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History Armagh

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Facing page:
Painting, 'The City of Armagh (1810)',
by James Black
(ACM 156.1958)

Front and back covers:
Details from above showing the Post Office (Market St.) and old St. Malachy's chapel

All courtesy of Armagh County Museum

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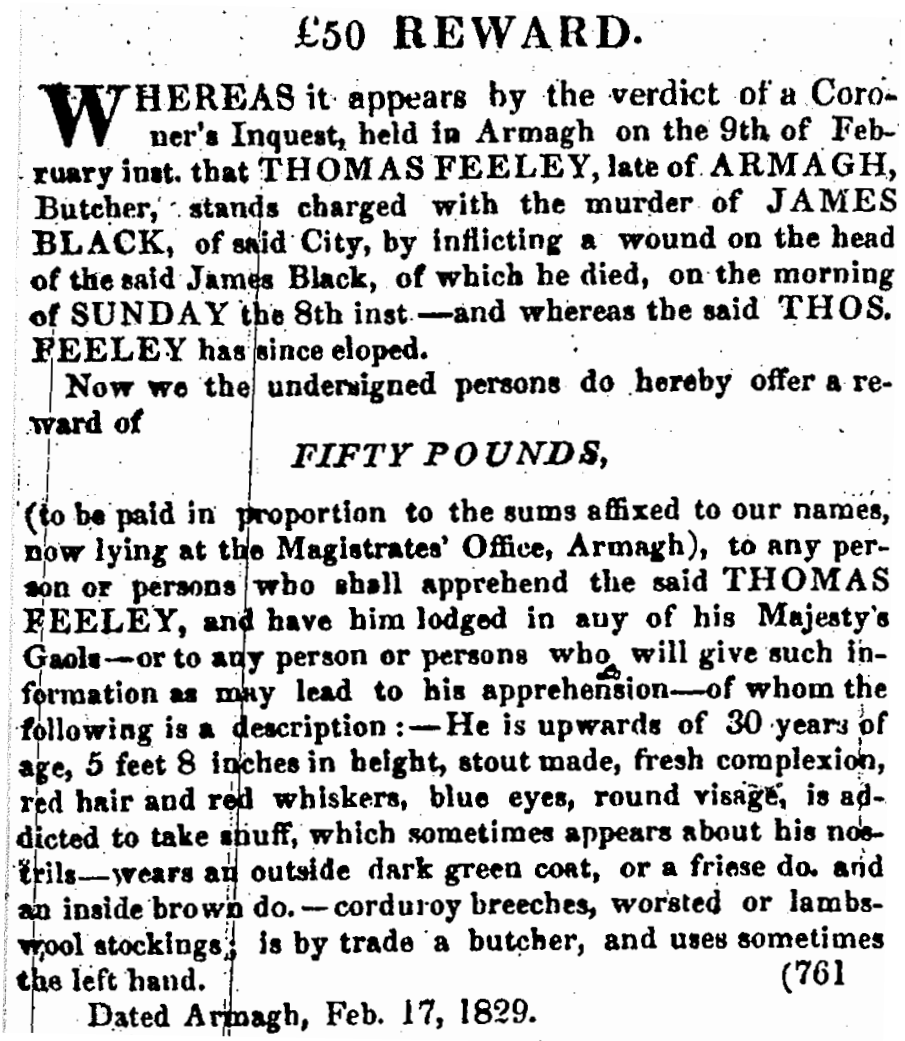
“An unprovoked and diabolical murder”: the killing of James Black

by Catherine Gartland

On the 10th of February 1829, both the *Newry Commercial Telegraph* and *Belfast Newsletter* carried details of ‘an unprovoked and diabolical murder’ in Armagh. According to the papers, on the night of February 4th, James Black, a ‘painter’, was walking along Lower English Street where he lived when Thomas Feely, a local butcher, had rushed out of his own house across the street and attacked him with a spade. The injured party had been tended to in Feely’s house, but to no avail. By Sunday 8th, Black had succumbed to his injuries. The following day, following a coroner’s inquest, a warrant was issued for Feely’s arrest, but he had already absconded.[1] On the 17th of February, a reward of £50 – a sizeable sum at the time – was offered for any information which might lead to the apprehension of the culprit.[2]



£50 REWARD.

WHEREAS it appears by the verdict of a Coroner's Inquest, held in Armagh on the 9th of February inst. that THOMAS FEELEY, late of ARMAGH, Butcher, stands charged with the murder of JAMES BLACK, of said City, by inflicting a wound on the head of the said James Black, of which he died, on the morning of SUNDAY the 8th inst.—and whereas the said THOS. FEELEY has since eloped.

Now we the undersigned persons do hereby offer a reward of

FIFTY POUNDS,

(to be paid in proportion to the sums affixed to our names, now lying at the Magistrates' Office, Armagh), to any person or persons who shall apprehend the said THOMAS FEELEY, and have him lodged in any of his Majesty's Gaols—or to any person or persons who will give such information as may lead to his apprehension—of whom the following is a description:—He is upwards of 30 years of age, 5 feet 8 inches in height, stout made, fresh complexion, red hair and red whiskers, blue eyes, round visage, is addicted to take snuff, which sometimes appears about his nostrils—wears an outside dark green coat, or a friese do. and an inside brown do.—corduroy breeches, worsted or lambswool stockings; is by trade a butcher, and uses sometimes the left hand. (761

Dated Armagh, Feb. 17, 1829.

Advertisement for reward (Belfast Newsletter 20 February 1829)

The appeal, published in the *Newsletter*, provided a fairly detailed description of Thomas Feely: ‘upwards of thirty years of age, 5 feet 8 inches in height, stout made, fresh complexion, red hair and red whiskers, blue eyes, round visage.’ As well as his usual attire, two distinctive features were specified: his addiction to snuff and the fact that he was left-handed.[3]

We know little else of Feely, as he vanished after the event and was never returned for trial. He may have been a connection of James Feely, a butcher in English Street in 1820.[4] The same family was, nearly 20 years later, still running a slaughter house near the Shambles, where butchers offered their meat for sale at the Tuesday and Friday markets.[5]

There is no trace of a Thomas Feely of matching age in the Catholic Church records of the Archdiocese of Armagh. Yet, the births of two children by the same name are recorded: Mary and Thomas Feely were born respectively in 1825 and 1828 – shortly before Feely’s disappearance, to an Anne Mullen.[6] The newspapers specified that Feely was married, so it is possible that the two children were his, the boy having been named after his father.

James Black, ‘portrait painter and draughtsman’

The victim, James Black, was a local artist. According to the newspaper reports, he resided in Lower English Street and was still ‘a young man’ at the time of his death. There is no mention of any family connections in the area. The burial records for the Parish of Armagh confirm that he was living in the town. They specify that he was 32 at the time of his death.[7] This seems unlikely, since the earliest known picture by James Black, ‘the City of Armagh', was painted around 1810, nearly two decades before his death. This would suggest that he was already an accomplished artist by the age of 13.[8]

This oil painting is currently displayed in Armagh County Museum.[9] It is one of three works by James Black held in the Museum. The other two are ink drawings on paper, both views of Armagh City, completed respectively in 1811 and 1819.[10]

We are not sure whether Black had been living in Armagh since 1810. He

is not listed in Bradshaw's 1820 directory, even though another landscape painter, John Bell of Thomas Street, is included. Moreover, Black is known to have also painted County Down landscapes. These include a view of Narrow Water Castle, showing the surrounding scenery of Mount Hall, as well as a view of Carlingford Castle and the mountains around Rostrevor, both of which were sold by auction in 1816.[11] It is not known whether these pictures have survived. Another painting of Tandragee and surrounding scenery (probably seen from the Glebe) was sold at an auction in the 1990s.[12]

On the back of one of the drawings held in the County Museum, Black is described as a 'portrait painter and draughtsman,'[13] suggesting a skilled craftsman, rather than an artist in the modern sense. A sort of early official photographer, he would have painted portraits of local notables. One of the few surviving examples is a likeness of local Presbyterian minister and assistant astronomer at Armagh Observatory the Reverend Robert Hogg (1770-1830). The picture is dated 1814 and currently hangs in his congregation's Church at Cloveneden, beside Loughgall. The National Gallery in Dublin also holds portraits of Samuel Molyneux (1616-93), William Molyneux (1656-98) and Sir William Ussher (d. 1657) - also an ancestor of the Molyneux. All are copies of older works signed by James Black and dated 'Armagh, 1813'.[14] Although the National Gallery has no information as to their provenance, it is possible that they were commissioned by a member of the Molyneux family, most likely Sir Capel Molyneux, 4th Baronet of Castledillon (1750-1832), who shared his time between his Armagh demesne and his Dublin house. Prominent families liked to display their ancestors' portraits, to confirm their prestigious lineage and social status. If an original could not be procured, it would not have been unusual to have a copy made.

According to former curator of Armagh County Museum TGF Paterson, Black may also have designed hanging signs for local inns, which were numerous in Armagh at the time, but there is no tangible evidence that this was the case.[15]

The City of Armagh in 1810

Black's 'City of Armagh' is one of the earliest known Irish landscape paintings depicting a provincial town. This is a genre which only emerged at the beginning of the 19th Century. As the middle classes rose to prominence, they were seeking small paintings and engravings to decorate their drawing-rooms.[16] The choice of subject was often local sceneries and views. James Nicholl's and John Nixon's views of the North Coast were popular choices. James Black's views of Narrow Water and Carlingford may have been produced to tap into this burgeoning market, but the newly affluent citizens of developing towns also liked to record and display their achievements.

Unlike the portraits, Black's painting would not have been commissioned by a wealthy patron. Designed to appeal to the civic pride of the middle classes, it had to be affordable; it was raffled between 80 subscribers who had each paid £1, and was won by Robert Steen, a local tanner.[17]

Like the two drawings in the Museum's collection, it depicts Armagh from the Clump hill area (now Dobbin Hill) above the prison. It is a conventional 'prospect'- a dominating view aiming at a realistic depiction of the city and its landmarks.

It is an impression of an expanding, busy and prosperous town. The population of Armagh had trebled in size during the previous forty years. While the Reverend William Lodge enumerated just under 2,000 inhabitants in 1770, James Stuart estimated the population at around 6,700 in 1814.[18] What English traveller Arthur Young had described in the 1770s as 'a nest of mud cabbins', was by 1810 a neat, modern town.[19] Apart from a couple of cottages, most of the houses depicted in the painting are built of stone and slate. The roads are lined with trees. A number of public buildings are visible: the Gaol, built in 1780 and the new courthouse, completed the previous year, at either end of the Mall;[20] on the far right is part of the Royal School;[21] a close look at Market Street reveals the Post Office, situated roughly where the Market Place Theatre now stands, beside the old cross.[22] It is an industrious, lively town: chimneys are puffing smoke; farm labourers are hard at work on the allotments in the foreground, leaves drying on the roof of their cottage; cattle are grazing in enclosed fields; a man on horseback and a carriage are passing along the Mall. A few soldiers on the right suggest the presence of the Barracks.[23] The windmill, just rebuilt in 1810, dominates the West of the city.[24] Passers-by can be spotted along the streets. Some of the wealthier inhabitants are having a stroll along the Mall, which is no longer used as a race course but as a civilised promenade.[25] It is possible that the figure on the Clump in the foreground with what looks like a roll of paper under his arm represents the artist.

Black's picture predates the building of the Catholic Cathedral, which did not start until 1840, and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869): the Established Church Cathedral, still crowned with its spire, dominates the scenery[26] but there is a Catholic presence. The old Chapel (old St Malachy's, built 1752 in Chapel Lane) can be seen to the left of the picture. By the 1810s, Catholics constituted nearly half the population of Armagh city but their participation in public life was still restricted by the Penal Laws.[27] In the following decades, their presence was to become increasingly conspicuous, as they continued to press for emancipation.

A 'violent paroxysm of party feeling'

It is against the background of Daniel O'Connell's campaign for emancipation that the murder of James Black was to take place, and the social and political context certainly coloured contemporary reports of the event.

The Penal Laws, which curtailed the rights of non-Anglicans in Ireland (and Great Britain), had already been

somehow relaxed in the last decades of the 18th Century. Catholics were now allowed to own and inherit property, join the army, practice law and take degrees in Trinity College. Religious practice and Catholic teaching were tolerated with certain restrictions. All those owning property of a rental value of £2 or more, irrespective of religion, had also been granted the right to vote. It had been widely expected that the Act of Union in 1801 would be followed by full emancipation, including the right to sit in Parliament, for those who did not belong to the Established Church. Since 1780, Presbyterians had been allowed to take public office without having to conform to the Church of Ireland, but Catholics still had not been granted the same rights.[28]

The Catholic Association, headed by Daniel O'Connell, had campaigned since 1823 for full Catholic Emancipation. The Association had originally been formed by well-off Catholics loyal to the Crown, who wished to petition the King for the enlargement of their rights. In 1824, the creation of a new membership category of associate member to the Catholic Association, at a cost of one penny per month (which was later to be known as 'the Catholic rent'), encouraged Catholics of all social backgrounds to join the movement. The active support of the Catholic Church - with priests collecting 'the Catholic rent' from their parishioners and chapels being used for meetings – soon turned the Association into a formidable force, which the government could not ignore.

Protestants were divided on the issue of Catholic Emancipation. In County Armagh, liberals like Henry Caulfield, MP (Earl of Charlemont), George Ensor (of Ardress House) and Sir Capel Molyneux (of Castledillon) supported reform. Others, like Charles Brownlow -the other MP for Armagh and a member of the Orange Society, vigorously opposed the Emancipation campaign. Brownlow was, however, to radically change his mind in April 1825. Claiming that the Catholic bishops' recent statements of loyalty to the Crown had finally convinced him, he stood in the House of Commons and declared that he now supported Catholic Emancipation, on the condition that only men 'of property and intelligence' were allowed to vote. Brownlow was soon branded a traitor by his former supporters. His effigy was burnt by anti-Catholic mobs,[29] and his parliamentary seat was challenged by a new Orange candidate, William Verner, at the general election of 1826. The electoral success of Brownlow, along with the other Liberal candidate, was hailed a victory for the pro-Emancipation side, but the contest had heightened sectarian tension in the county. A number of violent incidents – and at least two deaths- resulted from clashes between supporters of the two candidates.[30]

By 1828, the Catholic Association's campaign was gathering momentum. The election of O'Connell as MP for County Clare spurred the Protestant ultras into organising a network of 'Brunswick Clubs' to counter the Catholic movement for reform. The Armagh Club was established in the autumn of 1828, and armed shows of strength greeted liberal advance. In late September, rumours of an envoy from the Association being sent to the city resulted in a gathering of 'large bodies of well-armed Protestants' marching into Armagh.[31] Numerous petitions supporting Emancipation, as well as counter-petitions, were being sent to Parliament.

On February 2nd, two days before the attack on James Black, papers carried news that the King's speech was going to announce a measure of Emancipation for the Catholics of Ireland, and spirits were running high.[32] Not surprisingly, the initial report of Black's murder in the *Newry Commercial Telegraph* assumed that it was yet another political and sectarian incident. The paper pointed out that the victim was 'a quiet and inoffensive young man.' The 'unprovoked and diabolical murder', it stated, 'originated in and was committed under the influence of a violent paroxysm of PARTY FEELING. Black was a Protestant.'[33] *The Belfast Newsletter*, another anti-Emancipation newspaper, also suggested a sectarian murder: 'The deceased individual was an Orangeman, and the person charged with having murdered him is a Roman Catholic.'[34] A few days later, the *Newry Commercial Telegraph* published a more detailed account. Black was returning from attending an Orange Lodge, and was reported to have 'cried out "Verner for ever!- No Surrender!",' following which Feely had rushed out and replied "Brownlow!", and hit him on the head with a spade, 'exclaiming – "You've long wrought for that, and you have got it at last!".' The paper made much of the fact that the culprit was still at large, all but suggesting that the authorities were turning a blind eye to the murder of a Protestant by a Catholic: 'It is considered very remarkable that the perpetrator of the above mentioned was suffered to have his liberty not only that night, but the following day, when (...) he deliberately walked off in the middle of day-light (!) and has not since been heard of.'[35] The anti-Emancipation party felt let down by the government and Feely's easy escape all but confirmed the betrayal.

A gift to the Town Commissioners

Over the years, James Black's painting of Armagh came into the ownership of the Dobbin family. In 1870, Thomas Dobbin, JP, a nephew of Leonard Dobbin, MP for Armagh, presented the picture to the Town Commissioners as a gift.[36] A few days later, a letter was published in the *Armagh Guardian*, which detailed the story of the painting. The author added that the painter had been murdered after interfering in a domestic dispute between Feely and his wife.[37] It is interesting that the story differed from the version published in the papers at the time of the murder. Had the particulars of the event long been forgotten or was the incident viewed in a different light 40 years later?

Certainly, much had changed in Armagh since the late 1820s.

Catholic Emancipation in 1829 was

followed by the development of Catholic institutions in the town. The newly appointed Catholic Archbishop (William Crolly) came to reside in Armagh in 1835. St Patrick's College opened as a seminary in the 1830s; the Christian Brothers and Sacred Heart orders arrived in Armagh in the 1850s. Started in 1840, the new Catholic Cathedral was being completed. In 1869, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland finally put an end to Anglican domination.

