

Greystones Archaeological & Historical Society

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The Society's website at www.greystonesahs.org has material from earlier volumes of our journals, details of our activities and much, much more. Pay us a visit!

Introduction

This is the second publication of Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society and is made possible, firstly, by the generous sponsorship received from the La Touche Legacy Committee, and secondly, by our contributors who have made available to us free gratis the benefits of their research and scholarship so that we in turn can pass on to you some more information about this beautiful area of north County Wicklow in which we are privileged to live.

The Journal sub-committee hope you will read and enjoy this second issue, and that you may be encouraged to commit to paper whatever information you may have relating to Greystones and its environs. It is hoped that the Journal will have a wide circulation and be a financial success. This will enable us to produce the next issue for which we have already gathered enough material of interest to add to the published record of local history and archaeology.

A glance through the pages of the Journal will indicate the riches that lie in Greystones and its vicinity which we feel are worth recording in this modest publication to add to our knowledge of the area.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the Committee of Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society for their dedication over the past seven years of the Society's existence: Pat Brennan, Edith Cairns, Sean Daly, Joan Jones, Patrick Nearly, Aileen Short and Ann Sheerin. A special word of thanks is due to Joe Hayes, retired County Librarian (and our Honorary Auditor) and his staff for their endless patience and helpfulness towards researchers and anyone-looking for information in this area.

Jim Brennan – Chairman

GREYSTONES ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Notes on how the railway came to Greystones

By Aileen Short, September 1992

Why a Railway?

During the Napoleonic Wars (1800-1815), the number of British ships increased tremendously, and so did trade across the Irish Sea - the Army and Navy had to be fed and clothed, leading to a huge price-rise in grains. Dublin Port was silting up and Howth was used by the mail ships, but was not big enough for the huge volume of shipping now crossing the Irish Sea, nor for ships seeking shelter from frequent storms. Also, the memory of 1798 was very much on the London Government's mind, with the possibility of having to move troops fast if necessary. An "Asylum Harbour", therefore, was planned at Dunleary. The Act of 1815 authorised the building of the East Pier, followed in 1817 by the West Pier. After the visit of George IV in 1821 the town was called Kingstown.

Dublin entrepreneurs in 1825 petitioned the London Parliament for permission to build a Railway or Tram way between Dublin and Kingstown. Others, however, wanted a Ship Canal. Eventually the Act of 1831 allowed the first railway in Ireland to be built, called the Dublin and Kingstown Railway (D&KR). It cost the entrepreneurs £1626 14s 2p to get this Act passed.

Dublin and Kingstown Railway

The Directors of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway were a most honest, energetic, far-seeing group of men. Thomas Pim was the first chairman, and James Pim Junior was the first Secretary. The other Directors were Edward Alexander, John Barton, James Ferrier, Joseph Kincaid, James Perry, Robert Roe and James Twigg. In May 1832 James Pim Junior was appointed Treasurer, and Thomas Bergin became Secretary. In order to start building the railway, they had to raise £100,000 themselves, and the Board of Public Works loaned £75,000, on which the Directors had to take out mortgages. As far as I have been able to ascertain, no scandal ever marred the reputation of the D&KR.

Planning the Line

Land now had to be bought to build the line designed by the great Alexander Nimmo, the payment of whose fees were guaranteed by James Pim. Lord Cloncurry and Rev. Sir Harcourt Lees refused to allow the railway to be built across their lands at Blackrock and had to be compensated by huge sums of money - £3,000 and £7,500 respectively, as well as by a tunnel, towers, bridges, piers and bathing places. Most landowners along the line, however, were happy with the original compensation offered.

In looking for personnel to build the line the Directors looked first of all to the great Thomas Telford, who was asked to re-examine Nimmo's plans, but he was by now too old for such an undertaking. Mr. George Stephenson of Liverpool and Mr. Joseph Locke came across to give advice and were paid off. In 1832 the Board of Public Works suggested that Charles Vignoles be appointed as Chief Engineer for the D&KR. He was a brilliant engineer, born in Wexford of Huguenot extraction, who trained with the Royal Artillery Engineers and at the age of twenty-three began surveying and mapping South Carolina and the adjoining States. He then returned to England, where he joined the firm of John Rennie and learned about railways. He completed the plans for the line and spent a great deal of time travelling to and fro between Ireland and London, smoothing out problems and generating goodwill.

William Dargan



William Dargan (1799 - 1867)

William Dargan now enters the picture. Another Irishman, born in Carlow, he trained in Telford's firm, where he was involved with the building of the Holyhead Road in 1820. He then returned to Ireland, set up as a contractor and built the Howth Road. He had examined the ground for the railway with Vignoles, giving the benefit of his experience of Irish workers. He now tendered for the construction of the railway from Westland Row to Kingstown. His tender of £83,000 was to include laying the line, bridges, embankments, cuttings, leaving the line ready for the trains to begin running on 1st June 1834, and to maintain it for two years afterwards. For every week of delay, he would pay of penalty of £100, and for each week in advance, he would receive a bonus of £50.

The Construction to Kingstown Old Harbour

Building of the railway began on 11th April 1833, when Dargan's men began to cut down the cliffs at Salthill. On 17th April work began at Monkstown, and on the 24th at Westland Row. The men were paid 10s, 9s or 8s per week, depending on ability. By the 4th June a strike occurred, the men complaining that they would not work for less than 10s per week. A riot followed, and the leaders found themselves in prison. Dargan now offered 2 and a half pence for every foot of the hill work. The stronger men were pleased with this plan, which increased their wages, and anyway, they were all aware that Dargan paid higher wages than most employers, and regularly every Friday. By July 1833, 1,500 men were employed, and by September, nearly 1,800.

Local businesses prospered while the line was being built, but there were some complaints during the summer months, when scandalised residents noticed Dargan's workers bathing during their lunch hour "in an indelicate state". Accidents occurred, of course, and the wounded men would be taken to the newly opened "City of Dublin Hospital" in Baggot Street. A new hospital was also opened in Kingstown by local philanthropists, called the "Rathdown Hospital". This is now called Monkstown Hospital. Should a worker be killed on site, his funeral would be paid for, and a modest gratuity given to the widow. This was unusual for the time.

Meanwhile, a public relations exercise was being carried out by the Board, publicising all the benefits which would be enjoyed by the public on the opening of the railway. Females, it was said, would be particularly safe, and indeed the ladies were among the most enthusiastic travellers as soon as the line opened, and a kind of "railway mania" began. Vignoles, while in London, was summoned to Kensington Palace to instruct the Princess Victoria about railways, and she was invited to come across to open it. She did not come to Ireland, however, for another seventeen years.

The Railway Opens

On 31st July 1834, the first journey was made along the line by the Directors and then friends in a horse-drawn carriage. The first locomotive trip took place in October. Regular trains began running on 13th December 1834. The cost was one shilling for first-class passengers, eight pence for second-class, and sixpence for third-class. Five thousand passengers travelled that day, and the Directors celebrated with a banquet in the Salthill Hotel that evening. Dargan's tender had overrun by £23,000, his final account being £106,000.

Kingstown Extension

When Vignoles was redesigning the D&KR, he included plans for an extension as far as Bray. The first step, however, was to extend the line to serve the new wharf in Kingstown - the Kingstown Extension. When the Board applied to Parliament for an Act to allow this, they faced extensive opposition, led by Thomas Gresham, who owned both the Gresham Hotel and the Royal Marine Hotel in Kingstown. He foresaw that, if the line were extended, Bray would certainly become a holiday resort and would compete with his hotel in Kingstown. He and others preferred a ship canal. Both sides appealed to Daniel O'Connell in London. Eventually, O'Connell was persuaded by the Board of the D&KR that the poor of Dublin would benefit if coal were brought by train straight into Dublin rather than through agents who made excessive profits. The Act for the Kingstown Extension became law in May 1834. Dargan was appointed contractor, and on 13th May 1837 the new line was travelled by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Mulgrave. It took him 13 minutes to travel from Westland Row to the new terminus at Kingstown.



Kingstown Railway Station, 1880 - 1914 (Lawrence Collection)

Onwards to Dalkey

The Dalkey Extension now followed, notable because it was the first ever public Atmospheric Railway. Samuel Clegg demonstrated his system at Paris in 1838 and in London in the following year in association with the Samuda Brothers. Some of the D&KR directors saw this demonstration and were immediately enthusiastic, particularly James Pim. The Board of Public Works offered a £25,000 loan, sufficient to build the line, so it was decided not to apply for an Act of Parliament. Dargan was appointed contractor and work began in September 1842. Samuda Brothers supplied the main pipe. The pumping station was built at Barnhill Road. The trams would be pushed up to Dalkey, using air and a vacuum system, and would

return using gravity. The advantages were cleanliness and quiet for the passengers, and economy for the investors. However, although the vacuum principle was well understood by the Victorians, the technology was simply not well enough developed. The line was in use for ten years, from March 1844 until April 1854, when the Kingstown-Dalkey line was handed over to the Dublin and Wicklow Railway.

The Dublin and Wicklow Railway

In August 1844 Brunel and some directors of the Great Western Railway (GWR) came across the Irish Sea to inspect the Dalkey Extension, and let it be known that they were hoping to open up another cross-channel service between Fishguard and what is now Rosslare. Therefore, they were very keen to see the line extended to Wexford and Waterford.

