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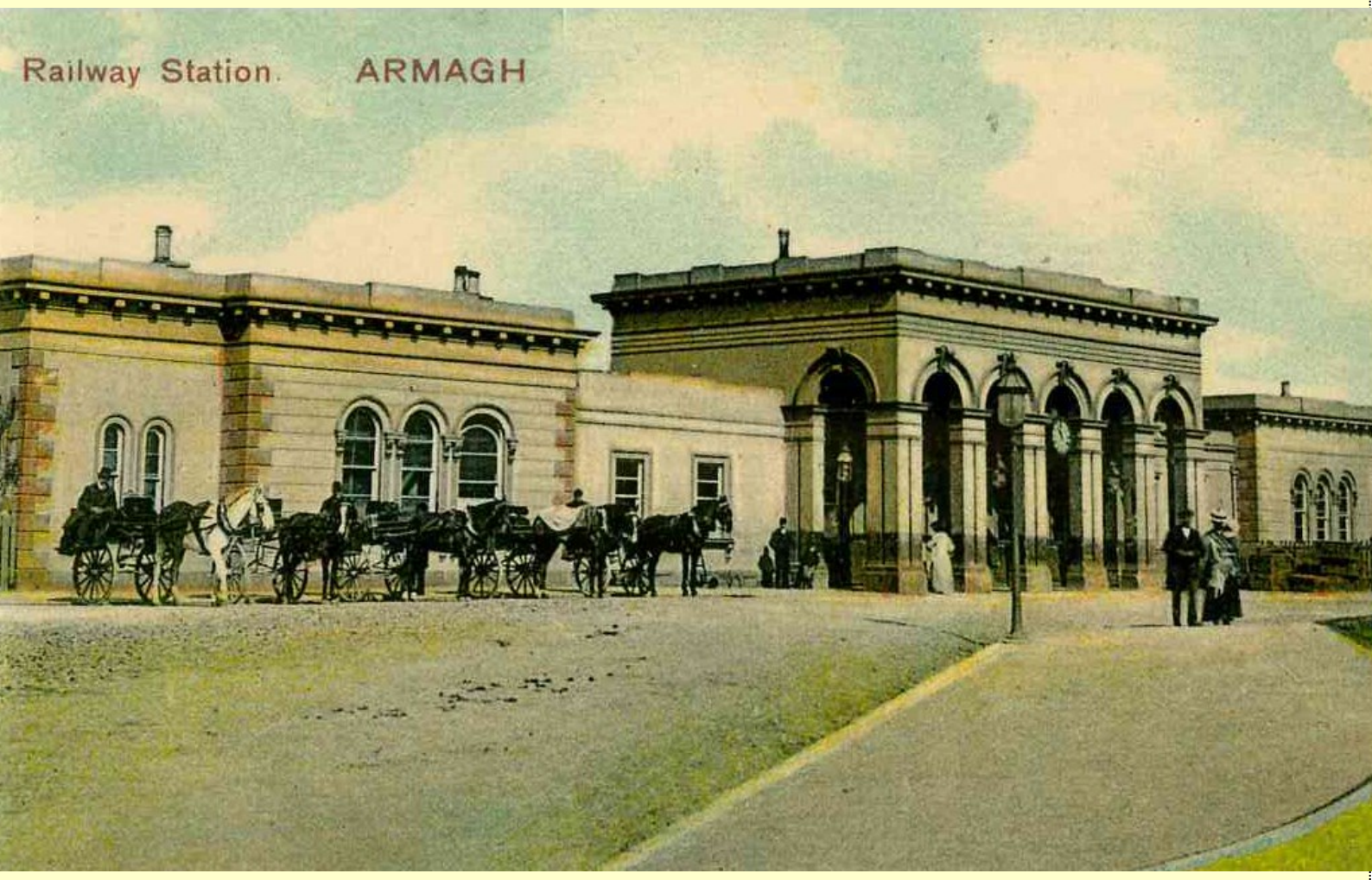

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Postcards form the collection of Roy Cummings

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The Old Callan Bridge:

A late 17th Century Vernacular Masonry Multi-Arched Bridge

by Kevin Quinn

The old Callan Bridge is one of Armagh City's most iconic landmark structures, but similarly to the nearby windmill is somewhat ignored and forgotten. Sometimes, I wonder if the motorists who cross over its five arches realise just how significant the structure is in the context of early bridge building in Ireland. Or whether they are aware that at the bridge's centre, three of Armagh's old townlands met; Drumarg and Downs, Legarhill, and the Corporation. The old Callan Bridge also has a very significant place in the history and culture of Armagh and has been a source of inspiration for many painters and photographers over the years. Most famously, John Luke's depiction of the bridge in his 1945 painting; *The Old Callan Bridge,* made the bridge known to people outside of Armagh. The painting is now displayed in the Ulster Museum. The old Callan Bridge is an important part of Armagh's heritage and I believe the history of its construction should be better known.

Crossing place over the River Callan

The bridge is likely situated at what was once a natural fording spot on the ancient route west from Armagh to Emain Macha (the Navan Fort). According to tradition, St. Patrick forded the Callan at this location on his way to Armagh in 441AD. By the late 7th Century, Armagh was an established ecclesiastical centre attracting religious, commerce, and trade, so an early crossing place on the Callan would have been necessary. A form of stepping stones or a clapper bridge would have been the most likely crossing method in order to accommodate those travelling by foot.

Bartlett's 1601 pictorial map of Armagh (cf. Fig. 1)

Bartlett's pictorial map shows Armagh in 1601. His map is a bird's eye view

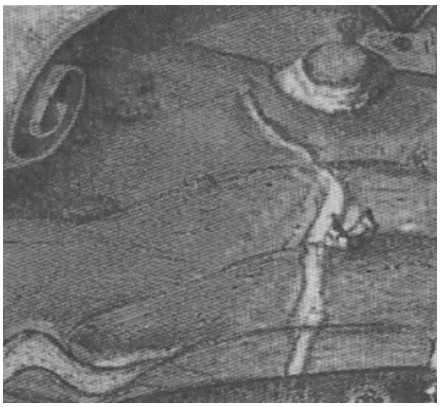

Fig. 1 - Bartlett Map (1601) - Depicting Callan River

of Armagh looking west. The section depicted in Fig.1 shows the west road leaving Armagh, passing Templemurry (ruined church) at the top of Legarhill, and passing south of Emain Macha. The Callan River is also depicted flowing along the base of the drumlins, but the spot where the present bridge is situated is hidden. Hence, it is impossible to say if some type of bridge was in place by the early 17th Century.

Earliest documented reference for the old Callan Bridge (cf. Fig.2)

The earliest reference to a bridge over the Callan River in its present location can be found in Sir Thomas Ashe's 1703 survey of the lands of the Archbishopric of Armagh. While touring the lands to collect the May 1703 rents, Ashe made notes and observations about the properties he visited. In one passage, Ashe refers to

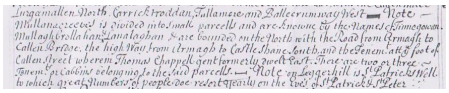

Fig.2. A section from Ashe's survey which refers to a bridge over the Callan in the same location as present .

the existence of the Callan Bridge at its present location:

"bounded on the north with the road from Armagh to Callen Bridge, the highway from Armagh to Castleshane south ".

Documented evidence of a bridge in 1760 and 1777 (see Fig. 3 and Fig.4)

Rocque's plan of the city of Armagh (1760) clearly shows a bridge in the exact location of the present day structure. Three roads, St. Patrick's

Fig. 3. Rocque's Map (1760) - Old Callan Bridge

road to the south west, Legarhill to the west, and Lurgyvallen to the north can be seen branching out from the bridge. Unfortunately, Rocque did not provide detail on the bridge's features which could be used to identify a period of construction. For example, had Rocque depicted projecting cutwaters on the bridge, this would have confirmed that the present bridge had been constructed pre-1760. Skinner and Taylor's map (1777) also confirms a bridge at the

Fig4. Skinner and Taylor (1777) – Old Callan Bridge

present location, but similarly to Rocque fails to depict any structural features which could be used to identify a date of construction.

Structural Features Indicating an Early Construction Date – Upstream View

Voussoirs are the wedge-shaped stones that make up the ring of the arch. The voussoir at the highest point is known as the keystone which locks the other stones in place and stabilises and supports the centre. Voussoirs in early masonry bridges were not decorated and were built of rubble/field stone, as is the case here.

A key structural feature of an early bridge is the masonry projections called cutwaters. The early cutwaters were V-shaped, as is the case here. The cutwaters protect the piers during floods, taking the force/pressure of heavy water, breaking up the flow, and reducing the risk of damage from scouring and the impact from debris. The semi-circular arch was the main form of arch used in Ireland from the medieval period into the latter part of the 18th century. This type of arch gives the least amount of side thrust to abutments and piers. The arch was the next stage after the construction of the piers. In early masonry bridges, a wood scaffold, known as centring, was built to support the shape of the arch until the mortar set.On early masonry bridges with more than one pier, the piers were solid and as wide as the arch. The size and spacing of the piers was determined by the suitable bedrock in the riverbed. The regular spacing of the four side by side arches would confirm that this bridge was founded on rock.

Structural Features Indicating an Early Construction Date – Downstream View

The core or body of this bridge consists of un-worked random rubble/field stone. Rubble stone is also used for the external facing both up and down stream. These features are evident here, and are typical of early masonry bridges.

The walling that forms the outer face of the bridge, both up and downstream is known as the spandrel. The spandrel wall is essentially the area just above and between the arches. The spandrel in this structure is un-coursed which suggests an early construction date.

Abutments are base flanking supports that prevent the arch from spreading and help to resist the pressure of the water flowing against the structure. Probably one of the main reasons for choosing this location was that abutments would be laid on the natural stony river bed. Most early masonry bridges were not rendered. The facing rubble stone was nearly always left exposed, maybe to reduce weight.

The cutwaters have been extended up to parapet level to provide pedestrian refuges, a feature of many early masonry bridges. However, cutwaters on some early bridges were only built on the upstream side. In this case it appears that the downstream cutwaters were an original feature, probably to achieve a more symmetrical structure and to protect the downstream side from the danger of eddying waters.

Structural Features Indicating an Early Construction Date – Carriageway

The disadvantage of the semi-circular arched early masonry bridge was the humped backed carriageway. This was due to the height of the arches. In order to increase the span of the semi-circular arch, it was necessary to increase the height, resulting in a hump backed carriageway. The gradual introduction in the late 1700's of the segmental arch into bridge building in Ireland allowed for a more level carriageway. The earliest masonry bridges were constructed at right angles to the river, (see Fig.5.) restricting the stresses in the arches to direct compression. This can be seen by the abrupt change in directions in

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

the roads adjoining the bridge, ensuring the direct angle of approach. Both features are evident here.

In early masonry bridges, the carriageways were narrow (no more than 12ft to 14ft wide) but were laid out for pedestrian, horseback, and packhorse traffic. To facilitate pedestrians, little alcoves were built which were large enough for a person to stand in. These were known as a Pedestrian Refuge. (see Fig. 6.) The triangular cutwaters were extended upwards to parapet level to form the V-shaped alcoves. On this structure, the three up and downstream cutwaters form six pedestrian refuges (three on each side) built into the parapet walls.

The parapets are the walls on either side of the carriageway, built from the same masonry fabric as the main bridge. The coping stones main function is to stop water getting into the wall and washing out the lime mortar, making the structure unstable. Both features are constructed from rubble stone, another feature which points to an early construction date.

Bridge Design (see Fig.7.)

The Old Callan Bridge was built on an easterly bend in the river. This section was particularly wide with shallow water on the downstream side allowing for a natural fording spot. The isolated flood arch on the western side of the bridge was slightly segmental in shape and hence differed in shape from the four semi-circular arches on the bridge's eastern side. There are two important reasons for this. Firstly, the isolated flood arch was positioned in order to take the river's main flow; therefore, the flood arch required more length than height so as to allow as much of the raised water level to flow through it during floods. Thus, reducing the strain from the water pressure on that side of the structure. Secondly, its position at the beginning or end of the bridge (depending on the direction of approach) required the arch to be slightly segmental so as not to raise the height of the carriageway above.

At the time of construction the river at this location was probably not as wide. There was probably a natural bend but not as sweeping or as wide as it is today. It is probable that the stonemasons shaped the river on the upstream side to suit their bridge design. It is most likely that, as part of their flood design, the river bend needed to be widened in order to accommodate the positioning of the four side by side arches. During a heavy flood where the river bursts its

Fig. 7

banks, the positing of the four side by side arches was crucial in order to prevent a flood plain forming. As part of the excavation, the east side upstream bank was cut back and extended creating a channel for the river to flow through the four side by side arches. This also created a more extensive bend which can naturally reduce the strength of the flow during floods by holding some water back. In addition, when water levels were high, the flood arch divided the main flow into two, reducing the pressure in the structure's centre. Any excess water, which could not escape through the flood arch, would then flow along the extended central spandrel wall and be divided by the three cutwaters before flowing through the eastern arches.

A late 17th century structure

It is difficult to date a bridge solely based on structural features, as some early bridges exhibit one or more characteristics of a particular period. In the case of the old Callan Bridge, all of its structural features point to a late 17th or early 18th century construction date. However, when Thomas Ashe's reference to the bridge in 1703 is considered, a construction date somewhere between the 1660s and 1680s is probably most likely. Indeed, during this period Armagh was undergoing a kind of construction boom which saw the construction of many new buildings; it is quite possible that the bridge was part of this same period of construction in Armagh.

A vernacular multi-arched masonry bridge

The bridge is a vernacular construction meaning it was built without an architect or engineer but with local knowledge, materials, skills, and tradition. At the time of construction, the bridge was designed and built solely on the experience of the local stonemasons, who were employed by the promoters of the bridge. Provided the foundations are sound and there is sufficient space through the arches to allow any possible flood water to flow through, a masonry/stone bridge is virtually indestructible. This was undoubtedly the case with the old Callan Bridge. The design of the bridge is somewhat unique, especially in regards to the position of the arches, as the design probably reflects the local knowledge of the river during periods of raised water levels.

Decline in use of the old Callan Bridge

By 1842, a new road was constructed between Armagh and Caledon which was known as the 'The New Line'. The new road would have significantly reduced the wheeled traffic using the bridge such as the stage and mail coaches. By the 1850s, the railway became the principal means of personal travel and commercial transport, ultimately replacing coaching as the principal method of transport. The road over the old Callan Bridge would have certainly declined in importance. However, according to the Grand Jury Presentments, the system which gave financial approval for the construction of public and private works, the bridge was routinely maintained despite its loss in importance to the transport system in Armagh.

Remedial work during the 19th Century and in recent years

Over the years, the bridge has undergone much remedial work due to flood damage and natural decay. In recent years, as part of flood prevention and conservation schemes, the Callan River has been dredged and rerouted in some locations, as was the case at the bridge. Other developments have included the introduction of single lane traffic regulated by traffic lights at either end of the bridge and a pedestrian footbridge built on the downstream side. (see Fig. 8.)

The County Armagh Grand Jury Assizes (see Fig. 8.)

Between 1821 and 1844, there are four entries in the Grand Jury spring and summer assizes where the old Callan Bridge is mentioned in the awarding of contracts. The contracts either set out work undertaken specifically on the bridge or refer to the bridge within the section of road to be repaired. Significantly, the bridge is described as "old" in 1821, and had to be substantially repaired in 1828:

"*Repair 100 perches.....between the "Old Callan Bridge in the townland of Legarhill and Thos Gervais house in Ballycrummy"*

"To build 12 perches of mason work in repairing the bridge over the river Callan in Legarhill road from Armagh to Caledon"

In the past twenty years or so, a new bank was constructed in order to reroute the river through the two

Fig. 8

western side by side arches. This permanently blocked off the isolated flood arch. The two eastern side by side arches have also become redundant due to rerouting. The bases (abutments) of each pier have also been surrounded by a crude concrete skirt and underneath (soffit) the arches have been rendered.

During the 19thCentury, remedial work was undertaken to prevent the further outward movement of the spandrel walls. This entailed placing iron bars with threaded ends through the bridge fill and securing them to pattress plates on the face of the walls (west plate hidden by ivy). In some sections, the parapet walls have either been rebuilt or partially rebuilt. The most westerly cutwater has been partially rebuilt.

Conclusion (see Figs. 9 & 10)

The Old Callan Bridge has probably


Fig. 9. The isolated flood arch is completely blocked and hidden by overgrowth

spanned the River Callan for nearly 350 years. So many feet and wheels have either walked or rolled over its humpbacked carriageway, and countless floods have battered its upstream walls. Yet the bridge is the oldest structure in Armagh still in daily use and this fact is the greatest testament to the expertise of those stonemasons who designed and built the bridge over three centuries ago. However, those charged with


Fig. 10. The first two eastern arches are silted up and

maintaining the bridge in the present day do not seem to take these facts into consideration and as a result, have been less than sympathetic in their conservation approach. In particular, the use of crude concrete skirts surrounding the base of the piers, rather than the use of material similar to the original, has destroyed some of the original features of the bridge. What is more, the upstream side of the bridge, which was once the subject for numerous artists and photographers, is completely neglected with the redundant arches totally overgrown. It is the responsibility of the custodians of our heritage to conserve the old Callan Bridge by applying minimal change to its structure and appearance, as well as taking the time and effort to control the overgrowth around the bridge's arches. If these simple measures are taken, then, future generations will be able to enjoy and appreciate a bridge that has served Armagh so well over the centuries.

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Postcards of the Old Callan Bridge: private postcard collection

Some Irish Surnames

by Gerry Oates

The following are short accounts of three families associated with the county and city of Armagh from at least late medieval times. It includes two families of native Irish stock and a third of Planter background, and forms part of a series of essays on local family surnames published in this journal. All three have contributed in various ways to the history and social background of our society and are an integral part of the checkered kaleidoscope of what we are today.

Mac Parland

Mac Parthaláin 'son of Parthalán' is a surname that has been associated with Co. Armagh since the late medieval period and possibly before. *Parthalán* is an Irish rendering of Latin *Bartholomaeus* which, in turn, is a borrowing from Hebrew *Bār Talmāi* 'son of Talmā' and means 'rich in land'. The anglicised version is *Mac Parland* /*Mac Partland*. Earlier forms of the name are recorded without final *–d* and reflect the Irish pronunciation; final *–d* only begins to appear in the 18th century in imitation of English surnames ending in *–land* (e.g. Holland, Welland, Pentland etc.).

The *Mac Parlands* trace their origins to the ancient kingdom of Oriel (Armagh, Monaghan & Louth) where the name is still found in considerable numbers, particularly in Mid- and South Armagh. It also occurs frequently in Co. Leitrim as *Mac Partlan /Mac Partlin*, which might be due to a migration from Ulster at some period. Matheson's survey of births in 1890 records 36 *Mac Parland /Mac Partlan* births in Ulster, 11 *Mac Partlins* in Connacht and a mere 3 in Leinster. Black notes that the surname is also found in Galloway, Scotland, as *Mac Partland / Mac Partling*, but maintains that it is of Irish origin.

