved in providing information about the site of the grave to strangers. Eventually and when confident of their goodwill, he assured them that:

Old and young pay it [Tone's grave] reverence; while every other grave in the place is walked over, no one ever walks on that grave; and even the children are taught by the grey-haired men not to harm it, as my father taught me to respect the counsellor's grave.¹²

Accompanied by a neighbour, who was in the forge when the pair called, the blacksmith brought Davis and Madden to Bodenstown and there he pointed out that site which we revere today as Tone's final resting place. Gray described it as a slight elevation of the ground near the church wall 'without inscription, slab or headstone'. Gray commented that the ground in the area was obviously well tended as there was 'a soft freshness about the ground' since the 'good blacksmith' appeared to the pair to be 'the self constituted guardian of the counsellor's grave' and having asked his permission, each took a rooted daisy and shamrock. The letter states that at the time of their visit there was a splendid new house replacing Tone's old home. But in spite of this, Gray says that 'the old cottage once the home of the gallant woman, whom Tone idolised as

the best of mothers, still retained a halo which no splendour could eclipse.’

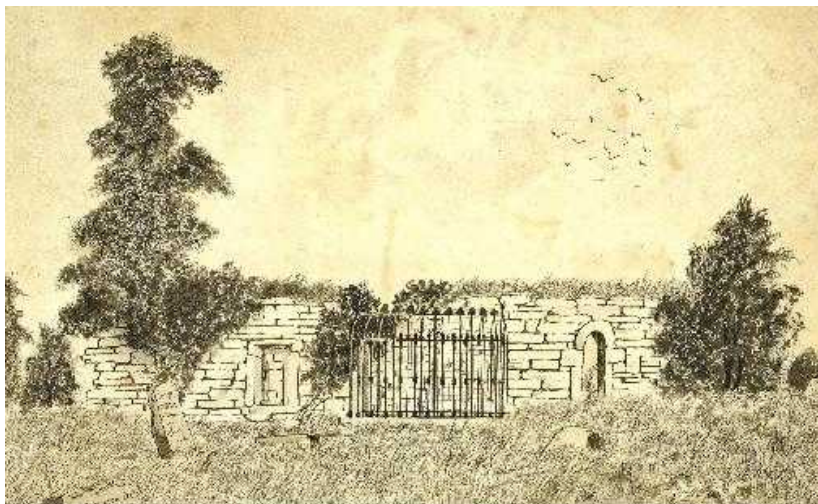


The location of Mr Reddy's forge at the crossroads in Clane in the 1840s

Source: Griffith's valuation of Ireland

On the walk back to the forge they talked about putting a stone over the grave and ‘of entrusting the work to a local artist who was recommended by the blacksmith’. Shortly after this conversation (which we are told had occurred in the year 1843 or 1844) an inscribed slab was erected on the Bodenstown site and Gray pointed out that this thirty year old slab was the one which had been removed from Tone's grave in September 1873. This slab, then, sculpted by a ‘local artist’, was Clane's initial connection with Tone's gravesite.

Finally, Gray states that he sent the daisy and shamrock which he had taken from the Bodenstown grave to Tone's widow, who was then residing near Washington, in America. In return he received 'a most characteristic letter saying how she loved [the token] and would cherish it to her last hour.' Her reply was accompanied by a copy of 'The Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone' written by Tone's son.



View of the ivy-covered ruins of Bodenstown, County Kildare

Source: NLI, Collection: Prints and Drawings, Call no. ET 4186 TX 1

But Clane's link with the site did not end after these events in the 1840s. The news columns of *The Nation* on Saturday March 28, 1874 carried an account of another 'remarkable demonstration' at Bodenstown on the previous Sunday, March 22nd.¹³

Some six months ago ...a new slab was placed over the grave of Wolfe Tone ...to replace the original one, which had been injured and broken by persons chipping off portions of it to carry away as relics. To save the new stone from meeting the fate of the old, the men of Kildare have recently enclosed it with an iron railing which arches over at the top, at a height of about eight feet... The railing is of a tasteful pattern, and displays a range of spear-heads and shamrocks on the crown of the arch. There is a door to the enclosure, for which two

keys are kept, one by the Wolfe Tone Band, Dublin and the other by the Kildare men. The meeting on Sunday was intended to mark the completion of this historic work.

The event had an attendance of ‘hundreds from each locality’ and when all were assembled it was computed that there were about 3,000 present. The report describes the attendance as being well dressed, orderly and intelligent people amongst whom was a ‘considerable number of the fair daughters of Kildare’.

‘Apart from the Wolfe Tone band, the Volunteer band and the coopers band proceeded in a drag drawn by four white horses’ had all travelled from Dublin for the occasion. Clane’s brass band ‘under the presidency of Mr J. Hampson’ was accompanied by bands from Kilcock, Newbridge, Kildare and Naas. After the ceremony and the all-important speech making, ‘the bands marched around the tomb playing national airs’.

Before quitting Bodenstown each of them halted and performed some music in front of the house of the Messrs Reddy whose father in the year 1844 pointed out the grave of Tone to Thomas Davis, Sir John Gray and the others who had gone from Dublin to discover it. The spirit and the patriotism of old Mr Reddy ... who seemed to be the self constituted guardian of Tone’s grave still lives in the breast of his children.