The D&KR were not very anxious to do this, as their present line was very profitable, and the population along the proposed line was somewhat sparse. The D&KR agreed to go as far as Wicklow, but the GWR directors thought that they would then lose interest in any further extensions. GWR went ahead and sought approval from Parliament for the incorporation of the Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow and Dublin Railway, the 3Ws.

The 3Ws was incorporated in 1846, as was the Dublin, Dundrum and Rathfarnham Railway (DD&RR). Dargan purchased the 3Ws' shares held by the GWR and the 3Ws decided to apply for a Bill to go as far as Wicklow. In 1849 the 3Ws became the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway.

The country was now in a depressed state because of the Famine, and money was hard to find for railway-building, so shortly after work had begun at Bray Head and at Dalkey, funds ran out. It was therefore decided in the Act of 1851 to go as far as Wicklow (Dublin and Wicklow Railway). That year, also, the DD&RR changed its name to Dublin and Bray, and dropped the Rathfarnham branch.

Construction to Bray

A competition now ensued between the two lines to see who would get to Bray first. William Dargan now proved his worth. By now, he was one of the most trusted men in Ireland, as well as one of the wealthiest. He liaised between the two groups, with the result that on 10th July 1854 trains began to run between the new terminus at Harcourt Road and Bray, and between Dalkey and Bray. These new lines were on the new 5ft. 3in. gauge, and it was necessary to alter the old 4ft. 8in. lines running between Westland Row and Dalkey to the new size. Dargan was the contractor on all these works.

Bray to Wicklow

Dargan was now ready to tackle the Bray-Wicklow extension. Brunel drew up the plans for tunnelling under Bray Head. This was necessary because the Earl of Meath would not allow the railway to go through Kilruddery and donated the land at Bray Head. About 500 men were employed on building the tunnels and viaducts here. The work was complicated by the fact that the rocks here are among the oldest in the world and are hard and very difficult to work. Some of the rocks are also in layers and tend to slip.

It was at the Brandy Hole Viaduct that the famous accident happened in 1867, in which two people were killed. New tunnels had to be built in 1876 and 1879, and the Long Tunnel was built in 1917.

The Bray - Wicklow line was opened on 13th October 1855 by the directors of the Dublin and Wicklow Railway and William Dargan, who travelled on a trial train to Wicklow. On 29th October it was formally opened by the Lord Lieutenant who was a passenger on a crowded train which left Harcourt Road at 11.30am and travelled down to Wicklow. We are not told if

NOTES ON HOW THE RAILWAY CAME TO GREYSTONES

the train stopped at Greystones. This part of the railway followed the shore-line very closely, resulting in regular erosion problems, which are still with us.

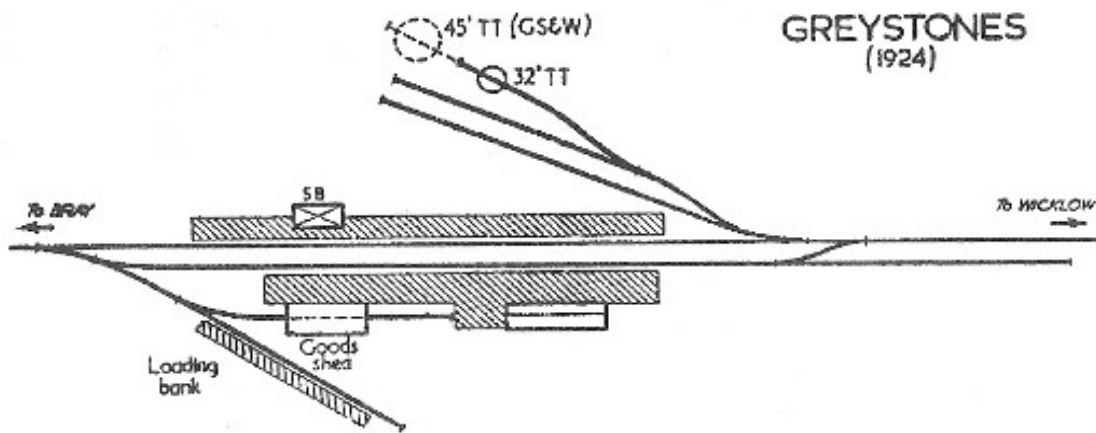
Greystones Station

Greystones Station itself was designed by George Wilkinson, who also designed the stations at Bray, Harcourt Street, Wicklow and Kilcoole among others, and was famous as a designer of Poor Houses and Lunatic Asylums throughout the country. It was built by Messrs. Crowe and Sons, whose tender of £3,000 was accepted in April 1855 for the building of Greystones and Wicklow stations.



Greystones Station, 1880 - 1914 (Lawrence Collection)

Greystones Station was the first station to be electrified, by the Greystones Electric Light and Power Company, in June 1921. It cost £250. The new turn table was built in 1914 for £390, and in 1918 a new creosoting plant was built in Ennis's Lane.



Greystones Station Plan (after Ernest Sheperd)

Changes

The line was re-named The Dublin and South-East Railway in 1907, and became part of the Great Southern Railway in 1925. The D&KR was nominally independent until this point. On 1st January 1945 CIE came into being, which took over public transport on railways and roads in the country.

The Morrissey Report of 1948 found that the road system in Ireland was very extensive, but it would create a heavy burden on rate-payers if all freight was moved on the roads. The passenger rail service was inadequate and infrequent, and should be changed to lighter trains. Branch lines should never be removed, as they were an integral part of the infrastructure of the country. Also, the locomotives as a whole were extremely old. CIE was re-structured in 1950.

A further report was commissioned in 1956-57 by Frank Lemass, General Manager of CIE, and this was used as a reason for wholesale reduction of rail services. On 1st January 1959 the Harcourt Street line was closed. Kilcoole and Newcastle Stations were closed, as well as nine others in 1964 and Greystones was closed for freight. In 1965 the turntable at Greystones was removed.

In 1970 the McKinsey Report was commissioned, and its most telling point was that the railway passenger system was too slow and cumbersome, and that diesel engines were unsuitable for suburban working.

Today

The Shuttle to Bray has gone. Greystones has no resident Station Master. The station is closed for most of the time. Only the Wicklow and Wexford trains now stop. Will Greystones Station be in use for much longer?

[Note: since this paper was written it has been decided to continue the DART line as far as Greystones. This may revitalise the station.]

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Dargan's Obituary (Published 15 February 1867)

THE LATE WILLIAM DARGAN

William Dargan died on Thursday, the 7th inst., at his residence, Fitzwilliam -square, in this city. Born in the county of Carlow, early in the present century, having received a fair education he was placed in the office of a surveyor. He was subsequently appointed to the post of surveyor for his native county; but this he did not retain for any time, from a feeling that he could never in that position be able to advance himself as he thought he should do were he free to do the best he could with his talents. Under Telford he was employed on the Great Holyhead Road, the successful execution of which marked him as fitted to be entrusted with the construction of works of greater magnitude. The stupendous docks at Liverpool soon after gave further evidence of his skill in engineering works. By William Dargan the work of forming the Ulster Canal as a means of communication between Lough Erne and Belfast, was carried out. The Railways in this country with one or two exceptions, were constructed by Dargan, and we are informed that at the time of the Industrial Exhibition in 1853, he had on hands contracts amounting to nearly two millions sterling. To enable the Exhibition Committee to erect a suitable building, Mr Dargan advanced £30,000, and further sums required to fully carry out the work, which before the opening amounted to close on £100,000. The profits realized by the Exhibition fell short of the expenditure by £20,000, which loss, as arranged, fell on Mr Dargan. In recognition of his services, and as a token of national gratitude for his patriotism and disinterestedness, a public meeting was held, from which resulted the collection of £6,000, and a grant from Government, by which the Irish National Gallery was founded, and a fine bronze statue to this "Illustrious Irishman" erected in front thereof on Leinster Lawn. Mr Dargan was a thorough man of business, fulfilling to the letter every one of the numerous engagements into which he would enter, he thereby secured the respect of all with whom he had dealings. He was several times pressed upon to enter Parliament, but could not be prevailed on to do so. He was also honoured with the offer of a baronetcy, but this also he refused. In him the labouring classes have lost a warm friend, as his endeavour always through life was to elevate and improve the condition of the humble workman. Mr Dargan's death will be sincerely regretted by all classes and creeds. The remains of the deceased were conveyed to their resting place in Prospect Cemetery, Glasnevin, and interred in a vault in the "O'Connell Circle." The coffin was of highly polished oak, bearing a burnished shield, on which was engraved:

WILLIAM DARGAN
Died 7th February, 1867,
Aged 68 years

The Kerry Experience

By Gwen McNiff

When we set off from Greystones on Thursday morning in April for our weekend in Kerry the snows were on the Wicklow hills. But we were going south and to the semi tropical climes of the south west coast. Little did we know we were headed into days of fierce winds, rain, cold and hailstones but stout hearted lot that we were it didn't stop us from doing anything we planned except for a boat journey on the lake.

We broke the journey in Roscrea to meet our guide to the castle and Damer House where work is still in progress following years of neglect. This lovely old house, early 18th century, has survived being a school and the offices of a bacon factory and the local commitment has achieved much. One of the interesting facts that emerged from this house was that at that time meals were not in dining rooms but rather people had their meals served in the bedrooms and as it was a bitterly cold house they had the right idea.



