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History Armagh

- **Posh picnickers or pioneers of prehistory?**
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- **Ice cream and chips ~ Italians in Armagh**

An Armagh History Group Publication

Mrs Tottenham admiring the Cloch an Fhir Mhóir, Rathiddy, Co. Louth, 12 July 1930. In legend, this is the stone where the hero Cúchulainn met his death. (Armagh County Museum collection)

See article by Sean Barden

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Watercolour, Scotch Street c1893 by James Lyons. From an illuminated address presented to Mrs Beresford by the Armagh Protestant Orphan Society. (ARMCM.15.1949)

Back Cover:
Tino & Aldo Nardonne in Tino's Cafe at 11 Thomas Street (early 1970s) Courtesy of Fernando Nardone

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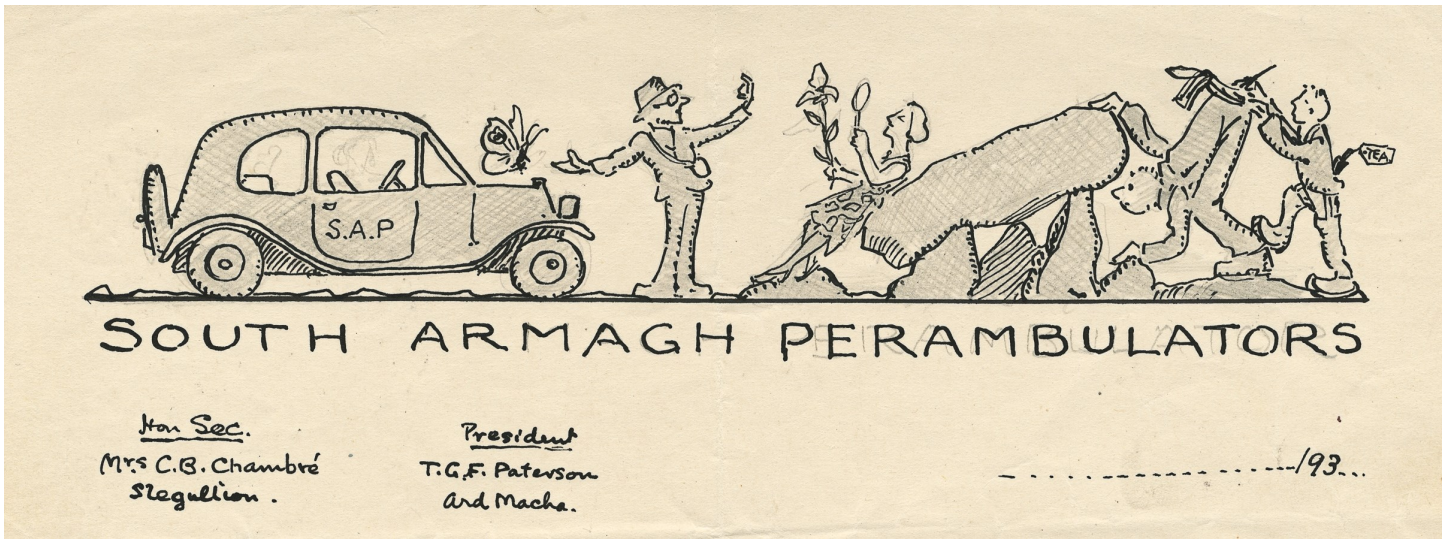
The South Armagh Ramblers Club posh picnickers or pioneers of prehistory?

by Sean Barden



Henry Godfrey Tempest's suggested letterhead for the Ramblers. (Armagh County Museum collection)

A new club

On 12 July 1928 four friends met to form a new club, they drew up a set of rules, elected officers and "set off to visit some places of interest in Creggan parish"[1]. Two of the eight rules are worth quoting because they sum up the club's intentions.

Rule 1. That the Club be known as the "South Armagh Ramblers Club" formed for the purpose of studying the antiquities of County Armagh in general, and those of South Armagh in particular.

Rule 2. That members shall endeavour to preserve all ancient monuments in their respective districts, and in the case of threatened destruction use all possible influence to prevent this.

This clarifies that the Club was not like many rambling groups which had evolved from the eighteenth-century Romantics' impulse to roam in wild landscapes in order to stimulate the body and spirit. The South Armagh Ramblers usually travelled by car. Nor were they connected to other clubs that were campaigning for the 'right to roam' that culminated with the 1932 mass trespass on Kinder Scout in Derbyshire eventually leading to the formation of England's National Parks. In fact a few years after their formation, Dundalk publisher, Henry Godfrey Tempest designed their club notepaper and suggested the 'South Armagh Perambulators' as a 'new and more exact title' for the club.[2] Although the rules suggested their geographical limits, rambles extended far beyond south Armagh.

The main sources for this article are two sets of records held in Armagh County Museum. The first is a set of four minute books totalling 706 pages of handwritten minutes made by Mrs Nina Chambre.[3] The other is a set of five notebooks totalling 440 pages, illustrated with over one hundred photos and numerous sketches compiled by TGF Paterson.[4] Paterson's books are numbered volumes one to six but volume three, (May to November 1930), is missing. Both sets cover the same period and contain a detailed record of sixty rambles between July 1928 and November 1933.

Who were the ramblers?

The short biographical notes below will give us an introduction to the most active members.

The president was Thomas or T.G.F. Paterson, a 40-year -old bachelor who managed Armagh's premier grocers and wine merchants, Couser's. His spare time was spent researching the history, folklore and archaeology of Armagh and in 1930 he would be appointed curator of Armagh County Museum where he worked until his retirement in 1963. He died 6 April 1971.

Club secretary and treasurer was 48-year-old Mrs Nina Chambre. She had been born in county Donegal where her father, Rev Alexander George Stuart, was a Church of Ireland clergyman.[5] She and her husband lived at Northland Row, Dungannon but during the summer

resided at Hawthorn Hill on the slopes of Slieve Gullion. Their country retreat was attacked and burnt to the ground by the IRA in May 1922 but was rebuilt and the Club's opening meeting took place there. Nina died in her native Donegal on 4 July 1958 and the demesne of Hawthorn Hill is now Slieve Gullion Forest Park.

The club librarian was Miss Mary (or Mollie) Barcroft aged 51. She was a member of a Newry Quaker family and before its demolition, their residence, The Glen, stood just west of the town. A housing development of the same name was built on the site in the 1950s. The Barcrofts were related by marriage to another prominent Quaker family, the Richardsons of Bessbrook. Mollie died 20 March 1959 at the Great Northern Hotel, Rostrevor.[6]

Her brother Dr David Barcroft attended thirty-two rambles and Miss Georgina Norman who joined in 1930 attended twenty-seven; the couple were married in November 1932.[7]

Twenty-nine-year-old John S.W. Richardson was appointed club botanist. He grew up at Moyallon county Down but sometimes stayed at The Woodhouse near Derrymore House, Bessbrook with his aunt Edith Williams.[8] He was a member of the wider Richardson dynasty that had developed the linen industry at Bessbrook and built the model village. In 1952 he presented Derrymore demesne to the National Trust; he died in 1985.

Three honorary members were elected at the first meeting, Mollie's 44-year-old sister Neta Barcroft, Deputy Keeper of the newly formed Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, D.A. Chart and Mr. E. Richey of whom we know little.[9] Miss Barcroft attended just seven rambles and Chart made it along to only four. Mr Richey is not mentioned again in the club books. Parish Priest of Forkhill, Father Clarke became an honorary member in September 1928 but like Richey, he is does not appear in the notes again.[10]

J.P Morgan and T.E.S Brereton were also founding members. A few months before the Ramblers' first meeting James P. Morgan with Paterson and Mrs Chambre explored a sweat house in Cadian near Eglish, Co. Tyrone. The result of their field trip was published in the Ulster Journal of Archaeology in 1940.[11] Thomas Edwin Sadlier Brereton was a 48-year-old bachelor who lived at Dean's Bridge on the outskirts of Armagh. He was born in India where his father had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the army. When he died in 1957 his estate was worth £30000.[12]

Other prominent members were Mrs Ellison whose husband was director of Armagh Observatory and John Sheringham, who worked at the observatory. The rector of Clonfeacle, Rev. Gordon Scott and his wife Tillie and Mrs Tottenham of Greenwood Park, Newry were also regulars on club excursions.

It is clear that most of the founding members were from privileged backgrounds and some already knew each other before the club was established.

Eighty-seven members or visitors are named in the notebooks but over half (46), attended none or just a single ramble and 70% went on less than five rambles. The most active members and the number of rambles they attended are outlined in the table below.

Rambler	Rambles
Brereton, Mrs	11
Scott, Mrs Tillie	13
Sheringham, Mr John	14
Richardson, Mr J.S.W.	15
Tottenham, Mrs	16
Scott, Rev Gordon	17
Ellison, Mrs	19
Barcroft, Miss Mary	22
Morgan, Mr. J.P.	24
Norman, Miss Georgina	27
Brereton, Mr T.E.S.	30
Barcroft, Dr. David	32
Chambre, Mrs	45
Paterson, Mr T.G.F.	53

Activities

The decision to establish a club library of archaeological works was made at the first meeting and it was agreed each member should keep a record of the club meetings. At the 1929 AGM it was suggested club funds should be spent on 'procuring photographs for the club collection'.[13] It is tempting to speculate that further sets of undiscovered Rambler's notebooks and photos survive in the family papers of other members.

Club activities were not confined to field work and the highlight of every ramble was a break for tea or a picnic at some scenic spot. Because of growing membership it was proposed in April 1929 that members should bring their own tea and cups on future rambles! They also

investigated renting a regular meeting room rather than relying on the hospitality of members but this was not carried through, probably because most of their activities were outdoors.[14] For instance, in June 1929 they held their Annual General Meeting at Lisnadill fort, although they did meet in Bessbrook institute in January 1930. However most of their rambles began and ended either on the slopes of Slieve Gullion, at Hawthorn Hill or at The Glen where the Miss Barcrofts would treat members to tea.[15]

Tea time at Lisnadill Fort, L to R, JP Morgan, JGT Sheringham, JSW Richardson, TGF Paterson, Dame Diana of O'Neill, Mrs Chambre and Mrs Tottenham.
(Armagh County Museum collection)

The Club grew slowly during the first two years with about seven ramblers on each outing. By the spring of 1930 there were more 'visitors' coming along and for the next two years between ten and fifteen people per ramble was normal. On 26 August 1931 a party of nineteen was conducted around the Cooley peninsula by Henry G. Tempest. A year later on 24 August 1932 a party of twenty-four including a contingent of Anglican clergymen that included Dean Swanzy of Dromore, Dean Carmody of Down and the bishop of Southwark Richard Parsons, rambled around the Bronte country of county Down. However these large excursions were rare and often just two or three enthusiastic members set out on 'unofficial rambles'. By 1933 numbers were falling to an average of eight which was the number of people who attended the last recorded ramble on 1 November 1933 which explored Armagh's Franciscan Friary and St. Bridget's well.

Where did they go?

Of the sixty recorded rambles, thirty-six were limited to county Armagh, a further three cris-crossed into Louth and excursions across the Armagh-Tyrone and Armagh-Antrim border happened on one occasion each. Twice they limited themselves to Meath and five rambles were confined to Tyrone and nine to county Down.

Over the five-and-a-half-year period they visited more than 150 sites and monuments ranging as far north as the Sperrins and south to the Boyne valley. Prehistoric monuments such as ringforts, megalithic tombs and standing stones were the most popular type of sites visited although they also explored ruined churches and castles too.

What did they record?

Sometimes the books recorded detailed notes of the places they visited, making observations, measurements as well as preserving a photographic record. On other occasions little was written except long quotes from published material. Of more significance, they often gathered valuable information from farmers and local people. There are also short but interesting headstone transcriptions from some of the graveyards they visited.

Amateur archaeologists

There were instances when the Ramblers physically intervened with monuments but evidence of excavations are rare. One example was at the souterrain (an underground passage known as The Fairy Cove), in the townland of Doohat or Crossreagh on the Armagh-Monaghan border, near Derrynoose. Paterson visited it in the summer of 1928 and by April 1929 had obtained permission from the owner, Mrs Robb, to investigate the site with a spade. He and Mr Brereton began clearing the entrance in May 1929 and Mrs Robb arranged to have the work completed for them. They returned twice more in June to survey the passages and Mr Brereton took some 'flashlight photographs' of the interior. Unfortunately, the photos do not survive in the Ramblers' notebooks.[16]

Sometimes finds were retrieved from sites. For example, a visit to Clanrolla mound on the shore of Lough Neagh in 1930 revealed that the five-meter-high mound had been disturbed by the landowner. He had dug much of the western half away to use as top dressing on his fields. Previously Paterson and Mr Sherringham had explored it in autumn 1929 and retrieved bones and flints from a distinctive layer known to locals as 'the black seam'. The Club's visit on 3 October 1930 revealed more pottery, bones and charred wood. The bones were sent to the Department of Zoology at Queen's University and a summary of Professor Gregg Wilson's report is written up in the minutes together with an abstract of a letter from curator of the Belfast Municipal Museum, Arthur Deane relating to the pottery and flints. Wilson made no clear conclusions about the bones except that they might be deer but could be horse and one was probably from a small pig.[17] Deane identified the pottery as Souterrain Ware which was in use between 750AD and the mid

1300s.[18] Some of these finds subsequently made their way into the collections of Armagh County Museum.[19]

First ramble of 1929 L to R, The Rambler, JP Morgan, John Richardson, Mollie Barcroft, Mrs Chambre, Mr Brereton (Armagh County Museum collection)

Reliable witnesses or fancy figures?

The quantity of observations made by the Club cannot be denied but how does the quality of the data hold up against modern figures? Because club rambles were not only opportunities to survey sites and monuments but social occasions where friends met and enjoyed each other's company, we might not expect the same consistent standard that a team of trained field workers would produce. A few times Paterson wrote that if only they had had a measuring tape it would not have been necessary to roughly pace out distances on the ground. However, as the following examples show, no figures were completely misleading and in most instances they compare very well with modern measurements.

During a ramble to the court tomb at Eshwary townland west of Bessbrook in May 1929 the height of two upright stones was recorded as 5ft and 4ft 4in.[20] In the Historic Environment Division online record the figures are 5ft 3in and 4ft 9in.[21]

The remains of a megalithic tomb south of Banbridge in Coolnacran townland was visited on 6 July 1932 and the height of the tallest stone was noted as 4ft 9½ in by the ramblers. The HED online record includes measurements made by an archaeologist in September 1989, her figure of 1.45m converts almost exactly to the ramblers' measurement (1.46m) fifty-seven years earlier.[22] [23]

Some of the notes should be treated with caution if we are expecting them to be faithful eye witness accounts. For instance, the note on Cadian sweat house near Benburb, visited in May 1932 is full of detail and measurements. However the words are copied verbatim from W.T. Latimer's account of the site which had been published in the Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland in 1894.[24] Although Paterson does conclude his notes by pointing readers to Latimer's article for more details, he does not say that the foregoing words were Latimer's and not what the Ramblers had observed on the day.[25]

One of the most valuable aspects of the notes is that they frequently record information taken down from farmers on whose land the monuments stood. For example, when they saw the standing stone at Moneyslane in August 1932 a neighbour James Straghan related that his father (who was born in 1806), said when he was a boy there were four stones and two of them had been destroyed many years before.[26] Again, Mr Cunningham of Killyfaddy, through whose farm the linear earthwork The Dane's Cast ran, told Paterson that he had found glass beads when digging a passage through it many years ago but unfortunately, they had been lost.[27]

Two records, one source

For the most part there is no difference in the text of Mr. Paterson's and Mrs Chambre's notebooks and there are several reasons for thinking that Chambre copied from Paterson. For instance, when Paterson draws a sketch, plan or diagram, Chambre's minutes include the caption but there is usually a blank space instead of the drawing.

Although the vast majority of the Chambre minutes match Paterson word for word, there are a few small differences that provide an insight into their personalities. Paterson had a fondness for colloquial expressions and there are occasions where it appears Mrs Chambre could not bring herself to include them. Paterson described the portal tomb at Aughadanove as, "The Oul' Grave or The Oul' Stones" but Chambre wrote, "The Old Grave".[28] Another ramble included a visit to Mrs Logan who lived at 'the agent's house' near Moira and she recounted the misfortune that befell Isaac Bell who levelled Trummery fort in the 1870s. Paterson wrote that he "took the gout in his stomach and did no good after, either in health or money".[29] Mrs Chambre omitted the gory detail and merely wrote that "Mr Bell got ill and did no good…"[30]

One mysterious observation that Paterson thought worth recording but did not make it into Mrs Chambre's more rational minutes, happened when they visited the stone circle at Ravensdale, county Louth in September 1932. Paterson wrote, "*Here a rather curious thing happened, two Sealyham terriers, that accompanied Mrs Stack refused to allow her to enter the circle and one becoming hysterical, she was compelled to return to the avenue with them without examining the monument*!"[31]

On another occasion when they visited the Grey Stone at Corran on 1 April 1929, Mrs Chambre ended her note by stating. "There are many stories told concerning it in the locality". Paterson's keen interest in folklore is evident when he wrote. "*There are many stories regarding it. One is that a bachelor in search of a wife by walking around trice and fulfilling certain conditions need fear no refusal, however haughty the maiden*!"[32]

An elderly TGF Paterson photographed by archaeologist Pat Collins at Aughnagurgan megalithic tomb, c1965.(Crown DfC Historic Environment Division)

The Club's legacy

It is not clear why the Ramblers' notes run out in November 1933 as there is evidence of some Club activity long after that date. For instance, in March 1937 John Richardson wrote to Paterson asking if there was to be an Easter Monday ramble. We unfortunately do not have Paterson's reply.[33] Two years later in April 1939 the Club is mentioned at a meeting of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club when it was noted that, "The affiliation of the South Armagh Ramblers' Field Club was accepted".[34] A note in the Belfast FNC annual report for 1945, indicates that the Club survived the war intact but evidence of their activities has not emerged.[35]

Establishing a link with a naturalists' group and adapting the name to Field Club signifies they were becoming more interested in natural history. Mrs Chambre and John Richardson may have influenced this move as they were keen botanists and Chambre had been a member of the Belfast Field Club since 1928 and Richardson since 1926. However the Belfast Club was also compiling lists of monuments; it and similar groups were doing important groundwork that would feed into the development of archaeology in Northern Ireland over the next ten years.

The pace of archaeological research in Northern Ireland was accelerating during the early thirties largely driven by two men. In 1928 Queen's University had appointed the geographer Estyn Evans as lecturer. He and another Queen's lecturer, Oliver Davies, both outsiders in their early twenties, brought a fresh energy to Northern Ireland's archaeological research.