Diarmaid Bacach Mac Parthalain ('Dermot Mac Parland the Lame'), who lived c.1485, was possibly the first to be recorded in historical documents; he is one of six scribes or poets named *Mac Parthaláin* in the catalogue of Irish MSS in the British Museum. Several references to *Mac Parland* occur in 17th century records including pardons granted to *Ony riagh Mc Parlane* by the Elizabethan authorities in 1602, and to *Neice Mc Parlane* & *Patrick oge Mc Parlone*, both of Co. Armagh, in the early days of James I. In October of 1625 and again in 1627 five persons named *Mc Parlan* were recorded at the Manor Court in Armagh, and Petty's 'census' of c.1659 recorded *Mac Parland* as a 'principall Irish name' in the baronies of Lower Fews and Orior. The Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-5 show a concentration of the name in Orior barony with eight families recorded in the parishes of Killevy and Loughgilly, and a further five in The Fews, all resident in the townland of Aghincurk, Ballymyre parish. In c.1670-1 a *Cormoc Mc Paralan* appears a signatory to the Franciscan petition in the parish of Mullaghbrack / Kilclooney.

In Penal times the registration of Catholic clergy was compulsory and in 1704 *John (Mac) Parlon* of Killevy, ordained in 1672, and *Patrick (Mac) Parlan* of Derrynoose, ordained in 1684, were duly registered with the local authorities.

Further details relating to the *Mac Parland* sept in the 18th century are found among the Armagh Assizes Indictments (1735-97); several had recourse to the law but one name stands out, *Ferdinand Mc Parland*, who brought a case of trespass at the summer assizes of 1749. Apparently, his proper forename was *Feardorcha* 'dark-haired man', common in 17/18th century Ireland, but often altered to *Ferdinand* (or *Frederick*) by court officials and others. Another of the sept, *Fr. Arthur Mc Parland*, parish priest of Kilmore, was involved in attempting to arrange a truce between the Protestant 'Peep o' Day Boys' and Catholic 'Defenders' during the on-going sectarian disturbances of 1795, just before the Battle of the Diamond. The Spinning Wheel Premium lists of 1796 included four households named *Mc Parlin* engaged in linen weaving in Armagh parish.

Mgr. Raymond Murray in his recent study of the poet, Art Mac Bennett, identifies at least 24 *Mac Parlands* in Forkhill and Loughgilly parishes who were related to or associated with the poet in his lifetime (1793-1879). Official records covering the same period, such as Griffith's valuations (1848-64), show large concentrations of the name in the South Armagh parishes of Killevy (58), Forkill (36), Ballymyre (28) and Loughgilly (21), with further clusters in the Mid-Armagh parishes of Lisnadill (41), Mullaghbrack (14) and Kilclooney (6).

Although *Mac Parland* is not so numerous in parishes north of Armagh city, Mac Corry in his recent 'Journeys' (2001) draws attention to the variant form, *Mac Partland*, in Derrymacash on Lough Neagh's shore; he notes too that with Loughran, Mac Kee, Toner and O Hare, it also

predominates in Ballymacanab. Fearon, in his history of Kilmore, records that *Mac Parland* was once a common surname there with 17 listed in the parish register of 1827-29, but none at present.

The census of 1911 illustrates some interesting facts about the various spellings of the name. *Mac Parland* was most common with 807 entries, 521 of which were located in Co. Armagh. Next was *Mac Partland* (323) with the majority in Leitrim and smaller concentrations in Armagh, Cavan and Roscommon, followed by *Mac Partlan* (290) again mostly in Leitrim. Finally, *Mc Partlin* (257) of whom 80% were resident in Leitrim.

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Toner

The original Gaelic name *Ó Tomhrair* became *Ó Tomhnair* in the spoken language and was ultimately anglicised *Toner*; early English forms include *O Thonery*, *Tonra* and *Tonry*. The sept represents a branch of the Cenél Eoghain that settled on the western bank of the Foyle in the vicinity of Lifford, Co. Donegal; later migrations took them to Co. Derry and to Co. Armagh, where the name is most prevalent at present.

The root of the name *Toner* lies in the Old Norse personal name *Þórarr*, which became *Tomrar* in Viking Dublin. It was not unusual for Irish families to adopt Viking names which then gave rise to surnames as in the case of *Ó Tomhrair /Ó Tomhnair*.

In Donegal the *Toners* founded a church *Ceall Ó dTomair* ('Toners' church') on a site close to the western shore of Lough Swilly. Anglicised *Killotoner* this name was later corrupted to Killodonnell, probably to assuage the ruling family of Tyrconnell, the O Donnells. However, another townland in Glenswilly, *Tullyhoner* (*Tulach Uí Thomhnair* 'Toner's Hill'), also in Donegal, perpetuates the family name in that county.

First record of the name appears in the Annals of the Four Masters under the year A.D. 1011 in an obituary to a priest, *Connmhach Ó Tomhrair*, described as 'a cleric and chief singer' in the monastic settlement of Clonmacnoise. The next mention, but less edifying, is the account of another cleric, *Patrick Othonyr*, of the archdiocese of Armagh, who was excommunicated in 1428 and, defying authority, was still reported in office in 1435.

The date of the migration of the *Toner* sept to Derry and Armagh is not recorded, but Archbishop Mey's register of September 1455 includes a *John Otounir*, described as 'chaplain, Culdee and master of the works of the major church of Armagh', who was granted an 'exemption from all jurisdictions inferior to that of archbishop', which suggests that he was person of some importance within ecclesiatical circles in Armagh. During the episcopacy of Archbishop Bole (1457-71) a cleric, *John Otoner*, is mentioned as a witness in the Primate's dealings with the bishop of Raphoe in 1462. Yet another cleric of the name known as *John O Thonery*, an Augustinian Canon, was appointed bishop of Ossory in 1553.

By the early 17th century, however, the name was well established in the county. A *Patrick O Toner* of Co. Armagh is cited in the Patent Rolls of James I in the first quarter of the century, and *Patrick oge O Toner* and *Hugh O Tonnor* appeared in the Armagh Manor Court Rolls of 1625. Further evidence of their presence turns up in the Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-5 when nine households of the name in the baronies of Armagh, Tiranny, The Fews and Oneilland were cessed for a tax of 'two shillings per hearth'. Petty's 'census' of c.1659 described *O Toner* as 'a principall Irish name' in the barony of the Lower Fews.

Records from the 18th century confirm the prevalence of *Toners*, now without prefix *Ó*, in all Armagh baronies: the Rental of the Manor of Armagh of 1714 listed *Pat*, *Hugh* and *Neece Toner* in Farranamucklagh, in the territory of Ballymacone, while *Brian*, *Neale*, *Knogher*, *William Toner*, and *Edward O Toner*, were listed as sub-tenants in Carrickaness (Eglish parish) and *Turlough Toner* of Creaghan (Clonfeacle parish) also as a sub-tenant on the archbishop's lands. The

Borough Assize Book of Armagh records that a *John Toner*, blacksmith, was sworn a freeman of the borough on 24 September, 1740. A survey of families in Creggan parish, taken in 1766, included five *Toner* households in the townlands of Tullynavall, Cloghoge and Cullyhanna.

Tithe Payers' Lists of 1833 and Griffith's Valuations (1848-64) indicate that *Toner* was one the most common Gaelic surnames in the county. The name was particularly numerous in the civil parish of Lisnadill, notably in the townlands of Farranamucklagh, Foley, Corran, Cashel and Armaghbrague. *Toner* was also prominent in the South Armagh parishes of Ballymyre, Creggan and Forkill.

In Ulster, outside of Co. Armagh, *Toner* is also common surname in South Derry; particularly in the parish of Ballinascreen and adjoining districts, but less numerous than in Armagh which, according the census of 1911, returned more entries for the name than any other county, including both the Belfast and Dublin urban areas. The main concentrations of the name in 1911 were similar to those of Griffith's valuations (1848-64) of the previous century: the Ballymacanab and Clady districts, Armagh city, Keady and across South Armagh. The name, however, was noticeably scarce in the northern parishes of the county.

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Griffith's Valuations (1848-64)

Trimble

There is a degree of uncertainty among the authorities on family names as to the origin of the surname *Trimble*. Irish experts, Mac Lysaght and de Bhulbh suggest that it is of English origin, whereas Black and Reaney place its beginnings either in Scotland or the north of England. What we can say with certainty is that *Trimble*, and its variant spellings, have been recorded in Co. Armagh since the first phase of the Plantation of Ulster in the early 17th century.

According to Black the surname first appears in 1263 when one *Walter de Tremblay* occupied lands in the Mearns (Kincardineshire) on the east coast of Scotland. It reappears in 1281 when *Robert de Tremblay* witnessed a charter of lands in Fife and again in 1296 in relation to *Robert de Tremblay /Trembleye* of Elgin. In the following century the name is recorded as *Trimbill*, *Trombill* and *Trumble* in Fife, and Black records that David II (1329-71) 'confirmed a charter of lands in Inverdovat, Fife, formerly held by the deceased *Robert Trymblay*' in 1363. Other late medieval variants of the name include *de Trumbeley* (1321) and *Trymlay* (1584).

The early form *de Tremblay* suggests a Norman French background based on the place-name *Tremblay* which stems from French *tremblaie* 'place where aspens abound' from *tremble* 'aspen tree' (Populus tremuloides). The modern town of *Tremblay-en-France*, formerly *Tremblay-lès-Gonesse*, is situated in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis in Ile-de-France. When, or if, the ancestors of the above-mentioned *de Tremblay* migrated to England and subsequently to Scotland is not recorded.

Another explanation suggests a north of England origin. Black agrees with the eminent Victorian surname scholar, Canon Bardsley, that *Trimble /Trumble* etc. represent a metatethic version of the Cumberland surname *Turnbull* in which the first syllable has been corrupted from *Turn…* to *Trun/m…* and eventually *Trim…* etc. Black records that *Turnbull* is commonly pronounced *Trum(m)ell* in Teviotdale on the Scottish side of the border. Bardsley maintains that *Turnbull* dates from medieval times when bull-baiting was a popular sport and arose as nickname for one adept at 'turning the bull' and some early recorded versions appear to bear this out: in 1314 *Willelmo dicto turnebule* (*William called Turnebule*) appears in charter of Robert I (1306-29); *Walter Tornebole* was witness to a charter of the lands of Altonburn (Roxburgh) in c.1354, and *Patrick*

Turnbull was bailie of Edinburgh, 1388.

Much the same divergence in spelling occurs in the early Ulster versions of the name. *Turnbull* is now rare in Armagh, and in Ulster generally, but *Trimble* eventually became the accepted standard form.

In Co. Armagh the first record of the name occurs in c.1630 when Lord Mountnorris called a muster roll of settlers to present themselves for military service. The list of men and arms included *Thomas*, *Peter* and *John Trumble*, who could only muster one sword between them. Another *John Trumble*, however, presented himself for duty with a musket. The Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-5 show that *Adam Trymell* paid 2/= (two shillings) tax for one hearth in the 'towne of Armagh'.

The name appears again in the 18th century in a rent roll of 1714 when *James Trumble* of Lisdrumard, in the parish of Lisnadill, is listed as an under-tenant of the archbishop. Further records of the name in the 18th century include a number of variant forms: *David* and *Patrick Trimble*, *William Trimbal*, *John*, *Mary* and *Jane Timbrell*, and *John Turnbrill* appeared as litigants at the Armagh Assizes between 1759-73. *William Trimball*, of Drumard in Kilmore parish, is recorded as the leader of the 'Peep o' Day Boys' faction at the Battle of the Diamond in 1795. On a more peaceful and industrious note, the Spinning Wheel Premium lists of 1796 record the name *Trimble* among those engaged in linen weaving in the parishes of Armagh, Kilmore, Derrynoose and Mullaghbrack.

Variant spellings persisted throughout the 19th century before the name was ultimately standardized as *Trimble*. Griffith's valuations (1848-64) include *Tremble* and *Trimil*, as well as the more usual *Trimble*. An example of the variation in spelling occurs in Griffith's valuations which record *John Tremble* of Money townland in Kilmore, whereas the same person is listed as *John Trimble* in the Kilmore parish tithes' list of 1833. The census of 1911, however, recorded only *Trimble* in Co. Armagh, with a six occurrences of *Tremble* in Co. Sligo and 17 of *Trumble* nationwide, 9 of which were in Dublin. *Trimble*, on the other hand, reached a total of 750, almost 75% of whom were in located in Ulster with notable clusters in Dublin, Longford, Donegal and Kildare. Concentrations of *Trimble* in Co. Armagh were found in Portadown and Armagh urban areas, Markethill, Keady, Killylea and Camlough.

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HISTORY GROUP WEBSITE IS AN IMPORTANT LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCE

Armagh & District History Group's website is now over three years old and contains a wealth of information for the local historian.

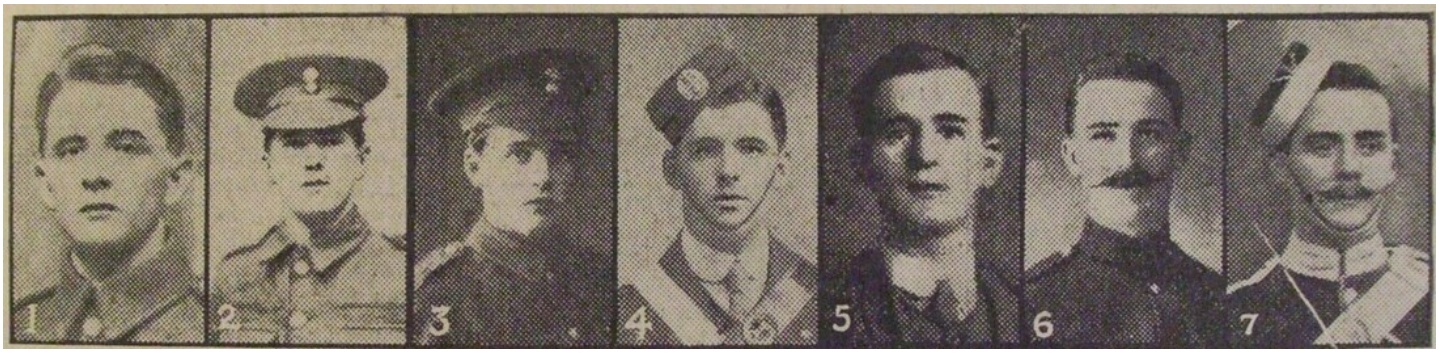
The Group publishes the successful magazine History Armagh and back issues can be difficult or impossible to obtain. As a consequence of this a decision was taken to make the magazine content available on-line. Over 60 articles are available on-line and the search facility means that these articles are easy to access. The website also has links to other mainly local websites that may prove useful to people with an interest in the history of the locality

Another valuable resource available through the website is a digitised and fully searchable version of William Lodge's census of Armagh city in 1770. This provides a fascinating insight to life in Armagh over 240 years ago.

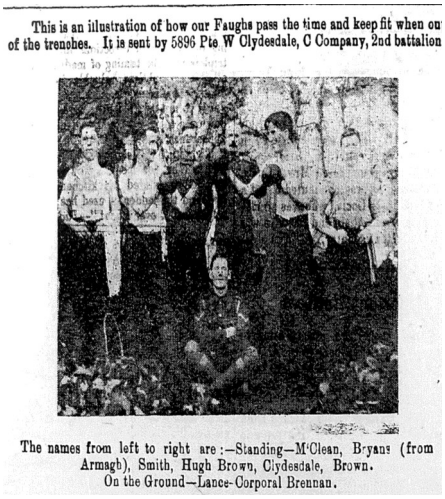
The website also has a news section to keep members informed of events and talks and is proving a useful way of keeping in touch with our programme throughout the year and other events of note. So if you are interested in the activities of the group why not visit www.armaghhistorygroup.com

Letters

by Marjorie Halligan



When I was researching the story of the Bryans brothers who served in the Great War (1914-1918), I was pleased to find the photograph reproduced below from the *Armagh Guardian* of November 26th, 1915 which shows the Irish Fusiliers boxing during a lull in the fighting. The photograph had been included in a letter to the *Armagh Guardian* from Pte. W. Clydesdale, C Company, 2nd Battalion Irish Fusiliers. Whilst the clarity of the photograph is not of the best and a Christian name is



This is an illustration of how our Faughs pass the time and keep fit when on of the trenches. It is sent by 5896 Pte W Clydesdale, C Company, 2nd battalion

The names from left to right are :—Standing—M'Clean, Bryans (from Armagh), Smith, Hugh Brown, Clydesdale, Brown. On the Ground—Lance-Corporal Brennan.

missing yet one of the boxers is named as "Bryans (from Armagh)". If compared with photograph at the start showing the six Bryans brothers and their half-brother, Alfred Camlin, it could be argued there is resemblance between the boxer and one of the Bryans brothers. This may be a rather tenuous link but my research began on a firmer foundation when finding a letter concerning the brothers.

The Bryans Brothers

A photocopied letter hidden in one of parish record books of St. Mark's was my introduction to them. This letter was addressed to Mrs. Martha Camlin of 36, Lonsdale Street, Armagh, from the Office of the Privy Purse at Buckingham Palace. Typing up records in the Parish Office on Victoria Street, Armagh suddenly became more interesting. Dated February, 1st 1915, the Keeper of the Privy Purse on behalf of George V congratulated Mrs. Camlin on the service of her seven sons for King and country. The Keeper at this time was Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Ponsonby who held the office until 1935. As part of his Office he was responsible for the Court Post Office. The second photograph shows the seven brothers referred to in the letter. They were Alfred Camlin, Lance Corporal, Royal Irish Fusiliers, (a half-brother), Charles and David Bryans, 9th Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, George Bryans, 14th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, pictured in his C.L.B. uniform, Robert Bryans, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, L/ Cpl John Bryans, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers and William Bryans, Royal Medical Corps. A search in baptism records showed that Robert baptised on December 18th 1889, George baptised on October 27th 27, 1892, Joseph Albert (John?) baptised on September 2nd 1894, Charles baptised on May 5th, 1896 and David Frederick baptised on November 29th 1899, were the sons of William and Martha Bryans nee Blair. William's occupation throughout their records was given as sexton of St. Mark's. The only parish record I could find for William J Bryans was his marriage to Mary J. Gray on April 2nd, 1909. His father was named as William Bryans, deceased, sexton of St. Mark's. Army records show that he enlisted in 1901 aged eighteen (Research team, Royal Fusiliers Museum). As sexton of St. Marks, Bryans had lived in the gate lodge (1845-1952) where the parish records are now kept. The 1901 census shows that the family had moved to 4 Georges Street, Armagh. Here William and Martha lived with five sons and two daughters and William's occupation was now noted as shoemaker. The parish records show that he was buried on January 9th, 1907. Martha Bryans married George Camlin on May 10th, 1908. He was a widower. The 1911 census shows them living at 36 Lonsdale Street, Armagh with R.