The illustration of Bodenstown above is from a pen and ink drawing by J.O’C. Robinson of Blackrock which was presented to Peter Clory of Clane in September 1874 in commemoration of his involvement in the construction of the protective enclosure around Tone’s grave. The caption to the sketch reads ‘Bodenstown, Co. Kildare with the grave of W. Tone beautifully rebuilt by Peter Clory of Clane, Co. Kildare’. The structures which were erected in 1874 were to continue until 1945 when the plaque was again replaced with the version shown below:



Headstone from 1945

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfe_Tone



A general view of Bodinstown churchyard

Source: <http://www.nga.ie/history.php>



Wolfe Tone's grave today.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfe_Tone

In the long saga of the struggles to preserve and honour Wolfe Tone's grave the important role played by Clane inhabitants is sometimes forgotten. Perhaps its re-telling will contribute to a new appreciation of that important role. Today, Wolfe Tone's grave is preserved by The National Graves Association.

References

¹ C.J.Woods, 'Theobald Wolfe Tone and County Kildare' in William Nolan and Thomas McGrath (eds) *Kildare History and Society* (Dublin, 2006) p.39.

² Ibid, p.390.

³ Ibid, p.391.

⁴ For chronology see: Corrigan, Mario, *All that delirium of the brave-Kildare in 1798* (Naas, -) pp82-97.

⁵ C.J.Woods, 'Theobald Wolfe Tone and County Kildare' in William Nolan and Thomas McGrath (eds), *Kildare History and Society* (Dublin, 2006), p.387.

⁶ C.J.Woods, 'Pilgrimages to Tone's grave at Bodenstown, 1873-1922; Time Place and Popularity' *History Ireland*, xxiii, no. 3 (May-June, 2015) p.38.

⁷ Fenian papers, (National Archives, 4763/R).

⁸ *The Nation*, Saturday 20 September, 1873, p.6.

⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Vol.23. Oxford University Press. 2004. pp. 436-7. Steele, David, *Grey, Sir John (1816-1875), newspaper proprietor and politician*.

¹⁰ For origins of Bodenstown church, see Canon Sherlock, 'the original Anglo-Norman settlers in county Kildare' *Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society*, VIII (1915-7), PP 290-9.

¹¹ *The Nation*, Saturday 20 September, 1873, p.6. The history *The United Irishmen, their lives and times* (1843, 7 vols.) was written by Dr Richard Madden.

¹² *The Nation*, Saturday 20 September, 1873, p.6.

¹³ *The Nation*, Saturday 28 March, 1874, p.6.

Extract from 'The Grave of Wolfe Tone' by Thomas Davis

*In Bodenstown churchyard there lies a green-grave,
And wildly around it the winter winds rave.
Small shelter, I ween are the ruined walls there,
When the storm cloud sweeps down on the plains of Kildare.*

*Once I lay on that sod—it lies over Wolfe Tone-
And thought how he perished in prison alone,
His friends unavenged and his country unfreed-
"O, bitter" I said "is the patriot's meed!"*

*I was woke from my dream by the voices and tread
Of a band who came into the home of the dead:
They carried no corpse and they carried no stone,
And they stopt when they came to the grave of Wolfe Tone.*

*There were students and peasants, the wise and the brave,
And an old man who knew him from cradle to grave,
And children who thought me hard-hearted; for they
On that sanctified sod were forbidden to play.*

*But the old man who saw I was mourning there, said,
"We come sir, to weep where young Wolfe Tone is laid,
And we're going to raise him a monument too-
A plain one yet fit for the simple and true."*

*My heart overflowed and I clasped his old hand,
And I bless'd him and bless'd everyone of his band;
Sweet, sweet 'tis to find that such faith can remain
To the cause of the man so long vanquished and slain.*

DENIS DUNNE, MEMORIES OF MAINHAM

John Noonan

Denis Dunne was born at the Forge in Mainham in 1937. His father Bill was a local man the youngest brother in a family of three boys and three girls. The eldest brother Denis joined the Civil Service in Dublin. Bill worked with his older brother Pat in the family forge. Of the sisters Mary Frances went to Paris as a governess and ultimately became the wife of a French diplomat. The other sisters June and Lil emigrated to England to become a cook and a nurse.



Bill Dunne of Mainham

The building which subsequently became the forge was originally built as a Mass House in 1711. A priest resided in a small house attached to the building. There is evidence that the priest's horse was kept inside the house. On special occasions up to ten priests would arrive on horseback to concelebrate Mass there. It is not known when the building became a forge

but Griffith's Valuation shows Denis Dunne, Denis's great grandfather occupying the building which was listed as a forge in the 1850s.

Bill married Catherine Fripps from Mooncoin, Co. Kilkenny; there were four in the family; one died of tuberculosis in 1944 leaving Denis with a brother and a sister. Denis went to the old boys' primary school on the Dublin Road in Clane and subsequently from 1950-55 cycled to the Christian Brothers' school in Naas; it was situated where the Moat Theatre is now. He has good memories of the Christian Brothers. There were no modern continental languages taught only Latin. Only ten boys were in the Leaving Certificate class when Denis did his Leaving in 1955.