If the Ramblers Club was fading into obscurity this was not true for key members. Paterson was facing time-consuming commitments so the club might not have been the priority it had been in 1928. By 1935 he was curator of Armagh County Museum and transforming the old Victorian cabinets of curiosities into a relevant county collection was a full-time job. However, with curatorship, came opportunities as well as obligations and Paterson was now well placed to participate and influence new agendas being written by the Belfast based academics. It isn't an exaggeration to say that his contribution to pioneering excavations and publications over the next ten years was only possible because of the work of the Ramblers.[36]

Oliver Davies wrote to Paterson in March 1937 to tell him it had been decided to reinstate The Ulster Journal of Archaeology which had ceased publication in 1911 and to, "ask you urgently to become a member of the committee".[37] It was reinstated in 1938 and between then and 1948 Paterson contributed thirty-six articles, collaborating with Davies on fourteen occasions.

In 1934 the Ancient Monuments Advisory Committee initiated a project that would culminate with the publication of The Preliminary Survey of Ancient Monuments of Northern Ireland in 1940. D.A. Chart who had responsibility for the care of monuments wrote to Paterson in December 1935 thanking him for joining the Inventory Sub-committee and giving him the good news that he would be allowed a "motor-cycle on any journey… undertaken for the sub-committee."[38] In the resulting publication Paterson contributed all but four of the ninety-five entries for county Armagh monuments and twenty-two entries for Tyrone.[39]

Mrs Chambre published ten short archaeological articles, nine of them in The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and one in the Ulster Journal of Archaeology and Mary Barcroft contributed an article to the UJA on Derramore House in 1838.

A quick glance might dismiss the ramblers as merely a group of friends from privileged backgrounds who enjoyed day trips to interesting ancient sites but this article has hopefully shown otherwise. There was clearly serious work going on and in their notebooks they have left an important record and it could be argued an early example of community archaeology.

Readers can browse and search all of Paterson's

Ramblers' notebooks online at, https://visitarmagh.com/places-to-explore/armagh-county-museum/research-geneology/

Further reading

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[6]Belfast Telegraph, 10 July 1959

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[8]Ramblers Minute book 1, p4 (ARMCM.70.2017), It is possible that Mrs Chambre mis-spelt E. Reily, the Works Division architect who advised Chart on historic monuments.

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[22]Taking 39.37 inches in one metre. Dividing 57.5 inches by this factor = 1.4605

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[29]Paterson's notebook Vol. 6, p22 (ARMCM.69.2017

[30]Ramblers Minute book No.4 p69 (ARMCM.73.2017)

[31]Paterson's notebook Vol. 5, p78

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[33]Letters from John Richardson to TGF Paterson 16 September 1936 and 7 March 1937. Armagh County Museum letter files

[34]Northern Whig, 19 April 1939

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[36]Letter from D.A. Chart to T.G.F. Paterson 10 December 1935, ACM letter files

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Random Jottings, Armagh

by Gerry Oates

'Random Jottings' was the title of a daily column in the Irish News many years ago. It was a collection of short articles on all sorts of topics, something which could be described as 'useless but interesting information'. 'Useless information' is something I could never resist, so I dredged the depths of my memory to dig up some hopefully interesting snippets relating to Armagh.

Lurgan spade

One often hears the expression 'a face as long as a Lurgan spade'. This turn of phrase, however, has nothing to do with the town of Lurgan, for there was never was a spade factory in the town or neighbourhood, as far as I am aware, or types of spade associated with the town. The expression itself refers to a 'long, thin, narrow face' or the 'gloomy, hang-dog look' which people adopt from time to time.

The origin of the term is found in the Gaelic 'lorga an spáid' (spade shaft). It is made up of *lorga* 'shaft' + *an spáid* 'of the spade' and in speech sounds approximately like 'Lurgan spade'.

Skite

When I arrived in Armagh almost 50 years ago I was introduced to the word *skite*, meaning 'a half-pint of beer'. "I'll have a *skite*' was a common expression in pubs. I knew the word from Belfast but in a slightly different sense; to me it was a 'splash of liquid' as in 'a skite of rain' or sometimes it could be a 'smack in the face'. It was always something which involved 'quick, jerky movement' and it seemed normal enough to apply it to quaffing a glass of stout or some other pleasant draught. After a little research I discovered that *skite* in Ulster usage came from the similar expression in Lowland Scots *skite* with a wide range of meanings including 'to squirt, splash liquid' and 'a sharp passing shower'.

Further research showed that *skite* derives ultimately from Old Norse, the language of the Vikings, and had perhaps made its way to these shores from the days of the Viking raids maybe 1400 years ago. From the Old Norse verb *skita* we have modern Swedish *skita*, Danish *skide* and Old English (*be)scītan*, all meaning 'to void one's bowels'. It should also be noted that words beginning *sk-* in Old Norse and the Scandinavian languages often adopt the sound *sh-* in English. Several examples of this practice turn up when we compare modern Swedish words with their doublets in English: *skjorta* / *shirt*; *sko* / *shoe*; *skepp* / *ship*; *skjuta* / *shoot*; *skott* / *shot*; *skam* / *shame*; *skola* / *school*; *skrika* / *shriek* etc. So, next time in your local you might think twice before ordering a *skite*.

Dore-ty linen in public

Armagh is only 40 miles distant from Belfast but differences in pronunciation are quite noticeable at times. According to Milroy in his study 'Regional accents of English: Belfast' there are two main Ulster dialect types – Ulster Scots and Ulster Anglo-Irish. The former extends mainly along the northern and eastern coastal areas of Down, Antrim and Derry and reaches into central areas of Donegal; the latter occupies the remainder i.e. central, southern and south-western Ulster. Hiberno-English describes the English spoken in the south of Ireland.

One of the first examples of differences in word sounds I noticed was the pronunciation of *bird* as if it were *board* / *bored*, whereas Belfast inhabitants generally refer to the same creature as *burd*. Both pronunciations, of course, are at variance with RP 'received pronunciation' as so-called proper English is known. In standard phonetic transcription *bird* is transcribed *[bəːd]* in which the *r* sound is missing, but this does not occur in vernacular speech in Ireland, north or south. Several similar examples of the above sound in Armagh vernacular speech spring to mind: *work* often occurs as *wore-k* (sounded as *wore* with *k* added), *dirt* as *dore-t*, *thirst* as *thore-st* and *first* as *fore-st*. Pronunciations of this type follow a regular pattern in words which contain the same vowel sound *'uh'* before the consonant *r*, as in *bird* (i.e. *burd*), generally throughout Ulster. This *'uh'* sound is regularly converted to a long *'o'* sound before the

consonant *r*, as in *'burd'* becoming *'bore-d'* and the other examples above, in the vernacular speech of certain speakers in the Armagh area.

The same pattern also applies to certain *surnames (sore-names)* in which the same vowel sound *'uh'* becomes long *'o'* occurs before *r*, e.g. *Murphy* is often pronounced as *More-fy*, *Mac Gurk* as *Mac Gorke*, *Mac Sorley* as *Mac Sore-ly* and *Curley* as *Core-ly* etc. The foregoing surnames all contain the long '*o*' sound found in the Armagh pronunciation of *bird (bore-d)*, *hurt (hore-t)* etc. Examples of apparently similar pronunciations are sometimes found in historical documents relating to the above surnames in the Armagh area. For example, the Hearth Money Rolls include a *Pattrick McGorke* of Rathcumber, in Tynan parish, and *Art McGorke* in the barony of Orior (S.E. Armagh), who each paid two shillings hearth tax in 1664. An even earlier example occurs in the Fiants of Elizabeth issued in 1602 which refers to a *Cormock MacSoirly* of Portnelligan, Tynan parish. The Primate's rent roll for the period 1660-73 includes a tenant named *Elizabeth Curley* who was later recorded as *Elizabeth Coarley* in 1676. The most curious examples of all come from an unexpected source – L' Hôtel Royal des Invalides (Royal Hospital for injured soldiers), Paris, regarding Irish soldiers in the service of France, the so-called 'Wild Geese'. Entrance records show that '*Antoine Morphy*, a native of county Armath' (sic), was admitted 1 June, 1703, and that '*Lt. Bernard Morphy*, a native of County Armack' (sic), was admitted 4 Feb., 1723. The French admissions officer evidently recorded the names as either spelled or sounded by both soldiers which again illustrates the long *'o'* sound before *r*, so common in current Armagh vernacular speech.

A message I recently received on Facebook illustrates this same point, but in reverse. The writer was referring to 'a group of people' which he described as a 'big *hurd*' and it took me a minute or so to realize that he meant 'hoard', which indicates that he had only ever heard the word as the sound *hoard /hore-d* and related it to *burd / bore-d* and similar-sounding *words* (*wore-ds*) such as *curd (core-d)*, *burn (bore-n)*, *fur (fore*-coat) and *murder (more-der)*.

To conclude, I draw your attention to the common pronoun *her* which is very often heard as *hore*. The Belfast equivalent in vernacular speech is *hur* which is pretty widespread in Hiberno-English throughout Ireland, north and south. In the official Received Pronunciation of English this is transcribed phonetically as *[hə]* without the *r* sound and is totally absent from Armagh vernacular speech.

In dealing with the various differences in pronunciation between local vernacular speech and the prescribed standard set by scholars I hold the view that all forms of speech are equally worthy of study.

Shafty

Shortly after I arrived in Armagh almost half-a-century ago I discovered that I was known as a *shafty* i.e. a native of Belfast who had settled in Armagh. I never felt that the term was used in a derogatory sense but simply as an indicator of one's origins and, furthermore, it has nothing to do with the less edifying expression 'to shaft someone' meaning 'cheat' or 'take advantage of'. From I first heard it the term *shafty* has always intrigued me and I felt had to find out the origins of the expression to satisfy my own curiosity and that of my fellow *shafties* in Armagh.

I started with the internet and found a piece by an anonymous contributor who confirmed that the term *shafty* is sometimes applied to Belfast people living away from the city in other parts of Ulster. Another anonymous contributor suggested that it is derived from the term *Belshaft*, which he/she defines as 'a slang term for the city of Belfast commonly used by Culchies.' It is a fact that some people from other parts of the province use the term *Belshaft* in joking references to the city, but it is equally true that less than a century ago others regarded *Belshaft* as the name of the city, usually people who had never visited the city themselves. Personally, I recollect hearing several elderly folk, always from outside Belfast and even in Armagh, refer to the city as *Belshaft*.

It is my contention that the term *Belshaft*, as a corruption of *Belfast*, has its origins in the Gaelic name of the city *Béal Feirste* 'mouth of the (River) Farset' in which a number of common linguistic changes have taken place. Both *Feirste* and *Farset* stem from the Gaelic *fearsaid* 'sandbank in tidal waters' i.e. 'a tidal ford' formed by the entry of the *Farset* into the River Lagan.

I am also aware that in my lifetime the pronunciation of the name *Belfast* has changed. Early forms of the name show stress on the second syllable as in *Bil-fast* (in phonetic script *[bəl 'fast]*), which reflects the Gaelic pronunciation *Béal Feirste* with emphasis on the second element of the name. The current pronunciation, promoted by the BBC, however, stresses the initial syllable *Bel-* as in *Belfast* (in phonetic script *['bɛlfast]*), with the initial element sounded like 'bell'.

Bel-fast, with stress on the second syllable, was formerly more common among the rural community and is still heard today in various parts of Ulster. The Gaelic name of the city *Béal Feirste* occurs as *[bəl 'fa:rʃt'ə]* in phonetic script where the symbol *ʃ* represents the sound *sh*, and suggests that early anglicized versions of *Belfast* sounded something like *Bil-fasht* in which the *r* sound of the Gaelic consonant cluster *-rst-* was discarded. Consequently, this would leave the second element of the name as *-fasht*. The next linguistic process to occur is metathesis i.e. the switching of sounds in a word e.g. pronouncing *elastic as elascit* in which *c* and *t* exchange places, and sounding *prescription* as *perscription* etc. This is a common linguistic feature which occurs in all languages. So, when applied to the earlier pronunciation *Bel-fas(h)t* in which the sounds *f* and *sh* change places we get the version *Bel-shaft*. From the second element of this it would appear that the term *shafty* for a native of *Belfast* came about.

The term *shafty* is a relatively recent creation and most probably came about with the migration of large numbers of the rural population to the city in search of work, particularly in the 19th century and early years of the 20th century. In the 18th century Belfast was still a small town on the west bank of the Lagan. In 1821, the population was only 37,000, in 1861 it had increased to 121,000 and by the end of the century it was 350,000. The rapid growth of the population was due first to the influx of rural people after the potato famine of the 1840s, but also to the rise of the linen and shipbuilding industries. The increase in population brought many from areas where the Ulster Anglo-Irish version of English was spoken – Fermanagh, Tyrone, South Armagh and South Down – and it is among speakers from these districts that the pronunciation *Bel-fast* is more common. The corruption *Bel-shaft* is a linguistic development of this supported by the underlying residue of Gaelic sounds still found in Ulster Anglo-Irish speech.

Postscript

Belfast, N. Ireland, also has its namesake in Co. Mayo. The townland and village of *Bealfarsad* in the Curraun peninsula is situated on the coast of Achill Sound which separates Achill Island from the mainland. Its Gaelic name, *Béal Feirste* ('mouth of the sandbank'), is exactly the same as that of *Belfast* on the Lagan. *Bealfarsad*, Co Mayo, owes its name to its position on the inlet of Achill Sound where the tidal waters have formed a sandbank which acts as a ford between the Curraun peninsula and Achill Island.

Finally, can any of our readers suggest an origin for this couplet about Keady and Armagh? If you have any information please contact the editor:

Keady for kittens, Armagh for old cats;
Dungannon for pigeons and Newry for rats.

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The Tonagh Riots, June 1876

by Lily Clifford

On Thursday 29th June 1876, an incident occurred in the Derrynoose / Clontibret area which arose from the rivalry between two Nationalist groups, reflecting support for the opposing views of the Home Rulers and the Fenians. But for the fact that a young single Derrynoose man, James Clarke, from the townland of Crossbane in Co Armagh, died from an accidental shooting and nine local men served sentences of hard labour as a result of what was deemed a 'riotous and unlawful' assembly, the event would have slipped into the void of forgotten history.

At local level it became known as The Tonagh Riots, named after the County Monaghan townland in which the confrontation took place. But it made headlines at local and national level with two local papers "The Ulster Gazette" and "The Northern Standard" devoting many column inches to the incident and the subsequent court cases.

Historical Background of the 1870s

The rural area of Derrynoose and Clontibret was predominantly catholic and practically everyone lived on small holdings, paying rent to landlords. Most of the rents in Derrynoose was paid to an Andrew J Crawford who lived in Dun Laoghaire, and after his death to the Moutray family of Favour Royal outside Augher in Co Tyrone.

In Monaghan, the landlords tended to be more local like the Lucas family of Castleshane, or Lord Blayney – Tonagh rents were paid to a Viscount Templeton.

Politically, there were several movements that nationalists could support. It appears that many of the men from Derrynoose and the adjoining townlands in Co Monaghan favoured the Fenian cause while the men from Tonagh were Home Rulers. These groups or factions had flags and banners and processed on church holidays much like the Orange factions did.

A Local Event

There was clearly a sense of local rivalry between these two groups and it appears that a drum belonging to the musicians associated with the Fenian faction, had been taken from a house in Crossbane.

So, on Thursday 2th June 1876, "a papist holiday" according to the Ulster Gazette , with revenge in mind, a group of men set off from the general Derrynoose area towards the small townland of Tonagh, barely two miles away as the crow flies. They clearly had their suspicions as to who was responsible for the missing drum!

They carried flags with music from drums and flutes, and there was even reference to a fiddle being played. When they arrived in Tonagh, they entered the fields and trampled on the growing crops. As the residents emerged from their homes, some of the crowd moved along the road shouting abuse, or in the words of the newspaper reports began "backguarding" the locals. Apparently, they threw stones and they had at least one gun which they used to shoot over the roofs of the houses, causing a minor injury to an old man standing outside his house when a branch which had been dislodged by a shot fell on him.

The Shooting Incident

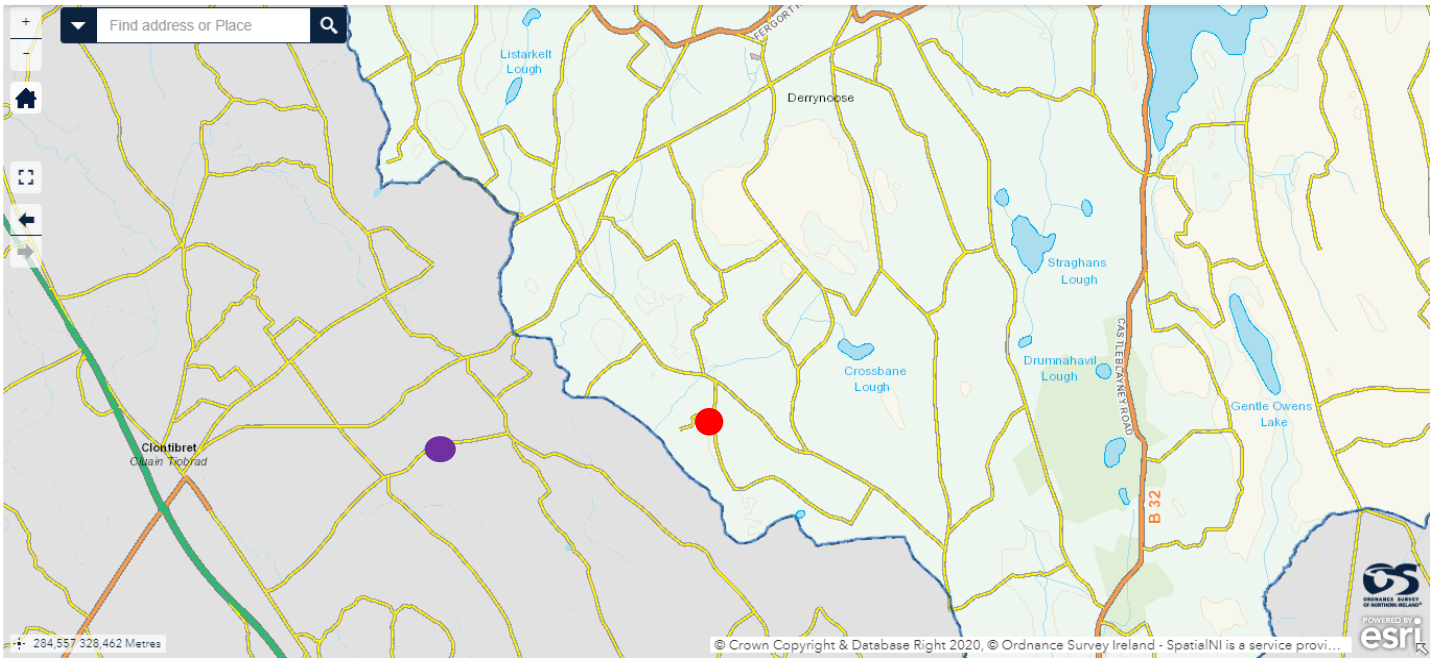
The following account of what happened has been taken from the various detailed witness accounts given at the inquest but is also supported by the local lore passed down through the generations.

