

The School Lane Cow Doctor...

...and other forgotten eighteenth century occupations Armagh.

by Kevin Quinn

Occupations in 1770 Armagh

The world of work has changed greatly over the last 250 years, causing many occupational names and terms to fall into disuse. The occupations and daily work of our Armachian ancestors have changed as trades, industries and professions have come and gone. The late eighteenth century Armachian did not have quite the same employment opportunities as we do today but Armagh at the time had a very wide range of skilled residents. Many of the occupations in 1770 Armagh are familiar and readily identifiable to us today such as tailor, butcher and barber others maybe are not that familiar such as cooper, wheelwright and watchmaker but hacklemaker, currier and cow doctor are occupations that can be firmly placed in the forgotten list. By delving a bit more deeply into these more obscure occupations it is possible to achieve some understanding of the daily working life of some Armachians 236 years ago

Lodge's 1770 census of Armagh

In 1770 the Rev. William Lodge compiled a census of the population of Armagh on behalf of Archbishop Robinson. It is uncertain as to the purpose of the census but for whatever reason it has provided a somewhat unique insight into the social and economic life of a late eighteenth century small county town. Lodge had not only documented the names of the heads of households but was also enlightened enough to include their occupations. Lodge recorded nearly two thousand people residing in Armagh ascribing 471 of them with identifiable occupations. The list is quite extensive ranging from the forty nine drink sellers the most popular trade to the solitary occupations. However, there are nearly a dozen or so occupations that have disappeared due to economic changes and technical advances or just simply went out of fashion.

Redmond Monaghan "The School Lane Cow Doctor"

Probably the most bizarre occupation listed in Lodge's census is the one ascribed to Redmond Monaghan of School Lane. His occupation is given as a cow doctor. The only other piece of information we have is that he was married with no children. Other than that we have to rely on a general description on Irish cow doctors from "The London Illustrated News" dated 1857 to achieve some sort of an idea as to the type of role Redmond would have played in the local community. Many people today hearing the term cow doctor for the first time would probably conjure up thoughts of some sort of a quack vet or a Doctor Dolittle type character. Probably the former description would go some way to describe this somewhat peculiar role. It is more than likely Redmond was the local character probably bordering on the eccentric but with a reputation of being a bit of a wise man. No social event would have been complete without his presence. Redmond would have probably been a bit

of a Seanchai being blessed with the "Gift of the Gab" and the custodian of stories and traditions. He would have been recognised by the local farmers as having the skills to cure all types of ailments afflicting their cattle. His knowledge would have probably been handed down or else he would have gained it from practising on his own cows. The compounds that he administered would have been purchased in the local apothecaries and paid for by the owner of the cows. In return Redmond would have been in paid in compliments, general hospitality and perhaps he would have charged a small fee. It is also likely that his services would have been in great demand and that he would have been held in high esteem within the local farming community.

Apothecaries

There are three people listed in the census as being apothecaries. They are Robert Scott, Joseph Boyd both of Market Street and Sam Maxwell of English Street. Apothecary was your modern day phar-

Lodge's Name	Modern Name
<i>Big Meeting Street</i>	Lower and part of Upper English Street
<i>Little Meeting Street</i>	Abbey Street
<i>Street Leading to Common</i>	College Street
<i>Abbey Street</i>	Dawson Street and part of Abbey Street
<i>English Street</i>	English Street
<i>Callan Street</i>	Callan Street
<i>Church lane</i>	Cathedral Close
<i>Pound Hill</i>	Vicars Hill
<i>Market Street</i>	Market Street
<i>School Lane</i>	Navan Street and Culdee Street
<i>Castle Street</i>	Castle Street
<i>Scotch Street</i>	Scotch Street and Barrack Street
<i>Irish Street</i>	Irish Street
<i>Mass Lane</i>	Chapel Lane
<i>New Street</i>	Thomas Street and Ogle Street
<i>Abbey Lane</i>	No longer exists (* see below)
<i>Lane off Irish Street</i>	No longer exists (lane to Gallows Hill)

Table showing the street names in Lodge's census and their modern equivalents

* This is not equivalent with the modern street bearing the same name, see map.



Plan of Armagh showing street names used by Lodge. Based on maps by Rocque (1760) and Livingstone (1766)

macist providing a range health related services. The apothecary sometimes was much more than a simple druggist. Some provided medical treatment, prescribed medicine, performed surgery and served as a mid-wife. Medical treatment was expensive and many individuals frequently diagnosed their own problems and went to the local apothecary who provided them with compounds and medication guided by tradition, folklore or domestic medical books. The local apothecaries must of have been busy dispensing as there was a substantial labouring class residing in the town that could not have possibly afforded the fees of the town's only medical doctor

Labourers, Charwomen, and the poor

The census lists seventy labourers, four charwomen, fourteen persons as being poor and twenty two as being very poor.