Furthermore, Armagh had been enjoying a period of relative economic prosperity. Its connection to the Ulster Railway network in 1848 and the establishment of a further rail link to Dublin in 1864 resulted in the development of new businesses around the railway station. The American Civil War in the 1860s gave a new impetus to an ailing linen industry, with new spinning mills and weaving factories opening in Armagh. The development of postal and telegraphic services and the expansion of banking services also contributed to the growth of local businesses. By the late 1860s, Armagh boasted over 300 businesses.[38]

Catholic businesses were part of this new found prosperity and the Catholic middle classes were now active participants in local public life. Changes in local government and voting qualifications resulted in the increasing involvement of better-off Catholics in town affairs. Up until 1863, about a third of elected Town Commissioners were Catholics.[39] Sectarian incidents still occurred but Catholics, or at least Catholics of a certain class, had acquired a new respectability. It is possible that in this new context, the murder of James Black was viewed in a different light.

In the event, the gift of Black's 'City of Armagh' was much appreciated by the Town Commissioners, who decided to display it in the Assembly Rooms at the Market House. Eventually, the painting was taken into the collection of Armagh County Museum, where it still hangs as a testimony to a lost golden - but turbulent - age in the history of Armagh City.

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[1] *Belfast Newsletter (BN)*, 10 Feb. 1829, *Newry Commercial Telegraph (NCT)*, 10 Feb. 1829 and *NCT* 13 Feb. 1829.
[2] *BN*, 20 Feb. 1829.
[3] *BN*, 20 Feb. 1829.
[4] *Bradshaw's General Directory of Newry, Armagh, etc...* , 1819, p68.
[5] 1839 valuation of Armagh (McCullough,2007, p18).
[6] Records held at the Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library & Archive.
[7] *NCT* 10 Feb. and 13 Feb. 1829.
[8] Burial records held in St Mark's Parish Church, copy at PRONI, MIC/583/13.
[9] ARMCM.156.1958.
[10] ARMCM.92.1937 and
[11] ARMCM.25.1950.
[12] *NCT*, 8 Oct. 1816.
[13] Sold Sotheby's May 96 (information Sean Barden, Armagh County Museum).
[14] City of Armagh (1811), ARMCM.92.1937.
[14] NGI.3724, NGI.3692 and NGI.2016.
[15] T.G.F. Paterson, 1947.
[16] Hewitt, 1977, p19.
[17] *Armagh Guardian* (*AG*), 1 Dec. 1870.
[18] 1,948 in 1770 (Lodge's Census in Glancy, 1955); 6,699 in 1814 (Stuart, 1819, p466); 7,010 in 1819 (*Bradshaw's*, 1819, p62).
[19] Young, 1970, p119.
[20] Previously, the gaol was situated in the lower part of the Sessions House in Market Street. The current County Gaol was completed in 1780. The Courthouse on the Mall eventually replaced the Old Sessions House in 1809 (Stuart, 1819, p529-31).
[21] Built 1774 (Stuart, 1819, p543).
[22] The Post Office then moved to Scotch St, where Bradshaw places it in 1819. As to the Cross, it was damaged in 1813 and then removed (Stuart, 1819, p509).
[23] For a history of the barracks see Stephen Day: 'Gough Barracks, Armagh' in *History Armagh*, 2015.
[24] McCullough, 2007, p15.
[25] Previously a common used for grazing and horse racing, the Mall was turned into a public walk financed by public subscription in 1797 (Stuart, 1819, p552-53).
[26] The original spire was higher than that showing on the painting. It had been modelled on the spire of Magdalen College in Oxford but had to be taken down in the 1780s, as it was too heavy for the building. The replacement was designed by famous Armagh architect Francis Johnston (Stuart, 1819, p449-50). It was in turn removed during the restoration of the building in the 1830s.
[27] 3,413 Catholics for 7,010 inhabitants, 2,000 of which belonged to the Established Church (*Bradshaw's*, 1819, p62).
[28] From 1780, Presbyterians were dispensed from the requirement to take communion in the Established Church to take public office.
[29] McAtasney, 2007-8, p181.
[30] McAtasney, 2007-08, p189.
[31] *NCT*, 3 Oct. 1828.
[32] McAtasney, 2007-08, p210.
[33] *NCT*, 10 Feb. 1829.
[34] *BN*, 10 Feb. 1829.
[35] *NCT*, 13 Feb. 1829. The following year, Richard Dowd - Black's companion on the night of the murder, was tried at the Armagh Assizes for his participation in a sectarian incident which took place in the Irish Street/ Chapel Lane area during a Twelfth of July parade. This would suggest that James Black may well have been a supporter of the Verner anti-Emancipation faction (*NCT*, 3 Aug. 1830).
[36] *AG*, 9 Dec. 1870.
[37] *AG*, 14 Dec. 1870.
[38] *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory*, 1870.
[39] McCullough, 2007, p8.

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance with the research for this article: Sean Barden (Armagh County Museum), Catherine McCullough (formerly of Armagh County Museum), Roddy Hegarty (Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library and Archive).

Uncovering Armagh's forgotten influences on British and Irish culture

by Eric Villiers

New research based on work done in Armagh decades ago is uncovering the connections that link County Armagh and Armagh City to the Brontë sisters of literary fame.

Between the 1930s and 1950s studies by TGF Paterson, a former curator of Armagh County Museum, first drew attention to the forgotten origins of the sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne: their great-grandfather was South Armagh's Patrick O'Pronntaigh and his son (their grandfather) was Hugh Brontë – it was a branch of Hugh's family that migrated to Armagh city in the mid to late 19th century.

According to Paterson they were a family of poets, story tellers and "spell binders" who had lived in Forkhill. The original family name in Gaelic was O'Pronntaigh or O'Prontige, but for various reasons it evolved and was anglicized into the softer sounding Brontë.

In the 1950s Paterson stirred up interest in this literary link and just in the nick of time he saved several crumbling buildings at Emdale, County Down: the church where the sisters' father Rev Patrick Brontë preached, the school where he taught, and his cottage birthplace now a museum attraction.

That the Brontë Interpretative Centre at Emdale exists today is largely thanks to the work of Paterson and another Armagh man the playwright Jack Loudan, who later became chief executive of the Northern Ireland Arts Council (then known as the Committee for Music, Arts and Entertainment).

Together with Loudan, who was born at the Seven Houses, English Street, Armagh, in 1910, Paterson drummed up support to commemorate the fact that the original Brontë country was in the hills where counties Armagh, Down and Louth meet.

The sisters pictured with their brother Branwell

Loudan's interest in the Brontës passed down to his son Colin who became a film actor based in London. Sometime around the 1980 Colin met Professor John Cannon, CBE, one of Britain's foremost historians: his books on 18th century politics are regarded as some of the most important commentaries on that subject.

At some point in their meeting Colin mentioned his father's interest in the Brontë's Irish background. Cannon was surprised to learn that the Rev Patrick Brontë had lived near Banbridge before leaving to take a degree at Cambridge University, and then settling in Haworth, Yorkshire.

The news piqued Cannon's interest and he began looking for the fountainhead of the sisters' literary talent in Ireland. It was a subject he returned to time and again and by the time of his death in 2012 he had published three books on the sisters and their Irishness.

The Brontë's Armagh connections exemplify the way history can allow important stories to slip from view. Among those now being researched are forgotten influences on British and

Irish culture including up to 20 important figures from this locality. It's a list that includes soldiers, heroes, explorers and scientists, as well as two generations of writers, poets, painters and musicians – all neglected or written out of history.

Since space does not permit us to go into the careers of them all, this article concentrates on two generations of writers and cultural figures: seven who came to prominence during the Irish Cultural and Literary Revival (circa 1890 to 1940), which was led by the poet WB Yeats, and five who can be found gravitating toward the Belfast Regionalist Literary Movement of the 1940s and 1950s.

In the early twentieth century Yeats' life-long friend, the poet, painter, mystic and politician George 'AE' Russell, emerged as one of the architects of modern Ireland. Born in Lurgan, Russell was first inspired to write poetry and paint by his regular visits to the southern shores of Lough Neagh, to Armagh city, its institutions and the Navan Fort.

Two others who worked alongside Yeats and Russell during the revival were: William J. Lawrence, a world authority on Shakespeare, who began his working life as a drinks salesman in Armagh, and William Brayden, born in Scotch Street, who helped establish the Feis Ceoil in Dublin and was immortalised by James Joyce in *Ulysses* as 'Godlike'. He is one of several Armagh figures who feature in the novel.

Two musicians whose careers were influential in those years were: Mary Connolly from Irish Street, a mezzo soprano, who took the populist aspects of the revival to the Irish disapora in Britain; and Barton McGuckin, an opera star who trained at St Patrick's Protestant Cathedral in Armagh – he too is featured by Joyce in *Ulysses*.

Meanwhile outside of Ireland other writers with local links were making names for themselves including a James Daly, who grew up in a cottage near the Navan Fort, and Frank Harris, a writer who had been a boarder at the Royal School Armagh.

In Australia Daly became the poet Victor J. Daley – the antipodean face of the Celtic Twilight and the country's most popular poet.

Meanwhile Harris who thought of Armagh as Ireland's Canterbury a "Wonder City" where he claimed to have climbed every tree on the Mall, found international fame through his journalism and books. Harris was Oscar Wilde's most loyal friend and produced such a notorious memoir that it was banned for forty years.

After WWII there was a second literary flowering led in Belfast by Sam Hanna Bell. The Armagh writers John O'Connor from the Mill Row; Jack Loudan; W. R. Rodgers, the reverend poet from Loughgall, and his poet-friend John Hewitt, a son of Kilmore, all coalesced around Bell and all won international recognition.

In their role as BBC producers Bell and Loudan encouraged young talent including the acting career of Armagh's Patrick (Paudge) Magee, who would go on to become Samuel Beckett's favourite interpreter of his stage dramas. Magee lived not far from Loudan in English Street, Armagh.

Plans are being put in place to recover these names and in time it is expected that blue plaques from the Ulster History Circle will mark their birthplaces. The first was unveiled last year on the County Museum building to commemorate TGF Paterson, and in time Magee, Loudan et al will be memorialised.

And now that the birthplace of Max Brontë has been identified another should be in the pipeline. Max was an utterly fascinating character: born in Armagh, he was descended from Charlotte Bronté's uncle Hugh (junior).

In the 1920s Max became a celebrity pathologist in some of England's most sensational murder trials, and today the FBI in America still reference his work as one of the fathers of CSI (Crime Scene Investigation).

Max, or to give him his full title, Dr Robert Matthew Brontë, was born above the family shop in Market Street, Armagh in 1879. After the death of his father at the age of 46, he attended the Masonic School, Dublin, and Royal School Armagh. Later he played for Armagh Rugby Club where his striking looks and flamboyance inspired a local balladeer to immortalise him in verse.

In 1894 Thomas E. Reid Junr., Secretary of Armagh County Council wrote an unpublished elegy to Max, which begins: "No wonder the poets sing – Why stands the sun so still? / Why faint the ladies all? / They wonder on, until / Emerging from the maul / They see the form of Max / So broad and yet so tall: / Even Magoggy backs / For Brontë has the ball. / If the Mall mud could speak / What a tale it would tell…"

After graduating from Ireland's Royal College of Surgeons Max lived in Harcourt Street, Dublin, and during WWI he served as a captain with the Royal Army Medical Corps.

In 1918 he became Ireland's state pathologist and during the War of Independence gave evidence for the Government against Republicans accused of murder. After several death threats he left for London, where he quickly found fame as a CSI celebrity.

As he gave his testimony at murder trials reporters had to look no further than his family lineage to explain the origins of his rich language and eloquent oratory.

Although history has forgotten Max Brontë, a couple of generations ago people would have been much more aware of both his celebrity and literary antecedents. In 1960 when his sister, Kate, who was born in 1876, died aged 83 in Exeter, newspapers reported that she left a sequinned cape that had belonged to one of the Brontë sisters in Haworth, Yorkshire.

Max and Kate's father Matthew was founder of the Armagh drapery firm "Brontë and Co., Market Square", at or near the buildings that later became the Lennox department store.

Some Irish Surnames

by Gerry Oates

The following are short accounts of four families associated with the county and city of Armagh from medieval times. It includes three families of native Irish stock and a third of Viking 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 what we are today.

Mac Veigh

Mac Veigh is nowadays the more usual spelling of this surname rather than the older variant, *Mac Veagh*, or the less common *Mac Vey /Mac Vea*. *Mac an Bheatha* 'son of life' is the Gaelic version which most commentators regard as a predominantly Ulster surname; it is also found in Leinster and Connacht but is much less numerous there. Both Woulfe and Mac Lysaght associate the surname with east Ulster, particularly Armagh, Down and Antrim, but Mac Lysaght also claims that it has been replaced at times by Mac Evoy in the area which includes south Armagh and north Louth.

Mac an Bheatha was also the name borne by one of the hereditary medical families of medieval Ireland and Ó Fiaich refers particularly to the obits of three medical men named *McVeagh* on a tombstone in Creggan dating from the 18th century.

One of the early anglicised forms of the name, *Mac Eveighe*, reflects reasonably accurately the pronunciation of *Mac an Bheatha* in the east Ulster Irish of the period. The person referred to was *Hugh Mac Eveighe* of Creggan parish who was listed among those who had been granted pardons in the Elizabethan Fiants of 1602. A post -Plantation survey of the archbishop's tenants of Armagh city in 1618 recorded *Pat Mc Vagh*, dwelling in 'a cople house and yard above the Nun's church', who might be the *Pat Mc Vaugh* (and *Ellen Mc Vaugh*) noted as 'householders owning gardens' in the same survey. In a rent roll of 1624-28 *Allen Mc Evagh* is described as one 'of those natives who did dwell in the cottages, within the City of Armagh'. The name also occurs in north Armagh, for an inquisition of 1624 to discover the lands still held by native Irish tenants identified *Hugh Carrogh Mc Evagh*, *Neale Mc Evagh* and *Rory Mc Evagh* of Derryinver in The Montiaghs parish on the shores of Lough Neagh.

Petty's 'census' of c.1659 includes *Mc Vagh* among the 'principall Irish names' of Oneilland barony. The spelling *Mc Vaugh* occurs in the archbishop's rent rolls of 1661 in Armagh city where *Ullyne Mc Vaugh* was renting a tenement and garden plot. In the same document a parcel of land in the city, 'containing 15 acres or thereabout', was named *Ffarin Mc Ivaugh*, which appears to stem from the Gaelic *Fearainn Mhic an Bheatha 'Mac Veigh's land'*, and implies that the site had previously belonged to the sept before the Plantation of 1609. The same rent roll listed a *Neale Mc Vaugh* of 'Irish Street' in the 'Towne of Armagh' in 1676. The Hearth Money Rolls for the same period (1664-65) also included *Mc Veagh /Mc Vagh* in all the baronies of the county except Tiranny. The Franciscan petition of 1670-71 included a *Neale Mc Veagh* of Creggan parish among the signatories in the diocese of Armagh.

Among the *Mac Veighs* recorded in the 18th century are *Owen* and *Pat Mc Veagh* of Drumsallan, in Eglish parish, in 1714, described as 'Catholic sub-tenants' on Church lands. The Armagh Assizes Indictments of the day include a number of the name who found themselves at odds with the law: *Mathew Mc Veagh* in 1740 and *Neale Mc Veagh* in 1747. More interesting is the charge of 'assault and rescue' brought against *Thomas* and *Patrick Mc Veagh* at the summer assizes of 1780 during a period of social and agrarian unrest in the county. A survey of the parish of Creggan in 1766 identified six *Mc Veagh* households in the area. One of the more prominent from Creggan was the Gaelic poet, *Fearghas Mac an Bheatha* (*Fergus Mc Veigh*), who composed the lament 'Tuireamh Phádraig Mhic a Liondain' ('Lament for Patrick Mac Alinden') for his fellow poet on his death in 1733. *Fearghas Mac an Bheatha* is buried in Creggan graveyard. During the sectarian disturbances of the 1780-90s *Henry Mc Veagh* and six others were charged at the summer assizes of 1789 with 'assault and riot, carrying arms and being a papist' in contravention of the Penal Laws introduced in 1695.

The 19th century distribution of the name is reflected in the Tithe Applotment Books for Co. Armagh (1825-40) which recorded *Mc Veigh* (31), *Mc Veagh* (18), *Mc Vey* (13). Griffith's Valuation (1848-64) listed 58 holdings in the county and slightly more than half were recorded in the northern parishes of Drumcree, Seagoe and Shankill. These figures and locations were approximated in the 1911 census which recorded 124 *Mac Veighs* in the county.

Tohall in his account of the migrations from north Armagh to Connacht in the wake of the sectarian disturbances of the 1790s includes a number of *Mc Vahy* (*Mac Veigh*) migrants and suggests that they might represent the origin of the current surname *Vahey* of south Mayo, which de Bhulbh equates with *Mac an Bheatha /Mac Veagh*.

It should also be noted that *Mac an Bheatha /Mac Veigh* is a cognate of the Scots Gaelic *Mac Bheatha* and

its anglicised version, *Macbeth*. Black notes that it was common as a first name from the 11th to the 14th century and meant 'son of life' in the spiritual sense with particular reference to 'a religious person' or 'one of the elect'.

Mac Kitt(e)rick

The origin of the surname *Mac Kitterick* is found in the Norse personal name *Sigtryggr* from the words *sigr* 'victory' and *tryggr* 'true'. It was later Gaelicised *Sitric* to give the surname *Mac Shitric* 'son of *Sitric*' in which initial *S* was lost by aspiration and the *k*-sound of *c* carried over from *Mac* to produce the current anglicised form *Mac Kitterick*.

The personal name *Sitric* has been in Ireland since the Viking era and occurs several times in the Irish Annals. Archbishop Simms informs us that a silversmith named *Sitric* left his name on a page in the 8th century Book of Kells. Between the 9th and 11th centuries there were four Viking kings of Dublin named *Sitric* including *Sigtryggr Silkiskegg* (*Sitric Silkbeard*) at the time of the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 when Brian Boru and the Munster army defeated the Dublin Vikings and their Leinster allies.