A group of men turned up a lane with dense bushes and trees on either side which meant it was difficult for witnesses to see exactly what happened next. It seems that James Clarke, one of the visiting group, was shot in the back from an accidental discharge from a shotgun by one of his own companions. This brought the whole incident to an abrupt end.

A post-mortem examination was held in Castleblayney the following day, Friday, by two local doctors and the report was carried in 'The Northern Standard' on the Saturday 1st July , 2 days later, detailing his injuries.

The slug hit his backbone, severing the main vein just above the belt line and deflected into his liver where it caused two significant areas of damage. He collapsed and died a short time later from his injuries as he lay in the lane.

The police were sent for and the local priest was called to the scene and it appears that the rest of the group



Map of the Derrynoose and Clontibret area showing key sites of the Tonagh Riots

Purple Marking—Tonagh Townland showing where James Clarke was shot
Red Marking—Crossbane Townland showing james Clarke's home

dispersed quickly to their homes and bringing the tragic news back to James Clarke's sister and brother.

Investigations Follow

Arrests followed and up to seven local men were taken into custody for the apparent murder of James Clarke. A report of the preliminary hearing of what was initially deemed to be a murder charge, was also covered in the local press, with many willing witnesses giving animated and detailed accounts of the events, naming many of the people involved. One well-known character who was involved was Neal Doran, a poet and local songwriter, from Derrynoose who had penned several political verses, supporting the Fenian cause. He was a man of particularly large build and would have been easily identified and thus was arrested soon after the event.

Not all men named were under arrest at this point and it is widely believed that the man who actually discharged the shot, was apparently spirited out of the locality shortly afterwards. The local lore indicated that a Mr James Skimmins, manager of the local lead mines in the Clontibret area, arranged for him to be taken to Armagh hidden in the bottom of a cart, put on a train to Belfast and onwards to Scotland. It is believed that he eventually went to America. He never returned to Ireland. Several men were kept in custody and others were named in the police publication 'Hue and Cry'.

Contrasting Evidence

A magisterial hearing was set for the following week again in Castleblayney, but this time the evidence and witness accounts were markedly different. As the newspapers reported, the evidence given by many of the same witnesses was of a very different nature. It seemed amnesia had set in, or a least a severe bout of forgetfulness and confusion. Estimates of numbers were confused, identification of people involved had become vague and uncertain. Ridiculous replies were given to direct questions from the lawyers and the whole thing turned into almost farce.

The local newspaper "The Northern Standard" carried a very detailed account of the accounts of the reluctant witnesses under questioning. The paper stated that it was "evident from the demeanour of many witnesses that some influence had been brought to bear on them since the first inquiry for a direct answer could not be elicited from them - of 18 witnesses not a new fact was elicited". Many of these evasive answers caused laughter in the court because of the absurdity of the replies.

What had happened to cause this? Well, it appears that in the intervening week the locals had come together, possibly some had gone drinking together, maybe even at Clarke's wake, and a decision was evidently made not to contribute any more evidence to the authorities. There may have been several reasons for this change in attitude - firstly it was accepted that James Clark's death was accidental – this was never murder! Secondly, the man who likely caused the gun to discharge accidently was

now far away out of the country, so he wasn't even in court, or ever likely to be!

Perhaps the most important reason was that the people from the two areas, all nationalists and neighbours, recognised a common enemy - that of the authorities in a court where landlords and gentry were members of the Grand Jury, a system which inspired little confidence in the ordinary tenants!

Case Goes to Court

However, despite many witnesses retracting their previous and detailed statements, there were several witnesses who did give evidence. This was enough to see the case go before the Grand Jury in Monaghan in February 1877, not as a murder case but that of Riotous and Illegal Assembly. Clontibret was also part of the proclaimed area where the carrying of guns or assembly of groups was prohibited, so the idea of nationalists moving in a large group, armed with weapons, was abhorrent to the authorities

Further arrests followed, while some of those already in custody were released. Up to twenty other suspects were named, but many had left the area. But the Long Arm of the Law reached far, and one man was arrested in Bootle in the Liverpool area. A local policeman Constable Martin from Castleshane, went to Liverpool and knowing the man by sight was able to arrest him and bring him back into custody.

A Tailor's Tale!

A little side story appears in "The Ulster Gazette" later that year about an arrest in Loughgall of an apprentice tailor. One of the persons named was a tailor called Ned Burns, described as being of short stature, and this tailor fitted the description. He claimed his name was James Beattie and he had been employed in Loughgall since the day before the events at Tonagh, further claiming that he was a Protestant from Belfast!

The JP, a Mr Atkinson, considered the circumstances justified remanding him in prison and so he spent the night in Armagh Jail. The next day a policeman arrived from Monaghan who knew the real Ned Burns and declared he was not the man! We are told that the tailor was "a bit elevated at the idea of having been made the hero of an additional chapter of incidents in the life of a tramping tailor".

The paper continues in the report stating that he was none the worse for wear for his short stay under "the paternal roof of Mr John McCutcheon", the governor of Armagh jail. It stated that several witnesses could have substantiated the apprentice tailor's identity but that was not thought of in time. But the report concluded "such is life, and the law must take its course".

Final Outcome

Nine men from both the Derrynoose and Clontibret area eventually appeared before the Monaghan Grand Jury, charged with participating in a 'riotous and illegal assembly' and received sentences of hard labour ranging from one month to nine months. They were Neal Doran and James Brennan – 9 months, William Markey and Henry Boyd – 6 months, James McBennett and John McQuaid – 2 months while Thomas Harris, James Ronaghan, Ned Burns all received I month. The men were defended by a legal team from Dundalk but no-where in the newspapers do we ever encounter any actual statements of defence from the accused – their voices did not add to the story of the Tonagh Riots!

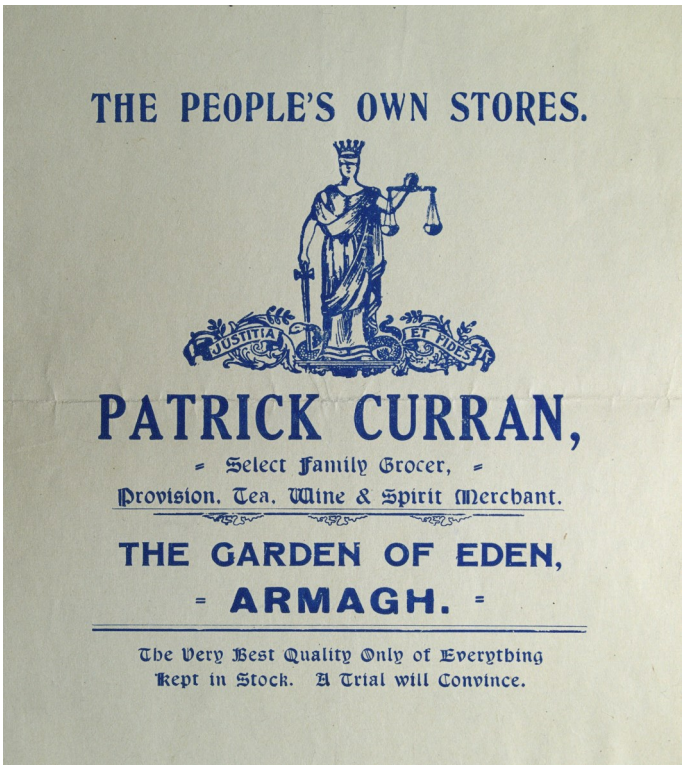
The incident remained in the local lore of the area for many years, with stories told of the image of men leaving court on their way to prison handcuffed together. An old man from Clontibret recalled a line from a song about the incident which sees the events from a prisoner's perspective "As I lay my head on this iron bed, I blame the wee widow from Tonagh".

The events of June 29th 1876 leading to James Clarke's untimely death made the headlines in the newspapers of the time and as a result so we can discover a small piece of local history that tells us something of life in rural Ireland in the late 19th century.

Glimpses into Castle Street's past

by Mary McVeigh

I lived next door to the 'Garden of Eden' for the first twenty years of my life. It was no neighbourhood paradise however but a pub in Castle street. Although it became the Castle Bar in the 1950s, this far from salubrious establishment was always referred to locally by its previous, more exotic, title. Then, as now, this street which partly encircles the Church of Ireland Cathedral on the south side was primarily a residential area. The only other business in my time was a small family grocery cum confectionary shop, like the pub long since gone.



Patrick Curran succeeded Robert Moore as Proprietor of the pub.

Armagh County museum collection (29.2020.321)

The street in 1770

It was very different 250 years ago when there were all kinds of crafts and trades being carried out. It is likely that some of the houses when I was growing up there dated back to the late eighteenth century but at that time they were more than just residential dwellings, they would have served as workshops and retail outlets. In 1770 no less than one sixth of the households in Castle Street were pubs, six out of thirty-six. Two of these were owned by Presbyterians, William Bradford and George Wilton. There was a butcher, a baker and whilst there was no candlestick maker like in the nursery rhyme there was a wheelwright, a nailer, a stonecutter, a shoemaker and several shopkeepers and two pedlars. William McKee was a school master who probably held classes in his house. There was even a farm owned by John Quin which might seem strange nowadays but in 1770 the centre of Armagh was far less built up. Indeed in the 1940s and 50s when we had far more spacious back gardens than current houses neighbours kept poultry and pigs. However, James Quin likely had more land than just what was attached to his residence. According to T.G.F. Paterson the Quins were a 'substantial Armagh family' which, over the years, acquired property in Castle, Callan, Irish and Linenhall Streets, Charter School Lane and Gallows Hill. John Quin was one of two Castle Street residents who were among the first seven trustees of the old St Malachys church in 1751. The other was Arthur O'Neill, a draper.

In 1770 the majority of Castle Street householders, twenty-six, were Catholic whilst eight were Presbyterian and two were Church of Ireland families. There were just two householders in Armagh then who had eight children, all others had less. One of these was Thomas McCann of English Street, a leading citizen and one-time Sovereign of Armagh and the other was James McDonald, a butcher from Castle Street. However, whilst the McCann household had five live-in servants to make life easier, the McDonalds, like all the rest in Castle Street, had none.

All the information from 1770 came from a census, comprising some 517 households over the sixteen streets and lanes which made up Armagh. It was carried out by Rev. William Lodge, D.D., at the behest of Archbishop Robinson and is an invaluable source for researchers who are

interested in late 18th century Armagh. The original manuscript is held in the Robinson Library.[1]

Just under 50 years later thirty-one people in Castle Street had their occupations listed in a trades directory.[2] There was no longer a school master but there was a Rev. Peter Coleman who had the initials RCP after his name which could have been meant that he was a Roman Catholic priest and probably attached to nearby St Malachys.

Paddy 'Neat Coat'

According to the directory there was just one pub in Castle Street and it was owned by Patrick Hughes but a later directory, published in 1840, listed Denis Branigan, John Lappin and Bernard McMahon as 'publicans and tavern keepers'.[3] In the intervening years it would seem that the establishment owned by Patrick Hughes had a name change to the Victoria Hotel but to date I have been unable to find how long it retained this title. There is no mention at all of a hotel in Castle Street in later directories. However, I came across a notice in a Belfast newspaper in 1862 advertising the sale or letting of 'that old established house called the Victoria Hotel, Castle Street Armagh, with good stores, rooms and stabling…also a splendid enclosed garden, with refreshing room therein'.[4] It could well have been that Patrick Hughes died and the name went with him. There is little doubt though that he was the nattily dressed gentleman, very much alive then, who featured in the reminiscences of 'an octogenarian' in the Armagh Guardian of 14 May 1914. He recalled:

"There was a well -known character in Castle Street in those earlier years of the century that has passed, called 'Paddy Neat Coat.' I never heard his surname but 'Neat Coat' was very likely merited on account of his singular and perfect fitting outer garment. Paddy was also arrayed in kerseymere shorts with what was known then as Hessian boots embracing them at the knee, and worn with tassels…He was thought to be a bit vain of his appearance and courted admiration."

He went on to say that 'attached to Neat Coat's hostelry was a well kept and well sheltered garden facing the sun, with seats and bowers, where young and old were invited to retire to hansel their investments in fresh toggery.' He was referring here to people buying their clothes in Castle street because it was there that most of the second hand clothes trade took place in Armagh at the time. Indeed the number of second hand clothing dealers had risen from six in 1819 to twenty-one by 1840. These were the days before readymade garments were available. There were few drapery shops and certainly no department stores as nowadays. Clothes were either hand-made or fashioned by dress-makers or tailors. Obviously then there was a ready market for second hand and even third or fourth hand items since there would have been many who had neither the time nor skills, resources and most of all the money to have their clothes made to order. It was a period of great poverty in Ireland so fashion was low on people's priorities and for many it was enough that they had clothes to cover themselves.

Residents in public life

In the first half of the nineteenth century Castle Street residents would seem primarily to have been involved in crafts and trades, both skilled and unskilled, but there were a few who would seem to have been active in public life. Patrick Hughes and Francis McKee, a leather seller, were both Town Commissioners, forerunners of City Councillors. Francis McKee was also a Poor Law Guardian and a trustee of St Malachy's church. John Quin, a solicitor, was an 'attorney for all the courts' and had addresses in both Castle Street and Lower Gloucester Street, Dublin. Patrick Hagan, a flax buyer, was obviously a man of some stature in his community because he would appear to have been one of the local leaders of the movement led by Daniel O'Connell. It sought the repeal of the Act of Union (1800) which brought Ireland under the jurisdiction of the Westminster Parliament. Patrick Hagan was the signatory of a letter on behalf of one hundred Armagh Repealers read out at a large meeting attended by the Lord Mayor and other notable dignitaries in the Corn Exchange Rooms, Dublin in January 1842.[5] He wrote that the sum enclosed was 'collected from humble but intelligent individuals, whose honest conviction is that there is no hope for Ireland but through a repeal of the act of Union'. He continued:

Castle Street in the 50s. The house where Maryanne Quin lived is to the left. (Armagh County Museum collection)

"When we see our artisans and mechanics forced to seek in a foreign land that denied them at home – a reward for their skill and industry – when we see our linen trade that formerly was the means of giving ample employment to thousands of our industrious population, all but extinct; when we see nothing but misery and distress, where heretofore none existed, it is time for us to bestir ourselves and seek, by every legal and constitutional means in our power, a repeal of this suicidal act of 1800…" This could well have been the first time that Castle Street figured in radical politics but it certainly was not the last.

The Quins in Castle Street

Patrick Hagan's house had one of the highest valuations in Castle Street according to a survey carried out in 1839.[6] It was one of five which had valuations in excess of ten pounds. Whilst these buildings were certainly not as grand as some in other parts of the town they were nevertheless quite substantial properties. The person whose holding held the highest value was Sylvester Quin who would seem to have been head of the Quin dynasty at the time. He died at age eighty-three 'after long suffering from an attack of gout' in 1848. It would seem that the clothes dealers and other trades people had properties which fell into middle to lower range but there were over twenty houses which were exempt from rates, likely because of their poor condition. Thus Castle Street was a mixed bag when it came to housing, a seemingly privileged few had fine houses, a substantial section had fair to good properties and the rest had poor housing.

The next valuation was carried out in the 1860s and the results were largely similar to the earlier one.[7] Again the majority ranged from low to middle range but there were a few more substantial properties. The mostly highly valued property was again the Quin residence on the north corner with Irish Street. (The only part of the building still in existence is the façade which fronts apartments built in more recent years). The owner listed was Maryanne Quinn (name spelling here ending with two ns) and it would appear that she owned seventeen small houses on the same side of the street, demolished in the 1950s. This was the same Maryanne Quinn who leased land to the nuns from the Sacred Heart order (RSCJ) in order to build their convent where Mt. St. Catherine's Primary School and St Catherine's College are now sited.[8] She was likely the last member of her family to live in Castle Street and she certainly did not die there. According to a document held in Armagh County Museum pertaining to the rental and conditions of sale of 'Quin's Armagh Estate,' dated 17th January 1945 Mary Anne Quin, spinster daughter of John Quin resided at Shanakill, Carrick-on-Suir, Co.

Waterford when she made her will. Her 'successor and sole next of kin' was given as Edward Ussher Quin of the same address who was the son of Arthur Quin, presumably a close relative, who had married Anne, a member of the well known and long established Ussher family which included two Church of Ireland Archbishops of Armagh, Henry and the more famous James who was a noted Biblical scholar and an opponent to Catholicism.[9]

Signs of Victorian respectability

The properties on the opposite side of Castle Street from the Quin house, between the corner and Chapel Lane, were also in the higher valuations for the street. Two of them were residences of flax merchants, Thomas Marshall and John Small. It appears that the latter gentleman who also held extensive property in Chapel Lane suffered some financial distress because he ended up in the bankruptcy courts in 1868 and 69 and thus in the following year was forced to auction off his worldly goods.[10] An advertisement for the sale which was to take place over two days listed the contents which were typical of a highly comfortable Victorian household including 'valuable' walnut pianoforte, full compass, crystal gas brackets, Brussels carpet, 'excellent shower bath' and 'servants' bedsteads and bedding'. The order of sales was: "1st day, Friday, 11th November, Outside effects, Office and Drawing room furniture, Pew in Chapel, some of the bedrooms. Saturday, 2nd day, November 12th, kitchen, parlour, hall and remainder of bedrooms.[11] It is highly unlikely that any of the small houses opposite owned by Mary Anne Quin(n) would have contained any of the items noted above. Their living standards would have been vastly different.