Denis served Mass, which in those days was said in Latin, in the People's Church in Clongowes Wood each Sunday. In 1946 there were 35 Jesuit priests in Clongowes. At holiday times when the students were away the local boys served Mass on weekdays as well. At Christmas each Jesuit said three Masses, there were five Jesuit brothers and seven local servers which meant that each server had to assist in nine Masses. Altar boys got a boiled or fried egg and a slice of toast for breakfast; on Fridays it was two slices of toast and a mug of tea. The altar boys' reward for serving Mass was an annual trip to a pantomime in Dublin. They were taken to Maynooth in a van to get the bus to Dublin; this was a great treat as they never otherwise got to Dublin in the 1940s and had never travelled on a double-decker bus. They went to Woolworths in Henry Street, ate in the Monarch Cafe and went to the theatre. It was either Jimmy O'Dea and Maureen Potter at the Gaiety, Jack Cruise at the Olympia or Noel Purcell at the Theatre Royal. Then there was a visit to a restaurant before returning to Burgh Quay for the bus to Maynooth where they were met by the van.

There was work to be had for boys picking fruit and thinning turnips and mangolds in the gardens at Clongowes. Mr O'Dwyer was the Head Gardener and Jimmy Nestor and his nephew worked there as well. There were 25 men working on

the farm in those days. Mick Duffy was the steward, Jim Noonan, the man who found the remains of the prehistoric elk nearby at Rathcoffey Castle, was one of two ploughmen and there were 13 or 14 workhorses for ploughing and other farm work.

Pat and Bill had a car for hire and if someone was sick or dying people would travel by bicycle to get Bill to collect Father John Sullivan, the Jesuit priest renowned for his gift of healing, to minister to them. Invariably on arrival at the patient's house Father Sullivan told Bill not to wait and he could be seen three or four hours later trotting (he actually did trot) back to Clongowes. Fr. Sullivan died in 1933. He was buried in the Jesuit burial ground at Clongowes but his remains were exhumed in 1960 and are in a casket at the Jesuit church in Gardiner Street, Dublin to facilitate the campaign for his canonisation. Denis recalls joining the huge crowds that visited the People's Church when Fr Sullivan's casket reposed there prior to being conveyed to Gardiner Street.



Pat and Josephine Dunne

Mainham Post Office, which opened in 1880, was located in the front gate lodge of Clongowes Wood College. Josephine

Shanahan was postmistress for 55 years from 1920. She married Denis's uncle Pat Dunne and they lived in the lodge. Unlike Clane, Mainham was a telegram office. The young Dunnes could earn money delivering telegrams. When a telegram arrived Josephine would hang out a sheet at the back door of the post office, which was visible from the windows of the house at the forge 100 yards away across the Green, signalling that there was a telegram for collection. They were paid two pence for delivering to Clane, three pence for Rathcoffey and four pence for Prosperous. There was a box in the Post Office for private telephone calls.



The former Mainham Post Office in the main gate lodge at Clongowes

At the forge the Dunnes shod horses and repaired ploughs, harrows, grubbers and fitted hoops on the wheels of drays. When making the wheels an iron hoop was placed in a pit of burning turf until it was red-hot in order to expand it. The hub of the wheel would be placed on a fitting on a concrete base then the red-hot hoop would be lifted with iron 'dogs', placed on the wheel and cooled with water from a large barrel. Up to 10 hoops would be fitted to wheels during a session.

Both Pat and Bill Dunne were in the IRA in the War of Independence. Pat was Officer Commanding the Mainham Company and Bill was the dispatch rider. The unit would train twelve to fifteen men and had about 12 weapons, Lee Enfield rifles and shotguns. The weapons were hidden in a hole dug into the side of a ditch near the cemetery at Clongowes. Bill's son Denis recalls that many years later when he was a boy of nine the disused chamber had been revealed when heavy cattle in the field had caused its roof to collapse



Denis Dunne points to the location of the former arms dump

Bill was only 18 in 1916. Travelling by bicycle under cover of darkness he mainly delivered letters to Prosperous and to Buckley the commander in Maynooth. He would take letters to Prosperous to be taken on to Allenwood. His main concern was the occasional presence of soldiers at Betaghstown Cross who were dropped there by a lorry. When approaching the cross he would put his bike in the ditch 150 yards away and walk up the field to see if any soldiers were there in which case he would have to take a detour. The ordinary post could not be used as, although many post office sorters were pro IRA, some were

anti IRA. In some cases pro IRA sorters intercepted letters containing information sent to the Crown forces by sympathisers and on occasion after an incident Pat Dunne would cycle to Leixlip where he was not known and hold up the postman and take his bag to a Leixlip volunteer to search the mail for letters from informers.

Most of the IRA activities in the area involved cutting down trees to block roads and disrupt military communications. One operation involved destroying a bridge about half a mile from Clane where the road crossed the Gollymochy River before it flowed into the Liffey to obstruct a convoy of Black and Tan tenders travelling from Naas to Celbridge. Seven tenders turned around and returned to Naas but three tenders diverted to the Royal Oak public house. The Tans incorrectly assumed, because of its name, that the occupants were sympathetic to them. They had been there for some time and had become quite drunk when they noticed a quantity of timber stored behind the pub for firewood and thought that this would be suitable material for making the bridge passable. They went to the forge and took Pat and Bill Dunne, the two Byrnes from across the road and a couple of others at gunpoint and ordered them to load the wood onto their vehicles. When the men refused the drunken Tans ordered them to stand against a wall and prepared to shoot them. Fortunately a military vehicle arrived on the scene and the captain in command, a Scotsman, ordered the Tans to go to their vehicles and return to Naas and sent the men home. Subsequently an anonymous letter to the barracks, naming the men who had demolished the bridge and urging their arrest, was intercepted. About a year later another letter with the same handwriting was opened this time bearing a signature. The writer of the letter was identified and it was proposed to shoot him but he was saved by the Truce of 1921 which ended hostilities.