Sitric was also adopted as a given name by the native Irish; the Annals of Lough Key report the deaths in 1102 of *Sitriuc Ua Maelfabhaill*, king of Carraic Brachaidhe in Inishowen, and his associate *Sitriocc mac Con Raoi*, and the Annals of Clonmacnoise record the obituary of *Sitric*, son of Cú Meadha Ó Laighechan, chief of Síol Rónáin, a district which includes the historic Hill of Uisneagh in Co. Westmeath. An entry in the Annals of the Four Masters reports the death in 1211 of *Sitriocc Ó Laighenain*, coarb of St. Comgall in Bangor, Co. Down; a later entry in the same annals recounts the election of *Sitreacc mac Ualghaircc Uí Ruairc* ('Sitric son of Ualgarg O Rourke') as chief of the O Rourke sept. An entry in the Annals of Ulster under the year 1366 reports the death of one *Sitriug na Srona Mac an Mhaighistir (Sitric Mac Master of the nose)* in which the patronymic *Mac an Mhaighistir* informs us that he was a descendant of the Maguires of Fermanagh.

As a surname *Mac Shitric /Mac Kitterick* was first recorded in the 13th century. A calendar of documents relating to Ireland, dated July 11, 1236, states that the demesne of *Mac Chiteroc*, an Irishman, in the vicinity of Waterford 'shall be delivered to Geoffrey de Turville to make the King's profit'. The name also appears as *Mac Shitteruck (*with *S* aspirate*)* in a Judiciary Roll of 1306, again in Co. Waterford

Mac Lysaght claims that *Mac Kitterick* and its variants, *Mac Kittrick*, *Mac Kettrick* and *Mac Ketterick* are currently more common in the ancient territory of Oriel, particularly in Cos. Armagh and Monaghan than elsewhere. The variants *Ketterick* and *Mac Gettrick* were recorded in Cos. Mayo, Sligo and also in Co. Louth. Arthurs in a study of the early septs of Co. Armagh locates a *Sitriuc* in the genealogy of the Clann Sínaigh, a well-documented ecclesiastical family of 10/11th century Armagh. However, *Mac Kitt(e)rick* does not occur in historical records relating to church affairs of the late medieval period or in details of the 17th century Plantation settlements in Armagh, but a survey of residents in Creggan parish includes a *Patrick Mac Kitrick* in the Co. Louth portion of the parish in 1766.

In the Clogher district of Tyrone *Alexander Mc Kitterick* was listed among the early 'tenant settlers' in 1610 at a time when many planters from the Scottish borders arrived in Ulster. In Scotland *Mac Kettrick / Mac Kittrick* has been recorded in Galloway since the 14th century. The Dictionary of Scottish Surnames suggests that the personal name may have been brought first to Ulster and then across the sea to Scotland about the year A.D. 890.

References to the name in post-Plantation Armagh occur in the rent rolls of the See of Armagh which recorded *Thomas Mc Kitterick* as a sub-tenant in 1714, and in the records of the Charlemont Estate which granted leases 'for three lives' to *Alex. Mc Kittrick* of Annaghmacmanus, Loughgall parish, in May, 1751, and to *James Mc Kittrick* of Ballynalack, Killevy parish, in Nov. 1795. The name also appears in the Co. Armagh Poll Book of 1753 when Arthur Brownlow of Lurgan ran against Francis Caulfeild, brother of Lord Charlemont, for representation of the county in the old Irish House of Parliament in Dublin. Records of the voting indicate that *Alex. Mc Kitrick* of Derrycrew, Loughgall, cast his vote in favour of Arthur Brownlow. In the latter part of the century the Armagh Assizes Indictments record that *John Mc Kitrick* appeared as a plaintiff at the summer session of 1773, and *Bryan Mc Kiterick* also as plaintiff at the Lent session of 1774.

However, it is the Tithe Applotment Books for Co. Armagh (1825-40) which give us an idea of the distribution and numbers of *Mc Kit(t)ricks* in the 19th century. There were 15 *Mc Kitt(e)rick* tithe payers in Loughgall and another five distributed between Creggan, Drumcree, Killevy and Clonfeacle parishes. A further two known as *Mc Citterick* were recorded in Tartaraghan. *Mac Kit(t)rick* occurs again in Griffith's Valuation (1848-64); there were 8 holdings in Loughgall, two each in Drumcree and Clonfeacle, and one each in Tartaraghan, Killyman and Kilmore parishes.

Mac Giolla Domhnaigh, in his study of Ulster surnames (1923), interestingly notes that *Hanson* has also been used as a synonym for *Mac Kittrick* in the Blackwatertown district of Co. Armagh but offers no explanation. The census of 1911 records *Hanson* in Cloghfin, Milford and Armagh city.

In Co. Armagh the distribution of the name and its 17th century references suggest a Scottish connection and most probably represent a migration from Galloway during the 17th century Plantation of Ulster. The source of the name, however, is the Viking personal name *Sigtryggr*, also gaelicised *Sitric* in Scotland, and eventually became the surnames *Mac Kettrick /Mac Kittrick* in the Galloway region.

The census of 1911 recorded *Mac Kit(t)rick* (247) and *Mac Kitterick* (100) with more than 90% of that number located in Ulster. *Kettrick* (67) and *Kittrick* (39) were solely confined to Co. Mayo.

Mac Atasney

Mac Atasney / Mac an tSasanaigh 'son of the Englishman' is derived from the noun *Sasanach* and might not actually refer to an ancestor of English origin, but was perhaps given in a satirical sense. The name also appears with an intrusive 'r', *Mac Atarsney*, which seems to suggest an attempt to disguise the original meaning. Something similar, but in reverse, can be cited in the case of the surname *English* which in Ulster is at times an anglicised version of the Gaelic name *Mac an Ghallóglaigh (Gallogly / Gollogly),* and based on the first element of the name, *gall* 'foreigner'.

Both forms, *Mac Atasney / Mac Atarsney*, are almost exclusively confined to Co. Armagh and the Belfast urban area. Mac Lysaght, however, maintains that the surname has been on record in Co. Armagh since the 16th century at least.

An early anglicised form was *Mac Entasny*, but examples found in the Hearth Money Rolls of 1664-65 show the name without the article *an* of the Gaelic version and include the intrusive *r*: *Donnell Mc Tarsany* of Roughan townland in Drumcree parish, and *Torlagh Mc Tarsny* of Cloncarrish in Tartaraghan parish each paid two shillings tax per hearth. In the following century the name occurs on eight occasions in the Armagh Assizes Indictments in a variety of spellings most of which retain the intrusive '*r*': *Edmond Mc Tarsney* (1747), *Francis Mc Tarsoney* (1767) and *Phelemy Mac Tarsan* (1768). In some examples the Gaelic '*an*' of the original (in which the *n* is silent in normal speech) is partially restored as '*A*' in the following examples: *John Mc A Tarseny* (1785), *Margaret Mc A Tarsany* (1786) and *Mart. Mc ATarsney* (1787). There is one entry without *r* – *Phelemy Mc Tasnagh* (1778). An earlier list of Drumcree parish rent and tithe payers of 1737 included an *Edward Mc Tarsney* of Derrycory.

In the early part of the 19th century, the parish register of Kilmore for the years 1827-29, includes two households named *Mac Atasney* in Annaboe townland, but the Tithe Applotment Books for Co. Armagh (1825-40) recorded only one entry - a *Widow Mc Atarsney* of Gallrock townland in Tartaraghan parish. Griffith's Valuation (1848-64), of the same period, also records *Mc Atasney* in Tartaraghan, Loughgall and Kilmore parishes, *Tarsney* in Drumcree and an unusual variant, *Mc Atassan*, again in Drumcree.

The rarity of the surname is confirmed by the census returns of 1901 and 1911. In 1901 Co. Armagh accounted for 14 of the 16 *Mac Atasney* entries in Ireland, ten of which were recorded in Ballyhagan (Kilmore), four in Annaghmore (Loughgall) and a further two in Belfast. Only four entries were recorded for *Mac Atarsney*, three of which were in Annaboe, Kilmore parish, and one in Belfast. The variant forms (*Mac*) *Tasney* (12) were all located in Belfast, while *Tarsney* (7) was found in Sligo (4), Monaghan (2), and one in Co. Armagh, in Tullymore townland, Loughgall.
In 1911 a total of 30 persons throughout Ireland were recorded using a variety of related spellings: *Mac Atasney* (13), *Mac Tasney* (2), *Tasney* (2); those with intrusive *r* included *Mac Atarsney* (4) and *Mac Tarsney* (9). All but seven of the above entries were recorded in Co. Armagh in the parishes of Kilmore, Shankill and Loughgall; of the remainder four were in Co. Antrim and one in Co. Tyrone.
At present, within Co. Armagh the name is largely confined to the northern half of the county with most residing in the civil parish of Kilmore and neighbouring Portadown. Fearon, in his 'History of Kilmore Parish' (2004) notes that there were 28 *Mac Atasneys* in Kilmore parish.

Finally, John Trimble in a recent article (2011) reminds us that *John Mc Atasney* of Lurgan is the last hand-loom weaver in the area and representative of a skill and tradition that contributed so much to the economy of Co. Armagh for more than 200 years.

Mac Anallen

Mac Anallen is almost exclusively confined to Co. Armagh and within the county is concentrated in an area of the cathedral parish of Armagh generally known as Tullysaran in the civil parish of Eglish. The census of 1911 returned 34 entries for *Mac Anallen*, 32 of which were located in Co. Armagh with the remaining two on the Tyrone side of the Armagh-Tyrone border.

Woulfe refers to *Mac Anallen* as 'a rare surname in Ulster and Connacht, the origin of which I cannot trace'. He goes on to give the Gaelic version as *Mac an Ailín*, which he claims 'represents the pronunciation as I heard it'. He also links it tentatively to the Mayo surname, *Nallen*. De Bhulbh suggests that *Mac an Ailín* may be based on *ail* 'rock'.

Muhr, in a place-name study of the barony of Iveagh, draws attention to the townland of *Ballymacanallen*, in Tullylish parish, which is suggestive of a surname resembling *Mac Anallen / Mac Enallen*. The form of the place-name in 1609 was *Ballyvickinallin* which appears to represent an original *Baile Mhic an Ailín* ('Mac Anallen's town'), but there is no further evidence of the name in that particular place.

The first mention of the name in association with Armagh city possibly occurs in a survey of the archbishop's tenants in 1618 which identified a *Bryan Ro Mc Ynellon* in Mill Street which Glancy has interpreted as the present-day *Mac Anallen*. An earlier entry in the Ulster Plantation Papers dated 1609, in relation to Co. Tyrone, states 'Precincte of Dungannon … natives assigned … *Shelan mc Amallam* … 60 acres', which looks suspiciously like a misreading of *Mac Anallan*, and in the nearby parish of Derryloran the same document refers to a *Felim Mc Anallan* who was granted 120 acres in the townland of Ballinecarrigie, now Scotchtown, in the neighbourhood of present-day Cookstown.

The name also occurs a number of times in the following century

among those who appeared at Armagh in the period 1735-97. *James Mc Anallen* appeared as a plaintiff at the summer assizes of 1751 in a case of assault. *Owen Mc Analon* appeared twice at the Lent assizes of 1789 accused of assault; he was found guilty on the first occasion but subsequently acquitted the second time. *Thomas Mc Anallen*, *Edward Mc Anallen* and seven others were charged with assault and found guilty at the Lent assizes of 1794 during a period of highly charged sectarian tension in north Armagh involving rival factions of the Protestant 'Peep o' Day Boys' and the Catholic 'Defenders'. In less contentious circumstances the Spinning Wheel Premiums' list of 1796 included *Owen*, *Edward*, *Patrick*, *Peter* and *Terence Mc Anallin*, *Rose* and *Daniel Mc Anallon*, and *Peter Mc Anallen* of Armagh parish among the recipients of spinning wheels granted by the Irish Linen Board in a government-sponsored initiative to promote the local linen industry. In the neighbouring parish of Aghaloo in Tyrone *Teal Mc Anallon* and the *Widow Mc Anallon* were listed among the flax-growers entitled to the same grant.

In the 19th century the Co. Armagh Tithe Applotment Books (1825-40) listed three *Mc Anallin* tithe payers in Eglish parish and one *Mc Analon* in Drumcree. Griffith's Valuation (1848-64) recorded a concentration of twelve holdings in the name of *Mac Anallen /Mac Anallan* again in the civil parish of Eglish with a further two in Shankill and one in Lisnadill. The census returns of 1901 and 1911 confirmed the distribution outlined in Griffith in the previous century with 22 entries recorded in the townlands of Eglish, Killyquin, Tullymore Otra and Larashshankill in Eglish parish. *Mac Anallen* was also recorded in Loughgall and Killevy parishes in 1911.

Both Woulfe and de Bhulbh mention a possible connection with the Connacht surname, *Nallen*, which de Bhulbh suggests might represent either an original *Mac an Ailín*, or *Mac Nailín*. It is possible that some of the Ulster sept may have taken part in the migration from north Armagh to Connacht in consequence of the above-mentioned sectarian disturbances of the late 18th century, but no positive evidence has yet emerged. Besides, the Fiants of Elizabeth include two pardons granted to *Meyler* and *Shane Mc Enallen* of Connacht in the year 1600, almost two centuries earlier.

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The Great Wind of 1839 and its impact on County Armagh

by Stephen Day

At Christmas 1838 people in Armagh could look back on a year when the 19 year old Queen Victoria had taken part in the first coronation procession in London since George III's in 1761. There was optimism that a new age had begun.

In Ireland, Catholic Emancipation had progressed further when Parliament introduced the 1838 Tithe Commutation Act, effectively bringing closure to the violent aspect of the 1831 -1836 Tithe 'War.' In the City of Armagh a decision had been taken to build a second Cathedral, dedicated to Saint Patrick, which would cater for the spiritual needs of the Roman Catholic community both locally and across the island. Archbishop William Crolly had been the driving force and the Foundation Stone had been laid on St. Patrick's Day of the same year. Meanwhile, on the Ancient Hill of Armagh, St.Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral was in the final stages of Cottingham's restoration (1834-1840), a major repair and remodelling of the interior and exterior of the building. The work was of high quality adding significantly to the resilience of the structure on this highly exposed site. This was soon to prove fortuitous.

During the past 12 months the first steamships had crossed the Atlantic and the rapid developments of railways in Great Britain promised an imminent revolution in modes of travel in Ireland. Everywhere scientific and engineering advances seemed to suggest that nature and natural obstacles to progress could increasingly be controlled and overcome. The New Year promised more opportunities, employment and hopefully a continued improvement in living standards. For many of the urban and rural poor it would be sufficient if they could keep a roof over their heads and be able to keep starvation from the door for one more year. Nevertheless, they hoped for something better. No one suspected that a natural disaster was imminent.

The weather during the day of Sunday 6th January 1839:

There was a remarkable calm in the hours before the Big Wind struck Ireland. Many of the eight million people living in Ireland at the time – a larger population than today - were preparing themselves for the Feast of the Epiphany. Saturday had seen the first snowfall of the year. By contrast, Sunday morning was unusually warm, almost clammy. Far away to the west, rain began to come in from the Atlantic arriving on the Co Mayo coast around 3pm. Wind and hail became strong by 6pm with an exceptionally strong storm pounding the coastal areas from 10pm.

The storm intensifies:

In County Armagh, most of the afternoon had been still and warm with ominously heavy low cloud. Some may have suspected that rain was on the way but as dusk fell and the long night began there was no indication of a storm approaching. Rain and wind arrived in increasing strength after 9pm but by midnight Armagh people began to experience the full force of this extreme weather event.

A terrifying night:

One can only imagine the concern and, in many cases terror, as the storm reached County Armagh and continued to roar at a great intensity from midnight into the early hours of the morning. In Armagh itself, where the people had enjoyed the luxury of gas lighting since 1833, the street lighting suddenly failed. In town and country wise people turned off their oil lamps and doused their household fires lest structural damage occur and set fire to the house. This was a particular threat to the small thatched houses, cottages and cabins. Where people feared structural damage many went outside to take shelter in stronger buildings or, in the country, in ditches away from tall trees

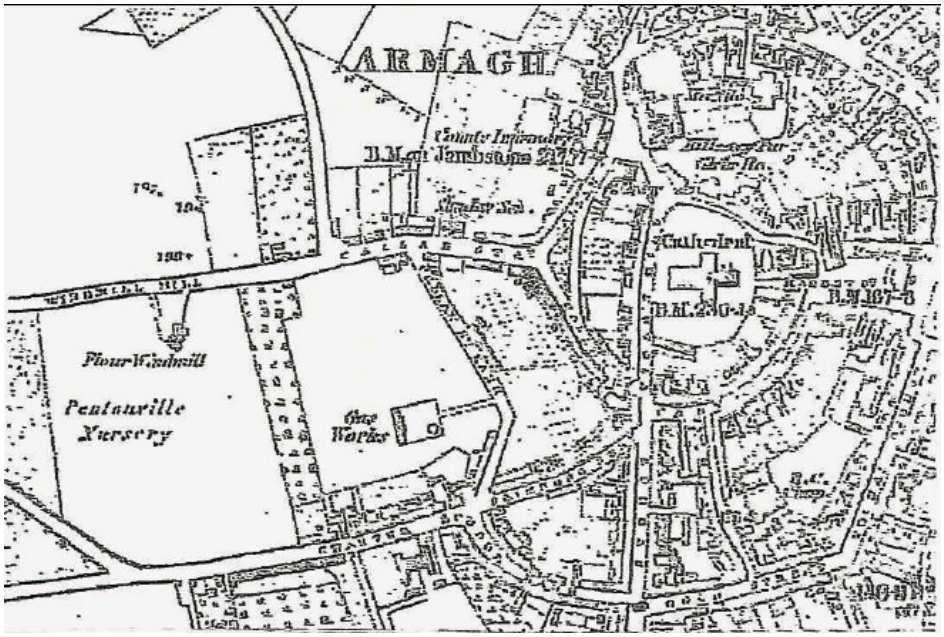
Small Irish cottage 1800s

Damage to Armagh and the surrounding area:

'Armagh has suffered very much. Many houses completely stripped and still more, partially. The gasworks are greatly injured; the chimney blown down and the town in complete darkness…….In the countryside great quantities of hay, corn and flax blown away; In short…. the country is nearly ruined.' (B.C.)

