

Greystones Archaeological & Historical Society

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Chairperson's Introduction

Greystones continues to grow at a rapid rate, and our town and its environs are changing beyond previous generations' imaginations. An anchor during this transformation is provided by our heritage, both archaeological and historical, and our Society, in its modest way, offers a link to our unchanging but shared past.

The Society remains very active. Our monthly lectures, mainly on local history, provided by such regulars as: Pat Power, Chris Corlett and James Scannell, and by new presenters: Emmett O'Byrne, Carole Holohan, Peter McNiff and Bryan McMahon, continue to be popular. In our well – attended spring tours in March 2005 and April 2006 we took a number of days to explore the heritage of Counties Cavan, Fermanagh and Clare. And our many summer day-trips included visits to Kildare and Wexford, exploring the abundant heritage of these counties.

Every few of years we publish the Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society journal that captures in permanent form some of the lectures we have heard and other material we believe may be of interest. That time had come around again. So it gives me great pleasure to introduce this journal, our fifth. Within it, Jim Rees provides an insight into the impact of the Famine on the people of Wicklow; James Scannell discusses the activities of two Irish spies during World War II; Pat Power tells us about Derrylossary Churchyard; Síle Ní Thiarnaigh summarises the Society's eventful tour of Cavan; a fragment of a diary by Henry Edward Kearns captures his experiences as a young man at sea in 1860; and, in a piece written in 1960 by P J Noonan, the history behind the building of the catholic church in Rathdrum is described.

For those of you who have missed our previous journals, electronic versions of these and other information related to the Society can be found on our World Wide Web site: www.greystonesahs.org.

Finally, many thanks are due to our committee members for their time and effort, all our contributors for their support, and particularly Aileen Short for her hard work in organising and coordinating our lectures, tours and visits.

Geraldine Hennera – Chairperson
GREYSTONES ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Surplus People from Newcastle and Ballyvolan

By Jim Rees

Introduction

A relatively new attraction for historical society outings can be found moored alongside the quay at New Ross. It is the replica famine ship *Dunbrody*. Ireland has two such sailing ships, the Kerry-based *Jeanie Johnston*, whose financial problems during her building were seldom out of the news, and the *Dunbrody*. The *Jeanie Johnston*'s problems seem to be behind her now and she has crossed the Atlantic to explain Irish famine emigration to many thousands of people in ports from Florida to Quebec. The *Dunbrody* is New Ross built and based, and is now one of County Wexford's major attractions. Although she is seaworthy, and may take to the open waters in the future, she is primarily an exhibit to explain mid-19th century emigration to America. To keep her as authentic as possible, she has not been fitted with the engines which modern regulations require before she can put to sea. That's the problem with such projects. The more a vessel is compromised to meet modern safety standards, the less of a replica of a 19th century ship she is. The *Dunbrody* has resisted the temptation to reduce exhibition space in order to meet sea-going criteria, although future policy may alter that. For now, she is what she was built as, a replica of an engine-less Quebec-built sailing ship of the same name. The original *Dunbrody* was owned by the New Ross shippers Graves & Company, and was engaged mainly in the famine emigration trade, leaving from the quay alongside which her replica is now moored.¹



Replica of the Dunbrody

All very interesting, but what has it got to do with north-east Wicklow? The original *Dunbrody* was used in the emigration programme of the Fitzwilliam estate, and part of that estate was located at Newcastle and Ballyvolan. But let us take it from the beginning.

1840s Emigration

The series of potato crop failures which occurred in the second half of the 1840s deprived the vast majority of Irish rural dwellers of their staple diet, and created a situation in which emigration was for many the only alternative to starvation. In the ten years between 1845 and 1854 over 2,250,000 Irish people crossed the Atlantic in the most primitive conditions. Less than 500,000 of them sailed to Canada, the rest went to the United States. The vast majority of these refugees managed to scrape together the fare to make their own way to what they hoped would be a better life. Some, however, were given what was euphemistically called 'assisted passage'. That is, they received inducements from their landlords to leave, so that they would not become inmates of workhouses or recipients of outdoor relief and so become a burden on the ratepayers, many of whom were the landlords in question.

The Fitzwilliam Estate



Coolattin House

By far the largest estate in County Wicklow was that owned by Earl Fitzwilliam, with Coolattin house near Shillelagh as its centre. The bulk of the estate covered the south-west corner of the county, but there were also outlying pockets further north and east, two of which were located at Newcastle and Ballyvolan. In the 1840s, the Fitzwilliam estate consisted of over 80,000 acres, spreading over more than a hundred townlands, and covering one-fifth of the entire county of Wicklow, with more than 20,000 tenants. By the end

of the century it had grown to 90,000 acres. Fitzwilliam had two other estates in England, and he spent most of his time there. The day-to-day running of Coolattin was left in the hands of his agent Robert Challoner. By definition then, Fitzwilliam was an absentee landlord, but it would be unfair to ascribe to him the connotations of that description. Unlike the usual absentee, Fitzwilliam took a close interest in the management of his Irish properties and was remarkably well versed in their minutiae. Few decisions were made without his approval.²

For generations the Fitzwilliams were regarded as liberal landlords who believed that the welfare of the tenants was not only morally laudable but also made good business sense. They paid higher wages and charged lower rents than other employers and landlords in the region. They also ran a 'Poor Shop' which operated as a savings club. Tenants could save as little or as much as their circumstances allowed. In most cases, the savings were used to buy blankets and clothes from the shop at favourable rates.³

At a time when many landlords in Ireland would not allow Catholic churches to be built on their estates, the Fitzwilliams not only gave permission but in some cases donated land and contributed towards the cost of erecting the church. Schools - Catholic, Protestant, and mixed - were also encouraged and many were either wholly or partly maintained from the estate coffers. Deals were struck between tenants and the estate as to how much each would contribute to improvement projects such as drainage and the erection or expansion of houses or farm buildings.

Of the 80,000 acres only about 800 were worked by the estate staff. The rest were leased and rented out. This created a multi-tiered structure. For example, a well-to-do farmer might lease 500 or more acres from the estate. He might work 200 acres and sublet the other 300 to as many as ten, twenty or more subtenants. Some of these subtenants did the same thing, and at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder was the landless labourer who rented a cabin and a small plot of ground, seldom more than one acre, in which to grow potatoes. There could be as many as five strata of tenants and subtenants between the estate management and the landless labouring class. Those who leased direct from the estate were 'head tenants' and those in the intermediate strata were 'middleman' or 'undertenants'. Sublessors made quite a profit by charging a much higher rent per acre than they themselves were paying. This meant that the poorest were paying the highest rent pro rata.

Although County Wicklow was economically better off than many other Irish counties, there was still a great deal of poverty among those on the bottom rung of the social ladder. In general, the land on the Fitzwilliam estate was poor and needed regular treatment with animal manure and lime. There was never enough of the former and the latter had to be

brought from twenty miles away, making it costly. This drove many into debt to money lenders whose rates of interest could be as high as forty percent. When tenants and subtenants fell behind in rent, the immediate landlord, whether the estate or a middleman, usually obtained legal permission to 'distrain' the value, that is seize goods from the defaulter to the value of the rent owed. There was a fee for this legal permission which was added to the amount owed. This constant erosion of what little capital and goods smallholders might have amassed in rare good years made it impossible for them to improve their holdings. This general downward trend in the economy caused greatest hardship among the smallholders with between ten and fifty acres and increasing unemployment among the landless labourers.

In practice, the landless labourers seldom handled cash. They paid their rent in free labour, but with the demand for their services diminishing each year the poverty in which these people lived became horrific. According to a Roman Catholic priest on the Fitzwilliam estate in 1844, giving evidence before the Devon Commission (which was established to enquire into the state of land tenure and general social conditions in Ireland):

*'... their condition is deplorable, and the lower order of people are famishing. I do not think that a great number of those who hold small farms under middlemen can afford themselves more than two meals each day constantly, and without milk or any other nourishment but their potatoes, and those potatoes are often sent a mile or two, and they eat them cold, and in the ditches: it is dreadful to consider the starvation they are subject to.'*⁴

And that was the year *before* the major potato crop failures which heralded the Great Famine. Twenty-eight percent of families in County Wicklow lived in one-roomed stone or mud cabins, topped with the poorest thatch. The mud floor had no covering.

The staple diet for the vast majority of these people was potato and buttermilk. This wasn't as



Irish cabin (failure of the potato crop)

bad as it sounds because not only was the potato highly nutritious, but it could be grown easily and abundantly on small plots of ground. It was a wonder food. Unfortunately, it was also highly prone to disease. Seldom a year went by without a localised outbreak of blight. Seldom a decade passed without a widespread crop failure. Even in good years, there were the annual 'hungry months' between the last of the old crop being consumed and the harvesting of the new. It was life by brinkmanship.

Famine and Poor Law

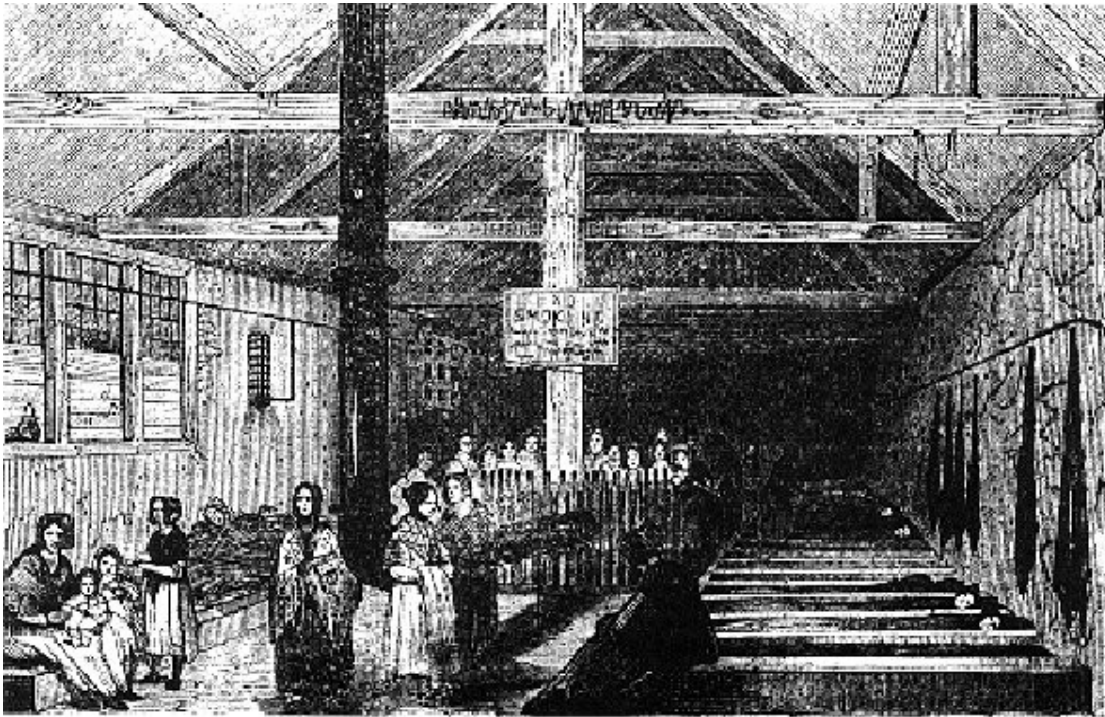
In 1845, there was a partial failure and the 1846 crop was a total disaster. Local economies collapsed. A simple system of social welfare existed in Ireland as a result of the Poor Law that had been passed in the late 1830s. This set up 130 workhouses to accommodate 100,000 inmates, and was funded by taxes, or rates, levied on property owners. The workhouses themselves and the harshness with which they were run were deliberately designed to discourage anyone from seeking admittance. Only 'destitute persons who were incurably lame, blind, sick, or labouring under bodily infirmity' would be admitted. 'Orphaned children left in a state of destitution'⁵ would also be allowed in. On entering, families were separated, males in one section, females in another, with the children taken into a third dormitory. They were allowed to meet once a week, and every inmate was given work to do either in the workhouse (washing, cleaning, and attending the physically and mentally ill) or in the yard, usually breaking stones for road works. Punishment for infringement of rules and insubordination ranged from solitary confinement to expulsion.

Despite the extreme bleakness of such a regime, workhouses were inundated by people clamouring for admission following the severe potato shortage of 1845. Soon every



At the gate of a workhouse

workhouse in the country was filled beyond its intended numbers. They became hotbeds of contagion as paupers suffering from fever brought on by malnutrition were allowed into them. The Poor Law, less than ten years old, was useless. Extensive redrafting of the legislation was required so that more destitute people would qualify for relief. One amendment was the introduction of outdoor relief. This, and other changes, increased costs and these costs had to be met by the ratepayers. The biggest landlords were to be hardest hit.



Interior of a workhouse

Landlords throughout Ireland were faced with reducing the number of uneconomic tenants on their estates, and to get the now homeless 'paupers' out of their district so they would not be a burden on the local rates. Large scale evictions, known as 'clearances' took place. There was no agreed policy between landlords, each acted as he saw fit or as his wealth allowed. In the vast majority of cases, poor tenants were simply turned out on to the road to fend for themselves as best they could. Some wandered into towns to live in unspeakable squalor, others moved from place to place. Many died by the roadside.

The Fitzwilliam Clearances

Heartless as it may seem, such clearances were the only way to avoid bankruptcy of many estates. With decreasing rent revenue each year and greater expenses on rates, most estates faced insolvency and clearances were their only hope of survival. Many estates did go under at that time. But it was how such clearances were carried out that separated the more humane landlords from the more callous.

Fitzwilliam was one of those most severely affected. He knew that shedding unviable or, in the expression of the time, 'surplus' tenants was the only way to avoid bankruptcy, but he avoided simply turning them out on the roadside, except in very few instances. Instead, he offered assisted emigration to those he wished to be rid of. They would be given free passage and a financial incentive to help them settle on the far side of the Atlantic. This was not a new policy on the estate. Tenants willing to emigrate had been helped to do so long before the Famine struck. There are references to assisted passages in ledgers dating from the 1830s, and four notebooks in the Fitzwilliam Collection in the National Library show that it was still common enough between 1842 and 1846.⁶ Adults, that is those over the age of fourteen, were given thirty shillings (£1-10-0 or £1.90) while children were given £1 (£1.27). Each would also have their fare paid.

In 1845, two Newcastle families applied to the estate for assisted emigration.⁷ They were Edward McGuire, his wife and five children. Neither his wife's name nor those of his children were recorded, but the eldest child must have been over fourteen as the amount applied for was £8-10-0, that is three adults and four children. The other family was that of John Ellis who was to be accompanied by his wife, his father, his mother, and his seven children, again no

TOUR TO COUNTIES CAVAN AND FERMANAGH, MARCH 2005

names, but each helping to bring the cost to £14 and their passage. Unfortunately, I have not checked the estate accounts for 1845 to see if their applications were granted.

By the middle years of the Famine the numbers of tenants to be encouraged to leave necessitated a reduction in the financial incentive, but the deteriorating situation would have made even free passage without cash payment an attractive proposition to the many people who were already destitute. The new payments varied, averaging about ten shillings (about 63 cent) a head, but some managed to negotiate much better terms. The estate also agreed to purchase any crops in the ground.

In March 1847, the estate manager Robert Challoner opened the Emigration Book.⁸ In it, he recorded the names of every tenant and family member prepared to leave for 'America'. This did not refer to the United States, but to British North America - Canada. The townland of residence, the ages, family relationships, size of holding, and sometimes the name of the ship on which they sailed were also recorded. Between April and August, 313 families, comprising 2207 men, women and children left the Coolattin estate for Quebec. They were among 98,000 refugees who sailed up the St Laurence that year to a country that was ill-prepared to receive such a deluge of pauperism.⁹

The Fitzwilliam clearance policy ran from 1847 to 1856, and almost 6,000 'surplus' tenants sailed for Canada, mostly arriving at Quebec on ships such as the *Dunbrody*, *Standard*, *Pilgrim* and other Graves-owned ships, but one ship, the *Star*, sailed from New Ross to the New Brunswick port of St Andrews.¹⁰

Among those 6,000 emigrants were two families from the townland of Newcastle Lower, and one from Ballyvolan:

The McGuerry family ¹¹	(Newcastle Lower): Elizabeth 45, John 27, Catherine 23, Pat 18, Morris 16, Michael 15, Edward 12, Mary 10 months, Mary (again!) 22 months
The Ellis family ¹²	(Newcastle Lower): John 50, Hannah 40, Mary 20, Sarah 14, Thomas 11, Eleanor 2
The Roche family ¹³	(Ballyvolan): Michael 50, Eleanor 40, Pat 16, James 14, Thomas 1, Michael Higgins 30

All sailed from New Ross on board the *Swan* on June 9th, 1848 bound for Quebec. The Roches were accompanied by Michael Higgins, 30. There is no record of his relationship to the Roches but was probably a brother of Eleanor, such was often the case. Research through parish registers might confirm or discount this supposition. The fact that all three families were near neighbours and are listed in the 1848 Book in strict sequence (references 163, 164 and 165) reflects the policy of the estate that friends and relatives should travel *en bloc* when possible. In such groups lay security and strength of purpose.

Without fuller information, it is difficult to determine all the criteria which qualified people for the scheme. There were many cases of individuals not being allowed to accompany their families to Canada. In some instances this was understandable, if a little callous, in that a fourteen or fifteen-year-old son or daughter might be working away from home and was, therefore, not regarded as being dependent on the estate. But what of young children whose names were first added to the list and then scratched off? Why were they rejected? Perhaps in a few cases they had died between the time their names had been given and the time of departure. It is just not possible to say. There were quite a few 'foundlings' and in most of these cases supporting evidence that the child had been cared for by the family had to be produced. A letter from a priest was deemed sufficient proof.

Any land holding, whether it consisted of a kitchen garden, ten acres or fifty, was to be incorporated into larger neighbouring holdings. In some cases, the recipient of the holding was expected to pay at least some of the costs of emigrating the departing family. For example, Mr Brewster of Ballynultagh agreed to pay half of the expenses of sending John Byrne and his family to Canada because he was to take over Byrne's six acres. In the majority of cases incorporation simply meant that the sublet holdings reverted to the immediate lessor.