The present building which housed the Royal Oak public house dates from 1866 with a later part, to which the bar was then moved, added in 1969. One of the owner Billy Fennell's three daughters, June, married Denis O'Haran who was a student in

Clongowes. June with her two sons ran the business for many years. Among the patrons over the years was the Dublin writer Brendan Behan.



The Royal Oak public house in August 1986

The largest operation in the area involving the Mainham Company and a number of local IRA units, was planned to ambush a train carrying 400 soldiers from Dublin to the Curragh at Stacumny near Hazelhatch. The Kilcock Flying Column joined the Mainham men and spent the night at the forge before cycling in darkness to the ambush site where they were joined by other companies from the surrounding area. Explosives were placed on the rails to derail the engine and the men took up positions on both sides of the track. However some of the men were spotted by a military vehicle which was checking on the bridges and there was a brief exchange of fire. Forewarned the military train stopped short of the ambush site and the soldiers disembarked and deployed to entrap the ambushers; however, realising they had been spotted, the IRA men had withdrawn.

During the Emergency from 1939 to 1945 Pat Dunne was in command of the local unit of the Local Security Force. Its function was to train against a possible invasion during the

Second World War. After the end of the war the LSF was disbanded.



Clane LSF marching down Gollymochy Hill. Michael Clarkson (left), a teacher at Clongowes with Pat Dunne side by side heading the column with Jack Delaney a veteran of the Great War marching alongside.

There were usually film shows for the students in Clongowes on Wednesday nights in winter. Nicholas Keary, the boiler man, had a son who was of an age with Denis and his friends and he would alert them when his father was told to heat the gym. The local boys sat on gym equipment at the back of the gym, the college students would sit on seats with ten to twenty priests sitting behind them on grand chairs. The Rector sat on a kind of throne in the middle. All the films were in black and white and at the end of each reel the lights went on while the reel was changed. At the end of the film the School Captain led three cheers for the Rector.

Football was the only organised sport in the Clane area in those days, there were no other clubs. Young men would play Pitch and Toss at Hogan's corner opposite Manzor's pub. Handball was played against the wall adjacent to the main gates of Clongowes

Denis would collect discarded comics, such as the *Dandy*, the *Beano* and other comics at Clongowes and take them to the school at Clane to sell them. A penny for 3 or 4 comics would buy a bar of chocolate or Liquorice All-Sorts in Clane. The comics and other items were initially put in a location in the Clongowes courtyard before being moved to the dump in a field. An odd time you would find discarded football boots on the dump which was in the field known as ‘the clump’.

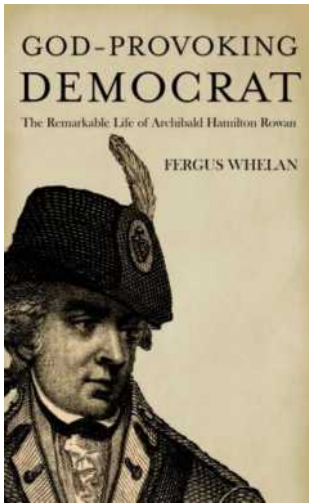
Clongowes in those days was almost self sufficient. It was a major source of employment for local people. It had a substantial mixed farm. In the dairy milk was separated; the skimmed milk was used to feed the calves and the dairymaid made butter and whipped cream. The college had its own tailor, bakery, slaughter-house and laundry. There was a large walled garden for fruit and vegetables which is now a floodlit all-weather rugby pitch. In those days 25 people were employed on the farm now there are only 5. The first tractor was acquired in 1947 followed by an ‘Allis-Chalmers’ with a double front-wheel from Magee’s in Ardee; there were two Magee boys at the college in 1947 and 1948.

All the teachers in Clongowes at that time, except for one or two laymen, were Jesuits. The Jesuits were changed regularly usually transferred to other colleges or overseas after three or four years. Denis along with most locals attended Mass in the People’s Church at Clongowes. College workers and locals, who died generally went to the People’s Church and were buried at Mainham. The priest responsible for saying Mass in the People’s Church visited local houses at Christmas, Clongowes was like a mini parish. In the good old days Mainham had a pub, grocery, Post Office and forge, all are now closed, the forge closing in 1965.

This article is based on an interview which Denis Dunne gave to John Noonan in 2014.

REVIEW OF ‘GOD PROVOKING DEMOCRAT’

Henry Bauress



TWO biographies of one time Rathcoffey resident, Archibald Hamilton-Rowan, appeared before the one about to be reviewed here. William Drummond did the first in 1840 and in 1943, Harold Nicholson, a relation of Hamilton-Rowan’s, published a second, ‘A Desire to Please’. According to Fergus Whelan’s relatively recent work, *God-Provoking Democrat; The Remarkable Life of Archibald Hamilton Rowan*, (New Island Books 2015), neither Drummond nor Nicholson treated their subject well.