The gasworks were located close to Callan Street on the westerly approaches to the city. The north-westerly winds also caused considerable damage to the sails and mechanism of the nearby windmill.

Less than 200 yards away to the east the Ancient Hill of Armagh took a pounding. However, whilst the City Infirmary, the Armagh Public Library and the row of houses at Vicars' Hill suffered some damage to their roofs mainly falling slates and ridge tiles there appears to have been no significant structural damage. The same applied to the Church of Ireland Cathedral, which had been comprehensively remodelled and strengthened during Cottingham's recent restoration. Indeed the hill may have provided some protection for



OS Map of Armagh 1834

many of the main residential and commercial buildings which were largely located on its eastern slopes stretching down to the Mall. (OS Map 1834). However, any poorly built or poorly maintained buildings suffered the most damage and many trees were blown down.

Damage in the Wider Area:

Reports were soon coming in of deaths and damage in the wider area. Examples, within a 30 mile circumference of Armagh were:-

To the west – Killilea – *'great havoc has been committed by the combined elements of destruction.' (N.T.)*

Caledon, on the County Tyrone/ Armagh border – *'Two pinnacles were blown off the abutment of the steeple of the Caledon Church – one of them passed through the roof and gallery.' (L.S.)*

A few miles away the villages of Aughnacloy and Ballygawley were described '*as little more than a heap of ruins. Some of the houses were blown down and others burnt. The inhabitants are in the most deplorable condition. Sir William Somerville's demesne has been completely sacked.' (G.P.)*

To the north – at Loughgall – *'Loughgall House and desmesne have suffered considerably. A vast number of the splendid trees adjoining the beautiful house, the growth of at least two hundred years, have been torn up by the root. The village and neighbourhood have equally suffered.' (D.J.)*

'At Church Hill, the seat of Colonel Verner, the house had its roof completely blown off whilst thirty guests sat at dinner.' (E.B.P.)

To the north-east - at Portadown – *'the roar of the wind was like an uninterrupted cannonade and every person in this neighbourhood thought that this terrible night would have been their last. At length the morning dawned on a scene of devastation, unparalleled in the annals of this part of the country. The scene altogether is a heart-breaking one – but we ought to be thankful to Providence for the preservation of our lives.' (I.R.)*

At Lurgan – *'the town presents a most shattered array of houses…. With the suburbs and neighbourhood in desolation, impressing the mind with such sensations as one might feel visiting a country ravaged by some ruthless enemy. The Church has suffered severely, the spire thundered down with a fearful crash, burying the ball deep in the pavement and injuring part of the roof. In the Brownlow desmesne about three hundred trees were blown down.' (U.T.)*

To the east – Tandragee; *'The Castle of Tandragee, from its exposed position, has suffered considerably. The tempest, has been succeeded by a heavy fall of snow, which has added, in no small degree, to the distressed situation of those whose dwellings have been laid open to it.' (N.T.)*

To the south east – *As the storm roared over villages such as Poyntzpass and Jerrettspass residents prayed for deliverance. In the surrounding countryside the experience of the Cole family was typical and personal. Norman Cole recorded that 'the house was thatched, as most were, with rushes tied down with hand twisted ropes. The house was stripped by the wind – every house in the country was….the people left their houses for they were falling in around them. They sought shelter in sheughs and behind banks. If they were caught in the open they had to hold on to the grass. There was a great deal of flying debris – branches, timber – even hens. All his days my grandfather Andrew Cole (1834-1924) and my father James (1872-1961) dreaded 'the Tandragee Wind.' Misses Minnie and Sara Savage recorded a lucky escape, typical of many that night. 'Our uncle James Best lived at Mullaghglass in a two story farmhouse. A large stone was dislodged from the chimney. It fell into the house and rolled down the stairs. It knocked a hole in the front door!' (Watters: p.78-79 – Watter's article contains many more human interest accounts of the impact of the storm in Poyntzpass and District.)*

At Newry, on the County Down/ Armagh border, 'on Sunday night, about eleven o'clock, the wind, which had been blowing hard from the north-west, rose suddenly to a pitch of fury rarely paralleled in this latitude, and, resembling the hurricane which so frequently spreads devastation and ruin amongst the West India islands, continued increasing in violence during the whole night. There is hardly a single house in the town unstripped, and a number of cabins have been completely wrecked. In the country, and along the shore, the effects of the storm are even more disastrous. Several ships, it is said, have been driven on land, more or less damaged; Reports add that some dead bodies have floated in with the tide…….Lofty and venerable trees, which have

probably a century defied the storm, have been torn up by the roots; the grain, flax, and hay crops, stacked in haggards, have been overthrown and scattered; and the dwelling and office houses, particularly those with thatched roofs; much injured…….The high wind, which still continues, will render abortive any attempt to secure the grain' (N.T.)

At Dundalk , Co. Louth,(a few miles south of the County Armagh border) – Most of the houses and public buildings have been denuded of their roofs, and windows to a considerable extent destroyed. The Post Office in Earl Street has suffered very much, as between twelve and one o'clock (in the night) the chimneys fell, tearing the roof and all the intermediate floors in to the kitchen. (The postmaster and his clerk were waiting up for the arrival of mail when the chimney fell and carried them with the ruins into the cellar, from which they were extricated, much injured. G.W.A). The Barrack also suffered very much, and the new chimney of the Gas- house has measured its length on the ground. (N.T.)

***To the south;** Amongst the numerous devastations committed in the Whitecross and Newtownhamilton neighbourhoods 'the havoc made by the storm at the demesne of Mr. Synot's Ballymoyer Estate was truly lamentable. At least 10,000 trees have been either separated, broken or so completely mutilated as to require their being cut down. Not a tree of any remarkable beauty escaped and it will require a fortnight to clear the avenue alone and to render it passable. At present the public road to Newtownhamilton is blocked up by immense trees which have fallen across it. Acres of other trees have been levelled with the ground and in many places the site of a wood resembles a fleet after a battle, the trunks of fine trees standing broken off at every height from the ground, shivered into splinters and riven as if by lightning. The oldest inhabitants of this part of the country do not remember such a hurricane and the houses of the farmers are, in many places, stripped of their roofs while corn- stacks, which stood in exposed positions, were literally blown all over the countryside. One fatal accident occurred in the neighbourhood of Ballymoyer; a young man, son of a schoolmaster named Allen, was killed by the falling of his chimney, which also severely injured some other members of the family.' (N.T.)*

***To the south-east;** At Monaghan, Co. Monaghan, (a few miles south-east of the County Armagh boundary) – 'Monaghan has suffered. A dreadful fire has added its horrors to those of the gale and the town is nearly depopulated; a party of the 38th regiment marched to protect the property of the unfortunate.' (L.J.) The beautiful plantation in the desmesne of Mrs. Leslie at Castle Leslie, Glaslough has suffered to a great extent. In Glasslough itself eight houses were burnt to the ground. Several families in the village of Middletown have been deprived of a roof.*

The Aftermath:

It is impossible to say how many people died as a direct result of the storm. (Record keeping was not as good in those days.) However, along the Atlantic coastline across Ireland itself and in the Irish Sea it is estimated that 250-300 people lost their lives. Most of these were at sea and the losses to Lloyds (the shipping insurers) were *at least £1 million (NL).* The entire island was affected with spectacular reports of damage in the capital, Dublin. In County Armagh probably less than a dozen died with many more sustaining injuries. This could be considered a blessing, of sorts, considering that the county had one of the largest concentrations of people in all of Ireland with at least 50 and often 100 persons per 100 acres. (Crowley et al: P.14) Many more lived in the countryside then than now (often in cabins or poor cottages) and the county towns and villages were much smaller.

There was much work to be done in the aftermath of the storm. In main towns like Armagh, Newry and Lurgan the priority was to clear the streets and the approach roads of trees and debris and to secure the roofs of damaged houses.

Newry - '*On Monday the streets were covered, in some places to a depth of more than a foot, with bricks, tiles, slates, mortar and other materials of the injured and wrecked houses around. The damage done to houses and property throughout the country, is, we understand, extensive and, in many instances irretrievable…We have not heard of any lives being lost in our own town; but in the immediate vicinity, we believe, the inhabitants of the crazy cottages that are everywhere to be found, have not been so fortunate. (N.E.) In the neighbourhood…. a mother and child were buried in the ruins of their little cabin.' (D.J.)*

A similar situation existed in Armagh and the constabulary, the army and the firemen all had a role to play in assisting the local authorities to restore some form of normality. Medical staff at the City Infirmary were kept busy. Many of all classes had suffered financial loss and some had lost their homes. In the countryside the loss of hay and other winter stores led to hardship in feeding animals over the coming months. Farmers struggled to protect both their livestock and their families from starvation. The destruction of trees led to a glut in the timber market and prices fell through the floor. For a time some communities were completely cut off by blocked roads. Main roads took priority. '*The Mails (Mail Coach) service was 'greatly retarded' due to debris and felled trees blocking the roads.' (N.T.)*

Clear beneficiaries of the storm were builders, carpenters, thatchers and slaters. Records can still be found of repair bills. In Armagh Public Library the accounts for that year record: - *' March 2 – Garland, Slater, for repairing injury done by the Hurricane in January £6.2.11.'* (This was approximately half of the housekeeper's yearly wage - a significant amount in those days*)*

The Legacy:

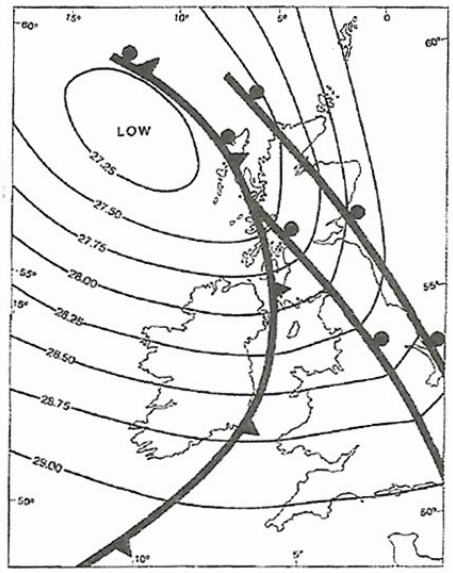
Irish Folklore: The Night of the Big Wind became part of Irish folk tradition. Irish folklore held that Judgement Day would occur on the

Feast of the Epiphany, 6 January. Such a severe storm led many to believe that the end of the world was at hand, a belief that added renewed strength to many a church sermon in the following months. Others spoke of the influence of the fairies or the actions of malevolent forces. (Carr: p. 51-63). Most of all the shock and the feeling of awe which this exceptional storm provoked would endure because it occurred at night and, unlike today, there was no warning.

Pension Eligibility: The Old Age Pensions Act 1908 introduced pensions for the over 70, but many Irish Catholics prior to the Registration of Births and Deaths (Ireland) Act 1863, had no birth registration. One of the questions used to establish proof of age was whether the applicant remembered the Night of the Great Wind. This could be abused by careful briefing of the applicant. *'The last problem Asquith's government faced was one of benefit take-up. An estimated 128% of Irelands pensionable population made a point of getting on the books, (these folk were no dozers!), a fact which caused much comment at Westminster.' (Carr: p. 66)*

Accurate Wind Measurement: So, was Armagh hit by a Hurricane? (Shields & Fitzgerald: p. 41-42). At the time it was certainly the strongest storm in living memory and many newspapers referred to it as such. They could rely on eye-witness accounts from the many people in the county who had also experienced hurricanes as soldiers or sailors in the West Indies where sugar was imported from island colonies, like Antigua, to Newry. (Newry had its own 'Sugar Island' warehouse area.) It could be that the storm force winds may have risen to hurricane force in parts of Ireland and many people sought scientific proof from the climatic experts.

At Armagh Observatory the weather records refer to 'a tremendous gale in the night.' There had not been much warning of a storm and certainly no indication of the actual intensity. Prior to its arrival air pressure had not been particularly unusual, although it fell to quite a low value around the time of the event. A remarkable rise in temperature was recorded on the evening of the 6th but very soon afterwards the temperature fell again with rain and snow recorded in the later stages of the storm. Crucially there were no instruments, here or elsewhere, to accurately record the wind speed. This spurred the Director of Armagh Observatory, John Thomas Romney Robinson, to improve upon previous research and in 1846 he developed the Cup-Anemometer. This was used worldwide as the standard for measuring wind speed and direction for the remainder of the century and beyond - a lasting legacy of the Great Wind of 1839.



Suggested weather map 7 January 1839


Robinson's Cup-Anenometre

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The Armagh woman who sang for both royalty and rebels: Rosa d'Erina, the Irish prima donna

by Mary McVeigh

I first encountered Rose when I came across an announcement of her forthcoming wedding from New York newspaper, reprinted in the *Armagh Guardian* in 1884. At that time, some 22 years ago, I was searching old papers for material for a column I wrote in the *Ulster Gazette*. I duly noted that this woman, Rose O'Toole, with the stage name, Rosa d'Erina, was said to have been born here in Armagh in 1852 and apparently commenced her career at an early age. In 1865 when she was just thirteen years old, it was recorded, she gave no less than 100 voice and organ recitals at the Dublin Exhibition. Two years later she was playing and singing in Paris.

At the time of her engagement she was leading soprano and organist at the Church of the Holy Innocents on West Thirty-seventh Street. She also played on Broadway and was, it would appear, very popular with the New York audiences. Her bridegroom to be, George R. Vondom, was a professor at St Louis College and had a short time previously inherited the title of Count de St. Croix. He spoke seven languages whilst his fiancée sang in six, the paper reported. The pair shared an interest in and commitment to music, 'both were composers, both were artistes. It seems that although they had loved each other for years they might never have taken the final, fateful step to matrimony but for a 'romantic incident' so stated the paper. On the Easter Sunday past the 'sweethearts' played the leading roles in Thomas Haines Bailey's romantic comedy, "Perfection". Rose took the part of a 'dashing, sparkling Irish heiress' and her fiancé was 'an English aristocrat'. "They made love that night. The following morning the professor offered his heart and title to the perfect woman of his life".

Rose and her Count received no further attention from me until recently when I was looking for something for the magazine section of the local Talking Newspaper for the Blind. When I resurrected their story from the files it whetted my appetite and I realised that I might now be able to glean more information from the World Wide Web. Thus began my Google search for Rosa d'Erina. Was she really from Armagh? If so, what could be learned about her background? How did she make out in America? Did she have a successful career and how long did it last?

Her early career

There is no doubt that her musical career was well documented right from the outset. Indeed, every opportunity was exploited in the pursuit of publicity and, as they say, nothing got lost in the telling! Both local papers, the *Armagh Guardian* and the *Ulster Gazette,* gave glowing accounts of her performance in the Tontine Rooms in May, 1865, when she took part in the touring, 'Diorama of Ireland' which was, it would seem, an exhibition of scenic paintings of different parts of Ireland accompanied by appropriate music and song. "Miss O'Toole, who, in addition to acting as conductress, sings each evening some of those native melodies which delight both ear and heart, and whose fullest beauty is realised by this accomplished Armagh lady". Unfortunately, no mention at all was given in either paper of her background: her parents, where she lived and from whom she received her musical education.

The diorama was destined for America but it was to be a few years before Rose crossed the Atlantic. However, it would appear that she did not stay on these shores because the Gilbert and Sullivan archive revealed that she was mentioned by her stage name, Rosa d'Erina, in a review of a production by W.S. Gilbert in *The Times* on 30th March, 1869. In late December of the same year she was back in Ireland, giving two concerts at the Antient Concert Rooms. The advertisement in the *Irish Times* announced: "Mdlle will perform her celebrated Marlborough House programme as performed by command of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales entitled Music from Many Lands…" To date I have not been able to find any trace of this performance before royalty although it was mentioned with great frequency in publicity material. A review in the paper declared that the 27 December event was 'an agreeable concert' held 'before a fashionable and appreciative audience'.