A typical emigration departure

In other parts of Ireland, tenants who increased their holdings by incorporating the holdings of evicted or otherwise departing tenants were sometimes ostracised by the local community, but this does not seem to have happened on the Fitzwilliam estate. If there was even one case of retribution for such incorporation I have not been able to find it. Perhaps it was the fact that unadorned eviction was not usually resorted to by Fitzwilliam, and a tenant's departure was more or less voluntary.

Getting to New Ross

Many people are surprised to learn that New Ross was an important port of emigration at that time. The main reason it figured so prominently was Graves & Company, a shipping firm which had been engaged in transatlantic trade for some years. When emigration became the most lucrative transatlantic trade it was natural that they should turn their attention to that quarter. The Fitzwilliam estate had contracted Graves with their previous assisted passages and the arrangements had proved satisfactory. There seemed no need to look elsewhere, and throughout the 1847-56 clearances, New Ross was the port of embarkation.

Even from the southern portion of the estate, New Ross was sixty miles distant. From Newcastle and Ballyvolan it was much greater, and it would seem logical that the McGuerry, Ellis and Roche families would have found it much easier to emigrate through the port of Dublin, but New Ross it had to be. In late May and early June of 1848, they gathered what they could and sold what little they might have had that could not be taken with them. Goodbyes to relatives, friends and neighbours would be said, and perhaps even an American wake was held to send them on their way. Unfortunately we can only surmise, because if the McGuerrys, Ellises and Roches left a record of their experiences, I have not come across it. On the day of

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leaving, perhaps they made their way to Coolattin and joined up with their fellow emigrants, from where carts provided and driven by relatives, friends or neighbours, carried the luggage or the young or old when they became tired. In some cases the estate provided carriage costs.



New Ross, Wexford

New Ross was a busy town. The river Barrow was quite wide and deep enough to allow ocean-going sailing ships to berth alongside the quays even though the open sea was eighteen miles downstream. Long before the groups of emigrants and their entourages entered the bustling town, they would crest a hill and look down at it. From this vantage point, they could see the sweep of the river and the tall masts of the ships. Then they descended into the streets, making their way to the quayside. Here was a jumble of human activity that most of Fitzwilliam's tenants would have found baffling. They were country people whose only experience of crowds at close quarters were fair days, but this was something different. The populace was a mix of residents and emigrants. The latter found what space they could to set up a temporary camp either along the quays or in back streets, or in fields on the outskirts of town. Challoner had sent one of his leading hands with them, Ralph Lawrenson, to make sure that there were no problems and all would board the ship.

The firm of William Graves and Sons owned and operated ships which traded between U.S. and Canadian ports and those in Britain and Ireland. They chartered other ships when needed and were experienced in the carriage of goods such as timber from Canada and tobacco, molasses and cotton from the United States. In common with other shipping agents, in recent years they had become equally experienced in sending those ships back across the Atlantic loaded with people. The usual routine was an eastward voyage from Canada or the U.S. to Liverpool where the cargo was discharged before the vessel sailed in ballast for New Ross where she would take on emigrants for the return journey. Graves would reap the benefit of the mass exodus which the estate now planned.

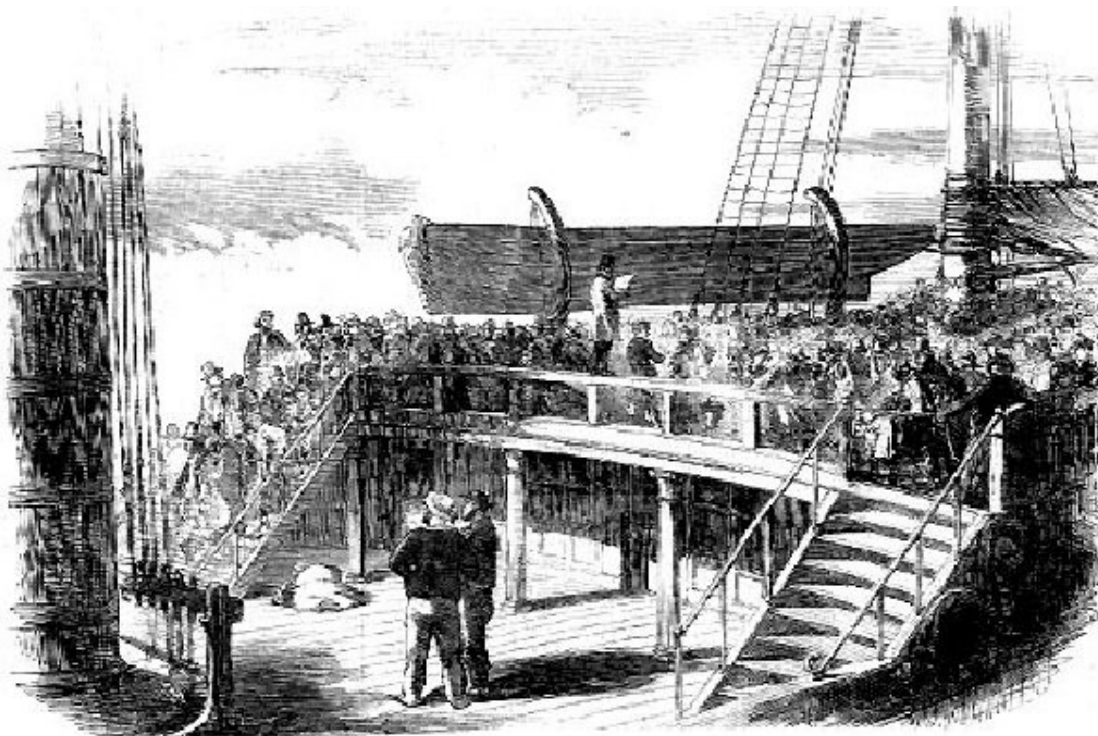
So much has been said and written about 'coffin ships' that it is easy to forget that such dilapidated vessels constituted only a tiny percentage of ships used in the emigrant trade. They did exist, but not in the numbers which are generally believed. Most of the ships which were used to take famine emigrants across the Atlantic were rough and ready, general cargo ships with the barest of modification for the accommodation of passengers. In truth, the

people were not regarded as passengers at all but as human cargo, to be delivered as cheaply and with as little disruption to the ship's schedule as possible. Comfort was not a consideration, but the ships themselves were seaworthy. Tales of rotten hulks crammed with destitute refugees being sent to sea for insurance gain may reflect isolated cases, but the vast majority of emigrant ships were strong and capable of making two round trips during the spring-to-autumn season. The efficient running of the ships depended a great deal on the honesty of the agent, the level of concern of an influential sponsor, and ultimately the character of the masters and crews. In the case of the Fitzwilliam tenants, both the honesty of Graves and the concern of Fitzwilliam guaranteed ships which were among the best available.

The ship which the McGuerrys, Ellises and Roches boarded at New Ross was the *Swan*. It did not differ in any great detail from countless others involved in the emigrant trade, and for this reason we can say what the Newcastle and Ballyvolan people experienced in general.

The 'tween Decks

Their names checked against the passenger list which Graves had received from Challoner, the emigrants settled down to wait. If the ship was in port ready to board they would do so. If not they would wait until she arrived and embarkation could begin.



Quarter deck on an emigrant ship

The McGuerrys, Ellises and Roches would have made their way down the gangway into the dark world of the *Swan*'s cargo hold. Rough boards had been erected to form two tiers of bunks six feet square. To the uninformed, such allocation of space did not seem too bad, but they were quickly disabused of their erroneous assumption. The bunks were not intended for the exclusive use of a single passenger, nor were they to be shared by two people, nor even three. Four passengers were to crowd into this six-foot-by-six space. Each was allocated six-feet-by-eighteen inches, a mere nine square feet to call their own until they reached Quebec. Large families claimed adjacent bunks, smaller ones and people travelling alone no doubt sought out the close proximity of friends. Such sleeping arrangements could prove disturbing for young women and men travelling alone, and various government committees investigating conditions on board emigrant ships repeatedly heard of activities between unmarried people of both sexes leading to 'bad results'. Even when getting undressed for bed it was extremely

difficult to maintain privacy and the voyeuristically inclined were often well rewarded for vigilance. Not surprisingly, many women spent the first nights of the voyage sitting up, fully dressed. Eventually fatigue triumphed over decorum. A major advantage in our three families travelling together was the fact that they totalled seventeen and a half statute adults, so could lay claim to four adjacent bunks, with the remaining one and half statute adults sharing with someone else. A 'half-adult' was anyone under the age of fourteen. Such proximity to each other had to have been comforting in a situation where comforts were few and far between.

Chests were stowed where they could be seen, or used as proprietary markers and, in that dismal catacomb, the people made their spaces as much their own as they could. The narrow passageways between the tiers of bunks were common space to be left clear, but in such confinements even this would have been cluttered.

The Sabbath at Sea

I have written elsewhere about the horrific conditions these emigrants suffered at sea,¹⁴ and it would serve little purpose to repeat it here. There is, however, one aspect of such a voyage that I have not recorded in print, although I have spoken about it from time to time. That is religious observance. Life on board an emigrant ship was far from pleasant, even on board well-run ships, such as the *Dunbrody* and the *Swan*, and even when the weather was remarkably fine or the voyage remarkably short. Not surprisingly, religion was a consolation for many. Unfortunately, I do not know of any ex-Fitzwilliam tenant leaving a diary or written account of the voyage, so I cannot cite particular instances on those particular ships,¹⁵ but there is no reason to assume that the daily life, and especially the Sabbath daily life, was any different to that recorded by other passengers on other ships. These accounts shed light on how diligent or how lax the passengers and crews were in the practice of their respective religions, and what role the clergy played not only during the voyage but also on the arrival of the emigrants in places like Quebec.

The average length of voyage across the Atlantic was six weeks. Some of the better ships in exceptionally good weather could do it in four or five, while adverse conditions, bad ships, bad seamanship, and major outbreaks of fever could keep a ship at sea for anything up to ten weeks. So, there were going to be at least four and perhaps as many as ten Sundays encountered during a voyage. Most the captains were, at least nominally, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist or another Protestant denomination. Most of the passengers who sailed from Irish emigration ports, such as New Ross, were, again at least nominally, Catholic. There is a good deal of research being done at the moment into religious practices at that time and for a few decades before and it would seem that the almost universal practice of church-going in Ireland didn't really begin until the 1860s.¹⁶ Nevertheless what is important here is the vast majority of Irish people were affiliated to one or other of the major Christian churches, and it is interesting to read what some of the passengers recorded in diaries regarding observance of the Sabbath and other religious practices.

One of the best-known eyewitness accounts of a voyage in 1847 is that of Robert Whyte. He noticed there was no sea chant to accompany the weighing of the anchor, 'it being the Sabbath'.¹⁷ The following Sunday he had a mixed reaction to what he saw. First he said:

'The Passengers were dressed in their best clothes ... and the sailors donned their holiday toggery in the afternoon.'

But then he remarks:

'Very few of them could read; neither did they seem to have any regard for the Sabbath. In the evening they had prayers in the hold and were divided into two parties - those who spoke Irish and those who did not; each section having a leader who gabbled in his respective tongue a number of 'Paters & Aves' as quickly as the devotees could count their beads. After these religious

*exercises they came upon deck and spent the remainder of the day jesting, laughing and singing.'*¹⁸

By the end of the third week, a little less than halfway through the voyage and when sickness first began to make its presence felt, Whyte wrote:

'Having hinted to the captain the propriety of having divine service read upon the Sabbath, he said that it could not be done. The sailors were too busy. This day, therefore, had no mark to distinguish it from any other. The poor emigrants were in their usual squalid attire, neither did the crew rig themselves out as on former Sundays.'

¹⁹

Considering the religious animosity endemic in Ireland, perhaps the workload of the crew was a handy excuse for the captain not to encourage an open display of any particular religious service.

Whyte's reference to 'jesting, laughing and singing' was echoed by William Hunter. Hunter was a Scot who emigrated with his wife in 1849 to Upper Canada, that is present day Ontario, by first making his way to Liverpool and sailing from there to New York, from where he headed into Canada, a reversal of the trend at that time. The vast majority of the steerage passengers were Irish. He wrote:

*'This was the Sabbath and such a Sabbath as I never saw spent. May God forgive them!'*²⁰
And what was so awful about the way the Sabbath was kept?

It was spent:

*'... whistling and singing throughout the whole day, and even playing on the flute. Our crew are also very wild, and they are as ill as ever a navvy was on the Caledonian Railway. Oh, it is pitiable to look at these poor sailors, how they are exposed to all weathers, and to see how they take their Saviour's name in vain, for they are all awful swearers and they swear always by Jesus Christ.'*²¹

Other accounts suggest that some forms of services did take place fairly regularly on deck when the weather allowed, but they seem for the most part to have been Protestants who formed small groups to read the bible and to sing hymns. Cards bearing religious tracts were sometimes circulated among the passengers particularly during stormy weather. 'At such times even the most hardened of sinners would pray fervently'.

Joseph Wilson also found it difficult to observe Sunday in his usual manner because of the antics of the bulk of the passengers. He wrote of his:

*'... first Sabbath at sea. Prayer meeting in the morning and afternoon and Scriptures read by the captain. Such a mighty din that I could neither read nor think. Oh, for a home for myself again secluded from this multitude. Never until now did I experience such an annoyance of a day I always set apart for meditation. Lord, send us a speedy voyage.'*²²

Sometimes there were clergymen on board. It was neither company policy nor a legal requirement, simply serendipity. When so many were making that westward voyage, by the law of averages some of them had to have been clergymen and we can assume that they did their utmost to promote regular religious observance.

One case that springs to mind is that of Father Thomas Hore who, with three young men in their final years of studying for the priesthood, led over 1000 people from south Wicklow and north Wexford to the Mississippi valley in 1850.²³ While there are no direct references, Father Hore was a man unlikely to let any of his flock slip into haphazard ways.

But there were times when all ocean-crossing passengers deeply felt the need for religious consolation. It was the time of illness and contagion. The time when seasickness turned to dysentery and dysentery brought on the fever. When swelling, beginning in the feet, moved agonisingly through the body and discolouration of the skin broke out in sores, it was then

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that the balm of religion was called for. In 1822, Reverend James Wilson sailed from Dublin to Quebec. One of the passengers on board was 23-year-old Phoebe Dagg from Aghowle in southwest Wicklow. Phoebe caught the fever. In the early, healthy stages of the voyage, Wilson had found her 'agreeable, friendly, and truly pleasing in manner' and stayed close to her during her illness. In his diary he made the following entry:

*'I visited Phoebe Dagg about twelve o'clock this morning, but found her speechless, prayed with her for the last time, and commended her soul to the Lord, she died about two hours after. She was allowed to remain in her bed until night, when about nine o'clock she was put in a sheet of canvas and brought upon deck. I was sent for by the captain to have prayer on the occasion. After prayer, she was let down into the sea, there to remain until the morning of resurrection, when the sea shall give up her dead.'*²⁴

Burial at sea usually took place a short time after death, sometimes within the hour. It seemed such a short time for the family to grieve over the body, particularly for people used to a three-day wake, but the health implications had to take paramount importance. In many cases, when there was no clergyman on board to utter the prayers for the dead, the captain or mate might be prevailed upon. But sometimes this was not possible and it was left to a family member to carry out this last farewell. Robert Whyte described such a scene in 1847:

'And as the sun was setting, the bereaved husband muttered a prayer over her enshrouded corpse, which, as he said Amen, was lowered into the ocean.'

How many were wrapped in old sail canvas and buried at sea without the benefit of prayer will never be known.

Ashore

Perhaps it was in the Quarantine Stations in American and Canadian ports that the courage of priests, ministers and nuns was at its most admirable. In the words of emigration historian Terry Coleman:

*'Wherever destitute Irish emigrants were gathered, Liverpool, New York, Boston, Quebec, priests were there among them to administer to their needs. Many of these priests came into contact with contagious diseases and died.'*²⁵



Irish immigrants disembark in New York (Samuel B Waugh)

Roman Catholic and Anglican priests could be found in the fever tents on perhaps the most notorious Quarantine Station of all – Grosse Ile, the gateway, or in many cases the barrier, to

Quebec. The niceties of theology were set aside in this time of crisis. Two Anglican and four Roman Catholic priests died there, as did several of the Grey Nuns. The situation at Montreal was not much better. There, the Catholic bishop Power went to give a dying woman the last rites. Her sense of consolation at having been anointed was evident to all, and satisfied that her soul was saved she died calmly. Power showed symptoms of the disease the next day and died soon afterwards. Such devotion to duty prompted the following editorial of the Boston newspaper, *The Pilot*, in July 1847:

'There never surely was any Church which proved, at the sacrifice of comfort and life, its devotion to religion, than does now the Roman Catholic clergy of Montreal.'

What a pity the writer failed to recognise the rare brand of trans-sectarian Christianity which was displayed by all concerned in those make-shift hospitals.

Conclusion

By any yardstick, the clearance programme carried out on the Coolattin estate between 1847 and 1856 was a massive undertaking - and a costly one. William Graves charged the estate £3-8-6 for each tenant shipped, but this was not the total cost per head by any means. As can be seen from the general ledgers, the estate provided oatmeal and rice to supplement the emigrants' diet during the voyage. The sea chests were paid for by the estate, as was the carriage of people and luggage from the estate to New Ross. There was also the very large cost of enticing people to surrender their holdings. All-in-all, between 1848 and 1856, the programme cost Fitzwilliam £16,342-11-1. I have yet to find the costs incurred in 1847, but more than one-third of the entire emigrant number left the estate in that first year so the likely cost would have been about £8,000, making a grand total of approximately £24,000. A massive amount at the time, but a wise investment in the long-term. The 'Surplus People' had been disposed of and the structure of the estate altered irrevocably.

The clearances achieved the desired effect. Between 1847 and 1856, the tenant population on the estate was reduced from 20,000 to 14,000. This was further reduced in following decades as more families made their way to the New World, some financially assisted by the estate, others from their own resources helped by money received from family members who had preceded them to the U.S. and Canada. This phenomenon of emigrants sending money back to Ireland to help family members to join them on the far side of the Atlantic was prevalent, throughout Ireland and became known as 'chain migration'.