Rowan, as we will call him now, arrived into the world on May 12 1751. He was born into landed wealthy people at the time but was someone with a concern for those less fortunate and less powerful than himself, “a benevolent and fair landlord,” who in times of stress would reduce rents. Of Scottish ancestry, he was conceived at his father’s ancestral home in Killyleagh Castle, County Down, just west of Strangford Lough. Whelan describes it as the heartland of enlightened, radical Presbyterian Ulster. Rowan’s mother, Jane, a widow, had married Rowan’s father, Gawin Hamilton, in 1750. Jane went to London when pregnant to avoid her son having contact with Ireland. So Rowan was born at Rathbone Place in London and educated at Westminster School and Cambridge University. He was greatly influenced by his grandfather, William Rowan, a barrister. William had refused to take the oath necessary for ordination, probably because he was a Unitarian and Protestant Dissenter. Unitarians rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and the belief that Jesus Christ was the son of God. The law was changed in 1813 so that it ceased to be a criminal offence to

call oneself a Unitarian, Most, if not all Unitarians were “radical Whigs,” who opposed abuse of power and corruption of Government. William hoped Rowan would be learned, sober and honest, not a place chaser or lackey of Government, seeking favours. Fergus Whelan concludes that Rowan lived up to almost all of his grandfather’s wishes. When the latter died in 1767, Rowan was 16 years old and inherited part of what was to be a large fortune by the standard of the times. A stipulation of the will, probably prompted by Rowan’s mother, Jane, was that Rowan must get a university degree in the UK and not go to Ireland until he was 25 years old.

Rowan lived with his father, Gawin, at Cowley Street, London, a house which became a meeting place for the many radicals in the UK House of Commons. People like John Wilkes, jailed more than once for his challenges to authority but elected by the people of Middlesex, each time the Government deprived him of his seat, and Dr Charles Lucas, founder of Dublin’s *Freeman’s Journal*, and a campaigner to democratize the governance of Dublin, were regular visitors. Rowan said that Wilkes and Lucas had influenced his early views. At university, Rowan was said to be troublesome. Fergus Whelan does not dwell much on Rowan’s private life. He does say, however, that before his long marriage to Sarah Dawson in 1781, he earned a reputation for getting into scrapes “especially with married women.”

In 1773, at the age of 22, he went to France where he remained for eleven years. He was admired by Marie Antoinette, who sent him a ring. Physically he was one of the biggest men many people of the time had ever seen. His heart, metaphorically speaking, was just as big. He could have settled down to a life of wealth but chose risk and challenge instead. According to Whelan, Nicholson portrayed him as someone mad or bad but Whelan, rejects this.

Rowan joined the United Irishmen and adhered to a liberal tradition which favoured the kind of democracy many of us take for granted today in the western developed world but was

then just an idea, and a feared one at that, in the eyes of many ruling powers. But at that stage of human development, slavery was a strong and legal institution. Rowan was one of their leading radicals, even if he was not as well known to us today as someone like Wolfe Tone, a good friend. Rowan, who was also a freemason, was ahead of his time when it came to anti slave trade sentiments and was unique at the time in supporting trade unions. During his American exile, he became disillusioned with the new country's love of money. He wrote to his wife about moving from Philadelphia to Wilmington, Delaware: "I will go into the woods but I will not kill Indians or keep slaves."

His first Irish period began in 1784 when he moved to Kildare, first to a small house before buying land and building a large house at Rathcoffey. He was 33 years old. One of his main achievements, which won him the hearts of so many in Ireland, was his defence of a 12 year old girl called Mary Neale, who, in April 1788, had been raped by one of the leading establishment figures of the day. The book outlines in detail the lengths to which Rowan was prepared to challenge the elite and corrupt elements of the authorities of the day. Among the acts of this campaign was the publication of a pamphlet, *A Brief History of the Suffering of John, Anne and Mary Neale*, which he printed on his own printing press (John and Anne were Mary's parents). His wife, Sarah, brought Mary to their Rathcoffey home at one point.

Rowan, while he challenged the authorities, at the risk of losing his liberty and his inherited property, was not, by personality prone towards violence. In France and while sympathetic to the cause of the revolutionaries he did not like the violence and cruelty which followed the 1789 French Revolution. He told his wife that neither reform nor revolution should be achieved by force. "I have seen one faction rising over another and overturning it; each of them in their turn making a stalking horse of the supreme power of the people, to cover public and private massacre and plunder; while every man of virtue and humanity shuddered in disgraceful silence." At Rathcoffey, his

family had bought land and he eventually acquired the former Wogan home at Rathcoffey in 1787 and turned it into a mansion.



Rathcoffey Castle ruin circa 1900. Rowan's house is in the background

An original member of the Northern Whig Club, Belfast, 1790, Rowan joined the Society of United Irishmen in 1791. This group had begun to challenge the authority of those in power. Even though it was in a non-violent way, in 1794 Rowan was arrested and jailed at Newgate Dublin on a charge of distributing a seditious document, possibly printed at his printing press in Rathcoffey. He escaped to France and then, in 1795, went to America, where he was separated from his family. He was to be in exile for twelve years.

In America, he was aided by, among others, James Monroe, who became the fifth President of the United States. Although Whelan does not dwell on this, he fathered children there, which Seamus Cullen has referred to in his article on Rowan in *Fugitive Warfare - 1798 in North Kildare* a part of the family which is referred to in *Burke's Family History*. Despite his sympathies, he was not then directly involved in the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland.