Damer House, Roscrea

We arrived early evening into Killarney where secretary Aileen Short, knowing how much we all liked the touch of luxury to which we could easily become accustomed, had booked our party into the warm delights of the Great Southern Hotel.

On the Friday morning we piled into our coach where driver Paul looked after us all like a guardian angel and drove to Muckross where we met up with our guide and local historian Gerry O'Leary. There in a howling gale we heard about the O'Learys, McCarthys and O'Donoghues buried there and the four poets who lie there - *Aogan O'Rahilly, Eoin Ruadh O'Suilleabhain, Geoffrey O'Donoghue and Piaras Firtear*.

In the cloisters we heard about the Yew tree that dates from 1440 and still stands there. We looked forward to the shelter ahead of us at Muckross House and one irreverent member was heard to sigh "that old Friary was a pain, I'm frozen and right now don't care how many McCarthys are buried there".

We toured Muckross House which is continually being improved and heard about the Vincent family who gave the house to the nation. The furniture is gradually being assembled by the Office of Public Works and hand painted silk wall covering in the billiard room was brought

THE KERRY EXPERIENCE

from China. Perhaps it's the little things that stick in the mind. I can hear Lily Flood's voice as she looked at the bed in the master bedroom with its piles of pillows, as people at the time slept sitting propped up. Her comment "What else would you expect, full of indigestion".



Muckross House

After lunch it was off to Ross Castle which has opened to the public in recent times and where an enormous amount of restoration work has been carried out. This 15th century fortress of the O'Donoghue Ross chieftains with its fortified bawn, curtain walls and towers was most interesting. It has everything a good castle should have, a murder hole, a garderobe and a musicians' gallery. The small details are fascinating, the doors and windows on pivotal hinges and the fact that special tools had to be made to create the oak roof of adzed timbers which are pegged with dowels.



Ross Castle

The account of the construction of the vaulted roof on the bed chamber is a lesson in medieval building techniques. It was built on huge wickerwork mats which were woven in situ. The plaster which was lime and sand was mixed with coarse animal hair except for the final layer which had no hair.

Both here and at Muckross House the guides were excellent but they will need to become fiercer towards people touching the ancient

furniture especially in Ross Castle where they did not object to 16th century chests being

opened. The guide mentioned that a toddler had leaped onto the 17th century bed and bedding.

As the boat trip on the lake was cancelled Gerry O'Leary took us around the fairly modern cathedral in Killarney and pointed out the local school where half the civil service in Dublin appears to have obtained their staff.

Evenings in Killarney were leisurely, good dinners followed by evening strolls, visits to the local pubs for some in search of craic and music or get together in the lounge. The energetic made full use of the pool and sauna.

After breakfast on Saturday we took off for Tralee where we had a full day planned. First to the Ashe Memorial Hall which now houses the County Museum and a reconstructed medieval Tralee when it was the seat of power of the Anglo Norman Fitzgeralds. We trundled through the ancient streets experiencing the sights sounds and smells. The museum up stairs could have kept us occupied for much longer but our itinerary called. We were bound for Blennerville, and its restored Windmill, on a steam train.



For society member Claude McFarland this was the highlight of the weekend as he has a lifelong interest in steam trains and is a member of the Rail Preservation Society. For him there was the honour of driving up front.

The windmill is awe inspiring and the work that has been done magnificent. It has developed talents and craftsmanship that had either gone underground or were waiting to be revived. Sadly that wind again spoiled things a bit as the sails couldn't be freed as the roof might have blown off. But a man passionately in love with what he is doing took us through all the stages of what happens when a mill is working.

There too we also read the sad stories of the poor who left Ireland from Blennerville for the new worlds and so often did not arrive.

Later we braved the driving rain to visit Ardfert Cathedral and Friary. Although most of it is closed to visitors our guide Gerry O'Leary brought it and the Friary a short distance away alive for us. As Gerry told it these long gone people are just around the corner and we wouldn't have been too surprised to meet them on our travels. We drove and looked at the sea but gave Banna strand a miss as the cosy delights of our Killarney base beckoned.

THE KERRY EXPERIENCE

All too soon it was Sunday and time to go but we had lots to see yet before we returned home.

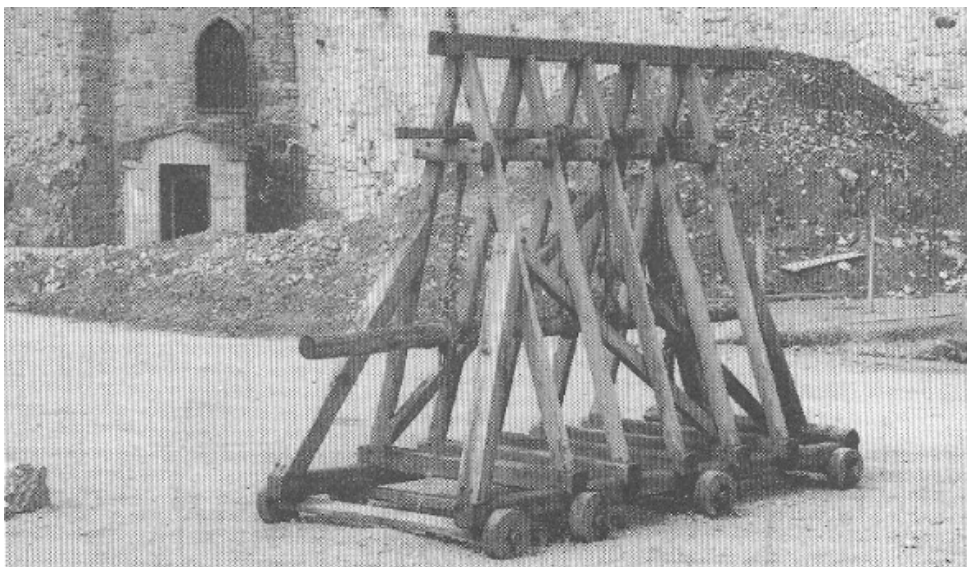
We were off to Crag Cave in Castleisland and it is one of the wonders of Ireland and even more so when we heard that all the development work was done by the family on whose land it was discovered, with no public funding.



Inside part of Crag Caves

Father O'Shea, brother of Greystones based Brendan O'Shea, led us there where Margaret Greany made us welcome and provided coffee. Vincent a member of the family led us on an enthralling tour.

Our final visit was to John's Castle in Limerick where once again it has been realised what a heritage we have neglected over the years. Work is ongoing here with interpretation of the life of a 13th century castle. Pre-Norman houses have been excavated and there is the usual audio visual show. When work is completed in some years it will be well worth another visit.



Replica Siege Engine, John's Castle, Limerick

And so our lovely few days came to an end. Aileen is already investigating where we will go in 1995. She says we are one of the few societies that have such an away trip. Poor things don't know what they are missing.



A comfort stop



Leaving the Tour Bus

The Landing of Arms and Ammunition at Kilcoole, County Wicklow by the Irish National Volunteers in 1914

By James Scannell

Background

In 1914 this country was on the verge of a civil war over the enactment of the Home Rule Act of 1912 under which it was intended to establish a parliament for Ireland with limited powers which would sit in Dublin. Passage of the Act was the high point in the parliamentary career of John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the constitutional face of Irish Nationalism. Opposed to the introduction of this legislation were the Unionists who wished to retain Ireland's link with Britain which had been created with the passage of the Act of Union in 1800 and who were fearful that the Dublin parliament would come under the undue influence of the Roman Catholic Church.

Home Rule had been first moved by Parnell in 1885 when he managed to persuade Gladstone to introduce a Home Rule Bill for Ireland but this was defeated in the House of Commons. This legislation had the effect of polarising Irish politics into two distinct opposing factions - the Unionists who wished to retain the link with Britain and the Nationalists who wished to terminate that link. A side effect of the Home Rule question was that it united various shades of Protestantism which previously had shown no degree of unity but faced with the threat of being ruled by a parliament which they perceived would be under the control of the Roman Catholic Church, they quickly buried their differences to provide a united front.



John Redmond



Edward Carson

The defeat of the First Home Rule Bill in 1886, the fall of Parnell in 1890 followed by his loss as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party coupled with the division of that party into two separate factions when a new leader could not be agreed upon, all brought some comfort to Unionists North and South and this was heightened by the failure of the Second Home Rule Bill in 1893.

At local level however Nationalists began to hold majorities on local government boards in the South but in the North the Unionists still held the balance of power as they did in key locations in the South.

In 1900, John Redmond, a supporter and follower of Parnell, became leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and under him the two disunited factions were united into one. Over the next decade the party supported the Liberals in government who brought many reforms and enacted legislation for Ireland under a policy known as 'killing Home Rule with kindness'. But Redmond never forgot the aim of Home Rule and in 1910 when the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party was needed by

the Liberals to remain in office, Redmond extracted a promise from them that they would enact a Home Rule Bill for Ireland.

When this became known, Unionists were outraged that again their worst fears were realised. Dublin barrister Edward Carson was selected to lead the Unionist campaign against Home Rule and very quickly great support for the Unionist Cause was generated. The final obstacle to the successful enactment of the Home Rule Bill was removed when the House of Lords lost the power of veto on legislation enacted by the House of Commons. From 1911 they could only reject legislation three times or delay its passage by two years after which it became law.