So, what happened the McGuerrys, Ellises and Roches? Over the past seven years, I have been able to trace what happened to many of the Fitzwilliam emigrants, unfortunately, I have not yet tracked down descendants of the McGuerrys, Ellises, or Roches. They could have settled in Quebec, or more likely made their way up the St Lawrence towards Montreal and farther on into Ontario. Several towns and cities in modern Ontario were in their infancy at that time and places such as Kingston, Peterborough and Guelph were favoured destinations for ex-Fitzwilliam tenants to congregate. If any reader has any information relating to these families, or other emigrants from north-east Wicklow, I would be very grateful to hear of it.

Over the past ten years, local historians have shown how the effects of the Famine in Wicklow have been grossly underestimated. Our workhouses were filled to overflowing, as elsewhere, people died by the roadside, as elsewhere, and mass emigration was experienced, as elsewhere. Most significant of all is the fact that the greatest estate assisted emigration anywhere in Ireland took place here in County Wicklow.

We may not have had our Skibbereen or our Scarriff, but the Wicklow experience of the Great Famine should never be lightly touched on and glossed over.

Reference Sources

- [1] www.Dunbrody.com: as I write, March 16th, 2004, the *Dunbrody* has just returned to her New Ross berth after a week's sojourn to Waterford to advertise the Tall Ships Race in 2005. The trip was made under tow.
- [2] When the Fitzwilliam family sold what remained of the Coolattin estate in about 1970, they donated most of the papers to the National Library. Ledgers and memoranda show the close interest Fitzwilliam took in the day-to-day proceedings of Coolattin.
- [3] National Library of Ireland, ms 4962.
- [4] Devon Commission Report, p.543, Witness No.956, Rev Daniel Kavanagh, curate in Carnew.
- [5] For a full account of how the Poor Law operated in County Wicklow see Ó Cathóir, E., 'The Poor Law in County Wicklow' in Hannigan & Nolan (eds) *Wicklow History & Society* (1994).
- [6] National Library of Ireland, ms 18429 (1-4).
- [7] Ibid, notebook 2.
- [8] National Library of Ireland, ms 4974.
- [9] For an account of what they found there, see Rees, J. *Surplus People* (2000).
- [10] It is impossible to give an exact figure. When a tally is made of all the names in the Emigration Books the total figure is 5,995, but there are several families listed for emigration in the 1847 book who also appear in later years, having delayed their departure for some reason. Also, when some family lists in the Emigration Books are compared with the passenger lists of the ships on which they sailed, there are often discrepancies. Some family members seem to have pulled out at the last minute, while some names are included on the passenger list which did not appear in the Emigration Books. Six thousand is a round figure that is not far off the actual number.
- [11] National Library of Ireland ms 4975 (1848) reference 163.
- [12] Ibid. reference 164.
- [13] Ibid. reference 165.
- [14] Rees, J. *Surplus People* pp.53-6.
- [15] I find it difficult to believe that not even one of almost six thousand people did not leave some record of their transatlantic experience. The fact that I have not found such a record does not mean that at least one does not exist. I live in hope.
- [16] See Connolly, S. J., *priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland* for patterns of religious observance.
- [17] Whyte, Robert, *1847 Famine Ship Diary*, p.14.
- [18] Ibid. p.23.
- [19] Ibid. p.32.
- [20] Quoted in Hoffman & Taylor (1999), *Across the Waters: Ontario Immigrants' Experiences 1820 – 1850*, p.68.
- [21] Ibid.
- [22] Ibid. p.69.
- [23] See Rees, J. *A Farewell To Famine* (1994)
- [24] Quoted in Hoffman & Taylor, p.107
- [25] Coleman, Terry *Passage to America*(1972). I've mislaid the page reference.

Tour to Counties Cavan and Fermanagh, March 2005

By Síle Ní Thiarnaigh

Monday 21st March 2005

Monday dawned wet and windy, so that when we arrived at our first stop, Oldbridge, which is about three miles from Drogheda, many members were loath to alight from the comfortable coach to have the Battle of the Boyne re-enacted. However, as soon as our young guide, Aisling, led us to a small sheltered hut and began to talk, we quickly forgot wind and weather. She was adept at demonstrating how blunderbusses worked and how each soldier carried his ammunition. She had samples of the type of carrier bag and explained how many bullets each held. The equipment of William's army was a little superior to that of James's. On display was a lovely saddle with support for the rider's back - presumably an officer's saddle. Our guide reminded us that the horse, in 1690, was the quickest mode of transport. She ran through a few points of the historical facts: there were 26,000 men in James II's army coming up from the south (he had landed in Kinsale) whereas William of Orange had 36,000 men. There were no big losses on the Irish side, though James fled the scene, and each side felt it had won! Schomberg, the great aged general, fell in battle and a simple stone, with just '1690' written on it, marks the spot. The terrain is to-day much the same as it was on that fateful day. Oldbridge House was to be seen in the misty distance and this house, through cross-border arrangements, is soon to become a heritage centre.

We boarded our bus again and I was looking forward to arriving at our hotel, the Slieve Russell in Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan, by mid-afternoon and getting in out of the rain. I should have known better; after so many years of outings with this society I should have known their enthusiasm for covering ground - literally and metaphorically. Our driver, Ciarán, who had done a school run that morning before starting out with us, kept on driving until we arrived at Enniskillen.

Fermanagh was the last county in Ireland that I visited. That was in 1994 when, with a friend, I skipped a day at the Carleton Summer School in Clogher and we drove to Enniskillen to see Castle Coole. To our disappointment, the great house was closed for restoration. We did not waste our time, however, as instead we took a delightful boat trip to Devenish Island and saw the remains of St. Molaise's monastic settlement and round tower - on a beautiful summer's day.

But to get back to Castle Coole on a wet day in late March 2005, the door of the great house was open this time and an informative guide there to greet us and show us around the house.

Castle Coole is the largest Georgian house in Ireland. It was begun by the Irish Armagh-born architect Francis Johnston (who designed our G.P.O. in Dublin) and when he was discharged early on, the work was completed by James Wyatt. The latter never came to Ireland, but his drawings are extant. The original family name was Corry. This family came to Ulster at the time of the earlier plantations, but were not actually given land. They were business people - later to become political - who actually purchased the land in the late 1500's. In all they acquired 70,000 acres in Ireland; this included land in Kilkenny. At first there was no house on the Enniskillen estate and the first one built was a Queen Anne mansion. Later, in the eighteenth century, when Arthur Corry became an earl, he chose to build this large house. He imported Portland stone (though there was plenty of stone available in Fermanagh). Four and a half million sterling was spent recently on renovation, the main portion of the expenditure going towards the restoration of the Portland stone. People came from near and far to see this fine house being built. The Regency furniture in the house was purchased by the second Earl about 1825 and is still in place. It is owned by the present Earl, the eighth, who lives in a small



Castle Coole

house on the estate, though the great house itself now belongs to the National Trust. The eighth Earl lived in the large house as a child and his mother is still living (March, 2005).

In the breakfast room, we saw cabinets of Chelsea china, also a large sized painting by Hugh Douglas Hamilton of the second Earl, who instructed Hamilton to portray him holding his speech against the Act of Union. Another picture was that of Dublin Bay from Phibsboro. The fragile original curtains were in a display cabinet.

We were led into the library, across the hall from the breakfast room, through double doors, i.e. one door placed behind the other without hinges, but with a pivotal bar running from top to bottom; much careful work had gone into the restoration of these doors. There is very fine late eighteenth century plaster work in this room, showing a Greek influence with laurel wreaths, etc. The fire-place is an exquisite piece of craftsmanship, the entire being cut from one piece of marble. Wyatt designed the white-painted book-cases, which are recessed in the walls. The furniture was re-covered in red velvet in 1860. The curtains are of red brocade and hang on one enormous brass pole, at least six inches in diameter, which extends over the three windows. In the library we saw portraits, paintings and photographs of the family. The last of the sisters (there were four and our guide could remember them) died in the 1960's. At that stage, there was only one servant in the house, and no heating. Derek Hill painted the family as young people. He used to stay in the big houses and his portrait of the family hangs in the library.

Upstairs there is a large hall with oval dome windows for light, and for heat, four most unusual urn-shaped stoves raised in niches. This hall is truly of magnificent design and one can imagine the lavish entertainment which took place there.

The ladies' sitting room, also called the oval room, was really half oval at one end - this portion containing three windows overlooking Lough Coole. Chinese style curtains and wall-paper were as original, having been exactly copied during restoration. There was an eighteenth century box piano in this room and a dozen Regency chairs; also an Oriental couch and two chairs.

The state bedroom with its great four-poster bed was for the King only. But no King ever came as far as Enniskillen and so this room was merely for show. Its wall-paper dates from 1812.

The windows are always kept shuttered in order to preserve the red colour of the decor and curtains, which were re-done during restoration. There were Nelson chairs in this grand room and among the pictures was one from Castle Leslie in Monaghan, presumably donated or presented; of interest was the fact that the Earl of Mornington's (i.e. Garrett Wellesley's) piano was portrayed in this picture. The Earl of Mornington was, of course, the first Professor of Music in Trinity College Dublin, being appointed in 1764. His son, later to become the Duke of Wellington, had been a promising violinist before deciding on a military career.

Downstairs again, we saw the drawing room, where the silk to re-cover the chairs came from Italy. The National Trust could not afford curtains yet, so white net curtains are hanging for the moment.

The oval room, called 'the saloon' contains a lovely round rosewood table and some musical instruments: an early Broadwood piano, one of only three made to this design, looks like a harpsichord except that it has two pedals, one to the extreme left and the other to the extreme right of the instrument. This piano is beautifully inlaid with Wedgwood ornaments. There is also a harp, dating from 1802 and not restored. This room is that most often featured in pictures of Castle Coole.

The last note I have on Castle Coole is of a wine-cooler in the dining room. This beautiful piece of carpentry was made from a sketch by two local brothers - and made in two days.

All in all, being inside Castle Coole on a wet afternoon was time well spent, but one would need a wet week to take it all in!

Tuesday 22nd March 2005

The second day I persuaded my friend not to go on another bus journey, but to relax over our breakfast and enjoy the facilities at the hotel. We saw the manicured gardens and made small purchases in the hotel shop. We also had a good walk, a pedestrian one, and saw a re-erected stone circle which had been advertised at the desk.

But before all this, we were enjoying a leisurely cup of coffee, served I may say on a silver salver, at the fire in the open lounge, when we noticed quite a few of the group wandering around the hotel. We wondered had some others besides ourselves not gone out that day, or had they returned already. They, in fact, had returned because the bus had broken down and were awaiting another to take them to Drumlane, so, after some little delay, their replacement bus arrived, and they left and got to their destination in the afternoon.

Drumlane is noted for its round tower, which is the only one in Co. Cavan, and dates, it is thought, from the 500's, when a monastic settlement was founded there. The settlement was attacked by Vikings in 950 A.D., a fact which was mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters. An appeal was made in 1431 to build a cloister; and other buildings, including the church, were probably restored at this stage, so that the remains we now have date from c. the fifteenth century. The round tower is noted for its carving of 'cock in the pot' (an allusion to Peter's denial of Christ). In 1586, under plantations, the Abbey was leased to the Dillon family.

(I am indebted for the above information to the Cavan Co. Museum in Ballyjamesduff, which we visited on the fourth day.)

Meantime, my companion and I were back from our walk earlier than the main group and had some hours to go before dinner, so we thought we would partake of afternoon tea in the Slieve Russell Hotel. I can only describe the tray laid in front of us as being fit for Castle Coole or Florence Court in their glory days.

Wednesday 23rd March 2005

On Wednesday morning we visited the second great house outside Enniskillen, Florence Court. This house was built for the Earls of Enniskillen, whose family name was Cole, and the house was named after the wife of the first owner. At first, there had been a hunting lodge on this site and then, in 1750, building for the present house began, the work being completed by 1764. The next generation made additions which gave it a Palladian look.

The house is now under the National Trust and, as tourists, we entered through the back courtyard and were brought upstairs to an octagonal room, called the 'Colonel's Room', where the guide gave us some information. Portraits in this room included the Second Earl of Enniskillen.

In the drawing room (or 'with-drawing' room, to which the ladies withdrew after dinner) were four large pictures, the artist unknown. One scene was Devenish Island which had been used for burials; the custom had to be discontinued when a squall drowned some of the mourners. Another of the large pictures was of the Belleek area, now flooded by the E.S.B. Ballyshannon scheme. I think it was in this picture that Enniskillen Castle was brought into view. The castle was, of course, the first home of the Cole family, of which we were to hear more later in the day. Another one of the large pictures was of Crom Castle. Smaller pictures included William of Orange on a brown rather than on a white horse, as is more usual, and a little portrait of Oliver Cromwell.



Florence Court

The great danger to these large houses was, of course, fire. In my life-time I can remember two great houses, Rockingham in 1958 and Powerscourt in 1974, being demolished overnight by fire. Just fifty years ago, in 1955, Florence Court suffered a bad fire, thought to have been caused by an electrical fault. The Countess saw the light of the fire under her bedroom door. There was a half-landing arch nearby, which space had been closed and used as a bedroom. The sky was to be seen through the badly damaged roof here. This section was restored to its original state of an archway half-landing after the fire. The sky was also to be seen from the hallway. A specialist, Sir Alfred Richardson, over-saw the restoration. Much quick thought was put into salvaging the dining room by boring multiple holes in the ceiling to let the water through. There is a portrait of the First Earl, who was in the Irish House of Lords, in this room. Another item was a large side-board made from a ship lost in the late 1700's. In the hall, we saw busts of the Third Earl and one of Schomberg (killed, as mentioned earlier, at the Battle of the Boyne).

We also saw the library, which is not a large room. The shelving here survived the fire and some books, which had belonged to the Sixth Earl, have been bought back from Trinity College Cambridge. One touch I liked here was the high fender with padded top for resting and warming the feet! Indeed, heating these great houses must have been a permanent preoccupation for the staff.

In some of the smaller rooms downstairs we saw memorabilia, addresses and certificates belonging to the family. We saw too the large kitchen in the basement with its interesting utensils: butter knives, sieves and bowls; laundry implements; large mangle and old irons. The servants had their own sitting-room and other quarters in the basement area. New tea-rooms and a little shop have recently been opened here and we enjoyed our coffee and scones. We availed of the tea-rooms in the basement of Castle Coole also. It is noticeable that the Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society really appreciate these amenities on their travels in pursuit of history.



Enniskillen Castle

Our next port of call was Maguires' (Enniskillen) Castle, with its two tall turrets, which we saw from the inside. It is even more impressive from the far side of the Lough, where the turrets can also be seen to hang down over the waters - and thus they have stood for the past six hundred years or more, keeping a watchful eye over Lough Erne. This little castle had three

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floors and a well for fresh water in the ground floor. When we see it in a sketch or reproduction, it immediately spells Enniskillen or Fermanagh for us and, of course, the town grew around it.

In the complex of castle buildings today are:

- (1) Restored buildings to the left of the castle to house new County Offices, where we assembled, having alighted from the coach.
- (2) The castle keep (presumably after the castle itself) is considered to be the oldest building in Enniskillen. It is a large three-storey high block and now houses a museum, the main interest being the Inniskillen Fusiliers, or 'Inniskillings' as they were commonly called. We hear of them mainly in connection with the First World War though they were not in fact disbanded until 1968. Much of the militaria dates from that war, but there is a portion of Napoleon's bed from St. Helena, where the Fusiliers had guarded him. Lots of silver and silver plate are on display. The various regiments, or at least the officers, carried and used these luxuries even in war. (We certainly saw on our four-day tour how much class distinction has changed in the last hundred years.)
- (3) (Another very old building to the right of the castle and behind the keep is a restored semi-circle of terraced stables and coach-houses, some of which have been given over to craft shops. The upper storey of these stables had at one time been a military hospital.



Greystones visitors to Enniskillen Castle

But to get back to the castle itself, outside of which stands a large cannon with an inscription saying the cannon was captured in the 1914 war (29th October, 1914). This castle was built by the Maguires and they lived and held sway there for many centuries. However, in 1595, the Maguires were defeated by a Captain Cole, thus starting another dynasty in Enniskillen. It is

said a cousin led the enemy in through a side gate; such are the vagaries of history. The Cole family lived in the castle for some time before the days of Florence Court. But this gem of antiquity will always be known as Maguires' Castle - the Maguires of Fermanagh.

Thursday 24th March 2005

On our way home on Thursday, we visited the Cavan County Museum in Ballyjamesduff. This museum was formally opened by the then President, Mary Robinson, on the 17th June, 1996. It is housed in what had formerly been a Poor Clare convent and school. The collection is very extensive, covering items of interest to archaeologists, military historians, sports enthusiasts, writers and much more. We had an excellent speaker to guide us around the building, after which we had an opportunity to rest our feet in the tea-rooms.

Our last visit of the day, and of the tour as a whole, was to the Cavan Crystal Visitor Centre where, to my surprise, a hotel has now been added. We visited their show-rooms where many small Irish made goods, apart from crystal, were available on sale. I have just now gone to my Cavan Crystal carrier bag (to check my spelling of the word 'crystal'!) and on opening it, I am greeted with delicious aromas of heather and moss soap and solid crème Cologne. So on that fragrant note I will end this piece about our trip to Fermanagh and Cavan.

The Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society have to date had twelve annual four-day tours and I am fortunate to have been on all twelve. These tours have been pleasant as well as being informative, we have had comfortable coaches and good drivers, have enjoyed the best of hotels, have had some excellent guides imparting their local knowledge of all the various places we visited. May I conclude, therefore, by commenting that the tours have proved to be a most worthwhile way of seeing Ireland.

John Francis O'Reilly and John Kenny:

Irishmen sent by the Germans to spy in Ireland during World War 2

By James Scannell

Background

During World War 2, or Emergency as it is called in Ireland, the Germans sent twelve individuals to Ireland on various intelligence gathering missions and to liaise with the I.R.A. Landed by a variety of means, from a small boat, a submarine or by parachute, eleven were captured by the Irish authorities and eventually wound up in the Athlone Interment Camp. The twelfth, John Lenihan, after landing in Ireland by parachute, travelled to Northern Ireland, surrendered to the British authorities and was accepted into the British Double Cross system, a British deception operation run by the XX Committee of M.I.6, sending back false information to the Germans, joining other captured German agents who had been accepted in it, without the Germans being aware that these agents were operating under British supervision and control.