Rowan's wife, Sarah, had to battle to make sure their property was not confiscated. Many people, family friends such as Lord Clare, and Rowan's friend, Richard Griffith of Millicent, helped him personally, while far from supporting the actions of 1798. While born into great wealth, his political struggles and his exiles led him to be short of money during exile. Rowan had a very independent streak and chose not to live on the charity of friends and supporters, of whom there were many. "In abject dependence I will not live while I can clean boots in an alley," he wrote. He worked as a day labourer and brewed beer. In America, he also set up a calico printing works on the Brandywine River, half a mile from Wilmington. Rowan was a warm supporter of Catholic Emancipation. But he believed that neither religion nor nationalism should be allowed to divide us. "The votaries of liberty are of no country, or rather of every country." He believed that when and if Irishmen were really united, they must be free. Rowan's acquaintances included people like William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the best known early feminists. His wife Sarah died in April 1834. Rowan's eldest son, William, died at Rathcoffey after an accident on August 17 1834. Rowan, went into a rapid decline and died not long afterwards on November 1, 1834. He is buried in St Mary's Church, Dublin, in what is now known as Wolfe Tone Street.

For me, Rowan was way ahead of his time in many respects. His life points to, among other things, how some of us will try and resolve conflicts between campaigning for human rights and not resorting to violence; between strongly challenging human groups, systems and cultures with good features to which we are very strongly bound but yet seem unjust at times; between challenging authority gone wrong and avoiding suffering to the innocent. Archibald Hamilton-Rowan tried to balance these conflicts, as relevant in his day as this century, with admirable courage, it would appear from this book.

MISCELLANY

From Bodenstown to Mainham

The photograph below shows the inscription which appears on the south side of the Celtic cross which marks the grave of Peter Mackey in Clane's Old Mainham graveyard. His inscription informs us that Peter died in his twenties in 1872. The inscription, although in English, is carved in old Gaelic lettering and reads:

This cross is carved from the original tomb of Wolfe Tone



An article in this edition of *Coiseanna* informs us that the original gravestone on Wolfe Tone's grave was replaced in September 1873. The article describes how the original thirty year old slab was removed by Clane craftsmen at the suggestion of the Young Irelanders and this inscription suggests that the redundant slab may have been subsequently recycled. If this is the case, then it suggests that Peter may have had some association with the honoured Bodenstown site. Any further information would be very much appreciated and fully acknowledged by the editorial team.

Venerable John Sullivan, S.J.

The name of the saintly Fr. John Sullivan will always be synonymous with the People's Church, Clongowes, where he ministered for many years. John Sullivan was born in Dublin on the 8th May 1861. He was the child of a mixed marriage; was raised a Protestant and was received into the Catholic Church in 1896. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1907 and was appointed to the academic staff at Clongowes where he was to spend most of the rest of his life.

Fr. John lived an austere and frugal life in Clongowes and was renowned for his asceticism throughout the surrounding countryside. He was always available to the needy, the poor and the infirm of the locality. People came to him from far and wide to seek his blessing and his prayers. Fr. John was a familiar sight on the roads around Clongowes as he cycled his old bicycle or walked at a brisk, trotting pace usually on his way to visit someone who was sick. To this day his memory is held in great reverence in the locality and many visit the People's Church to pray to him. He died on the 19th February 1933 and was buried in the Community Cemetery at Clongowes. In 1960 he was declared a Servant of God and his mortal remains were transferred from Clongowes to St. Francis Xavier's Church, Gardiner Street, Dublin.

From: A Short History of Clongowes Wood College, by Brendan Cullen.

Pope Francis declared Fr. John Sullivan S.J. Venerable on the 7th November 2014 much to the delight and satisfaction of the inhabitants of Clane where he spent most of his priestly ministry. This constitutes the first step on the road to his Canonisation. A miracle is now required for his Beatification and a further one for his Canonisation.

Fr. John Sullivan through the eyes of a student in 1916.

In my first two or three years Fr. John Sullivan was our Spiritual Father. It was only after I left Clongowes that I learned of Fr. Sullivan's austere and saintly life. I refer to him

here just as I saw him, and I imagine that most other boys in the college at that time would have seen him in much the same way. He appeared to be a very self-effacing man of great simplicity, who never seemed to wish to impress anybody with his own personality. Looking back on it I feel that he may have been consciously striving to be always just an ordinary person. None of us of course could have failed to see that he was a very holy man, was detached from worldly affairs and all his values were values related to the next world. He seemed dedicated to giving service to whatever he had to do. While we could sense his humility, he had none of the nauseating qualities sometimes attached to humility. It was a manly humility.

Among the boys Fr. Sullivan was always referred to as 'Johnny'. I cannot remember him preaching a Sunday sermon, but he probably did. I do remember that at Mass on the First Friday he always delivered what was known among the boys as his First Friday 'Spiff'. Of the content of any of these spiffs I have now no recollection. The manner of delivery I remember so well. He turned on the altar, faced the boys, put his head slightly to one side, with his neck bent forward so that his vision throughout the chapel would not be much over ground level. He started to speak slowly and well and of course very sincerely, but after less than one minute he went into top gear. His great elbow would be tucked in against his ribs, his right forearm and hand were extended horizontally towards the boys. He started to move his hand and forearm as if he were turning a handle and as he went on his turning movement became faster and faster. Looking back on it I feel that as he was delivering these spiffs he was nearer to God than he was to us.

The above extract is from an article written by a student who attended Clongowes from 1916 to 1921, and published in the 1986 Clongownian.

The Death of Fr. John Sullivan.