In September 1913 addressing some 50,000 members of the Orange Order and Unionist Clubs at Craigavon House, Sir Edward Carson warned all those present that they must be prepared for the moment when Home Rule became law and to prepare themselves to govern the Protestant province of Ulster.

Behind the scenes more militant members of the Unionist cause had discovered an ancient law which allowed the raising of a militia to protect the Union, and since Home Rule could be considered as a threat to the Union, sympathetic magistrates lost no time in approving applications for local militia to be raised and trained.



Herbert Asquith

While Unionists now bided their time, their worst nightmare was realised on April 11th 1912 when Prime Minister Asquith introduced the Third Home Rule in the House of Commons. Immediately the Unionist campaign of opposition got under way with dramatic urgency. On September 28th 1912, thousands of Unionists in Ireland and elsewhere signed the 'Ulster Covenant' which was a firm declaration by each person who signed it that they would do all in their power, by force if necessary, to defeat any attempt at imposing Home Rule.

In November 1913, the drift towards possible civil war over Home Rule came nearer with the creation of the Irish National Volunteers in Dublin. This organisation was infiltrated by members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood who saw it as a means of using force to remove the British from Ireland. The supporters of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party distanced themselves from the Irish National

Volunteers who were formally inaugurated at a meeting in Dublin on November 25th 1913. The formation of a rival body to the Ulster Volunteers came as a shock to the Dublin Castle authorities who, fearful that the two organisations might engage in hostilities against each other and thus provoke a civil war, decided to try and control the situation through the imposition of a prohibition on the import of arms and ammunition into Ireland. This prohibition was invoked in early December 1913 and it had the counter effect of forcing both organisations to obtain their arms and ammunition by engaging in arms smuggling.

1914 was to be an eventful year. In Ulster the Provisional Government prepared to seize power when Home Rule was enacted while the Government made plans to suppress the Provisional Government should they try to seize power even though it was known that the Ulster Volunteer Force would go into action.

In March 1914 both the Irish Parliamentary Party and British Government received a rude awakening when an incident known as the 'Curragh Mutiny' occurred. In the principal military base in Ireland a large

**Astounding Action by
Officers in Ireland**
NEARLY 100 RESIGNATIONS
**Conference with the King, and
Activity in Downing Street**
**IS IT A MUTINY OF
OFFICERS?**

THE LANDING OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION AT KILCOOLE

number of officers made it clear that they would resign their commissions rather than lead their troops against the Provisional Government in Ulster if ordered to do so. The incident was very quickly glossed over as a misunderstanding and no action was taken against those officers who had indicated their intention not to follow orders.

But a greater event was yet to happen. The Ulster Volunteers, now being unable to obtain weapons and ammunition from friendly sources in Britain had decided to smuggle in one massive consignment. Arms and ammunition were purchased in Germany and then shipped around the British Isles in time for a landing in Larne, County Antrim on April 23rd/24th 1914. On the night of the landing the Ulster Volunteer Force carried out a massive mobilisation exercise using some 700 vehicles to carry away the consignment of 35,000 rifles and 3.5M rounds of ammunition. Even though Larne was cut off from the outside world for the duration of the operation, no police, army or coastguards attempted to interfere with the operation nor was any subsequent action taken against those involved.

Planning



Erskine Childers

This was the final straw for the supporters of the Irish National Volunteers, but it was a London based committee of Anglo - Irish people which had been established on an informal basis which was to take the action resulting in the Howth and Kilcoole operations.

This meeting took place on May 8th 1914 in Grosvenor Road, London at which the recent Larne landing was one of the topics discussed. It was agreed that the INV needed arms and ammunition and that these could be obtained in Europe. The problem was how to get them from Europe to Ireland without the authorities finding out.

One of those present, Mary Spring Rice, later contacted her friends the Childers and suggested to them that arms and ammunition could be smuggled into Ireland in a fishing smack. Ms. Rice had in mind a fishing smack, the 'Santa Cruz', which lay at Foynes near her home but following an inspection Erskine Childers decided to use his own yacht

'Asgard' which was laid up in Wales as well as Connor O'Brien's yacht 'Kelpie' to smuggle the arms and ammunition into Ireland.

The plan to smuggle in this vital consignment was now formulated. Bulmar Hobson, head of the J.R.B, examined a number of possible landing sites north and south of Dublin and finally selected the two that were to feature in the operation - Howth, County Dublin and Kilcoole, County Wicklow. The initial plan was to land part of the consignment at night on the eve of the Howth landing at Kilcoole, which due to its remoteness some 20 miles from Dublin made it an ideal landing place.

The final plan which evolved was in 3 parts:

1. Arms and ammunition were to be purchased as quietly as possible on the Continent.
2. The arms and ammunition were then to be transported to Ireland in great secrecy.



Mary Spring Rice and Mary Childers

3. The consignment was to be landed in Ireland without hindrance and then distributed to the Irish National Volunteer members as soon as possible.

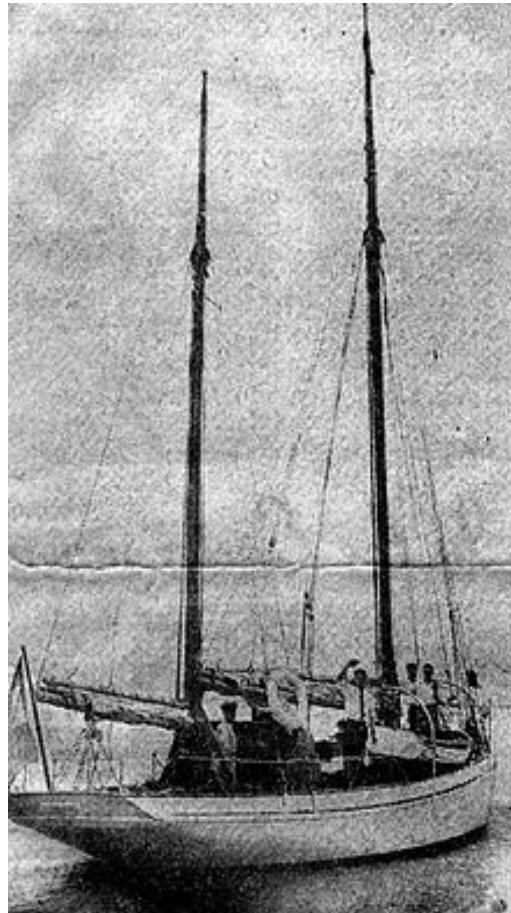
For reasons of security the entire plan was known only by Bulmar Hobson, Professor MacNeill, Sir Roger Casement and Erskine Childers. One final alteration was that the arms on the 'Kelpie' were to be transhipped to a steam yacht 'Chotah' which was then to land that consignment in Kilcoole.

Execution

At the end of May, the Home Rule Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons, but it was not sent to the King to be signed into law. At the same time Darrell Figgis was sent to Europe with Childers where in Hamburg they managed to purchase 1500 Model 1871/84 single shot 11mm Jaeger rifles which were surplus to the requirements of the German Army which had re-equipped with more modern weapons. Sellers Moritz Magnus did not have the weapons in Germany - they were stored in Antwerp - and Figgis had to travel there to select the best of them and then recruit local people to clean and prepare them for shipment to Germany. The purchase price was £1500 and this included 45 boxes of ammunition, each box containing 1000 rounds. Childers in the meantime had returned to start his end of the operation and at the end of June both the 'Kelpie' and 'Asgard' sailed from Ireland independently of each other and met at Cowes on July 9th where the final briefing on the operation took place.

Collection date for the cargo was Sunday July 12th off the Dutch coast and the next day, July 10th, both vessels sailed in order to make their meeting place on time. In the meantime Figgis has repacked the rifles and shipped them by rail to Germany without the Customs authorities being aware of what the consignment was. In Hamburg, Figgis chartered the tug 'Gladiator' and had to endure several hours of anxiety waiting for the ammunition to arrive which just came as they were about to cast off. Another hitch was the fact that the cargo had to be cleared by a Customs Official before departure but it was discovered that a pilot could exercise this function, so a sympathetic individual was obtained who did this and accepted a bribe from Figgis, who pretended to be a Mexican, and the cleared cargo, which all on board including the pilot knew to be arms and not as stated on the manifest, was now officially on the way from Germany to Ireland.

In the early hours of Sunday July 12th the 'Gladiator' sailed for the rendezvous point in the North Sea where Figgis had to wait the arrival of the two vessels. First to arrive was the 'Kelpie' and very quickly its consignment of 600 rifles and 20 boxes of ammunition were loaded and once this process was complete, the 'Kelpie' departed immediately. Later the 'Asgard' arrived and it too was loaded with the balance of the consignment which amounted to 900 rifles and 25,000 rounds of ammunition - on the way to Ireland, 3000 rounds had to be



Asgard

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dumped overboard due to a heavy seas which threatened to swamp the 'Asgard' which lay very low in the water due to the weight of her consignment.

In Ireland the Volunteers had been busy preparing for the landing day and spread so many rumours that the authorities were totally confused. The plan prepared by Childers allowed for 12 days sailing time to reach the rendezvous point in the Irish Sea where they were to meet with another vessel - the steam yacht 'Chotah' into which the arms on the Kelpie were to be loaded. The 'Chotah' was scheduled to bring these arms into Kilcoole on the night of Saturday/Sunday July 25th/26th as a prelude to the Howth operation on Sunday July 26th.