Clothiers disappearing

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the number of businesses in Castle Street would seem to have been decreasing. The clothes dealers were reduced to eight in 1881 but another directory' seven years later recorded only two 'clothiers, new and second hand,' J. Gribbon and M. McKeown based there.[12] By the 1880s there was just one pub whose proprietor was Hugh McAlindon. From valuation records it would appear that this was likely the site of the Victoria Hotel and was of a similar valuation as that of the house belonging to John Small. I have a recollection of reading somewhere that the pub was by this stage known as the 'Garden of Eden.' Looking through back issues of local papers Castle Street did not feature significantly in the advertising columns though I did notice that it had a laundry in 1894 owned by Mrs Hastings who offered 'family washing carefully done, lace curtains, ladies blouses, gents' shirts, collars and cuffs, equal to new'.[13] Robert Baxter announced he had 'always on hand' a 'large select stock of wholesale and retail tinware' and that repairs were 'neatly executed at moderate charges.' He assured that 'none but first-class workmen' were employed.[14] Building contractor Jacob Barrett undertook 'all kinds of jobbing carpenter work, repairing of houses, office and shop fittings…' and was prepared to travel to other towns for work.[15]

Support for Parnell

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Castle Street was mentioned in the press in a different context, politics. In December 1890 a new club was formed there by supporters of Charles Stewart Parnell who had remained loyal to him when he lost the leadership of the Irish Nationalist Party at Westminster after his involvement in the O'Shea divorce case. These thirty or so young men (women were invisible re politics, of course) had parted company with the Catholic Reading Rooms in Ogle Street after 'a meeting at which resolutions adverse to Mr Parnell and his interests were adopted' and 'in consequence of certain actions of the Rev. H. McOscar, Adm., chairman of the Rooms and the majority of the committee'. Their new body was to be known as the National Independent Club and was situated in Castle Street but whether this was in a room in a private house, a room in the pub or an outbuilding was not specified.[16] The Ulster Gazette reported that at a meeting of the club, attended by sixty to seventy members in the following February they were thanked in a letter from the MP for South Armagh, Alexander Blane, for 'their straightforward and manly action.'[17]

A Castle Street resident, Robert J. Keegan, now the owner of the pub according to the 1901 census was the club's interim secretary but later went on to become its president. His continued loyalty to

Parnell led to his expulsion from the choir of the Catholic cathedral in 1893.[18] On the day after the anniversary of Parnell's death, October 7th, he refused to remove a commemorative ivy leaf in his lapel which caused offence. He had 'scarcely taken his seat' in the choir loft when he was 'accosted by the organist' who informed him that his instruction was that 'any young lady or gentleman wearing an ivy leaf which was a political emblem was either to take it out or go down to body of the cathedral.' The result was a far from amicable exchange of correspondence between Mr Keegan and the Rev. J. Grimes, Administrator, published for all to see in the local press. Father Grimes wrote: "Is it true that you have refused deliberately and obstinately to obey the organist and conductor? If so, I am painfully obliged to tell you that you cease to be a member of the choir." He concluded by saying: "Hoping you will receive this in the spirit in which it is given, namely for your own good and to maintain order and discipline in the ceremonies and devotions in our grand cathedral".

Mr Keegan was certainly not cowed into submission by this missive but duly unapologetically responded. He was not going to be dictated to by anyone on his apparel nor going to trouble either the organist or the organ loft again with his presence. He went on to say: "Of course I receive, as you desire, your communication in the real spirit I which it is written -viz, to banish from the people of Armagh the memory of the man whose memory was commemorated yesterday by almost all the intelligent freemen of my country, and I am sorry, I cannot number you among the latter".

A few years later Robert Keegan again publicly defied clerical direction when he was a candidate in the local municipal elections.[19] This was the first election for the Town Commissioners (forerunners to city councillors) to be held under the ward system. He and a fellow 'Parnellite,' John McKenna, stood for the predominantly Catholic St Brigids (later the South ward) against candidates selected at a meeting held in the Catholic Reading Rooms in Ogle Street and presided over by Rev. John Quinn, Adm., and attended also by a number of other priests. Needless to say the Parnellites lost out to the clerically approved candidates.

Hibernians come to Castle Street

To date I have not been able to ascertain just how long the National Independent Club survived. There was no mention of it in the 1901 census but the National Foresters' Club had premises in Castle Street at that time. Could this organisation have taken over premises from the club or was it situated in a different property? If it was the same building then it was not just a couple of rooms because, according to the census returns it was a substantial 2nd class stone building with a tiled roof, containing eight rooms.[20] By the next census, 1911, the Foresters had moved to Market Street and the Ancient Order of Hibernians had become established in Castle Street. However, if we are to take the information given at face value it looks like the Hibernians were in a different building, one with just two rooms although it had the same number of windows. It could well have been the case that the caretaker, Edward Lindsey, who lived in the property just recorded the number of rooms that he personally used and failed to mention other rooms used for AOH business.[21] According to newspaper reports a 'new' hall was officially opened in February, 1925 when the keys were handed over by John Houlahan (probably the builder).[22] I am assuming that this was an extension to an existing Georgian house at the corner of Castle Street and Chapel Lane because this was where the Hibernians in Armagh had their headquarters until the 1970s. Could this have been the house once occupied by John Small?

The activities and pronouncements of the Hibernians both in Armagh and elsewhere in the early years of the 20th century featured frequently in the newspapers, particularly the Irish News and it would seem from these reports that Division 42, Armagh, was an active one. Interestingly in a report of a visit to Armagh in 1910 by the National President of the AOH, Joseph Devlin MP., one of the officers of the County Board who signed an address given to him was none other than Robert J. Keegan, Secretary.[23] Ironically in the split within Irish Nationalism over Parnell Devlin was on the opposing side to Keegan but like Keegan he had, in his early career, faced clerical opposition. Both however, it would seem had left those days far

The building to the right in this photograph shows the rear of the AOH headquarters and the roof of the Hibernian Hall

Armagh County museum collection

behind since the AOH was an avowedly staunch Catholic as well as Nationalist organisation.

First decade of the 20th century

By 1911 Robert J Keegan had left the pub in Castle Street, was now working as a crane master and living in Gaol Square with his family which had increased from three to seven children. The new occupant of the Garden of Eden was Robert Moore, a Presbyterian who resided there with wife Eliza Jane and their seven children. There were less businesses in Castle Street in early 20th century than there were in the later years of the previous century. In 1901 there were two vacant carpentry workshops but ten years later they had disappeared. There were two toy shops owned by Catherine Mullen and Jennie Lennon who was also a dressmaker. Mary Downey had a grocers shop from at least 1881 which was still in existence when she was aged seventy five in 1911. There was just one clothes shop left in Castle Street in 1901, property of Betty Jane Donnelly, but by 1911 it had disappeared and thus ended the streets association with the retail clothes trade. There were, of course, a number of dressmakers and tailors. There were some women employed in spinning mills and there were others who gave their occupations as weavers.

In 1901 a family of teachers, Hugh Scanlon, his wife Elizabeth, son William, daughter Annie and niece, Winifred Cosgrove lived in the street but by 1911 they would appear to have moved on. There was a mix of skilled and unskilled in Castle Street in the first decade of the 20th century such as labourers, women in domestic and laundry work, carpenters, pedlars and drivers. There were a few families then whose names continued to be associated with certain trades such as Knipes in the poultry business, McArdles as slaters and Houlahans as bricklayers.

Housing in Castle Street at the outset of the 20th century was by no means the worst in the city but certainly would not be considered adequate by today's standards. Four out of forty-four houses in the 1911 census were deemed first class, one of them being my erstwhile neighbour, the pub. The classification system strangely enough did not take account of the number of rooms, it just included the type of materials used in walls and roofs as well as the number of windows at the front of buildings. The house with the largest number of windows, eleven in total, was Patrick McEntee, poultry dealer. There were two thatched houses in the street then. One was occupied by a pedlar from Co.

Mayo, John Rowland Kelly and the other by James McAleavy, an 'ex-army man' and his wife. The only third class house in the street with just one room was occupied by seventy year old Margaret Fehan, a 'housekeeper.' All the rest of the properties were deemed second class which meant they were regarded as being 'good' houses. However, nearly half of them had only a total of three rooms or less for both living, sleeping and eating. Indeed many of these housed families of varying age groups. The most over-crowded would seem to have been the three roomed home of Patrick and Mary Brady, their six children and a mother-in-law. The publican, Robert Moore, also had a household of nine but they were in the happy position of having ten rooms for their use.

Concluding comments

This is certainly by no means a comprehensive study of Castle Street, merely some insights into its history over just less than a century and a half. I chose not to refer to how the street got is name because Kevin Quinn, in the first edition of History Armagh, focussed on its early history. The whole of the 20th century has yet to be looked at including the bombing in 1973 of the pub which devastated the entire street and left families homeless, the rebuilding of houses in a similar style to those that were demolished and the restoration of the properties between Chapel Lane and the corner of Irish Street by the Hearth Revolving Trust.

This piece of research has alerted me to the need to look more closely at some aspects of the politics of the period such as the city's involvement in the Repeal Movement in the first half of the 19th century and also the influence of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in local government in Armagh in the 20th century. I would also very much like to know more about Maryanne Quin, the woman who lived in Castle Street owned property all over the town and beyond and her intriguing connection to the Ussher family which was surely so different to her own.

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Historical Moy arson case that killed three remains a mystery

by Eric Villiers

After going to bed sometime after midnight on March 6, 1929 a Moy publican heard a series of odd noises like "empty tins" and "footsteps, moving rapidly away" in the street outside.

Twenty minutes later, as dogs continued to bark, she heard a loud rumble and looked out from her bedroom window to see a blaze in the ground floor shop of the three-storey building opposite, and smoke coming from the top two floors that housed Abraham White's young family and their housekeeper.

The pub owner, Miss L. Dawson, later told police that her shouts and screams of "Fire" brought neighbours rushing to the building on the corner of Charlemont Street and Killyman Road. Buckets of water were quickly being carried to the scene but it took another ten minutes to find a ladder that could reach the window of the top storey where the family had gathered in the hope of rescue.

Abraham and his children slept in one room so he was able to get Robert (15), Mary (13) and Freddie (10) to the window sill overlooking the street. As they called out for help the two younger siblings tried to escape the flames being whipped up at the open window and, enveloped in thick black smoke, disappeared from beside Abraham. As he desperately called them to him, the last words he heard from Mary were: "I am choking."

The two charred bodies would later be found huddled near the window from which father and son were helped to safety by neighbours. Firemen later recovered the remains of the housekeeper 80-year-old Mary Bartley on the ground floor to where her bed crashed as the inferno took hold. Her bedroom was also on the top storey but was at the rear of the building where she had no chance of escape as the fire swept from the front to back.

According to dramatic reports in British newspapers Abraham, suffering from burns and smoke inhalation, was heard to wail: "My poor wee children are being roasted up there… can nobody save them". As neighbours gathered to help his cousin Joshua White* tried to climb to the window for the children but was beaten back by the inferno. Within minutes the interior of the building crashed to the ground.

In terms of a house fire it was a perfect storm: the victims were sound asleep; the third storey was too high to jump; on the ground floor Mooney's general merchants stocked hardware, boots, bedding and oils; the street did not have a water supply, and a broken telephone link to Armagh Fire Brigade meant it took them an hour and half to arrive.

Within days an inquest was opened and adjourned because Abraham was still being treated in hospital for burns and shock. Only four months before the fire he had lost his wife Elizabeth (nee Graham) to illness, and as he recovered in hospital had to be told that his youngest child, a baby called Netta, who lived with relatives, had died. Another member of the family, his nine-year-old daughter Barbara was also away from the house at the time.

Abraham had sold a farm he owned at Corrainey and moved his young family the short distance to Moy after he bought a "fine three-storey house" in a community that spans the county border between Armagh-Tyrone. On the ground floor he opened a shop and was trading successfully until his wife took ill not long after giving birth to their fifth child.

It seems that during Elizabeth's illness in 1928 Abraham was forced to close the shop in order to look after her and the children, and baby 'Netta' was sent to live with his sister-in-law: in those days such wider family arrangements were not uncommon solutions for single parents or hard pressed carers.

His wife's death in her thirties, followed so closely by the loss of his three children –accompanied by the unimaginable pain of not being able to save Mary and Freddie – left Abraham traumatised, and for years he was in and out of mental institutions before recovering sufficiently to live with his married sister's family at Bush, Dungannon.

A matter of weeks after the fire Robert, better known as Bertie, ran away, lied about his age, and joined the Royal Inniskillings Fusiliers. In 1942 he transferred to

the Parachute Regiment when it was first formed, and – as a sergeant in the 156th Battalion – was part of the 1st Airborne Division dropped into Italy in 1943 to spearhead the allied advance north from Taranto to Bari. Within weeks of that campaign ending he began preparing for one of WW2's most infamous encounters, the Battle of Arnhem, later depicted in the 1977 epic movie *A Bridge Too Far*.

Prior to September 1944, as British top brass planned an airborne invasion with planes, gliders and 35,000 men, they dismissed German resistance around Arnhem in the Netherlands as "Hitler Youth and old men on bicycles". In fact two SS Panzer Divisions were waiting and the Red Beret casualties were so heavy that the 1st Airborne Division was wiped out, and never saw combat again.

Among the 1,174 paratroopers killed was Sergeant Robert Graham White, better known to his comrades as Bertie 'Chalky' White. The plane he was on was part of the second wave and was brought down by heavy flak over the dropping zone where his body was recovered and buried by a Dutch resistance group. After the war he was re-interred at the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery.

In 1928 during his wife's illness Abraham's middle daughter Barbara had been sent to relatives in England (never to return) so his greatest comfort between 1929 and 1944 had been regular visits from Bertie. On his last leave in 1944 Bertie broke regulations, if not the wartime secrets' act, by letting his father in on the news that on his next trip home he would sail from France.

The telegram confirming the death of his eldest child robbed Abraham of what little stability he had left, and for the remaining years of his life night after night he walked to the end of the road waiting and watching for Bertie to come home.

Through March and April 1929 the uniquely tragic circumstances of the "Moy Fire" made headlines throughout the UK and Ireland. Today if you go online and type those two words into the British Newspaper Archive hundreds of tags pop up. A fund was set up to assist the family – left homeless and penniless – and it raised a huge amount of money.

Daily and weekly newspapers from Mizen Head in Cork to Malin Head in Donegal and from Land's End in Cornwall to John o' Groats in Caithness ran the story and took in contributions, with the largest at around £150 (£10,000 today) raised by the Belfast Newsletter. Newspapers also directed their readers to two banks that had opened accounts for the incoming money, the Ulster Bank, Armagh and the Belfast Bank, Dungannon, so that today it would be impossible to estimate exactly how much was raised.

In late March 1929 the inquest re-opened but could not find the cause of the fire, and the jury returned a verdict of death by asphyxia, with a recommendation that a water supply be provided for the village.

Since arson was strongly suspected, the police carried out a comprehensive investigation and at the inquest during cross-examinations of Ms Dawson and store owner Thomas Mooney a police sergeant tried to establish that a crime had been committed.

In the witness box when asked about the sound of empty tins and rapid feet Ms Dawson backtracked somewhat, pointing out that she was half asleep and could not be sure what she heard. Perhaps she was reluctant to point the figure at Mooney, whose horror at being accused of an act that killed young children was clear from his testimony as he was quizzed about his business failing; recent upgrades of two insurance policies; unpaid bills, and bounced cheques.

Questioned by the jury Mooney admitted that his turnover was not great but was satisfactory for the hard times they were in. Three months later tongues must have been wagging when newspapers reported that he had been awarded £1,000 for malicious damage for loss of stock.

Nonetheless the police cleared Mooney as innocent and he was able to show that he never left his home that night. However, arson was the only logical conclusion: there was no fire in the shop that day; the last lamp in the White's house went out at 7pm, and Mooney did not have any lights on in the store.

The make-up of the appeal fund committee reflected Moy's strong cross-community co-operation, as the village strove to alleviate a family left "homeless and penniless". The ten-man committee drawn together by Mr R. A. Johnston of The Beeches, Moy, to administer the fund, was composed of men from both sides of the religious/political divide, most prominently the local Catholic priest and Church of Ireland rector.

That the community openly regarded the atrocity as arson is pointedly hinted at in the wording of Mr Johnston's letters to the press, where, as chairman of the appeal committee, again and again he refers to the tragedy as "the burning".

Police were unable to find the arsonist, and there seems

to have been no further press coverage of any ongoing investigation.

Interviewed by a White family genealogist in 1995 outside Abraham's house (now a pharmacy) octogenarian Billy White, who'd grown up with his cousin Bertie after he was taken in by Billy's father, recalled:

> "… we all knew who started it. There was a man who had a grudge [against Abraham]. He was seen hanging around this corner late at night just days before the fire. On the night of the fire someone saw him … standing outside the house with a candle… he disappeared that night and never dared show his face in Moy ever again".

The White family never let go of their conviction that it was arson but certainly not carried out by Thomas Mooney, who was after all Abraham's tenant. The fact that the insurance company paid out promptly also suggests his innocence, in contrast to the initial accusatory tone of police questioning at the inquest.

That March night the fire threatened several other buildings down the length of the street, and after rescuing Abraham and Robert, neighbours concentrated on stopping its spread, a fight that was helped by the house being on a corner, but hindered by the fact that the only water available had to be carried to the scene in buckets, a colossal undertaking.

Long after the initial story made widespread headlines, local newspapers continued to follow the ramifications of the tragedy, reporting that Colonel Howard, a member of Dungannon Rural Council had angrily condemned council officials for paying a bill of £14.13s for Rev J. F. Fleming, Moy who – in "shirt sleeves and trousers" – made a motorcycle dash to Armagh Fire Station, after learning that the telephone link was broken.

As was normal practice, because Fleming reported the fire, the brigade charged him for turning out. The colonel's opinion was that it was up to the villagers of Moy to pay for the turnout: the "Ministry" at the new Stormont Parliament also censured the council for paying the bill.

Later the £14.13s complaint was put in a ha'penny place by the colonel's next grievance. After the council agreed to provide a £15,000 water supply to Moy (around £1m today) – as recommended by the inquest jury – he bizarrely insisted that the lack of a municipal water supply was a problem for the villagers to solve.

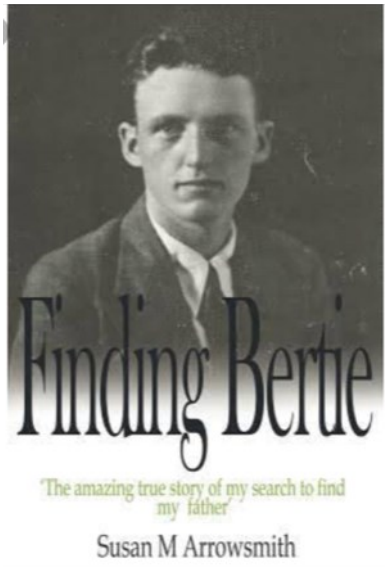
In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy Mary Bartley was buried in Benburb, her home village not far from Moy, and on Saturday March 9 a huge crowd turned out to join the funeral cortege that took the coffins of the White children the short distance from Charlemont Street to the church in the village square. The *Portadown Times* of March 15 reported that people wept openly as the "little coffins were borne by relays of schoolchildren". With no address to start out from, the bodies were removed from Mr J. Hughes licensed premises that stood next door to the smouldering ruins of their family home. It may be that Hughes was also an undertaker (a very common thing in Ireland for many years) and that might explain why the bodies reposed there until the funerals.

Site of tragedy

Today the replacement building on the corner of Charlemont Street and Killyman Road remains a stark reminder of the tragedy, for it is no longer a "fine three-storey" town house, like its 'twin' Georgian building (now Moy Library) directly opposite it on the other side of the street. It seems that as a mark of respect to the dead children and Mary Bartley, a third tier was not added when the house was rebuilt.