That he had been going downhill was clear for quite some time. A photograph of him taken at a procession in connection with the Eucharistic Congress of 1932 shows him looking badly. The procession took place at Staplestown. Later after that,

towards the end of November or the beginning of December, he suffered a complete “black- out” one Sunday morning in the course of celebrating Mass in the People’s Church. A Miss Diamond of Clonshambo, who was present at the Mass recalled this incident. When it became clear that Fr. Sullivan was ill, Paddy Corcoran, who was attending the Mass, came across to the castle to get help. Fr. Kenny, who was Minister at the time, went to the church, helped Fr. Sullivan to the sacristy and finished the Mass. Fr. Sullivan never celebrated Mass in the public church again.

Sometime towards the end of January or the beginning of February 1933 a swelling came on one of his arms which caused him great pain.... On the 17th of the month he developed very acute abdominal pains. Dr. O’Connor, the college doctor of the time was summoned and called for his immediate transfer to hospital in Dublin..... Mr. Lane, the surgeon, was waiting at Vincent’s Hospital when Fr. Sullivan got there and confirmed the need of immediate surgery. The operation took place somewhere about 7pm. It was a major operation and Fr. Sullivan’s age and condition gave little ground for hope. He rallied slightly in the early part of the day after his operation, but the improvement was short- lived. He was in marked pain all the time but he made nothing of that, and kept praying and asking those about him to pray. On the following day he lapsed into unconsciousness which continued throughout till evening; then he seemed to regain a little consciousness for a short time. Between 10 and 11pm he died, on February 19th, three months short of seventy two years of age.

The above is from an article in the Clongownian of 1976.

Clane’s link to classical sculpture

The Freeman’s Journal on Monday 1 March 1875 carried the following announcement:

Medical Appointment. - *At a meeting of the Clane and Timahoe North Dispensary District Committee held on Saturday at the committee rooms, Clane, Doctor M.A. Hogan (son of the*

eminent sculptor), *Dublin was unanimously elected medical officer of the district at the salary of £125 per annum.*

Today, Doctor Hogan's term in Clane is scarcely remembered but the family to which he belonged has left a major impact on Ireland's place in the world of sculpture. The best known member of the family was John Hogan (1800-1858) who is generally recognised as Ireland's greatest neo-classical sculptor. John's son, John Valentine Hogan (1840-1920) followed his father into the art world. John Valentine, like his father left many magnificent sculptures both in Ireland and abroad. The date of the notice of Dr. Hogan's appointment in Clane indicates that he was most likely a son of John Valentine Hogan who was then enjoying his artistic peak.

John Hogan (Snr.) holds a well deserved place in the pantheon of world-famous craftsmen having made his name in Italy where he studied and practised between 1830 and 1848. His neo-classical approach to sculpture was extremely popular since this form was then replacing the previous, very fashionable and long-lived traditional medieval style. His memorial sculpture of the famous Bishop J. W. Doyle of Kildare and Leighlin in Carlow Cathedral was a sensation when first unveiled and qualified him for membership of one of Rome's most exclusive academies, *The Virtuosi del Pantheon*. MacGreevy writing in the August 1943 edition of *The Father Mathew Review* states that, in his statue of 'Hibernia and Cloncurry' at Castle Lyons Hogan's Roman wife [who sat for the figure of Ireland] gives life and animation to the classical type of feminine loveliness.

In 1858, Hogan was an ill man and his final work 'The Transfiguration' was eventually completed by his artist son, John Valentine and is now on view in the Royal Hibernian Academy. John Valentine's most visible work is perhaps one of the *bas relief* panels which adorn the base surrounding the two hundred feet high obelisk known as the Wellington Testimonial (or aka Memorial). This well-known obelisk is located in the Battery Salute area of the Phoenix Park and overlooks the River Liffey seventy feet below. Although

completed in 1820, the Testimonial's bronze panels were only unveiled much later, in 1861. John Valentine's panel, thirty-five feet wide and seven feet high, cast from melted-down cannon, symbolises Wellington's key role, as Prime Minister, during the passing of the *Roman Catholic Relief Act* in 1829. The artistic talents of the much respected grandfather and father of the medical doctor who was appointed to serve them in the 1870s provide the communities of Clane and Timahoe with very good additional reasons to remember Dr. M. A. Hogan.

Wretched Clane

On the 10th December 1837 Thomas O'Connor with his companion Patrick O'Keefe, both of whom were employed in the survey of the place-names and antiquities of County Kildare for the Ordnance Survey, reached their lodgings in Clane. O'Connor wrote to his superiors in Dublin.

We just arrived here and with the greatest possible difficulty found a reception which, from its badness, will, I fear, prove injurious at least to me, as I feel on this evening rather disagreeably affected with a cold arising from the very cold wettings I got in Carbury. This is a most wretched village though a Post-townI hope that we shall have everything tomorrow so as to get clean out of this not to be liked place as soon as we can.

The above extract is from O'Donovan's "Ordnance Survey Letters Kildare" and was quoted in the Leinster Leader of 30th January 2003 by the late Con Costello.

Clane streets in 1873

The Freeman's Journal in its edition of Thursday, 6 March 1873 carried the following report which provides a very valuable picture concerning the state of the public streets in Clane at that time:

At the usual weekly meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Naas Poor Law Union held on Wednesday, 5 March of that

year, a report was read from the Clane Dispensary Committee. In it, the report noted with concern, that there was an absence of all sewage in the town of Clane. In particular, they stated that 'one quarter [of the houses in the town] having no place to receive the dirt but the public road before the doors.' The sanitary inspector was directed forthwith to issue summons to the landlords or owners of the houses in question.