Getting herself known

Rose went off to America apparently in 1870 and it would seem that she never came back to Armagh though she put in hundreds

of appearances at venues throughout the United States and Canada during a very long career. The last mention of her in the *Irish Times* was a travel piece on Quebec on 2nd October, 1874: "Here at present are a great number of tourists. This splendid hotel is crowded. Among the guests, Ireland's prima donna Rose d'Erina – she sings next week under the patronage of Vice-Admiral Wellesley and the officers of H.M.S. Bellerophon…"

I came across up on 200 reports of forthcoming concerts and reviews from all over the sub-continent. She was in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, New Orleans, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec as well as obscure, possibly back of beyond spots. She even played Nashville! One thing which becomes very clear when reading these is that she never missed an opportunity to promote herself and there may well have been instances when she was economical with the truth such as when it was claimed in the *San Francisco Call* on 17th February 1905 that she was 'organist of the Cathedral of Armagh at the age 12'. Indeed, when she left for America it was still being built. She had possibly forgotten that over 30 years previously, on St Patrick's Day in 1871 she gave a concert in New York's Steinway Hall for the 'more well-to-do Irish' to help raise funds for 'a church in Armagh', presumably the cathedral because at that time money was being gathered from many parts of the globe for its completion. [1]

Interestingly in an online history of the Old Town Hall of Alymer, Ontario where she had performed at a Grand Star concert in 1880 as part of her 'world tour' it was stated: "Much of what could be learned about Rosa was found in letters from her manager and herself…In one of these letters she made her reputation clear to the town by means of an advertisement for a previous concert which included reviews of praise by the Prince of Wales, President and Mrs Grant, Lord Dufferin and the Governor General of Canada". She offered locals a discount: "My usual tours are $50 but I accept $30".[2]

Rosa d'Erina: the Queen of Irish song

I have to say though that I was surprised that in all her publicity material she made no reference to her singing at the funeral of Fanny Parnell in 1882. Fanny, sister of Charles Stewart Parnell, was founder of the New York Ladies Land League. Rose, herself a member of the organisation, sang "Angels ever bright and fair' and was apparently the only woman to get a mention in the newspaper reports. [3]

Her face was familiar to the concert going public because she commissioned a well known photographer to take her portrait and was so pleased with his work that she ordered no less than five thousand copies. Whilst she may well have exaggerated her achievements and abilities and used every situation to her advantage she nonetheless has managed to go down in history. For instance, she gets a mention in a section Irish music in the online encyclopaedia of Canada. A reference to St Patrick's Hall in Montreal, built by the Irish community there in the 1860s stated that it was the site of many musical occasions, Irish and other, including an appearance in 1872 by Rosa d'Erina, 'the Queen

of Irish song'.[4] She also appeared in a history of the organ in Manitoba. It stated that she gave organ recitals in both St Boniface's cathedral and the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Winnipeg in 1905. [5]

There is no doubt Rose O'Toole was a real trouper and kept on performing right into old age. She travelled extensively, probably by train and staying in lodgings which may well have been less than comfortable at times. The last 30 years of the 19th century were the golden age of the opera house/ theatre in America. The railroads expanded considerably after the Civil war and there was scarcely a town of any size on a railway line that did not have one. It would seem that Rose performed in many of them. Just a year prior to her death in 1915 she was billed to appear at the Opera House in Odessa, Texas at the invitation of ladies belonging to the Catholic Church. Proceeds from the concert were to go to the church but this time the costs of admission were a mere 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children, a possible indication that her popularity was on the wane.[6]


WHAT THE PRESS OF FOUR OF

THE GREAT MUSICAL CENTRES

Of the World Say of the Great Lyric Star,

ROSA D'ERINA

ERIN'S PRIMA DONNA.

PARIS.

It is in America we shall hear of the rising of this great lyric star, where her talents will find true recognition, and her simplicity of manner win all hearts.—*La Patrie.*

Rosa d'Erina sings Irish melodies with that Milesian fervor which, as Byron used to say, "would set Tom Moore, though married, raving."—*Galignani.*

This charming young artiste has a splendid voice, of great power and compass, and at her grand concert last night sang in seven languages with complete success.—*L'Art Musicale.*

Sweden has produced two great canaries, Jenny Lind and Mlle. Nilsson. Ireland is jealous of Sweden, and has this season flashed to us a star—Mlle. Rosa d'Erina.—*Le Temps.*

Rosa d'Erina is a distinguished cantatrice. She has the voice, the talent, the taste, the tradition, a style the most correct, and a soul essentially musical.—*Figaro.*

Thanks to the accomplished young artiste, Mlle. d'Erina, for taking down "The Harp that once in Tara's Halls" and to reflect such glory on the poets and bards of Erin.—*Journal des Débats.*

DUBLIN.

Rosa d'Erina has attained the highest position amongst the leading Irish vocalists, and is everywhere regarded as the truest and best living interpreter of the magic music of her native land.—*Freeman.*

We are sure that all who love genuine song will hasten to greet back to Erin one of its daughters, who has upheld its name and fame for genius in foreign lands.—*Irish Times.*

We welcome with a cead mailte failtha the Rose of Erin, who, in the capitals of France and England, has made the music of Ireland celebrated, and reflected, by her genius, much honor to Ireland.—*The Nation.*

Rosa d'Erina has given upwards of one hundred recitals of the music of Ireland, in the great Paris Exposition, to thousands of delighted listeners, and the Paris press vouch for her genius.—*Evening Post.*

Immense crowds attend the concerts of Rosa d'Erina, in the Dublin Exhibition, and listen with wrapt delight to her rendering of the music and melodies of Ireland.—*Irish People.*

No Irish artiste, since Catherine Hayes, has attained so exalted a position as the Rose of Erin, and certainly none has done more, in her three years of absence, to perpetuate the immortal "Harp of Erin."—*The Irishman.*

NEW YORK.

Rosa d'Erina is a splendid vocalist, of the most varied talents, and was welcomed last night by one of the largest audiences ever assembled in Steinway Hall.—*Herald.*

The Irish Prima Donna made her debut last evening at Steinway Hall before a crowded and enthusiastic audience, and exhibited rare power of cultured vocalization.—*Tribune.*

Rosa D'Erina possesses a beautiful mezzo-soprano voice, cultivated to the highest degree in the Parisian school. Her varied programme proved her a marvel of linguistic attainments.—*Star.*

Mlle. Rosa D'Erina is a charming young artiste, of unquestionable talent; her pure and beautiful voice, and the perfect simplicity and naturalness of her style, presented a charm which was positively irresistible.—*Wehman's Art Journal.*

Miss Rosa D'Erina is a beautiful young flower from the "first gem of the sea." The Rose of Ireland is a worthy successor of Catherine Hayes and the mantle of the Queen of Irish Song has descended upon her.—*French Leslie's Paper.*

The beautiful title, Rosa D'Erina, bestowed upon her by the Parisians, made us long to behold one who had endeared herself to all by the sweet charms of her voice. She is destined to cheer the heart of many an exile from Erin.—*Irish People.*

LONDON.

Mlle. Rosa d'Erina has had the honor of singing, by gracious command of Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, at Marlborough House, yesterday, to the presence of a distinguished circle.—*Morning Star.*

Rosa d'Erina has the most extraordinary facility of vocalization, for whether in French, Italian or Spanish music, she is equally happy, whilst her Irish melodies are truly superb.—*Era.*

No Irish artiste, since Catherine Hayes, has created in the musical world such a sensation as the accomplished and highly gifted young lady, Mlle. Rosa d'Erina.—*Musical Times.*

Rosa d'Erina's singing of Spanish ballads at the Royal Gallery of Illustration, has not been equalled since the days of Violet Garcia. The Spanish Evening Song is immense.—*Telegraph.*

A most brilliant assemblage greeted the Rose of Erin at her benefit concert last night. Ireland has good reason to be proud of this gifted child of song.—*Morning Advertiser.*

Rosa D'Erina has won all hearts by her exquisite rendering of the delightful music of her native land. She is truly marvellous in her repertoire of Music from many Lands.—*Times.*

Rosa d'Erina is now making her First Grand Concert Tour of Canada,

AND WILL SOON APPEAR HERE.

Her early life is still a mystery

Whilst there is an abundance of material on Rose O'Toole's professional life as Rosa d'Erina there is very little on her personal life. There is no mention of children. Indeed, bringing up children when constantly on the move as she was would have been extremely difficult. She died in Ontario Canada where she and her husband had a summer cottage, presumably their only permanent base, on St Joseph's Island, Algoma district. Apparently they were actively involved in establishing St Boniface's Catholic Church there. It would seem that she retained a lifelong commitment to the Catholic Church because throughout her career she donated proceeds from concerts to various church associated organisations. Both Rose and George, who lived on another 15 years after her death, are buried in St Boniface's cemetery. Their gravestone gives no clues as to other family members.[7]

When they got married in 1884 the *New York Times* report (19TH May 1884) was a typical account of a fashionable society wedding, detailing attire, venue, guests etc. It noted the groom's family seat, his title and how he inherited it but the only reference to Rose's origins was that she was born in the city of Armagh. There were seven bridesmaids, all named but not an O'Toole among them. It could well have been that she had no siblings bearing in mind that at this time it was more usual than not for an older sister who emigrated to bring over younger members of the family. There was no mention of her parents but one of the guests, P. MacCourt was described as her manager and guardian. Was this man a blood relative? Did she meet him in America or was he known to her in Ireland?

Just before starting to write this article I realised I should try to find out more about the mysterious MacCourt thus I went back to the Internet. I was intrigued to discover that just five years after the wedding he had fallen in hard time and was, in fact, making an appeal to none other than the President of the United States to help save his job. It appears that he had just been sacked from what he considered to be a lowly clerical post which he had been forced to take due to his reduced circumstances. His plea, reported in a New Jersey local paper, the *Plainfield Evening News* (10th August, 1889), claimed that he had been a correspondent for the *Freemans Journal* and editor of a paper 'established by Archbishop Dixon'.

This association with Primate Dixon could, perhaps, be a clue as to how Rose's involvement with him began. The Primate had a good relationship with the French order of nuns, Society of the Sacred Heart, which had come to Armagh in 1851 and within two years had established schools for girls in the city. Could she have been given a letter of introduction to him from the Primate, via the nuns, as some-one who could assist her in her career? He certainly claimed to have moved in more exalted circles before hitting harder times. He professed to having been a personal friend of Parnell and of having letters complimenting him on his writing from Gladstone among others. Interestingly when he was involved in the name dropping he stated that he was the 'foster father of Rosa d'Erina' so it would therefore appear that Rose was regarded as a person of note at that time. Whatever about their earlier relationship there would seem to have been a parting of the ways between Rose and her erstwhile manager.

Rose could well have been a pupil at the day school run by the nuns in Armagh and may well have started her musical education there. Some of her publicity material referred to her having studied music in Paris. It is likely that the Armagh nuns could have assisted in this as the order was French and was well established in Paris. The Society's archives could possibly shed some light on this and will have to be consulted in the future. This is probably the only avenue open to finding out anything further of her early life.

When the Catholic registers of births and marriages became available on line under the auspices of the National Library of Ireland I had hoped that some information might be forthcoming on her parents. However, the records of births and marriages in the 1840s were short on detail. In fact, the marriages gave just the names of the couple and their witnesses, no occupations or addresses. Probably Rose's parents were Michael O'Toole and Catherine Donnelly who were married on 29th March, 1845 as the only child named O'Toole listed in this period was Roseanna O'Toole, daughter of this couple who was baptised on 23rd February 1846. Again there was little information other than the names of her sponsors, Francis and Roseanna Vallely. When Rose got married the newspaper report stated that she was born in 1852 but vanity may well have been responsible for the loss of 6 years!

I checked the General Valuation of Ireland (also known as Griffiths valuation) in 1864 because it lists householders by streets so if Rose's family was around it would surely be included. I was delighted to find a Michael O'Toole living in a house in Dobbin street. I also discovered a front page advertisement in the Ulster Gazette which ran for several months in 1865 for 'M. O'Toole, Practical and Scientific Tailor' and the address given was Dobbin Street. He also appeared in the "Business Directory of Belfast and Principal Towns in the Province of Ulster, for 1865-66". There however, the trail runs cold. There were no further newspaper advertisements that I could find and in the revised valuation records it would seem that the house in Dobbin Street exchanged hands in 1867.[8] Perhaps the whole family went to America.

I will still keep searching for information on Rose O" Toole because her story deserves to be recorded. She was an Armagh person who certainly made a name for herself in her chosen field and she certainly struck me as a resourceful woman who strove at what she did and availed of every opportunity to achieve her ambition.

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James McLevy: Ballymacnab's Sherlock Holmes

by Eric Villiers

In the 1990s James Magowan, a retired police superintendent donated the James McLevy Trophy to recognise outstanding achievements in crime fighting in Scotland.

What few people know however is that McLevy was from Armagh and the memorial award recognition of his unique place in the history of criminology.

It now seems clear that James McLevy was the Edinburgh policeman whose modus operandi inspired the creation of Sherlock Holmes, the world's most famous fictitious detective.

McLevy was a farmer's son from Ballymacnab, Armagh, and he grew up there before moving to Scotland. Born in 1796 he worked as a weaver before migrating to Edinburgh to work as a builder's labourer. His big break came after a spell as a night watchman, when his obvious intelligence saw him offered a place in the Edinburgh police force.

In 1833 he became the city's first detective and for the next 30 years used his observational powers to solve over 2,200 cases: included crimes in the burgeoning city committed by house-breakers, robbers, forgers, counterfeiters and pickpockets.

His fame reached such heights that the UK Parliament consulted him about crime fighting and Mary Carpentar, the great social reformer, quoted him in her paper about dealing with convicts.

As a detective he was well in advance of his time. He was a keen student of criminology and many of his successes were due to his psychological analysis of the criminal mind. He had an uncanny knack of memorising faces and even the most elaborate disguise failed to fool him.

Without the scientific aids that today's sleuths use McLevy made it a habit of getting advice on forensics from scientists at the medical faculty of the University of Edinburgh.

In 1860, at the end of his career, he wrote several popular books including *Curiosities of Crime in Edinburgh*, *Sliding Scale of Life* and *Disclosures of a Detective.* It is thought that it was these books and McLevy's links to a medical school that helped inspire Sir Arthur Conan Doyle the writer who created Sherlock Holmes.

In the late 19th Century Doyle was a student at the medical faculty which helped McLevy and it is reasonable to assume that Doyle got at least a degree of inspiration for his fictitious detective from McLevy's work and from the books he wrote.

Doyle has not been the only writer to draw on McLevy for inspiration. In recent years a dozen episodes of the BBC Radio 4's *Afternoon Drama*, written by David Ashton and starring Brian Cox as McLevy were based on stories from his career.

The evidence connecting McLevy to Sherlock Holmes is strengthened when you examine the manner in which McLevy solved mysteries: like Holmes he picked up clues that only became obvious after he explained them.

McLevy became notorious among criminals because he could spot the tiniest of clues: investigating a violent assault and robbery in the home of a wealthy lady all she could tell him was that the man was wearing moleskin trousers.

In a city of over 200,000 people thousands of working men wore moleskin trousers – the chances of solving the crime seemed impossible.

However McLevy quite quickly found the criminal as he later related in one of his books. One day on Edinburgh's high street McLevy spotted a man known to the police, and noticed he had recently had his moleskins trousers washed.

After McLevy stopped him he later gave details of their conversation in one of his books:

"George", said I, "you have got your moleskin trousers newly washed, but och man they are not well done".

"What do you mean," said he.

"Why you have forgotten to wash out the stains of Miss Bellamy's blood".

"In an instance every trace of blood drained from his face and he was struck dumb".

On another occasion after a murderous assault on an elderly farmer, McLevy was questioning a suspect who lived in the centre of Edinburgh – he knew he had his man after he spotted hayseed on his clothes.

McLevy it seems was never off duty and forever curious. While buying goods in a hardware store one day the shopkeeper casually mentioned that a young girl came in every day to buy a pewter spoon.

He waited for the girl to return and followed her to a workshop where he rounded up a gang who were using the pewter to make counterfeit shillings.

His ability to find stolen goods in the oddest of places was also uncanny. Coming across a well known "fence" in a café he searched him but found nothing. He then reached into the soup bowl on the table and fished out a set of valuable jewellery.

Detailed to track down a Bo'ness schoolmaster suspected of robbing a young messenger of £200 McLevy found him in a public house in Edinburgh where he had gone to begin spending the proceeds of his crime. A search revealed nothing of value on him. Asked why he was in the pub the suspect said he was returning two empty bottles for a refund.

McLevy asked to see the bottles, knocked the neck off one and out spilled a roll of notes – the other bottle contained the rest.

In his work McLevy rarely resorted to using firearms, instead relying on subtlety and craft. On one occasion he was tracking down a servant accused of a violent robbery against his master. He was found in a lodging-house known to be frequented by criminals.

McLevy dressed himself up as a tramp and got into the house, where he found his target, a giant of a man proud of his stature and feats of strength. McLevy had spotted his Achilles heel.

He turned the conversation to feats of strength in which the suspect eagerly took part. After a while McLevy asked him could he break hand-cuffs and he duly agreed to try it – needless to say neither he nor McLevy opened them after the trick was over.

Pick-pockets were the scourge of most Victorian cities and McLevy was called on to provide solutions all over Scotland. His most successful ruse was to use the thieves own ruses against them. They often used a pretty girl as a street singer to attract crowds. McLevy simply rigged himself out as a fat cat farmer fresh up from the country and complete with a bulging wallet – after that he only had to wait.

Down the generations newspapers like *The Scotsman* in Edinburgh and the *Belfast Telegraph* had kept alive McLevy's fame, but in recent years even more interest is being paid to him with a web page devoted to his memory.

His father was John McLevy, a farmer and weaver at Ballymacnab and his mother was Catherine Dourie – he had a sister called Mary. James had minimal schooling before leaving to become an apprentice weaver aged 13 at Gate House Fleet n Scotland, a path taken by many rural Irish in the Georgian and Victorian eras. At 17 years of age he moved to Edinburgh and worked for a good few years as a builder.

At some point he married Rosa O'Neill and it was not until he was 34 years of age that he joined the police. In 1833 he became "C.O. No 1" (Crime Officer No 1) the city's first detective.

Many of his solutions in his real cases are strikingly similar to the fictitious stories of Sherlock Holmes.

His fame was such that he was the first police officer to get a financial reward for finding stolen property, gold watches. And on June 9, 1856 he was invited to speak before a House of Parliament select committee on the subject of the transportation of criminals.

The James McLevy website is, https://jamesmclevy.com

John Stanley: From Armagh to Allahabad

by Richard Burns

Sir John Stanley, his wife Annie and their staff in Allahabad

In the year that Allahabad High Court celebrates 150 years of existence, it is appropriate to remember the role of one Armagh man, who played a major part in obtaining funding and the planning of the new High Court buildings.