* *Joshua White appears to have been the same man who went on to become one of the best known motor dealers in Mid-Ulster, with premises in Moy and Armagh City. In the early 1920s – like his fellow agent James Kerr in English Street, Armagh – he began his business career as an Irish representative for Raleigh Bicycles. Later Joshua graduated to selling motor cycles and then motor cars, with his state of the art showroom on the corner of College Street and Lonsdale Street, Armagh, becoming a local landmark until comparatively recently.*

Wartime love child uncovers dramatic story of her hero father



"Finding Bertie – The amazing true story of my search to find my father", is the title of a 2015 book written by Susan M. Arrowsmith, who grew up in Paddington, London as a daughter of John and Rose Musker.

When Susan was six-years-old her parents divorced and John disappeared from her life. It was not until she was approaching middle age that she set out to track him down, and finally did so after ringing into a radio request programme that connected long lost relatives.

Her search might have ended there until, with many more years having passed, John revealed to his daughter that he was not her real father. And so – with her mother Rose already dead – began Susan's second search for a lost father

John was able to tell her that her biological father was an Irish paratrooper called Bertie 'Chalky' White – from a wartime affair Rose had while John was away – and that the two had made plans to marry after the war.

Now Susan began a journey that would lead her back in time to the "Moy Fire" of 1929; the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery in the Netherlands; a loyalist flute band in Tyrone, and a memorial plaque to her hero father in Bush Orange Hall, Dungannon.

In the 1990s – after Bertie's cousins replied to a letter Susan sent to a local newspaper – she visited them and was delighted to find that her father was still celebrated where he was born and brought up. After his death the Bush village band, which had been formed in 1912, was renamed the Sergeant White Memorial Flute Band, and a brass tablet to his memory was erected inside the hall.

While visiting her newly-discovered relatives Susan watched the band parade on the Twelfth of July, and was a special guest at a social evening in the hall after the procession. That night, it seems, the Orange men had a little joke at her expense. Aware that she had been brought up a Catholic, they teased her by inviting her to have what they called an "RC" – rum and coke.

Susan's big disappointment on her trips to Moy was that her flowers could not be placed on the graves of her father's family. She was unable to find headstones for Abraham, Elizabeth, Mary, Freddie and Netta, in St James's Church of Ireland graveyard just off village square. At the rectory in 1995 she was told that the plot map of the period was lost, and without a headstone, there was no way to find the final resting place of her grandparents, and the children. The Whites do have a family plot at St James's where relatives and cousins like Joshua* are memorialised but not Abraham's family.

And that remains a sad postscript to the story. Time and circumstances have conspired to wipe the tragedy from the most obvious public record in the village, the church graveyard. Today the graves of the family have still not been found: a plot by plot search on foot failed to find a headstone to mark a tragedy that moved the hearts of people throughout the UK and Ireland, and drove a father to the point of insanity as child by child fate took all that he loved away from him.

For Susan Arrowsmith those visits to the family's ancestral home on the Tyrone-Armagh border did provide her with the final pieces of her genealogical jigsaw as she found answers to many of the questions that she harboured at the beginning of her journey: 'Who was my father… What did he do for a living… What did he look like…What was his life like growing up… Where were his family from… What did they do?'

Her father had been a strikingly handsome man, with – as she puts it in her book – "cornflower blue eyes": now she could see that same familial feature in the Whites she was meeting. At various gatherings Susan was shown family photos, and as these were passed around other similarities emerged: the same curly light hair… the same set of the eyes… the shape of chins… all confirmed for her that she had found the people she had spent years looking for.

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Armed Struggle in the Newry/Armagh Border area: 1921

by Stephen Day

Background

It is generally accepted that the Irish War of Independence (or Anglo-Irish War – there often seem to be two names for the one event in Ireland) began with the shooting dead of two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) Constables by Republican Volunteers at Soloheadbeg on 21 January 1919. They were escorting a routine cart of gelignite to a local quarry in County Tipperary and it was the day that the first Dail met in Dublin. Initially the killings were widely unpopular but in the second half of the year the Volunteers, who were now recognised by Dail Eireann as the Army of the Irish Republic (IRA), were presenting a serious challenge to the RIC, both on and off duty, and to the administration of British rule in Ireland. This was particularly so in parts of the south and west of Ireland.

In early 1920, as the RIC casualties increased and more isolated Barracks were damaged or destroyed, the police were augmented by new recruits mostly from Great Britain and many with previous military experience in the World War. These became known as 'the Black and Tans' (March) and the Auxiliaries (July) both nominally under RIC command. They were not deployed in the six northern counties but their ruthless tactics in the south and the IRA response resulted in this becoming known as the year of terror. Actions in the south had repercussions, exacerbating intermittent inter communal violence in some parts of the north, particularly in Belfast. However, the Newry/Armagh towns and the Armagh border area with Louth and Monaghan largely escaped this. Things were to change as the year progressed and significantly so from December 1920 to July 1921.

Warning Signs

Throughout 1920 small parties of IRA carried out sporadic raids for arms on isolated Border properties. These were mostly farms and the haul mostly shotguns. Some arms were recovered and some arrests made by security forces in South Armagh but it was clear that the local IRA were becoming more organised and experienced. An attack on local police was becoming highly likely and expected after the first capture of an occupied RIC Barracks in Ulster. The IRA attack took place on 14 February 1920 at Ballatrain, County Monaghan. Such attacks were leading to the strategic abandonment of small isolated Barracks (such as Middletown, Cullyhanna and Forkhill) close to the county boundary.

Adding to the tension was the introduction of the Government of Ireland Bill by Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister in February. A final proposal for partition with a devolved government in Belfast for the six northern counties and a devolved government in Dublin for the remaining twenty-six was reluctantly accepted by the Ulster Unionist Council in March. (Their preferred option was to remain under direct rule from Westminster with no dilution of the Union.) Sinn Fein wanted a full exit from the Union and the establishment of a Republic for the entire island. Northern Nationalists found themselves in an impossible situation in the middle. (The Legislation became Law on 22 December 1920)

In the interim the IRA campaign continued with growing intensity in parts of the South and the British Government reluctantly committed more troops to those troubled areas to contain the violence

Sunday 9 May 1920: Under pressure to intensify IRA activity in the six northern counties, a large force of IRA surrounded the small police Barracks at Newtownhamilton with the intention of capturing the building and seizing the guns in the armoury. Frank Aiken (22) from Camlough was the senior local man but the force was augmented by a significant number of IRA veterans from the south. They were resisted by the RIC Station Party – Sergeant Traynor and five constables. The mission was unsuccessful although the building was badly damaged. The night long attack was without fatalities.

June 1920: Usual electioneering tensions led up to the County Council Elections but no violence ensued.

11 June 1920: Sergeant Holland and two fellow RIC constables were on duty at a Gaelic Festival in Cullyhanna when men emerged from the crowd and attempted to steal their weapons. The Sergeant resisted, there was an exchange of fire and he fell fatally injured.

The two constables were also injured but survived. Peter McCreesh, aged 28, from nearby Aughanduff was shot dead in the exchange. Sergeant Timothy Holland was the first policeman to be killed in the Newry/Armagh area during the 'Troubles.' (A native of Dunmanway, Co. Cork he had been in the RIC for 18 years)

7 July 1920: Police Witness 'Kidnapped' in Armagh. The practice of Dublin Castle during the War of Independence was to transfer major IRA trials from 'proclaimed areas' to northern locations. This explains why cases such as the 'Knocklong Murders' of two RIC men in County Limerick on May 13 1919 were held at Armagh Court. It was reported that a key police witness, Sergeant Reilly, who was due to appear, had mysteriously disappeared from temporary local lodgings. Consequently, he did not give evidence. (Irish News: July 8 1920)

6 August 1920: The Dail sanctioned a boycott of goods from Belfast and this soon spread to many other parts of the Six Counties. It proved to be counterproductive and divisive. An opportunity for violence, intimidation and theft by some of those seeking to enforce it. The Boycott caused deepening hostility between North and South. (It continued into January1922 when it was abandoned in the Craig – Collins Pact. Promptly imposed again by Anti-Treaty IRA, it embarrassed Collins and contributed to tensions leading to the Civil War 1922-1923.)

BELFAST TRADE BOYCOTT

Warning to Irishmen and Irishwomen . . .

In view of the convening of the Partition "Parliament" at Belfast, it has been decreed that NO NOTES OR CHEQUES ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING BANKS ARE TO BE ACCEPTED UNDER ANY CONDITIONS AFTER THE 7th JUNE, 1921.

THE ULSTER BANK
THE NORTHERN BANK
THE BELFAST BANK

Any such Notes or Cheques seized on or after that date will be confiscated.

All persons in possession of such Notes or Cheques should immediately dispose of them.

By Order,

Belfast Boycott Committee.

Belfast Boycott Poster, August 1920

9 August 1920: Emergency Legislation introduced. Restoration of Order in Ireland Act provided additional powers for the authorities. This included curfew, traffic restrictions and greater powers of arrest. Many local Sinn Fein activists and IRA suspects were to be detained under this legislation in Camps such as Ballykinlar, County Down.

Autumn 1920: In a controversial move, the British Government decided to meet unionist demands for a reserve force to assist the understrength and overstretched Royal Irish Constabulary in the Six Counties. Ministers were unwilling to commit additional military to perform a policing role in the North. (The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was not formally established until 1 June 1922.)

1 November 1920: The Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) was legally constituted by the Westminster Government and recruitment was formalised.

21 November 1920: Head Constable John James Kearney, 51years, (RIC), Canal Street Barracks, Newry was shot dead by the IRA at Needham Street returning from devotions at the Dominican Church, Queen Street. He had been stationed in Newry since 1917 and was a very popular officer. He was the first policeman to be killed in Newry during the 'Troubles.' (A native of Co. Westmeath he had been in the RIC for 32 years.)

Late November 1920: The Special Constabulary began to increase joint patrol duties with the RIC in Newry/Armagh.

12/13 December 1920: Attack on Camlough RIC Barracks. At the end of the year, IRA HQ issued instructions for increased efforts to spread the conflict and relieve pressure on their hard-pressed Units in the South and West of Ireland. It appears that this attack was an early response to this.

Camlough Barracks, another small building, was located on the southern side of the town with the garrison town of Newry just three miles away to the northeast. This main road ran under the main Belfast to Dublin railway line and the ornate Egyptian Arch, a 100 -foot-high railway bridge.

Until recently the local IRA commander, Frank Aiken, had lived in the family home at Carrickbracken a short distance from Camlough and he led the attack. As with the earlier attack at Newtownhamilton Barracks the local men were supported by IRA volunteers from outside the South Armagh area. Unlike Newtownhamilton this was a high risk target in that it

was close to nearby support from Newry.

The IRA sealed off all approaches and that included having men positioned on the Egyptian Arch to deal with any reinforcements coming from Newry. The aim was to destroy the Barracks. There would be no attempt to seize police weapons if there was resistance. The building was surrounded. Sergeant Beatty RIC and six constables became involved in a fierce exchange of fire and grenades. Meanwhile, as expected, a relief column of Special Constables and military from the Newry garrison was approaching the Egyptian Arch. They were forced to take cover as the IRA on the high ground bombarded them with grenades followed by a fusillade of shots. No serious injuries were sustained by the Crown Forces who took cover and laid down heavy fire with all available weapons including a machine gun.

One IRA man, William Canning, was shot dead at the scene and two others, Peter Shields and John Francis O'Hare, died later of their wounds. The IRA carried out a quick withdrawal from the Arch and this resulted in a similar withdrawal from Camlough where relief forces from Bessbrook were also arriving. A number of other IRA men were wounded in this operation but survived. It was the last such attack on a police barracks in the Newry/Armagh area for the remainder of the campaign.

In follow up searches four men were arrested on the Dublin Road and subsequently sentenced to 15 years imprisonment for their involvement in the ambush. One was from Mullingar and another from Dundalk, further evidence that the local men were bolstered with a strong cross-border contingent.

In reprisal (and in line with the controversial government approved policy elsewhere in Ireland) Crown Forces burnt the houses used as cover for the attack on Camlough Barracks. They also burnt the Camlough homes of Frank Aiken and another prominent figure in the local IRA, Jack McIlhaw. The Sinn Fein Hall in William Street, Newry was also burnt. Extensive house searches were also carried out and a number of additional arrests made.

As a military operation the attack was a set-back for the IRA. From now on the emphasis would be on guerrilla activity in the rural border country to the south and close quarter shoots by small groups of men in urban centres.

Reprisals, Counter- Reprisals and The Truce

The Camlough attack had triggered a series of events which within a month moved parts of the South Armagh area from relatively low level activity to increased levels of guerrilla warfare.

Although this escalation followed a now familiar pattern and one that had been experienced elsewhere on the island, it seems highly unlikely that the opposing sides consciously played out each move in full knowledge of the likely consequences.

In the aftermath of the spectacular attack at Camlough, extra police and military were sent to bolster the local garrisons. There was an immediate and marked increase in search activities in Newry and the Border areas which forced many of the local Volunteers to go 'on the run'. On **28 December** Special Constables from No 2 Platoon, involved in this type of activity in the Belleeks area of South Armagh, shot and wounded a young man, Peter Mackin (18) leaving him for dead. The next day, **29 December**, they shot another, Michael Smyth. He died. The circumstances were controversial. The Constables' claims that the men were 'shot whilst attempting to escape' were counterbalanced by claims that these were reprisal shootings. (The first in the Newry/Armagh area.) The latter appears to have been the case and general concerns about the activity of this Platoon over this period led to its disbandment, its two officers resigning at the beginning of 1921.

7 January 1921: North of Camlough two RIC and one Special Constable on patrol were shot and wounded. That night three Constables were fired on at Crossmaglen. Fire was returned.

11 January 1921: John Doran, (26) was taken out of house at Keggal by masked men and shot dead.

12 January 1921: Felix Mallon, (17) Ballinlish died of wounds sustained the previous Sunday. Shot outside Clonlum Sinn Fein Hall near Meigh by persons unknown.

13 January 1921: Five police on bicycles were escorting Postman Patrick Kirk (ex Royal Irish Fusiliers and resident of Crossmaglen) as he delivered old age pensions between Crossmaglen and Cullyhanna. Ambushed by 50 Volunteers at Ballyfarnham Lodge, Freeduff and shot seven times in the back, Kirk was the first civilian to be overtly killed by IRA in South Armagh in the 'Troubles.' Special Constable Compston (25) who arrived with a relief party from Dundalk was also shot as they in turn were ambushed. The first member of the USC to be killed by the IRA, he was a local man from Outlack.) Both died of gunshot wounds. Several Constables were injured fighting off the attackers.

14 January 1921: Sergeant Kirk, 42 years, RIC was seriously injured in Market Street, Armagh when an IRA grenade was thrown at him. He was patrolling alone just 100 yards from the Russell Street Barracks. He later died of his wounds. The attack was denounced by the Sinn Fein Chairman of the City Council, Mr. James O'Reilly. The first and only police officer to be killed in Armagh City during the campaign.

The response to this upsurge in IRA activity was both measured and effective. Patrols were increased in Armagh, Newry and the outlying villages and large numbers of RIC, USC and military carried out searches, the most extensive being in the Slieve Gullion area of South Armagh. Weapons and seditious literature were found and 18 men were detained in custody. The following week similar searches took place in the Forkhill area.

19 January 1921: Constable Allford (Bessbrook RIC) shot and wounded in a hit and run ambush at Sturgan just south of Camlough. No more significant attacks followed in South Armagh until April.

2 February 1921: James Toner, 25-year-old Catholic, was shot and fatally wounded by IRA at his home at Lagan near Keady.

6 February 1921: Special Constable Cummings (24) died of injuries received from an IRA grenade thrown at his foot patrol at Back Seaview, Warrenpoint. Two of his colleagues were injured.

11 February 1921: In his Lenten Pastoral Address from Armagh the Catholic Primate of All Ireland, Cardinal Logue, strongly condemned the escalation of violence on both sides across the island appealing for more emphasis on reconciliation.

March 1921: The various IRA formations throughout Ireland were reorganised into Divisions. The Newry/Armagh area was at the centre of the 4th Northern Division under the command of Frank Aiken. It included a large portion of south Down and County Louth. (County Monaghan was designated 5th Northern Division under command of Dan Hogan.)

8 March 1921: An uneasy local peace in Newry was broken when police exchanged fire on IRA men in plain clothes who were acting suspiciously outside the Church Street Barracks. In the late evening Special Constables fired shots when confronted by a rowdy crowd. Three men were wounded and questions were asked in the House of Commons by the Nationalist MP Joe Devlin.

17 March 1921: As part of the Belfast Boycott an unexpected IRA raid took place on Richhill Railway Station in a predominantly unionist area north of Armagh City. The Station was largely destroyed by fire.

10 April 1921: Special Constable Fluke (ex Royal Irish Fusiliers) was cycling with four colleagues from Crossmaglen to attend church service at Creggan. En route they noticed men acting suspiciously and when they went to investigate they were ambushed by sixteen men throwing grenades and firing rifles. Constable Fluke was killed in the first contact as police returned fire. Three of his four colleagues were wounded but they were all able to return to Crossmaglen Barracks. The dead Constable was from Killylea district, just west of Armagh City as were two of his colleagues. The incident caused a lot of tension and anger in their local community. Some loyalists attacked some nationalist houses and some nationalists retaliated by attacking loyalist property including a local Orange Hall. No one was killed and order was restored by a heavy presence of police from Armagh.

23 April 1921: Shots fired at Camlough Barracks and IRA theft of the Belfast/Newry mail at Bessbrook Railway Station the previous evening led to a large scale search operation - Omeath to Mullaghbawn. Munitions were found, Suspects arrested included Johnny McCoy, local Sinn Fein Councillor and leading Volunteer in Mullaghbawn area.

26 April 1921: A joint RIC and USC foot patrol was ambushed by plain clothes IRA at Merchant's Quay, Newry. Several police injured and Special Constable George Graham (ex Royal Irish Rifles) died of his wounds. Fire was returned and the IRA ran off but were intercepted by a second joint RIC and USC foot patrol who fired warning shots. Three of the four men were arrested and lodged in the nearby military barracks. All three were found to be in possession of firearms. A curfew (9pm to 5am) came into effect in Newry at the beginning of May to help combat such attacks.

Early May 1921: Cross border incursions into Armagh by IRA from County Monaghan (4th Northern Division) included an unsuccessful raid against Tassagh Post Office just north of Keady. Probing IRA patrols in Derrynoose, Middletown and Tynan areas were deterred by police patrols from Tynan and Killylea. IRA arms raids on a number of Protestant rural houses and an Orange Hall in the Drumhillery border area between Keady and Middletown had limited success.