Great Southern and Western Railway

Sallins, Thursday Evening

It will no doubt be a source of much gratification to your readers to learn that miles of permanent rail of the Great Southern and Western Railway are already laid, and that on this day an experimental trip under the auspices of a committee of the directors of the company took place. At about half-past two o'clock the splendid new engine "the Lady MacNeill", belonging to the spirited contractors for the portion of the line between this town and the metropolis (Messrs. Dargan and M'Cormick) started with two or three trucks, conveying a select party from the cutting through Sherlockstown Hill, and proceeded along that portion of the permanent way towards the metropolis. At the bridge over the bye-road leading to Clane, the party was joined by his Grace the Duke of Leinster. From this point the first train on the great trunk line to the south and west of Ireland advanced to the end of the portion finished, retraced its way, and then went and returned again, the noble duke and the distinguished party expressing the greatest satisfaction at the state of the works, the rapid progress made, the solidity which marked all parts of the construction, and above all the contentment and apparent comfort of those employed. The visitors, myself among the number, were particularly struck by the contrast presented by the wagons, engine and other working necessities used by the contractors on this line and those on other lines. It is usually the custom to employ broken-down engines patched up for the occasion, and worn out wagons for the services required in laying the line. Here the contractors, with a judicious liberality and an enterprise worthy of the great undertaking they are engaged in, have already launched a magnificent locomotive,

equal if not exceeding in power and beauty any employed for the traffic of lines in full work, and a set of upwards of forty wagons, as fully finished as the wagons used for the luggage trains of railways. On completion of the trip the party proceeded to Sallins, where they were joined by several of your fellow citizens who had arrived too late to join the excursion, and all sat down to a sumptuous dejeuner. Amongst the company present were his grace the Duke of Leinster, George Roe, Esq., - Brooke, Esq., Edward McDonnell, Esq., Sir John McNeill, John McDonnell, Esq., Alderman Butler, Thomas Gresham, Esq., - Wright, Esq., - Horne, Esq., R. D. Kane, Esq., &c.

The chair was filled by James Fagan, Esq., T.C. The usual loyal and patriotic toasts were given, prefaced in the happiest manner by the chairman, through whose exertions, aided as they were by an abundance of the creature comforts, embracing the rarest wines of the choicest vintage, a most delightful evening was spent by the assembled guests. At their departure a crowd of those employed on the railway and of the inhabitants of the village who had assembled cheered the visitors and in an especial manner the contractors.

Freeman's Journal; Friday 1st August 1845

New School in Clane 1821

CHARITY SERMON, IN THE TOWN OF CLANE, COUNTY KILDARE AT WHICH HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF LEINSTER HAS BEEN PLEASED TO SIGNIFY HIS INTENTION OF BEING PRESENT.

A charity sermon will be Preached on SUNDAY, JULY 8, at Two o'Clock, in the Chapel of Clane, by the Rev. PATRICK WALSH, Jun. for supporting the extensive School, lately established there, under the protection of the PATRICIAN ORPHAN SOCIETY, Dublin.

The Governors having at a great expense erected a commodious School House in the Town of Clane, capable of accommodating a much larger number of Children than those under their immediate protection, undertook to extend the benefit of instruction to the Poor of that populous neighbourhood. The consequence has been that more than One

Hundred Children of the town and its vicinity, have, for the last year, enjoyed all the advantages resulting from a well regulated system of Education, and without Religious distinction.

The Funds usually collected for supporting this truly National Institution, being insufficient to meet its increased expenditure, and to discharge a debt, due for fitting up the School House, the Committee appeal to the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public, relying with humble hope on that kind feeling always manifested by the humane and affluent for the wants of the Poor.

Benefactions from those who cannot attend will be gratefully received by his Grace the Duke of Leinster; the Right Hon. Lord Cloncurry; the Most Rev. Dr. Troy; the Most Rev. Dr. Murray; the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle, Carlow; the Rev. Preacher, North Anne Street; the Rev. M. Kennedy, P.P. Rathcoffey; the Rev. L. Mooney, Clane; the Rev. Gentlemen of Clongowes College; the Rev. G. Doyle, P.P. Naas; the Rev. A. Higgins, P.P. Prosperous; Colonel Aylmer, *Kilcock*; *Sam. Mills, Esq. Turnance [sic]*; *Brian Mulloy, Esq. Mellicent [sic]*; *Captain Henry, Straffan*; *M. Donnellan, Esq. Clane*; *JOHN D'ARCY, Usher's street, President*; *JOHN KEARNEY, Pimlico, Vice-President*; *PAT BEAGHAN, High street, Treasurer*; *WM. DWYER, New Row, Secretary*

Extract from *The Freeman's Journal*, Saturday, 7 July 1821

Illicit Distillation

On the morning of the 12th instant, between the hours of one and two o'clock, after a long and harassing march, that meritorious officer, Francis Hughes Esq., supervisor of excise, Leixlip District, accompanied by Messrs. Colby, Davies, Cuthbert, Dunn and Shea, officers of excise, discovered an illicit distillery on a very extensive scale at full work, near the village of Rathcoffey. They arrested a man who was engaged in the still-house, and brought him before John Aylmer, of Courtown, Esq., J.P., by whom he was convicted in the mitigated penalty of £6, and in default of payment was committed to Naas gaol for three months.

Irish Examiner, Friday May 19th, 1843.