Mrs. Camlin, Lonsdale Street, Armagh.

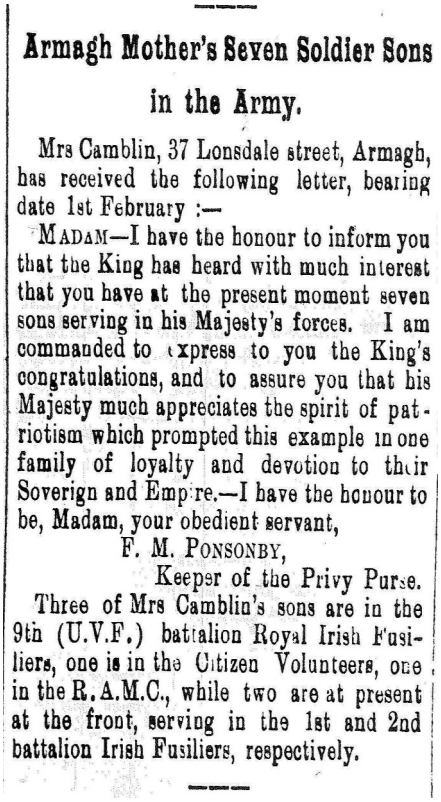
H.A. Camlin, John Camlin, Joseph Bryans (stepson), Charles Bryans (stepson) and David F. Bryans (stepson).

As Brothers

The names of the Bryans brothers are amongst those of the 244 parishioners from St. Mark's listed on the Great War Roll of Honour in the church porch. In *Armagh and the Great War* by Colin Cousins, Cousins states that the number of recruits raised in County Armagh between August 4th and April 30th 1915 was 3,236. He looked at the contribution by families to recruitment in general and lists the following families with many sons on active service: Mrs Ensor of Loughgall five sons; Mrs Lloyd of Tandragee, five sons; Mrs Mary Mitchell, Lurgan, six sons; Mr George Lunn, Lurgan, six sons (67). This was a pattern repeated across the country. In the County Tyrone parish of Ardtrea, Mrs. Eliza McIlree had eight sons in the King's service (www.mcilree.co.uk). The broadcaster, Gay Byrne, made a programme *My Father's War* which was screened on RTE One, April 14th, 2014. As my RTE 1 refused to function that evening, I am relying on his interview in the *Irish Times* (05-04-14) for details. He reported that his father, Edward Byrne and his six brothers joined up because there wasn't enough work on the Earl of Meath's estate so the next best thing was to "join the British Army and see the world". In the *Irish Times* of August 2nd, 2014, Rachel Collins wrote an article about her great-grandfather, William Collins and his five brothers who all fought in the Great War. A further example of extraordinary family service can be found in *Brothers in War* by Michael Walsh. Whilst researching the Great War he came across the story of the eight Beechey brothers from Friesthorpe Rectory in Lincolnshire who fought in the War. They were the sons of the Rev. PWT Beechey and his wife Amy. Walsh was able to construct their story because their sister Edith preserved the letters they had sent to their mother. Much is written about the "Pals " regiments of workmates and colleagues who joined and fought together in this war but these family stories tell of service men from an even closer relationship across all levels of 1914 society.

The King's letter

It was to families and particularly mothers that the King's letter of congratulation came. I found only two examples locally; the aforementioned



Armagh Mother's Seven Soldier Sons in the Army.

Mrs Camblin, 37 Lonsdale street, Armagh, has received the following letter, bearing date 1st February :—

MADAM—I have the honour to inform you that the King has heard with much interest that you have at the present moment seven sons serving in his Majesty's forces. I am commanded to express to you the King's congratulations, and to assure you that his Majesty much appreciates the spirit of patriotism which prompted this example in one family of loyalty and devotion to their Soverign and Empire.—I have the honour to be, Madam, your obedient servant,

F. M. PONSONBY,
Keeper of the Privy Purse.

Three of Mrs Camblin's sons are in the 9th (U.V.F.) battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers, one is in the Citizen Volunteers, one in the R.A.M.C., while two are at present at the front, serving in the 1st and 2nd battalion Irish Fusiliers, respectively.

letter to Mrs. Camlin and a letter of the same date sent to Mrs. Eliza McIlree of Ardtrea, County Tyrone. The Imperial War Museum holds three similar letters in their collection and five or six more examples can be found on the Great War Forum website. A phone call to the Public Record Office in Belfast confirmed that they hold no similar letters. Pride in the receipt of such a letter can be gauged by the fact that Mrs. Camlin's letter survived and that a copy was handed in to St. Mark's record office many years later. In 1915, there must also have been a sense of relief too, because it was an official letter bringing good news. All families of service men were beginning to know the personal cost of the war by early 1915. Beneath the short article in *The Armagh Guardian* of February 12th, 1915 telling of the "Armagh Mother's Seven Sons in the Army", there is a "Roll of Honour" showing the names of eight local men who had been killed in action and the names of four recently wounded. Whilst the McIlree family have no knowledge of the whereabouts of the original letter, their sense of family pride in its receipt led some of them to compose a music track entitled *The King's Letter*. It was played by the folk group "Flaxenby". The song writer of the group, Chris Buttery had heard the story of the letter from his wife Jude who was the great granddaughter of David McIlree, one of the brothers. The gist of it was so well known to her that Buttery and the group were able to compose the track. (www.bbc.co.uk/Shropshire). It is interesting given the information already quoted about families of brothers enlisting that there are not more similar letters. According to the National Archives Website families with more than five members on active service were known as "Patriotic Families" (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk). An example of Patriotic Families can be found in The *Lurgan Mail* for July 8th, 1916. The question then arises as to why the Office of the Privy Purse identified just some of these families for the *King's Letter*. I think the answer lies locally. According to the McIlree web site, the Rector of Ardtrea wrote to the King to inform him of his parishioner, Mrs. McIlree having eight sons in the army. His reply from Buckingham Palace had a letter enclosed for Mrs. McIlree the sentiments of which were identical to those in the letter received by Mrs. Camlin (www.mcilree.co.uk). The Rector of St. Mark's in 1915 was Canon Forde Tichborne (1913-1928). There is no reference in Vestry minutes for 1914-1915 to any letter being sent to the Palace in relation to the Bryans brothers. This is not unusual. Vestry

minutes dealt precisely with the day to day management of the church. The answer may lie in the Forde Tichbourne papers to which I have no access. There was strong support for the war by the Church of Ireland. The local press has abundant evidence of Archbishop Crozier's (1911-1920) leadership in this respect.

Army Form B. 104-82

Raising the morale from whatever quarter could not avoid the inevitable truth that wartime service could and did result in death. Cousins provides statistics for fatalities from August 5th 1914 to October 31st 1914 across the Irish Regiments as follows: 2nd battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, 267 men; 2nd battalion, Royal Irish Regiment, 259 men; 2nd battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 139, and 2nd battalion, Connaught Rangers 119 men (164). The war was just in its infancy and there must have been heavy use of Army Form B.104-82 which was the standard letter by which families were informed of the death of a family member. The wording of it was a far cry from the words used by Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) to console Mrs Lydia Bixby on the death of her five sons in the American Civil War (1861-1865). Here is a paraphrase of part of it, "Who was going to beguile these families from the grief of a loss so overwhelming" (www.abrahamlincoln online.org). This unique letter to Bixby of November 21st 1864 is not without controversy. Lincoln's authorship is disputed, John Hay, one of his secretaries, has been suggested as its author; three of Mrs. Bixby's sons were not killed. Then why introduce it? The letter is useful to my argument as to how heads of state became aware of individual service. Lincoln was informed by the Governor of Massachusetts, John A. Andrew who sought to ease Mrs Bixby's grief. We know George V had a local informant about the McIlree family. The Bixby letter entered modern legend when a copy of it was read by the actor playing General George Marshall in the modern Hollywood film *Saving Private Ryan*. The plot of this Second World War drama released in 1998 focuses on the saving of the last Ryan brother after his three siblings were killed in active service. Steven Spielberg, the director, asked Robert Rodat, the writer, to include the letter reading scene to add gravitas to the search story. The relevance of this story to an article on the Great War becomes clear from Amanda Nelson's story. When watching the film in Barnard Castle, County Durham she remembered the story her mother had told of how Queen Mary had intervened to have her father, Wilfred returned home from the front when his five brothers were killed. Mrs. Margaret Smith, her grandmother, was so distraught with the news of the fifth brother's death in 1918 that the Vicar's wife, Mrs. Sarah Bircham, wrote to Queen Mary to ask her to intercede with the War Office so that the youngest Smith, Wilfred, could be sent home. This rare intercession was successful. Mrs. Smith's grief was undiminished as she was reported to have said, "Don't have boys, they just grow up to be cannon fodder" (www.bigstory.ap.org/ article).

The War Memorial plaque in St. Mark's lists the names of 46 parishioners who were killed during the Great War. For two of those named David Bryans and Alfred Camlin, Mrs. Camlin would have received army form B.104-82 informing her of their deaths. David Bryans was killed in action at Moeuvres on November 22nd, 1917 when the 9th battalion of the RIF were under heavy attack. Lance Corporal Albert Camlin was killed by machine gun fire on August 24th, 1918 during an attack north of Bailleul. Both sons had survived previous wounds. Of the other brothers Charles was wounded and discharged on August 27th, 1916 with a Silver War Badge. This Silver Badge was instituted in September, 1916, and was awarded to soldiers who were honourably discharged because their service had rendered them permanently physically unfit. The badge was worn on civilian clothing. It could be awarded retrospectively. William was awarded one on April 24th, 1917 and discharged. Robert was awarded similar badge on April 14th, 1917 (Research team Fusiliers Museum). To my knowledge the five survived the Great War. Some of the brothers mentioned in this article were linked by letters of commendation for their service; many were linked by the letters bringing the tragic news of their death. From whatever part of Ireland they came they are also linked by the fact that they all fought as volunteers in the Great War.

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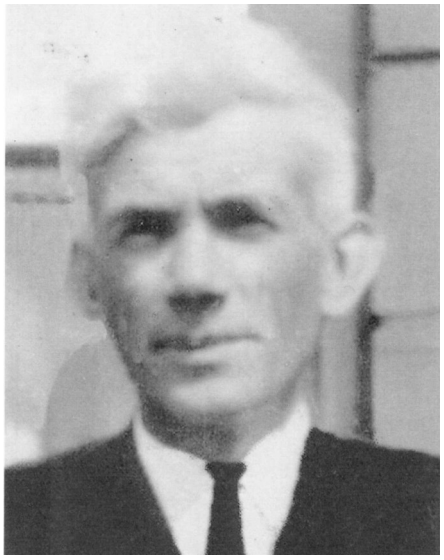
Man of the people defeated by 'Red Scare'

by Mary McVeigh



It must surely have been one of the dirtiest election campaigns fought in these parts but it was not, as might be expected, between Orange and Green. The vitriolic battle in 1945 for the South Armagh seat in the Stormont parliament was between the sitting MP, Paddy Agnew, a member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and Malachy Conlon, an agreed Nationalist candidate. Catholic clergy and leading members of the local laity threw their weight in behind Malachy Conlon; the threat of a Communist takeover was used to deter voters from Labour and Paddy Agnew was denounced from the pulpit as an 'agent of Moscow'. The result was that after seven years service at Stormont Paddy Agnew was defeated by 6,720 votes to 4,143.

Of the two, Paddy Agnew had the most political experience. By the time this post-war election was called he had already given more than a decade to campaigning to improve the lives of the poor and disadvantaged. These were the pre Welfare State days, it should be remembered, when life was decidedly bleak for many here at the lower ends of the social strata due to inadequate housing, health care and education as well as fewer prospects of employment due to closures and cutbacks in the mills. For instance, in 1937 the Minister of Home Affairs had to admit that most of the poorer classes in Northern Ireland lived in houses more or less unfit for human habitation. As far as health was concerned it was in the maternity service that neglect was particularly conspicuous. A woman in 1938 ran more risk of dying in childbirth than 15 years previously. There were not enough new schools being built and none of the education authorities provided nursery schools. Books and stationery were bought for only one child in ten and little was done to help feed or clothe needy children.

When the Armagh Employed and Unemployed Association was set up in 1932 in an attempt to highlight the high level of poverty and distress in the area Paddy Agnew was to the forefront. According to reports in the local papers of the time he was the driving force and its key spokesman. You might say he cut his political teeth in leading deputations, lobbying public representatives and writing to the newspapers for the implementation of public works schemes to help the unemployed. When the Northern Ireland Labour Party established a branch in Armagh a year later he continued to maintain a high profile on its behalf.

A Labour victory at the County Council

Perhaps his most notable achievement prior to the 1945 election was gaining the city's seat on the Armagh County Council in 1939 when he ousted Tom McLaughlin, a wealthy property owner with extensive business interests and high social standing and who represented Nationalist interests in the Senate, the non-elected upper chamber at Stormont. Paddy Agnew's platform was non-sectarian social reform and it worked because his support came from both Catholic and Protestant voters. Indeed the *Armagh Guardian*, no friend of Labour, commented that 'the electors, whether Unionist or Nationalist, prefer to vote for a candidate specialising in social betterment to one who deals more in party politics'. Significantly four years after this election, in 1943, when both men were serving on the County Armagh Infirmary Committee Paddy Agnew sought a £12 per annum rise for domestic staff who were currently receiving £40 for a year's work which, he claimed, was less than others were 'paid for a week'. His plea fell on deaf ears yet a proposal to increase the annual salary of the doctor in charge from £400 to £500 was passed without dissent. Senator McLaughlin remarked that even with this increase the salary was 'too low'.

Representing the people at Stormont

During his period in Stormont Paddy Agnew would seem to have used every opportunity to focus attention on working class issues. In fact the author of an academic study of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, Aaron Edwards, noted: *"...he was an extremely pro-active campaigner on issues affecting the socio-economic well-being of the people of South Armagh. He frequently highlighted the plight of those who led protest marches calling on local authorities to employ local workers as labour on local projects...Other topics of interest that Agnew raised in the House included road improvements, pension rights for workers, the 'unjust'*

poor law system, housing and the school leaving age. Agnew was also the champion of the non-industrial worker and could often be found lamenting how: 'At a time like this, when progress and prosperity are so much talked about, surely it is not too much to ask that the agricultural labourer should receive his due reward.'" Dr Edwards also commented that 'Agnew was one of the most vocal opponents of the Unionist government's track-record on trade union issues in the Stormont Parliament'.

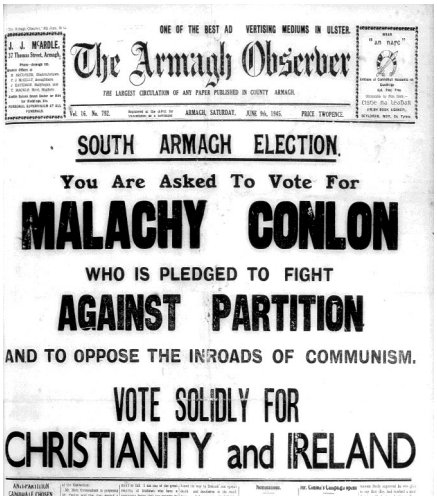
An important point to be borne in mind however, is that he was not a one-man band because after the setting up in 1937 of the Federation of Labour the party was well organised and active in the greater Armagh area. It had a presence in most of the small towns and villages of Mid and South Armagh during the period of his time at Stormont. Indeed when the Labour activists in the city opted not to contest the Mid Armagh seat it was not because they could not muster a candidate. Their decision, taken at a 'very large meeting in the Labour Rooms in Lower English Street', was due to 'the short notice given' in the calling of the election according to a notice in the local press. 'The Committee felt that Labour would be better served by pulling their weight with Mr P. Agnew in the South Armagh contest'. It could well have been that costs were also a major consideration since an election fund was set up to finance the Agnew campaign. An advertisement in the *Armagh Observer* announced that collectors were going to call in the coming week with 'official collecting cards' and that all returns were to be made to the joint treasurers, Sandy McPherson of Ogle Street and John Kelly of Market Street.

Why was he opposed?

The question could well be asked, why did Nationalists see the need to remove Paddy Agnew from the South Armagh seat? There was certainly resentment that Labour chose to put forward a candidate in 1938 when Nationalists had called for a boycott of Stormont. Indeed when addressing an election meeting, one of Malachy Conlon's main supporters, Charles Mallon, Chairman of Keady Urban Council, declared that Paddy Agnew 'had never been selected by any convention, but one time when he got the Nationalists' backs turned he took the opportunity to slip in. He did not represent the people and it was time now to put him out'.

However, regardless of how he got into Stormont there is no question that Paddy Agnew was a hardworking MP while he was there. The range of issues covered in his speeches and the 'surgeries' held throughout his constituency to deal with problems of individuals and families were testament to this. Although his first commitment was to Labour and the eradication of want and poverty and he was determinedly anti-sectarian he made no secret of his anti-partitionist beliefs. It was not until 1949, four years after this election, that the Northern Ireland Labour Party took a stance on the Border. Until then it was ambivalent on the issue and its membership included both pro and anti- partitionists with the Armagh branch definitely on the anti side.

As well, it would have been evident that his Stormont salary was a great boon to him as father of a large family and whose poor health greatly reduced his employment prospects. Dare one suggest that there could have been a class element in the opposition to Paddy Agnew, could it have been that his socio-economic standing was found wanting? There is no doubt that those who stood as Nationalist candidates in this period, whilst they were aptly described as 'a loose alliance of local notables' because they lacked a party organisation and cohesion, one thing they had in common was that they all belonged to the more affluent section of the Catholic community, men (women did not signify) of property and the professions.


ONE OF THE BEST ADVERTISING MEDIUMS IN ULSTER.

The Armagh Observer

THE LARGEST CIRCULATION OF ANY PAPER PUBLISHED IN COUNTY ARMAGH.

SOUTH ARMAGH ELECTION.

You Are Asked To Vote For

MALACHY CONLON

WHO IS PLEDGED TO FIGHT

AGAINST PARTITION

AND TO OPPOSE THE INROADS OF COMMUNISM.

VOTE SOLIDLY FOR

CHRISTIANITY and IRELAND

Challenged by Conlon

The person chosen to challenge Paddy Agnew had the full support of the combined might of the Catholic clergy and its middle class laity. Malachy Conlon, unmarried, aged 32 from the Silverbridge area, had no political experience or background. However, it could well be said that he did not need any because of the backing he received. He was described as 'journalist, playwright and farmer' in his election literature. He had worked for the Dundalk based newspaper, The Examiner, first as a journalist and then as editor until he had to retire for health reasons. He still continued to contribute articles to various journals and in 1945 wrote a play: "Dunreavy no more" which told of the lives of an outlaw Seamus Macmurthy and the Gaelic poet, Peadar O Doirin. It was initially put on stage by the Mullaghbawn Players.