John Stanley was born on 22nd November 1846, the sixth child and second son of John Stanley and his wife Catherine Sarah nee Bell. He was educated along with his three brothers at the Royal School Armagh, however he was the only one to progress to Trinity College Dublin[1]. At Trinity, he received a classic scholarship leading to a senior moderatorship and gold medal in classics. He returned to the Royal School in 1870 as Assistant Master, however possibly due to his father's failing health he turned to a career in the legal profession, initially running his father's legal practice as well as studying for the Irish Bar to which he was called in May 1872. With offices in Armagh and Dublin he had a large general practice and was standing counsel for the Shaftesbury estate and for the Belfast and County Down Railway Company. In 1896 he was called to the Inner Bar by Lord Ashbourne, the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and in October of the same year was elected a Bencher of Kings Inns.[2]

John and Annie Stanley wedding 1879

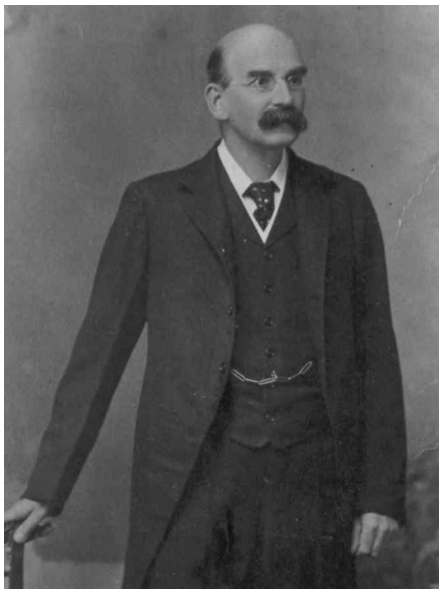
On 20th May 1897, he married Annie Norris, the daughter of James Norris of Castle Hill, Bletchingley in Surrey.[3]

In 1899 as a puisne judge of the High Court of Judicature in Calcutta. Three years later following the death of the incumbent Sir Arthur Strachey on 14th May 1901, Lord Curzon offered him the appointment as Chief Justice of the High Court of the North-West Province at Allahabad. It was a position he was glad to accept, as although he enjoyed his time in Calcutta, both he and his wife found the damp heat very trying[2]. In the King's Birthday Honours of the 7th November 1901 he was awarded a knighthood.

Lady Anne Stanley 1906

There were concerns in Allahabad about appointing someone from Calcutta as relations between the High Court and Bengal government had been strained in comparison to relations at Allahabad, however his support for both the subordinate courts and the judicial and executive officers of the government enhanced his reputation. He also managed to

clear the backlog of cases that had built up due to the inordinate delays in the administration of justice in India.



Sir John Stanley 1906

The Allahabad Law Journal Reports for 1908[4] is available online in the Google Archive, the bulk of the cases that the High Court dealt with are concerned with property. The following is taken from one of the cases included in the Journal.

The case of Ram Kali versus Jamna and another came before Sir John Stanley and Honourable Mr. Pramoda Charan Bannerji in August 1908. It deals with the Indian caste system Mahtab Singh is described as a Thakur meaning a nobleman or land owner while his son Ghansham Singh is described as a Sudra, the lowest caste.

Mahtab Singh was the occupancy tenant of certain fields. His father was a Thakur but his mother was a Kahar woman. Musammat Jamna was the concubine of Mahtab Singh, and by her he had a son, Ghansham Singh. On the death of Mahtab Singh, Musammat Jamna and Ghansham Singh applied in the Revenue Court for the entry of their names in respect of the occupancy holding of Mahtab Singh. The Revenue Court refused their application. Thereupon they brought the present suit for a declaration that Muammat Jamna was the wife and Ghansham Singh the son of Mahtab Singh and as such they were entitled to succeed to the occupancy holding. The courts below decided in their favour and this decision was appealed to the High Court

The judgement was delivered by Sir John Stanley as follows: The question in this second appeal is whether the plaintiff respondent Ghansham Singh who is the one and only son of one Mahtab Singh deceased by a concubine, who had lived continuously with Mhatab Singh, is entitled to the occupancy holding of his father as a male lineal descendant within the meaning of that expression as used in section 22 of the Agra Tenancy Act. The courts below have rightly held that Mahtab Singh belonged to the Sudra caste.

Both the lower courts held that the plaintiff was so entitled. We think that this decision is right. In other cases, their Lordships of the Privy Council held that the illegitimate children of the Sudra caste, in default of legitimate children, inherit their putative father's estate. In Sarasuli v. Mannu Pearson and Oldfield, held that illegitimate offspring of a kept woman or continuous concubine amongst Sudras are on the same level as to inheritance as the issue of a female slave by a Sudra and that the illegitimate son of an Kahir by a continuous concubine of the same caste took his father's estate in preference to the daughter of a legitimate son of his father, who died in the father's life-time. In Hargobind Kuari v, Dharam Singh, Straight, O. C. J., and Duthoit, J., held that according to Hindu Law and usage illegitimate sons are entitled to maintenance from their father and his estate is liable for such payment. Hindu Law differs from the English Law in so far that it does not treat an illegitimate son as *filius unclius*. His status as a son in the family is recognized and his right to maintenance secured to him.

On the foregoing authorities, therefore we think that it was rightly held in the courts below that the plaintiff Ghansham Singh is entitled in the absence of a legitimate son to the occupancy holding of his father's as male lineal descendant. We therefore dismiss the appeal with costs.

Sri S. P. Sinha a former judge at the High Court and later a Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court in an article entitiled "Some English Judges whom I Admired"[5] selected three judges, Sir Robert Aickman, Sir John Stanley, and Sir Theodore Piggot. Sir Robert Aikman served as a Judge in the High Court from 1892 to 1909, while Sir Theodore Piggot served as a Judge in the High Court from 1914 to 1925. He describes The Calcutta Weekly Notes account of Sir John's appointment as being in very complimentary terms and he brought to this Court a high reputation for ability and industry. His own description of Sir John is as follows: "His judgments show a thorough grasp of legal principles, wide experience, the saving grace of common-sense and a comprehensive view of human life. He was the master of a style simple, elegant and with an easy flow of words." He goes on to quote several cases, two of which are included below.[5]

His Lordship had a high sense of morality and he would not grant the husband a decree for restitution of conjugal rights if he had made a wanton and unfounded attack on the character of the wife. To quote

His Lordship: "We find him in the plaint itself heaping the vilest insults upon her. He charges her with immorality and adultery. In view of her parentage, position and fortune the charge, if untrue, is sheer cruelty".

Sir John Stanley according to Sinha was also singularly free from racial prejudice. Quoting a case from Jhansi which he viewed as typical of its kind and illustrates His Lordship's exalted character. One Rahim Baksh, a building contractor, did some work for the Government and had not been paid his dues despite repeated demands. One day, with more zeal than discretion, he approached the Engineer, Mr. Rice, and pressed his demand. This was too much for Mr. Rice. He not only scolded the contractor, but freely used his cane. Rahim Baksh brought an action for damages on account of the beating. Among the pleas raised by the Engineer in his defence was that what was done had been done in the discharge of his duty. The suit was dismissed by the Courts below. The second appeal came up for hearing before Sir John Stanley. His Lordship summoned Mr. Rice and plainly told him "It was no part of your duty to use your cane and beat the man".

His tenure as Chief Justice will probably best be remembered for the building of a new High Court,[6] following his appointment he quickly realised that the Court was not fit for purpose, and in the name of efficiency he harried the Local Government in pursuit of a new building, eventually overcoming their financial objections. He worked in close co-operation with the architects of the building but due to failing health his closest link to the building was in laying the foundation stone. This took place on the 18th of March, 1911, the building was eventually opened by His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy and Governor General of India, on the 27th of November, 1916.

Allahabad High Court

From 1907 to 1908 he served as Chairman of the United Provinces (Agra and Oudh) Famine Committee[6]. Famine was a regular feature of Indian life in the 18th and 19th centuries, agriculture depended on a favourable southwest summer monsoon which was critical in providing irrigation for crops. India suffered a major famine in the years 1896-7, it started in the Bundelkhand district of Agra Province, which experienced drought in the autumn of 1895 because of poor summer monsoon rains. When the winter monsoon failed as well, the provincial government declared a famine early in 1896 and began to organise relief. The famine spread to most parts of India, and while the monsoon rains of 1897 were plentiful, they were followed by outbreaks of malaria and cholera and later in the year the bubonic plague. The United Provinces suffered another major famine in 1907-8 again due to failure of the monsoon rains, although the effects were not as severe because of the establishment of canals in the area for irrigation and the expansion of the railways meant that people were less reliant on agriculture for employment.

He had been warned about his eyesight in 1909 and he gave up everything that required close attention apart from his work. His failing eyesight finally forced his retirement from India in 1911, his retirement the following April was announced in The Times on 8th January. For his work in India he was awarded the rank of Knight Commander of the Indian Empire. He and Annie returned to London and set up home in Gledhow Gardens, South Kensington. In December of that year the King approved his appointment as a Knight of Grace of the Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England[8].

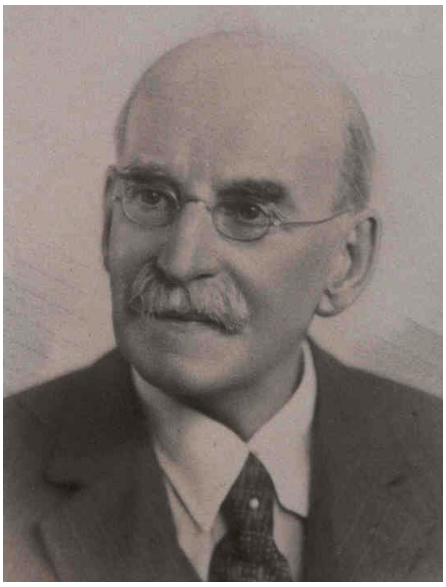
Gledhow Gardens

In November 1912, he was appointed President of the newly formed Indian Empire Club, and along with 470 others past and present residents of India attended the first "At home" in Prince's Restaurant in Piccadilly[9].

In September 1914 when news that Indian troops were to be sent to the western front, there was concern about their ability to cope with the climate and the Army's ability to provide suitable food and to cater for their spiritual needs. On 27th September 1914, an article in The Times describes the creation of the Indian Soldiers Fund, a charity to provide clothing and comforts to Indian troops and cavalry, it was also to provide food and luxuries to Indian prisoners of war in Germany and to Indian internees in Turkey and Asia Minor. Sir John was

appointed to the sub-committee of the St John's Ambulance Association responsible for the fund. On 9th October 1914, The Times published Lord Roberts appeal to raise funds for a Hospital in Alexandria where the Indian troops were initially posted and a smaller hospital at Marseille where the Indian troops in France would be based[10]. The Lady Hardinge Hospital at Brockenhurst was a private hospital set up by the fund for Indian troops. Lady Hardinge (1868-1914) was the wife of the Viceroy of India, Charles Hardinge (1858-1944), and the hospital was named in her memory.

Indian troops served on the Western Front, East Africa, Gallipoli, the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Suez, Sinai, Aden, and Palestine. Over the course of the war over one million Indian soldiers fought overseas, and by the end of the war a total of 47,746 Indians had been reported dead or missing; 65,126 were wounded. In notices for the Indian Soldier's Fund in 1917 Sir John is listed as the Vice Chairman. In the 1919 New Year's Honours, he was awarded a CBE for his work with the Indian Soldiers Fund[11].



Sir John Stanley 1928

While he made his home in London on his return from India, he maintained his links with Armagh and with former colleagues in the legal profession in Ireland. Attending functions in Belfast, Hillsborough, Armagh and Dublin. For some time after the war he maintained correspondence with T. G. F. Patterson about various matters of local interest including the Reverend William Henry Guillemard B.D., the Headmaster of the Royal School Armagh between 1848 and 1869[12].

Lady Annie Stanley 1928

Despite his failing eyesight he enjoyed playing golf and played regularly at Ranelagh Golf Club, winning the Junior Club Competition with a round of 67[13].

Sir John Stanley died on 7th December 1931 and his wife Lady Anne Stanley on 1st May 1946 and both are buried in East Sheen Cemetery, Richmond, London. One rather odd fact is that the gravestone inscription says Sir John "passed on" on 22nd December rather than the 7th.

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Stanley grave

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C. O'Neill Refreshment Rooms

by Karl O'Neill

When people hear the name **Eoin O'Duffy**, what immediately comes to mind? Chances are it's 'the Blueshirts', or 'the Irish Brigade in Spain', perhaps 'fascist sympathiser with the Nazis and Mussolini', and that 'Roman salute'; maybe it's just 'the tall guy with the Stan Laurel ears'. Some might mention his being an early member of Sinn Fein, and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, TD for Monaghan, Chief of Staff of the IRA, Garda Commissioner, the first leader of Fine Gael, a tub-thumping Catholic morality preacher who in reality was a chain-smoking alcoholic and repressed homosexual that in the end completely lost the plot. Something along those lines.

But for me, when I think of Eoin O'Duffy, I think of Tea Rooms. Or rather, **Refreshment Rooms**. More specifically, Refreshment Rooms in **Armagh**. Here I admit to a family connection. No, not to Eoin O'Duffy. To the said Refreshment Rooms in Armagh, my home town. They were owned by my great-grandfather, and GAA stalwart, **Charles O'Neill**. A founder member of the local Armagh Harps Club, he became County Chairman in 1903, the year the Ulster Council of the GAA was established, also in Armagh. Charles was soon made Vice-President of that Ulster Council, taking over from the man from Strabane who then became President, one Michael Victor O'Nolan, whose son Brian would achieve literary fame as Flann O'Brien. For much of two decades, Charles O'Neill's Refreshment Rooms was the hub of GAA activity in Armagh.

Now, as to Eoin O'Duffy… He was of course from Monaghan, born in Castleblayney, and began his working life as an engineer and then surveyor for Monaghan County Council in Clones. He became active in the Volunteers following the 1916 Rising, and was known for his exceptional organisational abilities, which were put to good use during the War of Independence. But he was also very active in GAA circles, and used the GAA as a recruiting ground for the Volunteers. He was Secretary of the Monaghan County Board in 1912, at the age of 20, and the following year was elected Secretary of the Ulster GAA Council, remaining so for the next ten years.

In February 1920, O'Duffy led the siege of **Ballytrain** RIC Barracks in Monaghan, and encouraged similar attacks on other police barracks, making himself a much wanted man among the authorities. On St Patrick's Day he attended an **Ulster GAA Convention** in Conlon's Hotel in Clones and entered in disguise, which was just as well as the police then raided the building. O'Duffy however made his escape. Exactly one month later the 'Adjourned Convention' was held in Armagh, and, where else, but in Charles O'Neill's Refreshment Rooms. This time, O'Duffy did not disguise himself and consequently when this meeting was also raided, O'Duffy was apprehended. The gathering had just been discussing possible strategies to increase attendance at the convention when… well, I'll let the Minutes of the meeting take it from there:

'*At this stage armed aliens surrounded the place of meeting and invaded the room; the Secretary being taken away by the military oppressors. The Council deliberations were only suspended while members wished our Secretary God speed and good wishes for a safe return. For some time the meeting was carried on under the eyes of the oppressor as an armed guard was placed in the room*.'

It would seem that O'Duffy had fully expected and intended to get himself arrested at the meeting in Armagh. His cunning plan was to get inside Belfast's Crumlin Road gaol and organise a hunger-strike among the Monaghan prisoners, and this he duly did, until the authorities gave in and released them. It is not known whether they dropped in to my great-grandfather's Refreshment Rooms on their way back to Monaghan but if they did I've no doubt they'd have been made very welcome.

Over the next twenty-odd years of our troubled and eventful history, O'Duffy made his mark, for good or ill, and died at the surprisingly young age of 52 in 1944. He received a state funeral that December.

Meanwhile, whenever I'm back in Armagh, I often dander down to the Shambles Corner area, on Lower English Street, and look up at the faded lettering on an old red-brick building – '**C. O'Neill, Refreshment Rooms'** – and I think of the day when armed aliens arrived to arrest Eoin O'Duffy.

The Rev. John Redmond at the Hindenburg Line in 1917

by W. E. C. Fleming

Rev. John Redmond 1917

The Battle of the Somme, on the Western Front in World War I, commenced on July 1, 1916, and became a prolonged engagement with heavy casualties being suffered on both sides. At the same time Germany was at war with Russia on its Eastern Front, and by the month of September, the German army being overstretched was reappraising its position. In these circumstances Field Marshal Hindenburg evolved the plan to straighten and thereby shorten the Front, by constructing a new defence line, conceding some ground in the process. This work commenced in September 1916, and his new position became known as "the Hindenburg Line".

It was here that the Rev. John Redmond, serving as a Chaplain to the Forces, wrote from the Allied Front, on April 15, 1917, to his sister Peggy (Margaret), in the family home at Grange Lower, Portadown, as follows:

"*My dearest Peggy,*

You have doubtless read the good news of our great victory last week and the progress since. On the part of the Front where I am, the progress, though at times meeting with checks, is almost continuous daily. On the battlefields of last week, where the infantry attacked, big guns are now to be seen. You could ride a horse today with comparative safety in daylight, behind the first trenches of the Hindenburg Line! In front of this new world, and famous Line, their barbed wire was tremendously strong. There were 14 lines of it with twisted iron stakes every four feet square. It was about four feet high with, I suppose, 30 strands, and all the rows interwoven in a very thorough fashion, nothing human or animal could get thorough or over it. Then behind this, two other defences of wire not nearly so strong, and behind all, their front line trench.