The 11 German secret agents captured by the Irish authorities were:

Werner Unland	Ernest Weber Drohl	Herman Goertz
Walter Simon	Wilhelm Preez	Henry Obed
Dieter Gaertner	Herber Tributh	Guenther Schutz
John Francis O'Reilly	John Kenny	

Of these eleven individuals, two stand out - Herman Goertz and Guenther Schutz. Herman Goertz landed by parachute on 12th May 1940 in Co. Meath. He was the most serious minded German intelligence gatherer sent to Ireland. He remained at liberty for 18 months, being sheltered in a series of safe houses operated by Republican sympathisers until finally captured on 12th November 1941. Guenther Schutz, the most ingenious of the spies, was arrested on 12th March 1941 within hours of landing in Co. Wexford, later managing to escape from Mountjoy Prison and remaining at liberty for a number of weeks. He was also sheltered in houses owned by Republican sympathisers until re-captured in Rathmines on the eve of moving to another safe house located in the Bray area.

A thirteenth individual, Jan Van Loon, a Dutch seaman with German sympathies, jumped ship in Belfast, travelled to Dublin, presented himself at the German Legation at 58 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4, and then astonished the staff by candidly offering to engage in intelligence gathering for them. The Germans, fearing that he was an agent provocateur sent by the British, declined his offer and turned him out of the Legation. He was subsequently detained by the Irish authorities and sent to the Athlone Interment Camp for the duration of the Emergency.

The Abwehr (German Military Intelligence) sent eleven of these twelve German secret agents while the remaining was sent by the S.D. (Nazi Party Foreign Intelligence Service). Remarkably two of the twelve secret agents were native-born Irishmen: John Francis O'Reilly and John Kenny, and how these two individuals came to be working for the German intelligence services are the subject of this paper.

John Francis O'Reilly

John Francis O'Reilly landed by parachute in Kilrush, Co. Kildare, on the night of 16th December 1943. This individual was born on 7th August 1916, the son of R.I.C. Sergeant

Bernard O'Reilly who arrested Sir Roger Casement at Banna Strand, Co. Kerry, earlier that year after he landed from a German submarine to take part in the 1916 Rising. Thereafter Sergeant O'Reilly was known as 'Casement O'Reilly'. In 1920, he was one of several R.I.C. members who resigned from the force in protest over the activities / behaviour of the Black and Tans and retired to Kilkee, Co. Clare.

John Francis O'Reilly attended the Christian Brothers in Kilrush, Co. Clare and went on to join the Irish Customs and Excise Service at Rosslare, Co. Wexford, in 1936 but later left the Service. One version says that he failed the statutory Irish language examination while another account says that he was dismissed for striking a superior. He then appears to have decided to join the priesthood and entered Buckfast Abbey in England but left after 2 weeks.

By the time World War 2 broke out in September 1939, O'Reilly was working as a hotel receptionist in London but shortly afterwards left this position and moved to the island of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands 20 miles off the Cherbourg Peninsula in France where he obtained employment as a seasonal worker with the potato harvest at Beaumont Farm, St. Heliers. He then transferred to a tomato plantation where he was employed in a similar role.

On 10th May 1940, the Germans unleashed the might of their armed forces against the British Expeditionary Force and the French along the Western Front, very quickly occupying Holland and Belgium without difficulty. Within a matter of weeks the French, unable to resist the rapid German advance, were forced back while most of the British Expeditionary Force, minus its equipment, plus some French troops, was successfully lifted from the beaches of Dunkirk as part of Operation Dynamo which began on 27th May 1940 and concluded on 4th June 1940. While this was happening, the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark) were evacuated by British forces. Jersey and Guernsey were bombed by the Germans on 28th June 1940 and occupied by them 2 days later, the only British territory to be occupied by the Germans during World War 2 with citizens being ordered not to resist the German occupation by the British authorities in London.

Some citizens of Jersey were very happy in ingratiate themselves with the Germans and collaborate with them - the local civil administration worked for the Germans in accordance with ambiguous instructions issued to them by London and this action has still left a legacy of bitterness with some citizens of this island over their collaboration with the occupying Germans as no action was taken against them by the British Government when Jersey was liberated in 1945. O'Reilly was one of those who was happy in ingratiate himself with his new German masters and began by rising from a menial job at the German airfield to finally acting as interpreter between the island commander Major Goerg Wilhelm Prunzy zu Walbeck und Prymont and those Irish workers who had decided to remain on in Jersey.

Having established himself with the Germans, O'Reilly approached the Major about the possibility of obtaining permission to travel and work in Germany, an action which O'Reilly later claimed was a ploy to enable him to reach the Irish legation in Berlin with a view of returning home. The Major indicated that he was prepared to grant him permission to travel to Germany provided he could recruit other Irish workers in Jersey for employment in Germany. O'Reilly threw himself into this challenge with great zeal and by means of a very creative incentive scheme which promised pay, holidays and paid return to Ireland when the war was over, managed to persuade 72 Irish workers to travel to Germany with him.

The workforce the Germans expected and what they received were in great contrast to each other. The Germans expected a very disciplined and well behaved group of workers but things started to get out of hand once the workforce reached mainland France to commence the train journey to the Herman Goering plant at Waterstedt. While on the train, the Irish party behaved in a very boisterous and noisy manner, were drunk, entered the compartments of other foreign workers travelling on the train and on several occasions pulled the emergency

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cord for no apparent reason. O'Reilly as leader of the party had to accept much of the blame for what the Germans considered unacceptable behaviour.

On arrival at Waterstedt, O'Reilly turned on the charm and managed to get accreditation with the German authorities as an interpreter to the German forces. He began to distance himself from the Irish workers as they never conformed to the German concept of workers and the type of behaviour expected of them as they disregarded the rules, were noisy and boisterous at night and more seriously turned or left on the lights of the factory they were working in during the blackout.

After a while, O'Reilly tired of his Irish compatriots, in September 1941, replied to an advertisement seeking a writer of articles for Irland - Redaktion, the Irish service of German Radio. Between December 1939 and May 1945, German Radio broadcasted Nazi propaganda to Ireland starting with a weekly talk in Irish, later growing in time to a nightly broadcast in English and Irish. The originator behind this operation was Dr. Adolf Maher, the Austrian born director of the National Museum of Ireland. Maher joined the National Museum of Ireland in 1927, became a member of the Nazi party in 1933 and was appointed Director of the National Museum of Ireland in 1934. In August 1939 he went to Germany to attend an archaeological conference but did not return to Ireland, remaining in Germany for the duration of World War 2, being officially recorded as being on leave of absence from his post as Director of the National Museum of Ireland during this period. Dr. Maher spent the World War 2 years working at the Irish desk of the German Foreign Office in Berlin as well as starting and directing Irland-Redaktion.

A very full and comprehensive account of this service will be found in David O'Donoghue's book *Hitler's Irish Voices*, published by Beyond the Pale Publishing and available through booksellers.

In September 1941, O'Reilly was interviewed by Herr Bock of the Propaganda Ministry after which he took part in a voice test on 24th September 1941 at the Radiofunkhaus. O'Reilly was successful in his application and began work as a script writer, progressing to making broadcasts under the name of 'Tim O'Brien' before revealing his true identity in late October 1941. The British and Irish authorities monitored all these broadcasts. True to form, after a period of time, O'Reilly began to act up. He initially refused to read the suggested text of Wolfe Tone's diaries as he considered them uninteresting but later read them. He also criticised the selection of music played on the station and in 1942 began to seek work in other directions.

O'Reilly later claimed that in June 1942 he met an American working for the S.S., later identified as Howard Marsgraff, who told him that there might be work for him in Spain contacting those who might have news of Northern Ireland. Marsgraff served in the Waffen - S.S., worked with German Radio and had assisted Norman Ballie - Stewart in getting work in Germany. Norman Ballie - Stewart was a British officer court-martialled in 1933 under the Official Secrets Act for passing low grade intelligence information to the Germans. On conviction, he was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment which he served in the Tower of London and had the distinction of being the last British citizen imprisoned there. In 1940 Bailie-Stewart became a German citizen. At the end of World War 2, he was captured by the Americans in Austria and handed over to the British. Because there were doubts that a prosecution for high treason might not succeed, he was prosecuted by the British on the lesser charge of 'committing an act likely to assist the enemy', and on conviction was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. He later moved to Ireland and died in Dublin in 1966.

It appears that Marsgraff also acted as a freelance recruiter for both the Abwehr and its arch competitor and rival, the S.D. The S.D. was the intelligence branch of the S.S. responsible for the security of Adolf Hitler, the Nazi hierarchy, the Nazi party and the Third Reich. For his part, O'Reilly indicated that he would be more interested in being sent to Northern Ireland on a

mission and it is possible that Marsgraff may have reported this willingness to work for a German intelligence service to his superiors.

O'Reilly applied to work as a German intelligence agent / V - man (trusted agent / reliable information source) and in June 1942 was interviewed by the S.S. This may have been the S.D. as the vetting of applicants and the carrying out of security checks would have come within their remit. O'Reilly continued to work for German Radio until September 1942 when he was called back by the S.S. / S.D., informed that his application to work as a German intelligence agent had been approved and that he would now be required to undergo a period of training. O'Reilly then submitted his resignation to German Radio with Dr. Hartmann trying to persuade him to stay but he refused this request and was only released by providing a replacement Irishman in his place, Liam Mullally, who had formerly worked in the Berlin Berlitz School and shared an apartment with him.

On 17 September 1942, O'Reilly reported to the Abwehr training school in Bremen to commence preparations for his mission to Northern Ireland which was assigned the code name *Isolde* for which he was to collect intelligence from Derry / Londonderry, Belfast, Liverpool and Lough Foyle. In the early planning stage of the mission, consideration was given to basing him in London and have various I.R.A. contacts in Britain bring him relevant information. Another intention was that he would be either landed on the Irish west coast by cutter, travel from Lisbon, or dropped by parachute over Ireland.

Towards the end of 1942, plans were made to send him to Ireland by submarine but when he returned from leave in January 1943, he was told that this plan had been dropped. The Abwehr also considered obtaining a transit visa for O'Reilly from William Warnock, the Irish Charge d'Affair in Berlin but his idea was abandoned. The decision to cancel O'Reilly's Irish mission was taken by Dr. Edmund Veesenmayer, the Irish specialist in the Foreign Ministry, who was more concerned in trying to arrange Frank Ryan's return to Ireland and considered the O'Reilly mission a waste of precious resources. Veesenmayer had O'Reilly secretly assessed with the investigating officer considering O'Reilly a 'pig headed individual'. The Abwehr still wanted to proceed with the O'Reilly mission but following discussions with Veesenmayer, Admiral Canaris, head of the Abwehr, cancelled the operation even though it had been suggested, as mentioned earlier, that O'Reilly should obtain the relevant travel papers from William Warnock at the Irish Legation in Berlin to enable him to legally travel from Lisbon to Ireland from where he could then enter Northern Ireland or Britain to carry out his mission.

Although O'Reilly completed a telegraphy refresher course, the Abwehr had no further use for him once his mission to Ireland was cancelled and was released from their service. But the S.D. was still interested in him and planned their own special operation for him without Veesenmayer or the Abwehr being aware of what was going on.

Once free of the Abwehr, O'Reilly returned to Berlin with the intention of rejoining the Irland-Redaktion team but it appears that he did not exert himself to return to work and received a mildly threatening telephone call from Sonderfuhrer Kurt Haller. In a subsequent telephone conversation with Nora O'Mara, who worked for the Irish Service, O'Reilly received an offer from her to return to Ireland and subsequently received a call from S.S. Oberstrmfuhrer Geisler who offered himself with the S.S. Thereafter O'Reilly underwent training with the S.D. and although some of his instructors had previously worked with the Abwehr, the procedures used by the S.D. were different to those used by the Abwehr. The Luftwaffe, which was to drop him by parachute, expected a 'quid pro quo' and he was now additionally required to provide the Luftwaffe with air intelligence information and to assist him in this task, he was shown captured Allied aircraft at a Luftwaffe airbase as well as R.A.F. rank markings and unit flashes.

The S.D. element of the O'Reilly mission was very subtle in parts - the S.D. wanted him to collect political intelligence in England with special emphasis on the inter-party political conflicts within the British government which was an all-party one of national unity, make

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contact with the Scottish and Welsh nationalist movements, travel to Northern Ireland and report on the state of relations between American and British troops, British convoys and destroyers, shipping and the American Air Force. During his mission preparation in Germany, he met Oscar Pfaus who had travelled to Ireland in early 1939 to set up links between the Abwehr and the I.R.A. which eventually resulted in James O'Donovan from Shankill undertaking this role as liaison between these two organisations. O'Donovan later sheltered Captain Herman Goertz in his Shankill house for a week before he moved on to Stephen Held's house in Templeogue. A subsequent Garda raid on this house revealed the presence of Captain Goertz in Ireland but he was able to evade capture and was forced to go on the run, being sheltered in a variety of safe houses until captured nearly 18 months later.

During his training period, O'Reilly assisted the S.S. in selecting another Irishman, John Kenny, for an intelligence gathering mission, who I will progress to in a few moments.

The initial German plan was to drop O'Reilly and Kenny by parachute into Ireland on 16th December 1943 but the pilot in charge of this operation expressed doubts about being able to drop them on target due to the narrow drop zone selected. These agents were being dropped blind as there was no-one on the ground to mark the proposed landing zone for their arrival. On 15th December 1943, O'Reilly was flown to Ireland by Luftwaffe Specialist Group 123, normally based in Brest, Northern France, with his aircraft timed to arrive in Kilkee to coincide with the arrival of the transatlantic flying boat in Foynes so that the sound of the twin-engine German aircraft would be masked by the sound of the larger 4-engine aircraft. O'Reilly was required to jump from an altitude of around 1000 feet with his suitcase weighted so that he and it would descent at the same time on their separate parachutes. He was also supplied with a coloured signal light to indicate that he had made a safe landing to the aircraft crew.

O'Reilly was dropped about 1 mile from his family home around 2 a.m. on 16th December 1943 and made his way home where he received a very warm and welcoming reception from his family. News of his arrival spread locally by word of mouth and in due course rumours of his arrival reached the Garda Síochána who were aware his activities. They also received reports about a stranger with a suitcase stopping at Moveen seeking directions to Kilkee. Despite all this information, the local Garda Síochána took their time about contacting O'Reilly and when they did get around to calling at the family home to arrest him, his mother informed them that he had gone on a shopping trip to town. Instead of waiting for him to return, the Gardaí concerned left a message asking him to call into the local Garda station which he did at 11 p.m. that night. O'Reilly was questioned and then released and was not taken into custody until 11.30 a.m. the next day – 17th December 1943. When searched, he has £143 left of the £300 he had dropped with on his person.

The subsequent search of his landing site revealed the presence of two parachutes, one with harness and one without, spades and eight shock absorbent pads. He was also equipped with an Abwehr a.c. main transmitter / receiver, a battery powered transmitter / receiver, Morse key and a code wheel for enciphering and deciphering messages. O'Reilly was brought to Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin where conditions were not as spartan as those in nearby Mountjoy Prison or the Athlone Internment Camp.

O'Reilly's passport was subjected to a thorough examination by the Irish authorities due to the presence of what appeared to be an exit visa signed by William Warnock, the Irish Charge d'Affair. O'Reilly admitted that the visas for Spain and Portugal were forgeries but that the Irish stamps were genuine. The passport was subjected to a very detailed forensic examination using ultra violet light and infra-red photography. This detailed examination revealed that the passport was genuine but that page 12 had been cleverly replaced and that visa stamp No. 213 / 39 issued on 15th May 1939 had been altered to read No 213 / 43. There were 2 further errors – the German forgers failed to notice or had not been informed that William Warnock's

1939 title of Secretary to the Legation had changed to Charge d'Affair by 1943 and used his 1939 title under the forged 1943 stamp. The second was the use of a code number with the visa stamps as these had been discontinued since the outbreak of World War 2.

O'Reilly's restless streak surfaced again on 6th July 1944 when he managed to escape from Arbour Hill Prison by squeezing through the bars of his cell window, making his way to an unused sentry tower which he previously noticed, loosening the barbed wire, getting through it, crossing over the wall and then finding his way to Hueston Station in Kingsbridge using a Dublin street map which he had obtained through a ruse from the duty officer in the Prison who failed to question / query the reasons for the request. At Hueston Station, O'Reilly boarded the next Clare bound train and arrived back in the family home around 7 p.m. on the 9th July 1944. By this time wanted posters with his pictures offering a reward of £500 for information leading to his capture had been put up throughout the country. O'Reilly had very little time to savour the joys of the family home as his father reported his presence to the authorities and he was rearrested there at 9 p.m. that night and subsequently returned to Arbour Hill Prison. However during the two hour period at home it appears that father and son discussed a course of action under which he would turn his son into the authorities and then claim the reward on his behalf, which is what subsequently happened.

Bernard O'Reilly applied for the reward which was duly paid to him after the matter had been the subject of discussions between Gerald Boland, Minister of Justice and Col. Dan Bryan, Head of Military Intelligence, concerning the legitimacy of making this payment to the father of the escapee, but in the end it was agreed that the money would be paid to him so as not to damage the public response to any future appeals for information leading to the capture of escapees.

Occasionally In Arbour Hill Prison O'Reilly was interviewed by members of Irish Military Intelligence with any information obtained from him relayed to M.I.5 in Britain through the 'Dublin Link', an aspect of Anglo – Irish military cooperation / intelligence sharing during World War 2 / Emergency, details of which are only now being slowly revealed. Occasionally M.I.5 sent Irish Military Intelligence questions they were seeking answers to from O'Reilly, sometimes providing material to assist them in obtaining this information from him. Dr. Richard Hayes, Director of the National Library of Ireland and Ireland's top code expert, managed to break the code used by O'Reilly with this information being passed back to M.I.5 via the 'Dublin Link'.