Labouring was the largest occupation in the town. A lot of these men would have been builders labourer's as at this time Archbishop Robinson was undertaking his building programme such as the Palace and the Public Library. Others would have split between agricultural and casual labourers the latter doing menial jobs on fair days. Labourers were also hired by the town corporation to remove all the dung-hills that had been piled at the side of the streets by the inhabitants. The cleaning of the streets every Saturday was one of the corporation bye laws that were imposed on all the town residents. The most striking observation regarding the poor and very poor was that the majority were widows. In Callan Street there were the widow's O Neal, Cartwright, Dunkin, Lappan, Mc Conna, McMullan, Hamilton and in Castle Street the widow's Johnston and Duffey. All are listed as being poor or very poor. With their bread winner gone these widows would have been facing significant

daily hardship. The four charwomen listed are, Mary Conaway, Fanny Hamilton, Rose Donnelly all of Callan Street and the Widow Conry of Irish Street. These women would have been in domestic service cleaning the grand houses of the local gentry and professionals.

The Gentry

Among the professional occupations was John Richardson a hearth money supervisor who resided in Market Street. Hearth Money was introduced in 1662 as a tax levied against the number of hearths (fireplaces/chimneys) that each house had. The rate was two shillings on every hearth or fireplace. The Richardson's are only one of a few households where the woman of the house had an occupation. Mrs. Richardson is listed as being a mantua maker. A mantua maker is better known today as a seamstress or dressmaker. This was one of the few businesses that

a woman could completely run on their own in the eighteenth century. They made dresses, jackets and gowns for customers. They were responsible for draping, cutting and sewing the gowns. The mantua maker had to know which type of fabric to use and how to cut it, as well as keeping up with the latest style and fashion. Geoffrey Parks is listed as being in the linen trade and his wife is down as keeping a public house. Geoffrey Parks of English Street was only one of four linen merchants residing in the town. The manufacture of linen at this time was principally a rural industry. However, Mrs. Parks unlike her husband was not in a minority occupation as the town had nearly fifty outlets selling alcohol.

Thirsty Armachians

Armagh had an extraordinary amount of public houses. There were eight in Irish Street, seven in Castle Street, six in both Big Meeting Street and Scotch Street, and five in English Street and four in Market Street. The most contrasting occupations listed for one person is that for Edward Justice of New Street who is down as being both a verger and publican. Within that number there were two inn's, McKinstry's in Market Street and Thomas Stringer's in Scotch Street. Both inns were obliged by law to provide at least two beds for the lodging of strangers. Armagh had one brewery at this time situated on the site of the new shopping mall near where Thomas Street and Ogle Street meet. The brewery was probably not able to supply all the beer to the local establishments. However, there were five local malsters to provide the malt and to do some of brewing in order to meet the local demand. The local malsters were Charles McKew of Little Meeting Street, William Craig of Big Meeting Street, Edward Kerr, Tim Gallagher, and Andrew Hutchinson of Scotch Street. To make sure that their neighbours were paying their duty on the beer, the local customs officials known as a gauger only resided a few doors or streets away. As the title suggests a gauger gauged/calculated the amount of duty to be

paid to the government on all the locally produced or imported beers, spirits and wines. There were two gaugers listed a Mr. Palmer of Callan Street and Mr. Agnew of Scotch Street neither christian names were recorded.

Wig Makers

There were four wig makers in the town to keep up the appearance of the local gentry. They were John Mc Clenaghan of Big Meeting Street, David Hanna of Church Lane, Alex McDonnell of Callan Street and Brian Black of Scotch Street. Dressing fashionably in the eighteenth century meant looking good from the head down. The precise dress of the head was as important as any other article of clothing. Wigs and hair pieces were available in horse, goat or human hair. The wig maker's skill allowed him to weave hair and fashion into the latest coiffeurs from London.

Dancing Masters

Two dancing masters resided in the town. They were John Rocks of Pound Hill who is described as an old dancing master and a Mr. Moorhead of New Street. Mr. Moorhead was also a notable violin teacher and attracted pupils from as far away as Tandragee. Both probably provided dancing lessons for the local gentry for their many social occasions and possibly for the lower orders to dance at fairs etc. It was during the eighteenth century that the dancing master first appeared in Ireland. They were flamboyant characters who wore bright clothes and carried staffs. On occasions when dancing masters met at fairs they challenged each other to a public dancing contest that only ended when one dropped with fatigue

Chandlers, Nailers, White Smiths and Carriers/Carmen

There were three chandlers to keep the town houses well lit. Thomas Dobbin of English Street, James Prentice and Widow Cuming both of Scotch Street.