The 'Asgard' meantime was sailing to Ireland independently of the 'Kelpie'. On July 4th the 'Kelpie' arrived in the St. Tudwell's Road and waited in vain for 4 days for the arrival of the 'Chotah'. It never arrived so on Friday July 24th the 'Kelpie' sailed out to meet the 'Chotah' only to discover that it had split its mainsail and so the operation planned for that weekend was cancelled. Orders cancelling the Kilcoole operation were issued but some Volunteers did not receive them in time and that Saturday night - July 25th - the Kilcoole area was subjected to an unusual amount of motor traffic as Volunteers drove around for hour after hour waiting for a shipment to arrive which had been cancelled. This activity was noted by the correspondents of the local newspapers who commented on this, and some assumed that the landing had taken place when in actual fact it had not. After several hours the motorised Volunteers realised that the landing was not going to happen and departed quickly from the area.

On Sunday July 26th the 'Asgard' landed its consignment in Howth unopposed and the landing passed off incident free. However on the way back to Dublin there was a confrontation with the police at Fairview which resulted in a minor melee but the weapons and ammunition were



Howth Harbour

spirited away by those at the rear of the column while those at the head argued with the police.

A detachment of the King's Own Borderers had been mobilised and while returning to Barracks via Bachelor's Walk opened fire on a crowd who were jeering them and this resulted in the deaths of two men and one woman, 35 were wounded; two of those wounded sustained bayonet wounds. While these events were happening in Dublin Connor O'Brien had transhipped his cargo of arms and ammunition to the 'Chotah' which now lay at anchor in Wales and he arrived off Bray head that morning. Rumours that the Volunteers had landed arms along the coast were rife and a large force descended on Dalkey Harbour waiting for the 'Kelpie' to sail in. But when no Volunteers arrived and several hours had elapsed, it dawned on the watchers that they had been duped and they left immediately, leaving a token force to guard the Harbour.

A watch was put on Bray Harbour, Greystones, and in Dun Laoghaire; all vessels at anchor there were boarded and searched but nothing was found. As news about the shootings in Dublin spread down the coast the initial reaction was that the story was a fabrication and yet another rumour put out by the Volunteers, but when special editions of the Dublin newspapers appeared this disbelief changed to one of outrage and horror.



Relatives of Batchlors Walk Casualties

The immediate effect of the successful Howth operation was that coastal surveillance was stepped up and daily the warships 'Liverpool' and 'Forward', which were based in Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire), sailed up and down the coast stopping and searching vessels at random by day and night. At night time, in the absence of radar which had yet to be invented, the vessels swept the seas with their searchlights looking for the vessel which they expected would try and sneak through the blockade under cover of darkness. They did not know that the 'Chotah' was lying at anchor in Wales waiting to carry out the Kilcoole operation.

The strength of the blockade coupled with the guard on the Bray, Greystones and Wicklow harbours gave many supporters of the Irish Volunteers and those who were to take part in the Kilcoole operation great cause for alarm as they believed that the 'Chotah' would be unable to slip through the blockade. At a local level, throughout County Wicklow that week, local Volunteer companies found themselves inundated with people presenting themselves for enlistment such was the outrage people felt over Sunday's shootings in Dublin. Up to this event most people had treated those who had joined the Irish Volunteers with great derision. From a position of poor support and contempt the Irish Volunteers now found themselves the centre of everyone's praise and support and local officers worked long and hard hours dealing with the enlistments.

Internationally Europe was on the brink of the outbreak of World War I and as Britain began to prepare for the eventuality of war, on Wednesday July 29th, the naval blockade of the coast was abandoned with the recall of all available warships to Portsmouth and other British naval bases as the various fleets were placed on a war footing and brought up to strength in preparation for the commencement of hostilities. The seriousness of the situation was demonstrated on Thursday July 30th when all available coastguards were taken from their respective stations and sailed for Portsmouth from Kingstown leaving only a skeleton force

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behind to try and cover the coastline as well as carrying out their normal duties. No replacements were drafted to carry on the coastal surveillance operation so this part of the operation to prevent a further landing of arms by the Irish Volunteers now fell by the wayside.

Landing at Kilcoole

This was the breakthrough that the Irish Volunteers were waiting for and Sean Fitzgibbon, the officer in charge of the Kilcoole landing, issued orders for the mobilisation of those concerned



Holy Faith Convent

with this operation for Saturday August 1st with great security being maintained. Remarkably, the Saturday August 1st issues of 'The Wicklow People' and 'The Wicklow Newsletter' contained accounts from various correspondents about the previous Saturday's activities in the Kilcoole Area, speculating as to whether or not arms had been landed. But no one in authority seems to have realised the importance of these news items which clearly indicated that Kilcoole was to be a landing site and that the previous week's events had been in effect a dress rehearsal for the real thing.

On Saturday August 1st the Volunteers selected for this operation assembled with their respective motorised transport in Dublin and headed off to various spots in County Wicklow on an individual basis spending the afternoon seeing the sites or taking it easy pending the arrival of nightfall. Road maps which had been prepared by a Sean Kenny in Bray gave the routes from Dublin to Kilcoole and in the village itself a Mr. Foley had made arrangements with the Holy Faith Convent that vehicles not directly in use during the operation could be parked there. Some boatmen, some as far away as Bray, had sailed down the coast and had their vessels hidden in readiness for the arrival of the 'Chotah' which had sailed earlier that day.

As darkness fell, the Volunteers began to converge on Kilcoole and carefully it was isolated from the outside world lest details of the operation about to unfold leaked to the authorities. Telegraphic communications were disconnected and pickets were placed on all the approach roads to warn those down at the beach of the arrival of the authorities. As Volunteers arrived in motorised vehicles, they dismounted and made their way on foot to the beach while the vehicles were parked in the grounds of the Holy Faith Convent. The only vehicles which were brought down to the beach were those forming the convoy to bring the arms to Dublin and the size of this convoy has been quoted by some sources as:

3 motor lorries

6 motor cars

12 motor cycles with sidecars

While Kilcoole had an R.I.C. barracks, this did not feature in the night's operation and it is not known if those attached to it were told to keep clear of the operation; kept clear of it themselves as possibly they supported the aims of the Volunteers, or simply decided due to the numbers of Volunteers in the village to keep out of the way, and mind their own business. Down at the beach the Volunteers lay hidden pending the arrival of the 'Chotah' and after a while a vessel was seen coming into Ballygannon Point and began to flash a series of pre-arranged signals which indicated that it was the 'Chotah'. Replies were given from on-shore and the 'Chotah' came in as near as possible to the beach to facilitate unloading. Once in

position, a number of small boats which had sailed down the coast for this operation went out to the 'Chotah' where those on board began to hand down the rifles and ammunition which were then ferried ashore.

As these boats came in Volunteers waded through the surf to unload them and to place the arms and ammunition in the waiting motor convoy. Backwards and forwards these boats went until the cargo was unloaded. However all this activity had not gone unnoticed. To the south of Kilcoole a fireworks display in Wicklow provided a welcome backdrop but the exchange of light signals had been seen by two police men, Constables Dalton and Webb from the Greystones R.I.C. Station who had the task of patrolling the railway line from Greystones to Kilcoole and back. During their patrol they spotted the 'Chotah' lying at anchor in Ballygannon Point which they knew was not an anchorage point normally used and they decided to investigate further. As they got nearer they saw the exchange of light signals and this immediately aroused their suspicions

They decided to head for Kilcoole Railway Station from where they could contact their superiors in Greystones as they were aware that the Kilcoole Station was a good mile from where they were. As they neared the station they were surrounded by local men, armed with batons who indicated to them that they should proceed with them to Kilcoole Village. The two policemen protested but when revolvers were produced they realised that resistance was futile and went under protest with the Volunteers to Kilcoole Village where they were kept under guard. In the village they noticed that the place was full of Irish Volunteers and that some type of operation was in progress at the same time noting the absence of the local inhabitants.

By 3 am on the Sunday morning the landing operation was over and the 'Chotah' sailed off. On the beach, the Irish Volunteers lined up four deep and arming themselves with any of weapons left over, marched up to the Village proper singing 'A Nation Once Again', 'Clare's Dragoons' and 'God Save Ireland' where they joined their transport vehicles and then returned to their respective destinations. The last act of the rearguard party as they left the village was to release the two policemen and to collect the pickets which had been placed on the approaches to warn of the arrival of the authorities should the operation have been detected while in progress.

While the convoy was on the way back to Dublin the two released policemen found that communications with the outside world had been cut off and it was left to Constable Webb to board the 3.30 am train to Bray where on arrival in that town he raced up from the railway station along the Quinsboro Road to the police barracks which at that time lay beside what is now part of the Royal Hotel. He sounded the alarm and immediately the police in the district went on the alert, but by the time the check points had been put in place the convoy with the arms and ammunition was back in Dublin.

On arrival at St. Enda's in Rathfarnham it was discovered that a vehicle was missing and immediately another lorry was sent out to locate the missing one, which was located on the outskirts of Bray where it had broken down. Those in this vehicle had the presence of mind to hide the cargo in neighbouring houses and with the arrival of the rescue vehicle the cargo was retrieved and transported to Dublin for redistribution.