Through the wire there were tracks down which machine guns fired, and there were narrow trenches down which snipers moved to pick off officers of the attacking party as they came forward. Where our guns had destroyed this wire, our troops carried the German line, but where it was not cut success was a physical impossibility. Yet our gallant fellows advanced up to the uncut wire in face of a galling fire, searched for tracks that had been cut here and there and went through! But alas, to get to the German trenches was impossible, and so they heroically laid down their lives without turning their backs to the enemy. The gallantry of these fine fellows could not be exaggerated. I have been several times over the battlefield trying to get our noble dead buried, but they have not all been collected yet. I hope to get this melancholy duty completed tomorrow morning. I preached to them the day they went up for the battle, and did what I could to inspire them with enthusiasm for our great and righteous cause, and it is sad now to have to commit so many of them 'earth to earth'. But such is war.

Two days ago I had somewhat of an escape. I was burying a man, and when half way through the service, a shell fell eight or ten yards away, and severely wounded a man standing beside me. I was not touched, thank God.

The weather has been mostly wet or snowy and cold, but I keep perfectly fit and well, though I haven't had the shelter of an unbroken house for weeks. Last

week I built myself a hut with materials taken out of German gun pits, but it was very rough and I am away from it now. I hope someone is reaping the benefit of it. I am writing this on a box in a broken room of an all but completely demolished house, I can see the sky thorough the ceiling, and yet this is possibly the best room and house in the whole village. And this village is like every other village in nearly, if not quite all 100 square miles! I haven't had any clothes off properly day or night for weeks, except when getting a bath or change of under clothing! Oh for a month of dry warm weather!

The army, in spite of the cold and wet and lack of shelter, is full of optimism and full of cheer. The way the men take everything is a never ceasing marvel. While I was finishing that last sentence a Bosch heavy shell passed overhead with its peculiar roar and fell a 'dud' not far away. A 'dud' is a shell that fails to burst.

But I must now close. With best wishes to father and mother and you all. Has Johnston arrived at home yet?

Ever your affectionate brother John.

P.S. I have had to send my little harmonium and other things to a store (a dump), and with them I sent my Bible as it was so big. Will you please send me one of my small ones as soon as you can?"

The Rev.John Redmond subsequently served as Curate assistant at St. Anne's Cathedral, Belfast; Rector of Ballymacarrett, 1920-29 (then the most populous parish in the Church of Ireland); Rector of Doagh, Co. Antrim, retiring in 1951 to Grange Lower, Portadown.

He married in 1924, Lydia Margaret (Peter) Smith, of Bristol; issue, Pat and Jack. He died, July 17, 1967, aged 91 years, and his ashes are buried in Tartaraghan churchyard.

Rev. John with his sister Peggy 1960

Peggy (Margaret), his sister to whom he wrote, was born at Grange House, Feb. 7, 1886. She trained as a National School Teacher at the Church of Ireland Training College, Dublin, and taught for a short time in Loughgilly parish. She then returned to the family home to share with her brother, Joseph, in running the farm.

They concentrated on developing the orchards, with special emphasis on the Bramley apple, and Peggy, in the 1930s, served as Hon. Secretary to the Ulster Fruitgrowers' Defence Association, which protested vigorously against a duty imposed by the then Irish Free State government, in 1933, of 11 shillings (55p) a barrel on imported apples. In recognition of her work in fostering the apple industry in County Armagh, she was awarded the M.B.E. She died, unmarried, at Grange House, Sept. 7, 1979, and is buried in the family plot in Tartaraghan parish churchyard.

Johnston, brother of the Rev. John, mentioned at the end of the letter, was born Oct. 22, 1881. He was educated at Dundalk Grammar School; emigrated to Australia, and studied at St. Aidan's College, Ballarat, Victoria; ordained deacon, 1905, and served in the Anglican Church there for thirty years. He also served as a temporary Chaplain to the Forces in WWI, 1916-18, in France, Belgium and at sea. In recognition of his services, he was appointed Chaplain, with the rank of Lieut-Colonel, in the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces, 1932-36. He subsequently served in the diocese of Manchester, England. He married and had issue in Australia. He died, July 13, 1964 at a nursing home in Southport, Lancashire.

The foregoing letter, written at the Hindenburg Line, is reproduced courtesy of the writer's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Dorothy Redmond, Portadown.

The day 'Old Blood and Guts' came to town

by Kevin Quinn

General George Patton's address to the G.Is on the Mall was part of the Allies D-day deception plan, codenamed; 'Operation Fortitude'.

Background: General George Smith Patton JR

General Patton was one of the most able but also one of the most controversial American commanders of World War II. Patton came to international prominence and fame with the United State's entry into the Western theatre of the War and distinguished himself during the invasion of North Africa and the subsequent capture of Sicily during 1942—43. Patton's family had a strong military background on his father's side. His grandfather was a Brigadier General in the Confederate army during the American Civil War and his great uncles were also both military officers. Patton continued this long military tradition and graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point 1909. In 1916, he accompanied General John Pershing as his aide on a punitive expedition in Mexico pursuing the Mexican insurgent Pancho Villa. In World War I, Patton, who was then a lieutenant Colonel, was injured in the leg during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in France in September 1918.

Fig. 1. (Private collection) General Patton saluting as units of the 2nd US Infantry Division pass by. To the right of Patton, stand Major General Walter M Robertson, Commanding General of the 2nd US Infantry Division, and General Wade H. Haislip, Commanding General of XV Corps.

Controversy during World War II

During visits to two different field hospitals in Sicily in August 1943, Patton verbally abused and slapped two patients after they explained to him that they were suffering from a form of shell shock. An enraged Patton ordered them back to the front lines. The incidents caused widespread controversy resulting in Patton being severely reprimanded by the overall Allied Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower. Consequentially, Patton was removed from field command for several months.

Patton's role in the D-day Deception.

Eisenhower was aware that the German high command feared Patton more than any other allied general and so decided to put Patton to some use by using him in a deception campaign named " Operation Fortitude". In an elaborate ploy designed to convince the Germans that the Allied invasion of Europe would take place in the Pas-de-Calais region of France and not in Normandy, Patton was put in charge of the fictional "First US Army Group" or "FUSAG". Patton's main contribution to the deception was by making speeches throughout Britain as commander of "FUSAG". However, secretly Patton had been put in charge of the American Third Army which would take part in the invasion after the initial phase.

The purpose of Patton's speeches

A key aspect of this elaborate ruse to wrong foot the Germans, was for Patton to maintain a high visibility by delivering speeches to his mythical "FUSAG". In reality, the speeches were made to divisions of the newly formed American Third Army to help motivate them for their upcoming combat duty.

It is estimated that Patton probably delivered four to six speeches between February and June 1944. One of these speeches, known simply as "The Patton Speech", has become legendary partly due to its interpretation by George C. Scott in the 1970 film *Patton*. Some historians have went so far as to say that it was the greatest motivational war oration of all time.

Fig. 2. (Private collection). General Patton addressing the assembled 2nd US Infantry Division. Patton's speech on the Mall that April morning was part of a greater act which hoped to convince the Germans that the Allies would land in the Pas de Calais region in the north-east of France.

The content of the speeches

Patton was renowned for his direct and brash style of speech-making. One historian has remarked that Patton "never sugar coated anything" and this is probably one of the greatest understatements made in regards Patton's rhetorical style. Most of his fellow officers were of the opinion that his speeches were merely laced with profanities and were just foul-mouthed, loud, and uncouth. However, to the enlisted men Patton spoke "the language of the barracks" i.e. a down to earth style of language which they could easily understand and relate to.

One possible reason for Patton's direct style could be put down to the fact that he suffered from severe dyslexia as a child and that he continued to have problems reading throughout

adulthood. Perhaps this is one reason why Patton rarely (if ever) rehearsed or prepared his speeches. However, Patton's unconventional style has even earned him praise in academic circles with one historian hitting the nail on the head by describing Patton as "the master of an unprintable brand of eloquence".

Preparing for the Armagh visit

In late March 1944, Patton arrived in Northern Ireland to speak to and to inspect the training of the American Third Army in counties Armagh and Down. Before arriving in Armagh, Patton addressed American troops training in the Mourne Mountains and at Green Castle airstrip. The American troops based in and around Armagh had been made aware of the visit sometime before. Below is a quote from the memoirs of American soldier based at Tynan Abbey:

"We spent days before the review getting ready, everything had to be just right, our equipment, weapons and uniforms cleaned and polished again and again to make sure everything was in order".

The locals get to see and hear 'Old Blood and Guts'.

Local folklore recounts that the Mall was secured the evening before the visit by military police and residents of the Mall were requested to remain indoors and for their doors and windows to be closed.

This was apparently a precautionary measure against the possibility that Patton's profanities may be overheard by the locals, particularly by women and children However, the memoirs of an American soldier who was present that morning confirms that the locals were quite keen to see and to hear Patton: *'Many townspeople gathered nearby or listened to the speech from the second storey windows surrounding the square, however, a few minutes of Patton's R-rated (X-rated) speech was enough'.*

The G.I.s memoirs are collaborated by the recollections of a Armagh lady who was also present that morning. In a closer examination of fig.3 a police officer can be seen standing in front of a group of civilians.

Fig. 3. (Private collection). General Patton reviewing troops in front of the County Museum and St. Mark's Place. In the background of this picture, on the lower left side where Beresford Row joins Charlemont Place (the row of buildings that now house the Education Authority), it is possible to make out a figure which resembles a policeman standing in front of what appears to be a group of civilians.

The Mall, Armagh, Saturday 1st April 1944, 10 am.

On Saturday 1st April at 10 am, the US 2nd Infantry Division along with other units were assembled on the Mall to be reviewed and addressed by General Patton. Memoirs from four American soldiers assembled that morning describes the events:

'One day we had to march into Armagh to hear General George Patton address our troops. The scene was a sea of soldiers crammed into a park, referred to as the Mall. Patton was the head of our army at that time'.

'*On the first day of April 1944, the entire division assembled at the Mall in Armagh an important event in our lives. We were to be reviewed and inspected by General Patton himself. Unit after unit marched into the vast green expanse of the Mall, each one smartly taking its place on the green, waiting for the general to appear'.*

'The regiment was required to assemble at 3.00am. Unfortunately the general and his convoy did not arrive until 10.00am.The boisterous fire sirens could be heard for miles as his convoy approached the Mall. The men stood to attention for at least an hour before the general began the scheduled troop inspection and motivational speech'

'Attention! The command sounded and echoed through the Mall as the different units made ready for the general coming. He made his way firmly and proudly through the ranks of the regiments.... his discerning eyes sized up our appearance, from the top of our helmets to the tip of our combat boots. Our bayonets gleamed in the scant sunlight of Armagh in the spring sun. The general was impeccably dressed in jodhpurs, shining riding boots and combat jacket. I searched for the pearl handed revolvers his trademark, but today he was not armed'.

The Mall probably held over 15,000 troops that morning as each of Patton's addresses in other parts of the UK were delivered to division sized forces of 15,000 men or more.

The Mall Speech

It has been suggested that "The Patton Speech", or at least some elements of it, were first delivered on that April morning in the tranquil setting of the Mall. Based on some of the snippets taken from the personal accounts of American service personnel who assembled there that morning, it seems quite possible that the explosive language and lurid vocabulary of that famous speech could have been first unleashed on the city of Saints & Scholars. Below are quotes from soldiers who were present that morning:

In this extract, a soldier recalls how he was inspired by seeing and hearing Patton on the Mall:

"They made their way to the reviewing platform set up at one end of the Mall. Facing the assembled troops; the general stood in front of the microphone and told us about the things we would have to face in an invasion....he told it like it was, about the pain and fury of combat and the resoluteness of the enemy; it's fanaticism for the Nazi cause...the only way to beat them is to kill them, he said and this we must do. He already had me believing I could do it....we stood at ease, but my insides were at attention spellbound by the words.... I could not take my eyes off him. I had never before seen a living legend....we stood at attention again after he had finished speaking, the each unit wheeled smartly past the reviewing stand and out of the Mall, to where the trucks were parked"

These quotes provide a flavour of Patton's so-called 'eloquent profanity':

"I remember his speech was very fiery and outspoken to put it mildly. He said 'when you get into hand to hand combat, don't just stick your bayonet in – stick it in and twist it'"

"B Company saw the legendary General George Patton. The General told the assembled division, Give them hell boys!"

One source claims that Patton ended the speech with the comment,

"Veterans of the Third Army if you stick the Son-of-a-Bitch in the ass, shoot him in the ass as he runs away".

Unfortunately, a transcript of the Armagh speech is yet to come to light.

It was like something from a film set' - a ninety-four year old lady from Armagh recalls Patton's visit to the Mall.

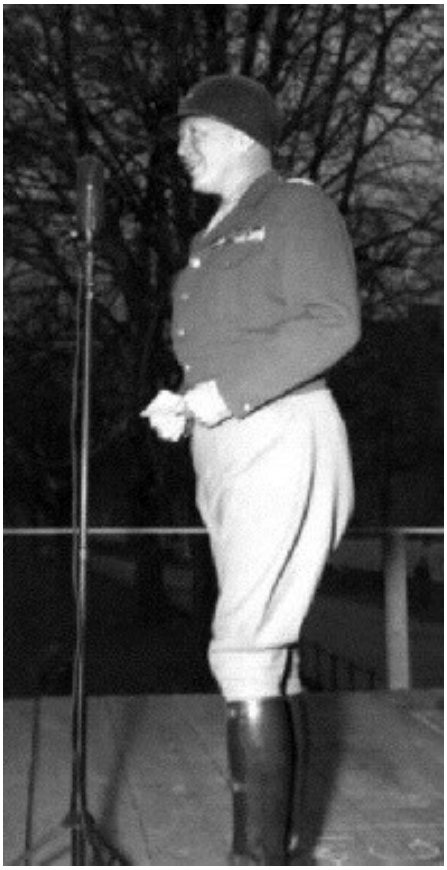

Fig. 4. (Private collection) Patton's facial expression would suggest that he was probably enjoying one of his vulgarities.

According to one local lady who was present that morning, large groups of civilians were permitted to gather in the vicinity of the Mall. This is contrary to the myth that the Mall had been basically sealed off from civilians and that the residents living there had to batten down the hatches in the fear of a Patton profanity getting too close to ear shot. This is her recollection of the event:

'I was 22 years old and a medical student at Trinity in Dublin at the time. I had returned to Armagh during a university break. There had been a feeling about the town in the days leading up to the visit that something big was going to happen. I remember that morning making my way to the bottom of Jenny's Row. I can recall two large crowds of civilians gathered at the bottom of Russell and College streets. I could see the formations of soldiers standing in the Mall. It was a most unusual scene; it was like something from a film set. I thought how ironic it was to have soldiers being prepared for war standing beside the war memorials. I could then hear a loud crackling noise; it was the Tannoy system and then a voice coming through. I think Patton was at the top of the Mall near the jail. Well! Today I think the term for the language used that morning is 'BLUE'. His language was terrible; I think the content would still shock even today.'

Patton 1944—45:

Acclaim, more controversy and conspiracy.

Patton's motivational speeches most definitely had the desired effect as the American Third Army would go on to play an integral role in the last months of the war. When one injured American soldier, on his way to a field hospital, was asked about the Patton successes, he simply stated: "It was our blood and his guts".

Fig. 5. (Private collection). Patton reviewing the troop formations located on Mall West. Patton frequently kept his face in a scowl that he referred to as his "War Face"

Under Patton's command, the Third Army closed the Falaise Pocket in August 1944 thus ending the battle for Normandy and then relieved the siege of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. Despite his vital military successes, Patton was constantly reprimanded by General Eisenhower for stirring up various

political controversies in the months after the war. On 9th December 1945, Patton sustained spinal cord and neck injuries in a car accident. Patton died 12 days later. It has been claimed that Patton was assassinated in order to silence him. The accident and his subsequent death is one of the enduring mysteries of the war era.

Fig. 6. (Private collection). General Patton and Major General Walter M Robertson saluting the US 2nd Infantry Division. In the background can be seen a unit of troops standing in front of Hartford Cottage. Further to the left, a lot of windows in the Hartford Place houses are open. So this probably confirms that the local residents had been listening to the speech.

British Forces on the Mall during the Second World War.

The Mall was also used for a similar purpose by the British Forces during World War II, but it is not certain whether this was before or after the Patton review on the Mall in 1944. There is no contemporary information as to the purpose of the gathering or when it occurred. However, based on the composition of the services it appears to be something more akin to a military tattoo. The relaxed atmosphere and demeanour of the different services could suggest that the photo was taken sometime during the so-called "Phoney War" period (i.e. from the outbreak of the War in September 1939 to May 1940) or as a part of a victory celebration in April or May 1945.