Backed by priests

His selection as the Nationalist candidate was made at a convention held in the Foresters Hall, Camlough and from the outset clerical support was very much in evidence. His nomination paper was signed by two priests, Canon McKeown, Parish Priest of Crossmaglen and a curate from Mullaghbawn, Rev. Seamus Corry. Another Crossmaglen priest, Father Mc Fadden, chaired his first election meeting and a further election meeting was presided over by the Parish Priest of Lower Killeavey, Rev. P.A. McKee.

This was not the only kind of support given to Malachy Conlon's campaign. At the convention where he was nominated £150 was collected from those who attended. This was undoubtedly a considerable sum at the time and is highly unlikely that the total amount taken up on the weekly collection cards put out by Paddy Agnew's supporters came anywhere near it.

A prominent issue raised mainly by the clergy who spoke in support of Malachy Conlon was the fear that the Stormont government was going to take away control of their schools from Catholics and Labour would not provide strong enough opposition to it. Father McFadden, speaking in Crossmaglen, said what concerned him as a priest and a Catholic was 'the attempt that was to be made to filch from them their rights over the Catholic schools'. He went on to say that what they needed in Parliament were men 'who will have the ability to fight with determination against the studied onslaught of the Stormont government against our ancient rights'. At an after Mass meeting in Cullyhanna Father McKeown also stressed the need to return members 'who would fight against the proposed injustice of taking from Catholics the control of their schools'. Malachy Conlon, in his election manifesto, claimed that the Unionist administration intended to take over the control of Catholic schools which would be 'greeted with glee by the Communist infested Labour Party'.

Emotionally charged election manifesto

This election manifesto which was prominently displayed in local Nationalist newspapers was a lengthy, emotionally charged diatribe against Communism with racist overtones. The second paragraph stated:

"We Irishmen of this generation are asked again to raise aloft this flaming cross and with the might strength of a United Nation to hold it higher than the clouds that Europe and the World might see that all is not lost ...But ever to the East is the sneering bulk of Communist Russia where the Jews have marshalled mighty force to carry on their age old struggle – the destruction of Christianity".

According to this document Britain's association with the Soviet Union during the war brought the threat of communism nearer:

"There can be no doubt that the Labour Party is a hot-bed of Communistic activity and that in the years which lie ahead of us the latent energy which has been nourished during the war by close contact with Russia will spring into mad fanatic life".

It referred to England being ready for 'the vile henchmen of the Communist Jew' and decline of morals there:

"Standards of purity which we in Ireland hold dear and sacred are scoffed at in England. The marriage laws are but a flimsy tissue, and the monstrous crime of abortion is practised constantly without a thought of its enormity".

Whilst there was acceptance that Paddy Agnew was a Catholic and 'a decent man' he nevertheless answered to the Labour whip and was 'but a cog in the Labour machine'.

"You as electors must decide whether you are to be represented by a man who is pledged to defend your country against Communism and who is pledged to fight with every weapon for the Unity of that land; or by a man who is pledged to to answer a whip which is cracked in Moscow and who gives allegiance to a party which is satisfied that the Border shall remain"'

The final lines were certainly a battle cry:

"Ireland stands where she stood at Limerick. We are marshalled together and we are asked to march. There are two flags in the sand – the Hammer and Sickle of the Communist Jew – and the flag of our own land. Which flag do you support? Whither are we marching? These are the questions.

A vote for me is a vote for Ireland and Christianity, a vote for Mr Agnew is a vote for disruption and chaos".

This manifesto set the tone for all of Malachy Conlon's speeches throughout his campaign. At every opportunity the 'red scare' was invoked and even, according to those in the Labour movement who recalled the period, congregations at Sunday Masses were advised not to vote for Paddy Agnew because he was an 'agent of Moscow'.

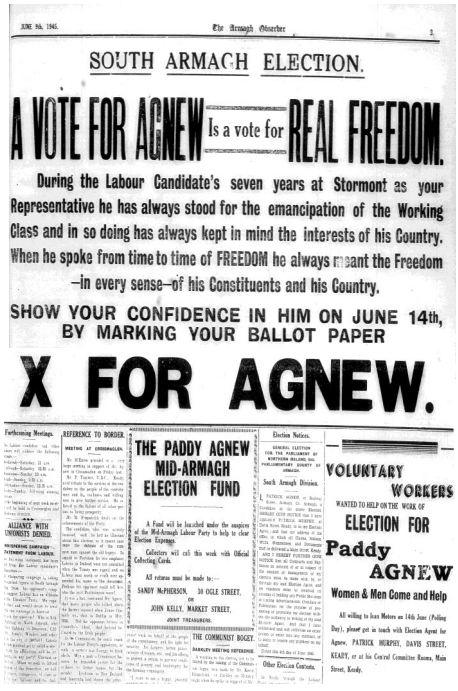
'Dirty' tactics

The threat of the infiltration of Communism through Labour was not new. Obviously it was difficult at election times to publicly oppose policies which sought to improve the lives of working people so instead the tactic was to link Labour with Communism and Godlessness. Labour in Armagh came up against it at every election contest throughout the 1930s and 40s. For instance, during the 1939 campaign for the Armagh seat on the County Council, referred to earlier, Paddy Agnew had a programme of demands including better housing, poor law and unemployment reforms, improved health care and greater educational opportunities. Nonetheless, he was not challenged on any of these. Instead his opponent, Tom McLaughlin resorted to the 'red scare'. He warned Armagh voters:

"I have heard that efforts are being made to introduce Communism into our midst. Any attempt in that direction will have my most strenuous opposition. I will fight Communism tooth and nail with all the strength at my command...Hands off Armagh; we will have none of your antics here".

The difference between the 1945 and previous election contests was the degree of viciousness wrought by the

Conlon campaign. Labour party activists have recalled it as one of the 'dirtiest' campaigns ever fought and in his post-election speech after the count, Paddy Agnew referred to the 'scurrilous' attack on him in the Conlon manifesto and claimed that Labour Party workers had been intimidated. He said that Malachy Conlon had asserted that the result would have a bearing on Ireland's status and independence but the methods used to gain that result were not in keeping with the ideals of independence or democracy. The manifesto had mentioned the Fiery Cross but the party's tactics were neither Christian nor in keeping with the faith they both professed.



JUNE 9th, 1945. The Armagh Observer

SOUTH ARMAGH ELECTION.

A VOTE FOR AGNEW Is a vote for REAL FREEDOM.

During the Labour Candidate's seven years at Stormont as your Representative he has always stood for the emancipation of the Working Class and in so doing has always kept in mind the interests of his Country. When he spoke from time to time of FREEDOM he always meant the Freedom —in every sense—of his Constituents and his Country.

SHOW YOUR CONFIDENCE IN HIM ON JUNE 14th, BY MARKING YOUR BALLOT PAPER

X FOR AGNEW.

Forthcoming Meetings.

REFERENCE TO BORDER.

MEETING AT CROSSMAGLEN.

ALLIANCE WITH UNIONISTS DENIED.

THE PADDY AGNEW MID-ARMAGH ELECTION FUND

A Fund will be launched under the auspices of the Mid-Armagh Labour Party to help to clear Election Expenses.

Collectors will call this week with Official Collecting Cards.

All returns must be made to:—

SANDY McPHERSON, 30 OGLE STREET,

or

JOHN KELLY, MARKET STREET,

JOINT TREASURERS.

THE COMMUNIST BOGEY.

DARKLEY MEETING REFERENCE.

Election Notices.

GENERAL ELECTION FOR THE PARLIAMENT OF NORTHERN IRELAND, 1945.—PARLIAMENTARY SOCIETY OF ARMAGH.

South Armagh Division.

Other Election Contests.

VOLUNTARY WORKERS

WANTED TO HELP ON THE WORK OF

ELECTION FOR

Paddy AGNEW

Women & Men Come and Help

All willing to lose Motors on 14th June (Polling Day), please get in touch with Election Agent for Agnew, PATRICK HURPHY, DAVIS STREET, KEADY, or at his Central Committee Rooms, Main Street, Keady.

The Agnew campaign

What sort of campaign did Paddy Agnew wage in the face of such opposition, it might well be asked? As in other elections he concentrated primarily on welfare issues. In Newtownhamilton he said he wanted a 'happy and peaceful countryside' with the farm worker getting a 'just wage and a decent life'. In Darkley he pointed out that Labour wanted to 'have new industries installed and old ones revived' In Crossmaglen he refuted that Labour was aligned to Communism. He asked if a man was a Communist because he demanded justice for the workers or better homes for the people. 'Irishmen in Australia and new Zealand had shown the greatness of Labour's policy in bringing forward a programme of social security similar to that outlined by His Holiness, the late Pope Leo XIII and today Labour was challenging Unionism here- in the centre of gravity – Belfast – a proof of their earnestness to make changes for the better'.

Most of his support according to the local press, came from Keady and Bessbrook, understandable in that these were villages where the majority of inhabitants were mill workers and he was a firm supporter of trade unions and their efforts to improve work and conditions. Unfortunately for him in the end it was not enough to stave off his challenger who had the advantages of money plus the very visible support of the clergy and civic leaders within the Catholic community.

The aftermath

After the election Paddy Agnew still continued as a Labour activist locally. He was a member of the County Council for ten years until 1949 and when the City Council was reconstituted after the Second World War he became a member and leader of the Labour opposition, a position he held until Labour's defeat at the hands of the Independent Nationalist Party in 1958, the year prior to his death. His obituary in the Armagh Guardian paid tribute to his work for others:

"In Parliament, in council and in committee Mr Agnew was untiring in his efforts to help the working man and outside the council chamber he represented many of all denominations when their claims for insurance benefits came up for hearing. He was also always ready to compile a letter when he believed it would help some-one to gain something to which he was entitled".

Malachy Conlon went to Stormont in 1945 but his career as a Member of Parliament was short-lived. Although he held the South Armagh seat in the 1949 election he died the following year. Much of his time had been taken up with the Anti-Partition League which he helped found and was its main organiser. Along with Senator J.G. Lennon of Armagh who had been one of his platform speakers in the 1945 election campaign and Tom Barry he went to the USA to lobby support from both the American government and the Irish-American community for the ending of Partition. He arrived home in an exhausted state and months later died in hospital in Belfast.

Ironically Malachy Conlon has a page long entry in the nine volume Dictionary of Irish Biography but there is no mention of Paddy Agnew. Malachy Conlon had a street named after him in Culloville but there is no lasting memorial anywhere to Paddy Agnew who truly was a man of the people.

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Photograph of Paddy Agnew courtesy of Teresa Agnew

A school remembers the boys who died 100 years ago

by Tom Duncan

Every year in the Royal School Armagh a service takes place to remember those who died in the service of their country during World War 1, World War 2, in other conflicts and as the result of terrorist activity at home. The Old Armachians have placed 3 memorials in school to record the names of those who fought and died in World War 1, those who died in World War 2 and to those who have suffered in conflicts since World War 2. The World War 1 memorial is in the hallway outside the library. The World War 2 memorial is at the cricket pavilion. The memorial to other conflicts takes the form of a stained glass window at the entrance to the boarding department. The names of those who died are printed and the photographs of a number are included. The words of John McCrae's poem 'In Flanders Fields' are also quoted as a tribute to those who died in the 1914-18 conflict in Belgium and France. Over the 3 years 2003-2005 the graves of those from the school who died there have been visited and memorial crosses with the school name on them have been placed on each grave.

PUPILS FROM THE ROYAL SCHOOL ARMAGH WHO WERE KILLED IN WORLD WAR 1

B. S. Anderson ..... **Gunner, Canadian Army**

W. E. Andrews ..... **2nd Lieut. R. I. Rifles.**

J. F. St. J. Annesley..... **Captain R.A.M.C.**

L. S. Arbuthnot ..... **2nd Lieut. Royal Flying Corps**

F. M. Badham. ..... **Lieut. Royal Naval Res.**

E. W. Barrett ..... **Captain. Royal Flying Corps.**

A. C. Bateman M.C. ... **Captain R.A.M.C.**

C.F.J. Bell ..... **Private R. Dublin Fus.**

C. H. Binions ..... **Corporal Royal Engineers**

J. Blackwood ..... **Corporal Irish Guards**

C. E. Bradstreet..... **Private R. I. Fus.**

J. T. Brett ..... **2nd Lieut. Royal Dublin Fus.**

W. A. Burges..... **Lieut. R. I. Rifles.**

F. C. Burges..... **Private Irish Guards**

H. J. Calvert ..... **Private R.I.Fus.**

C. P. Christie ..... **2nd Lieut. King's L'Pool Regt.**

R. F. S.Christie ..... **2nd Lieut. Royal Flying Corps.**

A. E. Coote..... **2nd. Lieut. R. I. Rifles.**

R. P. Daniel..... **Captain Royal Welsh Fus.**

E. R. Despard..... **D.S.O. Lieut. Tank Corps**

F. Le F. Dobbin ..... **2nd Lieut. Gurkha Rifles**

T. R. H. Dorman ..... **2nd Lieut. Royal Munster Fus.**

G. E. Drake ..... **Lieut. Worcester Regt.**

S. J. Faris ..... **Lieut. King's L'Pool Regt.**

W. H. Ferrar ..... **Capt./Adjutant Welsh Regt**

C. A. Findlater..... **Sergt. Royal Dublin Fus.**

P. W .Gray..... **Private R.A.M.C.**

J. H. Grayson ..... **Lieut. Leinster Regt.**

J. A. H. Helby ..... **2nd Lieut. Royal Dublin Fus.**

K. S. Howard..... **Captain Sherwood Foresters**

W. A. King..... **Private Black Watch.**

A. J. Lennox ..... **2nd Lieut. R. I. Rifles.**

H. T. Maffett ..... **Captain Leinster Regt.**

H. Marks ..... **Lance Corpl. Scottish**

L. H. Martin..... **2nd Lieut. R. I. Fus.**

D. S. Maunsell ..... **Lieut. Royal Munster Fus.**

J. M. McCleery..... **Sergt. R. I. Fus.**

A. W. McLaughlin .. **2nd Lieut. Royal. Flying. Corps.**

I. F. R. Miller ..... **Lieut. Royal Inniskilling Fus.**

R. W. Moeran ..... **Private Canadian Infantry**

J. W. M. Morgan .... **D. S. O. Lt. Col. R. A. S. C.**

D. St. G. Morrison... **Lieut. Royal Field Artillery.**

C. H. J. Mouritz ..... **2nd Lieut. Leinster Regt.**

C. Nelson ..... **Captain Punjabis**

T. A. Peel..... **Lieut. R. A. M. C.**

J. Pollock..... **Lieut. R. I. Rifles.**

H. T. Radcliff ..... **Captain Leinster Regt.**

Lee Rice ..... **Sub. Lieut. Royal Naval Reserve**

W. H. Russell ..... **Staff Sergt. Major South African Inf.**

H. A. Small ..... **2nd Lieut. Kings Liverpool Regt.**

E. H. Stewart ..... **Corporal (Pub. Schools)R. Fus**

L. H. Stokes ..... **2nd Lieut. London Irish Regt.**

G. S. R. Stritch..... **Captain Connaught Rangers**

J. M. Stronge ..... **Lieut. R. I. Fus.**

H. W. Stuart ..... **Sergt. R. AM. C.**

C. H. Trotter ..... **Lieut. Royal Air Force**

A. N. Turner ..... **Corporal Royal Irish Regt.**

C. M. Tweedy ..... **Corporal Royal Dublin Fus.**

R. Ussher-Greer..... **Acting Army Chaplain**

J. N. Watson ..... **2nd Lieut. Royal Inniskilling Fus.**

H. K. C. Weir ..... **Lieut. South Staffordshire Regt.**

W. Chadwick..... **East African Army Chaplain**

One Soldier's Story:

the war diary of Captain Henry Telford Maffett

by Richard Burns

The National Library of Ireland holds a collection of papers relating to Henry Telford Maffett during the latter part of 1914. This article draws on these documents[1] and a history of the Regiment[2].

Henry Telford Maffett was born on the 24th March 1872 in St Helena, Finglas, county Dublin[3]. He was the ninth and youngest son of William Hamilton Maffett and Marcella Bayly. He and his older brother Reginald Ernest Maffett were educated at the Royal School Armagh in 1884[3]. The family had strong links to Armagh, their aunt Anna Maria lived there having married her cousin Matthew Robert Bell. There was a further link as their great grandfather, James Crookes[4] taught at the Royal School.

Henry, aged 16 is pictured below on the occasion of the marriage of his older sister Marcella Amelia to Alexander Sharpe Deane on the 5th March 1889. Also in the picture is his sister Emilie, aged 15 and beside her cousin and future husband Cecil Harmsworth aged 17 with his arm resting on her shoulder. Henry's correspondence with Emilie forms a large part of the material in the National Library

From left to right they are – seated Henry Telford Maffett, Madeleine Smartt (nee Maffett), Marcella Amelia Maffett (the bride), William Maffett (father of the bride), Oswald Maffett, Marcella Maffett (nee Bayly, mother of the bride), the two children in front are Bayly and Ruth Spencer, while standing are Edward Spencer, Edward Maffett, Emilie Maffett, Cecil Harmsworth, Gertrude Spencer (nee Maffett), Reginald Maffett, Alexander Sharpe Deane (the groom), Arthur Maffett, his wife Isabel Maffett (nee Loughnan), Gerald Maffett and an unknown person.

Henry and Reginald were the only brothers to follow military careers; Reginald joined the Duke of Wellington's regiment as a 2nd Lieutenant on 21st January 1893, and served out the war in India reaching the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Henry T. Maffett c1900

Henry began his military career with the 5th Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, a militia battalion. He was promoted from second lieutenant to lieutenant with the Battalion on 16th September 1893. He then joined the full time army with the 2nd Battalion of the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) as a 2nd Lieutenant on 2nd June 1894. In the twenty years leading up to the war Henry served in Gozo; Bermuda; Halifax, Nova Scotia; St Lucia; Nigeria; South Africa; Mauritius and India[2]. He was promoted to Lieutenant with the Battalion on 10th July 1895 and to Captain on 6th October 1902. He was awarded the African medal with clasp in 1902 whilst on secondment to the West African Frontier Force in Northern Nigeria, during part of which time he acted as Adjutant of the 1st Northern Nigeria Regiment and Brigade-Major of the West African Frontier Force. He was

present at the anti-slavery operations against the Emirs at Bida and Kontagora. He was awarded the India medal with clasp in 1908 where he acted as Provost Marshal attached to the Staff of the 2nd Brigade Mohmand Field Force, north-western frontier of India[5].

The first hint of war came at midnight on 25th July 1914 while the Battalion was camped at Moore Park, Fermoy as part of Battalion training with the 6th Division. Orders came to the 2nd Battalion that all troops were to return to Cork and that commanding officers and adjutants were to report to Brigade Headquarters. Initially it was thought that further trouble had broken out in Ulster and the situation required the intervention of the army. However, it was soon discovered that this was a precaution in case Germany went to war with Great Britain. Great Britain declared war on Germany at midnight on the 4th August 1914, on the 5th the Battalion was mobilised and this was completed on the 9th August.