O'Reilly was released from Arbour Hill on 24th May 1945 with the £143 he had on him when arrested in 1943 being repatriated to him. In October 1945 O'Reilly purchased the Esplanade Hotel in Dublin for £7,100 using the £500 reward money his father had claimed on his behalf and the balance with German funds which the Garda Síochána failed to locate. Later he opened a public house in Parkgate Street, Dublin, called *O'Reilly's* but more commonly known as The Parachute Bar while he was referred to as The Parachutist. Although he married after his release from Arbour Hill Prison, this marriage failed in the 1950's resulting in his 6 children being taken into care when he emigrated to Nigeria. His estranged wife Helen became pregnant by another man but died from an abortion performed on her in April 1956 by the infamous Nurse Mamie Cadden who dumped her body outside 15 Hume Street, Dublin 2. Cadden was subsequently found guilty of her murder, sentenced to death, reprieved, with the death sentence being commuted to life imprisonment, and was later sent to the Central Mental Hospital, Dundrum, where she died in April 1960. O'Reilly later remarried and had a son who was born in the 1960's. For a while O'Reilly worked for Clare V.E.C. (Vocational Educational Committee.) giving German lessons and he is credited with playing a significant role in attracting a German plant to the town. It is claimed by some writers that O'Reilly worked for British Intelligence in Africa and the Middle East. O'Reilly died in England in 1971, the apparent victim of a hit and run accident.

John Kenny

John Kenny was born in Dublin on 27 March 1916. His father died while he was very young and the man his mother subsequently re-married showed very little interest in him and he was raised by his uncle John Sullivan in Kilcummin, Killarney, Co. Kerry. John Kenny claimed that he was nominal member of the I.R.A. but immigrated to England in 1937 where he held down a series of menial jobs.

Following the outbreak of World War 2 in September 1939, he was aware that he would be liable for conscription to the British armed services and in early 1940 moved to Jersey, one of the Channel Islands, obtaining employment as a seasonal agricultural worker. However it is believed that he was about to be deported from Britain under the Prevention of Violence Act as the authorities considered him 'a threat to the realm' arising from his membership of the Irish Republican Defence Association in Ilford between 1937 and 1940. It is further believed that his travel to Jersey was assisted by the Peace Pledge Union, an anti-war group which helped able bodied men to avoid / evade conscription.

When the Germans occupied Jersey, Kenny, like O'Reilly, found employment with the new occupiers, first as a hotel waiter, then as a vehicle mileage checker in the German motor pool, and finally as a driver for a naval officer, replacing the previous post holder, also an Irishman. This individual had knocked down and killed a local boy while driving under the influence of alcohol and had been sentenced to two years imprisonment by the Germans. Kenny took up this position in 1942 and held it until 1943 when he received a visit in Jersey from O'Reilly and another individual described as 'a Gestapo officer'. Following this meeting Kenny volunteered his services on the basis of a number of promises given to him by O'Reilly which included travel to Germany, that he would not have to do factory work and that he would be sent home to Ireland. Unlike the previous promises which O'Reilly made to the Irishmen still working in Watenstedt, those given to Kenny were honoured and he was sent to Berlin where he stayed in the Hotel Roxy for 3 weeks, doing nothing while drawing a monthly salary of 450 Marks.

In due course Kenny was summoned to a meeting with Oberleutnant Gesser at Berlin S.D. headquarters after which he was assigned to Lehnitz to undergo an S.D. course covering the repair and maintenance of radio transmitter sets. At the conclusion of this course, he received a crash course in elementary sending and receiving of messages using these sets and in Morse code after which he was brought with his handler to Brittany. O'Reilly was not impressed with Kenny's skills and prior to their departure attempted to convince the Germans to no avail that Kenny was a liability to his mission. On 17th December 1943, an attempt was made to parachute Kenny into Ireland but foggy conditions obscured the drop zone and the aircraft had to return to France with him still board. On this leg of their journey, Allied aircraft attacked this German aircraft forcing Kenny and the crew to bailout over Rennes airfield while the pilot made a successful emergency landing.

Following repairs to the aircraft, Kenny was dropped into Ireland around 2.30 a.m. on 19th December 1943 but on landing overlooked or forgot the basic rule instilled into all parachutists during training of immediately collapsing their parachute upon landing. Before he did this, a gust of wind inflated his parachute in the manner of a giant sail and he was dragged through several fields and over some low walls before his progress was stopped by a more substantial stone wall. During this process, Kenny sustained a head wound, injuries to his back and was badly bruised. Making his way to a neighbouring house, he sought aid but the occupants contacted the Garda Siochana as they sensed something was not right about him and he was taken into custody. His only possessions were a camouflage parachute and £94. Kenny was brought to Kilrush Hospital for treatment of his injuries and then to the country hospital in Ennis for a period of recovery after which he was brought to Arbour Hill Prison in Dublin where he was later diagnosed with the condition of 'traumatic neurasthenia' due to his back injury and detention in an unheated cell.

While in Arbour Hill Prison, Kenny divulged very little to his interrogators being rather vague about the precise nature of his mission. The only admission he made about his mission was that he came to Ireland, not with the intention of doing harm to the country, but for the purpose of getting to England to work there against a country he did not like for another country (Germany) which was at war with England. He refused to reveal the names of any of contacts and remained extremely tight lipped. It is most likely that his main role was to serve / act as radio operator for O'Reilly but had not been trained adequately to perform this task and it appears that O'Reilly, who had misgivings about him, instructed him to go home and wait there until called by him.

Kenny was released from Arbour Hill Prison on 11th May 1945 and disappeared into obscurity.

The landing of these two German intelligence gatherers created some problems for the Irish Government even though the information obtained from them, especially O'Reilly, was being relayed to the British through the 'Dublin Link'. Their arrival had led to a diplomatic row in early 1944 when both the United States of America and British Governments sent separate diplomatic notes to Taoiseach Eamon de Valera as head of the Irish Government. At that time, the British and Americans were busy planning *Operation Overload*, the 6th June 1944 Normandy invasion and were concerned that intelligence information about the build-up of men and equipment in Britain might be brought to the attention of the German and Japanese diplomatic representatives in Dublin for onward transmission to their respective governments.

Both governments decided jointly to exert diplomatic pressure on the Irish Government out of the need to maintain security and secrecy on this operation by submitting separate diplomatic notes calling for the immediate interment of these diplomatic representatives and the closure of their legations.

On 22nd February 1944, Alan Gray, the United States of America Minister to Ireland, served a long American Diplomatic Note on Taoiseach Eamon de Valera in which there were references to the radio transmitters found on O'Reilly and Kenny and to one in the German legation which he did not know had been surrendered the previous December to the Irish authorities and was being held at that time in a Dublin bank vault. Part of the American Note read:

'We request, therefore, that the Irish Government take appropriate steps for the recall of German and Japanese representatives in Ireland. We would be lacking in candour if we did not state our hope that this action will take the form of severance of all diplomatic relations between Ireland and these two countries. You will readily understand the compelling reason why we ask, as an absolute minimum, the removal of these Axis representatives, whose presence in Ireland must inevitably be regarded as constituting a danger to the lives of American soldiers and to the success of Allied military operations.'

This was followed by the British Government's Note to Eire dated 22nd February 1944 which stated:

'The United Kingdom Government desire to make it clear to the Government of Eire that for their part they would warmly welcome the initiative which has been taken by the United States and they fully support the request for the removal from Eire of German and Japanese Diplomatic and consular representatives. The United Kingdom Government wish to emphasise the importance they attach to this document.'

De Valera rejected both Diplomatic Notes and allowed the German and Japanese representatives to remain at liberty in the country until the end of World War 2. However in retaliation for the rejection of these requests, the British Government suspended travel between Britain and Ireland on 13th March 1944 citing 'military reasons' with the only exceptions being those whose travel or work was considered as of utmost importance. Irish

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workers in Britain and those serving in the armed services were unable to return to Ireland until these restrictions were eased from August 1944 onwards.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks are extended Michael Kelliher, Bray Public Library, who provided me with specific information from provincial newspapers dealing with John Francis O'Reilly, John Kenny and John Lenihan.

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Log for 1860

By Henry Edward Kearns

Being the account of the travels of a bandsman for three years on board of a Ship of War (51 Guns), being on two stations during that time namely S.E. Coast of Africa & the S.E. Coast of America.

Background

This paper is a rendition of a diary handwritten by Henry Edward Kearns who was born in 1842 and died August 1905, aged 63 Years. Also included are some letters written by Henry to his parents, and some published material related to key events noted by Henry.

Henry Edward Kearns's life subsequent to the events noted in his diary was not recorded, however, he did eventually move to Bray, Co. Wicklow, changing his surname along the way from Kearns to Cairns. He was Pat Brennan's grandfather, and the Society thanks Pat for this primary source material.

The handwritten diary was initially word processed by Emmett Brennan. Although some minor editorial changes were made in the version below, the sequence of events and the words are those recorded and written by Henry almost 150 years ago.



Left to right: Harriet Cairns with Jack, Frances, Bertha and Henry Edward Cairns (Kearns)

The Diary

In the early part Spring of Eighteen Hundred and Sixty I took a notion of going to sea and not content with going myself I got 3 more young men (names: Washington Caltow, Richard Heap and James Heap) who were weavers and musicians likewise to go with me and at this time I was learning to weave along with the first one, which circumstance was very favourable for my intention, because I made the excuse that morning that I was going to weave and I accordingly got up a little before six o'clock in the morning and the night before I had to make up the price of my fare down to Portsmouth, which I had done by putting my Violin and case and burlap coat in pawn, on which I realized ten shillings at Mr. Jerimiah Kippaxis, Burnley.

LOG FOR 1860

On the morning of the eleventh of February - a cold wintry morning and it was snowing also, I went out of our house with my bagging can, but I left it under the mangle which my mother kept and I proceeded to the house to one of the weavers (Was. Cat.). There I had to meet the others and after having a cup of coffee made by Mrs. Caltow, we proceeded to Thorny Bank Railway Station, where we waited for a short time when we proceeded to the 7.00 a.m. train for Halifax, then we had to wait there about twenty minutes when we took tickets for London, but I forgot to mention that I had to pawn a summer coat which I had, on which I realised Ten Shillings. We had to stop at London all night.

On the morning of the 12th we went from Victoria Station to Portsmouth (Landport Station). On our arrival at Portsmouth we made our way to No. 10 Berkley Street, Southsea, which was occupied by an old man named John Constable. This man was what you would call an agent for Bandsmen that is, the Captains of several vessels employed him to get him musicians, for which he would receive One Pound and sometimes he would have the purchasing of the instruments and you can imagine he used to buy inferior ones, and pocket the balance between them and good ones. He had a good Euphonium in his house when I went, but he thought it was not working, because one of the valves got stuck, but after I tried it and cleaned it out I told him different, but I had not the slightest idea that I was doing myself an injury at the time for when I wanted to have that one, he said: 'Oh no, I will send up to London for one and you will get it along with the rest'. You must remember that there were several more bandsmen besides us four there and all waiting for the instruments to come down. When we got our instruments, I thought I should damage mine, which was a bad one. So I accordingly did so in the following manner. One night after we played on board I smashed (one of the valves) of my instrument just where it joins the lower part of the Bell and I told the Bandmaster it was done with pinching up. So I got this good one through that, but old man Constable was very annoyed. On the thirteenth day of February he



Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, K.C.B



HMS Forte

brought us on board the 'Victory' Guard & Flag Ship at Portsmouth, where the other three passed the doctor, I not being inclined that day, but on the 14th I went on board the 'Victory' and passed also, from which we were sent to the St. Vincent Receiving ship to await a Steamer going to Sheerness, where H. M. Ship 'Forte' laid, that being the name of the ship for which we joined. The names of the Officers belonging to her were as follows: Admiral Sir Henry Keppel K.C.B., Captain C. H.

Turnour, Commander Buckley, Flag Lieutenant Henige and 1st Lieutenant Squires.

On the twenty sixth of February we went to show up on the 'Dec', Store Ship, we arrived at Sheerness the following day. She was fitting out at Sheerness. On the seventh of April she sailed out of Sheerness for Portsmouth. On the eleventh of the same month she arrived at Spithead and from there she went into Dock to have a bit taken off her screw and when she was going into dock she broke her Ict. boom. On the twenty eight she sailed out of Portsmouth for Plymouth. Arrived in Plymouth on the twenty ninth. On the thirtieth she sailed out of Plymouth bound for the Cape of Good Hope. She took Sir George Grey and his wife with her: he was going to the Cape as Governor. Arrived at Madeira on the ninth of May. It is a Portuguese settlement. There was an American Man of War in while we arrived. While we arrived she had a theatrical performance on board, which was performed by the Ship's company. The 'Armes' British Paddle Boat Steamer of War was there also. She was coming home from off the Cape of Good Hope Station, being relieved by the 'Sidon' Paddle Boat Steamer (22 Guns).



A typical equator crossing

On the twelfth of May we proceeded from Madeira to Rio de Janeiro. On the twenty fourth of May we crossed the line and we held up the old rule of shaving and I will give a little account of the manner it is conducted. I will begin with the manner I was treated myself. I tried myself to keep out of it, but the 'Bears' as they are called caught me on the main deck close to the sheep pen on the starboard side and dragged me onto the upper deck, where I was blindfolded on the top of the ladder and no sooner had I got there, than I felt something nearly knock me down. It was a hose that they were playing salt water with and I can tell you it came with great

power. After that they conducted me to the starboard gangway, where Neptune and his amphitheatre were arranged in brilliant costumes.

The next performance was bringing me before the 'Barber', one adept at his trade, he is one of the S. Co. who is generally merry and can use some witty sayings and he will ask you 'What country man you are' and if you open your mouth you will have a pill administered (by the Doctor who stands alone aside of him) which is not composed of any herbaceous or medical matter, but of animal refuse. So if you are green as to answer them you will have some relish, but they did not give me any pills, although I seen plenty who did get them. There are several other questions which they will ask such as 'have you anything the matter with you. Have you a pain in your stomach'. After this is over the Barber will shave you and you are dealt with leniently or severely with according to the way you behave yourself. If you are silent and let them shave you they will be very likely give you a No. 3 razor, which is the best, it being a long piece of hoop iron let into a handle of wood. Nos. 1 + 2 razor being of the same metal, but nicked like a saw which will rear the skin from off your cheeks, as I have seen several times.

After that is gone through, they will take the handkerchief off your eyes and turn you right over head over heels into a sail that is about a foot of salt water in it and it is so put up that it is the same as being encased, for you cannot get out only at the one part. The sail is first laid on the main deck and is subsequently, nailed or tied up to the beams of the main deck. Ours was on the starboard side, right from the fore ladder to the main ladder and it is nearly opposite the main hatchway that you go in and come out at the forehatch. It is through the skid gratings that you are pushed down. Skid gratings are on each side of the upper deck and run from the fore to the main deck. They are made that way for air and light to be let on the main deck. Well

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after you are nearly smothered by the Bears, you can go and watch the sport yourself. I picked one of our bandsmen, one W. Gore who was so very old and infirm that I think it was a shame to do it to him, but everyone has to go through it, even the officers. After all was over which was towards the night the main Biaco was spliced i.e. they got an extra phial of Grog. The Ship that day was like a bathroom for you could go nowhere without getting wet.

We arrived in Rio de Janeiro on the 3rd June. There was a stoker named Townsend died of suffocation in the Stoke Hole through excess heat when we were crossing the line. He was brought up on the Starboard Gangway on the upper deck, to try if that would do him any good, but it would not and he died not long after.

On the 7th day of June we steamed out of Rio de Janeiro, with a nice wind for the Cape, but unfortunately we had to turn back on account of something which occurred between Admiral Keppel and Lady Grey on the third day after leaving. I heard Sir George Grey having suspicion of Old Harry, he watched one night and caught him in the act of committing an indecent action towards his wife. Therefore he ordered the ship to be 'boated' directly, which was done and we were on our way towards Rio de Janeiro again, before we hardly knew.

On the 12th June we arrived at Rio de Janeiro and Lady Grey was sent out of the ship at night and I heard she would go home in the next mail to England after which we coaled ship and steamed away again next morning for the Cape of Good Hope. Sir George went in our ship from Rio to the Cape. In the morning of the 13th of June we steamed out of Rio for Simon's Bay. On the passage from Rio to Simon's Bay there were two men fell overboard, one of which was the main deck sweeper, he had overbalanced himself when he was throwing out dirt, out of the Starboard main deck Bow port, he was soon picked up, and was sentenced to fourteen days Black list for throwing it out of the Bow port. He should have thrown it out through the Ash Seassmon M.D.

The other man, alias Shifting Jimmy, who was in the main Chains, was hit by the main Jack, as it was swinging about, and sent overboard backwards, Of course the usual cry was heard directly of 'Man Overboard'. The first thing that is done is to let go the Life Buoy, then 'Heave the Ship too' which took about ten minutes. We were going about ten knots per hour at the time, so he would have been about two or three miles astern in that time, and to make it worse it was a very cloudy night with a very heavy sea on. In fact I never thought he would have been found. The life boat was lowered directly the ship was 'heave too' and they must have been tossed about. I heard that the life boat's crew could not see anything of him for twenty minutes or so but they did so at last, and he had hold of the Life Buoy. The Life Buoy is always charged at evening hours, therefore it strikes on being let off at night and causes a match to light on it which keeps in. After he was brought on board he was ordered to go to the Master where he was treated with some rum to warm his stomach. I heard Jimmy say he should have been eaten by up by the Cape Pigeons and other birds while he was upon the Buoy, and to make it worse than all, he was on the Buoy the wrong way, through which he was turning summersaults in the water all the time he was on. If you can get properly on to it, it will ride with you very freely. The Life Buoy we had was composed of two large hollow iron balls which were at the extremity of an iron rod and from the centre of this rod was a perpendicular rod which was about two foot long and had at the top an iron rod running diagonally with the other.

As we had approached the Cape the wind gradually increased, and on the 2nd July it blew very hard with sudden squalls. It made some of us think of the next world but I found the best plan would be to keep my spirits up. On the 3rd of July the weather was more wind being higher and rougher sea on. The sea was like mountains rolling about. It was then I began to think of my father's words about his passage to India. He used to tell me he had seen waves 'mountain high'. Sometimes during the night they piped 'hands save ship' as our starboard bulwarks were skimming much water, and had it not been for the energy and the good judgement of one

of the Quarter Masters we would have very probably gone down, but he gave the wheel a turn which put her upright again, after which he shortened sail. It would not have occurred if there had been less canvas on, but fancy having all sails set in a gale of wind. But I have heard if old Harry Keppel did not feel the water in his bedroom he would not shorten sail. We lost four Quarter Boats, they were washed off by the waves and a great part of our fore bulwarks were carried away too. It was the most miserable night I have ever witnessed, as in the first place I had no sleep and in the next she was rolling about so, that I thought I should have been lamed every minute with mishaps. With all the rolling about all our plates were broke but fortunately we had some Armstrong plates and basins left. These Armstrong basins and plates are made up largely for the Navy being made of iron and a sort of glazed stuff on the outside. We had to heave the ship too because we were so close to land. We would have gone in to-day only it was so rough and it would have been night before we would have gone in.