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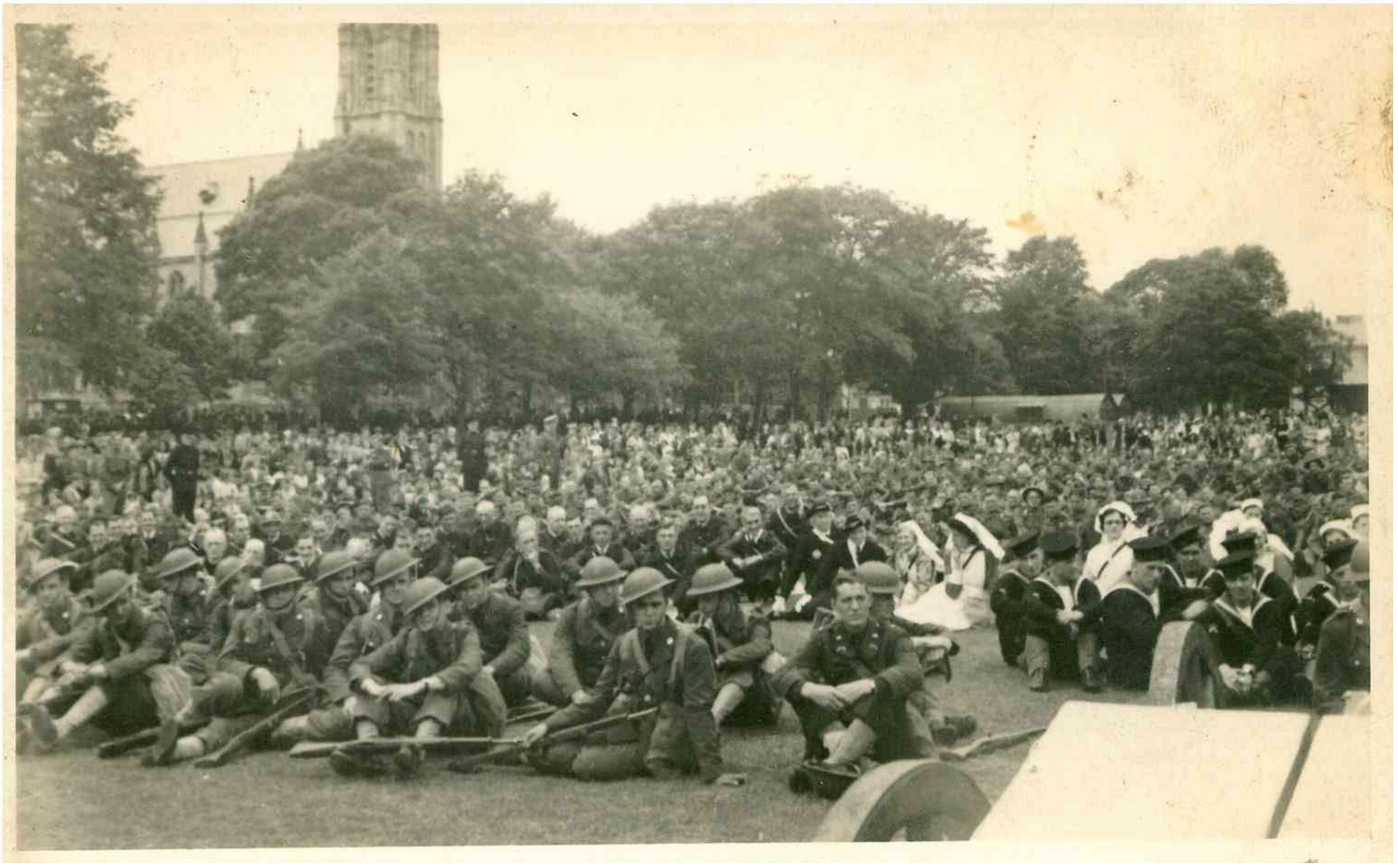


Fig 7. (Private collection). Photo of the different branches of the British forces on the Mall. Date unknown but probably either between September 1939 and May 1940 or April /May1945.

The Easter Rising, 1916 according to the local press

by Mary McVeigh

Armagh was dead at Easter 1916 according to the *Ulster Gazette.* Indeed in the edition of that week it bemoaned the fact that there was not even a football match or a race meeting so those who were 'leisure bent' had to go elsewhere which was not good for the local economy. However, all the churches of the various denominations were 'largely attended', it reported.[1]

If nothing of significance happened in Armagh the same could not be said for the capital city. Both local papers in the following weeks gave considerable space to the uprising in Dublin which started on Easter Monday, 24th April, and needless to say neither was sympathetic to the rebel cause. The *Armagh Guardian* observed: "There is not the slightest doubt the authorities were caught napping, but it is somewhat of a consolation that the rebellion had to be dealt with by the military authorities and not by the mollies of the Castle". This paper had, 'on very reliable authority' that 'open encouragement and sympathy' with the rebels had been expressed in Armagh and 'these expressions were nothing but treason'. "Thus in our midst we have traitors who would rise if they dared," it declared.[2]

The *Ulster Gazette* decreed that it was the 'bounden duty of all loyalists now to do everything that [lies] in their power for the preservation of law and order'. It reported that all railway bridges in Armagh and district were being patrolled night and day by the constabulary and that every precaution necessary for public safety was being observed 'with utmost rigour' by those in charge.[3] Interestingly it published the entire Proclamation complete with signatories which it described as 'an extraordinary document'. As well, it had some comments to offer on Countess Markiewicz who was deemed 'one of the strangest personalities in the Ireland for the Irish movement'. It noted she was 'apparently approaching middle age' and 'was of undeniably attractive appearance'. [4]

The A.O.H.

Condemnation of the rebellion was not confined to these two Unionist papers. At the fortnightly meeting of Division 12, Armagh of the Ancient Order of Hibernians a resolution, proposed by 'Bro.' Hughes and seconded by 'Bro.'Maguire was passed unanimously in which they wished to record 'their sense of grief and horror' regarding the recent insurrection in Dublin and 'heartily' sympathised with those whose homes were now 'desolate through destruction of property and loss of life'. They continued to pledge their support for John Redmond and his colleagues in the Irish Party and the 'constitutional policy which [has] resulted in so much lasting benefit to this country'. [5]

Disruption in Armagh

The rebellion caused some disruption in Armagh. Up until Wednesday of Easter week until the G.P.O.was captured there was no telegraph link but it was the suspension of rail travel which caused the most inconvenience. The cashier of the Provincial bank branch, Mr Taylor, had gone off with the key to the safe and was unable to get back, thus the safe could not be opened. Money had to be borrowed from other banks in the city so the bank could do business. "Needless to say the loan was at once given, for banks now and again have to oblige each other in this way if the lock of the safe goes wrong", so stated the *Armagh Guardian.* The Bishop of Tuam was unable to get to Armagh for the consecration of the Bishop of Derry and the Lord Chancellor's Registrar who had come here for the ceremony was marooned until the trains ran again. However, for some the stoppage of the passenger rail service was a boon. All the soldiers north of Dublin who had Easter leave were able to get a few more days at home.[6]

Private Twiss who was 'fired on and chased by rebels'

Both papers gave accounts by individuals from the area who had been caught up in the events in Dublin and there is no doubt there was nothing lost in the telling! The *Armagh Guardian* narrated the hair-raising adventures of a Loughgall soldier who had been 'fired on and chased by rebels'. It would seem that Private William Twiss from Ferlough Ardress was returning home from his battalion of the 3rd Irish Guards and was making his way by rail from the port of Rosslare on the Thursday after Easter but could only get as far as Sallins. He then had to

proceed on foot but when he got as far as Maynooth he found the people were 'distinctly unfriendly' towards him. Boys, parading with wooden guns cried out to him that soon he and all English soldiers would be shot. Not everyone was hostile however, for some women entreated with him to take of his uniform to save himself. Undeterred he kept on walking towards Dunboyne where he encountered a group of rebels and here things decidedly took a turn for the worse.

"They immediately started firing on him and as he was only one against hundreds, discretion was the better part of valour and he took to his heels through the fields. Twiss says he does not know how they missed him – they must have been drunk – because he heard the bullets whistling past by the hundreds and the rifles were certainly Mausers. He outdistanced his pursuers only by throwing away his overcoat and so succeeded in getting to Dunboyne police station".

Next day he continued his perilous journey on foot but in civilian clothes which had been loaned him by the police who sent a request with him to the barracks in Navan for reinforcements. He was joined on his trek by a Dundalk solicitor named Cleary who loaned him an overcoat. When they got near Dunshaughlin they discovered that it was in rebel hands so they struck across the country to avoid it, eventually reaching Navan. Here, they got a lift in a car to Dunleer where Twiss got a train and arrived home on Sunday morning. This is not the end of the story because he apparently went back for his overcoat and actually managed to recover it.[7]

Countess Markiewicz

The woman from Markethill who was mistaken for the Countess

No less exciting was 'a Markethill lady's experience' as recounted by the *Ulster Gazette*. The wife of Lieutenant George Taylor of the 12th Inniskillings. (The paper obviously saw no need to give her own name) was out riding in the Phoenix park in Dublin with her husband and another officer on Easter Monday afternoon when they heard shots and then saw a policeman and a sentry killed by a party of rebels. "The officers saw that the outbreak was serious, and the horses heads were turned and they rode hot haste to the Royal Barracks and warned the garrison there". Mrs Taylor returned to Ross's Hotel where she was staying but it soon became too dangerous to remain there because it would seem that the hotel was in the firing line. Indeed, her bed was pierced by bullets. She thus sought refuge in the Royal Barracks where she was shown how to use a rifle and a revolver. It would seem she put herself in danger by 'incautiously' looking out a window because a sniper 'presumably used it as a mark' and sent no fewer than 26 bullets into it, one of which narrowly missed her head.

During a lull in the fighting curiosity apparently got the better of her so she thought she would venture out to see what was happening 'up town'. She ran into a 'bullet-swept zone' at the quays and had to turn back with bullets 'splattering' all around her. An 'armed rebel' and others chased her back to the barracks but when she got to the gates she was immediately arrested and put in the guard room. It seems that she was mistaken for Countess Markiewicz as she was still in her 'astride riding attire of breeches and puttees' which was apparently the usual costume of the rebel aristocrat. Later on she visited the Four Courts after it had been captured where she saw large amounts of provisions which had been stored by the rebels as well as 'the contents of a raid on some cellars, for there was a splendid array of champagne bottles'. She also returned into Sackville Street 'and saw the rebels routed out of the houses, and felt the horrible smell of burning human flesh when the Post Office was on fire'.

Mrs Taylor's purpose in visiting Dublin was to retrieve a goal watch which had been left in a jewellers. Unfortunately, she was unsuccessful because the shop had been looted and set on fire. She concluded her story by saying that 'her nerves received such a shock from the fright and from the horrible sights of the dead men in the street that they were not settled till she found herself at home in Markethill, County Armagh.'[8]

Rather different in tone was a

report sent to the *Ulster Gazette* by a Middletown teacher, Mr J. Bradley. This was a first hand account, delivered in a more measured, factual manner but no less effective and impressive for all that. Mr Bradley intended going to Cork on Easter Monday to attend the Annual Congress of the Irish National Teachers Organisation. He duly set off from Tynan station and arrived in Dublin around one o'clock. He and a fellow delegate from Lurgan, Edward Bunting, dismissed warnings about the insurrection given by people in the station and set off with the intention of getting across town to King's Bridge where they were to get the train to Cork. When they were approaching Nelson's Pillar they heard the firing of guns and a couple of loud explosions. "At the same time a lad of about twelve years of age was carried down the street with his arm hanging by his side and bleeding profusely."

He continued: "In wending our way along the Quay we were under the cross-fires of the insurgents and military and were obliged to prostrate ourselves on the street, and twice to retreat into private houses for safety; the bullets whizzing over our heads and striking the houses and street within a few inches of us. After climbing over several barricades – motor cars, heavy lorises, carts, bread vans, boxed etc. – which the insurgents had placed in the street we succeeded in getting to Kings Bridge station which was held by the military".

Here they found about 80 fellow northern I.N.TO. delegates but learned that there were no trains going to Cork. They were very lucky to get accommodation in a hotel but they did not get much sleep because there was a large contingent of soldiers to the front of the hotel and at the rear ' a formidable body of Sinn Feiners had entrenched themselves behind a stout barricade, while unknown numbers were in population of the houses, the windows of which were sandbagged and otherwise provided for a stubborn resistance'. During the night the beds in the hotel were hurriedly dismantled and placed on the floor as a precaution against flying bullets. Throughout Tuesday and the following night the fighting continued. "The sound reminded one of a sudden and violent thunderstorm, and the effect on the nervous and delicate in Dublin must have been truly terrible ". On Wednesday morning Mr Bradley and his fellow delegates decided to make for home. [9]

Undoubtedly as far as the two Armagh papers were concerned the Easter Rising was an aberration, quickly suppressed but which at the time provided some dramatic interest of the kind which sells newspapers. This was the perceived view of many then which must surely show that all too often the future is not predictable?

References:

[1] *Ulster Gazette,* 29th April, 1916

[2] *Armagh Guardian,* 28th April, 1916

[3] *Ulster Gazette,* 29th April, 1916

[4] *Ulster Gazette,* 6th May, 1916.

[5] *Ulster Gazette, 27th May, 1916*

[6] *Armagh Guardian, 28th April, 1916*

[7] *Armagh Guardian, 5th May, 1916*

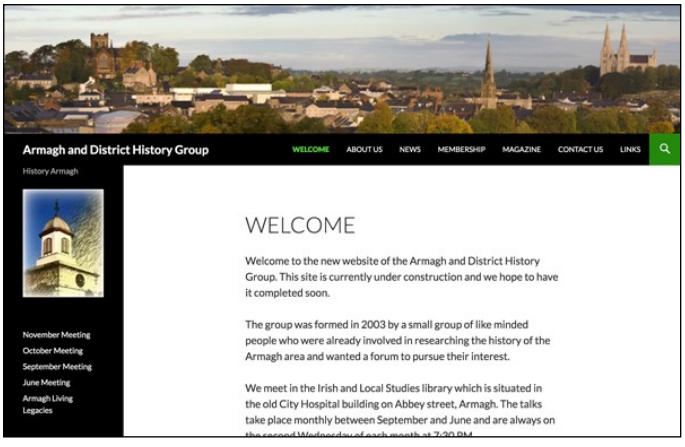
[8] *Ulster Gazette, 20th May, 1916*

[9] *Ulster Gazette, 6th May, 1916*

HISTORY GROUP WEBSITE IS AN IMPORTANT LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCE

Armagh & District History Group's website contains a wealth of information for the local historian. The website has undergone a transition to a new format and is being updated.

The Group publishes the successful magazine **History Armagh** and as back issues can be difficult or impossible to obtain, a decision was taken to make the magazine content available on-line. Currently over 50% of our articles are available on-line with more being added regularly.



The website has links to other mainly local websites that may prove useful to people with an interest in the history of the locality

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.historyarmagh.org

HEIRMÉAS ARD-MHACHACH by Nuala Reilly

i.m. John O'Connor marbh in Townsville 1960

Samhail agam Heirméas óg
Eiteoga órbhuí gruaige
Os cionn an dá chluais
Caipín cruinn
Ar bhaithis do chinn
Mála cearnógach leathair
Ag do choim
Tú crom os cionn an rothair

An saol ar do thoil agat,
Tú sa chéill ab aigeantaí
Ag spéirbhruinneall
Ó thír na Fraince.
An ghoic fhearúil uaibhreach sin agat
Ag tabhairt dhúshlán an tsaoil.

Tú í mbun pinn
Mórtas cine go smior ionat
Scéal bhunadh Rae an Mhuilinn
Á ríomhadh agat,
Do mhuintir beo beathach i do scéal
Ag comhrac na Callaine
'S í ag cur thar maoil
Le díle bháistí agus tuilte gan trua.

Do mhacghníomhartha féin sa scéal,
Gaisce a rinne tú
Ag iompar gabh uisce
Do do mháthair mhór
Gan deoir a chailleadh sna bróga,
Nár mhór ann geifear thú!

An seanmhuileann go ceannasach
De shíor bhur gcoimhéad
Seal ar obair
Seal díomhaoin.

Ach loic an aisling,
Seoladh an ainnir thar sáile,
Imirce agus éag i ndán duit
Bás bocht uaigneach sa gharbhchríoch
I bhfad ó bhaile
I ngan fhios do do mhuintir.

Níl a fhios agam
Ar éalaigh cumhracht
Ó Eamhain Abhlach
Ar anáil leoithne earraigh
A tháinig aniar aduaidh ort
Ar an choigríoch
A thug Bóthar Loch gCál
Tráth na n-úllbhláth
Os comhair d'intinne
'S a chuir snaidhm ar do chroí.

Níl d'ainm greanta ar leac uaighe
Ná níl plaic práis i do chuimhne
Ach mairfidh do chlú
Ar dhóigh níos buaine fós
I do scríbhinn
Agus sa mheon séimh
A mhaireann i muintir Ard Mhacha.

ARMAGH HERMES.

I imagine a young Hermes
wings of golden hair
above the ears
a little round cap
on the crown of your head
a square leather bag
at your waist
and you crouched on your bike.

The world to your liking
in the seventh heaven
entranced by a beauty
from the land of France.
Your proud manly head-toss
a challenge to the world.

You are working the pen
pride of race in you
to your very marrow
telling of the Mill Row
your people alive in your story
battling the Callan
as it overflows
in downpours and merciless floods.

Your boyhood deeds in the story
a deed of valour
carrying a "go" of water
for your Granny
without spilling a drop on your shoes.
Weren't you something else!

The old mill, tyrannical
eternally watching
at times working
at times idle.

But the dream was extinguished
the beauty returned home
your destiny
emigration
a poor lonely death
in the out-back
far from home
unbeknownst to your people.

I wonder
did fragrance from Appled Eamhain
steal away on the breath of a breeze
that caught you unawares
out foreign
and brought the Loughgall Road
in apple blossom time
before your eyes
and tightened a noose on your heart.

Your name is not engraved
on a head-stone
there is no brass plaque
in your memory
but your fame will survive
in a more lasting way
in your writing
and in the kindly mind
that lives in the people of Armagh.

This very day
in our presence
a blue plaque was unveiled
in your honour
at number 94 Banbrook Hill
let us raise a triumphant roar
for your celebration is secure for evermore.

Armagh and District History Group Chairperson, Mary McVeigh pictured below (seated) giving a talk during the John O'Connor Writing School on Armagh in O'Connor's time

Armagh and District History Group press Officer, Eric Villiers pictured above leading a Literary Tour on the Mall as part of the John O'Connor Writing School

An Armagh History Group Publication