Table 9 NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS - MAY 1921			
CO ARMAGH ELECTION		CO DOWN ELECTION	
Electorate	53,977	Electorate	93,138
Valid Votes	46,592	Valid Votes	81,187
Spoiled Votes	696	Spoiled Votes	935
Quota	9,307	Quota	9,021
BEST (U)	15,988	Sir J CRAIG (U)	29,829
COLLINS (R)	12,656	De VALERA (R)	16,269
SHILLINGTON (U)	9,730	ANDREWS (U)	12,584
NUGENT (N)	6,857	O'NEILL (N)	7,317
AIKEN (R)	1,301	MULHOLLAND (U)	4,665
		McBRIDE (U)	3,297
		T LAVERY (U)	2,863
		McMULLAN (U)	2,692
		ADAMS (W)	1,188
		P LAVERY (R)	327
		MOORE (R)	149
(4 Elected:)		(8 Elected:)	

Election results for Belfast Parliament

May 1921: Northern Ireland Parliamentary Elections offered a temporary lull in local violence. Sinn Fein ran their top men, Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera in the constituencies of County Armagh and County Down respectively. As expected both men received an impressive Republican protest vote. They were elected along with a number of other Nationalist and Unionist candidates under the proportional representation system of voting. Nevertheless, both constituencies remained overwhelmingly anti Republican. (Both men were 'on the run' as was Frank Aiken who also appeared on the Ballot Papers. There were also electioneering tensions between Sinn Fein and the Nationalists, a hangover from the Council Elections of the previous year.

6 June 1921: The decision of Sinn Fein's military wing to continue violence in Newry/Armagh after the election finally provoked the tit for tat reprisal killings which had largely been avoided hitherto. Two prominent Nationalists, Hugh O'Hanlon (35) Eshwary, Camlough and James Smyth (45) Keggal, Camlough were taken from their homes and shot dead as spies. Both were respected members of the AOH whose anti-Sinn Fein views were well known. Few doubted that the IRA was responsible and on this occasion it appears that fellow Hibernians may have killed a local Sinn Fein activist in retaliation. (13 June 1921)

8 June 1921: Special Constable George Lyness, 25 years, (Ex Royal Irish Rifles) was shot dead whilst on patrol at Greenan Road, Corrigs just NE of Newry. Two of the Magill brothers (Owen and James) were shot dead at a nearby house by the Specials. This was an apparent reprisal in controversial circumstances.

13 June 1921: John Cosgrove (28) described as a local Sinn Fein activist was taken from his home near Camlough and shot dead. (An attempt on a second Sinn Fein man was unsuccessful.) It appears that these two incidents were reprisals, possibly by fellow Hibernians, for the killing of AOH members on 6 June.

19 June 1921: A large party of IRA attempted to kill two young Special Constables at their home at Grangemore north-west of Armagh City. The home burnt out but the raiders were repulsed. Arrests followed.

22 June 1921: King George V officially opens the Northern Parliament in Belfast. *'This is a great and critical occasion in the history of the Six Counties, but not for the Six Counties alone, for everything which interests them touches Ireland…. I pray that my coming to Ireland today may prove to be the first step towards an end to strife amongst her people whatever their race or creed. In that hope I appeal to all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and forget, and to join in making for the land which they love a new era of peace, contentment and good will.'* However, Nationalist and Sinn Fein MPs held to their pledge *'not to enter this north-eastern parliament.'*

24 June 1921: A Troop Train carrying 113 (10th Royal Hussars) soldiers and their horses was returning to Dublin on the main line from Belfast having carried out ceremonial duty at the King's visit to City Hall. The train was derailed in an IRA ambush at Adavoyle just south of Bessbrook. The civilian train guard, Francis Gallagher, was killed as were three soldiers, Sergeant Dawson, Trooper Harpur and Trooper Telford. These were the first British soldiers to be killed in County Armagh in the 'Troubles.' In the confusion a local man, Patrick McAleer, an innocent civilian, was shot dead in a nearby field by soldiers. Up to 50 horses were killed or had to be put down at the scene. This was probably the most successful attack by the IRA's 4th Northern Division in the North.

30 June 1921: Special Constable Hugh Gabbie (ex WW1 soldier) was shot dead whilst off duty in plain clothes outside the Market, Hill Street, Newry. (In follow up activity police arrested a leading IRA man from Warrenpoint who was armed and had been on the run since the killing of Special Constable Cummings the previous February)

30 June 1921: The Carnagh Ambush. Michael McEneaney and Thomas McEneaney, 5th Northern Division, were killed by Auxiliaries in a Border ambush on the main Keady to Castleblayney Road in County Monaghan just south of the main crossing point at Carnagh. A large number of IRA were operating on both sides of the Border and following the progress of a vehicle transporting Boycott-related goods south. The vehicle was under Crown Forces escort and the plan was to eliminate them and capture the goods. The plan

was known and Auxiliaries had set up their own ambush on the southern side, positioned on a railway bridge which bisected the road.

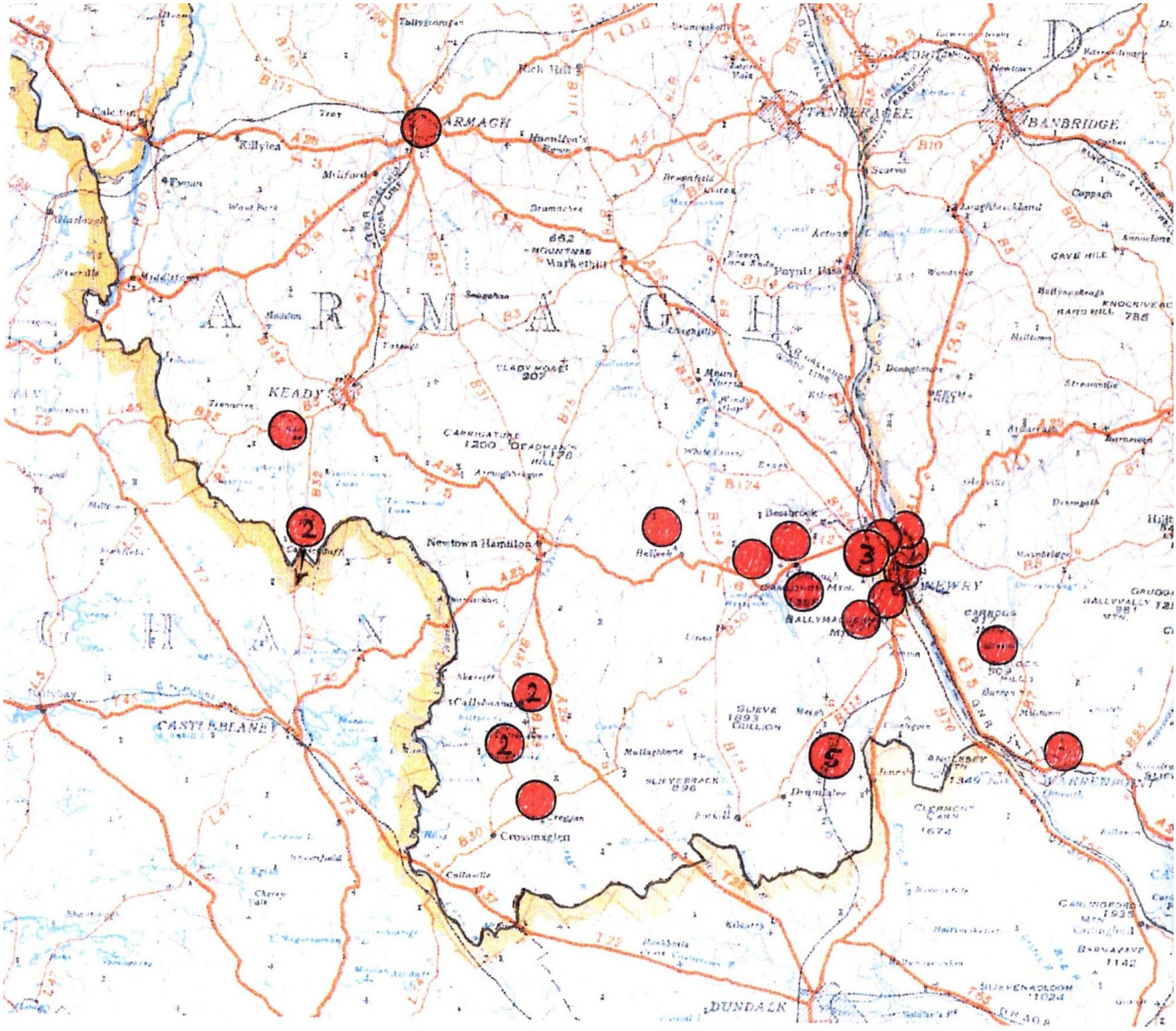
1 July 1921: William Hickey was taken from his lodgings at Kilmorey Street, Newry and later found shot dead at the side of the Armagh Road in an apparent reprisal.

6 July 1921: Four more apparent reprisals took place. Two Reilly brothers, Thomas (21) and John (24) Dublin Road, Newry, Peter McGinnity (19) Ballymacdermot and Patrick Quinn (38) Carnaget were all taken from their separate dwellings and shot dead. There is little doubt that these killings were carried out by a clandestine section of the security forces operating in plain clothes. However, it is unclear as to whether it was carried out by soldiers in response to the troop train attack or by Specials following the death of their colleague in Newry or a combination of both. Neither is it clear if the reprisals were officially sanctioned.

9 July 1921: The IRA response was to kill a Protestant workman. Draper Gwyn Holmes (47), a ganger for the GNR, was surrounded by a dozen armed men and shot dead whilst working on the railway line at Lisdrumliska on the southern outskirts of Newry.

11 July 1921: Just two days later the senior figures in Sinn Fein and the IRA agreed a Truce with the British Government. (This had been under discussion since 1 July.) In line with the rest of the island 'armed struggle' in the Newry/Armagh area came to a **temporary** halt.

4 September 1921: In his first public appearance since the Truce Michael Collins MP attended a large Sinn Fein demonstration in Armagh City with a colleague Eoin O'Duffy IRA HQ Staff. Whilst Collins



Map showing location of deaths resulting from armed struggle in Newry/Armagh border area 1920—1921 (Most occurred from December 1920 to July 1921)

spoke in conciliatory terms O'Duffy declared that if Loyalists insisted on partition, Sinn Fein members *'would have to put on the screw – the Boycott. They would have to tighten the screw and, if necessary, they would have to use the lead against them.'*

The existence of a revenge mentality would re-emerge in an even more virulent form in the post Treaty trauma of the following year.

In Newry/Armagh the death toll had been three soldiers and eight police (including five Special Constables) against three IRA dead. In addition, nineteen civilians were killed some accidentally and some in reprisals or as alleged spies for the security forces. Many more combatants and civilians suffered serious wounds and injuries. Most of the incidents were in Newry/South Armagh but impacted on the wider County Armagh and south Down areas. Some well beyond that.

The Truce in July brought a feeling of relief and optimism. But for those, on both sides and none, who had lost loved ones, the grief remained. Republican prisoners were released as part of the peace process but within months there was growing evidence that Sinn Fein and the IRA were using it to strengthen their respective organisations with militaristic political rallies, the development of Sinn Fein Courts and an increase in IRA recruitment and training camps. Attempts to set up an alternative justice system in the Newry/Armagh border region collapsed, largely due to a lack of general support and pro-active police monitoring of the situation. The same applied to training camps. This demonstrated that, once again, what was possible in other parts of Ireland clearly was not possible here due to its more complex characteristics.

Nevertheless, the setting up of at least four IRA training camps just outside the jurisdiction such as Louth (Ravensdale) and Monaghan (Mullyash) border area presented an ominous and ongoing threat to the Northern administration. As such they were a major factor in preventing a return to peace-time patrolling in Newry/Armagh. As a precaution the Belfast government began recruiting more Special Constables in November. There was nothing simple or reassuring about what might lie ahead.

October/November 1921: The Treaty: Two months of negotiation between the British Government and Irish representatives followed. Further debates between the divided Irish representatives in the Dail continued throughout the Christmas period. The terms of the Treaty were accepted on 7 January 1922 by 64 votes to 57. The split between pro Treaty and anti Treaty forces led to the Civil War in the South: 28 June 1922 - 24 May 1923. From January to June 1922 the North and the Newry/Armagh Border area experienced a final period of violence until ironically events in the South enabled peace to return.

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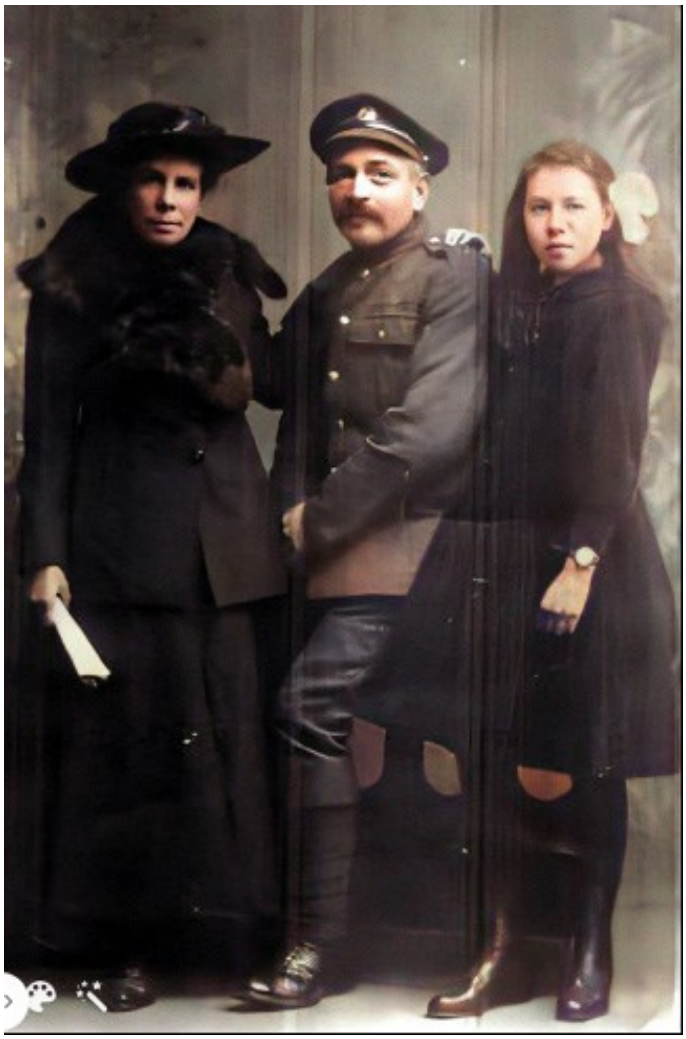
Hammerhead: A glimpse into the life of a lighterman

by Richard Burns

My great-grandfather William James McCann was a lighterman by profession, as were a number of his brothers and nephews.



William James McCann along with his wife Mary Ann and daughter Eliza. Probably pictured in 1916 before going to serve with the Royal Engineers Inland Waterways Transport Section.

Perhaps the best known lighterman on the Newry Canal was his mother's brother Thomas Henry 'Hammerhead' Davidson [Note 1], and almost equally well known was my great grandfather's nephew and Hammerhead's namesake Thomas Henry 'Topcoat' McCann. Over a hundred years after Hammerhead's death in 1911, his name is still mentioned when talking about the lightermen. Mickey Waddell in his article on the canal [REF 1] refers to Hammerhead as the most famous name spoken about, and he also remembers Topcoat McCann being called that because he wore his overcoat all year round, even in the height of summer.

The following newspaper reports give some insight into Hammerhead's life and activities.

AN EXCITING EVENT [REF 2]

"ANY MONEY, HAMMERHEAD"

The stagecoach has given way to the locomotive and the passenger clipper has been superseded by the ocean greyhound of today, which with its powerful engines pushes along almost regardless of wind and weather – the trip which formerly occupied at least a month now seldom exceeding eight or nine days. Truly this is a go-ahead age but we, nevertheless, not infrequently come across connecting links which remind us that the age of sails and horse is not so long past. What better example can we name than the lighter of the last decade of the nineteenth century? When the hurricane blows straight up or down the canal, then the local junks trim their sails to the favouring breeze, and

"The fittest falcon scarce can fly more merrily along"

But when

"There is not a breath the blue wave to curl"

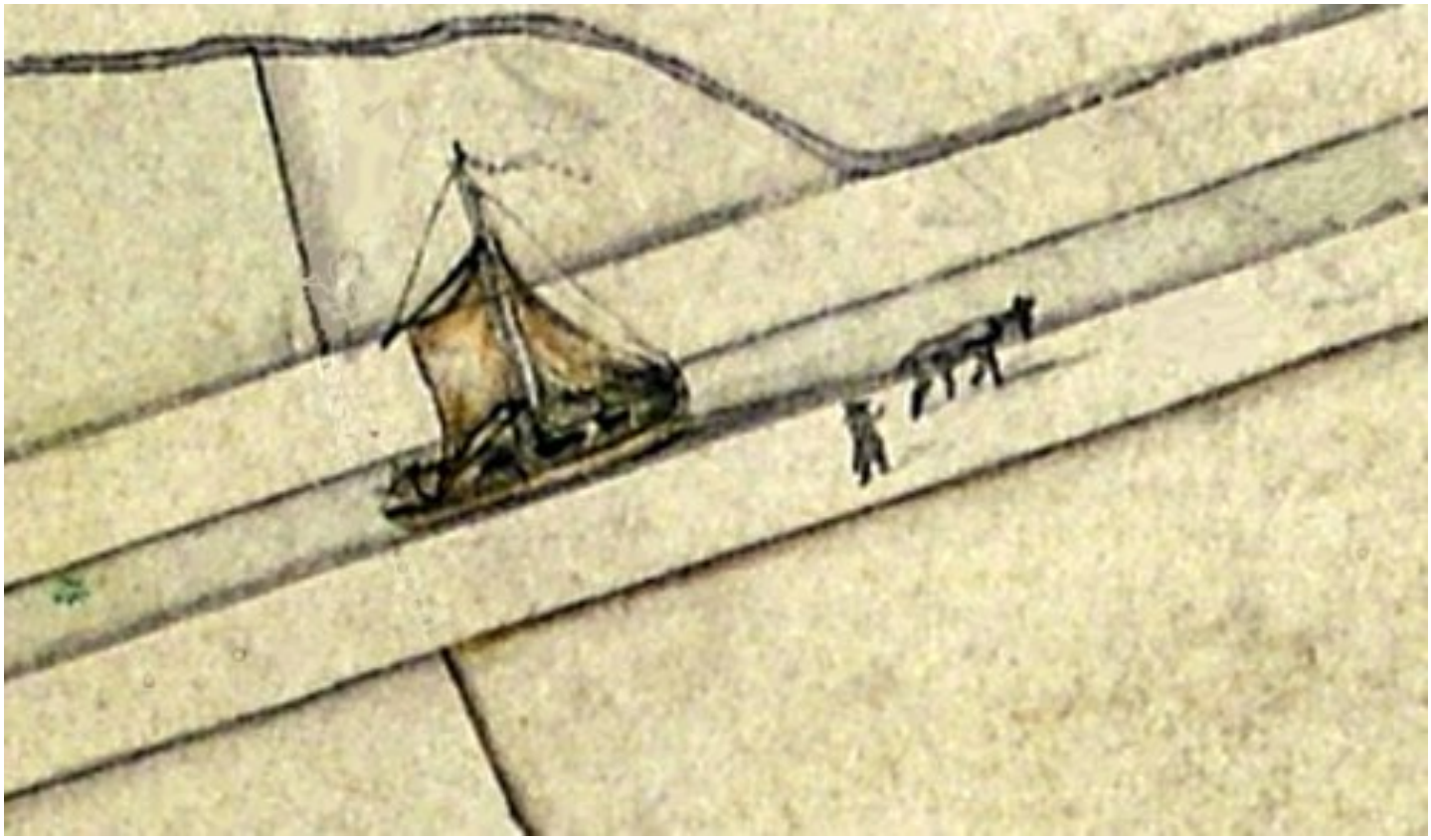
a gallant steed with a single tree hanging gracefully behind as a dress-improver is attached to the end of a long rope, which, in turn is taken round the capstan of the dainty craft reposing as peacefully as a wigeon on the breast of the pleasant waters. The strain is terrible on the noble beast, but the owner is prepared for any emergency and has 'canted' him forward. Once in this position he manages to keep his legs, and crawl onwards at the rate of a mile and a half per hour, all the time goaded on and kept in the forward position by an occasional prick of the boathook and the uninterrupted imprecations of the 'mahout'. So long as the animal is kept going all is well, but let him stop suddenly and a roll into the canal or in the opposite direction is the invariable result; for the lighter drawing horse is not too strong on his legs. In general debility he is only excelled by Atty McGeough's fossil!