Some chandlers not only made and sold candles but would have made a black soap that was important to the linen bleaching process. Armagh had two whitesmiths who were probably related as both shared the same name. There was Sam Davidson of Church Lane and a Sam Davidson of Scotch Street. They would have supplied the local gentry with the better quality decorative finished white metal work. The whitesmith was thought of someone akin to a sculptor. He had to know how to shape tin with artistic talent, taste and design. The town had five smiths who specialized in making nails probably mostly for the building trade and for the odd hackle instrument used in the linen trade. At this time Archbishop Robinson was commencing his building programme so the local nailers probably would have had plenty of orders. The nailers were James McCone of Big Meeting Street, George McGreery of the Street Leading to Common, John Edge of Callan Street, Matthew Gray of Castle Street, and William Johnston of New Street. Carriers/carmen was the modern day delivery/haulage man collecting and delivering raw materials and products both by horse and hand cart. Like the labourers the carmen were hired by the town corporation to take away the dunghills that had been piled by the local residents during their compulsory Saturday clean up. One of the town's bye laws was that horse and carts had to be led through the town as on previous occasions stampeding stallions had made pedestrians dive for their lives. The local carmen were Dan Camwell, Henry Tiffney both of Big Meeting Street, Philip Dugan of the Street Leading to Common, George McKelvey of Church Lane, Peter Carroll, William Johnston both of Callan Street, Edward Conry of Irish Street, John Paterson, James McJennett, Ralph Dick and James Simpson all of Scotch Street.

The solitary trades

Michael Troy of Irish Street was the town's only hackle maker. The hackle was an instrument with teeth made of

nails that separated the coarse part of flax. The fibres were hackled combed to separate the long line and short tow fibres. The dry plants were pulled through the wooden hackle several rows of nails. The seeds would then fall off onto a cloth that had been placed under the hackle. James Russell of Church Lane is the only documented currier. He would have dressed the coats of horses with a currycomb and also tanned leather. The art of curing leather was hard manual labour needing great skill and a range of special hand tools. The currier worked on a variety of hides, principally cow, calf, goat, sheep, pig and deer and on occasion dressed squirrel and rabbit. John Ward of the Street leading to Common was the local sawyer. John would have felled trees sawing the timber into boards for floorboards and joists etc. Robert Gardiner of Market Street was the town's sole brazier. He would have made or repaired brass or copper household items. One of his descendants established Armagh Foundry in Dobbin Street. James McGeough of Callan Street is listed as being a waterman. It is uncertain as to exactly what his role was but it was probably something to do with the town's water supply. Dan Brennan of Irish Street was the town's pump maker. Armagh was fortunate in having a plentiful supply of underground water which could be tapped by wells, open basins, windlass and bucket and wooden pumps. A new elm pump for Market Street cost £4.3s.4d in 1767. Mat Mallon of Scotch Street was the town's pump borer. Sometime earlier than the Market Street pump, £8.18s.3d had been paid for sinking a well and making a pump in Irish Street. It is almost certain that Dan and Mat would have been involved in the above jobs. The Misses McCann of Scotch Street was the town's milliners. There were four McCann sisters probably sewing everything from aprons to cloaks. Randle Shields of Irish Street was the town fiddler. Randle would have probably entertained at fair days and at different social events, maybe even providing the music for the local dance masters. It is almost certain that Randle and Redmond Monaghan must

have surely crossed each others path many times either at some social event or maybe just ceiling in a neighbour's house.

Corporation employees

Richard Lutton of Little Meeting Street was the town sergeant. The town sergeant was appointed by the Grand Jury for the preservation of the peace of the town. Newcomers to the town were carefully examined by the town sergeant so undesirables could be moved on or persons already in the town who were not of good behaviour were liable to be expelled. Like Ann Armstrong who was expelled from the corporation area for being a disorderly person and a public nuisance. Thomas Johnston of Market Street was the town gaoler. The gaol was in the basement of the old session house in Market Street probably on the site of the former Lennox's store. The gaol had the infamous flight of nine steps leading to the cells where long term prisoners were held. It is quite probable that Thomas led Ann Armstrong down the nine steps a few times or placed her in the town's stocks. In 1770 Arthur Burleigh of Scotch Street was the town weight master. The weight master was appointed annually to oversee

the town's various markets. The weights and measures used were inspected regularly and those traders found to be using inaccurate scales were fined and their weights and measures were confiscated and destroyed. Thomas Crawley of Pound Hill was the keeper of the pound. Any seized or stray animals especially on fair days would be brought to the pound and held there until their owners paid a fine for their release. The Widow Blakeney of Scotch Street was the keeper of the infirmary. She was probably the matron of the infirmary that was situated on the corner of Scotch Street and Dobbin Street and not the infirmary at the top of Dawson Street (the old City Hospital).

A busy provincial town

The lists of trades and occupations reveals that Armagh in the late eighteenth century had a varied and busy commercial and professional life such as might be expected in a flourishing market town. Lodge's census's also provides a very real link to our town's past. It gives Armaghians a strong sense of belonging and continuity as many of the surnames listed are still with us today. ❖

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