From St. Enda's the arms and ammunition were distributed to the various Volunteer units. Preference was given to those individuals who were I.R.B. members or supporters, as Pearse did not trust followers of John Redmond who wanted the arms to be sent to Belfast to protect the Catholics there from sectarian attacks.

Conclusion

Thus ended the Kilcoole operation. By August 4th 1914 Britain was embroiled in World War I and no further gun running operations could be mounted by the Irish Volunteers. Interestingly enough no action was taken by the authorities against Childers, Connor O'Brien or Sir Thomas Myles or anyone else who took part in either this operation or Howth.



St. Enda's

By the middle of September the Irish National Volunteers had split into two distinct groups - the Irish Volunteers who decided not to assist the British for the duration of World War I and who took part in the Easter Rising of 1916 with members of the Irish Citizens Army, using as part of their armoury, the weapons and ammunition which had been landed in Howth and Kilcoole in 1914.

The other group - the National Volunteers - supported John Redmond and his belief that by enlisting in the British armed forces, Home Rule

would be granted at the end of hostilities. This never happened. The Home Rule Bill received the Royal Assent in September 1914, was immediately suspended for the duration of World War I and at the end of that conflict was repealed by the Government of Ireland Act (1920) which allowed for the partition of the island and laid the foundations for the establishment of two separate states within the island - the modern day Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland which remains part of the United Kingdom.

Today on the beach at Kilcoole, a stone marker reminds the visitor of the events that took place there in 1914.

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The Old Corn Mill, Killincarrig

By Sean Daly

(As written for National Heritage Day on 13 September 1992.)

Introduction

Prior to 1784 Irish agriculture was mostly orientated towards grazing.

In the early 1700's riots occurred because of chronic food shortages. The Irish Government resolved to redress the imbalance in food production and in 1784, the Chancellor, Foster, introduced a law promoting tillage. This was done by giving grants or 'bounties' for the export of grain. To discourage imports a sliding scale of import duties was devised. These levies ranged from 10d a barrel down to 2d a barrel in times of scarcity on the home market. The whole system was biased in favour of the developing Irish economy and was an immediate success. Almost all the grain was sold to England.

Foster's Corn Law, as it was known, produced an agricultural revolution in Ireland. During the French wars, particularly between 1800 and 1815, prices for grain rocketed. Farmers prospered and corn mills sprang up all over the country. Bogs were reclaimed and tillage took place even on the thin layers of soil that covered the mountain sides.

The Royal Dublin Society was established with the aim of promoting improved methods of agriculture, encouraging the development of more modern implements, techniques of crop rotation, fertilizer usage etc. The Society surveyed the country on a county basis, assessing developments and pointing out deficiencies. In his survey of County Wicklow carried out in 1800, the Scottish expert Frazer noted only one corn mill, that at Newtownmountkennedy, and bemoaned the lack of mills in a county with such excellent water resources.

However by 1840 the Ordnance Survey maps clearly show, there are 4 corn mills near Greystones, one at Bellevue Demesne, one at Kilcoole, one at Newtown and one at Killincarrig. All were powered by water.

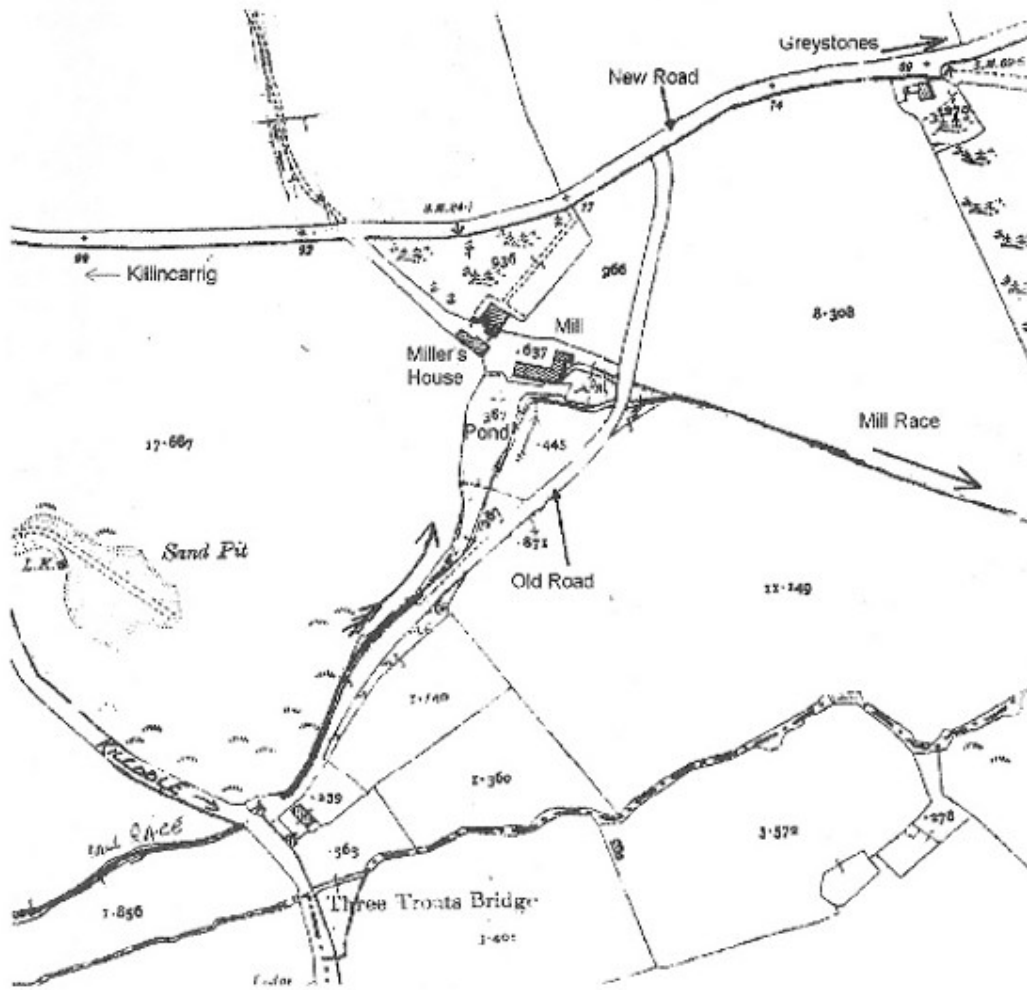
Killincarrig Mill

The earliest printed reference to Killincarrig mill is in the 1837 Lewis Topographical Directory under the heading of 'Killincarrig'. Killincarrig village, it was noted had 168 inhabitants living in 23 houses. 'Killincarrig House' was the seat of Arthur Jones Esq., who 'has an extensive mill here'.

Later the mill was known as Courtney's Mill and it eventually passed into the Burnaby Estate. It now belongs to Wicklow County Council. The mill is the last remaining of the above four mentioned and with its ivy-clad shell is a haunting monument to a period of prosperity and change in the local economy. Through neglect it is now reduced to a dangerous state as witnessed by the enamel warning sign nailed to a nearby chestnut tree. The sign, itself an interesting relic of the Burnaby Estate; it states:

"Warning, this old mill run is in a dangerous condition. The public is warned that any person going beyond this fence does so at his/her own risk. The owners will not accept Liability for any damage suffered by such person as a result.

The Trustees Burnaby Estate"



From 1974 update of 1909 survey

Without access to the papers of the Jones Estate we have no details of the workings of the mill, how many people were employed there, how much was produced, prices paid etc In terms of size, it would have been a great deal smaller than say the large mills of Cork and Dublin or of the large towns such as Carlow which in 1809 produced 120,000 barrels of grain. The mill at Clonmel is described by Burke in his *Industrial History of Ireland* as being as big as a large English factory at the time.

Nevertheless, the mill at Killincarrig is by any standards a substantial building, dominating the local landscape. The structure as it stands today reveals a basement / ground floor and four upper storeys partially covered by a hipped slate roof. There are numerous windows, some being blocked up. Most of the timbers are said to have been removed during the War for fire wood. There is no trace of any of the machinery. Outside one can clearly see where the giant water wheel was located. The water course which powered the mill can be traced, (see map) In the North east corner of the Northern 'wing' there is what appears to be a brick chimney stack extending from the ground floor to above the roof.

The birth of the mill probably occurred as a result of the stimulus of Fosters Corn Laws. The cause and time of its demise is less clear but is undoubtedly linked with a severe and prolonged drop in prices and/or with a change of ownership.

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1845 terminated the preferential treatment given to Irish corn on the British market (Irish exports of grain in 1840 to Britain was 2.3 million barrels). In the

second half of the last Century; the British market was steadily opened up to foreign corn and this steady decline in Irish exports was accentuated by the availability of large quantities of cheap corn after the 1850s from America. The decline had in fact started as far back as 1815 on the cessation of the French Wars with prices dropping by 100% in one year.

Moreover from 1835 onwards tillage was virtually abandoned in favour of the less labour intensive grazing. Furthermore with the application of more scientific methods of manufacture to the industry such as the roller system in 1883 'the old- fashioned local mills were forced to close their doors' (Burke). Between 1910 and 1914 huge Port Mills sprang up in Britain. Mass production led to surplus stock being dumped on the Irish Market at prices below production costs here.