But to our story: Amongst the proprietors of one of the splendid specimens of the equine species is a handsome individual who enjoys it in the flattering title of "Hammerhead"; and be it given to the world, he has the

greatest faith in the celebrity of his 'baste' - once it's started. Now, on Saturday evening, if we are rightly informed, Hammerhead made known to all and sundry that there wasn't a horse within the lamps of Newry that could keep pace with his on the flat, for any distance up to two miles, in proof of the earnestness of which declaration he hereby offered to race any Newry horse, from the head of Canal Street to Mr Whigham's and back, the owner of the winning horse to become also the owner of the loser. There happened to be among the crowd surrounding Hammerhead a certain individual who owns a few cars and horses, but who was thought by his friends to have more sense than to accept the challenge; but in this they were mistaken for no sooner had the Challenger ended is peroration, than the other curtly remarked. 'Come, I'll take ye up!' Hammerhead looked round and said he never saw the policeman yet who could do that; but his friends explaining that the words were meant as an acceptance of the challenge and not as a threat of imprisonment, a change quicker than that of April weather was noticeable in the rather open countenance of Hammerhead, the defiant and surly glance being replaced by one all pleasantness and sunshine. Soon the arrangements were made - no weighing-in, no penalties, no allowances, no objections; and the local 'bookies' decided paying over first past the post. The race was to commence immediately, and Hammerhead haulled out his nag; and the other said the only 'baste' he had at home was spavined but he would race and run with him all the same. {Note 3],

The Cock-of-the-Rock officiated as starter and judge, and here we must pay a tribute to his efficiency in the first capacity and the extreme fairness of his decision in the other. Amid a chorus of – 'I'll back the feel'. 'Any money Hammerhead'. 'What price ---?' 'I'll take yer two-to-one' &c, the commanding tones of the starter were heard in these words – "Now, gentlemen when I drop my cap, yez go'.

For a moment or two the betters were hushed, and in the interval thus afforded the cap fell with a thud to the ground. Hammerhead lost in the start, his horse refusing to move. 'Give him a shove, Cock', said the owner, and the starter having performed a slight office, away went the favourite after his opponent, which was a couple of perches in front. Inch by inch the space dividing the two diminished, then by feet – but the loud and heavy breathing, loud and shrill as a whistle of the 'Robert Burns' told the tale that both contestants were wind broken. But fortune favoured Hammerhead. Away almost at the turning point the keen eye of his steed perceived a cart of hay on the road; then, with a snort and a spank the distance between the two came down to yards, and the loud huzzas from those walking along the footpath told Hammerhead plainly that they had never for an instant lost faith in the capabilities of his charger. Now the nose of the laggard shot along the flank of the leader, and a horrible squeal the next moment directed the attention of the 'Sports' on the footpath. Hammerhead's horse had taken a piece out of the shoulder of his opponent! From this on Seabreeze (Hammerhead's) cut out the work, and in the course of ten or fifteen minutes the turning point was reached. Then those who had kept along with the race hurried forward and lifted Seabreeze and his rider clean round, gave him a shot forward, and he was gaily homeward bound. One of the distinguishing features of the running of the favourite is that it must go straight ahead – if it goes in the slightest deviation from its course a 'coup' is the result. Now unfortunately for the other horse it was just coming up to the turning point when Seabreeze was going in the opposite direction; they were directly in line with each other. Let us get over this sad portion as quickly as possible: Seabreeze charged straight ahead, knocked his opponent down and shot straight over its head; but the favourite rose with that ease which is the outcome of unintermittent practice, and shortly afterwards past the outstretched finger of the starter who was thus prepared to judge in the case of a neck to neck finish. Declaring Seabreeze the winner, he said he could judge as well along his finger as Mr McK. Waters could along with a needle, and there wasn't a one to say him 'nay'. The time for the mile and a half was given as 32 minutes 5¼ seconds. Heartily cheered was Hammerhead on the victory, the applause being renewed five minutes afterwards when the defeated surmounted the little rise within a few perches of the winning post. A move was then made to a 'pub' to settle matters, both animals being hitched outside the door. Hammerhead was just getting to the bottom of his fourth pint, when a little urchin popped in his head and said 'Ah, sir, yer horse has fell'. 'Bad luck to ye,' roared the one addressed, 'Why did ye lane against him!', and he made a spang at the youngster, but Seabreeze had recovered himself, and had just regained his legs when his master appeared. There was a little dispute about the lots and as yet Hammerhead hadn't got the other horse; but he is now soliloquising about the 'virtue in a solicitor', 'a pross' the 'County Court' and cognate subjects. When the case comes on, we'll be there to report it, but keep it dark, as we want the monopoly on publishing the interesting proceedings.



An image of the age of sail and horse is captured in this illustration from a 1795 map of the Newry Canal, which appears above with kind permission of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

For want of a bottle, a horse was lost

A less convivial side to Hammerhead arises in a series of court cases from the summer of 1897, initially held in Ballybot Petty Sessions and finally in Armagh Assizes relating to the alleged theft of two of his mares.

The first case was heard at the Ballybot Petty Session on Monday, 28th June, [REF 3] when Robert Hutchinson was charged with aiding and abetting James O'Neill in stealing one white mare and one dark brown mare, the property of Thomas Henry Davidson.

Davidson stated that he kept horses and towed lighters on the canal between Newry and Portadown. On Tuesday evening he had left the two mares in Mr Joseph Hall's stables in Edward Street, where he always stabled them. Both of the animals were his property and were valued at £5.10s. On that evening he was taken ill and had to remain in the cabin of the lighter at the Sugar Island Bridge. He was unable to leave the lighter until the evening of 16th June. When he went to the stables, he found both of the animals gone. James O'Neill, who was in charge of the lighter where he had been lying ill, told him that he had taken the two mares out of Halls and sold them, one to Samuel Thompson and the other to John Bell. After he realised they were missing he saw O'Neill and Hutchinson near Mr Whigham's public-house on the Armagh Road. He asked O'Neill what he had done with the animals, and O'Neill replied that he was looking for one of them. Witness then asked the men to come into Mr Whigham's until he could sort things out. Mr. Whigham told him that O'Neill was just after selling the little brown mare to Bell. O'Neill was employed by George Bright, Edenderry, Portadown, the owner of the lighter, and he employed O Neill. He had known him for the past nine or ten years, but he had never seen Hutchinson until he met him in the public-house.

Hutchinson said that he had come into town that morning about half-past seven. At the Sugar Island Bridge, O'Neill came up to him and asked if he was doing anything. He replied that he was not and asked was there any chance of a job. O'Neill said that he wanted him to drive a pair of horses with a lighter to Portadown, the man be usually had with him was sick. Sometime later O'Neill said that the white mare might drop dead before he got to Poyntzpass, and that he could sell her now. The animal was subsequently sold to a Mr Thompson by O'Neill for 9s. When O'Neill and he had gone a short distance down the line O'Neill said that the brown mare was not worth very much either and that he had better sell her as well. The brown mare was sold in the presence of Mr. Whigham and a man named Bell for the sum of 14s 6d or 15s. That was all he knew about the matter, he believed that the animals belonged to O'Neill.

In her evidence Mrs Jane Hall's stated that she was the

wife of Joseph Hall, who kept a public-house and stables in Edward Street. Thomas Davidson had always stabled his horses in her husband's yard. He left a white mare and brown mare in her husband's stable on Tuesday evening. On the following morning James O'Neill and another man came into the shop. O'Neill told her that Davidson was ill and had sent him for the animals. She saw him taking out the brown mare and later noticed that the white mare was not in the stable.

Samuel Thompson stated that he purchased the animal from O'Neill for the sum of 19s. He knew Hutchinson, who lived beside him for some time. John Bell stated he purchased a mare from O'Neill for the sum of 12s 6d. Hutchinson was with him. The following day a policeman came out to witness's house and told him that the mare had been stolen, and he gave the animal up.

The Chairman said that the evidence was insufficient to return Hutchinson for trial and discharged him from custody.

The second case was held in Ballybot Petty sessions on Monday, 5th July, [REF 4] when James O'Neill was charged with having stolen one white mare and one dark brown mare, the properly of one Thomas Henry Davidson. The evidence of the witnesses in the previous case was restated. Constable Somers then stated that he took over charge of O'Neill in the Belfast Police Office and read over the warrant to him and gave him the usual caution. In the train on his way to Newry O'Neill made the following statement : Hammerhead was lying sick in the cabin of the lighter, and he asked me for God's sake to get him something to cure him, and to take the white mare to Sammy Thompson's and get as much for her as I could. I got 9s for her, I brought him a naggin of whisky out of Adam Johnston's before I took anything myself. Hutchinson was with me. I then started the lighter with the brown mare, and went as far as the third locks, Hutchinson driving the mare and Hammerhead was lying sick in the lighter. The brown mare was unable to go any further. Hutchinson and I loosed out the mare and took her up as far as Whigham's and left her on the roadside. We met a countryman there and sold the mare to him. I think it was 19s, I am not right sure about the money I got for her. I then went out the road and saw Hammerhead come up. I offered the price of the mare to him and he would not take it. He wanted us to go back in to Newry. I followed the countryman up the road to get the mare back, but he was gone out of sight. I would not for six times the price of the old horses have had anything to do with it. Drink was the cause of it. Constable Somers explained that Davidson is known as Hammerhead, and that he had reported the matter to the police between eight and nine o'clock on 16th June. In response to Mr Sheridan, the defence lawyer, he stated that Davidson was not under the influence of drink at the time, but he looked sick. He was a man of very drunken habits. Their Worships returned the accused for trial to the next Armagh Assizes.

That case was held at the Assizes on Thursday, 8th June, [REF 5] when James O'Neill was indicted for the larceny of the two horses. Mr. J. Cusack appeared for the accused. Davidson when examined, said that he might have given the prisoner permission to sell the horses. By direction of his Lordship, O'Neill was found not guilty, and acquitted.

Canal Quay, Newry where my great grandparents lived.

Death of a Lighterman

Thomas Henry "Hammerhead" Davidson died on 12th September 1911, because of the nature of his death an inquest was held the following day. [REF 6]

The coroner for South Armagh Mr. John Francis Small, held the inquest in the Boardroom of the Newry Workhouse. Head-Constable Cregg and Acting-Sergeant Porter represented the Crown.

Giving evidence, Arthur McCann of New Street in Newry, stated he was a nephew of the deceased, who was about 62 or 63 years of age. The deceased was a lighterman but had not done any work for the past twelve months or so. On Tuesday morning about ten o'clock I assisted in taking him down from a loft in New Street. He was very weak and could hardly speak. I accompanied him in the Workhouse ambulance to the Newry Union Infirmary. I was present when the doctor examined him. He stretched out his hand to me. I asked him if he was dead and he did not answer; he was not able. Dr. Martin said he was breathing once every three minutes. I next heard the doctor saying he was

dead, and I assisted in carrying him into the mortuary. As long as I remember the deceased suffered from sores on his legs. He was previously in the Union Infirmary and was only out of it about three months. He had no means of living and depended on the charity of people. I have a brother called William James McCann, who used to live in Edward Street, but left it about five or six months ago. When he was there, he looked after him but since he left no member of the family looked after him. He had no place to sleep save barns and outhouses. In the past I often provided food for him. In consequence of what I heard I went to see him on Sunday night in the hay-loft in New Street with James Brady, of Canal Street. He said he would like some hot milk with pepper in it and my boy brought it to the deceased. The deceased then appeared to be weak and bad. I did not see him at all on Monday. On Tuesday morning I went to see him after I heard the doctor had been there. From Sunday night until Tuesday morning, though I knew he was bad, I never went near him. So far as I know he didn't get food or nourishment, but he was in the charge of other people. I have no reason to believe anyone interfered with him. The lightermen were good to him, and the Taylor family were also kind to him. I did not tell the police or the relieving officer that he was in a bad state. He was never married. My mother was his sister, and I am the eldest of her family. He had a brother, but I don't know his whereabouts or whether he is alive or dead. In a response to a question from the coroner McCann said the loft belonged to a man named Taylor. It was a hay loft and there was a stable beneath it. When further questioned, he said that the deceased had no fixed place of abode since his mother died about 18 years ago. Since the deceased left the Workhouse Infirmary about three months ago, he generally sat at the Canal Street Bridge during the day and occasionally he stopped on lighters. McCann added that the deceased wore clogs and was known as Hammerhead.

Dr H. W. Smartt, medical officer of the Newry No. I and Ballybot dispensary district stated that he saw the deceased in the loft in New Street about 9:30 on Tuesday morning. There was nothing but hay in the loft, and there was a cow underneath the loft. The deceased was wearing his ordinary day clothes and he was very wet. The man must have been out in the rain during the night; the hay about him was dry. Deceased was very weak and cold and could not answer any questions, he only mumbled. The deceased's age was given as 65. He advised that the man should be taken to the infirmary. He made an examination of the body that day. It was fairly well nourished and bore no marks of violence, but there was a bad ulcer on the right leg, with a strong odour from it. In his opinion death was due to heart failure accelerated by exposure.

Map of Newry c1903 showing the locations referred to in the inquest.

Joseph Taylor of 14 Edward Street, a lighterman stated that since he was a child, he knew Thomas Henry Davidson, as he used to drive horses hauling lighters but for some time past he was not able to do any work. About a fortnight ago the deceased came to him and told him that he had no one to look after him and asked him could he go up to the loft in New Street and lie down in it. He replied that he could. Next morning when he was in the stable underneath the loft the deceased asked him to go to his [Taylor's] mother and get him some tea. He did so, and his nephew, Robert Taylor, brought him round the tea. After that he saw him most days at the corner of the Canal Street bridge up to Saturday last. On Monday morning Taylor heard that the deceased was bad. His mother sent the deceased some tea that morning and hot milk at dinner time, and in the evening his brother brought him tea and bread. On Tuesday morning his brother brought him tea and bread, and when he went into the stable his brother asked him up to see the deceased. He then told his brother to send for the deceased's relative, Arthur McCann. He then went to Canal Street Barracks and told them of the old man's condition. He saw the doctor visiting the deceased in the loft about half past nine, and he afterwards saw the deceased going to the Workhouse Infirmary in the ambulance. His mother had frequently supplied the deceased with food, and James Brady, of Canal Street, also did so. The lightermen were kind to him. No one had any ill feeling towards the deceased.

The Coroner then questioned Taylor. Was he right in the head? --Yes.

Wasn't it a very extraordinary thing that he should lead such a wretched existence, as if he were a beast of the field? - He had no other place to go to, and he had bad legs.

Couldn't he have gone to the Workhouse? He was in it but would not stop in it. He left it and had no other place to go, he knocked about from one lighter to another.

It was not everybody wanted him? - I am sure very few wanted him

Wasn't that a reason why he should've come up to the workhouse and stop there. – He was in for several months but got tired of it.

He would rather need a life of misery outside than remain in the workhouse in a state of comparative comfort. Taylor made no answer

Mr T. J. Greenan, Master of Newry Workhouse stated that the deceased was admitted to the workhouse infirmary on 23rd of December 1910 and took his discharge from there on 27th of May 1911, he believed it was at the witnesses own request that he was discharged

The coroner summing up, said that this case was a curious illustration of the manner in which some people lived in Newry. The man seemed to have led a miserable existence indeed one could scarcely imagine a life more devoid of human comfort. That was the reason he asked the question was the deceased right in his head? He could not conceive of a man in his right senses preferring to sleep in the loft in his ordinary day clothes on a bundle of hay, instead of seeking a change to some other place where he could have the ordinary comforts of humanity. The deceased was in the workhouse infirmary and would have been kept there but he did not choose to remain there. There was no legal obligation on the McCann's to look after him nor on the part of the Taylors. The members the Taylor family seem to have been kind to him. He thought it was a great pity that as the deceased did not care to bring his condition to the notice of the authorities or that some other person did not alert earlier either the relieving officer or the police. The man, however, seemed to have been able to come to the bridge until Saturday morning last, and he supposed that was the reason no-one did anything for him. No question of the law arose in the case. The man was a full age and apparently of sound mind and that being so no person was under any obligation to do anything for him. That was the condition of the law. He supposed the only thing the jury could do would be to find a verdict in accordance with Dr Smartt's evidence namely that the deceased died of heart failure accelerated by exposure. If the deceased had remained in the workhouse infirmary he may have been spared for some years, but living like a beast, sleeping in his day clothes amongst the hay, getting his food in a precarious manner and suffering from a severe ulcer he had a rather poor chance of pulling through

The Foreman of the jury stated that he lived nearly always on the lighters. I knew him for 25 years and he was always right in the head.

Mr. Taylor said he supposed the deceased had not had his clogs off for fifteen years [NOTE 4].

NOTES

1. A lighter is a flat-bottomed boat used to carry the cargo from boats, making them lighter.

2. I am unsure how the nickname Hammerhead came about. The dictionary defines it as synonymous with blockhead and dunderhead. One explanation was that it was because he wore clogs, although I can't see the reasoning in that.

3. Spavined - The word means "old and decrepit" or "over-the-hill". The noun spavin refers to a disease of the hock joint (found in the hind leg, between the knee and fetlock) of a horse.

4. The reference to his clogs has become part of the legend with stories that he couldn't remove his clogs because his toenails had grown through them.