Emilie A. Harmsworth c 1900

In a letter to Emilie on 15th August Henry asks her to arrange with some of her friends to send out a weekly box of odds and ends for the men. He realised that it would be difficult to get money as most people had already given to the larger funds, but his concern with those funds were that large quantities of supplies were bought and they went into central depots and rarely reached the men at the front who were most in need of them. The list consisted of socks (woollen), tobacco (twist), a few wooden pipes, matches and chocolate (hard, unsweetened).

At 11:00 p.m. on 16th August, the Battalion received orders to embark at 4:00 a.m. the following morning. Henry reports that there were great difficulties in mobilising at Cork owing to drink and absence. The ship sailed from Cork to Holyhead where the Battalion entrained for Cambridge, arriving on the morning of the 18th to join with other units of the 6th Division. The 6th Division comprised 3 infantry brigades, the 16th, 17th and 18th Infantry Brigades, the 2nd Battalion of the Leinsters was one of 4 battalions making up the 17th Infantry Brigade, along with the 1st Royal Fusiliers, the 1st North Staffordshire's and the 3rd Rifle Brigade. In turn the 6th Division was combined with the 4th Division to make up III Corps, one of 3 Corps, each of 2 divisions comprising the British Expeditionary Force of 1914. While in Cambridge Henry contacted his sister Emily who was now married to Cecil Harmsworth and living in London, asking her to come and visit.

On 30th August the Battalion was marched to Newmarket and camped there for training. In the early days of September wounded officers began to arrive in hospitals in Cambridge and word began to emerge about events on the front line. On 7th September the Battalion left Newmarket by train for Southampton, Henry remarked on the splendid reception the troops received on their passage through London.

On 8th September the Battalion embarked in Southampton, arriving off St Nazaire on the morning of the 10th. While waiting to disembark news came through about the Battle of the Marne and that the Germans were in full retreat. Some feared the war would be over before they saw action. It was the 12th before the Battalion disembarked at St Nazaire and boarded a train that evening for Coulommiers near the Marne, arriving there at dawn on the 14th.

With the exception of Friday 18th September when the Battalion remained in billets, the Battalion marched each day until the 21st when they reached Dhuizel where they rested before marching to a front line position at a large farm house Cour de Soupir, where they relieved the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry in the trenches. The Battalion comprised 4 companies A, B, C and D; Henry commanded B Company. At Cour de Soupir C and D Companies went into the trenches first and A and B Companies were held in reserve, sheltering in a cave behind the farm and in one of the sheds at the farmhouse. The companies changed positions each day usually between 3 and 4 a.m. The next day their position came under heavy artillery fire which did a lot of damage to the farm buildings. In the margin of his diary Henry notes that he was bringing Lieutenant Cormac-Walshe his lunch when a shell burst close by and the lunch was spilt. At 10:00 p.m. the Germans advanced towards the Battalion, the attack lasted about 1½ hours but was rebuffed, though 1 man was killed and an officer and 3 men wounded. The next day a further 2 men were injured by shrapnel bursting over the trenches. The 24th was relatively quiet though there was some sniping on both sides, the men worked during the night to improve their trenches. On the early morning of the 25th the 3rd Rifle Brigade attacked the trenches facing their line; the Battalion supported them by firing on the enemy lines. The attack lasted about an hour but was beaten off by

the German machine guns. The Rifles had casualties to 4 officers and 50 men, 30 of them fatal. The Battalion came under heavy shelling later in the day, with some fragments falling in the trenches. The 26th was a quieter day, and on the 27th sounds of heavy traffic from the German lines led to the suspicion that the Germans were leaving their positions. Henry sent out one section to reconnoitre the enemy's position. This comprised Sergeant Riordan and 13 men; they had advanced about 250 feet when they were stopped by enemy fire, which was returned by the remainder of the Company. The patrol lay down and entrenched until night fall when they returned to the trenches. Sergeant Riordan and two men were wounded, and the Germans remained in place. The following days were more of the same, bursts of shelling, and some heavy infantry fire. The Battalion remained in the frontline until 1st October when they were relieved by the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and returned to billets in Dhuizel. This ended their participation in the Battle of the Aisne.

On the 28th September Henry wrote to Emilie, asking for 15 wooden pipes and some hard plain chocolate for the men, a thick woollen vest with long sleeves, a muffler and a number of daily newspapers for himself.

On 2nd October Henry rode over to Fismes to get a glass for his watch, it being broken at Cour de Soupir. On the 3rd Henry wrote to Emilie, sending her the key of his uniform case so that she could send his boots to his boot maker in Blackrock, Co. Dublin as one of them needed remade. He also asks for "*a warm brown cardigan jacket with long sleeves to be worn under his uniform as it is getting a bit parky. I like them made of Shetland wool and a little low at the neck*". He writes again on the 6th asking for 4 screens for the folding lantern and a refill battery for the electric torch. The Battalion remained in area until the 6th, when there was an incident in which a rifle was discharged by accident in the billets wounding both Lance Corporal Rice and Private Oates.

Henry T. Maffett c1910

Over the next 3 days the Battalion marched to Le Meux, where they entrained for St Omer on 10th October. A combination of marching and busses got the Battalion to Hazelbrouk where the 4th and 6th Divisions were concentrated by the 12th. On the 13th the division came up against the German lines from Bailleul to Les Trois Fermes. This was attacked by the Brigade with the Stafford's and 3rd Rifle Brigade, the Royal Fusiliers were held as Divisional Reserve and the Leinsters as Brigade Reserve to support the Rifle Brigade. Emilie wrote to Henry on the 13th listing what she had sent in a parcel "*1 under vest, thick long sleeves; 1 cardigan jacket; 1 Shetland jacket, khaki colour; 1 tummy band; 1 pair socks; 4 tins condensed milk; 1 tin meat lozenges; 1lb butter; 2lbs chocolate; 1 refill and 4 slides for lamp*". She had 150 pipes for the men; there was also a lot of news about the family and the work she was doing for the poor and refugees.

On the 14th about 2 p.m. the Battalion was moved to Outtersteene and a general advance on Steenwerck took place with a good deal of fighting on the part of the 18th Brigade on their right. The North Stafford's and Rifles assisted in the attack, the Battalion and Royal Fusiliers being kept in reserve. B Company was detailed to hold a crossroads about 1 mile east of Steenwerck. One section under Corporal Prince was detached to occupy the position covering a road and by mistake opened fire on a mounted French patrol killing two horses. At 6:30 p.m. the Company was ordered into Outtersteene to furnish outposts for the protection of transport. On the 15th the Company was detailed for outposts about ¾ mile south-east of the village and worked all the afternoon entrenching posts. At 6 p.m. they were ordered to close on Steenwerck. At 7 p.m. the Brigade started a night march with C Company on point and the remainder of the Battalion as advanced guard and B Company at the head of main guard. They arrived at Bac St Maur about 10:30 p.m. and found it occupied by a small portion of enemy cavalry and the swing bridge over the river Lys was turned round so as to be impassable. The point of the advance guard was suddenly fired on in the dark and the whole of C Company rushed back on the Battalion causing confusion and havoc. The fire was not heavy and order was shortly afterwards restored. After about 1½ hours the Brigade was withdrawn about two miles and halted in a village. Another attempt was made later to cross the river with B Company as advanced guard, no opposition was met and two platoons from the Company lined the bank of the river. The Royal Engineers made a raft, got a rope round the bridge and swung it round enabling the Battalion to enter the town which had just been left by the Germans. At about 4:30 a.m. the Company searched the town and found one drunken German who had been left behind. They turned in at 6:15 a.m. having arranged for defence and sent patrols to either flank.

On the 16th the Company remained billeted in Bac St Maur. A German patrol of 7 men was captured by one of the other companies. On the 17th the Battalion marched without breakfast as orders to move were received late, to billets in Chapelle d'Armentieres, where B Company manned outposts.

On the 18th the Brigade received orders to attack the line from Mont de Premesques to Perendies, the Leinsters in the firing line on the right, the Rifle Brigade on the left. Henry's Company was to support C Company in the firing line, their objective was from Premesques to a small road north-east of Batterie Stenarmont. The attack commenced at 7 a.m., Henry wrote that "*the ground advanced over is chiefly cultivated and much cut up with wire fences and small ditches. The attack of the Battalion becomes very much mixed up owing chiefly to the difficulty of keeping up communication. Small detachments from different companies generally under officers work forward and arrive within about 500 feet of enemy's lines. I with two platoons of my own Company less about two sections and about two sections C Company reach the line about 500 feet in front of the Batterie Senarmont which is occupied by infantry with machine guns and two guns. We reach this line about 10 a.m. and find that further advance is impossible. Some of the rest of the Battalion succeed in reaching the road running NE and SW through Premesques where they halt about 12 noon. The Rifles on our left are echeloned back a great deal, part of our platoon which is on my left appear to be the only troops in line with my left. About 2:20 a general advance is ordered the Royal Fusiliers to come up on the left of Rifles and bring them along.*

The 18th Brigade to attack on the line Capinghem – Mont de Premesques. I received these orders about 4p.m. and commenced movement by pushing out Lieutenant Walshe's platoon further to my right front and following the movement by Lieutenant Budgen's platoon. Walshe suffers from machine gun fire and shrapnel which is opened along my front so that I am compelled to remain in position and dig in. One section of C Company and about 30 rifles remain holding ground in front of and to the left of farm buildings on my left. We remain in position till after dark. During night one company of North Stafford's reinforce my left about the farm and the Rifle Brigade withdraw to line of road running SW from e in Halte to corner of road.

I get my men and C Company's men attached entrenched in turnip field and meadow. Quiet night.

Casualties Captain Montgomerie wounded, Sergeant Tandy, Corporal Delaney, Private Byrne killed.

Just before commencing attack from Chapelle d'Armentieres hear of German patrol in wood which we capture (1 officer and 3 men, one of whom is wounded). During afternoon and evening much annoyed by rifle fire machine gun and gun fire from 2 guns in Batterie about 500 feet off. Enemy very well concealed and impossible to locate."

The 19th has Henry's last entry "*Stand to arms at 4:30 and work trenches till daylight*". On the 20th it was obvious that Henry was aware of the position the remainder of his Company were in and in his last message to his commanding officer detailed the danger, pointing out the limited number of men he had to cover his position, concluding with "*If I am attacked of course I will do my utmost to maintain my position*". At 8 a.m. the Germans began an artillery bombardment on the position of D Company at Premesques, the Company took heavy casualties and were withdrawn. Companies A and C were unaware of this, and as the Germans advanced both Henry's Company and C Company came under heavy fire, suffering heavy losses and it was during this action that Henry was killed. A Company having the Battalion's two machine guns were able to hold off the Germans, reinforcements were sought from the 18th Brigade who sent in a company of the East Yorkshire Regiment with the intention of retaking Premesques, they suffered heavy losses in the attempt and were unable to retake Premesques. However the German advance had come to a standstill and about 5 p.m. the remainder of A and B companies were withdrawn to Chapelle-Armentieres.

The Battalion were in the front-line until late in the afternoon of 23rd October when they were relieved by the Lancashire Fusiliers. Over the days that the Battalion fought at Premesques the total casualties were 11 officers and 423 other ranks, of these 5 officers and 150 other ranks were killed. Of the men killed 119 bodies are still unaccounted for.

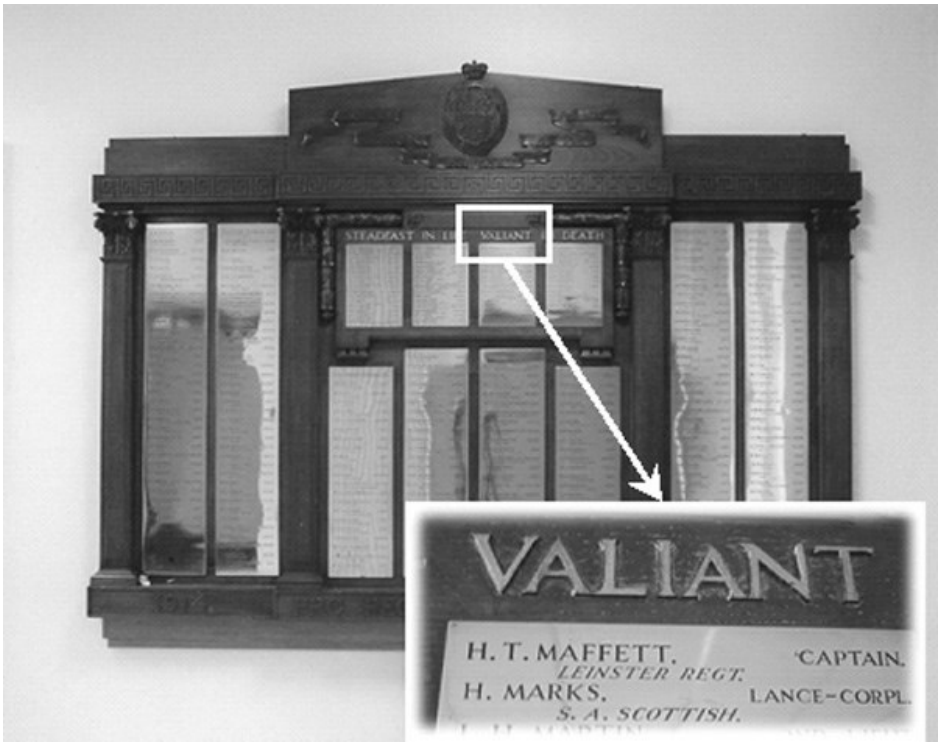
Emilie A. Harmsworth c 1915

On the 22nd Emilie wrote again to Henry with news of the family and friends, saying that she had sent off 6,000 Woodbines for the men and that she had 300 pipes waiting until he told her where to send them. On the same day Colonel Reeve wrote to Emilie expressing his sympathy and telling her of Henry's death. Emilie received a telegram from the War Office on 24th October telling her that Henry had been killed on the 21st along with sympathy

from Lord Kitchener, followed by a telegram from Buckingham Palace passing on the sympathy of the King and Queen on 26th October.

On the 25th Emilie commenced writing letters in an attempt to find out more about Henry's death. As a result Emilie received many inaccurate and differing accounts of his death and burial and it was not until November 1915 that she received word about a book by a German Officer, Lieutenant Walther Reinhardt in which he relates how he found Henry's body.

"Not far from our lines, which we have occupied now for ten days is a stormed English trench where lies amidst his own people a dead officer, of from forty to forty-five years of age,. I have ascertained his name from his papers --- Captain H. T. Maffett, 2nd Leicester (sic) Regiment. Near the body I found a card, written in tinted pencil which I freely translate as:- 'To Lieutenant Daly. My position lies 600 paces north -west of Point 42 of the fort Batterie Senarmont, near the edge of the Lille plateau. I cannot reconnoitre further owing to heavy machine gun fire from the enemy trenches which lie on Batterie Senarmont or immediately under it. Please request the artillery to reply to this fire. There is no intention to advance and it is possible that I may receive the order to draw back my men from the firing line. Look out for a good firing position, dig yourself in… ". Here the message breaks off in the midst of a sentence. Perhaps he was struck in the very moment of writing by a fragment of the German shell. I took and I keep the card together with an empty envelope with the address of the dead man's wife. Perhaps I shall have an opportunity after the War to convey to the widow of the fallen English comrade the last message written by her husband. Also the wrist compass of the dead man which I now carry on my wrist."



This version is borne out by a letter written on 12th May 1916 by Lieutenant Reinhardt to the British Foreign Office via the American Embassy in Berlin. His uncle Captain Roser had been shot down behind British lines near Ypres on 25th July 1915 and was buried with military honours on the orders of a Lieutenant Colonel G. D. Goodman, who also returned his decorations and precise details of where he was buried to the family in Germany via the American Embassy. Lieutenant Reinhardt wanted to repay this "chivalrous service" by Col. Goodman by letting Henry's widow know where he was buried and returning the various items of his that he held. Emilie must have subsequently passed this on to the War Graves Commission after the War. They recovered his remains and those of others, and these were re-interred in Houplines Communal Cemetery Extension a few miles away. However, from the inscription they did not appear to record exactly where they placed him: it says "Known to be buried in this Cemetery". The inscription is located against the boundary wall to the left of the entrance.

Henry is also remembered on the World War I memorial in the Royal School, Armagh.

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[4] "Hamilton Memoirs" compiled by Everard Hamilton, Dundalk: William Tempest, Dundalgan Press, 1920, p51.

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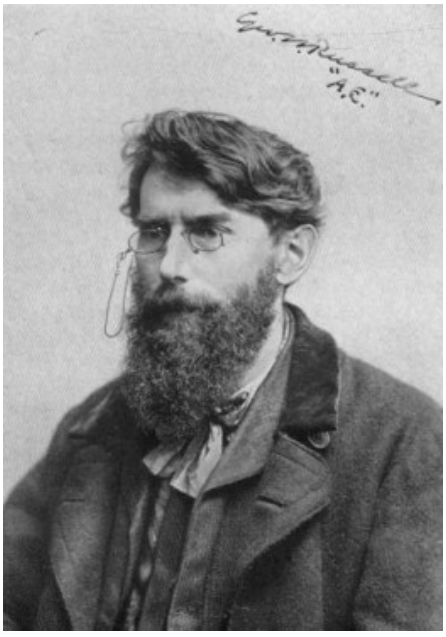
Armagh's place in the work of James Joyce and the Irish Literary and Cultural Revival

by Eric Villiers

While Armagh has successfully put itself on Ireland's tourist trail by marketing its rich history, magnificent Georgian architecture and its links to the eighteenth century writer and satirist Jonathan Swift, it now has a new opportunity to capitalise on recently discovered connections to literary giants like James Joyce and WB Yeats, as well as the Irish Literary and Cultural Revival. Here, Eric Villiers outlines the significant contributions to the revival made by writers, musicians and scholars, who were born, lived, worked or were educated in Armagh.

Academic historians have long quietly acknowledged that County Armagh's



George 'A.E.' Russell played a central role in the Irish Literary and Cultural Revival from the 1890s to the mid-twentieth century. Only his life-long friend the poet WB Yeats was more significant. Russell was the polymath of the revival – poet, writer, editor, critic, painter, mystic, publisher, politician and co-operator – but has never received the acclaim his overarching contribution merits. His reputation has suffered in the shadow of Yeats's genius, which included a flair for self-publicity, and over time Yeats became the story. As Henry Summerfield, author of a biography of Russell, points out:

Every aspect of the Irish renaissance, literary, artistic, political, and economic is indebted to A.E. Although W.B. Yeats was a greater poet, J.M. Synge a greater dramatist, and Jack B. Yeats a greater painter, none of A.E.'s fellow countrymen could rival his versatility or match his spiritual stature.[1]

According to the late T.G.F. Paterson, who assembled an invaluable archive of AE's art, writings and memorabilia for the County Museum on the Mall, Armagh, it was the history, legends and beauty of 'Ard Macha' that awakened Russell's spiritually and his art. Born in Lurgan he visited Armagh often and fell for his first teenage sweetheart Carrie Rea at Tower Hill, where they both had aunts living in the Shiels Almshouses.