On the morning of July the 4th the weather looked rather favourable, the wind having abated and the sea also. I can assure you that I was frightened last night, for every time she rolled over, you would have imagined she was going down and it was impossible to walk on deck. You might venture, but you would have to risk being hurt, as I went along the main deck I had to catch hold of the hammock hooks. There was a French Barge in sight about 7 a.m. She looked rather shaky. We got into Simon's Bay about 9.30 a.m. There was the 'Boscaner' Flag Ship (74 Guns) in when we arrived, the ship we are going to relieve. She having being her period of three years out. The Admirals name was Grey, some relation of the Governor. The Governor went ashore directly we got in, and I expect he would make his way the next day for the Cape.

On July the 5th at 8 a.m. the usual salute was fired according to the rank of each Admiral. On the forenoon of the 7th July the 'Boscaner' sailed for England from Simon's Bay. The 'Boscaner' is a line of battle ship of 74 Guns and an old sailing vessel. H.M. Ship 'Forte' took up her moorings shortly after she left. On the 8th the band went ashore to play at the Admiral's House and continued to do so while we remained in Simon's Bay, with the exception of a few nights.

On the 16th Admiral Keppel removed from his own ship to H.M. Ship 'Brisk' for the purpose of going his rounds on the East coast of Africa. He took his galley's crew and band with him. The 'Brisk' was a corvette of 22 Guns (Capt. de Horsey). The Brisk sailed the same day. On the 21st she arrived at East London (Buffalo Bay) and sailed from there the same day.

On the 26th we arrived at Algod Bay. On the 27th at 5 a.m. there was a fishing party sent ashore, consisting of a man from each (sailors') mess (and marines) with four of five bandsmen - I was one myself. There were a midshipman and a master's asst. also with us. They brought the seine and a Boat compass with them for fear we should require it.

On our arrival at the shore the fishing party landed, there being a Boatswain mate left in the boat to pay out the seine. When it is ready there is one half catches hold of each rope that is attached to the seine and pulls it on shore. I got up to my neck in water in trying to pull it, so I thought my best plan would be to let it go, so I did. I had a new cloth jacket on too, which got all the pockets filled. The first haul we had was a very good one, but it was more for pleasure than anything else that I went for, so I disappeared from amongst the fishermen after the first haul and went exploring. I had been strolling about for a few hours before I seen any one, but at last I spied three or four natives making towards us (I had two more bandsmen with me). There were 4 of them, and all well-built men of about 5 ft 10 in height. They had little or no covering - merely a bit of coarse sacking, they also had little ornaments hanging around their waist, some were the feet of fowl, others the teeth of animals sharpened I expect for some purpose. They had tomahawks also (crude ones). They could not speak any English - as we expected, nor we could not make out anything they said, only by their motions we understood they wanted powder to file their horns that hung by their side, (cow's horns). They also wanted something to eat. When we were tired of talking to them we left them. I forgot to

mention what sort of head dresses they wore. Some of them had their hair all meeting around a gutta percha hoop which was about six inches from their head and their hair waxed to make it stick together; it formed something like a crown on their heads; others had it much similar with very little difference.

We came on board about 3 p.m. with very hungry stomachs, although we had plenty of fish we could not cook any for a snack, but I was partly aware of it so I brought a shilling (1s 6d the price) from the steward, box of sardines with me which gratified my hunger a little. The fish was served out among the messes at 6 p.m. - our mess got about half.

On the 28th we sent another fishing party ashore, on the opposite side; but as usual I sallied away again on quest of finding something extraordinary - so I did - because I had not gone far before I saw some more natives, but these had a select spot for themselves for they had maize, dried fish, and Calaraches outside of the place where they were living: living you might call it. It was under a large tree that six of them were sitting with their hands on their knees and very little to cover them: they had an old pot (cracked) boiling in front of three of them - the men. There were 3 men one side and 3 women on the other side of an old mat which was suspended from the tree. They looked poorly to look at, and the mode of living looked fearful. I took an old silk handkerchief off my neck, and having heard previously that they liked exchange I tried to exchange it for something and I did exchange it for a piece of dried fish which was something like ling. I also exchanged an old cotton handkerchief with several holes in it for a hen, but the native made a fearful noise about it when he found the holes in it, but we had shoved by that time so he had to put up with it.

Previous to finding these natives I found a human skull apparently a young lad's, it was in a sort of wood. I saw plenty of animal's bones and large ones too; I fancied some of them were belonging to whales. We went aboard after being about two hours ashore.

We sailed away not long after. The next place we arrived at was Turtle Island, so called after the abundance of Turtles found there. The Admiral, Flag, Lieut. & Secretary went ashore in search of them, while we kept tacking about waiting for them. They came off late in the evening with 4 large turtles and a great variety of shells. We drudged a good deal besides on this passage. As soon as they came on board we sailed away again. We had a fair wind all the way as yet.

On the 7th August we arrived at Mozambique. There is a fine old fort there, which is occupied by Portuguese soldiers. Our Third Lieut. bought a fine monkey there. The Bumb boats bought all sorts of monkeys off, and various sorts of shells and red coral rock. Mozambique is in the channel of the same name.

On the 9th August we sailed from Mozambique for the Seychelles Islands.

On the morning of the 10th August (about 8 a.m.) our signal-man named Allen noticed a ship at a good distance changing her tack which caused a suspicion of her being a slave ship, as this part is noted for the slave-trade being carried on; she was not far from land.

Admiral Keppel ordered steam to be got up, also to make all plain sail, steam was up in less than twenty minutes (full power of 4 boilers). Fortunately for us there was only a very light wind, thereby we had the advantage of her; for if there had been a good breeze she would have out done us. We got pretty close to her about 4.30 p.m. close enough to distinguish them sending things overboard. We fired a blank charge at her, a sign for her to 'heave too' but she paid no attention to it, and just as we were going to fire a shot at her stern she hove too, we were then close to her.

Admiral Keppel hailed her; she said she as a 'Yankee Whaler'. 'Where are your colours then?', said Keppel; 'They are pretty near all sick on board with the fever' was the reply, which was a poor excuse for hoisting no flag. Without any more questions being asked the admiral sent our

1st & 2nd Cutters with our Master & a Lieutenant & a Midshipman in them to board her. Every one both fore and aft were anxiously waiting to hear the result. They had been on board but a short time when Mr May (Master) put his head over the bulwark and cried out 'She is a lawful prize' and our ensign was hoisted on her. The master on boarding her went directly to see if she had any 'Slave Decks', and on finding them, and on finding out the number he sang out the above. The Master cried out shortly after that she had 800 and odd slaves on board and bound for Savannah from the island of Obo. She was close to the island of Joahanna when caught.

When the master cried out 'She is a lawful prize' there was a shout raised directly. After they had their crew cleared out with the exception of the Doctor, who stopped on board to assist our doctor, they sailed off manned by our crew - for Joahanna, although we started pretty near together, but she got in a good time before us. Her name was 'Emanuella' (Keppel christened her 'Sunny South'). Her crew, with the exception of Captain, 1st & 2nd Mate, who dined in the wardroom and Petty Officers mess, dined in the Troop deck.

Arrived at Joahanna on August 11th. The 'Emanuella' sailed out of Joahanna for Mauritius on August 12th. Keppel christened her 'Enchankefs'. The "Brisk" sailed away for Joahanna on the 13th August.

The Island of Joahanna is about 30 miles in circumference, having two towns upon it. The town that we were at was very small having one house that looked likely to live in, and that belonged to the governor. He had a Sugar Mill also, at which the natives worked, all the other dwellings were composed of a cocoa-nut leaves matted, and having boughs of trees for supports. I went ashore one day along with some more bandsmen, and as we landed we were met by an old Arab and a few natives, the Arab invited us down to his house to have dinner, of course we accepted it, and on our arrival there he bade us be seated while it was ready, in the mean time he brought us some lime juice to drink, which was very nice only it was rather sweet - sugar was cheap there.

We arrived at Zanzibar, on the 16th August, and we landed Captain Speake & Grant, and the 12 Cape Mounted Rifles who went ashore on their mules. Captain Speake & Grant are trying to discover the source of the Nile. Captain Speake & Grant came on board at Plymouth, and they had a screen rigged on the main deck for their sleeping apartment. Speake is about six feet high, and Grant rather lower, but both very fine made men, and appear to be well suited for their trying enterprise. I went ashore on the 19th August, but being strange of course I did not see much. I went ashore again on the 21st August again, and this time I seen a little more and one thing in particular was the slave market. It was held in an open court yard; the slaves stood in groups-something similar to cattle, and the men who were selling them stood close by waiting for a purchaser - they were all Arabs i.e. the owners. While I stood there I seen a person come to purchase, and he just hauled them about like cattle feeling the women's breasts - looking at their teeth; making them run after a stick which would be thrown a short distance to see whether they could run or not; but I did not stop to see all for I had enough as it was. The streets in Zanzibar are very narrow and dirty. There is a Sepoy Guard kept there.

This is the end of the diary fragment.

Two of Henry's Letters

Joahanna

12 August 1860

HMS Brisk

Dear Father & Mother

It is with great pleasure I write these few lines to you hoping this will find you in good health as it leaves me at the present time thank God.

We had a very nice passage so far. The first place we called at was East London on the East coast of Africa. The next place we called at was Delgoa Bay, next was Turtle Island, next was Mozambique. We stopped there a few days. There is a great fort there. Then we sailed for Joahanna. It is 3 days sail from Mozambique to Joahanna. We arrived at the Comoro Islands that are a short distance from Joahanna, when the man on the lookout sighted a sail and of course anywhere about this channel you may expect them to be nothing only slavers, so we chased them. There was a tidy breeze and we put on full power of steam and after her. She was tacking about in different ways which was suspicious. After about 4 hours we got up to her and asked her why she hoisted no flag. She said she was a Yankee Whaler. Then we asked her why she did not stop. She said all were sick on board, we fired a blank shot and if she would not stop we would have fired a shot into her. Two of our boats went off to her with a midshipman.

The first thing they seen was the slaves peeping out through the grating, when they searched her there was 850 slaves on board of her. A beautiful vessel, the best prize that has been taken this long time.

We heaved too to let the crew come on board of us and then we both sailed for Joahanna, we got there the next morning. They sent a prize crew on board of her with plenty of everything. The Captain and first and second mate were sent on board of us, they all looked very determined men. As far as we could learn from the crew, they had brought the slaves from the island of Obo, they were three days into their voyage to Savannah when we caught them.

I must conclude for the present.

Your affectionate Son

Henry Kearns

First part of the following letter is missing:

... hospital to be distributed as follows. The $\frac{3}{4}$ of the proceeds to the English hospital, the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ to the Spanish hospital. I think it would be useful for you to expend about £6 in coming to meet me -don't you. I have no doubt you would like to be on the beach waiting for me, but £6 is a large amount to gratify your own pleasures momentarily, whereas I would be at home in less than forty eight hours, which is not long compared with 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ years. You need not be afraid for me while I am away. Let me know if you have received that prize ticket. You need not answer this letter for it is hard to say whether I will receive an answer to it.

I have bought a Mattee Pot, Bombeza and Yerba which is a favourite drink out here. I will give you a description of it. The 'Mattee' is a pot made by cutting a round hole in a poppy, in which the Yerba is placed, then it is defused by pouring hot water on it. Then by mixing a little sugar with it, it is fit for use. The 'Bombeza', is a tin tube about 10 inches long with a bulb like piece of tin at the bottom, pierced with holes, which is put into the infusion and drank. It resembles our tea very much, and it is a great insult to refuse to drink it if it is offered to you.

I have got a pair of 'Emu' eggs which resemble ostrich eggs, but not so oval. I will write Mary a letter, but I scarcely think I should for being so ungrateful in not answering my last letter. So I must conclude, with my kind love to all. Accept the same yourself.

I remain your affectionate son.

Henry Kearns

Alternative Views

Extract from 'Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile' by John Hanning Speake, page 20:

On the 27th April, Captain Grant and I embarked the new steam frigate Forte, commanded by Captain Turnour, at Portsmouth; and after a long voyage, touching at Madeira and Rio de Janeiro, we arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on the 4th July. Here Sir George Grey, the governor of the colony, who took a warm and enlightened interest in the cause of the expedition, invited both Grant and myself to reside at his house. Sir George had been an old explorer himself - was once wounded by natives in Australia, much in the same manner as I had been in the Somali country - and with a spirit of sympathy he called me his son and said he hoped I would succeed. Then thinking how best he could serve me, he induced the Cape parliament to advance to the expedition a sum of £300, for the purpose of buying baggage - mules; and induced Lieut-General Wynyard, the Commander in Chief to detach 10 volunteers from the Cape Mounted Rifles to accompany me. When this addition was made to my force, of twelve mules and ten Hottentots, the Admiral of the station placed the screw steam corvette 'Brisk' at my disposal and we sailed for Zanzibar on the 16th of July, under the Captain A.F. de Horsey - the Admiral himself accompanying us, on one of his annual inspections to visit the East coast of Africa and the Mauritius. In five days more we touched East London and thence proceeded north, made a short stay at Delgoa Bay, where I first became acquainted with the Zulu people, a naked set of natives, whose national costume principally consists in having the hair trussed up like a hoop on the top of the head and an appendage like a thimble, to which they attach a mysterious importance. They wear additional ornaments, charms etc., of birds claws, hoofs and horns of wild animals tied on with strings and sometimes an article like a kilt made of loose strips of skins of vermin strung close together. Next day we went on to Europa, a small island of coralline, covered with salsolaceous shrubs and tenanted only by sea birds, owls, finches, rats and turtles. Of the last, we succeeded in turning three the average weight of each being 360lbs and we took large numbers of their eggs.

We then went to Mozambique and visited the Portuguese Governor, John Travers de Almeida, who showed considerable interest in the prospects of the expedition.

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Leaving Mozambique on the 9th of August, bound for Johanna, we came the next day at 11.30 a.m., in sight of a slaver, ship rigged bearing on us in full sail, but so distant from us that her mast tops were only just visible. As quick as ourselves, she saw who we were and tried to escape by retreating. This manoeuvre left no doubt what she was and the Brisk all full of excitement gave chase at full speed and in four hours more we drew abreast of her. A great commotion ensued on board the slaver. The sea-pirates threw overboard their colours, bags and numerous boxes, but would not heave to, although repeatedly challenged, until a gun was fired across her bows. Our boats were then lowered and in a few minutes more the prize was taken, by her crew being exchanged for some of our men and we learnt all about her from accurate reports furnished by Mr. Frere, the Cape Slave Commissioner. Cleared from Savannah as 'The Sunny South' professing to be destined for Hong Kong, she changed her name to the 'Manuela' and came slave hunting in these regions. The slaver's crew consisted of a Captain, doctor and several sailors, mostly Spaniards. The vessel was well stored with provisions and medicines, but there was scarcely enough room in her though she was said to be only half freighted for the 544 creatures they were transporting. The next morning as we entered Pamoni harbour an intricate approach to the rich little island hill Johanna, the slaver as she followed us stranded and for a while caused considerable alarm to everyone but her late Captain. He thought his luck very bad, after escaping so often, to be taken thus. For his vessels power of sailing were so good, had she had the wind in her favour, the Brisk even with the assistance of steam, could not have come up with her. On going on board her, I found the slaves mostly to be Wahiyow. A few of them were old women, but all the rest were children. They had been captured during war in their own country and sold to Arabs, who brought them to the coast and kept them half-starved until the slaver arrived.

On the 15th the 'Manuela' was sent to Mauritius and we after passing the Camoro Islands, arrived in Zanzibar.

Extract from Bartons and Speakes a novel by William Harrison, published in 1984, W.H. Allen. Harrison's sources were - The Royal Geographical Society, Peter Hanning Speake and Isabel Burton:

Page 320:

Again a ship bearing Speake toward Africa was taking the long way around. Instead of travelling to India, this time he was going to South America, and he forgot how much he detested the idea of a sea voyage. Grant practised photography, water colouring, nautical observation and read books on botany. Whenever possible Grant studied the stars with Captain Turnour in the evenings.

Page 321:

Two South African Dignitaries, Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape Colony and Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, Commander of the British forces at the Cape, were also aboard the Forte.

Page 327:

On the 4th of July 1860 Speake's ship sailed into Simons Bay at the Cape. So they were in Africa again. Grant began gathering specimens of the flora, pressing leaves and blooms under glass.

Sir George informed them that they were being supplied with another ship the 'Brisk', a slave hunting corvette, at the docks the ships band in bright red coats played a medley of marching time.

Derrylossary Churchyard and 1798 Monument

By Pat Power

Derrylossary Churchyard



Derrylossary Church

The name Derrylossary is probably derived from 'doire lisheen' meaning the 'little enclosure of oak'. And indeed the location of the site suggests such an origin. The church is built on an ancient site and there may well be remains of a pre-Reformation church under the present structure. Three 'bullaun stones' are associated with the graveyard. These items generally attest to a long established religious site. The best example of the Derrylossary bullaun stones is the one preserved in the graveyard enclosure. It is a large granite monolith with a grind hole 15" wide by 12" deep. A smaller depression was probably the cradle for the grinding stone (now lost). The purpose of bullaun stones is still debatable but the general consensus for those in proximity to old churches is that they were corn grinders for the ritual grinding of a portion of the ancient church corn tithe. This dates from a time, 10th century onwards, when it was the custom for local people to gather and present their first fruits and a portion of farm produce to the clergy. In 1932 the antiquarian Liam Price reported a very old baptismal font, said to have originated from the church, located in the garden of a private house near Annamoe.

The now roofless church consists of two distinct buildings. The older section, which comprises of the nave of the existing church dates from the late 11th century and is depicted in George Petrie's illustration of Derrylossary Church executed for engraving in Thomas Cromwell's *Excursions Through Ireland* (1820-21). Here the small church is shown from a southerly aspect surrounded by a grove of mature trees. Contemporary guidebooks remarked on the 'melancholy air' of the place under their dense foliage. A few fragments of the trees still exist.