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‘I scream, you scream, we all scream for Ice Cream… especially on a Sundae’

by Kevin Quinn

Thank ‘Cod’ for Fish & Chips: The Armagh-Italian Connection

Intense poverty in the latter part of the 19th century and two world wars in the 20th century saw waves of Italians leave their native land for a better life in Britain and Ireland. From around the late 1900s, the first of several Italian families arrived in Armagh. By the 1950s, these families had become synonymous with the catering and restaurant landscape of the town. The Italian cafe, chippy and ice cream parlour gradually became institutions and part of the Armachian culinary scene.

The earliest Irish-Italian links in Ireland and Armagh

There has been a tradition of Italian trade and commerce with Ireland for centuries. Italian merchant bankers came to Ireland as a result of the Norman invasion in the 12th century. For example, the Lombardi and Nico families were bankers and merchants who traded in salt, corn, wine and spices in ports such as Waterford and Galway. In 1221, Reginald of Bologna was sent to Ireland by the Dominican Order to found Dominican houses. It is uncertain if his travels brought him to Armagh during this period. Reginald returned to Italy and in 1247 was appointed Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland by Pope Innocent IV. However, due to ill health, Archbishop Reginaldus never returned to Ireland and died in 1256. In 1477, Octavian Del Pagio of Florence arrived in Ireland as the new papal nuncio and in 1478, Pope Sixtus IV appointed Octavian Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. Archbishop Octavian died in 1513 and was buried in Drogheda.

Notable Italians in 18th and 19th Century Ireland

In the 18th century, Italian plaster workers (Stuccodores) were in high demand in Ireland to embellish the newly-built Georgian houses. By the middle of the 19th century, highly skilled Italian craftsmen, mostly from the Luccia region of Italy, were commissioned to create mosaics and terrazzo floors for many of the Catholic Churches being built in Belfast. Many of these craftsmen remained and worked on some of Belfast’s most iconic buildings such as the City Hall and the Crown Bar. In 1900, Cardinal Logue commissioned the Italian sculptor, Cesare Aureli and Italian painter Oreste Amici, to contribute to the beautification of the interior of the St Patrick’s Roman Catholic Cathedral in Armagh. The former carved Leonardo da Vinci’s last supper and the latter painted the ceilings in Italianate style. Other notable Italian contributions to Ireland include: Charles Banconi who gave Ireland its first transport system, by establishing a coach service between Clonmel and Cahir in 1815, and Guglielmo Marconi who set up some of the earliest radio transmission stations in Ireland in the 1890s.

Italian emigration from ‘Valle di Comino’ to Britain and Ireland

The majority of Italians who came to Ireland between the 1880s and the 1950s originated in the ‘Valle di Comino’ in the province of Frosinone and region of Lazio (approximately 70 miles southeast of Rome and 90 miles north of Naples). The epicentre for emigration was the town of Casalattico and the five primary villages within its municipality, such as Monattico and Mortale, nowadays known as Montforte. The village is named after Charles (Carmine) Forte, the Italian-born Scottish hotelier. It is estimated that nearly 80% of Irish-Italians can trace their origins to this tiny area of Italy. Similarly to Ireland in the mid-19th Century, economic hardship was the main contributing factor for emigration from this particular region of Italy. Just like certain areas of Ireland at this time, the land in the Valle di Comino could no longer support its inhabitants as the ground was not suitable for agriculture due to the mountainous terrain. The land was also sub-divided

between children pushing farming to even poorer land higher up in the mountains. When this was no longer economically viable, the people were forced to emigrate.

Tramping over the Alps in search of a better life

Beginning with the male population, the men of Valle di Camino began to walk their way out of poverty, often with members of their extended family. Making their way through the Alps into France, the men often worked as labourers in construction or in bottling factories. It was at this time that their association with catering began to develop as the migrants would supplement their income by selling ice cream in the summer and roast chestnuts in the winter. Unfortunately for them, there were few opportunities in the catering business in France as it was monopolised by the indigenous culinary culture.

Making their way to England, Scotland and Ireland

By the 1860s, Italian migrants were arriving in England from France. They migrated northwards through England and into Scotland and by the 1880s, began to cross the Irish Sea arriving in Belfast and Dublin. By the early 1900s, Italian immigration was gradually spanning out to other Irish cities and provincial towns such as Armagh. By this time a small Italian artisan community had already been established in Belfast. Italians from the Valle di Camino arrived in Belfast in large numbers throughout the 1880s and 90s. They settled in the densely packed streets behind St Anne's Cathedral which became known as Belfast's 'Little Italy'.

Culinary fusion

It was whilst in the north of England that Italian migrants created the culinary fusion we know today as Fish & Chips. The diet in the north of England was mostly fish, potatoes and peas due to the relative abundance of these three basic and cheap foodstuffs. For the Italians, it was quite simply a case of combining the three into a dish which could then be easily transported around on their barrels along with their ice cream carts. In Scotland, the Italian ice cream vendors came to be known as the 'Hokey Pokey men' thanks to their sales pitch: *'Gelato, ecco un poco'* which translates as *'Ice cream, here's a little'*. Hence the origins of describing an ice cream on a cone as a 'poke'.

Ambitious to succeed

The majority of these new, unskilled migrants settled alongside the established Italian artisan class in Belfast bringing a new diversity to the Italian community. Despite being from impoverished backgrounds, the census (1901 and 1911) data reveals that most of these unskilled migrants were literate. Being literate would have undoubtedly helped them to quickly become proficient in English. By 1911, most migrants had progressed from itinerant work and street vending to owning their own businesses, such as 'fish saloons', ice cream parlours, and confectionery/tobacconist shops.

Irish culinary culture

Italians immigrants made a very significant contribution to Irish culinary culture. Before their arrival, there were very few restaurants and food shops in Ireland and any that did exist were out of the financial reach of most people. Consequently, there was an opening for reasonably priced food which was affordable to all social classes, such as Fish & Chips, ice cream and confectionary. However, Oyster and Shrimp Saloons were still popular in Belfast. Oysters were plentiful, inexpensive and were eaten nearly every day by the working classes. For this reason, it took longer for Italian families in Belfast to move into the fried Fish & Chips business compared to other cities in Britain and Ireland. By 1914, there were relatively few Fish & Chips shops in Belfast. Similarly, in provincial towns such as Armagh, Fish & Chips would have been a later addition to the menu. Initially, it was hot peas in a cup seasoned with pepper and a good dash of vinegar that was on offer. Below is an extract from the memoirs of an Armagh woman, Katherine Donnelly Toner (b. Armagh 1903, d. Florida 1979), recalling the sale of hot peas in her teenage years:

"There was an ice cream man. His name was Cafolio. He had an ice cream parlour on English Street. […] *He also sold hot peas.* […] *For one*

penny we could stay there until nine thirty, not one minute after. His penny's worth of hot peas or an ice cream slider was our admission for the night to be with friends"

From Mortale to Belfast: "The Forte Brothers"

In the 1880s, the Forte Brothers, Alfonso (b. Italy 1864, d. Belfast 1945), Angelo (b. Italy 1866, d. Belfast 1935) and Antonio (b. Italy 1873, d. Armagh 1947) left their village; Mortale, in the Valle di Comino to walk to France. Like so many before and after them, they walked and worked their way across France eventually reaching Paris. Although it is uncertain when the three brothers arrived in Belfast, the census reveals that they were well-established by 1901.

1901 census

The 1901 census records that Alfonso was living at 11 North Street (37) with his wife Ann (27) and Ann's niece Rose (7). Alfonso's occupation was given as an ice cream vendor. Antonio (30) was residing in a private dwelling at 94 Ann Street with his brother Angelo (35), who is recorded as head of household, his wife Mary (23) and two house servants. Angelo is recorded as being a manager of a refreshment house and Antonio as assistant manager.

Chain migration

By the mid-1900s, chain migration in which a migrant joined up with an already established relative was well in motion. In the 1901 census, there were only five Fortes living elsewhere in Ireland; either in Dublin, Cork or Galway. By 1911, there were around fifty Fortes recorded as living in Belfast and Larne with only a few still residing elsewhere in Ireland.

1911 census: The Forte family expands

The 1911 census records that Angelo Forte had moved to 94 Winetavern Street with Antonio and a fourth brother; Giovanni (42) (b. Italy 1868, d. Belfast 1939), and a shop assistant also in residence. Giovanni had been married for fifteen years and had five children who were all residing in Italy. Occupation is recorded as confectioner for all three brothers. Angelo and Mary also now had three children; Nancy (10), Congetta (7), and Felice (1). Alfonso's family is recorded as now living in Larne with his wife Ann recorded as head of household and her occupation as ice cream dealer.

Sir John Burke and the Italian Consulate

By the late 1900s, the Fortes were well-established economically and socially in the Italian community in Belfast. Their standing brought them into contact with Sir John Burke who was consular representative to Italy and to five other countries, a leading shipping agent and nationalist politician in Belfast. It was in his role as Italian consular that Sir John developed a strong friendship with the Italian community in Belfast. It was likely through this association with Sir John, combined with a good fluency in English, that Antonio secured a position in the Italian Consulate in Belfast. After partition, Antonio declined the offer to move to the new Italian Consulate in Dublin.

Belfast to Armagh

By 1914, (see fig.1) Antonio had opened his own shop in Victoria Street. However, it is uncertain if he continued to trade while working for the Italian Consulate. In March 1923, Antonio married Maria

Fig.1 Domenico Giovanni Antonio Forte, 30 October 1952. Courtesy of Thecla Brolly.

Carmela Vella who was also from the Belfast Italian community and by 1926, Antonio had opened a confectionary/tobacconist shop in Garfield Street in Belfast. It is unclear whether Antonio continued to trade from Victoria Street at this time. By 1928, the Fortes had two children Anna (b. Belfast 1926, d. Armagh 2019) (see fig.2) and Romeo (b. Belfast 1928, d. Armagh 2019). In 1934, the Forte family decided to move to Armagh to avail of a business opportunity and to leave the city for the quieter surroundings of a provincial town.

Upper English Street

Fig.2 Anna Brolly (nee Forte) aged 15, standing outside her parents Fish Saloon at 25 English Street (circa 1941). Anna was Lord Mayor in 2002/3. Courtesy of Thecla Brolly.

The Fortes opened their first ice cream parlour/fish saloon; the 'Palm Grove', in Upper English Street across the street from the former Woolworths store. In 1937, they moved to a larger premises; Forte's Fish & Chips, at 25 Upper English Street where the Craic'd Pot Coffee House is located today. The Fortes traded there for over fifty years, Anna and Romeo continuing the business when Antonio passed away in 1947. In 1974, the cafe was refurbished, losing its distinctive Italian characteristics such as the tile-work, and renamed 'The Copperfield'. By the 1980s, mainly due to the reduced footfall in the town during the Troubles, the restaurant closed.

The Maglioccas

The Maglioccas were one of the first Italian families to open businesses in Armagh. However, Armachians would be more familiar with the spelling 'Mallocca' – a simplified phonetic spelling for the locals. The Malloccas came from Settignano in the Valle di Comino, near the town of Atina, an old Roman town approximately halfway between Naples and Rome. It is uncertain when they first arrived, but by the early 1920s, the Malloccas appear to have been well-established in the catering business in Armagh and Portadown. An indication of this success was their sponsorship of two County Armagh football competitions: 'The Mallocca Cup and Mallocca Shield'. The Armagh street directories record the family running an ice cream saloon in Scotch Street (1921-22) and a fish saloon in English Street (1931). The 'Fish Saloon' was located in Upper English Street between the present day Bank of Ireland and the Ulster bank. Unfortunately, research has failed to locate any relatives of this branch of the family.

The 'Keady Malloccas'

Antonio Mallocca, his wife Felice, and their two sons (Frank and Joe) opened the 'Keady Ice Saloon' in the early 1920s (see fig.3). Another two sons; Celeste and Crescenzo, later arrived from Italy to work in the family business. Celeste eventually opened up his own business in Warrenpoint and Crescenzo in Monaghan. The Keady business was taken over by the Caffollas and later by Willy and Eveline Smith.

The 'Cafollas'

The Cafollas originated from the town Casalattico in the Valle di Comino. Although there is a reference to a man named 'Cafolio' in the memoirs of Katherine Donnelly Toner, it is not certain that he belongs to the Cafolla family which were in businesses in Armagh in the late 1930s. However,

Fig 3 Antonio and Felice magliccoo (Mallocco) and daughter?, who opened the original Keady Ice Saloon in the early 1920s. Courtesy of Fernando Nardone

there is a possibility that the Cafolla mentioned in the memoirs could have been Vittorio Cafolla (d. 1948) or maybe his father Francesco (d. 1932). Vittorio is listed in the 1937 Armagh Street Directory as a confectioner trading from 74 Scotch Street. Vittorio was married to Stella Mallocca (d. 1969) (fig. 4), the daughter of Celeste Mallocca (d. 1939), who was mentioned in the 'The Keady Malloccas'. When Vittorio passed away, his wife Stella and their sons continued to run the business. By the 1950s, the Cafollas had two cafes in Armagh, trading under 'Cafolla & Sons'. The business at 74 Scotch Street was now trading as a cafe and a second cafe was opened at 37 English Street. In 1937, the latter address, was listed as the residence of a Marco Rosato (d. 1944) who was married to Vittorio and Stella's daughter; Anunziata Cafolla (d. 1954). It is uncertain if the Rosatos ever operated a business from this address. In later years Stella's grandson; Vicki Cafolla, ran the business trading there until the 1980s. Stella's other grandson; Marco Cafolla (d. 2019), initially worked with his uncle Tino Nardone in his Thomas Street cafe. In 1976, Marco took over Aldo Nardone's chippy in Thomas Street for a period of time before setting up a business in Railway Street and then in Lower English Street which still carries the Cafolla name.

The Nardones

Like the Malloccas, the Nardones came from Settignano. Tino Nardone first came to Armagh in 1950 and the following year married Antonietta Cafolla; a member of the already well-established Cafolla family in Armagh. Tino and Antonietta started off working in Cafolla's restaurant at 37 English Street before taking over the other Cafolla cafe at 74 Scotch Street beside Marley's fruit and veg shop. The cafe was named 'The Modesto Café' - Tino being short for Modesto. In the late 1960s, Tino moved to 11 Thomas Street as 74 Scotch Street was demolished in order to widen the road at the corner of Thomas and Scotch Street.

Tino was joined by his twin brother; Aldo, in 1956 who worked with Tino in the Modesto for a few years (see back cover). Aldo was joined by his wife Maria and son Fernando in 1958 and in 1960, they

Fig.4 Vittorio and Stella Cafolla (nee Magliocco) and their daughter Antonietta who later married Tino Nardone. Courtesy of Thecla Brolly

Fig .5 Aldo working in his chippy at 13 Thomas Street in the early 1970s. Courtesy of Fernando Nardonne

opened a chippy/café; the 'Supper Saloon', at 1 Barrack Hill (at the junction of Barrack Hill and Georges Street). Aldo traded there for about two years before moving to 13 Thomas Street in 1962. The following year, a fire destroyed the premises on Thomas Street causing the Nardones to return to Italy for nine months before returning to Armagh to rebuild. In December 1976, Aldo and his family moved to Devon, opening a new business and trading there for fifteen years. Tino left Armagh to join his brother in Devon in the late 1970s but kept the business running in Armagh. Aldo retired to Italy in 1990 and Tino returned to Armagh in 2000 before retiring to Italy. Just like their businesses in Thomas Street, the properties Aldo and Tino retired to in Italy were side by side (fig.5).

Aldo returned to Ireland to be with his only son, Fernando, after losing his wife Maria in 2010. They opened a takeaway business together in Riverstown, County Sligo. Aldo worked along with Fernando until he passed away in May 2016 (aged 86). Tino passed away in 2017. Both men are buried in Settignano in the Valle di Comino close to the old Roman town of Anita.

The Macaris

The Macaris are the only remaining Irish-Italian family still in business in Armagh. Like the Fortes, they originated from Montforte in the Valle di Comino, initially immigrating to Scotland in the aftermath of the Second World War as their region had been devastated during the war. They moved to Armagh in the 1950s and were initially in the Fish & Chips business. In the late 1960s, Ami Macari purchased MacNeice's Newsagents at 5 Lower English Street. As well as newspapers, the Macaris have sold ice cream made from a family recipe which is well-renowned in Armagh. In recent years, the Macaris have opened an Ice Cream & Coffee shop and a painting and decorating store; PV Macari Interiors, both next to the original newsagents.

'What did the Romans ever do for us?' *The legacy of Italian immigration*

The setting up of ice cream parlours and Fish and Chip shops by Italian immigrants brought about a sea change in social attitudes towards public dining in Britain and Ireland. Where once dining was restricted to the upper and middle-class formality and conservatism of tea rooms, Italian food outlets were accessible to all social classes and gave people a new social hub, such as that described by Katherine Toner Donnelly. Despite arriving a little late to Ireland, the Romans, or at least their descendants from the Valle di Comino, gave us the template which evolved into the restaurants, coffee houses and fast food outlets that we enjoy today. They introduced new foods and a different take on traditional foods. They upended the social code concerning Sunday trading and late night opening. They brought ordinary folk together for refreshments and a chat. They gave generations of teenagers a safe environment to socialise, to a backdrop of mirrors, wooden partitions and leather covered seats. Unwittingly, they provided an alternative to Sunday morning mass, leaving the Church a little poorer as the 'mitchers' enjoyed a beverage or ice cream purchased with the money intended for collection. Sipping on their coke or eating their ice cream, they would wait for those

who had attended to provide information for their deception; the name of the priest for most parents or a brief insight into that morning's homily for the more doubtful parents.

From Bovril and biscuits to cappuccinos and ice cream sliders, the Italian influence has continued to permeate Irish culinary culture and is evident in every coffee house, restaurant and bar today.

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Fig. 6 Crescenzo Magliocco, Circa 1952. Taken at Allison Studio, Scotch Street, Armagh
Armagh County Museum collection (ARMCM.82.1992.1174.48)

Fig. 7 Maria Nardone wife of Aldo standing at the door of their 'Supper Saloon' at the Junction of Barrack Hill and George's Street (between 1960-62)
Courtesy of Fernando Nardone

Fig 8, Antonio Forte (on rght) with his family in Mortale in the Valle di Comino (early 1920s). Antonio returned most years to help with the harvest. Antonio is beside his brother John who remained in Italy. Courtesy of Thecla Brolly.

A special thanks to Thecla Brolly and Fernando Nardone for sharing their family memories and histories with the readers of History Armagh.

Fig. 9 Nardonne's 'Supper Saloon' Junction Barrack Hill and George's Street, Armagh. Courtesy of Fernando Nardone

Fig. 10 Celeste Magilocco's (Mallocco's) Ice Cream Parlour, Warrenpoint. Courtesy of Frenando Nardone.

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