Notwithstanding those negative developments, in 1907 the Irish milling industry employed 5,000 people with a total output of £7,500,000. Some indication of the layout of the mill may be gleaned from the accompanying illustration of Garrylough mill in County Wexford and from the cutaway section that follows later (reproduced from Dr. A.M. O'Sullivan's Garrylough



Garrylough Mill (c) Jonathan Billinger

Mill and the General Developments of Water Mills in County Wexford (J.W.H.S.)).

Garrylough is similar in size to Killincarrig with our mill having an extra storey. The wet or green corn was dried when smokeless heat from an anthracite furnace on the ground floor passed through special perforated tiles through the spread out corn. This might account for the chimney on the north wing.

The ground floor contained the main mill gearing supported by a heavy timber frame. A chain sack hoist transports incoming grain to the upper storage floors. The newly ground grain is gathered into chutes from the grinding stones overhead. The first floor contains the mill stones operated from the main gearing below via spur and pinion wheels.

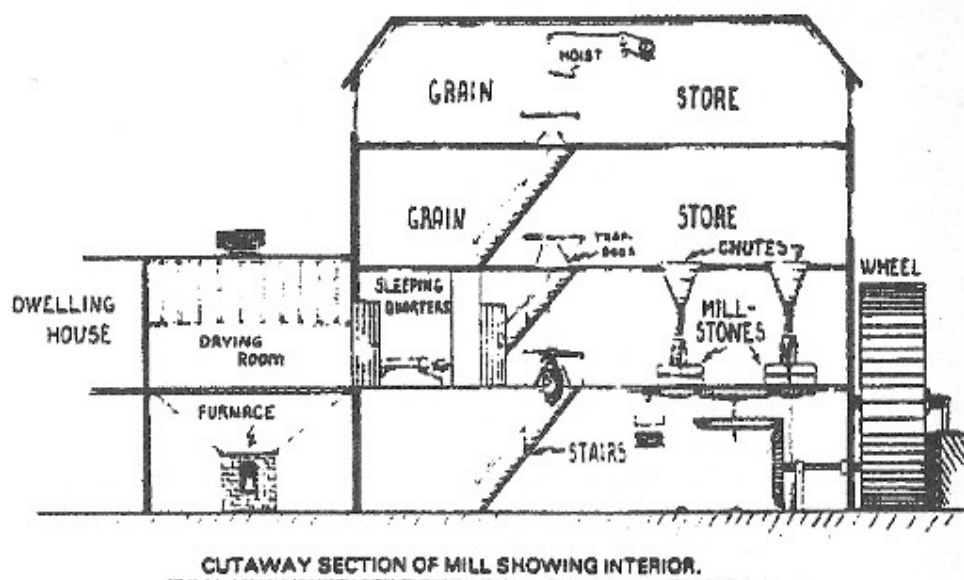


Diagram from JWHS

The second floor contains the hoppers that feed the mill stones.

The upper floors are for storage, they being better ventilated and further removed from rodents.

South of the mill - towards Kilcoole - where the ground is now heavily overgrown was located a specially constructed mill pond where the incoming water was controlled and directed towards the mill wheel. The water feeding this pond came from a diversion of Three Trout's River. The path-way that is now the right of way from Three Trout's Bridge (Bridge House) to the road at Millbrook Nurseries runs alongside this watercourse and may have been built as a dyke to contain the water. Having passed through the water wheel eastward the water passed through two arches five metres long approx by two metre wide. These are still in apparently good condition. Refuse is now dumped in the briar-covered path of this once vibrant stream.

The mill is not 'listed' as being of a relatively recent date it does not qualify. It is now seen by the Council as a financial burden. Its future is uncertain.

[Note added later: it is now in private ownership.]

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Mr Joe Hayes for his assistance in facilitating research at the County Library, Greystones and Dr Justin O'Sullivan, Author and Curator of the Agricultural Museum, Johnstown Castle, Wexford.

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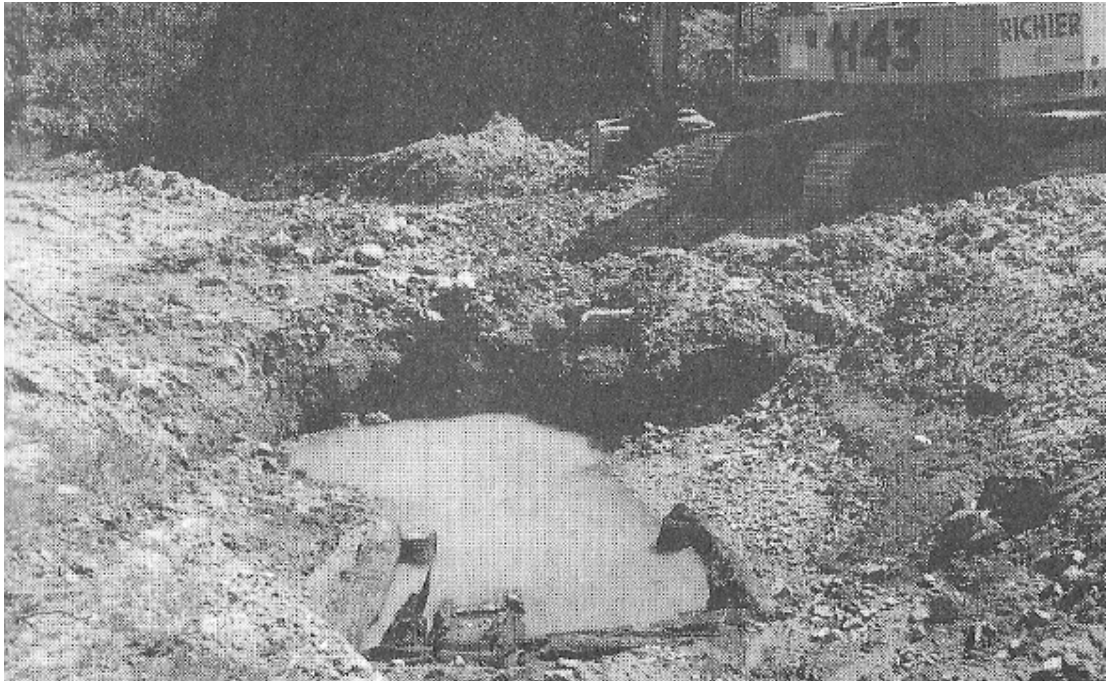
Horizontal Water Mill at Newcastle

Revd. Canon Robert Jennings

In June 1993 when Mr. 'Torry' Stringer of Leabeg, Newcastle, was excavating land with his track machine on behalf of Mr. Andy Byrne of Newcastle Upper, Co Wicklow, the bucket struck timber beams some six feet below the surface of the ground. The work was in connection with the construction and layout of a Par 3 Golf Course on Mr. Byrne's farm.

Work on that particular area was discontinued until further investigation confirmed that what had been so unexpectedly uncovered was an ancient Horizontal Water Mill.

The Board of Works was contacted by the Byrne family and they sent several experts to examine the remains of the mill and confirmed that a horizontal water mill of over 1,000 years of age had indeed been found.



Excavation at the 13th green

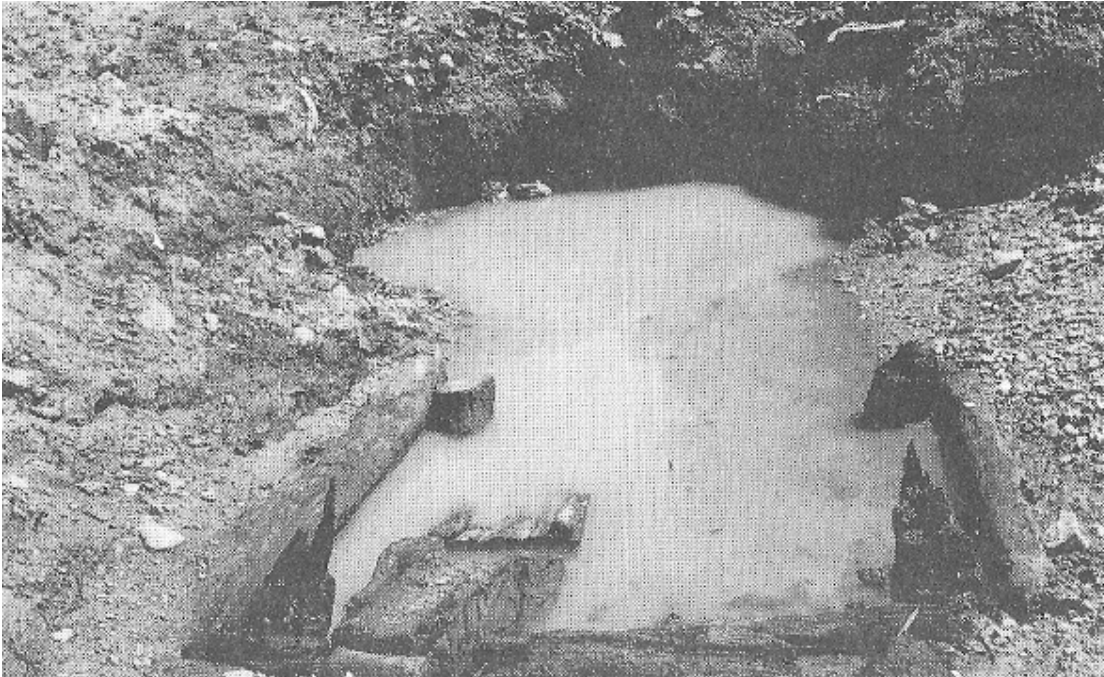
The site of the mill is on private land in the townland of Upper Newcastle. Starting from Newcastle Church of Ireland Church, follow the old historical road over the new bridge on the Little Vartry river for 300 yards. Turn right at the sign "Castlebrook Crafts" and follow the private road for a further 330 yards which leads into the yard of the Byrne family's homestead. Here you cross over the river, and continue west along the river until you reach the 13th green of the golf course at the entrance of the Big Glen Wood. At this point you may be disappointed as the horizontal water mill now lies buried once more under the 13th green of the Glen Mill Golf Course. The mill lies quite close to the river at the bottom of a steep glen covered in hazel, ash, holly, willow, beech, alder and many other species of trees. The upper side of the glen is covered with extensive bracken and briars.