One of the ancient 'bullaun stones' in the precincts of the Churchyard

The main portion of the present building was a standard type Established Church with bell tower built in 1820 for £450 pounds, funded in part by the parishioners and the Board of First Fruits. A few scattered gravestones are shown in the engraving. Derrylossary churchyard contains, as well as its memorials of the Protestant church tradition, a number of Roman Catholic gravestones from the 1740's to 1750's when 'respectable' Catholics were allowed burial in Established Church graveyards. This reflects the time before the Roman Catholic Church was allowed to legally own its own property and when some Established Church congregations, like that at Derrylossary, allowed Catholic interments. Invariably Catholic memorials in Protestant graveyards were always placed in the rear of the church out of immediate sight.

The oldest traceable grave memorial still existing is to the Rev Arthur O'Neill and dates from 1705, just about the time when family gravestones were first coming into fashion for those outside the military or nobility. Other early 18th century stones are to the Hatton family (1712) Fleming (1715) Williams (1732) Kana (1740) Carroll (1746) Kennedy (1778) and several others from a later period of the 18th century.

Buried in Derrylossary Churchyard are two important figures from the loyalist side of the 1798 rebellion. Thomas Hugo of Drumeen House who died of natural causes in 1809 was associated with the legendary rebel figure General Joseph Holt. During the course of the Rebellion they were sworn enemies and much of the lore surrounding Joseph Holt in the latter part of '98 centres on his quarrels with Hugo, who's house at Drumeen was burned by Holt. Here too is buried Rev Ambrose Weekes, Rector of Annamoe, who was also burned out in the rebellion.

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Derrylossary Churchyard and 1798 Monument (continued/1)



Derrylossary Church engraved from a painting by G Petrie, circa 1821

In more recent times a number of contemporary memorials of interest have been erected. A poignant and very romantic verse epitaph is inscribed on the grave of Archie and Audrey Collins. She was for many years the lead violinist of the R. T.E. Orchestra. Their epitaph sums up a life devoted to each other:

Archie (1930 - 1988) & Audrey Collins (1936 - 1994)

Friends – Musicians – Lovers

‘I will wing my way to you honey

And among the souls of Heaven

I will find your soul

And float towards it evermore’

Derrylossary Churchyard is nationally famous as the burial place of the illustrious Childers and Barton families of Glendalough House, both of which played such important roles in the forging of the Irish Free State, and its subsequent development. Although not buried in Derrylossary a word may be said about Erskine Robert Childers father of President Erskine Childers.

Erskine (Robert) Childers (1870-1922) was one of the most noble and tragic figures of the Irish Republican struggle. Of English birth, Childers spent a great deal of his childhood at the Barton residence, beautiful Glendalough House, as he was related to the Barton family. He became an early convert to Irish republican aspirations and used his wedding present from his father-in-law, the famous yacht *Asgard*, to smuggle guns to the Irish Volunteers. He later gave distinguished service in the Royal Naval Service and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander. Known in some circles for his literary work more so than as an Irish patriot, Childers wrote a famous thriller novel *The Riddle in the Sands* which was successfully filmed. Erskine Childers was at the very forefront of the Irish struggle from 1919 to 1921. He took the Republican side

DERRYLOSSARY CHURCHYARD AND 1798 MONUMENT

in the Civil war and was judicially murdered by a military court in one of the fledgling states most shameful acts of revenge. He is buried in the Republican plot in Glasnevin.

Erskine Hamilton Childers, President of Ireland (1905-1975), was born in London and son of the executed patriot Erskine Robert Childers, President Childers started his career as a travel agent manager and later held a position in the *Irish Press* newspaper. In 1944 he embarked on a political career and spent several years as parliamentary secretary until he became minister for Post and Telegraphs from 1951 to 1954. Following on from that he served a number of ministerial portfolios, Minister for Lands 1957-59, Minister for Transport and Power 1966-69 and Minister for Health 1969-73. Childers succeeded Mr Eamon De Valera as President of Ireland in what was at the time a rare political event, a full presidential election. He died suddenly in office on November 16 1974 and was accorded a state funeral.



Arthur Griffith (left), Robert Barton (centre with cigarette) and Michael Collins (right, at car door)
at Anglo Irish treaty talks in Downing Street, 1921

Also buried in Derrylossary is Robert Childers Barton (1881-1975) of Glendalough House. A signatory of the 1922 truce along with Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, Barton was first cousin of the executed patriot. While Barton was a high-minded Irishman dedicated to the public good, he was no republican firebrand. He served on the committee of Irish Agriculture from 1910 and would probably have remained undistinguished had he not voluntarily joined the British Army on the outbreak of the Great War. As a British officer Barton was drafted to

Dublin in the wake of the 1916 Rising. The whole event made such a profound impression on him that he resigned his commission and joined the Irish Volunteers. Thereafter he served as a Sinn Féin T.D. and Ireland's first Minister of Agriculture in the first Dáil. Barton served several prison internments until he was selected as one of the negotiators in the truce. Although he signed the Treaty he voted against it and took the Republican side in the Civil war. Shortly after the establishment of the Free State he resigned from political office but served as head of the Agricultural Credit Corporation and Bord na Móna. He was 94 when he died.

Other members of the extended Barton-Childers family are also buried in Derrylossary. A testimonial to the democracy of death, as much a token of esteem and the inherent dignity of the Childers family, is a memorial stone in the Barton - Childers plot to:

'Thomas Strickland, for 22 years faithful butler to the Childers family'

Many have remarked on the humility of an Irish President buried only twenty feet from his butler.

Declining congregations over the last half-century reduced the numbers attending Derrylossary Church from 300 in its hay-day during the 1870's to a few dozen by the 1950's. In a rationalisation of the Church of Ireland parishes about 50 years ago the building was deconsecrated and left as a planned ruin on the landscape.



Derrylossary Churchyard: the grave of President Erskine Barton Childers,
Greystones Archaeological and Historical Society tour, 2005

1798 Monument to Andrew Thomas at Castle Kevin Bridge

Andrew Thomas was reputed to be a servant to Mr Hugo of Drumeen House, an implacable loyalist during the 1798 period. Hugo suspected his employee's United Irish sympathies and threatened to imprison him if a rebellion broke out. In 1798 Thomas indeed joined the rebels. He is supposed to have departed from his employer while Hugo was swimming in Lough Dan. Taking advantage of Hugo's undress and his clothes not immediately at hand, Thomas stole Hugo's gun and legged it. Thereafter he became an active guerrilla fighter in Wexford and Wicklow.

DERRYLOSSARY CHURCHYARD AND 1798 MONUMENT

Andrew Thomas was closely identified with the Wicklow rebel Michael Dwyer and was accounted part of his fighting group. At one stage he had a £50 reward posted on his head Dead or Alive. Among his many exploits Thomas made an attempt to shoot Hugo as he was being driven in his coach along the avenue of Drumeen House. The assassination almost succeeded. The lead musket ball passed through the carriage windows showering Hugo with debris.

Thomas remained at large for two years after the Rebellion was officially over. In December 1800 he and a companion, John Harmon, were hiding in a hollowed out rick of turf at Castle Kevin when a party of yeomen surrounded them. The men escaped the initial encounter but Thomas was later spotted making slow passage across the bog just below Castle Kevin Bridge and was assaulted by a mounted yeoman named John Manly who struck him with a pistol butt. Although injured he still managed to elude capture until a second yeoman named Mark Weekes, son of the Rector of Annamoe Ambrose Weekes, shot him in the leg with a musket ball. Thereafter he was slain by several others in a melee of stabbings, slashing and shooting.

The unfortunate rebel's body was later brought to Rathdrum where his mangled corpse was hanged, his head been spiked on the gable as a warning to others.

A Church for Rathdrum

By P J Noonan

The following paper is an edited version of a Wicklow People newspaper article written by P J Noonan circa 1960 and the Society wishes to thank The People Group for permission to use the material in its journal. The article was brought to the attention of the Society by Leo Ireton,

Introduction

Considering that Rathdrum – the Rath Droma Atha of ancient Ireland, the ‘fort of the ridge of the ford’, which describes its location above the rapid-flowing Avonmore – was the centre of almost unceasing conflict, and of such desperate and prolonged resistance to Anglicisation, records are meagre and incomplete. However, let us first examine what went before 1860, the year the church of Saints Michael and Mary in Rathdrum was solemnly dedicated and what, in a much more peaceful atmosphere, followed that event.

Ancient Ties

An ancient Celtic Church of ‘Disert Keyvyn’ (Kevin’s Hermitage) was mentioned in 1276 in an account of churches in the Deanery of Arklow, and it lay between Rosahane and Rathdrum. It appears that St. Kevin established a house in Glenmalure, and this church continued to be mentioned in records up to 1531. Henry VIII became too masterful for the O’Byrne Clan of the east, but the O’Byrnes of west Wicklow held their territory so that the churches there, in Glenmalure, Macreddin, etc., were outside the jurisdiction of the Archbishops of Dublin. It was this clan who provided for all the churches in their territory, and indeed some of the priests were of ‘noble birth’, that is, O’Byrne chiefs.

On the 26th August 1580 Lord Grey De Walton, Lord Deputy, was ambushed and his army severely punished by Feach Mac Hugh O’Byrne at Rathdrum ford. The Deputy had pushed his way through from Wicklow via Kilnamanagh, where the ‘Deputy’s Pass’ still commemorates his name.

The fort at Rathdrum, it is reported, was taken from the O’Byrnes in 1595 by Sir Wm. Fitzwilliam, Lord Deputy. Feach Mac Hugh O’Byrne was slain in his own glen on the 8th May 1597. In the same year, State papers ordained the setting up of the county of Wicklow, which was to be formed of the baronies of Inisboghin, Ballinacor, Talbotstown, Hollywood and Castlekevin. It was, however, another quarter of a century before this, the last county of Ireland by English orders, was really established, and in the meantime Feach’s son, Phelim, had inflicted the terrific defeat on Sir Henry Harrington’s Army at the Rathdrum ford on the 28th May 1599.

In 1601 the O’Byrnes made terms with their enemies, through Lord Deputy Mountjoy, who, breaking all agreements, awarded the O’Byrnes’ lands and property to the Wingfields.

In the 15th century the Holy See had revived the ancient Diocese of Glendalough. When Henry VIII suppressed the religious houses, the Franciscans from Wicklow Abbey, according to tradition, took up their abode in Glenmalure, on the site of St. Kevin’s Monastery, at Ballinabarney and called it St. Mary’s Abbey. From May 1597, with the death of Feach Mac Hugh O’Byrne, and the burning of the abbey by soldiers from Rathdrum under Captain Thomas Lee, this house ended. For more than a century the district had to depend, so far as that was possible, on Irish priests from the Continent.

Registering Priests

Under the Government Act of 1704, the registering of 'Popish Priests', the first parish priest of the district of Rathdrum was Fr. Charles Byrne, appropriately enough, who resided in Ballinabarney. Ordained by St. Oliver Plunkett at Enniskeane, Co. Monaghan, he lived, it would seem, in his mother's house, as according to the Catholic Register of the Parish of Rathdrum, this was the location of the former abbey, and to this day it is known as 'The Priest's Fields'. Fr. Byrne had then been parish priest for twenty years.

Then there came in succession, to take charge of the extensive parish that embraced Greenane, Macreddin, Aughrim, down to the Wexford borders, as far as 'The Meetings' in Avoca, north to Kilcommon, and east into Barndarrig, the following pastors:

Rev. Phelim Bryan (or Brien)	Died 1759
Rev. Francis Callan	1765
Rev. P. O'Quinn	From 1775 to 1778
Rev. Laurence Brennan	1771
Rev. N. Deevy (or Devoy)	Died 1779
Rev. R. Fitzgerald	Until 1783
Rev. John Meagher	From 1795 to 1799
Rev. John Kavanagh	Arrived 1800

Rev. John Kavanagh, a native of Gorey, left a permanent impression on Church history of the whole area of Rathdrum – Aughrim. During the Penal days the chapel of Glenmalure was apparently situated in the townland of Ballinatone. It was burned in 1760 by the notorious 'Burn-Chapel' Whaley or Whaley Abbey from just beyond Ballinnaclash, who was the foreman of the Grand Jury of Wicklow. Subsequently a chapel was built 'on the brow of Ballinacor', adjacent to the site of where Feach Mac Hugh O'Byrne's castle stood. This was burnt by the Yeomen in 1798.

Fr. Kavanagh, who had been Chaplain in the French Navy prior to 1782, had the church at Greenane rebuilt during his curacy, but he went much further, for he also restored the church at Macreddin which was also burnt in 1800. It was Fr. Kavanagh who built the beautifully situated church at Clara. Apparently his work was recognised by the Archbishop, for he was appointed P.P. of Rathdrum in 1802. It is worth noting that the Greenane Church was rebuilt in the rare cruciform style such as those at Ashford and Wicklow, all of which suffered at the hands of the Yeomen during the troubled period surrounding the Rebellion of 1798.

Greenane Church was at that time the principal edifice for the Rathdrum Parish, for no church had up to then been allowed to be built in any of the towns and villages of the entire area, as witness not only Rathdrum, but Aughrim, Tinahely, Carnew, Avoca, etc. Fr. Kavanagh continued his ministry up to his death on 1st August 1825, aged 75 years. By his own request he was laid to rest at Greenane, at the south side of his church, where to this day, lies his tombstone with the Latin inscription which he had prepared years before his demise. Following considerable renovations and improvements (1935 – 46), the 150th anniversary was commemorated on 10th June 1951.

Rev. Wm. Doyle succeeded Fr. Kavanagh as Pastor, and it was during his ministry that the then Earl of Fitzwilliam erected the Parochial House, Avon Park, on the Laragh Road, which was the Parish Priest's residence until the early 1950s when a new house was built.

Fr. Doyle lived until the year 1834, when he was succeeded by Rev. James McGrath, who remained Pastor until 1854. Then came an auspicious time for the Rathdrum Parish in the person of Fr. Galvin, whose contribution will be discussed later.

Churches in Rathdrum Area

So far as one can judge, there is no tradition of a catholic church of outstanding importance ever attached to Rathdrum in ancient times, nothing such as Glendalough, Wicklow or Arklow. There is reference to St. Mary's of the Wood as being a wooden church, and as having been desecrated by Cromwell's Army, but apart from its unimportance, so indicated, naturally a wooden church would not last long. It appeared in Penal times that Greenane was the principal church of the parish. As already mentioned, Rathdrum seemed one of those towns in which a catholic church was forbidden.

From all this one deduces the non-existence of a stone-built catholic church ever in Rathdrum town. One and a half miles out from the town on the main Wicklow road, there stood a church on the height on the left-hand side dedicated to St. Coman – today it is called Kilcommon. The name was of ecclesiastical origin, but who St. Coman was is not known. In its churchyard a stone exists, dated 1776, to the memory of Rev. Bryan Byrne. According to Lewis in his *Topographical Dictionary*, Kilcommon was a parish of 850 inhabitants and constituted one of what was known under English administration as a Constablewick of the parish of Wicklow, when Wicklow – or to be more correct, Rathnew Parish – extended to the confines of Rathdrum.

Tradition has it that St. Coman was a disciple of St. Kevin, Glendalough, and also that during the Penal times its parishioners from outlying districts were not allowed to use the roads and had to visit the church by means of 'double ditches'.

The next church that might be noted is that at Ballinatone, but today the church there (Church of Ireland) is quite a modern looking edifice. Apparently it was named after Baile na Corra as a seat of Clan Gabhall Raghnaill of the O'Byrne Clan, and it gave its name to one of the baronies constituting the county administration.

Over by Kilmacoo, near Avoca, is the site of Tigroney – Tigh Romhan – commemorating that Palladius, who preceded Patrick, landed at Inisbothin, and was the first to preach the Christian concepts on Irish soil, establishing this as one of his first churches, and thence going to Donard where he and his disciples set up a monastery on a large scale.

All this presumption about not having had a church actually built in Rathdrum is borne out by the fact that, when Penal codes were being relaxed priests came to reside openly in the Rathdrum area, there certainly was no such building, and they had to turn to what they could find for the purpose. This brings us to Fr. Charles Byrne in 1704, and it can be assumed that it was the wooden church of St. Mary that he had for his ministrations. After the Rebellion, which probably accounted for St. Mary's as well as neighbouring churches in Greenane, Ashford and Wicklow (though this is mere presumption), the then Parish Priest, the famous Fr. Kavanagh, was permitted to use the Flannel Hall.

Flannel Hall Described

A contemporary description of this Flannel Hall, given by Wright in his guide of the early years of the century (written 1827) stated:

'The design (of the Flannel Hall) was admirable. It consists of two storeys, in the upper of which was a long hall, carried round the four sides of the square, having stands for the support and display of goods. The basement contained another gallery, occupying three sides of a square, the fourth side being occupied by a storeroom, lodge and entrance. The centre of the hollow square was analogous to an exchange mart, where factors and merchants bargained and converged upon business.'

A Church for Rathdrum

When Wright visited Rathdrum the market in flannel manufacture was flourishing. There were two kinds of flannel presented for sale, and he says that 'it was generally supposed from the excellence of the quality of the Wicklow wool for flannel manufacture, it might be carried to a high degree of perfection in this country, superior to that of their rivals, the Welsh, had they but the spinning machinery'.

'We quit Rathdrum,' said Mr. Wright, 'impressed with the belief that important opportunities are here shamelessly neglected, and anxiously hoping that the beauty and fertility of this country may speedily claim the attention of those in whose hands fortune has placed the means of bettering its condition.'

So important had this flannel industry become in Rathdrum that the Irish Government, in 1790, appointed a seller to superintend the market. The Flannel Hall had been erected for its purpose by the then Earl Fitzwilliam at a cost of £3,500 of that period's currency. Above the entrance there had been the escutcheon of the Fitzwilliam family, with the date of erection, 1793. Yet, within ten years of Wright's visit, thanks to the prohibition on Irish exports imposed after the Union, the industry had virtually disappeared.

In 1798 the Flannel Hall was converted into a prison for the 'croppies'. Many were executed there.

A Visitor in 1834

Let us examine a description of those times, written by a priest who hid his name under the pen-name of 'John O'Toole', and who subsequently wrote a history of the Clan O'Byrne as memoirs. We will split up the thread of his story to serve our purposes.