Granted the freedom to roam the Palace Demesne, it was there that the ruined Franciscan Friary and St Brigid's Well inspired his earliest attempts to draw and write. He also made "pilgrimages to Emain Macha" (Navan Fort), viewed the heavens from the Observatory, heard lectures in the Armagh Natural History and Philosophical Society Rooms and attended talks at Armagh United Protestant Young Men's Improvement Society.[2] In 1954, after interviewing Carrie Rea (later Mrs R. E. Coates), Paterson wrote: "… it was in Armagh that [Russell] first experienced those spiritual manifestations that afterwards became the great realities of his life."[3]

Where Paterson led others are beginning to follow. In recent years there has been a renewal of interest in Russell, and while the hope is that this will continue, he is not the only one who deserves better from the narrative of a period in Dublin that has been compared to the London of Shakespeare and the Athens of Pericles. Among these are a surprising number of 'Armachians': William Brayden O.B.E., editor and barrister; Dr William J. Lawrence, writer, journalist and scholar; Frank Harris, writer, journalist and literary trail blazer; Barton McGuckin, opera singer and musician, and Mary Connolly, a mezzo soprano who, albeit in a less informed more populist way, spread the revivalists' gospel across Ireland and to the Irish Diaspora in Britain.

If, as Summerfield says, the celebration of Russell has been muted for a century, then those other reputations have also suffered. Two of the primary texts testifying to the importance of our Armagh subjects could hardly be more different. One is *Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer*, the life-long journal of the famed Dublin diarist Joseph Holloway, which, although necessarily rough and ready,

nevertheless is prized by academics around the world for its content. At the other end of the literary spectrum is perhaps the best evocation of that Dublin era, James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

First – the evidence from Holloway. While hurriedly written and almost illegible, his journals remain *the* best repository of untapped cultural information about the period. At an estimated 25 million words it represents a daunting read, but there are hidden gems to be found – from his opinion of the "colossal and tyrannical … conceit" of WB Yeats to the "Woeful exaggerations and absurd grotesqueness [of the] Gaelic maniac Mr P. H. Pearse" – from James Connolly, "a determined piece of goods" to the unspeakable James Joyce, "a strange fish".[4]

It is from Holloway's mass of observations, opinion, tittle-tattle, rumours and facts that the Lawrence and Connolly stories emerge, while it is in Joyce's masterpiece that Russell, Brayden, Harris, McGuckin and Armagh in general, are celebrated. In *Ulysses* Joyce references his indebtness to Russell's mentoring with the irresistible compliment A.E.I.O.U.; expresses admiration for Armagh's Georgian architect Francis Johnston; uses Armagh as background for his fictional heroine Molly Bloom, whose father was Major Tweedy – or Sergeant Major – in Armagh's Royal Irish Fusiliers; jaggedly jokes about it being the "bloody" birthplace of the Orange Order and notes the city's religious importance with various references to it as the ecclesiastical capital Ireland.

In devoting space in *Ulysses* to Brayden, Joyce was tipping his hat to the Armagh man's place as Ireland's most influential newspaperman – "the lofty giant among a host of babbling journalists".[5] Brayden's politics as an ardent, active supporter of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Home Rule leader, would certainly have appealed to Joyce, since Parnell was the young Joyce's first hero.

Brayden was born in Scotch Street, Armagh, on September 13, 1865, in a substantial corner house where the street is joined by Linenhall Street. He was the son of William Henry Brayden, a pawnbroker and later manager of the *Ulster Gazette*, and Eliza Brayden (née Windrum). After his education at the Royal School he worked for a short time on the *Gazette,* then the *Leinster Leader* in Naas, County Kildare, before joining the *Freeman's Journal* in 1883.

While his family was Church of Ireland and unionist, Brayden converted to Catholicism in the 1880s, around the time he enrolled in University College Dublin. His law studies there were interrupted when the *Journal* sent him to Westminster as the paper's parliamentary correspondent, during the exciting period when Parnell led the fight for Home Rule. In 1892 he was appointed editor of the *Journal* at the young age of 26, and by 1894 had completed his studies to qualify as a barrister, although he may have practised on only a couple of occasions after being called to the bar.

His arrival in Dublin coincided with the beginning of the revival led by Yeats and later the Abbey Theatre, and he threw himself into working to establish cultural institutions – he was a member of the Council of Trustees of the National Library of Ireland, vice-president of the Royal Dublin Society, and was associated with the early years of the Feis Ceoil and the Royal Academy of Music.

In this decade of centenaries Brayden is a reminder of the complex nature of Ireland's socio-political and cultural environment before and after the defining days of 1916. An Irish-speaking former 'Protestant Northerner' and a home ruler, he was so active a recruiter for the British army that he was awarded an OBE. In December 1917 his youngest son Kevin, a lieutenant with the London Irish Rifles, was killed in action in Palestine.

While Brayden's Armagh antecedents have largely remained hidden from popular history and Joycean enthusiasts, in 1993 the National Library of Ireland recognised his importance to the revival when Dónall Ó Luanaigh, Keeper of Collections paid tribute to his pioneering work in an essay for the *Dublin Historical Record*:

His association… with Irish writers and thinkers such as Thomas Kettle and Francis Sheehy-Skeffington … are evidence of his having helped found and develop much of the cultural life of Dublin, which we experience and appreciate today.[6]

Dr William J. Lawrence – Harvard professor and hotel dish-washer

As a writer and freelance journalist who contributed regularly to the *Freeman's Journal* William J. Lawrence, who moved to Dublin around 1900, knew Brayden well. They would surely have swapped stories about Armagh, where Lawrence had begun his working life as a salesman for a Belfast drinks company in the late 1870s.

By the time they met Lawrence was a published author of theatre history and a rising star of Shakespearean research, a field of studies fast developing into a worldwide phenomenon. Among his extra-curricular activities was writing pamphlets in support of Arthur Griffith and his newly formed political party Sinn Féin, and socialising at James Cousin's house, where guests included George Russell and a young tenor by the name of James Joyce.

Ostracised by Irish academics as a "commercial traveller" with a "strangely harsh" Belfast accent, Lawrence gravitated towards a clique of self-made, self-taught scholars.[7]

Some of them, including Lawrence, gathered regularly in the National Library for the literary discussions Joyce recreated in the library scene in *Ulysses*. Joyce famously found his characters or their characteristics from real life, so it is of further interest that Lawrence's first job in Dublin was writing advertising plugs in the *Evening Telegraph*, a job similar to that of the book's hero Leopold Bloom.

Years after Lawrence's death the poet Austin Clarke and Abbey playwright T. C. Murray would recall the glorious debates of their youth when the extraordinary erudition and withering wit of this irascible Belfast maverick could reduce Dublin audiences to uncontrollable laughter. He delighted in jumping to his feet in packed theatres to hiss, heckle and protest, or in lecture rooms to challenge speakers. He once humiliated Patrick Pearse in a public debate, and famously led the protests against JM Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*. His interruptions at the Abbey Theatre were so notorious that he was known as "Yeats's Nemesis".[8] Once, when Yeats was in London to address a literary gathering, the poet began by saying he was happy to be there, not least because he would not have to put up with a red-headed heckler back home. With that, from the back of the hall came Lawrence's thick Belfast drawl: "I am here".

In 1916 the Easter Rising and ensuing civil unrest finally ruined his already precarious livelihood in Dublin. Since he had not gone to university he did not have the background necessary to secure a post or a bursary to finance his studies and subsidise his books, even though he wrote a dozen of the era's most important studies of Elizabethan theatre. Nevertheless his books won him an international reputation and he decamped from Dublin for New York on lecture tours of US ivy-league universities.

In 1917, writing to Joseph Holloway his best friend in Dublin, he reported that things were not working out. Lecturing dates were so geographically far apart that he could not make sufficient profits. To survive he was living in friends' apartments and spending his nights washing dishes in uptown New York hotels.

Lawrence, the son of a railway hotel manager at Mountpottinger Station, left school at sixteen to pursue his hobby of theatre research and work for Kirker, Greer and Company in Armagh where he "had a great time" and made "old friends".[9] In 1889 he was working in the company's Belfast head-office on the day of Armagh's Great Rail Disaster and the next day travelled to Armagh on a humanitarian visit. The train was carrying nurses, relief workers and grieving relatives, and during the journey, the respectful silence of the passengers in Lawrence's carriage was broken by a preacher intoning aloud passages from the Bible. As the train pulled into Portadown – the last station before they passed the crash site on the adjacent Warrenpoint line – Lawrence, at 6ft 3in, stood up, set down his newspaper, and physically removed the offending evangelist from the train to the platform.

Lawrence would return to Armagh on other occasions. In 1921 Sinn Féin paid him £5 to campaign there for the IRA chief, Michael Collins (then on the run) when Collins successfully stood as MP in the first Northern Parliament.

A few months later Lawrence's impoverishment won him sympathy in London literary circles and he was surprised to be awarded a Civil List Pension. It was a magnanimous gesture given his ardent anti-imperialism, Irish nationalism and his work for Collins at a time when the latter headed Great Britain's most wanted list.

The incident in Portadown was an early example of Lawrence's confrontational nature. His inability to suffer fools in silence made him life-long enemies in Dublin academia. Throughout his career he was dismayed by standards in philology and once declared that "scholarship should sit in metaphorical sackcloth and ashes for its prolonged obtuseness in refusing to search for facts and examine the circumstances in which Elizabethan playhouses operated".[10] On another occasion, railing against this lazy reliance on secondary sources, he wrote: "You cannot fully enjoy his [Shakespeare's] acquaintance until you have imbibed a sound knowledge of his environment".[11]

It was only after he had been: elected to the Royal Society of Literature; admitted to the elite London Critics' Circle; appointed a Harvard professor; publicly validated in newspapers by the Nobel poet laureate TS Eliot; praised by half-a-dozen American Shakespearean scholars and lauded in the *New York Times*, that Irish universities finally reneged and graced him with honorary doctorates. Queen's University Belfast responded in 1930, but it was not until 1940 the year of his death that the National University of Ireland tardily followed suit. Lawrence, then living in London accepted the Dublin tribute graciously, but he was too ill to attend and died "poor and disappointed".[12]

Lawrence's influence on theatre studies is still felt today. His pioneering methodology – first devised by him as a Methodist College schoolboy – is now the accepted forensic way to study Shakespeare.

Mary Connolly – idol of Ballsbridge doctors and Belfast dockers

While writers like Yeats and Russell were in the intellectual vanguard of the revival, Armagh's Mary Connolly, the 'Dublin street singer' personified Irishness to the masses. Thousands flocked to see her at Gaelic League

rallies, and in British music halls Irish immigrants packed out her concerts. One commentator wrote that Ireland's "soul sighs through her singing" and Holloway compared her to the ancient, mythical Kathleen Ni Houlihan going about rousing nationalist sentiments.[13] (Yeats had earlier written an eponymous play about the legend).

Connolly was living in a tenement when she was discovered by opera lovers in Ailesbury Road, Dublin's richest street. She was delivered into the hands of Dr Vincent O'Brien, Ireland's top singing master who coached Joyce, Count John McCormack and Italy's favourite soprano Margaret Burke Sheridan. As Connolly rose to fame and fortune, the tragedy of her harrowing years as a teenager in English mines captured hearts everywhere, and newspapers around the English-speaking world revelled in the Cinderella tale. At the Belfast Empire, whose patrons were Ireland's working class aristocracy – the shipyard-men and linen factory girls – a fund was raised to pay a music tutor to tour with the singer and preserve her voice.

Armagh was so proud of Connolly and the fame she brought to the town that William McCrum (president of several local cultural and sporting clubs) organised a civic collection to present her with engraved jewellery. In recent years McCrum, owner of linen mills in Milford and Armagh, has become famous for devising football's penalty kick, now the most dramatic rule in world sport.

Holloway admitted shedding tears as he wrote up the Connolly story. Born in Irish Street, Armagh in 1892 she was educated at the Sacred Heart Convent before migrating to the Lancashire coalmines. At eighteen years of age, working as a pit brow lass at open air picking belts in all sorts of weather, she collapsed with pneumonia in the winter of 1910. She was in a coma four days before Christmas when an explosion blew up the pit where she worked – it was England's worst mining disaster. She was so ill she did not hear the blast even though it rocked the house and rattled the windows. It was two weeks before she was well enough to be told of the disaster that killed 344 men and boys, including her fiancée.

With her hopes of marriage dashed and psychologically unable to face mining, she worked as a farm labourer until the death of her father forced her back to the family's origins at Dorset Street, Dublin, to bury him at Glasnevin. By the end of 1916 workless, penniless and having lived for three days on a 'ha'penny cake', ashamed and in tears, she was forced to go street singing. She was soon earning £7 per week (seven times the average wage and today the equivalent of £350).

Street crowds began following her everywhere and several attempts by wealthy Dubliners to buy her a classical music education were rebuffed by the singer. The approaches – including those by a doctor friend of Holloway's – were made in the street but a tenement girl talking to gentlemen on a night-time street had only one interpretation, and she hurried away. It was significant that it was a woman who eventually got through to her and brought her to O'Brien's attention.

It may not be co-incidental that O'Brien worked as much in popular theatre as he did in the rarefied environs of opera, classical and church music. Overnight she became a UK sensation in music hall, variety theatre and concerts, earning millions (in today's terms) for her manager Barney Armstrong and the Findlater family who owned the Empire Theatre (now the Olympia), to which she was contracted.

In 1921 she broke free and formed her own variety company – which was rare for the times – and toured with huge success before tragedy struck again. A fire burned down the Garrick Theatre, Edinburgh where her company filled the programme. All of her equipment was lost and none of her acts had insurance. Over the next two decades her name slipped down bills until her last reported outings at seaside halls in rural Cork and Down in the 1930s. After that newspapers have no further trace of her career.

Her name only surfaces again in the 1970s when one of her old friends Ena Dayne, once a child star, was killed in a car crash. Among Dayne's prized possessions was a signed photo of Connolly and another of Penny Calvert, a dancer and first wife of Sir Bruce Forsythe. Incidentally Dayne co -wrote the 1945 hit "Cruising Down The River On A Sunday Afternoon".

Mary Connolly died in obscurity. When or where is not known, nor where she is buried. While there is sound evidence that her parents were interred at Glasnevin, there are no official documents or a headstone. The graveyard's trustees believe her father and mother were interred in "poor land" – the paupers' plot for which records were not kept.

Barton McGuckin, Armagh trained opera singer and musician

Barton McGuckin was a chorister in St Patrick's Protestant Cathedral where he trained in singing, organ, violin and pianoforte, before becoming a brilliant international operatic tenor, mostly with the Carla Rosa Company in London.

James Joyce delighted in the story of McGuckin singing on the same bill at Dublin's Ancient Concert Rooms with his father John Joyce and McGuckin later telling people that Joyce senior had the best tenor voice in Ireland. Joyce returned the compliment by paying tribute to McGuckin in *Ulysses* and re-telling the concert story in his semi-autobiography *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Frank Harris – pupil of the Royal School Armagh

According to George Bernard Shaw Frank Harris blazed a trail through English literature like a meteor flashing across the sky, while another close friend of Harris, Oscar Wilde, tragically refused his advice after Harris pleaded with him not to sue Lord Alfred Douglas for libel.

Harris, who attended the Royal School, was a prominent editor, author and publisher and famously wrote what has been described as the frankest ever biography. Wilde featured Harris in his writing as did a number of other artists including Joyce and Cole Porter, the latter referencing Harris in his song "After All I'm Only a Schoolgirl".

In the recent hit television series *Selfridges* the shop-girl-chasing character Frank Edwards was based on Harris, who made friends with some of the world's most talented and famous people. His multiple-volume memoir *My Life and Loves* was banned in many countries because of its sexual explicitness.

In his memoirs Harris paid tribute to his schooling in Armagh, which he found far more enlightening than his time in English public schools. He also credited the Royal's sports masters with sending him out into the world with a sense of fair-play.

Francis Johnston, architect, born in Armagh

James Joyce once joked that if Dublin was ever destroyed the descriptions of its streets and buildings in *Ulysses* could be used to rebuild it. More realistically it would be Francis Johnston's drawings that would be needed for some of Dublin's most important streets and buildings, including the iconic GPO and St George's Church, the bells of which Leopold Bloom hears ringing out in *Ulysses*. Johnson was responsible for much of the Georgian splendour for which both Dublin and Armagh are famous. He founded the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1824 and provided their headquarters in Lower Abbey Street at his own expense.

All of those mentioned here may not represent an exhaustive list – other Armagh connections remain to be examined. For instance there is T. W. Rolleston, the writer poet and political commentator who helped Yeats establish the Irish Literary Society in London. Rolleston's forbears arrived in Armagh in the early 1600s to take up land patents at Kilmore and Mullabrack granted them by King James I.

Exhaustive or not the list is something of which Armagh should be proud. It is now time to reclaim these international stars of the arts, whose religion, politics, cultural choices, and in one case gender, saw them unfairly written out of history. A hundred years ago their perceived Anglo-Irishness alienated them from Southern historians in the new Irish-Ireland emerging in the early twentieth century, while conversely their nationalism and preference for Dublin meant they would not be remembered in the new Northern Ireland either.