What was revealed at this site were the substantive oak beams of the lower mill house which housed the wooden mill wheel. A few of the paddles were also recovered and resemble in size and shape the ladle-like blade of an oar. The wooden chute which directed the water into the blades was also clearly seen. This wooden chute for the water flow appeared to have been constructed from a single split oak tree cut and chiselled out to form a deep channel. The timber of the water chute narrowed considerably as it reached the blades of the water wheel thus providing a greater force of water to turn the wheel. Further timbers were roughly

HORIZONTAL WATER MILL AT NEWCASTLE

excavated back towards the river along the mill race which had originally been constructed to take the necessary flow of water from the river. A piece of granite from the outside edge of one of the millstones was also recovered. All the remains of the mill lay buried under wet peaty soil and gravel.

The Board of Works, having closely inspected the site and the remains of the mill, said it was one of the least damaged mills known to them. They took samples of the oak timbers and paddles so that they can accurately date its construction by the most modern and accurate method of dendrochronology.



Mill timbers in excavation

They advised that as there was now considerable knowledge of horizontal water mills in Ireland they would not at present be interested in preserving it for viewing. They have taken accurate details of the site so that at some future date it could be excavated once more. The preservation of the wooden mill for over 1,000 years lay in the fact that it was buried in water logged conditions like numerous other wooden objects such as wooden roadways, dugout canoes and household containers that continue to be discovered in similar situations throughout Ireland.

So sadly, on their advice, the remains of the mill were covered in once more. At least those of us privileged to have seen its exposure for a few weeks can confirm its existence with photographs and video, and the parts of it recovered for preservation by the National Museum.

It is also yet another confirmation that around the old medieval town of Newcastle, its ancient castle, old gaol and paved roads, lies a great historic heritage waiting to be explored and uncovered.

The various methods used by man from prehistoric times to the present day for grinding and milling grain, roots, nuts and other hard edible food, is of considerable interest and indeed we have examples of all of them in our own locality. The most primitive of all was the Saddle Quern which as its name suggests was a piece of granite in the shape of a saddle. It was held in the hand and rolled to and fro on the grain on a hollow stone. A number of these have been found around Glendalough and more recently one was found at the Rathdown site outside

Greystones made of granite and weighing 10.9 kg. They may also have been used for other grinding purposes besides food.

From around 500 BC Rotary Querns were used extensively and most households would have had one for their own use. Again, as the name suggests, a round piece of granite approximately 18ins in diameter was rotated by hand on top of a similar stone. The grain was poured into a hole in the top stone and the rotary action ground it into flour. Rotary Querns are found extensively throughout Ireland and a few years ago one was dug up in Calary Bog.

From the beginning of the 7th century in Ireland and with the more extensive growing of grain, it was found necessary to find a method that would be more efficient and that would provide for the growing need of the larger community. It was at this period that the automatic horizontal water mill was first introduced from the continent. This new method was as revolutionary as the invention of the steam engine. The principle involved was that water was diverted from the river by a mill race. This water was directed by a chute to hit paddle-like extension fitted to a wheel. An upright spoke from the wheel was attached to a round mill stone which then rotated on a fixed mill stone underneath. Grain was fed through a hopper into a hole in the top mill stone. A sluice gate in the mill race close to the mill itself was operated to turn on or off the flow of water.

A special method was used to alter the distance between the two mill stones. In order to remove the husks from the grain the distance between the two stones was adjusted to just less than the diameter of the grain. The mill was then operated to remove the husks. The second step was to again adjust the distance between the grinding stones so that it would now grind the grain to flour for making bread.

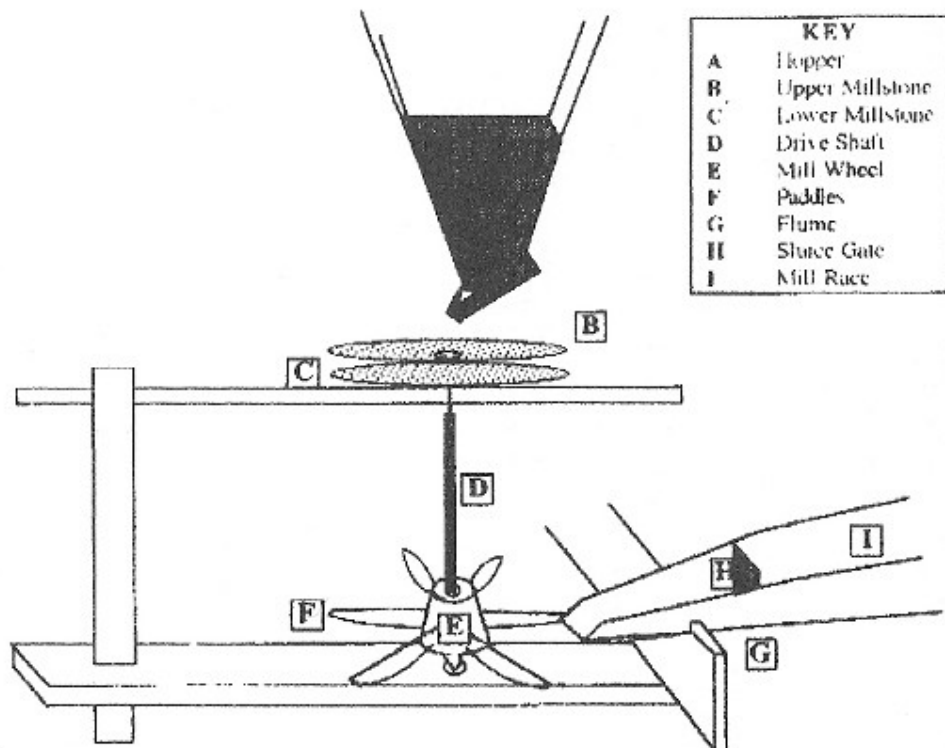


Diagram of horizontal water mill

A number of horizontal water mills have been found throughout Ireland and have remained preserved in the wet bog lands and river sides like the one at Newcastle. All of the Irish horizontal water mills date from 630 AD to 930AD give or take ten years as determined by the most recent scientific method of tree-ring growth known as dendrochronology perfected by Mr. M. Baillie of Queen's University, Belfast.

HORIZONTAL WATER MILL AT NEWCASTLE

In the Irish National Heritage Park near Wexford you can see in working order a reconstructed horizontal water mill based on the example of the Cloontycarthy Mill in Co. Cork dated 833 AD. The later upright water mills which work on the same principal as horizontal mills are more familiar to most of us and can still be seen in many towns and villages throughout Ireland.

The same Little Vartry river that provided the water power for the horizontal mill also provided in more recent times the power for upright water mills at Millbrook House and Oaklawn in Newcastle Village. The track of the mill race can still be traced in the field adjoining the churchyard and also in the field on the other side of the road opposite the old castle ruins.

An extract of the Corn Tithes of Newcastle for the year 1792 tells that the miller John Doyle at Millbrook was required to pay four shillings for one acre of barley and six shillings for two acres of oats. Only sound oak timber that would not rot in water was used in the construction of water mills.

History relates that some of the best oats in these Islands grew around Newcastle. In documents relating to Ireland 1285 to 1292 we read that £60 of silver was to be expended on carpenters to cut down oak out of the woods of Newcastle and Glencree and transport it by sea to build the Queen's Castle of Haresford in Wales. The Queen was Eleonora daughter of Ferdinand III of Spain and wife of Edward I of England.

Dendrochronological Report on a Sample from Newcastle Upper, County Wicklow

By David Brown

An oak wood sample from a horizontal mill was received by the palaeoecology Centre on the 8 November 1993. The sample's reference number is Q8825.

When measured the sample yielded 97 annual growth rings. The centre of the tree was not present in the sample. No sapwood or heartwood/sapwood boundary was present on the sample. The tree-ring pattern obtained was compared against the standard Irish chronology. A highly significant correlation value ($t = 6.69$) was found giving an end year date of AD712. The best estimated felling date range of the tree will be AD 712 +/- 9 years to the end date.

It is likely that the tree used in the construction of the mill was felled sometime in the mid to late 8th century. The lack of sapwood makes it impossible to give a more precise felling date.

(As presented in an unpublished letter to Mr. Michael J. Moore, Office of Public Works. 51 .St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, 14 December, 1993)