'Mr. O'Toole' in the preface to his book recalls the way in which he left his College in 1834, and said that having received a note from the Parish Priest of Rathdrum – one of his deceased father's earliest and most steadfast friends – inviting him to spend a weekend with him, he, instead of answering the invitation, determined to proceed to him at once – 'and oh, the delight of that day's journey on the top of a coach, through Little Bray, over the Dargle Bridge, through the Glen of the Downs, the wooded ravine of Dunran, and up the steep hill that rises above the valley of Avonmore.' 'Where,' he asked one of the loungers standing at the stage, 'does Father D ----- (whom we can identify as Father Doyle) live?' Surprisingly enough, he says that, having crossed a little bridge his guide preceded him through Rathdrum, and then turning to the left, pursued his way up a road so straight that 'Mr. O'Toole' could not lose sight of him.

'Instead of keeping pace with him, I halted as if spellbound, by the exceeding beauty of the landscape ... mountains of gracefully undulating outline, dense woods almost concealing from view the Vale of Clara with its flashing river, and terminating all, at the bridge-foot of the mill, the clank of those wheels, softened by the foaming race, was distinctly audible in the slumberous stillness of that hot August day. Here for me was a vision of beauty in all its freshness. It is, said I to myself, one of nature's masterpieces. I will hang it up for ever in memory's best gallery.' A couple of minutes brought him to his friend's door, where he awaited the visitor.

On his first evening with Fr. Doyle, he tells us he was formally presented to two friends – an aged priest, Pastor of a neighbouring parish, whose name was (as he put these things) Fr. G ----. We can identify Fr. Grant of Wicklow, who was a native of Rathdrum parish. The other was Mr. C -----, 'who, I thought, from his general bearing must be fond of field sports. He had come from another county (Kilkenny) and settled in Rathdrum ...' This we can safely assume was Mr. James Comerford, who built the Rathdrum flower mills after purchasing the existing buildings from a Dr. Tomlinson around 1830. The last Comerford associated with the mills was Mr. Edwin Comerford, and following his demise the mills were closed for about three years in

the 1950s and later were sold. In the 1960s they were the property of the Wicklow Co-Operative Agricultural Society, with headquarters in Ashford. The milling of animal feeding stuffs took place at Rathdrum mills, as well as drying and storing of wheat. About the same time the Comerford's beautiful residence, Ard Avon, built in 1863, was sold to the Co. Wicklow Vocational Education Committee and was one of the country's most commodious and beautifully situated technical schools.

In the course of the first evening's conversation, mention having been made of the Flannel Hall 'Mr. O'Toole' asked what it was?

'The hall,' replied Fr. Doyle, 'was built by one of the Fitzwilliam family long ago, and was once a famous mart for the sale of flannel. That branch of the trade failing, the hall was turned into a prison during the troubles of '98, and you may still see over the parapet, the spikes on which the heads of the unfortunate rebels, as they called them, were impaled. It is a grim Golgotha to look at, but my predecessor, Fr. Kavanagh, induced the Earl Fitzwilliam to lend us the corridor, which we use for sacred purposes. Some short time ago, while the Protestant Church was undergoing repairs, the Episcopalians had their heels upon our heads, for they occupied a small room above us, and a sect, which I believe originated with an obscure fanatic in the town, assembled two or three dozen of them next door to ourselves – in fact, it was and is a sort of Noah's Ark. We have, however, three edifices in the parish which have pretensions to be called churches – Clara, Macreddin and Greenane. The latter was burned in '98, but was rebuilt by my worthy predecessor. You must see them before you leave, and Greenane especially which stands at the head of historic Glenmalure.'

'Mr. O'Toole' visited Glendalough, and returning, he thought over the memoirs written by Fr. Kavanagh which had been given to him by Fr. Doyle. He regretted that they were confined completely to his experiences while serving as a chaplain in the Navy, and did not cover his experiences around the '98 period at home. Fr. Kavanagh had been ordained in the Irish College, Nantes, France, and came to Rathdrum shortly after 1783 when he had been visiting Spain, and had he continued his memoirs on shore 'he would have told us much of far greater moment than his adventures afloat Living during '98 he had ample opportunity to jot down what he saw, and if he had done so, we would now possess a narrative of unequalled importance on the religious and political conditions of Wicklow at that momentous period.'

Temporary Halting Place

Again that night after dinner with the P.P., and two curates (Fr. H -----, just back from Rome, and Fr. F -----, a huge man, who thought nothing of riding to Aghavannagh in the sleet and storm of a winter's night), as guests of Mr. Comerford with music, discussion and song, the conversation returned to the Flannel Hall.

'No bishop would think of consecrating such an edifice as this; we Catholics regard it merely as a temporary halting place for the ark of our passage,' said the big curate. 'Although our churches lack sculpture, paintings, mosaic, they witness the same prodigy that is wrought under the gigantic bronze baldachino of St. Peter's. We hope for better times, when the piety of the people will build an edifice more suited to the requirements of our religion. Meantime, we must be content with what we have. We must do as well as we can with Clara, Moycreddin and the Flannel Hall 'A few years hence,' he prophesied, 'when our eyes have grown accustomed to the light – for you know that the gloom of political and religious servitude to which we were consigned for centuries had well-nigh blinded us – we will raise the Cross and fill the lamp with temples, such as would rejoice our ancestors, if they could leave their graves to visit them, temples worthy of that religion which has made art her anointed servant.'

Next day, while Fr. Doyle was hearing confessions in the Flannel Hall, 'Mr. O'Toole' tells us that he crossed the fields to get a look at this place, which he found to be a large square building, without any pretensions to architecture, but well suited for a great mart. The aspect of the

place was chilling, and suggested decayed trade and bankruptcy. An old man whom he addressed told 'Mr. O'Toole' that it had been a busy place before the Union; that he remembered when it was filled with blankets and cloth and wool annually, and buyers used come to it from England, Dublin and all parts, 'and spent a power of money in the town. Not a yard can you get for love or money now ... sure the Union knocked up all that.'

Asked what did the place serve now, the man replied: 'the Protestants have the upper part of it, while their church yonder is repairing, and there is a man in the town has got up a sect – he calls them the New Lights – and they have another corner of it. The Catholics, God help them, have to 'scruge' themselves as well as they can into the corridors on the left there on Sundays and holy days.'

Young Theologians

'At nine o'clock next morning (Sunday),' wrote 'Mr. O'Toole', 'I set out for the Flannel Hall whither a large crowd was hastening to assist at Mass. The Pastor had risen early in order to hear Confessions ... and was robing at the Altar (vestry there was none), when I entered that temporary church. It was crowded to inconvenience by a devout congregation, many of whom had to kneel outside the doors. Here is simplicity enough, as far as church adornment is concerned, but after all, is it not true that a crowded and pious assemblage is the highest adornment that a place of this kind can have?'

'Breakfast over, my host asked me to accompany him to the Flannel Hall "where," said he, "I will show you my young theologians whom I am indoctrinating in the rudiments of faith." And indeed it was a pleasant sight to see the crowd of rosy children, boys and girls, filling the benches there. The latter had, for their instructors, several young ladies ... while some stout young men ... did the same for the boys. As we entered they all uprose, and when they resumed their seats, the Pastor went from form to form questioning this and that on the Sacraments, their obligations to God and their neighbour ... thus dispensing, as it were, drop by drop to those babes of faith, the milk of an instruction, tender, simple and suited to their capacity. When time for dispersing sounded, all knelt and joined the priest in a prayer ... , and oh, the glee of those unsullied young hearts as they scampered off During dinner, the curate related the day's experiences, and made their amiable superior acquainted with the names of parties they had baptized, married or attended in their last illness during the week. There was nothing concerning his flock that was not thus brought to his notice.'

Obviously, as there is no mention of any other place, the Flannel Hall continued to do service for Catholics until the Saints Michael and Mary church was erected. It also served as the Petty Sessions building where magistrates and the Resident Magistrate of the British regime sat monthly to deal with local cases, until, after 1921, when the Irish Free State was set up, it was altered to the District Court. In addition its utility changed again in 1926 when pictures began to be shown there, and in the early 1950's it became known as the Ormonde Cinema, after extensive alterations and conversion into a regular cinema.

'Mr. O'Toole' bade his friends goodbye, including Fr. Grant in Wicklow, who mentioned in the course of his conversation at his house in the Abbey that he had to go collecting for his new church, St. Patrick's, Wicklow, which celebrated its jubilee in 1944. 'Mr. O'Toole' then went travelling on the Continent, remaining away for over 20 years, and he records with regret having, in mid – October of the same year, 1834, received word from the young curate of the death of Fr. Doyle from fever, which he had contracted attending a poor man. In 1846 he learned, while in Pisa, of the death of Fr. Grant. Coming back finally to Ireland, he visited Kilbride, Wicklow where the remains of the parish priest of Rathdrum were buried. He wrote:

'Passing thence I made my way to Rathdrum, but as I turned down the road that leads to the Presbytery, I could not repress the joy I felt at seeing a beautiful church and convent schools in

progress of erection, on the eminence from which I got my first view of the Vale of Clara and the Avonmore.'

He tells how he approached the Parochial House to go see the little study and the dining room of his late friend, but his courage failed him. He went to Clara Vale Church, where the big curate, Fr. F -----, was buried, and then decided to call on Mr. Comerford, only to find that, in the 20 years interval he too had died. He met Mrs. Comerford and asked her who was in Fr. Doyle's place. She answered: 'Fr. Galvin, a most energetic and exemplary priest has succeeded your old friend's immediate successor (Fr. McGrath). He has laboured hard to raise our new church and the convent schools.'

The Flannel Hall was closed – 'all dead', he thought, as he looked at the last rusted spike on the parapet. In Glenmalur he found a handsome new hotel which replaced the old public house, and only wished 'some gentle soul would erect a little oratory in the glen, were it for nothing else but to have the Angelus tolled out at the rising and setting of the sun.'

In subsequent years 'Mr. O'Toole' lived in Enniskerry, where he found the first stone of St. Mary's Church in that village laid and blessed by Cardinal Paul Cullen in 1858, and the church dedicated on Sunday, October 2nd 1859. In 1960 the parishioners celebrated its centenary.

Fr. Galvin and His Church

'The place you have abandoned was unfit for the worship of God. Here, however, you have in your zeal erected this magnificent temple. You have done great things for God. You have made great sacrifices in His name, and you will not be disappointed.'

On Sunday 22nd July 1860 the Archbishop of Dublin Most Rev. Dr. P. Cullen, later to become Ireland's first Cardinal pronounced the above words which contained, in their fullest meaning, acknowledgement for great deeds accomplished, and rich rewards bestowed upon the Pastor and parishioners of Rathdrum, as, sitting beneath the tall ceiling of the new church of Saints Michael and Mary, they joined in the dedication of the church.

Gone was the Flannel Hall, its misery and horrible history. Now Rathdrum had its beautiful church, so exquisitely sited overlooking the Avonmore's valley. This accomplishment had been made possible by the dedication of Rev. Richard Galvin, P.P., and the equally earnest co-operation of the parishioners.

Fr. Galvin was a native of Co. Limerick, and he came first to Rathdrum as one of its curates on June 20th 1847. Previous to that, and since his ordination, he had served in Blackditches, Naul and Barndarrig. Ordained by Most Rev. Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, in 1844, he was 'promoted to the pastoral charge of Rathdrum by Most Rev. Cullen, Archbishop, in 1854', in succession to Very Rev. James McGrath.

Fr. Galvin must have been a man of dynamic energy, impressive personality and deeply sincere convictions. As a result of his endeavours, he secured this enchanting site on the eminence that overlooks the Avonmore, on the road to Glendalough, from the Fitzwilliam family, who had a few years previously bestowed a similar fine location on the people of Wicklow for their grand church.

Building Begins

Armed with full authority, and already generously supported by the people from far and near, Fr. Galvin began his building programme, the design for the church having been prepared by a Mr. J. J. McCarthy. The granite and stones used in its building came from the quarries of Ballyknockan, Ballinacarrig, Tinnakilly and Aughrim. Fr. Galvin kept a meticulous record in his diary of everything that concerned his undertaking. Specifications for the church, which were prepared and dated 22nd December 1855, were preserved by him, and work commenced on it in July 1856.

A CHURCH FOR RATHDRUM

The plan consisted of a nave and chancel with side aisles and chapel porches north and south, and a sacristy south of the chancel. The arch rises from columns of Galway marble, resting on corbels of Caen stone carved into beautiful figures of the patrons, the Blessed Virgin and St. Michael.

Specially to be noted in the plans of the church were the following features:

- The belfry, which is built upon the wall, being corbelled into the gable;
- The main door, which is a masterpiece, is a copy of the 'dog – tooth' arch in St. Mary's Cathedral, Glendalough;
- The tracery window, at the back of the high altar, with four mullions, thirteen feet long, of one single stone which illustrates so graphically the workmanship that was then executed by Irish craftsmen in the building trade.

These three main features have been ever since admired by architects visiting Rathdrum from all parts of the world.



St Mary and Michael Church, Rathdrum

Parish Donors

It was stated at the time of the dedication that there had been three beautiful pictures erected behind the altar, pictures which had been specially commissioned by and painted in Italy for Cardinal Cullen, representing the two patrons of the church and St. Kevin of Glendalough, but of these pictures, it was stated as far back as 1950, that there was no trace of them.

Mr. John Farrell, Rathdrum, presented the altar; Mr. J. D. O'Neill, was the donor of the side altars; the stained glass window over the high altar was erected in Very Rev. Carberry's pastorship in memory of Fr. Galvin; that over the Blessed Virgin's Altar was erected by Mr. Daniel Tallon, a native of Rathdrum, who rose to become Lord Mayor of Dublin, and his sister, Mrs. Sheridan, about 40 years ago when Very Rev. Canon Staples was P.P.; that over St. Joseph's Altar was erected in memory of Rev. Fr. Forde, who was a curate of the parish; and the altar

rails were the gift of Mr. Patrick Cuniam, Kingston, and were installed by Very Rev. Fr. Kennedy, P.P.

Two bells had been erected in the cupola; years later one of those was erected in a wooden framework in the grounds, erected by Very Rev. Fr. O'Donnell, P.P., but in 1929, Fr. Kennedy, when he was having renovation work carried out on the church, and installed the electric light, had the bell restored to its original position.

Dedication

The solemn dedication of the church of Saints Mary and Michael took place on Sunday 22nd July 1860 by Most Rev. Dr. Cullen, and the clergy present included Very Rev. Archdeacon J. Grant, P.P., Wicklow; Very Rev. Canon Redmond, P.P., Arklow, etc. At the ceremony was William Walsh, a young student from Maynooth who had the privilege of taking part in the day's ceremonies. In 1906 when this student reigned as Archbishop of Dublin, he wrote to Very Rev. J. H. O'Donnell, P.P., Rathdrum, approving of extensive decorative work to be carried out on the church, and recalled that his first visit ever to Rathdrum was on this day of its dedication.

The church was opened for public worship on Christmas day, 1860.

Fr. Galvin had prepared for himself in his own church a vault, and when he died, on 22nd November 1878, he was laid to rest here. Prior to his death, his curate, Rev. Fr. Forde, had died and, with Fr. Galvin's permission, the curate's remains were laid in the same vault. During his pastorate, Rathdrum parish was divided, and Aghrim Parish was constituted as at present.

Fr. Galvin was succeeded by Very Rev. P. Carberry, who was transferred to James Street, Dublin, in 1876. The next P.P. was the Very Rev. Canon Staples who, several years later, was transferred to Wicklow, and then came Fr. O'Donnell, who, in 1917, was sent to Ballybrack and was succeeded by Very Rev. Joseph O'Callaghan. In his pastorate, Fr. O'Callaghan had a monument erected to the memory of Fr. Galvin. When he resigned owing to ill-health in 1926, he was succeeded by the Very Rev. P. Kennedy, who died in 1948, and was the first pastor whose remains were interred in the church grounds since Fr. Galvin's time.

Fr. O'Keeffe was the next P.P., and it was under his supervision, in 1950, that a major renovation took place. The contractors, Messrs John Kane, Wicklow, had to hack off the interior plastering. Their workmen had not proceeded very far with the work of denudation on the walls when it was revealed that the church had been constructed in an especial manner, known technically as 'random rubble plaster', which is deemed to be a very uncommon treatment. In this type, the stonemason's work was carefully executed to give an intricate but not geometrical design, the stones being chosen deliberately to give a lovely over-all effect, somewhat similar to that of the 'crazy pattern' garden walks. This unusual vandom-tooled ashlar treatment surprised all concerned – architect, contractors, priests, and there ensued earnest discussions as to whether it would not be more desirable to perpetuate Fr. Galvin's unique objective and allow this random rubble effect to be displayed, rather than cover it again with plaster, paint and colour.

The discussions ended in a unanimous vote, if one might so term it, to retain this unusual effect and the intended decorative work was altered. Now Rathdrum possesses a church unsurpassed by and unlike to any other church in the country.

Accordingly, all plaster work which had some time since 1860 covered the original craftsmanship on walls, pillars, arches, entrances, etc. was cleaned off carefully; all 'pointing' was done with extreme care and skill, and the result is one that must please the most fastidious, as it did a Hungarian architect who happened to come via Rathdrum while the work was in progress, and declared his astonishment to find in Ireland such an architectural Gothic gem.

A CHURCH FOR RATHDRUM

Other tasks Fr. O' Keeffe had to assume included fixing the roof of the church, the building of a new presbytery in 1952 to accommodate his two curates at the Fairgreen, new schools at Clash, renovation of schools at Trooperstown and Clara, and renovation at Clara Church.

Very Rev. T. Power succeeded Fr. O'Keeffe on his transfer to Dublin, and during his time he had erected on a site just outside the boundary of the church grounds in 1956 a bungalow residence for the parish priests, as well as carrying out extensive improvements to the grounds of the church, where he provided a second avenue approach from the roadway, and installing electric heating in the church itself.

Fr. Power was transferred as P.P. to Wicklow in the autumn of 1960 and was succeeded by Very Rev. M. Cusack, who celebrated the centenary of the dedication of Saints Michael and Mary Church in the first year of his pastorship.

The Society welcomes New Members.
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