Notes

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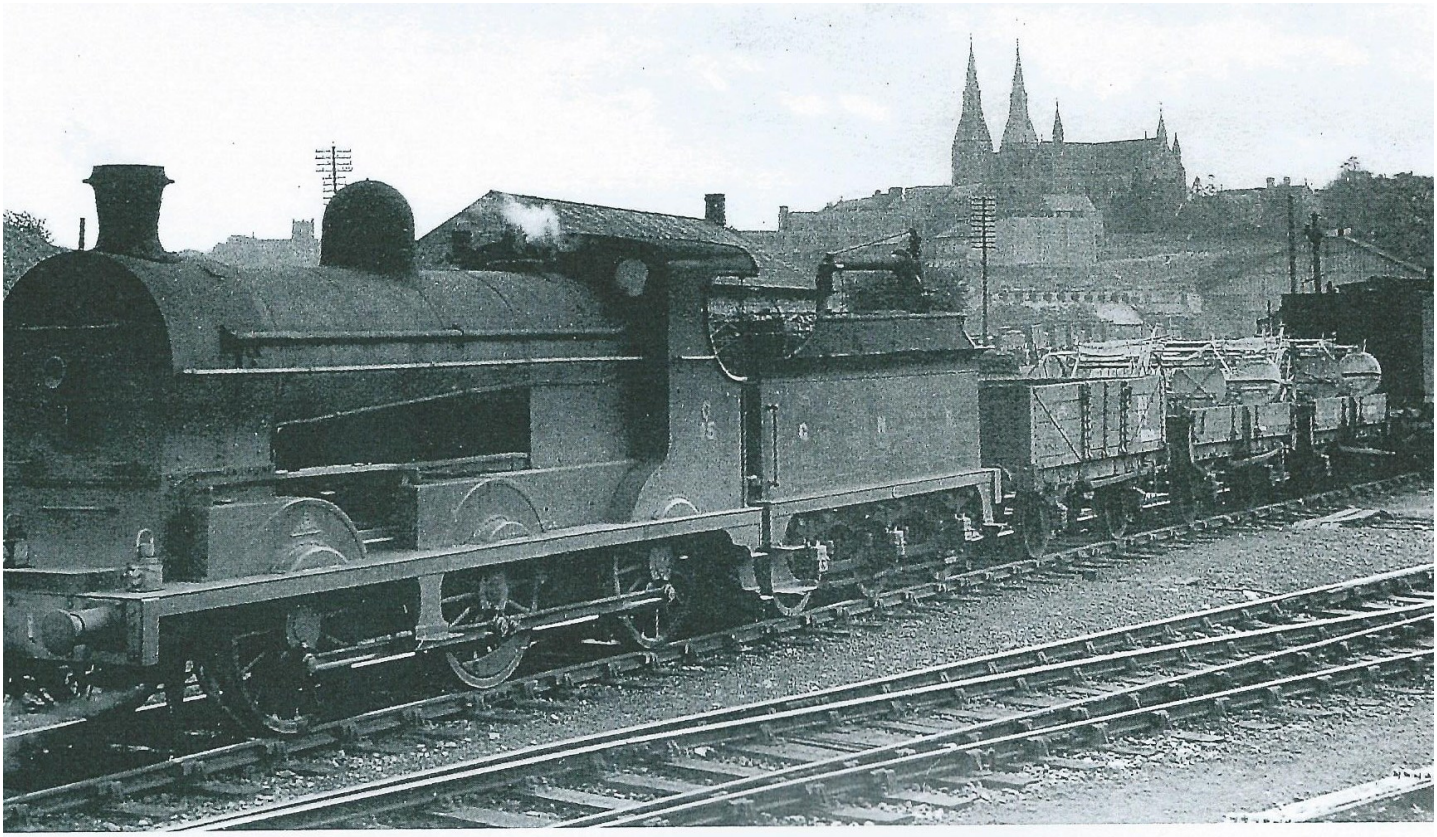
The Railway Network in Armagh & Newry:

Origins and Development

by Stephen Day



For just over a century, 1841- 1957, the arrival of railways revolutionised transport in the county of Armagh. For most of this period the city of Armagh was at the centre of this complex network which, in its heyday, was the focus of an amazing growth in social and economic activity. Today Armagh Railway Station and the vast majority of this network lies derelict or has been developed for other purposes. The only line still running through the county (mostly adjacent to the eastern boundary with County Down) is the main Belfast to Dublin service through Lurgan, Portadown and Newry. Many of the younger generation, born from the late 1950s onwards, will have no recollection of the steam trains that ran through the countryside to all corners of the county nor of the busy railway stations which were a feature in many of the county towns. Yet many traces remain and can still be explored.

This article provides a general overview of the history and heritage of the County Armagh rail network and a basis for the young historians of today to explore their local area, perhaps with the assistance (and memories) of their parents and grandparents.

Transportation before the Railways

Before railways it was not possible to travel faster or further than a galloping horse. Most roads were not suitable or safe for this to happen. Even on those roads which had improved to such a standard that horse drawn carriages could transport passengers relatively quickly between key cities and towns, the teams of horses would have to be changed at regular intervals.

For most people, any sort of travel outside of the Parish or County was a costly luxury. Moving large quantities of goods at speed over long distances was also a problem which was partially solved in England with a complex network of canals. In the north of Ireland in the late 18th century it was hoped that new canals such as the Ulster Canal and the Newry Canal might also help to solve this. However, the invention of the first successful steam locomotive in 1804 promised a step change towards a transport system which would be much more versatile and easily available to all.

By 1830 the Liverpool & Manchester Railway was officially opened and it was soon operating passenger trains to a timetable and carrying freight at quieter times of the day. (NIRCG: p 1) The race was on and by 1875 there were railways operating on every continent. In Ireland, as elsewhere, the development of a complex railway network represented nothing short of a time-space revolution. (Horner: p 22-27)

The Railways come to Ireland

The first railways in Ireland were the Dublin Kingstown (Dunleary) Railway (1834) and the Ulster Railway, **Belfast to Lisburn line. (1839)**

Belfast's Great Victoria Street Station was opened by Ulster Railways in 1839. It's elegant and impressive Terminal building was completed in 1848 and provided a most suitable assembly point for passengers arriving at and departing from the growing city. It was familiar to many Armagh travellers and fondly remembered. However, it suffered badly in the early 'Troubles' of the 1970s and was closed in April 1976. It was replaced by Belfast Central Station and the old Station was demolished. A new Great Victoria Street Station was opened in 1995 a little further south of the site of the original and it is once again the main Belfast station on the Dublin route through County Armagh.

Lisburn, Lurgan, Portadown

This main line to Dublin (which connects to Belfast via Lisburn) is the only railway line which operates in County Armagh today.

Lurgan Railway Station opened in **1841. Portadown** Railway Station was opened, just east of the River Bann in **1842** whereupon a temporary station at Seagoe, north-east of the town, was closed. (A later sub-station, Goodyear, which facilitated the local factory, and was located midway between Seagoe and Lurgan, closed in 1983.) The first Portadown Station was closed in 1848 and replaced by the second one. Built a short distance away on the site of the current station just west of the river, it was designed to extend the line south to Armagh and south-east to Newry where it could meet a proposed line from Dublin. It closed in 1863. A third, larger, station built on the site of the first was closed in 1970. It was replaced (on the site of the second one) by the fourth and final station which still operates today. The line layout at this station was modified in 1997. A significant upgrade and modernisation of the station was completed on 4 July 2013.

Portadown to Tynan via Armagh

The Belfast to Portadown line was extended south-west of the River Bann to **Armagh.** The new line and Armagh Railway Station were both formally opened to traffic on 1 March **1848** along with one intermediate station at **Richhill.**

Richhill Railway Station was located on Sandymount Road in the heart of 'Orchard' county, about two miles west of Richhill itself and five miles north of Armagh. The Fruitfield factory was located a mile away and like other fruit preservers in the Loughgall/Richhill area it came to rely on the railway for the export of its goods and the import of ingredients to prepare them. Farmers were able to use the railway network to reach a wider market for their livestock and crops.

For most of its life Richhill enjoyed a quiet existence but on Saint Patrick's Day 1921, during the War of Independence, it was extensively damaged by fire. This isolated IRA attack was part of their wider Boycott campaign against 'Northern' goods going 'South' of the six northern counties. The damaged areas were soon rebuilt and the station resumed business until its closure in 1957. Today the old station and the crossing point on the Sandymount Road remain in good condition and are easily recognised.

Armagh Railway Station was initially called Ulster Railway Station and then known as Armagh Railway Street in the 1910s and '20s. It was located on the Loughgall road on the northern fringes of the city, a short distance from the key commercial and civic buildings. Passengers arriving at the new, compact but elegant, Armagh terminus could choose one of the horse drawn carriages, which were waiting immediately outside the building, and be transported to their various destinations. There was a choice of Hotels – The Beresford Arms, the Charlemont Arms or the Albert Hotel in English Street or the Royal Hotel in Dobbin Street. These were all a short distance away and easily accessable via the new curving street built to circumnavigate the steep approach over Banbrook Hill. Naturally it was named Railway Street. For those wishing to travel further to places such as Dungannon, Enniskillen, Newry or Monaghan, which as yet, had no railways, there was a well established coach business which operated from the hotels. An Omnibus took people to Castleblayney.

For a few decades the railways and the horse drawn coach companies, in Armagh and elsewhere, operated to their mutual benefit. However, as the railway network grew the opportunities for the latter reduced. It was a case of adapt or die but there remained a need for horse drawn transport, on a smaller scale - traps, sidecars etc - until the early 20th century when the impact of the motor car began to take effect.

A few years later it was decided to extend the line again, this time towards Monaghan. The line was opened in **1858** with a station at **Tynan** which was known as Tynan, Caledon & Middletown until 1880 and then as Tynan & Caledon. Visitors to and from the 'big houses' – Castle Leslie, Tynan Abbey and Caledon became a regular sight at Tynan Station. **Killylea** was opened a year later in **1859** as was Glaslough just across the county boundary in County Monaghan. Soon there were further rail connections from Armagh leading to all corners of the island.

(Much later, in 1936, the level crossing at Quakers Crossing (Drumilly Road) between Richhill and Armagh became

a formal stop and was renamed Retreat Halt. It was never given a platform.)

With the exception of Portadown, all of the stations on the Portadown to Tynan line were closed in 1957 by the Great Northern Railway (GNR Ireland) Board. The Armagh station was demolished in 1964. The impressive entrance gate pillars are all that remain of its elegant past although some of the old sheds and railway artefacts remain. It is currently used as a backup facility for Ulsterbus.

Portadown to Newry:

The next station on the route south-east from Portadown was **Tandragee.** Although named Tanderagee it was located in the countryside, adjacent to the Newry canal, some distance along the road between the towns of Tandragee and Gilford. Opened in **1852** and originally named Madden Bridge, then Tanderagee & Gilford and known as Tanderagee from 1894, it was closed in 1965.

Next on the route is **Scarva** Railway Station. Although Scarva village is in County Down the station is located just yards away on the County Armagh side of the canal. This small station was opened in **1859** forming an important link with the line to Banbridge and Newcastle, County Down. It was closed from 1965 to 1984. Reopened, it has been operating on a limited basis ever since. (The connection to Banbridge closed in 1956 when Banbridge itself was closed.)

Just a few miles further south the small railway station at **Poyntzpass** enjoys a similar history. Opened in **1862** and closed from 1965 to 1984. It was reopened by Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) in that year and provides a limited service.

The railway station at **Goraghwood** opened in **1854**. It was located at a very important railway junction but, whilst it was being built, a small station just south of Goraghwood at **Mullaghglass** came into operation. Opened on 6 January **1852**, Mullaghglass Station was just a few hundred yards from the main Newry Armagh Road. The main line south to Dundalk* stopped here and passengers wishing to continue their journey could catch a horse drawn coach at the nearby junction. In fact Mullaghglass Station was renamed Newry Armagh Road in 1854 but was closed to passengers in 1856 when the line was completed and the new Newry and Goraghwood Stations were opened. Between the two stations the spectacular ¼ mile long, 18 arch, **Craigmore Viaduct** had been completed **(1852)** It was made of local granite and remains one of the great civil engineering masterpieces of the Irish railway system. Three workers were killed during its construction.

(* **Dublin** Railway Station, later named Amiens Street and then Connolly, was opened in **1844** as was the link with **Drogheda**. The Drogheda to Dundalk line reached **Dundalk** in **1849.** The Dundalk to **Wellington Inn** link, just south of Newry, was completed in **1850**.)

Newry Station, located just south of the Craigmore Viaduct and west of Newry town, opened in **1855**. It was later called Monaghan Road Station, then Newry Main Line, then Bessbrook. It was closed in 1942 and was reopened as Newry in May 1984. A large new Station was built at this location and opened on 7 September 2009.

(A few yards south of Newry Station is the **Egyptian Arch (1851)** – a striking and unusual single arch railway bridge across the main Newry to Camlough road. It includes aspects of Egyptian architecture (very popular at the time) and reflects the touch of class that some of the early railways wanted to incorporate in their design. The Arch and the Craigmore Viaduct are unique in Ireland and feature in many of the early tourist postcards.)

Other small Stations on the main line through south Armagh were the aforementioned Wellington Inn (closed 1852) and Adavoyle **(1892)** which was closed in 1933.

On 24 June 1921, during the Irish War of Independence, Adavoyle was the scene of a major IRA attack on a train carrying cavalry troops back to Dublin from Belfast. They had been carrying out ceremonial duties for the opening of the first parliament in Northern Ireland by George V. A length of track was removed and bombs detonated causing derailment. Five soldiers, one civilian and about forty horses died as a result of this attack. Many more were injured. (Arnold: p33-35) It was by far the worst in a number of attacks on the railways and railway personnel in parts of County Armagh from 1920 – 1922. During the recent 'Troubles' (1969-2002) the main Belfast to Dublin line through the county has experienced many lesser bomb attacks and disruptions.

Today the prestigious Enterprise Express provides a high quality service for passengers travelling between the two capitals. The flagship name was introduced by GNR in 1947.

Portadown to Vernersbridge

This route was part of a much larger scheme to connect Belfast and Londonderry. It was completed in 1861. The first section of the line from Portadown, **'the Derry Road'**, as the line became known, was opened in **1858**. The line swung west across the low boggy ground south of Lough Neagh. The first stop was **Annaghmore**, an area where large peat workings formed a significant part of the local economy. Nine miles from there it arrived at **Verners Bridge.** Here the line crossed the River Blackwater on Blackwater Viaduct into Co.Tyrone.

In the 1930s, to combat increasing road

competition, the GNR(I) introduced railcars and railbuses on the route with additional stops at Derrycoose and Annakeera Crossings. Despite this, Vernersbridge was closed in 1954. The Derrycoose and Annakeera Crossing Stops were both closed in 1957. Both Annaghmore and the remnants of 'the Derry Road' line closed in 1965.

Armagh to Goraghwood

On the 25 August 1864 the Newry & Armagh Railway opened its line from Goraghwood (just south of Jerrettspass and north of Bessbrook) to a temporary station at Drummondmore, one mile short of Armagh Station. Completion of the line to Armagh was made on 13 February **1865** whereupon the temporary station closed. The single line ran parallel to the Dublin & Belfast Junction Railway main line at Goraghwood for a short distance before climbing and crossing over the main line, heading north-west over the hills to Armagh. The line then came to the longest tunnel in Ireland at Lissummon which was 1,759 yards long and then to Ballydougherty Halt, 3½ miles from the start. The Halt was opened in 1912. Further on was Loughgilly Tunnel (365 yards long) which partly fell in on 25 January 1914. No trains ran from Goraghwood to Markethill until repairs had been affected and the line reopened on the 1 May 1914.

Loughgilly Station was the next stop. Opened with the line, this station closed in 1897, being replaced by another station by the same name half a mile away. (This was renamed Glenanne Station in1924. The horse drawn Glenanne & Loughgilly Tramway met the Newry & Armagh Railway here and terminated between the running line and the siding. The tramway ran from the Glenanne Works of George Gray & Sons and was used to transport coal to the works and linen from them. It closed in 1919.

The next station along the line was at Markethill, 8½ miles from Goraghwood. Four miles further on was Hamiltonsbawn Station and just 2¼ miles west of Hamiltonsbawn is Derry's Crossing. It was here on 12 June 1899 that an overloaded fifteen-coach Sunday school excursion train from Armagh bound for Warrenpoint stalled on the 1:75 incline. Carriages were uncoupled and started to run back. They collided with a scheduled train, which had started to climb the incline and had been able to stop. The collision took place on an embankment just east of the main Armagh-Portadown road and 88 people were killed. Many more were injured. The disaster had a profound effect on railway operations throughout Great Britain & Ireland and led to the passing of the Regulation of Railways Act in August of that year. Its recommendations contributed greatly to railway safety across the globe. (In 2014 a memorial statue was placed in the Mall. Other memorials can be found at the Methodist Church in Abbey Street and in the nearby City Infirmary where many of the victims were treated.)

(In 1879 the Newry & Armagh Railway became part of the expanding GNR(I). The latter continued to operate the line until the rail strike of 1933 which put an end to passenger and goods services from Markethill to Armagh. Ballydoughery Halt and Glenanne, and Hamiltonsbawn stations closed in 1933. The remainder of the line finally closed 22 years later.)

Goraghwood, Newry, Warrenpoint

Although more than half of this route is situated in County Down it was a very familiar journey for many County Armagh adults and children throughout the generations who took excursions to the seaside resorts of Warrenpoint and Rostrevor. It also played a significant role in developing commerce along the corridor from Armagh, through the frontier town of Newry and on to Carlingford Lough. (Goraghwood was where the Newry-Armagh line crossed over the Dublin-Belfast line so excursions also often gathered at the station to catch a train to other destinations such as Dublin, Belfast and the seaside resorts of Bangor and Newcastle. (Newcastle Railway Station closed in1950.)

The first section of the route, built by the **Newry, Warrenpoint** & Rostrevor Railway opened in **1849**. The line ran from a station at Kilmorey Street in Newry to Warrenpoint Station. It never did get to Rostrevor! Compromise was reached and the three mile Warrenpoint to **Rostrevor** link was completed in **1877** with a charming narrow gauge tramway. It's stations, Warrenpoint Railway Station, Rostrevor and Mourne Hotel (the line terminating ¾ mile further down at the quay) were all closed in February 1915 after a violent storm washed away a scenic section of the track adjacent to the coast. A new Warrenpoint Station which was built just on the Newry side of the old one continued to cater for a railway service from Newry to Warrenpoint docks until 1965 when the Station and the line were finally closed. The scenic Narrow Water Halt had already closed in 1959.

Meanwhile, back in **1854** the aspirational Newry & Enniskillen Railway had opened a second station in the town – **Newry Edward Street** – which ran up a 3½ mile climb to meet the Dublin and Belfast junction at Goraghwood. This became Newry town's main station. An extension to the line was built at the Newry end to the Albert Street Basin for goods traffic to and from the docks. (With the completion of the extension from Goraghwood to Armagh in 1865 the Newry & Enniskillen Railway changed its name to the Newry & Armagh Railway. It merged with the GNR(I) in 1879 and the NW&RR did the same in 1866.)

The final piece of a complex jigsaw was put in place in 1857. The Town of

Newry Connecting Railway authorised a connection between the Albert Street Basin (Port) Line to King Street with a junction laid and a drawbridge positioned over the Newry Canal leading to Dublin Bridge. A further elaborate 'Swivel Bridge' was created which then enabled trains to cross the Clanrye River and to join the Warrenpoint and Rostrevor Railway (NW & RR) just beyond its Kilmorey Street terminus. The line was opened on 2 September **1861** and a new station built for the NW & RR at nearby **Dublin Bridge**. Kilmorey Street Station closed on the same day but carried on as a goods depot until about 1900.

For many years Newry was a bustling railway town with no less than five level crossings ensuring trains could pass safely through its busy streets. Visitors and goods could arrive at Edward Street within one day of departing from Euston Station in London to Holyhead and boarding the steam ship to the small port at Greenore. The route was advertised as a gateway for tourists.

(**Newry Bridge Street**, on the Greenore line, became a GNR Halt in**1932**. It was closed to passengers in 1951)
Newry Edward Street and Newry Dublin Bridge Stations closed the same day as Warrenpoint Station – 4 January 1965.

Newry to Greenore

The **Newry to Greenore line** (Dundalk, Newry & Greenore Railway DN&GR) ran adjacent to the Newry Ship Canal and through a small, scenic, section of County Armagh which borders the southern shore of Carlingford Lough as far as the Victoria Locks and 'Narrow Water'. From there it continued into County Louth with small stations at Omeath, Carlingford and at the port of Greenore itself. The port was opened in 1867 and the line was opened in **1876**, three years after the Greenore to Dundalk line. From 1873 to 1951 there was a ferry service from Holyhead to Greenore. Newry line closed shortly after it stopped.

Bessbrook to Newry

Opened in **1885**, this 3 feet gauge electric tramway ran 3 miles from the mill town of Bessbrook (the 'Model Village') to a point adjacent to Edward Street Station in Newry. This was a scenic, downhill, country route to Newry, with brief stops at Maytown (formerly known as Maytown & Mullaghglass and later Mullaghglass & Derramore), Millvale and Craigmore before passing under the 140 feet high Craigmore Viaduct with clear views of the Mourne Mountain range beyond. The tramway was the first all-year-round electric service in the British Isles. In 1948 the line finally closed after suffering competition from the bus service operated by the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board.

Armagh to Castleblayney

Built by the Castleblayney, Keady & Armagh Railway company the first section from Armagh to Keady was opened to goods traffic in 1908 and to passenger traffic in1909. Stations and Halts on this section were – Irish Street Halt, Armagh, Milford Station, Ballyards Halt, Tassagh Halt and Keady Station. The linen mills, including Milford, Keady and Darkley, benefitted from this new service. (Indeed the Milford industrialist, R.G. McCrum contributed £3,000 as an incentive to have the first section of line built and stop at his village.) The remaining section to Castleblayney, County Monaghan, opened in 1910. Stations on the route were Carnagh, Creaghanroe (Co. Monaghan) and Castleblayney. A year later the line was absorbed by the GNR(I). The route south from Armagh took the line over some rugged and hilly countryside, necessitating three major viaducts – Ballyards, just south of Ballyards Halt, Tassagh Viaduct, north of Tassagh Halt and Keady Viaduct, south of Keady Station. (The most impressive of these was, and remains, the Tassagh Viaduct, with its eleven arches.) Steam trains passing over the elevated line along the eastern part of Keady town were also a spectacular sight.

The section of line from Keady to Castleblayney was closed, post Partition, in 1923, along with Carnagh and Creaghanroe stations – the last GNR line built for a regular passenger service and the first to be completely closed. (Castleblayney station remained open on the Dundalk-Londonderry route until 1957).

The section of line from Armagh to Keady remained open to goods services until 1957 but it had already lost its passenger service* over 20 years earlier with the closure of the Irish Street Halt, Milford Station, Ballyards Halt, Tassagh Halt and Keady Station in 1932.

(*There were exceptions. During World War II Saturday night passenger specials for the military travelled from Keady to the cinema in Armagh.)

The Many & Varied Uses of the Railway System

The development of railways in County Armagh meant that businesses could take the opportunity to develop. Instead of operating in a small local market they could sell nationwide and beyond. The thriving linen industry was proof of this with the linen products from factories such as Bessbrook Mill enjoying an international reputation for quality. The same could also be said for agricultural produce (both crops and livestock) and there was a ready market for this in Belfast, Dublin and even England's teaming industrial cities.

The development of an efficient national postal service, The Royal Mail, corresponded with the development of the railway network.

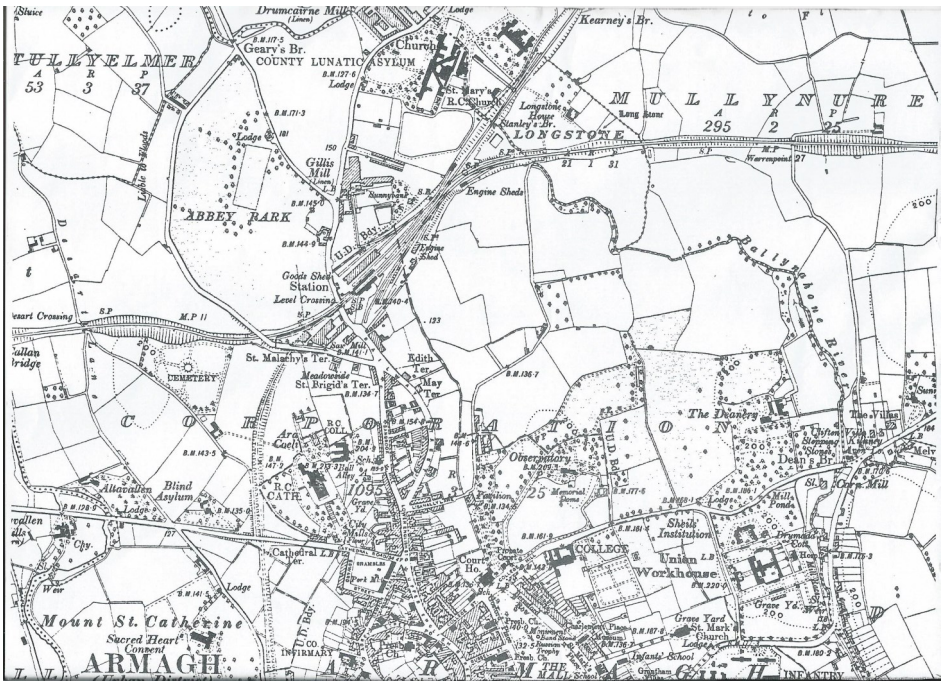
Soon letters and parcels could arrive the next day and in many cases newspapers could be received anywhere in the country on the day of issue.

At the beginning of the 20th century the growing popularity of postcards carrying scenic views was also a clever way of advertising places of interest and encouraging further rail travel and this was enhanced by the display of railway advertising posters. In Armagh, the Primatial City, people were attracted to it's ancient history, it's landmark Georgian buildings and the views of it's beautiful churches from the Mall.

The great increase in people travelling and mixing together changed people's perceptions of eachother and their knowledge of the wider community. Railway excursions presented a greater opportunity to experience sports events, seaside and city day trips and other large social and political gatherings. The religious significance of Armagh also meant that many nationally important ecclesiastical events took place there. The volume of people at such events became much bigger and often people arrived by rail from all points of the compass. This was often commented upon by the newspapers.

One such event was the dedication of the new Armagh Catholic Cathedral on 24 August 1873 when it was estimated by some that up to 20,000 people attended. (A similar event took place on 24 July 1904 when the interior of the building was completed.)

Large political outdoor gatherings in the city included the anti Home Rule rally attended by the Unionist leaders, Sir Edward Carson and James Craig, on 4 October 1913 and the large Sinn Fein rally attended by Michael Collins on 4 September 1921. The large annual, 'Orange Order and Hibernian parades relied on the railways to



transport Lodges to their main summer events.

During both World Wars (1914-18 & 1939-45) a major focus of the railways network in Armagh was to support the war effort. The First World War broke out in August 1914 and on 28 September 1914 the first batch of new recruits, Armagh Company, Royal Irish Fusiliers paraded from Gough Barracks to Armagh railway station for onward transport to Clandeboye Camp near Bangor, County Down. After further training they would be shipped to France. (Regular soldiers had already been deployed.) Similar events were taking place in Newry where soldiers in the military barracks adjacent to Canal Street began their journey from the local railway station. Soon troop movements and the movement of supplies relating to the war effort became routine along with the normal day to day activities.

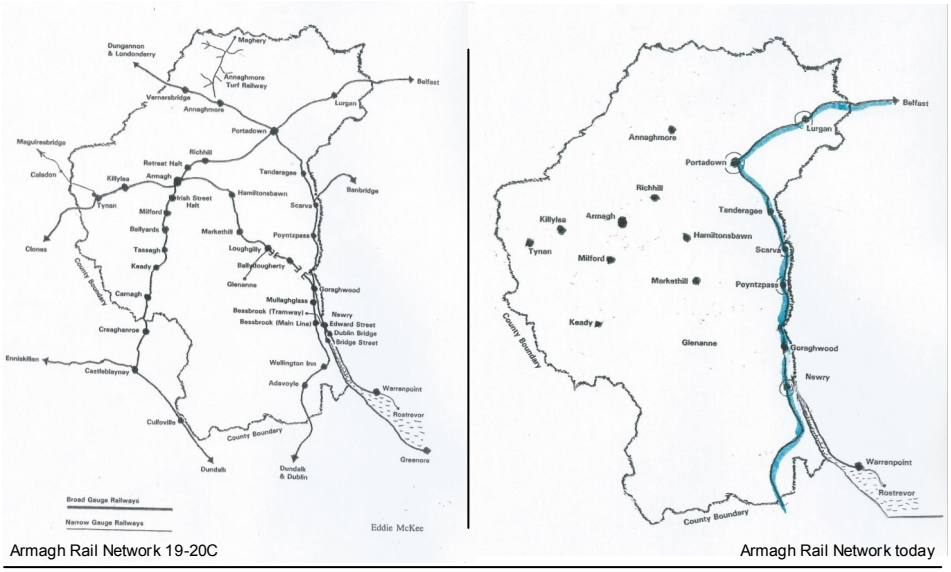
Between the wars another event which generated a massive increase in rail traffic from all corners of the Province and beyond took place on 28 July 1937. (Arnold: p 174-175) It was the Coronation visit of King George VI to Belfast. This included a Youth Rally held at Balmoral Show Grounds. Additional excursion trains were run and many of the passengers came from the county. Many made diary entries about their experience. The romance and excitement of steam travel still added to that experience and they were able to convey a sense of the atmosphere to friends and relatives.

During the War the arrival of the United States army in 1942 added to the international dimension of local rail travel. In addition to British and Commonwealth personnel passing through, there were also many American training camps in the county and many of the soldiers travelled to Armagh and Newry in their free time.

The Decline of the Railways

For many, the golden years of the Great Northern Railway and of steam travel in Armagh lasted from the early1880s until just after the Second World War. The variety of engines, especially the Beyer Peacock range, were much admired along with their colourful livery. Some were given individual names such as Slieve Gullion. However, the first hard economic facts had begun to appear prior to 1914 with the rising cost of maintenance and the introduction of alternative motor transport.

Ironically, although use of the railways greatly increased during the war, profits were offset by the cost of raw



materials. After the war political unrest and the partition of Ireland in the early 1920s presented further challenges. The new land border had a disruptive effect on trade, particularly in the border counties like Armagh. Delays were caused by customs checks at places like Goraghwood station and other political factors impacted on the movement of produce. The decline of the linen industry and the impact of the Great Depression added to the problems.

During World War II there was a temporary reverse in the process. Passenger traffic increased as there were restrictions on private motor vehicles. Many northerners also sought more plentiful and cheaper goods south of the Border in a neutral Ireland. A certain amount of smuggling on the trains was tolerated contributing to this 'black' economy! However, after 1945 the threat from road transport greatly increased. Developments in technology during and after the war meant that lorries could carry more and were more reliable. Lorries and cars could be mass produced and imported. By the early 1950s many families could afford a car. Buses were also much improved and presented a real challenge to rail transport.

The Stormont Government invested more in developing the road system and expanding the bus service to provide a much more flexible form of transport. The Ulster Transport Authority (UTA) oversaw rail and bus services (1948 – 1967) and the GNR Board was dissolved in 1958. By now the new, cleaner and more efficient, diesel locomotives were beginning to replace the steam engines but overall investment in the railways continued to decline and rationalisation meant that by 1965 only a few main lines remained on the island and only one in County Armagh. In 1967 Translink (NI) took over from the UTA. The newly named Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) came under its management.

Today the national debate regarding the future role of railways, in a balanced transport network, continues. In Armagh the increasing pressure on the road system has encouraged local campaigners to push for a return of the Armagh – Portadown rail link. There are many practical obstacles but Transport NI and DRD are considering the matter. Meanwhile the old disused lines with their many remaining features continue to provide rich evidence of Armagh's fascinating railway heritage.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many people who have assisted me in preparing this article. My thanks go in particular to the staff of the Armagh Public Library and The Irish & Local Studies Library in Armagh. Most of the books and maps outlined as **References** can be found in these libraries. Many contain wonderful photograph colections of the Armagh rail network in its prime. For a detailed history, Des Fitzgerald's thesis is an excellent resource. For a social history of the characters and human stories behind the day to day railway activities in the county, during the golden years of the GNR, R.M. Arnold is outstanding. For moving pictures of the age of steam railways in Armagh, the BBC railway programme, 'Walk The Line', contains fascinating archive material.

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When the Swimming Baths at the Folly were opened

by Mary McVeigh

Nowadays we are inclined to take leisure facilities for granted: indoor pools, Jacuzzis, weights rooms and fitness routines tailored for individual needs etc. so it is hard to imagine the enthusiasm and excitement nearly a century ago when the old swimming baths opened at the Folly.

They were described as 'the city's latest boon' when close on a thousand spectators turned up for the official opening in July 1918. The MP for the area at the time, the Hon. James R. Lonsdale came over from London especially for the event. He told the gathering that there were very few places in Ireland that had swimming baths such as these and he hoped the citizens would avail of the benefits they would provide.

Indeed the Armagh Guardian made a point of noting that this amenity put Armagh ahead of the other towns in the county. Even though Lurgan had a lake in its park and Portadown was built on the Bann neither was able to provide 'bathing places as safe, sanitary or as suitable as those of the Primatial City'. Mr Lonsdale who had learned to swim in the Callan in his youth had donated £100 towards the cost of erecting dressing rooms. He also provided prizes for the competitions held after diving and life-saving exhibitions were given by Belfast champions. Among the local winners were James Crawford of Navan Street who came first in the boys fifty yard race and Kenneth Blakely who was best at underwater swimming.

Initiators of the baths project were A.C. McBride, H. Hirsch, W. McCrum and Father Cullen. It was they who prevailed upon the City Council to have the former city water supply basins at Folly Lane converted into two swimming pools, one of which was to be kept for learners. Within months the baths were ready, complete with ladders, diving platforms, a raft and lifeboat plus changing facilities.

Several weeks after the official opening it was reported that already great numbers were patronising the baths every day from seven in the morning to nine o'clock in the evening. The ladies, it was said, were 'taking full advantage of their hours as well as the opportunites for mixed bathing'. Boys were in and out all day long and such was the enthusiasm of some of them that they returned at close on eleven o'clock one night. The poor caretaker who was paid thirty shillings (£1.50) a week for his responsibilities had great difficulty in getting them out of the water and then apparently had to endure abuse instead of gratitude for his efforts from their mothers.

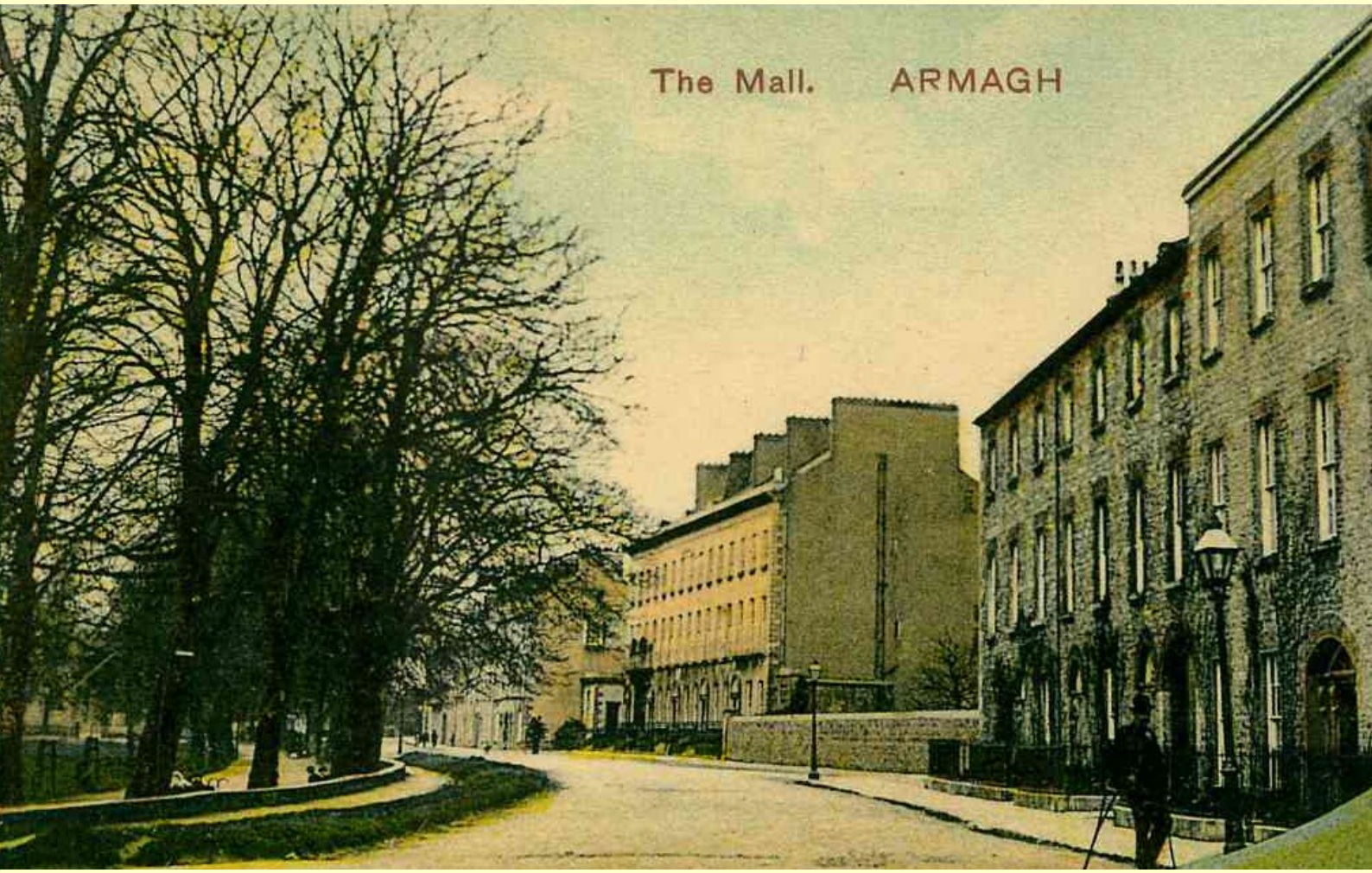
The Armagh Guardian advised those who were wearers of dentures to be warned because there had been a bit of an emergency when one unfortunate bather got a loose plate stuck in his throat and 'in the efforts to eject it swallowed much water below the surface'.

The baths were regarded as one of Armagh's attractions for many years to come. In an official handbook published before the second world war it was stated that they were 'the largest and best equipped swimming pools to be found in any inland Irish town'.

References

Armagh Guardian

Postcard of Folly Swimming Baths from the collection of Roy Cummings



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